# Table of Contents


- About this Volume
- "Introduction: Editing Blake"
- Wayne C. Ripley, Winona State University
- Essay
- "Modernizing Blake's Text: Syntax, Rhythm, Rhetoric"
- David Fuller, Durham University
- Essay
- "The Ends of Editing"
- W. H. Stevenson
- Essay
- "Contingencies, Exigencies, and Editorial Praxis: The Case of the 2008 Norton Blake"
- Mary Lynn Johnson
- Essay
- "'The productions of time': Visions of Blake in the Digital Age"
- Rachel Lee and J. Alexandra McGhee, University of Rochester
- Essay
- "Editioning William Blake's *VALA/The Four Zoas*"
- Justin Van Kleeck
- Essay
- "Delineation Editing of Co-Texts: William Blake's Illustrations"
- Wayne C. Ripley, Winona State University
- Essay

## About This Volume

This volume of *Romantic Circles Praxis Series* includes an editor's introduction by Wayne C. Ripley, with essays by David Fuller, W. H. Stevenson, Mary Lynn Johnson, Rachel Lee and J. Alexandra McGhee, and Justin Van Kleeck.

Co-edited by Wayne C. Ripley and Justin Van Kleeck, Editing Blake looks at the profound challenges William Blake poses to both editors and readers. Despite the promises of the current multi-modal environment, the effort to represent Blake's works as he intended them to be read is increasingly being recognized as an editorial fantasy. All editorial work necessitates mediation and misrepresentation. Yet editorial work also illuminates much in Blake's corpus, and more remains to be done. The essays in this volume grapple with past, present, and future attempts at editing Blake's idiosyncratic verbal and visual work for a wide variety of audiences who will read Blake using numerous forms of media.

Ripley's introduction attempts to tell the history of editing Blake from the perspective of editorial remediation. Essays by W. H. Stevenson, Mary Lynn Johnson, and David Fuller, all of whom have edited successful print editions of Blake's works, reflect on the actual work of editing and explore how the assumptions underlying editorial practices were challenged by publishers, new ideas of editing, new forms of technology, and ideas of audience. Recognizing that editorial work is never done, the volume also includes the indispensable errata to the 2008 edition of Grant and Johnson's *Blake's Poetry and Designs*. Essays by current and past project assistants to the *Blake Archive*, Rachel Lee, J. Alexander McGhee, Ripley, and Van Kleeck, examine the difficulties that Blake's heavily revised manuscripts, such as *An Island in the Moon* and *Vala or The Four Zoas*, and Blake's illustrations of other authors, have posed both to editors working in print and to the ever-evolving *Blake Archive*.

The text is encoded in HTML, but features no frames and a limited use of tables. It will work best with Netscape 4.0 or Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher or a comparable browser; earlier browsers may not display everything properly. Because you may enter and exit these files along multiple paths, you may need to use the back-arrow button on your browser to return to your starting point. The full text of the volume, like all hypertexts in the *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*, is fully searchable.

The essays and other files were marked up in HTML by David Rettenmaier and Mike Quilligan at the University of Maryland. The volume cover and contents page were designed and marked up by Mike Quilligan.

---

## About the Romantic Circles Praxis Series

The **Romantic Circles Praxis Series** is devoted to using computer technologies for the contemporary critical investigation of the languages, cultures, histories, and theories of Romanticism. Tracking the circulation of Romanticism within these interrelated domains of knowledge, **RCPS** recognizes as its conceptual terrain a world where Romanticism has, on the one hand, dissolved as a period and an idea into a plurality of discourses and, on the other, retained a vigorous, recognizable hold on the intellectual and theoretical discussions of today. **RCPS** is committed to mapping out this terrain with the best and mo st exciting critical writing of contemporary Romanticist scholarship.

---

# About the Contributors

**Wayne C. Ripley** is an Associate Professor at Winona State University. He is working on a book project regarding William Blake and Edward Young. His essay on Blake's relationship to the Hunt Circle is forthcoming in *Studies in Romanticism*.

**David Fuller** is Emeritus Professor of English and former Chairman of the Department of English in the University of Durham, England. From 2002 to 2007 he was the University's Orator. He is the author of *Blake's Heroic Argument* (Routledge: Chapman and Hall, 1988), *James Joyce's 'Ulysses'* (St Martin's, 1992), *Signs of Grace* (with David Brown, Cassell, 1995), and essays on a wide range of poetry, drama, and novels from Medieval to Modern. He is the editor of *Tamburlaine the Great* (1998), for the Clarendon Press complete works of Marlowe, of *William Blake: Selected Poetry and Prose* (Longman, 2000; revised 2008), and co-editor (with Patricia Waugh) of *The Arts and Sciences of Criticism* (Oxford, 1999). His edition with Corinne Saunders of the medieval poem *Pearl* modernized by Victor Watts is published by Enitharmon (2005). He is trained as a Musicologist, plays the piano and organ, and has written on opera and ballet. His recently completed *The Life in the Sonnets* will be published in 2011 by Continuum in the series *Shakespeare Now!*.

**W. H. Stevenson** has worked in universities in Britain, West Africa and the United States, including periods as Head of Department at Ibadan and Calabar, before his retirement from teaching some years ago. His principal work, which has continued since retirement, has been with editing William Blake's poetry and, more recently, an extensive selection of the 1611 King James Bible

**Mary Lynn Johnson** is the co-author, with Brian Wilkie, of *Blake's "Four Zoas": The Design of a Dream* (1978); co-editor, with Seraphia D. Leyda, of *Reconciliations: Studies in Honor of Richard Harter Fogle* (1983); and compiler of the Blake chapter in *The English Romantic Poets: A Review of Research and Criticism* (4th ed.,1985), ed. Frank Jordan, Jr. She contributed to *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake* (2003), ed. Morris Eaves; *Physiognomy in Profile* (2005), ed. Melissa Percival and Graeme Tytler; *Women Read William Blake* (2006), ed. Helen P. Bruder; and *Blake in Our Time: Essays in Honour of G. E. Bentley, Jr.* (2010), ed. Karen Mulhallen. Before serving as Special Assistant to the President of the University of Iowa (1983-2000), she held faculty positions at Louisiana State University, University of Illinois, and Georgia State University.

**Rachel Lee** is a doctoral student in the Department of English at the University of Rochester and a project assistant for the *William Blake Archive*. Her dissertation investigates Romantic poetics, narratives of mediation, and constructions of media history in the works of Wordsworth, Blake, and De Quincey.

**J. Alexandra McGhee** is a Ph.D. candidate in the English Department at the University of Rochester and a project assistant for the *William Blake Archive*. Her dissertation, *Undead Slaves and Cannibal Gods*, explores the evolution of the zombie in nineteenth-century Britain and its Caribbean colonies.

**Justin Van Kleeck** is an independent scholar living in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia in 2006 and wrote his dissertation on Blake's VALA/Four Zoas manuscript

# Editing and Reading Blake

## Introduction: Editing Blake

**Wayne C. Ripley, Winona State University**

> "Unless we find a way to bind these awful Forms to our Embrace we shall perish."
>
> - *Jerusalem* 82.3-4 (E 239)[1]

1. Few artists have linked their arguments to their methods of production with the same conscious intent as the engraver, poet, and painter William Blake. In his most ambitious declarations, Blake hoped to foster nothing less than a full-scale media revolution that would promote a more direct, personal relationship between artists and audiences. Best known today for "illuminated printing," a form of relief etching he created in the late 1780s (E 693), Blake often worked proudly and determinedly as his own bookseller, publisher, and editor, shaping his works as he saw fit. In *An Island in the Moon* (c. 1783-85), Blake offered his first vision of a new method of printing that would transform his world: "I would have all the writing Engraved instead of Printed & at every other leaf a high finishd print all in three Volumes folio, & sell them a hundred pounds a piece. they would Print off two thousand." The radical political implications of this media revolution are seen when a character associated with Blake's wife Catherine responds with the air of a *sans-culotte*: "whoever will not have them will be ignorant fools & will not deserve to live" (E 465).

2. Even after he perfected illuminated printing, Blake continued to experiment with a vast range of different media: illustrated and illuminated manuscripts, intaglio etchings, emblem books, the marginal designs he produced for Young and Gray, the white-line etching for Blair, his unique fresco, and the original fusion of word and image in the illustrations to the Book of Job and many other works. But if Blake desired to reform society around these new forms of media, it was a future that never came to pass. He discovered time and again how dependent he was upon existing networks of media production and distribution. It is likely that at the same moment when the 1793 Prospectus blamed publishers for the "poverty and obscurity" of "the Artist, the Poet, [and] the Musician" who lacked the "means to propagate" their own works (E 693), Blake's books were on display at the shop of the radical bookseller Joseph Johnson (Davies 216-17). Ironically, his most productive period in illuminated printing coincides with his most successful period as a commercial engraver. As much as Blake thought about different forms of media production, in the end his images of editing and publishing were often vague. It is unclear in the *Island* fantasy who the "they" were who would print and sell these engraved books and which "them" Catherine would execute for lack of taste. In *Marriage*'s "Printing house of Hell," Blake's "Unnam'd forms" are passively "reciev'd by Men" who put them into "the forms of books" (E 40). As seen in *Poetical Sketches* (1783), possibly *Tiriel* (c. 1789), *The French Revolution* (1791), and his plan to print some version of *The Four Zoas* (1797-1808?) to great profits (E 726), Blake continually flirted with the possibilities of publishing in more conventional forms of print. Blake also published his visual art in exhibitions of all types. In addition to the Royal Academy, Blake's illustrations to Young and Blair were displayed at bookseller shops alongside other illustrated book projects, and he took the more radical step of holding his own exhibition in 1809-10 only when he was denied the use of more traditional venues, printing the *Descriptive Catalogue* and the Prospectus for *The Canterbury Pilgrims* in letterpress without ambivalence. Blake's failure to publish also led to some of his most intriguing work. The manuscripts *Island*, *Tiriel*, *The Four Zoas*, and the Genesis illuminations are complex works that exploit their material form in profound ways, while the notebooks and even the marginalia consist of important visual and verbal play.

I

3. Blake's extensive use of different media forms has meant that the first task of every editor has been to remediate this work—to translate it to a new medium, which irrevocably changes its form, context, circulation, and meaning. It is for this reason that professional Blake editing began with John Sampson's recognition of the "disservice" (v) an editor must do to Blake's intentions. Invariably, no edition can convey all that Blake intended. While it may sometimes seem that the selection of a medium would be only one among many editorial choices, remediation is a kind of superstructure that conditions all subsequent editorial decisions. The concept of remediation was formulated by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, who adapted it from the media theory of Marshall McLuhan.[2] While the content metaphor of remediation has been criticized as positivistic,[3] its relevancy to editing print and digital media has recently been explored by Diana Kichuk, Kathryn Sutherland, and Alan Liu. In each of these studies, theories of remediation serve to remind writers, readers, and editors of their place in what Liu calls an "encounter zone" of shifting media protocols (Liu par. 1). For editors and readers of Blake, this scene resembles nothing so much as the title page of *The [First] Book of Urizen*, where Urizen sits reading/writing/drawing/transcribing the different media codes before him.[4] As this title page makes clear, Urizen's Newtonian search for "a solid without fluctuation" (E 71) is also a search for pure linguistic codes that dwell apart from bibliographic codes, the seamlessly remediated stream of data. Kichuk has identified four paradoxical claims of remediation apposite to Urizen's strivings:

   > (1) *The remediation is the "real thing" or a clone with a primary focus on the old medium.*
   > (2) *The remediation seeks to improve the old medium.*
   > (3) *The old medium is intentionally fashioned or changed.*
   > (4) *The old medium is "absorbed" into the new media without a trace.* (292)

   The contradictions of remediations are manifest in all editions of Blake's works, be they letterpress editions, print facsimiles, book reproductions, catalogues, digital archives, and, arguably, even exhibitions. Editions claim to represent the reality of Blake's work, even while improving it, and as the work becomes a new thing, it remains itself all the while. Such paradoxes are familiar to editorial theory, but the preponderance of remediation in our culture threatens to veil its contradictions. Today, readers of Blake will encounter the poet in a range of different media. Most readers of this electronic collection will use their computers to consult the *William Blake Archive* while cross-referencing their own dog-eared copies of Erdman, Bentley, or Keynes, the Princeton-Blake Trust facsimiles of the illuminated books, *Blake Books*, *Blake Records*, and other print materials, many of which also exist in digital forms. This host of different forms allows readers to see Blake in numerous ways, fulfilling the injunction of the Santa Cruz Blake Study Group "to triangulate Blake's text through as many editions and editorial theories as one can lay hands on" (15).

4. Proposed by Justin Van Kleeck, *Editing Blake* hopes to aid in this readerly triangulation by bringing together the work of both established and younger Blake editors and scholars reflecting on the problems and possibilities of editing Blake in the current media environment. W. H. Stevenson, Mary Lynn Johnson, and David Fuller have all edited successful print editions: *The Poems of William Blake* (Longman: 1971, 1989, 2007), *Blake's Poetry and Designs* (with John Grant, Norton: 1979, 2008), and *William Blake: Selected Poetry* (Longman: 2000, 2008). These editions have not only thrived in the shadow of Keynes, Erdman, and Bentley, but given the fact that all three editions have been recently revised, they remain vibrant print editions of the digital age. The essays of these editors explicate their editorial methodologies and their principles of revision, as well as detailing the ways in which material, social, and economic realities have impacted their volumes. Similarly, the essays suggest that editors of codex editions of Blake today can ignore neither the editorial implications of digital media nor the

wealth of resources that digital media makes available to readers of all levels. The second set of contributors, Justin Van Kleeck, Rachel Lee, J. Alexandra McGhee, and Wayne C. Ripley, have all worked as project assistants to the *Blake Archive* and received their graduate training from its editors. Their essays are in more direct dialogue with the *Archive* as it expands its editorial labors to Blake's works beyond the illuminated books to include the manuscripts and illustrations of other authors, investigating how these new forms have or have not required the *Archive* to revise its editorial theory and practice. Lee and McGhee provide a useful and detailed history of the *Archive* up through its present work in preparing Blake's manuscript satire, *An Island in the Moon*. Drawing on his dissertation, which is a thoughtful and comprehensive survey of the problems of editing Blake,[5] Van Kleeck details the editorial history of Blake's heavily revised illuminated manuscript *The Four Zoas*, including the electronic edition he prepared for his dissertation that will become the basis for the edition at the *Archive*. Ripley uses the theories of D. F. McKenzie and Jerome McGann to pursue a Blakean notion of social-text editing for Blake's illustrations of other authors. Together, these six essays show how past and present experiences of editing Blake contain much that is instructive and fully applicable to editing in today's media environment.

5. In its focus on editorial practice and achievement, *Editing Blake* can be seen as a companion of the 2005 Praxis volume, *Digital Designs on Blake*. Edited by Ron Broglio, this volume explored "how new media representation of William Blake's work provides a heuristic for another mode of inquiry into Blake's complex verbal and visual texts" ("About This Volume"). Instead of employing the model of the archive common to electronic editions like the *Blake Archive*, Broglio offers "immersive textuality" as a model for engaging literary works from within ("Living" par. 5). Many of these forms of representation involve the creative exploitation of ideas implicit in Blake's own text or philosophy and use tools, such as MOO, Flash animation, and Ivanhoe, to draw them out. Such approaches pursue Jerome McGann's idea that all editorial ventures are species of interpretative "deformations" (*Radiant* 116). The deforming role of the editor is a point acknowledged by all the contributors to *Editing Blake*, but Morris Eaves's warning against the ever-present threat of "change and obsolescence" in digital media is worth noting ("Crafting" par. 29). Most of the electronic heuristics explored by *Digital Designs* have had a very brief shelf life and limited popular appeal as a means of presenting and exploring Blake's work, and it remains the case that print media and the self-declared "conservative" *Blake Archive* are the primary means by which almost all of Blake's readers engage his works ("Crafting" par. 25).

6. To say this is not to criticize the innovative work of *Digital Designs*, which makes no claims about editing Blake, but to recognize the still unwritten future of scholarly editing and the uncertain demands of future readers in our complex media environment. It is highly probable that *Digital Designs* will offer much in terms of editing Blake in an interactive Web 2.0 environment, but potential interactive models of editing still must reconcile themselves to questions of textual and pictorial accuracy. Peter Robinson has faulted scholarly editions for not moving "beyond the model of print technology," arguing that "dynamic interactivity will change the relationship of the reader to the text" ("Where We Are" pars. 1 and 9). However, Robinson's notion of dynamic interactivity is not exemplified by MOO spaces but more sophisticated means of presenting and analyzing traditional editorial data, such as the collation of variants and manuscript groupings that would be of little use to the general reader. Which type of interactivity, if either, will represent the editorial future? Robinson, who clearly believes in the superiority of digital scholarly editions over print ("Current Issues" par. 5), has recognized how the difficulty of producing digital editions has contributed to the resistance of scholars, publishers, and readers from adopting electronic editions. Robinson would remedy these problems with better tools that could make the creation of digital editions easier and their value more apparent to scholars ("Current Issues"). In their explanation of the decision to print the Cambridge edition of Swift in a traditional codex format, Linda Bree and James McLaverty arrive at a far different solution for the same set of problems. Their decision was based on cost, editorial authority, and what uses most readers

will make of the text. They point out that "[e]lectronic editions are generally more expensive to produce than print editions" since they must be supported by grants and "the diligent and extensive unpaid labour of academics" (129), and where books can be completed, electronic editions must be indefinitely maintained and updated even when finished in terms of content.[6] While Bree and McLaverty do not question the scholarly utility of the resources available at most electronic archives (different versions of texts, manuscripts, and various social-texts), they do question how many readers will ever utilize these resources or how many will know what to do with them if they do. They envision print editions continuing to be of central use for most readers, with electronic archives supplying different versions, textual witnesses, and other materials to form what Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland have called "the hybrid edition" (6).

7. The intersection of print and digital media is almost certain to continue despite some of the more ambitious claims surrounding electronic scholarly editions. John Unsworth has called sites like the *Blake Archive*, *Rossetti Archive*, and many of the other projects that were developed in conjunction with the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH) at the University of Virginia thematic research collections ("Thematic Research Collections"). The thematic research collection gathers primary digital resources and a "contexual mass" of other materials, and it serves as both a depository and as a site for new research to be conducted (Palmer 357).[7] But as Jerome McGann has written, "personal computers today function most powerfully as scholarly tools when we use them on our desks and in our libraries at home and elsewhere. In those places they get embraced by the more sophisticated, stable, and dispersed network of book technology" ("From Text to Work" par. 19). Stevenson, Johnson, and Fuller all see their editions being used in connection with the *Blake Archive*. For its part, the *Archive* often directs users to printed text through its notes, introductions, and bibliographies. Although Nelson Hilton's *Blake Digital Text Project* provides hypertext editions of the *Songs* and the *Everlasting Gospel*, it is noteworthy that both it and the *Archive* made digitizing Erdman's *Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* an early priority, presumably for the purpose of improving the text through their remediation. As the acknowledged standard text of Blake, Erdman's edition served as the textual foundation of the editions of Stevenson and Ostriker, with Stevenson even sharing the 1971 title page with Erdman. Neither of these editors, however, accepted all of Erdman's decisions. As Stevenson writes in his essay for this volume, he standardized Blake's spelling, punctuation, and initial capitals under the direction of his general editor, F. W. Bateson, who, with Stevenson and Erdman, concluded that Blake's punctuation "is often insoluble" (xii). Ostriker challenged some of Erdman's readings, albeit without specifying which copies or transcriptions she consulted (8). While the *Archive* is emphatically not based on the Erdman edition (Eaves et al., "Standards" 142), it clearly privileges the text over Bentley, Keynes, and other editions, even though Bentley and Keynes are referred to in the object descriptions alongside Erdman. But whereas these printed editions explicitly adapt and change Erdman's text, the two digitizations of Erdman are silent in how their remediations altered the same text. Figures 1 and 2 provide a screen shot of how both digitizations display the opening of the *Songs*, and I will assume the reader has access to the print edition for comparison.[8]

Figure1

Figure 1 *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* from *The Complete Poetry and Prose* at the *Blake Digital Text Project*

Figure2

Figure 2 *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* from *The Complete Poetry and Prose* at *The William Blake Archive*

8. The digitization at the *Blake Digital Text Project* includes line and page numbers in the margins, but does not reference the textual notes, which are only available when using the *Project*'s concordance. More usefully, the *Archive* digitization provides hyperlinks to the textual notes, which open in a new window. Its concordance is on the same page, which allows viewers to see search terms in their complete context, and it also provides a full index to the work, including the textual notes. In terms of textual reproduction, the stanzas at the *Archive* have the tendency to collapse into one another, while at the *Blake Digital Text Project*, the stanza divisions are greatly exaggerated. The *Archive* digitization editorially adds the plate numbers of the *Songs* that Erdman chose to leave off but omits Erdman's

numbering of the *Songs*, which followed Blake's 1818 list of the order in which the *Songs* should appear. Erdman did include plate numbers for the other illuminated books, but in the digitization these are bracketed, giving the misleading impression that the editors of the *Archive* added them, and in the manuscript works, Erdman's "pages" are often mislabeled "prints." Although neither copy is a new edition, these significant differences mean that the standard edition of Blake now exists in three versions. Do these variations call into question the authority of the letterpress edition itself, and inasmuch as they mirror the variations found in the original prints, do they direct readers to print and digital facsimiles? Or will a reader simply take the digitization at face value, never realizing, for example, how Blake used stanzas? The impact of these digitizations on print culture, moreover, seems minimal since Random House released a "new" print edition in 2008, which added a brief foreword from Harold Bloom, whose dated commentary both digitizations cut without comment.

9. Such variations are the consequences of remediation, and they underscore how every version of Blake's visual and graphic media into letterpress, printed facsimiles, or digital images will present a different Blake. The inevitable necessity of transforming Blake's works forces us as editors, readers, and scholars to ask, in Morris Eaves's formulation, which Blakes we want and which we do not. In more direct editorial terms, we must ask what in Blake's linguistic, bibliographic, and sociological fields we need and want to represent. As the contributors to this volume all suggest, these questions are inexorably tied to the tools, resources, and perhaps luck available to accomplish these goals.

II

10. While the following survey of some of the central issues and problems in editing Blake is sketched initially in relationship to the editions of Keynes, Erdman, Bentley, and the *Archive*, the more reader-friendly editions of Stevenson, Grant and Johnson, and Fuller wrestle with the same issues of how to translate Blake's works into different media and what balance to strike between fidelity and the limitations of both the new medium and the knowledge-base of the reader. In an important article on the history of editing Blake, Eaves identifies the division of Blake's words and images as the critical accomplishment of the first generation of editors that followed Gilchrist. Eaves locates the philosophy behind this division in a pair of statements by William Michael Rossetti and Algernon Charles Swinburne. Rossetti, who had contributed to his brother's edition of Blake and edited his own 1874 volume of Blake's poetry, declared about *Jerusalem*, "Difficult under any circumstances, it would be a good deal less difficult to read these works in an edition of that kind [i.e., print], with clear print, reasonable division of lines, and the like aids to business-like perusal" (qtd. in Eaves, "Crafting" par. 8). Swinburne, who was one of the first readers to appreciate the *words* of the prophetic books, dismissed the designs as "mere husk and shell" (qtd. in "Graphicality" 109). As Eaves argues, the decision to move Blake into letterpress was "in response to the (rightly) perceived need for greater legibility" ("Crafting" par. 8). The shedding of this visual husk by Blake's first generation of editors allowed for his "reintroduction into the communication system that he had attempted to resist with his illuminated books" ("Crafting" par. 10). The effect of this simplification was to initiate Blake's slow and steady institutionalization in the twentieth century as a major Romantic poet, but this approach also "systematically fractured Blake's original works" into "disaggregated fragments" that made the works and Blake himself "more compatible with the habits and dominant institutions of modern culture" (par. 4).[9]

11. But if, as Eaves's history suggests, the fracturing of Blake's works makes him more compatible with "dominant institutions," then the recovery and reunification of his works is, by implication, a subversive act—a chance to redo what Blake failed to do. It may be for this reason that there has always existed a strong countercurrent in Blake editing that seeks to reunite his visual and verbal

fragments, and where this has proven impossible, editors and scholars have often pointed to the "wonderful originals" that could not be captured (E 531). In his early typographic transcription of some of the poems, Benjamin Heath Malkin described the *Songs* as "richly embellished by [Blake's] pencil" (BR 565). Henry Crabb Robinson provided a more detailed description of the *Songs* and described *America* and *Europe* as "works of Blake's poetry and painting" (BR 602). Garth Wilkerson's 1839 version of the *Songs* verbally described the designs, while C. A. Tulk's small 1843 print run of the *Songs* took the innovative step of leaving space in its pages for the reader to hand-copy Blake's designs from the original in Tulk's collection (BB 24). All these early excerpts of Blake's text emphasize that what the reader sees is but a fragment of Blake's complete work. The Gilchrist generation initially shared the same tendency, and before Rossetti and Swinburne declared that Blake's works were "Too much" (E 38), editors enthusiastically employed new technologies of reproduction to recover and rescue Blake through remediation. Gilchrist's biography was decorated with inlaid designs copied from Blake's works, while the accompanying edition included electrotypes of the surviving copperplates of the *Songs* and of the Job engravings. William Muir, John Henry Bellam, and, likely, W. J. Linton all produced high quality facsimiles of Blake's works, some of which passed for Blake's originals (Viscomi, *Blake* 201-16). While the 1893 William Butler Yeats and Edwin John Ellis edition shared Dante Gabrielle Rossetti's cavalier attitude towards textual accuracy, the edition strove for comprehensiveness by including 296 lithographic reproductions (BB 502). More directly, the Burlington Club brought together many of Blake's visual works in its 1876 exhibition, a means of editing Blake's works that remains indispensible.

12. The attempt to edit Blake through reproductions was eclipsed by the advent of serious bibliography and reliable print editions in the early twentieth century. Even though this work standardized Blake and divided his words and images, the new bibliographers and editors were acutely aware of the demands of Blake's material forms and the limits of other media in representing them. As noted above, Sampson's 1905 edition was the first to recognize in a practical way that these forms could not be fully represented. With Rossetti and Yeats in mind, Sampson criticized how previous editors had used "Blake's text" as "a sort of poor palimpsest where each new owner has overwritten his own poetry" (vii). Sampson was the first Blake editor to provide bibliographical introductions, alternative readings, and comprehensive textual notes. He was also the first to recognize the "haphazard" punctuation of the illuminated books, which he reluctantly, though explicitly, altered to conform to standardized conventions (viii). Sampson was instrumental in helping Sir Geoffrey Keynes revise his groundbreaking *Bibliography of William Blake* (1921). The indispensible contribution of Keynes to the editorial and bibliographical work surrounding Blake is best described by Bentley's "Blake's Reputation and Interpreters," but it is necessary to reference some of his accomplishments here for what they say about subsequent efforts to edit Blake. The *Bibliography* brought together the first comprehensive survey of Blake's corpus, including a verbal description of hundreds of illustrations, reproductions of many other designs, the known references to Blake, and the extant scholarship. Mats Dahlström has pointed to Ross Atkinson's assertion that, like editions, bibliographies "function as simile representations" (30) based on their iconicity.[10] In this sense, Keynes's *Bibliography* can be seen as one of the most important editions of Blake's work, especially since many of the bibliographic codes it describes have become essential elements of print and digital editions.

13. Keynes's own letterpress editions were among the first sites where the contest over how to represent Blake's bibliographic codes was waged. The three-volume *Writings of William Blake* (1925) built on the *Bibliography*, and it was the only authoritative edition for thirty years (BB 33). Using one copy of the illuminated book as his copy text, Keynes largely respected Blake's idiosyncratic spellings, capitals, and abbreviations, and he included Blake's variants in his textual notes. But in his most infamous decision, Keynes, with the assistance of Max Plowman, standardized the punctuation of the illuminated books "with the admitted risk of sometimes conveying a meaning not intended by Blake" (Keynes, *Complete Writings* xiii). For the illuminated books, this decision avoided the problem of dealing with

the individual copies, while for the works in manuscript, it made them appear far more finished than they were—especially *Island* and *The Four Zoas*. Both the *Bibliography* and the *Writings* had small print runs, and for the more widely available *Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (1927), Keynes removed the textual notes and variant readings ostensibly for "the comfort of the majority of Blake's readers" (Keynes, *Poetry and Prose* ix). It was this simplified version of Blake's text that was the major vehicle of Blake's reception for a generation, including the Beats. Keynes would later write that the removal of the notes and variants from the cheaper edition eliminated much of the "furnace-force of Blake's creative workshop" (*Complete Writings* x), and he restored and updated the notes for *The Complete Writings of William Blake with All the Variant Readings* (1957). This edition added line and plate numbers for all the illuminated books based on his and Wolf's *Census of the Illuminated Books* (1953), which was a move away from what the editors of the *Blake Archive* describe as "the poem or other work abstracted from its physical medium" ("Editorial Principles"). Although *Poetry and Prose* contained a number of images, *The Complete Writings* added images from plates that had backwards writing to the limited number of illustrations found in *Poetry and Prose*. Keynes explained that such designs were "essential to the understanding of the text" (xiv), and while one sees traces of Rossetti and Swinburne's prejudices in such statements that suggest *The Poetry and Prose* and *The Complete Writings* may be the high point for the division of Blake's words and images, Keynes, at the same time, worked tirelessly to bring forward both Blake's words and images in numerous facsimile editions. Most critically, Keynes anticipated the need for facsimile surrogates that could "be placed beside the original book without any fear that the one will suffer seriously by comparison with the other" (414), and his efforts led to the creation of the Blake Trust facsimiles, the most accurate facsimiles available until the advent of digital printing in the 1990s.

14. In addition to his foresight in creating workable facsimiles, Keynes's bibliographical work facilitated the early computational analysis of Blake's text by drawing together information about different copies of the illuminated books, states of engraving and etchings, textual variants, contextual information, and other collections of data. Erdman's foray into editing Blake began with his desire to add to this computational capacity with a concordance of *The Complete Writings* (1967). Erdman's *Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (1965) would ultimately displace Keynes, but until 1982, when Erdman added running line totals to his edition, scholars using Erdman still had to refer to Keynes's *Complete Writings* as an "interface for locating citations in the Blake Concordance" ("Santa Cruz" 22). Given the subsequent accomplishments of facsimile editing and the individual transcriptions of different copies of the illuminated books and other works available in the Princeton-Blake Trust editions and the *Blake Archive*, the differences between Erdman and Keynes are less radical than they appeared in the mid-1960s. Erdman's major accomplishment was his effort to represent Blake's own text "as close as possible [. . .] even in punctuation," which involved untangling Blake's "final or preferred readings separated from earlier or deleted or alternative readings or arrangements" (E 709, 1965 ed.). In terms of punctuation, Erdman acknowledged, "In print it is impossible to copy Blake exactly," and he admits to having "wobbled [from his principles] in his transcription" of the prose (E 710, 1965 ed.). But Erdman's approach to Blake's punctuation introduced a central element of Blake's graphic textuality into letterpress editions that previous editors had rejected as frustratingly accidental. By doing so, however, Erdman underscored the inability of letterpress editions to accurately mediate Blake's texts. As he wrote, "In print it is impossible to copy Blake exactly: his colons and shriek-marks grade into each other; he compounds a comma with a question mark; his commas with unmistakable tails thin down to unmistakable periods" (710, 1965 ed.). Erdman based his copy text on the lost copperplates, attempting to recreate them through a collation of the existing prints that could recover Blake's final copperplate intentions. Like Blake's previous editors, Erdman, for the most part, approached the copies of the illuminated books as if they were editions of print books, trying to recreate Blake's ideal authorial intentions and not reflecting the individuality of each book.

15. Many of the intended and unintended consequences of Erdman's editorial choices and his remediation

of Blake's texts were pointed out in the 1984 review of the revised *Complete Poetry and Prose* (1982) by the Santa Cruz Blake Study Group. While praising the book as "the best available printed edition" (15), the Group highlighted the distortion letterpress editions had on Blake's works: "to change anything that physically appears in Blake's work to an editorial alternative is to 'emend' the text in favor of an editorial line of interpretation" (5). They pointed out instances where Erdman mispunctuated Blake's text in violation of his editorial philosophy, and how his standardization of Blake's line divisions destroyed vital fields of semantic play. Countering W. J. T. Mitchell's idea of Composite Art, which posited, in their view, a false binary between Blake's writings and images, the Group emphasized the interdependently graphic character of Blake's words and images: "There is crucial information of a visual-semiotic nature in Blake's disposition of individual letters, words, sentences and other semantic units on his printed page, and in the visual boundaries that make such disposition possible" (8).[11] A letterpress edition obscures the "graphic potential" (6) of Blake's text, and in ambiguous or polysemous contexts, the letterpress characters themselves force an editorial judgment about authorial intentions. The loss of these features obliterates Blake's status as "the prophet *écriture*" (4). The Group's review was written at a time when new ideas of textuality and editorial theory were quickly emerging. Both Jerome McGann's *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* and Nelson Hilton's *Literal Imagination* were published in 1983, and in the following years, Hilton and Thomas Vogler's *Unnam'd Forms: Blake and Textuality* (1986), Donald Ault's *Narrative Unbound* (1987), and Molly Rothenberg's *Blake's Textuality* (1991) all investigated the fluidity and indeterminancy of Blake's texts and the logic of their graphic structures.[12] This scholarship brilliantly revealed dimensions of Blake's work that had been dismissed as accidentals and ephemera but now were shown to be a central component of Blake's method and argument. No edition of Blake has really emerged that fully incorporates this new understanding and appreciation of Blake's textuality into its editorial theory and practice. But, at the same time, the explosion of facsimile editions and catalogues published between the late 1960s and early 1980s suggests that scholars and editors were painfully aware of the limitations of letterpress editions and desired to reflect aspects of Blake's work that textual and editorial theory was just beginning to enunciate.

16. Viscomi has faulted these print facsimiles for "point[ing] to the original rather than reproduc[ing] it" (Kraus 148). But these editions are instructive because they show editors struggling to theorize and to represent Blake's complex bibliographic codes without fully understanding his production methods and the formal limitations of the codex. Erdman's *Illuminated Blake* (1974) and David Bindman's *Complete Graphic Works of William Blake* (1978), for example, offered an illusory completeness fostered by the limitations of print. Yet their black and white images of relatively low quality seemed impossibly rich in visual and bibliographic detail in comparison with letterpress editions. As is now obvious, the codex form forced fatally misleading representations of Blake's work. Martin Butlin's still indispensible *Paintings and Drawings of William* (1981) shows that the same is true of Blake's productions as an artist since the volume closely crops Blake's designs. With the quality of their reproductions, all three of these books must convey essential bibliographical data through description rather than the representation of the artifact. Given these limitations, it may not be coincidental that this era saw editors experimenting with remediating Blake's work through other media, such as slides, microfilm, and filmstrips. Interestingly, among the most accomplished parts of this print archive were facsimile editions of Blake's manuscripts, which may have achieved a standard that excelled the reproductions of the illuminated books because more theoretical and practical models existed. Erdman's photographic and typographic facsimile edition of Blake's notebook (1973) was a magnificent achievement of diplomatic editing that provided black and white photographs of each leaf with transcriptions that followed the layout, font size, emendations, and deletions with a level of accuracy that will be very difficult, if not impossible, to replicate electronically. In 1963, G. E. Bentley, Jr. published a facsimile edition of *Vala or The Four Zoas* that provided full-sized black and white images, detailed transcriptions, and a wealth of bibliographical data that greatly influenced later conceptions of the poem's status as a manuscript work. Bentley's facsimile has been supplemented by Erdman and Cettina

Tramontano Magno's facsimile edition and commentary on *The Four Zoas* (1987), which used infrared photography to recover wild and often erotic scenes that Bentley's reproductions were not able to capture. That same year, Michael Phillips published his facsimile edition of *An Island in the Moon*, which provided a detailed diplomatic transcription of the work that challenged previous readings of the work in letterpress editions and made apparent the textual thicket from which some of *The Songs of Innocence* emerged.[13]

17. Bentley's other contributions to the print archive were just as significant as *Vala*. Beginning with his and Martin Nurmi's *Blake Bibliography* (1964) and culminating in *Blake Books* (1977, with updates), Bentley revised and expanded Keynes's *Bibliography*, which had become within a few years of its publication a rare book that "very few [could] hope to possess" (Binyon v). *Blake Books* remains as indispensible as ever. Conceived as an edition of Blake, the book represents Blake's materiality and his relationship to print culture in comprehensive ways that no electronic archive could ever hope to match, and its bibliography of scholarship is so complete that it is almost a twentieth-century reception history. Because it anticipates the goals of social-text editing laid out by McKenzie and McGann, *Blake Records* (1968, with updates) stands as an innovative edition of Blake that traced his presence in a legion of social networks. Together, these works greatly expanded the editorial and interpretative fields associated with Blake, and in many ways they have constituted these fields so pervasively that scholars who have railed against the dominance of Erdman have scarcely perceived Bentley's remediation of this material.

18. Bentley's insistence on Blake's materiality and visual dimensions is apparent throughout *Blake's Writings* (1978), which was a decisive step in the fusion of letterpress and facsimile editions of Blake. His purpose was "to present Blake's writings in a form as close to his originals as type will permit," and he included "all the printed designs which are of considerable size and significance" (xxxviii). These reproductions were of far higher quality than those found in Erdman's *Illuminated Blake*, though they were similarly reduced and standardized in size. Bentley was not able to reproduce every page of every poem, and he typically omitted those plates Vincent De Luca has described as a "wall of words."[14] Despite the hundreds of designs Bentley reproduced, however, his text was not a transcription of these plates, and like Erdman, he envisioned the lost copperplates as his copy text. Rather than collating copies of existing prints, Bentley favored "copies in which the etched text is clear, uncoloured, and not clarified by hand" (xlii). Typically, these copies were posthumously printed and reflected the final state of the copperplate "unaffected by the author's colouring or changes of mind in the process of printing or correcting" (xlii). Nonetheless, Bentley joined with Erdman in isolating and idealizing Blake's work on the copperplate from the other stages of production. In punctuation, Bentley tried to strike a balance between Keynes and Plowman's silent editorial intervention and Erdman's attempt to record every mark by showing where he added, subtracted, or emended Blake's punctuation through typographical emphasis. He provided "essential" marks in half brackets; omitted "redundant full stops," marking the omission by italicizing the final letter of the preceding word (his "disconten*t*" for Blake's "discontent."); supplied the correct punctuation in place of the full stop, again marking the change with italics ("scor*n*?" for "scorn."); and capitalized names and beginnings of paragraphs that Blake wrote in lower case (xliv). Bentley's representation of Blake's text and punctuation elicited a thoughtful commentary by E. B. Murray who used the difficulty of Blake's punctuation to question the applicability of the copy-text paradigm to Blake. Pointing out the substantial disagreement between Erdman (1965) and Bentley in marking the unique copy of *The Song of Los*, Murray proclaimed that "Blake's pointing is often so ambiguous in its appearance that there is no defining it except arbitrarily" (149). Instrumentally, Murray challenged the idea that an editor could choose an ideal copy-text or produce a consensus text that would best reflect Blake's intentions, and he called on scholars to pay greater attention to the production of the illuminated books.

III

19. The call to investigate Blake's production methods would be best met by Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, who together tempered the unsubstantiated claims for Blake's textuality by focusing on his production methods in their historical context. Eaves, who has always shown an interest in Blake's use of technology, positioned Blake within the overlapping discourses of art, British nationalism, and technologies of reproduction in *The Counter Arts Conspiracy: Art and Industry in the Age of Blake* (1992). In *William Blake: Printmaker* (1980), Essick firmly situated Blake's biography and illuminated books in the tradition of professional engraving, and in a subsequent series of articles, he challenged some of the untenable conclusions of textual critics who removed Blake's works from the site of their material and historical production and privileged Blake's aesthetic theories over his practice.[15] It was Joseph Viscomi's explanation of Blake's production methods in *Blake and the Idea of the Book* (1993), however, that had the most direct impact on editing Blake. Viscomi shows that Blake did not produce the books for individual customers one at a time but printed multiple copies of the books during the same printing session. Viscomi terms these copies an "edition" (183) because they reflect common production procedures. Each edition, moreover, had an "ideal copy," a term Viscomi borrows from editorial theory where it refers to a book with all its leaves intact that would be sold by a publisher (179). For Viscomi, an ideal copy is how Blake envisioned the editions at the moment of production, which included those features shared by all the copies of the edition. Ideal copies "can be used to determine Blake's intentions for printing sessions, at least in regard to the number, if not also the order, of plates that a book was to have when produced" (179). A new edition, or print run, could represent a new reinvention of the book, but not each copy of an edition since true "versions," as Viscomi employs the term, resulted from "different periods of production" (178). Viscomi applies his knowledge of Blake's production methods to defend Erdman's and Bentley's practice of privileging the copperplate text on the grounds that it was during the preparation of the copperplate that Blake showed his last real interest in "verbal structures" (182).[16] Viscomi's dating of the illuminated books enables editors to know Blake's intentions at a given moment, and he argues that the changes in color and composition among the various copies of one edition do not substantially change a poem to the same degree that a new system of production does (182). Viscomi's advice for the transcription of Blake's problematic punctuation was to record it "as it reads to the eye," with variants being recorded according to the edition and arranged chronologically, but he gives no clear suggestion on how to transcribe the marks that have no counterpart in type.

20. These investigations into Blake's production methods coincided with further developments in textual studies and the advent of new media. These changes radically altered notions of textuality and the assumed primacy of the book as the vehicle of scholarly editions.[17] Blake scholars who had long been frustrated with the remediation of Blake in print now had material alternatives. Nelson Hilton at the *Blake Digital Text Project* began to develop the digitized Erdman and the hypertext editions of the *Songs* and *Everlasting Gospel* with the belief that the new platform would reveal much about the nature of Blake's textuality.[18] Eaves, Essick, and Viscomi had their first opportunity to put their editorial theories into practice in two of the six Princeton-Blake Trust facsimile volumes. While this series was a milestone in terms of the quality of its images, the transcription of each individual plate, and its scholarly introductions, annotations, and other notes, the dissatisfaction of Eaves, Essick, and Viscomi with the platform of print for representing Blake's works led them to IATH and their contact with its director John Unsworth. With the initial assistance of IATH, Eaves, Essick, and Viscomi gave birth to new ways of remediating and editing Blake. The *Archive*'s basic idea of providing vibrant color images of different copies that were remotely accessible radically transformed what it meant to read, study, and edit Blake.[19] The success of the *Archive* in meeting many of the mundane challenges laid out by Robinson, Bree, and McLaverty is due to the tireless work of its editors and project managers in obtaining grants, working with technical staff, training and directing project assistants, and dealing with the scores of different institutions and individuals holding Blake's works, even as they wrestle

with the more traditional problems faced by editors in what was and remains a new and evolving digital environment. The individual transcription of each object allows users to focus more than ever before on the unique copy before them. Each of these objects can be viewed in several different ways. 100 dpi jpeg reading images can also be viewed at their actual size using Inote, while 300 dpi jpeg images can "provide more detail than even unmagnified originals" (Viscomi, "Digital" 32). In other words, digital media allow a host of bibliographical data to be transmitted by the image itself. The current comparison feature of the *Archive* allows for different versions of the same plate to be juxtaposed, and when the *Archive* finally launches its Lightbox software, viewers will be able to compare any set of visual material they wish. The *Archive* also offers many computational options. Its transcriptions are fully searchable, and the editors have developed a verbal tag system for searching Blake's images. In addition to its electronic version of Erdman, the *Archive* also provides comprehensive textual notes describing the work's material history; introductory essays on Blake's life, mythology, and engravings; bibliographies; contact information for the holders of Blake's works; and a detailed account of its own editorial methodology, history, and reception. In addition to the illuminated books, the *Archive* includes many of Blake's drawings, paintings, and engravings. As the editors write,

> By incorporating as much of Blake's pictorial and literary canon as possible—with both images and texts organized, interlinked, and searchable in ways that only hypermedia systems will allow—the Archive would for the first time give scholars and students access to the major intersections between the illuminated books and Blake's other creative and commercial works. That is to say, by exploiting new information technology to deliver the historical, technical, and aesthetic contexts necessary to study Blake as printmaker, painter, and poet, the Archive would encourage a deeper, more responsible understanding of his aims and methods, which have been regularly misunderstood and misrepresented. ("The Plan of the Archive")

The wealth of materials now available at the *Archive* makes it possible to fuse Blake's different artistic identities and modes of production, and, as Lee and McGhee and Van Kleeck detail in their essays, the *Archive* recognizes the need to adopt new editorial philosophies and practices to represent these different works.

21. The practical accomplishment of the *Archive* as a useful "edition" of Blake's work has been accompanied by a running set of meta-reflections by its editors, project managers, and project assistants on the novel experience of editing in digital media. Many of the editorial choices of the *Archive* have emerged from a combination of long email chains that wrestled with theoretical concerns and the dictates of technical capabilities that speak to Martha Nell Smith's claim that "editing is a kind of encoding and coding is a kind of editing" (314). As Lee and McGhee show, many of the technical issues confronted by the editors and staff of the *Archive* are a fundamental part of the editorial process when working in digital media. Eaves has described how the idea of an electronic edition initially held the promise of an Osiris-like reunification of Blake's words and images, but the experience of editing the *Archive* has taught him that the site "is at least as much about recapitulation and recycling as about restoration—and as much about fragmentation as integration" ("Crafting" pars. 4 and 5). Because digital editing "conforms to the curve of its technologies" even more than print (par. 28), it confronts editors and projects with a "constant threat of change and obsolescence" that is ultimately "unnerving" (par. 29). Despite the innumerable differences in editing for print and electronic platforms, Eaves also stresses the continuity the *Archive* has with the tradition of editing Blake in print:

> Instead of the fresh, untrammeled view of the original Blake that one might imagine, the work presented in the Blake Archive is enmeshed in a framework of supplementary information and optional views defined over the last 200 or so years by Blake's most talented and resourceful sponsors. The superconsolidated array and the reorientation to

> visual reproductions of Blake's original documents are new, at least on this scale (if ungainly), and the scholarly opportunities they offer altogether are unprecedented. But the elements are, at bottom, inherited. The entire editorial grid, reproductions and options alike, is further restricted by interlocking technical compromises imposed by the present, rather severe, limits of memory, bandwidth, software and hardware design, institutional requirements, and our own editorial imaginations. (par. 25)

The debt of the Archive to the tradition of print underscores McGann's point that computers are most effective when placed in a network of books. Moreover, as Johnson's essay in particular will make clear, as does her experience with the Blake Videodisc Project,[20] the constraints and difficulties articulated by Eaves are embedded in every editorial venture regardless of its media.

22. Yet the difficulty of obtaining funding and of crafting agreements with holding institutions makes it hard to imagine another site emerging that could challenge the *Archive* in the same way that letterpress editions have challenged one another. For better or worse, successful thematic research collections like the *Archive* are in unique positions to shape their authors in ways that far exceed the authority of the most popular print editions, and the exceptional influence of the *Archive* demands a detailed understanding of how it remediates Blake. The most obvious remediation of the *Archive* is its vast array of digital reproductions. Kathryn Sutherland has challenged more grandiose claims for digital surrogates made by scholars like Martha Nell Smith. Quoting Matthew Kirschenbaum,[21] Smith argues,

> The ability to provide artifacts for direct examination (rather than relying on scholarly hearsay) has altered the reception of humanities computing in the disciplines of the humanities so that skepticism is "at least replaced with more to-the-point questions about image acquisition and editorial fidelity, not to mention scholarly and pedagogical potential." (Smith, "Electronic" 310)

Troubled by the easy equation of high quality digital images with "artifacts" that circumvent scholarly mediation, Sutherland fears that most users will not question the fidelity of the images they see, believing the commercial and scholarly rhetoric that suggests "the computer is a totally mimetic space unshaped by the constraints of its own medium" ("Being Critical" 17-18).[22] Sutherland's fears are manifest in Kenneth Price's recent declaration that "The electronic edition can provide exact facsimiles" ("Electronic Scholarly Editions"). As Sutherland insists, the "electronic instantiation" of these facsimiles is severely under-theorized ("Being" 18). For their part, the editors of the *Archive* have been very explicit about how their images are obtained and what they can provide the user:

> [O]ur images are not intended to be "archival" in the sense sometimes intended—virtual copies that might stand in for destroyed originals. We recognize that, if we are going to contribute to the preservation of fragile originals that are easily damaged by handling, we must supply reproductions that are reliable enough for scholars to depend upon in their research. Hence our benchmarks produce images accurate enough to be studied at a level heretofore impossible without access to the originals. (Eaves et al. 138)

While this benchmark has been unquestionably met, anyone who has seen these originals know that the *Archive* images flatten, obscure, or simply remove such features as vibrant color; gold plating; fine ink work; the wide margins of a page on which the print may be strangely cockeyed; bindings; stab holes; new mountings; museum stamps; editorial and curatorial notes; material on the back of the page, print, or painting; and a host of material contexts in which engravings, illustrations, paintings, or annotations appeared. Again, the editors of the *Archive* have not shied away from these issues but explored them in great detail. Discussing how the *Archive* crops the sheet surrounding Blake's designs, Joseph Viscomi

has acknowledged that the process "discards bibliographical information, [and] thus fails to represent the artifact itself" ("Digital" 34). The reasons for doing so, he writes, are "more technical and pedagogical than economic and aesthetic":

> Recording the image on the film as large as possible reduces the scaling ratio between reproductive source and original, which ensures greater accuracy in the digital image [. . .]; cropping out the image's margins significantly reduces file size, and, for most images, enables the image to be shown within the Archive's interface on monitors 17" or larger without scrolling. ("Digital" 34, 35)[23]

The decision to crop the image of the artifact stemmed from an imminently practical set of concerns related to technical resources and the desire of most users to have an image of Blake's design that is as large as possible. But the practice of cropping moves the *Archive* farthest from its emphasis on "*the physical object*" ("Editorial Principles"), and it is probably not coincidental that here the *Archive* closely follows the practices of print facsimiles, which share a similar set of technical and pedagogical concerns. As technical capabilities inevitably change, users will be haunted by decisions demanded by the moment. Eaves has recently described some of the current technical difficulties facing the *Archive* in achieving its editorial vision, focusing particularly on the problem of using jpeg images, which cannot capture the clear, crisp engraved line, and the long struggle by the *Archive* and others to provide a way of searching images without recourse to a verbal-tag system. These technical problems show the real and frustrating limits of working with a host of tools that are not completely one's own. While the image of the design can provide more detail than the original, the remediation of the plate will invariably shape the kind of research that can be performed. The fact that many museums, libraries, and private collectors are restricting access to Blake's works also creates a situation in which the digital surrogates may have to fill in for many of the functions of the originals not foreseen by the editors, a need that may demand access to or the creation of images that contain more information about the complete artifact and its material context. Solving these problems will also invariably involve the holding institutions, which remain necessary partners when their collections are being used. As both Eaves and Nelson Hilton have stressed, the accessibility of Blake's images in digital media has not meant their free circulation and use since both editors and scholars must still deal with issues of copyright and accessibility, with Eaves stressing how the *Archive* is contingent on "formal and informal" agreements with these institutions ("Golgonooza" par. 9, "Picture" par. 5).

23. Many other implications of the *Archive*'s remediations are explored in the essays by Lee and McGhee, Van Kleeck, and Ripley in *Editing and Reading Blake*. In "'The productions of time': Visions of Blake in the Digital Age," Lee and McGhee trace the editorial and technical evolution of the *Archive* up through its current work on the manuscript satire, *An Island in the Moon* (1783-85). Recounting their work marking the *Island in the Moon* manuscript, Lee and McGhee make the crucial point that not every physical marker, linguistic code, or textual variation can be realistically marked, leaving elements that some users will consider vital out of the representational and computational scope of the *Archive*. [24] Lee and McGhee also show how the recent transition to XML impacts editing practices of the *Archive* and how the release of the fifth version of the TEI Guidelines allowed the editors and project assistants to encode the alterations Blake made to the *Island* manuscript with far greater nuance. Their essay shows how even though electronic editions are haunted by editorial choices dictated by technical and other practical considerations, the perpetually changing nature of electronic tools will enable the *Archive* to reflect different aspects of Blake's works and grow as a project in relationship to the needs of the scholarly community that uses the site. To address the unique problems presented by manuscripts, the *Archive* developed a new system of transcription, and Lee and McGhee provide a valuable description of this new color-coded system. Their account is a clear demonstration of how editing in digital media is contingent upon a host of tools whose capabilities and limitations are not under the control of the editor and how editors must improvise to make these tools work.

24. In "Editioning William Blake's *VALA/The Four Zoas*," Van Kleeck examines the editorial history of a manuscript far more complicated than *Island*, Blake's *VALA or The Four Zoas* (1797-1808?). Beyond its two titles, the work's legendary host of editorial difficulties includes the palimpsest of revisions found on several pages; the uncertain arrangement of text, pages, and nights (including its famous two night sevens and the unnumbered "Night the [Second]"); the various scripts in which Blake wrote different sections of the text; the manuscript's appropriation of the *Night Thoughts* proofs, a proof of *Edward and Elenor*, and other scrap pages; and more than one hundred designs. Building on Donald Reiman's idea of versioning,[25] Van Kleeck coins the term "editioning" to describe how each edition presents a different view of a work, and he surveys the editorial representations of the manuscript/poem by Keynes, Margoliouth, Erdman, Bentley, and Stevenson in masterful detail, providing a valuable and lasting contribution to the editorial history of the work. Van Kleeck also considers the interpretative problems arising from having to deal with print editions and facsimiles in the absence of easy access to *The Four Zoas* manuscript, which is held tightly in the British Library vault. Van Kleeck describes his own experience with the artifact and how this experience affected the electronic edition of the poem that he created for his dissertation, which will serve as the foundation for the *Archive*'s edition.

25. In "The Delineation Editing of Co-Texts: William Blake's Illustrations," Ripley suggests that Blake's illustrations of other authors offer an ideal site for exploring D. F. McKenzie's and Jerome McGann's notions of social-text editing. Ripley argues that when the *Archive* edits out the literal presence of Blake's source texts in its transcriptions of Blake's designs or scatters the contents of what was once a bound, printed volume across its different material categories, the *Archive* crops Blake's works in very significant ways that replicate notions of Blake as an autotelic artist. While these choices are the result of practical editorial decisions, the decisions still distort and destroy the original coherence of Blake's collaborative works and their existence as social texts. Ripley suggests that the texts and illustrations are necessary co-texts that must be available in the same editorial field for the illustrations to be read correctly. Building on the recent work of Joseph Viscomi on Blake's virtual designs and of Saree Makdisi on Blake's graphemes, Ripley offers a social-text model of editing Blake within his material and social contexts that uses Blake's theory of the line and which would look to models such as E. L. Ayers and W. G. Thomas's *The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War* and other IATH projects.

IV

26. Future print and digital editions of Blake will have to recognize needs and capabilities not met by the *Archive*. For all its current computational power, the *Archive* still lacks many of the editorial tools called for by Robinson. Susan Hockey, who emphasizes that "a digital image is a surrogate, not the real thing" (371), has argued for organizing digital scholarly editions in new ways not dictated by the model of the printed page. As large as *Blake Books* and its updates are, a digital platform could allow for a host of additional bibliographical and contextual information that would facilitate computational analysis of many different features and topics. Eighteenth-Century Collections Online and Google Books have shown the potential of this direction because they allow for full-text searches and provide a much broader range of paratextual and contextual information than a print bibliography, even if the remediations of this material can be problematic. Such tools could be developed independently or in conjunction with the *Archive*.[26]

27. Another direction can be found in Edward Vanhoutte's call for a minimal edition, which might be termed the contrary to the thematic research project:

> The minimal edition is a cultural product that is produced by the scholarly editor acting as

> a curator or guardian of the text, whereas the maximal edition is an academic product in which the scholarly editor demonstrates his/her scholarly accuracy and scrutiny. (100)

Vanhoutte sees the reading edition as the desideratum of electronic editions. Scholars like McGann would rightly counter that the end of textual criticism is not accuracy but precise, historical interpretation that electronic archives have helped to enable ("Monks" 66). But the wider point about the need for a minimal edition as a cultural product remains relevant, especially when one reflects on the impact of Keynes and Erdman. Through its stress of each copy of the illuminated book as well as its digitization of Erdman, the *Archive* has hitherto largely avoided the problem of having to produce a minimal edition of its own and to wrestle with the theoretical and practical implications that the edition would create. But as Lee and McGhee relate, Blake's manuscripts resurrect this problem for the *Archive* in several ways. The diplomatic transcriptions of individual copies of illuminated books have the added value of also being reading versions that are more accurate than the collated versions of letterpress editions. Applying the same diplomatic editorial philosophy to manuscript pages will reflect its textual contradictions and incoherence. In ways that recall Erdman's description of Blake's "shriek-marks" (E 787), Lee and McGhee describe how the last page of *Island* resists the logic of diplomatic transcription because of the indeterminate nature of Blake's drawings and letters. At some point, as they suggest, the editor needs to decide whether a mark is a character capable of transcription or an image to be described. Van Kleeck and Stevenson both emphasize how editors of *The Four Zoas* have long recognized that the poem requires an editorial intervention, even with Ault's magnificent reading of the poem as a manuscript largely following the structure given by Erdman's 1982 arrangement. The *Vision of the Last Judgment*, *Public Address*, and many of the notebook poems have been recovered through editorial interventions, while, as shown recently by Jason Snart, Blake's marginalia has a complex intertextual and graphic relationship with the books in which they were written.[27] In short, the absence of a minimal edition means that the *Archive* will not be presenting legible texts for some of Blake's most famous works.

28. The *Archive* also lacks space for editorial interpretation and contextual annotation. With the exception of the hypertext editions of the *Songs* and the *Everlasting Gospel* at the *Blake Digital Text Project*, which have not been maintained and contain many dead links, interpretative editions remain the province of print facsimile and letterpress editions, particularly those created by the contributors to this volume, Ostriker, and the Blake Trust Series. In addition to his work as an editor of the *Archive*, Essick has continued his work in producing print facsimiles, issuing editions of the Virgil engravings (1999) and the Huntington's copies of the *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (2002), the illustrations to *Paradise Lost* (2004), and the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (2008). The copies of these illuminated books (E in both cases) are not currently available at the *Archive*, and Essick reproduces features of their bibliographic codes that cannot be imitated by the electronic *Archive*. The facsimile of *Visions*, for example, is printed on both sides of the leaf to imitate Blake's original printing (Essick 15), an innovation that had been urged by Viscomi (*Book* 180). Such choices reflect the truth of Sutherland's recent insistence that there remain many aspects of the book that cannot be represented electronically ("Being Critical" 21), and a printed book's mediation of Blake's work may be closer in some aspects than a digital image.[28] Reproducing an individual copy allows Essick to perform a specific reading of the copy and "not a generalized interpretation of all copies or of some hypothetical 'standard' copy" (26). Exhibitions and catalogues are even more dramatic examples of Blake's originals with useful contextual information as seen, for example, in Robin Hamlyn and Michael Phillips's beautiful catalogue for the 2000-01 Tate exhibit or Martin Myrone's recent catalogue of Blake's 1809-10 exhibition, *Seen in My Visions*.[29]

29. In light of the ability to produce such reliable print and digital facsimiles, the letterpress edition may seem too minimal. But part of the continuing success of the annotated editions of Stevenson, Grant and Johnson, and Fuller without a doubt stems from their ability to present useful information to their

readers through the efficient exploitation of print and its scholarly apparatuses. Claire Warwick has praised the technology of print in ways reminiscent of Rossetti: "Reading a printed text is clearly a subtle and complex analysis technique. It is therefore not surprising that scholars have made the assumption that digital resources and computational techniques that simply replicate the activity of reading are a pale imitation of an already successful technique" (374). Stevenson, Johnson, and Fuller skillfully utilize the conventions and technologies of print, doing their readers a great service by mediating both the knowledge accumulated in an unwieldy critical tradition that has made sense of Blake and the complex bibliographical and typographical issues for which most general readers do not have the patience or training. These remediations reflect editorial theories and practices just as complex and rigorous as those of Keynes, Erdman, Bentley, or the *Archive* as they wrestle with both the demands of Blake's works and the requirements of different audiences.

30. In "The Ends of Editing," Stevenson concentrates on the practical outcome of editing, which is to provide the reader with "an accurate and useful text." In the three editions of *The Poems of William Blake* (1971), retitled *Blake: The Complete Poems* for the 1989 and 2007 editions, Stevenson wrestled with these sometimes conflicting dictates in light of what readers need and what the text demands. As he observed in the 1971 preface, no annotated edition of Blake's poetry had been produced since Sloss and Wallis's 1926 edition of the prophetic books (xi), and Stevenson's choice to do so was influential, since, by the end of the decade, two additional annotated editions (Ostriker and Grant and Johnson) would be published. Where the Bloom commentary was an "explicatory discussion rather than [a] detailed annotation," Stevenson aimed to "annotate all of Blake's poems line by line and detail by detail," providing "essential details of fact and background" (xi). In the 1971 edition, Stevenson supplemented the annotations with a general introduction, headnotes, maps of the Holy Land and London, and five black and whites plates. In textual matters, as noted above, he worked closely with both Erdman and Bateson in producing the 1971 edition. As Stevenson writes, Bateson insisted that no grammatical or typographical difference should interfere with the "sympathy" between Blake and his readers. Even if Bateson's editorial principles dictated the wince-inducing spelling of "Tiger," the standardized spellings and punctuation greatly aided readers. It was this service that distinguished his editions from those of Erdman and Bentley who struggled to "see what words and points Blake actually put down on paper." In the two subsequent editions, Stevenson allows more of Blake's idiosyncrasies to stand, but he still justifies the standardizations of his text on the grounds that his edition is "designed to be widely, and fluently, read" (xiv, 2007 ed.).

31. The serious revisions Stevenson has made in each successive edition underscore the relevancy and vitality of his work for both general and specialized readers. He opens the 1989 edition with the observation that "much has changed in the Blake world, as well as in the world outside" (xi), while in 2007, he describes how he "scoured and revised" the headnotes and footnotes in light of Blake scholarship and editorial theory over a period of nearly forty years (xiv). While continuously updating his edition, Stevenson also stresses in his essay that he constructed his notes around simple facts (e.g., place names of London), facts that have wider significance for Blake (e.g., Beulah), and those images intertwined with other images (e.g., the "Three Classes" of *Milton*). Stevenson's standardizations and annotations do not mean that his edition eschews textual difficulties. As Van Kleeck describes in detail, his 1989 arrangement of *The Four Zoas* revealed a tenable alternative vision of the poem, and in the 2007 edition, he made such major changes as adopting the plate order of the later copies of *Milton* and including the tractates because they added to the reader's understanding of Blake. With the addition of color plates for the 2007 edition, Stevenson also included more of Blake's designs, with the goal of illustrating how Blake "repeatedly used certain [visual] motifs" (xiii). In line with his standardization of Blake's text, his images are closely cropped, and, with the exception of *Urizen* plate 5, they reveal nothing of the wider page upon which they appear. But Stevenson remedies this remediation by referring readers to the Princeton-Blake Trust Series and the *Blake Archive*. Such decisions are well considered in light of new scholarship and reflection regarding the needs of the reader, but, as

Stevenson notes in his essay, Blake often forces an editor to make decisions that cannot ultimately be justified by the text itself. In the end, Stevenson admits that "There is no simple formula for" editing.

32. Fuller's *William Blake: Selected Poetry* (2000, 2008) also standardizes spelling and mechanics of his selections of poetry, supplying the reader with a general introduction to Blake, useful headnotes and annotations, a bibliography, and nine illustrations. To supplement these illustrations, Fuller, in a unique move in modern editions, verbally describes the most important designs, as well as pointing readers to the *Archive*. In "Modernizing Blake's Text: Syntax, Rhythm, Rhetoric," Fuller rejects the general push in Blake editing toward replicating the artifact and embraces the idea that the primary mission of an editor is to "modernize" Blake's text for the audience. Fuller stresses that all editing is a form of construction, and he argues that a modernizing editor must assume the role of the ideal reader. Confronting Essick and Viscomi's description of Blake's conflicting practices regarding the state of his text, Fuller points out that editors must decide when Blake's idiosyncratic punctuation and other bibliographic figures present great meaning and when they are the result of Blake's production methods or cavalier attitude towards some particulars.[30] As an example of the former, Fuller calls attention to how Blake's punctuation creates "structurations" in Blake's verse, such as "accreted parallelisms," which are hidden by diplomatic transcriptions. While his edition does not do so, Fuller points out that the modernizing editor could reveal such structures to the reader in the layout of the poem, calling attention to the wider patterns of the work in ways reminiscent of McGann's discussion of editorial defamiliarization. Fuller is also more attuned than other editors of Blake to the rhythm of his language, making a persuasive argument for marking the accented *-ed*s and retaining the elisions as *-'d* or *-d* to aid the reader in replicating Blake's rhythm and sound and following a practice laid out by Blake's first professional editor, John Sampson.

33. In terms of book production alone, both editions of Grant's and Johnson's *Blake's Poetry and Designs* (1979, 2008) have been beautiful fusions of Blake's images and words that give new readers a useful introduction to Blake's visual and graphic productions while also offering lucid headnotes, textual notes, annotations, maps, critical essays, and bibliographies. In "Contingencies, Exigencies, and Editorial Praxis: The Case of the 2008 Norton Blake," Johnson chronicles the difficulties of revising the work in light of developments in Blake scholarship, editorial theory, and new methods of editing. In the 1979 edition, she and Grant constructed their text from copies that were available from facsimiles, so that readers could compare the transcription with the reproduction, and unlike other editions, they tried to follow Blake's line spacings and indentations, going so far as to replicate the ornamental stanza divisions in their text (xliv). As Johnson writes, she and Grant, in preparing the new edition, confronted a range of editorial questions that they had simply not asked before, and they employed the new resources and information provided by the *Archive*, *The Blake Digital Text Project*, the Princeton-Blake Trust series, and Viscomi's *Blake and the Idea of the Book* to grapple with Blake's texts anew. The base text for the 2008 edition originated with the "earliest edition that contains all or most plates appertaining to a given work," which would be compared to the copies at the *Archive*, Erdman, Bentley, and the Blake Trust series (599). These comparisons did not alleviate the central difficulty of translating Blake's marks into letterpress (600), and while their edition does not standardize Blake's punctuation to the degree that Stevenson and Fuller do, it still must struggle to "balance accuracy with readability" (602). In practice, this has meant removing "punctuation that seriously interrupt units of thought" and deciding not to replicate Blake's line breaks, even when they offer important arguments of their own (as in the famous example of "book of me / -tals from *The Book of Urizen*) (601).

34. If these decisions standardize Blake too much for some readers, the 2008 edition stresses that it is to be used "in tandem with the magnificent William Blake Archive" (xi). The edition provides a far more elaborate and accurate system of reference to the plate and object numbers used by Keynes, Erdman, Bentley, and the *Blake Archive*, which facilitates and encourages cross-references by the reader to other editorial vision of Blake. In collating the text of different copies, the 2008 edition presents lines from

other copies but strikes them out in a manner that retains their legibility but clearly indicates that they were missing from the copy at hand. As the title of the edition underscores, Blake's visual work remains central, with many of the images positioned within the text itself, remediating a new and fruitful interplay of the words and designs. The new edition adds to this effect by more skillfully allowing the white space of the page to bleed into the designs. While the color plates are more vibrant, it is worth noting that the newly remediated images consistently omit Blake's page numbers, even though they were present in the "lower quality" image in the 1979 edition. Such problems underscore how even ostensible improvements are editorial changes with immense consequences. With the new edition containing sixteen color plates, 86 black and white designs integrated in the text, and the entirety of *Jerusalem*, Johnson illustrates how real world exigencies enter into editorial decisions that were worked out in terms of finances and her interactions with the publishers. As troublesome as these exigencies can be, Johnson stresses that they also create unforeseen opportunities, as seen in her account of why and how the new edition has colored maps on its end papers.

35. Featured with Johnson's essay is an appendix listing the errata of the 2008 edition, a special benefit to readers of Blake, Praxis, and the Norton volume. In this list, Johnson has continued the melding of the print and digital resources that makes *Blake's Poetry and Designs* such an important book in envisioning the future intersection of these platforms. New print and digital editions of Blake will have much to learn from the work of Stevenson, Johnson, and Fuller, whose integration of the general reader into their editorial vision should be the model for any future uses of immersive textuality in approaching Blake. But, for the present moment, these current editions of Blake demonstrate that print editions can engage with the resources offered by the digital age and remain highly relevant to general readers and scholars alike.

**Notes**

1 All Blake quotations are from the 1988 Erdman edition, abbreviated E.

2 As Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin write, "No medium, it seems, can now function independently and establish its own separate and purified space of cultural meaning," *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge: MIT P, 1999) 55. See also Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*, 2nd ed. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001).

3 Laura Shackelford, "Narrative Subjects Meet Their Limits: John Barth's 'Click' and the Remediation of Hypertext," *Contemporary Literature* 46.2 (2005): 275-310.

4 The relevance of *The [First] Book of Urizen* to editing and book production has long been recognized. See McGann's "The Idea of an Interdeterminate Text: Blake's Bible of Hell and Dr. Alexander Geddes," *Studies in Romanticism* 25 (1986): 303-24; Paul Mann's "The *Book of Urizen* and the Horizons of the Book" in *Unnam'd Forms: Blake and Textuality*, eds. Nelson Hilton and Thomas A. Volger (Berkeley: Univ. of California P, 1986) 49-68; John H. Jones's "Printed Performance and Reading the Book[s] of *Urizen*: Blake's Bookmaking Process and the Transformation of Late Eighteenth-Century Print Culture," *Colby Library Quarterly* 35 (1999): 73-89; Lisa Kozlowksi's "Resonating Resins: 'Listning to the Voices of the Ground'" in William Blake's *Book of Urizen*," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 64 (2001): 411-27; and John Pierce's *The Wond'rous Art: William Blake and Writing* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2003).

5 See "The Veils of VALA: A Critical Survey of Full Editions of William Blake's *Four Zoas* Manuscript," diss. Univ. of Virginia, 2006.

6 Paul Eggert points to the lack of satisfaction presented by the never-ending work on an electronic edition in "The Book, the E-text and the 'Work-site," *Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*, eds. Marilyn Deegan

and Kathryn Sutherland (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009) 63-82. For more recent accounts on what it means to finish an electronic edition or archive, see the summer 2009 issue of *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, eds. Amy Earheart and Maura Ives <http://digitalhumanities.org/dhq/index.html>.

7 The editors arrived at the following conclusion themselves about the multiple functions of the *Archive*: "We came to see the Blake project as a pacesetting instance of a fundamental shift in the ideas of "'archive,' 'catalogue,' and 'edition' as both processes and products" ("Standards" 136). For more on Thematic Research Collections, see Carole L. Palmer's "Thematic Research Collections," *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, eds. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004) 348-65. Eggert has offered the term "electronic work site" ("The Book" 81) to capture how the intellectual labor of readers could create and record new editions at archive sites utilizing "Just in Time Markup."

8 The length of the screenshot is due to the physical orientation of my monitor, which I have turned 90 degrees counterclockwise to replicate the longer shape of paper. The orientation has proved very useful for viewing the images at the *Blake Archive*.

9 Eaves's point here echoes that of W. J. T. Mitchell in his "Dangerous Blake" *SiR* 21.3 (1982): 410-16.

10 Atkinson, "An Application of Semiotics to the Definition of Bibliography" *Studies in Bibliography* 33 (1980). 14 September 2009 <http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-sb?id=sibv033&images=bsuva/sb/images&data=/texts/english/bibliog/SB&tag=public&part=3&division=div>.

11 Eaves refers to this notion as Blake's "graphicality." See his "Graphicality" 99.

12 See Hilton's review of this literature in his "Blake and the Play of Textuality" in *William Blake Studies*, ed. Nicholas M. Williams (New York: Palgrave, 2006) 85-105.

13 See Phillips's *William Blake: The Creation of the* Songs *From Manuscript to Illuminated Printing* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000).

14 See "A Wall of Words: The Sublime as Text," in *Unnam'd Forms*, ed. Nelson Hilton and Thomas A. Vogler (Berkely: Univ. of California P, 1986), 218-41.

15 Counter-Art Conspiracy (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992). *William Blake: Printmaker* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980). Essick's key articles include: "William Blake, William Hamilton, and the Materials of Graphic Meaning," ELH 52 (1985): 833-72; "How Blake's Body Means" in *Unnam'd Forms: Blake and Textuality*, eds. Nelson Hilton and Thomas A. Volger (Berkley: Univ. of California P, 1986), 197-217; "Representation, Anxiety, and the Bibliographic Sublime" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 59 (1998): 503-28; and "Blake and the Production of Meaning" in *Blake in the Nineties*, eds. Steve Clark and David Worrall (New York: St. Martin's, 1999), 7-26. Many of Essick's articles were a response to Stephen Leo Carr's "William Blake's Print-Making Process in *Jerusalem*" ELH 47 (1980): 520-40 and Paul Mann's "Apocalypse and Recuperation: Blake and the Maw of Commerce" ELH (1985): 1-32.

16 For his part, Essick questions the usefulness of a copperplate edition (Kraus 187).

17 Some key works include: Jerome J. McGann's *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991) and *Radiant Textuality* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); George Bornstein and Ralph G. Williams's collection *Palimpsest: Editorial Theory in the Humanities* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan P, 1993); Richard J. Finneran's collection *The Literary Text in the Digital Age* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan P, 1996); Leah S. Marcus's *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlow, and Milton* (New York: Routledge, 1996); and Peter Shillingsburg's *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan P, 1996) and *Resisting Texts: Authority and Submission in Constructions of Meaning* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan P,

1997).

18 See Nelson Hilton's "www.english.uga.edu/wblake," *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 33 (1999): 11-16.

19 See Karl Kroeber's initial ideas about the influence of the *Archive* in his introduction to "The *Blake Archive* and the Future of Literary Studies," *Wordsworth Circle* 30 (1999): 123-44.

20 Mary Lynn Johnson, "The Iowa Blake Videodisc Project: A Cautionary History," *Wordsworth Circle* 30.3 (1999): 131-35.

21 "Image-based Humanities Computing," *Computers and the Humanities* 36 (2002): 4.

22 Sutherland herself turns to Kirschenbaum and his recent investigation into the unrecognized materiality of electronic media in *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).

23 For an example of this cropping, see Viscomi's figures 3 and 4, which show the uncropped and cropped versions of *The Book of Urizen* copy G, plate 4.

24 For more on the practical limitations of marking and editing a text, see Peter Robinson, "Ma(r)king the Electronic Text: How, Why and For Whom?" in *Ma(r)king the Text: The Presentation of Meaning on the Literary Page,* eds. Joe Bray, Miriam Handley, and Anne C. Henry (Burlington: Ashgate, 2000) 309-28 and Phill Berrie et al., "Authenticating Electronic Editions" *Electronic Textual Editing*, eds. Lou Burnard, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, and John Unsworth (New York: MLA, 2006) 271. Given these limitations, McGann, in particular, has stressed that literary language has autopoetic structures that the hierarchical TEI markup schemes cannot capture (*Radiant* 182).

25 See Reiman's "'Versioning': The Presentation of Multiple Texts," in *Romantic Texts and Contexts* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri P, 1987), 167-80.

26 See Eaves's description of how the *Archive* is using Alexander Gourlay's commentary on the *Night Thoughts* illustrations ("Picture" par. 32).

27 *The Torn Book: UnReading William Blake's Marginalia* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna UP, 2006).

28 Drucker discusses some of the theoretical and practical relationships between a physical page and its electronic imitation in "The Virtual Codex from Page Space to E-space" in *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*, eds. Ray Siemens and Susan Schreibman (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008) 24 August 2009 <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/view?docId=blackwell/9781405148641/9781405148641.xml&chunk.id=ss1-5-5&toc.depth=1&toc.id=ss1-5-5&brand=9781405148641_brand>.

29 *William Blake* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000) and *Seen in My Visions: A Descriptive Catalogue of Pictures* (London: Tate, 2009).

30 See Essick, "Production."

**Works Cited**

NOTE: All editions of Blake are alphabetized according to their editor.

Bentley, G. E., Jr. *Blake Books*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1977. Rpt. Mansfield Centre: Martino Publishing, 2000.

---. *Blake Records*. 2nd ed. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2004.

---, ed. *William Blake's Writings*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1978.

Binyon, Laurence. *The Engraved Designs of William Blake*. London: Ernest Benn, 1926. Rpt. New York: Da Capo P, 1967.

Bree, Linda and James McLaverty. "The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift and the Future of the Scholarly Edition." *Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*. Eds. Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland. Burlington: Ashgate, 2009. 127-36.

Broglio, Ron. "Introduction." 2005. *Digital Designs on Blake*. Ed. Ron Broglio. *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*. 28 May 2009 <http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/designsonblake/about.html>.

Dahlström, Mats. "The Compleat Edition." *Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*. Eds. Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland. Burlington: Ashgate, 2009. 27-44.

Davies, Keri. "Mrs. Bliss: A Blake Collector of 1794." *Blake in the Nineties*. Eds. Steve Clark and David Worrall. New York: St. Martin's P, 1999. 212-30.

Deegan, Marilyn and Kathryn Sutherland. "Introduction." *Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*. Eds. Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland. Burlington: Ashgate, 2009. 1-9.

Eaves, Morris. "Crafting Editorial Settlements." *Romanticism on the Net* 41-42 (February-May 2006). 7 July 2008 <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/2006/v/n41-42/013150ar.html>.

---. "Graphicality: Multimedia Fables for 'Textual' Critics." *Reimagining Textuality: Textual Studies in the Late Age of Print*. Eds. Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux and Neil Fraistat. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin P, 2002. 99-122.

---. "Picture Problems: X-Editing Images 1992-2010." *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 3.3 (2009). 3 October 2009 <http://digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/3/3/000052.html>.

Eaves, Morris, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. "Editorial Principles." *The William Blake Archive*. 13 November 1997. 13 October 2008 <http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/public/about/principles/index.html>.

---. "Plan of the Archive." *The William Blake Archive*. 13 November 1997. 13 October 2008 <http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/public/about/plan/index.html">.

Eaves, Morris, Robert N. Essick, Joseph Viscomi, and Matthew G. Kirschenbaum. "Standards, Methods, and Objectives in the William Blake Archive: A Response." *Wordsworth Circle* 30.3 (1999): 135-44.

Erdman, David V., ed. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. New rev. ed. New York: Random House, 1988.

---, ed. *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. New York: Doubleday, 1965.

Essick, Robert N. "Blake and the Production of Meaning." *Blake in the Nineties*. Eds. Steve Clark and David Worrall. New York: St. Martin's P, 1999. 7-26.

---, ed. *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*. San Marino: Huntington Library, 2002.

Fuller, David, ed. *William Blake: Selected Poetry*. London: Longman, 2000.

Hilton, Nelson. "Golgonooza Text." *Digital Designs on Blake*. Ed. Ron Broglio. 2005. *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*. 14 December 2009 <http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/designsonblake/hilton/hilton.html>.

Hockey, Susan. "The Reality of the Electronic Edition." *Voice, Text, Hypertext: Emerging Practices in Textual Studies*. Eds. Raimonda Modiano, Leroy F. Searle, and Peter Shillingsburg. Seattle: Univ. of Washington P, 2004. 361-77.

Keynes, Geoffrey, ed. *The Complete Writings of William Blake with All the Variant Readings*. 1957. London: Oxford UP, 1966.

---, ed. *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. New York: Random House, 1927.

---. "The William Blake Trust." *William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon*. Providence: Brown UP, 1969. 414-20.

Johnson, Mary Lynn and John E. Grant, eds. *Blake's Poetry and Designs*. New York: Norton, 1979.

---, eds. *Blake's Poetry and Designs*. New York: Norton, 2008.

Kichuk, Diana. "Metamorphosis: Remediation in Early English Books Online (EEBO)." *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 22.3 (2007): 291-303.

Kirschenbaum, Matthew G. "Introduction." *Computers and Humanities* 36 (2002): 3-6.

---. "'So the Colors Cover the Wires': Interface, Aesthetics, and Usability." *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Eds. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. 523-42.

Kraus, Kari. "'Once Only Imagined'*:* An Interview with Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi." *Studies in Romanticism* 41 (2002): 143-99.

Liu, Alan. "Imagining the New Media Encounter." *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*. Eds. Ray Siemens and Susan Schreibman. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008. 24 August 2009 <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/view?docId=blackwell/9781405148641/9781405148641.xml&chunk.id=ss1-3-1&toc.depth=1&toc.id=ss1-3-1&brand=9781405148641_brand>.

McGann, Jerome. "From Text to Work: Digital Tools and the Emergence of the Social Text." *Romanticism on the Net* 41-42 (May 2006). 11 May 2009 <http://www.erudit.org/revue/RON/2006/v/n41-42/013153ar.html>.

---. "The Monks and the Giants: Textual and Bibliographical Studies and the Interpretation of Literary Works." *Women Editing / Editing Women: Early Modern Women Writers and the New Textualism*. Eds. Ann Hollinshead Hurley and Chanita Goodblatt. New Castle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009. 55-74.

---. *Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

---. "The Rationale of Hypertext." *Electronic Text: Investigations in Method and Theory*. Ed. Kathryn Sutherland. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1997. 19-46.

Murray, E. B. "Rev. of *William Blake's Writings*," ed. G. E. Bentley, Jr. *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 14

(1980): 148-61.

Ostriker, Alicia, ed. *William Blake: The Complete Poems*. New York: Penguin, 1977.

Palmer, Carole L. "Thematic Research Collections." *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Eds. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. 348-65.

Price, Kenneth. "Electronic Scholarly Editions." *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*. Eds. Ray Siemens and Susan Schreibman. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008. 24 August 2009 <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/view?docId=blackwell/9781405148641/9781405148641.xml&chunk.id=ss1-6-5&toc.depth=1&toc.id=ss1-6-5&brand=9781405148641_brand>.

Robinson, Peter. "Current Issues in Making Digital Editions of Medieval Texts or, Do Electronic Scholarly Editions Have a Future?" *Digital Medievalist* 1.1 (Spring 2005). 11 April 2009 <http://www.digitalmedievalist.org/journal/1.1/robinson/>.

---. "Where We Are with Electronic Scholarly Editions, and Where We Want to Be." 24 March 2004. 11 April 2009 <http://computerphilologie.uni-muenchen.de/jg03/robinson.html>.

Sampson, John, ed. *The Poetical Works of William Blake*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1905.

Santa Cruz Blake Study Group. "Rev. of *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*," ed. by David V. Erdman. *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 18 (1984): 4-31.

Smith, Martha Nell. "Electronic Scholarly Editions." *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Eds. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. 306-22.

Stevenson, W. H., ed. *Blake: The Complete Poems*. 2nd ed. London: Longman, 1989.

---, ed. *Blake: The Complete Poems*. 3rd ed. London: Longman, 2007.

---, ed. *The Poems of William Blake*. London: Longman, 1971.

Sutherland, Kathryn. "Being Critical: Paper-based Editing and the Digital Environment." *Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*. Eds. Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland. London: Ashgate, 2009. 13-25.

Unsworth, John. "Thematic Research Collections." Modern Language Association. 28 December 2000. Washington D.C. 13 August 2009 <http://www3.isrl.illinois.edu/~unsworth/MLA.00/>.

Vanhoutte, Edward. "Every Reader his Own Bibliographer—An Absurdity?" *Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*. Eds. Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland. London: Ashgate, 2009. 99-110.

Viscomi, Joseph. *Blake and the Idea of the Book*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.

48-. "Digital Facsimiles: Reading the William Blake Archive." *Computers and the Humanities* 36 (2002): 27-

# Editing and Reading Blake

## Modernizing Blake's Text: Syntax, Rhythm, Rhetoric

**David Fuller, Durham University**

Problems of Representation: the Editor as Fictioner.

1. Blake can be read in a variety of material forms. Though most people cannot get access to original copies of the illuminated books (some of which are extant in only one or two copies), thanks to some dedicated labors (particularly those of the Trianon Press), and to modern technology (especially different forms employed by the Tate Gallery / Princeton University Press facsimiles and the internet *William Blake Archive*), Blake can now readily be read in the combined verbal-visual form he intended.

2. But he cannot be so read entirely. As most facsimiles implicitly confess by providing transcripts of their texts, the illuminated books can be difficult for readers familiar with the regularity of letterpress, especially when the incised lines impressed by the etched copper plate in the original are flattened out in reproduction. Facsimiles are probably more often accompaniments to letterpress reading than read in themselves. And in any case there are important differences between any facsimile and an original copy. Color applied through stencils (as in the Trianon Press facsimiles) is unlike color applied freely. Photolithography (as well as muting the effect of engraved incisions) regularly misrepresents some part of the color spectrum (the Tate / Princeton facsimiles, for example, represent gold leaf as a bland grey, so that its copies of the *Songs* and *Jerusalem* look strikingly unlike the glowing and shimmering originals from which they were made). With the *Blake Archive*, color seen on a screen is unlike the "same" color seen in a book (not lit from behind), never mind the myriad other differences between books and electronic media. And with all forms of reproduction, misprinted text in any individual copy has to be recovered from copies with different inking or printing failures; as does unreadable text that has been masked by paint or subject to other accidents; while destroyed text, which cannot be shown up by photolithography, can only be recovered by editors who are able to examine its residual indentations in originals—editors who may not agree about what readings those indentations imply.

3. Facsimiles and photographs apart, Blake may be read in letterpress, which apparently offers to reproduce Blake's poetic texts exactly as he engraved and (or) printed them. Again this proves in practice highly problematic. A would-be non-interventionist editor must often invent what he or she purports to report. Most simply, an editor will regularly ignore the often significant textual differences produced by the different inking, printing, and coloring of different copies. (These could in theory be represented, but the apparatus required would be extremely cumbersome.) More fundamentally, Blake's engraved texts simply cannot be transferred directly to letterpress. Letterpress cannot reproduce the eccentrically shaped letters which some critics take as visual puns (*o*s that are almost *a*s: worship / warship); most letterpress texts do not attempt to reproduce Blake's spacing, though some critics regard this as important some of the time; and letterpress has no equivalents of Blake's eccentric marks of punctuation. Apart from the unique eccentricities sometimes taken for punctuation which may be the result of careless etching or poor inking, these include Blake's colons which merge into exclamation marks, his full stops which merge into commas, his sometimes uncertain distinction between lower case and capital letters, and his irregular spacings for all punctuation marks. All these irregular forms may imply irregular meanings. An editor who is committed to transcribing what Blake printed (or perhaps—though this can be quite different—to recovering from a comparison of many copies what he engraved) in fact makes choices about which standard letterpress punctuation mark most nearly represents the non-standard mark in the original, and is likely to make those choices in relation to contemporary expectations about punctuation in the relevant context. The result is that Blake's two

most textually purist modern editors, when transcribing the same work from the same copy, several times represent its punctuation differently. Though all these problems may be acknowledged in a preface, solutions to them cannot be incorporated into a letterpress text, which is therefore often a form of fiction.[1]

4. The problems are yet more complicated because in some texts Blake uses adorned scripts in which the adornments—which are nothing like letterpress forms of punctuation—act, and surely were intended by Blake, partly as forms of punctuation. Just how adorned Blake's script can be the opening text plate of *America* demonstrates (plate 3; plate numberings throughout are those of Bentley's edition—the only collected edition from which text and illustration can be discussed together). Here in every line a number of letters are exuberantly decorated—for example the *d* of "abhorr'd" (l. 11), which develops into a long vine; or the *b* of "limbs" (l. 16), which ascends as though recording the flight-path of a small bird or large insect. This is the usual form of Blake's script in *America*: other plates show even more fantastic adornments—for example, the beings, creatures, and shapes that grow out of "who commanded this, what God! what Angel" (pl. 13.7), or the similar beings that grow out of "earth" (pl. 17.5). Decorations of this kind are characteristic of Blake's script in many texts. In some places they punctuate quite as much as what we might usually recognize as punctuation. In the "Nurse's Song" of *Songs of Experience*, for example, a long tail on the "e" of "arise" (l. 6), filling the rest of the line, functions as a stop; or in *America*, plate 17, the exuberant tails on the "y" of "sky" (l. 10) and the "h" of "youth" (l. 22), both words which occur at the ends of paragraphs but are followed by no conventional punctuation, act as marks indicating conclusion. Conversely, irregular punctuation, as one aspect of the decorated character of a script, plays its part in adornment: it is not primarily syntactic, or rhythmic, or rhetorical; it is visual *jouissance*. In these cases, the forms in which punctuation occurs, and the ways in which it functions in the original, are entirely misrepresented when all the other adornments are stripped away and only what can be recognized as related to conventional punctuation remains, regularized in form and position into letterpress "equivalents." Blake's punctuation has to be understood in the context of his script as a whole in a way that conventional typography simply cannot reproduce.

5. Moreover, despite Blake's own insistence on the expressive importance of detail in his texts, he was often not careful about punctuation. Most obviously, when Blake inked in text which had not printed properly he often did not ink in punctuation, and when he did he sometimes inked in punctuation different from that which other copies show to have been the punctuation of the copper plate. Then, passages adapted from one work to another—for example, the three appearances of the lines describing Los's fixing of Urizen's fallen form—have numerous differences of punctuation (*The Book of Urizen*, pls. 10-13; *The Four Zoas*, pp. 54-55; *Milton*, pl. b). Most repeated lines are not punctuated in the same way in their different appearances. The three-times repeated choric line of *America* plate 11 is punctuated differently at each appearance. The five-times repeated choric line of the Bard's Song in *Milton* is likewise never given with the same punctuation (pls. 3:25; 5:18; 5:50; 7:7; 9:31). The slogan, "Every thing that lives is holy," repeated from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and in *America*, is punctuated differently at each different appearance (*Marriage*, "A Song of Liberty," Chorus; *Visions*, pl. 11:10; *America*, pl. 10:14). The "Nurse's Song"s in *Innocence* and *Experience* have three common lines, but two of these are punctuated in the two poems differently. [2] While it might conceivably be argued that some of these differences are related to context, no dispassionate consideration could suppose that most are. Moreover, there is much more variation in punctuation between different copies of the same work than is generally recognized, not only because of misprinted punctuation, but also because, especially in later copies, Blake would often cover punctuation when he colored the plate. With one of the few texts with which a variorum of the punctuation has been attempted, *The Book of Thel*, of the work's one hundred and twenty-five lines (only two of which are unpunctuated) only thirty-nine are punctuated identically in the seventeen extant copies (Bogan 10). Much of the evidence derived from Blake's practices therefore—corrected

and uncorrected misprinting, repeated lines, variations between copies—suggests that he was relatively indifferent about punctuation. While some of his punctuation may have been carefully considered and expressive, it cannot but be supposed that much of it was not.[3]

6. Different problems about editing and punctuation are presented by the manuscript poems—primarily those in Blake's Notebook, the Pickering (Ballads) manuscript, and *Vala; or The Four Zoas*. The illuminated books were intended as public documents. The Notebook and the Pickering manuscript were not. With its beautiful copper-plate hand, during the early stages of composition the manuscript of *The Four Zoas* may have been intended as a public document. The deletions, transpositions, and increasingly chaotic additions made during its later stages of development almost certainly indicate that the manuscript became a working draft. The poems in the Notebook engraved in *Songs of Experience* are much more lightly punctuated in their manuscript forms, as are the lines of *The Four Zoas* that were engraved in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. With manuscript works there is therefore an even slighter case for preserving punctuation which Blake's practices with turning (private) manuscript into (public) engraved text indicate that he would have revised had he prepared them for publication in his usual way.

7. Evidently there is a need for the kinds of collected editions of Blake's texts produced by David Erdman and G. E. Bentley, Jr., and for the kind of facsimile edition of the illuminated books (in which the text and punctuation of the individual copies facsimiled is transcribed) overseen by David Bindman. There is a different but equally a particular value in the kind of collected annotated edition of Blake's poetry produced by W. H. Stevenson, and the comprehensive textually purist selection of Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant.[4] And Blake would surely be as delighted as he would be astounded by the availability of his work made possible through the internet by the *William Blake Archive*. But with all the foregoing considerations in mind, it should be clear that all editing is a form of construction, even a choice of misrepresentations, and particularly that any notion of preserving the accidentals of Blake's text is highly problematic and cannot be treated as a shibboleth. There is not only one useful way of editing. All editors can do is make choices, explain their grounds, and look for their consequences. How those choices are made depends on an edition's purpose and audience.

A Representational Choice: the Editor as Moderniser.

8. Modernizing the accidentals of Blake's text involves some losses. It also offers important gains. Principally, it can clarify problems of Blake's syntax, problems to which an editor attempting to transcribe need not attend, but for which a reader must find solutions. A reader confronting the considerable difficulties of Blake's text is not helped by the presence of punctuation in the middle of syntactic units, the absence of punctuation at the ends of syntactic units, and other elements of syntactic structure that are not marked by any form of punctuation, as well as a host of other idiosyncratic usages which cannot be explained in any systematic way.[5] All of this can make primary senses difficult to recognize. Of course, some schools of criticism would not recognize the idea of "primary senses"; but Blake's own criticism, in poetry, prose, and designs, makes it clear that he saw some meanings as more important than others. And while there may be a value in the sheer struggle with difficulty, the reader of Blake will never be short of that: it is all a choice of focus. Modernizing accidentals may mean that the editor is doing some of the ideal reader's work—clarifying, for example, the syntactic possibilities which are always present as a base from which interpretation may knowingly deviate. Sometimes a choice of senses has to be made in terms of a preferable shape for the rhetoric (whether, for example, it is characteristic in a given case for syntax and lineation to coincide or to be expressively at odds); sometimes it has to be made, not in terms of immediate sense and syntax, but in terms of context. Many readers are not ideal readers. Many readers benefit from having this kind of work done for them. The

misreadings of editors are in themselves demonstrations of how often the reader unaided by editorial clarifications may misunderstand. Modernizing certainly runs the risk of producing meanings not intended by Blake, but then so can retaining Blake's punctuation.[6] I had thought of myself as a careful reader of Blake. Certainly, when I came to edit Blake's poetry,[7] I had read it carefully enough to have filled the margins and destroyed the bindings of more than one collected edition. But in editing him I noticed problems of syntax which I did not notice as a non-editing reader, and I suspect this is not unusual.

9. Of course syntactic ambiguity can produce a valuable interaction of different meanings. It can also produce a mental haze antithetical to Blake's demand for the sharply precise. It is in his fallen state that Blake's archetypal artist Los utters "ambiguous words blasphemous" (*The Four Zoas*, p. 53:26); the inspired Los demands "explicit words" (*Jerusalem*, pl. 17:60). "Definite and determinate identity" only is the source of a perception of the infinite (*Jerusalem*, pl. 55:64): indeterminate syntax and a free play of signifiers is not. Where structure, sign, and play open up unlimited potential, words lose the precise significance which allows error to be snared and truth to be told so as to be irresistibly understood. The editor as ideal reader is often called on to help out in the wars of truth and error by making presentational choices.

10. The common absence of punctuation at line endings, for example, often means that lines can be connected either backwards or forwards—as in the following:

    Albions Guardian writhed in torment on the eastern sky
    Pale quivring toward the brain his glimmering eyes, teeth chattering
    Howling & shuddering his legs quivering; convuls'd each muscle & sinew
    Sick'ning lay Londons Guardian, and the ancient miter'd York
    Their heads on snowy hills, their ensigns sick'ning in the sky
    (*America* pl. 17:6-10; Erdman 57)

    Here Blake's punctuation (the semicolon in the middle of l. 8) might suggest distributing the parallel phrases between the two candidates (Albion / London)—a choice no modernizing editor makes: the shape of the rhetoric (parallel phrases modifying the same noun) and the form of the verse (line-ending understood as a kind of punctuation) is allowed to predominate. Stevenson adds a full stop at the end of l. 6 so as to apply ll. 7-8 to London; Sloss and Wallis, Keynes, Bentley, and Mason add a full stop at the end of l. 8, and so apply ll. 7-8 to Albion. Stevenson seems to me wrong, mainly because his punctuation involves an awkward shift from singular to plural within the same syntactic unit ("his ... their"), partly because the lack of punctuation at the most probable point (l. 8) has a possible material cause (the word "sinew" only just fitted on to the etched plate). A similar problem occurs in *America* at pl. 16:9-10. Here an intervening illustration can be understood as decisive punctuation. Mason does so understand it; Sloss and Wallis, Keynes, Bentley and Stevenson (correctly, in my view) agree in regarding the syntax as continuous across the illustration. Similarly, in *America* pl. 17 Blake has no punctuation at the end of the last line of text. Mason connects this last line to the first of pl. 18; most editors add a full stop, accepting that the plate-ending acts as a form of punctuation and that pl. 18:1 begins a new syntactic unit. (In cases of serious doubt about the syntax, in the Longman / Pearson selection I gave the original punctuation in the annotation, and discussed alternative possibilities.)

11. Blake's punctuation is, however, often not syntactic. Where it has a discernable specific purpose it may also be intended to point the rhythm (for example, by marking a caesura); or it may be intended to point the rhetoric where the shapes do not coincide with the lineation. In "Does he who contemns poverty, and he who turns in abhorrence / From usury: feel the same passion" (*Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, pl. 8:10-11), for example, the non-syntactic colon may be intended to point the parallelism of the preceding antithetical phrases, which is obscured by the lineation:

Does he who contemns poverty
and he who turns in abhorrence from usury
Feel the same passion ...

Or non-syntactic punctuation may sometimes be intended to signify what a twentieth-century poet might render by lay-out—a reading which considers each phrase or clause as a separate unit:

Sweet moans,
dovelike sighs,
Chase not slumber from thy eyes.
Sweet moans,
sweeter smiles,
All the dovelike moans beguiles.[8]

These can be no more than hypotheses. In any case, much of Blake's punctuation cannot be explained in such ways. Distinctive idiosyncratic feature of the text that it is, much of Blake's punctuation is not specifically explicable. And it can be actively misleading about syntax.

12. Blake's most notable and potentially misleading idiosyncrasy is his use of the full stop, which commonly occurs in the middle of grammatical units. This may sometimes be intended to mark internal rhyme ("The Little Boy Found": "Who in sorrow pale. thro' the lonely dale," l. 7),[9] though Blake often has internal rhyme unmarked by punctuation (as, for example, in "The Little Vagabond," ll. 3, 7, 15). But it apparently most often signifies the kind of minor syntactic disjunction which in modern punctuation would be rendered by a comma: "And because I am happy. & dance & sing" ("The Chimney Sweeper," *Songs of Experience* l. 9); "And Father. how can I love you" ("A Little Boy Lost" l. 5). Or a full stop can be (as it was commonly in the seventeenth century) an extra way of marking the end of a line, as in "Night," which has full stops at the end of each of the last four lines though the syntax is continuous.[10] Or it can be an extra way of marking the end of a stanza, as in "Laughing Song," which has full stops at the end of the first and second stanzas, though the three-stanza poem is a single syntactic unit.

13. But though one can find reasons for some of Blake's idiosyncratic punctuation, there is no consistency about such usages, and there are many examples of punctuation that actively misleads the reader about the syntax.

On his head a crown
On his shoulders down,
Flow'd his golden hair.
("The Little Girl Found" ll. 37-39)

Here the presence of the syntactically redundant comma implies (absurdly) that "down" is a noun parallel to "crown" rather than as an adverb modifying "Flow'd." In "The Little Black Boy" on the other hand the absence of a comma where it is syntactically expected between two parallel phrases—"Comfort in morning joy in the noon day"—momentarily confuses about the function of "morning," which can be mistaken for an adjective modifying "joy" (l. 12). These oddities the competent reader readily negotiates. But the long poems, often much more syntactically complex than the lyrics, provide many examples of syntactic problems that are much less straightforward of solution. Bentley addresses the difficulty by frequently modernizing Blake's punctuation, with an elaborate apparatus to indicate where he does so. Even the purist Erdman alters the most syntactically misleading punctuation, recording such changes in his textual notes. It is the hint of a tacit admission that more might be valuable.

14. There may be all sorts of meanings in Blake's punctuation. And in some of it there may be no meaning. Its meaning is often not syntactic, and it often misleads about the syntax. Readers of Blake may have many needs. For the deconstructive reader, of course, the more sources of indeterminacy the better—and Blake's highly idiosyncratic punctuation can certainly be a source of indeterminacy. For most readers, construing Blake's syntax is a need fundamental to other kinds of sense-making, including perception of the rhetorical structures that are often so important to the tone and feeling of his poetry. About this an editor can—as it was once thought an editor should—give guidance. But before rhetoric, rhythm.

Editing for Rhythm

15. By retaining Blake's indications of syllabic value, and thereby marking the distinction between these and other forms of the same words with different syllabic values, modernization can also help to point Blake's rhythms: for example, "ev'n," "giv'n," "black'ning," "sick'ning," "rav'nous," "wintry" (not "wintery"), and so on. These forms can be obscured by modernization, but modernization that retains them, by the new context of more familiar forms, draws attention to them.[11]

16. This is particularly important from the point of view of Blake's rhythms with his distinction between final non-syllabic *d* or *'d* and syllabic *ed*. It is not possible, of course, in the relatively free meters of the long-line poems, to be conclusively sure simply from any given case that Blake's practice was entirely consistent. However, his practice in the metrically regular poems suggests that inconsistencies are at most very few.[12] The two forms are used throughout his work, and the only alternative to supposing the intention of a consistent distinction is to suppose that the distinction is meaningless—a supposition which its use in the metrically regular verse, where Blake's intention can be judged against recognized patterns of syllabic organization, entirely contradicts. The convention of pronounced final "ed" in formal written usage was still very much alive in the late eighteenth century. It was still observed in the printed texts of the younger generation of Blake's contemporaries. It is observed consistently, for example, in Keats's 1820 volume. Rhymes on *ed* or *d*, in the few places where Blake uses them, indicate that the convention is being observed: "bed" rhymes with "ecchoed" ("Nurse's Song," *Songs of Innocence* ll. 14, 16), "followed" with "led" ("The Little Girl Found" ll. 45, 46); and (conversely) "mild" rhymes with "beguil'd" ("The Angel" ll. 3, 4). A more interesting and important test is provided by the poems and passages copied from one source to another—the two manuscripts of "I askèd a thief to steal me a peach" (Bentley 996, 1071);[13] the poems in *Songs of Innocence* first included in *An Island in the Moon*;[14] the poems in *Songs of Experience* drafted in the Notebook;[15] the passages from the early prophetic books transposed into *The Four Zoas*;[16] and the passages from *The Four Zoas* transposed into *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. With reworkings to or from *The Four Zoas* one must allow for the fact that reuse is almost never simply transcription. Blake almost always reworked material to suit the new context, or, one may deduce, simply with an aim of aesthetic improvement. Nevertheless, almost without exception, when reworking material from one poem to another, and often in the context of making numerous other changes, Blake retains distinctions between *d* or *'d* and *ed*.[17] Writers on Blake's metrics have understood the distinction as meaningful (Paley 42-57). Modernizing editors have not, and have usually suppressed it, modernizing all forms without differentiation to *ed*.[18]

17. Modern readers are not accustomed to observing Blake's distinction between pronounced and unpronounced "ed." Without a way of rendering it, therefore, the rhythms Blake intended, for which he had this still widely recognized convention of notation, are probably often not observed. Observing them may, in some cases, have results that are surprising even to Blake's most competent readers.

18. My interest in rhetorical structures in poetry relates to my interest in music, which is basic to my sense of how poetry works. I love effects of verbal shapeliness, so am interested in reading poetry aloud—finding the musical shapes of poetry that are not always evident on the page, shapes that are discovered in the process of feeling one's way into the words by working them into the voice. To my sense, if one cannot love the sounds and shapes made by the words of a poem, one often cannot begin to love the poem at all. How Blake's poetry makes those sound-shapes line by line—the feel of its rhetoric, as of its rhythms—is part of what it means. In my view, appreciation of Blake's long-line poetry does better to begin with a voice workshop than a chronology of British culture in the period, a chart of symbolic translations, readings in Thomas Taylor, or whatever else might suit the tenets of a different critical credo. An editor can provide the basis for this kind of engagement by releasing the reader's attention from construing Blake's syntax to focusing on the shapes of his rhetoric.

19. It may be that there lurks in some criticism a Modernist distrust of rhetoric in poetry, the unease voiced by Yeats when he quoted with approval the famous dictum of Verlaine—"wring the neck of rhetoric" (*Oxford Book* xii); or when he contrasted, in his own voice, poetry and rhetoric ("Anima Hominis" 170). When Blake compared his practices of varying tone in poetry with those of the "true orator" (*Jerusalem*, pl. 3), I understand him to mean in part the expressive shapeliness we think of as rhetoric, which he sometimes offers in quite evident forms, but which sometimes has to be more discovered within formal structures that conceal it, or at least make it less than obvious. Blake sometimes offers utterly overt structuration—accreted parallelisms conterminous with the lines, as at the climax of *Milton* (pl. 43.1-28). One can readily proliferate examples that have only slightly less patterning, evident visually on the engraved plate or the written page—the climactic questions of Oothoon in *Visions* (pl. 6:2-13), Orc heralding the end of empire or Boston's Angel declaring independence in *America* (pls. 8:1-15, 13:4-15), the laments of Enion and Urizen in *The Four Zoas* (pp. 35-36, 63-66), the songs of *The Four Zoas* with their loose stanzaic forms (pp. 14-16, 58, 59, 91-93), Los's "creation" (de-creation) of Urizen (*The Four Zoas* pp. 54-55; *Milton* pl. b:6-27), or Milton's moment of self-recognition and self-dedication (*Milton* pl. 12:14-32). These passages offer rhetorical patterning that the eye readily sees.

20. What editing that points Blake's syntax can help readers to see more clearly is this kind of structuration where it is less obvious but (I would say) equally emphatic—less obvious because the rhetorical shapes cut across the structure of the line, often in irregular ways. The *Milton* climax and comparable passages are unusually geometric and Grecian for Blake: his typical manner is more one of Gothic asymmetrical symmetries. Though Blake's way with this is idiosyncratic and his own, it is a typical effect of English poetry to derive part of its energy from some clash between formal and syntactic structures—in Donne, for example, when the bounding outline that is the circumference of his energies (be it the Italian sonnet form or an elaborate invented stanza shape) can scarcely contain his exuberance: fulfilling the shape in rhythms and rhymes, breaking it down through syntax. Milton does very similar things both in his sonnets and in blank verse. This playing off the rhythms and syntax of stylized speech against formal regularities of the line or stanza was the usual limit of freedom in English poetry before Blake. For Blake it was not freedom enough. That the reader of Blake does not feel in his long-line poetry effects entirely similar to the contained and bursting energies of Donne or Milton is because the fundamental structure of Blake's long line is less rigidly regulated. Nevertheless, comparable effects are present if the reader develops a feeling for them; and, unless the reader experiences this, Blake's long-line poetry can seem much less energized by manipulations of structure than it is.

21. I have discussed this elsewhere with examples from *The Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem* (*Heroic Argument* 89-93; "Blake and the Body" 67-70). As in those discussions, I have here rearranged the lines on the page so as to bring out their expressive rhetorical structuration (printing first the text from Erdman, to

show Blake's lineation). I make no claims for my own particular arrangements: they are a device for demonstrating the presence of loose parallelisms, and might well be varied in detail. Their aim is to show the broad tendency of Blake's rhetorical structures, including shapes within shapes.

Thou seest the Constellations in the deep & wondrous Night
They rise in order and continue their immortal courses
Upon the mountains & in vales with harp & heavenly song
With flute & clarion; with cups & measures filld with foaming wine.
Glittring the streams reflect the Vision of beatitude,
And the calm Ocean joys beneath & smooths his awful waves!

These are the Sons of Los, & these the Labourers of the Vintage
Thou seest the gorgeous clothed Flies that dance & sport in summer
Upon the sunny brooks & meadows: every one the dance
Knows in its intricate mazes of delight artful to weave;
Each one to sound his instruments of music in the dance,
To touch each other & recede; to cross & change & return
These are the Children of Los; thou seest the Trees on mountains
The wind blows heavy, loud they thunder thro' the darksom sky
Uttering prophecies & speaking instructive words to the sons
Of men: These are the Sons of Los! These the Visions of Eternity
But we see only as it were the hem of their garments
When with our vegetable eyes we view these wond'rous Visions
(*Milton* pls. 25:66-26:12; Erdman 123)

Thou seest the constellations in the deep and wondrous night:
they rise in order
and continue their immortal courses
upon the mountains
and in vales
with harp and heavenly song,
with flute and clarion,
with cups and measures filled with foaming wine.
Glitt'ring the streams reflect the vision of beatitude,
And the calm ocean joys beneath and smoothes his awful waves.

These are the sons of Los, and these the labourers of the vintage.

Thou seest the gorgeous clothèd flies that dance and sport in summer
upon the sunny brooks and meadows:
every one the dance knows in its intricate mazes of delight artful to weave,
each one to sound his instruments of music in the dance,
to touch each other and recede,
to cross and change and return:

These are the children of Los.

Thou seest the trees on mountains:
the wind blows heavy,
loud they thunder through the darksome sky
uttering prophecies and

speaking instructive words to the sons of men.

These are the sons of Los, these the visions of eternity.

But we see only as it were the hem of their garments
When with our vegetable eyes we view these wondrous visions.

This is the rhetoric of dance and song, but it is the dance of Isadora Duncan, not Anna Pavlova; it is the song of Renaissance monody, before the regularities of the bar-line and 4- or 8-bar phrase. The eye can find its shapes, but only rarely does the lineation present them to the eye: their expressivity is to be found by the voice. The single visual paragraph (on two plates) falls into three parts: "Thou seest the constellations … the flies … the trees," each part with a parallel conclusion ("the sons [children] of Los") but with variegated nuance (biblical ["laborers of the vintage"]; prosaic [the lacuna]; rhapsodic ["vision of eternity"]). Within each part asymmetric groupings are paralleled in the larger repeated shapes ("with harp … with flute … with cups" / "to sound … to touch … to cross" / "uttering … speaking"). The structure of the free seven-beat line is kept audible as a base from which the structures of the rhetoric divert ("And the calm ocean joys beneath and smoothes his awful waves"). Other rhythmic regularities play against this ("Glitt'ring the streams reflect the vision of beatitude": an iambic pentameter with inverted first foot, until collapsed towards prose by the multi-syllabic "beatitude"). Two concluding lines re-affirm the basic free long-line structure as they give a new perspective on the content: the wonders conjured by this rhetoric are no more than a partial glimpse of full vision. Within this variously shapely verbal music are more local patternings and sound effects, which the voice can find when the words are dwelt in as the tone of intense perception of the natural world to which the words point indicates that they should be, and which the lay-out here—Blake printed in the style of Ezra Pound—is intended to indicate.

22. Of course, as the simplicities of demonstration require, this is in some ways an exceptional passage. Blake's punctuation here is by no means at its most misleading. The expression is almost uncharacteristically syntactic, as his rhetoric is, for the dance, especially shapely. But while these beautifully shaped paragraphs especially repay the voice's search for their structures, the effects are fundamentally typical of the smaller-scale interplay of syntax and lineation found throughout Blake's long-line verse. The reader can find these expressive structures more readily if the editor, by making clear the syntax, shows where to look and, by looking, how to listen for them. As Wallace Stevens has it, "In poetry, you must love the words … and rhythms with all your capacity to love anything at all" (161). Some critics of Blake, if they allow themselves the unprofessional idea of "loving" poetry at all, give the impression of taking an interest in anything but its words and rhythms. The characteristic vice of editors—a vice for which the professional world of letters offers special temptations—is to become obsessed with particles below word- and rhythm-level as a passport to joining an elite coterie in which discussion of editorial practice quite forgets the poetic purposes of loving the minutiae of articulation and embodiment.

Radical Strategies

23. It has been suggested to me that my re-writings here are related to the critical techniques proposed by Lisa Samuels and Jerome McGann in "Deformance and Interpretation."[19] I could not agree more with the Samuels-McGann starting points: "interpretation of works of imagination call[s] for responsive works of imagination, not reflexive works of analysis" (29); "meaning is more a dynamic exchange than a discoverable content" (31). One may doubt whether so much critical activity that is here polemically discounted (reflexive analysis) has been so wholly on the wrong tack since Aristotle

considered Sophocles. Nevertheless, any re-direction of professional criticism from its intellectually and imaginatively arid concentration on analysis is welcome; and on the most radical consequence of the Samuels-McGann argument—the "exposure of subjectivity as a live and highly informative option of interpretive commentary" (36)—I agree wholly. My *Blake's Heroic Argument*, in which the final chapter explains the experiences of and ideas about religion, politics, sex and gender, and education underlying the emphases of the book's account of Blake, is just such an elaborated argument for and exemplification of the explicit engagement of subjectivity in criticism. But in the present context my aim is more limited than that of Samuels and McGann. It is re-writing to reveal features of the rhetorical structure of Blake's poetry that are concealed by the conventions of its formal structure. The primary object of Samuels and McGann is not reflection on the object but on the nature of critical procedures. They mention in passing, as one possible mode of "deformance," "altering the spatial organization, typography or punctuation of a work" (37, and cf. appendix 2), but they explicitly choose not to explore this: with reflection on the nature of criticism, it would not take them so far as they wish to go.[20]

24. There is similarly, I think, a distinction between the kind of re-writing proposed here and that required by the so-called "Ivanhoe game," in devising and developing which again Jerome McGann has played a prominent role (and on which see, for example *Text Technology*, 12.2 (2003), and multiple internet sources. This project, which takes its name from its beginnings, re-writings of the end of Scott's novel ("game" because it is performed co-operatively, in immediate or virtual contact), is a critical practice of re-writing to reveal reading possibilities coded or latent in a text. Insofar as it has ancient sources, its model is postmodern criticism's favorite originary practice, midrash. It may be compared to the central place given to structured play in the arts in Schiller's *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*.[21] But it should be primarily understood as a next step on from various later twentieth-century critical strategies which actualize more fully the reader's role in re-creating a text, of which those initiated by Barthes in *S/Z* and elsewhere on the "writerly" text, and the ludic aspects of Derrida's criticism, are the most prominent. Again the modes of re-writing it deploys are more radical than those proposed here, though, like those proposed here, the first aim is a more complete view of features of the originary text.[22]

Coda: An Editor's Failures and the Limits of Choice

25. I had few struggles or compromises to make with the Longman Annotated Texts Blake. I worked on the edition alongside and following on from some more purist editing as part of the Clarendon Press collected works of Marlowe—an old-spelling edition with full textual apparatus, which allowed me to consider from experience a range of editorial possibilities.[23] Longman was at one with my fundamental editorial choices and procedures. The general editor for my area of the series, Daniel Karlin, was nothing but helpful, supportive, and minutely attentive, suggesting many improvements. I now think it an excellent idea to print maps of Blake's London, Britain, and the Holy Land (such as are variously included in the editions of Bentley, Stevenson, and Johnson and Grant), but this simply did not occur to me. The only limitation against which I chafed related to illustrations. Much as Blake's poetry can stand alone as what generations of readers have taken it to be, a verbal art, I do see his work as fundamentally a verbal-visual composite. I should, therefore, have liked many, many more reproductions of plates from the illuminated books—and am accordingly envious of the copious color illustrations included by W. W. Norton in the new edition of Johnson and Grant and by Pearson-Longman in the new edition of W. H. Stevenson. However, in the internet world, with the *William Blake Archive* reproductions so readily available, and with the single-volume edition of the collected Tate-Princeton facsimiles also in print (ed. David Bindman, Thames & Hudson, 2000), this is a less serious limitation than it would once have been. And since I knew from the start that I was not to have

the illustrations I would ideally have liked, even this could be turned into a kind of virtue. I decided that, for every plate of the illuminated books the text of which was included in the selection (and for each page of *The Four Zoas* included—about one hundred and seventy plates and pages in total), I would provide a brief description of the main elements of the illustrations—as far as possible objective, not interpretive. Like so many of the textual grapplings, this too was, in a minor way, a revelation: how difficult it sometimes is to say precisely what is represented; how often critics who discussed illuminations created what they apparently supposed themselves to see. But an account of that would be material for another essay.

**Notes**

1 Erdman (786-87) and Bentley (xliii-xliv) both discuss the problems. Erdman admits that he is "inclined . . . to read commas or periods according to the contextual expectations." Their versions of *The Book of Los* (which exists in only one copy) differ over punctuation largely because Blake's marks cannot be directly transcribed into standard typography. Differences of interpretation or representation between the two editions can be readily multiplied: see Murray's review of Bentley, which concludes, "In the long run, the problems and the contradictory solutions available for them probably exceed even a theoretic comprehension, much more any set of workable editorial principles" (160).

2 In *Experience*, ll. 1 and 5 have Blake's common non-syntactic full stop: "When the voices of children. are heard on the green / Then come home my children. the sun is gone down." The corresponding lines in *Innocence*, verbally exactly the same, both omit the stop. A similar apparent indifference about punctuation is suggested by different punctuations for parallel clauses in adjacent stanzas of "A Cradle Song":

Sweet smiles Mothers smiles
All the livelong night beguiles.
// [. . .]/[. . .]/
Sweet moans, sweeter smiles,
All the dovelike moans beguiles.

(The differences between the two stanzas are present irrespective of how the punctuation of the original is rendered.)

3 Peter Middleton presents a confused argument for the importance of what he takes to be Blake's punctuation, but on the assumption that the forms and significances of the punctuation in the originals are those of letterpress. In the five-line passage mainly discussed he contrives to misquote the punctuation, the lineation, the paragraphing and the words.

4 Johnson and Grant's selection, based on their own studies of original sources, also draws on both Erdman's edition and the *William Blake Archive* transcriptions: see its "Textual Technicalities," 599-602.

5 For example, Blake's use of the question mark: contrast its complete absence from the questions of "The Lamb" with its copious presence in the questions of "The Tiger"; or, in "Earth's Answer," its absence from questions in stanza 3 with its presence in the middle of questions as well as at their end in stanza 4.

6 See, for example, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "A Song of Liberty," Chorus: "Let the Priests of the Raven of dawn, no longer in deadly black, with hoarse note curse the sons of joy." Blake's meaning is evidently "[. . .] no longer, in deadly black [. . .]": priests, indicatively black-gowned, should no longer curse (not, as the punctuation on a modern interpretation implies, priests, wearing something other than their usual black gowns, should continue to curse).

7 Fuller, *Poetry and Prose*. This contains the major works, mostly complete, each with an individual introduction and detailed annotation, including accounts of designs, and similarly annotated selections from *The Four Zoas*, *Milton*, and *Jerusalem*.

8 "A Cradle Song." This hypothetical lay-out is based on Bentley's reading of the original punctuation:

> Sweet moans. dovelike sighs.
> Chase not slumber from thy eyes.
> Sweet moans. sweeter smiles.
> All the dovelike moans beguiles.

The stanza exemplifies the difficulties of rendering the punctuation of the original in letterpress. Erdman (12) and Lincoln (pl. 16) both represent the punctuation of this stanza differently from Bentley (37) and from each other.

9 Cf. "The Garden of Love," where Blake marks internal rhyme by an a-syntactic comma: "And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds, / And binding with briars, my joys & desires." (On the rhyme "gowns" / "rounds," see my *Poetry and Prose* 96.)

10 Cf. "Holy Thursday," *Songs of Experience*, stanza 1, in which each line ends with a syntactically redundant full stop. Also *Songs of Experience*, "Introduction," "That might controll. / The starry pole" (ll. 8-9), and "Earth's Answer," "Break this heavy chain. / That does freeze my bones around" (ll. 21-22)—though both of these are also examples of the ambiguous forms of Blake's punctuation. In the first case Bentley (174) gives no punctuation (perhaps interpreting the mark undoubtedly present in some copies as a spatter); in both cases Erdman gives a comma (18, 19), Lincoln a full stop (pls. 30, 31).

11 Contracted forms are not retained by Stevenson, but are retained by Mason, and also in the more partial and conservative modernization of Keynes.

12 One exception to Blake's *ed* indicating *èd* in his metrically regular verse comes in the "Introduction" to *Songs of Innocence*: "So I piped with merry chear, / ... / So I piped, he wept to hear" (ll. 6, 8). Here Blake may have thought of the "e" as necessary to modify the "i" and to distinguish "pipe" from "pip": cf. *Songs of Experience*, "The Little Vagabond," l. 3, "use'd" (Notebook, p. 105, "usd"), and *Milton*, pl. 11.47, "tone'd" (where the "e" is retained to modify the "o"), both cases of other verbs identical in form with nouns. In these cases the apostrophe is apparently used to indicate that the "e" should not be pronounced. See also my note to "Ah, Sunflower," *Songs of Experience*, l. 5: *Poetry and Prose* 95.

13 In the fair copy Blake actually marks with an accent the "e" of "asked" in l. 1 (to distinguish it from monosyllabic "asked" in l. 3), and he maintains the distinction from the Notebook version between *ed* (l. 2) and *'d* (ll. 7, 8, 12). "Turned" (l. 2) must be disyllabic: l. 2 is not otherwise the trimeter required by the ballad meter stanza structure to match l. 4.

14 For example, "Nurses Song," l. 17, "The little ones leaped and shouted and laugh'd," where the same *ed* / *'d* distinction is made in both versions.

15 Here the distinction is reproduced with almost complete consistency. The single exception is "The Angel" where in the Notebook l. 6 has "wiped" (which, since it is not metrically impossible, may indicate only that in engraving the poem Blake changed his mind). In the draft of "My Pretty Rose Tree," "But my rose was turned from me" was altered to "But my rose turnd away with Jealousy" (l. 7); in the draft of "London" "The german forged links I hear" was altered to "The mind forgd manacles I hear" (l. 8)—both changes that clearly indicate Blake observing the *'d* / *ed* distinction.

16 See, for example, *The Book of Urizen*, pls. 10-13; *The Four Zoas*, pp. 54-55; *Milton*, pl. b: despite the changes of form between *The Book of Urizen* and *The Four Zoas* (short to long lines), and the overall abbreviation of the passage in *Milton*, there is only one single change of a verb form.

17 See, for example, *The Four Zoas* pp. 39.17-19, 40.2-20, 41.1-18, and 42.1-19, which became *Jerusalem*, pl. 29[43].33-82: in a context of several minor changes the *d* (or '*d*) and *ed* distinction is reproduced with complete consistency. Exceptions can be found: *America* pl. 8.6-12 is repeated verbatim in *The Four Zoas* p. 134.18-24, except that one *ed* becomes *d*. Whether this indicates Blake's occasional inconsistency or a change of mind about the rhythm is, of course, impossible to tell.

18 The distinction is ignored by Stevenson and Mason. The only edition actively to bring it out in the text is that of Sloss and Wallis, which retains the non-syllabic forms and renders the syllabic form *èd*. Johnson and Grant indicate syllabic *ed* in their annotation.

19 *New Literary History* 30 (1999), 25-56.

20 On my basic sympathy for McGann's long-running arguments about the subjectivity of criticism, and an attempt to draw some different conclusions, see my "Keats and Anti-Romantic Ideology."

21 *On the Aesthetic Education of Man, in a Series of Letters*, ed. and trans. by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, Oxford: Clarendon, 1967; throughout, but see especially Letter 15.

22 For an attempt to give greater currency to critical practices broadly of this kind, synthesizing analytical, critical and creative work, and offering the reader a range of interactive strategies for structured play in re-writing texts, see Rob Pope, *Textual Intervention: Critical and Creative Strategies for Literary Studies*.

23*Tamburlaine the Great*, Parts 1 and 2. In *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, vol. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1998).

## Works Cited


Bentley, G. E., Jr., ed. *William Blake's Writings*. 2 vols (paginated continuously). Oxford: Clarendon P, 1978.

Bindman, David, gen. ed. *The Illuminated Books of William Blake*. 6 vols. London: Tate Gallery, 1991-95. (Vol. 1. *Jerusalem*. Ed. Morton D. Paley, 1991. Vol. 2. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. Ed. Andrew Lincoln, 1991. Vol. 3. *The Early Illuminated Books*. Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, 1993. Vol. 4. *The Continental Prophecies*. Ed. D. W. Dörrbecker, 1995. Vol. 5. '*Miltona Poem*' *and the Final Illuminated Works*. Ed. Robert N. Essick and Joseph Viscomi, 1993. Vol. 6. *The Urizen Books*. Ed. David Worrall, 1995.)

Bogen, Nancy, ed. *The Book of Thel: A Facsimile and a Critical Text*. Providence, RI: Brown UP, 1971.

Erdman, David V., ed. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965. Rev. ed., 1988.

Fuller, David. *Blake's Heroic Argument*. New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1988.

---. "'The Human Form Divine': Blake and the Body." *Essays in English Romanticism* 31 (2007): 53-73.

---. "Keats and Anti-Romantic Ideology." *The Challenge of Keats: Bicentenary Essays, 1795-1995*. Ed. Allan G. Christensen *et al*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. 9-25.

---, ed. *William Blake: Selected Poetry and Prose*. London: Longman UK Group Limited, 2000. Rev. ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2008.

Johnson, Mary Lynn, and John E. Grant. *Blake's Poetry and Designs*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979. 2nd ed., 2008.

Keynes, Geoffrey, ed. *The Complete Writings of William Blake*. London: Oxford UP, 1957. Rev. ed., 1966.

Mason, Michael, ed. *William Blake*. The Oxford Authors. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988.

Middleton, Peter. "The Revolutionary Poetics of William Blake: Part II—Silence, Syntax, and Spectres." *Oxford Literary Review* 6 (1983): 35-51.

Murray, E. B. Rev. of *William Blake's Writings*, by G. E. Bentley, Jr., ed. *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 14 (1980-81): 148-61.

Paley, Morton. *The Continuing City: William Blake's "Jerusalem."* Oxford: Clarendon P, 1983.

Pope, Rob. *Textual Intervention: Critical and Creative Strategies for Literary Studies*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Samuels, Lisa and Jerome McGann. "Deformance and Interpretation." *New Literary History* 30 (1999): 25-56.

Schiller, Friedrich. *On the Aesthetic Education of Man, in a Series of Letters*. Ed. and trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby. Oxford: Clarendon, 1967.

Sloss, D. J., and J. P. R. Wallis, eds. *The Prophetic Writings of William Blake*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1926.

Stevens, Wallace. *Opus Posthumous: Poems, Plays, Prose*. Ed. Samuel French Morse. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957.

Stevenson, W. H. *Blake: The Complete Poems*. Longman Annotated English Poets. Text by D. V. Erdman. London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1971. 2nd ed., 1989. 3rd ed., 2007.

*Text Technology: the Journal of Computer Text Processing* 12.2 (2003). Special Issue on the "Ivanhoe Game."

Yeats, W. B. *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse: 1892-1935*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1936.

---. "Anima Hominis." 1918. *Selected Criticism and Prose*. Ed. A. Norman Jeffares. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1970. 165-80.

# Editing and Reading Blake

## The Ends of Editing

### W. H. Stevenson

1. The first thought when planning to row the Atlantic must be: "Where to start from?" Then, having reached halfway, the only thought is: "Will this ever end?" The editor of works as vast as Blake's probably has similar, if less physical thoughts. This is not just a matter of working one's way through; it is a matter of answering all the questions that are to be answered; and that means at first finding the questions, and, not least, balancing them one against another. If the Complete Works are the target, the problem is to know how to limit the information; with a Selection, to know what text to include; and in either case how to say much in very little. The job may be less dangerous than rowing the Atlantic, but a good deal less finite.

2. Storytellers, poets, musicians, painters, like actors, seek to engage the audience. So, in a fashion, do editors, but they need to be objective, to display the work, not to express it. The reader looks for understanding, not mere enthusiasm. Both editor and reader are seeking answers. Some they find; but for both the search never ends.

3. Almost inevitably, scholars have either a literary or an artistic leaning; I do not say "bias," but it is a rare scholar who can be as familiar with one medium as with the other. David V. Erdman (after years of textual editing) concentrated on the designs and their visual effect, and produced *The Illuminated Blake* (1974).[1] More recently, The Tate Gallery, with David Bindman, Thames & Hudson, and the Blake Trust combined in producing *The Complete Illuminated Poems* (2000),[2] in which Joseph Viscomi provides an invaluable set of dating answers. Otherwise, the notes have a chiefly "literary" approach, laying stress on the poetry. I shall not attempt to deal with the body of his drawings and paintings. To try to do so would be to invite confusion, and so I shall restrict myself here to his writings and illuminated books.

4. The first part of the search, then, is textual: to show what actually was written (and, in Blake's case, what artistic work was drawn and painted, and where it is placed), and to present it to the reader and viewer.

5. The first duty of an editor is to present an accurate and useful text. For Blake, Erdman and Bentley have done this task as thoroughly and effectively as anyone could ask; but questions have scarcely begun, particularly when we turn to *Vala*. We wish to print an intelligible narrative whose reader should at least be able to understand situations and movements of events; but this is much more easily said than done. Blake has wallpapered over the opening pages to set up his narrative of *The Four Zoas*, barely hiding those problems that have occupied scholars for years and arise at once, and when these are passed, there are more to follow. What does the First Night consist of at last?

6. After the confusion in the opening pages, the First and Second Nights develop into a long and fairly continuous narrative of the conflict between Urizen and Luvah, alongside the quarrels of Los and Enitharmon, pausing twice for laments from Enion. The second of these plainly marks the end of the Second Night. But where does the First Night end and the Second begin? After Enion's first lament on p. 18, Blake has added seven lines to the page, adding "End of the First Night." But he has already written in the margin on p. 9, as an afterthought, "Night the Second," marking out the division by heavy lines, and adding two lines to make sense of the division, although otherwise the narrative runs on to p. 18. After this, unfortunately, there are some wandering pages, numbered 19-22, but bound into

the MS in the wrong order, that have to be fitted in somewhere. On p. 23, however, there is a title page for a new Night, perhaps the Second, but Blake, after an imposing "Night the," wrote, then deleted, "First," and no more. It makes sense to start the Second Night here, with the First ending in Enion's lament, as the Second does, ignoring the intervention on p. 9.

7. However, on the basic principle of respecting an author's final thoughts, as indicated by the changes on p. 9, I chose to make the division at p. 9, although it makes a short First Night and a very long Second. Editors have to make such choices, which may still be contested by others. The question facing the editor is how far to lead the reader into all this. At one extreme, one may determine a text and present it as final; at the other give the readers all the fragments and leave them to make up the jigsaw themselves. A precipice on one side, a swamp on the other. The middle way of presenting one's own choice and pointing out the problems and indicating where the enthralled reader may find a full discussion, may seem the best, if one can find a sure footing. In any case, leaving the reader with a view only of confusion is, to change the metaphor, falling at the first hurdle.

8. Some textual details are easier to identify, but no easier to settle. The question of how to deal with Blake's spelling and capitalization has been much discussed, is not settled, and, doubtless, never will be agreed upon. If we simply want to see what words and points Blake actually put down on paper, we can consult Erdman or Bentley. Otherwise, does it matter?

9. There are three ways of looking at this question. First: does it affect the meaning of the passage? Second: does it affect the rhythm and rhetoric? Third: did Blake really care? As David Fuller has said, "It should be clear that any notion of 'Blake's punctuation' is highly problematic" (21).

10. Why not "modernize" Blake's spelling, punctuation, and eccentric capitals? The reasons for retaining his forms are surely, first, that since Romantic times, we believe we should respect the author's wishes; and second, that by his process of illuminated printing his specific choices were burnt into copper and printed for all to see. Against that stands the need for later editors to produce a text which does not in itself bewilder the reader from the outset, and this need may require the editor to punctuate Blake for him. At the very least, there is one modernization no one can avoid: none of us is likely to use the "long *s*" (which I have yet to find in TrueType).

11. F. W. Bateson, as my General Editor, laid down the policy that "whatever impedes the reader's sympathetic identification with the poet [. . .] whether of spelling, punctuation or the use of initial capitals—must be regarded as undesirable" (ix ).[3] Having accepted the task, I had to accept these quite emphatic constraints. Bateson, as a strong 1920s Socialist, looked for sound scholarship, combined with a presentation which would not alarm a readership such as the members of the Workers' Educational Association, aware of their lack of academic background but eager to remedy it. Those who want to know what Blake actually put down on paper can look up Erdman or Bentley. Otherwise, does it matter? Similar disputations of "authenticity" have enlivened musical theory and performance for a generation now, but the opposing sides have at last accepted a state of coexistence. A comparison with the treatment over the years of the texts of Shakespeare and the Bible is somewhat more relevant.

12. In Shakespeare's time, of course, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization were still somewhat in flux, and modern editors cannot possibly identify any text as uniquely authentic. Editors, therefore, make their own choices among the various quartos and folios and their own preferences. The Bible, a text regarded as sacred, and under strict royal copyright from the start, is in a very different, strictly controlled, category, requiring exact reproduction; but though the actual words are sacred, consistent and extensive modernization of the spelling appears as early as 1638. Printers of the day plainly did not think such things mattered, and small variations in orthography continued for centuries, in a quiet acceptance of modernizing practices.

13. Considering two of Blake's passages for their punctuation, as he published them:[4]

> I am your Rational Power O Albion & that Human Form
> You call Divine. is but a Worm seventy inches long
> That creeps forth in a night & is dried in the morning sun
> In fortuitous concourse of memorys accumulated & lost
> It plows the Earth in its own conceit, it overwhelms the Hills
> Beneath its winding labyrinths. till a stone of the brook
> Stops it in midst of its pride among its hills & rivers
> Battersea & Chelsea mourn. London & Canterbury tremble
> Their place shall not be found as the wind passes over
> The ancient Cities of the Earth remove as a traveler [. . .]
> (*Jerusalem* pl. 29/33:5-14)

This passage typically disregards rule, and the lack of precise punctuation results in some confusion of sense. After "Divine" and "labyrinths," Blake has a tiny dot, a mark which often does duty either for a comma or for a full stop. In both cases, the sense is clear, and calls for a comma. After "lost," and after "rivers," he has nothing, and raises the question, Which is "fortuitous," the "ploughing," or the "creeping forth," its adult activity? A full stop after "sun" determines one reading; after "lost," another. Again, a matter of choice, not helped by Blake's lack of marking.

14. Again, in *Milton* pl. 22:56-59:

> And these are the cries of the Churches before the two witnesses
> Faith in God the dear Saviour who took on the likeness of men:
> Becoming obedient to death. even the death of the Cross
> The Witnesses lie dead in the street of the Great City [. . .]

This echoes Paul's words in Philippians 2:7-8: "[Jesus] [. . .] took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: / And [. . .] humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Blake's dot after "death" corresponds to the Bible's comma; he has a colon after "men," as does the Bible (which is prodigal with colons), but nothing after "Cross" or "City." Is this *the witnesses' faith*, or do the *cries* begin at, "Faith in God [. . .]"? Keynes puts a full stop after "Witnesses," implying (but not indicating) that the cry begins at "Faith" (506). The quotation from Philippians means that the cry must begin at either "Faith" or "The Witnesses lie dead." Keynes chose the first, but the reference to Whitefield and Wesley, and the rhythm, surely call for continuity of the phrase, "before the two witnesses' faith in God [. . .]." But Blake does not mark the beginning of the cry and leaves it to us to decide.

15. Do these minutiae of punctuation matter? Often, reading from the facsimile, one has to ask, When is a Blake colon an exclamation mark? Usually the sense is clear, but at times, in passages such as these, the typography confuses the sense.

16. As to Blake's profuse use of capital initials: my own brief researches among such "ordinary readers" as admirers of J. K. Rowling's works, indicate that they are not after all alienated by the extensive use of capital initials in such phrases as "Master of the Dark Arts," but Blake's usage has created another area of dispute. Often they seem to be merely random:

> In Beulah the Feminine
> Emanations Create Space, the Masculine Create Time, & plant
> The Seeds of beauty in the Space.

(*Jerusalem* pl. 85:7-9)

The word "Create" is always capitalized in the late poems, where, like "Emanation," it carries a special meaning; and so, in this context, do "Space" and "Time." In this particular passage, the nature of "Feminine" and "Masculine" is central; in short, almost every word here is capitalized for a reason. But why "Seeds" and not "beauty"? In places, such as the Preface to *Milton,* almost every word seems to bear a capital initial, apparently simply because of Blake's enthusiasm at the moment. (See also the lines from *Milton* pls. 2-3 quoted below.)

17. In *Jerusalem* pl. 47:16-17, Blake agonizes over Albion's collapse: "Shudder not: but Write. & the hand of God will assist you: / Therefore I write Albions last words. Hope is banishd from me." In Blake's usual practice, one might expect the word "hand" to be capitalized, rather than "Write"; but here Blake stresses the word "Shudder," and the feeling that Albion's words are almost too painful to record. Thus capital initials may be used to express powerful feelings, of enthusiasm, anger, or fear.

18. One further detail: Blake rarely uses *brackets* (e.g., *Milton* pl. 8:4, *Jerusalem* pl. 18:7); but that he occasionally does may justify an editor in adding them. Sometimes his unmarked digressions can cause uncertainty, as in pls. 73-74 of *Jerusalem,* depicting the chaotic state of Albion in a sequence of disconnected passages, not easily explicated, whose inconsequentiality may easily entangle the unsuspecting reader. Brackets seem here the only practical way of warning the reader, and of separating some segments from the rest, so as to make their discreteness relatively clear.

19. From time to time, an editor, in pursuit of clarity and ease of understanding, has to take minor liberties with the minutiae of Blake's text. Somewhere between Erdman's and Bentley's textual scholarship and Bateson's educational aims there may be safe ground for an editor, but it is advisable to choose the policy of typographical amendment carefully—and to wear a Kevlar waistcoat.

20. These typographical details may not often affect the sense, but they do affect the pronunciation, and therefore the rhythm and flow of the verse. It is important to know how many syllables Blake intended. To take an obvious example: the word *walked* is, in modern speech, one syllable. In poetry, the word, so printed, may be one syllable or two. In most cases, the rhythm makes the answer self-evident, but not always. In the past, when the habit of pronouncing the *-ed* was still remembered, it was common to mark the short pronunciation as *walk'd*. Blake sometimes wrote one form, sometimes the other, and I am not yet convinced that he followed any regular practice, still less a rule, and, seeing no guide in the matter, I cut the Gordian knot and printed "walked" in all cases, leaving the reader's ear to decide (despite David Fuller's disapproval.[5]

21. In a period when scansion involved the counting of syllables in the old familiar manner, poetic texts often marked out mute syllables, as in *walk'd*. The Scottish metrical psalms, printed at the end of many Bibles, are a good example of strict observance. The popular ballad stanza, the "fourteener," is divided eight-and-six, the first word of the second half not capitalized:

    And when by thee he shall be judg'd,
        let him condemned be;
    And let his pray'r be turn'd to sin,
        when he shall turn to thee.
                    Ps. 109:21-24.

    When me your fathers tempt'd and prov'd,
        and did my working see
    Ev'n for the space of forty years

this race hath grieved me:
Ps. 9:29-32.

Any spelling with *-ed* ("condemned") indicates a pronounced syllable; to avoid unwanted syllables, the raised comma is substituted for *e,* even at the expense of such impossible pronunciation as *tempt'd*. Not all publishers were as precise:

> "You're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
> Give me your tool" to him I said;
> And at the word right gladly he
> Receiv'd my proffer'd aid.[6] (Wordsworth 104)

"Overtasked," but "proffer'd." All that can be said is that a convention, not rigidly followed by all, did exist. It remains for editors to follow Blake, or not, as they think best. Unfortunately, Blake's works have no such exactitude, and the editor is left to choose: to copy Blake's script exactly; to ignore Blake and follow modern conventions throughout; or to follow Blake wherever possible, with amendments to help with reading aloud.

22. Fortunately, editors, handling texts on paper, rarely need to touch on specific pronunciations. Three spring to mind: the names Los, Urizen, and Vala. Is *Los* to be rhymed with *cross*, or with *hose*, with an unvoiced *s*? (I know of no such words in English, except some personal or place names, such as the name *Voce* and the place *Wrose*.) Admittedly with no more evidence than this, I have always taken *Los* to be homophonic with *loss*. American speakers, unaccustomed to the English short first vowel, tend to settle for the second. There one must leave it, to personal choice.

23. Kathleen Raine derives the name *Urizen* from *horizon*, with overtones of *your reason* (2:56). Both imply a stress on the second syllable, but differ as to the vowel: a rhyme with *eyes,* or with *ease*? By once again reading aloud, in this case from most of *The Book of Urizen*, I find that stress on the first syllable, *U,* is the only way to make the verse scan; the *i* then loses stress, and all is clear.

24. Like many people, I tended to pronounce *Vala* as *Vahla*, which seems more natural for an exotic name; but since it was pointed out (I think by Bentley, but I cannot fix on the place) that she is commonly identified with the *veil*, I have accepted the name as *veil+a*. In this case, the rhythm gives no help.

25. These are only three cases, but they illustrate the importance of small matters for the rhythm and flow of Blake's verse. He was a lower-middle-class Londoner: I think of his accent as something like John Major's, allowing late eighteenth-century differences. The pronounced *r,* for example, went out of English usage around that time, except in various western areas (Somerset and Manchester spring to mind); but did Cockney Blake, brought up in the 1760s, still sound the *r* in *Enitharmon*? Can anyone tell? Most editors can find themselves lucky not to have to pronounce on the matter, but it is genuinely important that readers be helped to feel the flow of the verse—and the lack of either, where Blake may intend it so.

26. Editors do tamper in these various ways with the minutiae of text that Blake left behind. The only justification with Blake's text is that to do so brings us nearer to Blake, and releases us from tripping over the manifold minor obstacles to understanding that Blake was not aware of leaving. But it must be done with care and judgment.

27. Setting aside Blake's text itself, dating is one element that is rarely debated. That is not to say that dates are not discussed and disputed (although Viscomi's work, especially in *Blake and the Idea of the Book*, [7] has largely silenced debate for the time being), but that individual editors do not in general find

themselves in the midst of such arguments over dating as face them in orthography. Yet most editions are arranged in an accepted order of dating. An exception is Erdman's edition, arranged first by genre and then by date. Perhaps we should pay more attention to this.

28. The process of dating creates gridlines for events around us. More valuable is our perception of the rate and extent of the passing years. The importance of the opening years of the French Revolution in Blake's life is of course thoroughly covered; but we tend to miss the scale of events. It is easy to run the years of 1789 to 1793 together; we should reflect on the fact that three years are a substantial period, and that the years 1789 to 1792 were not one single summer of upheaval, but an extended period of politicking, which for many (Blake, Wordsworth, and co.) was three and a half years of "blissful dawn" to be alive in. But much can happen, and did, in three and a half years, when a brave new world is emerging. Then in 1792 came turmoil; but in the years after 1794, the hopeful days seemed long past, the government made more unpopular laws, a dreary, unsuccessful war dragged on, and prices went up.

29. Consider these years in the life of Blake himself. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* reads like the work of a youthful iconoclast; yet he was about 33 when he wrote it, not usually the age of an *enfant terrible*. And we may debate the dating of *Vala,* from its beginnings in 1795-96 to its abandonment—when? 1812? We should consider the fact that, when he began this grand enterprise, Blake was still in his middle 30s, an age when one may still hold ambitions of coming greatness; but he was in his 50s when he left it aside, an age when it may seem clear after all that the great days are done, and it is time to settle for less. To generalize is to be an idiot, but perhaps we may add that, as 70 approaches, one may not care any more, and take on some large tasks, such as the Book of Job, or the *Divine Comedy* which life has become. Certainly, an editor should be aware of the personal meaning of time.

30. It would generally be agreed, but I do not propose to argue, that, important though typographical questions are, the real core of an editor's task is to examine the substance rather than the mechanics of Blake's work, those elements that a reader is likely to find difficult to understand, so as to make them understandable, a very different, delicate, and more sensitive matter.

31. Readers need no editor to make up their minds for them whether or not to accept the arguments of a critic who writes with a particular bias. Was Heathcliff a proto-Marxist, the archetypal capitalist, a tragic Byronic hero—or none of the above? The material an editor presents must at least try to be more objective. Editing as tendentiously as Soviet editors of Dickens in the 1950s, to demonstrate his basic Marx-Leninism, would invalidate an edition.

32. My own task began before the floodgates of Blake scholarship had been opened. Important books had been written by Foster Damon, Martin Schorer, Northrop Frye, David Erdman, and others, but they were heavyweights; the mass of small detail that has informed Blake scholarship since the late 1960s had barely begun to appear. It seemed to me that information rather than interpretation was most needed. The aim was to avoid giving the work any particular coloring of my own, and to provide, as far as possible, everything necessary to enable readers to interpret Blake for themselves.

33. This is more easily said than done. We go in pursuit of completeness and are faced with almost infinite information. Dealing with Chaucer, we would find ourselves in a remote world of which even now our information is restricted; with Pope, we would find a stable world, a small circle of London cognoscenti, the defined world of his friends and enemies, the dominance of well-known master works. Blake's eye scanned a world in explosion, and the universe beyond, helped not only by Milton, Bunyan, the recesses of the Bible, the fascination of obscurer writers on spiritual themes, and also by such apparently unrelated subjects such as his introduction through Basire and Bryant to the age's fascination with Druidical and Eastern antiquity, taking him on to Welsh nationalism and its poetry.

34. Any attempt, then, to present readers of Blake with all the necessary information that they might lack opens Pandora's Box. Blake's Autolycus mind snapped up all manner of fascinating wayside material in any kind of order. It helps the editor also to be something of an Autolycus; a specialized fixation in a certain direction may reveal a great deal of valuable truths, but may at the same time exclude much more. We need a focus, but however objectively we try to select our necessary material, we all have some political, historical, or philosophical drift to our thoughts that will direct the kind of notes we provide.

35. In the past, commentators on Blake tried to find a focus in him through a set world of symbols in word and design. It was too easy to take the line literally, "I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans" (*Jerusalem* pl. 10:20), and thereafter concentrate on finding and deciphering the golden elixir of a comprehensive system. Damon declared, "Blake heartily embraced Thomas Taylor's teaching that the Ancients concealed the Divine Vision under symbols ... Blake deliberately confused his prophetic books" (x). Reading Blake became somewhat like reading a newspaper in a foreign language, needing constantly to look up the meaning of words and images one by one. The reader soon loses touch with the much more productive approach to Blake's difficulties, in simply asking the question, "What's *happening*?"

36. Kathleen Raine's emphasis in *Blake & Tradition* on the Neo-Platonism of Thomas Taylor was original and very valuable, and the vein is not worked out. Yet Kathleen Raine herself, in her concentration on one area, and silent but almost complete rejection of Blake's political concerns, diminishes the value of her own work. David V. Erdman's *Prophet against Empire* was a very necessary revelation of Blake's political enthusiasms, although he is sometimes inclined to find oppressed radicals under every bush. To state that the victory song of *Vala* p. 13 "evidently celebrates" the victories at Alexandria and Acre, is surely rash (Erdman 319). We all have to avoid the danger that "everything the reader needs (or wants) to know" becomes "what the editor thinks the reader needs to know." Fortunately, we seem to be past the era of the single-minded focus; Jon Mee[8] did not need to find one answer to the supposed Blake enigma.

37. Matters requiring enlightenment may fall into three groups. First, simple matters of fact; the second are facts that are more than facts; the third are those intertwined with images, perhaps based on simple experience, but are enravelled with others in all manner of insights. Examples of the first group are the London places familiar to Blake from his childhood, and listed in the poem introducing Chapter Two of *Jerusalem*: "the fields from Islington to Marybone" will surprise many modern readers, who will not find Willan's farm or the Green Man pub in the A to Z maps. Some images were more familiar then than now. Derby Peak (*Jerusalem* pls. 21:34; 57:7; 64:35) is still much climbed, but less fashionable than it was in 1812; modern readers may need the editor's prop to follow the allusion. Again, not all Blake readers will have read Erdman's identification of the orphanages near Blake's Lambeth home (290); and so the list continues.

38. Second are the details needing more than simple identification, having a deeper meaning for Blake. In *Vala* Night the Second l. 282 (p. 25:40), Luvah is "cast into the Furnaces of affliction and sealed." Modern readers of Blake are unlikely to know much about the general principles or actual practices of refining and casting iron in the eighteenth century. They need that information, and more, because this image of ferocious and fiery creation is just one of the images of the remaking of Luvah through suffering—such as the robes of blood, and the crushing of grapes in the vintage, echoing in the course of *Vala* and elsewhere. Likewise, the "Three Classes" referred to repeatedly in the first half of *Milton* are soon explained historically, but they carry a further meaning, demonstrating the ways in which people may respond to the demands of Imagination, so essential for Blake.

39. Annotating is not just a matter of detail. Blake's vision easily extends itself into widespread ranges of

experience. Blind spots are difficult to clarify; they may turn out to be extensive dark clouds. Complex ideas and images arrive singly, and may by blending make a problem of their own. The editor must attempt to balance the two.

40. For example, on opening *Milton*, the first-line allusion to Beulah could make any reader of *A Pilgrim's Progress* feel at home; but almost at once, in the tenth line, what is to be made of "the False tongue, vegetated / Beneath your land of shadows"—and then Milton's six-fold Emanation, and Enitharmon's looms? We can settle down to a Bard's Song about a farming community of Palamabron, Rintrah, and co., even including Satan, but then be puzzled by the recurrence of familiar lines from *The Book of Urizen*. Where are we, and where are we going?

41. A first reading of the whole poem leaves one with the impression of Milton's traveling through the abyss—yet he seems to be on at least two journeys, and at the same time lying in a coma. What at one time seems to be straightforward narrative of travel turns out to be very uncertain indeed. It is only when the nature of Time in *Milton* is recognized that the contradictions fall into place. This is a timeless universe; therefore Milton can travel by different routes, and lie in one bed, at the same time. It is an infinite, as well as a timeless universe.

42. Consider more precisely pls. 6-20. After the epic opening, Blake opens the poem by introducing the Three Classes:

> Three Classes are Created by the Hammer of Los & Woven [. . .]
> By Enitharmons Looms [. . .]
>
> The first. the Elect from before the foundation of the World.
> The Second. The Redeemed. The Third. The Reprobate & form'd
> To destruction from the mothers womb:
> follow with me my plow.
> Of the first class was Satan. With incomparable mildness [. . .]
> (*Milton* pls. 2:26-3:1; 7:2-5)

Easily missed by an editor covering all this: the three classes of predestined souls, as devised by St. Augustine, and made notorious through Calvin, and then the echo of Blake's experience with Hayley about to follow, is the irony of the next line, on Satan's first appearance since *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, thirteen years ago: "Of the first class was Satan: with incomparable mildness [. . .]." Satan was once the heroic anti-Messiah; now he is the "virtuous" hypocrite. Hence, surely, the insistence of "follow with me." It leads the reader of 1800, besides, to the startling labeling of Satan blithely, and without comment, as of "the Elect." This is the old, calmly iconoclastic Blake of *Marriage* back again; but the editor's concern with explicable detail can easily ignore the irony of this line.

43. Besides keeping up with such detail, the editor must be concerned to display the big picture. The depiction of personal irritation with Hayley is noteworthy, but not the function of the Bard's Song, which continues to develop towards its prime purpose, to lead us to the point where Milton determines to return to Earth to redeem the errors of his previous life. In the process, new images appear, whose importance ranges throughout *Milton*, and well beyond. In particular, there is the Couch of Death, on which Albion will sleep in a coma until "the time of the End" (*Jerusalem* pl. 7:64), here almost incidental to the scene of the Great Assembly the Bard is singing about, but the foundation image of his two last great poems, and the pattern of the couch on which the shadow of Milton sleeps as his soul journeys towards his meeting with William Blake. Besides this, the Bard introduces the concepts of *Contraction* and *Opacity* (pl. 13:20), and *Time* and *Space* (pls. 8:43, 13:16), as elements of the mortal world, ruled respectively by Los and Enitharmon, for the protection of souls in the mortal world.

44. These motifs may appear as details, but they become more than details, extending and becoming woven into strands across all later works, poetic or visual. They may not be essential to the plot, but they are essential Blake. It is a major feature of his work—not only his writing—that certain motifs recur throughout, especially but not solely in his three major epics, in which they are at least as important as the narrative.

45. The Atlantic, for example, does not appear often. It is the barrier between king and rebels in *America*, and, apart from the seventeen occurrences in *Jerusalem,* chiefly in Chapter Two, scarcely seems worth comment. Yet in those appearances it has developed into an ominously threatening image. For Blake's contemporaries, the Atlantic was not merely an obstacle to be routinely crossed; it was the relentless "old grey widow-maker" that threatened all, and drowned many travelers west- and east-bound. Blake took this "boundless ocean, bottomless, / Of grey obscurity, filled with clouds & rocks & whirling waters" (*Jerusalem* pl. 39:14-15), and made it an emblem of the brutal force of unimaginative despair that divides peoples from one another, and the soul within itself (*Jerusalem* pl. 38*:*65-70).

46. And apparently gentle images may carry great force. The most striking of these is the *garment,* which reaches its most fearsome expression in the Covering Cherub, expressing as an image his late concept of *States*, outlined in the *Canterbury Tales* Prospectus (Notebook, pp. 79-80) in the commentary on *A Vision of the Last Judgement*, where he makes the distinction between the apparent character, the behavior, the deeds which individuals clothe themselves with, but which are emphatically not the personality itself. The *State* is a garment, a covering; when discarded, it reveals the real person it hides. So in *The Marriage*, pls. 17-19, the fearsome serpent vanishes in the face of Blake's nonchalance, and the Covering Cherub vanishes at the climax of both *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. He has no substance; he is a shadow, the temporary State put on by an Individual. Blake states the concept in full in the late pl. 18 of *Milton*, and succinctly and effectively in the verse *To the Accuser*, epilogue to *For the Sexes*:

> Truly My Satan thou art but a Dunce,
> And dost not know the Garment from the Man:
> Every Harlot was a Virgin once,
> Nor canst thou ever change Kate into Nan.
> We must look for the Individual, not the Shadow.

I have not mentioned the great poetry in the added pls. 10 and 18 of *Milton*, nor the set of full-page illustrations which make a dramatic commentary on the whole. To some extent, Blake's books accumulate as did the books of the major prophets: an original core is filled out by relevant material from elsewhere. Blake could never "murder his darlings," to leave out any inspiration, so that his books sometimes spread like an overgrown garden, full of obscuring undergrowth and unexpected brilliances, with pathways like those behind Alice's Looking-glass, aiming at one center and arriving at another. It is not easy to follow through the many digressions. Yet this is what the poem is about, and it is the editor's job to find ways to clarify by the broad outline and the manifold details.

47. There are other motifs besides these: those of the designs. A most striking element of *The Book of Urizen*, and other works of the period, is the number of claustrophobic designs: figures crushed under rocks, trapped in caves, trapped by coiling serpents. Some of the designs in *Job* express the same sensations. Against these are the joyful designs of figures flying free in the air: and all the variations in between which reflect the poetic material they illustrate.

48. In all this, the editor must keep head above water. The process is multifarious, not to be set out in a single line. Blake faces an editor with many minutiae to explain, features to elucidate, the wider perspective to be shown, whether of a poem or of Blake's whole work, the strands that reach across poems, and at times by pointing to the idiosyncrasies to reveal the poet within the poems. There is no

simple formula for it. Success in the endeavor to clarify will not come from a counting-house procedure of working one's way through and checking off all points of interest and obscurity. That hardly needs to be said. The truth surely is that there are too many facets at any point in Blake's work for it to be possible to elucidate every detail; and I have barely touched upon the intrinsic importance of his designs. The best thing an editor can hope for is to light a way through a work, to open out the manifold variety within it, and to stimulate the reader to go on searching. Not to analyze but to absorb, because Blake finds no bounds to the vortex of Heaven in a wild flower.

## Notes

1 David V. Erdman, ed., *The Illuminated Blake* (New York: Anchor Books, 1974).

2 David Bindman, *William Blake: The Complete Illuminated Books* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000).

3 From the introductory Note by F. W. Bateson, General ed., Longman Annotated English Poets, in *The Complete Poems of William Blake* (1971). This note was reproduced in the 2nd ed. (1989) but not in the 3rd ed. (2007).

4 Quotations from Blake's works here follow the punctuation, etc., found in the Tate facsimile.

5 See Fuller 25-26, where he discusses this matter more fully.

6 In the same stanza, the words "sever'd" and "endevour'd" also appear.

7 Joseph Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton UP, 1993).

8 Jon Mee, *Dangerous Enthusiasm* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1992).

## Works Cited


Damon, S. Foster. *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake*. Providence, R.I.: Brown UP, 1965.

Erdman, David V. *Blake: Prophet against Empire*. 3rd ed. New York: Dover, 1977.

Fuller, David. *William Blake: Selected Poetry and Prose*. Harlow: Longman-Pearson Education Limited, 2000.

*The Holy Bible*. Edinburgh: Alexander Kincaid, 1775.

Keynes, G. L., ed. *The Complete Writings of William Blake*. London: Nonesuch P, 1957.

Raine, Kathleen. *Blake & Tradition*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969.

Stevenson, W. H., ed. *The Complete Poems of William Blake*. Text by D. V. Erdman. 1st ed. Longman Annotated English Poets. London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1971.

Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads*. Bristol: Biggs & Cottle, 1798.

# Editing and Reading Blake

## Contingencies, Exigencies, and Editorial Praxis: The Case of the 2008 Norton Blake

**Mary Lynn Johnson**

1. As a material object in the sublunary world, the second edition of Johnson and Grant's *Blake's Poetry and Designs* (2008) in the Norton Critical Editions series is the product of trade-offs. The only way that my co-editor John E. Grant (husband Jack) and I could bring the 1979 Norton Critical Edition of Blake into the twenty-first century—not only updating scholarly references but also coordinating with Internet resources and expanding the selection of Blake's illuminated work to include the full verbal portion of *Jerusalem* in a finite number of bound sheets of printed paper—was to redesign the book from scratch, not just according to our own lights, of course, but in conformity with editorial and fiscal policies of the current Norton series. Because ours is the only Norton Critical Edition in which visual images are a non-negotiable essential—as reflected in the book's title—even a permissions budget expanded by 40 percent (from $2,500 to $3,500) was exhausted before we had finished acquiring the images and well before we had finalized the revised selection of critical essays. That one pot of money, split 50-50 between publisher and editors (as in the first edition), had to supply not only publication fees for base texts, essays, and designs but also all library, museum and/or commercial imaging services and all art-production costs (true also of the first edition). Our solution (as with the first edition) was simply to pay for what we could up front, out of pocket, until we were in the ballpark of $3,500, and to defer receiving royalties indefinitely to cover the rest—and we have absolutely no regrets about that self-subvention. The current Norton Blake now includes the full textual portion of Blake's entire body of work in illuminated printing, with the sole exception of the emblem captions in *The Gates of Paradise*, as well as a generous selection of his unpublished poetry and prose. And despite the cut-back from 32 to 16 color plates, the new edition still offers 17 images in color (counting the cover) and 86 in black and white (up from 80 in 1979), thus continuing to provide a sufficiently solid introduction to the visual side of Blake's achievement to motivate current and future students to explore resources that, since 1979, have become available online and in libraries, most notably in the *William Blake Archive* and in the Blake Trust / Tate / Princeton scholarly facsimile editions of the illuminated books. Even the first edition's paperback cover portrait of Blake from the collection of Robert N. Essick, now recognized as a self-portrait, remains visible as a thumbnail on the back cover of the 2008 Norton Blake.

2. But many of the trade-offs, or in Morris Eaves's telling phrase, "editorial settlements," were exasperatingly difficult to negotiate.[1] The most forthright compromise to be made by any editor of Blake is that necessitated by the irremediable incommensurability of the author/artist's content and the editor/publisher's container. All words extracted from Blake's unique handmade, home-printed illuminated books must be heavily processed if they are to appear—in any form—between the covers of an ordinary mass-produced (and salable) book or on a computer screen. The mismatch between Blake's etched text (or textual etching) and conventional typography affects every aspect of the appearance of the published page: everything from layout to font to lineation to hyphenation. As there are no typographical equivalents for this artist's "hybrid question marks over comma bases, oblong periods, [. . .]. elongated colons [. . .] short exclamation points [. . .] lopped-off question marks" and "birds, butterflies, fish, squiggles and plant tendrils that serve as animated textual markers" (Norton Blake 2008, 601), even the ideally non-interventionist texts of Erdman, Bentley, the Blake Trust facsimiles under the general editorship of Bindman, and the transcripts accompanying images in the Eaves-Essick-Viscomi *Blake Archive* must make do with rough approximations. Beyond that, editors of texts designed to appeal to first-time readers of Blake must decide how much further to go with

alterations, depending on the degree of normalization or modernization preferred by the editor or imposed by series guidelines.[2]

3. The 2008 Norton Blake was also shaped by subsurface trade-offs required (as in all editions of all authors) by the "practical and material demands" addressed in Jerome J. McGann's theory of the "editorial horizon" of "production and reproduction" within which all texts reside (*Textual Condition* 21).[3] In the making of any edition, unpredictable behind-the-scenes compromises may be occasioned whenever editorial aspirations collide with brute facts of page allowances, physical dimensions, paper stock, rights and permissions budgets, house style, publishers' policies, design and series constraints, technological limits, subcontractors' specifications and schedules—whatever may constitute the McGannian "material and institutional conditions" and "social considerations" that happen to curve the peculiar horizon of one's own edition toward the earth (21). This reality is confirmed in Rachel Malik's just-emerging theory of "horizons of the publishable," which examines publishing as "a set of historical processes and practices—composition, editing, design and illustration, production, marketing and promotion, and distribution—and a set of relations with various other institutions—commercial, legal, educational, political, cultural, and, perhaps, above all, other media" (709); for Malik, the book is "a site where various publishing processes—writing, editing, design, marketing, production—intersect and conflict" (709). Although the pragmatic compromises entailed by horizons of the editable and the publishable—almost never, to my knowledge, aired in a forum such as this one[4]—always "become manifest and even imperative" (McGann, *Textual Condition* 21) to the editor or editors, they usually remain invisible to readers and reviewers. Even after the book is "in press," it sometimes happens that seat-of-the-pants editorial decisions profoundly affecting the character of the published edition must be taken in the anxious state brought on by intense spatial, temporal, technological, and budgetary pressures. In that furthest back room of the sausage-making factory, as editorial neuroses proliferate, it sometimes cannot be helped that scholarly, pedagogical, and book-production values fall slightly out of alignment. Because our own trade-offs in response to the fortuities and mundanities of book production came to dominate the end-stages of the preparation of the Norton Blake of 2008 in unforeseen ways that strongly affected its final content, up to and including the endpapers (as will be seen), this anecdotal case history dwells disproportionately on the influence of contingencies and exigencies upon our editorial praxis.

4. In the summer of 2004, while grappling with the immediate problem of working out the trade-offs necessary to represent Blake's illuminated books in conventional typeface, Jack and I signed up for Neil Fraistat's editing workshop at the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism (NASSR) conference in Boulder. "There seems to be no real model for what we are trying to do," I proclaimed by e-mail, a little pompously:

   > create a reader-friendly (but not normalized) text from multiple versions of an etched and often hand-retouched text, in a way that can be defended along the lines of standard (but adapted) editorial principles. To state those principles and our necessary deviations from them gets into something much longer than any student would ever need or want to know.

   After our draft statement of principles was critiqued by members of the workshop (as acknowledged in the new Preface [xii]), we boiled it down to a four-and-a-quarter-page account of "Textual Technicalities" tucked discreetly in the back of the book so as to put the information on record without scaring off actual first-time readers of Blake who might begin by skimming the front matter. In that appendix, we admitted that our case-by-case editorial maneuvers were "wickedly complicated to explain" (599); what we did not say is that they are difficult to justify at all in the traditional language of textual scholarship. The truth is that almost every time we edited a page, we ran into yet another anomaly that called for a bit more tweaking of the obligatory editorial statement. With each re-write, practice drove principle, not the other way around. According to one of my self-pitying 2004 e-mails to

Morris Eaves, "[T]he more we work on it [the declaration of principles] the worse it gets, swinging back and forth between intelligibility and accuracy." In confessing to Joseph Viscomi the impossibility of living up to the ideals of his "Editing" chapter in *Blake and the Idea of the Book* (180-81), I whined:

> We try our best to compromise in a principled way and not cheat on punctuation, but then the text turns out so weird that we might as well just leave it alone—but we're supposed to be creating a reading text that will fit into the Norton [Critical Editions] series. Jack and I pass the same text back and forth for days without finalizing the punctuation.

I do not recall having this problem in preparing the first edition. One reason may be that, before I resigned from Georgia State University in 1978 to join Jack in Iowa, the discipline enforced by the time required to prepare and mail a typescript with a carbon copy imposed sensible limits on our exchanges of preliminary drafts.

5. The most verifiable of the comprehensive statements in "Textual Technicalities" is that we "adjusted standard editorial principles to suit our author and nudged special features of his work in the direction of our principles" (599). This bald-faced admission—which McGann, at the 2004 Fraistat workshop, assured us that an editor of a particular edition with a particular purpose is permitted to make "without shame"—would have horrified Irving Ribner, my first mentor in textual studies.[5] Back in the long afterglow of the golden age of the New Criticism at Tulane University, as the 1950s slipped into the 1960s and the whole point of graduate studies in English was still to get better at close, appreciative readings of well-wrought works of literary art, the requirements of Ribner's mandatory year-long Shakespeare seminar came as a shock. Before becoming engaged with the plays themselves, we first-year graduate students were to spend a whole semester learning how the text was established—studying Elizabethan secretary and court handwriting (in the pre-Xerox form of huge blueprints), Shakespeare's six signatures, "Hand D," good and bad quartos, compositors A and B, W. W. Greg and Fredson Bowers ("Frets and Bowers," in my first-day's notes). Our final assignment that term was the editing and annotation of a famous passage, a different one for each student, containing at least one notorious textual crux. Pure misery—but it worked. By mid-year, having internalized the best textual practices of that era, my classmates and I had developed a hearty scorn for unprincipled interventions of any sort. Without knowing quite when it happened, we had ceased to think of editing as the mechanical toil of unimaginative drudges incapable of achieving the heights conquered by masters of the more demanding craft of literary criticism. Conscientious editors had become heroes in our eyes, and we never again performed a heedless New Critical reading in a blissful state of textual naïveté.[6]

6. In the original proposal and sample headnotes for the first edition of *Blake's Poetry and Designs*, submitted and accepted in 1974, Jack and I said nothing about how we would go about developing a modernized reading text, as required by the Norton Critical Editions series, from the fruits of Keynes's and Erdman's labors and our own study of originals and facsimiles. Instead, we concentrated all our persuasive powers on urging the inclusion of enough images to give students an inkling of the interplay between verbal and visual elements in Blake's self-published work—a then-radical departure from Norton Critical Editions' textual norms for which, luckily, we won the support not only of our supervising editor but also of M. H. Abrams, the general editor and guiding spirit of the series. Once *Blake's Poetry and Designs* was in press, it turned out that the pre-computer difficulty of coordinating verbal and visual elements on monochrome pages slowed down publication by some years, and the mounting costs of the unusually large number of color plates, a whole signature of 32 pages, almost derailed the project entirely (until we altered the standard royalty arrangement). But on the textual side, everything moved forward smoothly. As indicated in our fairly straightforward prefatory "Note on the Texts" in the 1979 edition (xliii-xlv), we took a position close to that shared by David Fuller and W. H. Stevenson in their current editions: "For scholars, nothing short of a study of the punctuation of each separate copy in scattered museums and private collections can settle a fine point of textual analysis or

criticism. For most people, a readable text faithful to one of Blake's hand-made copies is not only sufficient but more desirable than a scholar's text" (xliii-xliv). Our concept of "readable," though, was considerably looser than that underlying the Fuller and the earlier Stevenson editions: "We have retained all of Blake's spellings, except for obvious slips, most of his capitalizations, and most of his odd punctuation" as part of "a compromise that preserves most of Blake's eccentricities while removing serious obstacles to understanding" (xliv).

7. By 2003, however, in the early planning of the second edition, we had come to feel that the 1979 edition was overpunctuated, a judgment overwhelmingly confirmed by Nelson Hilton and other online list members of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism (NASSR) who answered our open call for suggested revisions—as epitomized in a 2004 e-mail from Jennifer Michael: "My own feeling about punctuation is that less is more, and once you start editing, it's hard to justify making some emendations and not others [. . .]. [A] wonderful openness is lost when you change 'Little Lamb who made thee' to 'Little Lamb, who made thee?'." Everyone urged as little repunctuation as possible; no one, absolutely no one, argued for more—partly, I suspect, because today's readers, at least in the U.S.A., are thoroughly accustomed to decoding unpunctuated streams of electronically transmitted verbiage, as tactfully stated in our Introduction to the second edition: "Since the advent of e-mail and text messaging, Blake's irregularities have perhaps become less of a barrier than they once appeared [. . .]" (xiv). The tighter punctuation of the first edition is also to some degree attributable to a change in textual basis: in 1974 we started on the base of the Keynes text (for which permission had been granted at a remarkably affordable price), collated with Erdman and with our own images of and notes on the original source texts. In the second edition, for the illuminated writings, we started with the *Blake Archive*'s transcription of a single copy of each work as the base text, "checked against the *Archive*'s corresponding images and against printed facsimiles of the same and other versions of the same book" as well as against our own notes on originals, the Erdman and Bentley editions, and "the transcriptions, variants, and textual notes of the scholarly facsimile editions in the Blake Trust series" under Bindman's general editorship (599). Not surprisingly, it was much harder to add or change punctuation (second edition) than to adjust or remove it (first edition), as Keynes had already done so much of the work of modernization needed for the 1979 edition. For the second edition, the electronic foundation in *Blake Archive* transcriptions of specific unique versions of illuminated works supported our decision (at least in theory) to alter punctuation of most of these works (leaving *Songs* virtually untouched) "just enough to smooth the way for readers" (601)—meaning that we usually limit ourselves to supplying quotation marks, apostrophes for nouns in the possessive case, and (more consistently in the earlier works) conventional substitutes for Blake's most egregiously non-syntactically employed periods, or dots.[7] An added benefit of basing the text on the *Blake Archive* was that the *Archive* editors facilitated our acquisition of the *Archive*'s transcriptions in electronic form, making it possible for us to enter our alterations directly into a clean electronic copy,[8] so that this altered electronic text, after vetting by Norton's editorial department, could be sent directly into the computer of the Norton compositor, minimizing the need for keystrokes other than formatting commands. In return, as heavy users of the *Blake Archive*, we were occasionally able to catch minor errors in transcriptions and editorial notes, or scanning errors in the *Archive*'s Erdman text, for prompt correction by the editors.[9]

8. For editors of most poets, page and line numbering is probably the least of all worries; for editors of Blake, it is just one more raging headache. In the 2008 Norton edition of Blake, after much deliberation, we settled on an awkward hybrid of the plate and line system for the illuminated books adopted by Erdman (inherited from Keynes) and that of Bentley and the *Blake Archive*. Even though scholarly studies since 1965 have been, and probably will continue to be, keyed to plate numbers in the indispensable Erdman edition, which often assigns lowercase roman numerals to introductory elements and title pages and leaves some full-page designs unnumbered, the more logical and consistent all-arabic, all-plate numeration of Bentley and the *Blake Archive* is much easier to follow, and it is possible that its dissemination through the widely accessible and still growing *Blake Archive* will eventually

ensure its dominance.[10] In the current Norton edition, boxed numbers in boldface in the right margin correspond to Bentley and *Blake Archive* plate or "object" numbers (except for the special case of *Milton*), with the Erdman numbers, if different, appearing in ordinary type after a forward slash (600). Line numbers are another matter: they adhere to "the Keynes-Erdman-Bentley and Blake Trust convention of beginning with the first line of poetry after the title" rather than to the *Blake Archive*'s system of numbering "*all* lines, including titles, page and section numbers, carry-over lines, and catchwords" (600). It is something of a relief that the helter-skelter wraparound text of the single-plate illuminated work יה *[Yah] & his two Sons Satan & Adam*, written over, under, beside, and around engraved figures and on the base of the classical statue *The Laocoon*, and meant to be read in any order, or taken in all at once, cannot be assigned line numbers at all.[11]

9. Numeration systems aside, I pause on this seemingly minor editorial dilemma because lineation and layout have become a serious point of contention among Blake scholars, and because in the harsh praxis of editing, the stubborn facts of a book's physical dimensions not only limit the range of possible layouts but may also have an unforeseen effect on content. One of the very first respondents to our NASSR-list request for recommended revisions was Susan Wolfson, who asked in early 2003 "how you and Norton would feel about following the lineation of [B]lake's plates rather than the Erdman model of letterpress editions," as recommended in the Santa Cruz Study Group's review of Erdman's second edition[12]—and as observed in Wolfson's own critical and editorial practice.[13] Independently, our colleague Judith Pascoe concurred: "I like the way Wolfson preserves the plate layout in her edition. It does seem to make a difference, most obviously for something like 'All Religions are One,' but also for, say, 'The Fly.'" We opted to finesse the issue by attempting to make a pedagogical virtue out of space-saving necessity: "To illustrate the effects of different degrees of editorial mediation discussed in 'Textual Technicalities' (599), we approximate Blake's own page layout, spelling, and punctuation in *All Religions Are One*, but present *There is No Natural Religion* in conventional prose lines" (4). Because invading the margins of the relatively narrow Norton page was not an option, we could not preserve Blake's columnar presentation of "The Fly"; instead, we relegated the information to a footnote that implicitly rejects (without engaging) Wolfson's argument for reading the poem horizontally as well as vertically: "The sequence of stanzas in Blake's two-column layout, with the fifth stanza centered below, is unambiguous in the stanza numbering of his draft (Notebook 101)" (37).[14] Inconsistently, however, in the final three stanzas of the prefatory poem "To the Christians" (*Jerusalem* 77 [312]) and in Blake's letter-poem to Butts of 2 October 1800 (475-76), where interpretive stakes are lower or nonexistent, we preserved the double columns mainly because on these pages they saved space without cluttering the Norton layout.

10. The shift from manual to computerized page composition forced other kinds of trade-offs. The graphic hand-crafters of the first edition, who prepared camera-ready copy by laboriously cutting out selected portions of glossy prints with scissors for mounting in and around letterpress text on waxy paste-up sheets, managed to keep texts, related images, and footnotes on the same page at the occasional cost of leaving noticeable empty stretches (as on 23, 112, 118, 119, 121). The computer-driven composition of the second edition left no space wasted but sometimes edged footnotes a page away from their reference numbers (as with n. 7-8, 272-3), shifted Blake's "headpiece" or "tailpiece" designs to the opposite ends of Norton pages (as on 85, 92, 344), or separated designs from their plate numbers (as with the bottom design of *Jerusalem* **37**/33, which correctly appears with the top design on 256, but *after* plate number **38**/34). Quite understandably, we also lost the first edition's gracenote of a playfully hand-scalloped top border, following the lines of drapery, in the design for "The Cradle Song" (29); in proofs of the second edition, a digitally grayed-out area between pleats became successively lighter without ever being altogether eliminated, so the border was mercifully straitedged and squared off (20). In the end, the second edition's most successful interweaving of Blake's images with conventional typographic text is the "Argument" of *Marriage* 2 (68), for which designers had Bentley's edition (1.75) as a model.

11. Blake's illuminated books have an unusually large width-to-height ratio, meaning that when a page image is reproduced at maximum width in a book of average dimensions there will always be extra space on the vertical axis. On proofs of the color plates of the first edition, our editor noted the gaping white space remaining under the source caption of each design, and invited us to add something more. As the book was then already in production, and the text was needed immediately, we quickly came up with quotations from the poems, not intending to indicate that Blake's design illustrated the quoted lines, but probably giving that impression to many students. In the current Norton series, the "jumbo" format has a trim size of 5 $^5/_8$ by 9 $^1/_4$ inches, a half-inch wider and almost a full inch taller than the earlier 5 $^1/_8$ x 8 $^3/_8$ dimensions, so that reproductions of Blake's designs leave still more space at the bottom than in the first edition. For the color plates, only after we had written longer captions to help balance the composition did we learn that the current printer's specifications called for wider margins than in the 1979 edition, so that in some cases the published image—though of higher color quality—is actually *smaller* than in the first edition.

12. In the book as a whole, the space crunch to which I have repeatedly alluded was caused mainly by our determination to include the whole text of *Jerusalem* as the capstone of Blake's achievement, as I wrote the NASSR-list in 2003:

> I love the *Four Zoas* and agree that graduate students interested in our period should be encouraged to read it, but I don't consider it in any way the core document from which *Jerusalem* spins off. A reader/viewer can go chronologically through the works Blake published, from the Lambeth books to *Milton* (issued—printed and offered for sale by Blake—in four versions) to *Jerusalem* (issued in five and one-quarter versions), and more or less catch the drift, without ever having read (or even knowing of the existence of) *The Four Zoas* (extant solely in a single privately-held, never-issued, worked-over palimpsest manuscript interlayered with *Vala*). The textual history of both works is hugely complicated, with various overlaps in time, but as Morton [Paley] points out in his superb Princeton/Blake Trust edition, Blake did consider the fully colored 100-plate creation that we call Copy E "Finishd." He never said that about *FZ*, which by its very nature is unfinishable.

Early on, we understood that the second edition was to be no longer than the first. (Other recent Norton Critical Editions, the Shelley second edition of 2002 and the Coleridge of 2004, are considerably longer but are not weighed down by art reproduction and permissions expenses.) But in February 2004 we woke up to the fact that the 48-page selection from atypical pages of *Jerusalem* published in the 1979 edition had thrown off our calculation of the additional pages needed for this unusually text-heavy work. As I wailed to our editor:

> In 10-point type, but without yet the insertion of line numbers, the text alone (from *Blake Archive*) takes up 97 pages. Carry-over lines will increase the length. There are also substantial prose prefaces to each of the four chapters (which we already have in the existing edition). Then there are the introductory short-line lyrics (which Blake—and the 97-page *Blake Archive* transcript—placed in two columns); these, published in one column in our existing edition, also take a lot of space. When prose lines are numbered—which we do not propose, but it will give you an idea of how much text there is to cope with—the work is 4,553 lines long.
>
> Footnotes, even the most economical ones for only the very most difficult lines, will require even more pages. W. H. Stevenson's [2nd] Longman edition devotes 210 pages to *Jerusalem*. That's entirely reasonable, given the extreme difficulty of the poem, but of course we aren't thinking of anything like that level of detail in our notes. [. . .] [W]ith

strong self-discipline to control the impulse to annotate, we still need at least another 125 pages to put in the rest of the text plus notes.

> We know we can't have that many more pages. We are shortening our headnotes and looking for other cuts that won't detract from the usefulness of the edition.

It was at this point that we proposed cutting our 32 color plates down to 16. As our annotations of *Jerusalem* grew, further space calculations became such an obsession for me (the typist in our family) that our editor took the extraordinary step of having sample portions of the electronic typescript set by the Norton compositor for me to use as a guide. Even with this help (working with lines 25 picas in width, each pica being .167 of an inch and .4233 of a centimenter), I overcompensated in trimming content, as we were to discover during production after additional compression at the copyediting and proofreading stages.[15] By then it was too late to renegotiate any of the cut-backs in selections. What I should certainly have done in the first place, as advised by our editor, was not to worry about how much would fit on a page and simply let the experts do their jobs. Perhaps it is some consolation that our economizing on length (only 20½ 32-page signatures!) may make it possible, as time goes on, to keep the book's price, now $22.50 (http://books.wwnorton.com/books/detail.aspx?ID=9997), on a par with others of its vintage in the same series.

13. The most soul-trying trade-offs of all unexpectedly fell our way on April 14, 2006, a day after a tornado hit Iowa City and three months after we had mailed the final loose ends to our publisher. On that day we received the copyedited manuscript bristling with stick-on flags, most of which queried "interpretive or borderline-interpretive" annotations in our footnotes, in response to a general directive by our senior editor. To stay on the production schedule for the fall of '06, we were to return the manuscript on May 15. (Norton Critical Editions are published only in the fall of each year; and in spite of Jack's coming down with shingles just as we were set to hand-deliver the manuscript in November 2005, we were still on track.) Earlier in the spring, when we were expecting the manuscript a little sooner, we had made nonrefundable reservations to meet other Blake scholars and enthusiasts at the auction of Blake's rediscovered designs for Blair's *Grave* at Sotheby's New York—now right smack in the middle of the window for reviewing the copyedited manuscript. We got right to work, and within a half-hour I was beside myself, as I e-mailed the associate editor:

> Before we get deeply into responding to the flags, I have an important ground rule question [about the flag] attached to the following sentence in the Introduction, p. xiii, [which] has caused many footnotes to be queried:
>
> "We occasionally suggest our own interpretations of especially difficult or controversial points, with the intent to stimulate discussion, not to foreclose it."
>
> The flagged sentence repeats verbatim, with the addition of a qualifier, the first clause of a sentence on p. xxiv of the 1st ed.:
>
> "We have occasionally suggested our own interpretations of difficult or controversial points, but where possible we have simply presented the current critical consensus on each work."
>
> In both editions, this was intended to cover all annotations, whether headnotes or footnotes. Favorable reviews of 1/e approved this policy and praised our notes for providing needed information and guidance without crossing the line into restricting the reader's own efforts. If the NCE series has changed its policy since our 1/e came out, we didn't know about it.

> Blake is notoriously difficult, but some of his interpreters have put forward terribly far-fetched glosses on deeply puzzling passages, citing impossibly arcane sources. It would be nice to cite someone else's article for each passage of this sort, but sometimes there's nothing that serves the purpose. [. . .] It is discouraging to see what we regard as serviceable, useful notes carried over from 1/e, with updates, now flagged on suspicion of being too interpretive. [. . .]
>
> [. . . ] I assure you that we won't fight all these suggestions, but I don't want to waste time fighting any of them if there is no room for negotiation. What I find scariest, at the outset, is the unexpected clamp-down on footnotes that I think puzzled readers will see as explanatory, or cautiously suggestive, and I'm dismayed at trying to eradicate any smidgeon of interpretation in notes throughout the book.

After a confirmation that Norton had indeed changed its policy since 1979 (hardly surprising, but so long ago that the editorial staff had not thought to mention it), the ordeal of self-surgery without anaesthetic began. My co-editor, the first to admit that he makes footnotes longer, not shorter, switched his duties to full-time househusband while I spent the days and nights filling the manuscript-covered dining room table with botched attempts at slashing and burning, trying to undo in a month notes that had taken two years to write. In that frenzied state, I tried to wheedle sympathy from Donald H. Reiman, co-editor of the original and revised Norton Critical Edition of *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. Don sensibly replied on April 20:

> Every time I've had to revise any work I've thought was complete, the result has been better than the earlier version was. Perhaps we should think of Manzoni, who published *I Promesi Sposi* in the Lombard dialect, and then rewrote it in Tuscan so as to help unify and extend the value of Italian literature (as Alfieri had done before him). Blake studies are so volatile that a fact-based edition will have a longer shelf-life than an interpretive one [. . .].

In the end, in the cover letter to the revised manuscript, we were fairly successful in arguing for the preservation of flagged notes that we justified as explanations of Blake's "image clusters, mythic characters and plots, unusual political and religious ideas":

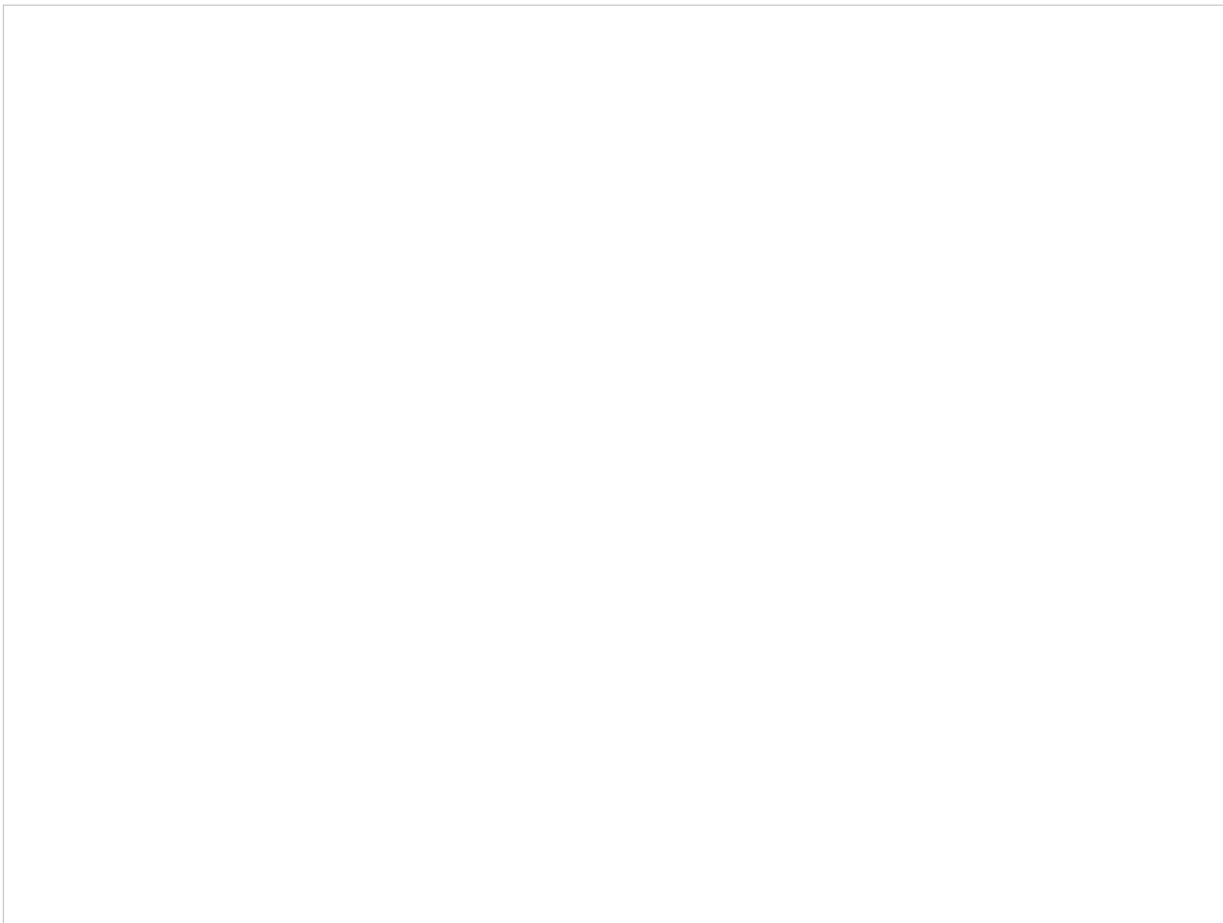
> Notes on Donne, Spenser, and Milton [in other Norton Critical Editions] explain things like the Ptolemaic universe or wordplay on obsolete meanings or identifications of principal allegorical figures or the Puritans' issues with the Church of England. With all three of these poets, there's something "out there," culturally and historically, to point to. Blake is just as allusive, but the allusions are to something he was making up as he went along [. . . ] a self-constructed literary myth—with its own bewildering cast of characters, vocabulary, and cosmos—and a personal philosophy or set of questions about beliefs. It is this private construction to which his middle and later works refer, just as if he were referring to something documentable like Apollo or the nine circles of Dante's Hell or Arthurian romance. Mostly, we leave students to sink or swim in this murk. But for very basic recurring characters, themes, and such (as listed in the Key Terms) we provide explanatory footnotes. Nothing we say in them is controversial among Blake scholars. Nothing imposes an interpretation on students; it provides only enough to orient them to read further.

Mercifully, the headnotes, with mini-essays covering both bibliographical and interpretive issues, escaped being flagged. The shortened, toughened-up, refootnoted manuscript finally went back to the editor in early June, two weeks behind schedule—and, to join Blake's Isaiah in discussing the fate of his unpreserved works, I can say that probably "none of equal value was lost. Ezekiel said the same of

his" (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 13, Norton 2008 p. 74).[16]

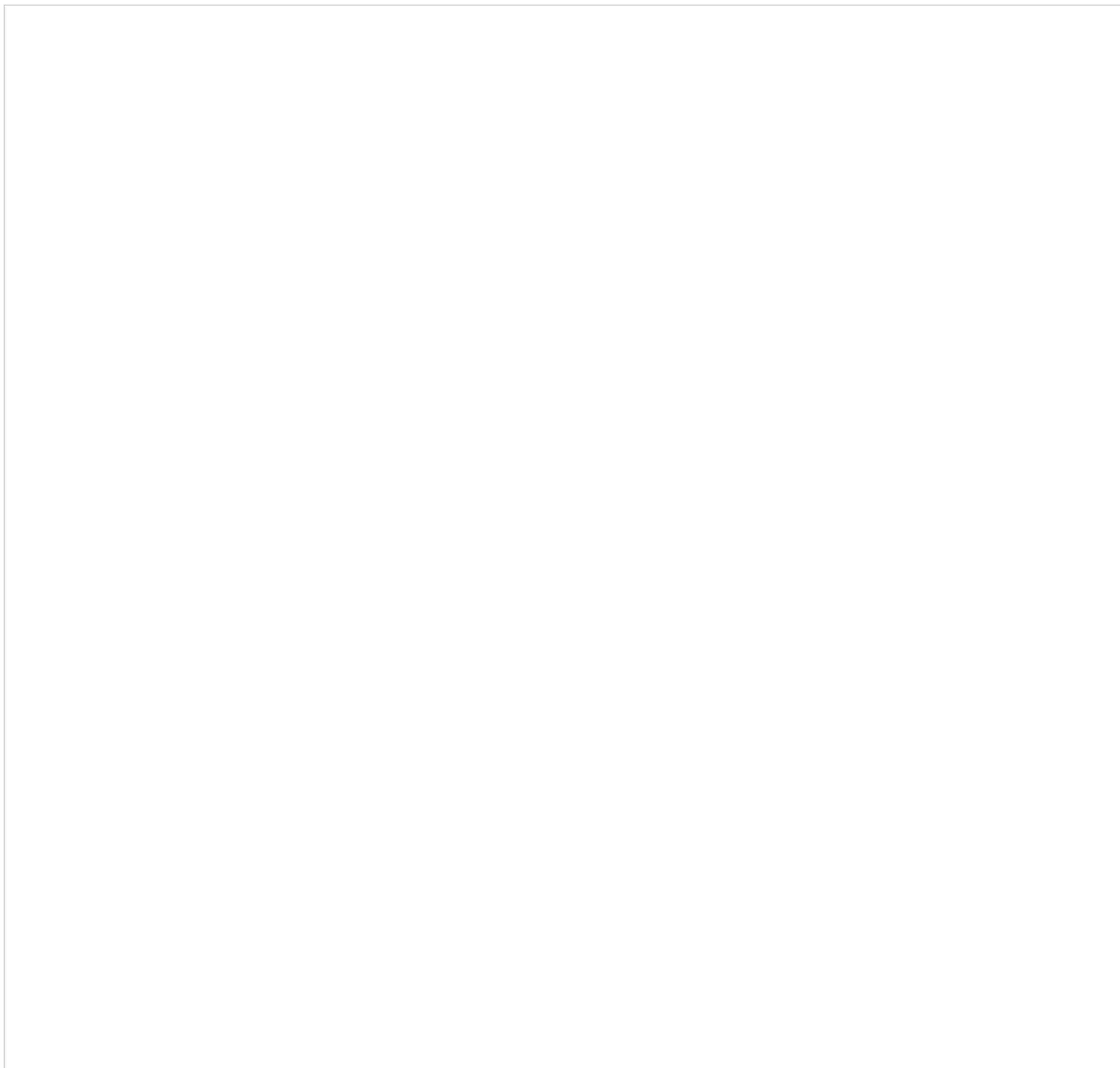
14. Given our spatial and financial constraints, our decision to include maps of "Blake's Britain," "The Holy Land," and "Blake's London," revised from the first edition, may seem unwise. Why any maps at all—and why all three in color, no less? Aren't they taking up resources that could otherwise have been devoted to Blake's own work? The answer is no: the maps fall into a category of their own, neither quite in the book nor out of it, just below the page-count radar. Until a very late stage, they were to be in black and white, as in the first edition, so at no time did they compete for any of the 16 slots in the color insert. Nor did they ever figure into the permissions budget, because the original cartographer, Karen McHaney, and I had created and copyrighted them ourselves, and there were no fees to pay. Even the slight drain on the page count vanished when Norton agreed to relegate them to the inside front and back covers and adjacent pages. That arrangement eventually proved impracticable, but as endpapers they are still outside the total page-count, hence unlisted in the Table of Contents, yet actually more convenient for reference than when they were in the front matter of the first edition.

15. Even in Blake's visionary universe, in which every atom of space potentially opens into eternity, maps of the physical world are important. Blake's blood- and soot-stained "chartered streets" are laid out in a particular area "near where the chartered Thames does flow." A good map can help students visualize the physical environment in which Blake lived and worked most of his life, from his birth on Broad Street until his death in Fountain Court—the London of cathedrals, charity schools, workhouses, hospitals, asylums, pleasure gardens, fields, palaces, and taverns that have made their way into his poetry. This is mappable terrain that the actor Niall McDevitt has recently celebrated by leading tourists on four-hour narrated jaunts through central London, as noted by the travel writer Nigel Richardson—the same terrain that James Bogan once traversed more broadly in a day-long effort, apparently using the first-edition map of "Blake's London," to retrace Los's spiral journey from the northern suburbs to London Stone in *Jerusalem*.



Without such a map, students confronting the full-text *Jerusalem* in the new Norton Blake, with its super-abundance of place-names, would be even more baffled than they must be. We hope that the three maps will help all readers, especially those in North America, begin to get at least their physical bearings as they find their way into the poem, winding the golden string into a ball.

16. If students want more details, as I hope they will, my cartographic sources are readily available on the Web. Richard Horwood's wonderful house-by-house map of London, 1792-99 is at Motco.com, and the cover image (www.motco.com/Map/81005/) even features Blake's Number 13, Hercules Buildings address, in the then-undeveloped section of Lambeth near Astley's home and circus. This part of the city has been well explored in recent work of Michael Phillips and is the setting for Tracy Chevalier's novel *Burning Bright*, discussed by Phillips and Chevalier at the "Blake at 250" conference in York in the summer of 2007. The other principal source is John Cary's 1818 *Plan of London and Westminster [. . .] and parts Adjacent*, placed on the Web by UCLA's Department of Epidemiology and Public Health in connection with John Snow, an anaestheologist and epidemiologist born in 1813: http://www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/Snow/1818map/1818map.htm.



But it's still helpful, I think, for students to keep the Norton map at hand, because in the detailed street plans the places of importance to Blake are hard to spot, and they're impossible to visualize in relation to the city as whole. When a section is blown up to show a certain address, other major landmarks are

out of sight; and when all of London is in view, the individual streets are too small to see.

17. In the first edition of *Blake Records*, Bentley reproduces good-sized portions of Horwood's map, in high resolution, with arrows pointing to Blake's addresses, but in the second edition he prints much smaller, lower-resolution excerpts, using numbers to mark some of the buildings and simply listing other addresses, indicating in which direction they are off the map. W. H. Stevenson reprints the three simplified London maps of his earlier editions in his magnificent third edition of *Blake: The Complete Poems* in the Longman Annotated English Poets series. These are a modern cartographer's renderings of London c. 1810 in three views—(a) the city and its suburbs; (b) a closer view, with street names, covering approximately the same area as the Norton Blake map, with an inset blow-up of Golden Square and a note that "The site of Regent Street is approximately that of Great Swallow Street"; and (c) the same perspective, cropped toward the east, without street names and with numbers indicating basically the same landmarks shown in the Norton map.

18. All these are helpful, but the Norton Blake map of London remains unique in presenting a single, uncluttered, trans-historical, topologically correct overview of Blake's city, with all major streets and landmarks labeled directly on the map. As I wrote in "Mapping Blake's London," this hybrid map was possible because my friend Karen McHaney, a professional cartographer, was willing to work with me collaboratively to plot Blake-related sites onto a street plan drawn from an overlay of Horwood's work of the 1790s on Cary's of 1810, benefiting from research of Paul Miner, Stanley Gardner, Bentley and others. Karen and I were in almost daily contact for several months and sometimes even worked side by side. Originally, for both "Blake's Britain" and "Blake's London," I had in mind the sort of map that distorts distances to make a point, such as Saul Steinberg's famous *New Yorker* cover, "View from Ninth Avenue," which came out in March 1976, about the time we were starting this project: http://strangemaps.wordpress.com/2007/02/07/72-the-world-as-seen-from-new-yorks-9th-avenue/. I was also inspired by a literary tourist's map of London that showed magnified drawings of places like the Tabard Inn connected by much smaller renderings of major roads and tube lines. But Karen's insistence on true scale opened my eyes to the physical realities of Blake's stomping grounds, and I finally understood, for example, that Willan's Farm and the Jew's-Harp House of his boyhood were situated within the royal preserve that John Nash was to incorporate into Regent's Park, under the grand renovation program of 1812-20—not further north as I had imagined them. I was prepared for a similar learning experience as I worked on revisions, though this time without a cartographic collaborator. This time, I just sent Web images of traditional Ordnance-Survey sorts of maps with verbal instructions about details to add or subtract from the three maps.

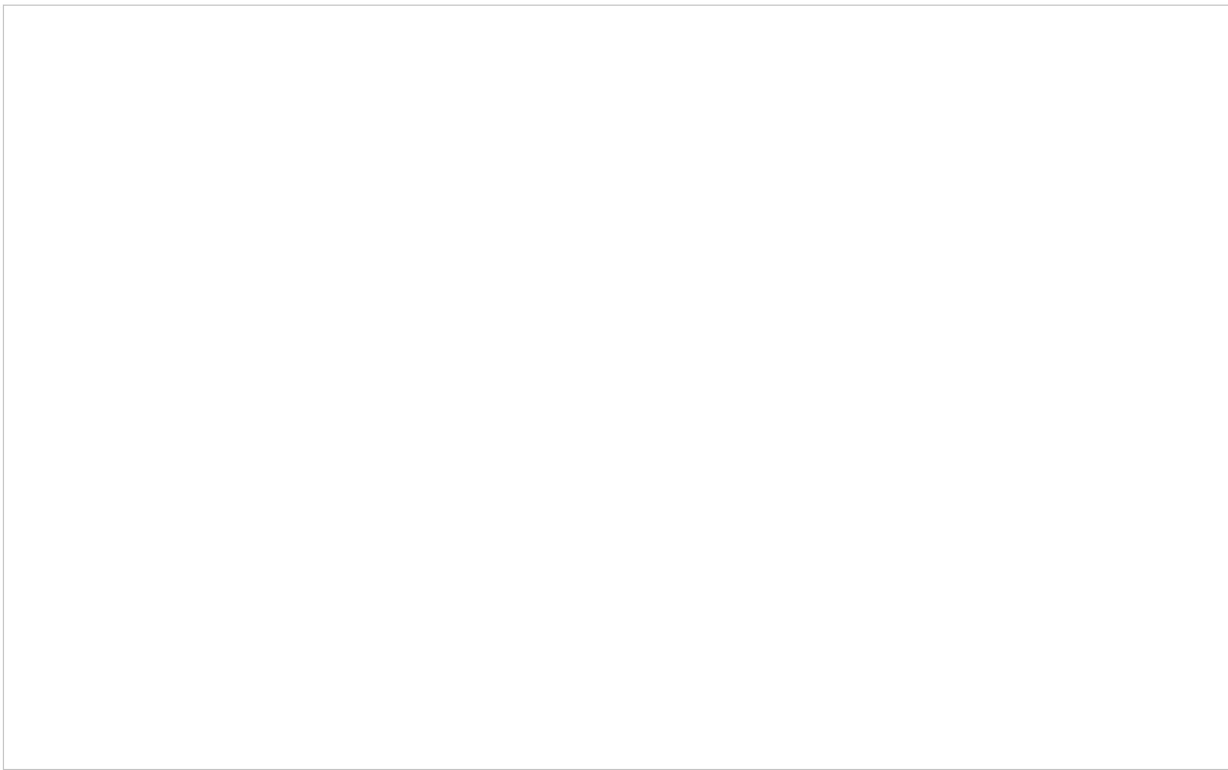
19. On February 12, 2007, during the first pass of proofreading, I asked the associate editor handling the book, "Do you know the status of the maps that needed changes, especially the 'Blake's Britain' map?"—which I singled out because it was the most heavily revised, taking advantage of the elongated new "jumbo" format by extending Scotland further north to add John o' Groats and other landmarks on the mainland coast and adding the northeastern coast of Ireland to show the beginning of the Giant's Causeway. Within weeks, that editor announced that he was moving to a different publishing house, and on April 26, his successor asked us simply to confirm the map placement on the inside front and back covers and the back endpaper. So far, so good, no surprises. But the next day, April 27, our senior editor wrote, "My sorrow at moving the maps inside (and losing the four-color option) is no more. How about running the maps in color as per below"- attaching the production manager's suggestion that we put them in endpapers, something that could be managed at a negligible cost when printed with the 16-page color insert. To which I replied: "I'm baffled! What color? The maps have always been in black and white. Has color been added to the labels? [. . .] If the maps themselves have been colorized, could they be e-mailed so that I can look at them before responding?"

20. On May 3, 2007, I learned that the team was standing by waiting for *me* to decide what colors should

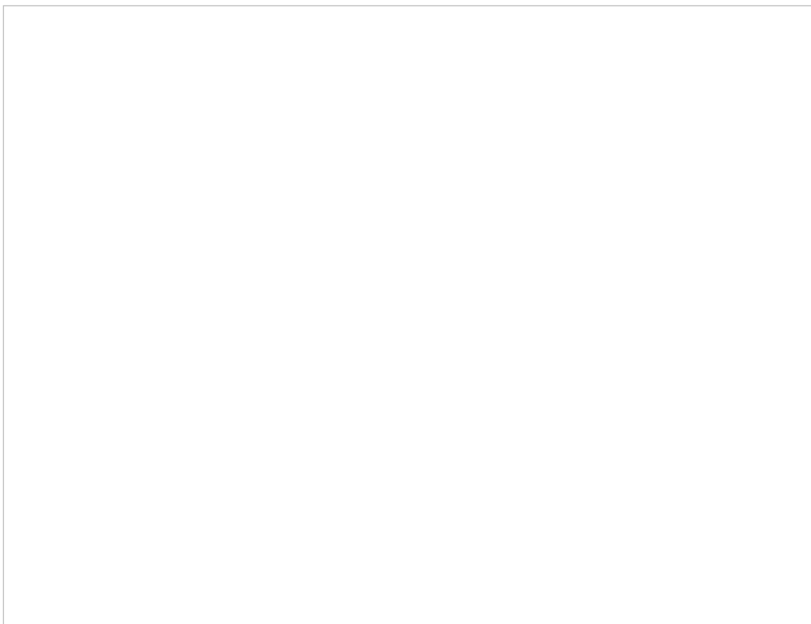
go where. For the London map, the most complicated, I was to send a colored mock-up by May 10, to allow the cartographer a full month to prepare new renderings. I did the best I could with clumsy color markers and sent along the old *Blake Quarterly* article as background information for the cartographer (an employee of Mapping Specialists, Ltd., whose name I still don't know). To clarify details, I sent Web links to other maps, including an illusionistic 3-D tourist map of present-day London at www.mapscape.net. I then had two lightning rounds of map proofreading—starting June 6, 2007, while we were swamped with text proofs, with a twelve-day turnaround, and then a review of the second-pass map proofs with less than a week turnaround in late June-early July—all part of a push that, at the time, we believed would result in published books by the beginning of the fall semester 2007. The version shown is from a PDF of the third pass, which we were not supposed to change except for typographical errors.

But I did question the gabled structure for "Jews-Harp House" that I hadn't seen earlier, at the upper left of the detailed view below, and it was removed before publication.

Unfortunately, the other flaw I spotted at that stage, the misspelling of "Horseferry Road," leading toward a nonexistent bridge to Lambeth Palace, remains in the published map.

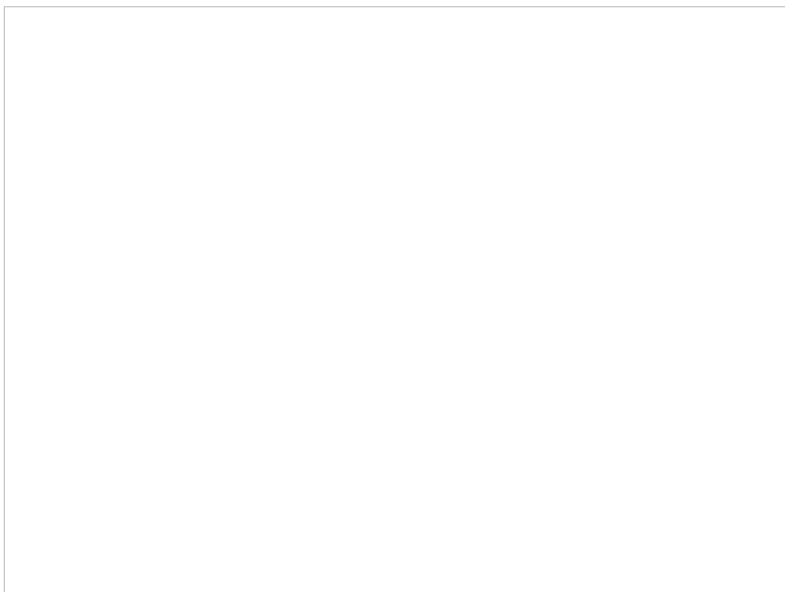


21. I asked for different colors for Blake's addresses, addresses of his friends and patrons, charity schools, and landmarks in his poetry, either splashes of color or colored texts, but the cartographer thought colored symbols would be better. On the first pass Blake's addresses were marked by little houses and his patrons by a man in silhouette. As many of the wives were also friends and patrons, I asked for a gender-neutral symbol, and the cartographer decided to use the houses for the patrons and to represent Blake's homes by an easel. There was no time to ask for something different.



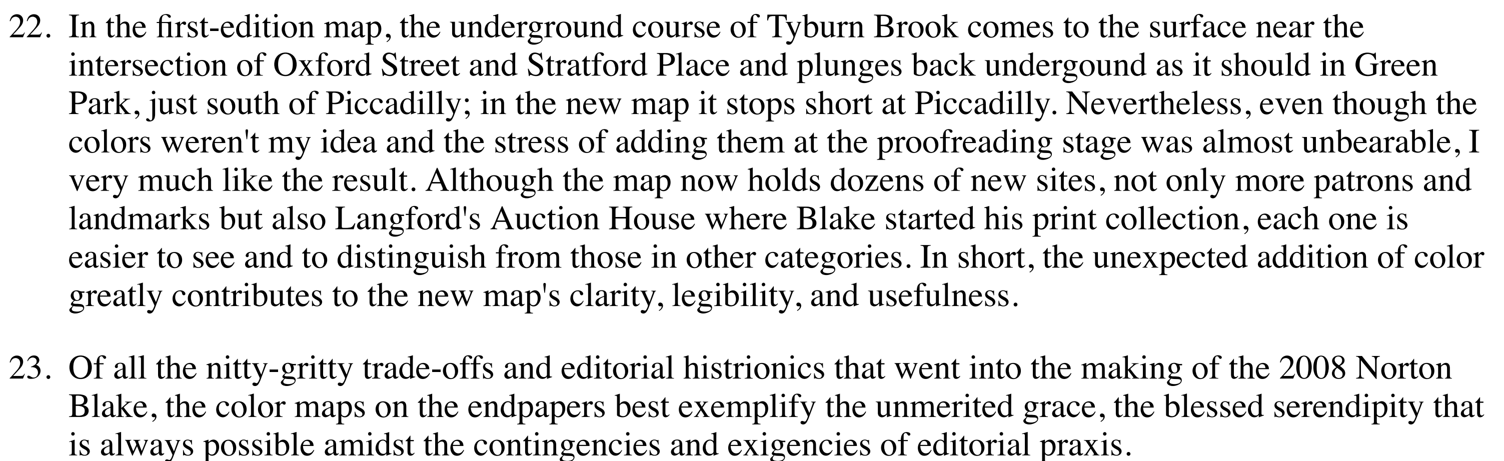
I added St. James's Church, where Blake was baptized, but my pencilled Xes and verbal descriptions weren't clear enough, so it is slightly misplaced. I decided not to add sites associated with Blake's parents and other relatives, reflecting recent discoveries of Miner, Gardner, and of course Phillips, Whitehead, Keri Davies, and Troy Patenaude, because I feared, in a map of this size, that additional addresses would soften the sharp focus we wanted to keep on Blake's own life and work. So the Fetter Lane church, where Blake's mother joined the Moravians, is absent, but I wish very much I had been

able to include the meeting place of Hindmarsh's Swedenborgian New Church in Great Eastcheap, just east of the starred location of London Stone.



And I wish the cartographer had chosen not to put minarets, or whatever they are, on the Tower of London.

Still more, I wish the label for the new London map weren't covering Bunhill Fields, clearly visible on the first-edition map, where Finsbury Place forks to the northeast and joins City Road.



22. In the first-edition map, the underground course of Tyburn Brook comes to the surface near the intersection of Oxford Street and Stratford Place and plunges back undergound as it should in Green Park, just south of Piccadilly; in the new map it stops short at Piccadilly. Nevertheless, even though the colors weren't my idea and the stress of adding them at the proofreading stage was almost unbearable, I very much like the result. Although the map now holds dozens of new sites, not only more patrons and landmarks but also Langford's Auction House where Blake started his print collection, each one is easier to see and to distinguish from those in other categories. In short, the unexpected addition of color greatly contributes to the new map's clarity, legibility, and usefulness.

23. Of all the nitty-gritty trade-offs and editorial histrionics that went into the making of the 2008 Norton Blake, the color maps on the endpapers best exemplify the unmerited grace, the blessed serendipity that is always possible amidst the contingencies and exigencies of editorial praxis.

## 2008 Errata

### Notes

1 As discussed in his "Crafting Editorial Settlements," *Romanticism on the Net 1996-2006: Celebrating Ten Years of Online Publishing* (February-May 2006), http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/2006/v/n41-42/013150ar.html, these are "something like treaties with term limits" that operate "by negotiation and mutual accommodation, but they usually have built into them elements of forceful imposition. They are most often [. . .] imposed by the requirements of the editors' time and situation—the editorial version of posterity—and imposed by the living upon the defenseless dead" (par. 6). In Eaves's sweeping historical overview, well worth summarizing here, the nineteenth century settlement of radical normalization established a literary and artistic niche for Blake by splitting his legacy into conventional categories of words and pictures, culling out and repackaging his words in a form envisioned by W. M. Rossetti, "with clear print, reasonable division of lines, and like aids to business-like perusal" (qtd. in par. 8), and shifting the art to the sidelines. The twentieth century settlement of consolidation and institutionalization led to the Keynes edition and then to the work of scholars and art historians, within their respective fields, who created the essential disciplinary resources of

"printed editions of rigorously edited texts [Erdman and Bentley], extensive catalogues of engravings [Bindman, Essick], drawings, and paintings [Butlin], extensive bibliographies [Bentley]" and biographical records [Bentley] (par. 18; my bracketed insertions). The early twenty-first century settlement of reorienting, reverting, and superconsolidation has so far led to "x-editing," the interactive, collaborative, offsite, highly adaptive, approximate, tentative, experimental, and "radically incomplete" process (par. 28) that is producing the ongoing *Blake Archive*, simultaneously "liberat[ing] editing from old compromises" and "generating fresh compromises whose hallmark is daunting, potentially paralyzing uncertainty," "on the brink of the known editorial universe" (par. 33).

2 There is much to be said in favor of a reader-friendly text: as Essick has confessed, "When I read Blake just for fun, even serious fun, I read the Geoffrey Keynes edition. I think he [. . .] did a fine job at using twentieth-century punctuation conventions to represent Blake's verbal content" (Kraus 188-89). Readers of Blake are blessed with a wide array of options. Besides the Stevenson and Fuller editions discussed in this issue, and Alicia Ostriker's highly regarded, fully annotated Penguin edition, substantial editions in print prepared with students and nonspecialists in mind include, most recently, selections by G. E. Bentley, Jr. (Penguin) in which, according to "A Note on the Texts," xxxii-xxxv, the editor has "silently added punctuation where there might otherwise be confusion" and "retained Blake's eighteenth-century and sometimes idiosyncratic spelling [ . . .] but [. . .] silently corrected mere errors in transcription [. . . ]." (xxxiii) and by Michael Mason (Oxford World's Classics)—reviewed, with negative comparisons to annotations in the 1979 Norton Blake by E. B. Murray (esp. 147-53). Of the two non-facsimile specialist editions, that of David V. Erdman, *Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, first published in 1965 and most recently revised in 1988, has remained the standard in advanced courses and in scholarly citations in part because of its portability and affordability. On the many merits of G. E. Bentley, Jr.'s 1978 sholarly edition, see John E. Grant's essay review.

3 Discussed most fully in "Theory, Literary Pragmatics, and the Editorial Horizon," the opening chapter of his *The Textual Condition* (19-47); presented more briefly in "Literary Pragmatics and the Editorial Horizon."

4 A strong exception is Morris Eaves's *cri di coeur* on electronic editing in "Multimedia Body Plans: A Self-Assessment": "If you listen closely to editors editing, you will always hear the harsh sounds of primal conflict as visionary aspirations clash with reality. In a techno-commercial world the pressures of hard necessity bear down no less on editing with electrons than with ink, wood, or flesh. Yet somehow the fleshly editors of the amazing William Blake Archive continue to provide electronic access to images of all of Blake's illuminated books (and eventually all copies of all of these books) as well as works in other media while also keeping their electronic existence current through waves of technological change. (On a doomed, too-early, pre-Web effort with similar first-phase goals, see my account of the Iowa Blake Videodisc Project.)

5 This was of course long before McGann's revolutionary work on editing texts of Blake's period in *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, in which McGann insists that "good nonspecialist editions can involve as much scholarly intelligence as critical editions" in that they "incorporate in the reading text alone a process of historical translation analogous to what the scholar sets forth through his critical apparatus (95-96) and notes that "The nonspecialist editor [unlike the critical editor] is perforce highly conscious of [contemporary] demands" and may even be in a position to "pass a corresponding judgment upon the work of critical editors" (96).

6 For an informative overview of the editorial approach that I once believed was timeless, see Paul Werstine, who notes that, in all fairness, copy-text editors were the first to follow up on W. W. Greg's caveat that his method applied only to sixteenth- and seventeeth-century publishing conditions. Werstine cites Bowers on "radiating texts" in *Library* 5th ser., 27 (June 1972): 81-115; Thomas Tanselle, "Editorial Apparatus for Editing Radiating Texts," *Library* 5th ser., 29 (September 1974): 330-337 and his "Editing without a Copy-Text," *Studies in Bibliography* 47 (1994): 1-22; and Richard Bucci, "Tanselle's 'Editing

without a Copy-Text: Genesis, Issues, Prospects," *Studies in Bibliography* 56 (2003-2004): 1-44. These matters are also helpfully reviewed by W. Speed Hill.

7 Our sense of what constitutes syntactical egregiousness has greatly mellowed over time. For example, "Damn braces: Bless relaxes," the 1979 Norton text for item 57 in "Proverbs of Hell," follows Keynes in utterly effacing Blake's indubitable dot after "Damn." But the 2008 Norton text, "Damn, braces: Bless relaxes," despite its further complicating parsing ambiguities (noted in my "The Devil's Syntax and the OED"), follows editors of the *Blake Archive* in at least acknowledging the existence of some sort of mark in our source text printed from Blake's now lost etched plate—whether a true authorial period introduced perversely or indifferently; or an autographically original comma that lost its tail in the etching bath, mentioned by Viscomi (Kraus 185); or "an ovoid shape somewhere between a period and a comma," mentioned by Essick (Kraus 188); or just a random (or purposeful?) protrusion that made a different impression in different copies. Embarrassingly, a 2008 error that must be corrected in future printings occurs in the very line cited to illustrate the problem of Blake's intrusive dots (601): the 2008 comma in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* 9/6:21 (63), changed from a period, should be a semicolon, as in the 1979 edition (please see the appendix, "'Illuminated Woks': Errata in the 2008 Norton Blake").

8 For *Jerusalem*, as part of our agreement to contribute $1,000 to IATH, the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at the University of Virginia, which then housed the *William Blake Archive*, the *Archive* editors generously provided the services of the then-assistant Justin Van Kleeck, to remove the *Archive*'s formatting and convert the text to .rtf format, a time-consuming task which Justin graciously completed off the clock. For conversion of other texts, we hired a local assistant to help with the most efficient method I could devise: assign the "Paste Special" command in Word to control-shift-v, followed by "u" for "unformatted," to bring the words into .rtf; then use "Find-Special-Any Digit," followed by "Replace All," to get rid of the *Archive*'s left-side line numbering, and renumber manually on the right. Incidentally, a drawback of taking on a revised edition as a retirement project is that all institutionally provided part-time research assistant services, quite rightly, are devoted to supporting the work of active-duty faculty members (as acknowledged in our first edition [xxvii]). In the Preface to the second edition, I neglected to express my gratitude to the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies and its director, Jay Semel, on the University of Iowa's Oakdale Research Campus, for giving me a much-needed summer pied-à-terre for my transition back to the scholarly life during my phased retirement from the President's Office in 2000.

9 Similarly, our heavy use of the wonderfully convenient and fast-operating Blake Concordance of "eE," the electronic Erdman on Nelson Hilton's University of Georgia site, <http://www.english.uga.edu/Blake Concordance/>, enabled us to catch scanning errors that Hilton immediately fixed. By the time the 2008 Norton Blake finally appeared, some of our other links to the UGA site had ceased to work, but when Nelson noticed the problem after receiving an early copy, he generously retrofitted repairs from his end. We deeply regret that our attempted recognition of the eE Concordance in "Abbreviations" (xvii), a section added after the first-pass proofs, resulted in a third-pass proof error that forced deletion of the whole entry.

10 For an example, as if one were needed, of the shifting horizon of editorial perspective, see Grant's 1982 forecast: "Now that Erdman's complete edition has appeared, scholars will be able to abandon the Erdman/Keynes dual citations without feeling compelled to take up a Bentley/Erdman system. [. . .] Bentley's new system of plate numbering is inherently preferable to the one established by Keynes and followed, with modifications, by Erdman, but Keynes's system is now too well established, and too many scholarly and critical works are keyed to it, to justify another radical change that would necessitate future use of dual plate references" (Grant, "Who Shall Bind the Infinite? " 283-84). At present, in addition to its own "object" numbers, the *William Blake Archive* provides the Bentley, Erdman, and Keynes plate numbers but refrains from cluttering its renumbered lines with a dual lineation system.

11 The 1979 Norton Blake was the first to use Blake's title for this work (bracketed after the conventional

title, *The Laocoön*), a practice since strongly advocated by Morton D. Paley (53-100). The full design (titled *Laocoön*) is reproduced most clearly in *Milton a Poem and the Final Illuminated Works: Blake's Illuminated Books* 5, ed. Robert N. Essick and Joseph Viscomi (Princeton: William Blake Trust / Princeton University Press, 1993) and, as *Laocoön*, in the *William Blake Archive* and in Fuller's edition. The text is harder to read in the reduced reproduction in Bentley and in the accidentally reversed white-on-black reproduction in the 1988 Erdman edition (corrected, but terribly blurred, in the 2008 edition). Another innovation of the 1979 Norton Blake, the "Conclusion"-"Application"-"Therefore" closing page sequence of Blake's unsorted and unnumbered plates for *There is No Natural Religion* (1979, 15; 2008, 7) has since been generally adopted.

12 On pp. 18-22 the Group critiques Harold Bloom's unrevised Commentary, a section unchanged in the latest "newly revised" edition of 2008. Citing the Santa Cruz Study Group's review, McGann goes so far as to call the Erdman edition "[i]n one sense [. . .] a travesty of Blake's original authorial intentions" because "the typographical format has forced Erdman into attempting a translation of the linguistic components of Blake's work only, the lexical and grammatical levels of its textuality"—its "linguistic" but not its "bibliographical signifiers" ("What is Critical Editing?"—originally in *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*; here quoted from McGann's *The Textual Condition* 53, 56-57).

13 For example, Wolfson as an editor retains the short, doubly hyphenated prose lines of *All Religions are One* and *There is No Natural Religion* and the double columns of "The Fly" in her Longman edition (107-08, 119), in keeping with her attention as a critic to the "semantic beyond the semantic of words" in Blake's "scriptive signifying" that "operates in lines, in discrete words, even in syllables" in her *Formal Charges* (33). Eaves amusingly recalls the *Blake Archive* editors' arguing for months over line numbering (Kraus 176-77).

14 Wolfson, who graciously read an earlier draft of this piece, was of course fully aware of Blake's numbering of stanzas in the Notebook, but as she noted in a follow-up e-mail (on an unrelated subject), she considers the plate

> a separate, if not independent, version of the poem, the arrangement of which, accidentally or intentionally, offers new interpretive horizons. This is not a compositor's design, but Blake's own, and he was nothing if not attentive. But even if he had been just thinking in columns, with no side-thought about horizontal reading, the design he creates has the effect of inviting the latter. So I would not exclude it. The reader has agency as well as the author—this is the old argument about the absolute prescription and government of authorial intentions over textual effects. But I think it also supplies yet another instance for Don Reiman's theory of textual versioning, of all texts having a place in the discussion. [ . . .] The Fly is completely unique in Songs for this column arrangement, and it compels attention, I think, rather than rejection.

Wolfson also recalled, referring to *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, that she "had a real fight, with every edition of the anthology, to maintain this page-expensive format"—something that the much narrower pages of the Norton edition physically could not have accommodated. In connection with Reiman's "versioning," see also Stillinger's "practical theory of versions" (118-40).

15 First-pass proofreading was slowed by extra-large headings and titles, some marked as major section heads requiring page breaks, making art placement difficult and exaggerating the overall page count. To stay on schedule, we focused mainly on page-altering problems at this stage and deferred to the next round, when we had recomposed pages in hand, most of the ordinary chores of proofreading such as catching editorial and printer's errors, filling in cross-references, and flagging misplaced or poorly coordinated designs, some of which persisted into and beyond the third-pass proofs.

16 For example, in the last "Memorable Fancy" of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (on plate 23), the new footnote (80, n. 2) glossing an Angel's colorful reaction to a Devil's unorthodox remark stops with comparing

Raphael's blushing response to Adam's question about angelic lovemaking in *Paradise Lost* 8.619, omitting the extensive quotation from *True Christian Religion* in the first edition to illustrate the point that "Such disputations in the spiritual world are common in Swedenborg's visions" (99, n. 8). Sometimes, though, our cuts went too far: in simplifying the timing of the charity schoolchildren's procession to St. Paul's to thank their benefactors, we referred to "annual springtime services" (22, n. 1) but neglected to note, as in the first edition, that the event occurred neither "on Maundy Thursday (before Easter) or Ascension Day (forty days thereafter)" (21, n. 4), with a citation of Thomas E. Connolly's 1975 research. (Ascension Day is the thirty-ninth day after Easter, the fortieth day of Eastertide in the church calendar.) On balance, nevertheless, the notes collectively serve their intended purpose, and some—such as the one on the origin of "Woman! lovely woman!" in Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd* (101, n. 3)—actually contain information unavailable elsewhere.

**Works Cited**


Bentley, G. E., Jr., ed. *William Blake: Selected Poems*. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin Group, 2005 [2006].

---, ed. *William Blake's Writings*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977. Rpt. 2001.

Bindman, David, gen. ed. *Blake's Illuminated Books*. 6 vols. Princeton: The William Blake Trust and Princeton University Press; London: The William Blake Trust and Tate Gallery Publications, 1991-95. Paperback 1994-98.

1. Paley, Morton D., ed. *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*. 1991/1997.

2. Lincoln, Andrew, ed. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. 1991/1994.

3. Eaves, Morris, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, eds. *The Early Illuminated Books*. 1994/1998.

4. Dörrbecker, D. W. *The Continental Prophecies*. 1994/1998.

5. Essick, Robert N. and Joseph Viscomi, eds. *Milton a Poem and The Final Illuminated Works*. 1993/1998.

6. Worrall, David. *The Urizen Books*. 1995/1998.

Bogan, James. "Blake on a Bike: Following the Footsteps of Los' Epic Ramble in *Jerusalem*." *Journal of the Blake Society* 2 (1996).

Connolly, Thomas E. "The Real 'Holy Thursday' of William Blake." *Blake Studies* 6.2 (1975): 179-87.

Davies, Keri and Marsha Keith Schuchard. "Recovering the Lost Moravian History of William Blake's Family." *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 38.1 (2004): 36-57.

Eaves, Morris. "Crafting Editorial Settlements." *Romanticism on the Net 1996-2006: Celebrating Ten Years of Online Publishing*. February-May 2006. 1 September 2008 <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/2006/v/n41-42/013150ar.html>.

---. "Multimedia Body Plans: A Self-Assessment," in *Electronic Scholarly Editing*, Modern Language Association-Text Encoding Initiative, 2006. <http://www.tei-c.org/About/Archive_new/ETE/Preview/eaves.xml>

Eaves, Morris, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, eds. The William Blake Archive. 1966- . Web. Dec. 1,

2008. <http://www.blakearchive.org>.

Erdman, David V., ed. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. 1965. Newly Revised Edition. Commentary by Harold Bloom. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1988.
Standard edition for scholarly citation. Also available as "eE" in the Blake Digital Text Project directed by Nelson Hilton, 2003. Web. Dec. 1, 2008.
<http://virtual.park.uga.edu/~wblake/home1.html>; <http://www.english.uga.edu/nhilton/Blake/blaketxt1/
>, including an invaluable Concordance, <http://www.english.uga.edu/Blake_Concordance/>.
The Hilton team's electronic transcription of the 1988 Erdman is also the basis of the Erdman text in the William Blake Archive http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/erdman.html.
Erdman's text and Bloom's commentary are unchanged in the latest edition, "With a New Foreword and Commentary by Harold Bloom." Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

Fuller, David, ed. *William Blake: Selected Poetry and Prose*. [2000]. Longman Annotated Texts. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2008.

Gardner, Stanley. *The Tyger, the Lamb, and the Terrible Desart:* Songs of Innocence and of Experience *in Its Times and Circumstance*: *Including Facsimiles of Two Copies*. Madison, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998.

Grant, John E. "Review Article: Who Shall Bind the Infinite and Arrange It in Libraries? [Bentley's] *William Blake's Writings* and *Blake Books*." *PQ* 61.3 (summer 1982): 277-304.

Hill, W. Speed. "Theory and Practice in Anglo-American Editing," *Anglia: Zeitschrift für englishe Philologie*. 119.3 (2002): 327-350.

Johnson, Mary Lynn, and John E. Grant, ed. *Blake's Poetry and Designs*. Norton Critical Edition. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008.

---. *Blake's Poetry and Designs*. Norton Critical Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979.

Johnson, Mary Lynn. "The Devil's Syntax and the OED." *Blake Newsletter* [later *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*] 3.3 (1969): 94.

---. "FZ vs. Jerusalem." E-mail to North American Society for the Study of Romanticism. 3 January 2003.

---. "[I]mpasse and proposed trade-offs." E-mail to Carol Bemis. 16 February 2004.

---. "The Iowa Blake Videodisc Project: A Cautionary Tale." *The Wordsworth Circle* 30.3 (1999). 131-35.

---. "Mapping Blake's London" *Blake: An Illuminated Quarterly* 10.4 (1977): 117-22.

---. "The MS." E-mail to Brian Baker. 14 April 2006.

---. "[E]diting seminar." E-mail to Neil Fraistat. 14 June 2004.

---. "Textual Technicalities." E-mail to Morris Eaves. 29 April 2004.

---. "[T]extual technicalities." E-mail to Joseph Viscomi. 28 April 2004.

Keynes, Geoffrey, ed. *The Complete Writings of William Blake*. 1925. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1966. Corr. rpt. 1972, 1979, 1991.

Kraus, Kari. "'Once Only Imagined': An Interview with Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi." *Studies in Romanticism* 41.2 (2002): 143-199.
Co-published as a Romantic Circles Praxis Volume. January 2003. Web. Dec. 1, 2008. <http://www.rc.umd.edu/>.

Malik, Rachel. "Horizons of the Publishable: Publishing in / as Literary Studies." *ELH* 75.3 (2008): 707-35.

Mason, Michael, ed. *William Blake: Selected Poetry*. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.

McGann, Jerome J. *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago P, 1983. Rpt. Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1992.

---. "Literary Pragmatics and the Editorial Horizon." In Philip G. Cohen, ed., *Devils and Angels*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1991. 1-21.

---. *The Textual Condition*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991.

Michael, Jennifer Davis. Re: "feedback." E-mail to Mary Lynn Johnson. 25 September 2004.

Miner, Paul. "Blake's London: Times & Spaces." *Studies in Romanticism* 41.2 (2002): 279-316.

Murray, E. B. Rev. of *The Essential Blake* [. . .] by Stanley Kunitz, ed., *William Blake* [. . .] by Michael Mason, ed., and *William Blake: Selected Poetry and Prose* by David Punter, ed. *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 24.4 (1991): 145-57.

Ostriker, Alicia. *William Blake: The Complete Poems*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Group, 1977. Corr. rpt. 1986, 2004.

Phillips, Michael. "No. 13 Hercules Buildings, Lambeth: William Blake's Printmaking Workshop and Etching-painting Studio Recovered." *British Art Journal* 5.1 (2004): 13-21.

Paley, Morton D. *The Traveller in the Evening: The Late Works of William Blake*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003.

Pascoe, Judith. "blake editions." E-mail to Mary Lynn Johnson. 14 February 2003.

Patenaude, Troy R. C. "'The glory of a Nation': Recovering William Blake's 1809 Exhibition." *British Art Journal* 4.1 (2003): 52-63.

Reiman, Donald H. and Neil Fraistat, eds. *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2002.

Reiman, Donald H. "Re: Serious Norton Critical Edition problem." E-mail to Mary Lynn Johnson. 20 April 2006.

---. "'Versioning': The Presentation of Mutiple Texts." *Romantic Texts and Contexts*. Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1987: 167-80.

Richardson, Nigel. "Blake's London." *The Sunday Times*. 24 June 2007. <http://www.timesonline.co.uktol/travel/holiday_type/travel_and_literature/article1971522.

Santa Cruz Blake Study Group, The. Rev. of *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* by David V.

Erdman, ed. with Commentary by Harold Bloom. *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 18.1 (Summer 1984): 4-31.

Stevenson, W. H., ed. *Blake: The Complete Poems*. 1971, 1989. Longman Annotated English Poets. 3rd. ed. Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2007.

Stillinger, Jack. *Coleridge and Textual Instability: The Multiple Versions of the Major Poems*. New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994.

Viscomi, Joseph. *Blake and the Idea of the Book*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993.

Werstine, Paul. "Editing Shakespeare and Editing Without Shakespeare: Wilson, McKerrow, Greg, Bowers, Tanselle, and Copy-Text Editing." In *Text: An Interdisciplinary Annual of Textual Studies* 13, ed. W. Speed Hill et al. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2000: 27-54.

Whitehead, Angus. "William Blake's Last Residence: No. 3 Fountain Court, Strand, George Richmond's Plan and an Unrecorded Letter to John Linnell." *British Art Journal* 5.1 (2005): 21-30.

Wolfson, Susan J. *Formal Charges: The Shaping of Poetry in British Romanticism*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997.

---. "Re: Freedman lecture, etc." [On editing "The Fly"]. E-mail to Mary Lynn Johnson. 18 September 2008.

Wolfson, Susan and Peter Manning, ed. *The Romantics and Their Contemporaries*. Vol 2A in *The Longman Anthology of British Literature*, ed. David Damrosch, Susan J. Wolfson, Peter Manning. 3rd ed. Pearson Longman, 2006.

# Editing And Reading Blake

## "The productions of time": Visions of Blake in the Digital Age[1]

**Rachel Lee and J. Alexandra McGhee, University of Rochester**

1. Any encounter with Blake is a meeting across media; watercolors, pen and ink, engraving, pencil sketches, and the reverse writing of illuminated printing are found in small handmade books and in anthologies of British literature, on display in museums and on the walls of private collectors, and on the computer screen in digital archives, Youtube videos, and multimedia projects such as if:book's Songs of Imagination and Digitisation. Blake's characteristic integration of text and image, which makes possible such an abundant multi-media experience of his work, has also engendered a complex and varied editorial legacy. "The editorial history of Blake's art" has included, in the assessment of Morris Eaves, "three distinguishable historical phases—radical normalization in the decades following Blake's death; consolidation and institutionalization in the twentieth century; and, most recently, a digital superconsolidation that is simultaneously progressive and conservative" ("Crafting Editorial Settlements" "Abstract"). These editorial compromises, or "settlements" in Eaves's terminology, result from the limitations of media, both print and digital. Print editions of Blake that integrate text and image are often prohibitively expensive for publishers and readers alike, and while digital editions may in part resolve the schism between text and image, they too are "restricted by interlocking technical compromises imposed by the present, rather severe, limits of memory, bandwidth, software and hardware design, institutional requirements, and our own editorial imaginations" (Eaves "Crafting Editorial Settlements" par. 25).

2. In his foreword to *Electronic Textual Editing* (2006), G. Thomas Tanselle acknowledges the exciting possibilities of digital technology, such as increased accessibility, efficiency, and new modes of textual production and display, but also warns against an uncritical embrace of a digital editing revolution. He reminds us that editorial "procedures and routines will be different; concepts and issues will not" (6). He goes on to say,

   > These desirable changes [offered by the digital medium] do not alter the questions we must ask about texts or guarantee a greater amount of intelligent reading and textual study. We will be spared some drudgery and inconvenience, but we still must confront the same issues that editors have struggled with for twenty-five hundred years. (6)

   Whether working in print or digital media, editors still need to consider questions about authority, intention, interpretation, textual variants, and presentation or display.

3. While fundamental issues might remain the same in both print and digital scholarly editing, procedural differences are extremely important. Major differences in editing procedure, for example, may actually prevent scholars from producing electronic texts. Digital editions, unlike their print counterparts, often require technical knowledge about encoding, display, and even programming.[2] Peter Robinson asserts that many scholars lack the tools and support to begin a digital edition on their own, and that the encoding systems and programs currently available to digital editors are difficult for non-specialists to use ("Current Issues"). Preserving such projects can also be a challenge. Marilyn Deegan describes the "tension between the new possibilities offered by the electronic edition and the need to preserve the scholarly record" (365). While "the underlying scholarly practices are much the same" between the production of print and digital scholarly editions,

   > the technical issues [...] need to be resolved. The resolution is difficult, because at the moment electronic editing is characterized more by innovation, experimentation, and new developments than by established practices—that is what makes it so exciting. Electronic editing is also

> caught up in the world of hardware, software, applications, and standards, which change with dizzying speed. An editor is caught between taking advantage of all these new developments and trying to ensure that the work survives for the long term. (Deegan 362-63)

These problems in the procedures of technical editing revolve around the limitations of current digital tools and the pace of their development. They can in fact prevent new digital editions from being created and may raise doubts about the stability and reliability of evolving electronic projects.

4. The fluidity of digital editions, however, can also offer unique opportunities for experimental scholarly editing. Eaves's concept of "x-editing" offers a new model for scholarly editing in a digital medium that embraces instability.[3] Emerging out of the editorial settlement with the limitations of digital media, x-editing represents a break with traditional print-based editorial practice and attempts to evolve alongside changing technologies. Eaves argues that

> The pressures [exerted by the "harsh conditions of unstable but relatively inflexible digital environments"], I would maintain, produce—demand—forms of editing different in degree and kind from their print-based relatives. X-editing does not simply complete or improve earlier kinds; it breaks with them, not out of editorial desire but out of desire fused with necessity [....] The conditions of our work and medium force us, in some measure, not just to adjust and improve but also to lay new foundations that will have their own evolutionary cycle, as yet unrevealed. ("Crafting Editorial Settlements" par. 30)

X-editing produces "a torrent of freewheeling experimentation characterized by multilateral problem solving, trial and error, approximation, compromise, revision, and (always) unintended consequences" (Eaves "Multimedia Body Plans" 220-21). This mode of editing is a departure from the stability of printed texts, but it also offers an important flexibility that allows for the evolution of electronic texts within emerging theoretical frameworks.

5. Despite the advantageous flexibility of an editorial model that evolves alongside technologies, there are also pitfalls in a system that emphasizes constant evolution. "Fluidity in editing," as Deegan points out,

> can cause serious problems at the same time as it conveys many benefits [....] Fluidity can be a strength for an editor, who can adapt and change the edition as new information comes available, but a weakness for a user who may not know what changes have been made and for a librarian who needs to deliver and preserve the materials: what version of a text becomes the preservation version? (362)

Deegan is more concerned with the problem of preserving fluid, electronic editions, but she's right to point out that the instability of x-editing can become a problem for readers who need stable, reliable scholarly texts. If changes in editorial practices are *not* made public, the usability, accessibility, and validity of such projects will be compromised.

6. Documenting editorial decisions has long been a practice in print editions, but transparency in electronic scholarly editions takes on a new significance —especially when it describes the failures of experimental editing. John Unsworth asserts the importance of documenting failure as a lesson for future scholars:

> We are in an important evolutionary moment: an important transformation is taking place, and we are a part of it. Many things that we take to be trivial, or embarrassing, or simply wrong, will be of interest to our peers in the future. Our first responsibility, therefore, is to document what we do, to say why we do it, and to preserve the products of our labor, not only in their fungible, software-and-hardware-independent forms, but also in their immediate, contemporary manifestations. The greatest mistake we could make, at this point, would be to suppress, deny, or discard our errors and our failed experiments: We need to document them with obsessive

care, detail, and rigor.

Shifting the focus away from the digital product and onto the process of electronic scholarly editing opens up failure, not only as a lesson, but also as a necessary condition of experimental editing.

7. This piece documents our experiences editing Blake's manuscript, *An Island in the Moon*, a forthcoming electronic publication in the *William Blake Archive*. The evolution of our XML tag set for manuscripts and the development of a color code for the online transcript show x-editing at work; the editorial process has been and continues to be collaborative, transparent, and adaptable. From its inception in 1996, the *William Blake Archive* has sought to take advantage of the democratizing and transformative capabilities of digital media to set "a new standard of accessibility to a vast array of visual and textual materials that are central to an adequate grasp of the British art and literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" ("Archive at a Glance"). Free access and rigorous scholarly standards make the *Blake Archive* a valuable resource for Blake scholars and non-specialists alike. The *Blake Archive*, writes Thomas Benton in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "is a gorgeous, meticulously edited compilation of [Blake's] many illuminated works […] [and] mark[s] an important point of departure from expensive clothbound volumes available in university libraries—and unique items in private collections—to high-resolution facsimiles freely available to anyone with Internet access." A project that would have been prohibitively expensive in print, and impossible for only one person to undertake, has become one of the most collaborative, authoritative, and long-standing digital archives in the comparatively short history of the Internet.

8. The *Blake Archive*'s success is due in part to its hybrid nature, integrating Blake's text with images, and offering unified access to disparate materials. Historically, the codex form has limited the scope of scholarly editions, and in particular, Blake's integration of media, excess of variant texts, and broad range of artistic and commercial work are a challenge for any medium—but especially for print. Jerome McGann's 1995 essay, "The Rationale of Hypertext," argues that hypertext media can in some ways ameliorate the limitations of the codex form:

   > To date, for example, it has been impossible to produce a true critical edition of the works of Blake. Because Blake's texts operate simultaneously in two media, an adequate critical edition would have to marry a complete facsimile edition of all copies of Blake within the structure of a critical edition. One needs in such a case not a critical edition of Blake's work, but a critical archive. This archive, moreover, must be able to accommodate the collation of pictures and the parts of pictures with each other as well as with all kinds of purely textual materials. Hypermedia structures for the first time make this kind of archive possible. (McGann par. 37)

   The *Blake Archive* has taken advantage of these hypermedia structures to present color corrected images of Blake's works alongside diplomatic transcriptions, explanatory textual notes, introductions to individual copies and series of works, and image descriptions. The editors frame the *Blake Archive* as "a hybrid all-in-one edition, catalogue, database, and set of scholarly tools capable of taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by new information technology" ("Archive at a Glance"). The hybridity of the *Blake Archive* is twofold: along with reuniting Blake's text and image, detailed facsimiles appear within a robust scholarly apparatus.

9. From their computers, scholars can access a diverse range of primary materials that are "highly disparate, widely dispersed, and more and more often severely restricted as a result of their value, rarity, and extreme fragility" ("Archive at a Glance"). The *Blake Archive* now "has permission to include thousands of Blake's images and texts without fees," from contributors ranging from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London to Essick's own personal collection ("Archive at a Glance;" "Contributing Collections"). The *Blake Archive*'s expansive digitized collection of fragile primary documents partially fulfills the role of research libraries as imagined by Donald Reiman in his 1987 essay, "'Versioning': The Presentation of Multiple Texts." In the introduction, he observes that it is becoming increasingly difficult for scholars to collect primary materials themselves, and therefore, there will be a

> greater need for all libraries that support scholarship and criticism to have available accurate (i.e. photographic) facsimiles of manuscripts, first editions, and other textual authorities if they do not have the originals, and if they *do* own the originals, the fragility of these primary witnesses and the danger that heavy use may destroy them may render the availability of facsimiles all the more urgent. (168)

The urgency for access to primary materials stems from the difficulty of creating personal collections, and electronic facsimiles not only make these documents available, but also preserve them for the public record. The importance of access is also tied to Reiman's major thesis about the fundamental importance of making available multiple versions of literary works. As he famously argues,

> I suggest that it may be possible to make available to the public enough different *primary* textual documents and states of major texts (not all of which may need be critically edited) so that readers, teachers, and critics can compare for themselves two or more widely circulated basic versions of major texts. (169)

Since Blake himself published multiple versions of his own work, he is a particularly interesting case study for the "alternative" editing practice of versioning. The *Blake Archive* actively facilitates the reader's own exploration and analysis of Blake's work not only with the presentation of variant copies, but also with analytical tools, such as image searching and the "Compare" function.[4]

10. In addition to increased access to Blake's work and new scholarly tools, the digital archive offers opportunities for both selective and radial reading. A reader can view images of an Illuminated Book separately from the transcriptions. Hyperlinked text notes appear in a new window. Each work also includes a detailed introduction, "Copy Information" (detailed bibliographic information and provenance), and an illustration description (when applicable). Because of linked navigation, readers can choose to focus specifically on Blake's text or his images, and can tailor the scope of the scholarly apparatus to best fit their needs. When used in conjunction with the *Blake Archive*'s advanced searching and analytical tools, the high-resolution scans of Blake's works, particularly his Illuminated Books, enable a more interactive and far-reaching exploration of the visionary poet than a traditional monograph would allow.

11. Despite the advances in digital technology, however, Blake's work has always been difficult to represent, and continues to challenge editors and readers alike. One problem for the editor of Blake is the integration of multiple media within his primary documents. Illuminated printing emphasizes Blake's own hybridity as an author, painter, engraver, etcher, and printer, and necessitates his working within—and between—multiple media. While his new "method of Printing which combines the Painter and the Poet" (qtd. in Viscomi "Illuminated Printing," "New Printing Technologies" par. 1) solved some of the problems posed by commercialized book making, it also compromised his success within each artistic discipline. As Eaves and Viscomi point out, eighteenth-century book making was characterized by a total separation between the processes that reproduced images from those that produced text. Blake's illuminated printing united textual and visual elements within the process of production, a process that was "appealingly domestic and autographic, as well as reasonably fast, flexible, and inexpensive, at least by standard methods of reproductive engraving" (Eaves "Graphicality" 105). However, the hybridity of illuminated printing prevented the full reception of Blake's work within his lifetime, and limited access in the following generations. Eaves links this problem of audience to Blake's own interest in pursuing "an artistic technology that fits many categories and none" instead of more traditional, mainstream vehicles for his work, such as oil painting or epic poetry (106). This early alienation of audience and the institutional divide between Blake's poetry and art gave rise to an editorial tradition of separation.

12. The editorial divide between text and image in Blake's work has been substantially lessened over the last few decades of scholarship, but images continue to remain a problem within technologies of storage, manipulation, and reproduction. Pictures in both print and digitization remain resource-intensive, requiring vast amounts of time, money, and equipment to reproduce. Because of the increasingly sophisticated tools

and technologies needed for successful image reproduction, explains Eaves, “images resist easy technological assimilation.”

> Video and audio on the (relatively) amazing multimedia scene of the World Wide Web remain grotesquely primitive, complicated, and elusive beside the reassuringly streamlined and stable letters and lines of standard, searchable, intermeasurable ASCII text. Pictures remain formidable problems, and the relation of the graphical to the textual remains an unsolved foundational issue. (“Graphicality” 118)

These conditions of technological impairment give rise to various editorial settlements: the *Blake Archive* restores the union of text and image by offering both, yet text and image searching are entirely separate activities. Hyperlinked navigation allows for a more customizable reading of Blake, yet it also reproduces the divisions between facsimile images and transcriptions. Although one of the founding aims of the *Blake Archive* was the reunion of Blake’s text with his designs, “more than a decade of collective experience has revealed that the *Archive* is concerned at least as much with recapitulation and recycling as with restoration, and as much with disciplined fragmentation as with integration” (Eaves “Crafting Editorial Settlements” “Abstract”).

13. Image searching, for example, is an important scholarly tool of the critical archive, but it also represents another compromise with the limitations of digital technologies. Searching the *Blake Archive* is separated between text and image; in fact, image searching is actually a search for text. Illustration descriptions, written collaboratively by the editors, generate key words, which then constitute the controlled vocabulary of the search page. Readers must select terms from a controlled vocabulary, rather than enter their own keywords. Essentially, text is used to stabilize images. Discussing the scholarly treatment of images in the *Blake Archive*, John Walsh writes that "the controlled vocabulary is an excellent tool for finding what one wants to find. The controlled vocabulary […] serves a much-needed purpose, like an index or page numbers, for locating material of interest. Having then found interesting content, the scholar can reflect on the subtlety and richness, ambiguity and clarity of the work" ("Survey," "Individual authors" par. 4). Once they have located an image through searching, scholars can then manipulate the images of primary sources. At the time of this writing, the *Blake Archive* uses Inote to annotate images. When viewing an image, the reader can select the Inote tool, which displays the image descriptions associated with that image in a separate window, along with the original image marked by quadrants (which are used to organize and display the annotations). Inote also works within image searching to zoom directly to the region of the image that contains the search term. Inote, however, will be replaced with Virtual Lightbox, an open source software tool for viewing and annotating images. Originally developed in 2000 by Matthew Kirschenbaum and Amit Kumar at the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities, Lightbox is being further developed by the *Blake Archive*’s Technical Editor, William Shaw (Kirschenbaum and Kumar). The *Blake Archive*’s version of Lightbox is still in rounds of revision and testing, but the core purpose will be to provide users a new interface with which to view, manipulate, analyze, collect, and compare images.

14. The *Blake Archive*’s technical standards and encoding practices are also evolving experiments in digital editing. In 2005, the *Blake Archive* converted to eXtensible Markup Language (XML), a non-proprietary standard that allows more flexibility in document encoding and compatibility across platforms and file formats. The switch from SGML and DynaWeb gave the *Archive* a “stronger foundation” from which to work (“Archive at a Glance”) and brought it up to date in relation to current digital scholarship. In this new phase of its continued evolution, the *Blake Archive* continues to adapt general encoding standards to fit its own needs. In general, XML allows users to define their own elements, but there are also discipline-specific standards, such as the guidelines developed by the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), an international consortium that has set the standard for the encoding of electronic texts in the humanities. The *Blake Archive* integrates several aspects of the TEI's most recent release of guidelines (at the time of this writing, P5), in addition to developing and revising elements already in use.

15. XML elements, or tags, are used to encode textual data based on the document's structure and content,

rather than its typographic appearance (as HTML would encourage). A canceled word in a manuscript, for example, is tagged as a "deletion," instead of being encoded as a "strikethrough." This key difference between semantic and visual markup results in a greater flexibility in the document's final format. Within XML documents, the appearance or rendering of the text is determined solely by the stylesheet, also called XSL (eXtensible Stylesheet Language). XSL stylesheets "can turn XML into many data formats, including ASCII text, HTML, and PDF" ("Technical Summary"). The *Blake Archive*'s XML documents are transformed "into HTML for display on the Web" ("Technical Summary"). As display standards change over time or become obsolete, XML documents are still relevant and usable; they merely have to be processed through new XSL stylesheets to meet the demands of different data formats. While the syntax of the XML encoding might not be visible to readers of the *Blake Archive*, XML is a better archiving and editing tool because it focuses on the document's structure and content, rather than its appearance.

16. The advantages of XML, however, certainly do not negate the difficulties of editing Blake. In fact, the very potential, freedom, and flexibility inherent in digital publication create new editing challenges. The hierarchical structure of XML, for example, becomes difficult to maintain when encoding Blake's revision-heavy, non-linear manuscripts. The XML tags which appear so easy to define in theory become inadequate when faced with complex revisions, partial letters, backwards writing, or indeterminate marks that could be either altered text or an incomplete image. As *reading* Blake—a richly-textured encounter with a visual artist, poet, printmaker, engraver, and self-editor—becomes *encoding* Blake, we (as the Editors and Project Assistants) are forced to consider key questions about our project's purpose, transcription policies, and intended audience, and are compelled to develop an XML tag set able to contain his elusive works.

17. One of the current works-in-progress, *An Island in the Moon*, will set the encoding and display standards for future manuscripts published in the *Blake Archive*.[5] The manuscript, Blake's longest prose work, exists in one unique draft without a title (*An Island in the Moon* is extrapolated from the first line). *Island* is an incomplete manuscript written in pen and ink, and contains dialogue, songs, and a page of sketches, signatures, and partially legible words and letters unrelated to the textual content. Probably composed in 1784-85, when Blake was around twenty-seven years old, *Island* was first published as a whole in 1907. The work satirizes contemporary fashions, literature, philosophy, scientific experimentation, and the superficiality of the salon lifestyle, and may include caricatures of Blake's acquaintances in the Mathew Circle. The character Quid the Cynic seems to represent Blake himself, while Suction the Epicurean may be his brother, Robert. Its reference to the short-lived fad of balloon hats links the piece to early demonstrations of ballooning, while its location on the moon places it in a longer tradition of moon voyage or flight narratives (Smith 60). Its form (dialogue interspersed with song lyrics) links it to contemporary theatrical pieces, while its satirical approach is a familiar narrative mode within the eighteenth century. The manuscript also notably contains the earliest drafts of three poems from *Songs of Innocence*: "Holy Thursday," "The Nurse's Song," and "Little Boy Lost."

18. The *Blake Archive*'s work on *Island* began in 1999, when the manuscript pages were photographed and color-corrected. Transcription and encoding started in 2003, and manuscript images and transcriptions are currently available on the *Blake Archive*'s "Testing" site, a non-public site that contains both previously published works and those in production. Editors and assistants can access works in progress to proofread transcriptions, check links, and test displays. *Island* is currently undergoing final revisions to the encoding, and awaiting pre-publication feedback and proofreading. Because it will be the first manuscript published by the *Blake Archive*, and therefore will utilize a revised tag set and a new color code designed specifically for manuscripts, this process of feedback and revision will be especially important.

19. *Island*'s tag set (see "Manuscript Tag Set"), which defines XML tags and their attributes, has been in development for several years. It was initially based on the tag set used for the Illuminated Books, but ultimately, we needed a new vocabulary to represent the intricacies of the manuscript. The XML elements "addition" <add> and "deletion" <del>, for example, are seemingly straightforward changes to mark; words inserted with a caret, for example, have clearly been added to the text, and words crossed out have been obviously canceled. The original tag set defined a "deletion" as having several attributes. The most

common type is “overstrike,” which describes a cancellation made by a line or lines drawn through the text —horizontally, vertically, or a simple looping scrawl (“Filling out an XML BAD File”). Another type of “deletion” is “obscured,” which signifies text that has been heavily canceled through washes, charcoal, or crayon (“Filling out an XML BAD File”). As we worked on *Island*, we discovered that “obscured” was too general and vague for our purposes. A heavily canceled word in ink, for example, might be described as an “overstrike,” (because the medium is ink), but also “obscured,” (since it was *heavily* canceled). Some of the letters and words in the manuscript were clearly “washed,” yet they were not “obscured”—they were, in fact, clearly legible. To clarify the types of “deletions,” we revised the tag set to include more precise descriptions of the medium used, and aimed for tag definitions which were less dependent on subjective analysis of the deletion, such as a “simple” scrawl or “heavy” cancellation. The original and revised definitions for “deletion” are below.

20. ***Original Tag Set*** (circa 2007)

## CANCELLATIONS: <del>

<del>Material between tags cancelled.</del>

A <del>> tag (a.k.a. “deletions”) is used to mark deletions that are recoverable/legible. The del tag may have the following attributes:

<table>
<tr><td>type</td><td>overstrike (a line or lines drawn through the text, horizontal or vertical, or a simple looping scrawl)<br><br>erasure (text that has been obscured by attempt to remove writing mark, such as by rubbing)<br><br>overwrite (text that has been replaced by text written directly over it)<br><br>obscured (for washes, charcoal, crayon, etc. used to cancel text by obscuring it heavily)</td></tr>
</table>

***Revised Tag Set*** (2009)

## DELETIONS: <del>

<del>Material between tags is cancelled.</del>

A <del> tag is used to indicate text that has been deliberately cancelled, but remains legible. <del> may have the following attributes and values:

<table>
<tr><td>type</td><td>overstrike: Text that has been deleted by a line or lines drawn through the text. Pen and ink is the default.<br>del type="overstrike"<br>del type="overstrike_pencil"<br>del type="overstrike_crayon"<br>del type="overstrike_charcoal"<br><br>overwrite: Text that has been deleted by new text written directly over it. (Always grouped with an <add>, as part of a <subst> unit.)<br><br>erasure: Text that has been deleted by an apparent attempt to remove the text by rubbing.<br>del type="erasure"</td></tr>
</table>

| | wash: Text that has been deleted by a wash.<br>del type="wash" |
|---|---|

Our decisions regarding the markup of these revisions will not only affect the transcript display and encoding of *Island* (and future manuscripts), but will also necessitate a return to previously published works in the *Blake Archive* that will benefit from the updated tag set.[6] As we create XML elements and redefine their attributes, we are building a new editorial vocabulary with which to describe Blake's texts. Ultimately, our encoding choices are editorial acts of interpretation, and how we decide to encode text emphasizes certain manuscript features while leaving others unmarked.

21. The robust structures and varying detail of TEI-conformant encoding for manuscripts have nearly limitless possibilities. Since time and financial constraints make it impossible to describe every possible feature of the text, the limits of the project must be determined.

> Early in the process, the editor must determine how fine-grained the transcription is to be, because markup permits the specification in minute detail of the paleographic features of the document [….] Virtually any linguistic or prosodic feature of interest can be represented; consequently, editors must make fundamental choices as to what features they will mark. (Fenton and Duggan 244)

There are tags to describe the physical object, such as its current location, material, dimensions, watermarks, ink color, handwriting, and damage. XML elements can map the text's content through rhyme schemes, grammatical structure, technical language, or foreign expressions. Projects concerned with linguistics can encode parts of speech, while others may choose to include the GPS locations of place names mentioned in the text or link to other relevant material available on the web. Transcribers can include alternate readings for an unclear word, and translators can use linking structures to provide multiple translations for a single line, stanza, or entire poem.

22. Adhering to our diplomatic transcription policies while serving our audience, both scholarly and non-specialist, motivates our encoding. The "utterly fundamental" first principle of the *Archive* is its emphasis on the physical "object" (the Illuminated Book page, the manuscript page, the letter) over the "textual unit [...] the poem or other work abstracted from its physical medium" ("Editorial Principles"). The effort to transcribe text at a visual rather than a contextual level roughly translates into a policy of "transcribe what you see," which "implicitly raises some rather complex ideas in the form of questions about what constitutes a text, a work, a copy, an image, a picture, a representation" (Essick qtd. in Kraus 34). While these questions of what constitutes a work are certainly not new in the realm of textual criticism, they do take on renewed significance in a digital environment that can easily present multiple versions of a literary work.[7] In electronic versions, the XML documents are both an important piece of critical apparatus and yet another version of the original work. In addition to manuscript images, textual notes, work introductions, and transcriptions, XML documents also contain important editorial notations and explanatory information. In a digital edition, the tag set, and the XML documents it helps to create, become a formalization of editorial intention. We are constantly redefining our object of study—Blake's page—as we revise the tags we will use to encode it. The tags we choose reflect the *Archive*'s concern with Blake's revisions and the physicality of the page. Changing the tag set means updating our XML documents as well—creating new electronic "versions" of Blake's page with every XML or tag set update. The fluid evolution of the *Archive*'s critical apparatus demonstrates the importance of experimental modes of editing, such as versioning, in the production of scholarly electronic editions.

23. At the *Blake Archive*, our editorial interest in *An Island in the Moon* lies in its physical properties; namely, the revisions in Blake's hand—the manuscript's additions, gaps, substitutions, and deletions. We want to depict the relationships of revisions within his substitutions, describe the sketched images of the last page, delineate partial letters from scribble, and clearly represent these complex features in the manuscript. We strive to reunite Blake's visual work with his textual, while at the same time treating the page as a visual,

physical object. The focus of our encoding necessarily overlooks other features of the text, such as the possibility that *Island*'s characters satirize real people in Blake's social circle, the various narrative modes at work (such as poetry, song, and satire), or explicit references to the popular culture of Blake's day, such as balloon hats and George Cumberland's new methods of printing (Phillips 10-12). Although some of this material may be included in the brief introductions to a work or textual notes, our encoding is of necessity "incomplete." In keeping within our view of Blake's page as a physical object, we want to represent revisions to the manuscripts in both our encoding and transcript displays. While the process of developing a tag set should keep the audience in mind, it must also be responsive to the primary work itself; encoding thus functions as a mediation between Blake, our editorial intentions, the anticipated scholarly audience[8], and the limitations of the technology.

24. One of our biggest obstacles in creating a detailed—yet concise—tag set for Blake's manuscripts has been the problem of substitutions; that is, when one word (or word ending) replaces another. Such acts of revision, although two separate changes (a deletion, and the addition of new material), actually constitute a single intervention in the text. This is what we wanted to show. But, at the time, there was nothing in the TEI standards that described this situation.[9] We had to invent our own tag. We developed a "replacement" tag that we defined as follows: "A <rep> tag is used to mark text that apparently replaces earlier text that has been deleted by the writer. In practice, a <rep> will always be preceded by either a <del> (most often) or a <gap> - that is, text that the writer had deliberately canceled in order to replace it with different text" (Eaves "Update for MS. Tags"). The simplest kinds of replacements involved word endings, or single words and short phrases that were clear replacements in the text.

25. For example, the word below originally read "endeavourd" and was changed through overwriting to read "endeavouring."

    The markup for this word would have read:

    ```
    <l n="bb74.1.ms.01.17" justify="left">the three
    Philosophers at this time were each endeavour
    <del type="overwrite">d</del>
    <rep type="overwrite" place="over">ing</rep>
    …</l>
    ```

    This line in the transcription also includes an explanatory textual note: "Blake may have first written 'endeavourd' or 'endeavoured' before altering the word to 'endeavouring.'"

26. Another example shows the replacements of noun markers, "any" for "a." In keeping with our emphasis on the typographical page, we transcribe the inserted word on its own line. In this case, the "replacement" appears first in the encoding, and a text note explains the relationship between these two lines.

    ```
    <l n="bb74.1.ms.06.10" justify="left" indent="3">
    <rep place="supralinear"><hi rend="subscript">any</hi>
    </rep>
    <note>This line was inserted above, and appears to replace,
    the deleted "a" in line 11.</note>
    </l>

    <l n="bb74.1.ms.06.11" justify="left">that
    <del type="overstrike">a</del>
    natural fool would make a clever fellow if he was properly
    <note>Phillips reads the deletion as "a-" (page 39).</note>
    </l>
    ```

While using <rep> worked well for “simple,” straightforward replacements, such as changed word endings (from “d” to “ing”) or alternate phrases, it became a problem in the display for more complex revisions. We were struggling with definitions, and had trouble deciding what in fact constituted a “replacement.” We realized that while some revisions were deliberate replacements, not all text that follows a “deletion” could be defined as a “replacement.” The simplest kinds of replacements involved word endings, or single words and short phrases that were clear replacements in the text.

27. While the <rep> tag does serve its function in these examples, it causes a few problems. Since the <add> and the <del> occur on separate lines, it is not immediately apparent that they constitute a single act of revision. This gets at a larger problem of definition; although we are trying to represent a single act of revision comprised of two XML elements (an <add> and a <del>), the <rep> tag emphasizes only one part of the manuscript change. By definition, the <rep> tag emphasizes the “addition,” and is an unbalanced representation of the total revision. While <rep> did serve our purposes, it ultimately did not present the entire substitution as a single unit of revision.

28. In 2007, the TEI updated their encoding standards. The P5 update contains the new element “substitution,” which links an “addition” element and “deletion” element together. The definition of this tag, from the TEI guidelines, is that “<subst> (substitution) groups one or more deletions with one or more additions when the combination is to be regarded as a single intervention in the text” (TEI Consortium). Integrating this tag into our manuscript tag set clarified how to encode revisions that were comprised of combinations of smaller changes. This linking of elements clearly represents the revision as a single unit, while maintaining the separate actions of adding and deleting. For example, the changes to the word “endeavour” are now encoded like this:

```
<l n="bb74.1.ms.01.17" justify="left">the three
Philosophers at this time were each endeavour
<subst>
<del type="overwrite">d</del>
<add type="overwrite" place="inline">ing</add>
</subst>
…</l>
```

The <subst> tag is far more flexible than our original <rep> tag, since <add> and <del> remain separate, yet we can also show their relationship to one another.

29. As *Blake Archive* project assistant Christopher Jackson points out, developing the tag set “led us not only to see something new in Blake’s process of revision, but also to formulate new editorial ideas in response” (“island article”). This kind of responsive editing is made possible by the digital environment, which allows us to rethink and revisit previous readings of Blake, including our own. Editing Blake thus becomes a process of discovery. Jackson notes that

> The concept of replacement or substitution text is not mysterious. It seems obvious once you have it pointed out to you. But we had to discover it on our own–and it was the process of engaging with the vocabulary of our [manuscript] tags […] that allowed us to notice the feature of Blake's text. (“island article”)

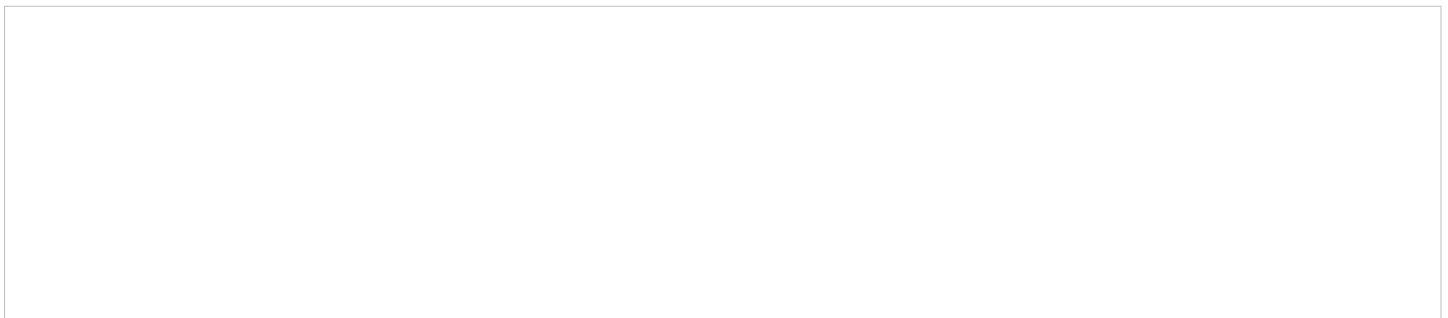
This process of “discovery”–of both complex revisions in Blake’s manuscript and the XML tags we needed–is a result of reading Blake through the lens of encoding.[10] Our working vocabulary of XML elements forces us to closely inspect and reconsider authorial interventions in the text. The shifting symbiosis between our tag set and Blake’s revisions *is* the impermanent condition of experimental editing, one in which encoding may reveal new aspects of a work, and these characteristics in turn require new XML elements to describe them.

30. The formal publication of *Island* will also mark the implementation of a color-coded transcript. By using font colors and highlighting instead of traditional editorial markings, our goal is to represent and clarify Blake's original manuscript with minimal editorial presence. The color code works to balance the *Archive*'s own editorial choice to highlight Blake's process of revision, while also enabling the reader to approach the text through a systematized transcription. Colors have been carefully chosen by project assistants and editors to coordinate harmoniously while simultaneously representing a range of textual edits; for example, red font represents complex deletions, black highlighting represents illegible or obliterated text.

    The color code also appears on every transcription page for easy access (as a pop-up window). We have also restricted the colors used to avoid overwhelming the reader visually–by limiting the number of colors to a specific, clearly defined set, the color code will eventually become intuitive for frequent users. Along with the color code, the *Archive* also uses one of the more traditional editorial symbols, the strikethrough, to indicate simple deletions. This selective combination of traditional, familiar typographic symbols with the more experimental color code allows the *Blake Archive* to diversify and strengthen its means of transcribing Blake's often challenging and convoluted revisions.

31. The use of a color code rather than traditional textual symbols to track manuscript edits is not particularly new to digital scholarship. Projects like *The Walt Whitman Archive* have employed similar transcription displays to capture the complexities of manuscripts. But a color code *will* be a first for the *Blake Archive*, which has predominantly focused on publishing Blake's illuminated books, drawings, prints, and commercial works up to this point. These previously published works exist as fair or finished copies, and therefore do not contain complex revisions. *Island*, on the other hand, was never finished or copied, and thus is riddled with misspellings, cryptic letterings, and multiple edits and re-edits. The manuscript forces us to consider how these unusual features can be transcribed diplomatically, with as little conjecture as possible, and displayed with minimal reconstruction of authorial intention.

32. The color code offers some key advantages over the more traditional method of using typographic symbols to represent editorial changes. While color codes and typographic symbols work in very similar ways to visualize textual alterations in a manuscript, a color code allows editors more creativity in how changes display in a transcription, while also enabling a deeper look into the often messy details of the *Island* manuscript. For example, transcriptions using traditional typographic symbols do not have a particularly effective way to denote that a word or phrase is replacing, or substituting, another word or phrase. These symbols tend to show only that one word has been deleted and is followed by an added word. The display that depends upon these more traditional transcription methods does not effectively capture the idea that the deleted and added words form a unit.[11] In the example below, there are clear units of substitution, marked by yellow highlighting (from object 3 in *Island*).

    Traditional editorial symbols drawn from the tradition of the printed monograph transcription are restricted by the fact that they must be standardized typographic or stylistic markings. While a color coded display might overcome some of the limitations of typographic symbols, it is still an editorial settlement. *Any* transcription will be necessarily different from the manuscript, making it even more important that editorial choices are transparent.

33. Edits in the *Island* manuscript can be difficult to interpret and hard to track. Because of damage to the manuscript, illegible handwriting, or multiple edits of one particular word or phrase, Blake's changes can be challenging for his editors, and particularly for the *Blake Archive*, which has set in place an editorial policy based on diplomatic transcription and adherence to only what is visually discernible from the source material (the page). When the editors / assistants want to make a particular claim or put forth a variant reading[12] for a complicated edit, they have adopted the textual note. Text notes are linked from the transcriptions of illuminated books, individual etchings (such as *Laocoön*) and now manuscripts. They can provide detailed information not included in the transcription or the tag set, thereby allowing the *Blake Archive* to maintain its editorial policies while simultaneously providing a platform for clarification, explanation, or translation.[13] The inclusion of text notes provides readers with yet another way to interact with a work, while also enabling a project like the *Blake Archive* to become more transparent through detailing the choices assistants and editors make when transcribing a work.

34. Although including text notes with a transcription is standard practice for many editors working in print, the *Blake Archive* is able to go a step further by adding text note images to highlight particularly tangled cases within the *Island* manuscript. These text note images appear alongside the written content of the notes themselves, providing the reader with the specific manuscript content in question. The example below gives an illustration of this–the text note and the text note image appear together to clarify the complicated nature of the overwrite here (from object 9 in *Island*)[14]:

    This not only gives the reader a direct reference to troublesome or heavily edited spots in the manuscript, but also allows the *Blake Archive* to unite the textual (in the form of the text note) with the visual (the manuscript image itself). "Depending on the needs of the project," writes John Lavagnino, "it may be desirable to represent […] unusual [textual] features with images instead of relying solely on transcription and tagging" (336). By supplementing the text of transcription and encoding, images in the editorial notes show another kind of relationship between text and image–one that is marked by extension, instead of separation. The text note image continues the *Blake Archive*'s philosophy of joining the textual and visual sides of Blake's work, and brings those two previously separated realms together in the sphere of critical editing.

35. Referencing and representing the visual component of Blake's work within the text notes is perhaps most important because it allows the editors to display complicated images alongside transcriptions that often lose (and indeed, should lose) the occasional incoherence and difficulty of the original text. The transcription should ideally work to clarify the manuscript, rendering difficult revisions in a clear and straightforward manner. However, the text note image can highlight particularly problematic or noteworthy cases that may interest the reader. The text note image thus becomes another way to privilege the page while simultaneously heightening the transparency, readability, and usefulness of the transcription. Below is an example of one revision that the assistants and editors felt needed further explication (from object 8, line 29 of *Island*). The transcription renders this particular spot in the manuscript thus:

    The transcription is clearly legible, and the color code signals that there have been a series of revisions (something illegible is followed by the deleted "man," which seems to be substituted by "Gent"). But the sequence of deletions and additions is not as simple as it appears here. The manuscript presents us with a tangle of revisions that looks like this:

    From the text note image, we can see that "Gent" replaces the entire deletion, rather than just "man," as the transcription might lead some readers to mistakenly think. However, its positioning in the manuscript, over an illegible deletion and before the deleted "man," cannot be replicated exactly in the transcription. Because the transcription must operate within specified parameters set in place by the editors, representing this case

presents some serious issues. As Jackson explains in an email discussion, the *Blake Archive* has conventionally transcribed the earliest of Blake's revisions in a given sequence first, in a movement from left to right, rather than attempting to duplicate the appearance of the manuscript exactly ("Morris, Ali, Rachel"). Thus, the text note image here provides a necessary clarification for the reader, who can examine it alongside the transcription to get a clearer idea of Blake's chain of revision. While the transcription removes a level of complexity from Blake's manuscripts, and therefore might hinder a reader's comprehensive understanding of the text, the text note images restore the problematic layers of Blake's edits and disclose our editing decisions.

36. The final page of the *Island* manuscript, object 18 in the *Blake Archive*'s pagination, has been one of the most difficult to transcribe and display digitally, precisely because it integrates, even confuses, textuality and graphicality.

**Object 18 of *Island***

This final page, which resembles that of a sketch book, contains images of horses, livestock, and human faces in profile; signatures, probably deleted but still legible; single letters repeated in rows; backwards writing; and partial letters. The text that does appear on the page, unlike the rest of the manuscript, is very striking visually–it is not written in lines, but fills in the spaces around the images. Some of this text is heavily deleted, some is washed over in lighter shades of ink, and some even intersects with the images of horses and human faces. The images and text that appear together on this page appear to have no connection to one another beyond the shared space of the manuscript page.

37. In his facsimile edition of Blake's *Island*, Michael Phillips does not include this final page in his transcription of the work. To meet our goal of joining the visual and the textual within Blake, however, the *Blake Archive* must consider this page in both of its aspects. In addition to describing the images and making them available through image searches, we also transcribe the text–to the best of our abilities. The digital representation of this page becomes problematic since the transcription might visually misrepresent the manuscript's complex features, and our capabilities to encode and display certain components of the text, such as partial lettering, are limited. These challenges redefine the problem of graphicality and textuality within the critical apparatus of a digital work.

38. The partial letters challenge the *Blake Archive*'s transcription policies because they exist on the border between image and text–neither fully one or the other, these lines hint at legibility, but also refuse it. Two sets of partial letters visually resemble lowercase "n's" or "m's" in cursive and another line may be the backstroke to a capital "T" or "F."

Electronic publication limits how we can display unique semi-characters that cannot be fully represented by modern typefaces. While we could infer that these marks were most likely the beginning backstrokes of an "n" or "m," we could not confidently transcribe them as such.[15] There seemed to be no clear way to transcribe the ambiguity of these markings: not representing them as text in the manuscript misrepresents the fact that they are more textual than they are graphical, transcribing them as either the character "n" or "m" misrepresents our own confidence in that reading, and transcribing these lines as two characters simultaneously just doesn't seem feasible, and certainly does not preserve our goal for a transcript, which is to clarify and make legible the manuscript page.

39. In addition to the problem of displaying partial characters, we were also not sure how to encode them in XML. There are several options available within TEI, but none seemed to be a perfect solution.[16] Our decision for now is to encode a partial letter with the <gap> element, which is used to mark text that is

illegible, usually because of damage or cancellation. Attributes within the element specify the reasons for the illegibility. To encode partial letters, we added the attribute “partial” to explain why these letters are illegible.

40. While this is a good working solution for our encoding, we are not sure it will be an effective display option. The <gap> element is currently displayed as black highlighting, and we must consider the visual noise this might create in the transcript for object 18.

    While black highlighting is quite similar to cancellations in other areas of the manuscript – deletions that are made with heavy strikethroughs or puddles of ink–it might misrepresent the partial letters on this page, which are not covered in heavy ink, and are in fact very present as gray-washed lines on the page. As Lavagnino suggests, there is less room in a digital display for visual ambiguity: "There is less room in a digital edition for evading interpretive questions by printing something with an ambiguous appearance. To make an edition work as intended, it is generally necessary to interpret features and not merely reproduce their appearance" (338). To the extent that the transcription of object 18 “misrepresents” the appearance of the original, the color code represents our editorial interpretations, not the literal appearance of the page.

41. The problems of encoding and displaying certain textual elements on this page raise important questions about graphicality and textuality not only in Blake's work, but in the scholarly edition itself. Reading partial letters, we rely on their graphical resemblance to complete characters. Describing the images on this page, we focus on the most recognizable and complete images–animal bodies and heads, human faces in profile. Several indeterminate lines on the page, neither complete image nor partial text, remain outside of both the transcription and illustration description for this page. In our production of the *Archive* edition, the scholarly version of Blake's work, we alter the visual aspects of Blake's work in the transcript, and incompletely describe the images in our prose descriptions and search vocabulary. While the *Archive* does help remedy the long-standing disciplinary division between the visual and the textual in Blake, our work leaves out still other aspects of Blake’s work as we make difficult decisions about what we can adequately encode, describe, and display in an online version.

42. To the extent that the publication of *Island* will mark a new stage of evolution for the *Blake Archive*, it is also a transitional project. A product of x-editing, itself a provisional, speculative process, the online edition of *Island* may someday become obsolete as electronic editing continues to evolve. Increased interest in folksonomy (social tagging) and the semantic web, for example, may significantly alter the scope, detail, and extent of markup. In an article discussing the reliability of electronic texts, Phill Berry, Paul Eggert, Chris Tiffin, and Graham Barwell write: “No editor can foresee all the uses to which an electronic scholarly edition can be put or all the interpretive markup that will be required. The more the attempt to provide interpretive markup is pursued through increasingly heavy tagging, the more the reliability of the text is put to risk" (271). In electronic textual editing, the tasks of the editor extend beyond meeting obligations to the audience, primary materials, and one’s own editorial goals, but must also include producing a reliable–but flexible –electronic text.

43. Increasingly, visions of future electronic editions put more of the editorial process in the hands of the reader. In a 2004 essay, Peter Robinson advocates “fluid, co-operative and distributed editions” which will be “the work of many, the property of all” (“Where We Are”). In these fluid editions, readers perform editorial acts to primary documents.[17] A reader, for example, might “want to attach commentary, annotations, or translations” to a digital manuscript, import additional manuscripts not included in the original electronic edition, “make his or her own edited text, perhaps by taking over an existing edition and substituting his or her own readings at various points,” or even continue the markup by encoding unmarked elements (such as people names or places) to allow for linking and data analysis (Robinson “Where We Are”). These fluid, cooperative editions will “present materials which can be dynamically reshaped and interrogated, which not only accumulate all the data and all the tools used by the editors but offer these to the readers, so that they might explore and remake, so that product and process intertwine to offer new

ways of reading" (Robinson "Where We Are"). This model of scholarly edition which opens itself to readerly interrogation and intervention parallels open source projects, such as Wikipedia, which succeed precisely because they create "an architecture of participation" (qtd. in Shirky "Gin, Television, and Social Surplus").

44. In "Reflections of Scholarly Editing" (1996), however, Tanselle maintains the necessity of historical expertise and the vital role specialists play in interpreting textual artifacts of the past. In response to "theorists who say that readers should decide for themselves how (or whether) they wish to alter documentary texts," Tanselle suggests that readers might want the historical knowledge of experts, as they themselves might not be "equally qualified to engage in historical reconstruction, which involves knowledge as well as imagination" ("Reflections"). Countering the objection that critical editions are too prescriptive, Tanselle asserts that readers can choose for themselves "how much or how little they wish to rely on the historical activities of the readers who preceded them" ("Reflections"). These activities, which include editing and publishing scholarship, are the products of systematic efforts to interpret the past. In Tanselle's view, readers might not be altering documentary texts themselves, but they do retain the power of choosing how much of the critical apparatus and scholarly research to incorporate into their reading.

45. Regardless of whether readers actually encode and edit electronic editions, the future of scholarly digital projects still rests with its readers. As Robinson writes, "the best guarantee that an electronic edition should remain usable is that it should be used" ("Where We Are"). In an effort to increase transparency and maintain usability, we at the *Blake Archive* continuously reexamine and revise our tools, goals, and procedures. At the moment, projects under discussion include a major site redesign, a new imaging application (Lightbox) that will allow users to annotate and manipulate Blake's images on their own computers, and an unofficial blog (The Cynic Sang) that attempts to shed light on working for the *Archive* while exploring wider topics in digital humanities.

46. Just as Blake's work is "intercanonical" and "straddles two strongly defined conventional canons whose borders are institutionally guarded," the work of the *Blake Archive* attempts to break new ground in digital humanities while staying true to many of the criteria for producing, and evaluating, a scholarly edition in print (Eaves "Graphicality" 105). Uncertainty about the long-term future of the *Blake Archive*, (indeed, about any digital project), motivates our goals and decisions today, though it leaves us "with no answer to the haunting question of where and how a project like this one will live out its useful life" (Eaves "Multimedia Body Plans" 218). Our struggle to best represent the complexities of Blake's work situates us firmly within the realm of x-editing, but it also links us to Blake himself, whose own experiments with print technologies led occasionally to failure, but also, more often than not, to invention.

**Notes**

1 The authors would like to thank Brian Boucheron, Christopher Jackson, Wayne Ripley, and William Shaw for

their willingness to read this paper in various stages of development, and for their supportive comments, much needed corrections, and insightful questions. Thanks also to the volume editors and readers for their thoughtful suggestions. A portion of this paper was presented at the 2009 Conference for the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism, Durham, NC.

2 Eileen Gifford Fenton and Hoyt N. Duggan note that "creating digital text from handwritten documents requires all the traditional editorial and bibliographic disciplines necessary for publication in print plus some mastery of SGML/XML markup" (241).

3 Eaves lists the primary characteristics of x-editing as "interactive; collaborative, requiring closely coordinated teamwork; offsite, conducted at several dispersed locations connected electronically; highly adaptive; approximate; tentative; experimental, ruled by trial and error; radically incomplete" ("Crafting Editorial Settlements" par. 28).

4 In the *Blake Archive*, comparative analysis can begin with the click of a button. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, for example, is comprised of nine separate copies held in eight different institutions and private collections. The reader can view them all on a computer screen as high-quality, color-corrected images, "reproductions that are more accurate in color, detail, and scale than the finest commercially published photomechanical reproductions" ("Archive at a Glance"). While browsing images of this Illuminated Book, readers of the *Blake Archive* can enlarge the pages, read descriptive annotations, search for additional images, or use the "Compare" function, which displays matching plates from each copy of the work in a single screen.

5 Current Project Assistants on this project are Christopher Jackson, Rachel Lee, and J. Alexandra McGhee; the Project Manager is Ashley Reed; the Technical Editor is William Shaw; and the Editor is Morris Eaves.

6 For example, object 18 includes sections of backwards writing. Our decisions about how to encode these sections of backwards text in *Island* can be retroactively applied to the Illuminated Books that also contain mirror writing.

7 In "Levels of Transcription," M. J. Driscoll observes that "from a single marked-up copy text it should be possible, if one so desires, to produce screen or print copy at any level, from strictly diplomatic to fully normalized" (258).

8 Eaves points out that the *Blake Archive*'s primary purpose is for studying Blake rather than reading him. Therefore, our primary audience is a scholarly one. "The first imperative of editing is to meet the needs of audiences, and the audience that has guided our imaginations is the community of scholars" ("Multimedia Body Plans" 211).

9 This was before the TEI P5 release in 2007.

10 Patrick Durusau makes a similar observation about encoding as a process of discovery. "The process of documenting markup choices is actually one of learning about a body of texts. Specialists know the text but not from the standpoint of imposing markup from a fixed set of elements such as the TEI guidelines. And it is not always obvious which TEI elements should be used for encoding, even if there is agreement about what to encode" (303).

11 For example, Michael Phillips transcribes the first three words of the second line of Chapter 7 (object 7, line 40 in the *Archive*), as "*they* Quid and Suction were left alone" (*Island* 40). The use of italics here indicates that "they" has been deleted. However, Phillips transcribes "Quid and Suction" normally, while the Archive would represent this as a "substitution," therefore joining "they" and "Quid and Suction" by highlighting both the "deletion" and the "replacement" as one unit.

12 The *Archive* includes variant readings from Phillips, G. E. Bentley, and David Erdman within text notes. In one such case (object 6, line 11), the *Archive* reads, "that a natural fool would make a clever fellow," but includes

a text note with this information: “Phillips reads the deletion as ‘a-’ (page 39).”

13 For example, *Laocoön* includes Greek and Hebrew lettering that is displayed in the transcription, but translated in the text notes.

14 In examples from the transcription, the color code pictured may be an earlier version than what appears in the “Manuscript Color Code.”

15 We do use the <unclear> element to encode unclear or conjectured text in manuscripts, but we still felt like this would not be diplomatic enough in these cases.

16 As James Cummings and Syd Bauman pointed out when we sent a query to the TEI listserv, it is possible to describe nonstandard characters or variant glyphs, such as with the glyph <g> element (Cummings), or by using the character <c> element with the attribute “partial” (Bauman). However, the *Archive*'s Technical Editor, William Shaw, explained that even with these solutions, we were still left with the problem of displaying these markings, and that the only realistic alternatives might be to encode Blake's partial letters as altered or illegible characters (Shaw).

17 Clay Shirky makes a similar comment about citizens performing acts of journalism in his book, *Here Comes Everybody* (Penguin Press: New York, 2008).

## Works Cited

“The Archive at a Glance.” *The William Blake Archive*. Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. 19 September 2008. 13 October 2008 <http://www.blakearchive.org/>.

Bauman, Syd. “encoding partial letters & backwards writing.” Email to TEI-L (Text Encoding Initiative listserv). 1 September 2008.

Berrie, Phill, Paul Eggert, Chris Tiffin, and Graham Barwell. "Authenticating Electronic Editions." *Electronic Textual Editing*. Ed. Lou Burnard, Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, and John Unsworth. New York: MLA, 2006. 269-76.

Benton, Thomas H. "Authoritative Online Editions." *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 6 July 2007: C2. <http://chronicle.com>.

“Contributing Collections.” *The William Blake Archive*. Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. 19 September 2008. 13 October 2008 <http://www.blakearchive.org/>.

Cummings, James. “encoding partial letters & backwards writing.” Email to TEI-L (Text Encoding Initiative listserv). 1 September 2008.

Deegan, Marilyn. “Collection and Preservation of an Electronic Edition.” *Electronic Textual Editing*. Ed. Lou Burnard, Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, and John Unsworth. New York: MLA, 2006. 358-70.

Driscoll, M. J. “Levels of Transcription.” *Electronic Textual Editing*. Ed. Lou Burnard, Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, and John Unsworth. New York: MLA, 2006. 254-61.

Durusau, Patrick. “Why and How to Document Your Markup Choices.” *Electronic Textual Editing*. Ed. Lou Burnard, Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, and John Unsworth. New York: MLA, 2006. 299-309.

Eaves, Morris. “Crafting Editorial Settlements.” *Romanticism on the Net 1996-2006: Celebrating Ten Years of Online Publishing*. No. 41-42, February–May 2006. 1 July 2009. <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/2006/v/n41-42/013150ar.html>.

---. “Graphicality: Multimedia Fables for 'Textual' Critics.” *Reimagining Textuality: Textual Studies in the Late Age of Print*. Ed. Elizabeth Bermann Loizeaux and Neil Fraistat. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, 2002.

---. “Multimedia Body Plans: A Self-Assessment.” *Electronic Textual Editing*. Ed. Lou Burnard, Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, and John Unsworth. New York: MLA, 2006. 210-23.

---. “Re: [blake-proj] Morris, Ali, Rachel: Update for MS. Tags.” Email to blake-proj (*The William Blake Archive* listserv). 4 March 2008.

“Editorial Principles: Methodology and Standards in the Blake Archive.” *The William Blake Archive*. Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. 13 October 2008 <http://www.blakearchive.org/>.

Fenton, Eileen Gifford and Hoyt N. Duggan. “Effective Methods of Producing Machine-Readable Text from Manuscript and Print Sources.” *Electronic Textual Editing*. Ed. Lou Burnard, Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, and John Unsworth. New York: MLA, 2006. 241-53.

“Filling Out a BAD File.” *The William Blake Archive WIP Site*. 14 December 2008.

Jackson, Christopher. “Re: [blake-proj]Ali and Rachel: your island article.” Email to blake-proj (*The William Blake Archive* listserv). 7 December 2008.

---. “Re: [blake-proj]Morris, Ali, Rachel: Island Objects 7-8.” Email to blake-proj (*The William Blake Archive* listserv). 31 January 2008.

Kirschenbaum, Matthew and Amit Kumar. Virtual Lightbox. 2000. <http://www.mith2. umd.edu/products/lightbox/index.html>.

Kraus, Kari. “Once Only Imagined: An Interview with Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi.” *Studies in Romanticism* 41.2 (2002): 143-99. Rpt. in *Romantic Circles Praxis Series* March 2003. 7 December 2008 <http://www.rc. umd.edu/praxis/blake/blakeint.html>.

Lavagnino, John. “When Not to Use TEI.” *Electronic Textual Editing*. Ed. Lou Burnard, Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, and John Unsworth. New York: MLA, 2006. 334-38.

McGann, Jerome. “The Rationale of Hypertext.” 6 May 1995. 1 July 2009. <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/public/jjm2f/rationale.html>.

Phillips, Michael. “Discussion: *An Island in the Moon*.” *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*. 22.3 (1988-89): 110-11.

---, ed. *An Island in the Moon*. William Blake. New York: Cambridge UP, 1987.

Reiman, Donald H. “‘Versioning’: The Presentation of Multiple Texts.” *Romantic Texts and Contexts*. Columbia, MO: U of Missouri P, 1987.

Robinson, Peter. “Current Issues in Making Digital Editions of Medieval Texts–Or, Do Electronic Scholarly Editions Have a Future?” *Digital Medievalist* 1.1 (Spring 2005). 1 July 2009. <http://www.digitalmedievalist.org/journal/1.1/robinson/>.

---. “Where We Are With Electronic Editions and Where We Want to Be.” 24 March 2004. 1 July 2009. <http://www.computerphilologie.unimuenchen.de/jg03/robinson.html>.

Shaw, William S. “[blake-proj] Chris and Will: 2 encoding questions that need attention.” Email to blake-proj (*The William Blake Archive* listserv). 17 September 2008.

Shirky, Clay. “Gin, Television, and Social Surplus.” 2008 Web 2.0 Conference. San Francisco. 23 April 2008. 1 July 2009. <http://www.shirky.com/herecomeseverybody/2008/04/looking-for-the-mouse.html>.

Smith, K. E. *An Analysis of William Blake’s Early Writings and Designs to 1790*. Studies in British Literature, vol. 42. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen P, 1999.

Tanselle, G. Thomas. “Foreword.” *Electronic Textual Editing*. Ed. Lou Burnard, Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe, and John Unsworth. New York: MLA, 2006. 1-6.

---. “Reflections on Scholarly Editing.” *Raritan* 16 (Fall 1996). 52-64. *WilsonWeb*. Rush Rhees Library. University of Rochester. 30 June 2009.

“Technical Summary.” *The William Blake Archive*. Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. 7 July 2008. 13 October 2008 <http://www.blakearchive.org/>.

TEI Consortium, Ed. *TEI P5: Guidelines for Electronic Text Encoding and Interchange*. 1.2.0. 31 October 2008. TEI Consortium. 8 December 2008 <http://www.tei-c.org/Guidelines/P5/>.

Unsworth, John. “Documenting the Reinvention of Text: The Importance of Failure.” *The Journal of Electronic Publishing* 3.2 (December 1997). 1 July 2009 <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=jep;view=text;rgn=main;idno=3336451.0003.201>.

Viscomi, Joseph. “Illuminated Printing.” *The William Blake Archive*. Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. 30 October 2006. 5 August 2010. <http://www.blakearchive.org/>.

*The William Blake Archive*. Ed. Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. 30 October 2006. 3 November 2008 <http://www.blakearchive.org/>.

Walsh, John A. "Multimedia and Multitasking: A Survey of Digital Resources for Nineteenth-Century Literary Studies." *A Companion to Digital Literary Studies*. Ed. Susan Schreibman and Ray Siemens. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008. 29 October 2008 <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/DLS/>..

# Editing and Reading Blake

## Editioning William Blake's *VALA/The Four Zoas*

**Justin Van Kleeck**

### I.

1. Of the many mysteries that William Blake left us to ponder over, one has proven to be particularly vexing for us and for the maker himself: the illustrated manuscript poem first titled *VALA* and later re-dubbed *The Four Zoas*. Even after more than 200 years, in which Blake has gone from obscurity to surprisingly broad appeal, *VALA/The Four Zoas* stands out as one of the richest and most complex works in the poet-artist's impressively prolific career. Offering one of the few surviving manuscripts of Blake's poetry, and the only glimpse we have into the compositional processes behind his late epic Prophecies, *VALA/The Four Zoas* presents an arresting vision of the fallen world as the poem's characters struggle amongst themselves toward regeneration, redemption, and a return to fourfold Eternal unity as “One Man.”

2. But the plot is only one part of the manuscript's fascinating draw. Its many large folio leaves offer a material testament to Blake's struggles with the content and form of his myth in both its verbal and visual elements. As such, the multitude of discontinuities, disjunctions, textual cruxes, vacillations between readings, and (for us and likely for Blake) irresolvable inconsistencies in the poem represent a challenge that some have accepted boldly, that some have accepted only in small pieces, that others have shied away from confusedly, and that others have ignored completely. Each of these complex elements of the manuscript played an essential part in its evolution from *VALA* to *The Four Zoas*. Because its multiple “transformations” remain visible on the revisionary surface of the page, the manuscript's “final state,” as Blake left it, is one of process, of movement, of change.

3. The minute particulars of Blake's heavily revised, seriously complicated, and never finished work have long represented a major field of contention and interest in Blake scholarship. Facing such a challenging task, editors have adopted multiple approaches for engaging with and then representing the original artifact. In turn, their editions come to play an integral role in larger Blake scholarship and so how this work has been understood, both by scholars (of all levels) and by “general readers.” Editing thus represents a unique act of “interpretation” in its own right. So, too, does what I call “editioning,” or the process of turning some original work into a distinct object and work through the process of reworking and representing it in an edition. On the one hand, editing and editioning reflect contemporary trends in literary scholarship, whether through an editor's relationship to a specific audience or through an editor's contextual influences and use of scholarship when editing the materials. On the other hand, they also seriously influence or even determine many aspects of literary study by providing the resources—usually in lieu of an original artifact—that scholars use for engaging with a work, formulating opinions, and then making their own arguments about it.

4. Therefore, if we hope even to understand Blake's manuscript without extended, hands-on access to the artifact itself, then we must first discover the methodologies behind the editions we use, assess the ways that editors put their principles into practice, and consider how the editions are shaped by the editors' stated (and unstated) purposes. And then we must see how, when they both *obscure* and *clarify* the works being edited, editors and their editions shape our understanding. That is, we must examine how the manuscript has been both *edited* and how it has been *editioned*. Such a comprehensive and critical method of using editions—determining and recognizing each element of an editorial methodology in a given edition—represents the only way that one can carry out a reliable study of

Blake's *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* manuscript.

5. The need for critical scrutiny when using editions of *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* exists not just because the manuscript's fragile condition makes studying the original itself nearly impossible, forcing us to rely on various editions of it as faithful and reliable representations. We often can gain new insights into the manuscript's particularities, its many interwoven and highly heterogeneous threads, through an editor's serious engagement with them, which has come to be expected in any true scholarly edition. Such an expectation of rigor may seem at first a relatively modern priority, something superseding "belleletristic" editing. In fact, a look at the editorial history of *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* reveals that a core belief in *fidelity and precision* represents perhaps the most *important* and *dominant* part of editorial methodologies—as represented by and in editions of the manuscript. When we actually recognize this principle in its various manifestations, we also can see where editions lack the rigor that an editor has attempted (and usually promised) to uphold. In turn, we can discover the weaknesses in an edition that otherwise we might have accepted whole hog. We thereby can consider an edition's context and how our expectations relate to it, which adds a degree of self-awareness to our own scholarship in a specific time (as Proust might say) and place.

6. At one extreme of the editorial axis, an editor may decide to adopt an entirely "genetic" or "documentary" approach to *VALA*/*The Four Zoas*, treating it as a physical object and so having as little recourse to supposed authorial "intentions" or narrative "sense" as possible. Instead of representing a work of literature, a coherent "poem" (with or without accompanying illustrations), such an editor most likely will ignore or minimize questions of order, sense, continuity, and so forth, focusing instead on "interpreting" what physical-textual evidence remains and the possible insights it can offer into the artifact's growth.[1] The resulting edition would present something far from a "reading" text, a traditional "poem," but instead a record of "data" for subsequent critical use.

7. For a genetic editor, the *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* manuscript would be a *manuscript* first and foremost and forever, but many editors (and their readers) would find such a treatment of Blake's work to be insufficient—likely as Blake himself would have. At the other extreme of the methodological spectrum, an editor may wish to approach the manuscript with the understanding that it was meant to be, and so is, a poem to be read as the author intended: in as sensible a manner as possible. That is, this editor would read the manuscript text and interpret the material and textual evidence so as to find the "right" order for the poetic narrative, even if the physical evidence did not fit the perceived sense of the narrative. Recovering—or discovering—this order amidst the "chaos," the "literary" or "intentionalist" editor would then refashion the manuscript's contents accordingly for his/her edition text—thus creating an "ideal" version of a poem. The result, of course, would require an editorial representation or re-forging of Blake's manuscript and would involve multiple degrees of alteration, conjecture, and inevitable *mis*representation. However much actual editorial imposition exists in this sort of edition, the edition itself would present to readers a relatively sensible poem—the "reading text" that many edition users (scholars or "general readers") seem to desire. [2]

8. Editions of Blake's *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* fall at various points on this spectrum, sometimes straddling the fence or blending methods from the two different schools of thought. While such a general "middle path" might offer the most satisfying results to the most individual edition users, it also creates the conditions in which we find many editors adopting seriously self-contradictory methods in order to reach some solution. This sort of method mixing, intentional and unintentional, has rather profound effects on every edition of the manuscript to date. Ironically enough, a majority of Blake's editors frequently strive to separate "objective" or "scientific" methods of editorial fidelity and precision from dangerously "subjective" interpretations of Blake's poem based solely on personal whim and reader preference. They try to divide editing from interpretation through commentary (in prefaces and notes) and materially/structurally (in the editions). Nevertheless, interpretation remains crucial in every

editorial methodology and edition—and this interpretation is of a *literary*, even *aesthetic* nature at that, not simply interpretation of physical evidence.

**II.**

9. We can learn much about the reasons for this harmonious discord in editorial methods by looking at the current complexities of the manuscript itself through a brief *biographical* and *bibliographical* history. Then, we can broaden our perspective, pull back from the particulars, and examine how some key editors of Blake handle their materials and, in the process, shape so much of scholarship. I hope that my approach will show the challenges *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* poses and the way editors have tried to overcome them for us, or help us overcome them, or just make us more bloody confused.[3] After striding through the past, perhaps then we can step forth into a possible future for Blake's restless manuscript.

10. Blake began his poem with the original title *VALA* probably in 1796 or 1797, and from the beginning it represented a new venture for him both as poet and as illustrator of his own writings. He had just recently finished a lengthy project to illustrate Edward Young's long meditative poem *The Complaint*, better known by its subtitle *Night Thoughts*. Commissioned by the publisher Richard Edwards, Blake produced 537 watercolor illustrations on large folio leaves provided for this purpose by Edwards. Only 43 of these were engraved for an edition of the first four Nights, the only one of the four intended volumes ever published.[4] Perhaps inspired by Young and his poem's movement from fall to apocalypse through nine Nights, or perhaps reacting to the poet's religious orthodoxy, Blake borrowed the nine-Night, fall-to-judgment structure for his own new poem *VALA*. At the same time, Blake "revised" his models in characteristic ways as he laid out his own, much darker vision of the fallen universe and its pantheon of mythological-symbolic characters struggling for dominance in their state of separation while simultaneously plodding towards the Last Judgment.[5]

11. At the end of his authorial labors, Blake created a manuscript of 70 folio (or nearly folio) leaves and three fragmentary leaves, or 146 pages total, most of which contain both text and some sort of illustrative design. To do so, Blake "borrowed" more than just ideas and structures from the *Night Thoughts* project; he also borrowed materials, executing nearly all of *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* on leaves left over after he completed his watercolor drawings and engraving proofs for Edwards. In the early portions of his own manuscript (now pp. 1-18, 23-42), Blake used the blank leaves and wrote in a large, fine script, generally; he even took the time to draw guiding lines in pencil in order to keep the lines straight across the page, as well as numbering many of his lines. Similarly, he spent more time on his illustrations: some, in the earliest pages, were colored with light watercolor washes, and many of the other illustrations are developed beyond a simple "rough sketch." These combined factors present a strong image of an author with both a care and some future intention for his work beyond a sketchpad. And the remainder of the original manuscript, the rest of *VALA*, may have had a similar appearance to these pages—possibly providing a good basis from which to print and publish the new work.[6]

12. However, the extant manuscript is much more complex, and much less finished, even at the most basic level of the pages. Besides the blank leaves described above, Blake at some point also began reusing leaves with his *Night Thoughts* proof engravings on the fronts. These reused proofs first occur on p. 43 and continue to the end. There is an equally noticeable shift in Blake's writing on these pages, too. Rather than keeping up an ornate script, he wrote his lines in the text panels on the front and on the blank backs in a less-careful, smaller script than on the previous pages. Similarly, there are no well-developed, let alone ornamented or "finished," illustrations in these pages. Looking at the highly heterogeneous manuscript now, from our perspective, we surely will encounter a serious difficulty concluding what this reuse of proof sheets and change in hand represents for Blake: a change in publishing intentions, a lack of fresh materials, a recopying of text from heavily revised original pages,

or something else?[7] Faced with so much uncertainty, we surely might ask: Why this change in materials and methods?

13. Blake's biography provides the answer to this question. Failing to find a publisher, or lacking the resources to engrave and print the work himself, or intending to leave it in an unpublished state, he continued working on the text of his poem and its designs for well over a decade. These revisions grew out of significant events and changes in Blake's personal life. After moving to Felpham in late 1800 to serve as engraver-in-residence for the poet and socialite William Hayley, whose circle of close acquaintances included such famous figures as William Cowper, Blake attempted to follow Hayley's advice for achieving commercial success. Public tastes and personal conflicts proved too much for Blake the engraver—but even more so for Blake the author of original ("inspired") poetic and pictorial works—and, in 1803, he left Felpham and returned to London.

14. Blake experienced yet another personal "revelation" in this period that had a more direct impact on the illuminated poem *VALA* as it then existed. In 1804, Blake had a remarkable reaction to the artworks he viewed while visiting the Truchsessian Gallery, which sparked a renewal of inspired Christian vision—"the light I enjoyed in my youth," Blake called it—after twenty dark years.[8] With financial pressures constantly looming like some "rough demon" overhead, Blake struggled through and kept his artistic eye trained on the bright flame of inspiration—burning brightly once again—amidst the commercially gloomy streets of London.

15. As Blake the author changed, he also struggled to salvage the original material of *VALA* in the face of a new, and in many ways vastly different, vision. The years in which he revised *VALA*—both before and after the return of Christian light—also overlap the years he began composing his two later, engraved epic poems, *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, both of which he probably began sometime around 1804 (as the title pages record). Blake kept trying to fit old and new material together while creating these new works, which resulted in an exchange of ideas and material from early to later works. The ultimate effects on *VALA* were clearly significant, even leading Blake to re-title the poem as *The Four Zoas* during perhaps the latest stage of revision.[9]

16. Due to his tenuous financial resources, as well as his perception of British artistic tastes, *VALA* remained a work in manuscript (i.e., neither engraved on copperplates and printed, as with Blake's other poems, nor published) and a work in progress. But he seems to have either failed or neglected to finish the manuscript completely—in terms of its poetic text or its illustrations—and so left innumerable portions literally in pieces. At some late point in his life, he gave the manuscript to his younger friend and patron John Linnell. It remained in the Linnell family until sold as part of the estate in 1918, after which it was anonymously donated to the British Museum, where it was bound in a large codex.

17. Whatever the manuscript's condition when Blake gave it to Linnell, E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats recount in their 1893 edition how they found it when they began to edit it for the first time: as a veritable chaos of paper, a pile of unbound and unsorted folio leaves. That is, the manuscript's leaves had fallen into complete disarray, apparently with no sort of perceivable order in what, to the would-be editors, clearly represented some sort of poetic work. Thus, Ellis and Yeats's first task was to put the leaves in the best order they could find (or make) using whatever clues Blake had left amidst the other chaos on the pages themselves. We can see some of the traces of this formidable struggle in various inscriptions still on the pages, such as on p. 15 (two long notes by Ellis—the first from 1891, abandoning the leaf as a fragment, and the second from 1904, relating his belief that it should go in its current position based on a suggestion by a man named "Fleay") and elsewhere in the middle Nights. As they struggled with the massive, chaotic physical evidence, they also relied heavily on the text, using their perception of the narrative as a central clue to how to put the pieces back together; as such, their reliance on

interpretation of the poem guided their editorial efforts. The order that Ellis and Yeats reached then took physical form in their edition text of "Vala," part of their 1893 three-volume edition, *The Works of William Blake*.

18. However, after coming into the possession of the British Museum, someone at the Museum decided that this order was not the right one. After consulting with Geoffrey Keynes, the manuscript was reordered—and numbered on each recto in pencil—to accord with Keynes's 1921 *Bibliography of William Blake*. Someone also attempted to collate the manuscript against Ellis's solo 1906 edition, in the process making many pencil inscriptions giving page numbers and the name "Ellis." Finally, before the actual binding of Blake's multiply variable manuscript, someone at the Museum reordered—and renumbered—it yet again, which brought it to its present order as bound and safely stowed away in a British Library safe. As happened with Ellis and Yeats, these many reshufflings were attempts to arrange the raw physical data of the manuscript for the best narrative sense of the text as a poem: the search was for the proper reading sequence. Ultimately, then, we have no way to know the order that Blake either intended or left off with when he turned the manuscript over to Linnell. Nothing, it seems, can be taken for granted when it comes to *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* as a literary-pictorial work or as a literary-pictorial artifact.

**III.**

19. Obviously, then, ambiguity abounds in the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript resting peacefully in a library safe. The complex "revision sites," encountered on nearly every page, range from clear authorial directives for revisions (transpositions of text on a page, transpositions of entire pages), to highly ambiguous authorial directions, to irresolvable moments where Blake himself seemed uncertain about what he "intended."[10] In order to show how the manuscript has been edited, and thus given a varying number of "authoritative" forms through editioning, I would like to touch on a few of the more famous, and infamous, complications or problems in the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript.

20. If we simply turn to a page in the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript, even the first (title) page, we likely will encounter some fairly obvious sign that the work is unfinished. We frequently find large blocks of text added in all directions—horizontally, vertically, diagonally—in margins or amongst earlier lines, sometimes in pen, sometimes in pencil, sometimes even in colored pencil or crayon or some other instrument. On manuscript p. 4, for example, Blake carried out at least two separate stages of addition to the central text now on the page, including a passage in pencil at the top (probably, but not certainly, the latest addition), two vertical lines originally in pencil and then written over in ink in the left margin, a single vertical addition in two blocks in the right margin, and three lines added below the last line of central text. Another good example comes on p. 34, which contains a long episode of over 100 lines that Blake added to the original text, thus filling the otherwise empty bottom and left margins with stanzas—and a crescent-like symbol to mark the insertion point of the addition. Thanks to these directions, editors have an easy time of it—simply inserting the many lines into the text where indicated, following the fairly straightforward narrative. The text on p. 4 is a little less certain, but all editors agree in the most sensible order and so build a progression in which new and old flow together.

21. Besides adding expansively to *VALA*, Blake also *cancelled* much of the original text in equally various ways. Night I, especially pp. 3-12, have been so heavily revised that now at least *three* layers of text exist on most of the pages—some recoverable, most not. These passages provide a profoundly tantalizing palimpsest that editors and critics have long sought to recover (and/or hypothesize about). On pp. 5-7, Blake left a particularly famous puzzle for his latter-day editors and readers to ponder over. Here, Blake enclosed different portions of the text—*not* the original text but later layers of the palimpsest—in boxes or circles, either before or after striking through parts of it. However, he also appears to have revised that text *after* making the boxes/circles, which makes their purpose and the

status of the enclosed text utterly uncertain. Did Blake intend to retain the text by marking it in this way, or did he finalize the cancellation with these symbols after a failed attempt to revise and *retain* them?[11]

22. To give the earliest approach to this passage, Ellis and Yeats (editing almost entirely on the interpretational end of the spectrum) completely rearrange the manuscript text with almost no precedent from Blake or the manuscript page order. This *may* be due merely to a reversed page ordering (verso of leaf [p. 6] placed before recto [p. 5]), which is how they arrange the pages, but this seems unlikely and certainly unfounded since the illustration on p. 5 is one of the few nearly finished ones in the manuscript and so early. Plus, they print the first two lines from p. 7 with the text on p. 6 (as it comes before 5), followed by the text of p. 5, then the rest of the text of p. 7. Ellis and Yeats make serious textual alterations with little attention to the physical, bibliographical details and only the most minor notes of their work, simply rearranging because they feel the resulting narrative is most sensible (or aesthetically pleasing). Ironically, though, their rearrangement (accidental or not) of the Tharmas-Enion-Spectre episode creates a confusing scenario in which Enion first draws forth Tharmas's Spectre, Tharmas sinks into her filmy woof, and then the Spectre issues from Tharmas and Enion weaves him a body. Later editors see this passage much differently; prevailing editorial opinion holds that Blake enclosed the passages in order to cancel them but perhaps added a few splices here and there to smooth out the resulting narrative. As such, this is typically what we find when reading an edition, not the narrative that Ellis and Yeats created.

23. Most of Blake's cancellations are much more straightforward than on these pages, though, ranging from erasures with replacement text written over them, to extensive passages covered in thin, water-based wash (e.g., on pp. 6 and 8), to strikethrough lines of different kinds, to heavy scrawls that completely obscure words and lines, and so forth. With all of these unavoidable traces of revision, of expansion and contraction, Blake's manuscript looks like a work in progress that never found, and cannot find, the material-textual “peace” that its author (most likely) intended.

24. Night I also introduces several other ambiguities into the work that Blake left us to read, behold, interpret, and edit. On p. 9, Blake added an apparent heading for “Night the Second” in the right margin, as if he intended to begin a new Night with Los and Enitharmon wandering in the “world of Tharmas.” However, the “End of the First Night” occurs later in the manuscript—not once but *twice*, on p. 18 and again on p. 19. Only two editions of the poem, D. J. Sloss and J. P. R. Wallis's *The Prophetic Writings of William Blake* (1926) and the series edited by W. H. Stevenson (first ed. 1971), actually incorporate the apparent start of Night II on p. 9 as the final revision. As such, Night I in these editions goes up to p. 9 and then jumps to pp. 19-22 (rearranged as pp. 21-22, 19-20; see below). Night II starts midway down p. 9, goes to p. 18, then jumps to p. 23 and continues to the “End of the Second Night” on p. 36.

25. Stevenson's explanations for his decision (in a separate article) are telling. He says that because, as editor, he

> had to present a single, unequivocal text to my readers, I decided to present them with this rearrangement, not because I like the rearrangement for its own sake, but because the new text seemed to me to make very good sense as narrative, and as narrative construction. (“Two Problems” 14-15)

His interpretation of the poem based on this arrangement is that Blake added pp. 19-22 after introducing the concept of four Zoas and then had to reconcile that with the birth of Los and Enitharmon from Enion in the opening of Night I (15-16). By reordering the pages and Nights as Stevenson thinks should be done, “the pattern of four Zoas is satisfied, and the original story of pp. 3-9

is reconciled to it"; further, with this new end and beginning of Nights, "The turning-point is now the change of scene from Eternity to mortality" (15, 16). Still, this hypothesis/rearrangement must remain conjectural, since "the evidence of the MS is that Blake himself was uncertain, rather than that he had decided, and it is not for us to make up his mind for him" (16). This last statement is most interesting, since by editioning this new page/narrative order, Stevenson does in fact "make up [Blake's] mind for him," finalizing the poem for readers so that it makes sense. That is, so that the poem makes sense to Stevenson (and Sloss and Wallis), which in essence finalizes the narrative and indeed makes up Blake's mind for him, as far as readers are concerned.

26. As if an identity crisis for the first Night were not enough, the Night that comes next/second on p. 23 of the manuscript is not in fact the "Second," since Blake erased the number in its heading possibly after several revisions (from "First" at least, maybe from "Third" as well) and just left a blank: "Night the ". Things become still more complicated at this point because pp. 19-22, cut from a single leaf that once contained a very rough sketch of a face, are all late insertions into the manuscript. In their present order as bound, they seem to make little narrative sense, not only because they occur after the first "End of the First Night" on p. 18, but also because "End of the First Night" occurs again on p. 19 and is followed by more text on p. 20 (i.e., the other side of the same leaf) and pp. 21-22, the former a pencil passage and the latter a long account of the Zoas going to war. Thus, as a transition from the early material on p. 18 to the even earlier material on p. 23, these pages create more puzzles rather than solving any—which has lead many editors and critics to believe that they were bound in reverse order, with pp. 21-22 rightly preceding pp. 19-20. Even this solution, though, does not completely resolve the inconsistencies between the added text and the original context. Perhaps consequently, nearly all editors accept p. 23 as the beginning of the second Night—save the exceptions discussed above.

27. While Nights I and II represent a clear challenge to anyone approaching *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* as a readable poem, no twisted maze has received as much attention as Blake's seventh Night—or, more properly, his two Nights Seventh. That is, "Night the Seventh" heads the section comprising pp. 77-90 and the section immediately following, pp. 91-98. Further, at some point Blake decided to rearrange the second Night Seventh by dividing it midway down p. 95 and flipping the parts fore and aft so that the latter portion precedes the former. Additionally, either before or after this reversal, Blake added a significant amount of material to the original end of VIIa, extending from pp. 85 to 90, which even necessitated the insertion of two new leaves (cut from a print of Blake's engraving *Edward & Elenor*, appearing on pp. 88 and 89). This last addition contains perhaps the key turning point in the existing narrative for the entire poem, for here the characters Los and the Spectre of Urthona embrace and intermingle, providing the first sign of an upswing towards regeneration even though the embrace is incomplete (because Enitharmon, the female Emanation of Urthona/Los, flees).

28. As we find upon looking at past complete editions, from E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats in 1893 to Cettina Tramontano Magno and David V. Erdman in 1987, most editors (as well as literary critics) follow Geoffrey Keynes in labeling these two Nights Seventh "a" and "b" (so, "VIIa" and "VIIb"). But other matters prove much harder to agree upon—or solve—and thereby grant us a unique view into how theory shapes praxis *and* the editions we use. Some editors, such as Sloss and Wallis and David Erdman (1965, but not 1982), place Night VIIb in a separate appendix in their edition texts, since it was presumably replaced by VIIa. However, H. M. Margoliouth in 1956 and G. E. Bentley, Jr. in 1963 make the opposite argument, that Blake wrote VIIa before VIIb—Margoliouth basing his argument on a perceived narrative continuity from Night VI to VIIa to VIIb if the late addition to VIIa is excluded (xiii), Bentley basing his argument on holes showing that VIIa was bound with preceding pages and on what he believed was obviously late Christian symbolism in VIIb (see, e.g., *Vala or the Four Zoas* 163).

29. Most editors print the two Nights consecutively, as bound, or place the supposedly later Night VII in an

appendix. But two editors adopt a much more radical approach to resolving this "problem" of two Nights Seventh in a would-be "Dream of Nine Nights." In the fall 1978 issue of *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, three scholars published their arguments for how to handle the Nights Seventh—all involving a *conflation* of the two Nights into a single "Night the Seventh." Convinced by John Kilgore's proposal, David Erdman implemented the conflation in his 1982 edition by inserting Night VIIb, as reordered by Blake, into VIIa just before Blake's late addition on p. 85.[12] Erdman chooses this arrangement because it makes for "a better reading sequence" and, by following Blake's instructions for VIIb, does "the least injustice to the claims of narrative and the manuscript evidence" ("Editorial Problem" 137). In an eerie instance of coincidence, Landon Dowdey implements a similar conflation in his 1983 edition, though he argues that he based his arrangement on an independent inspiration sparked by a suggestion G. E. Bentley, Jr. made long before the 1978 debate in *Blake Quarterly* (B:4 n. 7:19). Although Erdman's and Dowdey's similar versions vie with several others for being "the" Night the Seventh, it is clear that readers of their editions would have a completely different experience than readers of others editions—and, of course, of the manuscript.

30. Night the Seventh, both of them, is not the end of story—in all senses of the word. For quite a few other challenges or problems remain in the rest of the *VALA/Four Zoas* manuscript. Indeed, the very next Night, the Eighth, presents one of the most noticeable and most extensive instances where Blake attempted to fit later, very different material into *VALA*. As all editors agree, Blake appears to have written much of this Night VIII in the present manuscript after the return of Christian vision, so after 1804, which makes the content much different than what precedes and follows this Night. Here, Blake focuses most on a universe at war as humanity reaches the nadir of its existence, which occurs through the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus. With an unprecedented amount of biblical characters and themes, Night VIII incorporates Christian material much more pervasively than any other portion of the text, along with political and other references that seem to mark it as one of the latest additions to *VALA*—likely replacing some original "Night the Eighth" now lost.

31. As a result of this addition, however smoothly (or not) incorporated relative to the preceding Nights, Blake added a lengthy passage to the beginning of Night IX in order to segue from chaos to apocalypse—creating what appear to be two apocalypses, one in the added beginning (pp. 117-19) and then the long, original version that follows to the "End of the Dream" on p. 139. Moreover, Blake left multiple directions for revising Night VIII: transposing passages on pp. 100 and 101; inserting a portion of p. 113 on p. 104; and inserting the rest of p. 113 to p. 116 at a point on p. 106. In the manuscript, then, Night VIII remains extremely unsettled as an addition to *VALA* in its original form before revision. Yet to produce their "settled" texts (to use Stevenson's word [Poems xii]), editors follow Blake's relatively clear directions for reordering passages and implement the authorial intentions. In the process of editioning the text here, they do in fact settle the text, creating a version that then may well seem complete to readers.

32. Blake's "Dream" may end on p. 139, but the *VALA/Four Zoas* manuscript does not. Several fragmentary pages, probably from one or more notebooks, have been bound after the last leaf, constituting pp. 141-45 (with p. 146 a blank verso). The first leaf, pp. 141-42, contains material clearly remaining from Blake's early drafts of the text, probably of Night I, which he never used. The last leaf, p. 145, also contains earlier material for a portion of the main manuscript text, though the corresponding text appears in the late Night VIII. The text on pp. 143-44, a very small sheet that was torn and so leaves some text unaccounted for, corresponds with text on pp. 7 and 8 in Night I.

33. For most of its critical and editorial history, these particular tidbits of fragmentary text represented more early/draft material that Blake ultimately replaced with the text in the main manuscript. G. E. Bentley, Jr. made another revision to common opinion by arguing that this material was actually *later* than that on pp. 7 and 8, an attempt by Blake to revise the already heavily revised account of Tharmas,

Enion, and the Spectre of Tharmas (see, e.g., *Vala or The Four Zoas* 160). Erdman agreed, going so far as to conflate the two separate texts for a “final version” in his 1965 edition. In the fall 1978 *Blake Quarterly*, though, Andrew Lincoln argued against Bentley's conclusion and in favor of the older view; Erdman, convinced to revise himself in this case as well as with the Nights Seventh, accepted Lincoln's argument and un-conflated his edition text accordingly. So now, post-1982, we find the text on pp. 7-8 *of the manuscript* back in pp. 7-8 *of Erdman's edition*. Both arguments appear plausible, but neither offers a perfectly problem-free solution due to specific revisions in each place that complicate any conjectural composition history and resulting hypothesis.

34. Any one of these textual cruxes, along with the myriad milder misfits, may prove a puzzle that many readers get stuck on and cannot move past. Or, perhaps more troubling, many or most of the original ambiguities may go completely unnoticed or be deliberately ignored depending on the reader and the edition used. In turn, the possible editorial approaches to handling the challenges have particular benefits and consequences, as well as motivations and interpretive biases, that influence a reader's final understanding. But they all reflect how any editor of the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript will have to make some sort of decision when it comes to representing the material-textual evidence in an edited (and variously “settled”) version of what Blake accomplished. So, too, will each reader, whether upon reaching one of those small narrative incongruities that cannot be smoothed over or upon diving headlong into the vortex of the manuscript in its full chaotic splendor.

## IV.

35. We now have looked both at the history of *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* and at how editors have handled specific rough spots to date. If we broaden our perspective and look at the more general level of complete versions of *VALA*/*The Four Zoas*, many of which are part of larger editions, we can get a clearer picture of overall editorial approaches to the manuscript and the entirety of Blake's corpus. Doing so, we soon see the same sort of fuzzy division between fidelity and interpretation that showed up on the small scale. Many editors have approached Blake's manuscript text with the understanding that it was meant to be a finished poem and thus *should be* a finished poem when represented in print. Most prominently, Ellis and Yeats, Stevenson, and Dowdey make extensive alterations (on top of Blake's own revisions) in order to fashion a readable, sensible poem for their readers on every page. These editorial interventions can range from modernization of punctuation and spelling (Stevenson), to rearrangement and actual rewriting of passages (Ellis and Yeats), and even to translation of the original poetry into modernized prose (Dowdey), just to name a few examples.

36. In most cases, the editorial finalization (small or large) leads to some degree of misrepresentation as well, since the editors either deliberately minimize the full extent of the manuscript's unfinished condition or transform that evidence so much as to make it negligible when using their editions. We find this most noticeably in text-only versions of the manuscript's contents. However, even facsimile reproductions, as in Cettina Tramontano Magno and Erdman's 1987 edition, undergo a vast re-presentation according to editorial views and goals, these editors completely reordering the reproductions to follow Erdman's edited text; in addition, the images are greatly reduced in size and produced with infra-red photography, which reveals many details of the pages but also darkens them quite dramatically when printed in black and white. Editors of facsimiles clearly make literary interpretations of the manuscript text as a generally consistent poem, arranging their editions and the reproductions of the pages therein accordingly.

37. At the same time, even editors more focused on development and genetic issues, as part of a methodology of strict fidelity and precision, ultimately rely upon some degree of literary interpretation —even while taking great pains to avoid it. But this same general appeal to precision, rigorously “objective” scholarship, and fidelity to Blake's manuscript runs through nearly every edition, no matter

how different the actual version is from the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript. We can find good examples of this in arguably the three most recognized scholarly editors of Blake: Geoffrey Keynes, G. E. Bentley, Jr., and David V. Erdman. Each alters the original manuscript in various ways, despite their individual claims about the importance of fully encountering Blake's revisions and about the reliability of their methods of textual perfection.

38. Keynes is a monumental figure for more than just editing. As Robert N. Essick puts it, Keynes "more than any other individual shaped the public perception of Blake in the twentieth century" (129). Although Ellis and Yeats edited the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript first, Keynes represents the accepted beginning of the editorial tradition for virtually all subsequent scholarship. With Keynes, then, Blake's "text" takes on a reliable form, as Keynes himself so emphatically states was necessary when he undertook filling in the hole left by years of inaccurate editions of Blake's writings. In the preface to his 1925 *Writings of William Blake*, Keynes laments how

> [Blake's] text has suffered more than that of most writers from the apparently uncontrollable impulse shewn by some of his editors to make the words convey a meaning desired by them instead of that which he intended. An additional misfortune lies in the almost unbelievable carelessness with which several of his manuscripts were transcribed for the press. (1:xi; italics removed here)

Keynes's influence remains an important one, be it through the reprints of his different editions or through his status as a model for subsequent editors (e.g., Alicia Ostriker [1977]).

39. Keynes's role as a model of strict scholarship is not so straightforward, though. Keynes alters and supplies punctuation, which is inconsistent with his semi-genetic edition text in which some authorial revisions are included and identified. This amalgamation of methods reveals some of the true details that usually do not show up in a clean text, and so Keynes rightly deserves his acclaim as Blake's first scholarly editor. But his mixed text also limits our ability to experience the fullness of *Blake's* personal and textual development in deference to a better understanding Blake's "meaning"—even as Keynes challenged his initial audience's tastes by including cancelled material in the first 1925 edition and onward until his death in 1982.

40. G. E. Bentley, Jr. may serve as the most striking example of the tension between faithful editing and literary interpretation in the two different versions of *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* that he produced. In the transcription accompanying his 1963 full-size facsimile edition, *Vala or The Four Zoas*, Bentley strives for strict diplomacy. He explains, "It is the aim of this book to present as precisely as possible both the problems [in the manuscript] themselves and some solutions of them" (xii). Indeed, his editorial aim has been "to make the relatively raw materials of the poem as clear as possible," "to reduce such hypotheses [about tidying up loose ends] to a minimum" and thereby, "as far as the limitations of type will permit, to give a perfect text of the poem in all its careless, curious, and perverse minutiae." Yet Bentley also believes that those same "problems," which need to be presented "precisely" to readers, free the editor from a straight jacket. As he puts it, "A certain amount of juggling or excision is required to bring all the *lines* into the sequence Blake intended" (italics in the original). The resulting transcription, then, is its own sort of "hybrid" (to use Ellis and Yeats's word for their text [II:299]), mixing diplomatic literalness with literary interpretation and transposition. On the one hand, Bentley incorporates genetic symbols into the edition text to better identify Blake's multiple revisions over the course of working on the manuscript, giving it the appearance of most genetic editions. On the other hand, Bentley makes various alterations of the original to construct a more sensible, settled text, such as inserting marginal additions per Blake's directions . . . or because the addition seems to fit best somewhere in the earlier text.

41. In his revised version of this transcription for *William Blake's Writings* in 1978, Bentley attempts to combine his fully inclusive, genetic text with more overt editorial impositions—entire pages (rather than lines) transposed, altered and supplied punctuation—as a sort of compromise. But he wants to be clearer than Keynes about the supplied material, every jot and tittle, so he uses other symbols along with the genetic symbols to distinguish editorial additions from authorial revisions. Pulling back from his determinedly precise methods, Bentley more carefully seeks "a solicitude for both the patience of Blake's reader and the precise accuracy of Blake's text" (1:xliv) and tries to weave together the two threads of objective fidelity and subjective interpretation that he once struggled to separate. Unfortunately, the thick barb-wire of the editorial apparatus makes using Bentley's text of *Vala or The Four Zoas* in this edition immensely challenging at best . . . for whatever type of reader.

42. For better and for worse, Bentley stands out for the degree to which he makes bibliography a part, indeed the foundation, of his methodology. His 1963 facsimile edition represents this best, though all of his work as editor and literary critic reflects an unusual—indeed unrivalled—awareness of the materials as *materials*. Thanks to Bentley's idiosyncrasies and the degree of his concern for bibliographical fidelity, his work provides the most extensive record of manuscript details to date, even though these same idiosyncrasies also seriously affect that record in many key ways. And, thanks again to Bentley's fidelity principle, we do have a full-sized (black-and-white) reproduction of the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript. However, these very characteristics also isolate Bentley to a great degree, for no other editor has gone so far in bibliographical examination and representation of evidence. And the differences between Bentley's two editions serve as remarkable witnesses to how the harmonious discord between fidelity and interpretation can rend an edition just as easily as strengthen it.[13]

43. Keynes and Bentley rightly stand as key figures in the biography of Blake's manuscript, but Erdman's presence in the overall history perhaps is the dominant one at this point. Erdman's *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (1965) and its successor, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (1982), took sound scholarship and textual fidelity in representation to a higher level. And part of his editions' success grew out of the degree to which he made these "perfected" texts easily available, in relatively affordable and compact one-volume editions. While this may seem like a trivial matter, in fact the nature of an edition as a physical object (size, price, availability, maybe even jacket design) surely influence its larger acceptance. Just compare an Erdman edition with Bentley's two-volume *Writings*, for example . . . not to mention Bentley's gargantuan 1963 facsimile.

44. Erdman makes his own proclamations of precision before his first edition was published in 1965. In a quasi-review of Bentley's facsimile, Erdman moves from criticizing to correcting Bentley and sets a high bar for his forthcoming *Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (1965). Erdman tells readers that his newly adopted editorial aim has been "To perfect Blake's text . . . " of *The Four Zoas* ("Binding" 113), though that eventually came to mean the complete "text" as well. He maintains, even amplifies this expectation throughout his editions. In the preface to his 1982/1988 *Complete Poetry and Prose*, Erdman again uses high rhetoric to make his point: "This edition of William Blake seeks to supply a sounder and more uncluttered text for reading than has been heretofore available, with a full apparatus of variant and deleted passages for study" (xxiii). This deleted text, some of it available for the first time according to Erdman, "allow[s] us a comprehensive view of Blake as a reviser of his own poetry," especially since readers "confront [in Erdman's edition] an accurate and well-nigh complete collection" of Blake's writings. This passage echoes Keynes's statements, quoted above, separating himself from previous editors and their less-desirable, because less-scholarly, texts.

45. Even Erdman, however, relies on more than strict fidelity in his quest for the "perfect" Blakean text. While his various means of making a good "fit," especially but not only when it comes to the Nights Seventh, resulted in what is now the standard scholarly edition of Blake, they frequently undermine Erdman's "precisely" punctuated text and unprecedented efforts to recover lost layers in the manuscript

palimpsest.[14] Despite Erdman's own assurances, his *personal* “vision of [Blake's] vision” (*Complete* xxvi) largely shapes the nature and content of his version of Blake's manuscript—“The Four Zoas”—and produce an extensively finalized poem for his readers.

46. While genetic editors surely would cringe at Erdman's editorial liberties, critics and students and even other editors have not. Far from it. Erdman, for the most part, has ascended to the top of the Blakean editorial mountain. Stevenson's and Ostriker's use of the Erdman text as the basis for their own textual editing reflects this “Erdman effect” well, not to mention the MLA Seal of approval on his 1982 and 1988 editions; these definitely help to identify him as the “standard” when it comes to editing Blake. However, his determinant role in the understanding of Blake and of Blake's “text” has serious consequences along with the benefits his desire for perfection produces. Erdman's “Night the Seventh” may be *the* “Night the Seventh” for many readers, just as his reshuffled sequences in his and Magno's facsimile may be *the* order of the manuscript-as-object in its entirety. The popularity of his textual edition, especially amongst serious Blake scholars, and the relative availability of his co-edited facsimile (versus Bentley's pricey big book) only amplify the prominence Erdman maintains even after his death in 2004. Consequently, Erdman's shift from literary critic to textual editor (and back and forth again) is a key moment for all of Blake scholarship.[15]

47. The cases of Keynes, Bentley, and Erdman as the three “pillars” of editing Blake make plain how our understanding of *VALA*/*Four Zoas* depends greatly upon the *individuals* constituting and shaping the many forms it takes. After all, they make the decisions when editing that largely, but not completely, determine how the manuscript is editioned. Each edition, then, is an interpretation-in-print, not to mention a critical argument about how Blake can (and should?) be edited. When it comes to the material condition of these editions, we must recognize immediately how much the medium employed by each editor both determines and profoundly limits the options for representing Blake's *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript. This is necessary not only for a fully informed view of the edition, but also for fairness to the editor. The physical dimensions of most editions define the page-space in which a text has to be fitted, occasionally with an accompanying apparatus beneath the text. One result of this is that the editorial presence—be it Sloss and Wallis, Bentley, or Stevenson, who all use footnotes—frequently competes with the edition text, supplementing it even to the point of distraction and overcrowding.[16]

48. Additionally, the physical structure and organization of an edition's contents have profound consequences on how we engage with Blake's work. For example Bentley places his 1978 version of *VALA*/*Four Zoas* in volume two of his edition—after what he considers “Blake's greatest and most characteristic literary achievements,” the illuminated poems (*Writings* 1:xxxviii). Similarly, both Bentley's and Magno and Erdman's facsimiles put the reproductions at the end of the edition as a whole in order for the editors to provide ample preparatory information: commentary, bibliographical data, etc. Whether intentionally or not, editors highly influence—and perhaps highly *determine*—readers' perceptions of the manuscript by giving their explanations before the text and/or reproductions of the original manuscript. That is, readers may form certain conclusions, assumptions, and expectations based upon the various sorts of evidence that editors provide as preparation for entering the vortex of *VALA*/*Four Zoas*. A rather startling example of this sort of preemptive biasing occurs in Stevenson's edition, where he does much more than just warn readers of the difficulties lying ahead in Night VIII. Stevenson first gives a hypothetical composition-revision history for passages in the Night and then states, “The reader who finds the sequence difficult would do well to miss out at the first reading” of specific passages (indicated in a table) (*Blake* 416). Much as he undertakes the most thorough (interpretative, explanatory) annotation to date, Stevenson here tries to assist his readers by suggesting a detour around the complicated track through this portion of Blake's text. Thanks to his directions as editorial traffic cop, readers of Stevenson's edition will completely “miss out” on material—just because it might prove difficult to follow along and less enjoyable to read.

**V.**

49. While editors may force us to use their editions in particular ways through such physical arrangements and comments, we should recognize that the editors themselves also were forced in many respects by the medium in question. After all, a material edition can only accommodate so many possibilities of presentation. Thus, while personal interpretations and priorities clearly shape the patterns produced, the materials also clearly influence the *methodology* for producing those patterns in significant ways. The limitations of the material edition have become most pronounced over the past decade or so due to the virtual explosion of digital scholarship in the humanities. A vast number of scholars and editors have realized that, as Jerome McGann puts it in "The Rationale of Hypertext," using books to study books "seriously limits the possible results" due to the "scale of the tools"; in contrast, electronic tools "lift one's general level of attention to a higher order" (12). McGann focuses on the "tools" and points out that traditional critical editions are difficult to produce, read, and use because they share the same physical form as the object of study; they force the scholar to invent analytical mechanisms that must be displayed and engaged at the primary reading level—hence the need for apparatuses to incorporate additional *editorial* material (13).

50. In contrast, virtual editions alone have the capability to present all the relevant materials at once because they are not bound by the time-and-space frames established by material books (McGann, "Rationale" 14). Peter Shillingsburg suggests the value of electronic editions for editorial purposes when he emphasizes, "Presenting information in an orderly form, not just establishing a single authenticated text, is the editorial function" (*Scholarly Editing* 38). Freed from the material strictures and structures of traditional print editions, critical editors have a vast number of options for performing this essential function.[17]

51. We can experience this function in action, as well as the limitations McGann highlights, in every material version of Blake's *VALA/Four Zoas* manuscript. Because of the complexity of the work, an editor is practically forced into various forms of separation, exclusion, and alteration of the extensive, but equally essential, material evidence. Otherwise, he or she has no real hope to perform "the editorial function," as Shillingsburg puts it. Magno and Erdman are the last editors to publish a new version of the manuscript in 1987 and so before the emergence of electronic editions as a viable choice.[18] In the present age, however, digital scholarship and editing in and for an electronic medium have gained further popularity and scholarly acceptance—as we can see most readily, perhaps, in the case of *The William Blake Archive*, which has received numerous awards and in 2005 became the first electronic edition to receive an MLA Seal as an "Approved" edition.[19] Other well-known and well-respected online critical editions include McGann's *Rossetti Archive* and *The Walt Whitman Archive*, just to name a few.[20]

52. As a quick browse through any of these electronic critical editions/archives will prove, the digital medium's virtually limitless ability to store data and its freedom from the structural determinants of presentation offer profound ways to "lift one's general level of attention to a higher order" indeed. In the *Blake Archive*, for example, not only can we *view* multiple copies of Blake's *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, but we also can *compare* those copies plate by plate thanks to the *Archive*'s Compare feature. Besides the full-color reproductions themselves, which print editions rarely can provide, the *Blake Archive* presents material that would require multiple print editions—along with a wealth of supplemental material (transcriptions, editorial descriptive commentaries and notes, and other resources). Moreover, only in an electronic environment such as the *Blake Archive* or other hypertexts can we perform high-speed, extensive textual searches—thus turning transcriptions into tools for indexing, collating, and other forms of very specific scholarly analysis, not just aids for reading. *The Blake Archive* and other image-based editions/archives also allow for *image* searching as well, though these features are still fairly rudimentary because they require encoded metadata for

searching; at present, a computer cannot fully "read" an image as it can a text.

53. Of course, the electronic medium has its own serious influences on, and limitations of, original literary materials being edited for a new and entirely *different* (because immaterial) environment. Most noticeably, electronic editions create drawbacks and alterations such as the "abstraction" of the original artifacts, the limited screen-space for representation, the likelihood of getting lost in a *mise en abyme* of hypertextual links, and so on. All of these necessary alterations for digital representation have as many consequences upon readers' understanding of the edited materials as do the alterations required by conventional typography and physical books. Further, while the electronic medium certainly offers much freedom for an editor to present materials and a user to access those materials, not every recent scholar accepts electronic editing as the best next step, and some rightly warn us of the other side of the virtual coin.

54. Kathryn Sutherland in particular remains skeptical of the growing scholarly belief that the electronic environment is virtually free from the constraints faced by print editors. Specifically, she questions the assumption "that, unlike the book, the computer is a totally mimetic space unshaped by the constraints of its own medium" (17-18). These digital constraints affect electronic editions—even archives—in their own ways, which then combine with traditional limitations of print editions. After all, both are the products of human editors; the difference is in the tools, none of which are perfect. As such, Sutherland rightly warns us against becoming "too enamoured of electronic simulation" (18) and turning to the computer as a free space for editors and readers.[21] Because electronic editions are still in a nascent phase, with plenty of theory and excitement but not a lot of actual development, there remains much to learn. Nevertheless, we can accept Sutherland's healthy skepticism about current electronic editions without giving up on them as "a recyclable wastebank" (25), nor should we dump them in the "dank cellar of electronic texts" (Shillingsburg, "Dank Cellar" 19) *for the long-term*.

55. Much as Sutherland looks back to print technology to counteract a naive awe of digital technology, Peter Robinson makes a valid criticism of electronic scholarly editions to date: they do a good job of presenting original materials but a poor job of showing how different versions and variants among related materials actually *relate*. But that is not to say that presenting materials, variants and versions and all, without extensive editorial commentary (and other meaning making) is necessarily a bad thing. McGann and many others have argued persuasively about the value a de- or un-centered hypertext can have for readers. Still, informed editorial guidance, and not only with materials as complex as *VALA*/*The Four Zoas*, is surely invaluable. Therefore, we can take Robinson's admonition seriously and combine the power, flexibility, and open space of cyberspace with enough editorial assistance (behind the scenes and center stage) to provide readers with as much detail as possible. This does not mean that every electronic editor must also become a computer programmer, nor that every editor must by default try to adopt every available technology to please every possible reader. As with print editions, the electronic edition will (and maybe even should) be dependent upon a given editor's goals . . . which we hope will be made after extensive research into current best practices and opportunities.[22]

56. Another critic of electronic editing, Phillip E. Doss, makes equally important points for us to keep in mind. According to Doss, in a hypertextual environment the textual editor holds unprecedented sway over interpretive possibilities because that editor builds the hyperstructure that necessarily exists with and supports the critical hypertext (216). Consequently, a hypertext reflects the editor's methods as much, if not more, than a print edition; Doss emphasizes that we must never forget this electronic constructedness, no matter the apparent freedom granted by hypertext. Even in cyberspace, it seems, the editorial *ethos* remains a fundamental part of a hypertextual edition regardless of how "abstract" the virtual world may appear or how many liberating options it can provide to readers/users.

57. However, we can nuance Doss's point and see how the act of preparing an electronic edition

simultaneously makes an editor more self-aware of his/her methodology. The computer's very real limitations do not negate the ways that the electronic medium provides new methods and insights for engaging with works of any form. Again, the key is informed, critical use of the tools and the products. McGann highlights the new methods of scholarly analysis thanks to the different “scale” of the digital tools, but we also should recognize that editors can gain as much insight and self-awareness for the same reasons. That is, not only do they have to carry out the traditional practices of textual criticism and scholarly editing; they also have to reanalyze the edited materials for electronic representation. The various “texts” underlying a critical edition (e.g., document type definition or DTD; encoded files containing text, apparatus, and so forth; style sheets for display) all follow strict guidelines of logic in order to function, and so each requires extensive, detailed analysis and understanding both of editorial methods and of the materials being marked up. Editors must go through additional stages of labor when creating a virtual edition, each stage forcing them to think through their principles and their practices—or else face the terrible error messages that lie waiting with every test-run or debugging. Ideally, then, the extra steps required for preparing digital tools can help editors to be more careful about their methods and more self-conscious when putting principles into practice.

**VI.**

58. In the editorial history of Blake's *VALA/The Four Zoas*, there is an extensive engagement with the physical manuscript and the text using traditional methods of editing (be they genetic or belletristic). But that solid foundation of traditional scholarship only sets in relief the very clear lack of editors and scholars using electronic tools to edit what is such a multiply hyper text. This lack of an electronic scholarly edition of Blake's *VALA/Four Zoas* manuscript brings me to the final point in my brief overview of how it has been edited, interpreted, and editioned: my own efforts to edit it with colleagues at the *Blake Archive*.

59. As may be obvious in the preceding account of electronic editing and the future of Blake's *VALA/Four Zoas* manuscript, I have a strong attraction to the electronic medium for further editorial and scholarly engagement with the original. (Though, as a bibliophile and quasi-Luddite, I still must prefer the original artifact itself.) The different types of thinking on a “higher order,” for editors and edition users, that electronic editing allows through its methods and its tools surely “promise much riches” (as Urizen would say) when it comes to Blake's *VALA/Four Zoas* manuscript. Indeed, with all of its internal variability of text(s) and materials, this manuscript seems a perfect fit for digital scholarship and electronic editing. For example, Blake's multiple “texts”—his successive stages of revision—can be rendered separately in an electronic version, allowing us to focus on particular stages as we wish. In a single, powerful source, we can carry out the scholarship that H. M. Margoliouth attempts to do, and thereby allow us to do, through his first-ever “disentanglement” of that early poem “*Vala*” (xi-xii). Or we can get even more myopic and examine specific revisions, as Bentley hoped to make possible with his symbolic identification of genetic “series” in the manuscript text (see *Vala or the Four Zoas* xi).[23]

60. Further, an electronic edition can offer any number of more “finalized” versions of the text should we choose—incorporating versions such as Ellis and Yeats's or Dowdey's on one extreme and Keynes's or Erdman's on the other, or even providing an entirely fresh reading text. If an editor has the knowledge to prepare the electronic text(s) properly, perhaps along with some Printer's and Coder's Devils to help out, such options of representation all depend upon the mere click of a few digital buttons—not mounds of paper.

61. Perhaps most importantly, the electronic medium's storage capacity and immaterial dimmensionlessness also mean that reproductions of the manuscript's pages can accompany the textual re-representation—in any number of ways. Without the additional limitations of expense, full-color reproductions finally become a realistic option (as the *Blake Archive*'s surprisingly extensive contents

exemplify).

62. Besides having transcriptions and/or edited texts along with images all available on our screen, we have the possibility to perform various kinds of analyses on those images, such as zooming or a choice of varying orders of navigation. These and many other existing features of electronic editions offer new means for us to study, interpret, and experience Blake's *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript, even if we miss out on its physical reality; the possibilities for other, more powerful features seem equally rich as technology develops exponentially.

63. Despite the clear usefulness of having the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript in some electronic form, no editor has published a full electronic version, critical or otherwise. To my knowledge, the only versions of the manuscript currently available online include two electronic reproductions of Erdman's text from *Complete Poetry and Prose* and an odd "experimental hypertext" that contains a few random pages related to the manuscript—but seems to be as much about "Pedro," the icon for the South of the Border tourist shop in South Carolina, as Blake's manuscript![24]

64. Luckily, some literary scholars have addressed the possibilities offered by electronic editions for studying Blake's work. For instance, David M. Baulch addresses the "multiple plurality" of Blake's manuscript—from its characters to its material-textual condition. He argues that "hypertext can preserve the integrity of the manuscript of *The Four Zoas* as a total of its narrative possibilities," since hypertext allows for asynchronous and non-linear relationships—the many possible worlds of *The Four Zoas* that constitute it (154). Baulch contrasts this reciprocity of edition with edited text to the existing print editions, which "attempt to extract a single, coherent linear narrative from a tangled manuscript of multiple revisions. Such editing privileges one set of possibilities, which unavoidably distorts what *The Four Zoas* manuscript presents to its readers" and contradicts/obscures Blake's "non-Newtonian" theme and methods.[25] Baulch thus recognizes the influence that editors and their material editions have on how readers engage with, and so understand, Blake's heterogeneous manuscript, and he calls for an electronic version as a more fitting alternative. Additionally, Donald Ault's intimidating examination and mapping of the various perspectives and internal "revisions" by Blake's characters, as part of the non-Newtonian narrative, seem to represent a rich possibility for exploration in the electronic medium. Nevertheless, no editor has taken up *this* particular challenge—whether or not we agree with Stevenson that "increasing certainty [has been brought by editors] to Blake's text" (*Poems* xi) or that the manuscript's visual/pictorial components have been covered by Bentley and Magno and Erdman with their facsimiles.

65. Having learned from these literary critics and from editors of *VALA*/*The Four Zoas*, I can see the many exciting opportunities that a digital *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* manuscript will make possible. And I am trying to put these lessons learned and visions experienced into practice as I help the editors and other colleagues at the *Blake Archive* to prepare the first electronic edition of the manuscript for future publication. There, it eventually will join the forthcoming edition of the *Island in the Moon* manuscript[26] and other materials, including the so-called Pickering Manuscript (Pierpont Morgan Library) and Blake's *Tiriel* and *Notebook* (British Library). This electronic edition of *VALA*/*Four Zoas* is based on a fresh transcription of the manuscript text, prepared using both of the available facsimile editions, a microfilm of the manuscript, extensive comparison with print editions of the text, and examination of the original manuscript itself.[27] Along with the fresh transcriptions will be fresh (and I must say spectacular) full-color digital images at unprecedented 300 dpi resolution.

66. To place this new edition on the editorial spectrum, from genetic to belletristic, let me say more about my methodology and the methodology of the *Blake Archive* editorial team. For myself, when I first undertook preparing a textual transcription for a dissertation project, I started from a belief that the most accurate way to edit Blake's manuscript is to treat it *as a manuscript* in every aspect, not as a

finished poem for continuous reading (though it may allow such a reading in many cases) and not as an orderly "sequence" of text and illustrations. The *Blake Archive* takes this approach as well, for its editions are founded on an "object-based" representation of Blake's works—everything from highly faithful transcriptions, to per-copy orders, to multiple versions of a single work (rather than an edition of *the* work). Speaking for myself, I recognize very clearly that Blake tried to bring *VALA/The Four Zoas* to a finished state over the many years that he worked on it, regardless of the final form that he may have intended for it (illuminated manuscript, engraved and printed Prophecy, conventionally printed letterpress text with engraved illustrations, etc.). Indeed, I am quite convinced he intended it to be such a literary-visual work. Nevertheless, Blake himself never actually brought it to this state, and by turning it over to Linnell in an unfinished condition, he finalized this unfinishedness and left the work as a "'work in progress' eternally" (to quote Erdman, *Complete* 788). Whenever an editor alters the original, be it the most minute "accidentals" or the most glaringly obtuse "substantives," the editor imposes a finality, sense, and meaning on Blake's work that reflects the editor's intentions as much as, if not more than, the author.[28] Thus, the object-based editorial foundation of the *Blake Archive*, like my own personal methodology, focuses first and foremost on the physical manuscript as it exists, not as what it might or could or should have been.

67. Looking back at the editorial history for predecessors and exemplars, I find that Bentley's textual transcription comes closer than any editorial representation to conveying the manuscript's true condition. Unfortunately, Bentley diminishes the fidelity of his transcription by inserting passages conjecturally and adopting other methods of alteration, so that his interpretations (based on physical, textual, and narrative grounds) still skew the evidence in some important ways. Be that as it may, I think Bentley's original transcription offers the best model to date for handling Blake's manuscript text. That is, a *fully* genetic and literal transcription, also making use of textual symbols and other similar designations within the edition text itself, provides the best means for accurately presenting the evidence as it exists on each manuscript page—many of which contain layers of text and multiple revisions that resist being bound in an orderly form. Moreover, such an edition text provides the only means for presenting the evidence in a way that keeps users of the edition—scholars and/or general readers—fully aware of the manuscript's heterogeneous, complexly woven web-work of multiple stages of composition and revision. When an editor keeps this material-textual fact at the surface level, the editor can lessen the amount of misrepresentations on both ends—editor's and reader's. One look at nearly any point in Bentley's transcription immediately calls our attention to the truly unsettled text of the *VALA/Four Zoas* manuscript.

68. However, a fully faithful and useful editorial version would avoid the different rearrangements and insertions of text that Bentley makes, changes that are due in large part to the limitations of his typographic format. Were he editing in print with existing technologies, he could use newer methods of photographic and electronic printing to represent text in multiple directions, wherever they occur or in some predetermined place on the page (e.g., the top or bottom margin), without having to insert them into the central text and/or print them in a linear manner. The electronic medium offers even more options in this regard, for windows with horizontal and vertical scrolling virtually break the boundaries of physical margins. While even this sort of representation often involves some form(s) of alteration, rather than strictly precise textual reproduction, I feel confident that it allows for a much more accurate form of presenting the original text.[29]

69. For example, in a digital window, an editor could easily accommodate the extensive additions Blake made in the margins of p. 34, which fill the bottom and left margins nearly completely and are written both horizontally and vertically. Bentley, confined by conventional print, inserts these additions into the central text as Blake directed (*Vala or The Four Zoas* 34-36). An electronic version of this page not only could leave the text in the margins; it also could render the text in the left-margin vertically. Or, in the early pages of Night I, an electronic version could present multiple layers of the palimpsest (as far

as they can be recovered) on the screen, allow the user to toggle between layers, or simply present the latest layer. With more flexible forms of navigation, users even could carry out multiple "readings" of the Nights Seventh, with or without editorial predetermination, and so judge for themselves what (if anything) creates the best "fit." Thus, both the *editor* and the edition's *user* have many more options in an electronic medium.[30] I must stress, though, that these options always should begin from an initial editorial version that reproduces the original as faithfully and in as much detail as possible—in terms of the content and order on each page, as well as the order of pages in sequence as currently bound.

70. Additionally, I think that Bentley's facsimile also offers the best model for representing the manuscript photographically: in full-sized reproductions. Of course, the next step (hitherto not taken) requires color reproductions, of whatever dimensions, that utilize the rapid advances in digital photography and so promise ever-increasing accuracy in capturing the manuscript's many crucial visual details. These can be displayed at amazing new depths of detail thanks to high definition. Full-sized reproductions are an option, too, thanks to the ready availability of large monitors. But even smaller (i.e., normal) monitors offer benefits, since the detailed color images can be viewed in sections. Combined with reduced, screen-sized images, such an approach to viewing can help to make up for the limitations of computer reproduction.

71. The benefits of digital images also outweigh the limitations, I think, when we factor in the many electronic imaging tools that computers now put at scholars' fingertips. Only in a digital environment can we carry out extensive image analysis (through zooming and comparisons, for example)—as well as image *manipulation* (such as color and contrast adjustments, polarization, granulation and other special effects, etc.) should we wish.[31] Methods such as these, when used as part of a scholarly undertaking (or maybe just having fun), obviously represent a much "higher order" of analysis that becomes possible only when we move beyond the medium of conventional print editions and traditional tools of scholarship, such as magnifying glasses, note cards, and the hard-coded editions themselves.

72. Of course, as I stated above, the electronic medium imposes its own idiosyncratic distortions and impositions, which have particular drawbacks when it comes to Blake's *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript. So we still must use an electronic edition with as much self-consciousness and critical awareness as we should print editions. Most obviously, the "abstraction" of the original *material* manuscript into digital space creates—and in this case encodes rather than *hard*-codes—an experience that differs drastically from the experience of holding Blake's large manuscript (or even a print facsimile edition of it), turning the pages one by one, feeling the texture of the paper, scanning the large leaves, and so forth. After reading Blake, we may consider this to be a terribly Urizenic enterprise that seriously skews some of the most important features of the poet-artist's work. Just as the printed page flattens crucial details in Blake's original illustrations and obscures the layering effect of his textual revisions, the computer screen may flatten whatever it displays even more extensively—with backlighting and constant screen redrawing as well.

73. Again, however, using the digital images in full awareness of the specific alterations and misrepresentations enforced by the medium in question can ameliorate this effect. Also, thinking back to Dowdey's profound translation of the manuscript's poetic text into "a modernized prose adaptation of Blake's text" (Mitchell 116), we have to consider how electronic encoding itself translates the original into a new "genre." An electronic source file, with all its hierarchy and various degrees of tagging, bears little resemblance to handwritten lines of verse and/or prose on the pages of a manuscript. (And obviously the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* text will have little to do with hierarchy!) The finished puzzle may resemble the original, but the actual electronic pieces require completely different methods of fitting together. The act of marking up a text that, in its original form, often is immensely difficult to decipher also introduces even more chances for human error—mistakes when transcribing the text, mistakes

when tagging the text, mistakes when preparing the style sheets to render the text, etc. A hypertext, therefore, may add even more chances for inaccuracy and unreliability than a print edition. However, the ease with which digital images of Blake's handwriting can accompany electronic texts, and the ease with which users can study the two together along with other tools described above, may give edition users the chance to catch such editorial mistakes more readily than they would in a print edition.[32]

**VII.**

74. This critical look at tagged texts brings me to the *Blake Archive*'s XML-encoded transcription and the electronic edition we are preparing.[33] We plan to use a color-coding schema (and a key to the color code that is readily available to users from each manuscript page) to identify the different types/stages of text when displayed. We also have plans for eventually providing different types of *edited* text—clean versions without rendering and non-final text, versions that exclude other specific types of text, and so forth—though at present the *Blake Archive* is focusing on diplomatic/genetic rendering of manuscript materials. Our current intention is to have the base transcription be as literal as possible, without conjectural transpositions or even alterations based upon Blake's directions, and fully precise in its representation of all Blake's most characteristic idiosyncrasies of composition—including his punctuation or lack thereof.[34] We have prepared extensive textual notes to accompany/supplement the transcription, covering details of revision, of the manuscript's material features, and of some cases of variation between our text and other significant editorial versions (e.g., especially those of Keynes, Bentley, and Erdman).

75. The foundation for all of this textual material, though, will be the first-ever color reproductions of the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript in full, prepared from new digital photographs from the British Library. As images of Blake's original artifacts provide the basis for everything in the *Blake Archive*, these digital images will be the focal point for presentation, with the transcription and notes supplementing the reproductions of the manuscript. Enlargements of the main display images also will allow users to focus in closely on the reproductions as part of their reading/studying experience.

76. Thus, in every piece and at every stage of putting together Blake's puzzle, we have striven to make the original artifact the foundation and determinant of our practices and of the final product. In our notes, we avoid making any straightforward literary interpretations of the text, just as we try to avoid *editing* in such a manner, and we remain faithful to the physical order of the manuscript in its current condition rather than execute Blake's (supposed) intentions, clear or not. Admittedly, I may sound like so many of my predecessors at this point as I try to separate precise editing from literary interpretation, creating my own harmonious discord. That said, I am not attempting to promise that our version is the definitive edition of Blake's manuscript itself, nor would I try to claim that the *Blake Archive*'s object-based version is entirely objective and free from its editors' own presumptions and priorities (e.g., that Blake's manuscript should be rendered as such, and that deliberate editorial alteration is more problematic than helpful). Nor would I say that electronic editing is the best, most Blakean, most useful way to edit Blake.

77. However, this edition of *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* is unique in many ways, opening the opportunity for many new insights into the manuscript. Firstly, my detailed examination of editions of the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript has made me highly aware of my *ethos* in action as I have helped to edit the manuscript. Being part of a larger team of skilled, experienced editors has helped even further, but here too personal biases had to be recognized and accommodated in much the same way. That is, each member of the team has a particular area of expertise and attention from which to approach the manuscript—be that the text, the images, certain editorial views, etc. Because of the collaboration involved in the collective effort, we all have been forced to articulate and defend our views, hear other opinions, and then reach an agreement that seemed most appropriate and consistent with the *Blake*

*Archive*'s standards. I know this process has been, and will continue to be, highly valuable for my understanding of both editorial practice and the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript.

78. Secondly, this edition of Blake's work involves an additional struggle with the electronic tools being used to represent it, requiring further analysis of the original artifact and the methods being used to edit it. In deciding how to tag a textual particular, how to display various types of the manuscript's content, or how to prevent inconsistencies between the transcription and the electronic source file, the editorial team has been forced to reconsider every element of our methodology and of our underlying conclusions about the manuscript. These additional stages of preparation also forced us to engage with the manuscript repeatedly, many more times than would have occurred if only preparing a print edition. Finally, we have had to consider at every moment how our choices will affect the users of our edition in their understanding, indeed their experience, of what Blake himself created . . . with additions from other, later hands.

79. All together, I know full well that the *Blake Archive*'s electronic edition, however faithful we have tried to make it in text and image and order, will be when published an editorial representation that can never stand in for the original. My hope is that it might prove reliable enough to provide a useful supplement for studying Blake's manuscript in all of its intricate particulars. I also hope that it might become an enduring part of the greater editorial history of this great work. Perhaps, then, the *Blake Archive*'s version of *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* in cyberspace may open a vortex for many more travelers through Eternity and allow them to "enter into" this grand work of art.

**Coda: The Manuscript "Itself"[35]**

80. As I mentioned, the *Four Zoas* manuscript was donated to the British Museum in the early twentieth century, and now it belongs to the British Library, bound in a codex and stored in a safe. More specifically, the Library classifies Blake's highly fragile and highly valuable manuscript as a "Z-Safe Restricted" work—which, translated from the argot, means that it *stays* in the safe almost without exception. After passing through so many hands and receiving so many post-authorial significations, the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript has been placed nearly off limits even to serious Blake scholars.

81. This is unfortunate in many respects. The manuscript's disappearance behind the veil of security only emphasizes the importance that editions play in our understanding of it. Now that actually engaging with the original is next to impossible, we have no choice but to rely on *editorial* engagements with, and responses to, that original in the form of editions. Unfortunately, achieving the degree of critical awareness that I have argued for confronts a direct challenge when we realize that most individuals will begin their engagement with Blake's manuscript in a given edition. Thus, most scholars and readers will begin with a limited purview—limited within the borders of their tools, the edition(s) used—and so have no way to compare the resource they use with the original it represents.

82. I experienced the reality of this situation myself thanks to the truly unique chance I had to study the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript directly, to engage it in brief Intellectual Battle. I spent five days (7-11 March 2005) in the British Library consulting Blake's manuscript, during which time I was able to see the original in its current state, examine many of the important cruxes and characteristics that I discuss above, and ultimately realize just how complex the web-work is in so many of its threads.[36] On one hand, the experience gave me a newfound respect for those editors who tackled the daunting artifact and tried their best to represent it in some way to an audience of scholars and general readers. On the other hand, I realized just how inadequate any edition would be; the most important and affective details in Blake's work lie far beyond the powers of photography, typography, and commentary to capture.

83. Most important in this respect, my time studying the manuscript—which included an examination of its text and its illustrations, as well as various pieces of material evidence (stitch marks, tears, patches, etc.)—gave me a much stronger foundation from which to approach editions of it. I find it unfortunate that many scholars, and even general readers, likely will never get to see the stunning, intimidating, and tantalizing work that William Blake—not to mention a few others—finally left us with.

# Appendix

## Notes

1 The "genetic" approach to editing has a fairly long history in Germany and France, though it gained impetus in Anglo-American editing most noticeably in the mid-twentieth century. For some extremely helpful introductions to genetic criticism—or *critique gï¿½nï¿½tique*—see the following: Hans Zeller, "A New Approach to the Critical Construction of Literary Texts," *Studies in Bibliography* 28 (1975): 231-64; *TEXT 3* (1987); Hans Walter Gabler, George Bornstein, and Gillian Borland Pierce, eds., *Contemporary German Editorial Theory, Editorial Theory and Literary Criticism* (Ann Arbor, Mi.: U of Michigan P, 1995); *Yale French Studies* 89 (1996); *Word & Image* 13.2 (April-June 1997). One of the earliest editions of English literature employing these methods is Harrison Hayford and Merton M. Sealts, Jr., eds. *Billy Budd: Sailor (An inside Narrative)* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1962). Additionally, John Bryant's *The Fluid Text: A Theory of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen, Editorial Theory and Literary Criticism* (Ann Arbor, Mi.: U of Michigan P, 2002) provides a valuable application of genetic methods to the editing and representation of manuscripts—Bryant's focus being Melville's Typee manuscript. A good article on the application of genetic methods from a more "traditional" perspective is Albert J. Von Frank's "Genetic Versus Clear Texts: Reading and Writing Emerson" (*Documentary Editing* [December 1987]: 5-9). Von Frank's account of how genetic methods allow more insight into an author's intentions and the literary value of his/her work bears a striking resemblance to Geoffrey Keynes's arguments in his editions of Blake, in that both strive to amalgamate genetic methods with a more reader-friendly text; it thus strikes a compromise between strictly genetic/diplomatic methods and intentionalist, literary-oriented methods. Two critical works on the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript that I found particularly helpful because of their focus on its genesis are Andrew Lincoln's *Spiritual History: A Reading of William Blake's* Vala *or* The Four Zoas (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1995) and John B. Pierce's *Flexible Design: Revisionary Poetics in Blake's* Vala *or* The Four Zoas (Montreal and Kingston, London, and Buffalo: McGill-Queen's UP, 1998).

2 "Intentionalist" (or "idealist") editing has been the predominant trend in Anglo-American editing for much of its history. W. W. Greg's "The Rationale of Copy-Text" (*Studies in Bibliography* 3 [1950-51]: 19-36) serves as something of a "base text" for this approach (though it has a history before Greg), while Fredson Bowers and G. Thomas Tanselle, among many others, more recently have carried the tradition through their work as editors and in individual publications. Luckily, however, these editors and others like them base their editions on sound scholarship and careful examination of all the evidence in question in the process of making their (authorially) "final" text.

3 For both my biographical and my bibliographical history of the manuscript, I am especially indebted to two works by G. E. Bentley, Jr., for their account of Blake's life and collection of records related to it: *Blake Records: Documents (1714-1841) Concerning the Life of William Blake (1757-1827) and His Family [...]*, 2nd ed. (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2004); and *The Stranger from Paradise: A Biography of William Blake* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2001). While Bentley's views and data are not universally accepted, he has done easily the most intensive and useful bibliographical work on the manuscript to date, not to mention his invaluable biographical pursuits.

4 Blake's watercolors for the *Night Thoughts* project are reproduced in Edward Young, *Night Thoughts, with*

*Illustrations by William Blake*, 2 vols. (London: Folio Society, 2005) and John E. Grant et al., ed., *William Blake's Designs for Edward Young's Night Thoughts: A Complete Edition*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1980); for the published engravings, see Robert N. Essick and Jenijoy LaBelle, ed., *Night Thoughts, or, The Complaint and the Consolation: Illustrated by William Blake, Text by Edward Young* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1975). According to Paul Mann ("The Final State of *The Four Zoas*," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 18.4 [spring 1985]: 204-15), Blake even might have received copperplates from Edwards along with the blank leaves, though no direct proof of this hypothesis is extant. However, Bentley cites a correlation between the size of the central panels of the *Night Thoughts* engravings and Blake's *Jerusalem* plates; see *Blake Books* 641-42.

5 Perhaps the best critic on Blake's "conversation" with Young is Peter Otto. See especially *Blake's Critique of Transcendence: Love, Jealousy, and the Sublime in* The Four Zoas (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000); see also his recent essay, "From the Religious to the Psychological Sublime: The Fate of Young's *Night Thoughts* in Blake's *The Four Zoas*," in *Prophetic Character: Essays on William Blake in Honor of John E. Grant*, ed. Alexander S. Gourlay, Locust Hill Literary Studies 33 (West Cornwall, Ct.: Locust Hill Press, 2002) 225-62. Also see Jeremy Tambling, *Blake's Night Thoughts* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2005).

6 This intention may have remained as late as 1803, when Blake was at a very different place (personally and physically—see below). In a letter to Thomas Butts, Blake discusses how his "three years trouble" may be worth it, for he has created "a Sublime Allegory which is now perfectly completed into a Grand Poem" (Erdman, *Complete* 730). However, because written in 1803, these statements may apply to *Milton* or *Jerusalem* rather than *The Four Zoas*—perhaps an early version or early portions of either of these works, which were in fact printed and sold later. Still, it is worth keeping in mind that Blake never seems to have abandoned the desire "to speak to future generations" (ibid.) in his visionary works.

7 For a much fuller account of these bibliographical details, from scripts to pages and beyond, please see Bentley's *Vala or the Four Zoas* and *Blake Books* 453-64. Bentley argues persuasively that Blake was recopying drafted material on these proof pages, rather than using them for new text, which supports the view that he completed an early version of *VALA* that was then reworked heavilyBentley was the first to recognize that p. 48/49, one of the proof pages, was also used as a backing sheet for a proof of a design for William Hayley's *A Series of Ballads*, from June 1802 while Blake was at Felpham working for Hayley (see below). Bentley believes, then, that "Blake transcribed p. 48, and probably the rest of the poem, after June 1802" (*Blake Books* 455).

8 For Blake's account of this experience, see his letter to William Hayley on 23 October 1804.

9 For more discussion on the title, see my article "Blake's Four...'Zoa's'?" *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 39.1 (summer 2005): 38-43, along with the follow up discussion: Magnus Ankarsjï¿½, "Blake's Four 'Zoas'!" *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 39.4 (spring 2006): 189-90; Justin Van Kleeck, "'mark ye the points,'" *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 39.4 (spring 2006): 190-91.

10 "Revision site" is John Bryant's apt term for any place where an author revises a text in some way (55 et passim).

11 Andrew Lincoln has made the most direct and influential examination of this particular crux in his article "*The Four Zoas*: The Text of Pages 5, 6, & 7, Night the First" (*Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 12.2 [fall 1978]: 91-95). As we shall see, this entire issue of *Blake Quarterly* represents one of the most significant scholarly engagements with the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript to date.

12 The relevant articles in this issue of *Blake Quarterly* are by John Kilgore (107-14), Andrew Lincoln (115-33), and Mark Lefebvre (134); Erdman's article, in which he accepts Kilgore's solution, follows Lefebvre's

article (135-39).

13 Dowdey's inspired “edition” of the manuscript presents a more drastic witness than Bentley in this regard, for it seems to fall to pieces as the editor-illuminator attempts to represent his *experience of Blake* so that others might experience Blake, at once abusing and adopting scholarly methods and all things “academic.” This early declaration from Dowdey sets the tone for a continuous haranguing of “academic” and scholarly approaches: “Trying to 'understand' the poem in an academic or abstract way will force you to stand outside it, unable to see through your own opaque shell of commonplace activity” (v). Ironically, he declaims academic/ scholarly methods while also trying to adopt them (most clearly in his notes, which read almost like the apparatus in a typical scholarly edition ï¿½ la Greg or Bowers).

14 Erdman refers to making things “fit” numerous times, but see especially his introduction to Night the Seventh in his textual notes in *Complete* (836).

15 Before editing Blake for *Poetry and Prose* in 1965, Erdman made his name as Blake critic with *Blake: Prophet Against Empire* in 1954 and elsewhere.

16 This competition of edition text and footnote is most drastic in Bentley's *William Blake's Writings*, where the footnotes occasionally take up more page space than the text of the poem.

17 For more enlightening and enjoyable discussion of editing by Shillingsburg, see *Resisting Texts: Authority and Submission in the Constructions of Meaning, Editorial Theory and Literary Criticism* (Ann Arbor, Mi.: U of Michigan P, 1997).

18 A few Blake editions have been published since Magno and Erdman's edition, though none including a new or significantly revised version of *VALA/The Four Zoas*. Ostriker's was reprinted without changes in 2004, and Stevenson's revised and expanded edition came out in 2007. (For my review of Stevenson, see *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 42.2 (fall 2008): 73-75.)

19 Before receiving the Seal, the *Blake Archive* also was awarded the MLA's Prize for a Distinguished Scholarly Edition—becoming the first electronic edition to receive the award (see the *Blake Archive*'s home page at http://www.blakearchive.org).

20 *The Whitman Archive* is particularly relevant to Blake's manuscript because the editors use an extensive set of textual symbols and methods of textual rendering in order to present genetic transcriptions of Whitman's manuscripts. These devices and the methods for marking up and displaying them can serve, and indeed *did* serve, as potential models for an electronic edition of *VALA/The Four Zoas* (see below).

21 The larger collection in which Sutherland's essay appears contains a wealth of enlightening new work on electronic editing and editions. Along with Sutherland's essay, discussed here, also see Edward Vanhouette, “Every Reader His Own Bibliographer—An Absurdity?” (99-112), and especially Elena Pierazzo, “Digital Genetic Editions: The Encoding of Time in Manuscript Transcriptions” (169-85). Another similar and relevant article by Sutherland is “Material Text, Immaterial Text, and the Electronic Environment,” *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 24 (April 2009): 99-112 (her response to McGann's “Rationale”). An even more thorough examination of digital humanities scholarship than the Ashgate anthology is *A Companion to Digital Humanities*; see especially Perry Willet's “Electronic Texts: Audiences and Purposes,” and Martha Nell Smith's “Electronic Scholarly Editing,” in which Smith may over-generalize a bit in claiming that “...under-informed skepticism has been replaced by the realization that critical engagements with new technologies are the best hope for advancing knowledge production in the humanities.”

22 For examples of work done on Blake in the field covered by Robinson's second criticism, a lack of using computer assistance to analyze electronic editions, see various essays by Nancy M. Ide, such as: “Meaning

and Method: Computer-Assisted Analysis of Blake," *Literary Computing and Literary Criticism: Theoretical and Practical Essays on Theme and Rhetoric*, ed. Rosanne Potter (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1989): 123-41; and "A Statistical Measure of Theme and Structure," *Computers and the Humanities* 23.4-5 (August-October 1989): 277-83. There is still much to be done with computer analysis, of course—and surely having more *scholarly* electronic editions available for analysis will be helpful in this regard, especially if built as Robinson wishes, so that they "present materials which can be dynamically reshaped and interrogated, which not only accumulate all the data and all the tools used by the editors but offer these to the readers, so that they might explore and remake, so that product and process intertwine to offer new ways of reading." We can almost answer Robinson here with McGann's affirmation that "One can build editorial machines capable of generating on demand multiple textual formations—eclectic, facsimile, reading, genetic—that can all be subjected to multiple kinds of transformational analyses" and, in the process, emphasize and build on the critical methods underlying the "machines" themselves ("Text to Work" 27). An editor *can* indeed, and with Robinson's prodding and McGann's assurances, perhaps more editors *will* build editions in these flexible, informative, *and* useful ways.

23 Scholars also interested in this genetic reconstruction of the manuscript, for the purposes of literary analysis/interpretation, are John B. Pierece, *Flexible Design: Revisionary Poetics in Blake's* Vala *or* The Four Zoas (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1998), and Andrew Lincoln, *Spiritual History: A Reading of William Blake's* Vala *or* The Four Zoas (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1995). Margoliouth, of course, also is greatly concerned with the genesis of the manuscript for his "disentanglement" of *VALA* from *The Four Zoas*, for which he relies heavily on the line numbers Blake put on many pages of the manuscript; however, the dates and reliability of these line numbers are both contentious issues, and both Bentley and Margoliouth attempt to interpret them but encounter serious problems in using them to order (or argue for an order) of the text.

24 Electronic versions of Erdman's text appear in the *Blake Archive* and the *Blake Digital Text Project* edited by Nelson Hilton (http://virtual.park.uga.edu/wblake/home1.html); for the "experimental hypertext," see F. William Ruegg's *Blake's "The Four Zoas" Fetishized: An Experimental Hypertext* (http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/~broglio/eromantic/blakefetish.nassr.html).

25 Recall Shillingsburg's remark about "the editorial function" and "orderly form" here! Stevenson provides a serendipitous example of this larger editorial purpose in action, specifically applied to Blake, when in his first edition he states, "It is necessary for an editor to present a settled text" (*Poems* xii). It seems editors, even Blakean editors, are largely a Newtonian bunch—or even worse, *Urizenic*, as Paul Mann argues in his 1980 dissertation (64 et passim) and less forcefully elsewhere.

26 Please see the article by Rachel Lee and Ali McGhee in this volume of Romantic Circles Praxis, in which Lee and McGhee discuss their work on the *Blake Archive*'s forthcoming edition of *An Island in the Moon*.

27 I examined the *VALA*/*Four Zoas* manuscript at the British Library from 7-11 March 2005, during which time I checked my transcription against the original and also studied—and nearly got lost in—the illustrations; see my Coda.

28W. W. Greg provides a classic definition of "substantives" and "accidentals," plus an editor's handling of them, in "The Rationale of Copy-Text" (21).

29 On the other hand, McGann makes a good point about the limitations of computers for display and browsing: "We are not even close to developing browser interfaces to compare with the interfaces that have evolved in the past 500 years of print technology" ("Text to Work" 17), not to mention the loss of physical interactivity in the "kinetic environment summoned (and symbolically coded) in books" (18).

30 McGann emphasizes this point, arguing that a hypertext edition or archive is formed to "disperse attention

as broadly as possible," with an indefinite number of "centers" and relationships possible (as modeled on the Internet and even the traditional library) ("Rationale" 29-30). Thus, it gives power to the user/reader because it does not dictate or privilege anything but gives many options as independent (but interrelated) items, be it whole texts or portions of texts (30). Daniel Ferrer addresses the virtues of hypertext for manuscripts and literary working papers specifically in "Hypertextual Representation of Literary Working Papers" (*Literary and Linguistic Computing* 10.2 (1995): 143-45.

31 McGann performs such an analysis-through-manipulation using D. G. Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel* in "Imagining What You Don't Know: The Theoretical Goals of the *Rossetti Archive*" (http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/%7Ejjm2f/old/chum.html).

32 The ease with which electronic texts can be revised and updated also makes *correcting* these editorial mistakes a more feasible option than it is with print editions.

33 The *Blake Archive* has adapted Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) standards for all of its electronic editions, though its Document Type Definition (DTD) is specific to the *Blake Archive* because of its stronger focus on physical objects. Similarly, the text tags for *VALA*/*The Four Zoas* and other manuscript works are based on TEI standards with changes to make them more appropriate for the *Blake Archive* and the works being encoded. The recent version of TEI standards, TEI-5, was released after our initial markup of *VALA*/*The Four Zoas*, so we will need to update the markup before publication.

34 See the *Blake Archive*'s many existing transcriptions for examples of their approach, plus their "Editorial Principles" in the "About the Archive" section of the site.)

35 The scare quotes in my coda's title suggest that the idea of experiencing some object/artifact "itself," in its true and unmediated form, is contentious to say the least. For an excellent discussion of this veritable sub-field of textual criticism, see Hershel Parker's article "'The Text Itself'—Whatever That Is," *TEXT* 3 (1987): 47-54.

36 I have to thank Morris Eaves in particular, along with Robert N. Essick and Joseph Viscomi—together the three editors of the *Blake Archive*—for making it possible for me to access Blake's manuscript. Morris Eaves wrote my letter of recommendation to the Library and so literally "cracked the safe" for me. I repaid him with a two-day crash course on the manuscript, which I believe still has him woozy.

## Works Cited

Baulch, David M. "Blake's *Vala* or *The Four Zoas*: Hypertext and Multiple Plurality." *Wordsworth Circle* 30.3 (summer 1999): 154-60.

Bentley, G. E., Jr. *Blake Books: Annotated Catalogues of William Blake's Writings in Illuminated Printing, in Conventional Typography and in Manuscript, and Reprints Thereof, Reproductions of His Designs, Books with His Engravings, Catalogues, Books He Owned, and Scholarly and Critical Works about Him*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1977.

-----, ed. *William Blake: Vala or The Four Zoas: A Facsimile of the Manuscript, a Transcript of the Poem and a Study of its Growth and Significance*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1963.

-----, ed. *William Blake's Writings*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1978.

Bryant, John. *The Fluid Text: A Theory of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen*. Editorial Theory and Literary Criticism. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2002.

Doss, Phillip E. "Traditional Theory and Innovative Practice: The Electronic Editor as Postructuralist Reader." *The Literary Text in the Digital Age*. Richard J. Finneran, ed. Editorial Theory and Literary Criticism. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1996.

Dowdey, Landon. *The FOUR ZOAS: The Torments of Love and Jealousy in the Death and Judgment of Albion the Ancient Man by William Blake derived from his original drawings, engravings and the manuscript dated 1797 by Landon Dowdey assisted by Patricia Hopkins Rice*. Chicago: Swallow P, 1983.

Ellis, E. J., and W. B. Yeats, ed. *The Works of William Blake: Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical Edited with Lithographs of the Illustrated "Prophetic Books," and a Memoir and Interpretation, by E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats*. 3 vols. London: Bernard Quaritch, 1893.

Erdman, David V. "The Binding (et cetera) of *Vala*." *The Library*, 5th series 19 (vol. dated 1964; published 1968): 112-29.

-----. "Night the Seventh: The Editorial Problem." *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 12.2 (fall 1978): 135-39.

-----, ed. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. With commentary by Harold Bloom. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1982. Newly rev. ed. New York: Anchor Books-Doubleday, 1988.

Essick, Robert N. "Blake, William (1757-1827)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*." Ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Vol. 6. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. 119-30.

Greg, W. W. "The Rationale of Copy-Text." *Studies in Bibliography* 3 (1950-51): 19-36.

Keynes, Geoffrey, ed. *The Writings of William Blake*. With Max Plowman. 3 vols. London: Nonesuch P, 1925.

Kilgore, John. "The Order of Nights VIIa and VIIb in Blake's *The Four Zoas*." *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 12.2 (fall 1978): 107-14.

Lefebvre, Mark. "A Note on the Structural Necessity of Night VIIb." *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 12.2 (fall 1978): 134.

Lincoln, Andrew. "*The Four Zoas*: The Text of Pages 5, 6, & 7, Night the First." *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 12.2 (fall 1978): 91-95.

Magno, Cettina Tramontano and David V. Erdman, ed. The Four Zoas *by William Blake: A Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript with Commentary on the Illustrations*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1987.

Mann, Paul. "The Final State of *The Four Zoas*." *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 18.4 (spring 1985): 204-15.

-----. "A Preface to William Blake's 'The Four Zoas.'" Ph. D. dissertation. University of California, Santa Cruz, 1980.

Margoliouth, H. M., ed. *William Blake's* Vala*: Blake's Numbered Text*. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1956.

McGann, Jerome. "The Rationale of Hypertext." *TEXT* 9 (1996): 11-32

-----. "From Text to Work: Digital Tools and the Emergence of the Social Text." *Romanticism on the Net* 41-42 (2006). 5 May 2009. <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/2006/v/n41-42/013153ar.html>.

Mitchell, W. J. T. Rev. of *The Four Zoas: The Torments of Love and Jealousy in the Death and Judgment of Albion the Ancient Man by William Blake*, by Landon Dowdey. *The Library Quarterly* 55 (1985): 115-17.

Robinson, Peter. "Where We Are with Electronic Scholarly Editions, and Where We Want to Be." 2003. 5 May 2009. <http://computerphilologie.uni-muenchen.de/jg03/robinson.html>.

Ruegg, F. William. Blake's "The Four Zoas" Fetishized: An Experimental Hypertext. N.d. 11 November 2005. <http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/~broglio/eromantic/blakefetish.nassr.html>.

Shillingsburg, Peter L. "The Dank Cellar of Electronic Texts." *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 24.1 (April 2009): 19-25.

-----. *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age*. 3rd ed. Editorial Theory and Literary Criticism. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1996.

Sloss, D. J. and J. P. R. Wallis, ed. *The Prophetic Writings of William Blake*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1926.

Smith, Martha Nell. "Electronic Scholarly Editing." *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Ed. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004. 5 May 2009. <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/view?docId=blackwell/9781405103213/9781405103213.xml&chunk.id=ss1-4-3&toc.depth=1&toc.id=ss1-4-3&brand=9781405103213_brand>.

Stevenson, W. H. "Two Problems in *The Four Zoas*." *Blake Newsletter* 1.3 (winter 1967-68): 13-16; continued in *Blake Newsletter* 1.4 (spring 1968): 6-11.

-----, ed. *Blake: The Complete Poems*. 1971. 3rd ed. Longman Annotated English Poets. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007.

-----, ed. *The Poems of William Blake*. Longman Annotated English Poets. London and New York: Longman Group UK Limited, 1971.

Sutherland, Kathryn. "Being Critical: Paper-Based Editing and the Digital Environment." *Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*. Ed. Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland. Digital Research in the Arts and Humanities. Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009. 13-26.

# Editing and Reading Blake

## Delineation Editing of Co-Texts: William Blake's Illustrations

**Wayne C. Ripley, Winona State University**

1. In his own lifetime and for the generation after his death, William Blake was best known as an illustrator of other authors. The illustrations represent the majority of his artistic output, and for his immediate posterity, his most famous works were not the illuminated books but the commercial book illustrations of Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1797) and Robert Blair's *The Grave* (1807) (Gilchrist 220).[1] Blake illustrated the works of several other authors, including Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories from Real Life* (1791, 1796), Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden* (1791), James Thomson's *Edward and Elinor* (1793), G. A. Bürger's *Leonora* (1796), Thomas Gray's *Poetic Works* (1797-98), Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1810), John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1794, 1824), James Hervey's *Meditations and Contemplations* (c. 1820), Virgil's *Pastorals* (1821), Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1824-27), Spenser's *Fairie Queene* (c. 1825), numerous scenes from the Bible, and multiple works by William Hayley, Milton, and Shakespeare. This list does not include the many single plate illustrations he designed, and if, as Blake claimed, he helped create some of the designs he engraved, then the number of authors Blake illustrated grows tremendously.

2. As much as any of the illuminated books, Blake's illustrations of other authors are profound examples of composite art. With them, an editor confronts a dizzying array of media and diverse relationships between images and texts. Materially, the illustrations explore the range between commercial print culture and the world of fine arts. Blake's commercial illustrations, for example, were usually based on his own watercolor or pencil designs, some of which were displayed to the public in anticipation of publication. Some of the illustrations commissioned by patrons were printed from engraved plates and exist in multiple copies that have been colored and touched up differently, much like the illuminated books. Other commissioned illustrations were watercolor designs used by their owners as extra book illustrations.[2] Blake's formal paintings have a complicated relationship with his own sketches, his prose or poetic descriptions, and the source texts of the designs.[3] In editions of Blake's works by Keynes, Bentley, and Erdman, the *Descriptive Catalogue*, *A Vision of the Last Judgment* (1810), and the *Public Address* (1810-11) have enjoyed a largely independent existence apart from the paintings since the lack of a visual corollary effectively transforms them into more of a commentary on Blake's poetry and mythology than the paintings. These editions largely elide the fact that these works exist in different material forms and were composed for different audiences. The *Descriptive Catalogue*, which was written for and sold at the 1809-10 exhibition, was the longest work Blake ever committed to print. In contrast, *A Vision of the Last Judgment* (1810) and the *Public Address* (1810-11) were notebook works never available to the original audience of the paintings, and even the ordering of the text is the result of editorial labor. Since Blake's Last Judgment painting has been untraced since his death, no one was ever able to pair the description and aesthetic statement with the painting, and it was not until the early 1980s that the existence of the Chalcographic Society (the addressee of the *Public Address*) was verified.[4]

3. Editors of Blake's illustrations of other authors must confront the function of the source text—its influence on the design, Blake's relationship to the author and other illustrators, and even the material position of the text in relationship to the design. Much of Blake's discussion of his Chaucer painting in the *Descriptive Catalogue* is a close reading of Chaucer's text with quotations from a "bad" edition.[5] In the *Epitome of Hervey's Meditations Among the Tombs*, Blake collapses the distance between a

catalogue description and the painting space by identifying its figures in the painting itself. The Thomas Butts designs for Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" include a transcription of the relevant passages, descriptions, and commentary in Blake's hand on accompanying manuscript leaves. The illustrations to *Night Thoughts* and the watercolor designs for Gray are literally built around the letterpress pages of other books. In the case of *Night Thoughts*, this book included Young's own emendations, while in the illustrations to Gray, Blake wrote in the blank pages of the mounted edition, including an introductory poem for their intended owner, Nancy Flaxman, and descriptions or titles of the upcoming designs. Blake's handwritten words often run out of the text box onto the space of the design, ruining the designs from one perspective but, from another, more intimately fusing word and image. As seen in The Illustrations to the Book of Job and the illuminated manuscript of Genesis, Blake continued to use texts by other authors to explore the interaction of word and image to the end of his life. But his union of word and text in these works stands as a significant departure from the segregation of text and image in commercial illustrations, where texts such as the design's title, quotations, and the publisher's colophon were written by a writing engraver beneath the design. While the vast majority of Blake's commercial designs followed this format, Blake himself wrote the subscriptions for the Butts watercolor illustrations of the Bible in large, fine letters. The subscriptions are visible when the watercolors are displayed as paintings (as in the 2001 Tate exhibit), but reproductions in catalogues (print or electronic) omit the subscription in order to present the design as large as possible in the given space of a page, unfortunately eliding the relationship of the word and image.

4. Most discussions of editing Blake have ignored the innovative range presented by his illustrations of other authors to concentrate myopically on the illuminated books. In this focus, the editors of the *William Blake Archive* are typical: "We saw the illuminated books, once we had substantially achieved our first-phase goal of including one copy from every printing of every book, as a kind of archival and editorial backbone for the project" ("Editorial Principles"). As Justin Van Kleeck, Ali McGhee, and Rachel Lee show in their essays for this volume, the *Blake Archive* is now revising its editing procedures for two of Blake's heavily revised manuscript works in the recognition that different material forms demand different sets of editing procedures. But while the *Blake Archive* is adapting to these forms, it has not considered how the diverse forms of Blake's illustrations of other authors equally demand adjustments to its editorial methodology. The failure to theorize the unique editorial demands of illustrations has meant that many of their essential material elements have been elided.

5. I will argue that social-text editing provides the most appropriate editorial model for Blake's illustrations of other authors. Social-text editing originated in the work of D. F. McKenzie, Jerome McGann, and others.[6] As McGann has frequently insisted, it is a model of editing that allows for a fusion of critical and facsimile editing on a single platform. In the codex, critical editing typically sought to create "a single, authoritative, original state of the work" that is linked to the intentions of the author, even if this eclectic copy differs from any and all pre-existing versions (Buzzetti and McGann 55). Facsimile editing had more fidelity to one historical document, which it approximated through photography or diplomatic transcription. But facsimile editions typically isolate one edition or state of the text. The advent of digital media allowed social-text editing to be put into practice (McGann, "From Text to Work," par. 27). Social-text editing seeks to combine the functions of facsimile and critical editing and turn editorial and readerly attention to the different versions of the texts and the key contextual material. The many historic marriages of these different versions and contexts are why McGann insists "no book is one thing, it is many *things*, fashioned and refashioned repeatedly under different circumstances" ("From Text to Work" par. 36). As Susan Schreibman writes, "social-text editing presumes that published words are collaborative acts between writers and any number of agents: editors, family members, friends—even critics" ("Editing Electronic Editions" 24). Thus, social-text editing provides the "full range of social realities which the medium of print had to serve" (McKenzie 15).

6. The best known example of a social-text edition is McGann's *Dante Gabrielle Rossetti Archive*. It brings facsimiles, transcriptions, and critical notes of all the contemporary editions of Rossetti's writings together with all states and reproductions of his paintings, drawings, and prints. It also includes the writings and visual arts of his circle and important influences and documents regarding his reception history. As the *Blake Archive* does with the multiple copies of the illuminated books, the *Rossetti Archive* is able to present complex, multi-media projects like "The Blessed Damozel" in a new totality that precludes reifying one version of the work as the whole ("From Text to Work" pars. 27, 32). But the *Rossetti Archive* also reveals the social existence of the work, while the *Blake Archive* has largely avoided social-text editing for its innovative combination of facsimile and critical editing that is typified by its presentation of multiple copies of illuminated books.[7] This is not to downplay the importance of seeing both Blake's commercial illustrations and his illuminated books together on the same editorial platform. As the editors of the *Archive* write, bringing together these different works yields "an augmented 'Blake' considerably larger than the one most familiar to students and scholars, especially those who approach Blake from the literary side" (Eaves et al. "Plan of the Archive"). My criticisms do not mean to disregard the immense accomplishment of the *Archive*, or to disparage the important work of the editors in focusing vital attention on Blake's use of his media, which itself was truly a "radical editorial revision" ("Plan"). But I do want to suggest that the hesitancy of the *Blake Archive* to embrace social-text editing has its roots in traditional readings of and editorial approaches to Blake's illustrations of other authors. These longstanding assumptions have contributed to the many contradictions found in how the *Blake Archive* has so far approached Blake's illustrations of other authors.

7. I propose a specifically Blakean notion of social-text editing that I have termed delineation editing. Delineation editing uses Blake's theory of the outline to flesh out key elements of social-text editing in Blakean terms. What I am most interested in is how Blake's line draws an imaginative frame that accords conceptually with the edited textual body. As Blake's theory of the outline suggests, that which exists outside of the outline—the unedited chaos of context so important to social-text editing—insists upon its own existence and calls attention to what is not enclosed within the frame. Delineation editing seeks to capitalize on the lack of autonomy in Blake's illustrations of other authors to expand the editorial frame beyond the illustrations themselves to encompass their material and social realities. As I will show, the recent work of Joseph Viscomi and Saree Makdisi on the virtual elements in Blake's prints has already moved scholarship in this direction, and I will apply their insights to how we can edit Blake's illustrations.

**The Strong Blake Theory**

8. In articulating his notion of the fluid text, Bryant challenges McGann by declaring that social-text editing "precludes the writer's prepublication creative process" (*Fluid* 52). As concerns Blake, I will show this is precisely the field that most editors have most overvalued. Editors of Blake can be forgiven for keeping the oft-cited words from *Jerusalem* at the forefront of their minds: "I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans / I will not Reason & Compare: my business is to Create" (10.20-21, E 153). This passage creates the image of a Blake strong in authorial intention, one not willing to be corrupted by the influence of booksellers, publishers, patrons, and readers. While this image is accurate on several levels, what I will call "the strong Blake theory" has erected many impediments in appreciating and analyzing the complex intertextual nature of the illustrations. Frequently the illustrations are read as a kind of visual species of his witty and incisively written annotations, which are often taken as the model for how Blake read all texts.[8] As E. P. Thompson wrote:

> [Blake] would look into a book with a directness which we might find to be naïve or unbearable, challenging each one of its arguments against his own experience and his own

> "system." This is at once apparent from his surviving annotations—to Lavater, Swedenborg, Berkeley, Bacon, Bishop Watson or Thornton. (*Beast* xvi)

Yet if we understand the illustrations as the same kind of direct commentary on the authors Blake read, we are not only eliding the ambiguity inherent in visual media but also misreading Blake's assertion in *Jerusalem* that he "will not Reason & Compare" but "Create."

9. How to interpret Blake's illustrations is a difficult question, and it is in many ways far more difficult to interpret the illustrations than the text. No one believes that Blake thought of an illustration as a "pure picture" untranslatable into words (Elkins 55). As he wrote his would-be patron, Dr. Trusler, "I hope that none of my Designs will be destitute of Infinite Particulars which will present themselves to the Contemplator" (E 701). But how Blake meant his "Contemplator" to interpret "Infinite Particulars" is unclear. Can "Infinite Particulars" even be bound in articulation? The relationship of the illustrations to their source texts only adds additional ambiguity. By the 1970s, the interpretative solution settled on by Blake critics was to integrate Blake's illustrations fully into the mythic system of the illuminated books, which, in this period, was believed to be fairly fixed. Writing on the *Night Thoughts* designs, Morton D. Paley, for example, acknowledged Young's immense popularity and the literalism in the designs that was apparent to early nineteenth-century readers like Henry Crabb Robinson and Edward Bulwer-Lytton. But he insisted that Blake's mythology provided the crucial context for interpreting the designs:

> It is true that at times Blake does merely turn a trope into a picture, but frequently he only *appears* to be doing this. What neither Robinson nor Bulwer-Lytton nor the others realize is that for Blake the pictorialized trope is often a means of making a symbolic statement which depends for its meaning not on Young's text but on the myth developed in the Lambeth books and in *Vala*. In pictures such as these, Blake adapts, ignores, or even subverts Young's meaning in order to develop his own. (137, emphasis added)

Paley raises an important point about the intertextual nature of Blake's designs that I will return to later. But the knowledge that Paley suggests is necessary for the interpretation of Blake's published designs is a steep burden for the contemporary reader who would be forced to ignore the seeming literalism of the designs for knowledge of Blake's early illuminated books and an unpublished manuscript poem that was, at best, just begun in 1797. The strong Blake theory forces us to imagine Blake laughing in his sleeve at his naïve readers, and it grossly simplifies the complex relationships Blake had with the authors he illustrated.

10. One can argue that the reliance on the illuminated books to interpret the illustrations already exemplifies the idea of social texts, and to some degree this is correct. But the strong Blake theory errs by always imagining the same *über*-reader, which, following M. H. Abrams, ultimately only finds its true manifestation in Blake himself (Eaves, "Expressive" 784). While Blake as both creator and ideal audience is an important context, it also eclipses other interpretative scenes that have concrete historical existences. These scenes are worth exploring both for their own sakes and for their influence on how Blake may have conceived of the reception of his works.

11. By rejecting the strong Blake theory, I do not mean to suggest that Blake did not have disagreements with the authors he illustrated. But social-text editing would demand that Blake's source texts be considered "co-texts" instead of merely one of many equal contexts that construct signification for the designs. Co-texts have been conceived in several ways that are useful for thinking about Blake's illustrations. In linguistic terms, a co-text is a previous utterance that constrains interpretation (Brown and Yule 49), and in literary studies, the idea of co-texts has been used to analyze how texts function together on the page or in the same volume (Mühlethaler 39). Blake's source texts function in their own

socio-historical network, which existed before Blake's illustrations and which the illustrations themselves join. The importance of the editorial apparatus to co-texts is suggested by research into electronic chatting and the difficulty in maintaining conversation strands across two or more conversation threads. Mariano Gomes Pimentel and his co-authors have designated this difficulty "co-text loss," which they define as occurring "each time the reader is unable to identify which of the previous messages provide the elements that are necessary to understand the message that is being read" (484). Co-text loss in this sense is an apt description, for example, of the confusion faced by readers of Blake's prophetic books where one is uncertain which preceding utterance can provide meaning. But co-text loss also has material and sociological implications for editing the illustrations because it suggests how much is lost by neglecting the importance of the source-text on Blake's design. By downplaying the contributions of the source author for those of the illuminated book, editors are facilitating co-text loss.

**Electronic Editions and Blake's Co-Texts**

12. The chief editorial accomplishments involving Blake's illustrations of other authors have been facsimile editions. The best of these (Essick and Paley's edition of *The Grave*; Essick and LaBelle's edition of the *Night Thoughts* engravings; Grant, Rose, Tolley, and Erdman's *Night Thoughts*; and Hamlyn's *Night Thoughts*) have been limited in the sense that they were forced to use the medium of print to represent print. As McGann has suggested, digital media has created an exterior field space that allows the bibliographic codes (or the mark-up language) of print to be revealed in new ways ("Rationale" 20-22 and "Marking" 205-06). However, the same editorial philosophy of the *Archive* that has done a wonderful job of presenting the variations of the illuminated books has produced a strangely abrogated and distorted view of the illustrations. The distortion of these illustrations originates in the diplomatic editorial philosophy of the *Blake Archive*, which emphasizes "*the physical object—the plate, page, or canvas—over the logical textual unit—the poem or other work abstracted from its physical medium*" ("Editorial Principles"). Missing from the list of physical objects is, of course, the codex, be it stitched pages or the bound print edition, which has been the chief "physical medium" of poetry, prose, and illustrations since at least the sixteenth century. While the editors of *The Blake Archive* have produced beautiful print facsimiles of Blake's illustrated books (to say nothing of their own visually stunning scholarly works), the *Archive* does not present editions but simply the illustrations themselves removed from their co-text and context. Not recognizing "the bounding line" (E 550) of the print book means that the *Archive* excludes much, if not all, of the original works that spurred the illustrations, omits the physical context in which the design exists, and leaves out paratextual features such as prefaces, epigraphs, and even blank leaves that Blake may have considered as part of the field for constructing his meaning. It is important to recognize that this material is not merely one context but an essential co-text for the illustrations.

13. The *Archive*'s variation of the strong Blake theory leads to a host of contradictions about Blake's works and their relationship to wider contexts and suggests that, for the illustrations at least, the best physical analogue to the *Archive* remains the traditional artistic catalogue, which gathers works from their places in specific contexts and collates them according to some rubric, such as author, period, medium, or owner. In terms of its hierarchical structure, the *Archive* proper (i.e., Blake's Works) is organized first by its focus on Blake and secondly by its focus on the media he used. The contradictions in these rubrics emerge in the commercial engraving for *The Grave*. The *Archive* includes the portrait of Blake engraved by Louis Schiavonetti after a painting by Thomas Phillips. In its time, both the painting and the engraving were greatly admired, but Blake is only the subject. Given the inclusion of a work by two other artists in the *Archive*'s category of "Commercial Illustrations," it is noteworthy that Blake's poem "To the Queen," which appeared in the print edition of *The Grave*, has yet to be included. What gives the portrait of Blake precedence over a poem by Blake is not clear, other than its immediate accessibility when the other prints were scanned. While the poem will certainly be added at some date,

it will be divided from its co-texts and presumably will be classified with "Manuscripts and Typographic Works."

14. Yet the decision to include the portrait of Blake is not a bad one because it follows the logic of the printed book in which the other designs appeared, and if, as Eaves suggests, electronic editing provides a model of textuality that is relatively "unstable" ("Crafting" par. 27), then Blake's illustrated books provide a residual stability that editors must acknowledge. By not recognizing print editions in its hierarchy of objects, the *Archive* selectively bowdlerizes the material most associated with Blake from a volume and leaves the rest as dross. This may have been necessary for a host of reasons, but it bifurcates the co-textual nature of the illustrations, creating a false distinction between Blake's own work and his source author as well as obscuring Blake's place in the collaborative world of publishing.

15. While the critical resources on Blake's life, mythology, and illuminated printing found on the *Archive* make up for this bifurcation to some degree, the sticky problem of co-texts is endemic. Once an object is selected to be in the *Archive*, all of the text printed on it is transcribed, including the publisher's colophon, even if there is no indication that the text originates with Blake.[9] A major exception to this is the text of other authors, as seen in the elision of Young's and Gray's poetry, despite the fact that their poetry forms the literal center of the designs. In the case of the illustrations of *The Grave*, inconsistencies regarding what should be represented in the textual transcriptions abound. The *Archive* transcribes the subscription and colophon of each plate. These subscriptions include many of the titles that were first recorded in the November 1805 prospectus issued by Robert Cromek (Bentley, *Records*, 212). It is unclear whether these titles originated with Blake, Cromek, or were a collaborative effort. Who controlled the subsequent changes to the titles is equally unclear, but we know two facts for sure. Blake did not engrave them, and they are all in dialogue with Blair's poem.[10] To take one example, the design often referred to as "Christ descending into the Grave" in the first prospectus was titled "Christ descending into the Grave, with *the Keys of Death and Hell*." (I've italicized the lines from Blair.) In the published design, "Christ descending into the Grave" appears in large letters, and beneath this title an excerpt from Blair's appears in smaller letters: "Eternal King! whose potent Arm sustains / The Keys of Hell and Death." While Blake did not engrave the subscription himself, the design, title, and excerpt work together to provide an important gloss of Blair's lines because of its identification of Christ with the "Eternal King," a connection which, given the tension between revealed and natural religion in mid-eighteenth-century poetry, was not automatic and may have been contested by some readers. Without the accompanying lines from *The Grave* in the subscription to the design, the significance of the title would be lost.

16. Despite Blake's questionable relationship to the subscription, from the perspective of delineation editing, the *Archive* properly transcribes it. The editorial omission of the facing page of text[11] (see page 1) by the *Archive*, however, radically curtails the most basic correlation between Blake's design and Blair's text in both theme and materiality. The facing page of text was the essential co-text. These excised lines describe the utter darkness of the grave:

> The Grave, dread thing!
> Men shiver when thou'rt nam'd: nature appall'd
> Shakes off her wonted firmness. Ah! how dark
> Thy long-extended realms, and rueful wastes,
> Where naught but silence reigns, and night, dark night,
> Dark as was chaos ere the infant sun
> Was roll'd together, or had tried his beams
> Athwart the gloom profound! (1)

The design illustrates these lines as well since the light coming from Christ illuminates the darkness of

the grave, aligning Christ with “the infant sun” whose “beams / Athwart the gloom profound.” As Christ descends, he approaches a line of fire running up the steps of the grave. Given that it is Christ and not the fire that dispels the darkness of the grave, Blake is likely making an allusion to the “dismal Situation waste and wild” that is lit by “darkness visible” in *Paradise Lost* (Milton I.60, 63). The comparison between Christ and the sun also suggests a host of allusions not only to Milton but to the typological tradition at work in Blair’s poem. Even if one argues that it was Cromek, and not Blake, who positioned the designs in relationship to the poem, every reader of the book (including Blake) experienced the design in this position.

17. My larger point here is that the meanings of Blake’s illustrations have a complex interdependent relationship with their verbal and visual co-texts that leads us to a reconsideration of the wider contexts in which they circulated. Removing Blake’s design from its place in the edition of *The Grave* facilitates co-text loss. In making this point, I echo with significant variation Robert N. Essick’s assertion that “The ever-present and generally unwelcomed demands of booksellers, partners, print dealers, and connoisseurs all influenced Blake in complex ways” (*Printmaker* 80). Certainly Blake’s disagreements with these figures must be acknowledged, but so must his real-world assumption that engagement with the public sphere in either print or painting depended upon them.

18. Most of my examples have come from the *Night Thoughts* and the *Grave* projects, but the same questions of co-text and context arise for Blake’s other illustrations. Blake’s three illustrations for Bürger’s gothic tale *Leonora* (1796), engraved by Perry, have never warranted an independent edition, either in print or electronic media. The two text illustrations are of soldiers departing for war and of reunited lovers, but these are anticipated by the frontispiece, which illustrates the heroine’s ride with the ghost who has been impersonating her lover. By anticipating the ending of the story itself, Blake’s frontispiece casts an uncanny pallor over the seemingly blasé domestic scenes of departure and reunion. While eighteenth-century critics condemned the wild design as “ludicrous, instead of terrific” (Bentley, *Records*, 75), the frontispiece essentially markets the shock-ending of Bürger’s narrative, which is what no doubt elicited the four editions of the work that were published in 1796. The co-textual relationship of Blake’s illustrations to Bürger’s text, however, is complicated by the presence of eight lines altered from Young on the frontispiece, making the verses a third co-text to consider. Blake had begun the *Night Thoughts* designs by this date, so it is worth asking whether Blake himself selected and adapted Young’s lines or whether this was done by Blake’s publisher William Miller, who would also sell copies of *The Grave*. Notably, Miller’s edition was also competing with one by the *Night Thoughts* publisher Richard Edwards, which contained designs by Lady Diana Beauclerc. Was Blake challenged to better these designs after seeing them in Edwards’s shop, or did Miller want to bank on what he may have seen as the fame that Blake would win with his *Night Thoughts* designs? And whatever answers are made to these questions, what role did Young’s own popular association with the gothic tradition play in the use of his lines?

19. Exploring these possibilities editorially would necessitate positioning Blake, *Leonora*, and Young in a wider network of literary and commercial relations. This approach to editing is an answer to the strong Blake theory and catalogue logic that removes Blake’s works from their various *public* contexts. Physical editions would be a necessary part of these networks, and rather than being gutted, Blake’s illustrated books could be represented in their entirety by a multitude of electronic formats—each with their own benefit. Future editors of Blake should begin thinking of how to convert the biographical and bibliographic heritage of Blake scholarship, especially as exemplified by Bentley’s *Blake Records* and *Blake Books* and the catalogues of Bindman, Butlin and Essick, into digital forms, as well as exploiting the exploding host of electronic scholarly editions, museum and library collections, and projects like *Gale’s Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*, *18thConnect*, *Google Books*, and the *Internet Archive*.

**Delineation Editing**

20. If a Blakean warrant for delineation editing is necessary, it can be found in *A Vision of the Last Judgment*, where Blake gave detailed instructions on how to view the now lost painting:

> If the Spectator could Enter into these Images in his Imagination approaching them on the Fiery Chariot of his Contemplative Thought if he could Enter into Noahs Rainbow or into his bosom or could make a Friend & Companion of one of these Images of wonder which always intreats him to leave mortal things as he must know then would he arise from the Grave then would he meet the Lord in the Air & then he would be happy (E 560)

The viewer must become "a Friend & Companion" with Blake's images, and this friendship becomes the basis for an enthusiastic melding with the divine. Blake describes this process as a perpetual resurrection, which suggests, recalling the letter to Trusler, how Blake envisioned engagement with "Infinite Particulars." The alternative model this passage suggests is the cursory viewing, where the viewer treats Blake's images as isolated, dead objects. If Blake's ideal viewers are resurrected through their active relationship to the image, then those who view the painting incorrectly are themselves corpses, unable to arise from their graves. McKenzie, it is worth noting, describes editing in these same terms: "[B]ibliography as a sociology of texts has an unrivalled power to resurrect authors in their own time, and their readers at any time" (28-29).

21. The fact that the *Last Judgment* painting that *Vision* describes is lost creates an ideal situation for delineation editing. Spectators must not rely on their senses, part of "mortal things," but weave together Blake's description with their own biblical knowledge to create the lost co-text imaginatively. This method of viewing the lost *Last Judgment* echoes Blake's description of how he viewed "those wonderful originals" of ancient monuments "in vision" when creating his painting *The Spiritual Form of Pitt* (E 531). Blake physically recreates these original monuments from what he understood to be imitations by the Persians, Hindus, Egyptians, and Greeks of lost Jewish masterpieces. Likewise, the lost "Imaginative Image" of the *Last Judgment* painting is recovered by "the seed of Contemplative Thought" as aided materially by Blake's own works and those analogous to it (E 555). In this sense, a lost object has more reality than one that is visible and viewed wrongly.

22. By describing contemplation as a chariot and a seed, Blake suggests that contemplation both conveys the mind to a physically distant image and nurtures a present but undeveloped image. It is in this way that contemplation corresponds to the line that creates but also uncovers or recovers preexisting forms. As Blake writes in the *Descriptive Catalogue*, "Leave out this l[i]ne and you leave out life itself; all is chaos again, and the line of the almighty must be drawn out upon it before man or beast can exist" (E 550). Delineation editing of co-texts would frame a proper "picture" of elements that allows for contemplative exploration and self-conscious identification of the imaginative frame that the editorial "bounding line" and the "Spectator" create around the illustration and its source text(s). James Elkins's discussion of Wittgenstein's idea of a picture illuminates how the infinite particulars in Blake's designs may be bound by a conceptual outline. Elkin cites Wittgenstein's statement 2.14 that "'the elements of a picture are related to one another in a determinate way,' otherwise the object is not a picture" (62). Wittgenstein's commentator, Max Black, glosses this statement using terms that are very similar to Blake's condemnation of "blundering blurs" that destroy art and vision (E 572): "A smudged or blurred picture is not a picture at all" (qtd. in Elkins 62). Rather, "the blobs of paint of which a picture is made must be organized in a single, definite way, out of the many that are possible . . . in order to constitute a determinate picture" (qtd. in Elkins 62). As Robert N. Essick has pointed out, Blake did not always follow through on his theory of the outline in artistic practice ("Production of Meaning" 20). The outline is less artistic method, then, than it is a cognitive and interpretative model.

23. Removing the co-texts from the illustrations is in essence removing part of the infinite particulars constitutive of the design. Admittedly, the distinction between co-text and context can be a slippery

one, but the immediate relevance of the source text to Blake's designs should be apparent. Delineation editing of co-texts insists that the requisite material and social realities of Blake's picture be included in the interpretative horizon.

24. Some of the problems and potentials of delineation editing are suggested by the recent work of Joseph Viscomi and Saree Makdisi, which has examined Blake's designs in terms of electronic and imaginative forms of virtual reality. The analogy they draw between the electronic virtual image and imaginative image (the object of Blake's contemplation) can be seen as a significant departure from the *Archive*'s emphasis on the starkly individualized physical object. Viscomi has shown that many of the illuminated books of 1795 have designs that fit together because they originated on one plate as a kind of painting before Blake decided to make them into books ("1795"). Viscomi uses digital media not only to reunite the divided physical images but also to reconstruct how the designs existed on the same plate. His digital images help readers to visualize the lost, imagined object of the print and the initial publication format Blake envisioned:

> Through such digital creations, we reify the experiences of memory and imagination, comparison and contrast, that we employ when reading / seeing Blake's works. Moreover, by doing so, we engage in creative processes involving memory and imagination similar to Blake's own when inventing new designs from elements of others. [. . .] In short, our [electronically generated] virtual reality is ideally suited for realizing Blake's virtual designs.

By recovering lost originals, Viscomi's electronic virtual reality replicates the cognitive framing demanded by Blake's outline.

25. How porous the outlines of this interpretative space can be is a topic explored by Makdisi. Makdisi stresses the "open logic of the illuminated books" (112), and as he contends, "if we try to read one of the illuminated books as a self-contained object, we will almost inevitably be frustrated. We will have greater success if we try to read it as a part of a virtual network of relations that opens away from itself and undermines its own autonomy" (130). Makdisi calls attention to Blake's "graphemes," such as the design for "Death's Door," which are replicated again and again throughout Blake's works. The replication of graphemes (and even, one may add, of the exact verbal phrases that Blake would repeat in his poetry and prose) offers the tantalizing promise of a visual and verbal grammar. But since different contexts change the significance of graphemes, their replication also disrupts and frustrates the efforts to decode them. Given these semiotic contradictions, Makdisi suggests:

> [T]he stable self-containment of a single illuminated book is superseded by the wide virtual network of traces among different plates, different copies, different illuminated books; virtual because it is not always necessarily activated, and, even when it is, not always activated in the same way. (114)

Makdisi avoids the pitfalls of the strong Blake theory because he recognizes that the connections among the illuminated books are *virtual* in that they exist in potential and are not always realized. He is not assuming Blake as his ideal reader. Instead, the meaning an individual reader creates by following "the wide virtual network of traces" is only one possibility or one imaginative frame. At the same time, this frame is also determined by the individual context of the grapheme (or whatever one takes as the individual unit in the network).

26. Blake's illustrations of other authors exemplify Makdisi's argument even more than the illuminated books. Paley recognized in his early essay on the *Night Thoughts* designs that graphemes do not respect the differences between the illuminated books and Blake's illustrations of other authors, but the strong

Blake theory limited Paley's conception of the "virtual network of relations" to the illuminated books. These books certainly provide one set of relations, but there is a multitude of others, particularly if we are concerned with how Blake's original readers would have interpreted the texts. Blake's illustrations undermine their autonomy in ways far more complex than their referential relationship with the illuminated books because of their status as co-texts. As Viscomi and Makdisi suggest, editors and readers must be attuned to when, how, and whether a virtual network is activated. Editors and scholars are in a unique position to frame the elements for the reader. This crucial role has been underscored by Kathryn Sutherland ("Being Critical" 24), and it is important to keep in mind when performing social-text editing. Social-text editors must be acutely aware of historical readers and scenes of reading to be resurrected by the co-textual and contextual information they provide, and they must recognize that these readers lack the composite view they enjoy. Most of all, social-text editors should be wary lest they recreate a Platonic ideal of a text from the aggregate of their historicized particulars.

**Praxis**

27. Delineation editing of co-texts outlines the fields in which Blake's designs and their co-texts can be read and interpreted. The *Night Thoughts* designs, for example, embody a wide range of material forms and raise a host of questions regarding Blake's relationship to his source author, his publisher, competing projects, visual and literary influences, and audiences. As detailed by G. E. Bentley, the *Night Thoughts* project was Blake's chance to compete with the great book illustration projects of the 1780s and '90s, such as Josiah Boydell's Shakespeare, Thomas Macklin's Poets Gallery and Bible, Robert Bowyers's *History of England*, and Henry Fuseli's Milton Gallery ("Great" 59). Like these projects, Blake's *Night Thoughts* went well beyond being one book. Blake drew 537 watercolor designs —one for every page of the poem (including blank ones), some of which were displayed at various shops before being bound in two volumes. The print editions have several significant variations. Young's text often runs onto the design due to printing errors that resulted from the experimental nature of the project. Some copies have the third state of the title page of Night the Second, while others have the fourth state. More than twenty of the engraved editions have been painted in watercolor, and some of these were done by artists other than Blake. Blake also found other uses for the proofs, employing one as a backing sheet for Hayley's *Ballads* (Bentley, "Date," 488) before using it and others in *The Four Zoas* manuscript. If McGann can describe the objects and contexts that constitute "The Blessed Damozel" as interstellar bodies that pull on one another ("From Text" par. 32), then Blake's *Night Thoughts* is truly "when the stars threw down their spears" (E 25). In its efforts to capture all these aspects of the project, the 1980 Clarendon "Complete" edition contains black and white reproductions of all the watercolors, a facsimile of the engraved volume, all known proofs, selected colored reproductions of the watercolors, sketches and earlier designs by Blake, and a catalogue of the painted and engraved editions. The recent edition of the poem by Robin Hamlyn sought to represent the actual size and color of the watercolors, but reviewers have noted how the marginal designs were not reproduced and how the colors of the designs were still not fully captured (Snart, "Young"). Despite its enormous cost and craftsmanship, the Hamlyn edition could represent only a small portion of the *Night Thoughts* project, and like the Oxford edition, it does not even try to represent the painted print editions.

28. Far from being failures, of course, these two editions are forced delineations of certain elements within the wider *Night Thoughts* project, a delineation demanded by their status as print books. Digital media provide editors the opportunity to truly edit this project, but the editorial philosophy of the *Blake Archive* threatens to fracture the immensity of the project and to obscure junctures where different material aspects of the project might have intersected. In the two copies of the print edition of *Night Thoughts* currently available (one colored and one uncolored), the *Archive* provides the illustrations, and the textual notes include the descriptions found in an "Explanation of the Engravings," which was included in some of the print editions, though there is no evidence the descriptions were by Blake or

whether these individual copies contained them. Missing from the *Archive* are the title page, Richard Edwards's advertisement, the pages of Young's poems that have no engraved designs, and blank pages. While the relevancy of Young's poem as a co-text should be apparent, as noted earlier, none of the text is transcribed even if the passage is marked by an asterisk.

29. I would suggest, however, that even the blank leaves have editorial value when considered in terms of the production history of the project. Not only did Blake illustrate the blank leaves in the *Night Thoughts* watercolors, but when the *Night Thoughts* watercolor designs were displayed to the public, the exhibit was a large part of how the original audience thought about the book. To this audience, the unillustrated pages in the print edition were not simply empty space, but they alluded to a more complete project that the original audience might have seen. Blake's *Night Thoughts* watercolors were displayed at the shops of Richard Edwards, James Edwards, and Robert Bowyer, who, at the same time, was displaying prints and paintings from his illustrated *History of England* (Bentley, "Publishers," 81). The relationship of these two grand illustration projects would have been obvious to all viewers, and together they would have served as individual works of fine arts, advertisements for their respective print editions, and as commentaries on the status of the British Arts. Even the readers who never saw the watercolors still would have read the spring 1797 prospectus that announced "forty very spirited engravings from original drawings by BLAKE" (Bentley, *Records*, 78). The engravings, for these viewers, replicated the more original watercolors, a fact that Blake was almost assuredly banking on for the future work of coloring the engraved editions.

30. The Library of Congress CD facsimile edition of colored copies J and B of *Night Thoughts* provides a good contrast to the methodology of the *Archive*.[12] It provides the open leaf images of both books, including all the paratextual information and the exterior and interior covers, a comparison of the differently colored designs, and a transcription of Young's text. These features reveal much about the book as an artifact and the evolution of its production and province as an object. Whereas the omission of the non-Blakean pages by the *Archive* suggests their expendability in constructing Blake's meaning, even the blank pages reveal foxing, plate impressions, and irregular leaf edges. While the CD edition does not explicitly exploit any features of social-text editing, its emphasis on the materiality of the books suggests several avenues of investigation. The anonymous inscription in copy J that it was "Coloured by Mrs. Blake" (Baker 6) points to Catherine Blake's own activities as an artist and her role in creating the massive *Night Thoughts* project. Although it may seem tedious to transcribe each copy of *Night Thoughts*, by doing so, the Octavo team discovered two different spellings for "wrapped" on page nine. In copy J, it is spelled "Wrapt," the same spelling found in the edition used in the watercolor designs, while in copy B and in the uncolored copy owned by Essick and reproduced by Essick and LaBelle, Grant et al., and the *Archive*, it is spelled "Wrapp'd." This small difference underscores the erratic production of the edition, which may have necessitated the printer Robert Noble compositing page nine or at least the line twice. But because the page lacks a design, it is missing from the *Archive*. Aided by OCR scans, transcriptions of all copies could illuminate the production history of the volume by revealing unrecognized collations. Viewed in this way, the *Night Thoughts* project becomes less about, in Paley's terms, deciphering "a symbolic statement which depends for its meaning not on Young's text but on the myth developed in the Lambeth books and in *Vala*" and more about Blake's collaboration with Young, Catherine, Richard Edwards, and a host of other figures.

31. If delineation editing of co-texts creates an editorial "form divine," we can also think of the host of textual bodies outside of the delineated edited space as "visionary limbs," a phrase I use to indicate the conspicuous absence of a particular design or image in a discreet unit that is readily available in another editorial platform. Visionary limbs are the necessary casualties of editorial delineation, but they also await their own resurrection since all belong to other potential editorial bodies. These visionary limbs are equivalent to Makdisi's unactivated networks of meaning, and Viscomi's work suggests that these limbs can be recreated through editorial work, be they actual historical texts and social networks

or speculative theories of the editor. An important visionary limb of the *Night Thoughts* project would be its relationship to the other illustrated book projects. As Eaves has shown, Josiah Boydell's Shakespeare gallery provides a window to a range of political, aesthetic, religious, and technological networks. A grand electronic edition of the great book illustrations of the late eighteenth century could incorporate the texts, paintings, prints, and exhibitions these projects generated. The edition would reveal how each project provided a context for the others. Such an edition would complete Alderman Boydell's vision for a multi-media edition that collapsed partly under the pressure of bridging letterpress, engraving, and painting (Eaves, *Counter-Arts*, 35).

32. One of the most important features of many print facsimiles and scholarly commentaries on the illustrations, which has not been replicated in any electronic edition to date, is the inclusion of Blake's vast number of visual influences. J. M. Q. Davies's *Blake's Milton Designs*, for example, is not an edition, but it presents the Milton designs alongside a rich genealogy of Blake's graphemes and projects an entirely different model of Blake's work than the *Archive*'s catalogue model. By putting Blake's designs into a wider context, the designs lose their autonomy, but they gain a place in set iconographic traditions. This again has Blakean warrant since it forces us to look at his own graphemes as pre-existing visual types. Viscomi anticipates how a creative editor could exploit Blake's graphemes as types when he replaces Death with Nebuchadnezzar in a virtual recreation of *Death's Door*. This replacement highlights the typological and homomorphic connection between Death and Nebuchadnezzar that is found not only in Blake's mythology and designs but also in wider Christian thought. Adam Komisaruk's effort to map Blake's mythology in three-dimensional space in his Blake Model is an important step in this direction, but such models also need to acknowledge and represent Blake's co-texts and not simply his own universe.[13]

33. There are many tools that could help editors do this. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) offer a range of possibilities in visually organizing new editions of Blake and in analyzing the data in these editions. In her contribution to this volume, Mary Lynn Johnson describes her experience in updating the now colored maps of London, England, and the Holy Land, which are available in the second edition of *Blake: Poetry and Designs*. GIS models can be used to bring together information about Blake's friends, patrons, publishers, and customers in ways that would reveal much about the milieu in which Blake worked and the lived reality he experienced. Sally-Beth MacLean and Alan Somerset's work in mapping the provincial routes of Shakespeare's companies using the Records of Early English Drama provide a useful model for mapping Blake's London, as do several projects that utilize Historical GIS, such as William G. Thomas III and Edward L. Ayer's *Valley of the Shadow*.[14] Susan Schreibman's *Thomas MacGreevy Archive*, particularly her bibliography, provides a useful model for editing Blake's letters and account books, and utilizing GIS and linking useful information about the persons and places mentioned could further illuminate Blake's life and work. Following Komisaruk, GIS could model Blake's spiritual London as well. Such ways of organizing knowledge about Blake need not flatten Blake's "Visionary forms dramatic" (E 257) to the Newtonian space of Ulro. Acknowledging the universalizing, disembodied episteme found in typical uses of GIS, Mei-Po Kwan has argued that GIS has untapped potential for feminist inquiry of the type that accords well with the efforts of social-text editing to illustrate the complex agency and materiality of textual production ("Feminist Visualization" 652). Likewise, projects in Speculative Computing and Temporal Modeling have provided important challenges to the hierarchical organization demanded by markup language, [15] and if McGann is right, we may be moving to a future where nonhierarchical models of markup will become the norm ("Prologue" 21).

34. Social-text editing remains an underdeveloped means of exploring Blake's works, their co-texts, and their contexts. Editors must create the borders of a space (physical or electronic) in which texts and / or images exist, and this is where careful delineation of the editorial field is key. Matt Kirschenbaum has described at length both the difficulties of redesigning the graphical user interface (GUI) of the *Blake*

*Archive* and the potential future of the computer interface in general.[16] Social-text editing complicates interface design since it displaces the author and work from an isolated center. Social-text editing also demands that editors visibly represent more ephemeral concepts, such as how Blake's works circulated in a range of contexts, his relationships to the authors he illustrated, the enthusiastic religious "underground" of the Romantic age, the visual and print cultures in which his works circulated, and the multitude of reading situations in which they participated.

35. By invoking Blake's theory of the outline, delineation editing would require editors draw a "firm and determinate outline" (E 549), which would reveal the presuppositions of their editorial and textual theory and the remediation effected by the electronic media. Kathryn Sutherland has recently critiqued how many electronic editions with their wealth of versions and documentary witnesses overwhelm most readers:

> Can we really go forward into an age of digital editing with a model that suggests that each user is (or wants to be) her own editor? And if we do not (if, that is, we accept that electronic editions enact further controlling interpretations and theories about what text is), how will we equip the user to understand (and critique) those theories and interpretations? [. . . .] How will we make electronic editions worth desiring by more than a few developers? (19)

A wealth of versions and social texts can quickly become chaos to those not versed in the textual and interpretative issues at stake. But to recognize this point is to arrive at the difference between "chaos" and "infinite particulars" for Blake. Delineated editions of Blake will be successful if they serve, as other editions have done, as the contemplative chariots that aid readers in imaginatively approximating Blake's works. By exposing the social realities of these works, future editions would strive to help readers understand the wider material, public, and discursive worlds in which these works were created and functioned. In his illustrations to other authors, Blake shows how these worlds were essential portions of his creative acts.

**Notes**

1 Where available, I have provided links for visual referents throughout the document.

2 Joseph Thomas used Blake's Shakespeare illustrations in his copy of Shakespeare's second folio (Altick 41).

3 The problem of editing painting has been discussed by G. Thomas Tanselle, who describes the problem of editing the painting in its own medium (as in a restoration or cleaning), rather than a facsimile edition. See "Textual Criticism of Visual and Aural Works," *Studies in Bibliography* 57 (2004): 1-37.

4 See Dennis M. Read's "The Context of Blake's 'Public Address': Cromek and The Chalcographic Society" *Philological Quarterly* 60 (1981): 68-86.

5 See Alexander S. Gourlay's "What was Blake's Chaucer?" *Studies in Bibliography* 42 (1989): 272-83.

6 Social-text editing emerged from critiques of editorial and bibliographical theory in the 1980s. See McKenzie's *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999). McGann's idea of social-text editing has evolved since his *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago P, 1983) and often in tangent with his discussion of the implications of digital media on textual and editorial theory and practice. The key works that explore social-text editing specifically include: *Social Values and Poetic Acts: The Historical Judgment of Literary Work* (Harvard: Harvard UP, 1988); *The Textual Condition*

(Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991); *Radiant Textuality: Literature after the World Wide Web* (New York: Palgrave, 2004); Dino Buzzetti and McGann's "Critical Editing in a Digital Horizon" in *Electronic Textual Editing*, eds. Lou Burnard, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, and John Unsworth (New York: MLA, 2006), 53-73; and "From Text to Work: Digital Tools and the Emergence of the Social Text," *Romanticism on the Net* 41-42 (May 2006). 11 May 2009 <http://www.erudit.org/revue/RON/2006/v/n41-42/013153ar.html>. Other important works that explore the idea of social text editing include: Leah S. Marcus's *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Peter L. Shillingsburg's *Resisting Texts: Authority and Submission in Constructions of Meaning* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan P, 1996); and Jacob Bryant's *The Fluid Text: Theories of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2002).

7 Lee and McGhee describe the necessarily "incomplete" nature of the *Archive*'s coding: "The focus of our encoding necessarily overlooks other features of the text, such as the hypothetical relationships between the fictional characters and real people in Blake's social circle, the various narrative modes at work (such as poetry, song, and satire), or explicit references to the popular culture of Blake's day, such as balloon hats and George Cumberland's new methods of printing" ("Visions"). Nonetheless, this explanation does not account for the neglect of Blake's co-texts.

8 Jason Allen Snart notes the verbal and visual element of the annotations in his *The Torn Book: Reading Blake's Marginalia* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna UP, 2006), 28-32.

9 The principles of transcription articulated by the editors of the *Archive* remain rooted in the logic of the illuminated book: "Transcriptions of texts are, in the terms of textual criticism, as 'diplomatic' as the medium allows. That is, in line with the archival dimension of our project, our texts are conservative transpositions of the original into conventional type fonts, retaining not only Blake's capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, but also (for the first time in a complete edition) an approximation of his page layout" ("Editorial Principles").

10 Bentley provides a useful chart of all the appearances of the titles and their order (*Blake Records* 217-18).

11 Available at the *Internet Archive*, this facsimile edition (New York: D. Appleton, 1903) shows the same eighteen lines as the original 1808 edition, but in the original the poetry does not overflow onto the next line. Consult Essick and Paley's facsimile edition (London: Scolar P, 1982).

12 These copies are also available at the Library of Congress online Rare Book Room.

13 See his "Introducing the Blake Model," *Blake / An Illustrated Quarterly* 38.3 (2004-05): 92-102. <http://www.rochester.edu/college/eng/blake/BlakeModel/text.html> and "Blake & Virtuality: An Exchange" in *Digital Designs on Blake*>.

14 Ayers and Thomas utilized GIS "to understand the way social structures were arranged spatially" ("Differences"). Benjamin Ray's Salem Witch Trials: Documentary Archive and Transcription Project, http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft , also provides a good model for editing Blake within a wider social context, while Claire Warwick's provides a good introduction to the utility of GIS and its relationship to print scholarship in "Print Scholarship and Digital Resources," *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, eds. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 366-82.

15 Johanna Drucker and Bethany Nowviskie argue for the importance of Temporal Modeling in foregrounding aesthetic and subjective interpretation in the electronic environment. See their "Speculative Computing: Aesthetic Provocations in Humanities Computing" in *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, eds. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 431-47.

16 Also consult Kevin Kiernan's "Digital Facsimiles," *Electronic Textual Editing*, eds. Lou Burnard, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, and John Unsworth (New York: MLA, 2006), 262-68.

## Works Cited


Altick, Richard. *Paintings from Books: Art and Literature in Britain, 1760-1900*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1985.

Ayers, E. L. and W. G. Thomas. "Two Communities on the Eve of the Civil War: An Experiment in Form and Analysis." 2002. 1 June 2009. <http://www2.vcdh. virginia.edu/xslt/servlet/XSLTServlet?xml=/xml_docs/ahr/article. xml&xsl=/xml_docs/ahr/ article.xsl§ion=text&area=intro&piece=purp_over&list=&item=>.

---. *The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War*. 1993-2007. The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, U of Virginia. May 3, 2009. <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu>.

Bentley, G. E., Jr. *Blake Records*. 2nd ed. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2004.

---. *"Richard Edwards, Publisher of Church-and-King Pamphlets and of William Blake." Studies in Bibliography 41 (1988): 283-315*.

---. "The Date of Blake's *Vala or The Four Zoas*." *Modern Language Notes* 71 (1956): 487-91.

---. "The Great Illustrated Book Publishers of the 1790s and William Blake." *Editing Illustrated Books*. New York: Garland, 1980. 57-96.

Blake, William. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. Ed. David V. Erdman. 1965. New rev. ed. New York: Random House, 1988.

---. *William Blake's Designs for Edward Young's Night Thoughts: A Complete Edition*. 2 vols. Eds. John Grant et al. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1980.

Brown, Gilllian and George Yule. *Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.

Bryant, John. *The Fluid Text: A Theory of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2002.

Buzzetti, Dino and Jerome McGann. "Critical Editing in a Digital Horizon." *Electronic Textual Editing*. Eds. Lou Burnard, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, and John Unsworth. New York: MLA, 2006. 53-73.

Davies, J. M. Q. *Blake's Milton Designs: The Dynamics of Meaning*. West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill P, 1993.

Eaves, Morris. Foreword. *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake*. Rev. ed. Hanover: UP of New England, 1988.

---. "Crafting Editorial Settlements." *Romanticism on the Net* 41-42. February-May 2006. July 7, 2008 <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/2006/v/n41-42/013150ar.html>.

---. *The Counter-Arts Conspiracy: Art and Industry in the Age of Blake*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992.

---. "Romantic Expressive Theory and Blake's Idea of the Audience." *PMLA* 95 (1980): 784-801.

Eaves, Morris, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi. "Editorial Principles." *The William Blake Archive*. 13 November 1997. 13 October 2008 <http://www. blakearchive.org/blake/public/about/principles/index.html>.

---. "Plan of the Archive." *The William Blake Archive*. 13 November 1997. 13 October 2008 <http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/public/about/plan/index.html>.

Elkins, James. *The Domain of Images*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999.

Essick, Robert N. *William Blake: Printmaker*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980.

---. "Blake and the Production of Meaning." *Blake in the Nineties*. Eds. Steve Clark and David Worrall. New York: St. Martin's P, 1999.

Gilchrist, Alexander. *The Life of William Blake*. Ed. W. Graham Robertson. 1907. Mineola: Dover, 1997.

Kirschenbaum, Matthew G. "'So the Colors Cover the Wires': Interface, Aesthetics, and Usability." *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Eds. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. 523-42.

Kwan, Mei-Po. "Feminist Visualization: Re-Envisioning GIS as a Method in Feminist Geographic Research." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92 (2002): 645-61.

MacLean, Sally-Beth and Alan Somerset. "Shakespeare on the Road: Tracking the Tours with REED Web Project." *College Literature* 36 (2009): 67-76. June 6 2009 <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/college_literature/v036/36.1.maclean. html>.

Makdisi, Saree. "The Political Aesthetic of Blake's Images." *The Cambridge Companion to Blake*. Ed. Morris Eaves. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.

McGann, Jerome J. *The Complete Writings and Pictures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Hypermedia Archive*. 2000-2007. The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, U of Virginia. 8 November 2008. <http://www.rossettiarchive.org>.

---. "From Text to Work: Digital Tools and the Emergence of the Social Text." *Romanticism on the Net* 41-42 (May 2006). 11 May 2009 <http://www. erudit.org/revue/RON/2006/v/n41-42/013153ar.html.>

---. "Marking Texts of Many Dimensions." *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Eds. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. 198-217.

---. "Prologue: Compu[e]ting Editorial Fu[ea]tures."*Reimagining Textuality: Textual Studies in the Late Age of Print*. Eds. Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux and Neil Fraistat. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin P, 2002. 17-27.

---. "The Rationale of Hypertext." *Electronic Text: Investigations in Method and Theory*. Ed. Kathryn Sutherland, Oxford: Clarendon P, 1997. 19-46.

McKenzie, D. F. *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.

Milton, John. *Complete Poems and Major Prose*. Ed. Merrit Y. Hughes. New York: Macmillan, 1957.

Muhlethaler, Jean-Claude. "Inversions, Omissions and the Co-text Reorientation of Reading: The *Ballades* of Charles d'Orléans in Vérard's *La Chasse et le Départ d'Amours* (1509)." *Book and Text in France, 1400-1600: Poetry on the Page*. Eds. Adrian Armstrong and Malcolm Quainton. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. 31-48.

Paley, Morton D. “Blake’s *Night Thoughts*: An Exploration of the Fallen World.” *William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon*. Ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld. Providence: Brown UP, 1969. 131-57.

Pimentel, Mariano Gomes, Hugo Fuks, and Carlos José Pereira de Lucena. “Co-text Loss in Textual Chat Tools.” *Modeling and Using Context*. Patrick Blackburn et al. eds. New York: Springer, 2003. 483-90.

Schreibman, Susan. “The Lives of Others: Editing Electronic Editions of Correspondence.” *Digital Scholarship*. Ed. Marta Mestrovic Deyrup. New York: Routledge, 2009. 23-35.

---. *The Thomas MacGreevy Archive*. August 13, 2007. The Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, U of Virginia. June 25, 2009. <http://www.macgreevy.org/index.jsp>.

Snart, Jason Allen. Rev. of *Edward Young*. *Night Thoughts, with Illustrations by William Blake*. *Commentary by Robyn Hamlyn*. *Romanticism on the Net* 45 (2007). 21 Nov. 2008 <http://www.erudit.org/revue/RON/2007/v/n45/ 015832ar.html>.

Sutherland, Kathryn. “Being Critical: Paper-based Editing and the Digital Environment.” *Text Editing, Print and the Digital World*. Eds. Marilyn Deegan and Kathryn Sutherland. London: Ashgate, 2009. 13-25.

Thomas, William G. III. “Computing and the Historical Imagination.” *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Eds. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. 56-68.

Thompson, E. P. *Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law*. New York: New P, 1993.

Viscomi, Joseph. “Blake's "Annus Mirabilis": The Productions of 1795.” *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 41 (2007): 52-83. <http://www.rochester.edu/College/ENG/blake/1795/1795/index.html>.

---. "Blake's Virtual Designs and Reconstruction of The Song of Los." *Romanticism on the Net* 41-42 (2006). <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/2006/v/n41-42/ 013151ar.html>.

Young, Edward and William Blake. *The Complaint, and the Consolation; or, Night Thoughts*. CD-ROM. Commentary Nicolas Baker. Octavo. 2004.