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HARMONIOUS THUNDERINGS

HARMONIOUS THUNDERINGS  
A Study of the Various Orderings  
of the Poems in the Copies of  
Songs of Innocence and of Experience

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## INTRODUCTION

In his manuscript draft of an addition to his catalogue of pictures--that addition commonly known as A Vision of the Last Judgment, Blake sets forth his understanding of his arts:

As Poetry admits not a Letter that is Insignificant,  
so Painting admits not a Grain of Sand or a Blade of  
Grass Insignificant--much less an Insignificant Blur  
or Mark.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in the study of both Blake's poetry and his painting (and his exquisite combination of the two, his illuminated books) extreme care must be taken to examine every detail and its relation to the whole. Such an approach forms the basis for David V. Erdman's The Illuminated Blake where each plate of the illuminated works are reproduced next to Professor Erdman's commentary on each, sometimes miniscule design that makes up the plate.<sup>2</sup> Such an approach forms the basis for Robert Gleckner's critical commentary on the poems of Songs of Innocence and of Experience in his The Piper and the Bard.<sup>3</sup> This study explores the application of this approach to the several different arrangements of the poems in the

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<sup>1</sup> William Blake, "A Vision of the Last Judgment," in Geoffrey Keynes, ed., William Blake: His Complete Poetry and Prose (London: The Nonesuch Library, 1967), p. 645.

<sup>2</sup> David V. Erdman, ed., The Illuminated Blake (New York: Anchor Books, 1974).

<sup>3</sup> Robert F. Gleckner, The Piper and the Bard (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1959); see especially page 63.

extant copies of the Songs.

Following this approach, I have found the placement of each poem in its poem series (the arrangement of the poems in the two books) to be highly significant and the arrangements themselves to be indicative of the evolution of Blake's thoughts. Utilising Keynes and Wolf's chronology of the copies more or less as it appears in their landmark bibliographical catalogue of the copies of Blake's illuminated works, William Blake's Illuminated Books: A Census,<sup>4</sup> I have charted in this study the development of the two primary ideas upon which Blake's mature philosophy is based-- the states of existence and the visionary process. In embryo the two ideas are based on the common Medieval and Renaissance motif of the ages of man; in the early copies of the Songs these two ideas are separated to join in the last copies in the figure of the redemptive Bard, the figure named Los-Urthona In Jerusalem and God in the fourteenth plate of the Illustrations of the Book of Job.

This unitive figure emerges from Blake's conception of the interrelation of innocence and Experience. In the early copies of the Songs and in those later copies that base their arrangements on thematic progressions first utilised in these early copies there is an emphasis on the contrariness or opposition (although they are not opposites) of Innocence and Experience; there is a separation between the objective Bard who strides forward into Experience and those subjective personalities

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Geoffrey Keynes and Edwin Wolf, II, William Blake's Illuminated Books: A Census (New York: The Grolier Club, 1953).

already in Experience. Although there is an implied progression out of these contraries ("Without Contraries is no progression." Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Plate 3), there is no true escape from Experience until there is a union of the external Bard and the internal personalities of Experience. To this end the later copies of the Songs display a progression of the personality of Experience, the psyche of the state, towards a union with the vision of the Bard. Through that visionary unity the "escape" from Experience is effected.

The following study is divided into five chapters which explore the development of the relationship of the poems to the poem series in Songs of Innocence and of Experience. The first chapter is an introduction to the evolution of the contrary states and contrary visions of Innocence and Experience; it concerns itself with the context of the Songs. An Introduction to the twenty-one different arrangements of the copies forms the basis of the second chapter; much of the bibliographical data which produces the following chapters is introduced here. The third chapter is an investigation of each of the copies and their interrelationships. Chapter IV concerns the last arrangement used by Blake of the Songs in seven copies and its place as the culmination of the copies' evolution. The final chapter forms the conclusion of this study.

In preparing and writing this study I have received help from many and varied sources. I wish to acknowledge the assistance granted me by the Beinecke Library at Yale University (Copy M), the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York (Copies K and e), and the generous and friendly help given me by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Copy Y). I wish

to thank Dr. Mary Lynn Johnson Grant and Dr. John E. Grant for their inestimable help in directing my attentions towards this area of the Songs; Dr. James King for his insights into the illustrations of the Book of Job; Professor Richard Morton for his unfailing aid and patience; Sandy for the scissors and paste; and lastly, my wife Judith for putting up with me.

## CHAPTER I

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONTRARIES

Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience has long been considered a sourcebook for ideas elaborated in the longer major Prophecies. In fact one school of Blake criticism<sup>5</sup> has its basis in such an approach: ideas and designs, both poetic and visual are repeated and elaborated throughout Blake's work. So far, no one<sup>6</sup> has looked at the arrangements of the poems within the Songs with the same end in view. An investigation of the several different orderings of the Songs<sup>7</sup> reveals the process of elaboration in Blake's use of the states of existence and the visionary faculty.

The states of existence and the visionary process are two

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<sup>5</sup> The so-called "systematic" school beginning with Joseph Wicksteed and including S. Foster Damon and Northrop Frye, et al.

<sup>6</sup> With the possible exceptions of E. D. Hirsch, Jr. in Innocence and Experience: An Introduction to Blake (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964) and the work of Donald Ross as reported in Erdman, ed., The Illuminated Blake, pp. 69-70, both discussed below.

<sup>7</sup> There are twenty-one different arrangements of the poems in twenty-seven extant contemporary copies. Seven of the last eight copies follow the same arrangement (the Copy T series). For the purposes of this thesis each different arrangement (with the exception of that of Copy B whose arrangement may not be Blake's and is not given in either of the below works) as reported in Keynes and Wolf, William Blake's Illuminated Books: A Census (hereafter, Census), pp. 50-69 and in Erdman, ed., The Illuminated Blake, pp. 69 and 96-97 will be considered.

common motifs throughout Blake's work. The states of existence in Blake's mature work are those psychological approaches or perspectives through which an individual spiritually passes. A concise formulation of the purpose of the states is found in A Vision of the Last Judgment (1810):

Man passes on, but States remain for Ever; he passes thro' them like a traveller who may as well suppose that the places he has passed thro' exist no more, as a Man may suppose that the States he has pass'd thro' Exist no more. Every thing is Eternal.<sup>8</sup>

In the early copies of Songs of Innocence and of Experience this aspect of the states as stages on a journey is muted; instead Blake places an emphasis on Innocence and Experience as the "Two Contrary States of the Human Soul."<sup>9</sup> An emphasis on the contrariness of the states leads in turn to an emphasis on the first two of Blake's hierarchy of vision-- the non-imaginative single vision and the vision of metaphor, twofold vision. In the later copies by the addition of several poems and the manipulation of the arrangement of the poems these simple visions are joined with the comprehensive visions which are threefold and fourfold:

Now I a fourfold vision see,  
And a fourfold vision is given to me;  
'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight

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<sup>8</sup>

Keynes, ed., William Blake: His Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 640.

<sup>9</sup>

Keynes, ed., Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 51.

And threefold in soft Beulah's night  
 And twofold Always. May God us keep  
 From Single vision & Newton's sleep!<sup>10</sup>

This comprehensiveness of vision is the distinguishing feature of both the T series copies and such mature works of Blake as the Illustrations of the Book of Job.

In order to chart the development of Blake's thought through the different arrangements of the poems in the copies of the Songs, it is first necessary to examine the contexts in which the two books of the Songs were written. Songs of Innocence was first published by Blake in 1789 using his process of illuminated printing.<sup>11</sup> Innocence elaborates a theme first explored in Poetical Sketches (published in 1783 with poems and prose works composed between 1769 and 1778) and in some poems added to a copy of Poetical Sketches (dated by Keynes around 1787)--the theme of Innocence. The first intimation of a state of Innocence existing in relation to a state of Experience appears in conjunction with speeches between Sir John Chandos and the Black Prince towards the end of the third scene of "King Edward the Third" in Poetical Sketches:

While vacant youth doth crave and seek about

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10

Blake, "Letter to Thos. Butts, 22 Nov. 1802," in Keynes, ed., Complete Poetry and Prose, pp. 861-62.

11

This process is described in Ruthven Todd, William Blake: The Artist (London: Studio Vista, Ltd., 1971), pp. 20-21.



young shepherd, and an old shepherd. The "Song 2nd by a Young Shepherd" is a draft for "Laughing Song," a poem of Songs of Innocence; "Song 1st by a Shepherd" is an invitation to a pastoral landscape where

Innocence doth like a rose  
 Bloom on every maiden's cheek  
 (II. 5-6)<sup>14</sup>

and "Song by an Old Shepherd" returns to the theme of the consolations of age first articulated by Sir John Chandos, to a "higher Innocence:"

Blow, boisterous wind, stern winter frown,  
 Innocence is a winter's gown;  
 So clad, we'll abide life's storm  
 That makes our limbs quake, if our hearts be warm.  
 (II. 9-12)<sup>15</sup>

Blake has transformed norms of behaviour, the original emphasis of the motif of the ages of man, into psychological states.

Songs of Innocence shares many of the elements of these transformations of the motif of the ages of man. Like the shepherd songs, Innocence invokes a pastoral landscape (with the exception of "The Chimney Sweeper," though even there Tom Dacre's dream is of a pastoral paradise). Like Chandos's speeches in "Edward the Third," Innocence ordains different actions for different ages (notably in "The Ecchoing Green" and in "Nurse's Song"); and like the memories of youth in those same speeches, Innocence is essentially static, a collage of tableaux which illustrate rather than

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<sup>14</sup>

Keynes, ed., Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 85.

<sup>15</sup>

Keynes, ed., Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 86.

progress.

In its simplest terms Songs of Innocence is a series of illustrations of Blake's belief in the correspondences between the sensory world and the world of the imagination. Its celebration is that of the identity of child, lamb, and Saviour. Innocence seeks

To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour.<sup>16</sup>

This mode of perception is what Blake called twofold vision.<sup>17</sup> Twofold vision exists in contrast to the rational single vision which sees only that which is in front of it--it is "Newton's sleep."

The structure of Songs of Innocence is in most copies that of the pastoral day.<sup>18</sup> The poems generally at the beginning of Innocence either outline a typical pastoral day (as in "The Shepherd") or themselves progress from morning to eve (as in "The Echoing Green"). Towards the end are typically those poems indicating the coming dusk ("Nurse's Song") or the night itself ("Night," "A Dream," and "On Another's Sorrow"). Between these two indicators of time's passing Blake intersperses the remaining poems in block patterns (see Appendix 2) in no consistent pattern through the copies.

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<sup>16</sup> William Blake, "Auguries of Innocence," ll. 1-4 in Keynes, ed., Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 118.

<sup>17</sup> See the discussion of vision in Blake below, pp. 9-10.

<sup>18</sup> In Copies B, I, K, L, Q, T of the separately issued Innocence; in Copies C, E, F, J, O of the combined issues.

Much has been written about the relationship between Experience and Innocence. S. Foster Damon finds intimations of Songs of Experience in the "Introduction" to Songs of Innocence.<sup>19</sup> David Wagenknecht discovers "Generation" (i.e. Experience) as an integral part of "Night."<sup>20</sup> Geoffrey Keynes<sup>21</sup> and E. D. Hirsch, Jr.,<sup>22</sup> however, argue for the complete dialectical independence of Innocence from Experience--when Blake wrote and published Songs of Innocence, he did not already have in mind its sequel. This last contention does not, however, incorporate what Blake explores in Poetical Sketches--the progression of man from one psychological state to another. So it is with Experience. Innocence as a static state which sees the oneness of the twofold vision through a variety of images does not descend into Experience; there is no necessary progression there. But Experience as an (at times) self-conscious parody of Innocence refers back to Innocence in a like manner but with a different emphasis as age looks back on the acts of youth or as "tir'd" youth looks back on its own actions: Experience divests itself of the gown of Innocence.

Even before 1794 when he issued Songs of Experience as a companion

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19

S. Foster Damon, "The Initial Eden" in Morton D. Paley, ed., Songs of Innocence and of Experience (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 32.

20

David Wagenknecht, Blake's Night (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1973), pp. 36-51.

21

Geoffrey Keynes, ed., William Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience (London: Oxford University Press, The Trianon Facsimile, 1970), p. xiv.

22

E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Innocence and Experience, pp. 14-15.

volume to Songs of Innocence, Blake had been experimenting with poem cycles. W. H. Stevenson identifies "Infant Sorrow," "In a myrtle shade," and "To my Myrtle" in the Notebook of around 1791-92 as one such attempt.<sup>23</sup> In the same notebook appear the drafts of eighteen of the twenty-six Songs of Experience ("The Little Girl Lost," "The Little Girl Found," "The School Boy," and "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" were first in Songs of Innocence; the "Introduction," "Ah! Sunflower," "A Little Girl Lost," and "To Tirzah" were written later with "To Tirzah" as late a date as 1801 for its composition), several of the designs for that book (the title-page, "London," "The Angel," "Introduction," "Holy Thursday," and perhaps "The Sick Rose"), and a poem, finally rejected, the "Motto to the Songs of Innocence and of Experience:"

The Good are attracted by Mens perceptions  
And think not for themselves  
Till Experience teaches them to catch  
And to cage the Fairies & Elves

And then the Knaves begin to snarl  
And the Hypocrite to howl  
And all his good Friends shew their private ends  
And the eagle is known from the owl<sup>24</sup>

Although this poem was written at the same time as the drafts of most of the Songs of Experience,<sup>25</sup> its diction and images are more in harmony with

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<sup>23</sup>

W. H. Stevenson, ed., The Poems of Blake (London: Longmans Group Limited, 1971), p. 151.

<sup>24</sup>

David V. Erdman, ed., The Notebook of William Blake (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. N101.

<sup>25</sup>

Keynes in Complete Poetry and Prose dates it around 1793; Erdman in Stevenson, ed., Poems dates it 1791-92.

Blake's emblematic books (The Gates of Paradise, for example). It does, however, demonstrate the necessary relationship between Innocence and Experience: within Innocence there is no progression out, no change; the first change occurs with the descent into Experience, its "teachings," the ordered sets of "Mens perceptions" which attract just as the grave beckons The!<sup>26</sup> or the "impatience" that leads "vacant youth" to attack Experience.<sup>27</sup> The "Motto" also shows that Experience and Innocence are contraries in that they are two different ways of seeing the same things: the fairies and elves of the Imagination are caged once caught; good friends become self-seeking; and the birds that were all once eagles (by implication) become differentiated into the several species that the eyes behold. The descent into Experience represents a loss of vision--the individual in Experience has only single vision or at most a perverted twofold vision. It is because of this loss of vision that most of the speakers of the poems of Experience cannot be trusted.<sup>28</sup> Only the Bard maintains a perspective untainted by Experience: he advances into Experience out of the pastoral state of Innocence gazing straight ahead. It is in the "Introduction" to Songs of Experience that the Bard is first invested with compensating vision necessary to understand the state of Experience:

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26

See The Book of The!, Plate 5, line 14 and following.

27

See above, pages 3-4.

28

For a comprehensive study of the problem of narrative voice in Experience, see D. G. Gillham, Blake's Contrary States (London: Cambridge University Press, 1966).

Hear the voice of the Bard!  
 Who Present, Past, & Future sees  
 Whose ears have heard,  
 The Holy Word,  
 That walk'd among the ancient trees.<sup>29</sup>

The vision of the Bard entering Experience is threefold both in structure and content. Innocence exists as a reference to the present, and through both the past and the present the Bard as prophet sees an indication of the future. The content of this vision is a series of indignant cries against the hypocrisy and incompleteness of the state of Experience. As a vision that strives for completeness, the vision of the Bard is similar to that of the lovers of Beulah; but, whereas their vision completed by their love becomes dreamlike in Beulah, in Experience that same vision becomes an indignant striving for completeness. With the passage into Experience Innocence becomes a dialectical state, an objective entity rather than its previous omnipresent subjective reality.

In Innocence its one time is all time--there is no sense of the passage of any time except that of the progress of the sun; Innocence exists in eternal spring. In Innocence, too, all things exist as correlatives of each other-- the lion acts as a protector for the lamb in "Night," a role that Christ plays in "The Little Boy Found," yet the lamb is itself an image of Christ. It is in Experience that these correlatives become opposites. It is the Bard's mission to reconcile these seeming differences. He calls the Earth and the "lapsed Soul" to remember again what they have forgotten:

Turn away no more:  
 Why wilt thou turn away  
 The starry floor  
 The watry shore  
 Is giv'n thee till the break of day.<sup>30</sup>

In the world of Experience "the starry floor" and "the watry shore" are imaginative impossibilities, yet Earth herself reclines on just such a floor (see the design of the "Introduction") although she does not realise it and the watry shore is a common setting in Innocence. A return to Innocence, however, requires not only remembering what has been lost, but also forgetting or transcending the "teachings" of Experience. Blake introduced the threefold vision of the Bard as an attempt to overcome the contrariness of the states. That this does not fully solve the problem of Experience is the reason for Blake's many experiments with the ordering of the poems in Songs of Experience culminating in the comprehensive and completing fourfold vision.

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 30

 Keynes, ed., Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 65.

## CHAPTER II

### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE COPIES

Blake continued to publish the combined Songs of Innocence and of Experience from 1794 until his death in 1827. During that period he constantly experimented with the ordering of the poems within the books. Of the twenty-seven copies in existence prepared by Blake, there are twenty-one different orderings which correspond to some degree with themes elaborated in the longer prophecies, in letters, and in his other work. Two themes of this type will be investigated here--Blake's themes of vision and state.

Three of Blake's four types of vision have been discussed above: the rational sensory "single vision," the twofold vision of correspondences, and the prophetic striving for completeness of threefold vision. Twofold vision is the proper vision of Innocence. In Experience either single or twofold vision leads to erroneous conclusions (as in "The Fly" which has both the form and the vision of Innocence) or to self-perversion (e.g. "A Poison Tree"). Twofold vision in Experience becomes pathetic fallacy;<sup>31</sup> single vision becomes despair. The threefold vision of the Bard becomes the only indicated means of moving out of the false visions of Experience.

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31

See D. G. Gillham's study of "London" in his Blake's Contrary States, pp. 8-20.

Threefold vision is the vision of lovers in Beulah (a state halfway between "Generation" or Experience and Eden where the conflict of Contraries is temporarily suspended by the power of love) and as such cries out in Experience in indignation at anything unreconciled because of hypocrisy or lack of love. The Bard cries out in indignation against impoverishment "in a rich and fruitful land" ("Holy Thursday"), cries out in prophecy of Earth's return "to her maker meek" (the bardic response to the situation outlined in the "Introduction" and "Earth's Answer" found in "The Little Girl Lost"), denounces the inauthenticity of the viewpoints of Experience ("To Tirzah"), and calls to the "Youth of delight" to participate in the "opening morn" ("The Voice of the Ancient Bard"). The bardic utterances in Experience are characterised by indignation and a spirit of prophecy-- tones which reveal that the bardic viewpoint (at least) is free of the mental bondage of Experience. The personae and characters in Experience, however, reveal their preoccupation with the present and their bondage to conventional morality ("The Angel," "My Pretty Rose Tree") or their society's domination and perversion of their spirits of freedom ("The Chimney Sweeper," "A Little Boy Lost," and "The School Boy"); they are caught in the netted traps of Experience which are primarily those of static acceptance of circumscribed behaviour. The speakers are caught in a state analogous to that of Innocence (hence Blake's movement of such poems as "The School Boy" from Songs of Innocence to Songs of Experience), yet they lack the vision to see beyond their state--their fall and their inability to rise are failures of vision. Twofold vision, while not a total succumbing to the dictates of Experience, still cannot see beyond

the contradictions of preachments and practices (again compare "London"). It is, however, in these "contraries" that Blake suggests the escape from Experience of those caught therein.

Closely tied to the visionary progression is Blake's theme of the states of existence. The "Motto to the Songs of Innocence and of Experience" demonstrates the contrariness of Innocence and Experience as a visionary contrariness.<sup>32</sup> The title-page to the combined books replaced the need for the "Motto," and is inscribed

SONGS/OF/INNOCENCE/and Of/EXPERIENCE  
Shewing the Two Contrary States  
of the Human Soul<sup>33</sup>

The contrariness of Innocence and Experience is not only that of vision but also that of state. The states of existence are closely allied to the ages of man: "each period of life has its own peculiar errors; as one grows out of one period into another, one is maturing."<sup>34</sup> Innocence corresponds to "vacant youth" (its vacancy is its timelessness which is at once no time and all time); Experience corresponds to youth's realisation of its emptiness--the realisation that results in craving and seeking and finding discontent. Blake conceives from the beginning of his

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<sup>32</sup>

See above pages 8-9.

<sup>33</sup>

Keynes, ed., Songs of Innocence and Experience, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup>

S. Foster Damon, A Blake Dictionary (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1971), p. 386.

career a third state that at first appears to be a vague "maturity" or "considerate age" or aged Innocence. In Poetical Sketches and its associated manuscript poems this state proceeds naturally with the years. By 1793 with the publication of both Songs of Experience and The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, the progression from state to state becomes dependent on the interaction of "contraries:"

Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction  
and Repulsion, Reason and Energy,<sup>35</sup> Love and Hate,  
are necessary to Human Existence.

The above quotation from The Marriage of Heaven and Hell elucidates to a certain extent the subscription to the title-page of the combined issue of the Songs. The Songs do not only illustrate "the Two Contrary States/ of the Human Soul" but also hint at and, in some copies, illustrate the interaction of these states--their marriage through the agency of the bardic vision. In later copies of Songs of Innocence and of Experience the figure of the Bard becomes more closely associated with the figure of poetic inspiration (Los-Urthona), and the interaction of states (in Experience, at least) becomes a study of poetic progression. This can be seen through a close investigation of the orderings of the poems through the copies as outlined in Appendices I through 6.

Appendix I is primarily the numerical key to the following tables.

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William Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Plate 3, II. 7-9 in Erdman, ed., The Illuminated Blake, p. 100; the title-page to the combined issue of the Songs of Innocence and of Experience first appears in Copy B, circa 1794.

The fifty-five plates that are arranged, rearranged, added, and deleted are here assigned a number based on the arrangement of seven of the last eight copies of the Songs (Copies U, W, X, Y, Z, and AA and, more or less, in the incomplete Copy T). This arrangement is the standard arrangement of the Songs among most Blake scholars.<sup>36</sup> The forty-nine poetry plates, three title-pages, and two frontispieces occur in most complete copies (there are some additions and deletions). In three copies (B, C, and D) "a" (see Figure 3), a tailpiece depicting a nude<sup>37</sup> figure borne upwards by six<sup>38</sup> cherubs, appears.

Appendices 2 and 3 show the arrangements of the poems in Innocence in the separately issued Songs of Innocence (Appendix 2) and in the Innocence half of the combined issue (Appendix 3). Of primary importance in these tables are the "poem blocks," groups of poems that appear together through the copies.<sup>39</sup> These poem blocks seem to stop after Copy N in the

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36

See Keynes and Wolf, Census, pp. 50-51; Keynes, ed., Songs of Innocence and of Experience; Erdman, ed., The Illuminated Blake, pp. 41-97; et al.

37

There is some dissension as to whether the Bard is in fact nude. Dr. Mary Lynn Johnson Grant sees him as clothed in one of Blake's "see-through" costumes. Keynes and Wolf agree with me that the figure is nude.

38

And not, as Keynes reports, "five;" see Keynes and Wolf, Census, p. 51; compare Erdman, ed., The Illuminated Blake, p. 388.

39

Most of these blocks are pointed out by Donald Ross as reported in Erdman, ed., The Illuminated Blake, pp. 69-70. I have included some blocks which were not included and have also found that some of his (Ross's) blocks are characteristic of some copies he does not include, notably Copies H and K of the separately issued Songs of Innocence; see Appendix 2.

separately issued copies of Songs of Innocence and after Copy E (and not including Copy A) in the combined copies. The reason for this cessation of the poem blocks is quite simple--it is after these copies that Blake began to use one plate per sheet of paper instead of his previous use of both back and front of the sheet. Thus, many of the orderings of the separate Songs of Innocence and Copies B, C, D, and E of the combined issue are dependent on either preprinted materials, i.e. the first plate of "The Little Black Boy" is printed on the back of a sheet with "Laughing Song" on its front, the second plate of "The Little Black Boy" is printed on the front of a sheet that has "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" on its back, or on a predetermined decision on what poem offsets what poem, i.e. "The Shepherd" and "Infant Joy." There are critical justifications that can be made for these poem blocks,<sup>40</sup> and it is demonstrable in two ways that these blocks are intentional structures rather than accidental. First, there are experimental variants of these blocks, i.e. "The Lamb" and "The Blossom" are paired in Copies A-H, K-M, and T of the separate Innocence and Copies C, D, and E of the combined issue, and "The Chimney Sweeper" is paired with "The Divine Image" in the same copies (with the addition of Copies A, I, and V in the combined issue); in Copies Q and O of the separate issue and Copy P of the combined issue "The Lamb" is paired with "The Chimney Sweeper." Second, there is a return in some of the single plate copies (one plate per sheet) to these poetic blocks characteristic of the

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Unfortunately, such a study is outside the scope of this thesis. A new perspective on Innocence, however, could be gained by such a discussion.

double plate copies. Combined Copy V marks a conscious return<sup>41</sup> to what Donald Ross has termed the "Old Order,"<sup>42</sup> i.e. an ordering incorporating these poem blocks. Copy V of the combined issue and Copy T of the separately issued Songs of Innocence preserve this ordering among the copies that are made up of one plate per sheet.

This last point, that Blake consciously returned to an "Old Order" in Copy V of the Songs of Innocence and of Experience, argues also for the independence of Innocence from Experience. Although Blake conceived of Copy V as one book (continuous pagination and similar colouring throughout Innocence and Experience),<sup>43</sup> he repeats patterns (at least four) in Innocence characteristic of the double plate copies (Copies C, D, and E) and does not repeat in Copy V the patterns found in the same copies in Experience.<sup>44</sup> Another indication that Blake considered Songs of Innocence to be independent from Songs of Experience is the non-parallelism in place of poems bearing the same or similar or contrary titles. If Blake had considered Experience solely as a companion book to Innocence then there would exist obvious parallels in place setting of the poems, i.e. "The Tyger" would approximate the placement of "The Lamb," "Holy Thursday" that of "Holy Thursday," "Nurse's Song" that of "Nurse's Song," etc. in the books. Yet even in copies

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41

Copy V is unique in that a manuscript ordering of its poems prepared by Blake survives; see Keynes and Wolf, Census, p. 63.

42

See Erdman, ed., The Illuminated Blake, p. 70.

43

Keynes and Wolf, Census, p. 63.

44

Compare Appendices 3 and 4 and the discussion of Group II in Chap. III of this study.

where "Holy Thursday" and "Nurse's Song" occur together in either Innocence or Experience, they do not occur together in the companion book. Only in Copy L and the Copy T arrangements (Copies T, U, W, X, Y, Z, and AA) are these two poems in similar positions in respect to each other in the two books, and even then each pair is not in a similar place in the two books. Not only are the incidental structures of the books (the poem blocks) not similar, but also the overall structures of the two books do not contain parallel elements.

The final argument for the independence of Songs of Innocence from Songs of Experience is related to the overall structures of the books: if Blake had intended there to be an inherent progression in Songs of Innocence as a result of the arrangement of the poems out of which a transition to Songs of Experience would occur, then those copies of Songs of Experience which exhibit similar progressions should have similar Songs of Innocence. In the copies of Songs of Innocence and of Experience there are several copies whose arrangement of the poems in Experience are similar; indeed there are several relationships that can be seen in poem setting among each of the copies (see Appendix 5). Copies C, D, and E form a grouping containing a great number of similar elements; Copies L, M, and N form another. Copies C, D, and E are copies whose arrangements are dependent on Blake's printing methods.<sup>45</sup> Copies L, M, and N, however, reflect independent means of production--each is printed in a different colour (L in dark brown,

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45

See the discussion above, page 17, and in greater detail, the "Group II" section of Chapter III.

M in dark brown and black, and N in black)<sup>46</sup> and is differently coloured (L with bright washes, M with dark simple washes similar in effect to Blake's colour-printing, and N with rich colouring and gold)<sup>47</sup>--and yet they have similar pairings of poems as the terminations for their Experience series. Although there are certain similarities in structure between Copies J and M,<sup>48</sup> there are enough similarities between Copies L, M, and N to suppose similar structures: an introductory section ending with "Earth's Answer" (L) or "The Clod & the Pebble" (M & N), a first part introduced (L & M) or terminated (N) by "The Tyger" and "The Fly" (L & N) or "The Angel" (M), a second part containing "To Tirzah" (L & M) or "The Little Girl Lost" plates (M), and a final section containing "The School Boy" (all). Yet in the corresponding Innocence series (Copies L and M only-- Copy N lacks Songs of Innocence) the arrangements of the poems are entirely different from each other. In Appendices 3a and 3b the terminal poems of the two Innocence series and those of Songs of Experience are examined. In the separately issued Songs of Innocence there are eight distinct endings for the series; five of these endings (including combinations of two or more) are characteristic of Innocence in the combined issue. Songs of Experience has nine distinct endings plus those of three copies, I, J, and P, which are not similar to any other termination. Comparing the two types

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46

Keynes and Wolf, Census, pp. 59-60.

47

Keynes and Wolf, Census, pp. 59-60.

48

See below, Chapter III, "Group IV."

of endings of Songs of Innocence in the combined issue with those of the corresponding Songs of Experience (Appendix 3c), it is demonstrable that there is no correlation between Innocence and Experience--similar terminations among the copies of Songs of Innocence and of Experience in Innocence do not correspond with similar terminations in Experience.

Blake's arrangements of the poems in Songs of Innocence and of Experience reiterate the thematic concern of Innocence: the final poems to both Innocence series most commonly end the pastoral day with "Night" (separate Innocence Copies A, B, C, E, I, K, L, M, Q, and T; combined Innocence Copies C, E, F, I, O, and Q) or with a lullaby in "A Cradle Song" (in separate Innocence Copies E and J, in combined Innocence Copies A and M), or show that what evil there may be in the world is overcome by a state of mind (those copies ending with "The Chimney Sweeper" and "The Divine Image"--Copies A, H, and L of the separate Innocence, Copies A and L also ending with "Night," and Copy D of the combined issue). Only one grouping of final poems points explicitly towards Experience, and this is the terminal group found in separate Innocence Copy D and combined Innocence Copies R and S and in variant form in Copies L, V, and the T series-- "The Voice of the Ancient Bard," "A Dream," and "On Another's Sorrow." "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" looks both backward and forward in a foreshadowing of the vision of the Bard in the "Introduction" to Songs of Experience. "A Dream" and "On Another's Sorrow" are parts of one group of poems in Songs of Innocence that recognize explicitly the existence of evil; yet like the other poems in this group ("The Chimney Sweeper," "Night," "The Little Black Boy," and "The Little Boy Lost" are among the poems of this group), "A Dream" and "On Another's Sorrow" provide Innocence's consolations.

"On Another's Sorrow" is a final, triumphant exposition of both the vision and the beliefs of Innocence--that if there is evil, its results do not go unpitied and that there is another pity and concern beyond the human. Songs of Experience questions the validity of this pity.<sup>49</sup>

Despite the structural and theoretical independence of Songs of Innocence from Songs of Experience, there are some copies which suggest that Blake thought of the two books as together comprising one unified book. The evidence for this assumption is based on Blake's pagination of the copies, a practice which seems closely related to time period. Appendix 4 presents in graphic form the different groupings of the copies of Songs of Innocence and of Experience. These different groups were determined by either separate or continuous pagination through the two books. Each of the groups displays a remarkable internal continuity: each copy within the group shows structural similarities with the other copies in its group and not with other copies.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, Appendices 5 and 5a are concerned with the arrangements of Songs of Experience. The information in Appendix 5 and results based on that information form the bulk of the next chapter. Appendix 5a displays the frequency of a given poem in a certain position in Experience; results

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49

See "The Human Abstract," the companion poem in Experience to "The Divine Image."

50

Much of the information in Appendix 4 derives from Keynes and Wolf, William Blake's Illuminated Books: A Census; I have accepted their datings of the copies but disagree with their characteristics of each grouping of the copies; compare Census, p. 55 with Appendix 4. Keynes and Wolf concentrate on the movement of poems, I on the pagination.

based on its information are very important to a full understanding of the different groups of copies discussed below.

## CHAPTER III

### THE COPIES OF SONGS OF INNOCENCE AND OF EXPERIENCE

The dating of the several copies of Songs of Innocence and of Experience is primarily based on watermark dates found on the paper used. This method of dating, however, establishes only an earliest date for the copy's publication; Blake may have used paper years old in the compilation of the copy. Keynes and Wolf's description of Copy R,<sup>51</sup> for example, lists a watermark dated 1808 on one leaf among pages that are watermarked 1794.<sup>52</sup> Some of the copies (Copies B, D, F, g, I, J, K, L, M, N, and O) contain no watermark information. Keynes and Wolf group these copies according to criteria which include the placement of a poem such as "The School Boy" or "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" in Songs of Innocence or Songs of Experience and includes the printing techniques employed.<sup>53</sup> The following groupings of the copies corresponds for the most part to that of Keynes and Wolf<sup>54</sup> with any differences noted in the appropriate section.

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51

Keynes and Wolf, Census, p. 62.

52

Copy F has an earlier Songs of Innocence watermarked "E & P" and according to the Census, p. 58, related to Copies I and J of the separately issued Songs of Innocence; Copy F's Experience has no marks.

53

Keynes and Wolf, Census, p. 52.

54

Keynes and Wolf, Census, p. 55.

## Group I--Copy A

Copy A, containing leaves watermarked 1794, appears without the Combined Title-Page. Songs of Innocence contains twenty-eight plates and is paginated by Blake 1-26 (the Title-Page and Frontispiece unnumbered); Songs of Experience contains twenty-two plates and is paginated by Blake 1-20 (the Title-Page and Frontispiece unnumbered). In total number of plates Copy A agrees with the description of the two books in Blake's prospectus for 1793<sup>55</sup> but differs from it in the allocation of the plates from book to book. Keynes and Wolf explain this discrepancy by noting the movement of the three plates of "The Little Girl Lost" and "The Little Girl Found" to Songs of Experience.<sup>56</sup> This, however, would mean that the original allocations, i. e. that of the prospectus of 1793--twenty-five plates for each book, would give thirty-one plates to Songs of Innocence and nineteen to Songs of Experience. Evidently, Blake early intended the movement of some poems from Songs of Innocence, "The School Boy" and "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" for example, to Songs of Experience which he only later did and intended more plates for Songs of Experience than he had yet etched.

Despite separate pagination in the two books, Keynes and Wolf find that the similarity in style in the coloring of the books establishes one date for their execution. Copy A lacks "A Little Boy Lost," "A Little

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55

Keynes, ed., Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 692.

56

Keynes and Wolf, Census, p. 51.

57

Little Girl Lost," and, of course, "To Tirzah."

In Copy A Blake constructs Contraries within the Contrary state of Experience--poems describing the oppressing situation alternate with poems about the self-enslaved. Four rough divisions in the arrangement of the poems in Copy A can be discriminated: the first division corresponds to a general introduction to Experience and includes, besides the Frontispiece and the Title-Page the "Introduction" and "Earth's Answer;" the second part introduces the individual in Experience in poems which alternate between the enslaved, the self-enslaved, and the state (or vision) which enslaves--this part terminates appropriately with "The Tyger;" a third part reaches the nadir of Experience--a grouping of poems, "Infant Sorrow," "The Little Vagabond," "Nurse's Song," and "The Human Abstract" whose total message seems to be that it is better never to have been born; and a final part beginning with "The Little Girl Lost" and "The Little Girl Found" which marks the emergence out of Experience. Together "The Little Girl Lost" and "The Little Girl Found" represent a partial response to the bardic plea in the "Introduction" through a return to Earth's Innocence by a change (like that of Lyca's parents) in vision. The movement of the two poems is the same as that of "Night" in Songs of Innocence--from a state of danger and loss, the lost individual becomes protected by a lion figure in a new pastoral Innocence. "The Little Girl Lost" and "The Little Girl Found" foreshadow a change of viewpoint in Experience (e. g. from that of "The Chimney Sweeper" to that of "The Lilly") and a

progression from the Contraries of Experience as in "The Clod & the Pebble." The intertwining themes of repression and restraint in Copy A culminate in this final division in a grouping of poems sharing floral imagery as part of one Contrary and "London" and "Holy Thursday" as another. Here the primary images of flowers and trees recall those of "Earth's Answer" and their perversion, a parallel for Earth's bondage. "The Garden of Love" introduces the first of these Contraries by combining the themes of social oppression and the repression of desire. "A Poison Tree," "The Sick Rose," and "My Pretty Rose Tree" illustrate the perversion of the spiritual body by the repression of sexual desire or anger: the speaker of "A Poison Tree" represses his anger towards his foe, hiding it "with smiles;" "The Sick Rose" suffers from the "dark secret love" of the "invisible worm;" the speaker of "My Pretty Rose Tree" represses his desire to take the May Flower by conceding to the dictates of a conventional morality and is rewarded "with Jealousy" (cf. "Earth's Answer") and thorns. "London" and "Holy Thursday" recall the oppressive trinity of "The Chimney Sweeper"---"God & his Priest & King." These two poems emphasize external oppression, the bondage of Earth (as Nature and hence natural desire) by Urizen, rather than the internal perversion of identity in Experience resulting from the weakness of desire as in the preceding floral poems. "The Lilly," the final poem of the "Three Flowers Plate," is also the terminal poem of Copy A. Here the strength of desire moves the Lilly out of Experience---her delight in love negates the need for the horn of "the humble Sheep" or the thorn of "the modest Rose." These Contraries---humility and horn,

modesty and thorn--recall the paradoxes of "The Human Abstract" which serves as the terminal poem of the preceding section of Experience. The movement of Copy A can be seen as a comprehensive definition of Experience through an interplay of Contraries resulting in a shifting of view ("The Little Girl Found") and the realisation of Experience as the repression of natural desire. Once this key to the state of Experience is perceived (its best statement is the distance of the sunflower, the Youth, and the Virgin from their respective goals in "Ah! Sunflower" on the "Three Flowers Plate"), the means of escape in the gratification of desire, in Love delighting, becomes evident.

This first copy of Songs of Experience forms a circle back to Innocence. The innocent play of the children in the first "Nurse's Song" becomes in the second sexual "whisperings. . . in the dale." The action of "The Lilly" transforms these "dark secret Loves" into the sweet delight of Innocence. The role of the Bard in this first copy, too, seems to be a recycling back to Innocence. The vision of the Bard is the vision of wrath, that of the Hebrew prophets. The Bard speaks three times: in the "Introduction" to call for Earth's return; in the first two stanzas of "The Little Girl Lost" to prophesise the eventual return; and just before the plate containing "The Lilly" in "Holy Thursday" to show that with Earth's return to innocence:

Babe can never hunger there,<sup>58</sup>  
Nor poverty the mind appall.

"The Lilly" moves then through Love away from the thorn and threat of Experience to the gratification of desire in Innocence.

which force it to become "dark secret" and sick; "The Little Vagabond" and "The Human Abstract" analyse the state of Experience once in hope and once in bitter despair; "A Dream" and "The Little Girl Lost" and "The Little Girl Found" (all four plates transferred from Songs of Innocence) illustrate the motif of "lost and found" which Blake, at this time considered a necessary part of the contrariness of Innocence and Experience (G.E. Bentley, Jr. considers the pairing of "A Dream" and "The Little Girl" poems as an accident resulting from Blake's printing methods--he cites the pairing of "Laughing Song" with "The Little Girl" poems in Copy E as a support for this argument; however, "A Dream" is commonly paired in the separate issue of Songs of Innocence with "The Little Girl" poems--Blake's transferring of one to Songs of Experience necessitated thematically the transferring of the other--the introduction of "To Tirzah" to the Experience series in Copy E necessitated a revision in the thematic unit of "The Little Girl" poems representing a partial response to the bardic call in the "Introduction;" hence, "Laughing Song" which is paired with "The Little Girl" poems in no other copy of either Innocence or Experience is paired with them in Copy E); "A Little Boy Lost" and "The Chimney Sweeper" deal with children sacrificed to the conventions and enslavements of society; "The Fly" and "A Poison Tree" are both about the perversion of the speakers' minds; and "London" and "The Tyger"

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60

Songs of Innocence in Copies C, D, and E of the combined issue has "The Little Boy Lost" and "The Little Boy Found" close to the end (in Copies C and D, the terminal poems) of the series.

61

G.E. Bentley, Jr., "Blake's Protean Text" in D. I. B. Smith, ed. Editing Eighteenth-Century Texts (Toronto: U. of T. Press, 1968), pp. 55-57.

deal with the chartering and binding of energy and impulse into one symbol for terror and misery. All three of the copies in this group for which the arrangements of the poems can be determined have these poem pairs in various places in their arrangements; all three, however, end with "Holy Thursday" paired with the "Three Flowers Plate" and "The Clod & the Pebble" paired with the Tailpiece (see Figure 6c; this pair occurs in Copies C and D) or this final pair is replaced by "To Tirzah" in Copy E. Evidently Blake, in these copies envisions Experience as he envisions Innocence as a multifaceted state which is essentially static. Only the movement out of Experience (or out of Innocence--the parallel placement of "The Little Boy Lost" and "The Little Boy Found" as the movement out of Innocence) assumes importance in its placement.

Copies C and D tie the themes of Experience together in their terminal poems. In four poems, "Holy Thursday" and the three poems of the "Three Flowers Plate"--"My Pretty Rose Tree," "Ah! Sunflower," and "The Lilly"--the themes of social oppression and sexual repression are reiterated. These two copies then tie together Innocence and Experience in "The Clod & the Pebble" to parallel their separation in the Combined Title-Page (which first appears in this grouping of the copies) and show the movement away from these Contraries in the Tailpiece.

Copies B, C, and D are unique among the copies of Songs of Innocence and of Experience in that they contain a tailpiece to the two poem series (see Figure 3). This Tailpiece is an obvious progression on the bardic motif of the two Frontispieces (Figures 1

and 2). In the Frontispiece to Innocence the Bard looks up at a cherub as he moves out of his sheep's pasture. The inspiration for his song is the measure of the interaction of that which is above (here in a literal sense, through Innocence in a metaphysical sense) with himself and that which is below him--hence the concern of Songs of Innocence with twin themes of protector and protected. The Frontispiece to Experience depicts the cherub now upon the shoulders of the Bard as the Bard strides forward out of the pastoral landscape. The cherub as poetic inspiration now looks straight out at the viewer and at the viewer's world. The duality of cherub and Bard exists (as a type of two-fold vision) to see below the surfaces of the situations of Experience--hence the implicit criticism of each speaker in Experience 62 behind the actual words of the poems. The cherub now has wings yet is bound to the Bard; the Bard no longer has his pipe. This dual sacrifice of freedom of movement and of expression is in contrast to the invested vision of the Bard in the "Introduction," indicating a closer association of the Bard with both the source of his poetry and the individuals of Experience with their sacrificed vision--hence the more social concerns of Songs of Experience. Finally, the Tailpiece to the two books depicts the Bard, now divested of his earthly garments 63 being upborne by six winged cherubs. Poetic inspiration with the five senses, freed in "The Lilly", raises the Bard above the Contrariness of Innocence and Experience (and, as some see the figure as andro-

62

See D. G. Gillham, Blake's Contrary States.

63

This design Blake inverted some thirty years later to form the Title-Page to the Illustrations of the "Book of Job".

Figure 1

The Frontispiece to Songs of Innocence

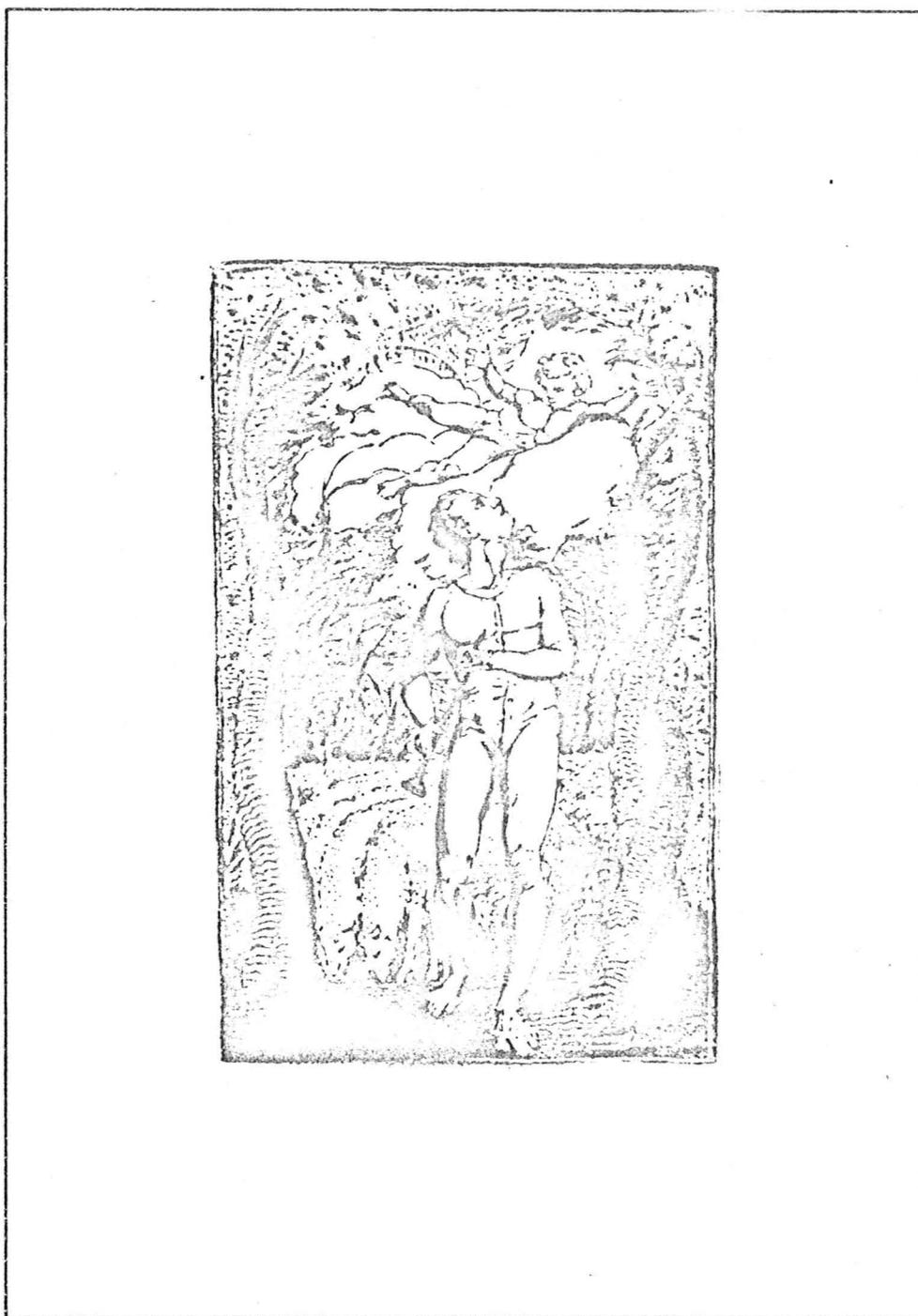


Figure 2

The Frontispiece to Songs of Experience

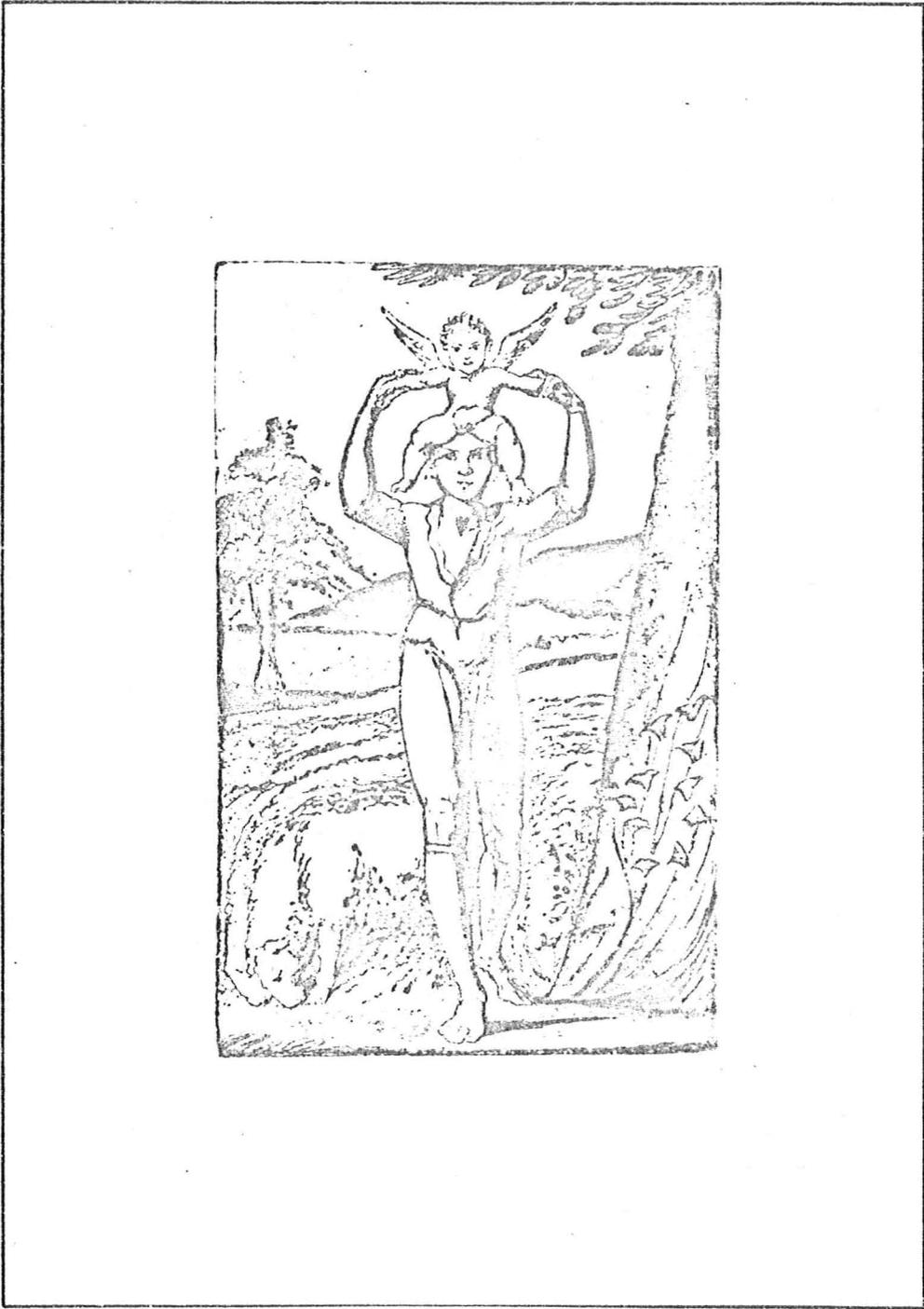
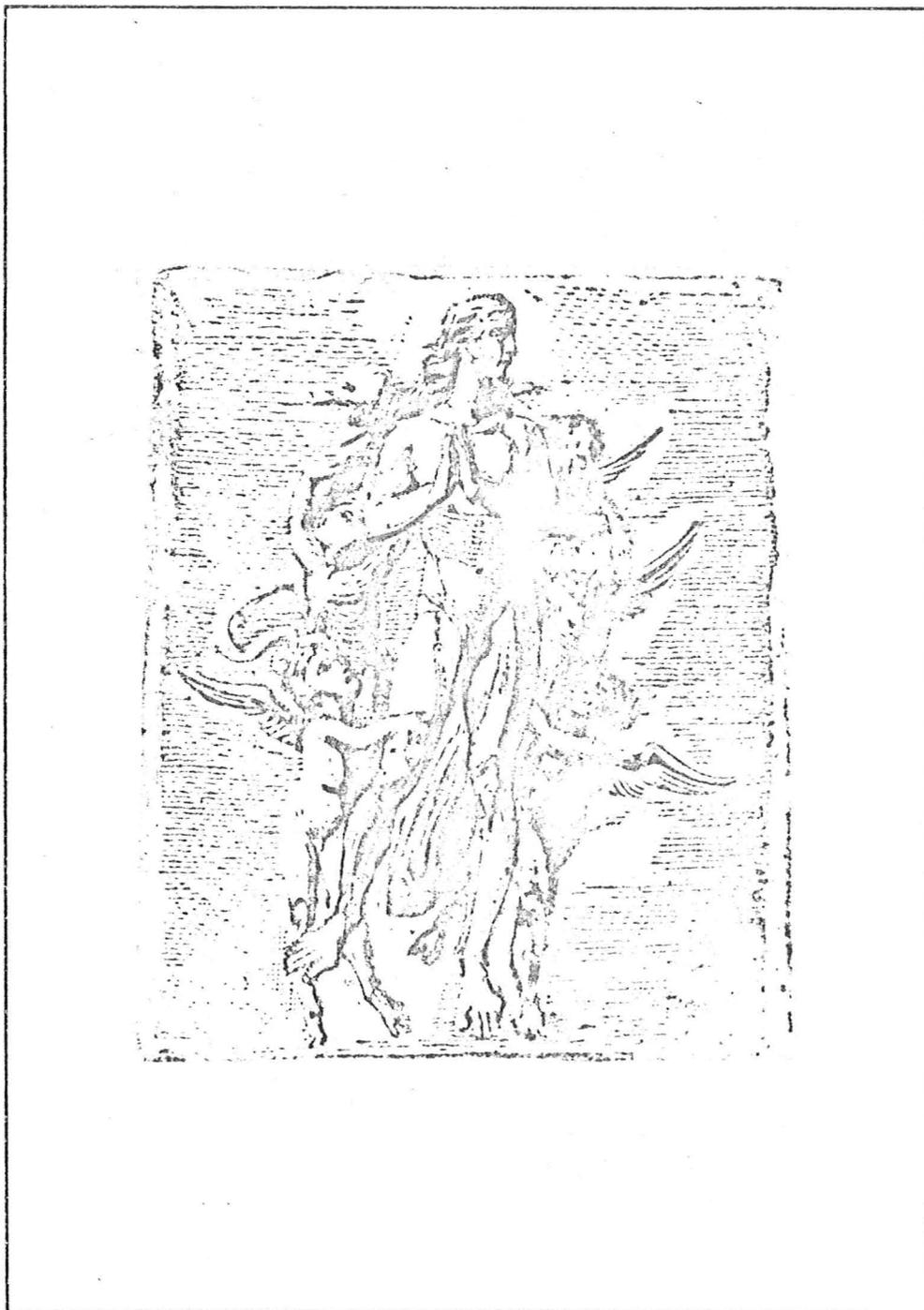


Figure 3

The Tailpiece to Songs of Experience (Copies B, C, and D)



gynous<sup>64</sup> above the Contraries of sex). In Copy E the pairing of this plate with "The Clod & the Pebble" is replaced by "To Tirzah."

"To Tirzah" is the only poem-plate in the Songs in which Blake has added extra-poetical matter (i.e. words not part of the poem) into the design. The poem itself is based on the rejection of Mary by Jesus at the Marriage at Cana: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"<sup>65</sup> The Contraries of Innocence and Experience are rejected here rather than reconciled. The garment that the Bard of the Tailpiece of the earlier copies cast off becomes the mortal part of the speaker of "To Tirzah," all the psychological bonds of Experience. The design depicts the raising up of the dead through a baptism administered by a father figure with two female figures attending. On the robe of the father figure is written a line from I Corinthians 15: 44:

It is Raised  
a Spiritual Body.

The baptised figure rises "from Generation free" and free from the closing of his senses "in senseless clay." From "The Lilly" and its rejection of a false imposition of censure on its desires, "To Tirzah" rejects all claims to dependence on the imposition of external authority as the means of escape from the false consciousness of the Contrariness of Innocence and Experience.

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<sup>64</sup>

Cf. Erdman, ed., The Illuminated Blake, p. 388.

<sup>65</sup>

John 2: 4.

"To Tirzah" replaces both "The Clod & the Pebbie" and the Tailpiece as a better and clearer means of escape from Experience. Whereas in Copies C and D an implicit understanding of the relation of the two states of the human soul led to a transcendence of them, "To Tirzah" and Copy E lead to a rejection of the state of mind that sees them as Contraries. Since the final response to the bardic call to the lapsed soul in the "Introduction" has changed, Blake changes also the partial response in "The Little Girl" poems and their paired poem: instead of the more usual "A Dream," Blake places "Laughing Song" as the accompanying poem of "The Little Girl" poems. Instead of another poem illustrating the same motif of "lost and found," Blake presents an idyllic embodiment of the state of Innocence. The emphasis of the poem block changes to that of the followed vision<sup>66</sup> where woods, hills, meadows, and streams laugh in sympathy with the inhabitants' joy. Copy E places this unit fittingly at the very beginning of its Experience series (Copies C and D place their variant of this unit in the middle) to show the inadequacy of its solution through the poems that follow it.

In Copies C and D the Bard is filled with reforming zeal-- with the inclusion of "A Little Girl Lost" in the series, he concerns himself with the future reformation of attitudes towards love as well; in Copy E with "To Tirzah" this reforming zeal has become revolutionary. The Bard of Copy E emerges as Orc, the spirit of rebellion.

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 66

Cf. "The Little Girl Found," ll. 45-46.

## Group III--Copies F, G, and H

Copies F, G, and H are the only copies of Songs of Experience<sup>67</sup> surviving that are colour printed. Since Blake developed and experimented with colour printing before abandoning the technique around 1795, these copies can be fairly certainly dated at about this time. These copies are usually considered incomplete, but a glance at Appendix 5a shows that Copies F, G (Copy G, however, lacks the Frontispiece and Title-page in its arrangement<sup>68</sup>), and H contain all the same poems and all lack the same poems. Blake evidently only treated these plates for colour printing<sup>69</sup> and his choice of which plates so to treat is significant. The poems included in Songs of Experience in Copies F and G are arranged in thematic units which display no progression towards an escape from or reconciliation of Experience. Instead, these two copies present a comprehensive view of Experience culminating in "The Three Flowers Plate" and "The Human Abstract" with one other final poem. Copy H presents the motifs of Experience in a random fashion but culminates in "The Human Abstract," a statement of the human soul locked in the state of Experience. The three copies in this group

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67

Only Copy F has Experience bound with Songs of Innocence; its Innocence series, however, is not colour printed and therefore probably not executed at the same time.

68

And has only recently been reassembled from diverse sources; see Keynes and Wolf, Census, p. 58.

69

This process is described in Ruthven Todd, William Blake: The Artist, pp. 37-40.

are shortened versions of Songs of Experience that tend to illustrate the state of Experience but provide no real responses to the problems Experience creates.

Also significant in these copies are the poems deleted from the series. "The Little Girl" poems,<sup>70</sup> "The Sick Rose," "The Garden of Love," "The Little Vagabond," "Infant Sorrow," and "To Tirzah" are excluded from Copies F, G, and H. It may be that Blake using this new printing technique which was certainly easier and faster than printing each copy by hand, intended this series of Experience for a wider audience than his earlier illuminated book could have. He may, therefore, have censored some poems from the series as being too inflammatory for the general public and issued the revised Songs of Experience as a solely descriptive companion volume to Songs of Innocence.<sup>71</sup> This is, however, conjecture and lacks a colour printed Songs of Innocence as support.

The technique of colour printing was finally unsatisfactory to Blake, and in the next group of Copies he returns to his process of illuminated production of the Songs.

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70

Which do appear in Copy F in Songs of Innocence.

71

"The Little Vagabond" for the same reason was omitted from the 1839 typographical edition of the Songs by its editor as being too subversive of authority. See Keynes, ed., Songs of Innocence and of Experience, p. 45, commentary. The other poems may have been excluded in Copies F, G, and H in this same spirit of prudence, a Contrary spirit to that of most copies.

## Group IV--Copies I, J, K, L, M, and N

Copies I through N contain no distinguishing watermarks, so any dating of the copies is the result of guesswork. Their similarity in composition creates the tendency to lump them together, and Copy L which bears in it the date 1799<sup>72</sup> suggests a tentative dating of around the turn of the nineteenth century. Overall (with the exceptions of Copies I and K) these copies display a tendency towards grouping together blocks of poems and moving these blocks about (especially in Copies J and M). Based on the arrangements of the copies, the following discussion is separated into two parts: a discussion of Copies I and K and a discussion of Copies J, M, L, and N.

Copies I and K seem to be further developments of the ideas of Copy E, and with these two copies Blake returns to his experimentations with order in Experience that characterised the earlier copy. Both Copy I and Copy K end with "To Tirzah" as does Copy E (Copy K ends with both the "Three flowers Plate" and "To Tirzah"). Both copies can be divided roughly into thirds by the same poems that divide Copy E into thirds: the revolt against reason in "The Fly;" the revolt against an imposed natural order in "The Tyger;" and finally the revolt against Experience itself in "To Tirzah." Around these three poems (which are not necessarily in this order in the three copies) are grouped the other poems of Experience which

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72

E. D. Hirsch, Jr. denies that this is a date. Cf. Innocence and Experience, p. 150.

contain similar elements. Blake's opinion of what produces what type of revolt, however, changes in the three copies. "The Little Girl Lost & Found: is associated with "The Tyger" in Copy E, "The Fly" in Copy K, and "To Tirzah" in Copy I. In both Copy E and Copy I "A Little Boy Lost" and "The Chimney Sweeper" are associated with "The Tyger;" "The Sick Rose" and "The Angel" are both associated with "The Fly." In both Copy E and Copy K "The Garden of Love," "The Little Vagabond," and "The Human Abstract" are grouped with "The Fly;" "A Poison Tree" and the "Three Flowers Plate" are both grouped with "To Tirzah." In both Copy I and Copy K "London" and "Nurse's Song" are associated with "The Tyger." That there is no consistent grouping around the pivotal poems yet a great similarity argues for Blake's continuing and coherent experimentation with arrangement.

The arrangements of Copy J and Copy M<sup>73</sup> substantiate this continuing experimentation with order. Departing from the concept of escape from Experience through the rejection of Experience's perspectives, Blake moves "To Tirzah" from the end of the series more towards the middle in these copies to signify that a change in vision is necessary to break out of Experience but not sufficient. Blake experiments with a new ending to the series in Copy J with a block of poems--"London," "The Sick Rose," and "The Little Vagabond." The rejection of the perspectives of Experience which culminates in "To Tirzah" after another block of poems ("Nurse's Song," "The Little Girl Lost & Found," "The Human Abstract," and "The

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73

Both Copy J and Copy M are similarly coloured.

Chimney Sweeper") results in a retreat to the simplistic "Swedenborgian"<sup>74</sup> innocence of "The Little Vagabond." In Copy M these same blocks occur in reverse order (with "The Fly" replacing "The Sick Rose"), but Blake creates a new ending using "The School Boy," the "Three Flowers Plate," and "Holy Thursday." Copies L and M<sup>75</sup> vary this ending to place greater emphasis upon a poem that Blake moves here from Songs of Innocence, "The School Boy."

"The School Boy" is an inversion of Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College." Gray places his little scholars in a state of innocence:

No sense have they of ills to come,  
Nor care beyond today.<sup>76</sup>

while all around them "the ministers of human fate" await their aging. Blake on the other hand places his scholar in a state of Experience in an unnaturally ordered society (school) while all around him the natural life calls out. As with most of Blake's children,<sup>77</sup> the schoolboy sees clearly

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74

Cf. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Letter to Charles Augustus Tulk, 12 February 1818," in Earl Leslie Griggs, ed., Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Vol. IV (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. III6. This would seem to authenticate the present ordering of Copy J.

75

There is a great deal of similarity between Copies L, M, and N. See above, pp. 19-20.

76

Thomas Gray, "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," in Roger Lonsdale, ed., The Poems of Thomas Gray, William Collins, Oliver Goldsmith (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., Ltd., 1969), p. 59.

77

Such as "The Little Vagabond" or the little boy in "A Little Boy Lost."

what his elders do not allow themselves to see, a faculty that Gray's scholars in no way share:

Yet ah! why should they know their fate?  
 Since sorrow never comes too late,  
 And happiness too swiftly flies.  
 Thought would destroy their paradise.  
 No more; where ignorance is bliss,  
 'Tis folly to be wise.

The schoolboy is fully aware (like the Old Shepherd in the manuscript poems to Poetical Sketches) of the "blasts of winter" which follow the "joy in the springing day," and it is this knowledge that makes him different from both Gray's scholars and the individuals in Innocence. Like the little vagabond, the schoolboy sees the inadequacies of a world which subverts innocent pleasure to the dictates of a rationally ordered society. Yet unlike the little vagabond, the schoolboy sees an integral relationship between Innocence and Experience; this is shown in his use of the seasons of the year to correspond to the ages of man. Not only is the inevitability of the "fury Passions" and "the vulture of the mind" of Gray's poem included in this image, but also there is in the evoked image of the yearly cycle an echo of Ecclesiastes 3: 1:

To every thing there is a season,  
 and a time to every purpose  
 under the heaven.

Unlike all other figures in Songs of Experience (with the exception

of the Bard), the schoolboy's vision is comprehensive--it sees with equanimity the joys of spring and the blasts of winter in a world which should neither blow away the blossoms or nip the buds of spring before their time.

It is because of this comprehensive vision that Blake came to place "The School Boy" among the Songs of Experience. Each of Blake's different orderings are experiments in the meaning of two different facets of life that he sees as illustrative of the contradictions inherent in the human soul. The later orderings of Songs of Experience develop tendencies towards an Innocence fully cognizant of the dangers and the lessons of Experience (in one way the entire state of Experience is the schoolboy's school). The movement of "The School Boy" with its comprehensive vision of both Innocence and Experience in one image (that of the year) from Innocence to Experience exemplifies this tendency towards comprehensive vision in the Songs.

Copies L and N by placing "The School Boy" as the terminal poem of Experience introduce a new element into the book: instead of the vague "otherness" of the escape from Experience in "To Tirzah" or the Tailpiece, an idea of the next stage from Experience as comprehension and integration emerges.

## Group V--Copies O, P, Q, R, and S

The fifth grouping also falls into two distinct parts: those copies that appear to hark back to the progression inherent in Copy E, and those copies that are transitional copies between this first division and the Copy T series. Under the first heading appear Copies O, Q, and S; under the second, Copies P and R.

Copy O is composed of fifty-six plates--the Combined Title-page and "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" occur twice, once in each part of the Songs. This copy is fairly definitely the result of two different productions: Keynes and Wolf suggest that Songs of Experience was bought by Mrs. Anna Flaxman around 1800 (this date because of the absence of Plate 53 with Plate 54) to complement her earlier copy of Songs of Innocence (separate Copy C). Later around 1817 she bought an uncoloured Songs of Innocence to complete the Experience volume.<sup>79</sup> Copy O like Copy E and Copies I and K ends in "To Tirzah;" like Copy E and unlike Copies I and K "Holy Thursday" is grouped with this terminal poem. Unlike any of these copies instead of the "Three Flowers Plate" included in this grouping, Blake moves here another poem from Songs of Innocence, "The Voice of the Ancient Bard." This poem, coupled with a movement similar to that of Copy E results in an added dimension to Songs of Experience.

Copy O, although a book with each plate printed on a separate sheet of paper retains several of the poem pairs of the double-printed

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79

Keynes and Wolf, Census, p. 61.

sheet copies, Copies C, D, and E. "The Garden of Love" and "The Sick Rose," "The Human Abstract" and "The Little Vagabond," and the close proximity of "The Fly" to "A Poison Tree" in Copy 0 suggest a close affinity with the Group II copies. Each of these pairings as in the Group II copies<sup>80</sup> develops a common theme. Also like the Group II copies Copy 0 moves in a series of tableaux of themes that define the state of Experience to, in "Holy Thursday," a statement of indignation at the world of Experience and the postulating of a better:

For where-e'er the sun does shine,  
And where-e'er the rain does fall;  
Babe can never hunger there,  
Nor poverty the mind appall.  
(II. 13-16)

From this postulating of a better world the Bard looks backward through Experience in "The Voice of the Ancient Bard."

"The Voice of the Ancient Bard" in Copy 0 precedes the terminal "To Tirzah" and evaluates the course of Experience (before in Songs of Innocence this vision of the Bard had been directed forward into Experience; in Innocence the "opening morn" of "Image of truth new born" was equivalent to the maze of Folly [Experience] when seen with the vision of the Bard of the succeeding "Introduction" to Songs of Experience) by looking backward over the maze of Experience. Yet the poem's placement at the end of the series implies a new morning to come. And like "The School Boy" (also

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80

See above, pp. 29-37.

transferred from Songs of Innocence) an encompassing triple vision of "Present, Past, & Future" emerges. This unitive vision which replaces the single pipe of the Frontispiece to Songs of Innocence with the prophetic many voiced harp<sup>81</sup> and all the personalities of Experience changes the rejection of "To Tirzah" from the entirety of Experience to "Doubt" and "clouds of reason,/Dark disputes & artful teasing." This rejection of the errors of Experience allows the personality to move beyond the limited perspective of Songs of Innocence to a mature perspective that combines both the joy of Innocence and the lessons of Experience.

Copies Q and S retain with Copy O the pairing of "The Garden of Love" and "The Sick Rose" from the Group II series and share with Copy M "The Tyger" and "The Chimney Sweeper" pairing. Although Copies Q and S lack the innovative addition of either "The School Boy" or "The Voice of the Ancient Bard," their endings are suggestive of the Group II copies. Copy Q ends as does Copies C, D, and E with the pairing of "Holy Thursday" with the "Three Flowers Plate" ("To Tirzah" occurring earlier in the series). Copy S terminates like Copy E in "To Tirzah;" however, the poems that precede the final poem, "The Fly" and "A Little Girl Lost," suggest a movement away from these poems's external oppression rather than a movement away from Experience through a liberation of the senses that "The Lilly" in Copy E prepares.

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81

King David's instrument; I Samuel 16: 23.

Copy P and Copy R form the final portion of this fifth grouping of the copies of the Songs. Copy R's ordering is identical to that of the Copy T series<sup>82</sup> except that the "lost" theme of Experience (in "A Little Girl Lost" and "A Little Boy Lost") is recapitulated after "To Tirzah" creating an ending without much hope of escape. Keynes and Wolf believe that Catherine Blake may have been responsible for this copy.<sup>83</sup> Copy P (like Copies I and J) has a unique set of terminating poems-- "The Chimney Sweeper," "The Angel," and "The Garden of Love," another depressing ending. "To Tirzah" which occurs at the beginning of the final third of Copy P seems to be overcome by the sheer weight of Experience in the succeeding poems and to collapse into imprecations against the social order in the final poems.

Of these copies in the fifth grouping all except Copy S place "The Little Girl Lost" and "The Little Girl Found" close to the beginning of the series. This suggests that Blake in this grouping began to see these poems as the metaphor for Experience that they truly become in the Copy T series.<sup>84</sup>

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82

See below, Chapter IV.

83

Keynes and Wolf, Census, p. 62.

84

See below, Chapter IV, pp. 57-59.

Group VI--Copies T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z, and AA

This final grouping of the copies of Songs of Innocence and of Experience is comprised of only two distinct orderings. Copies T, U, W, X, Y, Z, and AA all follow the same arrangement. For this reason that arrangement undergoes a closer examination in the following chapter. A discussion of the arrangement of Copy V follows.

The arrangement of Copy V is unique in two respects: the first is that no other copy follows its arrangement exactly, and the second is that a manuscript index exists delineating its arrangement. Keynes and Wolf comment:

. . . Blake seems to have taken the trouble to write out a MS. index, but only to reject it after having used it in this single copy [Copy V], the paper of which is dated 1818. Dr. Sampson used the arrangement found in this index as standard, but it does not constitute so weighty an authority as that found in seven of the latest copies executed by Blake, all of which bear his own foliation.<sup>85</sup>

This arrangement is a cumulative arrangement: that is, it is an arrangement that incorporates elements of all the preceding copies in an effort to bring together each of the ideas about Experience that the copies express. Structurally, Copy V proceeds from an introductory section (Frontispiece to "Earth's Answer") in ten pairings of poems to the

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85

Keynes and Wolf, Census, pp. 52-53.

culminating poem of Experience, "The Human Abstract." These pairs either correspond to or complement each other. "Nurse's Song" deals with the persona's colouring of the external world with her own prejudices; the speaker of "The Fly" colours his internal world with an external metaphor. Both of the speakers utilise a perverse type of two-fold vision, but their focus is misplaced, egocentric. "The Tyger" and "The Little Girl Lost & Found" contrast the "terrible" beast with the terrible-seeming but beneficent beast. "The Clod & the Pebble" contrasts the contrary perspectives of love; "The Little Vagabond," the contraries of preachment and practice. "Holy Thursday" and "A Poison Tree" contrast the cleansing expressed wrath of the Bard with the perverting repressed wrath of the smiling persona of "A Poison Tree." "The Angel" illustrates the coy repression of sexual desire; "The Sick Rose," its psychological result. "To Tirzah" denies the limits on the senses and their desires, and "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" illustrates the resultant change in vision of such a repudiation. The "Three Flowers Plate" looks at three ways of responding to desire--chastity, virginity, and "delight;" "The Garden of Love" contrasts to these individual responses to desire with its external repression. "A Little Boy Lost" deals with the repression of the free thought of the individual; "Infant Sorrow," with the mutual oppression of slave and enslaver. "The School Boy" and "London" contrast two spiritual responses to bondage. "A Little Girl Lost" and "The Chimney Sweeper" show two individuals prevented from following their natural desires by their parents and the social order. Finally, "The Human Abstract" summarises the state of Experience.

Although the pairing of poems is a common structural device in the earlier copies of the Songs, few of Copy V's pairs occur in other arrangements. The exceptions are the pairing of "To Tirzah" with "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" which occurs in Copy O and the pairing of the "Three Flowers Plate" with "The Garden of Love" which occurs in the Copy T series. The greatest similarities between Copy V and other copies are instead in the relative placement of the poems in the arrangement. The placement of "Nurse's Song" as the beginning of the Experience poems is characteristic of Copies F, G, and H, Copy K, Copy O, and Copy S. The placement of "The School Boy" near the end of the series is suggestive of Copies L, M, and N. Finally, the terminal "The Human Abstract" is again characteristic of the Copy F, G, and H group. Copy V is closest in movement to this group which seems more to present a comprehensive view of Experience than to deal with any progression from it.<sup>86</sup> The placement of "To Tirzah" and "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" in the middle of the series (like Copy P) closes off the circle--the vision of the Bard sees both backwards and forwards into the maze of Experience. In the Copy T series this circle is opened up, and escape from the maze of Experience again becomes possible.

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86

See below, p. 38.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FINAL ARRANGEMENT

Copy T<sup>87</sup> and the copies that follow its ordering represent the culmination of Blake's concerns with both the visionary process and the states of existence. As the culmination of his concerns, it parallels many of the ideas and the movement of Blake's last complete work, The Illustrations of the Book of Job. Briefly, the Illustrations describes the progress of Blake's archetypal man Job from a prosperity and an innocence derived from external law and a self-ignorance to destruction and the dark night of the soul, and from there to an eventual reintegration and resuming of innocence based upon internal understanding. In this way the Illustrations represents

the "three ways" of mystical experience:  
the way of purgation or purification, the  
way of illumination, and the way of unity  
or union.<sup>88</sup>

Beginning in Plate I with a description of Job's innocence, the Illustrations moves (Plates 2 through 12) to purgation, thence (Plates 13 through 20) to

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<sup>87</sup>

The series includes Copies T, U, W, X, Y, Z, and AA. Copy T is incompletely watercoloured; it is completed with the addition of most of a colourplated copy similar to Copies F, G, and H.

<sup>88</sup>

St. John of the Cross, The Dark Night of the Soul, trans., abridged, and ed. by Kurt F. Reinhardt (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1957), p. vi.

illumination, and thence (Plate 21) to union.

The way of purification consists essentially  
in the liberation of the soul from sensory  
apprehensions and images.<sup>89</sup>

In the Illustrations Job's purgation consists in the destruction of his Innocence and with it any feeling of participation in the world--he loses his sense of belonging. In the eleven plates that make up this portion of the Illustrations Job is deprived of his peace (Plate 2), his family (Plate 3), his property (Plate 4), his health (Plate 6), and his self-confidence (Plates 7 through 10). This resulting lack of identity leads to what St. John of the Cross terms "the dark night of the soul" in which all identification of the self with the external world is denied and in which the self itself is denied. Blake identifies the culmination of this state as a Last Judgment:

Whenever any Individual Rejects Error &  
Embraces Truth, a Last Judgment passes upon  
that Individual.<sup>90</sup>

With this rejection is opened the way of illumination.

The way of illumination is to make the thus liberated  
soul capable of practicing the cardinal virtues  
of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude

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St. John of the Cross, The Dark Night of the Soul, p. vi.

90

William Blake, "A Vision of the Last Judgment," in Keynes, ed.,  
Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 647.

and . . .<sup>91</sup> the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love.

The seven virtues of medieval theology are transformed by Blake into his three arts, the the power of his illumination is turned from practice to communication. The three daughters of Job, identified by the emblematic marginal designs as painting (Plate 18), poetry of the spirit (Plate 19--in which the rose and lilly of Experience are joined with the palm of victory), and music (Plate 20) become the instruments of the communication of his vision.<sup>92</sup> Plate 20 of the Illustrations depicts this as Job describes to his daughters his purgation and illumination as represented by the three tableaux upon the walls. Painting, poetry and music are the tools both Job and Blake use to communicate their vision.

The third and final "way" of mystical experience is that of the unitive experience:

in this sublime experience all the faculties are being spiritually transformed and actually divinized, so that a man learns to live and walk in the presence of God. This life of the perfect transformation and union in God, then, constitutes the<sup>93</sup> third or "unitive way" of the mystical life.

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St. John of the Cross, The Dark Night of the Soul, p. vi.

92

For Blake these three arts are "the three Powers in Man of conversing with Paradise, which the flood did not Sweep away." "A Vision of the Last Judgment," in Keynes, ed., The Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 643.

93

St. John of the Cross, p. xii.

The way of unity in the Illustrations is depicted in the final plate, "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning." The union that Blake there depicts is not only that of man with God (which is more obviously shown in Plates 17 and 18) or with his fellow man (Plate 19) but also and most importantly, with himself. Plate 21 returns to the original pastoral setting of Plate 1. Job is reunited with his prosperity, his family, and with himself. Yet his trials have given him a new and more complete perspective (symbolised by the musical instruments and scrolls of poetry, and by implication through the Illustrations itself, painting) on his existence. His mystical experience of God is united with his existence to transform that existence into a perfect life.

The same story in slightly different terms is told in the Copy T series of the copies of Songs of Innocence and of Experience. Because the Songs is divided into two books, there is a greater emphasis on purgation and the process of illumination (vision) than in the Illustrations of the Book of Job. The union of the two states, Innocence and Experience, is implied in the final plate of the series, "The Voice of the Ancient Bard."

Songs of Innocence operates in much the same way as the first two plates of the Illustrations. A pastoral landscape is described with sheep and shepherd, children and parents, and with this description emerges a perspective on the world, a vision, which separates a mundane world from an eternal world yet postulates a relationship possible between them. Yet this perspective has two dangers inherent in it: that the relationship between the human and the divine might become frozen into law and all

spontaneity disappear; or that the relationship might, therefore, become so incomprehensible that the self cease to believe that such a relationship could exist. The second plate of the Illustrations depicts the first danger with the book of Law that both Job and Jehova clutch; Songs of Innocence contains implications of the second danger as the pastoral day becomes night. "Night," "A Dream," and "On Another's Sorrow," all contain intimations of a physical world beyond the boundary of Innocence's vision. And beyond that boundary lies Experience.

Songs of Experience opens with the Fall already accomplished: the Bard calls out to "the lapsed Soul" of Experience. "Earth's Answer" contains several of the themes that will be explored later in Experience--imprisonment, despair, internal perversity (called here "Jealousy," selfishness, and "fear"). Also here are asked in desperation what in "The School Boy" will be asked in almost visionary indignation: the questions which frame Experience. In essence these questions center on the existence of evil and oppression in the world just as the Book of Job and Blake's Illustrations of the Book of Job do.

From this introductory section of the Copy T series there is a movement towards an outline of Experience. "The Clod & the Pebble" presents the contrariness of Experience to Innocence; "Holy Thursday" displays the abdication of the role of protector that belongs to those that take charge of the helpless (note Plate 5 of the Illustrations where Job gives a beggar charity out of a sense of superiority and the marginal drawings of Plate 7). In this way this section of Experience corresponds to Plates 3 through 7 of the Illustrations which show one by one the disasters that fall on Job.

The next two poems in the Copy T series, "The Little Girl Lost" and "The Little Girl Found," are a metaphor for the whole course of Songs of Experience. "The Little Girl Lost" opens with Lyca, the metaphoric self ("lika a")<sup>94</sup> separated from her protectors (parents) and wandering through a "desart wild" in which she does not belong. In the first two stanzas of the poem the Bard comments both on her situation and on the entire situation of Experience:

In futurity  
I prophetic see,  
That the earth from sleep,  
(Grave the sentence deep)

Shall arise and seek  
For her maker meet:  
And the desart wild  
Become a garden mild.

This Bardic commentary refers not only to Lyca's situation but also back to the "Introduction" to Experience. In the "Introduction" the Bard calls the Earth to return to the commandments of "the Holy Word;" in "The Little Girl Lost & Found" he charts that return in the person of Lyca. Lyca wanders, allowing her mind to exaggerate her plight, allowing her mind to fall into an illusory sense of her situation's reality, and allowing herself to be concerned with an overdependence on her parents. It is only when her mind sleeps that reality becomes apparent in the forms of gamboling beasts who, honouring her, take her to their caves.

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The "the" of the poem implies a universality missing from "A Little Girl Lost."

These beasts are parts of Lyca that she has repressed within herself. In this way she has committed the error of Experience--the making of complements into contraries. Only as she sleeps (like the persona of "The Angel") do they appear to her in the beast-like disguise in which she has clothed them. Yet their reunion with the personality of Lyca has begun as she journeys into the caves of her subconscious in the train of its archetypes.

There remains the problem of Lyca's separation from her parents. This situation is the contrary to that of such poems in Innocence as "The Echoing Green" or "Nurse's Song" in which the generations exist in harmony. The parents are caught in the vales of illusion of the seeming desert and must be overwhelmed as if unto death by what they see as a terrible beast but what in fact is Lyca's transformed "Spirit arm'd in gold" (note here a similarity between the Spirit and the medieval motif of Christ as the terrible Deliverer). Reconciled through their change in vision, Lyca's parents respond to the Spirit's command, "Follow me" (the words of Christ to Peter and Andrew [Matthew 4: 19]) and join Lyca in the palace of the Spirit. Here the union of personality (Lyca) with Spirit and with the world view (the influence of the parents and the past on the personality) results in the Peaceable Kingdom of Paradise.

From the overview of Experience and the outline of its personality's redemption, the Copy T series moves to particular enumerations of false vision and oppression. In this way these poems (numbers 37 through 51) correspond to the false arguments given by the "comforters" to Job and to the utter confusion Job feels in the dark night of his soul when he reaches

the furthest depth of his despair (Plates 8 through 13 of the Illustrations).

The first of these poems which lead to complete and utter despair<sup>95</sup> is "The Chimney Sweeper." The speaker of this poem is a child not only abandoned but also exploited by parent, "God & his Priest & King." Once again the abdication of the role of protector of the helpless by these personages is emphasized. There is also in the Sweep's tone a sort of self-righteousness that hints at a perversion of his own perspective to complement that of his oppressors.

This internal perversion is continued in the next four poems. "Nurse's Song" deals with the false consciousness of the Nurse as she colours her world with her own prejudices. Hers is a world of suspicion and distrust in which her "protection" takes the form of repression rather than expression (the opposite is true in the "Nurse's Song" of Innocence). "The Sick Rose's" sickness is on one level sexual desire, yet the rather melodramatic posture of the figure which rises out of the rose's heart belies this interpretation.<sup>96</sup> The superficial "criminality" of sexuality falls apart upon deeper investigation into the social connotations (guilt, etc.) attached to sexuality. Yet such a deeper investigation

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95

Which is counted a sin against the Holy Spirit in orthodox Christianity.

96

In Posthumous Copy e which I studied at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City, the figure in the rose is a man and the head of the worm forms his erect phallus. Copy e was not coloured by Blake. It was, however, coloured by a close associate of Blake's, either Catherine Blake or John Linnell, and the etched plate as demonstrated by the Gilchrist electrotypes admits of the ambiguity of the figure's sex and of the exact nature of the worm.

is not signalled to the reader (except for the hints in "The Little Girl Lost & Found" poems) until the end of the series; as a result, the reader experiences the same false consciousness of the personalities in Experience. In this way Songs of Experience becomes a reader participating event incorporating his senses in the wedding of picture and poem, his emotions, his intellect, and his imagination: the reader participates in the selfsame quest for visionary consciousness as does the individual in Experience.

It is perverted vision which forms the concern of the next poem, "The Fly." In some ways the identification of speaker and fly is similar to Gray's identification of "poor moralist" and fly,<sup>97</sup> and superficially, the logic and proportion of what the speaker says seems valid. Yet the syllogisms of "The Fly" leave the reader with a feeling of disquietude. This disquietude is amplified by the poem's design which seems not to have anything to do with the poem and which superficially at least, seems to resemble a pastoral scene of happiness. A closer look at the design as John E. Grant suggests<sup>98</sup> results in this same feeling that something is wrong, but it takes a transformation of perspective, of vision, to understand exactly what it is.

In "The Angel" the problem ("What can it mean?") is unanswerable for the speaker, but the reader is fully aware of the dream's meaning. What

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97

Thomas Gray, "Ode on the Spring," l.43, in Roger Lonsdale, ed., The Poems of Thomas Gray, William Collins, Oliver Goldsmith (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., Ltd., 1969), p. 53.

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John E. Grant, "Interpreting Blake's 'The Fly,'" in Northrop Frye, ed., Blake: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 50-51.

is a meaningful question for the poem's persona is for the reader a rhetorical one. The reader's consciousness of a meaning beyond that experienced (or in this case--not experienced) by the personae of Experience is signalled by this poem and utterly confused in the next.

"The Tyger" is one of Blake's most ambiguous lyrics. Its placement here among poems that deal with the ambiguity of vision in Experience forces the reader who is caught up in its cadences to identify himself with this confusion. This poem becomes the first climax of the series as the reader who previously has maintained a slightly superior stance in relation to the speakers of Experience begins to realise that he too is one of them. Whereas in Innocence, all of the inhabitants are complete figures ("The Lamb" for example) and are regarded as total entities, the Tyger is something that is put together piece by piece. This is the vision of the individual in Experience--the constituent parts obscure the whole. It is at this point that the reader realises that Experience reflects his own experiences and becomes one with the individuals in Experience just as Job's God and his beggar wear one face.

The first response to such confusion as that experienced by the reader and the personalities of Experience is a series of "Why's?" The Three Flowers Plate (number 43) serves as an introduction to the next section of the Copy T series which attempts to answer these "why's?" by presenting the same situation from three different perspectives.

In the three poems that make up this plate, "My Pretty Rose Tree," "Ah! Sun Flower," and "The Lilly," Blake reverses many of the traditional meanings of the emblematic "language of the flowers." The rose traditionally

is either an emblem of carpe diem<sup>99</sup> and the transience of life or of love;<sup>100</sup>  
 the sunflower is an emblem of the soul's knowledge of and desire towards God;<sup>101</sup>  
 and the lily is traditionally a symbol of purity and virginity.<sup>102</sup> In Blake's  
 poems the rose is characterised by jealousy, the sunflower by unrequited desire,  
 and the lily by "in love" delighting.<sup>103</sup> Although reversals of traditional  
 emblematic meanings, the perspectives incorporated in the poems are still  
 those of a metaphoric frame such as that of Songs of Innocence. That this  
 "two-fold vision" is in Experience false consciousness is shown by Blake's  
 reversal of traditional "two-fold" meanings (i.e. metaphoric or emblematic  
 meanings). Yet Blake does not intend these poems to mean only this: by  
 placing this plate after a climactic identification of the reader with the  
 individual in Experience and before a group of poems defining (in their own

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Cf. Herrick's "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time" where the rose (bud) becomes a representative of the classical motif of flowers--as symbols of the transience of life. Cf. J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, translated by Jack Sage (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1962), pp. 104-5.

100

J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, p. 57.

101

Cf. Francis Quarles, "The Fifth Book: Emblem IV," Emblems, Divine and Moral (London: W. Tegg and Company, 1859), pp. 198-200. The design of the emblem is of a young girl clutching a compass whose needle is pointing towards the radiant head of a winged cherub just as the head of the pictured sunflower is pointing towards the sun.

102

J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary of Symbols, p. 180.

103

A rather more complete investigation of the "Three Flowers Plate" and traditional emblematic meaning can be found in M. L. Johnson [Grant], "Emblem and Symbol in Blake," The Huntingdon Library Quarterly, Vol. XXXVII, Number 2, February 1974, pp. 151-170.

terms) the problems of Experience, Blake hints both at the nature of Experience's personalities and at the nature of their arguments.

Nowhere on this plate is this foreshadowing of the nature of the individual in Experience more obvious than in "The Lilly." The Lilly itself is characterised by Blake in negative terms: she has neither "a thorn nor a threat" to "stain her beauty bright." Although the Lilly like the Rose Tree and the Sun Flower is rooted in the soil of Experience, only she has the means of breaking out of the cycle of desire and thwarted desire that the previous two poems present. Superficially and emblematically, the Lilly does this by satisfying each desire she has and by not allowing their repression to "stain" her delight.<sup>104</sup> The lilly is a traditional symbol of purity because of its whiteness. If the reader stops at this, he is left with the paradox of chastity and purity indulging in unrestrained love. Yet opening up the symbolic value of the Lilly further by imbuing it with the immediate emotional charge<sup>105</sup> of (say) the Christian religious mythos, the Lilly as the flower of Easter becomes associated with sacrifice through love and therefore looks backwards to "Night" (in Songs of Innocence) and forward to "To Tirzah" and "The Voice of the Ancient Bard." This "three-fold" way of interpreting "The Lilly" is in itself one of the means of escape from the "endless maze" of Experience.

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<sup>104</sup>

Cf. Oothoon's speeches in Visions of the Daughters of Albion, Plate 6, ll. 18-23.

<sup>105</sup>

This immediate emotional charge is characteristic of three-fold vision. Cf. Damon, A Blake Dictionary, p. 437.

From "The Lilly" and its intimations of salvation Blake moves to a group of poems which define in their own ways the problems of Experience. "The Garden of Love" blames societal and religious taboos on love for perverting the fruition of love and closing up its expression. "The Little Vagabond" is the first of a series of attempts at a return to the viewpoint of Innocence ("The Chimney Sweeper" is not of this series since that Child's viewpoint is restricted, resentful, and totally of Experience). Such an attempt on one hand displays the hypocrisies and contradictions of Experience--a religious institution that preaches love and brotherhood is itself "cold" and without compassion--and on another displays a tendency towards retreating back into a restricted viewpoint (like that of "Night" or "The Chimney Sweeper" of Songs of Innocence) which is passive in the face of malignancy. Such a viewpoint cannot pose the questions of "The Tyger" nor answer them nor deal with any other problem of Experience. A solution such as that offered by the little Vagabond represents a retreat from perceived reality--one of the lessons necessary to experience. As a retreat this perspective runs counter to any progression of the personality of Experience. Yet it does reintroduce a "contrary vision," and as such "The Little Vagabond" introduces a tension into Experience which foreshadows an eventual progression.<sup>106</sup>

In recognition that a retreat into Innocence cannot work once the problems and questions of such poems as "The Fly" and "The Tyger" are

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<sup>106</sup>

Cf. "Without Contraries there is no Progression."

posed, the personality of Experience turns to the exact opposite of the little vagabond's utopia--to the horrific and terrible qualities of "London" made more horrible and terrible by the speaker's point of view. Instead of the spontaneity of the ale-house church, the personality of Experience sees "charter'd streets," "mind-forg'd manacles," bans, and restrictions (the army, the government, and marriage) surrounding him. The dream of the little vagabond is transformed into the "reality" of his older counterpart in "London."<sup>107</sup>

From external restrictions the personality of Experience turns to a closer examination of "the mind-forg'd manacles" of "London." As the penultimate stage of the personality's purification,<sup>108</sup> the mind of Experience turns inward. All of the internal perversions displayed in "Nurse's Song," "The Fly," "The Sick Rose," and to an extent in "The Chimney Sweeper" are seen as the essence of humanity ("The Human Abstract"). In "The Human Abstract," itself, Blake refers back to "The Sick Rose" and "The Fly" by alluding to "the Catterpillar and Fly" who feed on the Tree of Mystery. These insects devour from within just as the internal perversions that they represent devour the spirit.

"Infant Sorrow" and "A Poison Tree" complete the dark night of

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<sup>107</sup>

The speaker of "London" is also a vagabond, a wanderer; cf. l. l.

<sup>108</sup>

There are three: the enumeration of faults (in this case the problems of Experience); a close investigation of these faults; and finally a casting out of them from the personality. In this way purification resembles confession and contrition.

Experience that "London" and "The Human Abstract" introduced. Together "Infant Sorrow" and "A Poison Tree" echo Job's cry, "Let the day perish wherein I was born."<sup>109</sup> It would be better both for the self ("Infant Sorrow") and for others ("A Poison Tree") had the self never been born into Experience. Together "Infant Sorrow" and "A Poison Tree" repeat the two parts of the dilemma of Experience---external repression and internal perversion.

Blake recapitulates next external repression, the "lost" theme, in "A Little Boy Lost" and "A Little Girl Lost." In Songs of Innocence "lost" means a physical separation; here in Experience it means a mental separation from those around which leads to an imposed physical separation. In Innocence those who are lost are straightforwardly found again and returned to their point of departure or some other pleasant place. These last two "lost" poems of Experience have no accompanying "found" poems---both of the central figures of the poems, the little boy and Ona, are trapped by the rigid systems of Experience.

It is at this point that the Bard breaks his silence (he has been silent since the first two stanzas of "The Little Girl Lost") to comment on Experience:

Children of the future Age  
 Reading this indignant page,  
 Know that in a former time  
 Love! sweet Love! was thought a crime.

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109

Job 3: 3.

With "A Little Girl Lost" the separation of the bardic vision from the perspective of the personality in Experience begins to come to an end. Experience in the person of Ona is faced with the two Contraries of her desire and the strictures of her parents. Her desires form part of the vision of the Bard--he sees a time in the future when love is not a crime. Ona, however, must deny her love before her father's "loving look/Like the holy book." Ona submits not to her natural desires but to the external restrictions of an ancient and corpse-like father figure.<sup>110</sup>

From these summaries of the state of Experience the personality is led in "To Tirzah" to the repudiation of all unnatural restrictions.<sup>111</sup> This

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110

He is her "father white," suggesting old age and the whiteness of the sepulchre. It is with some irony that Blake has the father invest himself with the oxymoronic "blossoms of my hoary hair."

111

E. D. Hirsch, Jr. in Innocence and Experience, pp. 281-91, reads the opposite in this poem. He reads "To Tirzah" as a repudiation of Blake's earlier (?) stance on free love; on this reading and on that alone, it seems to me he dates Copy E around 1805. Tirzah, as mother of the mortal part represents that same restrictive parent figure as that of the "father white" of "A Little Girl Lost." Instead of denying a life of the senses, the speaker repudiates the restrictions placed on his senses:

With cruelty didst mould my Heart,  
And with false self-deceiving tears  
Didst bind my Nostrils, Eyes & Ears:

Didst close my tongue in senseless clay,  
And me to Mortal Life betray.

(emphasis mine)

It is the binding of the senses that is the betrayal not the senses themselves.

What then is this betrayal, this "Mortal Life?" Simply, it is the inability to see beyond the physical except (as in "The Fly") to identify with a lower form of the physical. Thus, this betrayal is the reverse of the twofold vision of Innocence--the identification of the self with a higher form.

The death of Jesus set me free:

Then what have I to do with thee?

Release from Mortal Life comes through the death of Jesus. "Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules." (Marriage of Heaven and

repudiation, in form similar to the "if-then" structure of "The Fly" except that there is no need for the hypothetical "if" (all statements are here conclusions; all questions, rhetorical) represents the final stage of the purification of the personality--it is a rejection of the (now) false perspectives of the personality about himself and his world (compare Plate 16 of the Job Illustrations). As a rejection of false perspective, "To Tirzah" represents what Blake terms a Last Judgment:

Whenever any Individual Rejects Error &  
Embraces Truth, a Last Judgment passes  
upon that Individual. 112

The design of "To Tirzah" becomes not only a pieta, not only a baptism, not only a resurrection (although it is all of these things), but also a Last Judgment.

"To Tirzah" rejects the false perspectives of Experience--that the physical is the only reality (single vision), that there are fixed oppressive laws that govern the universe (a perversion of twofold vision), and that all natural feelings need to be repressed ("free Love with bondage bound."). The poem does not, however, offer a substitute vision. "The

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Hell, Plates 23-24) From following natural desires (recall the endings of Copies C, D, and E where "The Lilly" precedes either the Tailpiece or "To Tirzah") and denying the restrictions imposed by others, freedom from these oppressions can be attained.

112

William Blake, "A Vision of the Last Judgment," in Keynes, ed., Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 647.

School Boy" and "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" culminate in an encompassing vision of both Innocence and Experience.

"The School Boy" represents a return to the pastoral scenery of Songs of Innocence. In form the poem's questions recall those of "A Dream" in Innocence and "Earth's Answer" in Experience. Although the schoolboy is caught in Experience, he sees the necessity for "the blasts of winter" and still anticipates the spring.<sup>113</sup> By finding symbols for Innocence and Experience in the cycle of the seasons, the schoolboy realises their interdependence and the nature of their progression.

Finally, "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" rounds out the cycle of Experience. Addressing the "Youth of delight," the "Children of the future Age" of "A Little Girl Lost," the Ancient Bard looks both forward to "the opening morn" and backward into the "endless maze" of Experience. Here as in "The Ecchoing Green" in Innocence and "The Little Girl Found" in Experience the generations coexist in a mutually beneficial relationship. Here the growing comprehension of "The School Boy" culminates under the tutelage of the Bard into a perspective that "Present, Past, & Future sees." By looking backward the Bard sees the maze of Experience and its obstacles; by looking forward he sees the opening pastoral morn of Innocence regained. The "Youth of delight," the now transformed personalities of Experience, look forward with him and see with their transformed vision the new morning

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113

See the discussion of "The School Boy" above, Chapter III, pp. 42-44.

of Innocence as the "Image of truth new born."

The design of "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" (Figure 4) emphasises this unity of vision between the personalities of Experience and the Bard. With the harp of the Ancient Bard (the harp as the instrument of David the psalmist) the children of Experience form a circle beginning with the youngest on the Bard's right and ending with the oldest on his left. This unitive circle which first appears in Blake's iconography in Songs of Innocence and of Experience (see the designs for "Laughing Song," the first plate of "The Ecchoing Green," and "Nurse's Song" in Songs of Innocence; "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" is the only design with the possible exception of "To Tirzah" in which this unitive circle appears in Songs of Experience) is a major design motif in Blake's works. The most revealing comparison that can be made between this design and its later representation is the comparison between the design of "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" and the last plate of the Illustrations of the Book of Job (Figure 5).

The figures of the last plate of the Job illustrations (Job, his wife, his sons and daughters) form three concentric circles (the circle of the tree trunk around which Job has traversed throughout the illustrations forms the innermost circle) echoing the structure of the Job illustrations as a whole. The scene, the overall structure, and the figures are the same as in the first plate--the end meets the beginning to close off the final circle of the Illustrations of the Book of Job.

The figure of Job in this plate is almost exactly the same as the figure of the Ancient Bard. Both with flowing hair and beard pluck a

Figure 4

## The Voice of the Ancient Bard

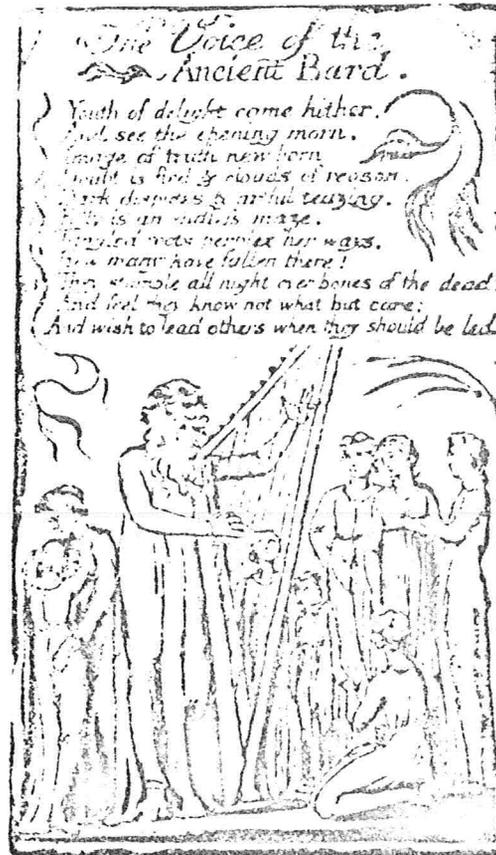


Figure 5

21

Great & Marvellous are thy Works  
Lord God Almighty

Just & True are thy Ways  
O thou King of Saints



So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job  
more than the beginning

After this Job lived  
an hundred & forty years  
& saw his Sons & his  
Sons Sons



In burnt Offerings for Sin  
thou hast had no Pleasure

even four Generations  
So Job died  
being old  
& full of days



W Blake inv & sculp

standing harp which they hold on their left with their right feet advanced. Both are instructors: Job in the previous plate (Plate 20 of the Job illustrations) communicates to his daughters the power and the meaning of his vision; the Ancient Bard guides the new-born personalities from Experience away from the maze of Folly towards "the opening morn." Both are old men among a crowd of the young.

Just as in the final plate of the Job illustration the entire course of the book is united in a series of circles, so "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" unites the whole of Experience. This is the third design in the Songs in which the Bard propere appears (compare Figures 1 and 2 with Figure 4). The Bard has now totally absorbed the divine element of his inspiration (the cherub) and transformed it into the communication of his vision (the Songs themselves). Like the daughters of Job the reader has taken part in the poet's experience. This final vision is the interdependence of Innocence and Experience.

This then, as in the Job illustrations is the course of Songs of Innocence and of Experience in the Copy T series: a first stage in which a pastoral landscape is shown in its pristine innocence--sometimes including forebodings of dangers to come (Songs of Innocence); a second stage of Fall and descent (the descent of the cherub in the Frontispiece to Songs of Experience up to "The Clod & the Pebble"); a third stage where Innocence is contrasted with Experience in which the perspective of Innocence is found to be incapable of dealing with malevolence ("The Clod & the Pebble," "Holy Thursday," and "The Little Girl Lost & Found"); the descent to the dark night of the soul ("The Chimney Sweeper" to "The Human Abstract");

the enumerations of the limitations of Experience (the two types of oppression--external and internal--of "Infant Sorrow" and "A Poison Tree" and the recapitulation of the essential theme of Experience, "lostness," in "A Little Boy Lost" and "A Little Girl Lost"); the culmination of the purification of personality in the repudiation of the false perspectives of Experience ("To Tirzah"); a growing comprehension of the interdependence (rather than their primary "Contrary" quality) of Innocence and Experience ("The School Boy"); and a final unitive experience between personality and vision and between Innocence and Experience in a single circular perspective.

With the similarities of movement and design between the Job illustrations and the Songs there is another similarity--that of the interpretation of theme. The surrounding marginal designs of and the several different levels of action in the Job illustrations point to the central problem of the Book of Job, a concern also of the Songs--the problem of evil.

. . . Job's suffering is a dispensation of love, but brought about by the wrath-spirit [the Accuser or Satan], and with every appearance of wrath. It is so with every trial and chastisement of the righteous. And it cannot be otherwise; for trial is designed to be for man a means of overcoming the evil that is external to him, and chastisement of overcoming the evil that is within him. There is a conflict between good and evil in the world that can issue in victory to the good only so, that the good proves itself in distinction from the evil, withstands the assault of evil, and destroys the evil that exists bound up with itself: only so, that the good as far as it is still mixed with the evil is refined as by fire, and more and more freed by it.

This is the two-fold point of view from

which the suffering of Job is to be regarded. It was designed, first of all, that Job should prove himself in opposition to Satan, in order to overcome him; and since Job does not pass through the trial entirely without sinning, it has the effect at the same time of purifying and perfecting him. In both respects, the history of Job is a passage from the history of God's own conflict with the evil one, which is the substance of the history of redemption, and ends in the triumph of the divine love. . . . Accordingly the church has always recognised in the passion of Job a type of the passion of Jesus Christ. James (v. 11) even compares the patience of Job and the issue of the Lord's sufferings. And according to this indication it was the custom after the second century to read the book of Job to the churches during passion-week. The final solution of the problem which this marvelous book sets forth, is then this: the suffering of the righteous, in its deepest cause, is the conflict of the seed of the woman with the seed of the serpent, which ends in the head of the serpent being trampled under foot; it is the type or copy of the suffering of Christ, the Holy God, who has himself borne our sins, and in the constancy of His reconciling love has withstood, even to the final overthrow, the assault of wrath and of the angel of wrath. <sup>114</sup>

Blake takes this orthodox interpretation (or one like it) of Job as the starting point for his interpretation. <sup>115</sup> The emphasis on not only

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<sup>114</sup>

F. Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on The Book of Job, Rev. Francis Bolton, trans. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 31-32.

<sup>115</sup>

He does, however, change certain parts to suit his conceptual universe--notably a greater emphasis on the psychological import of the book.

external evil ("trial") but also internal evil ("chastisement") leads to plate designs that either occur on one plane--the physical (corresponding to internal evil)--or on two levels--the physical and the supernatural<sup>116</sup> (corresponding to external evil). This same separation of internal and external evil, chastisement and trial, takes place in several poems of purification in Songs of Experience (compare, for example, "The Little Vagabond" with "A Poison Tree").

It is these two evils that form the passion not only of Job and Christ but also of the individual in Experience. The poems of purification in Experience are in effect Stations of the Cross leading to the Resurrection from the tomb of "To Tirzah." Finally in "The Voice of the Ancient Bard," the sown physical body is united with the newly risen spiritual body.<sup>117</sup>

Songs of Innocence in the Copy T series can be compared to Paradise before the Fall. There all things have names (there is no Mystery) and each walks in compliance with if not in fact with (like the Bard) God. Songs of Experience is Paradise lost<sup>118</sup> and regained. It serves as a type for the Fall and for the Redemption by annihilating "the Self-hood of Deceit & False Forgiveness."<sup>119</sup> Thus purified, the personality emerges from

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116

Note that no action takes place entirely on a supernatural plane.

117

Blake indeed painted a watercolour of the embrace of spirit and body.

118

Cf. the emphasis on the "lost" theme in Songs of Experience.

119

William Blake, Milton, Plate 18.

Experience with a new perspective which "Present, Past, & Future sees."  
This illumination allows the union of each facet of the life of the  
personality of Experience into a comprehensive totality.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### THE EVOLUTION OF THE COPIES

Blake's several different arrangements of the poems within Songs of Innocence and of Experience reveal an organic development of his thought which corresponds to much of what he develops in his longer "didactic and symbolical works," to use Sir Geoffrey Keyne's phrase. There is an organic development from ideas in Poetical Sketches to Songs of Innocence and from Songs of Innocence to Songs of Experience. Two of these ideas which from the first were paired by Blake are the states of existence and visionary capability.

Blake took the common motif of the ages of man and correlated it not to chronological age but to spiritual progress: "Man Passes on, but States remain for Ever; he passes thro' them like a traveller."<sup>120</sup> They are stages of spiritual maturity through which a man passes. The means of moving from one state to another is vision:

Now I a fourfold vision see,  
And a fourfold vision is given to me;  
'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight

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<sup>120</sup>

William Blake, "A Vision of the Last Judgment," in Keynes, ed., Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 540.

And threefold in soft Beulah's night  
 And twofold Always. May God us keep  
 From Single vision & Newton's sleep!<sup>121</sup>

The harmonious vision of Innocence, twofold vision, is inapplicable in Experience--it leads to either pathetic fallacy or the spectre of Nobadaddy. Single vision is blindness to the transcendental and "sleep." Threefold vision, the vision that repudiates the limitations on the senses, is the means of temporarily achieving harmony in Experience (this harmonious state, an early prototype for Beulah). Fourfold vision, the unitive all-encompassing vision of the states as one cyclic continuum, creates the final escape from the "Contraries."

The development from twofold and threefold vision in the Songs of Experience corresponds to the development of the several orderings of the poem series. Figure 6 shows in graphic form the relationships between each of the twenty-seven copies. All of the copies derive in some extent from the pairings of contraries in Copy A. The poem pairs of the second group and the inclusion of "To Tirzah" in Copy E are two more important influences on the development of Songs of Experience. The third group, Copies F, G, and H, has an influence on Copy P and Copy V. The middle copies absorb these influences and try out several thematic combinations. The inclusion of "The School Boy" and/or "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" opens up the possibility of a fourfold vision (beyond the Bard's threefold vision), a possibility that is

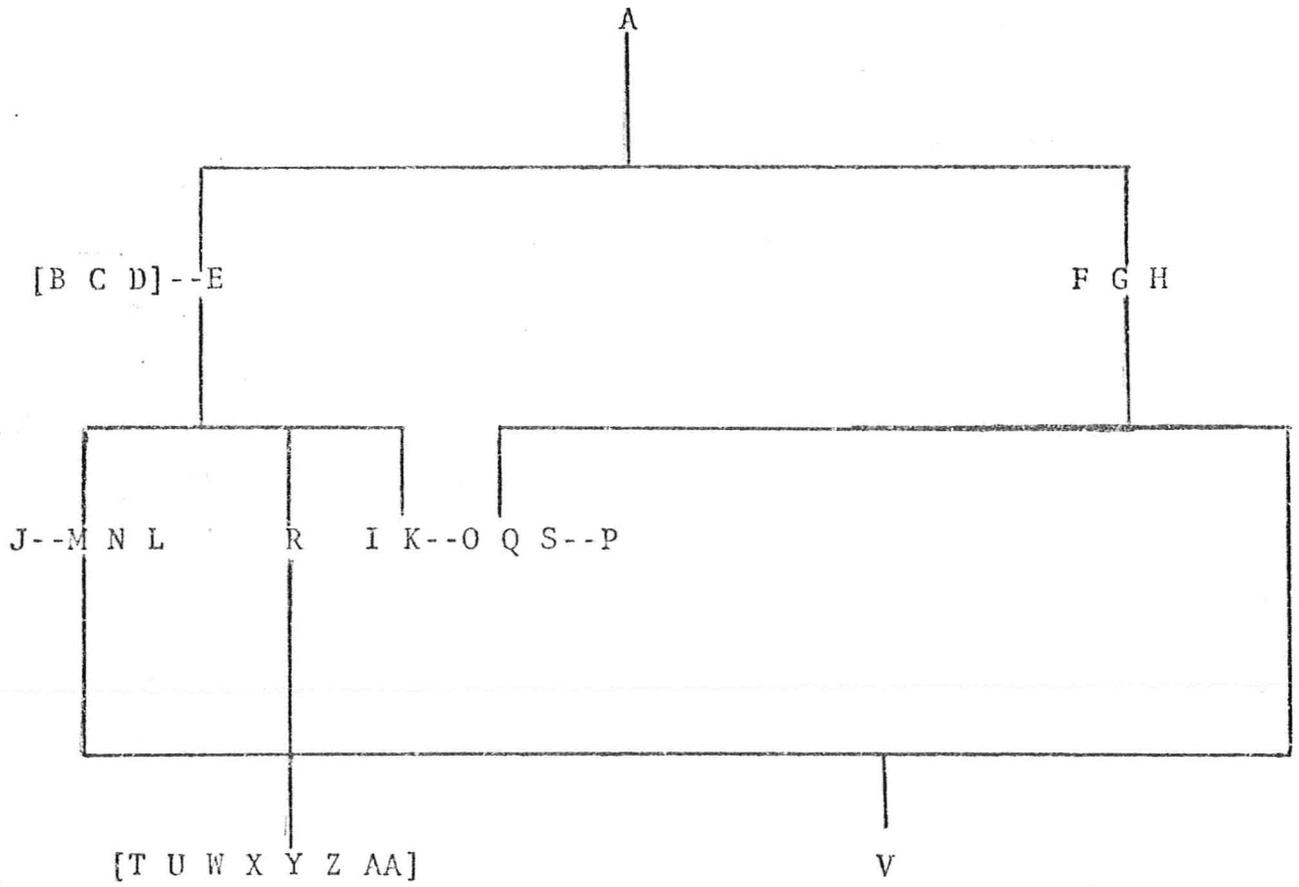
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121

William Blake, letter to Thomas Butts, 22 November 1802, in Keynes, ed., Complete Poetry and Prose., pp. 851-62.

Plate 6

A Geneology for the Copies



accomplished in the Copy T series.

It is in the Copy T series that Blake attempts a fourfold visionary unification of his works. By placing "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" last in the series, Blake creates a movement similar to Plate 14 of the Illustrations of the Book of Job or to Plate 36 of Milton; in each of these illustrations a cosmic egg is laid open displaying four parts and a unifying middle; "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" is such a unifying middle which ties together not only the Four Zoas but also the states of existence into one unity. The Copy T series exists in systematic harmony with Blake's greatest prophecies, engravings, and paintings. In this way not only is the Songs of Innocence and of Experience a sourcebook for Blake's other works, but also Blake's other works become sourcebooks for the different arrangements of the Songs.

A study of the different arrangements of the poems in Songs of Innocence and of Experience is predicated on the assumption of Blake's intention. Along with the internal consistency of theme and its parallels with Blake's other work which has been developed in this study,<sup>122</sup> there exists the evidence of Blake's carefulness in his other works and his assertion in the preface to Jerusalem that

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122

and the statistical improbability of any two poems' being repeated next to each other (roughly equivalent to  $1/20!$  or

$20 \times 19 \times 18 \times 17 \times 16 \times 15 \times 14 \times 13 \times 12 \times 11 \times 10 \times 9 \times 8 \times 7 \times 6 \times 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1$   
if the arrangement were truly random).

Every word's every letter is studied  
and put into its fit place.<sup>123</sup>

If the placement of a letter or a blur is of such significance to Blake, then surely too must be the placement of a poem in a series such as the Songs. Blake's publication of several issues for friends<sup>124</sup> may have been one factor in Blake's composition of the series, but even this argues for intention.

The continuing publication of the Songs throughout Blake's career make it one of Blake's most popular books in his lifetime. Blake's continuous experimentation with order in the copies provides a vivid representation of the development of his thought.

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<sup>123</sup>

Keynes, ed., Complete Poetry and Prose, p. 645.

<sup>124</sup>

Especially Copy 0 for Anna Flaxman. See above pp. 45-46.

APPENDICES

## Appendix I

## Numerical Key to the Following Tables

The Poems of Songs of Innocence and of Experience

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Combined Titlepage                 | 31. Earth's Answer                                    |
| 2. Frontispiece to <u>Innocence</u>   | 32. The Clod & the Pebble                             |
| 3. Titlepage to <u>Innocence</u>      | 33. Holy Thursday                                     |
| 4. Introduction to <u>Innocence</u>   | 34.-36. The Little Girl Lost<br>The Little Girl Found |
| 5. The Shepherd                       | 37. The Chimney Sweeper                               |
| 6.-7. The Ecchoing Green              | 38. Nurse's Song                                      |
| 8. The Lamb                           | 39. The Sick Rose                                     |
| 9.-10. The Little Black Boy           | 40. The Fly   |
| 11. The Blossom                       | 41. The Angel   |
| 12. The Chimney Sweeper               | 42. The Tyger   |
| 13. The Little Boy Lost               | 43. My Pretty Rose Tree,<br>Ah! Sun Flower, The Lilly |
| 14. The Little Boy Found              | 44. The Garden of Love                                |
| 15. Laughing Song                     | 45. The Little Vagabond                               |
| 16.-17. A Cradle Song                 | 46. London  |
| 18. The Divine Image                  | 47. The Human Abstract                                |
| 19. Holy Thursday                     | 48. Infant Sorrow                                     |
| 20.-21. Night                         | 49. A Poison Tree                                     |
| 22.-23. Spring                        | 50. A Little Boy Lost                                 |
| 24. Nurse's Song                      | 51. A Little Girl Lost                                |
| 25. Infant Joy                        | 52. To Tirzah   |
| 26. A Dream                           | 53. The School Boy                                    |
| 27. On Another's Sorrow               | 54. The Voice of the Ancient Bard                     |
| 28. Frontispiece to <u>Experience</u> | a. Tailpiece (for Copies B, C,<br>and D)              |
| 29. Title-Page to <u>Experience</u>   |   |
| 30. Introduction to <u>Experience</u> |   |

## Appendix 2

### The Orderings of the Poems in the Separately Issued Songs of Innocence

Copy

|   |    |       |    |    |    |    |    |       |    |       |    |    |    |       |    |       |    |       |    |    |    |       |    |       |    |    |       |
|---|----|-------|----|----|----|----|----|-------|----|-------|----|----|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|----|----|----|-------|----|-------|----|----|-------|
| A | 5  | 25    | 16 | 17 | 15 | 9  | 10 | 54    | 6  | 7     | 24 | 19 | 27 | 22    | 23 | 53    | 26 | 34-36 | 11 | 8  | 13 | 14    | 20 | 21    | 12 | 18 |       |
| B | 5  | 25    | 27 | 53 | 19 | 24 | 15 | 9     | 10 | 54    | 6  | 7  | 13 | 18    | 26 | 34-36 | 13 | 14    | 16 | 17 | 22 | 23    | 11 | 8     | 20 | 21 |       |
| C | 16 | 17    | 13 | 14 | 18 | 12 | 27 | 22    | 23 | 53    | 8  | 11 | 26 | 34-36 | 15 | 9     | 10 | 54    | 19 | 24 | 6  | 7     | 20 | 21    | 25 | 5  |       |
| D | 6  | 7     | 15 | 9  | 10 | 54 | 11 | 8     | 26 | 34-36 | 24 | 19 | 25 | 5     | 20 | 21    | 13 | 14    | 18 | 12 | 16 | 17    | 27 | 22    | 23 | 53 |       |
| E | 18 | 12    | 6  | 7  | 11 | 8  | 15 | 9     | 10 | 54    | 5  | 25 | 27 | 22    | 23 | 53    | 24 | 19    | 14 | 13 | 26 | 34-36 | 20 | 21    | 16 | 17 |       |
| F | 5  | 25    | 8  | 11 | 15 | 9  | 10 | 54    | 13 | 14    | 18 | 12 | 16 | 17    | 20 | 21    | 27 | 22    | 23 | 53 | 26 | 34-36 |    |       |    |    |       |
| G | 26 | 34-36 | 8  | 11 | 6  | 7  | 18 | 12    | 25 | 5     | 20 | 21 | 16 | 17    | 13 | 14    | 24 | 19    | 27 | 22 | 23 | 53    | 15 | 9     | 10 | 54 |       |
| H | 5  | 25    | 15 | 9  | 10 | 54 | 6  | 7     | 16 | 17    | 20 | 21 | 24 | 19    | 11 | 8     | 27 | 22    | 23 | 53 | 13 | 14    | 26 | 34-36 | 12 | 18 |       |
| I | 5  | 9     | 10 | 54 | 16 | 17 | 11 | 34-36 | 8  | 24    | 25 | 27 | 13 | 14    | 12 | 22    | 23 | 53    | 15 | 26 | 19 | 18    | 6  | 7     | 20 | 21 |       |
| J | 5  | 9     | 10 | 54 | 18 | 26 | 6  | 7     | 27 | 25    | 8  | 22 | 23 | 11    | 24 | 12    | 16 | 17    |    |    |    |       |    |       |    |    |       |
| K | 6  | 7     | 15 | 9  | 10 | 54 | 11 | 8     | 26 | 22    | 23 | 53 | 25 | 5     | 16 | 17    | 24 | 19    | 12 | 18 | 13 | 14    | 20 | 21    | 27 |    |       |
| L | 5  | 25    | 24 | 19 | 27 | 22 | 23 | 53    | 15 | 9     | 10 | 54 | 6  | 7     | 16 | 17    | 13 | 14    | 8  | 11 | 18 | 12    | 20 | 21    |    |    |       |
| M | 25 | 5     | 15 | 9  | 10 | 54 | 27 | 22    | 23 | 53    | 16 | 17 | 19 | 24    | 6  | 7     | 8  | 11    | 18 | 12 | 21 | 20    | 13 | 14    |    |    |       |
| N | 5  | 6     | 7  | 8  | 19 | 24 | 16 | 17    | 15 | 9     | 10 | 26 | 12 | 13    | 14 | 27    | 11 | 20    | 21 | 53 | 22 | 23    | 15 | 18    |    |    |       |
| O | 5  | 25    | 9  | 10 | 27 | 22 | 23 | 15    | 53 | 54    | 12 | 8  | 19 | 18    | 20 | 21    | 26 | 16    | 17 | 11 | 24 | 13    | 14 |       |    |    |       |
| P | 25 | 6     | 7  | 22 | 23 | 18 | 19 | 53    | 13 | 14    | 27 | 26 | 15 | 11    | 20 | 21    | 8  | 5     | 54 | 12 | 24 | 9     | 16 |       |    |    |       |
| Q | 6  | 7     | 11 | 22 | 23 | 25 | 54 | 5     | 9  | 10    | 27 | 16 | 17 | 18    | 19 | 8     | 12 | 26    | 53 | 15 | 24 | 13    | 14 | 20    | 21 |    |       |
| S | 5  | 6     | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12    | 13 | 14    | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18    | 19 | 20    | 21 | 53    | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25    | 54 | 26    | 27 |    |       |
| T | 5  | 25    | 27 | 19 | 24 | 9  | 10 | 54    | 6  | 7     | 12 | 18 | 26 | 34-36 | 13 | 14    | 16 | 17    | 22 | 23 | 11 | 8     | 20 | 21    |    |    |       |
| U | 25 | 6     | 7  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 15    | 8  | 53    | 24 | 13 | 14 | 20    | 21 | 19    | 26 | 16    | 17 | 25 | 54 | 22    | 23 | 5     | 27 | 18 | 34-36 |

Note: All the above copies begin 2, 3, 4 with the exceptions of Copy T which begins 3, 2, 4 and Copy U which begins 3, 2 and lacks 4

| Poem Blocks | Copies in which they occur | Poem Blocks   | Copies in which they occur |
|-------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| 15 9 10 54  | A B C D E F G H K L M      | 11 8          | A B C D E F G H K L M T    |
| 15 9 10     | N                          | 12 18         | A B C D E F G H K L M T    |
| 9 10 54     | I J T                      | 8 12          | Q O                        |
| 27 22 23 53 | A C E F G H L M            | 5 54 or 25 54 | P Q E S U                  |
| 22 23 53    | D I K N                    | 19 24         | A B C D E G H K L M N T ☞  |
| 26 34-36    | A B C D E F G H T          | 26 27         | P S                        |
| 5 25        | A B C D E F G H K L M O T  | 17 13 14      | C G L                      |



## Appendix 3a

## The Terminal Poems of the Two Innocence Series

|         | In                |        | SoE                    |
|---------|-------------------|--------|------------------------|
| Copy A  | 20-21; 12, 18     | Copy A | 16-17; 26, 25          |
| Copy B  | 11, 8; 20-21      | Copy C | 20-21; 13, 14          |
| Copy C  | 20-21; 25, 5      | Copy D | 18, 12; 13, 14         |
| Copy D  | 27, 22-23, 53     | Copy E | 13, 14; 20-21, 26      |
| Copy E  | 20-21; 16-17      | Copy F | 25, 11; 20-21          |
| Copy F  | 26, 34-36         | Copy G | <u>Experience only</u> |
| Copy G  | 15, 9-10, 54      | Copy H | <u>Experience only</u> |
| Copy H  | 26, 34-36; 12, 18 | Copy I | 20-21; 13-14           |
| Copy I  | 6-7; 20-21        | Copy J | 13-14; 11, 12, 54      |
| Copy J  | 24, 12; 16-17     | Copy K | <u>Experience only</u> |
| Copy K  | 13, 14; 20-21, 27 | Copy L | 54, 15; 18, 27         |
| Copy L  | 18, 12; 20-21     | Copy M | 25, 16-17, 12          |
| Copy M  | 20, 21; 13, 14    | Copy N | <u>Experience only</u> |
| Copy N  | 53, 22-23; 25, 18 | Copy O | 13, 14; 9-10, 20-21    |
| Copy O  | 11, 24; 13, 14    | Copy P | 11, 24; 13, 14         |
| Copy P* | 12, 14; 9, 16     | Copy Q | 13, 14; 20-21          |
| Copy Q  | 13, 14; 20-21     | Copy R | 54, 26, 27             |
| Copy S  | 54, 26, 27        | Copy S | 54, 26, 27             |
| Copy T  | 11, 8; 20-21      | Copy T | 25, 26, 27             |
| Copy U  | 18, 24-26         | Copy V | 26, 27; 13, 14         |

\* Copy P's arrangement may not be complete (or authoritative) as it lacks pagination and the second plates of both "The Little Black Boy" and "A Cradle Song"

## Types of Endings

12, 18: In A, H, L; SoE D  
 20-21: In A, B, C, E, I, K, L, M, Q, T; SoE C, E, F, I, O, Q  
 16-17: In E, J; SoE A, M  
 15, 9-10: In G  
 26, 27: In S; SoE L, R, S, T, V  
 34-36: In U, F  
 22-23, 53: in D, N  
 13, 14: In M, O, Q; SoE C, D, E, F, I, O, Q

## Appendix 3b

The Terminal Poems of Songs of Experience

|        |    |       |      |
|--------|----|-------|------|
| Copy A | 39 | 33    | 43   |
| Copy C | 43 | 33    | 32 a |
| Copy D | 33 | 43    | 32 a |
| Copy E | 33 | 43    | 52   |
| Copy F | 47 | 43    | 40   |
| Copy G | 43 | 47    | 52   |
| Copy H | 46 | 51    | 47   |
| Copy I | 42 | 34-36 | 52   |
| Copy J | 46 | 39    | 45   |
| Copy K | 49 | 43    | 52   |
| Copy L | 51 | 43    | 53   |
| Copy M | 53 | 43    | 33   |
| Copy N | 33 | 38    | 53   |
| Copy O | 33 | 54    | 52   |
| Copy P | 37 | 41    | 44   |
| Copy Q | 45 | 33    | 43   |
| Copy R | 52 | 51    | 50   |
| Copy S | 40 | 51    | 52   |
| Copy T | 52 | 53    | 54   |
| Copy V | 51 | 37    | 47   |

## Types of Endings

33, 43: (A, C, D, E) (M) (Q)  
 51, 47: (G, H) (V)  
 47, 43: (F, G)  
 51, 43: (G) (L)  
 53, 43: (L, M)  
 53, 33: (M, N)  
 52, 51: (R, S)  
 54, 52: (O) (T)  
 43, 52: (E) (K)

Unique: Copies I, J, and P

Groups of Common Terminations in Songs of Innocence (Combined  
Issue) Compared with Groups of Common Terminations in the Corresponding  
Songs of Experience

| Innocence | Experience |
|-----------|------------|
| A         | A, C, D, E |
| C, D      |            |
| E, F      | F, G, H    |
| I         | I          |
| J         | J          |
|           | K          |
| L         | L, M, N    |
| M         |            |
|           |            |
| O         | O          |
| P         | P          |
| Q         | Q          |
| R, S, T   | R, S       |
| V         | T          |
|           | V          |

A Tabulation of the Songs of Innocence and of Experience\*

| Group | Date      | Copies                  | Type** | Characteristics  |
|-------|-----------|-------------------------|--------|--|
| I     | 1794      | A                       | half   | Separate foliation for <u>Songs of Innocence</u> and for <u>Experience</u> ; one plate per sheet   |
| II    | 1794-95   | B, C, D, E              | whole  | Continuous foliation (in E; in others no foliation); back and front of sheet are printed   |
| III   | 1795      | F, G, H                 | half   | F with earlier <u>Innocence</u> , separate foliation; G and H have only <u>Experience</u> ; all three are colour-printed; one plate per sheet  |
| IV    | 1796-1801 | I, J, K, L, M, N        | whole  | I, L, M have continuous foliation by Blake; K and N are incomplete copies but their foliation suggests an earlier <u>Innocence</u> , the whole continuously foliated; J has no foliation but is coloured like M and has a few points in common in its arrangement with I and K |
| V     | 1801-08   | O, P, Q, R, S           | half   | Copies have separate foliations for <u>Innocence</u> and for <u>Experience</u>   |
| VI    | 1815-26   | T, U, W, X, Y, Z, AA, V | whole  | Copies have continuous foliation   |

\* Note: I have followed Keynes and Wolf (Census, p. 55) in dating the Copies; I have, however, disagreed as the characteristics of the groupings. I have tended to put together copies that show the same intent, i. e. whether or not Blake saw Innocence and Experience as one book or two. This is quite easy to decide based on the information in the Census with the exceptions of C, D, and J. In those cases I have analysed the structure of the copies to decide with which other copies they belong, e. g. there are obvious formal similarities between C, D, and E which suggest that they are closely related.

\*\* This terminology is based on whether the Songs are paginated as one book, "whole," or two books, "half."

Appendix 5

The Orderings of the Poems of Songs of Experience  
In the Combined Copies of The Songs

|        |    |    |    |    |       |       |       |       |       |    |    |       |    |       |       |       |       |       |    |    |    |       |    |    |    |
|--------|----|----|----|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----|----|-------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----|----|----|-------|----|----|----|
| Copy A | 29 | 28 | 30 | 31 | 40    | 32    | 41    | 37    | 42    | 48 | 45 | 38    | 47 | 34-36 | 44    | 49    | 39    | 33    | 43 |    |    |       |    |    |    |
| Copy C | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 48    | 51    | 38    | 41    | 39    | 44 | 45 | 47    | 26 | 34-36 | 50    | 37    | 40    | 49    | 46 | 42 | 43 | 33    | 32 | a  |    |
| Copy D | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 40    | 49    | 46    | 42    | 39    | 44 | 26 | 34-36 | 48 | 51    | 47    | 45    | 50    | 37    | 41 | 38 | 33 | 43    | 32 | a  |    |
| Copy E | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 15    | 34-36 | 50    | 37    | 42    | 46 | 44 | 39    | 38 | 41    | 45    | 47    | 40    | 49    | 48 | 51 | 33 | 43    | 52 |    |    |
| Copy F | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32    | 38    | 33    | 46    | 41    | 49 | 42 | 50    | 51 | 37    | 47    | 43    | 40    |       |    |    |    |       |    |    |    |
| Copy G |    |    | 30 | 31 | 32    | 38    | 37    | 42    | 33    | 50 | 46 | 40    | 49 | 41    | 43    | 47    | 51    |       |    |    |    |       |    |    |    |
| Copy H | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32    | 42    | 38    | 43    | 49    | 33 | 41 | 37    | 50 | 40    | 46    | 51    | 47    |       |    |    |    |       |    |    |    |
| Copy I | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32    | 33    | 48    | 41    | 39    | 40 | 50 | 51    | 43 | 37    | 45    | 49    | 44    | 46    | 47 | 38 | 42 | 34-36 | 52 |    |    |
| Copy J |    | 29 | 30 | 31 | 48    | 32    | 44    | 40    | 42    | 50 | 33 | 43    | 41 | 38    | 34-36 | 47    | 37    | 52    | 49 | 51 | 46 | 39    | 45 |    |    |
| Copy K | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32    | 38    | 48    | 42    | 33    | 41 | 46 | 40    | 47 | 45    | 50    | 51    | 44    | 34-36 | 37 | 49 | 43 | 52    |    |    |    |
| Copy L | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 34-36 | 42    | 40    | 33    | 48    | 32 | 37 | 52    | 45 | 47    | 44    | 50    | 41    | 39    | 38 | 49 | 46 | 51    | 43 | 53 |    |
| Copy M | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32    | 49    | 42    | 41    | 39    | 52 | 44 | 50    | 51 | 37    | 47    | 34-36 | 38    | 48    | 45 | 40 | 46 | 53    | 43 | 33 |    |
| Copy N |    | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32    | 37    | 49    | 48    | 42    | 40 | 39 | 47    | 51 | 34-36 | 44    | 41    | 43    | 50    | 52 | 46 | 45 | 33    | 38 | 53 |    |
| Copy O | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32    | 38    | 34-36 | 42    | 48    | 37 | 44 | 39    | 46 | 43    | 49    | 50    | 40    | 47    | 45 | 51 | 41 | 33    | 54 | 52 |    |
| Copy P | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 48    | 42    | 40    | 32    | 34-36 | 49 | 39 | 33    | 47 | 38    | 51    | 50    | 52    | 43    | 46 | 45 | 37 | 41    | 44 |    |    |
| Copy Q | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 48    | 42    | 37    | 34-36 | 38    | 32 | 40 | 50    | 47 | 52    | 39    | 44    | 46    | 51    | 41 | 49 | 45 | 33    | 43 |    |    |
| Copy R | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32    | 33    | 34-36 | 37    | 38    | 39 | 40 | 41    | 42 | 43    | 44    | 45    | 46    | 47    | 48 | 49 | 52 | 51    | 50 |    |    |
| Copy S | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32    | 38    | 42    | 37    | 49    | 45 | 33 | 43    | 47 | 50    | 41    | 48    | 34-36 | 46    | 44 | 39 | 40 | 51    | 52 |    |    |
| Copy T | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32    | 33    | 34-36 | 37    | 38    | 39 | 40 | 41    | 42 | 43    | 44    | 45    | 46    | 47    | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51    | 52 | 53 | 54 |
| Copy V | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 38    | 40    | 42    | 34-36 | 32    | 45 | 33 | 49    | 41 | 39    | 52    | 54    | 43    | 44    | 50 | 48 | 53 | 46    | 51 | 37 | 47 |

Note: Copy O begins by repeating I and then continues as above; Copy Q places I after 28; Copy T, though incomplete, is taken here to indicate the ordering of Copies T, U, W, X, Y, Z, and AA.



## Appendix 5b

## The Arrangements of the Poems in Group II

| Copy C |      | Copy D |      | Copy E |      |
|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|
| 28     |      | 28     |      | 28     |      |
| 29     |      | 29     |      | 29     |      |
| 30     |      | 30     |      | 30     |      |
| 31     |      | 31     |      | 31     |      |
| 48     | I    | 40     |      | 15     |      |
| 51     |      | 49     | VII  | 34-36  | V    |
| 38     |      | 46     |      | 50     | VI   |
| 41     | II   | 42     | VIII | 37     | VI   |
| 39     |      | 39     |      | 42     | VIII |
| 44     | III  | 44     | III  | 46     | VIII |
| 45     |      | 26     |      | 44     |      |
| 47     | IV   | 34-36  | V    | 39     | III  |
| 26     |      | 48     |      | 38     |      |
| 34-36  | V    | 51     | I    | 41     | II   |
| 50     |      | 47     |      | 45     | II   |
| 37     | VI   | 45     | IV   | 47     | IV   |
| 40     |      | 50     |      | 40     |      |
| 49     | VII  | 37     | VI   | 49     | VII  |
| 46     |      | 41     |      | 48     |      |
| 42     | VIII | 38     | II   | 51     | I    |
| 43     |      | 33     |      | 33     |      |
| 33     | IX   | 43     | IX   | 43     | IX   |
| 32     |      | 32     |      | 52     |      |
| a      | X    | a      | X    |        |      |

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