

The Evolution of William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* [Part I]

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In my end is my beginning

-T. S. Eliot, "East Coker"

The man who never alters his opinion is like

standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind

-William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, plate 19

In *The Early Illuminated Books*, volume 3 of the recent Blake Trust series of reproductions, we briefly explained why the genre and structure of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* are among the book's "most distinctive, most unsettling primary features." Depending on how one counts, the *Marriage* text is divided into thirteen or more sections or units consisting of one, two, three, and more copper plates [1], plates with and without illustrations, with and without titles; some of which are "theological or philosophical, others proverbial, others variously narrative (myths of origin, interviews, mock travelogues, conversion stories)," with "few if any characters or settings in common." Moreover, "time and space are freely manipulated: the narrator travels to hell and back, hangs over abysses with an angel, and dines in the approximate present with Isaiah and Ezekiel, while the order of events and the relation of one narrative space to another are seldom specified." [2] Is the book "varied and pregnant fragments"; a mere "scrap-book of Blake's philosophy"; a "structureless structure" about "as heterogeneous as one could imagine"? [3] Or is its structure classifiable in terms of genre, as many scholars have attempted to show, perceiving it as variously as anatomy, Bible, manifesto, primer, prophecy, or testament? In *The Early Illuminated Books*, we assigned it to a subcategory of Menippean satire identified with the "Greek prose satirist Lucian of Samosata (c. A.D. 125-200), whose works such as *Dialogues of the Dead*, *Voyage to the Lower World*, and *The True History* (third edition in English, 1781) exemplify the Lucianic 'News from Hell type'" (p. 118).

Clearly, the *Marriage* is an intellectual satire, and its disjointed structure fits reasonably well into

the Menippean category. Nevertheless, as I argue here, it would be a mistake to infer from this fit Blake's original intentions for the *Marriage*—to assume that he set out to write a Menippean satire or modeled his book on any one specific work. In this essay, the first of a three-part study on the evolution of the *Marriage*, I argue that the idea of a disjointed, miscellaneous work entitled *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* emerged only after Blake had written and executed plates 21-24 and planned his "Bible of Hell," and that the structure of the whole work is in some measure the result of a production history in which sections were written and executed at different times.

Narrative discontinuity alone suggests that textual units were not composed in the order in which they are now read. But it only suggests and does not prove disjointed *production*, and it does not provide the clues necessary to establish the sequence in which the textual units were composed. Analysis of the text cannot answer basic questions, such as whether individual units or groups of units committed were committed to copper plates soon after they were written, or only after the entire manuscript was completed. For clues and for answers, we need to examine technical features unique to illuminated printing; the first printing of plates 21-24; the different lettering styles among the *Marriage* plates; and, most important, the manner in which plates 21-24 and the other plates were supplied from larger sheets of copper. This examination will demonstrate that the four copper plates carrying the text of pages 21-24—which constitute a sustained attack on Swedenborg—were quarters cut from the same sheet of copper, were executed soon after their text was written, and were the first unit produced. They appear to have been written and printed (at least once) as an independent (though probably unissued) pamphlet, but became instead the core of what became the *Marriage*, generating twenty of its subsequent twenty-three plates. These plates, also quarters of larger sheets, can be reconfigured into their original sheets; and the sheets, once sequenced by their lettering styles, confirm the textual units as revealed by linguistic codes and identify the larger sections or likely printing sessions to which the units belong. Material evidence provided by the bibliographic codes—by which I mean lettering style as well as reconstructed sheets—establishes the sequence in which the units were most likely written and executed. [4]

When we read the *Marriage* units in this sequence—that is, in a chronology of plate production—we begin to see visual and verbal connections heretofore obscured, connections that

illuminate Blake's composing process and the creative logic underlying the book's composition. We can trace the development of key ideas and the relation between unit composition and book production—or, in Blakean parlance, between invention and execution. In this hands-on, workshop style of composing, in which poet and printer could execute plates upon completing autonomous textual units, Blake could think nonlinearly and behave like an artist: ideas and images of a unit already executed could direct the subsequent creative process. We begin to see how Blake interacted with his graphic medium and how such interaction encouraged an ever-evolving (what I have called "organic") mode of composition. Witnessing the *Marriage* unfold through its production enables us to answer basic questions about the *Marriage*'s form and Blake's original and final intentions, as well as general questions about Blake's mode of composing his texts and books. In short, it enables us to see more of Blake's mind at work

The second essay in my study of the *Marriage* substantiates the claim made here that plates 21-24 were written and executed before the other units, probably as an independent, anti-Swedenborgian pamphlet. I examine their thematic, aesthetic, and rhetorical coherence and date Blake's interest in and disillusionment with Swedenborg, placing the latter within the context of other critiques most likely known to Blake. I identify the primary Swedenborgian texts that Blake satirizes and examine the major themes that figure in and help to generate the subsequent plates and units. The third essay traces these themes and texts through the remaining textual units in the order in which the units were produced. It focuses on Blake's allusions to printmaking and their connection to Swedenborg, examining in detail the image and symbolism of the cave. The last essay reveals, in effect, that the *Marriage* is a series of variations on basic themes first raised in plates 21-24. [5]

I. Composition in Illuminated Printing

Blake did not date or sign the *Marriage*. Until recently, most scholars dated it circa 1790-93. [6] A set of complex allusions to Swedenborg, Blake, and Christ on plate 3 suggests the beginning date. [7] The "June 5 1793" inscription on *Our End is Come*, an engraving used as a frontispiece in *Marriage* copy B, one of the earliest copies printed, suggests the conventional end date. The three-year gestation, the perfunctory mention of Swedenborg on plates 3 and 19, and the vociferous attack on plates 21-24

suggest that Blake broke from Swedenborgianism slowly and cautiously, but this conclusion is mistaken. First, the evidence that the composition of the *Marriage* continued beyond 1790 is very weak (see *Early Illuminated Books*, 113-16). The engraved frontispiece, for example, is not printed on a sheet of paper conjunct with the title page, as thought earlier (see Bentley, *Blake Books*, 287 n. 3). With no documentary evidence to prove otherwise, we should accept Blake's implied date of 1790, which is implied on plate 3 and, more persuasively, penned-in on plate 3 of copy F—color printed in circa 1794 (see *Early Illuminated Books*, 145)—as the end-date. Second, the autographic nature of relief etching encouraged moving quickly from text to plate (as I will argue below)—or at the very least did not present any technical obstacles to composition—making it unlikely that a book of twenty-seven small plates would have taken three years to produce, a good deal longer than any of the other books Blake was working on during the same period. The schedule suggested by Blake's professional commitments also supports a 1790 date: the years 1789 and 1790, which saw the first illuminated books, were almost completely void of (known) outside commissions for engravings, whereas during 1791-92 Blake engrave at least seventy plates for book publishers. [8]

The hypothesis that the *Marriage* was in progress for three or more years—and that Blake's feud with Swedenborg was a slow boil, an ambivalence that developed into hostility—is dubious. In fact, as the present essay argues, the evidence that the *Marriage* evolved *from* Blake's hostile attitude toward Swedenborg is very strong. Nevertheless, while the *Marriage* almost certainly did not take three years to compose and execute, neither was it completed overnight; it was in progress for a time, but not in the way, or for as long, as we have thought. As we will see in sections 4 and 5 of this essay, it resulted from four or five distinct and recognizably sequential periods of composition, all presumably taking place in 1790. But before examining the bibliographical evidence indicating chronology, we need to examine what the *Marriage* as a work-in-progress could mean, and that requires clarifying what we already know about Blake's composing and production processes. We need to understand how illuminated printing ensured execution a creative role in the invention of text, illustration, and design.

The suspicion that Blake wrote the units of *Marriage* out of order is neither new nor surprising. Narrative discontinuity, as noted, suggests as much to the readers of Blake. Logic alone indicates that plates 21-24—which explain the grounds of Blake's attack on Swedenborg—were probably written

before plates 3 and 19, where perfunctory mention of Swedenborg appears to rely on information already provided, compositionally speaking. But even those who have seen in Blake's eclectic texts the mind of the *bricoleur*, or a reviser and cobbler of fragments, still imagine him pulling the fragments together conventionally. [9] In this view, the narrative's disjointedness is a matter of Blake's drawing on disparate discourses and traditions. When one speaks of Blake writing illuminated texts, even a text as “seemingly ad hoc” as the *Marriage*, [10] one is hard pressed not to envision him writing and rewriting the entire composition on paper before committing it to copper, because one still imagines Blake working as a poet in the manuscript tradition and using illuminated printing subsequently as a mode of reproduction. It is exceedingly difficult to think outside the letterpress paradigm, to conceive of a mode of printing that did not require a finished text or fair copy before execution began; or of a mode of execution in which aesthetic decisions regarding page designs could have an immediate effect on the text, shaping and directing it. In the letterpress paradigm, one simply assumes that a text is written on paper and then set in type, that is produced and completed before being reproduced, with labor moving determinately—and unidirectionally—from author to compositor. Indeed, authors and compositors were not collaborators, and endings were not set before beginnings. [11]

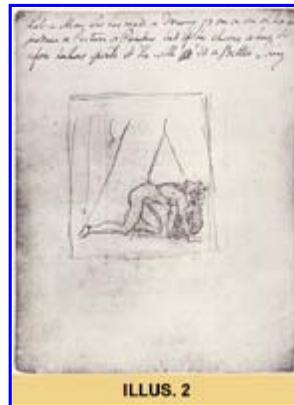
It is commonplace in Blake studies to assert that illuminated printing united invention and execution, and to view it as a reaction against the division of labor characteristic of letterpress printing; but, this assertion has remained mostly theoretical and contradictory. Not much thought had been given to how—let alone exactly where in production—invention and execution intersect, except in the person of Blake himself, as author and printer. But the same laborer does not necessarily mean undivided labor; the acts of writing and printing in the creation of an illuminated book were still perceived as occurring separately. This perception is particularly evident in Ruthven Todd's theory of illuminated printing, which attempts to explain how Blake could have avoided writing directly on plates, that is, backward: he must have transferred from paper *first*. Like many before him and since, Todd assumed that Blake produced his books on paper before reproducing them in metal; this effected a modeling relation between text and plate and, furthermore, required fair copies. These are perfectly reasonable assumptions, given that the illuminated page is a print, which by definition reproduces images made in other media, whether visual or verbal. In fact, only by understanding the reasonableness of Todd's

proposal can one fully appreciate how radically Blake broke with conventional modes of composing and printing by not transferring texts or images. [12]

Todd's theory presupposed that Blake's adaption of the "counterproof," a method of transferring outlines that preserves the direction of the original in the print. He proposed that Blake, instead of rewriting his text in graphite on paper, rewrote it in an acid-resistant ink on leaves coated in gum arabic (otherwise the ink would enter the fibers of the paper). He rewrote text clearly and legibly, exactly as he wished it to appear on plates, on leaves cut specifically to fit their designated plates—or within the outline of the plates drawn on the leaves—for the plates of an illuminated book are not uniform in size or shape. He would then carefully register each leaf or page face down onto its designated plate, pass leaf and plate through the press, and soak the pair in water to facilitate the transference of the text—which would then appear backward ("counterproofed") on the plate and be left standing in relief after the plate was etched. . Furthermore, the leaves, taken together, would have constituted a fair copy, but they would have been destroyed in the process of transference (this, Todd believed, explained the absence manuscripts for the illuminated books). [13] Producing the leaves in advance in this manner necessarily divided the manuscripts into pages that corresponded exactly to plates. Hence, Blake would have been able to cast off copy—and thus execute plates in order. And, in advance of production, he would have known which pages were to be illustrated and the size and position of the illustrations. He would thus have known ahead the proportion between text and image per page, even if he had not yet determined the illustrations, and have had general mock-ups of pages. What is produced in metal would be, as Gilchrist mistakenly assumed, an "imitation of the original drawing," that is, a "facsimile" of what had been invented on paper. [14]

Todd's theory breaks down quickly when examined historically and technically. Conventional methods of transferring texts in etching and engraving do not work in relief etching, which is why Todd imagined Blake radically adapting one. The method he and Hayer describe, however, is strikingly similar to the one invented in 1798 by Alois Senefelder (an actor who did not know reverse writing) for use in lithography. In Blake's time, moreover, all engravers were trained in reverse writing. The evidence shows that Blake drew his illustrations on plates directly, without the assistance of transfers; and when he had sketched an illustration beforehand, he merely redrew it on the plate to fit. The vignette

of Nebuchadnezzar in the second state of *Marriage* plate 24 (see illus. 3) is a case in point: When the plate was first printed, for *Marriage* copy K, the vignette had not yet been drawn on it (illus. 1), which meant that Blake had to mask the plate's unetched bottom half during printing (see n. 22 below). Only after printing plate 24, with the three accompanying plates, did Blake decide to continue designing it, at which point he added the vignette of Nebuchadnezzar from his Notebook (illus. 2). Because Blake redrew this image freehand on the plate, the printed image is the reverse of the drawing (illus. 3).



The Notebook drawing has no indication of text and appears not to have been drawn as part of an illuminated-page design. It may have been drawn as part of an emblem series that Blake began circa 1789-90 and thus before the writing and execution of plates 21-24. In any event, Nebuchadnezzar was not chosen randomly; Swedenborg points specifically to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2: 44 as foretelling the New Church as the last and eternal church, a passage reprinted in the *Minutes* (p. 130) of the first General Conference, which, as I have noted, was attended by Blake. Whether Swedenborg reminded Blake of an earlier drawing of his or generated a new one, Blake continued to invent plate 24 and deepen the meaning of his text by responding creatively to his own first prints. If, on the other hand, he was merely reproducing a preexistent design, then plate 24 as first printed would probably have included its vignette, and/or the vignette in the Notebook would probably have had text, or some indication of its placement in the design. Instead of transferring or copying the appearance of a page already designed, Blake designed his page *while executing it*, combining his raw materials—text and image—for the first time on the plate itself instead of on paper.

To assume, then, that Blake counterproofed texts—which preserves the direction of the original—while drawing illustrations directly on the plate—which reverses the original—is to assume

not only that he could not write backward but also that he was completely indifferent to the relation of text and illustration that he supposedly had designed on paper and was attempting so fastidiously to reproduce in metal. Rather than complicating the composing process with anachronisms and contradictions, we should assume that Blake treated his texts as he did his illustrations. He did not need to prepare a fair copy for a compositor any more than he needed to prepare a detailed drawing or page design for himself. He merely needed to rewrite his texts—however they were first prepared and in whatever condition—legibly (albeit backward) on the plates, placing word and image at the same time, using the same brushes and pens, the tools of "the Painter and the Poet" (E 692). Thus, Blake probably never had what he did not need, a fair copy of an illuminated book, let alone a manuscript divided according to its final form on plates; he did not know—or need to know—the length of any of his illuminated books when he began to etch their plates. In the case of *Marriage*, where the bibliographical evidence indicates that units were executed at different times (see below), Blake presumably ended up with an assortment of texts written at different times, probably on various sizes and kinds of paper, but never a fair copy of a completed manuscript. As with his other illuminated books, Blake did not know the number of plates the *Marriage* would be until after it was executed.

Blake's technique and tools allowed him to combine the raw materials of text and image on the plate to produce original page designs, as opposed to reproducing or facsimilizing preexistent designs. The amount of text written on a plate, the line breaks, letter size, line spacing, and the size and place of illustrations were not predetermined by a mock-up of that page; they were aesthetic decisions made during production, which ensured the marriage of invention and execution. [15] The technique also allowed Blake to begin etching plates as soon as he had completed writing a section or chapter—that is, upon completing an autonomous textual unit, or one that he thought was auto-nomous at the time—should he want to. This unprecedented interplay between graphic execution and textual composition is easily seen in the structure of *Songs of Innocence*, *Milton*, and *Jerusalem*. The first work consists of independent texts whose various lettering styles indicate various plate-making sessions; the second was printed circa 1811 in two books but was dated 1804 by Blake and begins with the ambitious prediction that it will be complete "in 12 Books," indicating that production began long before the text itself was completed; and the last work, which was also dated 1804 though not completed until circa 1820, has two

sets of plate numbers etched in the metal, the result of Blake inserting plates and changing his mind about the book's organization.

Being able to execute and design plates before completing a manuscript made it technically possible for Blake to think and work outside the letterpress paradigm—if not also to conceive of producing a disjointed work like the *Marriage*. It made it possible for a text to progress through production, with sections produced at different times and out of order. However, if it is credible that plates 21-24 were the first unit of *Marriage* written and executed, to describe the production of these plates as “out of order” seriously confuses the issue, for at the time of production there was no order to be out of. To assume that an order existed at this time is either to think in terms of completed manuscript production or to imagine Blake beginning the *Marriage* with only a vague idea of a disjointed, miscellaneous work of which these plates, numbered 21-24 only later, were to become part. Besides relegating invention to paper, or the mind, such assumptions raise numerous problems. Why start here? Did Blake think this episode would make a good opening for the *Marriage*, only to change his mind later? Not likely; the “Note” announcing the forthcoming “Bible of Hell” at the end of plate 24 functions rhetorically as a conclusion, exactly as it does in the *Marriage* as a whole. Announcing a forthcoming work at the end of a publication is reasonable if the work carrying the announcement is completed, but it is very odd for Blake to have included such an announcement here if he had only vague notion of wanting to compose a miscellaneous book. He would have had to have had to know not only that this text was a section of something larger but also that it was the last unit of that still unwritten text. [16]

The “Note” contributes to the Swedenborgian satire, in that it calls to mind Swedenborg's announcement near the end of *True Christian Religion*: “Inasmuch as the Lord cannot manifest himself in Person . . . and yet he foretold that he should come, and establish a New Church, which is the New Jerusalem, it follows, that he will effect this by a Man, who not only can receive the Doctrines of that Church in his Understanding, but also publish them in Print.” [17] Printing Swedenborg's text was the *raison d'être* of the Theosophical Society, founded in 1783 by Robert Hindmarsh and other Swedenborgians to promote “the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem, by translating, printing, and publishing the Theological Writings of the Honourable Emanuel Swedenborg.” [18] The Society was itself modeled after the Manchester Printing Society, which began in 1782 to print and publish

Swedenborg's works in English. The Swedenborgian New Jerusalem Church emerged in January 1788 from a splinter group of the Theosophical Society led by Hindmarsh. Publishers, including Blake's friend Joseph Johnson, typically announced forthcoming books at the ends of pamphlets, but the Swedenborgian context suggests that Blake had Hindmarsh in mind. [19]

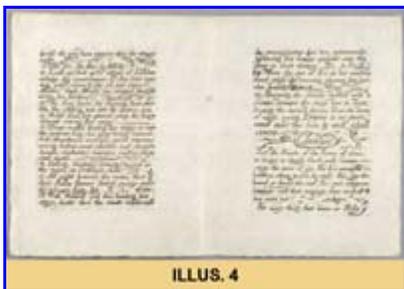
Blake's "Note" ends in the middle of the plate, but instead of starting another episode, Blake left the space blank, printed it in that state, and then added a vignette, creating a second state of the plate (see below). He is clearly thinking of plates 21-24 as an autonomous unit, but, as will become clear, it was probably not one of several units he was then planning to write but rather the unintended model for what he was to write. Blake's "Note" ends a text that at four plates in length was nonetheless the second-longest narrative in illuminated printing when it was written in 1790. The longest was *The Book of Thel*, which, as we will see, appears to have consisted only of plates 2-7, with just five text plates, at that time. At four pages, then, the autonomous text attacking Swedenborg would not have seemed unusually short for Blake to print as an independent work. The earliest and only extant independent printing of plates 21-24, known as *Marriage* copy K, strongly supports this hypothesis.

II. *Marriage* copy K: Pamphlet, Proofs, or Incomplete *Marriage*?

Plates 21-24 were printed in black ink on both sides of one conjunct half-sheet with a bottom deckled edge. [20] The sheet was folded to form a pamphlet with the following configuration: 21/22-23/24. These four monochrome prints are not proofs (a correction to the views we expressed in *Early Illuminated Books*, 115; and see Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book*, 394 n. 10), despite their ink color and uncolored condition and the presence of two first-state plates (21, 24). Plates 22 and 23 were printed together as an inside forme and were carefully registered onto the paper and aligned to one another by eye. They were printed first, with plates 24 and 21 printed as the outside forme and registered by eye to plates 23 and 22, so that the lines of text on recto and verso of the leaves roughly align. There would have been no reason for Blake to take such pains with his printing if he were merely pulling working proofs—that is, checking to see if the design is finished or stands sufficiently in relief, or if the printing pressure is correct—but it is perfectly appropriate for producing illuminated pamphlets and books.

More revealing still, the borders of all four plates were carefully wiped of ink so they would not print, a practice Blake followed almost without exception when printing illuminated books between 1789 and 1795. [21] In preparing intaglio plates for printing, printers wiped clean the beveled edges to ensure an aesthetically pleasing platemark (the plate's embossment into the paper); wiping the borders of relief plates is an adaptation of this practice—though its effect was the erasure of the tell-tale signs of graphic reproduction—because relief plates were printed with less pressure and did not leave pronounced platemarks. This erasure transforms an otherwise overt imposition of metal onto paper into an image that looks as if it were drawn by hand on the paper, executed spontaneously like sketch and autograph. Printing relief plates to appear like manuscript pages would have been unnecessary if Blake's intent was merely to proof.

Only one other textual unit in the *Marriage* was printed with this kind of care and attention—and it too was produced as a pamphlet. "A Song of Liberty," which consists of plates 25-27, was independently printed at least twice. These printings are referred to as *Marriage* copies L and M; the latter is untraced but described in a 1918 Christie's catalogue (see Bentley, *Blake Books*, 287); the former is now in the Robert N. Essick Collection (illus. 4). Copy L consists of three uncolored



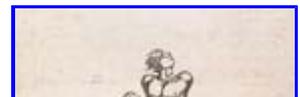
impressions that were printed in black ink, with wiped borders, on a conjunct sheet of laid paper folded in half, forming a four-page pamphlet: 25/26-27. (They are not proofs, but are the only extant illuminated impressions on laid paper [a correction to our statements in *Early Illuminated Books*, 115; and Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the*

Book, 394 n. 10]). Plates 25 and 26 were carefully registered recto-verso so that their lines are aligned; facing plates 26 and 27 are equidistant from the paper's top edge and the center fold. Plate 25 is in its first state; plate 27 is in a second (and final) state. [22] Though printed separately at least twice, "Song" may not have been issued as a pamphlet—or at least, despite its potential for separate printing and issue, no such copies are extant. The extant and untraced copies both appear to have passed through John Linnell's family, which indicates that they remained with Blake until at least 1818, when he met his young patron (see Bentley, *Blake Books*, 301). Yet, while these two copies were apparently not issued, one cannot infer from the absence of other copies that the "Song" was never issued; by that logic, the

unique copies of *The Book of Los* and *The Book of Ahania* demonstrate that those works were never issued. We can say with reasonable assurance that whatever his original intentions for the "Song," Blake attached it to the *Marriage*. These three unillustrated pages of twenty numbered statements and "Chorus" read—and look—like a "coda." As we will see, "Song" was probably written after the *Marriage's* first twenty-four plates, appears to have been generated in part by *Marriage's* theme of a new age (plate 3), and is the size of *Marriage* plates because it was executed using materials left over from the production of the *Marriage*. [23]

Textual and visual features of plates 21-24 also support the hypothesis that the plates were intended as a pamphlet. The absence of a catchword on plate 24 implies that Blake did not anticipate subsequent plates; there is also no catchword on plate 20, suggesting that plates 21-24 were also composed independently of the preceding textual unit, plates 16-20. The text is polemically coherent, with well-defined objectives: to undermine Swedenborg's credibility and to champion Blake and his positions. The former objective required Blake to refute the New Church's essential claims that it was "distinct" from the old and that it was founded on the true or "internal sense" of Scripture (resolutions 1, 12-15, 17, 29, 32; *Minutes* 126-29). The latter required Blake to position himself as authentic visionary and offer his own readings of the Word. The attack also belongs to a turning point in Swedenborg's English reputation, when his "news from the spiritual world" was wearily dismissed by his critics but eagerly awaited by his followers. [24] The awareness by both camps of Swedenborg's claims that he spoke directly with angels provided the requisite context for Blake's seemingly unprepared-for first sentence on plate 21: "I have always found that Angels have the vanity to speak of themselves. . . ." (see Viscomi, "Lessons of Swedenborg"). [25]

The unit is structurally and rhetorically as well as polemically autonomous. Its three features—statement, "Memorable Fancy," and "Note"—provide the well-defined beginning, middle, and end of the rhetorically complete pamphlet. The unit begins with an entrance whose objective is to catch the audience's attention and an exposition that sets forth the facts, defines the terms, and presents the issues to be proved. The entrance is beautifully and yet confrontationally realized by Blake's "divine humanity" (illus. 5); the exposition consists of distinct paragraphs forcefully explaining why Blake thinks Swedenborg is neither original nor new. The following section, in which



an angel and devil debate the nature of God functions as the confirmation, in that it sets forth through the two parties the arguments for and against Swedenborg's idea of God, the central issue dividing the two visionaries. The devil wins the debate, as is evinced by the angel's conversion. The text ends with a "Note" that teasingly promises more infernal readings if the world should "behave well," while confidently announcing Blake's future project, whether the world "will or no." As first written and printed, with Nebuchadnezzar missing, the "Note" was the entire conclusion; it restates Blake's basic premise that "infernal" is better than "internal sense", and it leaves the reader wanting—or fearing—more. With the addition of the vignette, exposition and confirmation are framed by a visual and verbal entrance and conclusion. [26]

Moreover, the three-part structure of plates 21-24 differs from other units in the *Marriage*. In the other units with these features, the "Note" (on plates 6 and 17) was placed *before* the Memorable Fancies, thereby preventing the unit full closure effected by a Note. And no other unit in the *Marriage* works as autonomously or, when finished, returns the reader to its beginning. Plates 21-24 effect this kind of closure both thematically and materially. The concluding announcement on plate 24, that "I have also: The Bible of Hell," returns the reader to the "I" and the resurrected figure on plate 21. When reading the four plates on a folded, conjugate sheet—that is, as a pamphlet as in *Marriage* copy K—the reader would return physically to plate 21 after reading plate 24; flipping to the beginning moves the reader from defeated tyranny and oppression to the liberated New Man. The same movement occurs if the pamphlet is opened when one reads plate 24, in which case plate 21 would be on the right, facing 24 (see illus. 5, 3).

As we can see, the claim that plates 21-24 were the *first* of *Marriage*'s twenty-seven plates written *and* executed is certainly plausible; and no technical facts now known about illuminated printing contradict it. The division of the *Marriage* plates according to the formation of the letter *g* into three distinct sets significantly strengthens it.

III. The Letter G and Three Sets of *Marriage* Plates

David Erdman was the first to notice that Blake moved the serif of his *g*s from the right to the left. [27] In Blake's first illuminated books, *All Religion are One* and *There is No Natural Religion*

(both 1788), Blake used a roman script with a right-serifed *g*; in "The Argument" (plate a3), he also employed the sans-serifed, italic *g* that he used in his manuscripts, including *Island in the Moon* (c. 1784) and *Tiriel* (c. 1789). Blake used the roman right-serifed *g* in all but two of the poems in *Songs of Innocence*; using the sans-serifed *g* in the title of "Night" and the text of "The Voice of the Ancient Bard." [28] He used the sans-serifed *g* in all *The Book of Thel* plates except 1 and 8, which is to say, on plates 2-7, the core of the narrative. (The first and last plates of *Thel* have long been recognized as additions to the core narrative [E 790], but I have argued that they were added sooner than has been supposed; see Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book*, chap. 25, and below). *Thel* plate 8 has both sans-serifed *g* and the new left-serifed *g*; the sans-serifed *g* was occasionally used with a serifed *g*—right and left—in the *Marriage* as well (for example, plates 21 and 26 [see illus. 5, 4]), but no plate in *Thel* and only plate 7 of the *Marriage* has both kinds of serifed *g*. The leftward *g* replaced the rightward *g* during the production of the *Marriage*, and the sans-serifed *g* dropped out altogether in the next illuminated books executed, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and *America, a Prophecy* (both 1793). The right-serifed *g* reappeared for the major epics, *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, begun in 1804, long after all the early illuminated books were executed.

Why the rightward *g* reappeared is not known. The reasons for abandoning it in favor of a leftward *g*, however, and using the latter consistently for years, seem easier to determine. Erdman does not propose a reason, but it seems evident that the change ensured aesthetic consistency in the script, for the serifs (when present) on other letters, like *b*, *d*, *h*, *l*, *k*, *p*, and *t*, lean leftward. They do so because Blake began the letter with a pen stroke moving to the letter's stem, which is to say, moving in the same direction that the hand moves while writing (this is true whether writing forward or backward). A rightward serif on the *g*, however, requires a backward/downward stroke if the *g*, like the other letters, was to be written without lifting the pen; or it required an upward stroke moving in the direction of the hand but added to the letter last, requiring a two-step gesture. The leftward serif, then, allowed Blake to start his *g* at the serif and to write it, like the other letters, in one continuous act (stroke/serif, top loop, stem, bottom loop). Once adopted, the new *g* was consistently used because it was easier and more efficient to make and, equally important, its style and execution were continuously reinforced by the style and execution of the other letters.

Erdman believes that Blake changed his *g* in early 1791, while working on the *Marriage*. Consequently, because *Thel* plates 1 and 8 have this new *g*, he believes that *Thel* was not finished until 1791 (E 790). Erdman is correct that work on the two books overlapped (see below), but the overlap probably took place in 1790. As previously argued, the evidence for extending the period of the *Marriage*'s production beyond 1790 is weak. Erdman also proposes that the *Marriage* plates can be divided into sets according to the style of their *g*; again, he is correct, but he incorrectly identifies the sets and misinterprets their meaning.

Erdman discerns two sets of plates in the *Marriage*: plates 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 23, 24; and plates 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27 (E 801). But in this scheme, the plates with the earlier type of *g* are not sequential, nor are they the first eleven plates of the book. Why, then, do they share the same *g*? According to Erdman, "after Blake had a complete version of *The Marriage* (probably minus the 'Song') on copper, he began thinking of improvements and amplifications . . . and made them by inserting new plates, onto which old and new matter were inscribed (at a time when he had changed his *g*)." [29] Erdman proposes, in other words, that Blake completed writing and executing the *Marriage* plates before or by early 1791, when he believes that Blake introduced his new *g*, and that Blake continued to make changes for the next few years that required making—and thus rewriting—entire plates. [30] The plates sharing the early *g* are from the original "complete version," those that were not replaced. What was on the plates that were replaced is impossible to determine, because no impressions are extant. Hence, Erdman can argue that Blake worked on the *Marriage* for three years—though during most of that time he may have been merely fine-tuning the text—and at the same time make no attempt to trace the text's evolution. Plates with leftward *g*s simply replaced plates whose texts may have been either mostly the same as the replacement's or completely different.

Although this hypothesis does not address the issue of plate chronology, it does subtly suggest that *Marriage*'s final form was affected by execution, by the remaking of plates—a suggestion possibly meant to account not only for the change in lettering style but also for the *Marriage*'s disjointed structure. Nevertheless, the hypothesis proposes a composing process so impractical and costly—with Blake replacing over 50 percent of his earlier work—that it is surely mistaken on economic grounds alone. Mostly, though, it misreads the bibliographic evidence because it fails to recognize the

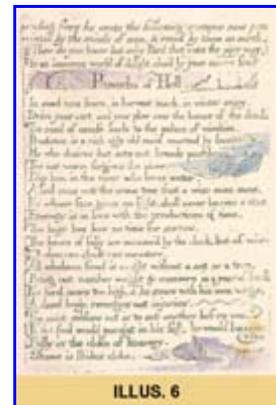
flexibility built into illuminated printing. Blake could execute plates as soon as text became available. In this light, text with the earlier lettering style reflects the first parts of the *Marriage* written and etched, and text with the latter style reflects portions written and etched later. Lettering style, combined with narrative integrity, can be used to identify sets of plates and the textual units within those sets, which is the first step in tracing the evolution of the *Marriage*. Inspected in this manner, the plates form three sets, instead of two, and can be sequenced (sets A, B, and C).

Set A consists of plates 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 23, and 24. Plates 2, 3, and 11 are self-contained units, meaning that their texts do not carry over to other plates. Plates 12 and 13 constitute "A Memorable Fancy" as a self-contained unit. Plates 21-24 are an autonomous unit that includes another Memorable Fancy. Plate 12 has a catchword and this indicates that its text continues and ends on plate 13; plates 21, 22, and 23 have catchwords, indicating that they are part of a larger narrative, which ends on plate 24. Plates 13 and 24 do not have catchwords, nor do plates 2, 3, or 11; they neither acknowledge nor anticipate subsequent plates—which is to say, the plates that now follow these may or may not have been produced immediately after them. The first set of plates, then, appears to consist of five autonomous units (2; 3; 11; 12-13; 21-24).

Set B consists of plates 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, which form three interconnected and continuous textual units, with catchwords on all but the third and last plates. The three sections include "infernal" readings of *Paradise Lost* and the *Book of Job* (plates 5-6), the narrator's trip to hell (plates 6-7), and the Proverbs of Hell (plates 7-10). These six plates form a set that can be sequenced after set A plates: the text carries over to plate 6 and from plate 7; and plate 7 (illus. 6) has in its first line the rightward *g* used

on plates 5 and 6—which, however, is immediately followed by the leftward *g* used on plates 8-10. Plate 7, integral to this group of plates, is thus a transitional plate, making the entire set transitional as well. [31]

Set C consists of plates 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20, which, like plates 21-24, constitute one autonomous unit with "A Memorable Fancy" written and situated as an integral part of the text. Catchwords are on all but plate 20. These plates have the leftward *g* exclusively and form a narrative unit, including Blake's and the



angel's trips to leviathan's abyss and the cannibalizing monkey house.

Sets A, B, and C are not difficult to identify, and the sets so constituted indicate that plates 21-24 were among the first *Marriage* plates written and executed. But the constitution of the three sets also raises new questions: where do plates 1, 4, 14, 15, 25, 26, and 27? Plate 1 is the title plate and has no lowercase *g*; plates 4, 14, and 15 have the leftward *g* and are autonomous textual units, although each has some direct tie to hell and/or the devil (see below). And plates 25-27 also have the leftward *g* and form the autonomous textual unit known as "A Song of Liberty." Were these plates produced along with the set B or set C plates? After plate 10 but before plate 16? Or after plate 20? Or were plates 1, 4, 14, and/or 15 produced after plates 25-27?

We can now begin to determine where these plates belong and, more importantly, to recover the production chronology of all the plates. This may seem like a tall order indeed, but these objectives are realizable if we examine fully the bibliographical and technical evidence.

IV. Reconstructing the Sheets of Copper used in the *Marriage*

The style of script provides a material basis for classifying *Marriage* plates and establishing the roughest kind of production sequence. The copper on which the script lies provides even more information.

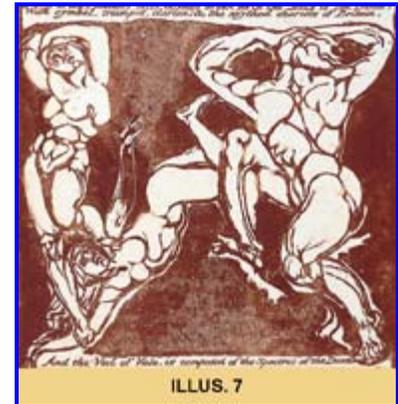
Most illuminated plates were etched on both sides. That Blake used both sides of his plates can be inferred from the presence of platemaker's marks, which were stamped into the verso of the sheets, visible in impressions from *Experience*, *Urizen*, *Europe*, and elsewhere. The versos of the *Innocence* plates, for example, were used for *Experience*; the versos of the *Marriage* plates were used for *Urizen*; the versos of *America* were used for *Europe*. The plates that are recto/verso can be identified by shared measurements (see Bentley, *Blake Books*, 145, 167, 382, on the likely pairing of plates). In intaglio graphics, etching the versos of plates still in use was extremely unusual, because designing, etching, or printing the verso places the recto on the workbench, brazier, or press bed, where it can be scratched. Scratches on intaglio plates, like all incised lines, hold ink and thus print as blemishes. When the design is in relief, however, lines slightly incised across it usually fill with ink and do not show; if they do show, it is as fine white lines that can be filled with pen and ink or covered over with watercolors. For aesthetic reasons, then, etching both sides of an intaglio plate is highly unorthodox, but these

considerations do not apply to relief etchings, and thus Blake could take full economic advantage of this practice.

Blake also saved money on materials by etching over old designs—that is, over discarded etchings or engravings—which he presumably purchased from platemakers at a reduced price.

Jerusalem plate 47 (illus. 7), for example, was drawn and written over an etching; it is important to note that Blake did not erase the intaglio line system but simply drew over it, using it as a patterned ground, knowing that the white lines of the previous design would not interfere with the bold relief outline and that alterations could be made if necessary when coloring the impression.

And it is equally important to note that he did erase the incised lines in the area he used for text, a decision probably more practical than



aesthetic, since the text was written with a pen, which requires a smoother ground than the brush used for the illustration. Removing the underlying line system makes it easier to write with a pen and easier for the small letters to be read. Blake did not try to erase the entire design, but only those areas required by his new page design. The erasure was presumably done by burnishing the incised lines and then possibly hammering up that area from the back (a technique called *repoussage*)—assuming its verso was not to be used. [32]

Perhaps Blake's most astute economic decision—and presumably one open to other printmakers as well—was to cut his small plates from larger sheets of copper himself. The *Innocence* plates, for example, are quarters of larger sheets (see Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book*, chap. 5). Blake cut plates out of sheets using relatively simple methods, such as deeply scoring the hand-hammered sheet of copper with a needle and burin and then snapping it between two plates or boards; or cutting the sheet in half with a hammer and chisel on an anvil. [33]

The *Marriage* plates are quarters of sheets the size of *The Approach of Doom* (approximately 30 by 21 cm). *Doom* (illus. 8), in fact, was quartered, and these were used for *Marriage* plates 12, 13, 20, and 27. We know this because on the versos of these plates are *The Book of Urizen* plates 27, 5, 14, and 16. The white lines from *Doom* can still be seen in *Urizen* plates 27 (illus. 9) and 14, revealing that the plates are the top- and bottom-left quarters of *Doom* respectively. When flipped upside down, plate 16

fits neatly into the top-right quarter, and very faint

traces of the earlier design are visible in some impressions. The only *Urizen* plate that fits the bottom right quarter is plate 5, a surprise at first, because this means that its text was written over relief lines and shallows (the white areas of the figures' robes). But *Doom* was probably etched very shallowly, for nothing more is required of plates whose relief lines are dense or closely arranged, and, as noted with *Jerusalem* plate 47, Blake could plane textured ground to accept text. Moreover, the impression of plate 5 in *Urizen* copy D shows slight traces of the earlier design. In the other impressions, these traces are obscured by color printing and/or washes added to the print. Also, when reconstructed, the bottom-right corner matches that of *Doom*; corners of sheets were usually rounded (from slightly, as here, to markedly, as in most of the *Job* plates) by the commercial platemaker.

The quartering of *Doom* provides crucial information about how Blake cut his sheets into plates and about the kind of variants we can expect when trying to reconstruct those sheets. *Doom* is recorded as being 29.7 by 21 cm (Bentley, *Blake Books*, 167 n. 1). These measurements are close but not exact and actually give the wrong idea of the plate's shape. They imply that the sides are the same length and the top and bottom are the same width, and they hid the slight bowing out across the plate's middle. But the plate was not a perfect rectangle, as the four measurements for *Doom* reveal: 21.25 cm (top); 21.02 cm (bottom); 29.80 cm (right); 29.95 cm (left). The sheet was first cut in half vertically, and then its two vertical halves were cut in half (see below, and the appendix, [diagram 1](#)). All four quarters are different sizes and, like the parent sheet, imperfect rectangles, from which we can infer that the three cut-lines were estimated by eye rather than measured with a ruler. These variations from perfect rectangles allow us to reconstruct the parent sheet and determine which quarter was used for each *Marriage* plate.

From reconstructing *Doom*, we learn that correctly reconfigured quarters form the same shape as the parent sheet, with a variation of only a few millimeters. The variation in size is minimal, to be sure, especially given the crude method of cutting sheets into plates and the loss of metal due to cutting. Variation also exists among impressions pulled from the same plate. Indeed, plate sizes are inferred from the plate's slight embossment into paper—that is, from impressions—and impressions from the same plate may vary slightly in size because different printing papers absorb more or less dampness and shrink differently. [34] By measuring the plates of seven copies of the *Marriage* and six copies of

Urizen, I discovered that plate measurements could vary from impression to impression as much as 3 mm, but the shape of the plate (and hence the fit of the quarters) almost always remained the same because the paper shrank evenly. For example, if the top of the plate was wider than the bottom, that relation remained, despite variation in the between different impressions. [35]

We learn from the quartering of *Doom* that sheets could be cut either vertically to produce two long halves that were then cut in half, or horizontally into two wide halves that were then cut in half. The two plates cut from one *vertical* half will share the same *width* (bottom and top of the two resulting plates) but rarely the same length; together, though, they will be the same length (or within 1 mm of it, depending on the variance of the impressions measured for the reconstruction) as the combined length of their paired vertical half. Likewise, the two plates cut from a *horizontal* half will share the same *length* (right and left margins of the resulting plates) but rarely the same width; together, though, they will share the same width (or within less than 1 mm) as the combined width of the sheet's other horizontal half. Because of these proportional relations, the quarter plates cannot be arranged into sheets arbitrarily; a plate must share its width or length with another plate, and then those two plates together must share their combined width or length with another pair of plates. The reliability, then, that the four plates forming a sheet are the plates originally cut from that sheet is quite high.

We also learn that sheets of copper Blake started out with were often irregular, and combined with his method of cutting plates from sheets and estimating the cut-lines by eye, this irregularity explains why illuminated plates are slightly uneven—not perfectly rectangular, and never uniform within a book. Consequently, four measurements must be made to describe accurately the shape of an illuminated plate. [36] By closely measuring all four sides of the *Marriage* plates, and noting the shape and any distinguishing marks in the platemarks—a convex or concave edge, or a slight nick or swelling inward or outward, or corners that are round, pointed, dull, or cut—I began to piece together the quarters and reconstruct the original sheets, much as one would a jigsaw puzzle. [37] Most of *Urizen*'s plates are on the versos of the *Marriage* plates, and knowing the measurements and distinguishing marks of the former helped me to verify the latter's plate configurations. [38]

On the next page is a table of reconfigured sheets is based on minute examination of *Marriage* copies A, C, D, E, F, G, and I, and *Urizen* copies A, B, C, D, F, and G. In addition to measuring all four

sides of the plates, I also traced in most cases the right and left margins and used the tracings to find and verify the plate's pair in the half-sheet and each plate's position in the sheet. (For the measurements of the *Marriage* plates, see the [appendix](#).) The plates are repositioned as quarters: an upside down *A* next to a plate indicates that plate fits upside down; an arrow between the vertical or horizontal halves indicates that sheet was first cut vertically or horizontally, respectively. The second column shows the probable *Urizen* plates that are on the versos of the *Marriage* plates reconstructed into sheets. The *Marriage* sheets are identified as I-VII and are sequenced according to the A (rightward *g*), B (rightward *g* and leftward *g*), and C (leftward *g*) sets discussed earlier. Small case *x* refers to a blank quarter; uppercase *X* refers to a quarter that had been already cut and used; lowercase *o* refers to a quarter whose identity is indeterminate.

From this evidence, we can conclude that Blake used seven sheets of copper to produce the *Marriage*. Had all of them been cut into plates at the same time—as his sheets of paper were when he printed his illuminated books in small editions—then the resulting twenty-eight plates, each one a quarter of a sheet,

		<i>Marriage</i>	<i>Urizen</i>	
A	I	22 24 \swarrow \swarrow 23 21	15 10 x 11	
↓				
A	II	12 x verso x 13 verso	27 x x 5	
↓				
A	III	\swarrow 2 3	28 x	
AB		1 5	x 18	
↓				
B	IV	6 7 \swarrow	20 24	
BA		\swarrow 8 11	7 x	<i>Urizen plate 7 has etched lines = used plate</i>
↓				
B	V	15 9 14 10 \swarrow	23 8 3 4	<i>Urizen plate 4 has etched lines = used plate</i>
↓				
C	VI	17 16 \swarrow 19 18 \swarrow	13 2 21 25	
↓				
C	II	X x 20 X verso	X x 14 X	
↓				
	II	X 27 \swarrow verso X X	X 16 X X	
↓				
	VII	25 26 o o	9 1 o o	

would almost certainly have been stored as a group. The plates forming multi-plate units, such as plates 21-24, or 5-10, or 16-20, would have been chosen from that large group and would not consistently come from the same or sequential sheets of copper. But because the plates forming multiplate and contiguous units do indeed form sheets, the sheets were most likely cut in preparation for those units—that is, cut as needed rather than cut in advance for a long, let alone twenty-seven-page, manuscript. That plates 21-24 form one sheet substantially verifies the hypothesis that these plates were written and executed as an autonomous unit (see appendix, [diagram 2](#)); to support the hypothesis that this autonomous unit preceded the others as an independent, anti-Swedenborgian pamphlet, it is necessary to prove that its sheet was the first one cut, which is the objective of the following section.

In reconstructing the seven sheets, I found just one anomaly: plate 11 is among the set B plates. I expected to find it cut from sheet III, which yielded plates 1, 2, and 3—the other set A plates. Instead,

plate 11 was cut from sheet IV, along with plates 6, 7, and 8. It does not belong to their unit, which contains the Proverbs and their introductory material, but like plate 6, plate 11 has the right-serifed *g*, whereas plates 7 and 8 have the left-serifed *g*. From its place in the sheet sequence, plate 11 appears to have been executed between plates 6 and 7, after the story of usurpation and Milton that begins on plate 5 and continues to the middle of plate 6; but before the Memorable Fancy that starts in the middle of plate 6 and continues with four lines on plate 7—that is, the transitional plate with both rightward and leftward *gs*. The production sequence appears to have been 5-6, 11, 6-10. Are we seeing traces of a moment of inspiration? Did Blake momentarily stop committing the Proverbs and its introductory material to copper to write and execute plate 11? Or had he brought that text to the printshop along with the texts for plates 1, 2, 3, and 5-10? These nine plates seem to have been executed in the same session (see below). [39]

V. Sequencing Seven Sheets of Copper

Reconfiguring the *Marriage* plates into their seven original sheets and sequencing them according to their sets A, B, and C provides a rough idea of the work's evolution. Clearly, if we are to understand the genesis of the *Marriage* in greater detail, we need to sequence the individual set A plates and determine which of these plates or units was produced first. The reconfigured sheets suggest four possibilities for the first position: 1) plates 21-24; 2) plates 12-13; 3) plates 2 and 3; and 4) all or some combination of these set A plates, produced together. Of these possibilities, the first is by far the most likely. It is strongly supported by the way in which the quarters from *The Approach of Doom* were and were not used at the beginning of production, and by a process of elimination that takes bibliographical as well as linguistic codes into account.

The Approach of Doom (c. 1788), possibly Blake's first experiment in relief etching (Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book*, chap. 20), predates the *Marriage*. It was thus on a sheet of copper already on hand when Blake wrote the set A plates, it is very unlikely to have been the first sheet cut, because only two set A plates—the textual unit consisting of plates 12-13—were cut from it. This means that two quarters were left untouched at this time, raising a troubling questions: If Blake cut *Doom* for the set A plates, why did he not use all four quarters immediately? If it were cut first, why weren't two of

the plates from the unit 21-24, or plates 2 and 3, on those remaining two quarters? These two unused quarters indicate that *Doom* was most likely cut after the sheet yielding plates 21-24; they also indicate that *Doom* was most likely cut before the sheet yielding plates 1-3, and 5.

That plate 5 was executed on the fourth quarter of the sheet that yielded plates 1-3 suggests that these plates were executed near in time; that the text of plate 5 continues on a plate cut from a new sheet suggests that Blake knew the text did not end with that one plate but required more. That this new sheet (IV) yielded plates 6, 7, 8, and 11—plates with both rightward and leftward *gs*—and not any of the plates in the textual units of plates 12-13 and 21-24, indicates that sheet IV was transitional and that its four plates—and plates 1, 2, 3, and 5 from sheet III and plates 9 and 10 from sheet V—are related and were all executed after the six plates from sheets I and II.

To assume that Blake began the *Marriage* with the plates of sheet III (1, 2, 3, and 5) makes no sense technically, because it also requires assuming that after quartering sheet III and executing plates 1-3, Blake skipped plate 5 and proceeded to quarter sheets I and II, whose plates (21-24, 12-13) also have the rightward *g* of plates 2-3. A plate sequence of 1-3, 21-24, 12-13, 5-10 means a sheet sequence of III, I, II, III, IV, V, which raises this question: why was the fourth quarter of sheet III used for plate 5 and not for one of the “subsequent” plates, that is, 21-24, or 12-13? Even if we assume that plates 5-6 were not part of the larger unit as identified here, we are faced with the same question. For example, if plates 5-6 followed plates 12-13, then why were they not written on the two remaining quarters from sheet II (*Doom*)? Why would Blake go back to sheet III for plate 5 and acquire sheet IV for plate 6? If plates 5-6 followed plates 1-3 for a plate sequence of 1-3, 5-6, 21-24, 12-13, 7-10 and a sheet sequence of III, IV, I, II, IV, V, then why weren't the three quarters from sheet IV used for the subsequent plates?

Blake is highly unlikely to have executed plates 11, 12, and 13 together as one unit, even though plate 11—about “ancient Poets” and their distorted derivative, “Priesthood,”—now introduces the visionary episode about prophets, an episode that exemplifies ideas raised on plate 11. It is unlikely because, as mentioned, plate 11—along with plates 6, 7, and 8, which continue the text begun on plate 5—came from sheet IV; and plates 12 and 13 came from sheet II. Had they been written and executed together, one would expect that plate 11 would have appeared on one of the quarters from sheet II (*Doom*), or at least on a quarter from a contiguous sheet (e.g., III)—like all other related plates in the

Marriage. [40]

There is a logic to using and not using materials, as is evinced by the pattern of plates that form units also forming sheets. *Doom*'s unused quarters imply a hiatus in production between sheets II (*Doom*) and III. The hiatus suggests that Blake executed the plates of sheets I and II before those of sheet III; and that when he returned to the studio to execute the next group of plates for what was now evolving into a book, he brought with him three sheets (III, IV, and V) and the texts and ideas for plates 1-3 and 5-10—and possibly for plate 11, although this may have been written and produced while Blake was executing plate 6; and he may have brought plates 14 and 15 as well. Blake either forgot he had the two *Doom* quarters or, because he knew he needed many more plates than two, began using the plates quartered from the sheets specifically acquired for his new texts. [41] Thus, the process of elimination yields the same chronology of plate production for the set A and B plates that is suggested by the reconfigured sheets of copper: 21-24, 12-13; 1-3, 5-6, 11, 6-10, followed by plates 14 and 15.

The linguistic code does not falsify this sequence; in fact, it independently suggests the same. It suggests that plate 3, with its perfunctory mention of Swedenborg, was written after plates 21-24; and moreover, that Blake almost certainly did not start with plates 12 and 13. These plates form "A Memorable Fancy," which retells the narrator's dinner with Isaiah and Ezekiel. But what is "A Memorable Fancy" and why is the narrator telling us about this visionary encounter? Three of the five Memorable Fancies in the *Marriage* are on set B and set C plates, which means that they were not yet executed. And yet the parodic intentions of plates 12-13 seems to require some preparation or context, nicely provided by plates 21-24, where Swedenborg is attacked by name; and his Memorable Relations parodied as "A Memorable Fancy." [42]

The episode on plates 12-13, in which Isaiah states that his "senses discover'd the infinite in every thing," may have been inspired by the contrary vision exemplified by Nebuchadnezzar, whose animal-like posture resembles that of the figure on plate b11 of *There is No Natural Religion* (see also the reproduction *Nebuchadnezzar*, color plate XVI). Together, the prophets and Nebuchadnezzar—the latter symbolizing both Swedenborg and the mad King George III—dramatize the theme of plate b11: "He who sees the infinite in all things sees God He who sees the Ratio only sees himself only" (E 3). Moreover, Isaiah and Ezekiel, two prophets whom Swedenborg quotes extensively, are exactly the right

witnesses to prove Blake's claims that Swedenborg's readings of scripture are old and weak and that his ideas of Christ and the Ten Commandments are ordinary and orthodox (plates 21-23).

Swedenborg says that he, like the prophets, sees angels. He also claims that

I have been informed how the Lord spoke with the prophets through whom the Word was given. He did not speak with them as with the ancients, by an influx into their interiors, but through spirits who were sent to them, whom He filled with His look, and thus inspired with words which they dictated to the prophets; so that it was not influx but dictation. And because the words came forth immediately from the Lord, they are each filled with the Divine, and contain within an internal sense, which is such that angels of heaven perceive them in a heavenly and spiritual sense, when men perceive them in a natural sense. [43]

He clarifies this in *Apocalypse Revealed*, where he states that the prophets distinguished between vision and dictation, being in the spiritual state for the former and in the body for the latter: "when they spoke the Word, they were then not in the spirit, but in the body, and heard from Jehovah Himself, that is, the Lord, the words which they wrote." [44] Blake's prophets, however, identify themselves as "poets," affirm an internal voice, refute external instruction, and make no distinction between vision and writing, or between spirit and sensual body. In the *Marriage*, Isaiah says:

I saw no God. nor heard any. in a finite organical perception: but my senses discover'd the infinite in every thing, and as I was then perswaded. & remain confirm'd; that the voice of honest indignation is the voice of God. I cared not for consequences but wrote. (Plate 12)

Isaiah ironically echoes Swedenborg's description of Adam and the ancients:

So with the man of the Most Ancient church; whatever he saw with his eyes was heavenly to him; and thus all things and everything with him were as if living. From this it may be seen what his Divine worship was, that it was internal and not at all external.

[45]

Blake will advocate a return to this visionary state on plates 3 and 11, with the return of Adam to Paradise and the mythopoeic perception of the "ancient Poets."

Writing as "poets" without fear of consequences contrasts starkly with the "systematic reasoning" of angels (plate 21); the first alternative also alludes to the poet Blake writing this prophetic prose and to his every other tract, and to Christ, whom the Devil defines as acting "from impulse; not from rules" (plates 23-24): behavior characteristic of the artist. The devil's and angel's debate over whether God is internal or external echoes a debate recurring in Swedenborg's writings about whether salvation depends on "faith [in Christ] alone, without the works of the law—which faith is mean by the dragon"—or in Christ as well as the law (*Apocalypse Revealed*, n. 539). The debate is reconfigured on plates 12-13, where the connection of art and Christ is made explicit when the prophets state that "in ages of imagination this firm perswasion removed mountains." Christ states, "If ye have faith . . . ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17: 20). By appropriating poets, prophets, and Christ for the devil's party, Blake has further defined the dialectic that unfolds on plates 21-24 between angels and devils on plates 21-24 in terms of religion and art. More to the point, he has strengthened the devil's refutation of the angel's claim that Christ sanctioned the Ten Commandments (plate 23) and strengthened his own claim that the New Church is anything but "new" and "distinct" (plate 21-22). Indeed, Blake again implies that Swedenborg misreads the Word and its prophets and thereby subjects people to false ideas, exactly like the Church he criticizes. Ezekiel states: "from [his and Isaiah's] opinions the vulgar came to think that all nations would at last be subject to the jews . . . [which] is come to pass, for all nations believe the jews code and worship the jews god, and what greater subjection can be[?]" (plate 13). The "code" refers to the "law of ten commandments" advocated by the angel and New Church but "broken" by Christ (plates 23-24). Swedenborg's worship of this code and God, then, reveals that he oppresses Christ. What Swedenborg worships confirms Blake's accusation that despite his showing "the folly of churches & expos[ing] hypocrites," he still "has written all the old falshoods" (plates 21-22). By tying Swedenborg to the very "code" the impulsive Christ rejects, Blake again refutes both of Swedenborg's claims—that the New Church is distinct from the old and that he recognizes the true Christ—and again affirms the message of plates 21-24, that the problem lies not in the Word but how it is read. Is it read diabolically or systematically, infernally or internally?

Swedenborg's God, if perceived "infernally," is revealed to be the dominating external God of

the "jewish code" and as such "merely derivative," having, like "all Gods," "originate[d] in" "the Poetic Genius" (plates 12-13; see also *All Religions are One* plate 9). While Blake does not mention "poetic genius" and "origin" on plates 21-24, he implies both. The "poetic genius" is implied through the hierarchy of writings, with the "sublime" of "Shakespeare" and "Dante" representing the truly inspired works of "masters," and Swedenborg's "recapitulations" of "superficial opinions" representing memory and the perpetuation by followers of "all the old falsehoods." The ideas of origin and originality are implied in Blake's claim that Swedenborg is a copyist and is so because he fails to consult devils who, as the origin of Blake's "The Bible of Hell," represent the "poetic genius." The idea that the "poetic genius" is the origin or "first principle" of perception and creativity is proposed on plates 12-13, while creativity's symbolic connection with hell will be made explicit later, on plate 6, by the narrator's trip to hell, where "fires" are "the enjoyments of Genius."

Blake started the text of plates 12 and 13 on new plates, as opposed to starting it *on* a plate as a continuation of the preceding and contextualizing text or narrative; the Memorable Fancies on plates 22, 6, and 17 begin midplate. This is consistent with the hypothesis that plates 12-13 were written and executed independently of the plates and narratives that now precede them, and were composed in light of a previously executed text that now follows them. As an autonomous textual unit, plates 12-13 seem to develop or extend contraries and themes propounded in plates 21-24, including originality and imitation, impulse and law, inspiration and memory, liberation and subjection, reading and misreading. The thematic relation between plates 21-24 and plates 12-13 places the former unit first, verifying the bibliographic code and significantly strengthening the hypothesis that plates 21-24 were not only executed first but also originally intended as an anti-Swedenborgian pamphlet. It seems reasonable to speculate that after Blake wrote and executed plates 21-24, where the Memorable Fancy is thoroughly contextualized and of a piece with the text as an independent unit, he began to imagine more visionary episodes in this satiric vein.

It also seems reasonable to suppose that "The Bible of Hell," which is announced *before* the *Marriage* was composed, might be referring to the *Marriage* itself, as it was anticipated at the time of Blake's anti-Swedenborgian text. Or, as I argue in "Lessons of Swedenborg," it may refer either to the Proverbs of Hell, intended as an ironic inversion of Proverbs—one of the books of the Bible that

Swedenborg excluded from his list of thirty-three books of Holy Writ for "not having the Internal Sense" (proposition 12, *Circular Letter*, 122)—or to a series of illuminated works written from the infernal perspective that was to include Blake's Proverbs as the first book or volume. [46]

If so, then their inclusion into the *Marriage* reflects Blake changing his mind, from publishing a separate volume or pamphlet of a projected series of illuminated works to including it as a section of his new book. From available bibliographical and thematic evidence, *Marriage* appears to have originated in what were originally two separate projects, an anti-Swedenborgian text, presumably meant as an independent work, and "The Bible of Hell," cobbled together with introductory material and a few more Memorable Fancies.

If so, that sheet I was the same size as *Doom* begins to make practical sense. The size, approximately 30 x 21 cm, was probably common one, selected because Blake wanted the plate size it yields when quartered. He probably did not start by cutting *Doom*, because he was unwilling at the time to destroy that design. On the other hand, without a manuscript divided into pages, Blake did not know how many plates his anti-Swedenborgian text would require, given such variables as letter size, line spacing, and illustrations. He may have purchased a sheet the size of *Doom* as insurance, in case the text went long and required a fifth or sixth plate. He could then quarter *Doom* to finish it rather than purchase a second new sheet. Or he may have cut both sheets at the same time, using the plates from the new sheet first and expecting to use the plates from the old sheet for his next project, "The Bible of Hell" announced at the end of plate 24. I suggest that the temptation to broaden his satirical attack beyond Swedenborg through parodying his Memorable Relations inspired Blake to write the dinner-with-prophets episode. At this point in the action, we see a break in production, apparently followed by the writing of new texts (that is, plates 1-3, 5-11) and the eventual purchase of three more sheets.

VI. *Marriage* Plates Lost and Found, and "The voice of the Devil"

As we have seen, the *Marriage* plates can be roughly grouped by lettering style to reveal the basic chronology of plate production, although where in this scheme plates 1, 4, 14, 15, 25, 26, and 27 belong is less easily determined. By reconstructing the sheets from which the *Marriage* plates were cut, we have exposed a deeper layer of the *Marriage*'s evolution and have located where all the plates fit into

the chronology. All, that is, but plate 4, "The voice of the Devil."

The first stage, in which plates 21-24 were produced, was soon followed by a second stage in which plates 12-13 were written and executed. The third stage produced plates 1-3, 5-6, 11, 6-10, including plate 1, the title page. It was cut from sheet III, which also yielded plates 2, 3, and 5, plates with the early form of *g*. Thus, Blake etched the title page of his new work after executing at least six of its plates. This is particularly telling, given that a title page for the non-existent "Bible of Hell" may have been designed (see note 46) and that the work had been announced on plate 24 of the *Marriage*. The position of the *Marriage* title page in the chronology of production is consistent with the theory that the work it names was not yet conceived at the time plates 21-24 were produced. Indeed, the conception of a satire of miscellaneous episodes appears to have followed the completion of the anti-Swedenborgian text and to lie in Blake's decision to combine it with his anticipated Proverbs (possibly "The Bible of Hell" or one of its volumes). Plates 12-13, the second Memorable Fancy written, appear to have been the first step in realizing this conception. The second step consisted of writing introductory texts (plates 2, 3) to the newly conceived work and texts to introduce and contextualize the Proverbs (plates 5-6). Plate 11 was executed in the same lettering style as these plates but appears to have been composed and executed after the text on plates 5-6 and before the Memorable Fancy and the Proverbs it introduces—which is to say, during this third stage of plate production.

We have found plates 14 and 15 in the chronology of plate production; both have the leftward *g* and are independent though thematically related units, filled with "information from hell," printmaking allusions, and cave imagery. Together they function as a two-plate unit of introduction and Memorable Fancy, a structure that had by this point in the composing process established itself. They were cut from the sheet that yielded plates 9 and 10, the last two plates of the Proverbs of Hell. They were executed after plates 1-3, 5-11, but they may belong to the same stage of production, which would suggest that their texts were written along with or even during the execution of these plates. They may also, however, have been written and executed afterward, in response to the previously executed texts and images, as suggested by narrator's trip to hell, his picturing himself writing the devil's proverbs, the animated island of the ancient poets, and the cave in which the island is placed (plates 6, 10, and 11). [47] If this is the case, plates 14 and 15 would constitute a fourth stage in the evolution of the *Marriage*.

Plates 16-20 constitute the next textual unit executed. The text for this unit, he probably anticipated, required at least one sheet's worth of plates. Blake seems unlikely to have acquired sheet VI with sheets III, IV, and V, the three used previously, because at approximately 31 x 20.5 cm it was noticeably larger than these others, yielding the four tallest plates in the *Marriage*. It probably was purchased specially for this section, suggesting that the text was written after those executed on sheets III-V. The text went nineteen lines long, requiring a fifth plate (plate 20). Instead of buying a new sheet of copper, Blake returned to the third quarter of *Doom* and used it for plate 20, which is much smaller than plates 16-19—a fact (like poor registration of plate to paper) that did not seem to bother Blake (see note 35). This autonomous unit constitutes either the fourth or fifth stage of production. Blake appears to end it with a wink and a nod toward Swedenborg. Whereas the image of Nebuchadnezzar and the axiom "One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression" end plates 21-24, expressing Blake's anger at church and state, plates 16-20 end less aggressively: "Opposition is True Friendship." Through the course of his composition—and, one could argue, by venting his wrath—Blake appears to move from the conviction that Swedenborg symbolizes religious and political oppression to something more like gratitude for his adversary's role in generating the *Marriage*, and thus in revealing or clarifying Blake's views in his own mind. Blake sees what he has accomplished, and sees the creative import of passionate response. In the *Marriage* he not only expresses opposition but at the same time engages in the intellectual combat—or "Mental Fight" (*Milton* 2: 13)—that he believed essential.

On that note, Blake appears to have ended his composition. The *Marriage* now consisted of twenty-three plates, which appear to have been executed in the following order: 21-24, 12-13, 1-3, 5-6, 11, 6-10, 14, 15, 16-20.

The fourth quarter of *Doom* was used for the next, and last, textual unit, "A Song of Liberty" (plates 25-27). Because only one of its plates came from *Doom*, "Song" almost certainly followed plates 16-20; and because only one plate remained from *Doom* at this point, the subsequent two plates (25 and 26) had to come from a different sheet. A sheet (or half-sheet) was chosen that produced plates similar in size to the last quarter of *Doom*. The size of the "Song" plates, then, may have been a matter of economic convenience and efficiency—Blake using metal on hand—or deliberately chosen so "Song" would match the *Marriage* in size as a supplementary text. As mentioned, "Song"

appears to have been originally designed as an independent pamphlet, as is evinced by its two early printings (*Marriage* copies L and M). If so, then it does not really represent a fifth or sixth stage in the production of *Marriage*—unless Blake originally intended "Song" to have a dual life, as independent text and as unit concluding the *Marriage*. It seem equally likely, though, that Blake decided to use "Song" as a "coda" soon after the production of both works. [48] The diversity of the *Marriage* could accommodate one, or many, more sections, even one with slightly larger script, new mythic characters, and numbered poetic prose, perhaps as an example of the mythopoetic prose of the "ancient Poets." Though more oracular in tone and overtly political, the "Song" fits the *Marriage* thematically. It too attacks priestcraft, kingship, the "stony law," and "ten commands," and it connects their defeat with the return to Paradise: "Empire is no more! and now the lion and wolf shall cease" (plate 27).

We have now located all of the plates in the chronology of plate production, including those missing from sets A, B, and C, except plate 4. This plate was not cut from any of the seven sheets yielding *Marriage* plates. It is the smallest *Marriage* plate (13.6 by 10.1 cm), almost 2 cm shorter on average than all the others. The exclusively leftward *g* (a correction to *Early Illuminated Books*, 114) suggests set B or set C. The plate's four sharp corners reveal that it is not a quarter sheet, which would have one dull or slightly round corner, and suggest that it was cut from the center of a sheet. But what sheet is this, and when was the plate composed? Plate 4 appears to have been executed around the time of, if not actually with, *Thel* plates 1 and 8—*Thel*'s Motto and the concluding plate. Answering our question requires taking a brief detour through the final stages of *Thel*'s production.

Like *Marriage* plate 4, *Thel* plates 1 and 8 appear to be orphans, unconnected to the sheets that supplied plates for the larger works. By applying the methods used to reconstruct the *Marriage* sheets, we can configure *Thel* plates 2-7 back into their original sheet. Together, they form a square sheet approximately 30.7 by 32.5, in the following configuration:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \nabla 4, & 5, & 6 \nabla \\ 3, & 2 \nabla, & 7 \end{array}$$

These six plates form the core of *Thel*, and they employ the sans-serifed *g* of Blake's italic script exclusively. But a sheet that would be square rather than rectangular, and the absence of round corners on plates 6 and 7 despite their position in the sheet, raise red flags. A closer examination reveals that the

six plates were probably cut from two-thirds of a 30.7 by 46.65 cm rectangle, with the missing third, 30.7 by 14.15 cm, yielding *Thel* plate 8—which is 14.15 cm long—and *Thel* plate 1 and *Marriage* plate 4, whose lengths, added to the width of plate 8, total 30.7 cm. Moreover, plate 1 has a round top-right corner and plate 8 has a round bottom-left corner, which becomes the sheet's top- and bottom-right corners; and the bottom of plate 4 appears to fit neatly on the right side of *Thel* plate 8 (see [diagram 3](#) in the appendix). [49]

Plate 1 has the leftward *g* exclusively, and plate 8 has it and the sans-serifed *g*, as well as the only interlinear decorations in *Thel* (line 15)—a feature present throughout the *Marriage*. These two *Thel* plates were certainly written after the core text, but how long after is unknown. Plates 2-7 are divided into three parts, with plates 3 and 6 having catchwords and plate 5 having a catch-number, indicating that the text continued on the next plate. Like plate 5, plate 7 ends with the catch-number IV, which merely indicates that there will be a Part IV; there is no catchword to indicate that it had been written. Apparently, Blake planned to conclude his tale with *Thel* entering the "house" of the "matron Clay," which he mentions on plate 7 (E 6); but if *Thel* copy a, a proof copy printed in black ink and missing plates 1 and 8, is evidence of production, then Blake had not yet written—or at least had not yet executed—the ending when he executed and proofed the core plates. While we can only guess how much time transpired between *Thel* plates 7 and 8, we can be reasonably sure that *Thel* plate 8 was executed after the first and second stages and possibly after or during the third stage of the *Marriage*'s evolution.

Among the *Marriage* plates *Thel* plate 8 followed are plates 6 and 7, which record the narrator's infernal descent and the devil's message. In *Thel* plate 8, *Thel* too descends into the netherworld and sits besides her grave listening to the voice therein. She goes below the surface, as it were, a metaphor possibly suggested not only by Blake's infernal visit but also by the tour he and the angel took "down the winding cavern" to "the infinite Abyss" inhabited by the Leviathan (plates 17-18). The idea that we perceive superficially—see the surface and not what lies below it—is visually expressed by the *Marriage* title page itself, where two-thirds of the design, including the words "Heaven" and "Hell," occur just below the surface, a space defined and hidden by a thin line, which, if "melted" away, would reveal "the infinite which was hid" (plate 14). Any one or all of these *Marriage* plates may have

influenced Blake's depiction of Thel's descent, but it is the way her perception affects experience that seems especially close to the *Marriage*.

Like angels who see the "fires of hell" as "torment and insanity" instead of the "enjoyment of Genius" (plate 6), or see the "leviathan" instead of "a harper" singing by "a pleasant bank beside a river by moonlight" (plate 19), Thel sees the world of sexual experience as death, a netherworld filled with lamenting sounds. The angel's perception of the "fires down below," be they creative energy or sexual desire, is refuted by the narrator's leisurely stroll through hell and by the harper. Thel's perception is also disproved; like the angel witnessing the leviathan, Thel fled the scene, but the image and gestures of the tailpiece—three naked children playfully riding a very phallic, leviathan-looking serpent—challenge the idea that Thel should fear her sexual desires, revealed as the true source of her restlessness in the last two questions spoken from her grave: "Why a tender curb upon the youthful burning boy?" and "Why a little curtain of flesh on the bed of our desire?" The interrogative form challenges preconceptions, and, before executing *Thel* plate 8, Blake used it to that end on *Marriage* plate 7, where a "mighty Devil" writes/etches: "How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way, / Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses five[?]"

Thel plates 1 and 8 appear to have been written and composed at the same time and presumably came from the same sheet of copper. I think *Marriage* plate 4 was probably composed and executed with them; its top margin shares the bottom measurement (10.1 cm) of *Thel* plate 1, a strong indicator that they shared margins and were cut from the same sheet; and the bottom of plate 4 fits along the side of *Thel* plate 8 (see [diagram 3](#), appendix). If so, then it is reasonable to assume that, just as *Marriage* plate 6 (the trip to hell) may have influenced the netherworld location of *Thel* plate 8, the idea of Thel's voice revealing the truth from the "pit" may have influenced "The voice of the Devil" of *Marriage* plate 4—or vice versa. Both plates have leftward *gs*, and in both, the "voice" knows what is hidden and symbolically represents the deep recesses of the mind.

I suspect that *Thel* plates 1 and 8 and *Marriage* plate 4 were from the same sheet of copper, a third of the sheet originally cut for *Thel* plates 2-7, but I do not know with certainty exactly where plate 4 fits into the composition of the *Marriage*. It responds to plate 3 thematically by inverting its rhetorical structure. On plate 3, the vignettes depict the joyous copulation and laborless birth characteristic of our

prefallen state ("Now is . . . the return of Adam into Paradise"), and the opening lines express Blake's optimistic anticipation of a new age, but the "religious" are given the last and seemingly authoritative word: "Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell." Plate 4 inverts this pattern, giving the religious the opening lines and vignette and the devil the last word. The vignette depicts a woman and child fleeing a man in flames, presumably the "fires of hell" as perceived by the "religious." But what the woman and child flee is no more frightening than *Thel's* sexually charged serpent, as the devil's voice makes clear: "Energy is Eternal Delight." [50]

Plate 4 visually echoes the relation between perception and experience as expressed on plates 5, 6, 7, 14, 16, and 20, but it explicitly corrects the last lines of plate 3: "From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason Evil is the active springing from Energy. Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell." After plate 3, though, Blake appears to have gone on to plate 5, which attacks the idea of passivity. Its first lines state: "Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained . . . and being restrained it by degrees becomes passive till it is only the shadow of desire." The rest of plate 5's text and the textual unit to which it belongs (the trip to hell and the proverbs collected there) set out to prove the "religious" wrong. By this time in the composition, Blake has profiled Christ, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Milton, Dante, Shakespeare, and the narrator as unrestrained figures, as active members of the devil's party. Surely, their actions and membership challenge the validity of passivity and the moral categories imposed by the "religious." Thematically, plate 4 seems unnecessary, almost ad hoc, like the Motto in *Thel*—or "A Song of Liberty" in the *Marriage*. Perhaps Blake thought his critique of the linguistic origin of what the religious call moral categories was too subtly ironic, or he simply wished to make explicit the relation between creative and procreative forces, between energy and desire.

Plate 4 continues the satire on Swedenborg by numbering the angels' and devils' particulars of faith, recalling the opening of *True Christian Religion*, where the New Church's "five particulars of faith" are presented without contraries. Plate 4 clearly responds to the "particulars" of plate 3, but a closer look reveals a relationship to other plates as well. The first error, "That Man has two real existing principles Viz: a Body & a Soul," is acknowledged on plate 14 as "the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul." The second error, "That Energy *calld Evil*. is alone from the Body. & that

Reason. *call'd Good*. is alone from the Soul," fuses "soul" and "body" to "Good" and "Evil," in response to plate 3's "what the religious *call Good & Evil*. Good is the passive that obeys Reason Evil is the active springing from Energy. Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell." The third error, "That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies," echoes the angels' fears as expressed on plate 6, that "The fires of hell" are "torment and insanity." On the evidence of its lettering style, plate 4 was executed after plates 3 and 6; its thematic awareness of plate 6 suggests that it was written afterwards as well. But what is its connection with plate 14? Is plate 4 or plate 14 the first to question this Cartesian dualism? The union of soul and body was implied on plate 11, which precedes both plates 4 and 14 in composition; it showed that the separation of "mental deities from their objects" resulted in "Priesthood." As I propose in "The Caves of Heaven and Hell," the union of spirit and matter was inherent in Blake's incarnational aesthetic, as stated explicitly on plate 16: "God only Acts & Is. in existing beings or Men," itself a clarification of plates 22-23's "The worship of God is. Honouring his gifts in other men each according to his genius . . . for there is no other God." Contrary to Swedenborg, who believed vision required leaving the body, Blake knew as an artist that it could occur while in the body and through the physical body of art. In short, plate 4 appears to recognize more than just plate 3.

Like the texts of plates 14 and 15, that of plate 4 is short, autonomous, and thematically it is derived from hell. On plate 15, Blake states, "I was in a Printing house in Hell & saw the method in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation," and then proceeds to describe the book-making process in all its visionary splendor. On plate 14, Blake notes that he "heard from Hell" when "the whole creation will be consumed [in fire] and appear infinite. and holy," and implies that he, as printmaker and publisher, partakes in this apocalyptic energy. Now, on plate 4, we, like the narrator, hear news from hell, only this time we hear it directly.

In identifying the cause of the primary "Errors" as "All Bibles or sacred codes," this news from hell appears aware that the "jews code" and "ten commandments" have already been criticized on plates 13 and 23 (and 27?). The devil's "Contraries to these" errors are "True," and thus the devil implies another set of contraries, Error and Truth, which is a variation of Imitation and Original, implicit in Blake's condemnation of Swedenborg, Priests, and the "sneaking serpent," in contrast to Christ, Prophets, the "just man," and presumably Blake (plates 21, 11, 2, 3, 12-13). The corrections are indeed

"True" from the devil's perspective, but there are no third parties in the *Marriage*. Blake belongs to the devil's party, and the devil and members of his party have expressed—on plates 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, and, most important, 7 and 23—what are presumably Blake's positions. On plate 7, the "mighty Devil," like Blake, speaks by writing/etching his preconception-challenging sentences "on the sides of the rock." On plate 10, he is pictured dictating the proverbs. On plate 23, the "Devil answer'd" the angel's assertion that Christ sanctioned "the law of ten commandments," that God is an external law-giver indifferent to man, by creatively reading Christ's acts to show that "Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules." The narrator witnesses the debate, which the devil, presumably speaking for Blake, clearly wins. [51]

Plate 4, then, while the only plate or section designated as "The voice of the Devil," is not the only occasion on which the devil speaks. And like the other debating and writing devils, he speaks with authority and conviction—and therein lies a serious critical problem. The devil is, as most Blake scholars acknowledge, a partisan, and as such cannot represent unbiased perception. Admittedly, the metaphysical framework of contraries, which can imply theoretically the "polar nature of being" as well as a "dialectical symmetry," and thus the idea that opposing views are equally valid, occasionally undercuts Blake's authority. [52] But to assume that this was Blake's intention is to dismiss the way in which, in practice, the satiric convention of turning the world upside down loads the dice—in Blake's and the devil's favor. When plate 4 is placed within the composing process and read in light of the many plates it in fact follows, Blake's intentions for this plate and for the devil's views throughout the *Marriage* begin to reveal themselves.

On plates 4, 14, and 15, Blake presents "information from hell," but on plate 4 he does not speak for himself, nor does he use the cave imagery present in the other two plates. The script poses difficulties. The italic of plates 14 and 15 closely resemble one another but differ from plate 4 (illus. 10).



In fact, the italic of plate 4 is stiff and occasionally awkward and does not closely resemble any of the *Marriage* plates—or the *TheL* plates, for that matter. Plate 4 does not look as though it was written with plates 14 and 15, or 16-20, or 25-27, but how long after—or before—these plates is impossible to tell. The appearance of one's usual writing hand will vary if the writing tools and materials vary; for

example, the difference could be owing to a different pen, a thicker writing solution, a more textured writing surface, or a combination of all three.

Another troubling feature of plate 4 is that it was not one of the two quarters from *Doom* left over after plates 12-13. These unused quarters suggest that there was a hiatus in production between plates 12-13 and the plates cut from the subsequent three sheets. If Blake forgot about the *Doom* quarters after a short hiatus, then it is possible that plate 4 was written around the time of plates 14 and 15 and before 16-20. These three texts required three plates and could be executed out of order. Blake wrote the texts for plates 14 and 15 on the quarters from sheet V, but instead of buying a new sheet for plate 4, he wrote it on a plate from a sheet he was then presumably cutting for *Thel* plates 1 and 8.

If, however, Blake remembered he had the two *Doom* quarters in stock, then plate 4 may not have been executed until after plates 16-20 and 25-27, for the two *Doom* quarters were used for plates 20 and 27. But this scenario suggests that plates 25 and 26 came from a sheet half the size of the others (20.8 by 14.9 cm). If the sheet had been the size of the others, there would have been two unused quarters, and one of them would presumably have been used for plate 4. Or one must imagine the half-sheet being used or cut up for other projects, none of which I have been able to identify. Unfortunately, whether plates 25 and 26 were quarters cut from a horizontal half-sheet or halves cut from a sheet half the size of the others cannot be determined.

Perhaps the most that can be said about *Marriage* plate 4 is that it was certainly not the fourth plate written or executed. Materially, it appears to have been connected with *Thel* plates 1 and 8; thematically, it appears to have been associated with *Thel* plate 8 and *Marriage* plates 14 and 15. It was introduced no earlier than two-thirds into the composition of the *Marriage*, if not added to the *Marriage* last, after "A Song of Liberty."

VII. Conclusion:

"Great ends never look at means but produce them spontaneously."

—Blake's annotations to J. C. Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man* (E

595)

The *Songs of Experience* poems were drafted in Blake's Notebook, but no separate and complete manuscript of *Experience* as a book is extant. No fair copies or even rough, partial manuscripts of any of the illuminated books are extant. There are good, legible manuscripts for *Tiriel* and much of *Vala*—works probably intended for letterpress and not illuminated printing—but not one for *The French Revolution*, which must have had a fair copy, since it was printed by Joseph Johnson. Perhaps its absence has more to do with the publisher's mishandling than Blake's. Nevertheless, one is led to wonder if the missing manuscripts of Blake's illuminated canon ever existed. Were they lost in Frederick Tatham's reputed conflagration of Blake works? Or were they the kind of manuscripts that, as Blake told Henry Crabb Robinson, were published as soon as they were written down and, once read by "the Spirits," were then "of no further use" (Bentley, *Blake Records*, 417 n. 3, and 322)?

The absence of illuminated manuscripts probably lies in reasons far less sensational or mysterious. Blake's mode of production did not require fair copies. To begin production, Blake needed texts, but that text did not need to be complete. It could consist of discrete units written at different times and on various kinds and scraps of paper, written as inspiration struck. The phrase "printed manuscript," coined by Essick to describe the illuminated book's unique conflation of print and autograph, [53] also describes the effect of illuminated printing: the printed work constitutes a completed manuscript, complete both visually and textually. This effect provides a plausible reason for the absence of the drafts and texts preceding the illuminated books. Upon publication, they were of no further use.

The absence of drafts and manuscripts for the *Marriage*, then, is not at all unusual for an illuminated book. What is unusual is the *Marriage*'s disjointed structure, its discrete textual units and diverse genres, topics, and points of view. Structurally and thematically, the work appears to have been written at different times, and in a different order from the one we have. Textual analysis, however, cannot by itself recover the chronology of plate production, without which no reasonable idea of this work's evolution is possible. When we group the *Marriage* plates according to the style of their letter g into three sequential sets and then reconfigure the plates back into their original sheets, the chronology of sheet and plate production begins to emerge.

The reconfigured and sequenced sheets reveal the following plate chronology: 21-24, 12-13, 1-3, 5-6, 11, 6-10, 14, 15, 24, 16-20, and 25-27. It is at this material level that the linguistic code suggesting

that plates 21-24 preceded plates 3 and 19 is verified. But the position of plates 21-24 in the chronology raises a host of questions about Blake's intentions and composing process. Why do they form one sheet? Why does that sheet seem to have been the first of seven cut? How could Blake begin the *Marriage* with these plates? Could he have thought their text was the beginning? If so, why announce forthcoming works, which has the air of a conclusion?

Had Blake a completed manuscript of the *Marriage* before he began production, it would not have been divided into pages, it is safe to say, that corresponded exactly to plates. With a continuous, undivided manuscript (that is, a manuscript or fair copy of the text but not a mock-up of the book), production would presumably have been sequential. Conversely, nonsequential production indicates that Blake began executing plates without a completed manuscript—a procedure encouraged by the exigencies of illuminated printing. Such an absence raises the possibility that what was initially produced (plates 21-24) was all that was intended at that time. The text of these plates, executed independently of the others, is thematically and rhetorically self-contained, and its appropriateness as a pamphlet was demonstrated by their first printing, *Marriage* copy K.

Plates 21-24 preceded not only the other *Marriage* plates but possibly the idea of the *Marriage* itself. That idea appears to have originated in what were originally two separate projects, the anti-Swedenborgian pamphlet and "The Bible of Hell" announced at the end of the pamphlet. This announcement may refer to the *Marriage* as anticipated at the time of the pamphlet. Or it may refer to the seventy Proverbs of Hell, then being written, or, more likely, to a projected collection of short illuminated works written from the infernal perspective that would include the Proverbs as one of its volumes. These two projects, one finished and one presumably in progress, may have been rethought. With new introductory material, a few more Memorable Fancies, and a title that evokes Swedenborg, these became the new work Blake called *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Its evolution from four-page pamphlet to twenty-seven-page book involved four or more stages of production. Its discontinuous narrative and diverse genres, topics, and points of view resulted in part from its production history, but they may also have resulted from Blake's conceiving "The Bible of Hell" in parodic imitation of the "fragment-hypothesis of the Higher Criticism, the theory that the Old Testament is a gathering of redacted fragments" (Essick, "Representation"; see also *Language of Adam*, 142).

Arguing against the hypothesis that plates 21-24 were intended as an independent, anti-Swedenborgian pamphlet are the claim that the pamphlet was not issued and the belief that Blake had intended from the beginning to produce a grab bag of a book, one perhaps modeled on *Songs of Innocence* but consisting of various textual units, instead of individual poems, centered around a particular theme. Both objections seem to infer cause or intention from effect; the work is disjointed, hence it was meant to be so from the very beginning, with plates 21-24 part of that plan, which anticipated the ordering of discrete units at a later date. Both overlook the most obvious explanation and the most human of all traits: learning and changing one's mind, in Blake's case through material production.

Blake's original intentions for plates 21-24 cannot be inferred from the absence of issued copies or by their inclusion in the *Marriage*. The absence of copies may reflect lost or yet-to-resurface works, or it could signify a change of mind as easily as an intent not to publish. Given that "Blake was an indefatigable reviser of his pictorial works," an artist whose "creative revisionism" (Essick, *Language of Adam*, 163) is evident in nearly every printing of illuminated books, original etchings, and original engravings, and inherent to his style of drawing (Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book*, chap. 4, 18), Blake seems more likely to have revised his idea of what plates 21-24 were than never to have intended a separate work. If we suppose that Blake had only a vague idea of wanting to write a disjointed, miscellaneous work, loosely modeled on Menippean satire, if not the theories of the Higher Criticism, it still does not solve the problem of his starting with plates 21-24, a self-contained unit with its own agenda and concluding Note. While his technique made it possible for Blake to execute plates as soon as text was available, it did not require him to do so. If he knew that there would be many more episodes to execute, why did he produce 21-24 separately?

I think that we are witnessing in the bibliographical code the material birth of an idea, the point at which the poet changed his mind, the point at which execution and invention intersect. The idea that the *Marriage* grew out of a pamphlet together with another project does not mean that the literary or biblical models do not figure into Blake's production. They possibly do, but they probably came into play *after* the pamphlet was written and executed, perhaps when Blake returned to plate 24 to add the vignette of Nebuchadnezzar, after which he wrote a second Memorable Fancy (plates 12-13). Blake

appears to have changed his mind about publishing an independent pamphlet—and/or a series of individual pamphlets to constitute a Bible of Hell—deciding instead to publish a group of interrelated variations on a set of themes, nearly all of which are raised in some form or another in the original pamphlet. The *Marriage* came into being in form and content through its production, with many of its units modeled on the pamphlet's structure and its objects of satire broadened, from Swedenborg to the socioreligious system in which he belongs.

By reading *Marriage* plates and images in the sequence in which they appear to have been written, we can see that plates 21-24 played a significant role in generating the subsequent plates and units. We begin to see in detail how the images, metaphors, and themes of one plate or set of plates are refigured in later plates, and how through the accruing of plates and their arrangement the *Marriage* creates new meanings. We can begin to understand Blake's complex and very personal attitude toward Swedenborg—and toward himself for momentarily being among Swedenborg's followers. In this ongoing study, I seek to trace Swedenborg's influence in even greater detail. I also seek to show where and how Blake depicts his life as a printmaker and his ideas about books, reading, imagination, and perception. To trace these ideas and topics through the *Marriage* as it evolved is to witness Blake's mind at work

APPENDIX

There are nine complete copies of the *Marriage*, copies A-I. I have examined all of these copies but have complete sets of plate measurements from only five (A, C, D, F, G). These five represent four different printing methods. Copies A and C (along with copies B and H) were printed on both sides of their leaves and lightly washed, c. 1790; copy D was minimally color printed on large sheets of paper on one side of the leaves, c. 1795; copies E and F were color printed from both levels of the plates on one side of the paper, c. 1794; and copy G was printed with plate borders on one side of leaves, c. 1818. Copy I was printed in the same style as copy G in 1827. Copy K refers to the first printing of plates 21-24; copy L refers to the second separate printing of plates 25-27.

The measurements, in centimeters, are given for all four sides (*Top*, *Bottom*, *Left*, and *Right*); unrecorded measurements for a side mean that the plate's embossment is too faint to be read.

The plate are reconfigured into seven sheets (I-VII) and sequenced according to sets A, B, and C:

I	II	III	IV	V
22 24∇	12 x	2 3	6 7	15 9
∇23 21	x 13∇	1 5	∇8 11	14 10∇
VI	II	VII		
17 16	x 27∇	25 26		
19 18∇	20 x	—		

Tables of plate measurements begin on the next page; diagrams 1–3 follow the tables. The symbol ∇ indicates that a plate fits upside down.

Marriage copies

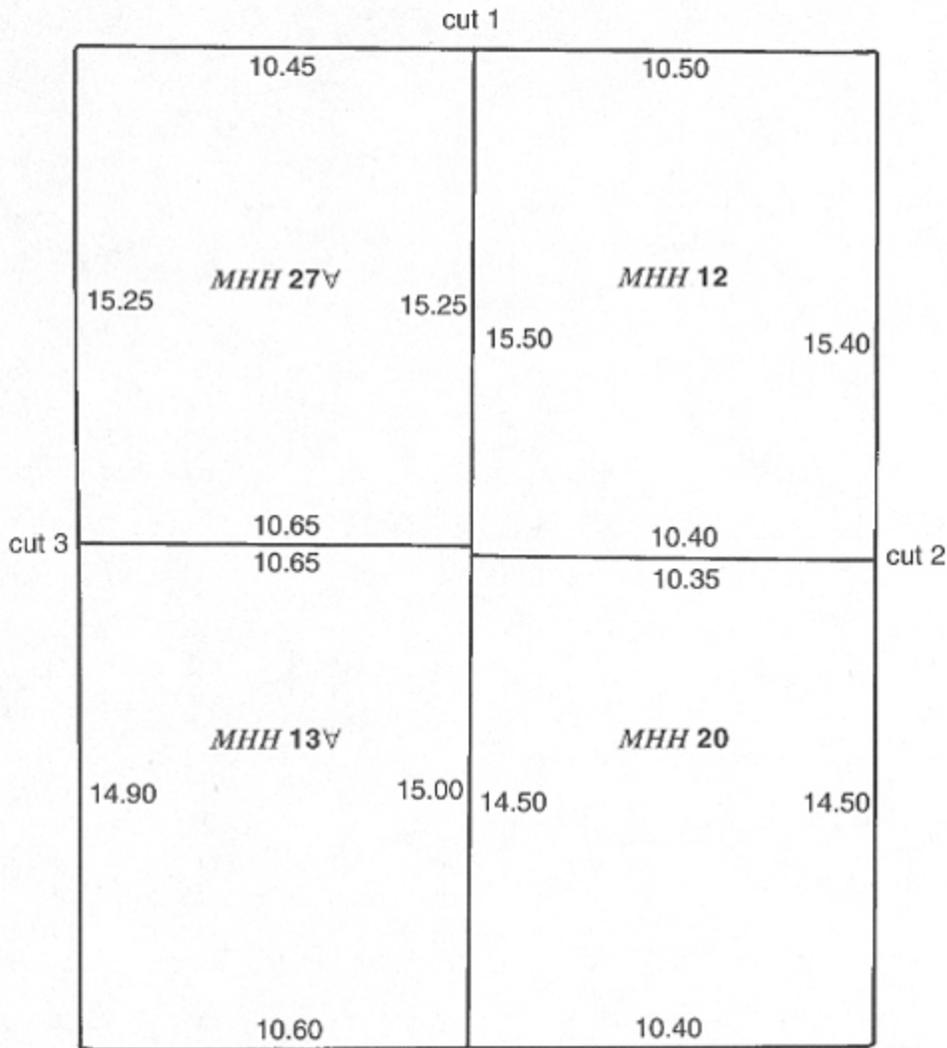
	A	C	D	F	G	K
Sheet I						
21 T	10.80	10.90	10.80	10.90	10.90	—
21 B	10.80	10.90	10.80	10.85	10.85	10.70
21 L	15.30	15.30	15.15	15.15	15.20	15.20
21 R	15.40	15.40	15.20	15.30	15.30	15.30
22 T	10.75	10.80	10.80	10.85	10.90	—
22 B	10.85	10.85	10.85	10.90	10.95	10.75?
22 L	14.95	14.95	14.75	14.90	14.90	14.70?
22 R	15.00	14.95	14.80	14.90	14.90	14.75?
23 T	10.10	10.10	10.05	10.10	10.15	10.00
23 B	10.05	10.10	9.95	10.02	10.10	10.00
23 L	15.25?	15.20	15.15	15.10	15.15	15.10
23 R	15.15	15.15?	14.95?	15.10	15.05	15.00?
24 T	10.00	10.00	9.95	10.00	10.00	9.90
24 B	9.95	9.95	9.85	9.90	9.90	9.80
24 L	14.80	14.80	14.60	14.70	14.70	14.80
24 R	14.95	14.90	14.75	14.80	14.82	14.85
Sheet II						
12 T	10.40	10.45	10.40	10.40	10.50	—
12 B	10.35	10.40	10.40	10.30	10.40	—
12 L	15.35	15.45	15.30	15.25?	15.40	—
12 R	15.45	15.55	15.30	15.25?	15.50	—
13 T	10.45	10.50	10.45	10.50	10.60	—
13 B	10.55	10.70	10.55	10.60	10.65	—
13 L	15.05	15.05	14.90?	15.00	15.00	—
13 R	15.05	15.05	14.80	15.00	14.90	—
20 T	10.30	10.35	10.30	10.30	10.35	—
20 B	10.35	10.40	10.35	10.40	10.40	—
20 L	14.50	14.55	14.40	14.50	14.50	—
20 R	14.50	14.60	14.45	14.50	14.50	—

	A	C	D	F	G	L
27 T	10.55	10.70	10.55	10.60	10.65	10.70
27 B	10.40	10.50	10.40	10.45	10.45	10.52
27 L	—	15.30	15.15	15.25	15.25	15.10
27 R	—	15.40?	15.15	15.30?	15.25	15.18
Sheet III						
1 T	10.10	10.20	10.15	10.20	10.25	—
1 B	10.40	10.40	10.40	10.40	10.45	—
1 L	15.25	15.15	10.10	15.25	—	—
1 R	15.25	15.15	15.10	15.20	—	—
2 T	10.25	10.30?	10.28	10.25	10.30	—
2 B	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.33	—
2 L	15.20	15.15	15.05	15.00	15.10	—
2 R	15.10	15.10	14.95	15.05	15.00	—
3 T	10.85	10.85	10.85	10.90	10.95	—
3 B	10.90	10.91	10.90	10.95	11.00	—
3 L	15.50	15.40	15.40	15.40	15.40	—
3 R	15.40	15.35	15.20	15.30	15.28	—
5 T	—	10.90	10.90	10.80	11.00	—
5 B	—	10.75	10.70	10.60	10.75	—
5 L	—	15.00	14.85	14.80	15.00	—
5 R	15.00	15.00	—	14.80	15.00	—
Sheet IV						
6 T	—	10.10	10.10	10.05	10.15	—
6 B	—	10.20	10.10	10.10	10.20	—
6 L	—	15.10	15.05	15.00	15.15	—
6 R	—	15.10	15.00	15.00	15.10	—
11 T	9.90	10.00	9.90	9.90	10.10	—
11 B	—	9.95	9.90	9.90	10.05	—
11 L	—	15.00	14.90	14.90	15.05	—
11 R	—	14.95	14.80	14.80	14.95	—

	A	C	D	F	G
Sheet IV (continued)					
7 T	—	10.40	10.35	10.30	10.50
7 B	—	10.25	10.30	10.20	10.30
7 L	—	15.15	15.00	15.00	15.15
7 R	—	15.10	14.95	14.85?	15.10
8 T	10.40	10.40	10.30	10.30	10.45
8 B	10.30	10.40	10.25	10.35?	10.35
8 L	14.90	15.10	14.90	15.00	14.95
8 R	15.00	15.05	14.90	15.00	14.95
Sheet V					
9 T	10.15	10.20	—	10.20	10.30
9 B	10.10	10.15	—	10.10	10.20
9 L	15.15	15.10	—	15.10	15.15
9 R	15.15	15.20	—	15.10	15.15
10 T	10.20	10.30	10.30	10.20	10.35
10 B		10.20	10.10	10.10	10.20
10 L	14.95?	15.15	14.95	14.90	15.05
10 R	15.05	15.15	14.95	14.90	15.05
14 T	10.25	10.25	10.15	10.25	10.30
14 B	10.00?	10.10	10.00	10.10	10.10
14 L	15.00	15.00	14.80	14.90	14.95
14 R	15.10	15.10	14.85	15.00	15.05
15 T	10.25	10.30	10.25	10.30	10.35
15 B	10.25	10.35?	10.25	10.30	10.30
15 L	15.00	15.10	14.85	14.95	14.95
15 R	15.00	15.10	14.85	14.95	14.95

	A	C	D	F	G	L
Sheet VI						
16 T	—	10.30	—	10.25	—	—
16 B	—	10.30	—	10.25	—	—
16 L	—	16.80	—	16.60	—	—
16 R	—	16.65	—	16.45	—	—
17 T	—	10.35?	—	10.20	—	—
17 B	—	10.25	—	10.20	—	—
17 L	—	16.75	—	16.55	—	—
17 R	—	16.80	—	16.60	—	—
18 T	—	10.30	—	10.30	—	—
18 B	—	10.30	—	10.30	—	—
18 L	—	16.40	—	16.30	—	—
18 R	—	16.50	—	16.40	—	—
19 T	—	10.35	—	10.30	—	—
19 B	—	10.35	—	10.30	—	—
19 L	—	16.60	—	16.55	—	—
19 R	—	16.55	—	16.50	—	—
Sheet VII						
25 T	10.35	10.40	10.30	10.30	10.40	10.50
25 B	10.45	10.50	10.45	10.30	10.50	10.60
25 L	14.70	14.80	14.70	14.75?	14.80	14.52
25 R	14.70	14.90	14.70	14.70	14.80	14.60
26 T	10.45	10.50	10.45	10.45	10.50	10.52
26 B	10.45	10.45	10.40	10.40	10.45	10.50
26 L	14.85	14.90	14.70	14.80	14.85	14.56
26 R	14.85	14.90	14.65	14.80	14.85	14.52
Sheet used for <i>The</i>						
4 T	9.90	10.10	9.90	10.00	10.05	—
4 B	10.10	10.20	10.10	10.20	10.20	—
4 L	13.60	13.65	13.55	13.50	13.654	—
4 R	13.55	13.65	15.50	13.50	13.65	—

Diagram 1



Sheet size in cm

T: 21.25 B: 21.02 R: 29.80 L: 29.95

Diagram 2

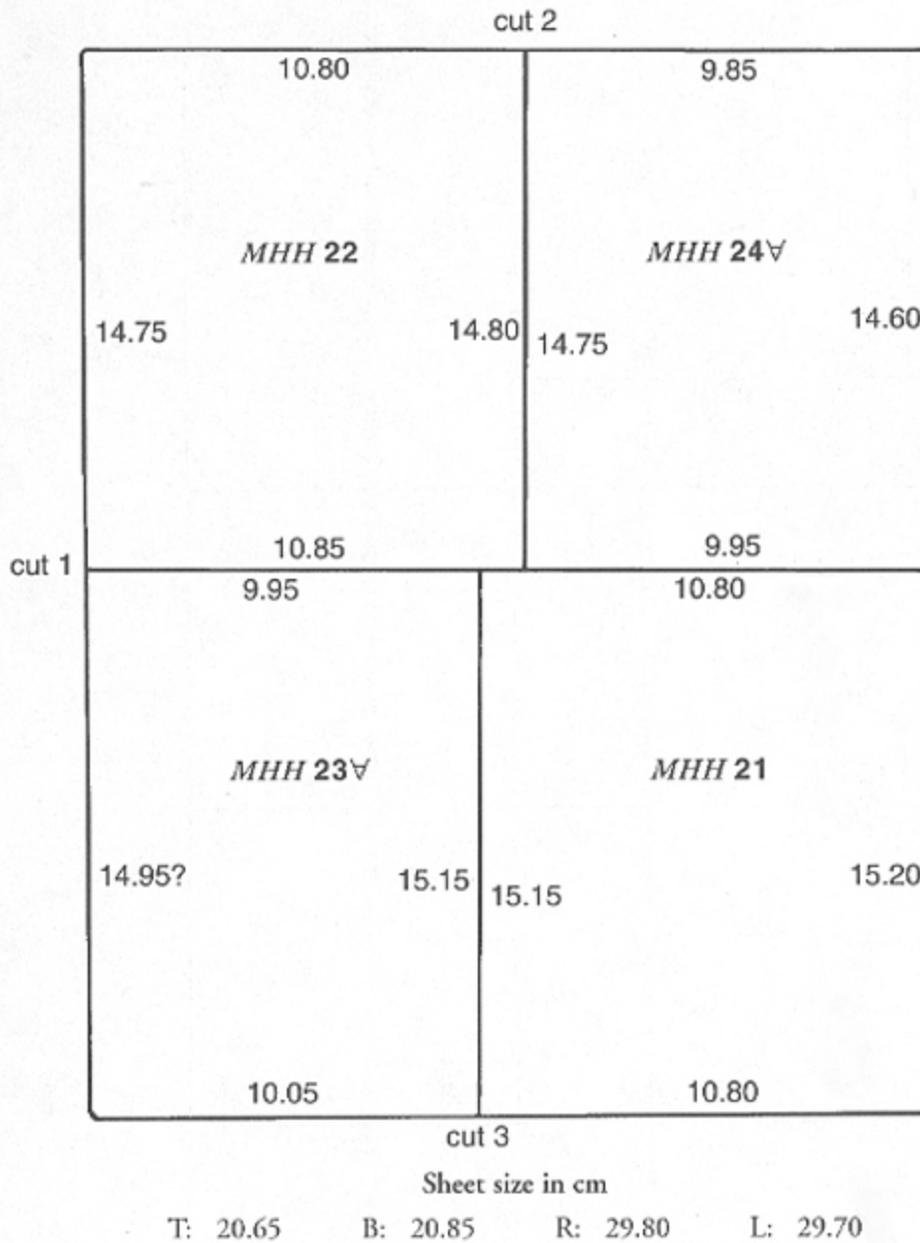
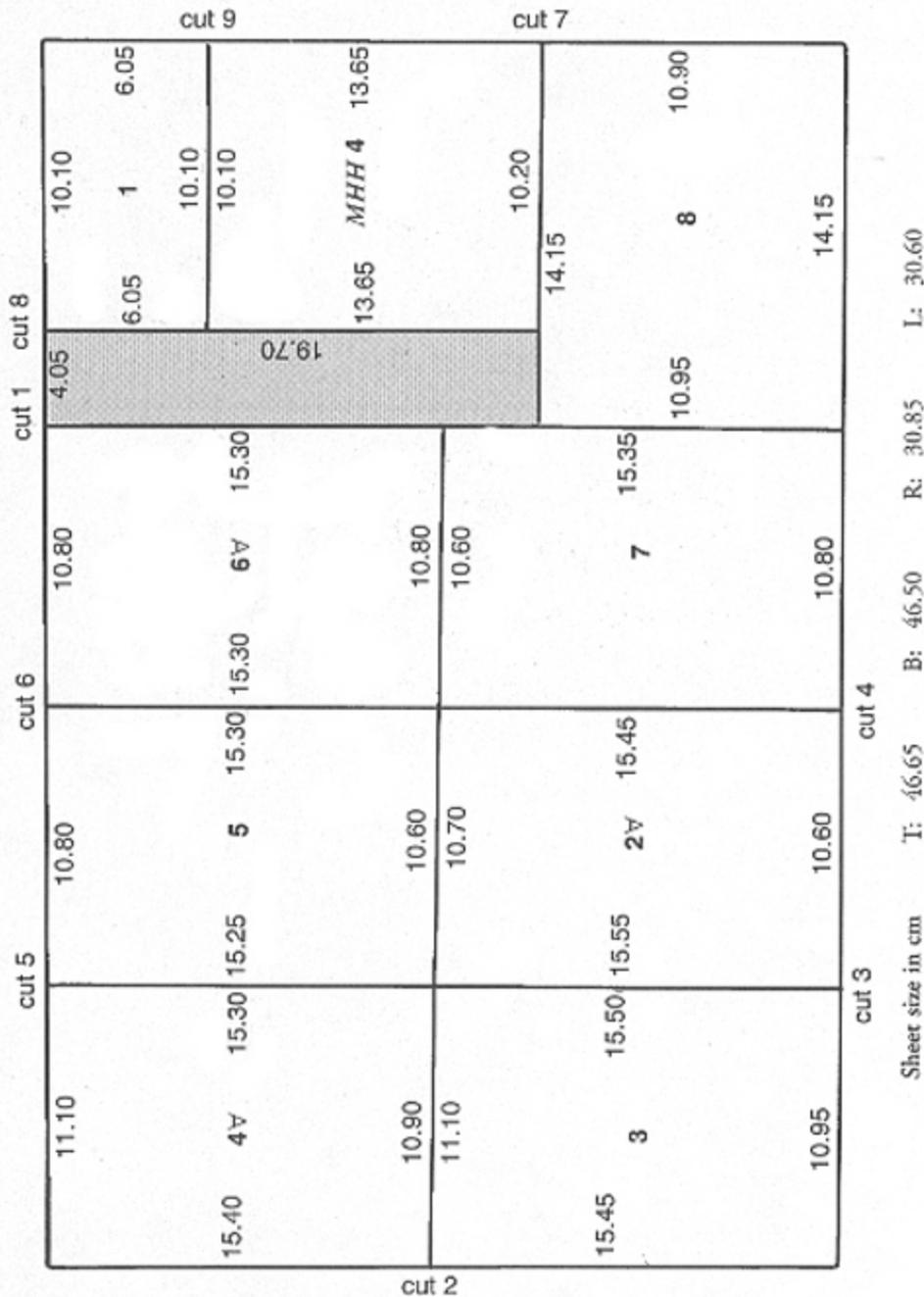


Diagram 3



ILLUSTRATIONS

1. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy K, plate 24, first state. Fitzwilliam Museum.
2. Notebook, page 44, vignette used for plate 24 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. The British Library, ADD 49460.
3. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy C, plate 24, second state. Pierpont Morgan Library, PML 17599.
4. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy L, plates 26-27. Robert N. Essick Collection.

5. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy K, plate 21, first state. Fitzwilliam Museum.
6. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy C, plate 7, detail. Pierpont Morgan Library, PML 17599.
7. *Jerusalem*, Copy I, plate 47, detail. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress.
8. *The Approach of Doom*. British Museum Print Room.
9. *The Book of Urizen* copy B, plate 27. Pierpont Morgan Library, PML 63139.
10. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* copy C, plate 4. Pierpont Morgan Library, PML 17559.

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NOTES

[*] *Huntington Library Quarterly* 58.3&4 (1997): 281-344.

[1] The thirteen textual units correspond to plates 1, 2, 3, 4, 5-7, 7-10, 11, 12-13, 14, 15, 16-20, 21-24, 25-27. If one treats the "Notes" on plates 6, 19, and 24 as separate textual units, which I do not, the number of units is sixteen.

[2] For a brief overview of the various classifications given the *Marriage* and the quotations above, see Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi, eds., *The Early Illuminated Books* (Princeton, N.J., 1993), 116-18; page references are given hereafter in the text.

[3] Descriptions of the form of the *Marriage* from Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake*, 2 vols. (1863; 2d ed., London, 1880), 1:78; S. Foster Damon, *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* (London, 1924); and Michael Ferber, *The Poetry of William Blake* (London, 1991).

[4] The terms "bibliographical code" and "linguistic code" are Jerome McGann's and refer, respectively, to the material and conceptual dimensions of a book that together constitute textuality. See *The Textual Condition* (Princeton, N.J., 1991), 13-16.

[5] The second essay of this study, entitled "The Lessons of Swedenborg: or, the Origin of William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*," is in Robert Gleckner and Thomas Pfau, eds., *Lessons of Romanticism*, forthcoming from Duke University Press. The third essay, entitled "In the Caves of Heaven and Hell: Swedenborg and Printmaking in Blake's *Marriage*," is in David Worrall and Steve Clark, eds., *Blake in the Nineties* forthcoming from Macmillan, United Kingdom.

[6] *Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, newly rev. ed., ed. David V. Erdman, with commentary by Harold Bloom (New York, 1988), 801 (hereafter cited in the text and in subsequent notes as "E"); and G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books: Annotated Catalogues of William Blake's Writings in Illuminated Printing* (Oxford, 1977).

[7] On plate 3, Blake confidently asserts that "it is now thirty-three years since [the] advent" of "a new heaven," echoing Swedenborg's *A Treatise Concerning the Last Judgment and The Destruction of Babylon* (1758; English trans., 1788), n. 61. Closer to home, it echoes propositions 38, 39, and 40 of the *Circular Letter* sent on 7 December 1788 to "all the readers of the Theological Writings of the Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg" (reprinted in *Blake and Swedenborg: Opposition is True Friendship*, ed. Harvey Bellin and Darrell Ruhl [New York, 1985], 122-25. The *Circular Letter's* forty-two propositions were resolved unanimously at the First General conference, held 13-17 April 1789, which Blake and his wife attended; and the thirty-two resolutions were published as part of the conference's *Minutes* by Robert Hindmarsh in 1789 (reprinted in *Blake and Swedenborg*, ed. Bellin and Ruhl; page references to the

Circular Letter and the *Minutes* are given both in the text and in subsequent notes). Resolution 25, summarizing propositions 38-40, states: "That . . . the Second Advent of the Lord, which is a Coming in the internal sense of his Holy Word, has already commenced, and ought to be announced to all the world. That this Second Advent involves two things, namely, the Last Judgment, or Destruction of the Old Church, which was accomplished in the Spiritual World in the year 1757, and the consequent Formation or Establishment of the New Church" (*Minutes*, 128). Thirty-three years from 1757 dates the "now" of Blake's passage at 1790. The date 1790, to be precise, would apply to the set of plates that plate 3 belongs to (see below); plates produced earlier may have come before 1790, as I speculated in *Blake and the Idea of the Book* (Princeton, N.J., 1993), 237. But this is unlikely because text on plates 21-24 echoes passages from the first issue of *The New Jerusalem Magazine* and in the *Analytical Review*, vol. 5., both of 1790 (see Viscomi, "Lessons of Swedenborg").

[8] Robert N. Essick, *William Blake's Commercial Book Illustrations* (Oxford, 1989).

[9] See Jon Mee, *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (Oxford, 1992), 3; and Edward Larrissy, *William Blake* (Oxford, 1985), 90.

[10] See Robert N. Essick, "Representation, Anxiety, and the Bibliographic Sublime" (forthcoming in *Huntington Library Quarterly*).

[11] At the conference on which this volume is based, Jerome McGann questioned these statements about letterpress printing, citing Rossetti's *Poems* (1870): while it was in production, Rossetti altered its text and page order numerous times. I do not doubt it, nor do I doubt that his compositors and publisher acted with restraint and patience. The economics of publishing and printing made legible and finished manuscripts (even in serial publication) self-evidently necessary. Continuous revision is costly: it takes up time, keeps type out of production, and can reduce the number of books the press will produce. Publishers can be forgiven, then, for wanting to prevent authors from using the printing process as we use computer printouts, endlessly proofing and changing our ideas once in material contact with them. McGann, of course, knows this, and so while we did not pursue the full significance of the Rossetti's exceptional practice, I must assume that he presented it not to challenge this characterization of the letterpress paradigm but to challenge the idea that letterpress printing and illuminated printing differ only in that the first divides invention and execution while the second combines them. He is right to suspect more essential differences. Although undivided labor indeed provided Blake with creative opportunities unavailable to other writers, what truly differentiates these two modes of production is that one is mechanical and the other is autographic. One requires reconstructing text with discrete pieces of metal type set in formes; the other extends the skills of writing and drawing, as Blake claims in his prospectus for the illuminated books (E 692-93). Dividing the labor of writing and execution reflects two very different ways of thinking about the text, a difference becoming increasingly blurred as we move from pens to typewriters to computers with numerous fonts and page-making programs.

I wonder if Rossetti would have made as many alterations if he was the one resetting type. In theory, letterpress printing has the potential of being part of a writer's composing process, a potential typically thwarted by economically grounded practice. But most authors, from poet to historian, pamphleteer to scientist, would no doubt correct proofs against manuscript and not vice versa because they thought in terms of writing and not in terms of typesetting and printing. (A fascinating exception to this rule is Laurence Sterne's *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, which unites bibliographical and linguistic codes for mutual support, as is brilliantly demonstrated by Essick's "Representation, Anxiety, and the Bibliographic Sublime.") The difference between letterpress and illuminated printing can be framed in terms of a medium's propensity versus what can be forced on or from it. That propensity is shaped by tools and the physical acts these media require, as well as by tradition and convention. The pen, brushes, and ink (albeit acid-resistant) of illuminated printing are the tools of writing and drawing, and writing and drawing are the paradigms that enabled Blake to use his new graphic medium as part of

the composing process.

[12] The theory of transferred texts was developed by Ruthven Todd with Stanley Hayter in 1948 ("The Techniques of William Blake's Illuminated Printing," *Print Collector's Quarterly* 29 [1948]: 25-36). It was not seriously challenged until 1980, when Robert N. Essick, in *William Blake, Printmaker* (Princeton, N.J., 1980) argued for the likelihood that Blake wrote his texts directly on the plates, backward (pp. 89-91). Even after this, the theory of transferred text (especially the assumptions upon which it is predicated) was still widely accepted, which is why in *Blake and the Idea of the Book I* undertook to show that it was not only aesthetically clumsy but also technically impossible in light of actual composition and illuminated book production (as opposed to that of individual plates). Below I summarize chapters 1-4 from that book.

[13] Todd, "Illuminated Printing," 34.

[14] Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake*, 1: 69.

[15] Such decisions included where text would be positioned on the plate. When space was not a problem, Blake would begin the first plate of a section or unit with a vignette and, if space permitted, he also end with one. He would also begin texts that he knew would run short with vignettes (e.g., *Marriage* plate 3). But when the fit looked tight, he would begin writing at the top of the plate (e.g., plates 12-13). Blake may have given the text for plates 21-24 four plates to keep it from being cramped, but this also may be a sign of Blake intended a four-page pamphlet, that is, intended to print on a conjunct sheet of paper that could be folded into a pamphlet. The first printing of plates 21-24 was in fact printed in this format (see below).

[16] That Blake had the *Marriage* committed to memory and thus could start wherever he wished is highly unlikely. While mentally constructing and then recording text proved an effective mode of composing for Milton and Wordsworth, it seems very unlikely to have been employed by a poet whose memory was remarkable but who appeared disinclined to use it consciously for composing text: Blake spoke of writing "from immediate Dictation twelve or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time without Premeditation & even against my Will" (E 729); and of writing "when commanded by the spirits and the moment I have written I see the words fly abo[u]t the room in all directions—It is then published and the Spirits can read—My MSS [are] of no further use" (G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* [Oxford 1969], 322). Thus he appears to acknowledge an immediacy to his composing that undermines the hypothesis that he may have invented lengthy texts entirely in his head before executing them.

[17] Emmanuel Swedenborg, *True Christian Religion*, 3d ed. (London, 1795), n. 779.

[18] See Robert Hindmarsh, *Rise and Progress of the New Jerusalem*, ed. Edward Madeley (London, 1861), 7.

[19] Hindmarsh listed Swedenborg's books in translation, in Latin, and in press at the end of pamphlets and books. He began advertising *The Wisdom of Angels Concerning Divine Providence* in 1789 as "Now in Press . . . 6s. to subscribers and 7s.6d. to nonsubscribers." It was published in 1790. Unlike the other Swedenborgian books he read, Blake annotated his copy of *The Wisdom of Angels* very critically (see Viscomi, "The Lessons of Swedenborg"). He also priced *Marriage* 7s.6d. (E 693).

[20] *Marriage* copy K is now bound, but whether the paper was conjunct or not must be inferred. It now appears that its plates were printed on both sides of two similarly sized leaves, but this is unlikely, since both leaves share the same bottom-deckled edge and have the same inside measurement—that is, are the same height at the fold in the binding—but have slightly different outside measurements. (The left side

of the half-sheet is 24.5 cm; the middle, at the fold, is 23.85 cm; the right edge is 23.7 cm; the top is 29.2 cm; and the bottom is 28.95 cm.) It seems more likely that Blake used a slightly uneven sheet of paper cut approximately 24 by 29 cm from a much larger sheet (Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book*, 394 n. 11); when folded, it formed a neat pamphlet of four pages without needing to be professionally bound. *Marriage* copy L, which consists only of plates 25-27 ("A Song of Liberty"), provides another example of this style of printing, since it too was printed on one sheet of paper folded in half to form a pamphlet (see note 22).

[21] By "plate borders" I mean the thin relief line surrounding the illuminated plate that was created where the edges of the plate were covered by strips of wax in order to "dike" the acid that was poured on the plate's surface. The portion of metal covered by the wax was protected and thus, like the acid-resistant text and design, remained in relief. Blake used the borders as part of the overall relief-line system that supported the ink dabber, preventing it from touching and thereby blemishing the shallows, which were designed to remain white, that is unprinted.

[22] The untraced *Marriage* copy M is described in the 15 March 1918 Christie's catalogue, lot 198, as missing the last eight lines on plate 27—that is, the "Chorus." This absence suggests that the plate was in its first state, with the bottom third of the plate still unetched. As in the first state of plate 24 in *Marriage* copy K, the unetched area would have remained in relief and would have had to have been either wiped of ink or masked over with paper during printing. Plate 25 in Copy M is presumably in its first state. Like copy L, copy M was printed in black ink and was uncolored. It is described in the Christie's catalogue as "octavo," whereas copy L was described as "quarto." These descriptions do not refer to printing formats, and the different descriptions do not necessarily mean that copies L and M were different sizes or that the latter was not also printed as a pamphlet or on laid paper. What the Christie's cataloguer considered "octavo" is not known, nor is it known whether copy M was trimmed.

[23] The model for "Song," at least in tone, may have been the "Song of Deborah" in Judges 4, as pointed out to me by Morton Paley. The oracular tone and mood, though, also points to Blake's *French Revolution*, which Blake was presumably writing at the time; it is dated in proofs "1791" (possibly a projected date), and printed as a sixteen-page pamphlet. Its pages were stabbed through three holes like an illuminated book.

[24] *Analytical Review* 5 (1789), 382.

[25] E. P. Thompson notes that "against the argument that this is not Blake's voice but a provocative voice reading Swedenborg in an 'infernal' sense...it should be recalled that he was to rework many of the same themes some years later and in his own voice in 'The Everlasting Gospel'" (see E. P. Thompson, *Witness against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law* [Cambridge, 1993], 173). I concur. While it is safe to define the various "I's" of the *Marriage* as narrators, personas, or speakers, and not Blake himself—in that language itself prevents it from being otherwise and the visions depicted are fictitious—I refer to the speaker of plates 21-24 as Blake because the Bible of Hell he announced as forthcoming was Blake's as was the personal anger and disappointment with Swedenborg. The tone resembles that found in Blake's private writings—particularly the satiric verses and epigrams—the Public Address, and the prefaces in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. Blake's speaker is a mask, but it is the mask of authority that Blake wears presenting himself as critic and equal of Swedenborg; he continues to do so, I believe, in the subsequently composed episodes and Memorable Fancies, where the speaker identifies himself as a printmaker and writer who believes in Poetic Genius and his own prophetic role. The distance between speaker and author is always a matter for critical debate; here I consider it quite narrow, deliberately transparent—as is appropriate for a manifesto or prophetic proclamation—and playful. For the view that Blake never "speaks straight" see Harold Bloom, "Dialectic of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*," in Bloom, ed., *William Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (New York,

1987); and for the view that the *Marriage* lacks an authoritative voice, see Robert F. Gleckner, *Blake and Spenser* (Baltimore and London, 1985), 71-116; and Andrew M. Cooper, *Doubt and Identity in Romantic Poetry* (New Haven, Conn., 1988). See also n. 51 below.

[26] These four parts represent Aristotle's reduction of the seven parts of the classical oration; see Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968).

[27] David V. Erdman, "Dating Blake's Script," *Blake Newsletter* 3 (1969): 8-13 at 12; see also E 801; and Bentley's counterargument, "Blake's Sinister 'g,' from 1789-93 to ?1803," *Blake Newsletter* 3 (1969): 43-45.

[28] Blake also used the right-serifed *g* for "A Divine Image" and "To Tirzah," two poems intended for the *Songs of Experience* (1794). Erdman dates the former poem circa 1790-1791 because of the lettering style. I would suggest circa 1789-1790, and that the origin of "A Divine Image" lies in Blake's rejection of Swedenborg. The poem's counterpart, "The Divine Image" in *Innocence*, appears to be a "simple and orthodox statement of the central doctrine of the New Church" (Kathleen Raine, the Swedenborgian Songs," in Harvey Bellin and Darrell Ruhl, eds., *Blake and Swedenborg: Opposition is True Friendship* [New York, 1985], 78); but it too may be anti-Swedenborgian; see Thompson *Witness against the Beast*, 146—a thesis supported by Erdman's hypothesis that *Innocence* was issued later than its 1789 date (E 791). If so, the poem and its *Experience* counterpart may be closer to the date of plates 21-24, in which there are clear echoes of the early 1790 issues of the *New Jerusalem Magazine* and reviews of Swedenborg in mid-1790 issues of *Analytical Review* (see Viscomi, "Lessons of Swedenborg").

Erdman dates "To Tirzah" post-1803 (E 800), the date he believes Blake returned to his right-serifed *g*, while Bentley dates it 1797 (*Blake Books* 414-17). If the lettering styles indicate dating parameters and do not overlap, then both of these dates are incorrect. The poem appears in copies of *Songs* printed circa 1795 (Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book*, chap. 29) and was most likely written around the time of "A Divine Image." Both poems express anti-Swedenborgian sentiments (see Thompson, *Witness against the Beast*, 149) and could have been written as early as circa 1789-90. Both were executed on the versos of *Innocence* poems: "To Tirzah" is on the verso of "A Cradle Song" plate 1, and "A Divine Image" is on the verso of "Infant Joy." Bentley recognized the first pair, but recorded "The Sick Rose" as being on the verso of "Infant Joy" (*Blake Books* 382). A close examination of the shapes of the plates, however, reveals that this is impossible and that "A Divine Image" is on the verso.

[29] Erdman, "Dating Blake's Script," 12.

[30] Erdman also states that *Thel* plate 8 is probably a replacement for "an earlier version" (E 790); it is also clear here that he thinks that the composing and etching of illuminated books are sequential (and presumably causal) events.

[31] Plate 7 is the only plate within a textual unit without a catchword. It is an odd omission in an otherwise consistent pattern, but the omission does not support Erdman's argument that the plate was a replacement—he calls the first rightward *g* a mistake ("Dating Blake's Script," 12; cf. Bentley, "Sinister 'g,'" 44)—because a replacement would have been able to include the first word of the subsequent plate.

[32] Other illuminated plates engraved over erased designs include *Jerusalem* plate 96, engraved over the advertisement for "Moore & Co"; see David V. Erdman, "The Suppressed and Altered Passages in Blake's *Jerusalem*," *Studies in Bibliography* 17 (1964): 1-54 at 36-37). *On Homers Poetry* appears also to have been etched over a used plate (Bentley, *Blake Books*, 335), as were two of the *Job* plates (G. E. Bentley, Jr., "Blake's *Job* Copperplates," *Library* 26 [1971]: 234-41).

[33] Ernest Lumsden, *The Art of Etching* (London, 1925), 28.

[34] *The Approach of Doom* exists as a unique impression; had various impressions been pulled from this plate as from the *Urizen* plates, they would no doubt vary, and one of them may have been even closer in size and shape to the four combined *Urizen* plates.

[35] The quartering of *Doom* also reveals that Blake did not bevel his relief plates or carefully round their corners. In intaglio graphics, because of the great pressure required to transfer an incised design to paper, rough and unbeveled edges and sharp corners could easily rip the paper (at worst) or produce an aesthetically distracting platemark (at best). Because printing pressure in relief graphics is minimal, Blake did not need to worry about pronounced platemarks or ripping his paper. Hence, he cut his plates and left them as cut, presumably removing any remaining burr but not beveling the sides. Leaving the edges of plates rough, a feature that now assists in reconstructing the sheets, saved time and labor and thus made practical sense. But Blake behaved the same way with some of his intaglio plates, like those in *The Book of Ahania* and *The Book of Los*.

Bentley states that the versos of the *Ahania* plates were used for the *Los* plates (*Blake Books*, 113), and I had concurred, adding that the six *Ahania* plates came from the recto of one sheet of copper (*Blake and the Idea of the Book*, 414 n. 26). Upon closer examination of *Ahania* and *Los*, however, I realize that Bentley and I were mistaken. The six plates constituting *Ahania* came from one beveled sheet of copper quartered, with plates 1 and 2 (title and frontispiece) on the versos of plates 6 and 3 respectively. The five plates of *Los* are quarters from a beveled sheet the same size, with plate 1 (title) on the verso of plate 4. This configuration makes much more sense than the one I first proposed, because the designs executed on the versos of plates are without text and were heavily color printed, which would hide any scratches picked up during production, whereas text plates would have their white background jeopardized. The sheets used for *Ahania* and *Los* had four rounded corners and can be reconstructed because each of their quarters has one round corner. What is so surprising is that Blake, contrary to graphic conventions, did not proceed to round the three other corners of each intaglio plate. He left them sharp or cut off (or pounded down) their points, but made no effort to file them round or to bevel the edges. It is this cavalier attitude toward his printing that earned him Muir's dubious compliment, that he was a printmaker who of displayed "skilled carelessness" (G. E. Bentley, Jr., "Blake Had No...Quaritch': The Sale of William Muir's Blake Facsimiles," *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 27 [summer 1993]: 4-13 at 6).

[36] The plate sizes recorded by Bentley (*Blake Books*, 67-70) and David Bindman (*The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake* [London, 1978]) differ from one another because different books were measured and because different papers shrink differently. But neither set of measurements can be used to reconstruct sheets because each set includes measurements for the top and right margins only; this yields an accurate sense of the plate's size but not a record of its shape.

[37] This information, along with the variance among impressions, is also used to identify the pairs of plates etched recto-verso. The plates were flipped over either vertically or horizontally. To verify pairs, I traced a platemark of one plate, flipped the tracing over vertically or horizontally, and laid it on the platemark of the second plate. If the two plates were etched recto-verso, the platemarks match. (My list of paired *Marriage* and *Urizen* plates differs only slightly from Bentley's; see note 38.) What is not reliable is the shape of the corners. They help in reconstructing the sheet, but because plates are three-dimensional objects, a plate's corner can be pounded down so that it prints roundish, while the same corner from the verso will print square, thereby producing a difference that does not necessarily prove different plates.

[38] *Marriage* plates 1, 3, 4, 11, and 23 appear not to have been used for *Urizen*. *Blake Books* adds *Marriage* plate 19 to this list, but plate 19, according to its shape and tracings (see note 37), was more likely paired with *Urizen* plate 21, which Bentley lists as being paired with *Marriage* plate 16 (pp. 166-

67). *Urizen* plate 2, which Bentley lists as having no pair, is probably on the verso of *Marriage* plate 16. Bentley also suggests that *Urizen* plates 12 and 22 and plates 17 and 26 are recto-verso. This is possible, but these paired plates may also have been halves of a sheet, which is especially likely for the latter pair, since their width across the middle differs by two mm. From a printing perspective, it makes more sense to have two separate plates to ink than one that had to be turned over during the printing session. Only *Urizen* plates 6 and 19 have no match whatever; the latter has a platemaker's mark (in the rock to the left of the woman's leg), which Blake designed around and gouged out. Apparently, plate 19 is on the verso of a used plate. As will be shown, the *Marriage* plates not used for *Urizen* came from three different sheets; they may have been unused because of irregularities in the copper or because they contained deeply stamped platemaker's marks, or marks less advantageously placed. (On Blake's ability to conceal or incorporate such platemaker's marks in his *Europe* designs, see Michael Tolley, "The Auckland Blakes," *Bibliography and Australian Notes and Queries* 25, no. 2 [1967]:6-16.)

[39] In "The Caves of Heaven and Hell", I suggest that plate 11 appears to have been inspired by four topics: Adam's return to paradise, Reason's usurpation of desire, heaven's derivation from the "Abyss," and misreadings of Milton's poetry (plates 3, 5-6). It appears also to have been influenced by the narrator's trip into the fires of creativity and the devil's message about "immense worlds of delight" possibly "clos'd by your senses five" (plates 6-7). All of these ideas figure into Blake's version of a much discussed subject, the origin of organized religion. Blake locates the origin in systematic misreadings of the ancient "poetic tales" by the "Priesthood," whose misreading resulted in the usurpation of our original and creative powers of perception.

[40] The plate order of *Marriage* copy G, printed circa 1818, differs from all other copies. It is 1-11, 15, 14, 12, 13, 16-27. Copy G still retains the statement-narrative (or introduction, followed by Memorable Fancy) structure, but plate 11 introduces the Memorable Fancy found on plate 15, and plate 14 introduces the Memorable Fancy found on plates 12-13. This shift in the position of plates 12-13 is consistent with the hypothesis that they were not originally conceived with plate 11.

[41] Two of the three sheets of copper were old, as is indicated by traces of earlier etchings in the *Urizen* plates (4 and 7) that are on the versos of the *Marriage* plates (10 and 8).

[42] Memorable Relations "contain particular Accounts of what had been seen and heard by the Author in the spiritual World, and have in general some Reference to the Subjects of the Chapters preceding them" (translator's note, in Swedenborg's *True Christian Religion*).

[43] Swedenborg, *A Treatise Concerning Heaven and Hell* (1778; 2d ed., London, 1784), n. 76 and n. 254.

[44] *Apocalypse Revealed*, in *Swedenborg's Works*, Rotch Edition, 32 vols. (Boston and New York, 1907), vol. 28., n. 945. He appears to contradict this statement in *Arcana Coelestia*, n. 6212 (vol. 11 in *Swedenborg's Works*): "It is known from the Word that there was an influx from the world of spirits and from heaven into the Prophets, partly by dreams, partly by visions, and partly by speech; . . . and into their very gestures, thus into those things which are of the body; and that then they did not speak from themselves nor act from themselves, but from the spirits which then occupied their body. Some at such times conducted themselves like insane persons, as did Saul when he lay naked." See I Kings 19: 24; and compare Isaiah's going "naked and barefoot three years" (*Marriage* plate 13).

[45] *Arcana Coelestia*, in *Swedenborg's Works*, vol. 2, n. 920.

[46] According to W. M. Rossetti, Blake wrote on the verso of an undated drawing "in title-page form, 'The Bible of Hell, in Nocturnal Visions collected. Vol. I. Lambeth'" (Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake*, 2:

240.2). Blake moved to Lambeth in “late summer” or “autumn 1790” (Bentley, *Blake Records*, 559, 560). Untraced since 1876 (see Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawing of William Blake*, 2 vols. [New Haven, Conn., and London, 1981], 221v). This apparent sketch for a title page confirms that Blake intended “The Bible” to be a separate work, as announced in the *Marriage*. No such work is extant, but the phrase “visions collected” calls to mind “I collected some of their Proverbs” (plate 6), raising the possibility that *Hell's Bible* was its proverbs, that is, a collection of infernal truths or words to live by, or perhaps that it included the proverbs as part of its collection of sacred texts.

[47] The cave on plate 11 shows up in *Marriage* copies G and I, the last two copies printed, but the design was actually drawn on the copper plates and erased during printing. The same is true of the cave forms on plates 10, 15, and 20 (*Early Illuminated Books*, 135). I discuss these forms in “The Caves of Heaven and Hell.”

[48] *Marriage* copies B and H appear to have been the first copies of *Marriage* printed (Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book*, 259-61). Both have plates 25-27 in their final states, but in both copies these plates were printed 25/26, 27, and thus are not materially connected to the preceding plates. They could have been added afterward or printed with the plates as a supplementary text that became part of the *Marriage* when the larger work was collated and stabbed.

[49] The versos of the *Thel* plates were not used for any other known work. The original sheet may have been a used intaglio plate, with *Thel* on its verso. If so, the strip of copper approximately 4.05 by 19.7 cm left from cutting the sheet as proposed may have contained a platemaker’s mark that Blake could not work around. On the other hand, despite the excess copper, the configuration makes practical sense and reveals a consistent pattern of cutting wholes into one-third and two-thirds parts. In the first cut, two-thirds of the large sheet was cut off; this section (30.7 by 32.5 cm) was cut into six plates, which may have been all that Blake expected his narrative to require. The remaining third of the sheet (30.7 by 14.15 cm) was also cut into two pieces, a one-third piece (14.15 by 11.0 cm), which was used for *Thel* plate 8, and a two-thirds piece (19.7 by 14.15 cm). The latter piece was trimmed of 4 cm in its width, slightly less than a third, leaving a section (19.7 by 10.1 cm) that was cut into one-third (6.1 by 10.1 cm) and two-thirds pieces (13.60 by 10.1 cm). These are the sizes of *Thel* plate 1 and *Marriage* plate 4.

[50] In most impressions of plate 4, a chain was added to the man's ankle, which either echoes or anticipates the chaining of the Giants on plate 16. Perhaps the chain's absence on the copper plate signifies that the plate was executed before plate 16. Its addition to later impressions of plate 4 transforms an ironic image of a devilish father-figure welcoming or releasing a child—and/or a mother-figure catching or preventing her child from flying (as in the *Experience* frontispiece)—into the struggle angels perceive between “Good” and “Evil,” “Soul” and “Body,” and “Restraint” and “Energy.” It is also, for the reader, the struggle between Swedenborg and Blake, and the requisite oppression and demonization of the liberator. The watercolor and color-printed versions of the design, produced circa 1791 and 1795, respectively, have the chained ankle.

[51] John Howard notes the same, that the angels and devils are not equals, or “moral neuters,” and that Blake departed from moral neutrality once he used angels and devils for satirical purposes, with angels representing the orthodox and the object of Blake's attack (“An Audience for *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*,” *Blake Studies* 3 [1970]: 19-52 at 34). Leslie Tannenbaum agrees, arguing that Blake writes as a philosophical satirist to restore Poetic Genius to its “rightful hegemony” (see “Blake’s News from Hell: *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and the Lucianic Tradition,” *ELH* 43 [1976]: 88). Cooper, on the other hand, believes that the devil's inversion of established order reifies rather than overcomes that order (*Doubt and Identity in Romantic Poetry*, 47). Cooper, though, begins with a mistaken premise. He assumes that the devil and God are contraries, but if the devil is partisan, it is on the side of God, for Christ and Jehovah, Blake states, are of the devil's party: “the Jehovah of the Bible being no other than

he who dwells in flaming fire. Know that after Christ's death, he became Jehovah" (plate 6). Moreover, the "marriage," or coming together of angel and devil, on plates 22-24 results in conversion (plate 24), which renders suspect the idea that contraries are equal (see Viscomi, "The Caves of Heaven and Hell"). On Boehme's role in Blake's conception of contraries and the underlying complexities of that concept as used by Blake, see Leopold Damrosch Jr., "The Problem of Dualism," in Bloom, *William Blake's "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell"*; and Thompson, *Witness against the Beast*.

[52] On the polar nature of being, see Martin K. Nurmi, "Polar Being," in Bloom, *William Blake's "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,"* 59-71 at 59; we comment on the dialectical symmetry in *Early Illuminated Books*, 121.

[53] Robert N. Essick, *Blake and the Language of Adam* (Oxford, 1989), 170.