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FROM FACE VALUES TO INNER VISIONS: BLAKE AND LAVATER'S PERCEPTION OF BODY AND SOUL

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To the memory of K.M.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (Genesis ch. 1, v.26)

Original, *adj.*, Of or pertaining to the origin, beginning, or earliest stage of something; that belonged at the beginning to the person or thing in question; that existed at first, or has existed from the first; primary, primitive; innate; initial, first, earliest. (OED)

Contents

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Abbreviations

1. Works by Blake

AL	*Annotations to Lavater*
AS	*Annotations to Swedenborg*
ABW	*Annotations to Bishop Watson*
AR	*Annotations to Reynolds*
ASP	*Annotations to Spurzheim*
AW	*Annotations to Wordsworth*
ARO	*All Religions are One*
NNR	*There is No Natural Religion*
SE	*Songs of Experience*
MHH	*Marriage of Heaven and Hell*
VDA	*Visions of the Daughters of Albion*
SL	*Song of Los*
BU	*Book of Urizen*
BA	*Book of Ahania*
BL	*Book of Los*
FZ	*Four Zoas*
CP	*Chaucer Prospectus*
PA	*Public Address*
DC	*Descriptive Catalogue*
VLJ	*A Vision of the Last Judgment*
M	*Milton*
J	*Jerusalem*
L	*The Letters of William Blake*

2. Works by Lavater

Lavater (1768-73)	*Aussichten in die Ewigkeit*
Lavater (1772)	*Von der Physiognomik*
Lavater (1774-78)	*Physiognomische Fragmente*
Lavater (1781-1803)	*Essai sur la Physiognomonie*
Lavater (1788)	*Aphorisms on Man*
Lavater (1789)	*Essays on Physiognomy* (Holcroft translation)
Lavater (1789-98)	*Essays on Physiognomy* (Hunter translation)
Lavater (1790)	*Das Menschliche Herz*, first edition
Lavater (1790-93)	*Handbibliotheck für Freunde*
Lavater (1798)	*Das Menschliche Herz*, second edition
Lavater (1804)	*Essays on Physiognomy*, second edition of Holcroft translation
J.H. Lavater (1824)	*Introduction to the Study of the Anatomy of the Human Body*
Lavater (1991)	*Von der Physiognomik und Hundert Physiognomische Regeln*, eds. Karl Riha and Karsten Zelle (Frankfurt and Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1991)

3. Frequently quoted Works

Diary of Farington (1979)	*The Diary of Joseph Farington: September 1796-December 1798*, eds. Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978-84). Volume III was published in 1979.
Butlin (1981), catalogue	Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, 2 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981): The numbers that follow "Butlin (1981), catalogue" are Butlin catalogue numbers.
E	*The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, newly revised edition, eds. David V. Erdman and Harold Bloom (New York: Double Day, 1988). The numbers that follow "E" are Erdman page numbers.

Introduction

> But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged;
> this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal,
> melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite that is hid.
> (*MHH* 14: 8-11, E39)

The principal argument of this thesis is that the physiognomy project of Johann Caspar Lavater, published in England as *Essays on Physiognomy* (1789-98), is an unacknowledged precursor to the structure and creation theme of Blake's Urizen Books.[1] These illuminated books by Blake are usually designated as *The Book of Urizen* (1794), *The Book of Ahania* (1795), and *The Book of Los* (1795). It will be argued that they are an important example of Blake's response to a specifically European manifestation of a wider Enlightenment aesthetic movement; one which provided both an interpretation and taxonomy of the body's relationship to the soul. Blake's trio of books appears after the arrival in English translation of Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy*, for the first volume of which Blake made four engravings. In addition, Blake extensively annotated Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man* using an edition of 1788.

The problem of representing spiritual qualities using the human form as the artist's only means of expression has been an issue long identified by modern Blake scholars. Anne Mellor in *The Human Form Divine* (1974), one of the earliest and most extended studies of the ways in which Blake's bodies carry meaning, delineated how his obsession with the human form was essentially a struggle between two kinds of body: the obvious fallen and restrictive one, but also an open and potentially expanding human form.[2] A few years later Leopold Damrosch's *Symbol and Truth in Blake's Myth* (1980) contextualised Blake's attempts at system-making, emphasising that his idea of the body was ambivalent, and tended towards Neoplatonic dualism.[3] In a further attempt to resolve this problem of the body and soul relationship, Janet Warner's *Blake and the Language of Art* (1984) suggested that the fallen and unfallen in Blake coexisted: "Eternal Form and Fallen Form (or vegetative form) are essentially the same - they exist in one and the same body, [...]. It is not that there is a physical body *and* a spiritual body; they are rather two aspects of one."[4] Warner reconciled the two kinds of bodies in Blake with fallen and unfallen perception and concluded:

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[1] Lavater's influence on Blake was first discussed by S. Foster Damon who argued for thematic and stylistic resemblances between Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man* (1788) and Blake's *Principles* in *All Religions are One*, S. Foster Damon, *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1924), 37, 61, 64, 92.
[2] Anne K. Mellor, *Blake's Human Form Divine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 142-44, 206.
[3] Leopold Damrosch, Jr., *Symbol and Truth in Blake's Myth* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 175.
[4] Janet A. Warner, *Blake and the Language of Art* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984), 23.

> This idea, then, of the real or eternal hidden *within* a false covering is a basic concept for Blake and allows him to bridge the old philosophic dichotomy between flesh and spirit. It places the issue solely in the realm of perception, in the perceiving of a *form* which is mental rather than material.[5]

More recently, in *Blake and the Body* (2002) Tristanne Connolly has re-examined Blake's body imagery and discussed the different processes of embodiment in both text and design with reference to contemporary anatomical practices.[6] In focusing on the material qualities of Blake's bodies, Connolly broke with a interpretative tradition which has perceived bodies in Blake as an expression of a soul-body dichotomy.

Connolly's materialist approach to the body, however, parallels earlier discussions of the representational paradoxes encountered by Blake in his printing and engraving techniques. The state of uncertainty and indecision about understanding how Blake felt able to express the intangible soul through a represented, materialised body is best exemplified in the early work of Robert N. Essick. The trajectory of Essick's scholarship moves from acceptance to rejection of a highly suggestive interpretation of the meaning embedded in the so-called dot and lozenge engraving technique which, effectively, materialises the represented human body of printing through a process which appears to entrap spiritual qualities within the technology of its own expression.

This approach was first set out by Essick in an important essay, "Blake and the Traditions of Reproductive Engraving," published in 1972. In this article Essick explained how an eighteenth-century apprentice engraver in the mode of Blake's apprenticeship was trained to employ a well established convention or repertoire of line engraving in order to delineate the human form through copperplate engraving. The conventions for establishing meaning and expression through line engraving were already well developed by the time of Blake's indenture to James Basire in 1772. In traditional commercial engravings objects were represented in terms of parallel as well as hatching lines. Due to their different depths they produced the illusion of tone. Essick described the engraver's line system as a "visual syntax" and interpreted it as a barrier between viewer and object: "The system [...] reduces all objects to a linear 'net' or 'web' [...] beneath which the objects reproduced almost disappear. [...] an abstract network of lines, which at once both delineates and entraps the human forms represented." Essick then pointed out that the "abstracting processes of reproductive engraving [have] become basic metaphors in a myth of creation, Fall, and entrapment."[7] At a stroke, Essick's close attention to the inescapable practices of eighteenth-century copperplate engravers seemed to offer both an explanation but also a problem for how Blake was compelled to work in developing the

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[5] Warner, *Blake and the Language of Art* (1984), 24.
[6] Tristanne J. Connolly, *Blake and the Body* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), vii-viii.
[7] Robert N. Essick, "Blake and the Traditions of Reproductive Engraving," *Blake Studies*, 5:1 (1972), 61-62, 68-69.

relief-etched techniques employed in the illuminated books. So, however much Blake sought to represent a spiritualised form, such as his mythological characters Orc or Los, he could not escape some degree of entrapping their shapes in relief-etched lines.

Fascinating as the suggestion was, Essick, unfortunately, then seems to have discarded this idea in a significant essay published over a decade later in 1986. In "How Blake's Body Means" published in the mainly post-structuralist collection of essays edited by Hilton and Vogler *Unnam'd Forms: Blake and Textuality* (1986), Essick appears to have revised his earlier view almost to the point of self-repudiation. Concentrating on a particular plate, Essick concluded that the "white line hatchings to the man's stomach in the second and third states of *Europe* plate 4 does not make it any more or less a 'man's stomach' in the conversion of image into linguistic sign."[8] In other words, Essick withdrew into a symbolic interpretation of the etched outlines defining the human form represented in the *Europe* plate.

However, despite the considerable authority of Professor Essick, who by then was working in the aftermath of his extended study *William Blake: Printmaker* (1980) and *The Separate Plates of William Blake* (1983), it will be argued in this thesis that the theme of embodiment is crucial to understanding Blake, since there was no transcendence of the body as such in his works and, therefore, no escape from the compromises of representation through the engraver's art. The body always remained the space in which the different aspects of identity and character, originating in the soul, struggled for expression.[9] I will contend that various European inflexions in Blake's work, which exceeded his awareness of German Higher Criticism, were manifested in his reflections on the popular practice of physiognomy. Indeed, the whole discussion of late eighteenth-century physiognomy originated as a distinctly European importation into British Romanticism. Even though Lavater's approach was attacked and discredited in Germany, the idea that character could be based on physical appearance prevailed in Britain. Notably the process of embodiment, as a problem of the representation of the body and soul, is inherent in Blake's Urizen Books.

Specifically in these books which focus on the relationship between Urizen and Los and the consolidation of their physical identity the problem of representation is acted out as complex processes of production as well as reproduction. The argument is that across these books the procedures involved in the embodiment of man are more important than

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[8] Robert N. Essick, "How Blake's Body Means," in *Unnam'd Forms: Blake and Textuality*, eds. Nelson Hilton and Thomas A. Vogler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 209-10.

[9] The only notable difference, according to Hagstrum, lies in how the resurrected body moves. The resurrected body seems to be able to defy gravity because it is continuously moving. See Jean H. Hagstrum, "Christ's Body," in *William Blake: Essays in Honour of Sir Geoffrey Keynes*, eds. Morton D. Paley and Michael Phillips (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 133-35, 143. Janet A. Warner, "Blake's Use of Gesture," in *Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic*, eds. David V. Erdman and John E. Grant (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 175.

the creation of the natural world itself.[10] What manifests itself on the surface of Blake's bodies is not a mimetic representation of bone-flesh relations, but a depiction of the complicated interaction between inner and outer shaping forces. In Blake's working out of this relationship, which was crucial to the physiognomy project of the Swiss theological writer Johann Caspar Lavater, the body's ontological status as either copy or original is continually questioned.

Whereas in Genesis man was created in accordance with the supposedly perfect image of an almighty God, in the Urizen Books creation is presented as an ongoing process of degeneration, a descent from a spiritual to a material state of being. Needless to say, the theme of creation and Blake's augmentation of the Genesis narrative in the Urizen Books, involved his reaching a new set of conclusions about his understanding of creation as embodiment. During their creation the bodies described in Blake's Urizen Books were not simply created from clay or bone, but were made physiognomical. Within the eighteenth-century European context of attempts to provide a taxonomy of human features primarily established by Lavater, the ontology of these represented and conceptualised bodies in the Urizen Books preceded creation. In Blake's myth the body - despite its distinctive physical qualities - is experienced as a mere surface, shaped through the interdependent relationship of the two creator figures, Los and Urizen.

By rendering the creation story as a solidification into physical identity, Blake went beyond all immediate associations both with Genesis and even its major seventeenth-century reincarnation: John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Indeed, Blake's notion of embodiment and its problems can be traced back to Plato's *Republic* and the idea that art as representation implies not only mediation or interpretation, but also a production process replacing the original with a copy. The perennial issue of the original-copy dichotomy has been of continual interest to modern cultural historians. Bas C. Fraassen and Jill Sigman have written of the inescapable paradox that the "representation of an object involves producing another object which is intentionally related to the first by a certain coding convention which determines what counts as similar in the right way."[11] It was the attempt to arrive at both a viable method of decoding and a reliable taxonomy of human features which was the chief impulse behind Lavater's physiognomical project. In Plato's sense, however, this physiognomical representation of character corrupted the direct relation between body and soul.

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[10] "In some *ex nihilo* myths, creation is a projection of the creator's thoughts. [...] Creation by thought presupposes a powerful supreme god who existed before existence itself. It also suggests a mystical sense of the world as contained within the mind of God, the world as a thought that could be forgotten," David Adams Leeming with Margaret Leeming, *A Dictionary of Creation Myths* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 59.

[11] Bas C. van Fraassen and Jill Sigman, "Interpretation in Science and the Arts," in *Realism and Representation: Essays on the Problem of Realism in Relation to Science, Literature, and Culture*, ed. George Levine (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 74.

The basic nature of this paradox of attempting to represent the unfigurable has proved an enduring problem for theorists. Theorising the self-creative body-soul relationships which may be found paralleled in Blake's creation myth, Gilles Deleuze's discussion of the platonic motivation has described the necessity "to distinguish essence from appearance, intelligible from sensible, Idea from image, original from copy, and model from simulacrum." In Deleuze's essay "The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy", published in the appendix to *The Logic of the Sense* (c.1969), he wrote of how the platonic motivation originated in the Biblical account of creation, with God creating Adam in his own image. According to Deleuze, there were two kinds of representations, namely the copy and the simulacrum. Both were bodies formed after an absent original. Whereas the first kind of body bore a resemblance to its inner being, in the second no resemblance could be identified. If the body offered an authentic representation of the inner, invisible truth then it was a copy, that is an embodied soul or a pure body which was shaped according to the proportions of the inner being. It is the philosophical bind between the copy and the simulacrum which forms the habitation of the engraver's practice.

The implications of these dual modes of representation had already been discussed by Lavater as early as his three volume *Aussichten in die Ewigkeit* (1768-73) in which he argued that the Adam of Genesis was the earliest copy of man's heavenly form. Lavater argued that, subsequent to the fall, the proportions of this earthly copy of the divine man had begun to deteriorate. To compensate for this decline Lavater believed that Christ was another, perfect and original embodiment of the divine image. Christ was incarnated, his argument went, as a reminder of the original after which man had been created.[12] By the time that the physiognomy project was published as *Physiognomische Fragmente* (1774-78), Lavater had begun to emphasise the need for the authentic copy, or in Deleuze's sense, to avoid representing the original as a simulacrum, that is with no relation to the divine image man had been created.

The implications for some of Blake's better known visual works can be swiftly outlined and appreciated here. For example, the puzzling late tempera *The Ghost of a Flea* (c.1819, Tate Britain) with its anthropomorphic insect may be placed within a taxonomy of animal-to-human features considered by Lavater as early as the 1770s. Indeed, as will be discussed later with particular reference to *The Ghost of a Flea*, animalised human forms presented a particular challenge for any physiognomist seeking to incorporate into his field of study the whole range of living forms.

For Lavater the status of an original was reserved for the human form, and he emphasised in the section on animals that the resemblance between humans and

[12] Karl Pestalozzi, "Lavaters Utopie," in *Literaturwissenschaft und Geschichtsphilosophie: Festschrift für Wilhelm Emrich*, eds. Helmut Arntzen, et al. (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1975), 286.

monkeys was only superficial.[13] Consequently, the more animal-like a human being was the less he (or she) resembled the divine original both in appearance and behaviour. Again, Blake's Large Colour Print of *Nebuchadnezzar* (c.1795, Tate Britain) is a particularly striking instance of how Blake memorably returns throughout his career to human-animal forms. In this context the notion of having fallen could be associated with the man-animal analogies regularly used by the physiognomist in statements about man's moral character. The emphasis on the resemblances between fallen and unfallen human form, manifesting itself as point of view and in the mind of the physiognomist, evokes Deleuze's platonic trinity: the hierarchy between user, producer and imitator. Fallen perception produced fallen forms, in the same way as any kind of representational relationship was based on projection or intentionally selected coding conventions. According to Deleuze, it came down to the user (or viewer) to assess the validity of a portrait and to determine whether the representation was a copy or a simulacrum:

> The copy can be called an imitation, to the degree that it reproduces the model; since this imitation is noetic, spiritual, and internal, however it is a veritable production ruled by the relations and proportions constitutive of the essence. There is always a productive operation in the good copy and, corresponding to this operation, a *right opinion*, if not knowledge. We see, then, that imitation is destined to take on a pejorative sense to the extent that it is now only a simulation, that is applies to the simulacrum and designates only the external and nonproductive effect of resemblance, that is, an effect obtained by ruse or subversion.[14]

Deleuze's outline of the platonic trinity can be applied to Blake's struggle with the representation of the spiritual, because each of his protagonists was embodied under different circumstances.

In following this shift in emphasis, away from the preference of mental reality as human existence, the role of the portrait in Blake needs to be reviewed in relation to the platonic motif of embodiment. In physiognomy or portraiture this motif manifested itself as the belief that there existed a representational relationship between portrait and portrayed. The portrait was related to the real person just as the real person is related to his (or her) eternal form. This connection between original and represented copy thereof posed methodological problems which can be demonstrated in Blake's works. For example, in the mode of portraiture, Blake's tempera painting of his idealised *Eve naming the Birds* (c.1810, Pollok House, Glasgow) is itself, as Essick has shown in his extensive study *William Blake and the Language of Adam* (1989) a complex manifestation of pre-linguistic semiotics which incorporated Blake's attempts to establish a primal language. Whereas Lavater accumulated a huge number of portraits or copies of human beings in order to determine what the original man looked like, in *The Book of Urizen* Blake had Los work

[13] Lavater (1774-78), I, 56-59. This idea is carried over into the English translation, where it is made more explicit. See Lavater (1789-98), II, 135.

with this original body to prevent it from further disintegration. In both Lavater and Blake the ultimate point of reference was the male body of Christ or Albion. Both were definitive and unambiguous representations of the Human Form Divine.

Both the Pollok House Eve and its pendant *Adam naming the Beasts* (1810, Pollok House, Glasgow), together with the three works comprising the Urizen Books form part of Blake's attempts to narrate a coherent creation myth. This myth begins with *The [First] Book of Urizen* (1794)[15] and is continued in *The Book of Ahania* (1795) and *The Book of Los* (1795). In particular, *The Book of Urizen* was part of a large project developed in Blake's illuminated books to evolve an alternative set of creation narratives to augment or challenge Genesis. In part they developed because Blake was keen to expand the political myths of creation such as those outlined in *America* (1793), *Europe* (1794), and *The Song of Los* (1795). Blake was drawn to the challenge posed by influential Enlightenment-based alternative deistical narratives that began appearing in the 1790s, principally Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* (1792); the first part of his *Age of Reason* (1794), and François Constantin Volney's *Ruins: Or, a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires*, available in English translation from 1791.

The themes and images of Blake's Urizen Books had their structural parallels not only in Genesis, and its two creation accounts, but also in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667).[16] The fragmented structure of *The Book of Urizen* suggested that Blake was well aware of late eighteenth-century Bible scholarship. Jerome McGann argued that Blake knew both German Higher Criticism and Alexander Geddes's work, including his Biblical criticism, research into textuality and his *New Translation of the Bible* (1793).[17] Subsequently Blake's creation myth progressed and was continuously reworked across *The Four Zoas* (1795-1804),[18] *Milton* (1804-18) and *Jerusalem* (1804-27).[19]

As has been indicated so far, it is important to realise that the original versus copy debate in Blake's formation of an ontology of being (*Sein*) was intimately connected with his material practice as a craftsman trained in the eighteenth-century mixed method of

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[14] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of the Sense* (c.1969; London: Athlone, 1990), 256, 258.

[15] Copy A of 1794 "is missing the word 'first' in plate 2 ('The Preludium') and plate 28 (colophon), and the numeral *I* in seven of nine running heads. Copy A this appears to have been produced after copy B, which has these features, but before copy G, which is on pager dated 1815. [...] Blake appears to have decided very soon after producing *Urizen* that there would be only one book." See Joseph Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 282-83.

[16] John Beer, *Blake's Visionary Universe* (Manchester and New York, Barnes & Noble Inc. and Manchester University Press, 1969), 87. Warren Stevenson, *Divine Analogy: A Study of the Creation Motif in Blake and Coleridge* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur Universität Salzburg, 1972), 90, 117-19, 148, 162.

[17] Jerome McGann, "The Idea of an Indeterminate Text: Blake's Bible of Hell and Dr. Alexander Geddes," *Studies in Romanticism*, 25:3 (1986), 303-24.

[18] "Many of the obscurities of Blake's first visionary epic, *The Four Zoas*, arise not from the use of obscure sources, but from an extraordinary interplay of contrasting views of human origins, in which elements derived from familiar mythical texts [...] appear in an unfamiliar form," Andrew Lincoln, "Blake and the Natural History of Creation," *Essays and Studies* (1986), 94.

[19] For the dates of Blake's illuminated books *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, see Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 315, 338.

copy engraving. For Blake the platonic notion of manifestation or embodiment was directly related to the problems of artistic representation and in particular the notion of copying. What was aspired to was the original form. In late eighteenth century artistic circles the original versus copy debate had the dimension of painting versus reproductive copy engraving. Contemporary attempts at theorising the status of a copy could be traced back to Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses on Art* (1797). As the first President of the newly founded Royal Academy, Reynolds was one of the most important figures of the London art world. His theoretical stance on the superiority of original painting, particularly oil-painting was problematic for someone like Blake who had been apprenticed to a copy engraver. While Reynolds rejected engravings as secondary forms of representation, he still had to accept that the fame of a painter or a painting could only be measured by the public demand for print reproductions.[20]

The economic and personal impact of Reynolds's subordination of engraving has been extensively discussed in works such as Morris Eaves's *The Counter-Arts Conspiracy* (1992). Eaves has detailed how Reynolds's studio practices allowed for the employment of specialised task workers, leaving Reynolds free to often only paint the face of a portrait painting.[21] This, according to Eaves, was what led Blake to formulate his technical ideal of the original copy in the *Public Address* (c.1809-10). In it Blake champions his "Inventive Powers" and "Physiognomic Strength" of drawing. (*PA* 11, E571) Crucially in the *Public Address's* unique elaboration of Blake's aesthetic theory of art, Blake makes a trenchant distinction between how he claims to "copy Imagination" in contrast to the "Pretended Copiers of Nature from Rembrat [*sic*] to Reynolds" himself. (*PA* 59, E574-75) As Eaves has justly described it, Blake's stress on copying imagination held an important position in his concept of artistic creation: "He desires this relation: in original art thought and deed are necessarily integrated, while in imitative art they are equally necessary unintegrated, because that separation makes imitation possible."[22] In a similar fashion Jerome McGann has emphasised that each copy of Blake's illuminated books was unique, individualistic and therefore original, while Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi have gone further in contending that the very nature of Blake's production process fused conception and execution into one original expression.[23] More recently, Saree Makdisi in *William Blake and the Impossible History of the 1790s* (2003) argued that Blake's production process did

[20] Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture 1760-1860* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 69, 70. Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1798), ed. Robert R. Wark, second edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 320-26. David Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 247-76.
[21] Morris Eaves, "Blake and the Artistic Machine: An Essay in Decorum and Technology," *PLMA*, 92 (1977), 903-9.
[22] Morris Eaves, *The Counter-Arts Conspiracy: Art and Industry in the Age of Blake* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 177.
[23] Jerome McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 119-20. Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 32, 44.

not simply reproduce meaning, it multiplied and amplified it. According to Makdisi, the various copies of Blake's illuminated books have no prototype or ur-form:

> That the variability of Blake's mode of reproduction problematizes the concepts of stability dependent upon repeatability may be not a problem for meaning generation, but a meaning *in itself*. [...] Blake developed a mode of reproduction that *necessarily* produced heterogeneous products at precisely the historical moment when manufacturers – and not just those in the art world - were seizing on the potential offered by another mode of production that would, in order to spew out a stream of identical products.[24]

In other words, the conventional categories of copy and original do not hold - each illuminated book was both copy and original in one. However, as indicated above, the problem of identity, in particular in the Urizen Books, had a thematic dimension which brought about a deconstruction of the notions of repetition and reiteration. As with the conceptual paradoxes apparent in the manufacture of the illuminated books, when it comes to the creation of man it is important to differentiate between the conceptual and material aspects of production because, within the context of physiognomy, it emerges that attempts at authentic representations of man are experienced as flawed and inadequate. Consequently, Blake's construction of human identity within the physical body mirrored the problems encountered during the processes of representation and likeness-making.

In Blake, the creation of man closely follows the procedures involved in copy-making. For example, the theme of copy-making is memorably introduced in the title-page design of *The Book of Urizen* where Urizen is shown producing two transcripts of an open book lying beneath his feet. Whereas the copy-making on the title-page is controlled by Urizen, the mythological characters contained in *The Book of Urizen* defy inscription of copied-in-character by following their own biologically creative agenda. When all creational acts, expounded in the Urizen Books, are approached in terms of the artistic action of likeness-making, it becomes obvious that it is the consciousness of each character which determined the nature of his (or her) body. As Thomas Frosch has described it, "Blake's characters [...] produce themselves [...] with a purposeless fury, their creative programs driven by a powerful impulse to organization, born of the loss of Albion's primal wholeness. Blakean man yearns for image and body, for sense and form; this is perhaps his strongest instinct."[25]

Concurrent with Blake's pondering of the representation of body and soul in his own work in the light of Lavater's British reception there was a wider context in which physiognomical enthusiasm was grounded. A more generalised physiognomical theory,

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[24] Saree Makdisi, *William Blake and the Impossible History of the 1790s* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003), 169-70.

identifying moral integrity as physically manifested body-soul relations in the face, was also appropriated by the popular print culture. In particular, the widespread contemporary popularity of cartoonists such as James Gillray and John Nixon tended to promote a reduction of physiognomical value through the practice of caricature. It was a problem in the representational repertoire of which Lavater was acutely aware. His struggle for a truthful representation of human spirituality was challenged. The caricaturist used many of the assets rejected by the physiognomist to increase the expressiveness of a character-portrait and to signal the types of human character. For Lavater spiritual truth suggested physical nakedness, while styles of self-representation counteracted the natural state of the body by aestheticising it. Blake was most certainly aware of the popularity and success of caricature and responded to its challenge in a remarkable way.

M.E. Reisner and more recently Alexander Gourlay have convincingly demonstrated that some of the pilgrims of the tempera *Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the nine and twenty pilgrims on their journey to Canterbury* (c.1808) were caricatures of well-known contemporary figures such as William Pitt and the Prince Regent.[26] In this painting the resemblance Blake sought was in the faces and not in the clothes, which were relatively nondescript. However, the pilgrims were an exception, because Blake, like Lavater, preferred to represent the naked body. Most of his figures were clothed in semi-transparent and clinging garments as if to emphasise Blake's point, as he expressed it in *A Descriptive Catalogue* (1809), that they were "the physiognomies or lineaments of universal life, beyond which Nature never steps." (*DC* 10, E532-33) In this respect Blake may have been following the suggestions of Francis Grose whose *Rules for Drawing Caricaturas* (1788) differentiated between a European ideal beauty and the distortions thereof which he coined caricature. Like Lavater, Grose considered the caricaturist as potentially dangerous.[27] While Lavater deplored any kind of deviation, the caricaturist deliberately flaunted the rules of proportion and combined fashion with physiognomical expression to render politically critical statements as visually codified representations. With this the caricaturist's practice stood in clear opposition to that of the physiognomist. Grose's standards can be traced back to the seventeenth century painter Charles Le

[25] Thomas R. Frosch, *The Awakening of Albion: The Renovation of the Body in the Poetry of William Blake* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 39.
[26] M.E. Reisner, "Effigies of Power: Pitt and Fox as Canterbury Pilgrims," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 12 (1979), 481-503. Alexander S. Gourlay, "'Idolatry or Politics': Blake's Chaucer, the Gods of Priam, and the Powers of 1809," in *Prophetic Character: Essays on William Blake in Honor of John E. Grant*, ed. Alexander S. Gourlay (West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill Press, 2002), 97-147.
[27] Francis Grose, *Rules for Drawing Caricaturas, with an Essay on Comic Printing* (1788), 4-8. See also Marilyn Butler, "Antiquarianism (Popular)," in *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture 1776-1832*, eds. Iain McCalman, Jon Mee, Gillian Russell, and Clara Tuite (1999; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 330.

Brun's analysis of the passions in humans and animals, an artist whose attempts to establish a vocabulary of emotional facial gesture of which Lavater was certainly aware.[28]

Additionally, in the late eighteenth century the Dutch anatomist Petrus Camper corrected the anatomical research undertaken by Galen who, he claimed, had arrived at a flawed understanding of human physiognomy because he was only allowed to dissect animals and therefore derived human anatomy from animal corpses. In an attempt to evolve a definitive description of the human form Camper developed the newly emerging field of comparative anatomy. He measured and abstracted Le Brun's concept of the facial angle, and ultimately supplied empirical evidence for common anatomical features. Camper's comparative anatomy, revolving around monogenesis, had a widely ranging aesthetic impact. Not only was the belief in a single origin of the human race ubiquitous but also that all living beings had been created at the same time.[29] Camper determined the degrees of humanity from the shape of the skull; and categorised them according to their facial angle. By aligning his methodology with Camper's hard evidence of anatomically shared features Lavater's search for the essence of man advanced to an even deeper level. With his knowledge of comparative anatomy he was able to enter the body and analyse its design.[30]

From its early beginnings Lavater emphasised that his physiognomy project was a work in progress - he was not providing a system ready to be used for character analysis. What he presented to his readers was a close study of facial features, and an attempt at interpreting the data and categorising it - according to the contemporary moral standards - as types of human character. Because of the numerous translations especially prepared by Lavater and his reluctance to bundle together his physiognomical material, it was impossible to identify one single authoritative text. In the proposed re-reading of the creation myth of Blake's Urizen Books, the contention is that in 1794 Blake also edited and collated six divergent copies of *The Book of Urizen* following a theoretical principle he had adapted from Lavater.

The eight existing *Books of Urizen*, compiled from 28 *Urizen*-plates, range from 24 to 28 printed text and picture plates. The book was printed in an edition of probably six copies in 1794, all of which were colour-printed, and issued again in 1795 and 1818. Copy B of 1795 appears to have been colour-printed but is a mono print to which colours have

[28] Charles Le Brun, *The Conference of the Monsieur Le Brun*, translated from the French (1701), 45-47. For Blake and Le Brun, see Alexander Gilchrist, *The Life of William Blake*, ed. W. Graham Robertson (1863; Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Ltd., 1998), 30.
[29] For the simultaneity of divine creation and the development of changes and variety explained according to Bonnet or Leibniz's pre-evolutionary thought systems, see Meinhard Rauchensteiner, "Dein Körper, diese Karte, mein Herz," in *Das Kunstkabinett des Johann Caspar Lavater*, eds. Gerda Mraz and Uwe Schlögl (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1999), 174.
[30] *Monthly Magazine*, 9 (1800), 26.

been added in simulation of colour-printing.[31] In 1794 he had not yet come to a conclusion about the implications of the creation of the first human body.[32] Lavater, who outlined his methodology with great care and advanced an empirical approach to the inner essence of human nature, emphasised that his goal was to construct the image of the invisible God. From a technical point of view, the variants and versions of *The Book of Urizen* ought not to be approached as simple revisions. All six, colour-printed copies taken together document what Blake perceived as the problems inherent in embodiment and in consequence in the act of likeness-making. The fact that there is no definitive version of *Essays on Physiognomy* nor *The Book of Urizen* exemplifies how difficult it was to define body-soul relations and represent spirituality. The working out of this problematic relationship between body and soul in Blake and Lavater will form the central debate of this thesis.

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Chapter 1 will discuss the intricate context of the reception of Lavater's works in England in the 1780s and early 1790s. The picture is immediately complicated by the relationship between the publication history of *Essays on Physiognomy* and that of Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man* since Blake's connection with both works is a matter of record: Blake provided plates for the *Essays* and filled his own copy of the *Aphorisms* with manuscript annotations. Even at its most basic function, Blake's reception of Lavater involves his own relationship with a clearly pan-European set of influences. However, it will also be argued that Blake's evolution of a fragmented notion of Biblical textual authority, which since McGann has been recognised as a formative factor in *The Book of Urizen*, may be linked to his understanding of physiognomical theories outlined in Lavater. Principally, Blake may have identified in the *Essays*, and in their publication in abridgements and translations by Henry Hunter and Thomas Holcroft, the subsumed presence of further German authorial contributions to the *Essays* by Johann Gottfried von Herder, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Johann Georg Zimmermann and Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. The role of the Lavater enthusiast and translator of Swedenborg, Nathaniel Tucker, provides a further contextual inflexion for Blake's understanding of the project of physiognomy and its British reception.

Chapter 2 will present a case study of Blake's annotations to Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man* together with a consideration of the neglected area of Blake's portraiture which has not been substantially revised since Geoffrey Keynes's *Complete Portraiture of William &*

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[31] Copies A D J C E F are one edition, because they were printed in the same session. See Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 88, 279-281, 376-79, 413. G.E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 166-85.

[32] Michael Shortland, "The Power of a Thousand Eyes: Johann Caspar Lavater's Science of Physiognomical Perception," *Criticism*, 28:4 (1986), 385.

Catherine Blake of 1977. The Enlightenment aphoristic mode was concerned with how knowledge, both scientific and literary, should be organised and communicated. Using critical models suggested by Wolfgang Iser's reader response theory and H.J. Jackson's recent work on the history of marginalia it will be argued that while physiognomy relied on an intimate author-reader relationship, the aphoristic mode encouraged reflective reading and active engagement with the text. Aphorisms do not merely mirror a reader's character but also transform the reader's identity in the process of reflective reading. In other words, *Aphorisms on Man* can also be understood as a physiognomical text because it generated new textual profiles of its readers. It will also be argued that self-portraits provide particularly good evidence for how Blake engaged with Lavater's ideas on physiognomical representations and how he manipulated his own image. Blake essentially played with mimetic as well as codified modes of representation and expanded on the possible signification of his own features. The way in which these modes of mimetic and codified representation were continued in portraits of Blake (as opposed to portraits by Blake) provides evidence that Blake was well aware of different representational possibilities. Particularly interesting is Blake's small self-portrait now in Professor Robert Essick's collection (Altadena, California) on watermarked paper dated 1802. Its physiognomy is similar to that of the Visionary Head, the portrait of *The Man Who Taught Blake Painting in Painting in his Dreams* (c.1819-20). Rather than being simply a copy of the 1802 self-portrait, it is a deliberate mirror image of the original drawing.

The third chapter is a re-reading of Blake's creation myth as set out in *The Book of Urizen* (1794). In this re-reading it will be argued that there is an interdependent relationship between Urizen and Los. Instead of Los merely being the creation of Urizen, the influence of Lavater's physiognomical theory of copy and simulacrum implies that their relationship is much closer than has previously been assumed. Indeed, through processes of embodiment both of their identities become consolidated inside the fallen, material body. The cultural insight which Blake's new perspective on creation introduces, when understood within the context of early 1790's deistical challenges to the Genesis myth, enables us to more fully appreciate the exact manner of Blake's responses to materialist readings of creation as best exemplified by Tom Paine's *Age of Reason* (1794). In the counter myth set out in *The Book of Urizen* the materialisation of the body is converted into an extended trope concerning the solidification of the human skeleton. By blurring the boundary between interior and exterior *The Book of Urizen* seems to dissolve body-soul dualism. Analogously contemporary medical practitioners such as the man-midwife William Hunter, who also taught anatomy at the Royal Academy, promoted dissection as a means of exploring the body. While Hunter's expertise in anatomy allowed Royal Academicians to be ever more exact in their representations of the human body, such a

materialist approach seemed reductivist when compared to physiognomy's offer to locate a meaningful relationship between the corporeal and the spiritual. Perhaps under the influence of occultist alternative physician, Ebenezer Sibly, author *A Key to Physic* (c.1795) and the *Medical Mirror; or Treatise on the Impregnation of the Human Female* (c.1796), Blake's bodies in *The Book of Urizen* essentially evade a clear cut definition from either the anatomical or physiognomical perspectives. The figures are unconscious rather than dead, and opaque rather than transparent. Urizen, after his body has been shaped by Los, is awakened by Orc. The transition between sleep and the waking state is usually described as resurrection rather than creation, because as Urizen is exposed to the sound of Orc's voice, his unresponsive body undergoes some kind of transformation.

Chapter 4 will discuss, to paraphrase the title by Essick on engraving, "How Blake's Colour Means." The overall proposition is that it was colour which denoted the content of the presence of spirit.[33] In large part this explains why, as Blake gradually moved away from being predominantly the etcher of the illuminated books in the 1790s, to be being a watercolourist and even painter in tempera, he gradually turned his mind towards the representational properties of colour. This chapter will take as its point of departure Blake's move into the techniques of the Large Colour Prints of 1795 and 1805 and will draw upon other aspects of colour-printing practice from the same decade. The chapter will also compare and contrast Blake's relationship with the now almost forgotten scandal known as the Venetian Secret. This highly publicised forged manuscript recipe for the pigmentation of the Old Masters highlighted the problem of the decline in contemporary colouring. Blake's own colour innovations were not only an attempt to improve contemporary poor colouring, they were his attempt to align himself with the best practices of the past. In other words the colouring he alleges he achieved in the lost painting of *The Ancient Britons* (c.1809) was a measure of his spiritualised colouring of flesh.

The fifth and final chapter examines one of Blake's most notorious imaginary episodes -the sketching of the Visionary Heads from 1819 which have been so carefully documented by John Varley, author of *Zodiacal Physiognomy* (1828). In many ways, especially given the by then complex interaction with early nineteenth-century Swedenborgianism and the burgeoning interest in phrenology, Blake's Visionary Heads provide a remarkably pure incarnation of spiritual physiognomy by the artist. When asked how he had recognised, for example, the spirit of Edward III, Blake replied: "My spirit knows him - how I cannot tell."[34] By the late 1810s physiognomy had become very much

[33] When it comes to the secrets of colours it is tempting to identify a similar myth. Such attempts have been made by J.T. Smith and more recently John Gage. See J.T. Smith, *Nollekens and his Times: Comprehending a Life of that celebrated Sculptor, and Memoirs of several contemporary Artists*, 2 vols. (1828), I, 482. John Gage, *Colour and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1993), 38.

[34] G.E. Bentley, Jr., *The Stranger from Paradise: A Biography of William Blake* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 373.

more popularised via such publications as *The Conjuror's Magazine* back in the 1790s but physiognomical theory had also undergone a new inflection due to a growing interest in phrenology.[35] Blake's relationship with the phrenological movement included not only his reading and annotations of Johann Georg Spurzheim's *Observations on the Deranged Manifestations of the Mind* (1817) but also his encounter with the maker of his life-mask, James De Ville. Long considered amongst the most remarkable of Blake's works, or else as merely a late Georgian parlour game, the Visionary Heads provide a vivid testimony to the enduring presence of physiognomical practice throughout Blake's life.

[35] The founders of the so-called science of phrenology are the Drs. Franz Joseph Gall and Johann Georg Spurzheim. Their major works, written between 1810 and 1819, were grounded on two principles: "the form and size of the brain regulates the form and size of the skull," and "the muscles have not the slightest influence on the form of the skull." See Johann Georg Spurzheim, M.D., *The Physiognomical System of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim, founded on an Anatomical and Physiological Examination of the Nervous System in General, and of the Brain in Particular, indicating the Dispositions and Manifestations of the Mind* (1815), 226, 227. Mary Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Types and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 17-21.

Chapter 1

The Reception of Lavater's Physiognomical Theories in late Eighteenth-Century England

Johann Caspar Lavater's luxuriously illustrated *Essays on Physiognomy* has a long editing history, starting from the original German work which was, almost immediately, translated into Dutch, French and English. Throughout Lavater's main concern was the engravings done to reproduce his physiognomical portraits. Even though he himself commissioned these illustrations, he was often disappointed with the accuracy of the finished engravings. Lavater, moreover, explicitly mentioned technical flaws and shortcomings in his physiognomical analyses, accompanying each of the engraved illustrations.[36] During the advertising campaign of *Essays on Physiognomy*, published in London from 1789 onwards, the Swiss-born painter Henry Fuseli sang the praises of the English engravers whose expertise, according to Fuseli, had made it possible to produce the best Lavater edition to date. Blake was not only part of the intended audience he was a member of the engraver team hired to produce the illustrations. Fuseli's recommendations, however, need to be qualified, because what he referred to was the Hunter translation, the unabridged translation of the French edition, and thus, by Fuseli's definition, the only original edition of Lavater's work.

In the 1790s the market was dominated by the Hunter translation, after Henry Hunter who translated from the French edition, and the Holcroft translation, after Thomas Holcroft who used the abridged German edition. Blake did four engravings for the Hunter translation which was promoted by Fuseli, a friend of both Blake and Lavater, as well as Joseph Johnson, the dissenting publisher and Blake's long-time employer. Blake, however, had also collaborated with Thomas Holcroft, the translator of the rival edition, and was therefore caught up between two people one of whom promoted the ancient practice of face reading as art while the other defended it as science.[37] Indeed, the success of Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* was due to its combination of Art with Science. This kind of attribution was quite common. In the Swedenborgian *New Dictionary of Correspondences*, for example, Swedenborg's approach to body-soul interaction was defined as the "science of representation": "Internal things are the subjects represented, and external things are the subjects representing. [...] The nature of the person who

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[36] Judith Wechsler, "Lavater, Stereotype, and Prejudice," in *Faces of Physiognomy: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater*, ed. Ellis Shookman (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1993), 114.

[37] The term Scientist was not introduced before the 1830s. By then the branches of Natural Philosophy had been replaced by new and more specialised disciplines. Lavater emphasises that the practice of physiognomy has nothing to do with divination or astrology. See Lavater (1774-78), I, 165.

represents is not regarded; because the representation respects the thing represented, and not the person representing."[38]

Lavater's ambition was recognisably an Enlightenment project of taxonomy, but it was also part of the aesthetics of portraiture. The practice of physiognomy was extremely popular precisely because it shared its discourse about the validity of represented likeness and resemblance with portraiture.[39] If all human expressions, so argued Lavater, were mapped out the two categories' resemblance to and difference from the divine image could be identified. His physiognomical talent, self-diagnosed and self-defined, proved invaluable when it came to speaking as a specialist on body-soul relationships and making a definitive statement about them. Lavater's elaboration on the response to a successful portrait was revealing because what he described was aesthetic effect: "You forget it is a picture - you see the objects themselves - you feel transported into the prison of the innocent sufferer - you weep with him - you wish to throw yourself into his arms, to die with him, to die for him."[40] In portraiture the data of likeness were translated into a work of art. The validity of a good portrait was usually assessed in terms of the life-likeness it evoked. While Lavater approached the portrait as a stand-in for an absent original, painters and artists discussed the status of their artefacts as copied or original. Within the late eighteenth-century context of physiognomy these two categories became closely linked.

Joshua Reynolds, the first President of the Royal Academy of Arts, insisted that nature should not be represented mimetically but according to a central form which guaranteed that the visual data of likeness acquired an aesthetic dimension.[41] Moreover, both Lavater and Reynolds cautioned against untutored engagement with reality. With the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768 artistic education was institutionalised and scientific methodology became an essential part of this education which claimed to enable individuals to identify the general and the particular and to differentiate originals from copies.[42] Blake repeatedly stressed the importance of copying, but even though he argued for attention to detail, he was never too bothered with mimetic fidelity. It was certain that even though he used the term copying to formulate a crucial opposition within his art, he differentiated between two different kinds of imitation: simulacrum and copy. In his annotations to Reynolds he wrote: "The difference between a bad Artist & a Good One Is the Bad Artist Seems to Copy a Great Deal: The Good one Really Does Copy a Great

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[38] Hindmarsh, ed., *New Dictionary* (1794), 288, 277-78.
[39] Ellis Shookman, "Wissenschaft, Mode, Wunder: Über die Popularität von Lavater's Physiognomik," in *Das Antlitz Gottes im Antlitz des Menschen: Zugänge zu Johann Caspar Lavater*, eds. Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1994), 245-46. K.J.H. Berland, "Reading character in the face: Lavater, Socrates, and physiognomy," *Word & Image*, 9:3 (1993), 252-54.
[40] Lavater (1789-98), II, 73.
[41] Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1997), ed. Wark, 47.
[42] Fraassen and Sigman, "Interpretation in Science and the Arts," in *Realism and Representation* (1993), ed. Levine, 80.

Deal." (*AR* E645) Here Blake draws attention not to technical skills, acquired through training, but to the general disposition of the artist whose work - original or copied - was only ever imitated.

Eighteenth-century portraiture was particularly concerned with the depiction of men and women of genius. These portraits were disseminated as prints and collected by both literary men and amateurs. Thomas Birch's *The Heads and Characters of Illustrious Persons of Great Britain* (1747), Joseph Ames's *A Catalogue of English Heads* (1748), and James Granger's *A Bibliographical History of England* (1769-74) were examples for the demand in ready-made portrait collections.[43] Granger's *Biographical History* had blank pages to be filled by its owner with engraved portraits as illustrations:

> The collection of 'heads' was not [...] the same as the creation of a scientific catalogue. Nor was it, like the modern museum, essentially concerned with quality. Homogeneity of a different sort was its purpose. Its ostensible function was to impose order on disorder and to regulate the present by means of the past.[44]

The link between portraiture and physiognomy was that within the context of *Essays on Physiognomy* character was rendered as a representation of body-soul relationships. Whereas resemblance pointed to a general divine form, difference signified a tendency towards individuality.

In *Essays on Physiognomy* the very concept of identity was bound up with the artistic process of representation. To reveal the resemblance to the divine image, buried in the features of a face, Lavater had to abstract from the available data to then produce a transparent and unambiguous representation of that resemblance:

> The soul is painted on the face; it must be perceived in order to be transmitted to the canvas: and he who is incapable of catching this expression; never will become a portrait painter. [...] it appears to me evident that an excellent portrait is in effect [...] of greater use than Nature, who only shews herself at intervals.[45]

Lavater repeatedly emphasised that a physiognomist needed to convey a physiognomical interpretation through drawing rather than through verbal description. Since he claimed full legibility of the unseen, the realisation of man's inner topography was turned into a matter of artistic talent. When identity is defined in terms of likeness-making, as for example in the context of physiognomy, it is clear why Blake associated the creation of man with the production of a good quality copy. Blake's definition of a good copy can, indeed, be related back to Deleuze's platonic trinity. Any work of art was either a bad or good copy. It was up to the viewer to differentiate between the two and to recognise the good artist.

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[43] James Granger, *A Biographical History of England, from Egbert the Great to the Revolution*, 4 vols. (1769-74; 1779) I, i, vi-vii. Granger's *Biographical History* quickly went through three editions. New material was added continually. Already the second edition, published in 1775, was issued as 4 volumes.

[44] Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 58, 59.

At the heart of portraiture, then and now, was the absence of objective evidence and the fact that some portraits capture likeness better than others. In his *Essays* Lavater granted the physiognomist moral superiority. Since there was no guarantee of an accurate rendering let alone reproduction of likeness, Lavater turned the assessment of the validity of a portrait into a matter of sensibility.[46] Blake broke with the notion of the feeling heart by dissecting the heart's anatomy in his Urizen Books. Such feelings as pain, for example, did not originate in the heart but in the whole of the body.

The readiness with which *Essays on Physiognomy* was embraced can be explained with Lavater's proposed scientific approach to codified artistic expression. By delineating its method and providing evidence for objectified physiognomical judgement, the popular fashion of physiognomical interpretation, until then understood as being based on intuition, became reputable. As Lavater put it: "By Physiognomical Discernment we mean - the sensation and the conjectures which certain Physiognomies produce, from which we form a judgment of the moral character which they announce, of the interior of the Man whose face or portrait we examine."[47]

Lavater outlined that physiognomical sensation could be produced by faces as well as drawn and painted portraits. He suggested that from portraits objective judgements about human character could be made. With the notion of a fixed character and with the help of a physiognomical taxonomy he hoped to found a universal science of character. The Enlightenment with its growing emphasis on experimental science encouraged visual evidence and demonstration. With his mathematical accuracy and emphasis on technical expertise, Lavater was a typical Enlightenment thinker.[48] The first volume of *Essays on Physiognomy* was published in the year of the French Revolution and continued through the beginning of the Napoleonic wars before its completion in 1798. The motivation behind the project - to accurately map human character - proved invaluable in a time when the old social order was turned upside down. Lavater, moreover, claimed that he wanted to teach his readers to see the soul in the face and to get to the true essence of human nature, which he believed to be clearly inscribed on the surface of the body and legible to trained eye.

The emphasis on the pictorial representation of true being, real character and pure likeness had a long tradition and was addressed by several eighteenth-century writers on the art of painting. In 1720 Thomas Page wrote:

> To draw a Face from the Life, is only to describe the same Lineaments and Colours in your Work, as are in the Persons [*sic*] Face whom you draw; just as if you were to copy

[45] Lavater (1789-98), II, 241.
[46] Lavater (1774-78), I, 160.
[47] Lavater (1789-98), I, 93.
[48] Barbara Maria Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (1991; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 42, 48.

> after a Piece of Painting. Only now you must be thoroughly versed in all the pleasing Deceptions of your Art [...] to give every Face its proper Grace and Air.[49]

In his *Analysis of Beauty* (1753) William Hogarth emphasised that character expression, manifesting itself on the body's surface, was varied and always ambiguous. He stated that likeness copied from nature needed to be transformed into accentuated representation:

> for tho' in nature's works the line of beauty is often neglected, or mixt with plain lines, yet so far are they from being defective on this account, that by this means there is exhibited that infinite variety of human forms which always distinguishes the hand of nature from the limited and insufficient one of art.[50]

Lavater, by contrast, asserted the ability of the physiognomist to discover and isolate body soul relations, invisible to the untrained eye.[51] He believed that spirituality could be made transparent as definitive body-soul relationships which he thought to be embodied in the bone structures underlying the physiognomy of a face.

In William Blake's Urizen Books the body was conceived as a space of existence, created through personal history and spectator interpretation. Their interaction and especially the subjective contribution of the latter were metaphorically shaped by the current debates on body-soul relationships. Blake's creation myth was part of his endeavour to create a truthful representation of the human body. This ambition emerged in the late eighteenth-century and as a result of Lavater's combination of portraiture with physiognomy. The drama of Blake's creation myth gives evidence of a representational problem of spirituality, of making visible or externalising what is hidden and lays inside the soul, according to the methods used in Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy*.

Lavater's book had a great aesthetic appeal. Its many engraved portraits helped to codify what was beautiful, ugly, wise or foolish in facial expression. *Essays on Physiognomy*, in fact, appealed to both specialists and amateurs alike.[52] In his advertisement to the *Essays* Fuseli stressed that he agreed with the overall intentions of the work. Its prospectuses promised that the book would provide "ample Matter to exercise, to gratify, perhaps to correct" the "Taste" of the "Lovers of polite Learning."[53] A work of similar intention, namely an attempt at teaching aesthetic feelings had already been published in 1778: Alexander Cozens's *Principles of Beauty* and its nineteen picture-plates depicting sixteen facial types. In the illustrations to *Principles of Beauty* the human form had been reduced to outline portraits. To familiarise themselves with the different

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[49] Thomas Page, *The Art of Painting, in its Rudiments, Progress, and Perfection* (Norwich, 1720), 75.
[50] William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty, written with a view of fixing the fluctuating Ideas of Taste* (1753), 128-29.
[51] Lavater (1789-98), II, 55.
[52] "Dr. Hunter's Translation of Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy is now completed; and, in this new and hitherto little travelled walk, may be considered as a valuable and highly interesting addition to the arts, and as affording much matter for curious and novel speculation to the inquisitive and philosophic mind, and many useful hints to artists of every denomination." See *Monthly Magazine*, 8 (1800), 903.

degrees of human beauty, readers were encouraged to work with these faces by superimposing various hair styles provided on separate sheets. While reflecting on personal taste and the possibility of an objective definition of human beauty Cozens emphasised that the work was incomplete. It only demonstrated the rules of beauty. From the list of subscribers to Cozens's *Principles of Beauty*, dedicated to the King, it emerged that the proposed system found much favour with the English aristocracy and also with many eminent members of the Royal Academy.[54]

Another example of art books, catering to the growing interest learning how to draw, was Carington Bowles's *The Artist's Assistant* (1768) and *The Draughtsman's Assistant* (1772). Both included plates of figures and body parts which Bowles wanted his readers to copy correctly. In the latter work Bowles offered a sequence of lessons which - when followed - would enable any learner to become a master of the art of drawing. Bowles preached awareness of anatomy, but mostly provided schemes of proportions in figures and heads. From these examples he formulated his rules of drawing:

> The Pupil will find the foregoing Rules of infinite Advantage: we would advise him therefore to give them due Application till they become strongly impressed on his Mind, as they will enable him to judge of the Productions of Nature in the Formation of the Human Body, and to compare the different antique Statues in drawing from the Life: but Care must be taken that too strict an Observance of the preceding Dimensions may not destroy that Variety of Compositions so absolutely necessary.[55]

In particular, Bowles's *Polite Recreation in Drawing* (1779) testified to the public infatuation with physiognomy and the tradition of caricaturing humans with animal features. In contrast to Cozens or Lavater, Bowles offered no systematisation of character expression.

These treatises, Bowles's *Artist's Assistant*, Cozens's *Principles of Beauty* and Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy*, were written and conceived as instruction books. What they had in common was the combination of sentiment with vision, so typical of the late eighteenth century. Concerning the preliminaries required in the human character to produce beauty, Cozens gave a list of sixteen qualities, among them the feeling mind. Only if the body of the observing party was sensitive and receptive to bodily signs, could sense-impressions be transmitted.[56] Likewise, in *Essays on Physiognomy* the connection between mind and body was foregrounded. Lavater's concept of the ideal physiognomist

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[53] David H. Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations by and after Henry Fuseli: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1994), 97.

[54] Among the subscribers were Richard Cosway, John Flaxman, William Gilpin, Joseph Nollekens, Sir Joshua Reynolds; George Romney, George Stubbs, Edmund Burke, Dr. Hunter and David Garrick. Thomas Banks exhibited "Head of Majestic Beauty, composed on Mr. Cozens's principles," in 1782. See also Alexander Cozens, *Principles of Beauty Relative to the Human Head* (1778), 1, 2.

[55] Carington Bowles, *The Draughtsman's Assistant; or Drawing made easy* (1772), 8. See also *The Artist's Assistant in Drawing, Perspective, Etching, Engraving, Mezzotinto-Scraping, Painting on Glass, in Crayons, and in Water-Colours* (1768), 1-3.

[56] Cozens, *Principles of Beauty* (1778), 3, 4. See also Stafford, *Body Criticism* (1997), 415.

was essentially dependent on the refinement of the senses and thus the development of the so-called spirit of observation.[57] Lavater, moreover, almost exclusively addressed himself to the sensitive reader: "Read and judge as you would do, were we examining the Work in your closet or mine. Read it twice, if you would form a candid judgment; and if you mean to honour me with a public refutation, read it, at least, - once."[58]

Both Cozens and Lavater's character theories required a subject whose physical and spiritual existence could be explored as well as improved. Such notions as self-knowledge and self-improvement of both body and soul were continually referred to. Both Cozens and Lavater believed that body-soul relationships could be actively shaped. In due course the body's physiognomy was transposed into mapped out proportions. Moreover, Lavater conceptualised the body as an absolute essence by using geometric grids to identify and measure body-soul relationships.[59]

With the transformation of physical features into abstract entities, it becomes obvious that in *Essays on Physiognomy* the relationship between author and reader was one in which readers were not simply charmed into agreement. They were expected to improve and educate themselves by subscribing to a training programme. This expectation was typical of the transition period between Enlightenment and Romanticism. Lavater had the confidence and optimism of an Enlightenment thinker and was convinced of the universality and social benefits of physiognomy. His *Aphorisms on Man* (1788), translated between October 1787 and May 1788 and published while the Hunter translation of *Essays on Physiognomy* was still being planned, is a good example of teaching self-improvement through the self-awareness principle. The idea of reflective, interactive reading is suggested in the book's final aphorism: "If you mean to know yourself, interline such of these aphorisms as affected you agreeably in reading, and set a mark to such as left a sense of uneasiness with you; and then shew your copy to whom you please."[60] Blake's annotations to *Aphorisms on Man* have conventionally been interpreted as evidence for an engagement with Lavater. In this chapter the argument is that Blake's annotations can be read as a demonstration of Lavater's notion of self-awareness and of how self-organisation could be stimulated by isolating personal favourites from a list of aphorisms.

Blake kept *Aphorisms on Man* all his life.[61] The importance of writing annotations was stressed early on by Fuseli who claimed that "one assuredly could read their writer's

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[57] Lavater (1991), 58.
[58] Lavater (1789-98), I, n. p.
[59] Stafford, *Body Criticism* (1997), 33.
[60] Lavater (1788), 224.
[61] After Blake's death his annotated copy went to Samuel Palmer. It was then acquired by Robert Hoes whose book-collection was eventually sold to the Huntington Library. A 1794 edition with a transcription of Blake's annotations is in Yale. See G.E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books Supplement* (1995), 322.

character in them."[62] This implies that Blake had, indeed, shown his comments to his friends. There was, in fact, very little which was private about these annotations. Passing on one's annotated books, as H.J. Jackson pointed out, was common.[63] And interestingly a parallel to Blake's annotations can be argued for Fuseli's *Aphorisms on Art* (1789/1831). After the manuscript was destroyed in a fire at Johnson's, Fuseli could not bring himself to start all over again.[64] However, he worked intermittently and in private on the manuscript until his death. His corollaries, written to supplement his aphorisms, come to more than half of what was eventually published in 1831. From these annotations we gain a deep insight into Fuseli's mind and his opinions about art and literature. *Aphorisms on Art*, according to Eudo Mason, was Fuseli's favourite work.[65]

What made the publishing history of *Essays on Physiognomy* difficult was that its English translations were not only preceded by authorised translations into French and Dutch,[66] but also by an authorised abridged German edition. According to John Graham, twelve versions, complete and abridged, as well as five English translations of the *Essays* were published during the 1790s.[67] Mary Lynn Johnson has since corrected Graham. From the five translations only two were genuine.[68] Lavater, moreover, was reported to have complained to one of his English visitors about these pirated translations[69] It is impossible to determine a master version of the physiognomy project.[70] What can be said with certainty is that the late eighteenth-century revival of physiognomy and the sustained interest in Lavater led to two major translations published from 1789: the Hunter translation from the French edition and the more affordable Holcroft translation from J.M. Armbruster's abridged edition, published in Germany from 1781.[71] Since Thomas Holcroft followed Armbruster, his translation had fewer illustrations than the unabridged German edition. The Hunter translation not only exceeded in size *Physiognomische Fragmente* but also the French edition, *Essai sur la physionomie* (1781-1803). The rivalry between the

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[62] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 63.
[63] Bentley, *Stranger in Paradise* (2001), 108. H.J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers writing in Books* (New York and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 44-80.
[64] *Aphorisms on Art* was published posthumously by John Knowles in 1831. See John Knowles, *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli*, 3 vols. (1831), III, 63-150, I, 159-60.
[65] Heinrich Füssli, *Aphorismen über die Kunst* (Klosterberg, Basel: Verlag Benno Schwabe & Co, 1944), 13-14.
[66] The first Dutch edition, *Over de Physiognomie*, was published as a four-volume octavo edition between 1780 and 1783.
[67] John Graham, *Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Berne, Frankfurt am Main, Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1979), 87-90, 103-07.
[68] According to Mary Lynn Johnson, Samuel Shaw's translation was pirated from Holcroft and published by H.D. Symonds in 1792. See Mary Lynn Johnson, "Blake, Chodowiecki, Schellenberg, Lips, and Images for 'The Proprietors of the English Lavater': Who Owned What When?,'" *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, forthcoming. Mary Lynn Johnson has meticulously sketched the negotiations between the different proprietors. She revised the traditional belief that Fuseli was the mastermind behind the Hunter translation by shifting the focus to the negotiations between Murray and Johnson.
[69] *Monthly Review*, 15 (1794), 124.
[70] Michael Shortland, "The Power of a Thousand Eyes: Johann Caspar Lavater's Science of Physiognomical Perception," *Criticism*, 28:4 (1986), 385-86.
[71] Holcroft was a man of diverse and extensive interests. He was a translator, dramatist as well as a writer and author. See Gary Kelly, *The English Jacobin Novel 1780-1805* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 114-78.

two English major translations was important, because both translations aspired to rendering an authorised edition of Lavater, complete or abridged.

At the centre of Lavater's physiognomy project, combining artistic and scientific concerns about human character, was a combination of text and design which has so far been believed to be unique to Blake. A generic approach to the publishing history of *Essays on Physiognomy* delineates the shift from verbal to optical description of character, prominent and fashionable in the late eighteenth century. In the German edition *Physiognomische Fragmente* (1774-78) Lavater wrote that its engravings were more than decorous illustrations. While outlining that the visualisation of body-soul relationships was the key to understanding and identifying character, he determined that in the text-image relationship the image was to be considered superior. Interestingly, this passage was omitted in the English translation of the author's preface in *Essays on Physiognomy* (1789-98).

Likewise, Cozens in 1778 was aware of the importance of good quality illustrations and the notion of their authentic mode of representation. For the failure to evoke the originals he blamed badly executed engravings. Even though Cozens used Francesco Bartolozzi, a popular stipple engraver, he apologised for his illustrations. He wanted to convey a system of human beauty, but had to make concessions in its presentation. As Lavater before him, Cozens stressed the importance of the images used as demonstrations of his system:

> I am apprehensive that some of the principles, from their novelty or from their nature, cannot but very obscurely communicated by words, it will be found that this defect obviated by the examples, which being objects of sight, are best adapted not only to illustrate but also to demonstrate the abstruser principles.[72]

The impetus of the advertising campaign for the *Essays* was that the Hunter translation succeeded in bringing its engraved illustrations to technical perfection. In what follows the polemic establishing the superiority of the Hunter translation will be analysed. The argument is that it revolved around what has been introduced as the platonic motivation in likeness-making and the differentiation between simulacrum and copy.

The publishing history of Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man* (1788) was simple in comparison with the complicated negotiations leading up to the publication of Henry Hunter's translation, *Essays on Physiognomy*, issued as three volumes bound in five parts, in 1789, 1792 and 1798. *Essays on Physiognomy* was published fourteen years after the German *Physiognomische Fragmente* (1775-78) and six years after the French translation, *Essai sur la physionomie*. Thomas Holloway, whose name appeared in the imprint next to those of John Murray, the publisher, and Henry Hunter, commissioned

[72] Cozens, *Principles of Beauty* (1778), 2-3.

Blake to engrave four plates.[73] Overall Holloway employed more than thirty engravers.[74] While the text of the *Essays* can be traced back to *Essai sur la physionomie*, many of the illustrations cannot. In his advertisement Fuseli explained that Holloway thought about updating the work and therefore decided to add new plates. Fuseli not only approved of Holloway's decision, he emphasised that the expressions in the representations of physiognomical character had been corrected. The quality of the Hunter translation was, according to Fuseli, extraordinary and outstanding.[75]

Next to the increasing number of illustrations the main difference between the German, French and English translations were the textual amendments, known as the Additions. Lavater's physiognomy project, in fact, had its beginning in *Von der Physiognomik* (1772). Before this book was published Lavater's friend Johann Georg Zimmermann, the Hanover-based doctor to King George III, had extracts of Lavater's lectures printed together with his own notes in the *Hannoverisches Magazin*. According to its preface, Lavater was so offended by this solo effort that Zimmermann had no choice but to publish both lectures as the book *Von der Physiognomik* with Weidmanns Erben and Reich.[76]

Zimmermann was the first to point out that Lavater was bringing a new angle to physiognomy.[77] Throughout, from *Von der Physiognomik* to *Essays on Physiognomy*, Lavater emphasised that his physiognomy project was a work in progress. In the author's preface, translated in *Essays on Physiognomy*, he wrote: "I neither will, nor can write a complete Treatise on the Science of Physiognomies. My ambition is limited to a few simple Essays; and the Fragments which I give, never can compose a Whole." At the same time he admitted that he was prone to making mistakes. However, as the gaps in the taxonomy of human character were closed, he was improving.[78] It was also part of Lavater's style of argument, pervading his work, to refute potential objections. He emphasised that the work was not yet finished and continued to accumulate new

[73] Blake's signature on the plate "Aged figures gardening" was first discovered in 1972. See G.E. Bentley, Jr., "A 'New' Blake Engraving in Lavater's Physiognomy," *Blake Newsletter*, 6:2 (1972), 48-49.
[74] William Zachs, *The First John Murray and the Late Eighteenth-Century London Book Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), plate 23. Holloway both executed and supervised the illustrations to *Essays on Physiognomy*. See Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations* (1994), 96. The importance of the engravings to the Lavater project is echoed in Holloway's memoir, because it was sometimes referred to as Holloway's Lavater. See *Memoir of the Late Mr. Thomas Holloway* (1827), 17-20.
[75] Lavater (1789-98), I, n. p. [Some copies of this edition do not have Fuseli's advertisement.]
[76] Lavater (1991), 9. August Ohage, "Zimmermanns Anteil an Lavaters Physiognomischen Fragmenten," in *Johann Georg Zimmermann, Königlich großbritannischer Leibarzt (1728-1795)*, ed. Hans Peter Schramm (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), 109-22.
[77] Lavater (1772), 3-6.
[78] Lavater's pose as modest author in the German "Ich kann schlecht und schwach über die Physiognomik schreiben, und Sie kann dennoch eine wahre, in der Natur begründete Wissenschaft seyn," has changed to a self-confident declaration: "Combat, confute my doctrines; I will not complain: yet I must still insist that the Science is true in itself, and indubitably founded in nature." See advertisement and author's preface in Lavater (1789-98), I, n. p.

materials.[79] The connection between work and author persona was closely linked through the combination of self-improvement and textual revisions and amendments. What Lavater presents us with is a logic short-circuit. If a reader finds fault with the argument, then the author is to be blamed - not the subject itself. Since Lavater was only a man, he would never reach perfection in his lifetime and the physiognomy project could never be brought to perfection by him alone.[80] A consequence of this tendency towards completion was that Lavater tried to be comprehensive and so never reaches completion.[81] This stance was continued by Lavater's translators and editors. In his advertisement to the *Essays* Fuseli, for example, argued that supplementing the physiognomy project with more illustrations was no violation of the physiognomical taxonomy.

In this advertisement Fuseli purported that the Hunter translation was a complete edition of Lavater.[82] In 1789, however, volume IV of *Essai sur la physionomie* was still outstanding. At the end of volume IV of *Essai sur la physionomie*, eventually published in 1803, Heinrich Steiner, the Swiss publisher who joined Weidmann, Erben and Reich, explained that despite the first prospectus's promise of three volumes, there was going to be a fourth volume, issued at the end of 1788. The necessity for an extra volume arose from six extra fragments (or chapters) which could not be incorporated into the already very thick volume III. This extra volume IV was to be given "gratis" to all subscribers. Lavater had been commissioned to write a summary. Again, this was done for practical reasons to ensure that volume IV was going to be as extensive as the other volumes. It was also an attempt to cover the costs of the extra volume, eventually published in 1803.[83] Lavater's résumé of the physiognomy project, commissioned in the late 1780s, was never written. The work, therefore, lacked closure.[84] Whereas *Physiognomische Fragmente* gradually wound down and ended with a two-page conclusion, the Hunter translation stopped abruptly with a passage about "General Washington." Lavater, beginning with Armbruster's abridged edition, may have decided to withhold the key to his physiognomical judgements. In the French and English translations he claimed that

[79] At the end of volume IV of *Physiognomische Fragmente*, Lavater recommends the work of one of his most fervent critics Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. See Lavater (1774-78), IV, 469.
[80] The word "Fragment" is used throughout the German preface, Lavater (1774-78) I, n. p. In the French and English translations the issue dealing with the work's open form has been tuned down.
[81] See prospectus in Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations* (1994), 97: "Artists in all the Branches of Design will be furnished with innumerable Hints respecting the Principles and the Improvement of their Art."
[82] "The subscribers have no right to complain of an additional volume, because, though, nearly as extensive to the Author as the two preceding ones, it will be given to them gratis: as little reason have non-subscribers to complain, for they are neither obliged to purchase it, nor to read it." See *Monthly Review*, 78 (1788), 554-55.
[83] Lavater (1781-1803), IV, n. p. According to Mary Lynn (private communication): "Chronically over budget and over length, Lavater never learned to curb his propensities for ordering extra engravings and inserting new commentary as his work was going through the press. *Physiognomische Fragmente*, printed in a press run of 750 copies and sold by subscription, set the pattern: it turned out to be the most expensive book ever published by the Leipzig house of Weidmann, Erben, and Reich (co-published by the newly formed Swiss firm Heinrich Steiner in Winterthur), and sales did not cover costs."
[84] The editor included "Cent Régles Physiognomiques détachées," and "Sur les lignes *d'animalité*, & le moyen d'en marquer la gradation." According to Mary Lynn (private communication): "Heinrich Lavater and Steiner

physiognomical judgement was a vocation and required life-long study.[85]

For the reception of *Essays on Physiognomy* it is necessary to explore the context and the public sphere into which it was published. The double publication with Fuseli's translation *Aphorisms on Man*, almost overlapping the Hunter's translation of the *Essays*, was typical of the increasing volume of print publication outputs at the end of the eighteenth century. The notion of public opinion came into being as a result of the prospering middle-class print culture, prompted by better printmaking technologies and effective manufacturing.[86] The growth in population was accompanied by an increase in newspaper, book and journal publication. Between 1780 and 1790 the output in printed items doubled from 3000 to 6000. More than forty new literary magazines were launched in the 1790s.[87] The impact and availability of printed items can be estimated from the arguments and counter-arguments entering the public sphere via the publishers and booksellers. The periodical literature helped to generate as well as promote new reading communities:

> the periodical assembled men from disparate social 'ranks,' writers with their patrons and potential readers, publishers with their suppliers, politicians with their critics. Social practices of gathering, reading, and writing as 'discoursing subjects' allowed these subjects to pursue the rational consensus called the Enlightenment.[88]

As an immediate consequence or the prospering print culture this period produced the modern journalist and the self-supporting author.[89] In the novel late eighteenth-century readers encountered new themes and a much wider representation of English society. Stock characters were abandoned and new ones were introduced: merchants, tradesmen, gentlemen, going about their daily lives in a middle class setting: "New modes of experience were annexed to the novel, and authors [...] are not afraid to build on exceptional circumstances. [...] Analyses of sensibility are more individual than those of the mid-century, and a certain amount of attention is being paid to adolescence."[90] What

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had to fill in Vol. IV with whatever they could find among Lavater's unpublished papers (only some of which were published after his death by Gessner)."

[85] The response to this change in attitude is already felt in the reviews of the French edition whenever the reviewer refers to "M. Lavater's school." See *Monthly Review*, 66 (1782), 492. *Monthly Review*, 69 (1783), 590.

[86] For the periodical as public sphere, see Jon Klancher, *The Making of the English Reading Audiences 1790-1832* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 19, 24.

[87] "The foundation of the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly* reviews occurred during a period of rising inflation and high paper prices that had reduced the size of the reading public and had more than halved the number of new magazines introduced in the first decade of the nineteenth century in comparison with the 1790s," Lee Erickson, *The Economy of the Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialization of Publishing 1800-1850* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 7, 75. Stephen C. Behrendt, "The Romantic Reader," in *A Companion to Romanticism*, ed. Duncan Wu (1989; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999), 93.

[88] Klancher, *English Reading Audiences* (1987), 19. Many of the eighteenth-century English novels were read without them ever reaching the status of a hardcover book. See Robert D. Mayo, *The English Novel in the Magazines 1740-1815* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1-2.

[89] Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels & Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 2, 18-20, 71.

[90] J.M.S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800* (1932; reprinted London: Methuen 1962), 180.

this change in taste had brought about was a focus on the individual and his (or her) reactions and responses to the surrounding world. These close character studies overlapped with the concerns of the late eighteenth-century educationists. Reading novels engendered personalised self-awareness and the recognition that the individual was part of a complex network of state institutions. The physiognomy project fitted in well with these changes, because *Essays on Physiognomy* contributed to the new narratives by accumulating and discussing various opinions of the celebrities dead and alive.

The Hunter translation had an extremely small print run. Again, the scope and impact of the print revolution played a crucial part in the reception of Lavater's version of physiognomy. Before 1789 most English readers would have had to rely on the reviews of the German and French editions. The first mention of *Physiognomische Fragmente* was published in the *Monthly Review* in 1775.[91] In that year the *Monthly Review* printed reports on papers given at the Royal Academy in Berlin a few years earlier. English periodical readers were not only made aware of the arguments for and against physiognomy, they knew about the generation of physiognomical thinkers before Lavater and long before the *Essays* came out: Henri de Catt, defending physiognomy as an art, was opposed by Dom Pernety and Mr. Formey who insisted that physiognomical analysis should not include animals. What de Catt or Formey failed to achieve, so commented the reviewer writing for the *Monthly Review*, was accomplished by Lichtenberg in 1778.[92]

When Georg Gustav Fülleborn published the first German history of physiognomy in 1797, he concluded that by the end of the eighteenth century the German interest in physiognomy had almost died down.[93] The fascination with Lavater continued in England and the interest his physiognomical doctrines was propelled by the problem of obtaining issue of good quality illustrations, an issue bound up with the growing fascination for the rising new genre of portraiture. One reviewer of *Physiognomische Fragmente* in 1776 remarked that many of its illustrations were "ill-chosen" and even "insignificant" for what Lavater claimed to be doing.[94] Criticisms on Lavater's interpretations continued throughout the 1780s. Whenever character readings clashed with popular opinion, objections to Lavater's physiognomical theory were particularly conclusive. It is important to note that

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[91] Graham, *Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy* (1979), 105-6. Graham mentions two reviews on the German *Physiognomische Fragmente*. See *Monthly Review*, 52 (1775), 190 and *Monthly Review*, 54 (1776), 317-18. In 1775 the *Monthly Reviews* brings an "announcement of 'Physiognomy' to be published by 'M. Luveter.'" It is, however, a review of the first prospectus, which promises, that *Physiognomische Fragmente* will "consist, at least, of four volumes in quarto, large paper," and that "detached reflections on particular physiognomies" will "be of such a nature as not to give any offence to the living." See *Monthly Review*, 52 (1775), 190.

[92] For reviews of the German edition, see *Monthly Review*, 52 (1775), 190, 573-74, 584-85. *Monthly Review*, 54 (1776), 317-318. *Monthly* Review, 58 (1778), 524-28.

[93] Georg Gustav Fülleborn, "Abriss einer Geschichte und Litteratur der Physiognomik," in *Beyträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, 12 vols. (Züllichau, 1797), VIII, 3. The debate between de Catt and Pernety is well documented, but rarely discussed, see Lavater (1991), 114. Ursula E. Geitner, *Sprache der Verstellung: Studien zum rhetorischen und anthropologischen Wissen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1992), 258-59.

[94] *Monthly Review*, 54 (1776), 318.

the objections to Lavater were mostly directed at the quality of his physiognomical illustrations.[95]

During the production phase of *Essays on Physiognomy* Fuseli showed great concern for his own designs. He paid close attention to how they were engraved. Even though it is generally held that there was no great artistic value to Fuseli's pictures, made especially for Lavater, Fuseli thought otherwise. His decision to focus on technicalities and engraving skills was, indeed, a response to the reviews of *Essai sur la physionomie*. Its illustrations, particularly the designs made after Fuseli, came off very badly: "Our author points out the faults of these heads, for which some good lines of character do not atone; but, the faults being predominant and egregious, we cannot conceive why he placed them in his work." Next the reviewer wondered why Lavater rebuked Raphael: "we humbly apprehend, that the incorrectness of the copyist, or the engraver, must have mislead our author into an erroneous opinion concerning the painter."[96] He outlined further that copies always and necessarily lacked the spirit of originals and that Lavater wrongly criticised Raphael's designs as being "deficient in truth, [...] and in correctness of design."[97]

What the reviewer addressed here were general problems of artistic representation. They arise whenever copies were made from originals. Fuseli reworked many of his designs, because what he really wanted to achieve when updating and expanding *Essays on Physiognomy* was to make sure that the illustrations were perceived as originals. In his advertisement he mentioned the improvement of the illustrations and introduced captions to his designs in the work to answer both his and Lavater's critics.

Essays on Physiognomy has, for example, two picture-plates of Mary Sister of Martha. The head used in the French edition, engraved by Heinrich Lips, is facing the page with Lavater's commentary and is preceded by Fuseli's new drawing. Its caption explains that Fuseli was "unwilling that the [...] Outline should pass as his Idea of Mary. But Lavater's remarks rendered it necessary to the English Editor to give a fac-simile of the French engraving." Other captions are "The Painter has been consulted, [...] and has endeavoured to regain what was lost or disfigured by the Engraver of the head in the French edition," and "The Engraver has consulted the Designer and followed the Original, the mouth of which expresses contempt instead of fear." The most effective commentary is in the final sentence to Mary Sister of Martha: "It is left to the Reader to determine, whether the criticisms of the Author, on spurious deformities, were worth retaining at the expence [*sic*] of propriety and beauty?"[98] Not only were the readers of the Hunter translation asked to compare two engravings executed after one design, the general attention was shifted away from Lavater's commentary towards the illustrations. With this

[95] *Monthly Review*, 66 (1782), 497-498. *Monthly Review*, 68 (1783), 621-622. *Monthly Review*, 69 (1783), 592.
[96] *Monthly Review*, 70 (1784), 539.
[97] *Monthly Review*, 70 (1784), 540, 542, 543.

Fuseli not only followed Lavater's emphasis on the role of the illustrations, he made their status as either copy or simulacrum a matter of execution.

By the 1790s the publishing industry had become so diverse, that a guide was needed to co-ordinate the London businesses and the booksellers in the country. Such a trade guide was John Pendred's *The London and Country Printers, Booksellers and Stationers Vade Mecum* (1785).[99] Another indicator of the changing print market was the phenomenon of publication by subscription. By the late eighteenth century the printing industry had became more specialised and the patron or commissioner had gradually been replaced by promoter and consumer. The terms publisher, stationer and printer came to be distinguished as three different activities: publishing, retailing and printing.[100] In his biography of John Murray, the official publisher of the Hunter translation, William Zachs pointed out that Joseph Johnson, whose name did not appear in the imprint, owned a quarter of the extremely expensive Lavater project.[101] Johnson, in fact, was heavily involved in the physiognomy project. He printed several reviews of the *Essays* in his house journal, the *Analytical Review*. This journal, described as one of the most radical and progressive literary magazine of its time, was founded by the political writer Thomas Christie (1761-96) together with Johnson as chief-editor in 1788.[102] Murray who had founded the *English Review* in 1783, advised Johnson on how to "gain ground in a competitive market."[103] Many of the contributions to the *Analytical Review* were written by Johnson's friends: Fuseli[104], Holcroft, Mary Wollstonecraft, John Aikin, William Enfield, and William Cowper.[105]

Murray probably persuaded Johnson, who had been arranging for an abridged translation with Mary Wollstonecraft as translator,[106] to join him for an unabridged translation of the French edition. Rivalry, wrote Murray to Johnson, would "infallibly hurt

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[98] Lavater (1789-98), II, 283, 285.
[99] For an assessment of Pendret's achievement and the use of his directory. See John Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 67.
[100] John Brewer and Iain McCalman, "Publishing," in *Oxford Companion to The Romantic Age* (2001), eds. McCalman et al, 198.
[101] Zachs, *John Murray* (1998), 83.
[102] Walter Graham, *English Literary Periodicals* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1930), 211-12, 219-20.
[103] Zachs, *John Murray* (1998), 83.
[104] Joan K. Stemmler, "The Physiognomical Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater," *The Art Bulletin: A Quarterly*, 75:1 (1993), 163. Eudo C Mason, *The Mind of Henry Fuseli: Selections from his Writings with an Introductory Study* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), 137, 365-368.
[105] Johnson was interested in modern science, sympathises with radical political theories and publishes his dissenting friends. The list of authors published by Johnson includes William Cowper, Erasmus Darwin, Joseph Priestley, John Aikin, William Enfield, William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Maria Edgeworth, Thomas Paine and Blake, whose *French Revolution* (1791) is the only work which got accepted by a commercial publisher. Blake's emblem book *For Children: Gates of Paradise* was published by Johnson in 1793. One of the five existing copies was owned by Fuseli. See Carol Louise Hall, *Blake and Fuseli: A Study in the Transmission of Ideas* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), 63. The *Poetical Sketches*, written between 1769-1778, were printed privately in 1783. See Michael Phillips, "William Blake and the 'Unincreasable Club': The Printing of *Poetical Sketches*," *Bulletin of The New York Public Library*, 80 (1976), 6-18.
[106] For Mary Wollstonecraft's translations for Johnson. See William Godwin, *Memoirs of Wollstonecraft* (Oxford: Woodstock Books, 1993), 64-66.

both" of them.[107] It is possible that Johnson became a silent partner of the Lavater project in order to create the impression that he was an outsider. As chief editor of the *Analytical Review* he was able to support the project by orchestrating its public reception. This was, indeed, what happened. The main battle between the Hunter and the Holcroft factions was fought on the pages of the *Analytical Review*. Murray had no need to be too concerned about the Holcroft translation. In July 1789 he wrote to his friend the Edinburgh bookseller William Creech: "The greatest service you can render us is to let the two editions be seen at the same time."[108] The distribution of the Hunter translation can be approximated from the prospectus. It was sent out to different bookshops in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh and Dublin.[109] Murray obviously believed that the accurately copied engravings of the Hunter translation would convince the prospective buyers. According to Zachs, it was part of his marketing strategy to advertise the quality of its illustrations: Murray "discouraged customers from waiting until the Essays appeared in volumes by reminding them that early impressions of the engravings would be superior."[110]

Little is known about the print run of *Essays on Physiognomy*. A possible minimum seems to have been 250 copies. This is what Murray usually advised for tracts and pamphlets. From what we know from Zachs, the Hunter translation was considered a lucrative project, at least 1000 copies were printed. However, the Hunter translation, just like the French edition, turned into a financial disaster.[111] Initially, to cover the production costs Murray had planned to issue the *Essays* by subscription before its official publication as forty-one fascicles for 12s per piece.[112] These fascicles were "intended to be at intervals of six weeks" between January 1788 and March 1799. They were issued together with information about the binding of the full-plate designs. The progress of the publishing-in-parts publication was slow. It took almost eleven years before the *Essays*

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[107] Zachs, *John Murray* (1998), 83.
[108] Zachs, *John Murray* (1998), 83n.
[109] L. White, the Dublin bookseller, is only mentioned in the January 1788 prospectus. "As the number of books increased and the system for their distribution grew, it became easier to find them. [...] Even the most prosperous establishments stocked items other than books, for book-selling alone was rarely sufficient to make a decent living, and not all the commodities and services the bookseller offered were directly connected with the culture of print. The provincial bookseller – there are 988 listed in 316 towns in the *Universal British Directory* for the 1790s." See Brewer and McCalman, "Publishing," in *Oxford Companion to The Romantic Age* (2001), eds. McCalman et al, 204.
[110] Zachs, *John Murray* (1998), 70n.
[111] Zachs, *John Murray* (1998), 65-83. According to Stephen C. Behrendt only very few people would have been able to afford *Essays on Physiognomy*. Its cost was way above the average working class wage. See Stephen C. Behrendt, "The Romantic Reader," in *Companion to Romanticism* (1999), ed. Wu, 92.
[112] In the late 1780s two prospectuses were published. The 1787 prospectus announces that the first fascicle was going to be issued on 1 January 1788. The second prospectus, issued on 21 January 1788, however, announces the first number for 31 January 1788. See Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations* (1994), 97-98. J.P. Feather, *Book Prospectuses Before 1801 in the John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford: A Catalogue with Microfishes* (Oxford: Oxford Microform Publications, 1976), 14-E09. For publishing by subscription, see Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 450-51.

was published in its entirety.[113] Blake's engravings appeared between May 1788 and February 1789, and before the first volume was available to the general public. The order of text and illustrations in the fascicles did not correspond with what was going to be published as the first volume. Blake's "Democritus," part of the third number published in May 1788, appeared on page 159, whereas the design of "Aged figures gardening," published with the fifth number in July, came to be on page 127. Because of his close friendship with Fuseli during the preparation time, Blake was probably aware of the re-editing. These readjustments might explain his motivation for moving around the picture plates of *The Book of Urizen*.[114]

The reception of *Essays on Physiognomy*, its elegant engravings and exquisite printing was bound up with the interest in its author Johann Caspar Lavater. Within the context of *Essays on Physiognomy* the role which Lavater created for himself was that of a self-conscious and reflective author. Through this seemly transparent level of self-characterisation readers were encouraged to learn about Lavater. One of the main themes of the *Essays* was how Lavater became the physiognomist he was. He carefully recorded, for example, all the works on physiognomy he read. In this way, Lavater turned himself into a representation of Romanticism's interest in the self-reflexive individual with their indifference to general socialising. Through this account of physiognomical education he wanted his readers to become more self-aware. However, what was installed at the centre of Lavater's research was a heterogeneous persona. Lavater's concept of self-presentation was so absolute that he did not consider Zimmermann, Herder and Goethe's contributions as collaboration. He worked their answers and ideas on physiognomy, especially written for Lavater, into his *Essays* and never regarded this appropriation as plagiarism.[115] It is helpful to compare Lavater's conception of authorship with the *Bildungsroman*, as for example, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795-96), published in Britain in 1824, to understand how hero and author could be seen to merge:

> As Lavater's fellow-travellers in this physiognomical theodicy, his readers may also gain the experience necessary for arriving at the expertise of being 'connoisseurs' of both humanity and divinity. And in the process, their individual 'I's can converge on the singular 'eye' of acquired Christian piety.[116]

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[113] The first volume was issued from January 1788 to October 1789, the second from December 1789 to July 1792. After Murray's death in 1793 the name "Hester Murray" appears on the imprint, and in 1797 the new Murray seems to have joined forces with yet another publisher called "Highley." All in all it seems to have taken eight years to issue the third Volume, which was published in 1798. Zachs draws attention to the recorded sale-numbers of part thirty-nine issued from March 1796. According to this account, 1000 copies had been printed, and 500 were sold between March and September 1796. The price recorded is only 10s. From this it might be possible to conclude that the Lavater-project turned out to be less profitable than it had been expected to be. See Zachs, *John Murray* (1998), 358-59.

[114] Bentley, *Blake Books* (1977), 593-94.

[115] Siegfried Frey, "Lavater, Lichtenberg, and the Suggestive Power of the Human Face," in *Faces of Physiognomy* (1993), ed. Shookman, 68-83. Shortland, "The Power of a Thousand Eyes" (1986), 385-86.

[116] Richard A. Barney, *Plots of Enlightenment: Education and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 162, 213-14.

Despite Lavater's initial statement about the illustrations embodying the main argument of his physiognomical doctrines the *Essays* mapped the chronology of his self-improvement. In the reader, encouraged throughout to identify with the personal author of the book, this encounter with the inner physiognomy of the other/author entailed heightened self-awareness and ideally self-confrontation. What was at stake was the possible knowledge of the other.

Lavater had a great presence in the *Essays*. The shifts in tone, from description to praise or criticism were quite sudden. As author he was a controlling force both during the reading process and during a moral evaluation.[117] Because of the way in which Zimmermann, Herder and Goethe were subsumed into Lavater's text, Blake's creative response to *Essays on Physiognomy* was a unique indication of his relationship to German High Romanticism. As has been implicit in this argument, Blake was working out the confluence of a variety of European Enlightenment influences. While Lavater used a version of himself as the prime reference point for his analysis of others, Blake suggested that the assumed origin of human identity was brought about by two counteractive forces. Consequently, the rift in the author persona of *Essays on Physiognomy* may have provoked Blake to conceive his adaptation of the Genesis myth in terms of two creator figures, a dramatic set up which determined the formation of the physiognomical identity of the body, the central theme of the Urizen books. What will be demonstrated in chapter 3 is how the split personality of Blake's creator God produced a body which could not be regulated from the outside: it is seen to contribute to its emerging material physiognomy. Moreover, the outer, abstracting force was such a determinative factor for Blake, that he eventually personified it as the Spectre. In the Urizen Books the body was conceived as a space in which inner and outside forces were seen to interact. On its surface and within the human frame they were brought to a halt.

Essays on Physiognomy was not written for the common man. Lavater, indeed, believed that his physiognomical theories would cause chaos, if released to the uneducated masses.[118] With the increase in literacy the reception of printed items had become broader. The circulating libraries had novels easily available to anyone who could read. This revolution in the print culture was accompanied by an anxiety about what the masses read. In particular the novel was considered as a low form of literature, primarily intended for amusement or entertainment.[119] The unregulated taste for novel reading, moreover, was believed to interfere with moral education. Mary Wollstonecraft, for example, wrote in *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787): "Reading is the most

[117] Geitner, *Sprache der Verstellung* (1992), 261-63.
[118] Robert E. Norton, *The Beautiful Soul: Aesthetic Morality in the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 187.
[119] See Tompkins, *Popular Novel in England* (1962), 1-33.

rational employment [...]. Judicious books enlarge the mind and improve the heart."[120] Her emphasis on rational reading was an echo of the Enlightenment notion of self-improvement and human understanding. The key to self-education was literacy, but after the novel had become the greatest reading passion Wollstonecraft felt that she had to warn the "mindlessly" consuming reader.[121]

To guide and refine readers' voracious appetites, literary, philosophical and scientific societies and discussion groups were founded. Printed books were made available through circulating and subscription libraries as well as book clubs. The focus was never on the reader in isolation but as part of a complex network of reader responses.[122] The association of the mass reading public with low-quality novels climaxed in the publication of Paine's *Rights of Man*. The English ruling class had to come to terms with the mass reading public: "Every new reader in the lower ranks of society meant another potential victim of radical contagion."[123] By the late eighteenth century the great theorists of human education, Locke and Rousseau, had been revised, and in particular the opportunities of girls and young women had been opened up to general discussion. Blake may have known some of the reformers through Johnson.[124]

The idea that Blake was an uneducated poet, lacking formal schooling, was fostered by Blake himself. In the advertisement to his *Poetical Sketches* he stated that these poems were written by an "untutored youth." (E846) With this Blake was aligning his work with a contemporary literary fashion:

> If the lower-class poet was celebrated as an original genius, he or she was by the same token considered primitive and childlike [...]. At a time when education had come increasingly to define stages of maturity, the 'uneducated poet' was by definition aligned with the child; the 'rustic' poet in particular was relegated to a quasi-primitive stage of human culture. Blake [...] to this day neither is included in studies of peasant or labouring-class verse.[125]

It is widely acknowledged that Blake was neither a self-sustained nor independent writer. The radical and informal traditions were part of his every day experience.[126] Not only did he respond to the discussions around him in his works, he taught his wife Catherine to

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[120] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on The Education of Daughters* (1787), 49.
[121] William B. Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain 1684-1750* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 139, 142-43.
[122] Brewer and McCalman, "Publishing," in *Oxford Companion to The Romantic Age* (2001), eds. McCalman et al, 204-05.
[123] Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 64, 76.
[124] Mary Wollstonecraft, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787) and Erasmus Darwin's *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools* (1797) were published by Joseph Johnson. Likewise, Maria Edgeworth and Richard Lovell Edgeworth's *Practical Education* was first, according to its imprint, "printed by J. Jackson and sold by J. Johnson" in 1780, and again "printed for by J. Johnson" in 1798.
[125] Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education, and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice 1780-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 251.
[126] Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels & Reactionaries* (1981), 43. E.P. Thompson, *Witness against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xviii.

read and write. Literacy for Catherine proved a means to participate in Blake's life as an equal partner.[127] That Blake opposed formal education can be explained with his dissenting background and his distrust of state education which he associated with beating and strict regulation. Into his Notebook he wrote: "Thank God I never was sent to School / To be Flogd into following the Style of a Fool."[128] Since education for Blake came down to self-education, filtered and directed by books read and discussed, it is plausible that he was interested in Lavater's account of self-improvement.

Blake's involvement with self-education is twofold. First, he educated his wife to help him with the colouring and printing of his illuminated books and second, he trained his younger brother Robert as an engraver. Especially in teaching Catherine he showed his concern with the responsibility of public and political awareness. Her participation in the printing of Blake's illuminated books was crucial to the overall production process.[129] It is interesting to see that work attributed to Robert or Catherine bears an incredible likeness to Blake's own.[130]

The second dimension of Blake's attitude to self-education was to do with the public concern with instruction books. From Essick's compilation of Blake's commercial engravings it is possible to estimate Blake's awareness or rather involvement with the contemporary manuals and self-educative books: Olivier's *Fencing Familiarized* (1780), Bonnycastle's *Instruction to Mensuration* (1782), Nicolson's *Instruction to Natural Philosophy* (1783), Earle's *Operation for the Stone* 1793), and Stuart and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens* (1794). Much later he worked for Rees's *Cyclopaedia* (1815-19) and Wedgwood's *Catalogues* (1815-16). These kind of books catered for both the layman and the expert.

Richard Altick in *The English Common Reader* (1957) emphasised that reading was commonly recognised as an opportunity for individuals to educate as well as further educate themselves in their various trades and professions.[131] Blake had an understanding of what trade literature had to offer. When it comes to his invention of relief etching, used to create his illuminated books, Blake claimed that the secret was revealed to him in a vision and through his dead brother Robert.[132] With this he contended that his invention originated outside the available instruction books and independently of the experience of reading.

According to Lavater, everybody could become a producer of physiognomical texts. Just as anybody could write and publish in the periodicals, every individual could learn

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[127] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 39.
[128] *The Notebook of William Blake: A Photographic and Typographic Facsimile*, eds. D.V. Erdman and D.K. Moore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), N 42.
[129] Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 105, 133.
[130] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 57, 59.
[131] Altick, *English Common Reader* (1957), 141, 188.
[132] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 71.

how to expose his (or her) inner being as well as those of the members of the gentry. In other words, once popularised in the revised, pirated and abridged form, Lavater's *Essays* provided a potentially definitive method of rejecting what had been justified by handed-down traditions. With Lavater's physiognomical interpretations the true social value of the individual could be determined by means of disclosure. The tendency towards self-representation beyond the constraints of class may have been fused into Blake's conception of the heroic and nude Albion.

When *Essays on Physiognomy* hit the English market it had become clear that the work was more about Lavater practising physiognomy than about physiognomy itself. The notion that Lavater did not really outline the practice of physiognomy was formulated in the *Critical Review* in October 1789. All Lavater did was expand on his intuition. What was coined by Lavater as self-education was merely a "history of the progress of a warm, eager mind, from a casual fondness for a subject, to the height of enthusiasm."[133]

The importance which Lavater attributed to drawing had already been recognised in a review of the French edition in 1782: it "opened to him interesting views of human organization, and its interpretative powers or character."[134] His methodology was ridiculed:

> If the nose, as our author observes, is the distinctive mark of a LUMINOUS UNDERSTANDING, he has, without perceiving it, composed his own panegyric in this assertion; for to judge from three profiles which lie now before us, M. Lavater has one of the largest, most humane and fine-turned noses which we have met with.[135]

By the time the *Essays* reached its British audience the physiognomy project had come to revolve completely around matters of representation. Whereas Lavater in *Physiognomische Fragmente* claimed that some of the given portraits embodied the main argument, in the translations the engravings were the embodied argument. The theme of Lavater's imminent perfection as a physiognomist had been displaced, because it was essentially presented as a matter of good execution. Blake followed this shift in emphasis because, as will be argued in chapter 3 containing the re-reading of Blake's Urizen Books, what was created depended to a large extent on the personality of the creator. This combination, a longwinded extrapolation from the relationship between God and man, was first analysed with allegedly scientific methods by Lavater.

The Göttingen physics Professor and writer of aphorisms Georg Christoph Lichtenberg is important for the overall argument about the English reception of *Essays on Physiognomy*. He attacked Lavater in his very influential polemic "On Physiognomy: Against the Physiognomist" (1778) ["Über die Physiognomik; Wider den Physiognomen"]. This treatise, first published in the *Göttinger Taschenkalender*, appeared while Lavater

[133] *Critical Review*, 68 (1789), 287.
[134] *Monthly Review*, 66 (1782), 482.
[135] *Monthly Review*, 66 (1782), 489. *Monthly Review*, 70 (1784), 142.

was preparing volume IV of *Physiognomische Fragmente* for publication. He retaliated by integrating a close reading of Lichtenberg's treatise into this argument *for* physiognomy. In both the French and English translations, these sections were moved to the first volume.[136] So, ironically the Lavater-Lichtenberg debate was not only reiterated as the physiognomy project progressed through its different translations, it was given more emphasis by its shift to volume I. Lichtenberg who realised that moral judgements derived from a science of character were dangerous challenged Lavater's physiognomical readings, which originated in the combination of moral integrity with physical beauty.[137] His critique was directed at Lavater's deviations from Enlightenment standards. What Lavater called an objective systematisation of body-soul relationships was, in fact, distorted by his belief in predestination. Physiognomy's success, insisted Lichtenberg, could not be explained with Lavater's methodological revelations but with the licence he gave to a specious, mindless and, in fact, prejudiced categorisation of individuals.[138]

Lichtenberg's response to Lavater was closely linked to his experience of London.[139] During his first stay in London Lichtenberg sent various engravings to Zimmermann in Hanover. Volume I, however, was already too advanced so that Lichtenberg's contributions could not be considered.[140] From the diaries, partly written in English, it emerges that Lichtenberg's interest in physiognomy helped him to orientate himself in the metropolis.[141] On 18 June 1770 he described how he came to terms with all those London faces he had first encountered in Hogarth's engravings.[142] His response to Lavater's abstracting grids was prompted by his London experiences and his encounter with the different manifestations of human character in an urban context. Lichtenberg's second visit, from September 1774 to December 1775,[143] coincided with the publication of the first volume of *Physiognomische Fragmente*.[144] Lichtenberg may have learned about it between 15 January and 9 April 1775.[145] It was in London where Lichtenberg formulated

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[136] Lavater (1789-98), I, 230-81. Carsten Zelle, "Soul Semiology: On Lavater's Physiognomic Principles," in *Faces of Physiognomy* (1993), ed. Shookman, 40-59.
[137] R.D. Loewenberg, "Der Streit um die Physiognomik zwischen Lavater und Lichtenberg," *Zeitschrift für Menschenkunde*, 9 (1933), 27.
[138] J.P. Stern, *Lichtenberg: A Doctrine of Scattered Occasions, Reconstructed from his Aphorisms and Reflections* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), 92. Frey, "Lavater, Lichtenberg, and the Suggestive Power of the Human Face," in *Faces of Physiognomy* (1993), ed. Shookman, 65, 89. Richard T. Gray, "Aufklärung und Anti-Aufklärung: Wissenschaftlichkeit und Zeichenbegriff in Lavaters 'Physiognomik,'" in *Das Antlitz Gottes* (1994), eds. Pestalozzi, et al., 166-68.
[139] Gert Sautermeister, *Georg Christoph Lichtenberg* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1993), 59-61, 66.
[140] August Ohage, "Über 'Raserei für Physiognomik in Niedersachsen' im Jahre 1777: Zur frühen Rezeption von Lavaters 'Physiognomischen Fragmenten'," in *Das Antlitz Gottes* (1994), eds. Pestalozzi, et al., 236.
[141] Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Wolfgang Promies, 4 vols. (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1967-72), III, 261-62.
[142] Lichtenberg, *Schriften und Briefe* (1967-72), II, 608. *Lichtenberg in England: Dokumente einer Begegnung*, ed. Hans Ludwig Gumbert, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1977), II, 94-95.
[143] Stern, *Lichtenberg* (1959), 16, 22.
[144] Frey, "Lavater, Lichtenberg, and the Suggestive Power of the Human Face," in *Faces of Physiognomy* (1993), ed. Shookman, 90.
[145] Lichtenberg, *Schriften und Briefe* (1967-72), I, 320.

his first assessment of Lavater's approach.[146] While Lavater pledged that common sense could intuitively grasp how the soul impressed itself into the body, Lichtenberg refuted it.[147] He argued that if there were any truth in physiognomy certainly Shakespeare would have used it in his plays.[148]

Lichtenberg's closeness to the London theatre world is crucial to his awareness of the usefulness of physiognomy. In a letter, written on October 17 1775, Lichtenberg recalled how he discussed *Physiognomische Fragmente* with David Garrick at Drury Lane Theatre. It was Garrick who brought the conversation on to Lavater. After both agreed on the extraordinary quality of Hogarth's designs, they conceded that particularly the engravings after Hogarth, used in *Physiognomische Fragmente*, lacked what was Hogarth-specific. Lichtenberg pointed out that Lavater probably did not understand Hogarth's irony.[149] Lichtenberg greatly admired Garrick. His theatrical performances embodied for Lichtenberg an ideal of gestures and perfected expression.[150] Garrick was one of the first celebrities of the stage. Because of his long and successful career as an actor Garrick's peculiarly visual style proved to be very influential.[151] Through his experience of the London stage Lichtenberg came to be convinced that body-soul relationships were a matter of expressed emotion, shaped by free will and not by physiognomical predestination.[152]

Lichtenberg's most important point was that Lavater did not sufficiently differentiate between the forms given through fixed bone-features and the spontaneous facial expressions. He not only questioned Lavater's notion of the inner man, he put it to the test by exposing it to the possibilities of pretence and disguise. A fine example for Lichtenberg's understanding of the inner man were two sketches of two night watches from the London diary, one of which was drawn after a voice impression. This voice-portrait did not conform to the traditional ideas of likeness making, but it was clearly a character portrait.[153] Lichtenberg did not refute the body's legibility, he doubted whether the interaction between body and soul could be understood in terms of unambiguously matching one-to-one relationships: "Inward pain the monster which is gnawing my bowels and my brain, and which one would think, could not possibly escape any ones observation, because of his immense bigness, yet may be covered with a smile, and lurk unobserved under the transparent veil of a face."[154]

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[146] Lichtenberg, *Schriften und Briefe* (1967-72), IV, 252-53. *Lichtenberg in England* (1977), ed. Gumbert, II, 174.
[147] Lichtenberg, *Schriften und Briefe* (1967-72), III, 257-58, 265.
[148] Lichtenberg, *Schriften und Briefe* (1967-72), III, 279.
[149] *Lichtenberg's Visits to England as described in his Letters and Diaries*, trans. and annotated by Margaret L. Mare and W.H. Quarrell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), 320-32.
[150] Sautermeister, *Lichtenberg* (1993), 75-76.
[151] Wood, *The Shock of the Real* (2001), 45.
[152] Gray, "Aufklärung und Anti-Aufklärung," in *Das Antlitz Gottes* (1994), eds. Pestalozzi et al., 173.
[153] Lichtenberg, *Schriften und Briefe* (1967-72), II, 657.
[154] Lichtenberg, *Schriften und Briefe* (1967-72), II, 611.

With Lichtenberg's emphasis on the fleeting emotions it becomes clear that he perceived the human body as an agglomeration of varied surfaces which represented the variegated, animated and moving human interior. While Lavater was searching for the manifestation of pure and true essence, Lichtenberg concentrated on the deep-seated phenomenon of pain when trying to explain the connection between body and soul. He not only alluded to its physical causes but also to the possibility of deliberate enactment. In the first instance pain was locked inside the body without being noticed on its surface, in the second case it spread over the surface of the face without any causal connection to the soul. In the Urizen Books pain is presented as one of the most powerful sources of human existence. From inside it not only rises to the surface, it distorts the body and transforms its physical existence. Pain in *The Book of Urizen* eventually penetrates the mask of interpretation which has been laid onto the face as physiognomical definition.

The next event which decisively influenced the reception of *Essays on Physiognomy* was the competition between its two major translations of Lavater's *Essays*, the Hunter and the Holcroft translation. It culminated in an argument about abridgements between Fuseli and Holcroft. Initially, the question of whether or not physiognomy could be approached as a science was based on the assumption that it *was* a science. In his advertisement Fuseli emphasised, just as Lavater before him, that mankind was united by "the great human principle," which was spread unevenly between "the most genially favoured" and "the most neglected."[155]

In his anonymous review of the Holcroft translation, written for Johnson and published in the *Analytical Review*, Fuseli accused Holcroft of never having seen the original. This review was a belated critique of Armbruster who, according to Fuseli, had warped the work by shortening it. It was also written in awareness of the critical opposition Lavater's book had elicited ever since it had first been published. The *Town and Country Magazine*, for example, wrote: "Mr. Holcroft [...] has rendered this extraordinary, this eccentric work into complete English. It is a work of fancy, written in a peculiar style, at once abrupt and rhapsodical."[156] From a close reading of these reviews one can conclude that Fuseli was not simply taking on a rival translation but Lavater's opponents.[157] While Johnson's *Analytical Review* brought out several of the reviews of *Essays on Physiognomy*, nothing was published on the Hunter translation of the *Essays*.[158] In 1789, however, Johnson printed the exchange between Fuseli and Holcroft over the status of

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[155] Lavater (1789-98), I, n. p.
[156] *Town and Country Magazine*, 21 (1789), 508.
[157] Two of Fuseli's re-translated passages, those on Johnson and Shakespeare, had, in fact, been used in the October issue of the *Critical Review* to point out that most of Lavater's instructions were rather whimsical. See *Critical Review*, 68 (1789), 289. Already in the December-part of his review Fuseli had attacked Holcroft's translation by pointing out that "Lavater's text" was made to appear like that of an "'*ideot [sic], full of sound and fury signifying nothing.*'" See *Analytical Review*, 5 (1789), 455.
[158] Stemmler, "The Physiognomical Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater" (1993), 163.

the different translations beginning with Fuseli's anonymous review of the Holcroft translation.[159] Fuseli declared that Holcroft misled his readership by publishing his translation under the title *Essays on Physiognomy*. Indeed, the *Critical Review* in October 1789 had referred to the Holcroft translation as "the first complete edition" of Lavater's work.[160]

In the late 1780s Holcroft was very busy. In 1789 Robinson published two of Holcroft's most successful translations: fifteen volumes of Frederick II translated from the French, and Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy*.[161] It has to be remembered that Holcroft was a member of the Johnson circle and may therefore have realised early on that the Lavater project was considered to be a potential goldmine. Indeed, for the simple reason that his translation was cheaper than the Hunter translation it was very successful. Holcroft's choice of title, moreover, was probably derived from the 1787 prospectus of the Hunter translation because whereas the French edition rendered *Fragmente* as Essai, the Hunter translation opted for the plural.[162]

Holcroft defended himself by pointing out that Armbruster's edition had been authorised by Lavater himself.[163] He emphasised further that the omissions were only "notes, additions, and judgments, on hand writing, on plates of horses, animals, insects, and others exceedingly extraneous to the human countenance."[164] To assert the validity of his translation, Holcroft was forced to defend physiognomy as a science. Lavater's theory did not lose its appeal through Armbruster's abridgements, it had become more coherent and comprehensible. This was quite a clever move against Fuseli who never addressed or questioned whether or not Lavater's approach to physiognomy was scientific. Fuseli was foremost concerned with physiognomy's aesthetic applicability.[165] He insisted on completeness and argued that physiognomy was still too "undefined" and therefore "irreducible to general rules." Whereas Holcroft argued that the essence of physiognomy could be conveyed by a small number of illustrations, Fuseli stressed: "every new example affords a new principle."[166]

The most important issue of the argument about abridgements had to do with animal physiognomies and the combinations of man-animal forms which were frequent and

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[159] *Analytical Review*, 5 (1789), 454-62.
[160] *Critical Review*, 68 (1789), 285.
[161] William Hazlitt, *The Life of Thomas Holcroft*, ed. Elbridge Colby, newly edited, 2 vols. (London: Constable & Company Ltd., 1925), I, 280. Elbridge Colby, *A Bibliography of Thomas Holcroft* (New York: New York Public Library, 1922), 60.
[162] *Monthly Review*, 66 (1782), 481.
[163] The fourth volume of Armbruster's abridged octavo edition has never been issued.
[164] For Holcroft's defence letter, see *Analytical Review*, 6 (1790), 110-12.
[165] Lavater (1789-98), I, n. p.
[166] "In that regular gradation of beings from mere vegetable existence up to human nature, may not every variety of form, through the passions by which it is agitated, and the propensities which predominate, tend to illustrate and discriminate the character of man, to whom by various degrees of excellence or deformity they gradually approximate?." See David H. Weinglass, *The Collected Letters of Henry Fuseli* (Millwood, New York: Kraus International Publications, 1982), 52-60.

popular.[167] Fuseli did not simply refer to Armbruster or Holcroft but to a much wider context. Armbruster, in fact, had not much abridged the section on animals from *Fragmente* [*Fragmente*, II, 63-84]. Behind this issue of how the human form should be interpreted stood the argument about the relationship between human and animal physiognomies. The standard work on man-animal resemblances was Della Porta's *De Humana Physiognomia* (1586). The kind of anthropomorphising, created by Della Porta through visual analogies between human and animal faces, probably originated in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomica*. It was continued by Charles Le Brun and published in English translation as *The Conference of the Mousier Le Brun* in 1701.[168]

Lavater used animal analogies to illustrate moral character and to explain its perfection in terms of an aesthetics of physical beauty utterly devoid of animal resemblance. The result was a scale which depicted the different stages of humanisation. This kind of moral progress of humanity could be traced back to Charles Bonnet's *La palingénésie philosophique* (1769) and its notion of the chain of being.[169] In late eighteenth-century physiognomy man-animal analogies were not clearly defined categories. Anthropomorphic vision was common. Whereas Holcroft claimed that animal physiognomies were "exceedingly extraneous to the human countenance,"[170] Fuseli argued for the gradual mapping out of the human face. He, in fact, continued this argument in a review of William Coxe's *Travels in Switzerland* (1789): "the ant-hunter, the spider, and the bee are [...] much nearer to man in contrivance and instinctive power than the sheep or ass [...] size, whether immensely great or small, is a relative idea."[171] Fuseli not only reconfirms the very idea of the chain of being, he insists that size is irrelevant to progression of the human form. So, from Fuseli's point of view what had been omitted by Armbruster and consequently in the Holcroft translation was possibly a missing link in the generic illustration of humanity.[172]

Traditionally, Fuseli's role in the dissemination and promotion of Lavater's *Essays* has been emphasised. Blake, however, was probably also influenced by Holcroft who he met in the early 1780s as the chief editor of *The Wit's Magazine* for which Blake engraved five plates.[173] This time of collaboration coincided with the publication of the first volume of *Essai sur la Physiognomie* and its English reviews, published in 1783 and 1784. With this

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[167] Sabine Herrmann, *Die natürliche Sprache in der Kunst um 1800: Praxis und Theorie der Physiognomik bei Füssli und Lavater* (Frankfurt am Main: R.G. Fischer Verlag, 1994), 16-17, 62.
[168] Charles Le Brun, *The Conference of the Mousier Le Brun* (1701), 40.
[169] Karl Pestalozzi, "Lavaters Utopie," in *Literaturwissenschaft und Geschichtsphilosophie* (1975), eds. Arntzen et al., 284-86.
[170] For Holcroft's defence letter, see *Analytical Review*, 6 (1790), 156.
[171] The April-1790 part of Fuseli's review is entitled "To Correspondents." See *Analytical Review*, 6 (1790), 471. In the first paragraph he mentions his Coxe review. See *Analytical Review*, 6 (1790), 156.
[172] Lavater (1789-98), I, n. p.
[173] Alan Sullivan, ed., *British Literary Magazines: The Augustan Age and the Age of Johnson 1698-1788* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983), 363-364.

second track into the argument of Blake's awareness of the Lavater project and its reception I want to broaden out the issue of the man-animal resemblances.

Essick argued that Holcroft hired Blake possibly on recommendation of Thomas Stothard. He commissioned him for the frontispiece "The Temple of Mirth" after Stothard for the first issue.[174] Blake also engraved the illustration to Holcroft's poem "The Beggar's Hat," published in May 1784. This arrangement was probably set up by either Stothard or George Cumberland, one of Blake's oldest friends who reviewed one of Blake's paintings exhibited during the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1780.[175] Whether or not Blake and Holcroft stayed in touch is difficult to determine. Holcroft's subscription to Robert Blair's *The Grave*, published in 1808 with engravings after designs of Blake, suggests a connection between them – possibly a friendship. The *Wit's Magazine* prided itself on being up-to-date and regularly printed humorous descriptions of different professionals while using stereotypical characters.[176] The piece "Expedition to the Moon," published in August 1784, commented on Lunardi's balloon ascent of September 1784. Blake's *An Island in the Moon* (c.1784-85) was possibly inspired by the way it was dealt with in *Wit's Magazine*.[177]

In *An Island in the Moon*, wrote Erdman, Blake used animal-resemblances to create a confusion among the Islanders and in order to bring about a breakdown in communication.[178] Blake drew on the tradition of caricaturing humans as animals but he also included insects enlarged as "magic pictures," shown during a microscope-slideshow.[179] The theme of man-animal metamorphoses in Blake continued. When he came to work on Fuseli's design "Fertilization of Egypt" (1791), engraved for Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden* (1791), he made a pen and ink drawing to give detailed expression to Fuseli's sketch. What was depicted was the dog-headed Anubis. This God was a mixed creature, a human body with a dog's head, but neither Fuseli nor Blake portrayed him as a man wearing a dog mask.[180]

Another example of humanisation of animals are the horses in Blake's *Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the nine and twenty Pilgrims* (c.1808), a subject matter taken from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Blake, in fact, claimed to have adapted the physiognomy of these horses to their respective riders: "The Painter has consequently varied the heads and

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[174] Robert N. Essick, *William Blake's Commercial Book Illustrations: A Catalogue and Study of the Plates Engraved by Blake after Designs by Other Artists* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 36-39.
[175] G.E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 17, 19, 283-84, 362. For Letters to George Cumberland, see British Library Manuscripts: Add.36494.
[176] Butler's *Characters* begin with the first issue in January 1784. For the importance of Samuel Butler's *Characters* and Butler's moralising approach and caricaturising style. See Ulrich Horstmann, "Der Englische Aphorismus: Expeditionseinladung zu einer apogryphischen Gattung," *Poetica*, 15:1-2 (1983), 45.
[177] David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet against the Empire*, 3rd rev. edition (1954; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 95-96. *Wit's Magazine*, II (1785), 294-95.
[178] It is "the Cynic who sees men as goats and tigers and fleas." See Erdman, *Prophet against Empire* (1977), 144.
[179] Erdman, *Prophet against Empire* (1977), 97, 103-07.

forms of his Personages into all Nature's varieties; the Horses he has also varied to accord to their Riders, the Costume is correct according to authentic monuments." (*DC* 10, E533) Blake's *Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the nine and twenty Pilgrims* has a companion piece: the watercolour of the Characters of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (c.1825). Both paintings are about the same size, but whereas Chaucer's pilgrims travel from left to right, Spenser's characters move, some of them on horseback, from right to left.[181] In a comparison of the two paintings the differences between the horses stand out. While Blake humanised the horses of the Chaucer painting, in the Spenser painting he kept the horse anatomies much purer and more horse-like.[182]

Blake's use of caricature was influenced by the question of whether animal physiognomies should be integrated into a physiognomical system or not. Blake did not employ animal analogies to caricature the human body. On the contrary, he added human features to highlight the integrity and potential of the animal body which he perceived to be aspiring to the form of the human body.[183] The painting *Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the nine and twenty Pilgrims* was an expression not only of Blake's anthropomorphic vision but also of his perception of the boundary between human and animal physiognomy. In the Urizen Books the question about the border between man and animal was peripheral. It was brought in at a late stage for the incarnation of Orc. This issue resurfaced, however, in the vision of *The Ghost of a Flea* (c.1819).

Another key insight into Blake's use and conception of physiognomy is through Swedenborg. The Swedenborgian angle on the reception of Lavater's physiognomical doctrines reinforces the argument about body-soul relationships in Blake's creation myth and explains why he conceptualised the creation of the body as embodiment and in terms of the making of its physiognomical identity. The link between Swedenborgianism and the physiognomy project was made by Nathaniel Tucker (1750-1807), a devout Swedenborgian and first important translator. His translations were printed at the expense of the Swedenborgian society in Manchester and were sold throughout England, Europe and America, and wherever Swedenborgian societies sprang up.[184]

Tucker translated two of Swedenborg's works which were read and annotated by Blake shortly after they were published. *The Wisdom of Angels, concerning Divine Love*

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[180] Essick, *Commercial Book Illustrations* (1991), 46-47.
[181] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 363. Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 811.
[182] For a large-scale reproduction and an identification of the figures, see Robert E. Brown and John E. Grant, "Blake's Vision of Spenser's *Faerie Queene: A Report and an Anatomy," Blake Newsletter*, 31:3 (1974-75), 56-85.
[183] The notion of Man-animal resemblances is very popular in caricatures: "Many human faces have striking resemblances to particular animals; consider what are the characteristic marks of each animal, and procure or make accurate drawings of their heads and features; and from them sketch out the human face, retaining, as much as possible, the leading character of the particular animal resembling your subject. Many examples of this kind are exhibited in Baptista Porta's Treatise on Physiognomy." See Grose, *Rules for Drawing Caricaturas* (1788), 15-16.

and Divine Wisdom was published in 1788 and sold by W. Chalklen and Robert Hindmarsh, the self-declared printer to the Prince of Wales and one of the main organisers of the London New Jerusalem Church.[185] Tucker's translation of *The Wisdom of Angels concerning the Divine Providence*, printed and sold by Hindmarsh in 1790, was the second work known to be annotated by Blake. Tucker's third translation of *The Apocalypse Revealed* (1791) was printed by C. Wheeler in Manchester in 1791 and sold by Hindmarsh and G.G.J. and J. Robinson, the publishers of the Holcroft translation who had their bookshop near Johnson's in Paternoster Row.[186] Tucker started on *A Treatise of Heaven and Hell* but never completed it. Blake's annotated copy of the *Treatise of Heaven and Hell* was the first ever English translation done by William Cookworthy, porcelain-maker and Swedenborgian, and Thomas Hartley and published by Hindmarsh in 1784. The 1789 third edition was attributed to Harley as translator and Chalklen as publisher. Hartley, in contrast to Cookworthy or Tucker, had no connection to Hindmarsh or the Swedenborgian Society. These translations were published before the Swedenborgian movement became a Society or even a Church. Blake, consequently, not only read Swedenborg he owned the first English translations.

The Swedenborgian doctrine of correspondence, describing body-soul relationships at large, was once again defined in the *New Dictionary of Correspondences* (1794) as a "relation subsisting between the essence of a thing and it's [*sic*] form, or between the cause and it's effect; [...] as only takes place when the one is derived from the other, in the same manner as an effect is derived from it's efficient cause." This dictionary was originally issued with the Swedenborgian *Magazine of Knowledge concerning Heaven and Hell*, published until November 1790. Without doubt, this publication was motivated from within the circles of the New Jerusalem Church, finally founded in 1789, and the need to make Swedenborgianism accessible to the growing congregation. Interestingly, the *New Dictionary* also listed physiognomy: the "science [...] grounded in that of corresponding."[187] Already in the spring of 1790 the *New Magazine Concerning Heaven and Hell*, yet another Swedenborgian publication, tried to clarify:

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[184] Lewis Leary, *The Literary Career of Nathaniel Tucker 1740-1807* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1951), 92-94.

[185] *Analytical Review*, 2 (1788), 97-98. In the "Catalogue of Books and Pamphlets published in the last six months of 1788" this English translation of Swedenborg is listed. The title has been abbreviated: "The Wisdom of Angels, &c. from the Latin of Swedenborg. 8vo. 6s. boards. Chalklin [*sic*]," 605. (The bibliographical details are: *The Wisdom of Angels, concerning Divine Love and Divine Wisdom*, translated from the Original Latin of the Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg (London: printed and sold by W. Chalklen, Grocers Court, Poultry, 1788.) This volume was also sold by R. Hindmarsh. It is advertised in his 1790 translation of *Angelic Wisdom of Divine Providence*, "List of Books," 599: This edition was sold at 6s.

[186] Robinson was at 25 Paternoster Row and Johnson at 72, St. Paul's Church Yard. According to John Pendred's *Vade Mecum*, Paternoster Row and St. Paul's Church Yard combined a huge percentage of booksellers, as well as stationers and bookbinders. See John Pendred, *The Earliest Directory of The Book Trade*, ed. Graham Pollard (London: Bibliographical Society, 1955), 8-21.

[187] *A New Dictionary of Correspondences, Representations, &c*, ed. James Hindmarsh (1794), I, iv, vi-vii, 261.

> To know how the soul and body of man are united, and how their operations are effected, has been matter of inquiry among the learned; but for want of some certain knowledge respecting that world where all causes originate, the generality of writers on the subject have been led into much perplexity and doubtful conjecture.[188]

Swedenborg's early editors wanted to reaffirm Swedenborg's theories over Lavater's and also over the popular interest in physiognomy.[189] Within the context of the Lavaterian vogue these definitions of body-soul interactions appear as rather topical.

What linked the 1788 edition of *The Wisdom of Angels* to Lavater was Tucker's reference to *Aphorisms on Man*. After the first sentence of section 11 of *The Wisdom of Angels* "That God is very Man" Tucker inserted a footnote, containing a general appreciation of Swedenborg's achievements in the clarification of the "Nature of the Godhead." This footnote was an indicator of the vogue of physiognomy. In quoting Lavater Tucker underlines Swedenborg's interpretation of God's humanity:

> We trust, that the pure and comprehensible View of the Nature of the TRINITY, opened in this Work, as existing in the ONE GOD, [...] and is the very Image and Similitude of those Creatures into whom he has imparted the nobles Faculties, and who only are capable of receiving the most perfect Displays of his Wisdom and Love, because the Master-piece, and grand End of all Creation; [...]To this we beg Leave to add an Observation of a judicious and sensible Writer, whose Aphorisms have just made their Appearance in our Language. "He who adores an impersonal God, HAS NONE,
> | 'and is without Guide or Rudder, on an immense Abyss, that first absorbs his
> | 'Powers, and next himself. What Nature will he honour who honours not
> | 'the Human?' The Rev. J.C. Lavater's Aphorisms on Man, P. 189.

There is a small gap between the words "himself" and "what," so as to separate the two sentences. When the above quoted passage is referred back to *Aphorisms on Man*, it emerges that Tucker combined two different aphorisms nos. 552 and 554, the latter actually concluded on page 190. Tucker also changed punctuation and capitalisation.[190]

Tucker's decision to formulate a response to *Aphorisms on Man* confirmed the importance of Lavater for the inner-Swedenborgian discourse. According to its preface dated January 1788, Tucker completed the translation of *The Wisdom of Angels* before Fuseli finished that of *Aphorisms on Man*, dated May 1788. Tucker must have known either Johnson or Fuseli to have been able to access the text and see it in typescript and while it was still being prepared for publication. Interestingly, Tucker's explanatory note to section 11 disappeared from the 1816 second edition of *The Wisdom of Angels*. Consequently, by 1818 a mention of a Lavater-Swedenborg connection had become irrelevant.[191]

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[188] *The New Magazine of Knowledge, and the Universal World of Nature*, 1 (1790), 54-55.
[189] Robert W. Rix delineates how the representatives of the New Jerusalem Church attempted to "streamline Swedenborgianism to respectability." See Robert W. Rix, "Healing the Spirit: William Blake and Magnetic Religion," *Romanticism on the Net*, 25 (2002), par. 11.
[190] Both aphorisms, 552 and 554, have been annotated by Blake.
[191] Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Wisdom of Angels, concerning Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* (1816).

Another contemporary response to the Lavater project was Peter Provo's *Wisdom's Dictates; or a Collection of Maxims and Observations*, published by Chalklen in the second half of 1789.[192] According to its preface, *Wisdom's Dictates* was the outcome of twelve years of close readings. In the appendix Provo gave a summary of twelve of Swedenborg's works, emphasising that some them had not yet been translated into English. Provo's *Wisdom's Dictates* can be compared to Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man*, because just as only very few of Lavater's works had been translated into English by 1788. Provo's maxims were distillations from a huge Latin text corpus. *Wisdom's Dictates* was conceived as a spiritual instruction book but also as an introduction to Swedenborg's writings which had become widely available by 1789.[193] In terms of their publishing history the works of Swedenborg underwent a similar development to those of Lavater's. Swedenborg was popular and Provo's *Wisdom Dictates* was tailored to the general interest in spiritual writers, in particular Swedenborg.

Tucker's footnote suggests that there existed an awareness of Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man* in early 1788 or even late 1787, that is much earlier than Richard J. Shroyer was able to establish. So far the discussion of when *Aphorisms on Man* was available hinged upon the 1788-89 dating debate. It revolved around the question of when the first edition of *Aphorisms on Man* could be bought in the bookshops. This confusion can be traced back to a statement, made by Christopher Moody in his review of June 1789 written for the *Monthly Review*: Lavater's book is "now before us."[194] While the 1788-1789 dating debate was cemented in John Knowles's biography of Henry Fuseli of 1831, Richard Shroyer, editor of Blake's annotations to Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man*, argued that Knowles's mention of 1789 was simply a misprint.[195] I have been able to determine that the text referred to in both the 1788 and 1789 reviews was, indeed, the first 1788 edition of *Aphorisms on Man*. Whether or not the second edition was available or not is open to speculation. What is certain is that this little book was under review for a long time.

Blake's annotation to section 11 of Swedenborg's *The Wisdom of Angels* accentuated the concurrent debate about body-soul relationships. Blake just like Tucker before him concentrated on the issue of God's humanity. Blake's commentary is in the top right corner of page 11: "Man can have no idea of any thing greater than Man as a cup

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[192] *Analytical Review*, 4 (1789), 498. *Analytical Review*, 5 (1789), 585.

[193] Peter Provo, *Wisdom's Dictates; or a Collection of Maxims and Observations concerning Divine, and Spiritual Truths* (1789), 7, 195-204.

[194] Richard J. Shroyer, "The 1788 Publication Date of Lavater's Aphorisms on Man," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 11:1 (1977), 26. At the time the mistake was cemented in John Knowles's biography of Henry Fuseli. Shroyer has argued that Knowles's mention of 1789 is a misprint. The phrase "now before us" is used frequently. See, for example, *Monthly Review*, 70 (1784), 142. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 69 (1798), 1034. Shroyer, "The 1788 Publication Date of Lavater's Aphorisms on Man" (1977), 23, 26.

[195] Shroyer suggests that the first 1788 review reflects how the book was discussed among the critics and contributors to the *Analytical Review*: See Shroyer, "The 1788 Publication Date of Lavater's Aphorisms on Man" (1977), 24, 23. For *Analytical Review*, see Leslie F. Chard, "Joseph Johnson: The Father of Book Trade," *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 79 (1979), 66-68.

cannot contain more than its capaciousness But God is a man not because he is so percievd [*sic*] by man but because he is the creator of man." (*AS* E603) With the cup-imagery Blake engaged with Tucker's explanation about how the essence of God could be explained in terms of the Swedenborgian doctrine of influx. While Swedenborg suggested that if man remembered his inner being or spirit he would be able to see God, Blake refuted Swedenborg's rationalisation about why "God is very Man." Understanding what God *is* was not a matter of conjunction but was based on an awareness of the similarities between God and man, that is an understanding of what in man was like God and vice versa. This act of self-seeing was neither granted nor spontaneous, it had to be achieved.

What Blake did in his elaboration on the cup-imagery was to shift the focus away from the content of the "cup," the soul, the spirit or essence of man, to the notion of its "capaciousness," that is to man's inner being and potential. In his annotation he drew attention to the limitations of the body which, according to this metaphor, served as a container of the inflowing spirit. Blake focused on the body and thus moved away from the abstract Swedenborgian conception of God as a source of influx outside man. From a Lavaterian point of view, the idea of man's divine nature had a very practical dimension. Man was considered to be a copy of God. For Blake the aspect of physical likeness was bound up with notions of spiritual potential as well as rational limitations. Man had to be made aware of himself. Since man and God could be united through their similarities, self-awareness was the only way to understand self and other.

According to Tucker, Lavater was a "master-piece of creation."[196] He had managed to deliver a demonstration of the idea of God as it resided inside man and revealed itself in his physiognomy. Tucker's conviction of the key role of *Aphorisms on Man* comes as a surprise considering that the book was a heterogeneous text-body. It was a combination of two books of rules published anonymously as *Vermischte unphysiognomische Regeln zur Selbst- und Menschenkenntnis* in 1787, and *Vermischte unphysiognomische Regeln zur Menschen- und Selbstkenntnis* with Lavater as author in 1788.[197]

Aphorisms on Man, according to its title-page, was "translated from the original manuscript" and Fuseli's advertisement which further emphasises this stance of immediacy says that the work was "transmitted in the author's own manuscript to the publisher."[198] The *Aphorisms* manuscript, especially prepared by Lavater, did not survive. 65 aphorisms of its aphorisms have no matches in either of the two German volumes.[199]

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[196] For Tucker see page 45 this PhD thesis.

[197] Lavater's *Vermischte unphysiognomische Regeln* (1788) ends with a printed statement: "Durchgesehen | Samstags den 17. May 1788." It was published around the time when *Aphorisms on Man* went into print.

[198] See title-page and advertisement to Lavater (1788), v.

[199] The great strength of Shroyer's facsimile edition is his consideration of the source texts to *Aphorisms on Man*. The 65 unmatched aphorisms are nos. 85, 236, 335, 348, 408, 409, 412, 427, 460, 475, 498, 499, 502, 503, 528, 539-42, 544-48, 551, 553, 555, 556, 561, 564, 567, 569, 573, 574, 576-85, 590-95, 597, 598, 601, 605-07, 609, 610, 620, 624, 625, 630, 632, 638, 643. See Johann Caspar Lavater, *"APHORISMS ON MAN*

Of course, Lavater could have discarded them after he sent the manuscript off to London in the autumn of 1787, and Fuseli, so it is generally believed, was faithful to the original. As Lavater's editor, however, Fuseli took liberties. He picked the title and decided to render rules as aphorisms. This change in style was significant, because in the dedicatory letter, included in *Aphorisms on Man*, Lavater referred to the text as 'rules.' In aphorism 299, moreover, the term 'rule' was mentioned again.[200]

The rule was a favourite form of Lavater's and there are numerous examples of different sets of rules written for different occasions.[201] What Lavater aspired to was a short and concise composition. He probably never got down to the particulars of literary terminology, but what is certain is that he associated the aphorism with science and as a "container" of information.[202] In an unpublished letter to the educational councillor Lampe, dating from late November 1787[203], Lavater mentioned a project he was working on: "aphorismen über Magnetismus" ["Aphorisms on Magnetism"]. In this letter Lavater explained that he intended a co-authorship with his son Johann Heinrich. As the prospective title of this project he suggested: "*Vater und Sohns Gedanken über Magnetismus*."

So, Lavater did, indeed, consider the aphoristic mode for one of his shorter works. All in all he had great confidence in his own writing and in both its style and content. For example, he thought of his *One Hundred Physiognomical Rules* as some kind of secret manual on whom to avoid and whom to befriend. When he published these rules in manuscript in 1789, he emphasised that he only entrusted them to his closest friends.[204] In 1793 they were published under the title *Vermischte Physiognomische Regeln* and in 1802 they were issued with volume IV of the authorised edition of *Nachgelassene Schriften*, published and edited by Georg Gessner.[205]

In the second half of the 1780s Lavater published several religious and philosophical works while getting heavily involved in the heated debates about animal magnetism. His attention to the treatment methods of the wonder doctors Gassner and Oberreit, his correspondence with Mesmer, and his interest in Cagliostro's magic ways eventually

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(1788)": A Facsimile Reproduction of William Blake's Copy of the First English Edition, ed. R.J. Shroyer (Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1980), xi, xii.

[200] Lavater (1788), iii-iv, 105.

[201] Lavater (1790-93), III, 115-121, 123-131, 143-150.

[202] R.H. Stephenson, "On the Widespread Use of an Inappropriate and Restrictive Model of the Literary Aphorisms," *Modern Language Review*, 75 (1980), 11.

[203] MS in Piermont Morgan Library, MA Unassigned, Misc Swiss, Autograph Letter signed: Zurich, to educational counciller Lampe in Salz-Dalum, 1787? Nov. 24."

[204] The preface is dated 15 January 1789. See Johann Caspar Lavater, *Vermischte Physiognomische Regeln, Ein Manuskript für Freunde* (Munich: Rupprecht Presse, 1922), n.p. In the preface to the official publication of 1802 Gessner, Lavater's posthumous editor, writes that a copy of Lavater's secret physiognomical rules had survived "in the hands" of a distant friend. Gessner emphasises that Lavater had feared for himself and had therefore decided not to publish his rules during his lifetime. See *Johann Kaspar Lavaters Nachgelassene Schriften*, ed. Georg Gessner, 5 vols. (Zürich, 1801-1802), 3, 4.

[205] Lavater (1991), 142.

made him a target of public ridicule.[206] Lavater always maintained that he was able to determine whether or not the various self-declared healers were real. He was fascinated by animal magnetism and the healing craze it had brought about. Lavater tried it out on his wife Anna, and although the treatment seemed to boost her health, his paramedical dabbling had the reverse effect on his reputation and respectability.[207] His old friend Zimmermann mocked his concern about occult medical cures in *Ueber die Einsamkeit* (1784-85).[208] Lavater's obsession with animal magnetism was most certainly known in England. Fuseli in his review of Coxe's *Travels in Switzerland*, asserted that even though Lavater was admittedly "weak enough to tamper with *animal magnetism*, he [was] certainly too wise to mix it with his religious tenets."[209] The Coxe review was a turning point in Fuseli's life. Even though he still defended him, Lavater's mystical religious interpretations had become too exaggerated for Fuseli who preferred the constructedness of the fantastic.[210]

In the discussions about the publishing history of *Aphorisms on Man* the main emphasis has been put on Fuseli as translator and on how his translation changed the original.[211] To make a new point concerning his role as editor Fuseli's influence on *Aphorisms on Man* has two dimensions. First, the aphoristic mode of the text was enforced, because in his advertisement Fuseli compared Lavater's aphorisms to those of Solomon and Hippocrates. Obviously, Fuseli was acutely aware of aphoristic scholarship.[212] Second, he added a final aphorism to *Aphorisms on Man* in order to harness the performative potential of the text: "If you mean to know yourself, interline such of these aphorisms as affected you agreeably in reading, and set a mark to such as left a sense of uneasiness with you; and then shew your copy to whom you please."[213] This aphorism has no match in either of the two German texts. I emphasise that the implications of Fuseli's interference with Lavater's text have not yet been fully explored.

As far as *Aphorisms on Man* are concerned Lavater had delegated the responsibility of the project to the London end by giving Fuseli permission to edit the manuscript: "I give you liberty not only to make improvements, but to omit what you think false or

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[206] Public interest in animal magnetism subsided quickly. It was banned in France in 1784, and made headlines in London between 1785 and 1790, see *Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age* (2001), eds. McCalman, et al., 408, 176-77.
[207] Mary Lavater-Sloman, *Genie des Herzens: Die Lebensgeschichte Johann Caspar Lavaters* (Zürich: Morgarten Verlag, 1939), 186-87, 260-65, 297-307.
[208] Lavater-Sloman, *Genie des Herzens* (1939), 301-02.
[209] *Analytical Review*, 6 (1790), 157.
[210] Mason, *Mind of Fuseli* (1951), 140.
[211] Füssli, *Aphorismen über die Kunst* (1944), 21.
[212] Spicker draws attention to Fuseli's adaptation of Hippocrates's "vita brevis, ars longa" in his *Aphorisms on Man*. Spicker seems to imply that Fuseli's version is by comparison with Goethe's less aphoristic. See Friedeman Spicker, *Der Aphorismus: Begriff und Gattung von der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts bis 1912* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 32-33, 336, 345.
[213] Lavater (1788), 224.

unimportant."[214] In May 1788 just after the Hunter translation had officially been launched, Lavater's friend Gottfried Heisch reported back to Lavater that about 700 of the 1000 rules had been chosen.[215] In this letter Heisch referred to *Aphorisms on Man* as an "addition" ["Zugabe"] to *Essays on Physiognomy* and explained that Fuseli's intentions were totally altruistic. He was acting in Lavater's best interests by trying to "put money into Lavater's hand" ["Geld in die Hand zu spielen"].[216] In the dedicatory letter, accompanying the manuscript to London, Lavater delineated how he came to entrust Fuseli with his 1000 rule manuscript. He saw Fuseli as a like-minded equal. Like but not identical: "I am not of your opinion; but, in what concerns the knowledge of mankind, we are nearer to one another than any two in ten thousand."[217] Even though there is no conclusive proof that Fuseli wrote the final aphorism, it differs from anything in either of the two German volumes in that it has an invitation to annotate the text. The final aphorism of *Aphorism on Man* is not only crucial to a discussion of Blake's annotations but also to the collaboration between Blake and Fuseli. In discussing Fuseli as Lavater's editor the organisation of the knowledge in *Aphorisms on Man* is emphasised. Thus Blake's motivation to annotate the book can be analysed with respect to the implications and applications of physiognomical knowledge.

Aphorisms on Man went through three editions with Joseph Johnson in 1788, 1789 and 1794. In 1788 the book was listed in the "Catalogues of Books and Pamphlets" of Johnson's *Analytical Review*.[218] The little book was highly successful. Shroyer has delineated how other English, Irish and American publishers reprinted the 1789 second edition and had Blake's frontispiece re-engraved.[219] The date of Fuseli's advertisement suggests, as pointed out by Shroyer, that *Aphorisms on Man* was in print and available by June 1788. The reviewers of the 1788 edition appropriated the corrections of the Errata-page into their selections of aphorisms. That there were only 633 aphorisms, even though the crucial final aphorism was numbered 643, went unmentioned.[220]

The contemporary reviews of *Aphorisms on Man* included samples. In June and August 1788 the *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* published two different selections. These chronological lists stood by themselves and only the June list was introduced with: "Selected from a small Volume, under that Title, by the Rev. J.C. Lavater,

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[214] Lavater (1788), iv. See also Hall, *Blake and Fuseli* (1985), 132.
[215] This letter was partly translated by Georg Finsler in 1902. See Georg Finsler, "Lavater in Amt und Privatleben," in *Johann Caspar Lavater 1741-1801, Denkschrift zur Hundersten Wiederkehr seines Todestages*, ed. Stiftung von Schnyder von Wartensee (Zürich: Commissionsverlag von Alb. Müller, 1902), 20-22.
[216] See Appendix A, transcription of 1788 Heisch letter by Mary Lynn Johnson and Sibylle Erle, 227 (2). See Zurich Central Library Lavater Family Archive, MS 512.138.
[217] Lavater (1788), iii.
[218] In the catalogues to the years 1789 and 1794 there is no mention of *Aphorisms*.
[219] "APHORISMS ON MAN (1788)" (1980), ed. Shroyer, xv.

Author of a celebrated Work on Physiognomy."[221] A July 1788 notice of the *Scot's Magazine* included sixty-six numbered aphorisms, all of which were in their first stage of revision, that is except for aphorism 277 which had wrongly been rendered as two different aphorisms. The bibliographical details conveyed very little information: "Aphorisms on Man. By the Rev. John Caspar Lavater, citizen of Zurich."[222]

The first detailed review appeared in July 1788 in the *Analytical Review*. It transcribed the dedicatory letter as well as Fuseli's advertisement and listed thirty-seven numbered aphorisms.[223] In August a reviewer writing for the *Critical Review* explained that the given selection were personal choices made after repeated readings of this "very seductive" book.[224] In September 1788 a short note appeared in the "Account of New Books and Pamphlets" of the *Town and Country Magazine*. Such key words as "reports of experience," "novelty," "humanity," and "honesty" echoed Fuseli's advertisement.[225] In the 1788 September issue of the *European Magazine* the subtitle to *Aphorisms* was "Selected from a small Volume, under that Title, by the Rev. J.C. Lavater. Author of a celebrated Work on Physiognomy." This review did without an account of Lavater and simply printed a list of twenty-eight unnumbered aphorisms which stopped at aphorism 149 and offered no commentary.[226] From July 1788 *Aphorisms on Man* was reviewed in its own right, even though in June 1789 Christopher Moody[227] was going to emphasise that *Aphorisms on Man* ought not to be read as an independent work but only in association with *Essays on Physiognomy*: "Nothing dignified with the name of Science is so entitled to our attention as that which analyzes the mind, developes [*sic*] the principles of human conduct, instructs us in the knowledge or ourselves, promotes the practice of virtue, and contributes to the truest enjoyment of life."[228] The idea that the 1788 first edition of *Aphorisms on Man* was not very widely circulated or maybe even printed in large quantities, is confirmed by the fact that all of the 1789 reviews use the text of the 1788 edition.

In England the aphoristic mode developed as the epitome of Baconian rational science. Its form and structure was inherently fragmentary; as such it was believed to be

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[220] In the second and third edition the numbering has been corrected, so that the gap is closed. As a result of this changes in the use of colophon had to be made. The page layout of the third edition of 1794 deviates even more from the earlier editions due to the omission of no. 529.
[221] *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, 82 (1788), 301-02. "Aphorisms on Man" is also a title to a short passage in *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, 83 (August 1788): 80: Aphorism 593 is inaccurately quoted: "on things which experience only can teach." It should be "or things which only experience can teach."
[222] *Scot's Magazine*, 50 (1788), 341-43.
[223] The reviewer still assumes that there are 643 aphorisms. See *Analytical Review*, 1 (1788), 286-89.
[224] *Critical Review*, 66 (1788), 141-143. *Analytical Review*, 1 (1788), 286.
[225] *Town and Country Magazine*, 20 (1788), 425.
[226] *European Magazine*, 14 (1788), 160. An account of Lavater's life and work is published in two parts in January and April 1789. This article ends with a reference to its review of *Aphorisms*: "Mr. Lavater is the author of a little volume of Aphorisms, lately published by Mr. Fuseli, the painter, to whom the Manuscript is said to have been transmitted. See *European Magazine*, 15 (1789), 276.
[227] B.C. Nangle, *The Monthly Review, First Series, 1746-1789, Indexes of Contributors and Articles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 29-30, 140.
[228] *Monthly Review*, 80 (1789), 526.

able to portray the processes of logic and doubt while being resistant to dogmatisation. By the late eighteenth-century writing a scientific text in the aphoristic mode was old-fashioned. Bacon's dialectic model of knowledge organisation had long since been superseded by the mathematical methods of Descartes and Newton. The second model for the English aphorism was that of La Rochefoucauld. His original composition in the epigrammatic style were, indeed, very popular.[229] Through the aphoristic style Fuseli combined short definitions which terse statements. Furthermore, he may also have wanted to suggest that they had been taken from a longer text. This notion which supported the idea that *Aphorisms on Man* was the key to Lavater and the physiognomy project.

Since Lavater approached physiognomy as a science, the idea that *Aphorisms on Man* was modelled on Bacon seems reasonable. When the *Essays* was first published the consensus was that Lavater had a "sometimes too wordy style."[230] The *English Review* commented that *Aphorisms* suffered from "metaphysical obscurity." The *Analytical Review* observed: the "phrases are far-fetched, and the language being apparently tortured, renders the sense obscure."[231] The Baconian aphorism not only intended to stimulate readers but motivate them to engage with the topic on a much more complex level. Consequently, while the La Rochefoucauldian aphorism, relying on a paradoxical structure, involved the reader in the formulation of meaning, the Baconian model prompted the reader to participate in the mental processes of knowledge acquisition.[232]

Part of this process of author-reader communication was the huge component of intense self-observation which Lavater recommended in his *Essays*. Another example for personal testimony made public and coming out of the tradition of psychological self-analysis as in Rousseau's *Confessions* was Lavater's *Secret Journal* (1795), the translation of *Geheimes Tagebuch* (1771-73). According to its preface, it was one of those books which promoted "the knowledge of the human heart." In a 1796 review Lavater's soul diary was described further: "We are here admitted to the interior of it, he unveils his secret conduct, and displays the motions of his heart. [...] few will perfectly accord with any individual, [...] he thus discloses what has passed within himself, in his endeavours after holiness."[233] The *Secret Journal* was received as a written expression of Lavater's soul-life and inner physiognomy.

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[229] Ulrich Horstmann, "Der Englische Aphorismus: Expeditionseinladung zu einer apogryphischen Gattung," *Poetica*, 15:1-2 (1983), 41, 42. The "Aphorismal mode of writing" is, indeed, "defended" in a note on a 1787 medical work entitled *Aphorismi de Cognoscendis & Curandis Febribus,* &c (*Aphorisms on the Knowledge and Cure of Fevers*). See *Analytical Review*, 2 (1788), 247.

[230] *Analytical Review*, 5 (1789), 372. *Analytical Review*, 5 (1789), 511.

[231] *English Review*, 13 (1789), 121-123. *Analytical Review*, 1 (1788), 287.

[232] H.E. Pagliaro, "Paradox in the Aphorisms of La Rochefoucauld and some Representative English Followers," *PMLA*, 79 (1964), 43-44.

[233] On the title-page the connection to *Essays on Physiognomy* is made explicit: Lavater "author of *Essays on Physiognomy*, *The Aphorisms on Man*, *Views of Eternity*." See Johann Caspar Lavater, *Secret Journal of a Self-Observer; or Confessions and Familiar Letters*, 2 vols. (1795), iii-iv. Finsler, "Lavater in Amt und

Aphorisms on Man could be used as an instruction book to be able to achieve this kind of deep self-awareness, because in the book's final aphorism, probably written by Fuseli, readers were encouraged to monitor their feelings to see where they agreed with Lavater and thus resembled him. The reward of such an intensive reading process was to comprehend the similarities between the other and one's own uniqueness. What annotating readers were asked to do was to establish which of the aphorisms embodied a difference and which a similarity. If these annotations were shown to second or third readers, as suggested by the final aphorism, these two categories would become more refined. Through the final aphorism Fuseli turned *Aphorisms on Man* into a template for Lavater's spiritual physiognomy and as such into a supplement to the widely circulated portrait.

What was at stake in both the *Secret Journal* and *Aphorisms on Man* was the written documentation of man's inner being (*Sein*). In the rhetoric surrounding these works it was continually emphasised that mapping character in terms of uttered feelings and expressed emotions was possible. While suggesting that Lavater composed and selected his rules but did not spent much time on revising them, Fuseli argued that this kind of unedited composition qualified the aphorisms as pure manifestations of his soul: "an original, meditated and composed in the series here offered during the autumn of 1787, and transmitted in the author's own manuscript to the publisher."[234] The impression of urgency was, first of all, generated by Lavater's style, described by both Fuseli and the contemporary reviews as effusive and rapid.[235] That Lavater was in a hurry when he prepared the London-manuscript was emphasised by Shroyer, who pointed out that when Prince Edward visited Lavater in the summer of 1787 Lavater's interest in "the prospect of the long-awaited English edition of the *Physiognomy*" was rekindled.[236] According to Lavater, however, the manuscript of *Aphorisms on Man* was a carefully thought out piece of writing: "What I give here is the result of long experience, matured and confirmed by various and daily application."[237] The idea that thoughts had to be written down quickly was part of the belief in the transmission of heart-felt thoughts. In order to sustain this immediacy and establish a connection between author and reader, the reader had to quickly annotate the book during a first reading.

In *Aphorisms on Man* emotions and opinions had been put into words as that they represented the author turned inside out. The reader had to penetrate the writing and understand its meaning to undo this kind of written physiognomical picture and gain

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Privatleben," in *Denkschrift* (1902), ed. Stiftung von Schnyder von Wartensee, 1-56. For the review published in the *British Critic*, 7 (1796), 421-27, see also John Boening, ed., *The Reception of Classical German Literature in England 1760-1860: A Documentary History from Contemporary Periodicals* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), V, 75-78.

[234] Lavater (1788), v.

[235] *Analytical Review*, 1 (1788), 287.

[236] "APHORISMS ON MAN (1788)" (1980), ed. Shroyer, x, xi.

knowledge of the universal in the self. By choosing to turn Lavater's rules into aphorisms Fuseli not only polished Lavater's style, he created a literary moment during which he could expect Lavater's readers to engage with Lavater through the aphoristic text. In giving the rules the dimension of the English aphorism Fuseli essentially drew attention to the discontinuities in Lavater's ideas. By focusing on both the conceptual and the poetic structure of the aphorism Fuseli addressed the question at the core of the aphoristic scholarship: in how far can content and form be separated? Consequently, *Aphorism of Man* was two things. On the one hand, it was a textual summary of Lavater's opinions and, on the other hand, it was a space in which author and reader were expected to interact. Fuseli did justice to Lavater's overall concept of the fragmented form, because while reader of the *Essays* witnessed Lavater's tireless effort to accumulate all the existing representations of human beauty, in *Aphorisms on Man* they were asked to open themselves to self-analysis and join the attempt at capturing the essence of man be successful.

One of the distinctly active readers required for a successful reading of *Aphorisms on Man* was William Blake. His approach to the little book was very different from that of the reviews described above. He did not participate in the polemics against Lavater. Blake was part of a small circle of insiders who discussed how Lavater's physiognomical theories could support artists in their endeavour to visually recreate personal identity in portraiture. Moreover, in considering Lavater's editorial predilections it will become clear how Blake's annotations echoed a long established revision process with which Fuseli, in particular, would have been familiar. Questions about Lavater specific revision traditions will help to understand how Blake engages, on the one hand, with the physiognomy project and, on the other hand, with the structure of the text itself.

Lavater's notion of revision was probably best exemplified in his manuscript publications the *Handbibliotheck für Freunde*, issued between 1790 and 1793, consisting of twenty-four volumes, dedicated and hand-signed. Most of these volumes contained excerpts, selections, sayings and quotations from letters. In 1792, in the second volume of that year Lavater set down how he wanted his works to be read, revised and proof-read. He asked his readers to give him feedback and where necessary to be his critics.[238] A good example of this kind of editing work desired by Lavater can be documented for the publishing history of *Das Menschliche Herz*. Even though this little book was never translated, Lavater's English audience was made aware of its existence. Thomas Holcroft mentioned it in the preface to his second edition of *Essays on Physiognomy* of 1804.[239] Holcroft probably referred to this little work, continuously changed throughout its

[237] Lavater (1788), iii.
[238] Lavater (1790-93), II, 303.
[239] Lavater (1804), cxxv.

publishing history, to reinforce his standpoint about abridgements and editing work in his argument with Fuseli.

When *Das Menschliche Herz* was published in 1790 in book-form it had two prefaces. The first was addressed "An Freünde" ["To Friends"] and the second was dedicated to Queen Charlotte. Lavater explained that he wished to bring this poem to perfection. To achieve this he needed his friends to read the poem and answer twelve questions.[240] In the second edition of *Das Menschliche Herz*, dating from 1798, Lavater summarised the different compositional steps.[241] He expressed his great satisfaction with what had been achieved, because a description of the human heart, so reasoned Lavater, could never be complete. As regarded his readers he would be content if only a few readers recognised themselves in the text - as if they were looking into a "mirror."[242]

Even though Blake jotted onto the first page of his annotated copy of *Aphorisms on Man* "for the reason of these remarks see the last aphorism" (*AL* E583) it is clear not all his responses originated from the attempt to gauge his emotional responses. Blake's annotation-text is best described as a heterogeneous construct. Such comments as "this aphorism seems to me to want discrimination," (*AL* E596) and "I do not understand this or else I do not agree to it I know not what hiding love means" (*AL* E593) indicated that Blake also annotated Lavater to help improve the form and content of *Aphorisms on Man*.

Both *Das Menschliche Herz* and *Aphorisms on Man* were written with the intention to promote self-awareness. Lavater's decision to let Fuseli edit his manuscript is, in fact, an invitation to help revise the text. Fuseli's editorial decision in favour of the aphoristic mode has to be interpreted against this background. This project had required the continuous effort from the author who had to identify the features of the inner self as well as from the translator who had to transport these features into another language. Consequently, the making of *Aphorisms on Man* evidenced the effort of two men. During Fuseli's revision the role of Lavater as author was never questioned. Just as in *Essays on Physiognomy* Lavater remained the ultimate point of reference for translator and editor, as well as reader and annotator. The reason it proved extremely difficult to determine the relationship between the different editions of Lavater's physiognomy project was because of Lavater himself who constantly rewrote and re-edited his *magnum opus*.

At the beginning of the physiognomy project in the 1770s Fuseli and Lavater often disagreed about how physiognomy ought to be conveyed in portraits. In 1771, for example, Fuseli wrote to Lavater: "Realise that invention is the soul of the painter and that without it a painter might just as well belong to the cobblers' guild. Your imagination and mine may be the same; but if I am to execute the pictures of that imagination, they must

[240] Lavater (1790), n. p.
[241] Lavater (1798), p. v.
[242] Lavater concludes the preface by thanking all his friends. See Lavater (1798), xi-xii.

flame up in my head, not yours."[243] Lavater believed that it was possible to reconstruct man's original form by inferring it from the existing material body. He gave precise instructions as to how a likeness should be rendered. Nobody, however, succeeded in meeting his expectations and therefore he wove his criticisms revolving around technicalities into his physiognomical analyses.[244] By the late 1780s, however, Lavater's trust in Fuseli's ability to improve his work had become all-embracing.

From this case study of Blake and Fuseli's engagement with *Aphorisms on Man* it becomes clear that both of them considered Lavater's work as unfinished. Not only did Lavater aspire to improve himself, he invited others - his editors, translators and friends - to revise, rewrite and amend his texts. In this sense the physiognomy project from early on assumed a life of its own. In the hands of Lavater's editors, translators and even annotators the editing process continued, eliminating the untrue, superfluous and ineffective. What Blake took away from the physiognomy project was an experience of an open relationship existing between publisher and author as well as author and reader.

Next to these formal and technical issues we can be certain that Blake had acquired an understanding of the procedures of physiognomy. He had been part of an engraver team which was continually encouraged to precision work, and he was one of the first who followed the invitation to annotate Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man*. The conclusion is that his engagement with Lavater's approach to physiognomy was complex and revisionary. Blake engaged with a version of physiognomy which aimed at objective definitions of human character types, derived from emotional responses to two different media, text and image. Whereas for Lavater character could be empirically measured, Blake felt rather uneasy about the combination of portraiture with physiognomy. He had an insider perspective on the publishing history of the physiognomy and had first hand experience of the different motives of Lavater's editors and translators.

The following chapter will argue that Blake's experience of a collaboration between different individuals, all determined to produce an image of the essence of man, brought about a conception of individuality which could never be fixed inside one portrait. The reason why the Hunter translation grew into three volumes bound in five parts reflects Blake's reservation against Lavater's approach but it also pre-empted his obsession with the human form. In the Urizen Books Blake subverted the processes which were at the core of the physiognomical credo and belief in shared spiritual and physical identity. As with the Blake portraits in his creation myth Blake leaves us with a number of different bodies.

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[243] Mason, *Mind of Fuseli* (1951), 138.
[244] Herrmann, *Die natürliche Sprache* (1994), 20-28. In Johann Heinrich Lips Lavater found an obedient engraver. See Hannelore Schlaffer, *Klassik und Romantik 1770-1830* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1986), 14.

Chapter 2

Blake's Annotations to *Aphorisms on Man* in Context: Physiognomy and Portraiture

This chapter concentrates on physiognomy's use in portraiture and on how Lavater's physiognomical texts influenced the perception and experience of portraits. To understand the connection between Blake and Lavater it is first of all necessary to consider Fuseli's role as a mediator for physiognomy. He was both object - his character was discussed in Lavater's *Essays* - and subject because he was the editor of *Aphorisms on Man*.

What is referred to as Blake and Fuseli's intense period of intellectual exchange began with Johnson, who recommended Blake to Fuseli for the frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Man*.[245] At Johnson's bookshop Blake could have met Johnson's partner the publisher John Murray as well as Henry Hunter, the translator of Lavater, and Thomas Holloway, the supervising engraver of *Essays on Physiognomy*. Not only was the planning worked out at Johnson's, the progress of the Lavater project was discussed over dinner.[246] Johnson first commissioned Blake for William Enfield's 1780 edition of *The Speaker*, and employed him throughout the 1780s and 1790s for such prestigious works as Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories from the Real Life* (1791), Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden* (1791) and Captain Stedman's *A Narrative of a five years expedition, against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* (1796).[247]

The most obvious connection with Lavater was in 1788 and 1789 when he made four engravings for *Essays on Physiognomy*. Throughout its publishing history the fine engravings were praised and recommended. Fuseli was involved with both projects, the *Essays* and *Aphorisms on Man*. However, while helping to expand the *Essays* into three volumes bound in five parts and defending it against Thomas Holcroft, he decided to condense *Aphorisms on Man* into 633 aphorisms. The argument is that he did not simply continue Lavater's methodology, but shifted the focus of the physiognomy project back towards art. This, so I argue, originated in a confrontation between Fuseli and Lavater.

In *Essays on Physiognomy* the section on Henry Fuseli had two portraits. The first, depicting young Fuseli, was accompanied by a physiognomical analysis written by Lavater. The second portrait after a drawing by Sir Thomas Lawrence was unique to the Hunter translation. Gottfried Heisch's letter, dating from May 16, 1788, highlighted the inadequacy of the French edition and identified Fuseli's case as a mismatched text-image combination. From a yet unpublished passage of this letter it emerges that Fuseli was

[245] On 12 September 1800 Blake wrote: "When Flaxman was taken to Italy. Fuseli was giv'n to me for a season," (*L* September 12, 1800, E707).
[246] *Memoir of the Late Mr. Thomas Holloway* (1827), 17-24.

dissatisfied with what had been published about him in the French translation and expected Lavater to change this section.[248] Fuseli's concerns, probably occasioned by the widespread reception of the *Essays* and its potential power to shape public opinion, did not matter to Lavater. In the Hunter translation Lavater's commentary was a word-by-word translation of the French. Without doubt, with the introduction of a more contemporary portrait Fuseli challenged Lavater's analysis. He did not only amend the *Essays* by introducing new illustrations, Fuseli interfered with its overall conception, because he unsettled the balance of text in image in *Essays on Physiognomy* by adding his own texts as captions. Even though he quite generally advised all readers in his advertisement to the Hunter translation to compare the English with the poorly executed French engravings, the real impetus of this suggestion originated in his captions to the newly introduced designs.[249]

By means of the newly added engravings, juxtaposed with reproductions of the French engravings, Fuseli turned the physiognomy project into a space in which the French edition was used as a negative point of reference. This contrasting device was unique to the Hunter translation. It emphasised not only its intended superiority over the Holcroft translation, it was an attempt to make the Hunter translation into the ultimate edition of Lavater's physiognomy project. Fuseli manipulated not only the approach to the Hunter translation, he focused on the problem of representing likeness in Lavater. The argument of this chapter is that the issues of likeness and their representation manifesting themselves during the production process of the Hunter translation of the *Essays* were also carried over into *Aphorisms on Man*.

Robert Essick and Joan Stemmler have been the principal critics who have worked on the Lavater portraits and particularly Blake's partly etched, mostly engraved Lavater-plate (1787-1800).[250] According to its imprint, this portrait was engraved after a drawing made in Zurich in March 1787. Essick identified three different stages and suggested that the plate could have been completed and published as late as 1801.[251] The need for a portrait in 1800 probably came down to the attempted assassination of Lavater in 1799 when he was mortally wounded but lingered on for more than a year before he died in 1801. Judging from the size of the plate it is safe to assume that Blake spent at least several months working on the portrait. So, while he was trying to render Lavater's likeness, the man himself was dying and, in his own terms, coming closer to his eternal

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[247] Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 68, 108.
[248] See Appendix A, transcription of 1788 Heisch letter by Mary Lynn Johnson and Sibylle Erle, 231-32 (6, 7). See Zurich Central Library Lavater Family Archive, MS 512.138. See also Finsler, "Lavater in Amt und Privatleben," in *Denkschrift* (1902), ed. Stiftung von Schnyder von Wartensee, 20-22.
[249] Lavater (1789-98), I, n. p.
[250] Stemmler, "The Physiognomical Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater" (1993), 160-62.
[251] Robert N. Essick, *The Separate Plates of William Blake* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 150-57.

likeness which would reveal itself a few hours after his death.[252] This particular portrait was available from 1789. An engraving by William Bromley was published in January 1789 together with an account of Lavater's life by the *European Magazine*. The portrait was also mentioned by Heisch who claimed that a certain Hoffham owned it in 1787.[253] It is possible that Johnson acquired the drawing and gave it to Bromley, also a member of the engraver team working on the Hunter translation.[254]

While *Essays on Physiognomy* was being published Johnson decided to bring out *Aphorisms on Man*. Given the growing demand for author portraits, the choice for a non-representational portrait as frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Man* was curious, especially since Lavater believed that a good representation could easily substitute physical presence.[255] This frontispiece, designed by Fuseli and engraved by Blake, showed a writer who was lost in thought. Above him hovered a child, possibly a muse. The plate was reworked for the second edition of 1789 and, indeed, during the publication of the third edition in 1794. Probably only the third stage conveyed Fuseli's finalised intention.[256] The design has conventionally been discussed as evidence for the artistic relationship between Fuseli the translator-editor and Blake the engraver-annotator.[257] Its theme of divine inspiration occupied both designer and engraver but also Lavater. The main difference between sketch and engraving is that while Fuseli gave the muse wings, in the engraved version the wings have been omitted.[258]

When Lavater explained divine inspiration he usually began with the condition of the soul in the afterlife. He suggested that disembodied souls hovered like butterflies over people's heads and were able to radiate their thoughts into the minds of the religious. This conjunction, wrote Lavater, between disembodied soul and devout, light-receptive human appeared to the mortal eye as a halo.[259] In fact, in *The Songs of Innocence*, printed in the 1790s, halos are frequent in Blake's illustrations. The idea that the frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Man* inspired Blake's compositions of the two frontispieces to his *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* has frequently been voiced.[260] Blake's frontispieces,

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[252] Lavater (1789-98), III, 180.
[253] This Hoffham is the merchant Luder Hoffham. See Zurich Central Library Lavater Family Archive, Ms 513 and Ms 566.
[254] Zachs, *John Murray* (1998), plate 23.
[255] Karin Althaus, "Lavaters Begegnungen und die Formen seiner Kommunikation," in *Kunstkabinett* (1999), eds. Mraz and Schlögl, 37.
[256] Essick established that the "second and the third states appear with about equal frequency in copies of the 1794 edition." See Essick, *Commercial Book Illustrations* (1991), 40.
[257] "Fuseli and Blake have created a spiritual portrait commenting, in a most complimentary manner, on the origin and composition of the book." See Essick, *Commercial Book Illustrations* (1991), 40-41.
[258] The disappearance of the wings can be traced back to Fuseli who claimed that angels need not have wings. See Ruthven Todd, "Two Blake Prints and Two Fuseli Drawings," *Blake Newsletter*, 5:3 (1971-72), 174.
[259] Johann Caspar Lavater, *Briefe an die Kaiserin Maria Feodorowna, Gemahlin Kaiser Paul I. von Russland, über den Zustand der Seele nach dem Tode*. ed. Royal Library of St. Petersburg (St. Petersburg, Royal Academy of the Sciences, 1858), 10, 26, 29, 46-49.
[260] Nelson Hilton, "Songs of Innocence and of Experience," in *Companion to Romanticism* (1999), ed. Wu, 104-105.

moreover, illustrated similar situations of inspired communication. Bearing in mind the gradation between them, Blake visualised two kinds of conjunction. In *The Songs of Experience* he used the symbolic dimension of the wings to indicate that an immediate exchange between muse and poet had become impossible. Consequently, while Blake represented two states of being in his *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* with one merging into the other, Lavater was obsessed with the idea that the material and the spiritual worlds coexisted.

In the sixteenth letter of *Aussichten in die Ewigkeit* (1768-73) Lavater wrote at great length about the so-called "language of heaven." Since he was not yet able to speak this language, so he apologised, he was going to "stammer" about it. In what follows Lavater explained his physiognomic doctrines as a linguistic theory and as an opposition between the natural and the arbitrary languages. The latter was considered as a corruption of the former and was based on the conventions of a phonemic system. Lavater emphasised that the language spoken by man was an "imperfect, accidental and arbitrary tool," utterly insufficient to communicate the full scope of human thought.[261] When Lavater expanded on natural language he described it as physiognomical, pantomimic and musical. Whereas the adjective physiognomical was linked to facial expression, the words pantomimic and musical described the language of movement and sound. All of these components translated emotions into a combination of audio-visible expression.[262] The idea that the body never lost its potential for simultaneity, transparency and immediacy was the key to all of Lavater's physiognomic doctrines. He described the immediacy of the physiognomical language by comparing it to a painting and stressing how a picture transmitted "images, thoughts, and emotions" at the same time as it communicated gradual phenomena as sound-like sequences.[263]

Lavater's interpretation of Genesis was that through the fall words replaced naturally motivated gestures. Thus, God's original creation lost its capability for immediate expression. Through the fall the face was turned into a mask and thus man became subjected to a fixed and recognisable physiognomical expression of character. In *Aussichten in die Ewigkeit* Lavater imagined how after resurrection man would gain a new form of existence. The resurrected body was the disembodied soul which rendered all uttered expression meaningless. Within the context of physiognomy the disembodied soul was man's inner nature turned inside out. In the disembodied soul every feature bore significance because and nothing could be accidental or arbitrary.[264]

So far, the language of Blake's bodies has been analysed by Janet Warner in *Blake and the Language of Art* (1984). As outlined in the introduction this approach fell short of a

[261] Lavater (1768-73), III, 48.
[262] Lavater (1768-73), III, 51.
[263] Lavater (1768-73), III, 50-51.

historical explanation of how these bodies actually express the language which Warner identified and classified. Next Angela Esterhammer in *Creating States: Studies in the Performative Language of John Milton and William Blake* (1986) interpreted Blake's conception of visionary language in terms of divine performative language, a discussion which came out of speech act theory. Esterhammer stressed that human identity was based on subjective expressions in language. With this theoretical approach to Blake's bodies Esterhammer focused on a body which was not only created but also only existed through language, be it divine or abstract.[265] Most recently, Robert Essick in *William Blake and the Language of Adam* (1989) proposed an analysis of Blake's use of language with reference to the mimetic and expressive language theories popular at the end of the eighteenth century.

According to Essick's phenomenological view on language where linguistic performances were interpreted as acts of creation, Blake's tempera *Adam naming the Beasts* (1810) - supposedly a self-portrait - became the embodiment of Blake's understanding of artistic creation. Since Adam's lips were closed Blake, so writes Essick, put the emphasis on the mental processes involved in creation and thus on the power inherent in physiognomical language to create. The event was set in paradise. In this painting, so argued Essick, Blake rendered the act of naming in terms of gesture, the only natural or motivated sign available to man.[266] This thesis's modification of Essick's contextualisation is a discussion of Lavater's "language of heaven," that is, an attempt to locate the mechanisms of the body's unfallen performative language within Lavater's physiognomy project. Within the religious context of *Essays on Physiognomy* the reason why bodily actions can be compared to acts of linguistic creation is made explicit.

For Lavater closeness to God manifested itself in terms of physical resemblance. Christ, according to Lavater, was the most perfect embodiment of that likeness. Therefore, a whole section of his physiognomy project was dedicated to images of Christ.[267] The declared goal of Lavater's physiognomical research was to identify traces of the divine image in the human face. He proceeded by relating particular features to living individuality and common features to a transcended image of Christ.[268] Lavater's conception of the one-man-image was based on the Christian idea of the Trinity with

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[264] Lavater (1768-73), II, 66.
[265] Angela Esterhammer, *Creating States: Studies in the Performative Language of John Milton and William Blake* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), xiii-xv, 24, 41-42, 99, 110-27, 177-214. Esterhammer's reading of *The Book of Urizen* emphasises how divine language deteriorates into the abstract utterances of Urizen. Again, she draws attention to the mechanisms which make Urizen generates embody political and social relationships. See Angela Esterhammer, "Calling into Existence: *The Book of Urizen*," in *Blake in the Nineties,* eds. Steven Clark and David Worrall (New York: St. Martin's Press and Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 115-32.
[266] Robert Essick, *William Blake and the Language of Adam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 7-10, 12, 20-21.
[267] Georg von Schulthess-Rechberg, "Lavater als religiöse Persönlichkeit," in *Denkschrift* (1902), ed. Stiftung von Schnyder von Wartensee, 179-80.
[268] Stafford, *Body Criticism* (1997), 92.

Christ being the incarnation of the divine word. As such Christ was the externalisation of divine expression. Blake's idea of this concept - of Jesus being the best possible embodiment of man - is formulated in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in a conversation between a devil and an angel:

> The worship of God is. Honouring his gifts in other men each according to his genius. and loving the [...] greatest men best [...]." To this the angel replies: "is not God One? is not he visible in Jesus Christ? and has not Jesus Christ given his sanction to the law of ten commandments and are not all other men fools, sinners, & nothings? (*MHH* 22, 23, E43)

Blake's visual rendering of the one-man model was Albion. From *The Four Zoas* onwards he seemed to reverse Lavater's aspiration to perfection through an ever increasing fragmentation of the eternal body into numerous figures which less and less resembled each other.

Lavater's ideas about the transparency of the transfigured body can be compared to Swedenborg's idea of a mathematical universal language, a set of symbols or hieroglyphs, with which physical and psychical phenomena can be securely identified.[269] Swedenborg had his place in the European mystical or spiritual enlightenment and his work was bound up with the mystical movement which sought to renew and revitalise the established Anglican Church.[270] Lavater, in fact, attempted to correspond with Swedenborg. When he wrote to him in August 1768 he not only wanted to know Swedenborg's opinion on his *Aussichten in die Ewigkeit*, he asked about his deceased friend Felix Hess. Lavater wrote again in 1768 because he believed that his first letter got lost.[271] Why Swedenborg did not reply to Lavater cannot be determined.[272] Lavater's request for a picture of Swedenborg and a copy of *Doctrine of the New Jerusalem*, however, was obliged.[273]

Interestingly and this ties up with what has been argued in the previous chapter about Tucker's footnote to *The Wisdom of Angels* (1788), while *Essays on Physiognomy* was being published in the 1790s Swedenborg's publishers remembered Lavater's letters. Together with a short introduction they were published in April and June 1790 in the *New-Jerusalem Magazine.* According to these letters Hess had promised Lavater to reveal himself after his death. In the first letter to Swedenborg Lavater speculated about whether Hess would really appear to him, but in the second letter written about one and a half years later Lavater entreated Swedenborg with urgency. Could he tell him whether Hess was "not yet clothed with Christ." Lavater pressed further: "Tell me pray, what he does?

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[269] Inge Jonsson, *Visionary Scientist: The Effects of Science and Philosophy on Swedenborg's Cosmology* (West Chester, Pennsylvania: Swedenborg Foundation Publishers, 1991), 96-100.
[270] Clarke Garrett, "Swedenborg and the Mystical Enlightenment in Late Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 45:1 (1984), 70.
[271] Ernst Benz, "Swedenborg und Lavater: Über die religiösen Grundlagen der Physiognomik," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 57 (1938), 160-61.
[272] Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Delights of Wisdom concerning Conjugial* [*sic*] *Love* (1794), 36-37.
[273] David G. Goyder, *A Concise History of the New Jerusalem Church* (1827), xxii.

paint me his figure, state, &c. in such words, that I may know that God in truth is in thee." In 1768 Lavater wondered whether he would ever be able to "converse with angels and spirits." In the second letter he sounded defeated. He asked Swedenborg to draw and describe Hess for him.[274]

To know what a disembodied soul looked like was of the utmost importance to Lavater. He thought of the disembodied soul as the ur-form of man, the kernel of all his potentials, active and passive. Adam's fall had, without completely destroying it, hindered the evolution of them, pre-formed in that original image. Lavater took the *imitatio Christi* quite literally. By imitating Christ, man would be able to return to what had originally been intended for him.[275] Christ's incarnation, from Lavater's point of view, meant redemption for man because through his physical existence man had once again been given a directive:

> Suppose a man who had got a near view of an Angel – of a God – of the Messiah [...] such a man must be entirely destitute of imagination and sensibility, if an aspect so august did not imprint on his countenance some of the traits which must have struck him. His physiognomy must infallibly have borne sensible marks of the Divinity who filled his soul, the *Deum Propiorem*.[276]

Lavater's belief in human perfectibility was so strong that he publicly challenged the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. In the dedication to his translation of Bonnet's *La palingénésie philosophique* (1769) he declared that Mendelssohn - if he really aspired to the next higher stage of existence - had no choice but to convert to Christianity. Lavater pointed out that if Mendelssohn did convert his features would become more refined, because they would in due course loose their Jewishness.[277] With the help of physiognomy, so wrote Lavater, such categories as nationality or race could be actively transcended.[278] In accordance with Bonnet Lavater argued that man could only achieve the highest degree of perfectibility through resurrection. Death in this argument was what separated man from an existence of perfect beauty and moral integrity. What fascinated Lavater was that Bonnet broke with the Platonic idea of the physical body being the prison of the soul.

The search for the manifestation of the living Christ was the central impetus to all of Lavater's thinking and the yearning for a spiritual meeting with Christ was at the core of

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[274] *The New Jerusalem Magazine*, 1 (1790), 179-81, 245.
[275] Pestalozzi, "Lavaters Utopie," in *Literaturwissenschaft und Geschichtsphilosophie* (1975), eds. Arntzen, et al., 286-87.
[276] Lavater (1789-98), III, 182.
[277] Judith Wechsler, "Lavater, Stereotype, and Prejudice," in *Faces of Physiognomy* (1993), ed. Shookman, 119. Lavater's dedication sparked an agitated exchange: Moses Mendelssohn, *Schreiben an den Herrn Diaconus Lavater zu Zürich* (Berlin, 1770) and Johann Caspar Lavater, *Antwort an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1770).
[278] Lavater (1789-98), II, 407-8.

his physiognomical research.[279] Lavater was known for having entreated Christ in prayers to reveal himself,[280] but he never experienced a vision.[281] The physiognomy project was, first of all, a philosophical search for the living Christ. It began with *Aussichten in die Ewigkeit* where Lavater delineated his utopia about the continuation of life in eternity and the resurrection of both body and soul to a flexible existence as a disembodied soul or "light-body."[282] Lavater emphasised that there was no testimony of the appearance of Jesus. What was known about him was derived from speeches and reported miracles. Christ's face was essentially a summary and illustration of everything which had been written about him. In referring to Christ's presence in both the spiritual and material worlds Lavater substantiated his argument about how the disembodied soul resembled the material body. Christ, according to Lavater, bridged the gap between the two dimensions of human existence. His penetrable "light-body" could be expanded at will. Consequently, resurrection was a necessary step on the way to spiritual maturity.[283]

Christ duly emerged as the centrepiece of Lavater's physiognomy project. Christ was the most God-like, the most precise copy of the almighty and invisible God and the ultimate embodiment of man's perfected physiognomical expression in terms of a complete match of exterior and interior, signifier and signified.[284] In the section on the images of Christ in volume IV of *Physiognomische Fragmente* Lavater addressed the difficulties involved in rendering Christ's likeness. He was convinced that a true believer could produce an authentic image of the living Christ.[285] Goethe in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* recalled how Lavater insisted that he had made some sketches.[286] In *Physiognomische Fragmente* Lavater continually struggled with the conception of this image. He was, however, confident to judge representations of Christ and to distinguish between the copy and the simulacrum, because whether or not a portrait is authentic or not could be gauged with the heart. In the end, however, Lavater conceded that an authentic image of Christ could never be captured in a single image. Only versions existed.[287]

The argument about Blake's annotations to Lavater starts with his collaboration on the frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Man* with Henry Fuseli. In the late 1780s Blake allegedly did not know Greek. Fuseli, therefore, must have spelled out the inscription of the Greek motto, held up by the child, on a different piece of paper. It is possible that Blake made a

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[279] Horst Weigelt, "Der Pietismus im Übergang vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert," in *Geschichte des Pietismus*, eds. Martin Brecht et.al., 3 vols (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993-2000), II, 720.
[280] Lavater-Sloman, *Genie des Herzens* (1939), 187.
[281] Lavater (1790-93), II, 167.
[282] Pestalozzi, "Lavaters Utopie," in *Literaturwissenschaft und Geschichtsphilosophie* (1975), eds. Arntzen, et al., 288-90.
[283] Lavater (1768-73), II, 23-26, 67, 69-70, 91-97.
[284] Lavater (1768-73), III, 52.
[285] Lavater (1789-98), IV, 435.
[286] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Aus meinem Leben – Dichtung und Wahrheit*, in *Goethes Werke: Hamburger Ausgabe*, 14 vols. (Hamburg: Christian Wegner Verlag, 1963), X, 15-16.

wash-drawing to integrate the suggested changes into the design just as he was to do for Fuseli's "Fertilization of Egypt" for Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden.*[288] David Weinglass has pointed out that it was common practice with Fuseli to give the engravers working for him "rough visual hints to work up."[289] From Gert Schiff's comparison of the *Aphorisms on Man* frontispiece with the Aratos and Urania plate, engraved by John Keyse Sherwin, it emerges that these designs shared the theme of poetic inspiration.[290] Even though posture and size of the two figures are different, the line of eye contact from left-below to upper-right and the ways in which hands and arms are positioned are very similar. While Sherwin's engraving is a good example for compositional dynamics, Blake's rather antiquated style brings a certain stiffness to the design. Consequently, what has been termed Fuseli's "implicit trust"[291] in Blake needs to be reconsidered. The three revisionary stages may, indeed, suggest that Fuseli was not satisfied with Blake's engraving work.

Next the discussion of Blake and Fuseli's collaboration on the frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Man* advances to the issue of represented likeness. It has already been mentioned that this frontispiece was unusual. Instead of providing a portrait of the author it addressed aspects of divine inspiration. The issue of represented likeness is nevertheless part of the collaboration, because the preliminary drawing has two sketched heads in its margin. They are drawn in profile and have been attributed to Fuseli. In addition, two lines have been drawn from the each of the foreheads and the chins to the noses, as if similarities between the two heads were to be foregrounded. Essick speculated that they possibly represented Fuseli and Lavater or both Lavater as an old and as a young man. Bearing in mind that these heads depicted the same person, it is important to note what they had in common was the same facial angle.[292]

In these sketches, suggested Stemmler, Fuseli demonstrated Lavater's physiognomical methods to Blake who was at that time working for Holloway and would have been grateful to get a deeper insight into Lavater's ideas on likeness in portraits and caricatures.[293] On the back of Fuseli's Michelangelo drawing, originally designed for the frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Art* (1789/1831), there is yet another sketch of a Lavater-like face. Since both drawings were in Blake's possession, he had the continuity of the

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[287] Gerhard Wolf and Georg Traska, "Povero pastore: Die Unerreichbarkeit der Physiognomie Christi," in *Kunstkabinett* (1999), eds. Mraz and Schlögl, 127, 133.
[288] Todd, "Two Blake Prints and Two Fuseli Drawings" (1971-72), 175. Robert N. Essick, *William Blake: Printmaker* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 51.
[289] Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations* (1994), 91.
[290] Fuseli represents the Greek poet Aratos of Soloi (ca. 315/318-240/239), who in *Phainomena* mentions 44 constellations known to the antique world, as being encouraged by the muse Urania. See Gert Schiff, *Johann Heinrich Füssli, 1741-1825, Text und Ouverekatalog,* Vol. I/1 (Zürich: Schweizerisches Institut für Kunstwissenschaft, 1973), 499. Blake's frontispiece is praised by a contemporary reviewer. However, this reviewer quite clearly admires Fuseli's design and not so much Blake's execution. See *English Review*, 13 (1789), 123.
[291] Todd, "Two Blake Prints and Two Fuseli Drawings" (1971-72), 175.
[292] Essick, *Commercial Book Illustrations* (1991), 41.
[293] Stemmler, "The Physiognomical Portraits of Johann Caspar Lavater" (1993), 164-65.

different images in front of him.[294] Given the idea that Fuseli's two men in profile depicted Lavater at different times in his life the third sketch could have represented Lavater at an even later stage. The line which marked the nose is very prominent and the nose itself is too big for the face. Considering the importance which Lavater attributed to the nose, this sketch was probably conceived as a caricature. Indeed, that the facial angle changed over time and from childhood to old age had already been documented by Petrus Camper.[295] The question which formulates itself is *what* kind of likeness is represented in these three drawings?

Robert Essick has already drawn attention to Blake's peculiar treatment of age by comparing Blake's engraving of Spalding for *Essays on Physiognomy* and one of his self-portraits from the *Notebook*, associated with the time when Blake was working on the *Public Address* (c.1809-10). Essick writes that Lavater's text, accompanying Blake's engraving, was "noteworthy in light of this resemblance." Blake, according to Essick, not only projected himself as an older man, he integrated Spalding's forehead into his own portrait thus turning his forehead into an example of "'solid and accurate ideas.'"[296] Spalding's forehead was, no doubt, exaggerated. However, it is important to note that this particular portrait had disappointed Lavater. He claimed: its "contours are flattened, and [...] the features which ought to be prominent are rounded off. The forehead is that of a thinker who embraces a vast field."[297]

It has long since been noted that Blake incorporated his likeness into his works, texts and images. Los, for example, has often been considered as Blake's alter-ego. However, this approach is problematic since the presupposition is that the opinions and attitudes of author and poetic figure overlap. Especially in the Urizen Books the differences between Los and Blake were crucial. While Los's creational acts give evidence to the struggle with represented likeness and original expression thereof, Blake uses the Urizen Books to explore the possibilities, potentials and problems of creation as such. However, it is tempting not to differentiate between the idealised and fictionalised Blake portraits. One only needs to think of the baby in the Large Colour Print "Pity" and also the baby from *Night Thoughts*, Night VII, page 48. The latter was part of an illustration of Edward Young's lines: "Before it, and behind! Poor Man, a Spark / From Non-existence struck by Wrath divine."[298] One of Blake's preliminary sketches to "Pity" was inscribed by Frederick Tatham with a quotation from *Macbeth*. "Shakespeares Pity / And pity like a

[294] Todd, "Two Blake Prints and Two Fuseli Drawings" (1971-72), 176.
[295] Petrus Camper, *The Works of the late Professor Camper* (1794), 71-72, 73.
[296] Essick, *Printmaker* (1980), 60-61. The quoted description refers to the first portrait, not engraved by Blake.
[297] Lavater (1789-98), I, 225.
[298] Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 320.

naked newborn Babe / &c &c /"[299] The baby's physiognomy, in fact, resembles that of Blake.

That the pity-baby was conceived as a self-portrait is a compelling idea. Since Blake associated his physiognomy with that of Jesus in his *Notebook*, it is interesting to note that a connection between the pity-baby and baby Jesus has already been made: "The babe is full of energy - it looks as if it has leaped across the space between mother and rescuing rider - and recalls the new-born Jesus in Blake's *Nativity*."[300] This connection to Jesus and Blake's merging portraits suggests the idea that the authentic portrait was somewhere in-between. The likeness to Jesus was significant because within the context of physiognomy it implied an almost realised potential for redemption.

There was, of course, a difference between private and commissioned portrait. Blake's portrait-miniatures, self-portraits and portraits of poets for William Hayley showed how he was grappling with a major genre. The production processes involved in the making of the miniature portraits, and in particular the engraving of Thomas Alfonso Hayley, differ significantly from how Blake embodied likenesses within the context of his creation myth of the 1790s. The first commissioned engravings Blake did for Hayley were for his *Essay on Sculpture* (1800). In this work Hayley intended to commemorate the death of his son Thomas Hayley. *Essays on Sculpture* has three plates - two of which were engraved by Blake. One had been designed by Thomas Hayley and the other was by Flaxman.[301]

Blake's engraving of Thomas Hayley was after a medallion designed by Flaxman. This medallion had been copied, in preparation for the engraving by Henry Howard. So, Blake was not only provided with a copy, which he could take away and work from, Howard's drawing rendered the three dimensions of the medallion as two for him. In the *Essay on Sculpture* the engraved medallion illustrated the lines:

> Could I, dear Flaxman! with thy skill express / Virtue's firm energy in long distress, / And all its merit, 'gainst affliction proof, [...] / Thou might'st suppose I had before thee brought / A Christian martyr, by Ghiberti wrought: / So Pain has crush'd his frame with dire control, / And so the seraph Patience arm'd his soul.[302]

On April 1, 1800 and after showing the plate to Flaxman Blake sent a proof to Hayley and asked him to comment on it. He wrote: "May Jesus and his Angels assuage & if it is consistent with his divine providence restore him to us & to his labours of Art & Science in this world." (*L* April 1, 1800, E705) Hayley disliked it and insisted that Blake did more work

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[299] Robin Hamlyn and Michael Phillips, eds., *William Blake: Exhibition Catalogue* (London: Tate Trustees, Tate Gallery Publishing Ltd., 2000), 196.
[300] Christopher Heppner, *Reading Blake's Designs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 115.
[301] Essick, *Commercial Book Illustrations* (1991), 79-81.
[302] William Hayley, *An Essay on Sculpture, In a Series of Epistles To John Flaxman, Esq. R.A. with Notes* (1800), 162 (Epistle IV, lines127-34).

on the plate. Blake complied but Hayley still thought it was all wrong. In a letter written on April 17 he explained to Blake in London:

> The great & radical defect I conceive to be this – the engraving is a Head 3 years older than the medallion – the Features by being made *longer & more sedate* have lost the *lively sensibility* of 16 - our dear Flaxman's medallion is *very faithful* to that *time of Life*, & certainly *like* tho I cannot say I ever thought it a *very very strong* similitude of the *Individual*.[303]

On May 6, Blake having again reworked the plate sent a new proof to Hayley. In the accompanying letter he wrote:

> I send the Shadow of the departed Angel. hope the likeness is improved. The lip I have again lessened as you advised & done a good many other softenings to the whole – I know that our deceased friends are more really with us than when they were apparent to our mortal part. (*L* May, 6, 1800, E705)

Blake acknowledged Hayley's intimate knowledge of the physiognomy of his son and claimed to have done his best to improve the resemblance by copying it more carefully from the drawing he was given to work from. Even though Hayley was never entirely sure whether Flaxman's portrait captured the likeness of his son in the first place, he was certain that Blake changed it into something it was not.[304]

It is remarkable that Hayley accused Blake of deliberately ageing his son into a nineteen-year-old boy. As if Blake was deliberately trying to project the image of an older person into the drawing he was given to work from.[305] His avowal "May Jesus and his Angels assuage & [...] restore him to us" certainly implied that he believed if he got the portrait right, it could evoke the presence of the person depicted. Eventually Hayley was satisfied, and despite his initial dissatisfaction with Blake, he asked him to draw a life-size portrait of his dead son. This now lost portrait may have been made in preparation for the series of the Heads of Poets (1800-03), painted for Hayley's library at Turret House in Felpham.[306] Blake must have convinced Hayley that even though he failed to render mimetic resemblance, he was able to create a different kind of likeness. In his letter dating from April 1, 1800, Blake pointed out that he was the better expert on what angels looked like. He claimed further to be able to see disembodied souls and was thus able to render or rather copy their eternal likeness. It is clear to me that within the context of physiognomy Blake employed the copy-versus-original debate to assert his artistic independence.

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[303] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 65.
[304] Letters to Flaxman, dated July, 16, and Lady Hesketh, dated September, 13 1800. See Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 70, 73.
[305] For Blake's portraits of Tom Hayley, see Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 344, 345.
[306] While Blake lived in Felpham and in Hayley's vicinity he engraved the plates for a number of Hayley's works: *Designs to a Series of Ballads* (1802), *The Triumphs of Temper* (1807), *The Life, and Posthumous Writings, of William Cowper* (1803). See Essick, *Commercial Book Illustrations* (1991), 82, 83-90.

The Heads of Poets were Blake's main project during his three year stay at Felpham. With these eighteen pen and tempera paintings, Hayley not only created his own gallery of literary heroes, of European poets and writers, he immortalised the work of his son who had designed the portraits of Demosthenes, Shakespeare, Tasso, and Klopstock.[307] For the recently deceased William Cowper and Thomas Hayley, Blake worked from portraits by Romney and Flaxman. For the rest he relied on engravings which he found in Hayley's library. In most cases it is possible to identify Blake's sources.[308] On November 26, 1800 Blake wrote to Hayley that the physiognomies of Milton, Homer, Camoens, Ercilla, Aristo and Spencer had been a "delightful study" for him. (*L* November, 26, 1800, E714) It is certainly possible, that Blake while poring over Hayley's print collection pondered on his own physiognomy, because if Tom Hayley could be included so could Blake. Also, he probably wondered how his relationship or even resemblance with his literary predecessors manifested itself in his face. What these Heads of Poets had in common was literary greatness. We know from Blake's own writings that he thought of himself as one of the greatest and that he put his hope on the future reception of his works.[309]

While in Felpham Blake painted a number of miniature portraits, for example, one of Mrs Hayley, which was, in fact, another of Thomas Hayley's unfinished projects.[310] As with the Thomas Hayley portrait the commissioners of Blake's miniatures were not always happy or even content with the results.[311] When Blake began working on the miniatures of the Butts family, he assured his patron Thomas Butts that his attempts at likeness-making had much improved. (*L* September 11, 1801, E716) The miniature of Butts, sent to Mrs Butts in 1801 for commentary, was disapproved of. Two years later Blake wrote:

> I am determind that Mrs Butts shall have a good likeness of You if I have hands & eyes left. for I am become a likeness taker & succeed admirably well. but this is not to be atchievd without the original sitting before you for Every touch. all likenesses from memory being necessarily very very defective but Nature & Fancy are Two Things & can Never be joined neither ought any one to attempt it for it is Idolatry & destroys the Soul (*L* July, 6, 1803, E730)

In 1809 Blake produced two outstanding miniatures, one of Mrs Butts and one of Thomas Butts Junior. That he may have reasserted his dignity by using the likeness of Mrs Butts in the watercolour painting *The Whore of Babylon* (1809), part of the Bible illustration series

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[307] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 69.
[308] William Wells and Elizabeth Johnston, *William Blake's 'Heads of the Poets,' for Turret House, the Residence of William Hayley, Felpham* (Manchester: City of Manchester Galleries, 1969), 3-4, 6, 9, 13. Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 343.
[309] Peter Ackroyd, *Blake* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995), 230.
[310] Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 346.
[311] Yet another example is Blake portrait of Benjamin Heath Malkin's son for Malkin's *A Father's Memoirs of his Child* (1806). When comparing the unpublished proof with the finished frontispiece it emerges that Blake's design of the frontispiece has been altered by R.H. Cromek. See Essick, *Separate Plates* (1983), 244-45.

commissioned by Butts, was suggested by Bentley.[312] Blake's treatment of likeness in these miniature paintings is another example of his free handling of likeness. Appropriating Mrs Butts's likeness for such a doomed character as the whore of Babylon would indeed be a way to comment on her character.

Next to decorating Varley's library at Turret House in Felpham and doing various miniatures, Blake engraved a portrait of William Cowper, used as frontispiece for Hayley's biography *Life and Posthumous Writings of William Cowper* (1803). Initially, Blake worked from a pastel painting by George Romney and produced a tempera painting for Hayley's library as well as several drawings and miniatures.[313] The Cowper plate, probably engraved after the adaptation of the Romney painting, proved to be crucial to Blake's relationship with Hayley, because with the project progressing Blake realised that Hayley pictured himself as a supporter of obscure poets.[314] Hayley thought that Blake like Cowper was "on the verge of insanity." G.E. Bentley Jr. has suggested that Blake may have felt that Hayley exaggerated certain aspects of Cowper's personality. Moreover, this unflattering comparison probably alienated him from Hayley, who according to Blake, tried to turn him into a conventional portrait painter.[315]

While Blake was working on the Cowper plate Lady Hesketh, cousin of Cowper and executor of his will, was in correspondence with Hayley. She was very reluctant to part with the biographical material in her possession and insisted that Cowper's years of insanity should not be emphasised.[316] She disliked Romney's portrait as well as Blake's miniature based on Romney. Hayley had to convince her of Blake's abilities. In a letter written on July, 15, 1802 he explained to her why Blake was the best person to undertake an engraving of Cowper's likeness:

> Whatever the Merits or the Failings of my diligent & grateful artist may be, I know I shall interest your Heart & Soul in *his Favour*, when I tell you, that He resembles our beloved Bard in the Tenderness of his Heart, & in the perilous powers of an Imagination utterly unfit to take due Care of Himself.[317]

In choosing Blake, so reasoned Hayley with Lady Hesketh, he tried to make sure that Cowper's likeness was recreated by a like-minded artist. His strategy was successful, because when Lady Hesketh received the printed first edition of Hayley's biography she

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[312] Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 376-78, 523. Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 188, 287, plates 74, 75.
[313] Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 343 *17*, 351-54.
[314] Blake had been looking forward to his Felpham period, In a letter to George Cumberland he writes about his lucky escape from London. See Robert N. Essick and Morton D. Paley, "'Dear Generous Cumberland': A Newly discovered Letter and Poem by William Blake," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 32:1 (1998), 4-13.
[315] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 164.
[316] G.E. Bentley, Jr., "Blake, Hayley, and Lady Hesketh," *Review of English Studies*, 7: 27 (1956), 264-86.
[317] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 105-06.

admitted: "I must tell you that I admire Romneys head of all things! now it is *Softened* [;] of the engraving I pretend not to Judge, but I like it."[318]

Blake obviously must have altered the Romney painting to the extent that the traces of madness disappeared from Cowper's face. Thus, he liberated the portrait from a codified representation of madness. This was confirmed in a letter written by Blake shortly after hearing from Hayley about Lady Hesketh's approval: "to please Lady H was a doubtful chance who almost adord [*sic*] her Cousin the poet & thought him all perfection & she writes that she is quite satisfied with the portraits & charmd [*sic*] by the great Head in particular tho she never could bear the original Picture." (*L* January 20, 1803, E726) I want to suggest that the Cowper episode, with Hayley and Lady Hesketh insisting on different kinds of likenesses, found its way into Blake's annotations to Spurzheim's *Observations on the Deranged Manifestations of the Mind* (1817).[319] In what seems to be a prelude to the Visionary Heads Blake explained about his encounter with Cowper's spirit:

> Cowper came to me & said. O that I were insane always I will never rest. Can you not make me truly insane. I will never rest till I am so. O that in the bosom of God I was hid. You retain health & yet are as mad as any of us all - over us all - mad as a refuge from unbelief – from Bacon Newton & Locke. (*ASP* E 663)

According to Blake, Cowper insisted that the expression of madness was to be included into his portrait. What this madness was, however, becomes ambiguous with Cowper pointing out that Blake was the maddest of them all. By aligning the diagnosis of madness with a notion of unbelief generated by the Bacon, Newton and Locke, the so-called madness of poets comes to be associated with divine inspiration. Also, Cowper's wish to disappear into the bosom of God implied - within the context of physiognomy - that if Blake granted his wish and rendered the kind of madness he was asking for, he would indeed regain his resemblance to the divine image of man.

In this argument about the best possible way of representing Cowper, Blake stood up for Cowper, who had been defamed even further in John Johnson's three volume edition of Cowper's posthumous poetry, published in 1815 and 1817, and his *Memoir of the Early Life of William Cowper*, first published in 1816 followed by a third edition in 1817. My interpretation of the alleged request for the representation of "true insanity," attributed to Cowper's spirit, is that Romney's portrait pronounced something which Blake had been asked to change. Lady Hesketh, in fact, never doubted the quality of either the picture nor the miniature. She was simply concerned with the likeness they embodied, and feared that it could influence the reception of Cowper's poetical work: "I entreat you on my Knees

[318] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 113.
[319] See Morton D. Paley, "Cowper as Blake's Spectre," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 1:3 (1968), 236-52.

not to suffer so horrible a representation of our angelic friend to be presented to the publick and to disgrace and disfigure a work I long so much to see."[320]

With the anecdote from Blake's annotations to Spurzheim Cowper returned to the dispute about which of the existing likenesses, mimetic or codified, best rendered his character. It is, in fact, a story which had its analogy in the episode related about Blake's session with the Royal Academician Thomas Phillips in 1807. Blake's treatment and representation of Cowper's likeness is a good example for the tightrope walk he mastered when mediating between seeming not mad and being not mad but inspired. Representing Cowper is another example for a process of adapted likeness.[321]

The manipulation of representational portraits attracted Blake. When it comes to an assessment of his own character in self-portraits it is important to determine whether they were realistic or codified. In his discussion of Blake portraits Geoffrey Keynes drew attention to Blake's appropriation of his natural physiognomy. Keynes pointed out that, in particular, Blake's nose was prominent rather than snubby. Blake's preference for the snub nose has two dimensions. It can be linked to representations of Socrates, and Blake himself was, indeed, compared to Socrates by Samuel Palmer.[322] Interestingly, Blake not only attributed the snubby nose to himself as, for example, in the so-called self-caricature "Cancer," drawn for John Varley in 1819, but also to Jesus. In his *Notebook* he writes: "I always thought that Jesus Christ was a Snubby or I should not have worship'd him if I had thought he was one of those spindled nose rascals."[323] Considering the popular use of physiognomy in portraiture and history paintings Blake seized the opportunity to represent his choice of likeness. He was able to establish pictorial links between himself and two important Western traditions, as if he, Blake, embodied both Jesus's teachings and Socrates's wisdom.

Just as with the comparison to the forehead of Spalding, it is possible to generate descriptions for Blake's "Cancer." In his *Zodiacal Physiognomy* Varley did not directly comment on it, but he had a whole passage on the meaning of the snub nose: "With respect to noses, those which turn up at the tip belong generally to persons who have confidence or assurance enough to battle their way well in the world, sometimes threatening more than they intend to do."[324] When compiling his list of Blake's works, W.M. Rossetti commented on the Cancer portrait and suggested that it bore a

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[320] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 79.
[321] Another, less controversial portrait used as frontispiece in volumes of Hayley's biography was by Sir Thomas Lawrence. See Essick, *Commercial Book Engravings* (1991), 87-88.
[322] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 319.
[323] Geoffrey Keynes, *The Complete Portraiture of William & Catherine Blake* (London: Trianon Press for the William Blake Trust, 1977), 21, 128-30, 135-39, plates 19-21, 26-33. David Erdman classifies this passage as "miscellaneous prose" and associates it with Blake's *Public Address,* see *Notebook of William Blake* (1793), eds. Erdman and Moore, 58, N64, N67.
[324] John Varley, *A Treatise on Zodiacal Physiognomy; illustrated by Engravings of Heads and Features, and accompanied by Tables of the Time of Rising of the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac* (1828), 58.

resemblance to Benjamin Franklin.[325] Franklin was, according to Lavater, "the model of a Thinker of singular sagacity and penetration. This happy physiognomy is wonderfully characteristic of a mind capable of rising, without effort; he is a man who pursues his object with a reflecting firmness, but wholly exempted from obstinacy."[326] Consequently, in his self-portraits Blake turned both his nose and forehead into spaces in which re-encoded meaning could be expressed. These composite portraits integrated components which had been borrowed from various contexts of physiognomical and moral value judgements.

Another important portrait by Blake and possibly of Blake was *The Man Who Taught Blake Painting, etc. in his Dreams* (c.1819-20). Anne Mellor in her seminal article on Blake's Visionary Heads analysed this Visionary Head according to Spurzheim's craniological charts:

> Blake's painting instructor was a highly skilled artist, with acute senses for spatial relationships, perspective, composition, proportion, shapes, textures and colours. He was highly imaginative, both in his visual designs and in his speech, which often employed metaphors or similes. He cared little for facts.

Mellor also compared Blake's *The Man Who Taught Blake Painting* to the monochrome wash drawing of Blake, used as a title-page image for *Blake's Poetry and Designs*, the Norton edition of Blake's works, published by John E. Grant and Mary Lynn Johnson in 1979. Based on the assumption that this portrait was by John Linnell,[327] Mellor proposed that because of the similarities between the portrait and Blake's Visionary Head it was likely that "Blake's painting instructor was in fact his own imagination."[328] What Mellor has suggested is that *The Man Who Taught Blake Painting* is a reversed projection or transformation from the blueprint of the instructor into the physiognomy of the student.

In the meantime, it has been argued that this wash drawing, watermarked 1802, was probably a self-portrait done in 1803 after finishing the miniature of Thomas Butts. So, what is *The Man Who Taught Blake Painting*? G.E. Bentley argued that in view of its similarities to *The Man Who Taught Blake Painting*, it ought to be referred to as "The Spiritual Form of William Blake."[329] In view of the dates of the two portraits the resemblance rendered in the Visionary Head seems to be a distillation of the physiognomy of the 1803 portrait. *The Man Who Taught Blake Painting* is, therefore, a vision of the inner man rather than a ghostly manifestation. The context of Blake's Visionary Heads will be explored in more detail in chapter 5. Here the emphasis is on the idea of distillation which may have originated in Blake's experience of the publishing

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[325] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 470.
[326] Lavater (1789-98), II, 318.
[327] Keynes, *Complete Portraiture* (1977), 24.
[328] Anne K. Mellor, "Physiognomy, Phrenology, and Blake's Visionary Heads, " in *Blake and His Time*, eds. Robert N. Essick and Donald Pearce (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978), 66, 67.
[329] Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), note to plate 88. In the Blake Archive this particular portrait appears in Denise Vultee's (with the editors) Biography of Blake. It is labelled: "Self-portrait of William Blake."

history of the Lavater physiognomy project and the exchange between Fuseli and Holcroft. If such a text could be abridged without losing its overall significance, so could the expression of a portrait be reduced to a core minimum.

According to Geoffrey Keynes's *Complete Portraiture of William and Catherine Blake* (1977) there are about forty different portraits of Blake, done by himself and his artist friends, such as John Linnell, George Richmond and Samuel Palmer.[330] However, there is no agreement on which of these portraits renders the best likeness of Blake. Lene Østerman-Johansen, for example, has emphasised that Blake portraits in general are to be considered as artistic statements about Blake rather than mimetic representations of Blake. In comparison with other Romantic writers, she writes, Blake is all head: "Blake the Romantic artist was entirely a brain worker. As such, most of these portraits become metaphysical, rather than physical portraits; there is an artistic attempt to capture the essence of Blake's great mind and soul through a repeated focus on his skull."[331] The focus on Blake's skull and the sense of its singularity is by no means surprising. As it has been argued above, it was fostered by Blake himself. In fact, after his death the manipulation of his physiognomy both in text and image continued, because many of Blake's artist friends found it difficult and highly dissatisfying to represent Blake by means of mimetic portrait alone.

Two of the most important posthumous portraits are attributed to Catherine Blake: *Portrait of the Young William Blake* (c.1827-31) and *Head 'Taken from something she saw in the Fire.'* (c.1830) The latter was used by Frederick Tatham for the drawing *William Blake in Youth and Old Age* (c.1830).[332] Tatham's account of young Blake's physical appearance, included into his manuscript memoirs, echoes the description provided by Catherine: "his locks, instead of falling down, stood up like a curling flame, and looked at a distance like radiations, which with his fiery eye and expansive forehead, his dignified and cheerful physiognomy, must have his appearance truly prepossessing."[333] Likewise, in August 1855 Samuel Palmer preferred to describe Blake by means of a non-representative portrait: "In him you saw at once the Maker, the Inventor; one of the few in any age [...]. He was energy itself. [...] He was a man without a mask."[334] In these accounts the material form of the man Blake is hard to control, or rather difficult to identify in the Lavaterian sense. Consequently, the metaphor of Blake as a man without a mask implies that the above mentioned portraits were intended to transcend Blake's physical appearance in order to penetrate to his eternal form. If we are to believe these

[330] Keynes, *Complete Portraiture* (1977), 24, 25.
[331] Lene Østerman-Johansen, "Victorian Angles on Blake: Reading the Artist's Head ih the Late Nineteenth-Century," *Angles on the English-Speaking World*, 3 (2003), 144.
[332] See Raymond E. Thompson, "The 'Double' of the Double Portrait of Blake: A Description of Tatham's Replica Portrait," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 13:1 (1979), 32.
[333] Raymond Lister, *The Paintings of William Blake* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 10.
[334] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 318-19.

posthumous descriptions, verbal and pictorial, Blake's physiognomy was best to be represented as an energetic conjunction.

Frederick Tatham's *William Blake in Youth and Old Age* (c.1830) is an evocative portrait. It juxtaposes the physiognomy of Blake at the beginning of his poetic career with the aged appearance of the mature prophet. Whatever we read into either of these two images, it seems inevitable that a link might be established between them by pondering about how the one aged into the other. This type of representation seems to have been prompted by Blake who, in his annotations to Reynolds's *Discourses on Art*, writes "Childhood & Age are Equally belonging to Every Class." (*AL* E648) In particular Catherine Blake's *Head 'Taken form something she saw in the Fire'* is often ignored. It has been suggested that it was drawn possibly as an analogy to Blake's Visionary Heads since it renders Blake's likeness in terms of his poetic vocation and the transparent authenticity of his prophetic voice.[335] The drawing is also a distinct echo of plate 3 from *The Book of Urizen* (1794) depicting Los walking through a sea of flames.[336]

How closely physiognomy and portraiture were linked emerges from an episode recorded by Lavater as the key experience of his development into an expert physiognomist. As he was sketching his friend Felix Hess on his death bed, he monitored his progress in terms of his emotional responses to the portrait. In due course Lavater realises that to be able to capture likeness he has learn the rules of drawing, because only with the pen can he penetrate to the physiognomical form of an individual:

> In the prosecution of my favourite amusement, my confused sensations became gradually more clear and distinct; I grew more and more sensible of proportion, difference of feature, resemblance and dissimilitude. Happening one day to draw two faces immediately after each other, I was astonished to find that certain features in both were perfectly like; and my astonishment was the greater, as I knew, beyond the possibility of doubting, that the characters were essentially different.[337]

What Lavater recalls here is how he detected a resemblance between J.J. Lambert, the famous physicist and philosopher, and his dying friend Felix Hess. Sketching, according to Lavater, helped to isolate the features of a human face and to reduce it into its pure physiognomical language.[338] In *Physiognomische Fragmente* he relates in a footnote that he sent Hess's portrait to Fuseli in London, where it was destroyed in a fire.[339]

In the French and English translations of Lavater's physiognomy project Hess's name has been omitted. Henceforth what Lavater recognised as the essence of his friend was transmitted by verbal descriptions only. It is possible that Lavater was not able to recreate the portrait, because the emotional intensity of the moment at Hess's death bed

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[335] Hamlyn and Phillips, eds., *William Blake: Exhibition Catalogue* (2000), 180.
[336] Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 261:4, c2. Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 237, 373-74.
[337] *European Magazine*, 15 (1789), 5-7.
[338] Ernst von Bracken, *Die Selbstbeobachtung bei Lavater* (Münster: Helios Verlag, 1932), 64-66, 95.
[339] Lavater (1789-98), I, 8.

was irretrievably lost. Consequently, the validity of a likeness has, according to Lavater, a physical basis. It is recognised and registered through bodily signs: feelings of recognition.[340]

This drawing episode is important for two reasons. First Lavater projected a future likeness of his dead friend. Second, argumentative force in Lavater was based on moral judgements which had been aligned with the intensity of his feelings. As an Enlightenment thinker Lavater was convinced that his emotional responses, pure and spontaneous, were able to regulate the act of painting and thus ensure that a likeness was truly authentic. In both *Physiognomische Fragmente* and *Essays on Physiognomy*, Lavater's description of the successful physiognomist covered what he believed to be the basic skills required in a portrait painter. The most important issue was the ability to pinpoint the physiognomical essence of a person. One way of representing or rather capturing it was silhouette-making.[341] However little the silhouette conveyed, it expressed it accurately:

> for it presents nothing positive, and gives only the exterior contour of half the face; it is faithful, for it is the immediate impress of Nature, and bears a character of originality which the most dexterous Artist could not hit, to the same degree of perfection, in a drawing from the hand.[342]

Lavater saw the silhouette as the foundation of the representation of human character, because it made the task of likeness-taking easy. Not only was the very act of likeness taking dictated by the medium, pen or copperplate, it was also part of a wider discourse on taste and artistic intention. But with the physiognomy project progressing Lavater changed his mind about the silhouette. In the beginning he advocated silhouette-making, because he perceived it as a solution to the problem of representation. Consequently, there was a shift in emphasis or rather a development from *Physiognomische Fragmente* to *Essays on Physiognomy*. Lavater gradually moved away from the original body, the object of his research, to concentrate on its representations or copies.

The relevance of the silhouette for Lavater's physiognomical analyses was bound up with the late eighteenth-century vogue of silhouette-making. The reason the silhouette was such a successful medium of likeness-making came down to the attempts to optimise the process with the help of machine-generated images.[343] The silhouette became associated with scientific objectivity and this change in the perception of human identity was disseminated through *Essays on Physiognomy*.[344]

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[340] The obsession with Hess found another outlet in Lavater's *Denkmal auf Johann Felix Hess*, weyland Diener göttliche Wortes (Zurich, 1774). There is no portrait in this little book either.
[341] Lavater (1789-98), II, 391-92.
[342] Lavater (1789-98), II, 176-80.
[343] Nadia Tscherny, "Likeness in Early Romantic Portraiture," *Art Journal*, 46:1 (1987), 193. Sue McKechnie, *British Silhouette Painters and their Work, 1760-1860* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1978), 22. Mrs. E. Nevill Jackson, *Silhouettes: A History and Dictionary of Artists* (1981; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1938), 59-69.
[344] Lavater (1789-98), II, 235-38, 395.

Lavater, moreover, was at the core of this movement towards technical perfection. He devised a special silhouette chair and also gave detailed advice on how to make a silhouette. With a solar microscope, fixed on a board covered with a sheet of paper, daylight could be focused so that it is possible to accurately trace a human profile without the interference of one's own shadow.[345] In *Physiognomische Fragmente* the silhouette is the starting point of Lavater's physiognomical character analyses. He divided the silhouette with horizontal and perpendicular lines. Based on the spaces between them and the ways in which they intersected, he produced definitive statements about physiognomical expression.[346]

From *Physiognomische Fragmente* to *Essays on Physiognomy* the silhouettes were gradually replaced. With the project progressing more and more line engraved portraits were used to illustrate the physiognomical doctrines. For example, whereas in Fragment Six of *Physiognomische Fragmente* Lavater guided his readers towards a silhouette to end on a rhetorical question,[347] in *Essays on Physiognomy* he substituted this question with a declaration: "We shall endeavour, as far as it is in our power, to enable the Reader to see, to examine and judge for himself. In this view we introduce here some heads, which will serve to elucidate the last assertions of this Fragment"[348] In *Physiognomische Fragmente* Lavater provided a list of greatly admired historical figures, while claiming to be able to compress the idea of human greatness into a single silhouette, in *Essays on Physiognomy* he spread the idea across various examples, the so-called Additions. These amendments were highly regarded, because - so it was held in the reviews of the French edition - Lavater initiated his readers into the "mysteries of the science."[349]

In contrast to *Physiognomische Fragmente* neither the French nor English editions had physiognomical exercises, based on the multiple choice principle. Nevertheless, in these Additions the implied training was continued. It worked on a different and much more subtle level, because Lavater wanted his readers to evaluate his combinations of image with text in terms of feelings of recognition. Everybody, according to Lavater, had a sense of true likeness.[350]

Another absence from *Essays on Physiognomy* was the *frontometer*, invented by Lavater to measure the human skull and constructed by the Mathematician and Mechanic Jacques Paul.[351] In *Essays on Physiognomy* Lavater referred to this invention but

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[345] "The word 'silhouette' [...] is derived from the name of Etienne de Silhouette (1709-69), a frugal and heartily disliked minister of finance under Louis XV, whose favourite hobby was the cutting of profiles from black paper." See Peggy Hickman, *Silhouette: A Living Art* (New Abbot: David & Charles, 1975), 10.
[346] Lavater (1789-98), II, 183, 184, 186, 188
[347] Lavater (1774-78), II, 54.
[348] Lavater (1789-98), II, 214.
[349] *Monthly Review*, 68 (1783), 618-19.
[350] Lavater (1789-98), I, 93.
[351] Gisela Luginbühl-Weber, *Johann Caspar Lavater - Charles Bonnet - Jacob Benelle: Briefe 1768-1790: Ein Forschungsbeitrag zur Aufklärung in der Schweiz*, 2 vols. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1997), II, 657-58.

explained that he had to accept how difficult it was to either describe or draw this machine. He eventually decided to destroy the plate.[352] Giving up on the *frontometer* signified a turning point in Lavater's career. It is the moment when he began to confront himself with issues of aesthetic experience, portraiture and problems of representation, because from when he abandoned the silhouette, his so-called scientific approach came to rely on the notion of genius which was, of course, less tangible. The decision to do without the *frontometer* made the physiognomy project less concrete and turned it into a strange mixture of collected portraits and biographical narrative. The final chapter will discuss how the phrenologists in the early nineteenth century revived the *frontometer* to continue the scientific approach to human character.

At the beginning Lavater perceived the *frontometer* as the perfect tool for measuring head and skull and generating precise data about body-soul relations. The *frontometer*, however, had disadvantages. In its stead Lavater actually recommended working with plaster figures:

> The want of it may be supplied, meanwhile, by forms of the forehead, moulded in plaster, which are easily cut in pieces, and may afterwards be applied to paper for the purpose of drawing them. I may possibly indicate, likewise, at the end of my work, a method still more simple, for determining the forms of the face, and the relations of the forehead.[353]

He even admitted that he preferred working with plaster-cast heads and in three dimensions. With plaster-cast heads, so argued Lavater, it was much easier to isolate facial lines in profile. While thinking about what to do with the *frontometer* plate, Lavater may have decided that everyday physiognomical practice should make do without elaborate measuring instruments. Likewise, he may have felt that the data generated from a silhouette unnecessarily increased the differences between the original human being and its copies, that is its physiognomical representations.

From this observation of a shift away from line analysis towards monitoring feelings of recognition, I developed my approach to the creation of the body in the Urizen Books, because in Blake's adaptation of Lavater in his creation myth of the Urizen Books the theme of embodiment and the representation of spirituality falls into two stages. First, the shadow of Urizen is employed as a means of identification for the Eternals. Second, under the eyes of Los the three dimensions of Urizen's anatomy begin to manifest themselves. In both cases the responses and actions on the body are based on recognition rather than first hand experience.

While a portrait painter closely observes a sitter - while creating his (or her) likeness on a canvas or a piece of paper - in the Urizen Books the sequence is reversed. Los, who

[352] Lavater (1789-98), III, 336. Lavater (1781-1803), III, 279.
[353] Lavater (1789-98), III, 336. Lavater (1781-1803), III, 279.

is associated with the role of the physiognomist, shrinks back in horror as Urizen's body is changing and unfolding his true identity. So rather than re-creating Urizen's spiritual identity at one remove, Los is forced to recognise it as it manifests itself on Urizen's body. The argument is that in *The Book of Urizen* Blake elaborated on how Lavater's measuring apparatuses manipulated human identity. When Los looks at Urizen and begins to embody him with specially forged nets and gins we see how these tools directly affect Urizen's body. Consequently, Urizen's creation through Los is a demonstration of how moral judgements - about what is believed to be true and authentic identity - channelled through acts of likeness-making reflect back onto Los, the generator of those interpretative acts.

The next chapter will argue that because of Los working with the original body instead of working from it, Urizen is actually disfigured and thus converted into a copy of himself. With respect to the development of *Physiognomische Fragmente* into *Essays on Physiognomy* it is possible to delineate the themes of constructed identity and likeness-making in Blake's Urizen Books as a two-stage process. Just as in the movement from silhouette to three-dimensional portrait, Urizen's character is first represented as a shadow and then as a full-size figure.

The remainder of this chapter will concentrate on the Blake portrait which is generated through the annotations to Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man*. These annotations to Lavater have long since served biographers as first hand information. Mona Wilson, for example, used them to sketch the character of young Blake in her 1927 biography: "The picture revealed is that of a man who prefers passion to cool villainy, active evil to passive good, a lover of laughter and downright speech, hating alike the sanctimonious and the sneerer."[354] This interpretation of Blake's annotations can be traced back to Alexander Gilchrist, Blake's Victorian biographer: "To me they seem mentally physiognomic, giving a near view of Blake in his ordinary moments at this period."[355]

The justification for a biographical reading of Blake's annotations to *Aphorisms on Man* is the motto of the little book, included into the frontispiece design: "Know thyself."[356] Lavater's little book had the potential to generate reader profiles based on choices of aphorisms.[357] Bearing in mind, how calculating Blake was with visual representations of his physiognomy, it is, without doubt, risky to take any kind of textual descriptions at face value. In addition, in his annotations Blake created two lines of argument, starting from his annotation to aphorism 3, which contained his response to Lavater's physiognomical

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[354] Mona Wilson, *The Life of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, third edition (1927; London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 54.
[355] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 58.
[356] This motto originates in Juvenal's satires. See Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations* (1994), 90-91.
[357] Lavater promotes the notion of textual creative power. In his hand-library he formulates his hope that his readers will be good and strong enough to embody the given maxims. See Lavater (1790-93), II, 304.

theories. The argument is that Blake's collaboration with Fuseli has yet to be considered as a response to the creative and image making powers of physiognomical language.

The need to place Blake's annotations in a historical context with respect to contemporary as well as universal conventions of notes and commentaries written into books has been emphasised by H.J. Jackson in *Marginalia* (2001). In the annotator, Jackson argues, the author meets an opponent: "Annotation introduces a second voice where writers and publishers intended only one; the reader talks to the book. [...] and the 'dialogue' is a partial record of the reader's participation in the book, the naturally occurring transaction between text and reader." Marginalia, particularly of well-known writers or poets, are usually read in search for biographical information. Jackson, however, stresses that it is wrong to think that annotations are written spontaneously or on impulse. Many annotators write in awareness of an audience which they sometimes imply or even address directly.[358]

According to Jackson any discussion of an annotator-author relationship has to begin with the signature of the annotator. Indeed, Blake's signature has so far proved relevant to discussions about two of his annotated books. Onto the title page of Edmond Malone's edition of *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* he writes: "This Man was Hired to Depress Art. This is the opinion of Will Blake my Proofs of this Opinion are given in the following Notes." (*AL* E635) Thus Blake tried to inform the future reader of his copy of Reynolds's *Discourses on Art* to what purpose he annotated Reynolds.[359] The second example is *Aphorisms on Man.* Blake drew a heart in ink around his signature and Lavater's name. What does it mean?

About this heart Carol Louise Hall wrote that it signified "the affection that he felt for the book and its author."[360] Hall also put forward that Blake's knowledge of physiognomy was mostly mediated by Fuseli so that Blake did not engage with Lavater but with "Fuseli's Lavater."[361] As a result of this association with Fuseli, Blake's own engagement with late eighteenth-century physiognomy has been ignored. However, Blake as a member of the engraver team, hired to produce the illustrations to *Essays on Physiognomy*, had first hand knowledge of the physiognomy project. As Fuseli's friend, it is safe to say, he was aware of the expressive potential of the aphorism. In his annotations Blake subverted the suggested use of *Aphorisms on Man* as an exercise book for character taxonomy to produce a likeness of himself which he deemed appropriate.

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[358] Jackson, *Marginalia* (2001), 242.
[359] Lawrence Lipking, *The Ordering of the Arts in Eighteenth-Century England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 165, 167.
[360] Hall, *Blake and Fuseli* (1985), 128.
[361] Hall, *Blake and Fuseli* (1985), 1-3, 128-29. Leonard M. Trawick, "William Blake's German Connection," *Colby Library Quarterly*, 13:4 (1977), 236.

Before Hall's statement about Blake's love for Lavater is reviewed, I want to explain with Wolfgang Iser's reader response theory why, indeed, a reader's notes and choices of aphorisms are a summary of character. It is, first of all, important to acknowledge that the effect of a text on a reader varies and depends on the genre: "The text provokes certain expectations which in turn we project onto the text in such a way that we reduce the polysemantic possibilities to a single interpretation in keeping with the expectations aroused, thus extracting an individual, configurative meaning."[362] With the aphoristic mode the possibilities of anticipating and recalling the different components of the text - for example its narrative - are limited. Nevertheless, with Iser's definition of the reading process it is possible to describe the interaction between reader and text as a confrontation between subject and object.

The variable structure of a text, written in the aphoristic mode, sustains the distance between reader and text. Therefore, a collection of aphorisms realises the Iserian notion of confrontation as a personalised network of projections.[363] Iser characterised the experience of the text as a gradual taking in of new information as well as a process of identification and recognition. According to Iser, the reader organises the different elements of the text and interlines the references of the text's repertoire:

> As we read, there occurs an artificial division of our personality because we take as a theme for ourselves something that we are not. Consequently when reading we operate on different levels. For although we may be thinking the thoughts of someone else, what we are will not disappear completely – it will merely remain a more or less powerful virtual force. [...] Every text we read draws a different boundary within our personality, so that the virtual background (the real 'me') will take on a different form, according to the theme of the text concerned.[364]

The annotator is a self-conscious reader. What differentiates the annotator from the reader is that the annotator spells out what Iser defined as the moving boundary within each reader. In due course, the separation of the familiar from the unfamiliar, is mapped out in terms of recognition and experience of new ideas. Marginalia not only help to focus attention for when a reader-annotator returns to the book, annotations essentially help trace the development in opinion making and point of view.

The idea that Blake annotated *Aphorisms on Man* with an audience in mind emerges from how he tried to involve the readers of his annotations from the first page onwards. He not only attempted to win their sympathy, he wanted to convert them to his analysis of Lavater's approach to physiognomy. On the final pages of his annotated copy he asserted:

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[362]Wolfgang Iser, "The reading process: a phenomenological approach," *New Literary History*, 3:2 (1972), 290.
[363]Wolfgang Iser, "The Interaction between Text and Reader," in *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and* Interpretation, eds. Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 110-11.
[364] Iser, "The reading process: a phenomenological approach," 298-99.

> There is a strong objection to Lavaters principles (as I understand them) & that is He makes every thing originate in its accident he makes the vicious propensity not only a leading feature of the man but the Stamina on which all his virtues grow. But as I understand Vice it is a Negative – It does not signify what the laws of Kings & Priests have calld Vice we who are philosophers ought not to call the Staminal Virtues of Humanity by the same name that we call the omissions of intellect springing from poverty. (*AL* E600-601)

As Blake summarises his opinion it becomes clear that his conclusion is a justification: "I hope that no one will call what I have written cavilling because he may think my remarks of small consequence." (*AL* E600) Blake acknowledged that he was adding another layer to *Aphorisms on Man* while emphasising that he expected his readers to critically examine his contribution. Since an annotated book fuses the original text with the added notes into a unified, that is personalised copy, it seems plausible that Blake wanted his readers to follow the argument between Lavater and himself, between author and annotator. In addition, he also perceived his notes as a means of improving *Aphorisms on Man*, because in his conclusion he wrote that he could not "resist the impulse I feel to rectify what I think false in a book I love so much. & approve so generally." (*AL* E600)

To determine Blake's relationship with Lavater beyond Fuseli's mediating explanations, I suggest that by annotating *Aphorisms on Man* Blake entered, indeed, an arena in which he engaged with Lavater directly. On this matter Carol Louise Hall writes:

> In his annotations, Blake used the book exactly in the manner that Lavater had intended: to expose the nature of the reader himself. [...] The subject was to read the *Regeln* through in one sitting, and record his instant and unpremeditated reaction in the margins, or by marking. [...] 'Know thyself' was not only the motto on the title page, but was also the purpose of the exercise.[365]

From what has been argued so far, it is obvious that Blake's responses to Lavater were more diverse and, strictly speaking, less impulsive than Hall has suggested. Blake filled his copy of *Aphorisms on Man* with various cross-references, and thus opened it up to other source texts, especially to the Bible. He weighed his own ideas against those of Lavater.[366] The point is that the heart which surrounds Blake's signature and Lavater's name is more than a symbol of fondness.[367]

Within the context of late eighteenth-century physiognomy the heart, containing the names of the annotator and the author, ought to be interpreted as a metonym for human existence. Indeed, the feelings of the heart were commonly associated with immediate communication transcending all notions of race and nation. For example, in a review of Samuel Stanhope Smith's *Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure*

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[365] Hall, *Blake and Fuseli* (1985), 135.
[366] His comments to aphorisms 487 and 489, for example, direct the reader to "Ezekiel Ch. xvi 49 ver" and "Matthew XII. Ch. 26. 27. 28. 29 v^{s}." (*AL* E594)
[367] *Effusions of the Human Heart: or, Heavenly Meditations and Devotional Exercises* reviewed by the *Analytical Review* in 1789. See *Analytical Review*, 5 (1789), 89.

in the Human Species, published in the *Analytical Review* in December 1788, it was emphasised that while physiognomical diversity could be recorded from pole to pole and according to climate and behaviour, the similarities between different individuals were down to like-heartedness. Smith redefined the relationship between the exterior and interior of man's existence, because with the concept of like-heartedness the search for universals in the human physiognomy and in consequence, the distinction between outer and inner man could be overcome:

> An acquaintance with the human heart has ever been thought important [...]; those who feel lively emotions wish to know if the same string vibrates in another bosom – if they are indeed tied to their species by the strongest of all relations, fellow-feeling – in short, if the world without resembles that within. [...] But observing the human heart, we may be said to work under ground [...]; the jealousy or ambition that actuates our antipodes is not supposed to differ from the passions which agitate us, - nor can the fortitude of an Indian [...] be distinguished from the pride or virtue which made many heroes endure grievous calamities.[368]

This approach to a definition of body-soul relationships was not simply a concession to the importance of lived experience, but an attempt to get beyond what manifested itself permanently on the surface of the body. With the notion of like-heartedness the bond between individuals was established as a spiritual rather than a material resemblance. This stance was, in fact, anticipated in a review of *Aphorisms on Man*, published in July 1788: "The author of these Aphorisms seems to have proceeded from the heart to the heart, or rather the study of one enabled him to trace the different forms the passions wear, and to discriminate many of their almost endless combinations."[369]

Aphorisms on Man has been described as a "manual of self-discovery." (E883) The Greek inscription on book's frontispiece, "Know thyself," announced it as such. Blake, moreover, wrote that " the name Lavater. [*sic*] is the amulet of those who purify the heart of man." (*AL* E600) Blake saw Lavater as literally guiding and regulating self-awareness as well as the process of immersing oneself into the depth of one's psyche. This perception of Lavater reinforces the heart-to-heart metaphor in terms of the annotator-author relationship as suggested by Jackson. I argue that by signing his name under Lavater's and encircling them with a heart, Blake indicated that he inscribed himself into a immediate exchange about human universals. By means of the heart he introduced himself as a worthy reader and grateful user of *Aphorisms on Man*. The terms of this kind of deep understanding between two human beings was repeated in a letter to Thomas Butts in November 1802: "Be assured, My dear Friend, that there is not one touch in those Drawings & Pictures but what came from my Head & my Heart in Unison." (*L* November 18, 1802, E719)

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[368] *Analytical Review*, 2 (1788), 431.
[369] *Analytical Review*, 1 (1788), 287-289.

In view of Lavater's highly organised revision practices it is important to remember that Lavater took great care with rewriting and refining his works. Not only did he ask many of his friends for advice, he sent off his books in manuscript and readily welcomed all kinds of suggestions into his texts, sometimes even without acknowledging it. Therefore, that Lavater prepared the manuscript for *Aphorisms on Man* in a hurry is a piece of biographical fiction. This myth of textual immediacy, so I argue further, was continued by Hall who suggested that Blake annotated *Aphorisms on Man* in one sitting.[370] From the differences in ink and handwriting it is safe to conclude that Blake returned to *Aphorisms on Man* a number of times and throughout his life.[371]

Blake does not sit down in June 1788 to quickly annotate *Aphorisms on Man*, because while he gives a demonstration of the practical dimensions of *Aphorisms on Man*, he reflects on how he is made to become aware of himself. He does not necessarily follow Lavater's reading instructions, since, according to Shroyer's list, the final aphorism, which Blake quotes as the reason for his annotations, is unique to *Aphorisms on Man*. I want to introduce the possibility of Fuseli being the author of this aphorism and thus the initiator of physiognomical reading, because Fuseli may have wanted to re-emphasise the empirical approach to Lavater by opting for the aphoristic mode and inviting the reader to compile lists of personal choices. In this he echoes Lavater's catalogues of questions in *Physiognomische Fragmente* with the help of which his readers could engage with the practice of physiognomy.

A way into Blake's annotations to *Aphorisms on Man* is to actually follow the logic of the comments. In response to aphorism 3 Blake, for example, writes "Let me refer here, to a remark on aphorism 533 & another on. 630." (*AL* E584). Whereas the comment to aphorisms 1 and 2 can be interpreted as a spontaneous agreement with Lavater: "This is true Christian Philosophy far above all abstraction" (*AL* E584) and a springboard into Swedenborg, as it is going to be argued below, the annotation to aphorism 3 is a well-thought out statement. It is, indeed, a signpost with which Blake flags up two lines of annotation-arguments. In my close reading of these two strings of commentary I propose that Blake actually encourages his readers to abandon Lavater's text and read it through his annotation notes. This subversion of text and annotation is suggested by Blake in his note to aphorism 3 where he refers his readers on to his remarks to aphorisms 533 and 630. I shall begin with Blake's annotation to aphorism 533:

> man is the ark of God the mercy seat is above upon the ark cherubims guard it on either side & in the midst is the holy law. man is either the ark of God or a phantom of the earth & of the water. if thou seekest by human policy to guide this ark. remember

[370] Hall, *Blake and Fuseli* (1985), 135.
[371] The great weakness of Shroyer's facsimile edition of Blake's annotated copy of Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man* is that he does not draw attention to notes written in pencil or different inks.

> Uzzah II Sam. [erasure] VI Ch: knaveries are not human nature knaveries are knaveries See N544 this aphorism seems to me to want discrimination. (*AL* E596)

With this statement Blake essentially makes his readers join him on the other side of *Aphorisms on Man*, that is, in the text of his annotations. In abandoning Lavater's numbered sequence the readers of Blake's annotations conspire with him against the author.

By means of a cross-reference to the Old Testament Blake evokes the story of King David, Uzzah and Obed Edom. King David is an observing figure. Initially, he is surprised at God's harsh punishment of Uzzah who had to touch the Ark of the Covenant as he was trying to save it from falling off the cart. Eventually King David accepts God's choice and blesses the newly chosen hero Obed Edom who houses the Ark after Uzzah's execution. What Blake draws attention to is the clash between human and divine judgement. In his note to aphorism 533 he articulates his scepticism about Lavater's moral judgements, who insists on the moral superiority of the physiognomist: "the theorist is enabled to assign to each class and each individual its own peculiar fit of vice or folly; and, by the same, he has it in his power to contrast the ludicrous or dismal catalogue with the more pleasing one of sentiment and virtue, more properly their own." (*AL* E596)

What Blake seems to suggest is that it is better to admire variety than to judge individuality. The mention of the King David story serves as a reminder of the impossibility of completely deciphering or predicting the actions of the Divine. Blake concludes his commentary to 533 by insisting that "knaveries are not human nature knaveries are knaveries See N 554." If we follow Blake to 554 we reach a conclusion: "Human nature is the image of God." (*AL* E597) This statement, I suggest, was written in response to Lavater's advice to allow for "momentary folly, symptoms of which assail the wisest and the best." (*AL* E596) What is at stake here, is the confusion of human character with human nature. While human nature is always flexible, and therefore like God, human actions are derived from character which is perceived as a constant.

The second trail from aphorism 3 leads to 630 and from there to 549 and 554. In this line of argument Blake emphasises his notion of an omnipresent divine essence. In his annotation to aphorism 630 Blake emphasises:

> It is the God in *all* that is our companion & friend [...] God is in the lowest effects as well as in the highest causes for he is become a worm that he may nourish the weak For let it be rememerd [*sic*] that creation is. God descending according to the weakness of man for our Lord is the word of God & every thing on earth is the word of God & in its essence is God." (*AL* E599)

According to this outline of body-soul universalism, it is not man who is at the centre of God's creation, but the Human Form Divine in each man. Whereas Lavater in aphorism 3 formulates man's position in relation to nature: "each beholder thinks himself the centre of

the sky," because "Nature formed her individuals, that each must see himself the centre of being," Blake's above quoted comment revises Lavater's arrangement of man within nature.[372]

The subversive force of Blake's annotation is that he differentiates between the outer and the inner man. Thus he refers back to the set up of the physiognomy project according to which all human beings are more or less - for better or worse - copies of the divine image. And, indeed, he agrees with Lavater's notion of graded resemblance, because the question "where is the Father of men to be seen but in the most perfect of his children?", part of aphorism 549, is annotated "this is true worship." (*AL* E596)

In the past, interpretations of Blake's annotations have concentrated on topical issues. Donald John and Jeanne Moskal, for example, have developed an argument about Blake and forgiveness. While John propounds the Swedenborgian point of view,[373] Moskal delineates the Christian notion of forgiveness which is represented in Lavater. For Blake, emphasises Moskal, forgiveness should not be unconditional. It involves both resentment in the victim and regeneration of the offender.[374] I argue that for Blake the theme of forgiveness is bound up with physiognomy because he associates the evil man with a less than human physiognomy. Whereas Lavater advises his readers never to lose "sight of man," Blake stresses "None can see the man in the enemy if he is ignorantly so, he is not truly an enemy if maliciously not a man." (*AL* E589)

Crucial to my argument about Blake's adaptation of Lavater is in the second part of his comment: "I cannot love my enemy for my enemy is not man but beast & devil [...] I can love him as a beast & wish to beat him." (*AL* E589) If a man chooses to do evil where he could do good, he literally loses the quality which makes him look human. Each individual, according to Blake, has the potential for both good and evil - for being man-like and beast-like. Once good has been chosen there is no return to evil: "Man is a twofold being. one part capable of evil & the other capable of good that which is capable of good is not also capable of evil. but that which is capable of evil is also capable of good."(*AL* E594) The pictorial dimension to this argument is that the evil man is represented as degenerating towards animal expression. I emphasise that Blake is against unconditional forgiveness because it robs man of the chance to literally rebuild his humanity.[375]

The idea of losing and gaining humanity permeates Blake's work. What makes his figures acquire the form of man is a force which resides within every single one of them. It is necessary to choose between good and evil because whatever is going on inside

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[372] Lavater (1788), 2.
[373] Donald John, "Blake and Forgiveness," *The Wordsworth Circle*, 17:2 (1986), 75.
[374] Jeanne Moskal, "The Problem of Forgiveness in Blake's Annotations to Lavater," *Studies in Philology*, 86:1 (1989), 70.
[375] Moskal draws attention to a possible connection to Jacob Boehme, who uses the word beast when referring to "unregenerate person." See Moskal, "The Problem of Forgiveness in Blake's Annotations to Lavater" (1989), 76, 78.

manifests itself as physical features and on the surface of the bodies. It all comes down to choice and whoever behaves like an animal will eventually look like one. What I tried to crystallise in my close reading of Blake's annotations to *Aphorisms on Man* is the simple tension about human nature and human character. Human nature is to be good. Even if a man is bad, that is looks evil, he has the potential for doing good. What Blake's two lines of argument, and especially the King David story, bring out are the difficulties involved in judging what is divine in man. Blake cautions against prescriptive character readings by suggesting to compare actions with physical manifestations. With the concept of the inner man spiritual rebirth manifests itself literally as a humanisation of character expression.

In the late 1780s Lavater was not only involved with the publication of *Essai sur la physionomie*, he was in the planning stage with the English translation which was going to be an extended translation of the still incomplete French edition. At the same time, however, he decided to publish four little works: *Vermischte unphysiognomische Regeln zur Selbst- und Menschenkenntnis* (1787), *Vermischte unphysiognomische Regeln zur Menschen- und Selbstkenntnis* (1788), *Aphorisms on Man* (1788) and *Hundert Physiognomische Regeln* (1789). It is probably true that Lavater wrote these texts out of his excitement about the forthcoming English translation, because what they have in common is that they condense the physiognomical theories.

When Fuseli cut Lavater's manuscript, a combination of the two books on miscellaneous rules, by a third, he went even further in an attempt to make Lavater's ideas available in a smaller and cheaper format. So, while *Essays on Physiognomy* expanded into three volumes bound as five parts, the book *Aphorisms on Man* is more concise than the manuscript it was translated from. Typical of the publishing history of these works, as I have argued so far, is a strong argument for making the English translation better than the original it has been translated from. Whereas perfection in *Aphorisms on Man* is reached through editing out, with *Essays on Physiognomy* it is achieved by supplementation.

What manifests itself in the editing done to *Essays on Physiognomy* and *Aphorisms on Man* is the widening gap between pictorial and textual representation of human character. Both these works are intended to engage, involve and enlighten the reader. However, whereas agreement in *Aphorisms on Man* is determined by recognition or rejection, the validity of a pictorial likeness is a matter of taste and aesthetic response. In late eighteenth-century England *Essays on Physiognomy* and *Aphorisms on Man* are the two poles of Lavater's attempts to embody human character. Fuseli's editing of Lavater helps to develop them independently. Consequently, while Fuseli emphasises the need for good-quality engravings for *Essays on Physiognomy*, he advocates self-knowledge mediated through the parameters of the aphorism of *Aphorisms on Man*. Blake, I argue,

has a similarly torn position on word-image relations. He is, on the one hand, part of the perfectionist engraver team and, on the other hand, he confronts himself with a text which is intended to isolate the universals of human character.

Within the context of Lavater's physiognomy project the inner struggle accompanying divine creation becomes a matter of choice and of everyday life.[376] The following chapter will argue that the issues of spiritual and physical regeneration have an immediate context in Blake's rendering of creation as embodiment. In his presentation of body-soul relationships in the Urizen Books the notion of what a man *does* and what he *is* acquire complex textual and pictorial connotations. The two extremes - textual as opposed to pictorial creation - have their parallel in what is expounded in *Essays on Physiognomy* and on a much smaller scale in *Aphorisms on Man*. The graded stages of the body's development away from the pure image of the ideal man is a reversal of Lavater's search for truthful representation, a stance carried right through into *Aphorisms on Man*.

In *Aphorisms on Man* Lavater gives a definition of similitude and variety in human physiognomy. In the first two aphorisms he formulates their interdependent relationship as a paradox. While human beings "agree in essence, as they do in their limbs and senses, [...] Mankind differ as much in essence as they do in form, limbs, and senses."[377] In other words, the divine in man manifests itself in the sum of all similarities. On this point Blake agrees with Lavater: "This is true Christian philosophy far above all abstraction." (*AL* E584)[378] In aphorism 532 Lavater names several historical figures. He attributes to each of them a certain quality and argues that genius originates in the "exuberance" of that quality. He emphasises further that what distinguishes this kind of high-degree individuality from the common man is usually interpreted as divergent. He preaches: "rectify them according to your own taste - what will be the result? you own correct, pretty, flat, useful - for me, to be sure, quite convenient vulgarity." (*AL* E595) Blake digresses from Lavater's definition of "exuberance" because for Blake the very act of experience is part of an epistemological problem. It revolves around the relationship between substance, essence and accident, three terms crucial for his definition of human identity as well as his critique of Lavater.

Twenty years later, when Blake wrote about Chaucer's twenty-nine pilgrims in his *Descriptive Catalogue* of 1808, he weighed up the concepts of variety and similarity and formulates his own definition of universality:

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[376] "The theme that man becomes like the God he worships is dominant in those books of Swedenborg which Blake is known to have annotated." See John, "Blake and Forgiveness" (1986), 76.
[377] Lavater (1788), 1.
[378] "Against the proliferation of error which the vegetable world renews, Blake saw a single soul in the imagination. It was to him the likeness of God in the body of man. Blake saw it with the humanity with which he had marked Lavater's first *Aphorisms*, and which he wrote out himself. [...] That is, Blake saw the soul as that which is lasting and common in men, of which their common shape is one form: the Human Form Divine." See Jacob Bronowski, *William Blake and the Age of Revolution* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 183.

> we see the same characters repeated again and again, in animals, vegetables, minerals, and in men; nothing new occurs in identical existence; Accident ever varies, Substance can never suffer change nor decay. [...] the characters themselves for ever remain unaltered, and consequently they are the physiognomies or lineaments of universal human life, beyond which Nature never steps. (*DC* 9-10, E532)

This statement can be traced back to *Aphorisms on Man* where Blake defined character as recurring patterns, shaped or expressed through a dynamic relationship between accident and substance. Moreover, this description echoed Lavater who had defined character in terms of bone-structures and by distinguishing between essential and accidental forms:

> The natural form is nearly the same in all bodies, however different from one another as to the exterior. It is for ever determined by the universality of a common nature in beings which transmits life, by the uniform property of their seminal liquid, and by the circumstances which naturally and invariably accompany generation. For this reason, man always generates a man, and every animal an animal like itself. The accidental form, on the contrary, is subject to variation in the same individual, according to circumstances, and the influence of age.[379]

For Lavater variety implied deformity in character. In aphorism 532, for example, he defines variety as deviating from the norm, that is from the underlying master image or ideal human form. For Blake variety is first of all a matter of beauty. In contrast to Lavater he concentrates on the body's surface without probing into its interior: "Variety does not necessarily suppose deformity, for a rose & a lilly. [*sic*] are various. & both are beautiful Beauty is exuberant but not of ugliness but of beauty." (*AL* E595)

The difference between Blake and Lavater is, that on a theoretical level Blake is more concerned with individuality than with general definitions of what is universally human. Blake's concern with individual expression is striking, especially since most of his figures look alike. Blake is, indeed, advancing individual artistic expression because through the Lavater project the question of human identity has been turned into a space which is open to negotiation. *How* we picture a human being depends on *how* an artist creates that impression. A portrait conveys gestures and visual codes, even styles of rhetoric, which can be associated with the personal likeness and the sitter's biography. In contrast to a verbal portrait a painted likeness captures character only as much as it is on the surface. In Lavater's physiognomy project what a person stands for is replaced with the truth about a person.

Another context for Blake's emphasis on individuality in artistic expression is Reynolds's *Discourses on Art*. Lavater searches for the ideal man and Reynolds elaborates on the importance of the central form, the key concept of History Painting and the great style he is promoting. When reading Reynolds's notion of the central form

[379] Lavater (1789-98), II, 145-46.

against Deleuze's differentiation between copy and simulacrum, the artist in Reynolds's critical theory becomes a restorer of the platonic ideal. Since everything existing in nature is deformed, the artist has to recognise the distorted central forms and restore their original perfection. According to Reynolds, it is the duty of the true artist to discover the flaws in what seems beautiful in nature at first glance. Consequently, what Reynolds has in mind are long and elaborate learning processes involving endless comparisons:

> His eye being enabled to distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things, from their general figures, he makes out an abstract idea of their forms more perfect than any one original; and what seems a paradox, he learns to design naturally by drawing his figures unlike to any one object.[380]

Blake annotated the passage about the quintessential central form with "To Generalize is to be an Idiot To Particularize is the Alone Distinction of Merit" (*AR* E641) and "One Central Form Composed of all other Forms being Granted it does not therefore follow that all other Forms are Deformity." (*AR* E648)

Blake cautioned against the notion of a central form because Reynolds essentially suggested that individual artistic expression and deformed artistic object were synonymous. The idea that an artist had to learn how to identify the central form inherent in every natural object was met with harsh criticism. From Blake's point of view, a natural phenomenon needed to be transcended so that it was possible to see how it differed from its type, that is, artistic conceptions of human identity ought to vary. This was the only guarantee for individuality both in artistic expression and human existence.[381]

It is foremost Blake's use of the words substance and accident, and his explanation of how substance is made "physiognomic" as, for example, in his comment to 532 which make his annotations reach beyond the themes and topics of *Aphorisms on Man*. (*AL* E595-96) This recourse to the vocabulary of Scholastic philosophy is not only characteristic of Fuseli's *Aphorisms on Art* (1789/1831) but also of Swedenborg's notion of correspondence.[382] Blake's main criticism of Lavater is that he "makes every thing originate in its accident." (*AL* E600) Blake also disagrees with Lavater's notion of predestination and its implication of spiritual passiveness: "if Raphael is hard & dry it is not his genius but an accident acquired for how can Substance and Accident be predicated of

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[380] Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1997), ed. Wark, 44-45.

[381] Hazard Adams argues that Blake uses the works "accidental," "substance," and "essence" in response to Reynolds who is trying to appropriate Locke's psychology and the tabula rasa model of the mind. Blake's criticism is directed at "Reynolds' attempted compromise between an empirical and a Platonic stance and particularly with respect to Reynolds' attack on minute particulars." See Hazard Adams, "Revisiting Reynolds' *Discourses* and Blake's Annotations," in *Blake in His Time* (1978), eds. Essick and Pearce, 131, 133-34. For a discussion of "substance and shadow" and "essence and accident" in terms of the traditional distinction between idea and body, i.e. conception and execution, see Morris Eaves, *William Blake's Theory of Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 88-91.

[382] Morton D. Paley, *Energy and the Imagination: A Study of the Development of Blake's Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 98-99. For Fuseli's aphorisms, see Knowles, *Life and Writings of Fuseli* (1831), III, 125-26.

the same Essence! [...] but the substance gives tincture to the accident, and makes it physiognomic." (*AL* E596) For Blake substance and essence were not synonymous. The term physiognomic denotes the visible results of all the accidents, modified by substance, to become an integrated part of all that is eventually considered as a manifestation of character. Essence in this context is what remains untouched beyond the dynamic relationship between accident and substance.[383]

Blake's critique of Lavater revolved around their different understanding of the role of imagination during the formation of the human body. Lavater differentiated between physiognomic development, influenced by climate and education and physiognomic creation, prompted by unexpected moments or accidents. Physiognomical creation was especially difficult to calculate but through the incarnation of Christ all human beings were given the opportunity to aspire to the likeness of Christ:

> Whatever *creates* [...] has its source from within, is a gift of Heaven. [...] Neither beautiful forms nor monsters are the work of art, or of a particular study – they are the result of accidents, which suddenly strike the acting object at certain chosen moments; and these accidents depend on a Providence which over-rules all things, on a God who orders and determines every thing beforehand, who directs and perfects all.[384]

What Blake was concerned with was the applicability of Lavater's body theory for artistic expression. He was, at the same time, thrilled by the idea that physiognomical creation was regulated through inner and outer forces. Lavater's ambition to establish physiognomy as a science, however, made him concentrate on the results of these shaping forces rather then the forces themselves.

For Blake whether or not individuality was perceived as deformity was dependent on visual categorisation and on whether the spectator based these categories on judgements of reason. His aversion to these kind of abstract ideas, first formulated in *Aphorisms on Man*, made him annotate Swedenborg's *Divine Love* with: "Think of a white cloud. as being holy you cannot love it but think of a holy man within the cloud love springs up in your thought. for to think of holiness distinct from man is impossible to the affections. Thought alone can make monsters, but affections cannot." (*AS* E603)[385]

As with the cup-imagery, discussed in the previous chapter, Blake put forward the idea that God was, quite literally, the best in man. In order to understand what God *is* the relationship between God and man had to be made personal. Likewise, the idea that physiognomical analysis furthers self-development, spiritual, mental and physical, prompted the question what kind of body the physiognomist was able develop. Possibly the ideal type which Blake invokes in his comment to aphorism 554: "human nature is the

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[383] With respect to Swedenborgian teaching this implies that the outer man can only be redeemed through the inner man, see Hindmarsh, ed., *New Dictionary* (1794), 130.
[384] Lavater (1789-98), III, 183.
[385] Bronowski, *William Blake and the Age of Revolution* (1965), 76.

image of God." (*AL* E597) Blake objected to Lavater's obsession with the body's physical appearance. Lavater, according to Blake, was distracted by its heterogeneity and the fact that it consisted of different parts. He missed the point completely :

> Man has an inward sense of consequence – of all that is pertinent. This sense is the essence of humanity: this, developed and determined, characterises him – this, displayed, is his education. The more strict you are in observing what is pertinent and impertinent, (or heterogeneous) in character, actions, works of art and literature - the wiser, nobler, greater, the more humane yourself. (aphorism 47, see *AL* E596)

By cross-referencing aphorisms 532 and 47 Blake suggests a connection between them. In both aphorisms Lavater alludes to what he believed to be a common physiognomical sense. While giving a warning in 532 not to impose personal taste, in 47 he asserts that it is possible to learn how to tell the pertinent from the impertinent of physical phenomena. Aphorism 47 is also a summary of his concern about the body of the physiognomist. While carrying out physiognomical analyses, so reasons Lavater, the results and insights reflect back on him and make him a better, that is a physically clearer defined, person.

By getting to know one's inner state of being what is divine in man can be known, discovered and determined. However, whether or not the physiognomist recognised the divine image in its material representation as his own potential was, according to Blake, a matter of the imagination. In his *Discourses on Art* Reynolds articulates a similar thought dealing without the treatment of nature when comparing the talented with the untalented artist at work. Reynolds expects the well-trained artist to excel:

> The artist who has his mind filled with ideas, and his hand made expert by practice works with ease and readiness; whilst he who would have you believe that he is waiting for the inspirations of Genius, is in reality at a loss how to begin; and is at last delivered of his monsters, with difficulty and pain.[386]

Further down Blake attacks this statement in favour of art education and central form: "All Forms are Perfect in the Poets Mind. but these are not Abstracted nor Compounded from Nature but are from Imagination." (*AR* E648)

Blake focused on innate ideas and inner potential. He objected to Lavater's belief in an interdependent relationship between the observer and the observed and condemned physiognomical practice for of the same reason that he objected to Reynolds's central form. While Reynolds advocated complicated processes of comparisons, all that Lavater did was to abstract from empirical data. For Reynolds any kind of character expression was mediated through nature's accidents. Therefore, what was created by the artist in a representation of individual likeness had to be traced back to a human type. Blake argued for artistic expression and the ability to accurately discern the subtlety of individual beauty against that type. The forms and contours of what is human were to be appreciated and

not necessarily to be grasped at an instant as suggested by Lavater, or recognised after long comparisons as suggested by Reynolds. In his Urizen Books Blake used different arrangements of text and picture plates in order to suspend moral judgement of the body by emphasising its aesthetic experience.

The notion of a dynamic interaction between physical shape and inner potential was also in Blake's annotations to Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* (1788). He commented on Swedenborg's seemingly rhetorical question, "is not one and the same Essence one and the same Identity," with "Essence is not Identity but from Essence proceeds Identity & from one Essence may proceed many Identities as from one Affection may proceed. many thoughts [...] If the Essence was the same as the Identity there could be but one Identity. which is false." (*AS* E604) Martin Priestman in *Romantic Atheism* (1999) stresses that Blake could not but disagree with the idea of one source of creative energy: "This refusal of an essentialism in which God takes over the active and energetic functions belonging to separate 'identities' is perhaps Blake's fundamental disagreement with Swedenborg."[387] Bearing in mind that while annotating *Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* Blake changed Swedenborg's "God" to "Poetic Genius" (*AS* E603), it becomes clear that Blake preferred the source of creative energy to be dispersed.

Likewise, in the exchange between Joseph Priestley and Robert Hindmarsh the issue of God existing in the physical form of man emerges as one of the central points of their argument.[388] In his 1792 *Letters to Joseph Priestley* Hindmarsh quotes from the Scriptures to argue that God is constantly addressed and referred to as a Being, equipped with bodily features and human behaviours:

> Then blame not the members of the New Church for ascribing to Jehovah a Divine Human Form; for while they give credit to the holy scriptures, they cannot help believing that God is a Man. I do not here enter into the spiritual sense of the above passages, because I believe you are not disposed to accompany me into these regions which are so far elevated above time and space. I must, therefore, in a great measure confine myself to the material system, and speak to you in your own language, that is, according to the mere literal sense of the scripture; though I dare say, that in the above and similar passages which do not agree with your idea of an infinitely extended Being, you have recourse to figure and metaphor. The holy scriptures, however, are not written, in any part whatever, by mere tropes, figures, or metaphors, but every-where by correspondences.[389]

Next Hindmarsh reasons that if God created man in his likeness he must be a substance, because otherwise all the other substances or forms of existence, derived from God

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[386] Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1997), ed. Wark, 37.
[387] Martin Priestman, *Romantic Atheism: Poetry and Freethought, 1780-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 91.
[388] Hindmarsh refers to passages in Priestley's *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*, where Priestley claims that God, situated in time and space, extends just like matter and pervades all his creations, see Robert Hindmarsh, *Letters to Dr. Priestley, Containing Proofs of the Exclusive Divinity of Jesus Christ* (1792), 235-36.
[389] Hindmarsh, *Letters to Dr. Priestley* (1792), 224-25.

through the act of creation, could not exist. Hindmarsh concludes by emphasising that while man is a mortal manifestation of the divine, God is the embodiment of the "immortal man."[390]

Whereas Swedenborgian thinking, as defined in the *New Dictionary*[391] and reiterated by Robert Hindmarsh in his reply to Priestley, allowed for variety and individualised expression, activated by influx and held together by degrees of likeness to the divine essence, Lavater's understanding of likeness was far more limited since he had the tendency to explain variation as excrescence. From Blake's point of view Lavater was wrong to believe that there exists an ideal physical body. There were only versions or rather varied expressions of embodied spirituality. In response to Lavater's one-man-model, Blake developed his notion of the Human Form Divine as a dynamic interrelationship between the different layers constituting the human body and generating personalised identity. When Blake writes that Lavater followed the "Philosophy of Causes & Consequences" and has been led astray, he puts forward his own conviction that "each thing is its own cause & its own effect." (*AL* E601)

In *All Religions are One* (c.1788/1795) Blake once again emphasised the role of the body. Here the argument revolves around material man or "the faculty which experiences." (*ARO* E1) By bringing the "Poetic Genius" to this argument about body-soul relationships, that is to the core of Blake's attempt at defining expressions of spirituality, whatever material man experiences is challenged, because as men create they draw on their own inner prolific energy.[392]

In *There is No Natural Religion* (c.1788/1794) Blake's equation of human nature being the image of God was turned into a matter of physiognomical analysis and as such into a matter of perception. In due course this equation is not only destabilised it breaks down. Similitude, variety, or likeness, according to Blake, are not the only things which connect individuals, It is also the whole range of possible physical variety, because it is this variety which expresses the divine essence of God. Blake formulated the question of how the human body should be described and categorised as an ontological problem. The new mode of perception was independent of the body's physical organisation: "Mans [*sic*] perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception. He perceives more than sense (tho' ever so acute) can discover." (*NNR* E2)

This new mode of visual categorisation is carried out by the poet who is able to grasp the entirety of human nature. The experimental philosopher, by comparison, recurs

[390] Hindmarsh, *Letters to Dr. Priestley* (1792), 226.
[391] Hindmarsh, ed., *New Dictionary* (1794), 119.
[392] Samuel Foster Damon traces "poetic genius" back to Blake's Annotations to Swedenborg's *Wisdom of Angels Concerning Divine Love and Divine Wisdom* which Blake annotated in 1788. This is when, according to Damon Blake "discovered the central importance of the Imagination. He applied it first to the Lord [...], but he soon transferred it to the essential Man, especially those in whom it manifests, the poets or prophets." See

to abstract notions of identity, and thus reconfirms the types and categories he set out to find. All he does is "repeat the same dull round over again." (*NNR* E3) If this argument is taken back to *All Religions are One* it becomes clear, that Blake believes that human perception impresses its parameters onto the physical world and in due course imagination becomes replaced by recognition. Redemption for Blake is a physical experience. It is possible because "it is the poetic genius in every man that can see both these aspects of every other man, for it requires a kind of fourfold vision to see the outward likeness and variety and the inward likeness and variety. To accept the psychology of Locke is to see only the likenesses."[393]

In Blake both textual as well as pictorial images were frequently manipulated and transformed into more accentuated representations, the most extreme examples being Blake's "Cancer" and *The Man Who Taught Blake Painting*. The following chapter is going to explore how Blake in his creation myth of the Urizen Books struggled with the idea of an ideal man and the notion of a central form. It is never quite clear in the Urizen Books who creates whom and whether what manifests itself as physical body was shaped from inside or outside. The problem of representation which Blake encountered, examined and explored in connection with the physiognomy project published as *Essays on Physiognomy* (1789-98) and while working with Fuseli on the frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Man* made him realise that not only the relationship between painting and engraving but also between God and man could be approached in terms of original and copy. This is why there are so many different versions of bodies in the Urizen Books.

S. Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake*, revised edition (1965; Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1988), 330.

[393] Erdman, *Prophet against Empire* (1977), 143-44.

Chapter 3

Physiognomical Developments and Physiognomical Creations

The argument of this chapter is that *The Book of Urizen* (1794) is not about divine, *ex nihilo* creation but about the processes involved in the representation of humanity. While the phrase "God created man in his Likeness" was the motto of Lavater's *Essays*, Blake's Urizen Books will demonstrate the problem of representation inherent in that phrase. The body in Blake contains man's eternal soul; but it is also a medium for physiognomical communication as well as a site of physiognomical interpretation. To understand Blake's use of the body, it is necessary to contextualise it within its various cultural, historical and aesthetic dimensions. This chapter will show how in the 1790s Blake's sense of humanisation and embodiment intersects with the discourses of translation, politics, the history of Bible criticism, and finally with anatomy.

At the core of Blake's creation myth is the construction of human identity, conveyed as both physical appearance and material body. With respect to Johann Caspar Lavater's quasi-science of physiognomy it becomes clear why the nature of human identity became such an important issue to Blake who focused on how identity is constituted through physical representation. From his involvement as an engraver for Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* Blake had been able to cultivate an awareness of the limits and potential dangers of representation. In reiterating the moment of creation throughout the Urizen Books, Blake not only subverted the notion of original creation, he expanded on physiognomical interpretation and thus demonstrated the impossibility of fixing identity into an unambiguous physiognomy.

At the outset of *The Book of Urizen* Blake's creator-God Urizen withdraws from the realm of the Eternals to live an independent existence and to create his own universe: "Lo, a shadow of horror is risen / In Eternity! Unknown, unprolific! / Self-closd, all-repelling." (*BU* 3:1-3, E70) Before the creation of the world can be continued Los has to resurrect or rather repair Urizen's broken body: "Urizen laid in a stony sleep / Unorganiz'd, rent from Eternity." (*BU* 6:7-8, E74) With the introduction of Los, Blake deconstructs the notion of creation as duplication after the divine image. Not only is the main creator figure a fragmented and possibly incoherent source, it is never clear exactly what the prototypical body is. However, it is possible to reconstruct the narrative by which this body is brought into existence.

The proposed reading of Los's creation of Urizen is that it is a physiognomical episode in a Lavaterian style. What is different in Blake's rendering of the creation myth is that Urizen is not created but brought back to life through the process of likeness making.

In his conception of Los, Blake differentiates between creation as original creation and creation as a recreation through interpretation. With the physiognomy project progressing through the various stages of its publication, as outlined in the first chapter, Lavater abandoned working with originals. However, it was only through drawing that Lavater was able to produce physiognomical interpretations of human character. As a result he came to prefer representations of human beings and thus to take the copy for the original. It is useful to note that Los's creative practices are quite different from those of either the physiognomist or the portrait painter. Los does not differentiate between original and copy; he works directly on Urizen who - in due course - suffers excruciating pain. Embodiment in the Urizen Books takes place inside as well as on the surface of the human body. While the first part of this chapter discusses the interpretative processes shaping the outer body, the second part will focus on how the inner human space is organised into its anatomical blueprint.

The ontological difference between original and copy is, in fact, never identified by Lavater. The copy is treated not as a representation but as a substitute or stand-in. He even believed a copy, made by a God-fearing artist, could potentially bear more resemblance to the divine original than any human being.[394] Thus, the connection between original and copy is constructed as a close link, just as if the copy were a reflection of the original. In Blake, the struggle between body and soul, inner and outer anatomy, lies in the feeling of pain which connects the visible surface with the invisible depth. As Blake wrote, even "The pangs of hope" begin "In heavy pain striving, struggling." (*BU* 12:19-20, E76)

By means of the changes happening inside Urizen's body Blake draws attention to the possible failures of the process of representation. Urizen comes to resemble himself less and less and Los shrinks back in horror: "He watch'd in shuddring fear / The dark changes & bound every change / With rivets of iron & brass." (*BU* 8:9-11, E74) Whereas Robert Essick conceptualised the body in terms of engraving techniques, with the engraver's incising nets over figures to give them body, this chapter argues that within the context of Blake's creation myth, nets set a physical transformation into motion. After covering Urizen with "nets & gins" (*BU* 8:7, E74) Los steps back and realises that underneath the nets bones begin to emerge and eventually flesh and bodily organs fill in the spaces of the bone-work construction: "Panting: Conglobing, Trembling / Shooting out ten thousand branches / Around his solid bones." (*BU* 12:5-7, E76) This body is finally woven together through nerves and blood vessels.[395]

In the introductory chapter of this thesis Gilles Deleuze's notion of platonic motivation in likeness-making has been outlined in order to theorise body-soul relationships in Blake's creation myth and to analyse the interaction between its two

[394] Lavater (1774-78), IV, 435.

creator figures and, in particular, the role of Los as material creator. Los has been attributed the role of the physiognomist, producer of interpretations of human identity, because his activities make the invisible qualities of Urizen's creation manifest themselves within the parameters of a physical body. The analysis focuses on the embodiment of Urizen, because his pain best exemplifies the responses of the divine humanity to self-limiting and self-definitive interpretations of human character.

The dynamic process of coming into being is reinforced through the narrative structure of Blake's creation myth. As Urizen is fashioned into a body, as described on plate 10, the Eternals are less and less able to recognise him ("The Eternals said: What is this?" *BU* 6:9, E74). The reader, however, begins to recognise Urizen's familiar human features. The paradox of this situation is that darkness is equivalent to materially manifested visibility only existing outside the eternal world. Blake, consequently, parallels coming into being with understanding and recognition, because Los uses his nets and gins to bring order and thus meaning to the newly interconnected parts of Urizen's body. Within the context of physiognomy it becomes clear that what he actually does is engrave the body-soul relations of Urizen's existence in the manner that Robert Essick has described in his essays "How Blake's Body Means." Lavater attempted to reveal the traces of divine resemblance, and Los tries to capture or rather fix what he believes to be Urizen whose physical body emerges as a representation of different relations of proportions and body-soul connections. In due course the divided consciousness of both Los and Urizen become interwoven within the boundaries of their physical bodies.

Prior to the writing of Blake's myth of creation as set out in *The Book of Urizen* it is important to realise that by the early 1790s the authority and authenticity of the Genesis account of creation as the divine word of God had come to be severely challenged within the liberal community. The Historicist argument about Blake's creation myth in connection with the textuality of the Bible began with Blake's contemporaries Alexander Geddes and Robert Lowth, and was continued two hundred years later by E.P. Thompson and Jerome McGann. E.P. Thompson and also Jon Mee have argued that what had been subsumed as Blake's idiosyncratic idiom was typical of the rhetorical practices of the late eighteenth-century antinomian and millenarian traditions. McGann first identified the Roman Catholic Alexander Geddes as a possible mediator for Blake's awareness of contemporary controversies on the status of the scripture, in particular of German Biblical scholarship.[396] Geddes, who was a regular contributor to the *Analytical Review* between 1788 and 1793,

[395] Los's creation of Urizen is spread over *BU* plates 8, 10, 11, 13.

[396] See Jerome McGann, "The Idea of an Indeterminate Text: Blake's Bible of Hell and Dr. Alexander Geddes," *Studies in Romanticism*, 25:3 (1986), 303-24, Jon Mee, *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), E.P. Thompson, *Witness against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law* (New York: New Press, 1993).

worked on a translation of the Bible which was published by Joseph Johnson in 1792 and 1797.[397]

McGann specially emphasised that Geddes's research into textual authenticity had a deep impact on Blake: "the received biblical texts were corrupt because they all derived from unreliable base texts."[398] The Pentateuch traditionally ascribed to Moses was, according to Geddes, a combination of a whole range of stories continually re-edited throughout its history. When it comes to formulating his own motivation for working on a new Bible translation Geddes begins by listing various Bible translations:

> By the help of these versions, compared with the original and with one another, and of the various readings of the text itself, collected in the present century from a great number of manuscripts, a nearly genuine copy of the Pentateuch may, by the rules of a judicious criticism, be at length obtained.[399]

Analogously in the 1780s the Swedenborgians had disputes about the authenticity of the Bible. Blake, according to David Erdman, noticed the differences between what was read at the five-day founding Conference of the New Jerusalem Church in April 1789 and what he was reading himself.[400] During this conference it was decided that the Swedenborgians needed their own Bible, *The Word of God*.[401]

Just as a single Mosaical authorship for the Pentateuch had been ruled out, in a similar way the complex and collegiate nature of Lavater's production process meant that works published under his own name were actually also the works of his abridgers and translators. Throughout the publishing history of his physiognomy project Lavater tended to rely on his translators and editors. He used to send out manuscripts to have them proof-read by his friends. Particularly, *Aphorisms on Man* was a good example for a successful collaboration between Lavater and his translator Henry Fuseli.

To trust a translator or an editor was, in fact, highly surprising, since it was part of physiognomical practice to infer the character of the author from word choice. Assurances of like-mindedness pervade the prefaces to the translations of Lavater's physiognomy project. For example, in the advertisement of volume IV of the French edition published in 1803 the translator is praised for his "faithful spirit" and "faithful heart." Therefore, he was deemed worthy of representing the author in the translated text.[402] It stands out that in order to be able to invoke Lavater's presence, his translators and editors had to establish an emotional or biographical connection to either Lavater or his work. Fuseli, when

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[397] For Geddes's relationship with Johnson, see G.P. Tyson, *Joseph Johnson* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1979), 66, 102-03.
[398] Jerome J. McGann, "The Idea of an Indeterminate Text: Blake's Bible of Hell and Dr. Alexander Geddes," *Studies in Romanticism*, 25:3 (1986), 310, 321.
[399] *The Holy Bible*, ed. Alexander Geddes, 2 vols. (1792), I, xx.
[400] Erdman, *Prophet against Empire* (1977), 142-43. See also John Howard, "An Audience for *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*," *Blake Studies*, 3:1 (1970), 19-52.
[401] G.E. Bentley, Jr., "A Swedenborgian Bible," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 24:2 (1990), 63-64.
[402] Lavater (1781-1803), IV, 232.

accusing Holcroft of distorting the *Essays*, argued that Holcroft had not seen the unabridged original and therefore worked at one remove from both the original and Lavater. Holcroft, according to Fuseli, was in no position to judge whether Armbruster's omissions in the abridged edition were possible.[403]

In bringing physiognomy to the discussion about the subversion of received Biblical authority it is possible to realise that it includes the pictorial dimension of Blake's Urizen Books. Not only is the narrative of how man is created interrupted, the pictures showing the different stages are likewise highly confusing. It is never quite clear what is depicted.

The Book of Urizen has 10 picture plates. They appear in different copies in different places without affecting the narrative. What makes each copy unique is that there are plates missing in some copies. The argument is that just as in the different versions or translations of Lavater's work, the focus of *The Book of Urizen* changes. In fact, only copies A and B have 28 plates. The most frequently omitted plates are: plate 16, depicting a crouched figure sitting inside a fire which has been omitted in 5 copies (C D E F J); plate 9, showing an old bearded figure apparently pressed down by rocks, as well as plate 24, a little boy standing beside a howling dog which are missing from one copy.[404] Early editors of the Urizen Books concentrated on the narrative and struggled with plates 8 and 10, both labelled chapter IV. David Erdman, for example, suggested that the plate order of copies D A G, with plate 8 preceding plate 10, was to be preferred to that of copies E F B. (E804-05)

Like Geddes, Blake tried to dig below the allegorical emendations to get to a literal meaning. He approached Genesis as a poetic text, a source material compiled from different mythic narratives, open and receptive to change and manipulation. The same goes for the pictures illustrating or rather supplementing Blake's rendering of the creation of man. From his engraving work done for the Lavater project, as summarised in chapter 1, he was acutely aware of the controversial status of the portraits used in the different translations of Lavater's project. As part of the engraver team for the Hunter translation, competing with the more affordable Holcroft translation, Blake had been encouraged to deliver excellent illustrations. It was, indeed, part of the marketing strategy of the Hunter team to produce the best available copy of Lavater's work. For Blake the position was probably further complicated by his knowledge from Lavater that representation was both a textual and pictorial matter. The experience of the arguments revolving around producing the best available copy of Lavater's work was further spurred by Geddes whose work made it clear to Blake that representation was not only a pictorial but also a textual

[403] *Analytical Review*, 6 (1790), 112.
[404] William Blake, *The Urizen Books*, ed. David Worrall, vol. 6 (London: Tate Gallery Publications for The William Blake Trust, 1995), 149. Hellen B. Ellis, "Added and Omitted Plates in *The Book of Urizen*," *Colby Library Quarterly*, 23:2 (1987), 99. Viscomi has pointed out that the absence of plates 9 and 24 can also be

matter. Consequently, both the publishing history of Lavater's *Essays* and Geddes's Bible translation motivated Blake to reconsider the boundaries in text and illustration.

As a result of late eighteenth-century Biblical criticism readers were made acutely aware of the absence of the God-author. This development is mirrored on a much smaller scale in the physiognomy project. Even though many of Lavater's contemporaries contributed to the *Essays*, Lavater never considered shared authorship as a threat to the unity of the work. *Essays on Physiognomy* was not simply authored by Lavater, it represented his choices and preferences and thus created another dimension to his personality. Consequently, the communal or shared nature of authorship as a common experience is something which Lavater practised and Geddes analysed. While Lavater fused everything into the history of how he became a physiognomist, Geddes deconstructed Biblical authorship and questioned the belief in a homogeneous divine, and by inference, state authority. The voice of *Essays on Physiognomy* is a collective force, rising from a text wanting to persuade and initiate physiognomical interpretation.

Blake's struggle with the creation theme was typical of the late eighteenth-century questioning of the Anglican High Church tradition. As with the different editions of Lavater's physiognomy project the scholarly argument about the validity of an authority derived from the Bible revolved around questions of translation. In the 1786 prospectus to his new translation of the Bible, Geddes summarised the difficulties with which modern translators were confronted. He elevated the authority of the translator by pointing out that they ought not to be blamed for mistakes. The fault did not lie with the translator but with the so-called originals. The main task of the translator was to analyse the different manuscript sources in order to reconstruct its original form and identify the ideologies at work: "when the corruptions of the text cannot be removed, either by the collation of manuscripts, or the aid of versions, internal analogy or external testimony; the last source is conjectural criticism."[405]

In his 1793 *Address to the Public*, written in response to harsh reviews of his translation, Geddes again emphasised both the progress made in textual criticism and his role as translator within this new context. He wondered whether his critics believed that "they who first transcribed those divinely inspired volumes from the autographs, and they

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explained with a later owner who when having copy E rebound decided to omit these two plates. See Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 283.

[405] Alexander Geddes, *Prospectus of a Translation of the Holy Bible* (Glasgow, 1786), 2, 55. In the *Prospectus* Geddes outlines how the textual status with regard to the original-copy controversy can be resolved. He delineates three steps of critical emendation: one is the "collation and comparison of manuscripts," secondly, a comparison of the Hebrew text and translations executed "at different periods, and in different languages," and thirdly, by tracing New Testament quotations back to their Old Testament sources. See Geddes, *Prospectus* (1786), 19-55. Jon Mee has pointed out that especially Geddes's notion of "conjectural criticism" turned him into an easy target for his conservative critics. See Jon Mee, *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 172.

who copied and recopied these through every age, were likewise divinely inspired?"[406] With the strengthening of the position of the translator, the value of translation as such improved.

Geddes was not alone or even the first to recognise the problems of the translator. When Robert Lowth analysed Biblical language and prophetic discourse in his *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1787), he remarked on the remoteness of the sacred texts and outlined how a translator had to situate a text in relation to its author as well as the time and country in which it was written. In a translation, writes Lowth, "genuine sense" cannot be communicated unambiguously. With translations of the Bible, however, he makes an exception:

> It was made in a very early stage of our literature, and when the language was by no means formed: in such a state of the language, the figurative diction of the Hebrews might be literally rendered without violence to the national taste; and the frequent recurrence of the same mages and expressions serves to familiarize them to us. Time and habit have now given it force and authority; and I believe there never was an instance of any translation, so very literal and exact, being read with such universal satisfaction and pleasure.[407]

For Lowth the Bible, just like any other poetic text, required an active reader who was able to differentiate between its sanctified form, and the stylistic affinities which it shared with other primitive texts. What the modern reader had to discern was how the Bible's basic form had been interfered with over the centuries: "some degree of ornament became necessary; and the instructors of mankind added to their precepts the graces of harmony, and illuminated them with metaphors, comparisons, allusions, and the other embellishments of style."[408] Translation in the sense Lowth and Geddes were concerned with was never an issue for Blake.[409] If one takes the Urizen Books to be Blake's "The Bible of Hell" (*MHH* 24, E44)[410] it becomes clear how the contemporary obsession with original and copy gets interrupted. Through the different and unique copies of *The Book of Urizen* Blake deliberately flaunts the boundaries between these two categories. It is uncertain which of the books of Urizen is the template and which are the copies.

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[406] Alexander Geddes, *Doctor Geddes's Address to the Public, on the Publication of the First Volume of the New Translation of the Bible* (1793), 6.
[407] Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, 2 vols. (1787), I, 112, 139, 183n.
[408] Lowth, *Lectures* (1787), I, 155, II, 163.
[409] For an alternative view, see Morton D. Paley who proposed that the prosody of *Jerusalem* can be traced to Robert Lowth's new translation of Isaiah of 1778. Morton D. Paley, *The Continuing City: William Blake's Jerusalem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 45-47.
[410] At the end of plate 24 Blake details his plans for further publications: "I have also: The Bible of Hell: which the world shall have whether they will or no." (*MHH* 24, E44). Viscomi has argued that plates 21-24 were originally intended as an anti-Swedenborgian text: "It [...] seems reasonable to suppose that 'The Bible of Hell' [...] might be referring to the *Marriage* itself, as it was anticipated at the time of Blake's anti-Swedenborgian text. Or [...] it may refer either to the Proverbs of Hell, intended as an ironic inversion of Proverbs - one of the books of the Bible that Swedenborg excluded from his list of thirty-three books of Holy Writ." See Joseph Viscomi, "The Evolution of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*," in *William Blake: Images and Texts* (San Marino, CA: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1997), 45.

The impact of late-eighteenth-century textual Bible readings on the notion of received authority climaxed in Tom Paine's *The Age of Reason*, the sequel to his *Rights of Man* and continuation of its themes of human freedom and political justice. In the earlier work *The Rights of Man*, written in response to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1791), Paine attacked Burke's interpretation of the French Revolution by deconstructing the heritage of political tradition and religious sanction on which Burke based his warnings against a French-style revolution. This debate was a continuation of issues, such as, for example, the question of Parliamentary representation and the need for democratic reform. Paine was a figurehead but not always the architect of many of the new radical ideas circulating in the 1790s.[411] Moreover, much of the critical reaction to the Revolution in France, beginning with Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), was carried out as a pamphlet war which lacked a textual centre. In the preface to the second part of *Rights of Man* Paine declared:

> Not less, I believe, than eight or ten pamphlets intended as answers to the former part of the 'Rights of Man' have been published by different persons, and not one of them, to my knowledge, has extended to a second edition [...]. As I am averse to unnecessarily multiplying publications, I have answered none of them.[412]

Indeed, this statement is another indicator of the diverse nature of the 1790's reform movement, which was by no means uniform but determined by the changing ideological aspirations of its different radical and loyalist leaders.[413]

The reason Paine is important to the argument about Blake's attitude to textual authority is that he was also one of the protagonists of the debates on atheism. In *The Age of Reason* (1794) Paine articulated his scepticism about the cruelty of the Old Testament God and suggested that the Bible had been compiled to serve the political interests of its different authors. The governmental reaction to Paine's *Age of Reason* was considerable. Not only were Paine's printers prosecuted but also those who sold the book.[414] In answer to *The Age of Reason* Bishop Watson, self-declared defender of the

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[411] Mark Philp, "The Fragmented Ideology of Reform," in *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, ed. Mark Philp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 50-77.

[412] See *Rights of Man*, part the second in Thomas Paine, *The Works of Thomas Paine, ESQ.* (1792), vii-viii.

[413] Günther Lottes, "Radicalism, Revolution and Political Culture: an Anglo-French Comparison," in *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (1991), ed. Philp, 84.

[414] The first part of Paine's *Age of Reason* was written in France and published in Paris and London in 1794, followed by three more London editions 1795 and 1796. The second part of Paine's *Age of Reason* was published from 1795. In the preface he summarises the great hardships he had to endure as a prisoner of the French Republic. Nevertheless and despite ill health he managed to finish the work after his release: "Then came the scandal in England in 1796 of the book's suppression – but the suppression only of the cheap edition, lest it disaffect the lower classes. The new Society for the Suppression of Vice and Immorality had launched a notorious campaign to prosecute the poor bookseller Thomas Williams for selling one copy of Paine's book. Even Erskine, originally the chief prosecutor, had changed his position and pleaded in vain with his erstwhile colleagues to withdraw the case and prevent Williams' trial and imprisonment along with the ruin of his family." See Florence Sandler, "'Defending the Bible': Blake, Paine, and the Bishop on Atonement," in *Blake and His Bibles*, ed. David V. Erdman (West Cornwall, CT: Locust Hill Press, 1990), 41-42. For a wider context of the controversial second part, see, for example, Gilbert Wakefield's *A Reply to Thomas Paine's*

Bible, published *An Apology for the Bible* (1796).[415] Even though Blake rejected Deism he decided in his annotations to Bishop Watson to take the side of Paine, who embodied for him revolt and progress: "It appears to me Now that Tom Paine is the better Christian than the Bishop." (*ABW* E620)

Florence Sandler argued that Bishop Watson was an opportunist who used this occasion to make himself known as a conservative representative of the established Church. He defended, from Blake's point of view, institutionalised Religion and the stance of the government and thus stood for the war against France: "Watson has defended Antichrist." (*ABW* E611)[416] About Bishop Watson's argumentative strategy Blake concludes: "I have read this Book with attention & find that the Bishop has only hurt Paines heel while Paine has broken his head the Bishop has not answered one of Paines objections." (*ABW* E620)[417]

Bishop Watson complained about Paine's resistance to accepting either God or Moses as the author of the Pentateuch. He insisted that the authenticity of the Biblical text was obvious, because all the books of the Hebrew Bible were derived "from public records." Therefore, according to Bishop Watson, the Bible was an authentic document. Blake sneers "Nothing can be more contemptible than to suppose PUBLIC RECORDS to be True." (*ABW* E617)[418] This argument was never resolved. Paine's answer to Bishop Watson was published posthumously in 1819 as *Reply to the Bishop of Llandaff*: "The Bishop says, 'the oldest book in the world is Genesis.' This is a mere assertion; he offers no proof of it [...].The book of Genesis means the book of Generations; to which are prefixed two chapters [...], which contain different cosmogonies [*sic*], that is two different accounts of the creation of the world, written by different persons."[419]

That Paine received Blake's sympathy when under attack from the conservative Bishop Watson is too simple a solution, because Paine's atheism alienated him from Blake. As an annotator he participated in the argument. He tried to provide the response which Paine's text demanded, and which Bishop Watson failed to deliver. Blake was interested in the question of the existing evidence for Biblical history. He bluntly rejected the idea, however, that these facts could have been transmitted through public records.

Second Part of the Age of Reason (1795). Johnson was imprisoned in 1798 for publishing Wakefield's works. See Erdman, *Prophet against Empire* (1977), 301-02.

[415] Richard Watson's *Apology* was first published in London in 1796, and within a very short time it ran through a number of editions. Blake's annotated copy is an eighth edition.

[416] Sandler, "Defending the Bible," in *Blake and His Bibles* (1990), ed. Erdman, 42.

[417] On the back of the title page Blake also noted: "I have been commanded from Hell not to print this as it is what our Enemies wish." For why Blake did not publish a pamphlet, see Erdman, *Prophet against Empire* (1977), 302.

[418] "Paine's Power lay exactly in his not having pretensions to scholarship, nor any allegiance to the aristocratic order. He posed as the plain man of common sense talking to other plain men, and announced that when such a man, having shaken free of the servile habits of mind [...], took a good clear look at the Bible, it immediately revealed itself to be a tissue of contradiction and fraud." See Sandler, "Defending the Bible," in *Blake and His Bibles* (1990), ed. Erdman, 59.

What is at stake is the question of what the Bible really is. With this, Paine's exchange with Bishop Watson becomes yet another battlefield on which opinions on textuality and ideological positioning are fought out.

In *The Age of Reason* Paine questioned the received interpretation of the Bible and historicised the so-called facts within it.[420] He brought a political dimension to the argument about textuality in advancing a Deistic point of view. Paine argued that since the sacred Biblical text could not be traced back to a single unified design, Christianity had to be man-made and was thus equal to either Islam or Hinduism. In the first part of *The Age of Reason* (1794) Paine compared the style of the different books and concluded that the Bible was a heterogeneous text: "I see throughout the greatest part of this book, scarcely any thing but a history of the grossest vices, and a collection of the most paltry and contemptible tales."[421]

The textual status of the Bible came to hinge on the act of translation. The translator had to give authority to how he translated the Bible, that is into a new and updated version of the word of God. Approaching the relationship between Blake's two creator figures in terms of the textuality of their existence, Los could be regarded as Urizen's translator because he converts Urizen's fragmented body-parts into the new self-sustained unity of a physical identity. Instead of creating Urizen *ex nihilo*, Los embodies him into a body which exists in his own right.

In his Urizen Books Blake moved beyond the search for the original source text, leaving behind him the uncertainty about what kind of text was at the core of the Bible. He focused on the issue of translation and the different material representations of the prototypical body. The narrative revolving around the creation of the prototype of the human body had to be elusive, because Blake confronted his readers with the question of whether this body was more like Los or more like Urizen. This at last shows Blake's ambiguous position on the status of so-called lost originals and newly reconstructed originals.

In contrast to Paine, who always went beyond the text's content to focus on the ideologies at work, Joseph Priestley advocated literality and a return to the original text. He believed that it could be recuperated once corruption had been driven out. On the occasion of being made a French Citizen with a seat in the National Assembly in 1791, Priestley wrote his *Letters to the Philosophers and Politicians of France, on the Subject of*

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[419] "Extract of a Reply to the Bishop of Llandaff," in Thomas Paine, *The Theological Works of Thomas Paine* (1819), 57.

[420] Jon Mee expands on the similarities between the idiom of Blake's prophetic discourse and the current radical controversies. Since the Bible was perceived as an open text, it was frequently supplemented: "To attempt to add to the received canon of God's word was to suggest that the era of divine inspiration was not closed. More pointedly it implied that areas of knowledge and power existed outside of those officially sanctioned." See Mee, *Dangerous Enthusiasm* (1992), 48, 69, 160, 211.

[421] Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason. Being an Investigation of True and of Fabulous Theology*, 2 parts (1795), I, 15-19.

Religion (1793), a work which attempted to disentangle miracle-evidence for religion from fabrications used in the arguments about superstition and priestcraft: "I invite you to admit nothing but what shall appear to be least contrary to *natural analogy*, and consequently to *probability*. For I maintain that, as unbelievers in revealed religion, you admit what is more contrary to common experience and daily observation, than I do."[422] That is admit only what is reasonable. The rest is heathen corruption.

The appeal for a recuperation of the literal meaning of the scripture was continued in Priestley's *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever* (1794), his response to *The Age of Reason*. Just as did Bishop Watson, Priestley recapitulated Paine's argument, and opined that Paine's awareness of facts and chronology were insufficient. He also pointed out that Paine had conceded that he did not have a Bible to hand and therefore had to quote from memory. Paine's ridiculing comments on the conception of Christ are countered by Priestley who put forward an almost fundamentalist attitude to the definition of truth:

> the truth of Christianity does not rest upon any miracles performed in secret, such as that of the miraculous conception, or the temptation of Jesus, if the literal account of it be true; but upon facts of the most public nature, which were open to the examination of great numbers of persons, such as his miracles wrought in the face of the whole country, in the presence of his enemies, his death, and his resurrection.[423]

With Priestley advocating a literal interpretation of the Bible within the context of scriptural critique and questioning of authorship, the shift from the literal to the figurative or metaphorical was a small but inevitable step. Blake had difficulties reconciling radical ideas with atheism but he appreciated that Paine had refuted the claim to a literal truth while proposing the need for re-interpretation as well as metaphorical or imaginative readings.

Issues of textuality have proved important for Blake's decision to render creation by means of deviating plot structures, referring back to an inaccessible original myth.[424] The reason the Urizen Books were more than a response to the diagnosed textuality of the Bible or to the radical discussions of religion is expressed the metaphor of "The Net of Religion." (*BU* 25:22, E82) This important image has not yet been sufficiently explained. It is important to note that Blake not only parodied the creation myth, he expanded on its connotations by using "The Net of Religion" to describe the relationship between Urizen and his creation turned congregation.

The argument is that "The Net of Religion" is yet another independent body as it creates the body of the believer. It is this material dimension of "The Net of Religion" which transcends any immediate historical context and destabilises the relationship

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[422] Joseph Priestley, *The Theological and Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Priestley*, ed. John Towill Rutt, 25 vols. (1817-32), XXI, 88-89.
[423] Priestley, *Works* (1817-32), ed. John Towill Rutt, XXI, 162.
[424] *The Urizen Books* (1995), ed. Worrall, 19-20.

between Urizen and Los. Blake, no doubt, engaged with the radical debates of his time, but what he was really interested in was the construction of character and physical identity. What is striking about "The Net of Religion" is that it not only locks creator and creation into the meshes of a restricting thought system, it further transforms the ontological status of both parties. Consequently, with "The Net of Religion" metaphor Blake draws attention to the relationship between original text and translator, because the net as translated text or created object takes on a life of its own and becomes another life-giving force within the creation myth.

The scope of Blake's "The Net of Religion" metaphor is truly amazing. It is conceived as a shadow emerging from Urizen's body, but it is also compared to a human brain and a spider's web. This conjunction of literal and figurative qualities in this metaphor echoes the ambiguity of form and status of the human body. When Urizen inspects his creation, he notices two things. Firstly, that his creatures are not strong enough to follow the rules of his religion: "he curs'd / Both sons & daughters; for he saw / That no flesh nor spirit could keep / His iron laws one moment," and secondly: "he saw that life liv'd upon death." (*BU* 23:27, E81) He withdraws and weeps: "Cold he wander'd on high, over their cities [...] A cold shadow follow'd behind him." (*BU* 25:5-9, E82) Just as Enitharmon separated herself from Los, "The Net of Religion" appears as an immediate consequence of Urizen's disappointment. "The Net of Religion" is yet another body brought to life, a "Female in embrio / None could break the Web, no wings of fire." (*BU* 25:18-19, E82)

Since Urizen's children have broken the laws of his religion, he hates them. The loving relationship between father and his offspring, however, is restored after their bodies have been reshaped so that the iron laws can be followed. Consequently, with the metaphor of "The Net of Religion" Blake gives expression to Urizen's subjectivity which literally produced the relationship between himself, the created world and the people within it. The interpretation put forward in this chapter is foremost concerned with the creative and transformative powers of "The Net of Religion." It not only maps religious doctrines, it transforms human existence by quite literally creating patterns with which the physical manifestation of man's identity can be defined:

> Then the Inhabitants of those Cities:
> Felt their Nerves change into Marrow
> And hardening Bones began
> In swift diseases and torments,
> In throbbings & shootings & grindings
> Thro' all the coasts; till weaken'd
> The Senses inward rush'd shrinking,
> Beneath the dark net of infection. (*BU* 25:23-30, E82)

It is possible to associate "The Net of Religion" with Lavater's method of physiognomical interpretations, because just as Lavater's physiognomical interpretations pressed human

beings into labelled categories of character, "The Net of Religion" painfully inscribes the parameters of the material body. In the same way in which the grids of horizontal and perpendicular lines define the proportions of human character, "The Net of Religion" generates structures of meaning:

> Six days they shrunk up from existence
> And on the seventh day they rested
> And they bless'd the seventh day, in sick hope:
> And forgot their eternal life. (*BU* 25:39-42, E83)

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Los is the materialist in *The Book of Urizen* and as such he is responsible for the physical manifestation of human identity. With respect to the contemporary physiognomical practices the fall, that is the creation of individual identity, is presented as a process of abstraction. This creation-fall is a demonstration of the limiting factors of a physical existence. What Urizen, Los, Enitharmon and Orc have in common is an experience towards closing off and solidification.

The shift from fluctuation to solid matter, presented as a crucial part of human existence, is first announced on plate 4 where Urizen declares: "I have sought for a joy without pain / For a solid without fluctuation." (*BU* 4:11, E71) Los's creation is described in terms of binding. (*BU* 8, 9, E74-75) And, finally at the sight of the new born Orc, the Eternals "closed the tent / They beat down the stakes the cords / Stretch'd for a work of eternity; / No more Los beheld Eternity." (*BU* 19:47-48, 20:1-2, E79-80) In *The Book of Urizen* identity is created in three stages. Not only is it defined within the boundaries of the human form, it gradually manifests itself with all the details contained in the anatomy of physiognomy: First, the creation of Urizen through Los. Second, the embodiment of Enitharmon and Los's assimilation into the form he has created, and thirdly, the incarnation of Orc. Ultimately all of these characters are engaged in the same kind of creation, because just as with the juxtaposition of the two creation myths in Genesis, the Urizen Books are concerned with the embodiment of the human form as we know it.

Any argument about the narrative of Blake's creation story has to take the order in which he produced the 18 text plates into consideration.[425] Usually it gets emphasised that each copy is unique because "Blake created a somewhat different work for each purchaser."[426] In recent years arguments on technical issues have become more prominent. Joseph Viscomi has pointed out that plates 7 and 8 of *The Book of Urizen* were probably etched as late as 1795, that is when Blake is believed to have been

[425] *The Illuminated Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 182.
[426] *Blake's Poetry and Designs: Authoritative Texts, Illuminations in Color and Monochrome, Related Prose, Criticism*, eds. Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant (New York and London: Norton, 1979), 141-42.

working on *The Book of Ahania* and *The Book of Los*.[427] Based on the coherency of narrative copy C has traditionally been dated the first exemplar. Pates 7 and 8 are missing from it. In all the other copies plate 7 precedes plate 8, thus continuing chapter III and preparing the action of chapter IV. Viscomi, however, pointed out that copy F also colour-printed in 1794 and looking very similar to copy C has these two plates.[428] A third problem which Blake's editors have had to address is the absence of plate 4 from five of the copies (D E F G J). It has Urizen's speech and thus an explanation for his creation of the world and human body.[429]

While it is possible to explain a certain degree of the visual variants of *The Book of Urizen* with the effects of colour-printing, the textual variations are due to the editing of the poem, to Blake extracting and collating its 28 plates. It is unlikely that Blake ever imagined that his readers would have seen more than one copy in front of them. Regarding the publishing history of the work it is useful to concentrate on topical issues in order to understand Blake's grasp of the thematic developments. So, if plate 7 picturing Los, and plate 8 showing Urizen's skeleton - the object of Los's creation work - are excluded as in copy C, Los only appears momentarily on plates 5 and 6 before he gets a longer mention on plate 10. Consequently, plates 7 and 8 not only increase Los's presence, they also develop the theme of creation as embodiment.

Plate 4, the most frequently absent plate, is closely related to plate 5 showing Urizen holding up a book. When tracing the plate through all eight copies, it emerges that only in copy G the colour-printed image evokes a book with paragraphs of text. In all other copies the design is obscured and the open pages are covered with nothing but blurred blobs of colour. It has been noted that Blake may have attempted to invoke the shapes of hieroglyphs, Greek or Hebrew characters as well as Runes. The argument is that while reaching beyond a clear cut differentiation between the visual and the verbal, Blake's designs are a visual representation of disintegrated text.[430] Thus, plate 5 is once again an indicator for a troublesome reader-book relationship to the extent of utter frustration on the reader's side. Yet, in some of the copies Urizen seems to retain a relationship to the

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[427] In connection with Erdman's argument about a work in progress and likewise Bentley's idea of a sequence of the plates Viscomi clarifies "Bentley and Erdman assume that Blake printed one copy of *Urizen* when it had only twenty-five plates, and then during that year completed two more plates (7-8) while extracting one plate (4) to produce three more copies (D, E, F), adding yet another plate (16) the following year to print two more copies (A, B). While Blake was not opposed to printing a book in progress [...] he was not likely to pull only one impression per plate unless he was proofing, and certainly not when color printing, since the technique required more preparation than ordinary printing [...]." See Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 281.

[428] Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 281.

[429] For reasons why this plate has been omitted from copy G of 1818, see Robert Essick's argument about Blake's technical problems with this plate in Essick "Variation, Accident, and Intention in Blake's *Book of Urizen*," *Studies in Bibliography*, 39 (1985), 230-35. See also Bentley, *Blake Books* (1977), 71-73, and Bentley, *William Blake's Writings*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), I, 238-59.

[430] "The mock hieroglyphs in *The Book of Urizen* probably were intended in part to satirize the idea of secret wisdom [...] Because of their variety and virtuosity, they also stand in parodic contrast to the unvarying medium of the 'real' texts around which the drawings were composed." See Irene H. Chayes, "Words in Pictures. Testing the Boundary: Inscriptions by William Blake," *Word & Image*, 7:2 (1991), 86, 97.

onlooker through eye contact.[431] Most of the visual variants of *The Book of Urizen* can be explained with the effects of colour-printing. The following chapter will explore the role of colour-printing in more detail.

Interestingly, neither the title-page of *The Book Urizen* nor plate 5 establish Urizen as the author of the book named after him.[432] What complicates matters further is that in *A Small Book of Designs* (c.1794/c.1796), an edition of mixed colour-printed images, Blake has given plate 5 the caption "The Book of my Remembrance." (E673) This title is probably derived from Malachi 3.16: "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, & a booke of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, & that thought upon his name."[433] Blake goes back to this Old Testament book, firstly, to enforce the notion of ritualised worship and secondly, to suggest that the kind of book held up by Urizen really is a barrier between God and his worshippers. In Malachi, the book of remembrance contains a list of those who will be saved at the end of time. In the context of *The Book of Urizen* it has become impossible to know who has been chosen.[434] According to plate 4 Urizen wrote the rules of the book of remembrance himself and in the "Book / Of eternal brass," (*BU* 4:32-33, E72) but he is not able to control it. What the *Small Book of Design* brings to the discussion about Blake's treatment of text-image relations is evidence for his awareness of their interdependency. Urizen is a creator God who has lost control. Neither his congregation, created in his image, nor the supposedly sacred text, engraved into the "Book of Brass" are stable or stay as they were intended.

On both plates 4 and 5 Urizen is presented as a Mosaic figure holding up the Ten Commandments. While his metal book signifies the attempt to fix the divine laws of human identity, the resemblances between God and man is distorted during the next step of practical creation. The inner, invisible and primal unity of the idea of what man is gets transformed when it becomes bound up with the material he is created from.

After analysing what effect the missing plates have on the narrative of Blake's creation myth Helen B. Ellis writes: "To omit Plate 4 is to omit this powerful and climactic identification of Urizen with God; without it the poem also loses the major verbal referent of Urizen's (and Jehovah's) most characteristic activities, that of lawgiver and author."[435]

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[431] *The Urizen Books* (1995), ed. Worrall, 29-31.

[432] The link between the two books has been established through the hieroglyphs which have been identified in both designs. Morris Eaves has tried to identify one of the squiggles of the book Urizen is copying from as the Hebrew letter *aleph*, see Eaves, "The Title-page of *The Book of Urizen*," in *William Blake* (1973), eds. Paley and Phillips, 228-29.

[433] King James Bible, Malachi, iii, 16. Only the second colour print of this design, used in the second copy of the *Small Book of Designs* is titled. See also Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 260:21, 261:8.

[434] Paul Mann, who emphasises that Blake identified Urizen's book with the Fall of man, expands on how both the book and man's material body "obstruct" Eternity, while delineating Urizen as the archetypal author in terms of Derrida's discussion of writing and logos, see Mann, "The Book of Urizen and the Horizon of the Book," in *Unnam'd Forms* (1986), ed. Hilton and Vogler, 53.

[435] Ellis, "Omitted Plates" (1987), 104.

Whereas Mollyanne Marks suggests that the narrative inconsistencies should be considered as Blake's resistance to fixed meanings and hierarchical order, Ellis regrets the omission of plate 4 and emphasises that Blake's editing decisions went to such extremes that sense is altogether lost.[436] According to Genesis man is created from clay and filled with the breath of life. In *The Book of Urizen* plate 4 summarises the process which precedes the transition from the conception to the embodiment of man. Bearing in mind the experience, made while part of the engraver team of the *Essays*, omitting plate 4 shifts emphasis away from artistic conception to how the problems of copied representation are overcome.

Likewise, the importance of plates 8 and 10 increases when considering how the Urizen Books intersect. *The Book of Los* expands chapter IV of plate 10 from *The Book of Urizen*, and *The Book of Ahania* repeats chapter IV of plate 8. This particular chapter emerges as the pivotal point of Blake's creation myth, because in each of the sequels it reiterates the scene of Urizen's embodiment.[437] Thus Blake not only emphasises Los's role in the creation myth, he foregrounds the body. What is magnified through the different collations of the plates of *The Book of Urizen* is the sixth day of creation. On the sixth day God created man. When aligning the Urizen Books it becomes clear that a shift away from Urizen's creation means a growing importance of the practices of Los.

After establishing that *The Book of Urizen* is more about the creation of man than of the material universe he inhabits, it is necessary to focus on the narrative of this creation from the perspective of Los. In order to understand what is happening, it is important to realise that what is characteristic of the relationship between Blake's creator figures is that Los is binding Urizen into the physical body rather than creating it *ex nihilo*. If the creation story had developed from Urizen's point of view we might have expected him to do so. But when Los enters the scene, Urizen already exists as a shadow.

After his separation from the realm of the Eternals, Urizen choose the shadow as a disguise: "unknown, abstracted / Brooding secret, the dark power hid." (*BU* 3:6-7, E70) As a shadow Urizen is to the Eternals what a silhouette is to man – a stand in. When Los decides to rescue Urizen he applies nets and gins thus turning the shadow into a much more detailed likeness of Urizen. This mode of creation echoes Lavater's physiognomical practices. Not only did he use a specially designed silhouette chair, he divided the silhouette image by means of horizontal and perpendicular lines.

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[436] "Inverting Plates 8 and 10 [as in copies B E F] simply makes nonsense of this section of the poem [plates 10, 11 and 13]." See Ellis, "Added and Omitted Plates" (1987), 102-03. Mollyanne Marks, "Structure and Irony in Blake's 'The Book of Urizen,'" *Studies in English Literature*, 15 (1975), 579-80.

[437] Marks, "Structure and Irony in Blake's 'The Book of Urizen'" (1975), 581. M.J.T. Mitchell has stresses Urizen's central position when writing that a "closer investigation of the later events of the poem reveals that they, too, are essentially modifications and re-enactments of the same event, and that they are not to be related in a causal, linear sequence, but rather as increasingly complex displacements of a single archetypal action, Urizen's retreat from and division of the mental universe of the poem," see Mitchell, "Poetic and Pictorial Imagination in Blake's *The Book of Urizen*," *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 3 (1969), 91.

Within the context of physiognomy it becomes clear that Blake renders the creation of man in terms of a displacement. Rather than creating Urizen's body, Los manufactures the tools with which he transforms Urizen from one kind of representation into another. His nets and gins are chains which bind Urizen's eternal existence and bring forth a human mortality.[438] The creation of Enitharmon is a similar event. This time only the Eternals shrink back in horror. Los has changed as well. He has lost the ability to recognise the consequences of his creation. When Orc is born, the Eternals close off the eternal world and become likewise, blind to man's divine origin. What is specific to the interaction between Blake's creators is that Los binds Urizen during a process of likeness making. This act is but a portrayal which originates in the theoretical context of physiognomy as well as in portraiture. Los's creation of Urizen is fundamentally different to the embodiment of Enitharmon and the incarnation of Orc.

Lavater's ideas about good quality illustrations can be linked to the contemporary debates about portraiture. His *Essays on Physiognomy*, moreover, played a crucial role in the development of portrait painting and helped to define and assess the validity of a likeness.[439] A demand for realism, used in History Painting for propaganda and glorification, accompanied the rise of the genre. Sir Joshua Reynolds, for example, in his *Discourses on Art* adhered to the idea that general likeness was preferable to precise and intimate representation. A perfect portrait, according to Reynolds, could only be achieved through an idealised image; only the artist was able to restore the true character by recuperating it from its existence in nature.

This definition of pictorial realism, originating in the classical tradition, can be theorised in terms of the notions of copy and simulacrum, or representation and facsimile, since what differentiates an imitation from a mere copy or reflection is aesthetic effect. Blake joined the debate about realism in portraiture when he annotated Reynolds's statement, "likeness, consists more in taking the general air, than in observing the exact similitude with every feature," with an indignant "How ignorant!" (*AR* E650)[440] By rendering the two creation stories from Genesis as a two stage of representation of embodiment,

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[438] "Los builds the panoply of a divine smith, including furnaces (like those in the Book of Daniel) and an Anvil and Hammer (as in *The Tyger*) and begins to shape Urizen into something more definite. [...] Los is not being praised, as Plato's harried shaper evidently was meant to be." See Harold Bloom, *Blake's Apocalypse: A Study in Poetic Argument* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1963), 183. Mellor compares Los's work to a womb-like creative force, because Urizen's "growth" out of a skeleton can be associated an embryological development, see Mellor, *Blake's Human Form Divine* (1974), 95. Paley, *Energy and Imagination* (1970), 65.

[439] In the section on portrait painting Lavater characterises the human face as God's "masterpiece," and he writes that if the portrait painter were aware of this, the "human face would be to him as sacred as the Text of the Sacred Writings ought to be to the Translator. He would be anxiously careful, not to alter the Work of God, as so many unfaithful Interpreters have altered his Word." See Lavater (1789-98), II, 240. "Such failure of art to convey the full import of facial features as they appear in nature roiled Lavater, and he expressed displeasure with painters and draftsmen whose work seemed to him often recognizable enough but seldom genuinely similar to its subjects." See Ellis Shookman, "Pseudo-Science, Social Fad, Literary Wonder," in *Faces of Physiognomy* (1993), ed. Shookman, 18, 20. "Lavater's ambivalent faith in silhouettes [...] shows him settling for less but claiming that it is more." See Christoph Siegrist, "'Letters of the Divine Alphabet' – Lavater's Concept of Physiognomy," in *Faces of Physiognomy* (1993), ed. Shookman, 34.

Blake seems to repeat the development from *Physiognomische Fragmente* to *Essays on Physiognomy.* Once the silhouette has been abandoned, the struggle with creating a likeness begins.

Blake's rejection of naturalism is well known. His attitude to copying from nature, however, was part of a complex aesthetic discourse on likeness. The belief that the universal could be embodied in the particular need not be confused with individual features. In fact, the question of whether a single portrait was capable of comprising the multitude of all human variants was answered in Blake's own attempt at theorising characterisation in the descriptions to his painting *Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the nine and twenty pilgrims on their journey to Canterbury* (c.1808), where he declared that the poet had the gift to recognise the "eternal principles of characters of human life." (*DC* 21, E536) Blake clearly agreed with both Lavater and Reynolds that the eternal in man could only be revealed through art. What he disagreed with was how this laying bare of the true inner nature was achieved. In his *Public Address* (c.1808) he writes: "I know my Execution is not like Any Body Else I do not intend it should be so. None but Blockheads Copy one another. My Conception & Invention are on all hands allowd to be Superior My Execution will be found so too." (*PA* 24, E582) The interaction between Los and Urizen is so complex because Blake demonstrates what can go wrong. Consequently, Urizen's body has not only become a space of mismatched body-soul relationships, his new mode of existence within a material body testifies to the implications of physiognomical interpretations.

What made Chaucer attractive to Blake was that he managed to evoke the different types of man's universal character: "some of the Names are altered by Time, but the Characters themselves for ever remain unaltered [a]nd consequently they are the Physiognomies or L[i]neaments of Universal Human Life beyond which Nature never steps." (*CP* E570) Blake emphasised that Chaucer had been able to portray the human types as they occurred in every age:

> The character's of Chaucer's Pilgrims are the characters which compose all ages and nations [...] different to mortal sight, but to immortals only the same; [...] nothing new occurs in identical existence; Accident ever varies, Substance can never suffer change nor decay. (*DC* 9-10, E532)[441]

This notion of human type is very much in the tradition of Neo-classical thought.[442] When Blake claimed that Chaucer's pilgrims together constituted a timeless cross-section of

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[440] Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1997), ed. Wark, 72, 200.

[441] For Blake's knowledge of Dryden's Preface, see Karl Kiralis, "William Blake as an Intellectual and Spiritual Guide to Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims," *Blake Studies*, 1:2 (1969), 142-43.

[442] Claire Pace comments on the gap and tension between the need of representing universal features as opposed to individual: "Indeed, as is now recognized, in many ways Blake was heir to eighteenth-century and earlier traditions to a greater extent than he admitted; yet for Blake, the rendering of universal truths about mankind was a visionary experience, which was inseparably linked with, and depended upon, the precise

English society, he implied that the essence, linking all, was immaterial. Thus it emerges that character in Blake signifies man's invisible qualities.

Reynolds, Blake and Lavater's thinking were close to each other in their insistence on how likeness should be rendered. All three attempted to get beyond the immediate effects of material likeness or similitude and to the deep structure of the face. Lavater summarised his expectations of the portrait painter with respect to physiognomical awareness and anatomical study:

> [he] may be an excellent Copier [...] he will, notwithstanding, produce bad portraits, unless he have [*sic*] studied with the greatest attention the structure, the proportion, the connection, the play of all the gross and delicate parts of the human body, as far as they have a decided influence on the exterior.[443]

For Blake, who conceived the protagonist of his creation myth without referring to nature for inspiration, it was crucial to differentiate between the general and particular features when letting the particular identity manifest itself. Since Blake was aware of the shortcomings of Lavater's physiognomical analyses he introduced the Emanations, entering the myth with *The Fours Zoas* as female counterparts to the protagonists, to embody what is invisible and what Lavater's outline-engravings failed to reveal. The Urizen Books revolve around the creation of the physical body. Blake explores the question of who Urizen *is* in terms of his material existence and in the most literal way the deep structure of his character. The depths of Urizen's physical nature will be explored in more detail in the second half of this chapter.

In both portraiture and physiognomy the definition of authentic likeness was based on the connection believed to exist between the inner and the outer man.[444] By the early-nineteenth century when the notion of what kind of information a portrait could deliver had been fully developed, it became clear that likeness-making was an ambivalent goal.[445] While likeness could be mastered and improved with mechanical aids, real presence depended on talent and artistic genius. The artist had to create the particular of human identity beyond the assumed poses.[446]

Lavater regarded the silhouette as the most objective representation of human identity. From it he derived his deterministic physiognomical interpretations. The shadow in *The Book of Urizen*, however, was a negative for Blake who breaks with the whole idea of definitive representation inherent to the silhouette from which Lavater derived his

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rendering of the individual instance; the generic was conveyed in terms of the specific, which must be sharply defined." See Pace, "Blake and Chaucer: 'Infinite variety of character,'" *Art History*, 3:4 (1980), 396-97.

[443] Lavater (1789-98), II, 242-43.

[444] Nadia Tscherny, "Likeness in Early Romantic Portraiture," *Art Journal*, 46:1 (1987), 196.

[445] Julian Bell, *What is Painting?* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 143.

[446] The notion that it required a painter of genius to express the essence of a person is a Neoplatonic idea. See E.H. Gombrich, "The Mask and the Face: The Perception of Physiognomic Likeness in Life and Art," in *Art, Perception, and Reality*, eds. E.H. Gombrich, Julian Hochberg, and Max Black (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University, 1977), 2.

physiognomical judgements. While Lavater eventually abandoned the silhouette because it did not convey enough information, Blake demonstrated through the interaction between his two creators how unstable Urizen's existence as a shadow was. Los's creational acts, consequently, represent the urge to define human identity beyond what the silhouette embodies. As a result Urizen solidifies inside a material body. A parallel can be noted for the shadow, emerging from Urizen's body. It cannot but develop into "The Net of Religion."

The material reality into which both Urizen and "The Net of Religion" develop is depicted on the final plate of *The Book of Urizen* with Urizen being entangled within it. So, not only is the net imposed on the shadow, it emerges from the shadow made body to change creation as a whole. In this ontological situation Urizen does not seek the confrontation with the otherness of his physical body which has taken hold of his existence. In his quest for identity through his universe he superimposes the net and the meanings it creates onto his creatures, his sons and daughters, who inhabit the created world. What the final plate of *The Book of Urizen* illustrates is how the self is closed off from the surrounding world. Consequently, the metaphor of "The Net of Religion" in itself stands for the role of the body which comes to be the vessel for the modern notion of identity. With regard to Lavater's physiognomical interpretations it becomes clear how the body turns into a boundary of definition and categorisation which cuts the self off from the other.

This tendency to advance the physical body as an index of human identity is in Lavater's search for the divine in human nature. Lavater differentiated between the physiognomy of the self and that of the other. While the former was usually associated with the soul, the latter was based on inferences derived from the features of the body. For Lavater all his physiognomical analyses were mediated through the experience of his self. He believed that a physiognomist could comprehend the difference between self and other through empathy. An understanding of one's own inner physiognomy would in due course lead to a correct analysis of that of the other. At the very core of Lavater's approach was a growing gap between body and soul, because the search for the soul in the face of the other was carried out as a re-experiencing of physical disposition. Lavater essentially experienced the body as a barrier which made it difficult to access the soul from outside.

In Blake's creation myth Los pities Urizen: "He saw Urizen deadly black, / In his chains bound." (*BU* 13:50-51, E77) Los had wanted to reconstruct Urizen's divine essence. His failure causes him to produce yet another visible object, the globe of blood which develops into Enitharmon, another representation of humanity and even further

removed from the original. (*BU* 18, E78)[447] As an immediate consequence of Los's pity Urizen's body changes even further. The Eternals see it transform from an image of "Death" into that of a "clod of clay," to "flesh or clay" and finally to "hurtling bones." (*BU* 6:9-10, 7:5, 8:2, E74)[448] However, Urizen is not dead, he is in a deep sleep.

From Los's point of view Urizen collapsed into formlessness. The different parts of his body are no longer interconnected. As the consequence of the fear and unwillingness of the Eternals, Los decides to take it on himself to bring Urizen back to life. Strictly speaking, Los tries to restore Urizen's humanity. To piece him back together again Los needs to apply contrivances for trapping such as nets and gins.[449] In terms of Lavater's physiognomical interpretation of self and other, Blake parodies the relationship between subject and object, by showing how the gulf between them widens.[450]

Los's creation of Urizen does not comply with the phrase "God created Adam in his Likeness." The process has been reversed because instead of the divine creating the immortal body of Adam, the qualities of that body are projected back onto its source the divine creator. This subversion of creation is particular to Blake. That the very act of creation is a binding process, which not only enchains the soul into the physical body but also the creator to an existence inside the created world, is prefigured in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "The Giants who formed this world into its sensual existence and now seem to live in it in chains; are in truth. [*sic*] the causes of its life." Blake emphasises how creator and creation interconnect: a body in chains is created by a chained mind. (*MHH* 16, E40) Mental chains, forcing the creator to call man into existence, become subsequently part of his body and cause feelings which define the body as human.[451]

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[447] For Blake ambiguous conception and use of pity during the creation process, see Stephen D. Cox, *'The Stranger Within Thee': Concepts of the Self in Late-Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980), 145.

[448] In *Milton* Blake returns to the clay creation: "Silent Milton stood before / The darkend Urizen; as the sculptor silent stands before / His forming image." (*M* 20[22]:7-9, E114) Tristanne Connolly draws attention to the embodiment of Reuben, who is continuously loosing his physical forms, and therefore returns to Los to be re-shaped. This clay-like remoulding is interpreted by Connolly: "Los [...] shapes Reuben's eyes, mouth and ears; each time Reuben frightens those on the other side of the river, then returns. Since he never completely takes bodily shape nor permanently passes over the river, he could, among his many meanings, represent repeated miscarriage." See Connolly, *Blake and the Body* (2002), 117-19.

[449] In *The Visions of the Daughters of Albion* "nets & gins & traps" are compared to "cold floods of abstraction" (*VDA* 5:18, 19, E49) and in *The Song of Los* state institutions are compared to "nets & gins & traps" which "catch the joys of Eternity." (*SL* 4:2, E67) This idea recurs in *The Book of Urizen* as "The Net of Religion." (*BU* 25:22, E82)

[450] Similarly, in *The Book of Ahania* deep felt pain in Urizen's genitalia initiates the separation of Urizen and Ahania. She is Urizen's invisible soul. Because of Urizen's jealousy "She fell down a faint shadow wandring / In chaos and circling dark Urizen / [...] Hopeless! abhorrd! a death-shadow, / Unseen, unbodied, unknown." (*BA* 2:38-42, E85) In Chapter V Ahania, recollecting this moment and lamenting her loneliness, is still a "Non-entity", because "Her voice was heard, but no form / Had she: but her tears from clouds / Eternal fell."(*BA* 4:49-51, 54, E88)

[451] Pity is, indeed, a degenerated feeling which originates in the fallen, physical body, and it is symptomatic of fallen or reductive perception: "does his eye behold the beam that brings / Expansion to the eye of pity?" (E50) Ross Woodman suggested that the sensation of pain occurs whenever the process of imposing "a name upon the nameless" is incorporated into a wider system, that is whenever the body falls "under the control of Urizen" and gets fixed into a syntax of meaning, see Woodman, "Nietzsche, Blake, Keats and Shelley: The Making of the Metaphorical Body," *Studies in Romanticism*, 29:1 (1990), 116, 125.

Consequently, Los's humanisation of Urizen is the *par excellence* of Blake's notion of the fall into mortality.

The relationship between Los and Urizen has conventionally been discussed as a process of an interdependent assimilation. W.J.T. Mitchell, Mollyanne Marks and Paul Mann have emphasised that the body which Los creates for Urizen rebounds and thus becomes his own.[452] This interpretation is based on Blake's use of chain imagery. Not only are both creator figures in chains, the chain reinforces the interconnectedness of painter and sitter, as well as creator and creation. With this, one arrives at a reinstatement of a body-soul dualism in Blake; that is, Los projects the chains of his existence onto Urizen. The fall takes place in the mind and causes the material world to manifest itself. This, however, is only partly true, because each attempt at embodiment in Blake's creation myth is not simply a matter of visual manifestation but triggers a process of transformation. When he recoils from Urizen Los's response is pity. This emotion comes out of a body which has turned material: "Los wept obscur'd with mourning: / His bosom earthquak'd with sighs." (*BU* 13:48-49, E77) As the gap between self and other widens, the process of replication increases. Los's pity turns out to be a female. She divides his soul and develops into Enitharmon. These creation scenes are different perspectives on the sixth day of creation. They are a demonstration of the fatalism formulated in *There is No Natural Religion* (c.1794/1795): "He who sees the in- /-finite in all things, / sees God. He who / sees the Ratio only / sees himself only." (*NNR* E3)

What is new in Blake's treatment of creation-as-binding is that he has the quality of a chain or a net fuse into the body. Blake suggests that the body literally freezes into its material form, as if the energy bound inside the forged tools was drawing the heat from the body. In *The Book Urizen*, the section on frozen caverns and solidifying bones is followed by the image of a "red / Round globe hot burning," sinking down from the spine. (*BU* 11:2-3, E75)[453] This combination of contrary forces, fire and ice, have their origin in the ambiguous persona of Los, who, when introduced in *The Book of Los*, is standing over the abyss of the newly divided eternal fires. These fires freeze into a "vast solid without fluctuation," and thus they become part of Los's identity: "The Immortal stood frozen amidst / The vast rock of eternity; times / And times; a night of vast durance: / Impatient,

[452] Mann, "The Book of Urizen and the Horizon of the Book," in *Unnam'd Forms* (1986), ed. Hilton and Vogler, 54. Marks, "Structure and Irony in Blake's 'The Book of Urizen'" (1975), 581. Mitchell, "Poetic and Pictorial Imagination in Blake's *The Book of Urizen*" (1969), 91. This idea recurs in Chapter II of *Jerusalem*, when he uses the phrase they "became what they beheld" six times and in close proximity to express his idea that recognising the other determines the perception of the self. (*J* 30[34]: 50. 54, 32[36]: 9, 14, 15, 19, E177-78)

[453] See "Earth's Answer": "this heavy chain, / That does freeze my bones around" (*SE* 31:21-22, E19). "The Tyger": "What immortal hand or eye, / Could frame thy fearful symmetry? [...] What the hammer? what the chain." (*SE* 42:3-13, E24-25) Nelson Hilton's reading of the solidification of the human bones is based on late eighteenth century fibre theory: fibres turn into nerves, and harden into bones, see Hilton, *Literal Imagination: Blake's Vision of Words* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 93-96.

stifled, stiffend, hardned." (*BL* 4:11-14 E92)[454] The relationship between Urizen and his created world can be analysed according to the above outlined approach. When Urizen encounters "His eternal creations" (*BU* 23:9, E81) for the first time he is appalled. Just as Los before him, he sees them assemble and manifest themselves piece by piece. Urizen acknowledges that their existence has turned physical and pities them. Like Los he spontaneously produces another body, "The Net of Religion." It originates inside his own body but grows to become a living entity.(*BU* 25:22 E82)[455]

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In the Urizen Books the major protagonists of Blake's creation myth come into being through their embodiment into the physical and temporal boundaries of the material body. So far, this chapter has delineated how the surface of this body comes to define the existence of Urizen, Los, Enitharmon and Orc. The reminder of this chapter will contextualise the inner space of the body in order to determine what being in the body means, because Urizen's body changes as Los works directly on it. The argument is that the role and experience of the body in Blake are regulated by the existing visual representations of its inner anatomy and the conjunction between art and medicine.

It is important to note that after physiognomy, anatomy was the second most influential factor in the quasi-science of human character. Since the Renaissance the enquiry into the body's interior continuously produced new images. These representations helped to define human identity. The difference between the understanding of the body and the awareness of the body's individuality, writes Jonathan Sawday, manifested itself during the examination of dead and living bodies. The fascination with anatomy originated in the difference between them: "it is, perhaps, this very impossibility of gazing within our own bodies which makes the sight of the interior of other bodies so compelling. Denied direct experience of ourselves, we can only explore others in the hope (or the fear) that this other might also be us."[456]

The embodiment of Urizen can not only be aligned with the physiognomical interpretation of a physiognomist but also with the examinations of the anatomist. Michel Foucault in *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), explained the development of the late eighteenth-century new medicine as the continuous detachment from handed-down book knowledge: "the methods of analysis, the clinical examination, even the reorganisation of

[454] This scene anticipated Los's creational labour in *The Book of Urizen*: "Cut off from life & light frozen / Into horrible forms of deformity / Los suffer'd his fires to decay / Then he look'd back with anxious desire / But the space undivided by existence / Struck horror into his soul." (*BU* 13:42-47, E77)

[455] "The description of Urizen being followed by his shadow presents no problem. Neither does the simile which likens the shadow to a spider's web. But in the second stanza [...], the simile has become a reality. The shadow was like a web, and then the web itself is given an existence equivalent to that of the shadow." See Marc Rosenberg, "Style and Meaning in *The Book of Urizen*," *Style*, 4 (1790), 198.

the schools and hospitals seemed to derive their significance from pathological anatomy."[457] Significantly, while Los seems to stay on the surface of Urizen's body, the body itself turns from a heap of organs mixed in body fluids, into a fully functioning organism. The strategies used to make the inner appear can be described in terms of the "metaphor of dissection."[458] Lavater, moreover, before issuing his character descriptions, analysed the human face by isolating its different features. He even produced engraved plates of eyes, eyebrows, foreheads, noses, mouths, lips, and teeth.[459]

While Lavater's physiognomical gaze steered towards an affirmation of the body's duality, with the soul imprinting itself into the physical body, the anatomical gaze could only begin to explore the inner space once all signs of life had left the body. Lavater often referred to the Dutch anatomist Petrus Camper who sawed through human skulls to exactly determine the profile-line of the facial bone structure.[460] In physiognomy and anatomy great care was taken when producing visual representations of the human body. The practices for making these representations were rather complex. While the physiognomical portraits used throughout Lavater's physiognomy project resulted from his life long experience, not to mention the time spent to produce them, in anatomy this relationship was reversed, because time had to be stopped in the object in order to counteract its decay.[461]

The argument is that Blake used the theme of creation-as-embodiment to juxtapose the effects of the anatomical and physiognomical gazes. Both ways of looking at a human body purported to reproduce the original state of the body; but whereas the physiognomist brought ready-made moral interpretations to the body, the anatomist prepared the corpse in order to artificially invoke its original state. Therefore, the visual and verbal discontinuities are Blake's attempts to question and interrupt the processes involved in the making of body representations in both physiognomical and anatomical practices. Since the prototypical body in Blake's creation myth is shaped by both, the bodies of Urizen, Los, Enitharmon and Orc can be associated with two modes of representation, the physiognomical and the anatomical.

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[456] Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), ix, 8, 110.
[457] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1963; London: Tavistock Publications, 1973), 124-26.
[458] Stafford, *Body Criticism* (1997), 38.
[459] It is important to note that this kind of bodily fragmentation is foremost in volume IV of *Fragmente* and volume III of the Holcroft translation of 1789. See Lavater (1789), III, 163-97, for plates see 295, 300, 301, 305, 306, 308. In his *One Hundred Physiognomical Rules* Lavater attempts to bring his observation to a conclusion. He uses numerous plates illustrating variants of the different parts of the human face. See Lavater (1804), III, 329-86.
[460] Meinhard Rauchensteiner, "Dein Körper, diese Karte, mein Herz," in *Kunstkabinett* (1999), eds. Mraz and Schlögl, 77.
[461] Robert Herrlinger and Marilene Putscher, *Geschichte der medizinischen Abbildung*, 2 vols. (Munich: Moos, 1972), II, 49.

In his physiognomy project Lavater considered how the interaction of flesh and bones shapes the skeleton: "It is the pressure [...] of the muscles, and that of the parts adjoining to the bones, which engrave upon their surface, and even in their substance, all sorts of designs and furrows."[462] The solution, derived from this kind of analysis of the body's inner forces, was to compare the creation of man's character to a gradual petrifaction of his bone anatomy:

> The bones themselves are, in the beginning, nothing but a kind of jelly, which becomes in process of time membranous, then cartilaginous, and, at length, hard and bony. In proportion as this jelly, so transparent and so delicate in its origin, grows, thickens, and loses its transparency, there is observable in it a little speck more firm, and more opaque, which differs from cartilage, and already partakes of the nature of bone, without its hardness. This speck may be termed the *nucleus* of the bone which is going to form, the centre from which ossification proceeds, till it reach the circumference.[463]

With the physical evidence of emerging bone structures Lavater justified the isolated character lines of his physiognomical portraits. His interpretation of the body's organic dimension is problematic because it does not allow for forces which are bound solely to the body's materiality. Indeed, one of the main events of Blake's creation myth is Urizen ageing into the mature body of a grown man. What structures this process is described in terms of different ages of "dismal woe." Each section of the poem describes how Urizen's body grows into its human anatomy, propelled by an inner programme. (*BU* 10:43, 11:9, 11:18, 11:25, 13:3, 13:11. 13:19, E75-76)

What Lavater described as petrifaction taking place during both ageing process and foetal development, is a complex metaphor in Blake's creation myth.[464] The imagery of frozen bones is used throughout the Urizen Books. In *The Book of Urizen* the formation of the human bones is related in Chapter IVb: "And the sulphureous foam surging thick / Settled, a lake, bright, & shining clear: / White as the snow on the mountains cold [...] Ribs, like a bending cavern / And bones of solidness, froze / Over all his nerves of joy." (*BU* 10:21-41, E75) In Chapter IV of *The Book of Ahania* this imagery recurs as "Nerves of Joy melted & flow'd / A white Lake on the dark blue air / In perturb'd pain and dismal torment / Now stretching out, now swift conglobing." (*BA* 4:13-16, E87)[465] Chapter IVb of *The Book of Urizen* and Chapter IV of *The Book of Los* dramatise Urizen's embodiment as advancing in seven and respectively nine ages. (*BU* 13:19, E76, *BL* 4:41, E94)

In *The Book of Urizen*, time is instigated by the "Incessant beats" of Los's hammer and reflected in the "chains new & new / Numb'ring with links. hours, days & years." (*BU*

[462] Lavater (1789-98), II, 149.
[463] Lavater (1789-98), II, 145-46.
[464] Lavater (1789-98), II, 146.
[465] An alternative reading is suggested by Christopher Hobson: "*Ahania* continues the treatment of Urizenic existence as autoerotic [...]. Again we see a white lake [...]. Though the details about fantasies and fluids are not repeated, the scene is clearly a variant on that in *Urizen* – it [...] involves some of the same imagery, and

10:17-18, E75) The eternal mind begins to rotate "ceaseless round & round." While wrapping itself into the newly forged time-chain it produces its body: "Restless turnd the immortal inchain'd / Heaving dolorous! anguish'd! unbearable / Till a roof shaggy wild clos'd / In an orb, his fountain of thought." (*BU* 10:31-34, E75)[466] The body in question is the skull. Due to Los's chains it develops from the soft head of a baby into the solid and rounded skull of an adult. Then other bones emerge. The spine, for example, is "Like the linked infernal chain." (*BU* 10:36, E75) With this Blake moves on to the sixth day of creation. The corresponding passage in *The Book of Los* begins with the creation of light. It is simultaneous to the appearance of Urizen's spine. (*BL* 5:10-17, E93)

Traditionally, the gap between the creation of day and night on day one and the subsequent attribution of light to the heavenly bodies on the fourth day poses a problem: Can there be light without a source? For Blake, according to Andrew Lincoln, "this distinction has a precise significance: it expresses two stages in the history of human perception."[467] What is new in Blake's treatment of this contradiction is that he has the body manifest itself without being exposed to light. Blake combines the creation of light with the creation of the body, and thus makes its substance precede any kind of human form originating in human perception. In Chapter IV of *The Book of Los* Blake parallels the creation of the body with the creation of light: "Then Light first began; from the fires / Beams, conducted by fluid so pure / Flow'd around the Immense: Los beheld / Forthwith writhing upon the dark void / The Back bone of Urizen appear" (*BL* 5:10-17, E93)

With respect to the different ages of creation the function of light is displaced. It has not only lost its absolute status, it fails to illuminate the final scene of Urizen's embodiment. In *The Book of Urizen* the Eternals divide the firmament into light and darkness only after Orc's birth. This act is described as the putting up of a tent. (*BU* 19:47-48, 20:1-2, E79-80) Later, in both *The Four Zoas* and *Milton* this passage is amended with minor changes in the description of the events: "And thus began the binding of Urizen; day & night in fear / Circling round the dark Demon, with howlings, dismay & sharp blightings / The Prophet of Eternity beat on his iron links & links of brass." The process of Urizen putting on "Enslav'd humanity" while "Refusing all definite Form" is structured through the lines "A first age passed, a state of dismal woe [...] And a second age [...]," etc. (*FZ* 53:20-28, 54, 55:1-9, E336) In *Milton* Blake begins with a direct warning to the reader "Mark well my words! they are of your eternal salvation." (*M* 2:25, E96) With his combination of body and light Blake not only subverts the chronology of the seven-day creation, he has it take place in the space of the human body. In the Urizen Books, Blake not only gives different versions of the creation of the body, he draws attention to the

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likewise ends in the formation of Urizen's body." See Christopher Z. Hobson, *Blake and Homosexuality* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 40.

[466] For the chain manifesting a Newtonian image of gravity, see Hilton, *Literal Imagination* (1983), 70.

problem of original representation. By displacing the role of light, Blake turns the relationship between God and man upside down. It is man through his body and not God from *ex nihilo* who creates light.

In comparison with how the theme of light and darkness is used in Lavater's silhouettes, generated through a clear-cut division between light and shadow, and in Camper's skull collection, produced from a separation of flesh from bones, Blake's treatment of light-sources and body-creations is a rather awkward combination.[468] This is because for Blake being (*Sein*) does not begin with biological birth or end with physical death. In the Urizen Books coming into existence is described as embodiment and thus character representation. What Blake confronts his readers with is a shift from a temporal to a corporeal definition of human existence. This change in perception, writes Jonathan Sawday, was caused by the rising of the new sciences and the ensuing collapse of the traditional and analogously harmonised frame of reference. The micro-macrocosm model proved too inflexible to give meaning to the newly discovered voids in the cosmos and the body.[469]

The shift from existence in time to existence in space explains why both Lavater and Blake identified divine creation not with an initial act *ex nihilo*, but as something taking place time and time again. In both Lavater's physiognomy project and Blake's creation myth the physical body bears the traces of this process. Even though Lavater repeatedly rejected superstition and folklore, the affinities of his physiognomical doctrines to occult beliefs cannot be ignored. When explaining, for example, birthmarks in terms of cause and effect relationships between the mother and the unborn child, it becomes obvious how he strays back into occultism.[470] With this step backwards Lavater recuperated the vitalistic assumptions in occult thought, which maintained the duality of human existence in a material and a spiritual body. As a consequence of the attempt to turn physiognomy into a science Lavater considered body-soul constellations as merging into one another.

Lavater set out to construct a taxonomy of human character, but what he was really concerned with was the representation of spirituality. Early on he realised that the proposed taxonomy would never be complete. Nevertheless, he continued to identify human types as indicators of character to enable individuals to monitor their moral progress up and down the scale of resemblance. Blake went beyond representing the body as an integral part of the self as well as object of the outside world. By embodying Urizen rather than creating him Blake showed how man comes to be his body. Next to

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[467] See Andrew Lincoln, "Blake and the Natural History of Creation," *Essays and Studies*, 39 (1986), 99-100.
[468] "In life and art the distribution of light and shade helps us to perceive the shape of things. The presence of absence of reflection tells us about their surface texture. [...] and the density of shading or 'hatching' therefore has the effect of modelling, that is of indicating form. We are shown an objective state of affairs which depends only on the position of the object in relation to the source of light." See E.H. Gombrich, *The Heritage of Apelles, Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1976), 3.
[469] Sawday, *Body Emblazoned* (1995), 90-91.

Urizen's embodiment through Los, bringing the eternal body into its physical manifestation, Orc's incarnation is a demonstration of how the human form is achieved through an improvement of animal resemblance:

> Many sorrows and dismal throes,
> Many forms of fish, bird & beast,
> Brought forth an Infant form
> Where was a worm before.
> [...]
> When Enitharmon groaning
> Produc'd a man Child to the light. (*BU* 19:33-40, E79)

In his description of Orc's incarnation Blake does not focus on the solidification of the bones. Instead he traverses the different stages of animal resemblance through which the human form ascends to its perfection, that is towards its resemblance to the divine image. Consequently, the description of incarnation with its different evolutionary stages complements the theme of the solidification of the human skeleton.

Another possible source for a representation of pregnancy is Ebenezer Sibly's *Medical Mirror, or Treatise on the Impregnation of the Human Female* (c.1796). Sibly, who had studied surgery in London and graduated M.D. from Aberdeen in 1792, explains how the transparent jelly of the foetus gradually loses its transparency during gestation: "the nucleus of the bone [...] is [...] the centre from which ossification proceeds, till it reaches the circumference." Like Lavater, Sibly characterised the development of the foetus as taking place in different epochs of ossification.[471]

What is curious about both Lavater and Sibly's descriptions of pregnancy is that birth as such has been taken out of the equation. Considering these contemporary deliberations on pre-birth developments it is not surprising that Blake blurred the boundaries between birth and coming into existence. He was interested in a definition of the human form. His understanding of the process of pregnancy and man's inner anatomy made it necessary for him to resort to the anatomical details of pre-birth and dissection situations in order to entirely grasp the dimensions of the body.

At the centre of Urizen's inner anatomy is his heart. As soon as his bone frame is in position the heart sinks inside it and shoots out veins and arteries. During the "third Age" of creation the brain grows "branches" around them. (*BU* 11:10-18, E76) From these inner bodily nets the senses gradually emerge to turn into distinctive facial features:

> On high into two little orbs
> And fixed in two little caves
> Hiding carefully from the wind,
> His Eyes beheld the deep,

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[470] Lavater (1789-98), III, 189.
[471] Ebenezer Sibly, *Medical Mirror; or Treatise on the Impregnation of the Human Female: Shewing the Origin of Diseases and the Principles of Life and Death* (c.1796), 48-51. See also Lavater (1789-98), II, 146.

[...]
Two Ears in close volutions.
From beneath his orbs of vision
Shot spiring out and petrified
[...]
Two Nostrils bent down to the deep.
[...]
In ghastly torment sick;
Within his ribs bloated round,
A craving Hungry Cavern;
Thence arose his channeld Throat. (*BU* 11:13-27, 13:1-7, E76)

After these "Ages" have past over the body, Urizen develops arms and legs during the seventh and final age of his embodiment:

Enraged & stifled with torment
He threw his right Arm to the north
His left Arm to the south
Shooting out in anguish deep,
And his Feet stampd the nether Abyss. (*BU* 13:12-16, E76)

While Chapter IVb of *The Book of Urizen* concludes with a more or less complete human being, in the corresponding passage in *The Book of Los* the creation of man climaxes after nine ages with the brain and the heart as the two centres of human essence and identity: "Till his Brain in a rock, & his Heart / In a fleshy slough formed four rivers / Obscuring the immense Orb of fire / Flowing down into night: till a Form / Was completed." (*BL* 5:52-56, E94)

By emphasising that both the heart and the brain are creative centres to the body's material physiognomy, Blake acknowledges them as two sources of spiritual energy: that is as productive interfaces between body and soul. The difference between Blake and Lavater, however, is that Blake ascribes certain powers to the bodily organs and in particular to the veins and arteries, which weave it together. When considering Blake's use of the heart imagery, Carmen Kreiter stresses that Blake may actually have witnessed a vivisection.[472]

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The visual strategies, used in artistic and medical illustrations, suggest that the concept of likeness was applied to representations of both the inner and outer man. The connection between anatomy and physiognomy was made in anatomical study books, for example, in *Introduction to the Study of the Anatomy of the Human Body, particularly designed for the use of painters, sculptors, and artists in general* (1824) written by Lavater's physician son Johann Heinrich Lavater. The book was conceived in 1789 and is

[472] Carmen S. Kreiter, "Evolution and Blake," *Studies in Romanticism,* 4 (1965), 114-15.

dedicated to Henry Fuseli who had encouraged J.H. Lavater's intention to make anatomical knowledge available to artists. Lavater's son stayed with Fuseli for five or six months after finishing his medical studies at Göttingen University in 1789. It is impossible to determine how regular Fuseli's help was but clear is that J.H. Lavater thought of his *Introduction* as a ground-breaking work.[473]

Most of the existing textbooks, according to J.H. Lavater, were too explicit for beginners. He emphasises that young artists need to be encouraged to study the anatomy of the dead to familiarise themselves with bone apparatus as well as of the living in order to understand the movements of the body.[474] J.H. Lavater is the missing link between Lavater and Blake. His instruction book is a perfect indicator for the vogue of physiognomy and the response to physiognomy coming from the medical circles. His fascination with Fuseli, moreover, found its way into his argument in favour of artistic-anatomical education. J.H. Lavater writes: "crude genius begets only unnatural and mis-shapen monsters."[475] As early as 1772 Johann Caspar Lavater had pointed out that a good painter or physiognomist had to acquire a well-grounded knowledge of anatomy. This was the only way to accurately determine what could be seen on the surface of the human face.[476] The goal of J.H. Lavater was to enable artists to understand the body in motion.[477] The differentiation between living and dead anatomy may have motivated Blake to blur the categories of life and death when having Los embody Urizen.

While the English translation of J.H. Lavater's *Introduction* was published posthumously in 1824 by Fuseli's friend Rudolf Ackermann,[478] the German edition *Anleitung zur anatomischen Kenntniß des menschlichen Körpers* appeared as early as 1790. J.H. Lavater's instruction book was, in fact, a translation of Ploos van Amstel's *Aanleiding tot de Kennis der Anatomie* (1783).[479] Just as with the physiognomy project, the denomination of translation or even adaptation was problematic. J.H. Lavater copied Amstel's copperplates after the Leydon Professor in Anatomy Albinus but provided a much more detailed text. The 1797 French translation had no dedication. Its preface was considerably longer, because so explained J.H. Lavater's translator Gauthier de la Peyronie he amended the work with notes and observations. When preparing for the

[473] See J. H. Lavater (1824), iii, iv.
[474] J.H. Lavater (1824), vi.
[475] The mention of the "monster" seems to repeat a passage from Fuseli's advertisement to *Essays on Physiognomy*. J.H. Lavater delineates human proportions, but there is nothing new his list. He merely summarises the current conceptions and theories. See J.H. Lavater (1824), 2, 6-12.
[476] Lavater (1772), 77-78.
[477] J.H. Lavater (1824), 3.
[478] Marcia Allentuck, "Fuseli and Lavater: Physiognomical Theory and the Enlightenment," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 55 (1967), 90.
[479] Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, *Aanleiding tot de Kennis der Anatomie, in de Tekenkunst, betreklyk tot het Menschbeeld* (Amsterdam, 1783). For the plates after Professor Bernhard Siegfried Albinus (1697-1770), the Leyden Professor who produced various very influential anatomical atlases, see iii. The highly accomplished illustrations were executed by the Dutch engraver Jan Wandelaar, see Robert Jütte, "Die Entdeckung des

English translation Fuseli decided to omit any direct reference to either Amstel or Sue, two names which were frequently mentioned in the preface of the French translation.[480] When Fuseli became involved he emphasised the originality of the work and its importance to art education. In comparison to J.H. Lavater, Amstel did not go beyond analysing dissected corpses.[481]

As an artist Blake was part of the intended audience of J.H. Lavater's instruction book. The mention of William Hunter in particular indicates that J.H. Lavater was familiar with how anatomy was taught at the Royal Academy at the time.[482] Next to the collections of plaster casts, the Royal Academy provided its students with the opportunity to attend the lectures of one of the best anatomy teachers in London: Dr. William Hunter, who had been elected Professor of Anatomy in December 1768, the year of the Academy's foundation. The significance of this appointment was enormous and spoke for the importance given to anatomical study. At that early stage the Academy only had four Professorships.[483] Not only were Hunter's lectures very popular, he dissected bodies of criminals, given to the Academy for teaching purposes, in front of students and visitors:[484]

> Hunter's lectures and demonstrations were popular with the students, and his stress on the 'superiority of nature over art' which 'seems to shine forth in almost everything,' must have led to lively discussions amongst the students [...] as Hunter's views clashed with those of the President. [...] Reynolds believed [...] that 'nature herself is not to be too closely copied,' she must be idealised. The artist must remember that it is the mind, not the eye, that he is addressing.[485]

Hunter's role at the Royal Academy was cemented by two John Zoffany paintings. One shows Hunter lecturing to the Academy, and the second positions him beside the President. It was because of Hunter's anatomy lessons that the Royal Academy belonged to the more progressive art institutions in Europe.

It is a well known fact that Blake disagreed with many of the principles of the educational programme devised by the Royal Academy and its Professors.[486] His relationship with the Academy is usually derived from his comments on Reynolds's

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'inneren' Menscheen 1500-1800," in *Erfindung des Menschen: Schöpfungsträume und Körperbilder 1500-2000*, ed. Richard van Dülmen (Wien: Böhlau, 1998), 257.

[480] J. H. Lavater, *Élémens Anatomiques d'Ostéologie et de Myologie, a l'usage des peintres et sculpteurs* (Paris, 1797), iii-viii.

[481] Amstel, *Aanleiding* (1783), 1,2, 5-7.

[482] J.H. Lavater (1824), vi.

[483] See William Shandby, *The History of the Royal Academy of Arts from its Foundation in 1768 to the Present Time* (London: Longman, 1862), I, 52. Sidney C. Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1968* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1968), 235. William T. Whitley, *Artists and their Friends in England 1700-1799* (London & Boston: Medici Society, 1928), I, 276. W.R.M. Lamb, *The Royal Academy: A Short History of its Foundation and Development to the Present Day* (London: Alexander Maclehose & Co., 1935), 25.

[484] Whitley, *Artists and their Friends* (1928), 277. Whitley draws on a letter written by the sculpture John Deare (1759-1798), who describes how Hunter initiated the making of the Dying Gladiator. This particular cast was made from criminal who had been hanged for smuggling. This "Smugglerius" was preserved to be integrated into the plaster-cast because of the extraordinary development of its muscles.

[485] David Irwin, *John Flaxman 1755-1826: Sculptor, Illustrator, Designer* (London: Cassell Ltd., 1979), 5-6.

Discourses on Art, probably written between 1808 and 1809. The overriding impression is that he thought institutionalised art education curtailed the imaginative development of artistic creativity. In *Discourse I*, read as the opening lecture at the Royal Academy, Reynolds stressed that he expected students to be diligent and to learn how to draw.[487] Drawing from life-models was one of the most important features of the curriculum. According to the rules and orders structuring the daily routines at the Academy, each student applying for admission to the Royal Academy, had to present "a Drawing or Model from some Plaister-Cast [*sic*]," and once admitted he had to "continue to draw after the Plaister, till the Keeper [...] judge[d] him qualified to draw after the living Models."[488] In his annotation to Reynolds, Blake refers back to his student days: "Having spent the Vigour of my Youth & Genius under the Opression [*sic*] of S^{r} Joshua & his Gang of Cunning Hired Knaves Without Employment [...], The Reader must Expect to Read [...] Nothing but Indignation & Resentment While S^{r} Joshua was rolling in Riches Barry was Poor."(E636) The reason Blake rejected the life-classes, according to D.W. Dörrbecker, was due to his previous schooling as an engraver. He may have had difficulties with drawing from three-dimensional models.[489]

Martin Kemp has pointed out that in the early nineteenth century Hunter's naturalistic approach to anatomy was gradually replaced with a more classical outlook on the human body. Flaxman's lectures, read as Professor of Sculpture, a newly created post at the Royal Academy in 1810, were an indication of this modification.[490] Likewise, Fuseli in the 1824 edition of J.H. Lavater's work developed the differences between the German adaptation and the Dutch original, first undertaken in 1789, even further, that is, to an aesthetication of the bone structures laid bare through dissection.[491]

Judging from the descriptions of dead anatomy set alive in *The Book of Urizen*, Blake benefited from J.H. Lavater's visit in 1789, the year in which the first volume of

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[486] Aileen Ward, "'S^{r} Joshua and His Gang': William Blake and the Royal Academy," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 52:1 (1989), 79.

[487] Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1997), ed. Wark, 19-20.

[488] *Council Minutes of the Great Assembly of the Academicians of the Royal Academy of Arts* (1768), I, 12-14. During Reynolds's presidency these regulations were changed but little, see also Hutchison, *History of the Royal Academy* (1968), 56-57. For Academies of Art see Erma Hermens, ed., *Looking Through Paintings: The Study of Painting Techniques and Materials in Support of Art and Historical Research* [*Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarbook*, v. 11] (Barn: de Prom, London: Archetype, 1998), vols. V-VI.

[489] D.W. Dörrbecker compares Blake's engraving with his drawing techniques and concentrates on what is required for conveying both shape and volume of a human body. In his analysis of Blake's pencil study "A Naked Youth Seen from the Side" Dörrbecker concludes that Blake was not capable of rendering his drawing without anatomical flaws, see Dörrbecker, *Konvention und Innovation: Eigenes und Entliehenes in der Bildform bei William Blake und in der britischen Kunst seiner Zeit* (Berlin: Kommissionsvertrieb Wasmuth Buchhandlung und Antiquariat, 1992), 187.

[490] Martin Kemp, *Dr William Hunter at the Royal Academy of Arts* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1975), 26, 27.

[491] Kreiter, "Evolution and Blake" (1965), 115. This explains the occasional écorché treatment of the body. Peter Tomory traced Fuseli's use of the échorché back to 1772: "Fuseli's interest in the flayed male figure commenched when he, like most of the other artists in Rome, first went to the French Academy (Villa Mancini) to practise his life drawing. [...] Whether plaster casts of these had already arrived in London before Fuseli's departure is not known, but other similar models were available cast by the anatomist Cowper." See Peter Tomory, *The Life and Art of Henry Fuseli* (New York: Praeger, 1972), 83.

Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* was published. During that time Blake was working on the Michelangelo plate, intended for Fuseli's *Aphorisms on Art.* It is possible that Michelangelo's close study of corpses was being discussed. In Blake's time human corpses were hard to come by and therefore, an understanding of living anatomy was extremely rare. The friendship with Fuseli and the possible familiarity with J.H. Lavater's anatomy project suggest that Blake in 1789, many years after his student days at the Royal Academy, was aware of the conjunction between physiognomy and anatomy, long before it reached its wider audience.

Next to its display in the anatomical instruction books the human body was also exhibited as dissected object in anatomical museums. It is possible that Blake not only followed the discussions about human anatomy at Fuseli's house, he may have been aware of the negotiations about John Hunter's enormous anatomical collection. It was offered to the British government after Hunter's death in 1793. F.J. Cole established that the development of anatomical museums depended largely on the price of liquid preservatives. Between 1739 and 1800 thirty nine museums were founded in England alone. The quality of the anatomical exhibits was determined by the nature of the preservative used and the storage in flint glass, which was - because of its transparency - preferred over commercial glass. While emphasising the importance of the increasing use of liquid preservatives Cole points out: "The Hunterian Museum, for its time unusually rich in spirit material, contained, as left by Hunter, only 4829 moist preparations, as against 8636 not requiring a fluid preservative."[492] That body parts preserved in jars were more successful than engravings of dissected bodies, emerges from Ebenzer Sibly's *Medical Mirror* (c.1796). Its plates, depicting the nine months of pregnancy, were drawn after foetuses exhibited at Rackstrow's museum. Sibly admits that these designs are lacking in detail and precision and recommends a visit.[493]

The modern historian, Ludmilla Jordanova, has delineated how the public interest in the phenomenon of life changed the way in which anatomical exhibitions were organised. The main purpose of the late eighteenth-century collections was to demonstrate the taxonomy of the creatures alive. To be able to convey an awareness of, for example, the secret life within the exhibit had to be transformed into a representation. If viewers were confronted with the real thing, argues Jordanova, they would not be able to follow the intended transition from knowledge displayed to knowledge acquired. A medical representation had to mediate between art and life to embody the "transformative

[492] F.J. Cole, *A History of Comparative Anatomy: From Aristotle to the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Dover Publications, 1975), 445, 448-50, 460-62.
[493] Sibly, *Medical Mirror* (c.1796), 52. For the museum was on Fleet Street, see Charles Lamb, "Newspapers Thirty-Five Years Ago," in *Essays of Elia; Last Essays of Elia* (1823 and 1818; London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1954), 261.

processes" necessary to the acquisition of knowledge.[494] Life had to be re-presented and therefore, progress of the foetus is really a representation of death.[495] The antithesis to Sibly's plates of the human foetus are the quality illustrations of William Hunter's *Anatomia uteri humani gravidi* [also known as *Obstetrical Atlas*] (1774 and 1794, published without plates).

Even though Hunter and Sibly purported to reveal the secrets of life, their illustrations depict in Hunter's case a female body, gradually anatomised, which was actually based on various dissected corpses, and in Sibly's case a strangely suspended space, consisting of a foetus surrounded by a black oval sphere.[496] Consequently, due to the new representation strategies, used in late eighteenth-century anatomical illustrations, we end up with two extremes: Hunter's artificial and brutal naturalism and Sibly's more attractive yet completely de-contextualised images. Hunter not only details how the women died during their final month of pregnancy, he meticulously lists and labels their cut open flesh. However, what their illustrations have in common is that they invoke death and decay.

The argument is that the imagery of Blake's depiction of Orc's incarnation and Urizen's embodiment is deeply rooted in the contemporary medical context and the perception of self and other derived from it. In *The Book of Urizen* Blake associates Enitharmon's pregnancy not with death but with sickness: "When Enitharmon sick, / Felt a Worm within her womb. [...] The worm lay till it grew to a serpent / With dolorous hissings & poisons," (*BU* 19:19-27, E79) but also with more fundamental questions of human identity: "Many forms of fish, bird & beast, / Brought forth an Infant form / Where was a worm before." (*BU* 19:34-36, E79) While Orc's incarnation is described in terms of an organic development, seen only if the body of the mother is opened up by the dissecting knife, Urizen's embodiment resembles that of mechanic-organic construction in a Frankensteinian manner. His body parts merge together and develop into a living organism.

The question of how body and soul, the visible and the invisible, interconnect is usually answered with the force of life. Traditionally the complex relationship between the visible surface and the invisible depth is deciphered with the help of the doctrine of signatures. Foucault's definition of the system of signatures emphasised that the relations between the visible and invisible are reversed in the process of interpretation: "Resemblances require a signature, for none of them would ever become observable

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[494] Ludmilla Jordanova, "Museums: Representing the Real?," in *Realism and Representation* (1993), ed. Levine, 256.
[495] Ludmilla Jordanova, *Nature Displayed: Gender, Science and Medicine* (London and New York: Longman, 1999), 183-202.
[496] The naturalism of Hunter's illustrations is based on "selective judgement" and composite portraits. See Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, "The Image of Objectivity," *Representations*, 40 (1992), 93.

were it not legibly marked."[497] Foucault also delineated how the Cartesian mechanistic science was grounded to a halt when it came to classifying living beings. Nature was too rich and various, and proved too autonomous to fit into the proposed frameworks. Mechanism and theology, however, went hand in hand in trying to sustain the conventional, strictly hierarchical world order. In an attempt to redeem the combination of God's seven day creation with the bountiful natural generation, the idea of preformation was formulated. This belief in the static forms of things alive was opposed by another model, based on vitalistic themes, trying to get to terms with the dynamic processes of life:

> The documents of this new history are not other words, texts or records, but unencumbered spaces in which things are juxtaposed: herbariums, collections, gardens; the locus of this history is a non-temporal rectangle in which, stripped of all commentary, of all enveloping language, creatures present themselves one beside another, their surfaces visible, grouped according to their common features, and thus already virtually analysed, and bearers of nothing but their own individual names. It is often said that the establishment of botanical gardens and zoological collections expressed a new curiosity about exotic plants and animals. In fact, these had already claimed men's interest for a long while. What had changed was the space in which it was possible to see them and from which it was possible to describe them.[498]

This is what takes place on a smaller scale in the Urizen Books and in the presentation of creation as embodiment. Blake's version of generative creation is a process which takes place inside the female body as well as outside it. While Orc's body developing inside the womb follows an inner, invisible programme, Los is seen to shape Urizen from outside. Blake's two creator figures polarise the interrelationship between inside and outside, namely the tension between what manifests itself on the surface and what lies hidden in the depth. Even though Urizen develops a body quite similar to that of Orc, his contribution is to counteract what Los creates on the surface.

During Urizen's embodiment his invisible inner motions are given a physical form. His body becomes a representation of physiognomical meaning, imposed on his existence through Los. Considering the interaction between the two creators, Blake's rendering of the fall can be described as a representational activity gone wrong. Urizen is subjected to a transformative process which turns him into a copy and leaves him as simulacrum. In the end all the resemblances to the original state of his existence have disappeared. However, the body's resistance to physiognomical interpretation, its inner life force, is something which Lavater's physiognomical system cannot register and, in consequence, Los cannot control.

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[497] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1970; London: Routledge, 1994), 28.
[498] Foucault, *Order of Things* (1994), 131.

Traditionally Urizen's creation through Los has been discussed in terms of resurrection.[499] What remains to be discussed are the healing processes set in action during the incarnation of Orc and the embodiment of Urizen, because even though the physiognomical and anatomical gazes are foremost associated with images of death, it is evident that Urizen is never dead in his body. All he needs is a little reanimation. In rendering creation as embodiment, Blake is essentially in opposition to such eminent thinkers as William Hunter, who saw anatomy as the key to understanding illness as well as retaining mental and physical health.[500] While Hunter accumulates pictures representing decaying bodies, Blake has representation coincide with creation and the generation of life.

Healing in the late eighteenth-century was largely associated with occult medical traditions. While Enlightenment medical systems were referring back to the Newtonian model, occult medical traditions dealt with what could not be represented.[501] During Enitharmon's pregnancy, for example, Blake does not use the feeling of sickness as a reference to the divine punishment bestowed on Eve, nor to indicate Orc's humanity by means of imperfection. Illness and the cure thereof are down to a healing power located inside the body which is seen to replicate some kind of pre-evolutionary development, namely the phylogenetic process. In terms of the graded stages of the body's development towards the pure image of the divine, the embryo recovers from its animal resemblance and gradually turns human. At one point Orc is compared to a growing serpent. This condition serves as a metaphor for physical transformation and thus healing: "The serpent grew casting its scales, / With sharp pangs the hissings began / To change to a grating cry [...] Howling, the Child with fierce flames / Issu'd from Enitharmon." (*BU* 19:30-46, E79) Incarnation and embodiment in Blake's creation myth are interdependent. Orc's generation supplements the creation theme, because it is a development of sound, from primitive noises to the howling of a child. Urizen's return to life begins as a combination of image and sound. Orc's voice is the spark of life which makes Urizen awaken to life. (*BU* 20:26-29, E80)

By making Urizen's existence dependent on that of Orc's Blake shows how the prototypical body, gradually manifesting itself on Urizen, Los, Enitharmon and Orc, is able to regenerate itself and reclaim its healthy, functional state. During Orc's incarnation the body gradually sheds its animal likeness and reaches its human form. The connection between Urizen and Orc then closes the circle of embodiment. Their bodies complement each other, because the sound of Orc's voice penetrates the shell of Urizen's body.

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[499] Kathryn R. Kremen, *The Imagination of the Resurrection: The Poetic Continuity of a Religious Motif in Donne, Blake, and Yeats* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1972), 130.
[500] William Hunter, *Two Introductory Lectures, delivered by William Hunter to his last Course of Anatomical Lectures at his Theatre in Windmill-Street* (1784), 65.

Urizen's coming-to is not a resurrection but an awakening. What these final and polished versions of Orc and Urizen's bodies represent is, again, part of the anti-Newtonian medical tradition. Newton's theory of matter had influenced medical theory, and in particular the perception of the physiological nature of the body-soul relationship. Arguments about the connections between matter and spirit had reduced the body-soul relationship to mechanic processes.[502]

In Blake's creation myth there is no such clear cut division. The body template underlying its different expressions in Urizen, Los, Enitharmon and Orc is based on metaphors of contraption, as for example "The Net of Religion" but also arteries, veins and nerves, the brain and the spinal cord, which are seen to weave the body together into an organic whole. These nets and webs play a crucial role in the combination of body-soul relations and their manifestation on the surface of the material body. While "The Net of Religion" is negative, causing Urizen to take on a mortal body and making his sons and daughter shrink back into "reptile forms" (*BU* 25:37, E82), the web of nerves counteracts this process. Not only do the "nerves of joy" harden into the spine, the brain shoots out new branches. It holds the senses and the organs in their place thus taking control of the cavities inside the skeleton body. (*BU* 10:41, E75) With this Blake seems to continue George Cheyne's (1671-1743) thoughts on the nervous system. When it comes to health and self-cure, it is important to note that there existed an alternative to Hunter's post mortem analyses.

George Cheyne's ideas about healing were deeply imbedded in Berkleyan idealism: "This spiritualized understanding of nature was embodied in his focus on the living filaments weaving together the animal organism. [...] The task of such almost invisible cords was to draw together the far-flung continents floating with the submerged ocean of the psyche."[503] Cheyne's interest in physical actions and his conviction that they could be observed rather than identified in the dissected body attracted Blake who spoke of drawings from life "as looking more like death, or smelling of mortality."[504] Possibly Cheyne's description of the spiritual body, as the suggested link between body and soul, contributed to Blake's understanding of the living anatomy.

Cheyne developed his understanding of the spirit's corporeality from an adaptation of Newtonian ether: "*The Existence of Matter* is a plain *Demonstration* of the *Existence of a Deity*. [...] Matter cannot move of *it self*." But God, according to Cheyne, was "intimately

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[501] Guenter B. Risse, "Medicine in the age of Enlightenment," in *Medicine in Society: Historical Essays,* ed. Andrew Wear (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 155.
[502] Anita Guerrini, "Isaac Newton, George Cheyne, and the *Principa Medicinae*," in *The Medical Revolution of the Seventeenth Century*, eds. Roger French and Andrew Wear (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 222-45, 233.
[503] Stafford, *Body Criticism* (1997), 404. Roy Porter, *Bodies Politic: Disease, Death and Doctors in Britain, 1650-1900* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2001), 59-60.
[504] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 423.

present, with every single *Atom* of Matter."[505] In this context the hypothesis of the animal spirits believed to regulate the muscle tonus is revised:

> *Vegetation, Elasticity, Cohesion,* [...] *Attraction* in the greater and lesser Bodies, and all the other secret and internal Actions of the Parts of Matter upon one another, are with some shew of Possibility suspected, and by some Observations [...] made not improbable by the late *sagacious and learned Sir* Isaac Newton, to be owing to an infinitely subtil [*sic*], elastick [*sic*] Fluid, or Spirit, [...] distended thro' this whole *System*, penetrating all Bodies with the greatest Facility, infinitely active and volatile.[506]

In his creation myth Blake achieves a totally unified expression of body-soul relationships in terms of the gravitational field of the body, with the nervous system and the blood vessels, defying Newtonian space, growing into the shape of the human body. Consequently, creation, dramatised as self-regulating and limiting factors leading to man's fall from an eternal existence, ends in a celebration of life. The body's physical formation is determined by an invisible, inner identity which exists before the creative moments of both the physiognomical and anatomical gazes.

Despite the use of anatomical representation drawn after foetuses preserved in jars Ebenezer Sibly in his *Medical Mirror* continued to focus on life. In separating the womb from the female body his illustrations follow the classical model of legibility, propounding that God's creation was, indeed, a process of duplication. However, an uncertainty about how the resemblance to the divine being manifested itself in man continued to pervade Sibly's ideas on creation:

> When God created Adam, he made him a summary of the world's fabric, an abstract of the Divine nature: in man, he ended his work: on man, he stamped his seal, and the sign of his power; and imprinted on him his own image and superscription, his ensign, and his portraiture.[507]

Man bears the imprint of God's image, but he is also subjected to the "spirit of nature." According to Sibly, nature supplemented as well as sustained the perfect design of the original image. This definition of body-soul relationships was similar to that of Lavater, because like Lavater, Sibly suggested that the trained eye could penetrate deceiving appearances and unmask the true inner being: "The image of his soul is painted in his face; the excellence of his nature pierces through the material organs, and gives a fire and animation to the features of his countenance. [...] It has been justly observed, that the countenance of man is the mirror of his mind."[508] In contrast to Lavater, however, Sibly considered human nature in terms of its spiritual and physical well-being. The human form was defined as a container for a balanced system of different life forces.

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[505] George Cheyne, *Philosophical Principles of Religion: Natural and Revealed*, 2 vols. (1715), I, 182, II, 75.
[506] George Cheyne, *The English Malady; or a Treatise of the Nervous Diseases of all Kinds* (1733), 75.
[507] Sibly, *Medical Mirror* (c.1796), 6.
[508] Ebenezer Sibly, *A Key to Physic, and the Occult Sciences, Opening to Mental View, the System and Order of the Interior and Exterior Heavens* (c.1795), 122, 138.

In an essay on dreams Sibly made a number of relevant points which might explain the nature of Urizen's return to life and the "dark changes" accompanying his awakening. From Sibly's theories of dreams it suggests itself that Urizen's "stony sleep" (*BU* 8:10, 6:7,E74) implies the possibility of subconscious self-creation, which in turn explains how Urizen, or rather his brain, resists Los's embodiment through transformation. Sleep, so writes Sibly, creates an illusion of the waking world. The actions of the dream correspond to the character of the dreamer. The mind continues its activities while the body became inactive. As a result, the "Imagination becomes more active and more capricious: and all the other powers, especially judgment and memory, become disordered and irregular in their operation."[509]

Sibly's observations on the nature of dreams is relevant to the discussion of the mental processes stimulating the web of nerves, because Blake suggests that Urizen, while exposed to Los's embodiment treatment, suffers a nightmare: "Restless turned the immortal inchain'd / Heaving dolorous! anguish'd unbearable [...] In a horrible dreamful slumber." (*BU* 10:31-35, E75) During the seven ages of creation each of which is experienced as a "state of dismal woe," Blake links the creation of the skeleton and bodily organs to the emotions of Urizen the dreamer. Even though the sequence is opened with the word "Like," Urizen's responses to the physical manifestation of his body dominate the sequence. Creation is associated with pain: "Like the linked infernal chain; / A vast Spine writh'd in torment [...] shooting pain'd / Ribs, like a bending cavern [...] Down sunk with fright a red / Round globe [...] (*BU* 10:36-43, 11:1-3, E75) and "Panting: Conglobing, Trembling / Shooting out ten thousand branches [...] In harrowing fear [...] His nervous brain shot branches." This scenario, dealing with coming into existence, climaxes in the formation of the senses, "The pangs of hope." (*BU* 11:5-11, 11:19, E76)

When Blake subjects Urizen to physiognomical creation, he opens up the interior of his body to describe the formation of the bodily organs. The embodiment of Urizen's inner body begins with his heart: "Shooting out ten thousand branches / Around his solid bones." And continues with the brain which "shot branches / Round the branches of his heart." (*BU* 11:6-12, E76) The exposure of Urizen's inner identity also reveals the structures of his nerves and the blood vessels. These net-patterns, quite different from those produced by "The Net of Religion," are a metaphor for how the healing process, defined as an exchange between body and soul, redeems the condition of the material body. Taken together these threads of life reiterate and map the human form into that of a body. Thus, blood circulation and the nervous system emerge as Urizen's inner profile. Both the anatomist and the physiognomist penetrate the skin, marking the border between the inner and outer body in order to get to either spiritual or material essence. For Blake,

[509] Sibly, *Key to Physic* (c.1795), 175, 176, 178.

however, there exists no absolute border, but an energy which transfuses both kinds of inner bodies before rising to the surface of the body.

Sibly's review of concurrent theories of the mind in sleep might help to understand why the body in Blake's creation myth had to be a product of two creator figures. Its progress depends on how it is perceived by both Los the physiognomist and by Urizen the dreamer. The place of action, dramatising the interaction between Los and Urizen, is the body's surfaces which are shaped through interpretations of its physiognomy and created through its inner anatomy. According to Sibly dreams are not instigated by the "agency of some spiritual beings." What he suggests is the following:

> Instead of the attendant spirits watching over our bodies, and inciting us to good or evil in or dreams, may we not more rationally suppose, that these incitements, or rather exertions towards real and sensible action, are produced by the soul or spirit within us, which being mortal, never sleeps; but which rather, during that passive state of the body, assumes an endeavour to act without it, or to escape from it, as from a prison, wherein it is restrained to certain limits, and obliged to act under the will of its keeper.[510]

Sibly's careful formulation of the body-soul relationship did not go much further. He stressed that experiment and observation had yet to confirm his speculations about the physiological connections between body and soul. Sibly's interpretation of dreams is similar to the modern perception of dreams. No longer should dreams be interpreted as forebodings but rather as an extension of the dreamer's character, opinions and preoccupations. There is no transcendence of the body in Blake. If the material body is, indeed, the prerequisite to salvation, then the "dark changes" can be seen as contributing to the overall healing process taking place inside it. Urizen's webs of blood vessels and nerves intercept Los's attempts to trap him inside a physiognomical net. Urizen is no victim but a co-creator.

In Blake's creation myth there are two forces at work which simultaneously shape the body from both the inside and the outside. With respect to Cheyne's understanding of the spirit's corporeality and Sibly's interpretation of dreams it is possible to gain an understanding of the body's inner self-healing forces. The connection between body and soul is an interaction between the outer and inner profiles of human identity. These two poles of human existence have a tendency to merge. The tension between them, however, is never resolved. Neither *The Book of Ahania* nor *The Book of Los* are known to have been colour-printed. Through colour-printing the constellation of Blake's two creator figures gains a whole new dimension, because not only do they embody each other, they are actually given shape and form through colour. The argument about colour and the different surfaces of Blake's illuminated books and Large Colour Prints is in the following chapter.

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[510] Sibly, *Key to Physic* (c.1795), 178, 179, 180.

Chapter 4

The Making of the Original Copy: Visibility and Transparency in Blake's Eternal Bodies

Looking back from 1809 to the 1790s, this chapter is an attempt to reconstruct Blake's treatment of colour and to consider it as part of his struggle with embodiment. The argument is that the Large Colour Prints made in 1805 were a continuation of the earlier mid-1790's project. They continued the subtle play between the different versions of one original. Bearing in mind that Thomas Butts owned two of the sixteen pictures exhibited in 1809, it is remarkable that Blake decided not to exhibit any of the Large Colour Prints of which Butts owned a complete set of twelve. This signifies that by the time Blake came to plan his one-man exhibition, he had moved on. What he tried to achieve in the Large Colour Prints was no longer relevant.[511] During the 1809 retrospective exhibition, organised like one of the annual Royal Academy exhibitions with a catalogue and sales instructions, Blake showed a number of paintings in watercolour, or "fresco" as he used to call them. (Advertisement of the Exhibition, title-page, E526)[512]

In the advertisement to the exhibition, dating from May 1809, Blake challenged the London art world to "inspect" what had been previously excluded from the public exhibitions (Advertisement of the Exhibition, 2, E527). With his pictures painted in water-based colours Blake offered an alternative to oil painting which was the preferred and dominant medium of the Royal Academy exhibitions. His exhibition was a space in which "England [was] protected from the too just imputation of being the Seat an Protectress of bad (that is blotting and blurring) Art." (Advertisement of *DC* E528) In the advertisement to his *Descriptive Catalogue* (1809), written to accompany the exhibition, he declared: "In this Exhibition will be seen real Art, as it was left us by *Raphael* and *Albert Durer, Michael Angelo,* and *Julio Romano*; stripped from the Ignorances of *Rubens* and *Rembrandt, Titian* and *Corregio*." (Advertisement of *DC* E528)

Blake was convinced that some of his designs rivalled those of the Italian Renaissance (*DC* 62, E549). *A Descriptive Catalogue* and *Public Address* (c.1809-10), the latter written to promote the engraving of his *Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the nine and twenty Pilgrims* (c.1808) - one of the paintings, exhibited in 1809 - were attempts at theorising his artistic practices, in particular the importance of drawing or outline in both paintings and engravings. In his *Public Address*, Blake resumed what had been formulated by Fuseli twenty years earlier: the status of English Engraving: "I request the

[511] Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 649-666.
[512] Blake intended to have this exhibition from mid May to the end of September 1809. It is certain that it stayed open for over a year. The admission fee was the same as for a Royal Academy exhibition 1s. See

Society to inspect my Print of which Drawing is the Foundation & indeed the Superstructure it is Drawing on Copper as Painting ought to be Drawing on Canvas or any other surface & nothing Else."(*PA* 11, E572) Blake positioned himself. Everything in his art came down to the skill of drawing. His accomplishment in the art of line-drawing came out of his forty-year experience as an engraver: "Mr Bs Inventive Powers & his Scientific Knowledge of Drawing is on all hands acknowledged it only remains to be Certified whether [...] Physiognomic Strength & Power is to give Place to Imbecility." (*PA* 11, E571) Further down Blake ascertained the relationship between line and colour both in art and in nature: "They say there is no Strait Line in Nature this Is a Lie like all that they say, For there is Every Line in Nature But I will tell them what is Not in Nature. An Even Tint is Not in Nature it produces Heaviness. Natures Shadows <are> Ever varying." (*PA* 46, E575)

The Canterbury Pilgrims project was especially bound up with questions of character representation and artistic originality.[513] To assert the superiority of his version he listed the mistakes of Stothard *The Pilgrimage to Canterbury* (1806-07).[514] The conclusion was that Stothard failed to become one of the "masters of Chaucer's language." Only those who mastered language could rise to the elevated level of the visual. By the late eighteenth century the general attitude to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* had changed. John Dryden's adaptation of the *Tales* was disregarded and the original had undergone a revival.[515] Many of the points raised in Blake's attack against Stothard originated in R.H. Cromek's prospectus, announcing the imminent publication of *The Procession of Chaucer's Pilgrims to Canterbury*, engraved by Schiavonetti after Stothard and published in Cromek's 1808 edition of Blair's *The Grave*, engraved by Schiavonetti after Blake. (*DC* 29, E539) Special emphasis was laid on the figure traditionally identified with Chaucer, which, according to Cromek, had been copied from a portrait created by a contemporary Chaucer scholar.[516]

While Cromek, quite indifferently referred to both print and original painting when promoting Schiavonetti's print, Blake argued on two levels. On the one hand, he deconstructed the praise given to the painting and, on the other hand, he claimed that even his engraving of the topic was an original production:

Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 331. For dates and sales of the exhibited pictures, see Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 649-664.

[513] Robert Essick identified five states of the Chaucer plate dating from 1810-23. See Essick, *Separate Plates* (1983), 60-89, 84. See also Essick, *Printmaker* (1980), 190-92.

[514] About the quarrel with Stothard Blake wrote "I have heard many People say Give me the Ideas. It is no matter what Words you put them into & others say Give me the Design it is no matter for the Execution. These People know [...] Nothing of Art. Ideas cannot be Given but in their minutely Appropriate Words nor Can a Design be made without its minutely Appropriate Execution." (*PA* 62, E576) See Aileen Ward, "Canterbury Revisited: The Blake-Cromek Controversy," *Blake/An Illustrated* Quarterly, 22:3 (1988-1989), 80-92. Dennis Read, "The Rival Canterbury Pilgrims of Blake and Cromek: Herculean Figures in the Carpet," *Modern Philology*, 86:2 (1988), 171-190. Betsy Bowden, *Transportation to Canterbury: The Rival Envisioning by Stothard and Blake* (Cambridge and Rochester, NY.: D.S. Brewer, 2001).

[515] Claire Pace, "Blake and Chaucer: 'infinite variety of character,'" *Art History*, 3:4 (December, 1980), 392.

> Englishmen rouze yourselves from the fatal Slumber into which Booksellers & Trading Dealers have thrown you Under the artfully propagated pretence that a Translation or a Copy of any kind can be as honourable to a Nation as An Original [...] Saying Englishmen Improve what others Invent[.] This Even Hogarths Works Prove [...] a detestable Falsehood. No Man Can Improve An Original Invention. [...] Nor can an Original Invention Exist without Execution Organized & minutely Delineated & Articulated Either by God or Man[.] (*PA* 61, 62, E576)
>
> Mr B repeats that there is no Character or Expression in this Print which could be Produced with the Execution of Titian Rubens Corregio Rembrandt or any of that Class [.] Character & Expression can only be Expressed by those who Feel Them Even Hogarths Execution cannot be Copied or Improved. (*PA* 18, E579)

Only careful accuracy paid homage to Chaucer: "the great poetical observer of men, who in every age is born to record and eternize its acts." (*DC* 14, E534)

According to Blake, self-willed interpretation was fatal, because it diluted the supreme quality of the original. While accusing Stothard of being unfaithful to the original - by misrepresenting the Wife of Bath as well as introducing a new character, and misplacing all of them against the wrong kind of background - Blake emphasised that his version of Chaucer's pilgrims was an accurate point-to-point translation of textual sequence into visual simultaneity. (*DC* 32, 33, 540)[517] To ensure the originality of Chaucer's pilgrims the artist had to find a way to give expression to his own ideas, or at least to an idea which he can feel for. If this unity between mind and labouring hand was not achieved, the results would be disappointing: "He who copies does not Execute he only Imitates what is already Executed Execution is only the result of Invention." (*PA* 63, E576) In his argument for the recovery of English engraving, Blake went back to the time when he was apprenticed to James Basire in the 1770s when he met the leading engravers of his time. (*PA* 55-60, E573-74)

The previous chapter argued that Blake was interested in modes of representation and in how the body was rendered as a copy or simulacrum that is, on the one hand, the human form as imprinted by God and, on the other hand, the distortions of this original attribution acquired during a lifetime. The original for Blake was a state the copy aspired to. It was, however, mediated during the act of representation, and in particular during colouring. While the copy bore a resemblance to the original or eternal human form, the simulacrum, created at one remove from the copy, did not have this kind of link to the absent original. The problematic relationship between copy and original can also be identified in his colour-printing experiments starting in the mid-1790s. Indeed, the copy's aspiration to the status of an original was enhanced by Blake's use of colour. Even though Blake came to master colour-printing in the Large Colour Prints, he eventually abandoned

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[516] *Prospectus*, see Robert Blair, *The Grave; a Poem, Illustrated by Twelve Etchings Executed by Louis Schiavonetti, from the Original Inventions of William Blake* (1808), 38, 40.

[517] Blake's painting of Chaucer's pilgrims is one out of sixteen works which were exhibited at his work exhibition in 1809. The description of all the characters is spread over twenty seven pages, which comes close

printmaking in order to focus on the perfection of original creation in painting. This transition is difficult to pinpoint, because in many of the colour-printed illuminated books and especially in the Large Colour Prints it is impossible to discern the brushstrokes from the printed images.

While there exist a number of prose texts from the early 1800s theorising line over colour, there are virtually none for the colour experiments and the colour-printing of the 1790s. Due to the number of colour-printed works, it is safe to infer that Blake attributed great artistic value to the effects of colouring, achieved through particular printing techniques devised during the 1790s. He not only colour-printed many of his illuminated books, he produced a series of Large Colour Prints as well as the *Small* and *Large Book of Designs*, consisting of miscellaneous designs collated after the first printing sessions of *The Book of Urizen*.[518] Martin Butlin identified several inscriptions used in the *Small* and *Large Book of Designs*. In most cases Butlin is certain that they were written by Blake and not added by later owners.[519] Some of these inscriptions have been used as key-phrases in interpretations of *The Book of Urizen*.[520]

The argument is that the concepts of original and copy, a crucial opposition in Blake's thought, were manipulated throughout the process of his colour-print medium. What he was trying to do was to build an argument for colour and line as an interdependent body-soul relationship. His colour experiments celebrated colour in terms of a primal experience and unified expression. The argument about embodiment in Blake has to span the implications of his 1790's colour-printing and colour experiments done after 1800. Colour interfered with the original image by integrating its pigmentation-qualities into the process of representation. Colour is another good example of how an original idea in Blake is transformed into either a copy or simulacrum.

The most obvious connection between colour and the body can be argued in terms of the artistic representations of skin - its painterly quality and role as philosophical border between the two realms of human existence. Tristanne Connolly in *Blake and the Body* (2002) interpreted Blake's attempts at flesh colour as an artistic realisation of an ideal state of being: "in which bodily borders are freely and easily transgressed by vision."[521]

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to half the volume of this catalogue. (*DC* 7-34, E532-40) For Blake's use of the 1687 Speght edition, see Alexander Gourlay, "What was Blake's Chaucer?," *Studies in Bibliography*, 42 (1989), 272-83.

[518] After his death the four existing copies were disbound and dispersed. There are two of each. See Bentley, *Blake Books* (1977), 269, 356-58 and *Blake Records* (1969), 471-72. Viscomi qualified that the "*Large Books* is a 'book' only by analogy, for its leaves were neither stabbed nor, apparently bound." See Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 302.

[519] Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 260-262:8. In a conversation Martin Butlin has confirmed that most of the later owners folded the paper back in order to hide the caption when framing the prints.

[520] The caption "Which is the Way / The Right of the Left" attributed to the title-page of *The Book of Urizen* is to emphasise Blake's idea of "strict division." See Morris Eaves, "The Title-Page of *The Book of Urizen*," in *William Blake* (1973), ed. Paley and Phillips, 227. Harald A. Kittel, "*The Book of Urizen* and *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*," in *Interpreting Blake* ed. Michael Phillips (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 134-35.

[521] Connolly, *Blake and the Body* (2002), 206.

This chapter will not discuss the performative potential of skin as such but the artistic practices and the attempts needed to control colour, to make it a stable contributor to represented identity.

The issue of good quality skin was essential to body-aesthetics but also to the wider context of anatomical knowledge transmitted through illustrations, depicting the complicated bone-flesh relations of human anatomy. Historically speaking, anatomy was regarded as a composite form, since it developed as a combination of art and science and as a collaboration between artist and anatomist. The most important anatomy book of modern history is Andreas Vesalius's *De humanis fabrica* (1543), which arranged the body against a landscape. Often the division between art and science was hard to tell, particularly in the collaboration between Govard Bidloo and Gerard de Lairesse, the designer of the figures used in Bidloo's *Anatomia humani Corporis* (1685). Bidloo printed Lairesse's illustrations even though some of them were quite unrealistic.[522]

In the history of anatomical illustration the discrepancies between theory and practice persisted. Aesthetic appeal often got in the way of scientific accuracy. The designers of medical book illustrations recruited not only the rules of perspective to make the three dimensions of the human body plausible, they used different colouring or shading techniques to achieve realistic representations. Due to its graduated highlights, mezzotint was preferred over engraving. For colouring there were two techniques: colour-printing and colouring prints, the latter involving printing in one colour and adding colours by hand. Until the early nineteenth century most of the coloured medical illustrations were coloured-in engravings.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, colour-printing had developed into an industry, especially once the very expensive technique of copperplate intaglio printing had been abandoned. The newly refined engraving technique became a successful and lucrative print medium, which allowed, as for example in the case of Blake's relief-etching, for printing off text and image together and also in different colours.[523] Colour not only made representations of the body resemble the living body, it helped to evoke the notion of original creation, because colouring-in could be linked back to an artist. In the context of merchandise, colour was clearly associated with the original: "printsellers '[...] with the view of making the copy, in their own vulgar estimation, approach nearer to its original, have caused colours to be [...] added [...]' printsellers, like Boydell, Bowyers, and Macklin, offered nearly their entire stock either colored or plain."[524]

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[522] K.B. Roberts and J.D.W. Tomlinson, *The Fabric of the Body: European Traditions of Anatomical Illustration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 621.
[523] Joan M. Friedman, *Color Printing in England 1486-1870: Exhibition Catalogue* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Center for British Art, 1978), 7, 8, 16-17.
[524] Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 131.

Colour prints were made from etched or engraved copperplates printed off in different inks. Colour-printing was a lengthy, complex and expensive technique involving great skill.[525]

> A coloured print may readily be distinguished from a colour print. Under a magnifying glass it will be seen that the lines of ink of a colour print are themselves coloured, while white paper may be seen between them. In a coloured print the printed lines will usually be in a different colour from the overlying brushed wash which will stain the areas of unprinted paper. It should, however, be noted that prints printed in colours were very often given extra finishing touches of hand-colouring.[526]

As far as coloured prints are concerned, it is easy to determine the relationship between copy and original. Differences signify original production and can be explained as different stages of revision. Watercolour, for example, can be added later to give fuller shapes.

In colour-printing, by comparison, differences subsist in emphasis and detail but not in design as such. Even though authorship seems to have disappeared in this fully mechanised process of reproduction, in Blake the two categories of conception and execution are coupled. Particularly in Blake's Large Colour Prints it is difficult to determine what was painted and what was printed.[527] As long as the colours were wet, the thick and dense layer of printed colour could be adjusted with a brush.[528]

It has never been clear exactly how Blake colour-printed. In recent years the technicalities of Blake's colour-printing process have been closely examined. Most recently, his method of colour-printing has been discussed as a one and two pull technique. According to the latter, Blake would have produced his colour-printed images by two consecutive print runs. Both arguments, however, are ideologically charged and rely on two different artificially constructed Blake personas. While the Blake printing with a two-pull technique is a highly skilled printmaker, registering his sheets without leaving any traces, the Blake of the one-pull technique is the embodiment of the Romanticised artist who is able to create a wholesome and unified artefact.[529] In relation to the colour-printed illuminated books, Blake's Large Colour Prints marked the climax of the technical perfection achieved in the 1790s. They are a point of transition in Blake's conception of the relation between words and images, because in the Large Colour Prints colour-printed images develop into works without text.[530]

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[525] Roberts and Tomlinson, *Fabric of the Body* (1992), 522.
[526] Anthony Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: An Introduction to the History and Techniques* (1980; London: British Museum Press, 1996), 114.
[527] Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 158-59.
[528] Essick, *Printmaker* (1980), 134-35.
[529] Michael Phillips, *William Blake: The Creation of the Songs: From Manuscript to Illuminated Printing* (London: British Library Press, 2000), 15-31, 95-108. Robert N. Essick and Joseph Viscomi, "Blake's Method of Color Printing: Some Responses and Further Observations," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 36:2 (2002), 49-64.
[530] Essick, *Printmaker* (1980), 147, 152. Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 160.

The starting point for Blake's use of colour is the beautiful skin colour of the bodies depicted in his Large Colour Prints. They are the result of a mastery of colour, which is evidence of the importance of the body and the need for a realistic representation of its ideal form. What complicates any discussion of the Large Colour Prints is that they have two dates "1795" and "1805", attributed by means of signatures and watermarks. But as well as it being highly likely, that there were two printing sessions the copy-versus-original debate involves not only each of the twelve Large Colour Prints, but also the differing versions of them as printed. Each probably existed as a set of three: one original and two copies, or to be more precise a first, second and third pull. Interesting is how the different pulls were perceived, because it emerges that the categories original and copy were mixed right from the beginning. Thomas Butts, for example, owned only eight of the twelve Colour Prints now held in Tate Britain in London. Six of them are signed and dated "1795." So, what is perceived as the Butts collection was originally not as homogeneous as it is now commonly assumed. According to William Rossetti, Butts's impression of *God judging Adam* was a "duplicate," that is, a second pull, which was "somewhat more positive and less excellent in colour." Rossetti also referred to another "duplicate," namely the third pull, which had "black, instead of yellow, behind and upon the rays."[531]

Traditionally, the Large Colour Prints have been discussed as illustrations to Blake's poetic works. A thematic coherence of the series has conventionally been foregrounded by identifying certain pictorial and iconographic relations. David W. Lindsay, for example, writes: "A reading of the series in the order indicated by its main biblical analogues reveals not only an intricate network of cross-references but also some disparity between its powerful negative images and its unemphatic conclusion."[532] This chapter questions this approach. By theorising from Blake's method of colour-printing, it will project its focus on the visual effects of each of the pulls in order to develop an explanation about the relationship between them. The argument is that Blake's colour-printing technique was not primarily a medium for reproduction because it might well be possible that Blake's method fell short of his expectation. This proposition makes the different copies of *The Book of Urizen*, colour-printed in 1794, and the three pulls of the Large Colour Prints, produced in 1795, a large scale experiment. Blake explores the physicality of colour, specific pigments as well as techniques of layering, mixing and applying paint.

The two opposites of Blake's theory of art were line and colour. His creation myth and in particular the different sets of Large Colour Prints are evidence of his treatment as well as control of the shaping forces of both line and colour. It is commonly believed that

[531] For no. 16 of Rossetti's 1863 list of Blake's works, see Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 417.
[532] David W. Lindsay, "The Order of Blake's Large Color Prints," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 52:1 (1989), 37-38.

Blake made the three pulls of each of the Large Colour Prints from a millboard painting.[533] With each pull the colouring of the resulting impression became more transparent as the amount of pigment decreased. Martin Butlin has pointed out that the horses in *God Judging Adam* lose a lot of their substance throughout the printing process. In the third pull the "more distant of the horse's back legs [...] had to be freshly outlined in ink."[534] A similar effect can be traced back through the different versions of *The House of Death*: eyes are opened and heads are turned.

The physicality of Blake's Large Colour Prints was first pointed out by Gilchrist in his 1863 biography of Blake.[535] Ever since, their strong and solid colours have been emphasised repeatedly by Martin Butlin, John Gage and others. During colour-printing it was impossible to control the way in which drawing and colouring merged and blurred. Essick described the effects achieved in colour-printing as follows: "the patterns of color printing [...] have the same multiplicity of reference to geological, biological, and psychological forms found in the myth of the simultaneous evolution."[536] What Essick suggests is that these effects prompted Blake to perceive colour in terms of energy fields. In other words, each set of the Large Colour Prints once peeled into its different layers displayed the brilliance of its material density.

The categories of original and copy are blurred in the Large Colour Prints because Blake was adding outline throughout and not only to the second and third pulls. Whereas the working order of colour-printing was to start from outline in his Large Colour Prints Blake reverses the process. It is the colours which first structure the features of both figures and backgrounds in different shades. In finishing each print by hand, Blake brings back the look of an original painting. Consequently, in the Large Colour Prints Blake flaunts not only the boundary between outline and colour but also between colour-printing and painting. He may never have intended to hang up the three pulls next to each other to open out the deterioration of the colour-printed images. So, each set of the Large Colour Prints consists of three layers of one original painting.

Next to attempts at deciphering the iconography of the Large Colour Prints possible interpretations of Blake's use of colour were formulated from early on. W.J.T. Mitchell in *Blake's Composite Art* (1978) argued that colour in Blake was not an "invariably negative symbol," as, for example, in the Large Colour Print *Newton* where "coloristic chaos" appears as a "positive alternative" to "Newton's concentration on his abstract, mathematical universe."[537] According to Butlin, the Large Colour Prints are "the most physical objects that Blake created." They are "works in a medium that in itself does not

[533] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 405.
[534] Martin Butlin, "The Bicentenary of William Blake," *Burlington Magazine*, 100 (1958), 42.
[535] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 405.
[536] Essick, *Printmaker* (1980), 148.

suggest time or literary narration but rather an individual moment or state of affairs."[538] Detlef Dörrbecker has argued that it was the colour which created both the space of Newton as well as the surface of *Newton*.[539] Indeed, colour-printing is conventionally associated with Blake's representations of the fallen world; that is while *The Songs of Innocence* are in watercolour, *The Songs of Experience* ought to be colour-printed. In this context the meaning of colour gains a whole new dimension.

Colour had a potentially negative status, since both on a practical and a philosophical level it was associated with the optical theories of Sir Isaac Newton. With Newton, colour had become a physically controllable phenomenon.[540] To explore the technical implications of the achieved colouring effects particularly the printing and colouring traditions which preceded Blake's colour-printing experiments in the 1790s, it is important to venture beyond the immediate symbolic meaning of colour. The starting point is the rhetoric of colour of the concurrent painting and printing practices, which mainly revolved around the question of whether the art of colouring was down to inspiration and could only be acquired after endless practice or whether it could be taught.

A result of the Newtonian approach to colour was Jacob Christian Le Blon's mezzotint printing technique for which he secured the copyright in 1737. Le Blon's foremost concern was to theorise colour and to demonstrate how it could be applied in a controlled and effective manner. In his *Coloritto*, published in London in 1725, Le Blon writes that he intended to reveal the secret of the art of colouring: "some great modern Colorists were not ignorant of it; only [...] in hiding their knowledge as a mighty Secret, have depriv'd the Publick of a great Treasure. It was in my Pursuit of this Art that I fell upon my Invention of Printing Objects in their natural Colours." He argued further that "the Harmony of Colouring in Painting" could be "reduc'd to certain Rules of Art." With his colour-printed illustrations he did, indeed, try to prove how a good grasp of the qualities of certain colours would guarantee natural flesh colour.[541]

Le Blon's colouring process involved printing from three plates, inked in the three primary colours on a single, carefully registered, sheet of paper. His technique revolutionised the production of realistic representations of the body used in anatomical atlases because it made coloured medical illustrations readily available to the printing entrepreneurs. Jean and Jacob Ladmiral, pupils of Le Blon in London and working principally in Amsterdam for Albinus and Ruysch, published from Leiden between 1736

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[537] M.J.T. Mitchell, *Blake's Composite Art: A Study of the Illuminated Poetry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 50-51.
[538] Martin Butlin, "The Physicality of William Blake: The Large Color Prints of '1795,'" *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 52:1 (1989), 2, 10.
[539] Dörrbecker, *Konvention und Innovation* (1992), 287.
[540] Gage, *Colour and Culture* (1993), 154.
[541] Jacob Christian Le Blon, *Coloritto; or the Harmony of Colouring in Painting: Reduced to Mechanical Practice, under Easy Precepts, and Infallible Rules; Together with some Colour'd Figures* (1725), iv, ii, 8. Peter Kivatsy, "Le Blon's anatomical colour engravings," *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 23 (1968), 153-58.

and 1746. Jacques Fabien Gautier Dagoty, assistant to Le Blon in Paris, published his own anatomical atlases in colour from 1745. In contrast to Le Blon but like the Ladmirals, the Gautier family used four plates instead of three. The fourth plate added shades of grey and black.[542] Whereas Le Blon had failed to make money from his invention, the Gautier family successfully used the process for about twenty-five years.

In this printing process colour had been used in the hope that it would increase the reality effect of anatomical pictures. The actual results, however, were less satisfying because colour blurred resemblances. The newly developed technique did not live up to the professional expectations. Colour did not improve the quality of realistic body representations, it simply catered to popular demand: "The work, though well thought-out and generally accurate, was not outstanding either scientifically or didactically when compared with the illustrations available in the mid-1770s and in the atlases of Albinus, Haller, Cheselden, or the British obstetrical anatomists."[543]

The difference between Le Blon and Gautier was how they delineated their motivation for their combination of colour-plates. Colour-printing "exploited ancient knowledge that new colours can be produced when different pigments are mixed together [...], and the new knowledge of colours that stemmed from Newton's work with prisms in 1710." While Gautier distanced himself from Newton, Le Blon linked the preliminaries of his technique to Newton's theory of light:[544]

> COLORITTO, or the *Harmony* of Colouring, is the *Art* of *Mixing* COLOURS, in order to present naturally, in all Degrees of *painted* Light and Shade, the same FLESH, or the Colour of any other Object, that is represented in the true *pure* Light. Painting can represent all *visible* Objects with three Colours, *Yellow, Red,* and *Blue*; for all other Colours can be compos'd of these *Three*, which I call *Primitive*; [...] And a *Mixture* of those *Three* Original Colours makes a *Black*, and all *other* Colours whatsoever; as I have demonstrated by my Invention of *Printing* Picture *and* Figures *with their* natural *Colours*. I am only speaking of *Material* Colours, or those used by *Painters*; for a *Mixture* of *all* the primitive *impalpable* Colours, that cannot be felt, will not produce *Black*, but the very Contrary, *White*[545]; as the Great Sir Isaac Newton has demonstrated in his Opticks.[546]

According to Le Blon, the colour-printing process had to include all original colours, since all visible colours were derived from these three primary colours. The Newtonian influence is at its strongest when Le Blon comes to how colours ought to be mixed. Since he did not

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[542] "After the death of Le Blon, Gautier acquired his privilege in 1745, but he also claimed to be the inventor of coloured copper-plate printing. In fact, he only added a fourth plate to the three colour plates used by Le Blon, and it is probable that even the latter himself employed the black plate." See John L. Thornton and Carole Reeves, *Medical Book Illustration* (Cambridge and New York: Oleander Press, 1983), 78.

[543] Roberts and Tomlinson, *Fabric of the Body* (1992), 524.

[544] Roberts and Tomlinson, *Fabric of the Body* (1992), 522-23.

[545] At the time the debate about the nature of white light was controversial. Newton argued that "sunlight was compounded from *all* the primaries, although under strong challenge from Christiaan Huygens in Holland he was forced to concede that as few as three primaries could make up white light." See Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 285-86.

have the technical equipment, such as colour filters available today, he had to gauge the correct combinations of red, blue and yellow in the original with his eyes before he got down to reproducing them.[547]

Le Blon's understanding of colours is inherently material: colour "comprehends within it self a Body, which hides every thing that is cover'd with it." In order to guarantee the natural appearance of flesh colour, so Le Blon advised, colour printers had to add red, blue and yellow on to the lights and shades of the figure to be able to render its different features as workable three-dimensions with "Particularities, call'd ACCIDENTS": "Some of those Accidents are Red, and Redish [...]; as on the Mouth, the Cheeks, the Ear [...]. Some [...] are Blew [*sic*], as on the Temples, or the Part between the Nose and the Eye [...]. Some [...] are Yellow."[548] Le Blon's rhetoric suggests palpable colours which when layered produce particular features in the colour representation. The reality effect of plastic nature is achieved through a deviation from clear cut colour divisions.

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The effects of colour and its physical intensity achieved through intense pigmentation are what make Blake's colour-printed images so evocative. The "tactile intensity" of the colouring effects in *The Song of Los* have been described by Robert Essick:

> The design is built up by multiple layers of color printing, painting, and perhaps blotting. The major elements of the design were printed in thick, opaque colours that formed large dendritic patterns. [...] The textures as well as the colors embody the images of terrific heat and pressure dominating the description of material creation in Blake's poetry of the mid-1790s.[549]

Even though *The Book of Ahania* and *The Book of Los*, the two sequels to *The Book of Urizen*, were never colour-printed, Essick suggested that the images used throughout the Urizen Books were especially designed for the effects achieved through colour-printing.[550] In 1794 Blake colour-printed not only *The Book of Urizen* but also his new works, *The Songs of Experience* and *Europe*. Joseph Viscomi stressed that before Blake came to colour-printing, the differences between his illuminated books were only slight: "those occurring among copies color printed are overt [...], but in both cases the differences are the inevitable result of a mode of production [...] in which a visual rather than linguistic logic exerts itself."[551] It is important to note that the phenomenon of layered colours is no matter of the distant past. In Blake's time Sir Joshua Reynolds lectured on the topic:

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[546] Le Blon, *Colorito* (1725), 6.
[547] Friedman, *Color Printing in England* (1978), 9.
[548] Le Blon, *Colorito* (1725), 22.
[549] Essick, *Printmaker* (1980), 129.
[550] Essick, *Printmaker* (1980), 147.
[551] Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 267, 178.

> To preserve the colors fresh and clean in painting; it must be done by laying in more colors, and not by rubbing them in when they are once laid; and if it can be done they should be laid just in their proper places at first, and not be touched again because the freshness of the colors is tarnished and lost, by mixing and jumbling them together; for there are certain colors which destroy each other by the motion of the pencil when mixed to excess.[552]

Whether or not Blake's judgements about pigmentation and layering were justified is another question. What he objected to were the impenetrable surfaces which were produced by oil-colour.

The Book of Urizen exists in eight copies; only the six copies produced in 1794 are colour-printed. When comparing the different versions of plate 5 of *The Book of Urizen*, depicting either one or three figures falling headfirst and entwined with serpents, David Worrall pointed out that there are several animal heads emerging from between the figures and from out of the coloured and colour-printed backdrop. They vary from copy to copy but are most pronounced in the watercolour copies made in 1795 and 1818:

> The watercoloured copy B shows conclusively that the two inter-figure animals were etched as an original element of the design. The animal on the right looks rather like a front view of the lion on pl. 21 with cat-like nose and round eyes (coloured in B so as to merge with the flames). The left hand animal is similar but has a narrower face (in B it is separately coloured yellow-brown). In A this animal on the left looks like the head of a bird, viewed from above, with a pointed beak, in F it has a mammalian mouth. In G, whether by accident or intent, the creature (or human) has a walrus-like moustache.[553]

Consequently, the difference between the two colour media used in *The Books of Urizen* manifested itself in degrees of transparency. We might have expected that Blake depended on the pigments and elaborated from the shapes they suggested. That is, the animals were essentially produced accidentally during the printing process, to be fine-tuned by Blake with brush and ink. This, however, is not the case. Blake inserted these animal heads with water-based colours, as if to say that the less colour material there was, the clearer were the shapes meant to be embodied through colour.

Traditionally, the ideas of light and colour in Blake have been discussed as interdependent and as a response to Newtonian optics. Newton had demonstrated that white light could not only be dispersed into spectral colours but also be restored by reversing the process. Blake layered colours and used the visual effects of colour-printing to show that white light cannot be brought back. For him colouring is a one-way process.[554] Colours in Blake hide as well as blur the boundaries between images and often also between image and text. By giving a demonstration of the richness of his

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[552] Joshua Reynolds in *The Hand-Book of the Elements of Painting in Oil, with an Appendix, Containing Sir Joshua Reynolds' Observations and Instructions to Students* (1842), 49.
[553] *The Urizen Books* (1995), ed. Worrall, 32.
[554] "A Letter of Mr. Isaac Newton, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Cambridge; containing his New Theory about Light and Colours," *Philosophical Transactions*, 80 (1671-72), reprinted in I.B. Cohen, ed., *Isaac Newton's Papers and Letters on Natural Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 50.

palette, Blake opposed Le Blon's Newtonian theorisation of primary colours. For Blake pigments and light were not interchangeable. The properties which he attributes to pigments are different to those of light:

> Blake was not only aware of the multiplicity of the Newtonian corpuscles of light, but also that the scientist's chief contribution to the understanding of colours had been to derive them from white light by a process of division through the prism. The divided light of the rainbow was thus for him a perfect image of the divided and fallen material world; and in portraying Newton in the act of creating this division – plotting perhaps the arc of the rainbow in the prism – Blake invented one of the richest images of materialism in his art.[555]

It is curious that Gage suggested that Newton is "plotting" the rainbow, because all that can be seen is a simple geometrical diagram. Gage seems to imply that for Blake line is something like the substructure to colour, generating coloured spaces by literally dividing a white page into its different compartments.

Blake saw line and colour as interdependent as two counteractive artistic forces. Line guaranteed the "display" of form, whereas colour could potentially conceal it. The only way to make sure that colour was not counterproductive to line was to not use oil colours: "Clear colours unmudded by oil, and firm and determinate lineaments unbroken by shadows, which ought to display and not to hide form, as is the practice of the latter Schools of Italy and Flanders." (*DC* 1, E530) In his *Descriptive Catalogue* Blake at great length qualified his use of line in relation to colour. He aligned his painting of Chaucer's pilgrims to the practices of the great schools of Italian art:

> The character and expression in this picture could never have been produced with Ruben's [...] light and shadow, or with Rembrandt's, or any thing Venetian or Flemish. The Venetian and Flemish practice is broken lines, broken masses, and broken colours. Mr. B.'s practice is unbroken lines, unbroken masses, and unbroken colours. Their art is to lose form, his art is to find form, and to keep it. His arts are opposite to theirs in all things. (*DC* 26-27, E538)

If colours are broken, according to Blake, they are mixed and thus muddled into each other. It seems plausible to link the words "broken" and "unbroken" to Newtonian colour theory but the vocabulary was also typical of the contemporary handbooks on colour harmony. What it meant was clarity and precision in expression.[556]

Colour-printing was Blake's favourite medium in the 1790s. After 1800 he, first of all, produced tempera paintings. Even though the move from printing to painting clearly indicated a new phase in Blake's *oeuvre*, his interest in colour effects continued. In 1809, according to his *Descriptive Catalogue*, Blake exhibited a number of experimental paintings. While working on these pictures he had been "molested continually by blotting

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[555] John Gage, *Colour and Meaning: Art, Science and Symbolism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 152.
[556] Charles Alphonse Dufresnoy, *The Art of Painting of Charles Alphonse Dufresnoy, with Annotations by Sir Joshua Reynolds*, (1668; Dublin, 1783), 94-95.

and blurring demons," to the extent that one of the pictures "painted at intervals, for experiments, with the colours" was "laboured to a superabundant blackness." (*DC* 51, 52, E546)[557] Further on, Blake put a name to these demons: the Venetian and Flemish painters: "They cause that the execution shall be all blocked up with brown shadows. They put the original Artist in fear and doubt of his own original conception." (*DC* 55, E547)

The experimental pictures exhibited in 1809 are still very similar to the Large Colour Prints. They were made by putting colour on top of each other. On the one hand, Blake parodied the Venetian style and in particular Titian's whose technique of layering paint was so greatly admired. Titian painted in intervals, a practice which was indeed common. The boundaries between the different colours are often not retained. Modern cross-sections have revealed that the special effects are due to colours overlapping rather than a complex technique.[558] On the other hand, Blake reached beyond the polemics of colouring techniques and brushstrokes whenever he addressed the physical nature of colour. He claimed, for example, that layering led to "blackness." What we ought to expect is a mixture of brown shades.

Blake's awareness of contemporary colour theories may have been mediated through the Johnson circle and Joseph Priestley, who revised Newton's ideas on light and colour in his *History and Present State Discoveries* first published in 1772 by Johnson. In the early 1800s Blake reiterated Newton's refraction experiments summarised by Priestley. While blackness signals solid matter, translucent bodies, consisting mostly of air, allow light particles to travel through them. Newton believed that light and black bodies literally absorbed and swallowed rays of light.[559] In associating layers of colour with blackness, Blake suggested that colour pigments even though they retained their different form under the microscope, interacted in a paint mixture and eventually solidified into an impenetrable surface. The more colour there was the more material an image became.

Colour and pigmentation are of utmost importance because they give expression to the drawn design. In his *Public Address* Blake claimed that he did not attack Rubens, Rembrandt and Titian "because they not understand Drawing, but because they did not understand Colouring [...]." Colour and line needed to be combined when bringing a design to artistic expression: "He who makes a Design must know the Effect & Colouring

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[557] Farington mentions two accounts about Titian's pictures being dark and brown. All visitors to Venice recalls that if he had not known that he was looking at a Titian he would not have recognised it as such: "The celebrated pictures appeared to me all black." See *Diary of Joseph Farington* (1979), III, 743, 793, 797.

[558] Max Doerner, *Malmaterial und seine Verwendung im Bilde*, eds. Toni Roth and Richard Jacobi, twelfth, improved edition (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1965). Ralph Mayer, *The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques*, ed. Edwin Smith (London: Faber & Faber, 1951). Jill Dunkerton, "Titian's Painting Technique," in *Titian: Exhibition Catalogue*, ed. Paul Holberton (London: National Gallery Company Ltd., 2003), 46.

[559] Joseph Priestley, *The History and Present State of Discoveries relating to Vision, Light, and Colours*, 2 vols. (1772), II, 298-301, 355.

Proper to be put to that Design & will never take that of Rubens Rembrandt or Titian to put that which is Soul & Life into a Mill or Machine." (*PA* 39, E575) In the early 1800s the art of colouring was foremost on Blake's mind. He associated colour with the spacing of the painting because he repeatedly insisted that any artist had to carefully decide where to put his colours: "The quarrel of the Florentine with the Venetians is not because he does not understand Drawing, but because he does not understand Colouring. How should he? he who does not know how to draw a hand or a foot, know how to colour it." (*DC* iii, E529)

Through his colour-printing experiments in the 1790s Blake realised that whereas design could be substituted by language, colour represented itself and could therefore not be translated into any other medium. Even though perfect colouring seemed to help the artist to achieve an authentic representation of nature, colour itself did not create identity. Blake's colour experiments are the result of an age-old philosophical debate about the sources of beauty. The experience of colour depended on sight and colour-words: coloured images were appreciated for their ability to evoke feelings. While colour-words in Blake are few and far between, other eighteenth-century poets readily adapted the propositions of Newton's prismatic experiments and infused their poetry with colours. One only needs to think of James Thomson's *The Seasons* and Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*.[560] Throughout the eighteenth century the connections between light, colour and sight were frequently explored. The most common association with Blake and colour is that he used its density to signify the qualities of the material world. As a consequence of man's fall into this world, his ability to see had been reduced: "The Eternals, closed the tent / They beat down the stakes the cords / Stretch'd for a work of eternity; / No more Los beheld Eternity." (*BU* 19:47-48, 20:1-2, E79-80)

Visibility as well as the capability to see were important philosophical issues. Whether, for example, the blind were able to receive the same delight from the idea of a colour as those who actually saw it was an important issue.[561] Already John Locke in his observations on human perception noted that, a blind-born man who had learned to differentiate between geometrical shapes by touch would not be able to distinguish them, if he was suddenly able to see them.[562] Blake through his colour-printing experiments of the 1790s foregrounded the mind-matter relationship in terms of accidental and intentional shapes. He played with the two categories, blurred the boundaries between them and left it to the reader or viewer to differentiate between them and to work out what was printed and what was painted.

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[560] Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Newton demands the Muse: Newton's Opticks and the Eighteenth Century Poets* (1949; Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), 90, 98, 163.
[561] *Analytical Review*, 7 (1790), 28.
[562] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1997), 144.

While the previous chapter delineated how in Blake's creation myth of the 1790s being (*Sein*) preceded being-in-the-body, this chapter argues that when it comes to assessing the role of line and colour in the Urizen books, Blake subverted the hierarchy and symbolic order of God's universe. The orthodox creation story traditionally begins with the creation of day and night. Blake undermines the separation of light from darkness by fusing light and body as well as blurring outline and colour.

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In Blake's time flesh colour is a popular topic of the art handbooks. How a good-quality skin colour could be achieved was detailed in various recipes. Gerard de Lairesse's popular and successful *Grondlegginge* (1701), a manual for beginners, as well as his *Schilderboek* (1707) were translated and reprinted throughout the eighteenth century. These books were appreciated for their comprehensive references to earlier source texts and the new theoretical revision of painterly practices.[563] The publication of *Schilderboek* in London in 1738, 1778, and 1817 was representative of the continuity of classical thought in the British art world. The comments on colour and Chiaroscuro proved especially useful to the tradition of landscape painting.[564] Lairesse emphasised that he could not understand painters who trained their sense of colouring after the paintings of Titian or Giorgione. Only nature or what was exposed to natural light was worthwhile copying.[565] His advice on the realistic representation of human flesh colour was equally important, because not only did he establish the categories, healthy, dead and the sick, he also included colour recipes for each type.[566]

The theoretical discussions about flesh colour oscillated between naturalistic and idealistic points of view. Thomas Bardwell in *The Practice of Painting and Perspective Made Easy* (1756) gave even more detailed instructions for the mixing of complexions and skin colours. Whereas Lairesse stood for extreme naturalism in stating nature as the original always to be preferred over the work of art, Bardwell advocated close studies of pictures and paintings. When reviewing the methods of colouring, Bardwell expressed his disappointment with the information available about the practices of the Old Masters: "It is astonishing [...] all Europe should suffer alike at the same time, for want of that noble Frankness and generous Spirit, which might have been expected from those Masters; and

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[563] Lyckle de Vries, *Gerard de Lairesse: An Artist between Stage and Studio* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), 71-73, 98-100.
[564] Johannes Dobei, *Die Kunstliteratur des Klassizismus und der Romantik in England, 1700-1840,* 4 vols (Bern: Benteli Verlag, 1974-1984), I, 688, II, 978-80.
[565] Gerard de Lairesse, *The Art of Painting in All its Branches, Methodically demonstrated by Discourses and Plates* (1738), 26. This edition was reprinted by S. Vandenbergh in London in 1778.
[566] This seems to be a modification of Hippocrates's doctrine of the four humours, according to which four physiological and psychological human types or temperaments could be determined. See Wilhelmina Lepik-Kopaczynska, *Apelles, Der berühmteste Maler der Antike, Lebendiges Altertum, [Populäre Schriftenreihe für Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 7] (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag GmbH, 1962), 38.

which would have done the World more Service than their Pictures."[567] Bardwell's *Practice of Painting* was republished as a pirated edition with a slightly changed title in 1795: *Treatise on Painting in Oil-Colours.* It was derived from the subtitle of the 1756 edition "the art of painting in oil with the method of colouring." With this elevation, the emphasis of the work had been shifted even more towards the issue of how good quality oil colours can be achieved.[568]

Daniel Webb in *An Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting* (1765) singled out the Venetian School because of its ideal rendering of human flesh. It was not enough to know the effects of the different tints, namely the "mechanic part" of the art of colouring; colouring required genius. Webb stressed that it was the quality of flesh colour which made the great artists stand apart as, for example, Correggio from Titian: "An artist might tell us, that these defects proceed from a colouring too yellow or red; from demi-tints too much verging on the green; whereas, nature, and the paintings of Titian, prove, that, in clear and transparent skins, the humid ever produces a blueish [*sic*] cast." Titian's flesh colours were closest to perfection, because they were closest to what was considered an ideal representation of nature.[569]

Throughout, Bardwell acknowledged the advantages of institutionalised art education. Since the foundation of the Royal Academy the collection of oil paintings, for example, had increased considerably. In his theorisation of copying and the development of individual genius Bardwell's aesthetic standpoint was similar to that of Sir Joshua Reynolds: "An eye critically nice can only be formed by observing well-coloured pictures with attention: and by close inspection, and minute examination, you will discover, at last, the manner of handling, the artifices of contrast, glazing, and other expedients."[570] Both stressed that true knowledge of the art of colouring could only be taught from a well equipped gallery.[571] Bardwell recommended the study of flesh-colour in nature but his instructions on how to use a living model make its naturalism look artificial:

> Were this model usefully employed, it would be placed in various lights; now in the beams of the sun, now in a more sober light, and now in the light of a lamp or candle; at one time in the shade, at another in a reflected light. By such practical artifices the complexion of the body under different circumstances may be thoroughly learned and mastered; and the tints and half-tints produced in the colour of the skin by bones, bloodvessels, or fat, may be duly attended to and discriminated. A student thus

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[567] Thomas Bardwell, *The Practice of Painting and Perspective made easy* (1756), 7-11, 21. With the advent of the copyright it had become easier for inventors to communicate their discoveries.
[568] Pages 75-173 are taken from the 1756 edition: "Practical rules for painting in oil colour."
[569] Daniel Webb, *An Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting, and into the Merits of the most Celebrated Painters Ancient and Modern* (1760), 71-72, 90, 91. Works on colouring were popular. For a survey on colour instruction books, see, for example, Leslie Carlyle, "Design, Technique and Execution: the Dichotomy between Theory and Craft in Nineteenth century British Instruction Manuals on Oil Painting," in *Looking through Paintings: The study of painting techniques and materials in support of art historical research*, ed. Erma Hermens (Baarn and London: Uitgeverij de Prom publications and Archetype Publications, 1998), 19-28.
[570] Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1997), ed. Wark, 29-30.
[571] For Reynolds's theory of imitation, see Lipking, *Ordering of the Arts* (1970), 175-78.

> instructed would be too forward in giving that rosy appearance to the flesh which we so often find in practice; but would modestly adhere to the dictates of nature, as the fountain head of that perfection to which he is constantly aspiring.[572]

This kind of recommendation was recreated in Joseph Wright of Derby's *Academ[ies] by Lamplight* (c.1769, Royal Academy, London and Mellon Collection). Communal drawing of models and sculptures was typical of the late eighteenth century British school. Characteristic of this practice was the tendency towards idealism and away from true-to-nature imitation.[573] Reynolds emphasised that rules supported artistic freedom and were essential to the development of the "force of genius."[574] This rhetoric dominated the aesthetic of the late eighteenth-century.[575]

However, the art of painting was not a closed system in which one painter consults the work of another. *What* in nature ought to be imitated and transformed into art was frequently discussed. In his *Discourses on Art* Reynolds outlined the choices an artist had to make: "Nature herself is not to be too closely copied [...] There are excellencies in the art of painting beyond what is commonly called the imitation of nature." What made Reynolds's point of view inherently modern, was that his advice had an empirical bias:

> There are many beauties in our art, that seem, at first, to lie without the reach of precept, and yet may easily be reduced to practical principles. [...] great ideal perfection and beauty are not to be sought in the heavens, but upon the earth. They are about us, and upon every side of us.[576]

Reynolds stressed that ideal beauty could not be found in the individual or singular but only in the general. The principle of imitation became closely linked to the idea that the artist was, indeed, an improver of nature and the different versions of each type and character within it. Like Reynolds, Blake rejected an unmediated copying from nature: "No Man of Sense ever supposes that Copying from Nature is the Art of Painting [...] Manual Labour any body may do it & the fool often will do it best as it is a work of no Mind." (*PA* 76, E578) In his annotations to Reynolds he defined further "All Forms are Perfect in the Poets Mind. but these are not Abstracted nor Compounded from Nature." (*AR* E648)

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[572] Thomas Bardwell, *Practical Treatise on Painting in Oil-Colours* (1795), xi-xii, 12-13.
[573] Ilaria Bignamini and Martin Postle, *The Artist's Model: Its Role in British Art from Ely to Etty* (Nottingham. Nottingham University Art Gallery, 1991), 16-24, 65.
[574] Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1997), ed. Wark, 17, 18, 35.
[575] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 719. See also entry for December, 31, 1796: "Stothard told me He endeavours to form himself in colouring as much as He can upon Rubens, - and He thinks we know the vehicles of Rubens though we do not those of the Venetian Masters." See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 734. January, 16, 1797: "Stothard I called on. - He shewed me his specimens in imitation of Rubens." See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 749. January, 22, 1796: "Fuseli [...] remarked on Stothard narrowing his views to a mere imitation of Rubens. - Rubens acted with a more extensive mind. He planned painting. He had a magnificent mind. What can be so absurd as one man attempting to be *another*: yet such is the view of imitators." See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 756.
[576] Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1997), ed. Wark, 41, 44.

Reynolds's statements on nature were written, according to Martin Kemp, to refute the extreme naturalism of William Hunter's dissected body.[577] In the previous chapter it has been pointed out that Hunter's naturalism was flawed, since he had had to use several corpses to be able to guarantee the authenticity of an illustration throughout the production process. Jordanova goes as far as to say that Hunter's *Obstetrical Atlas* did not imitate nature, it constructed it: "The plates are designed to give the impression of vitality, [...]. A lifelike effect was partly achieved by injecting blood vessels with wax to keep their shape."[578] Within this field of mixed parameters, it was inevitable that the theoretical foundations of the nature-ideal debate were destabilised. As a matter of fact, anatomy had to draw on the general while pretending to be particular. Hunter and Reynolds disagreed about how nature should be rendered, whether it ought to be recorded with all its details or abstracted into a central form. When it came to colour, both agreed on the importance of authentic flesh colour. The issue of good quality colouring superseded the art ideological differentiation between the natural and the ideal. Moreover, Hunter's natural illusionism was based on artificial colours, injected into the dead bodies to perpetuate the momentary impression of life.

Reynolds experimented with different pigments and painting techniques throughout his life. His ambition was to create the effective surface structures of the Italian masters.[579] The results were often disastrous. Some of the pigments he used for his flesh colour proved to be not permanent.[580] It was, therefore, not surprising that Blake associated colour with deception. In his annotations to Reynolds he remarked: "On the Venetian Painter / He makes the Lame to walk we all agree / But then he strives to blind those who can see." (*AW* E651) The idea of blinding can be linked to Blake's opposition to Reynolds's belief in art education. His caution was prompted by the apparent divorce of line and colour. The latter seemed to have become an end in itself.

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By the late eighteenth century the search for good-quality colours had generated a vacuum which was filled with untiring colour experiments as well as the search for secret manuscript recipes. The network of connections and association which this chapter

[577] "For Hunter's part, there is evidence to suggest that he attempted to moderate his views and to make concessions to classicism as he become more fully aware of Reynolds's belief in the Ideal. He may have attended Reynolds's Discourses in person, and he certainly received copies of them [...], each inscribed by its author." See Martin Kemp, *Dr. William Hunter at the Royal Academy of Arts* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1975), 22.
[578] Jordanova, *Nature Displayed* (1999), 187, 189.
[579] Derek Hudson, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: A Personal Study* (London: Geoffrey Bles, Ltd., 1958), 54, 75.
[580] "The complexions of many of his sitters have turned ashen pale; over-confident attempts by restorers have ravaged other canvases needlessly. That Reynolds' colours were not always 'fast' was well known his lifetime. His niece Lady Thomond (Mary Palmer) who helped to collect the memorial exhibition of her uncle's pictures in 1813 had to admit that one thing." See Hudson, *Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1958), 54. See also Appendix B: Reynolds's Painting Technique, by Horace A. Buttery, 248.

proposes will cover Blake's colour experiments, tempera paintings, the annotations to Reynolds, the so-called Venetian Secret, the 1797 Royal Academy exhibition and the reception of Blake's 1809 one-man exhibition. The hinge of these different historical events lies in Reynolds's *Discourses on Art*, the first eight Discourses Blake annotated between 1808 and 1809 and his attempts at theorising his artistic practices: the two Prospectuses (1809, 1810) to his painting *Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the nine and twenty Pilgrims* (c.1808), *Public Address* (c.1809-10) and *A Descriptive Catalogue*, written for the 1809 exhibition. This chapter is an attempt to read the organisation and set-up of Blake's exhibition as a response to the annual events organised by the Royal Academy.

Blake owned the 1798 second edition of Edmund Malone's edition of Reynolds's *Discourses on Art* of 1798. Even though the two editions were published within the short period of a year, there are crucial difference between them. The difference originated in the scandal around the Venetian Secret and the outcome of the 1797 annual Royal Academy Exhibition.[581] What made the second edition different from the first is in the footnotes to the biographical account preceding the work written by Reynolds's posthumous editor Edmund Malone. In the first edition he had footnoted Reynolds's confession "My fickleness in the mode of colouring arose from an eager desire to attain the highest excellence," with:

> Our author was so anxious to discover the method used by the Venetian Painters, that he destroyed some valuable ancient pictures by rubbing out the various layers of colour, in order to investigate and ascertain it. Had he lived a few years longer, he would have had the satisfaction of attaining by an easier way the process employed by the great colourists of former times; [...] This process [...] has been communicated for a valuable consideration, and under an obligation of secrecy, to some of our principal artists and connoisseurs, who are all of opinion that it is the very process used by the painters of the Venetian School; and several pictures painted according to the mode prescribed by this lady, will, I am informed, appear at the ensuing Exhibition.

In the forerun to the 1797 edition Malone had convinced himself that the colouring process accounted for in the newly discovered manuscript was genuine. Over the period of three years the amateur painter Anne Gemima Provis one of the major protagonists of the scandal of the Venetian Secret had allegedly produced several good "process pictures."[582]

The story of the Venetian Secret began in December 1795 when Thomas Provis, the father of Miss Provis, revealed the secret to Benjamin West, Reynolds's successor as President of the Royal Academy. Provis had followed Richard Cosway's advice to let West

[581] Gage has drawn attention to the fact that Malone "had welcomed the 'Secret' as something the first President should have lived to use, dismissed it as useless in the second edition. See Gage, *Colour and Culture* (1993), 213.

[582] Malone about Reynolds, in Reynolds, *The Works of Sir Joshua* Reynolds, ed. Edmund Malone (1797), xxxii-xxxiiin. Malone's source was Farington who mentions talking to Malone about the preparations for the exhibition in 1797 on March 18th. Four days later he visited Farington with the proof sheets: "He read to me some pages of the Manuscript. I told Him Sir William Chambers was the real Founder of the Royal Academy."

make some trials. This was the only way to procure the official support of the President. Almost a year went by. The public craze about the Venetian process began when the experiments were resumed on a much broader basis in November 1796, when most of the Royal Academicians were working on paintings to be exhibited during the next annual exhibition.[583]

In the above quoted footnote, Malone refers the successful history of the Royal Academy exhibitions, beginning in 1769 with 136 paintings exhibited at Lambe's auction rooms in Pall Mall.[584] The annual exhibition usually opened in late April or early May. The admission fee was one shilling which was sufficient to exclude the masses. Training and tuition at the Royal Academy were financed by the profits made from these exhibitions.[585] The 1797 exhibition was to many a disappointment. One of those who had had high expectations in this exhibition was Malone. In the preface to the 1798 edition he writes: "Shortly before the first edition [...] was published, some hopes were entertained that the process employed by the great colourists of former times had been preserved; [...] this process has not, I conceive, answered the expectations that were previously entertained concerning it."[586]

It is not certain when it was leaked that the Venetian Secret was a forgery. Before the exhibition was officially opened nobody except for the Council was allowed inside the exhibition rooms. According to the reviews, published shortly after the opening, the Venetian Secret was received as controversial. The rhetoric of the events distils the academic standard opinions on original and copy as well as original and forgery. When the Royal Academy had been founded in 1768 it had been decreed that only original works should be exhibited: "No Picture copied from a Picture or Print, a Drawing from a Drawing; a Medal from a Medal; a Chasing from a Chasing; a Model from a Model, or any other Species of Sculpture, or any Copy be admitted in the Exhibition - "[587] Consequently, the Council's decision as to which paintings, drawings and engravings were accepted for the annual event was eagerly awaited. It is this kind of expectation which Malone formulates in his preface to the works of Reynolds.

The official catalogue first of all detailed the hanging arrangements in the different rooms of Somerset House. Additional commentary on the exhibits was channelled through the newspaper press: the praise of individual paintings or the stars and even attacks on the art institution itself. Mark Hallett categorised the additional commentary as three kinds

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On March 28 Farington visited Malone to give him "particulars of Miss Provis and Her discovery." See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 800, 804, 808, 813, 814, 831.

583 *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 739, 743, 754.

584 W.R.M. Lamb, *The Royal Academy, A Short History of its Foundation and Development to the Present Day* (London: Alexander Maclehose & Co., 1935), 13.

585 Hutchison, *History of the Royal Academy* (1968), 49.

586 Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1997), ed. Wark, lvi.

587 *Council Minutes* (1768), I, 8.

of cultural journalism: newspaper exhibition reviews, pamphlets, and art magazines.[588] One of the most popular and sharp-tongued art critics of the time was John Williams, who usually wrote under the pen-name Anthony Pasquin. His 1797 reviews of the exhibition were published in the *Morning Post*. His hostile reviews not only summarised the general mood of the gallery goers, but also made the Royal Academicians reconsider the authenticity of the Venetian process.[589]

The exhibition opened on May 1. Pasquin's reviews published from May 2 were also published as *Critical Guide to the Present Exhibition at the Royal Academy, for 1797* by H.D. Symonds later in the same year. The subtitle to the book edition of his reviews specifies that the volume contains "*Admonitions to the Artists on their Misconception of Theological Subjects, and a complete Development of the Venetian Art of Colouring, as is now so much the Rage of Imitation.*"[590] The differences between the newspaper and the book reviews are important. They are indications for the controversially debated status of the Venetian Secret. In the book publication Pasquin declared that Tresham's Nymph and Cupid was "painted agreeably to the Venetian School, and in the clearness of the colouring differs widely from the hazy manner introduced in former pictures by the same artist."[591]

In his first piece written for the *Morning Post* Pasquin, however, is evasive. He is cautiously assessing the effectiveness of the Venetian Secret in the paintings of Benjamin West and Henry Tresham:

> That of the Crucifixion, by Mr. West, and the Nymph and Cupid, by Mr. Tresham, are executed in what is termed a new style, to the merit or beauty of which we shall not profess ourselves proselytes, until we know more [...] before any are decisive as to the utility or durability of the present efforts, they should leave the Pictures to the operation of time, who is a wonderful detector of what is false or true, established or sophisticated; but we shall resume this subject more fully in a future number.[592]

In the book edition the wording of Pasquin's evaluation of West's *Crucifixion* is more definitive: "the colouring is spotty and oppressive, that it looks like a contention, in which

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[588] Mark Hallett, "'The Business of Criticism': The Press and the Royal Academy Exhibition in Eighteenth-Century London," in *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780-1836: Exhibition Catalogue*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 65.

[589] See William T. Whitley, *Art in England 1800-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), 143. Pasquin was an entertaining, proactive but informed writer. In his *Memoirs of the Royal Academicians*, published by H.D. Symonds in 1796 he admonished the progress of the British Arts with respect to the institution of the Royal Academy and the Royal Academicians. In particular his parody on the inauguration oath of the President deserves attention. See Anthony Pasquin, *Memoirs of the Royal Academicians, Being an attempt to Improve the National Taste* (1796), 44-46, 53.

[590] John Williams [pseud. Anthony Pasquin], *Critical Guide to the Present Exhibition at the Royal Academy, for 1797: Containing Admonitions to the Artists on their Misconception of Theological Subjects, and a complete Development of the Venetian Art of Colouring, as is now so much the Rage of Imitation* (1797).

[591] Anthony Pasquin, *A Correct List of all the Portraits: The Royal Academy; or, A Touchstone to the Present Exhibition. By the Assistance of which, The Merits and Demerits of Every Picture Are, with the greatest Candour, and much critical Labour, made manifest to the observation to the public. These Criticisms, now considerably and momentously metamorphosed, meliorated and augmented, were first promulgated in the Morning Post* (1797), 10.

one hue strives to suppress the other; the tints are so varigated, abrupt, and deficient in mellowness, that it appears at a distance, like a vast piece of old coloured china."[593] According to Farington, West was very proud of this particular painting. While working on it he frequently showed it to visitors.[594] Westall, however, described it as "the strangest thing He ever saw."[595] West's *Crucifixion* was one of four pictures painted during the period of experimentation with the Venetian Secret. Even though it was mentioned by two contemporary art critics, it is not entirely certain how extensively West experimented on this particular painting. Pasquin was the only one who condemned it straightaway.

Pasquin provided a very detailed description of West's *Raphael West and Benjamin West, Jr* completed in 1796 and exhibited in 1797 as *Portrait of two brothers*.[596] On May 5 his review of the painting of West's two sons was published:

> unhappy as Mr. West is chronicled to be in Portrait Painting, he is more unhappy in this essay than heretofore: the two faces are stony, cold, and unnatural: for some very extraordinary reason he has given one of the characters green hair; if the worthy President meant this as the introductory example of a new mode to elude the Powder Tax, we do not suppose that Mr. Pitt will be very civil to him the next time he meets him in Windsor Castle.[597]

Pasquin is not exaggerating. The forelock of the younger son Benjamin West, Jr. definitely has a green tint. He is wearing a dark coat. His brother's is brown and red. The green originates in the background of the painting to the right in the night sky. Since the main light sources are to the left and in front of the two men, it is not easy to justify the green reflection in the greying hair as artistic intention. When confronted West claimed that he met the Provises in October 1796, just after he finished a portrait of his son Raphael. After it had been agreed that West should do some experiments with the Venetian Secret he "'copied on Canvas prepared agreeable to Provis's process and added to it a Head of His son Benjamin.'"[598] Farington saw the two paintings in January 1797 and preferred the two brothers to the head of Raphael. He "felt that by using the technique West had made a manifest advance over his previous work." [599]

That West had had problems with the *Portrait of two Brothers* is also mentioned by Farington.[600] William Beechey who visited West's studio in January 1797 recalled, "there evidently appeared a difficulty on the part of the Artist to make the colour work. [...] There is a deal of force in the picture when seen at a distance, but when approached, none of

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[592] *Morning Post*, 2 May, 1797. See British Library, *Microfish*; shelfmark: Burney 941.a.
[593] Pasquin, *Critical Guide to the Present Exhibition* (1797), 20.
[594] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 747
[595] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 720-21.
[596] Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 134, 174-75, 234-35, 362, 460-61.
[597] *Morning Post*, 5 May, 1797.
[598] Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West* (1986), 460-61.
[599] This painting is mentioned several times by Farington. In the beginning West seems to have been convinced of the new technique. See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 745.

that exquisite imitation of the human flesh." Both hesitated and neither of them was sure whether the Venetian Process and West's painting technique was to blame. Meanwhile and with the usual eagerness, the prospective exhibitors tried to optimise their painting techniques. Beechey, for example, tried to recreate Rembrandt's colouring technique. He explained to Farington, that "by holding the picture to the fire while the colours were wet which incorporated them witht [*sic*]. the use of pencils, - the blending by this means becoming more exquisite than could be by the touch."[601]

What is certain is that some of the Royal Academicians tried to outsmart others in order to produce more impressive and, in fact, more original paintings. The Venetian Secret was seen as an opportunity for an advantage in novelty. While West might have deliberately extended the trial period, others paid to use the Venetian Secret. With what appeared to be an ancient recipe they felt assured because they were able to avail themselves of a supposedly successful technique.

In the book edition the *Critical Guide to the Present Exhibition* (1797), Pasquin finished his reviews of the exhibition and concluded with a remark about the Venetian Secret:

> This new fangled mode of Painting, which, like all novelties, has been so eagerly adopted by Messr. West, Stothard, Farington, Tresham, &c. is, in our belief, no other than the consequence of a stratagem which has been practised upon their credulity, [...]. If any of our Portrait Painters should rashly do a likeness in this style, we have only to assure their employers, that it may change the complexion with as much rapidity as the Camelion [*sic*] does his jacket.[602]

On June 6 Farington went to West's to look at the paintings he was working on. After thorough examination he decided that Titian's grounds were "much warmer than Provis's grounds - and the objects are painted in *Colour* not russetted. - vigorous pencilling in the lights & protuberant parts. [...] The Last Supper is in His last manner which Rubens imitated, - a *warm* ground, on a *light* ground, and painted in *Colour* & *Titian Shade*." On the same day, West admitted to his disillusion about the Venetian Secret. Farington was surprised: West "*now says* Provis's grounds are too *cold* & purple."[603] Curious about this episode is that it was accounted for as late as June 1797, that is long after the above mentioned reviews were published. Moreover, Farington seems to imply that West changed his opinion after he went back to Titian to analyse the specificity of the Titian grounds. James Barry was one of few Royal Academicians who cautioned and voiced

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[600] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 750.
[601] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 738, 739-40, 744, 751. Beechey was not sure about the Venetian Secret. See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 777, 798.
[602] Pasquin, *Critical Guide to the Present Exhibition* (1797), 20-21.
[603] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 850.

suspicion.[604] In the wake of the Venetian fiasco, he stressed that colour always had to take second place. Colour was needed to harmonise but never to enhance a design. He emphasised that only endless practice would teach the artist how colour had to be mixed and applied.[605]

The Venetian Secret was not a simple formula which could be easily mastered. Farington relates that Stothard, who had seen West's experimental pictures in January 1797, said that he believed that Miss Provis's paintings "shew the value of it better than those of West."[606] This enforces the argument about the late eighteenth-century obsession with originality and the tireless efforts undertaken when trying to achieve it. Originality was not about innovative creative forces but about reproducing lost originals, about recovering a perfected mode of representing, buried in the past and lost over time.

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Reynolds's editor Edmund Malone was involved with one of the greatest forgery affairs of the late eighteenth century, the Shakespeare papers. Malone had made his name with *Attempt to Ascertain the Order in which the Plays of Shakespeare were written* (1778) which was followed by a ten volume Shakespeare edition published in 1790. Through this project Malone developed a great expertise and interest in manuscripts. In his 1797 edition of Reynolds's works he referred to the then recent scandal of Shakespeare's so-called new plays, which had been forged by William Henry Ireland, who like Macpherson and Chatterton was a renowned late eighteenth-century literary conman.[607] Malone, the manuscript expert who exposed the Shakespeare forgery, probably never saw the allegedly original Titian manuscript. Possibly Malone thought that there was no need for this, since the recipe itself was insignificant compared to the general hype about colour experiments.

In the 1790s especially the status of the alleged Shakespeare play *Vortigern* written by Ireland in 1795 occupied the public mind.[608] *Vortigern* was brought to the stage at

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[604] It is possible that Barry was not taken seriously. The controversy about the credibility of the Provises persisted. On March 6, Thomas Lawrence said to Westall, that he "had surrendered himself to Provis and his daughter as if He had never held a pencil, and afterwards was surprised at having done so to two fools." See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 761, 763, 788.

[605] James Barry, *The Works of James Barry, Esq.*, 2 vols. (1809), II, 321-22.

[606] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 743.

[607] "Unlike Chatterton's, William Henry's [Ireland] materials were convincing. The Parchment and terminology were of the right period; the ink would dry to a color equally authentic. [...] The journeyman who had supplied the ink had shown him that though pale when applied to paper, it gradually took on an antique brown when held before a fire for a few seconds. [...] After searching in various shops, he found a bookseller [...] who, for five shillings, permitted him to cut from all the folio and quarto volumes in his shop the blank flyleaves." See Bernard Grebanier, *The Great Shakespeare Forgery: A new look at the career of William Henry Ireland* (London: Heineman, 1966), 78, 98.

[608] "Ireland's portfolio of impostures included legal deeds, promissory notes, receipts, letters both to and from Shakespeare, a portrait sketch, and even a 'lost' tragedy, *Vortigern*, written in the bard's own hand." See Michael Keevak, *Sexual Shakespeare: Forgery, Authorship, Portraiture* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001), 23. William Henry Ireland, *Vortigern; a Historical Tragedy in Five Acts and Henry the Second,*

Drury Lane with John Philip Kemble the famous Shakespeare actor in the lead role on April 2, 1796. Kemble allegedly claimed that he was surprised that Sheridan, one of the play's producers, had been so credulous. From the first, he - Kemble - had been suspicious. The controversy about the authorship of the play culminated on the night of its performance. Edmund Malone was at the centre of the campaign against *Vortigern*. Outside the theatre he distributed pamphlets while inside the performance was interrupted with laughter.[609]

This forgery of the Shakespeare papers is an interesting parallel to the scandal of the Venetian Secret. In both cases arguments for and against authenticity were based on text sources but proof was derived from performance. In 1796 Ireland published what he claimed to have discovered: legal documents, various letters, love poems, a lock of Shakespeare's hair and the manuscript of *King Lear*. The novelties of Ireland's discovery were the two new plays *Vortigern* and *Henry II*. The success of Ireland's forgery can be explained with the lack of such documents and the desire of the contemporary Shakespeare scholars to have this gap filled.[610] In the same year Malone published *An Inquiry into the Authenticity of Certain Miscellaneous Papers Legal Instruments*. It had facsimiles of the hand-writings of Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth and Henry Earl of Southampton. With the keen insight of a detective Malone declared that an investigation into authenticity had to go beyond an analysis of the textual evidence.[611] His attack instigated the discovery of Ireland's forgeries and prompted him to publish his confessions in 1805.[612]

In his footnote to the 1797 first edition of Reynolds's works Malone carefully considered the possibility of forgery. He stressed that in contrast to the alleged Shakespeare manuscripts, the authenticity of the Venetian Secret could be easily ascertained. By the time the 1798 edition came out Malone's opinion had changed: "Some experiments have accordingly been made, and it seems, with no great success. However ancient therefore these documents may be, they hitherto appear of little value." This amendment supports the idea that Malone had not really calculated the time factor,

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and Historical Drama together with an Authentic Account of the Shakespearian Manuscript, &c. (New York: Kelley Publishers, 1971 [1799, 1796]).

[609] James Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*, 2 vols. (1825), II, 166, 171-72. Malone's "demonstration that the papers were forged was utterly devastating. The performance [...] was packed with his rowdy supporters and although there were many others opposing the contention that the play was a forgery, things disintegrated into bedlam when it became clear that even John Kemble [...] thought the production laughable. The play collapsed and did not return to the stage for over two centuries." See Nick Groom, *The Forger's Shadow: How Forgery Changed the Course of Literature* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Pan Macmillan Ltd, 2002), 219. "Within the space of a few days, *Vortigern* was laughed off the stage, and there was nothing left to do but for young William Henry to confess." See Keevak, *Sexual Shakespeare* (2001), 25.

[610] Ian Haywood, *Faking it: Arts and the Politics of Forgery* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1987), 64.

[611] Edmund Malone, *An Inquiry into the Authenticity of Certain Miscellaneous Papers Legal Instruments* (1796), 7.

[612] William Henry Ireland, *The Confessions of William Henry Ireland* (1805). Haywood suggests that with this publication Ireland followed the example of the early eighteenth-century literary impostor George Psalmanazar. See Haywood, *Faking it* (1987), 67.

because the quality of the pictures painted according to the Venetian Secret's recipe seems to have deteriorated - possibly after they had been hung. In 1798 Malone concluded this passage about the Venetian Secret with his 1797 praise of Reynolds who, according to Malone, "undoubtedly attained a part of the ancient process."[613] This speaks for the artistic desire to emulate the Venetian style. Malone duly acknowledged that mixing paints could not be compared to literary plagiarism. Colour was very difficult to manipulate. Blake's ironic, mocking comment to this passage is: "Why are we told that Reynolds is a Great Colourist & yet inferior to the Venetians." (*AR* E640)

A Blake connection to the ongoing debates about forgery is found in his annotations to Wordsworth's *Poems* dating from 1826: "I believe both Macpherson & Chatterton, that what they say is ancient, Is so," and "I own myself an admirer of Ossian equally with any other Poet whatever Rowley & Chatterton also." (*AW* E665, 666) Blake's response to the matter is more about the style of the poems than about whether there are genuine or not. Since their authors had projected themselves back into the time when they could have been written, he perceived these poems as possible. It is obvious that Blake separated authenticity from authorship, and thus shifted the focus to the work itself.[614]

By 1799 Blake had abandoned his colour-printing experiments. When he annotated Reynolds's *Discourses on Art* he was preparing for his own exhibition of 1809. One of the pictures painted for this occasion was *The Spiritual Form of Nelson guiding the Leviathan*. Blake's choice of this subject may have been influenced by West's *Apotheosis of Nelson* of 1807. This possible link to a painting of the high art world suggests that the themes of Blake's 1809 exhibition can, indeed, be associated with the achievements of the academic art world.[615] From the Large Colour Prints to the tempera paintings it was only a small step. Blake even signed some of his Large Prints with "fresco." So, within the context of the craze for original colours, and if the colour prints were a preliminary stage to the temperas, it becomes clear that Blake abandoned printmaking in order to concentrate on his colour experiments. In his printmaking he had achieved good results. After he realised that colour-printing only covered a certain area of visual effects, he ventured on. It is possible that once he felt confident about his art of colouring, he decided to organise an

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[613] Malone about Reynolds, in Reynolds, *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, ed. Edmund Malone (1797), xxxiii. Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1997), ed. Wark, lvii. In the months leading up to the 1797 exhibition Farington referred to William Henry Ireland and Malone in connection with the controversy about the Shakespeare manuscripts. On Friday 20, he mentioned that he went to the Shakespeare Gallery and met Ireland and Boydell. See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 745, 754, 755.

[614] "Mystification–fraud-creates the appearance of reality, while poetic fiction lends the effect of unreality. [...] This is analogous to the possibility of basing the (unreal) poetic fiction on positively real and psychologically well-defined dreams, visions, and hallucinations; indeed, the possibility cannot be discarded that a work of art is really the accurate recording of these dreams, visions, and hallucinations, at the level of the author's intentions. This is in fact one of the possible interpretations of the visionary artist William Blake's remark on Chatterton's authenticity." See Sándor Radnóti, *The Fake: Forgery and Its Place in* Art (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999), 185.

[615] Andrew Wilton, *British Watercolours 1750 to 1850* (Oxford: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1977), 22-3.

exhibition. During this exhibition on the first floor of his brother's shop in Broad Street, opened in May 1809, Blake showed sixteen paintings eleven of which were in "fresco."

Blake must have hoped that his fresco paintings would be more successful than the paintings produced according to the Venetian Secret that had been shown on the occasion of the 1797 Royal Academy exhibition. Even though there is a decade between these two exhibitions, one must not forget that exhibitions were a rare event. A connection between the two exhibitions would explain what the rhetoric of his *Descriptive Catalogue* was directed against: the colour debacles experienced at other exhibitions. In this catalogue Blake specially emphasised that he used a paint which predated oil colour: "Oil was not used except by blundering ignorance, till after Vandyke's time, but the art of fresco painting being lost, oil became a fetter to genius." (*DC* 6, 7, E531)[616] His biggest blow against the art establishment was his claim that everything painted in oil was only a copy of an even older fresco: "The Greatest part of what are calld in England Old Pictures are Oil Colour Copies from Fresco Originals the Comparison is Easily made & the Copy Detected." (*PA* 78, E578) Thus Blake installed the hierarchy of the arts of colouring which were intrinsically linked to the concepts of original and copy.

Blake had identified the binder of the pigments as a necessary evil, because while the old Renaissance paintings seemed to have retained their original brilliance, oil paintings, so emphasised Blake, darkened and discoloured over time. At issue is the stability of oil colour. During his 1809 exhibition he proposed the results achieved through an alternative to oil colour: fresco: "The Art has been lost: I have recovered it. How this was done, will be told, together with the Process, in a Work of Art, now in the Press." (*DC* 2, E527)[617] Joan K. Stemmler points out that even though Blake never revealed how he prepared the ground of his fresco paintings, his early biographers mentioned "glue-water" and "carpenter's glue." His frescos, writes Stemmler, are "pictures made with watercolor on a kind of plaster ground." This technique can be traced back to the Italian, late fourteenth-century painter Cennino Cennini. Blake's friend George Cumberland knew of the manuscript and, according to Stemmler, could have told Blake about it.[618] Even though Blake never mentioned that he had discovered an old manuscript, it is clear from his rhetoric that his *Descriptive Catalogue* is a product of the contemporary discourse about colour.

The chemical stability of the colours used for oil painting was a prominent theme of the rhetoric about colour. In January 1795 the *Analytical Review* announced the premium

[616] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 247.
[617] Blake never revealed the secret he claimed to have discovered. After the agreement and subsequent bond with Provis had been established Farington noted that one subscriber suggested that the Secret should be made known to everybody. John Trumbull, an American painter studying under West, was eventually allowed to sign the bond even though it had been considered that only British artists should have the privilege of the Venetian Secret. See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 752, 775,777, 785, 793, 802, 811, 812, 816.

votes published in the *Transactions of the Society instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce*: the "great silver pallet and 20 guineas" are given to Mr. Blackman for making oil-colour cakes which do not form a skin when drying.[619] At the request of the Committee of the Polite Arts this method had been tested by Richard Cosway, who after a number of experiments confirmed that oil cakes were a useful improvement for the practice of oil painting. However, the trial period was extended further after Stothard's objection: "I can say nothing as to their durability; that must be left to time." In March 1794 the Committee reached its final vote.[620]

The next noteworthy discovery was reported for the year 1798 when the editors of the *Transactions* summarised the results of the research undertaken into the discovery of the Venetian Secret:

> Various attempts have been frequently made to discover, if possible, the manner of Painting practised by the best artists of the Venetian School, [...] How far it agrees with those methods that have, within these few months, been told as secrets to some of our eminent artists, must be left to them to determine: certain is, that Mr. Sheldrake, [...] is uninformed of those secrets, and has discovered this method of painting by dint of application and study."[621]

In November 1798 the *Analytical Review* confirmed that the greater silver pallet was awarded to Mr. Timothy Sheldrake.[622] In the years 1799 and 1801 the editors of the *Transactions* announced that Sheldrake had written yet another paper to supplement his findings.[623]

From his annotations to Malone's account of Reynolds's life, it is difficult to infer whether Blake was aware of Malone's reconsideration of the affair of the Venetian Secret or not. In footnote 36, appearing only in the 1798 edition, Malone tried to assure his readers about Reynolds's colour experiments, because the majority of his pictures "have preserved their original hue."[624] Blake annotated: "I do not think that the Change is so much in the Pictures as in the Opinions of the Public." (*AR* E640) He was certainly aware of the current debates about colour instability and the fact that many of Reynolds's pictures had faded. When he ridiculed Malone he seemed to suggest that the judgement of Reynolds's pictures depended on taste or point of view rather than the material evidence. If we read the comment "Why are we told that Reynolds is a Great Colourist & yet inferior to the Venetians" (*AR* E 640) against the possibility of his knowledge of the

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[618] Joan K. Stemmler, "Cennino, Cumberland, Blake and Early Painting Techniques," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 17:4 (1984), 145.
[619] *Analytical Review*, 21 (1795), 43.
[620] *Transactions of the Society Instituted at London, for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce; with the Premiums offered*, 12 (1794), 275, 276-77.
[621] *Transactions*, 16 (1798), ix.
[622] *Analytical Review*, 28 (1798), 454.
[623] *Transactions*, 13 (1795), xiii-xiv. *Transactions*, 19 (1801), xxiii.
[624] The paintings cracked because of Reynolds's use of varnishes. They often cracked even before he sold them. See Hudson, *Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1958), 121.

editorial changes, it emerges that "the Venetians" might as well refer to his contemporaries, that is to those who experimented with oil colours in the late 1790s. With this assumption Blake's own colour rhetoric becomes part of the debates around the controversy of the Venetian Secret.

James Barry in his *Letter to the Dilettanti Society* signed July 25, 1797 explicitly mentioned the two editions of Reynolds's *Works*: "It is to be regretted, that the procrastination which so long withheld these papers of Sir Joshua from the public, had not been discreetly extended a little further, to the opening of the Exhibition, as what Mr. Malone then witnessed, even on the first day's exposure of this nostrum at the Exhibition dinner, would have saved him [...]." Reynolds, wrote Barry, "well knew how to employ as much of the Venetian manner of colouring as suited his own views of the art [...]." In his 1797 edition Malone jumped to conclusions and smoothed over the disagreements between the Royal Academicians in the months leading up to the Exhibition. Barry seems to imply that Reynolds would have known better.[625] Barry's mention of the differences between the two editions in his *Letter to the Dilettanti Society* suggests that the matter was brought to the attention of a wider audience.

What happened at the 1797 exhibition, if we are to believe Barry, happened within a few days and possibly within the exhibition space. It was common practice for artists to continue to work on their paintings right up until the beginning of the exhibition. Farington, for example, recommended that Lawrence should "carry his picture to the Exhibition room and complete it there in the week before the pictures are recd. [*sic*]. He was much delighted with the advantage."[626] The preparation procedures to the annual exhibitions were changed officially in 1809 when the so-called varnishing days were introduced: "the members of the Academy were granted the privilege of retouching and varnishing their pictures after they were hung, and prior to the opening of the exhibition."[627] The exhibitors could take this advantage to tidy up their works just before the private view. The exhibition was usually opened to the Royal family, then to the Academicians and selected guests and then finally to the general public.[628]

That the Venetian Secret developed into a full-blown public scandal can be estimated from James Gillray's hand-coloured aquatint etching of 1797 *Titianus Redivivus; - or – The Seven Wise Men Consulting the New Venetian Oracle*.[629] On top of a rainbow is

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[625] Barry, *Works* (1809), II, 477-78. After his appointment as Professor of Painting in 1782, Barry challenged Reynolds both as a scholar and painter. See also William L. Pressly, *The Life and Art of James Barry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 15-16, 136.
[626] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 801-02, 814.
[627] Shandby, *History of the Royal Academy of Arts* (1862), I, 274-75.
[628] John Sutherland and David H. Solkin, "Staging the Spectacle," in *Art on the Line* (2001), ed. Solkin, 26-27. In 1797 the Council "reviewed" the pictures submitted for the exhibition on April 9: The hanging begins on the next day. The Royal family is invited on April 28. See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 818, 819-20, 828.
[629] No. 47, see James Gillray, *The Art of Caricature: Exhibition Catalogue,* ed. Richard Godfrey (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), 87.

Anne Gemima Provis. At the bottom we see Reynolds returning from his grave. Macklin, Boydell, and West join forces on monetary issues. They leave the scene to the right.[630] The inscriptions on the canvases of the seven Royal Academicians, absorbed in painting, are "slogans about 'beginning' and 'finishing' and hiding faults behind paint."[631]

The "Seven Wise Men" gathered around Miss Provis can be identified as Joseph Farington, John Opie, Richard Westall, John Hoppner, Thomas Stothard, Robert Smirke, and J.F. Rigaud. The portfolios of those who objected to the Venetian Secret are leaning against the base of a headless Apollo Belvedere: Fuseli, Beechey, de Loutherbourg, Cosway, Sandby, Bartolozzi, Rooker, and Turner. Gillray's caricature crystallised the two major aspects of the Venetian Secret. Not only was the process a forgery, Royal Academicians had paid for a painting lesson. They had hired Miss Provis to teach them how to prepare the ground and mix the paints. Knowing the Venetian Secret was not enough, the technique had to be demonstrated.[632]

Miss Provis began with the practical instructions on January 31, the day the agreement with the seven Royal Academicians was signed. All seven paid Thomas Provis a sum of "Ten Guineas for the free use of the said Process of Painting."[633] Farington recorded: "Stothard was alarmed, said it was only a glazing System. Hoppner thinks a good deal in it. Rigaud, myself &c convinced that it is a discovery of great importance."[634] Over the following days, Farington while working on his own process picture took notes with great enthusiasm.[635] The agreement between the Royal Academicians and the Provises, however, proved no guarantee for the protection of the Venetian Secret. That it must have been communicated to the students of the Royal Academy emerges from J.F. Rigaud's motion recorded in the General Assembly Minutes of the Royal Academy. On April 8, 1797 he argued "as the Candidates for the gold Medal, may not all be in Possession" of the Venetian Secret "the Pictures for the Gold Medal are not to be Painted according to that System, but in the usual Mode." Five days later, in a second motion, Rigaud appealed to the Assembly to give "Tickets & Catalogue [...] to M.r Provis, & his Daughter. - for their Admission, during the Exhibition." Both motions were granted.[636]

During the months leading up to the 1797 exhibition Farington carefully noted down the excitement of his colleagues Westall, Smirke and Opie.[637] However, his positive

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[630] In the months before the exhibition West's behaviour is often commented on. Especially the Provises worried that West used the process without acknowledging or paying for it. See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 745, 749, 750, 751, 777, 811, 816, 820.
[631] Eaves, *Counter-Arts Conspiracy* (1992), 210.
[632] For Thomas Provis's expectations, see *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 735, 739, 740.
[633] This document is in the archive of the Royal Academy.
[634] The negotiations about a agreement between Provis and the Royal Academicians probably started on January, 11. It was signed on January 30. See *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 744, 745, 759, 760, 762, 763, 765.
[635] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 772-73, 783, 797, 795, 799, 800, 808, 815, 818, 821, 828.
[636] *General Assembly Minutes* (1768), I, 316, 319.
[637] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 746, 747, 749.

impressions of the different process pictures seem to come down to a matter of taste: "Bourgeois asked me how I liked Wests [*sic*] specimens of the new process. I expressed myself in favour of the small picture; He said neither of them afforded him any particular pleasure."[638] The bound notebook, kept in the archive of the Royal Academy, bundles notes by different people. John Gage argued that almost half of this notebook was in Farington's hand. He emphasised that the Venetian Secret was communicated orally.[639] This manuscript-book consists of four notebooks by different people and several sheets of different sized paper probably by Farington. On one of those pages appears a note written in ink: "to be copied into Process Book." While inspecting the Manuscript at the Royal Academy it occurred to me that since the differences between them are minimal, Farington may have collected all available notes once the Provis process had been ridiculed and abandoned.

While the process was rejected almost from the first day of the 1797 exhibition, Farington, according to his own notes, achieved good results. West certainly never managed to profit from the Venetian Secret. Farington wrote that it was West's fault that the process was discredited. He justifies this statement by pointing out that one of Tresham's paintings encouraged other painters to subscribe to the "Provis Process," and that many foreign visitors showed great interest in acquiring the secret recipe.[640]

Whether the pictures painted according to the Venetian Secret were good or not remains controversial to the last. The respective passage in Malone's biographical account referring to the results of Reynolds's experimental pictures was annotated by Blake. Success probably depend, suggested Blake, on adapting to the "Opinions of the Public." (*AR* E640) In addition, Farington may have been right in his judgement of West, because the search for the making and mixing of the Venetian colours was not over. When Washington Allston enrolled himself at the Royal Academy from 1801 to 1803 to study under Benjamin West, he, according to David Bjelajac "joined in the collective quest of the English school. [...] The 1797 fiasco did not deter the alchemical search for the Venetian Secret." Some of his most daring colour-glazing experiments were executed after his return to England in 1811.[641] Consequently, the rhetoric of Blake's 1809 one-man show is part of a wider context of contemporary colour experiments. Not only had he organised his exhibition to spite the Royal Academy, his exhibition was retrospective and displayed the various results of his own colour experiments.

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[638] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 751, 753, 813, 844.
[639] John Gage, " Magilphs and Mysteries," *Apollo*, 80 (1965), 38.
[640] *Diary of Farington* (1979), III, 832, 838, 841, 842.
[641] David Bjelajac, *Washington Allston, Secret Societies, and the Alchemy of Anglo-American Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10, 35.

There are many examples with which a case for Blake's attitude to colouring can be argued. The best case study concerns his ideas about flesh colour, formulated in his *Descriptive Catalogue*, and in connection with the painting *The Ancient Britons*, painted for the 1809 exhibition. Unfortunately, this painting is now lost. In his description Blake recurred to the second essential, which he recommended after his technical skill in drawing (both on canvas and on copper): visionary travel, the guarantee for the originality of his concepts. Blake starts out by emphasising: "The British Antiquities are now in the Artist's hands; all his visionary contemplations, relating to his own country and its ancient glory, when it all was as it again shall be, the source of learning and inspiration." (*DC* 40, E542) These representations of the ancient inhabitants of the British Isles put Blake's talents to the test:

> Now he [the artist] comes to his trial. He knows that what he does is not inferior to the grandest Antiques. Superior they cannot be, for human power cannot go beyond either what he does, or what they have done, it is the gift of God, it is inspiration and vision. He had resolved to emulate those [...] precious remains of antiquity, he has done so and the result you behold." (*DC* 45-46, E544)

In *The Ancient Britons* Blake also links the complex argument about his control of drawing outline both on canvas and copper with his argument about transparent colour. He associates the pure original physiognomy of the ancestors of the English nation with a healthy appearance:

> The flush of health in flesh, exposed to the open air, nourished by the spirits of forests and floods, in that ancient happy period, which history has recorded, cannot be like the sickly daubts of Titian or Rubens. [...] As to a modern Man stripped from his load of clothing, he is like a dead corpse. Hence Rubens, Titian, Correggio, and all of that class, are like leather and chalk; [...] in Mr. B's Britons, the blood is seen to circulate in their limbs; he defies competition in colouring. (*DC* 50, E545)

In this picture where the form of ancient man has been brought back to life Blake claims to have achieved a perfect union of line and colour.

Robert Hunt reviewed both exhibition and catalogue for the *Examiner* and disagreed with Blake's deliberations about transparent skin colour: "the poor man fancies himself a great master, and has painted a few wretched pictures, some of which are unintelligible allegory, others an attempt at a sober character by caricature representation, and the whole 'blotted and blurred,' and very badly drawn." The biggest blow was Hunt's comment on the colouring of *The Ancient Britons*: "This picture is a complete caricature [...] the colouring of the flesh is exactly like hung beef."[642] Ironically all that Blake had managed to

[642] G.E. Bentley, Jr., *William Blake, The Critical Heritage* (1975; London: Routledge, 1995), 64-66. In 1808 Robert Hunt, when reviewing Cromek's edition of Blair's *The Grave*, praised Schiavonetti's engravings while criticising Blake's designs. Bentley surmises that this harsh attack was "part of a campaign in the *Examiner* against 'the Folly and Danger of Methodism,' a folly which is demonstrated in any manifestation of a belief in the spiritual." See Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 305, 329.

achieve was a modern man whose representations had been transformed by the dissecting knife of William Hunter. Tristanne Connolly has pointed out that Blake most certainly drew on J.J. Winckelmann's idealised representation of the ancient Greeks.[643] Skin colour, rendered in terms of the blood circulating below a transparent skin, was also characteristic of Rubens. It is likely that Blake - due to lack of firsthand experience - was not aware of Rubens's controversial achievement in the representation of nudes.[644]

If Blake's painting technique is interpreted as representing the degree of openness in a body, it is necessary to remember that openness in Blake tends to be considered as being bound up with the body's anatomy and in particular with the flayed body: "Blake does seem to see through the skin – to strip off the external layer of his characters - and depict the tense, energy-filled inner being, the spirit of his idea."[645] The notion of the circulating blood was of utmost importance for Blake's conception of life's creative powers. With *The Ghost of a Flea*, as will be argued in the following chapter, openness is a category which transcends the material condition of the physical body, because it applies no longer to a body which is alive.

In *The Ancient Britons*, Blake recreated the original state of mankind. This ambition brings us back to the topic of the 1790's creation myth. It is important to see that his understanding of creation, outline and colour were intimately linked through the opposition of original and copy - with the copy aspiring towards the original. Whereas in the Urizen Books Blake represented the different attempts at embodiment, in *The Ancient Britons* he advanced beyond his earlier theorisation of representation. In the case of these figures there was no doubt about their authenticity as the original models had been "in the Artist's hands." (*DC* 40, E542). What was at stake in *The Ancient Britons* was Blake's art of colouring with which he intended to excel in his representation of the naked bodies of the ancient men. This issue could not be addressed within the context of the 1790's creation myth, because Blake as the creator of the Urizen Books was always situated outside the events. With his 1809 exhibition Blake had turned himself into the major protagonist of the forms displayed by both line and colour.

Nakedness as such was yet another *topos* in the art historical writings about the ideal human body. Winckelmann had suggested that the loss of the beautiful nakedness of the ancient Greeks was a physical degeneration brought about by changing environments and ways of life. Winckelmann's *Thoughts on the Imitation of the Greek Works of Painting and Sculpture* (1755) was the founding text of the Classicist art

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[643] The effects of nakedness in nature are discussed by J.J. Winckelmann. See Connolly, *Blake and the Body* (2002), 206-07, 42.
[644] Emil Maurer, "Der Fleischmaler: ach oder oh? (1977)," in *15 Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Malerei* (Basel, Boston, Stuttgart: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1982), 143-50.
[645] Wilton, *British Watercolours* (1977), 24.

theory.[646] Carol Louise Hall has pointed out that Blake owned a copy of Fuseli's 1765 translation of Winckelmann. He possibly acquired it during his apprenticeship to the antiquarian James Basire.[647] Blake's description of *The Ancient Britons* reiterated Winckelmann's theory about human society by asserting that the "three general classes of men who are represented by the most Beautiful, the most Strong, and the most Ugly, could not be represented by any historical facts but those of our own country, the Ancient Britons, without violating costume." (*DC* 39, E542)

One of Winckelmann's main points was that modern man bore only a faint resemblance to the ancient Greeks whose superiority found immediate expression in their bodies, which due to the mild climate and daily exercises were perfect and elegant. Winckelmann argued that the ancient Greek sculptures were precise imitations and an embodiment of a natural ideal: "the bodies of the Greeks, as well as the works of their artists, were framed with more unity of system, a nobler harmony of parts, and a completeness of the whole, above our lean tensions and hollow wrinkles."[648] Since Winckelmann determined that the loss of the Greek ideal manifested itself as a degeneration in artistic representation, his ideas about the centrality of the naked human form and the ways in which it could be represented appealed to Blake,[649] who had already explored the mythographic links between Britain and Ancient Greece: Britain's mystic founder was the Trojan refugee Brutus.[650]

> The connoisseurs and artists who have made objections to Mr. B.'s mode of representing spirits with real bodies, would do well to consider that the Venus, the Minerva, the Jupiter, the Apollo, which they admire in Greek statues, are all of them representations of spiritual existences of God's immortal, to the mortal perishing organ of sight; and yet they are embodied and organized in solid marble. (*DC* 36-37, E541)

It suited Blake to think of the ancient Britons at one remove from the Greeks and the idea of three British prototypes in terms of three aesthetic categories must have fitted in well with Chaucer's universally human cross-section of society and representation of the eternal principles.

Blake's definition of the relationship between the Greek statues and the living British prototypes is crucial. It was probably conceived in alignment with Winckelmann who, according to Alex Potts, explained the difference between Greek originals and Roman

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[646] Moshe Barasch, *Theories of Art: From Plato to Winckelmann* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1985), 310-21.
[647] Hall, *Blake and Fuseli* (1985), 67, 70.
[648] Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks* (1765), 4, 16.
[649] For Blake and Winckelmann, see George Mills Harper, *Neoplatonism of William Blake* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 34-35. Mellor, *Human Form Divine* (1974), 121-24. Hall, *Blake and Fuseli* (1985), 67-98.
[650] Brutus is referred to in Blake's early play *King Edward the Third* (E437). For the watercolour painting, titled "The Landing of Brutus in Britain." See Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 51, 52.

copies as a process of alienation. He approached Greek sculpture through Roman accounts about it:

> Winckelmann was drawing on written records relating to ancient Greek sculpture dating from the Roman Imperial period, which looked back to a moment of classic perfection [...], a moment that could only have survived in highly mediated form among the ruins of Imperial Rome available in the eighteenth century. Antiquarian scholars before Winckelmann had already been taxed by the problem as to whether the most admired surviving antique statues were true equivalents of the classic Greek masterpieces mentioned in ancient literature or works of inferior quality.[651]

All theories about the ideal human form originating in ancient Greece were based on the few surviving statues which were being discovered at the time. These relics came to represent the totality of ancient Greek art. For example, one has only to think of the influence of the Elgin Marbles, acquired in Athens and bought from Thomas Bruce 7th Earl of Elgin in 1816 by the British government. Even though the sale of these marbles was overshadowed by tedious negotiations, they were welcomed as the epitome of human beauty. Blake's links with the dealings with Greek antiques were his engravings for James Stuart and Nicolas Revett's *The Antiquities of Athens* (1794) and John Flaxman.[652]

Even though Blake had claimed that the British Antiquities were in front of him, his technique was similar to that of Winckelmann by claiming that he not only had effigies but also the "poems of the highest antiquity." (*DC* 41, E542) It is important to note that Blake's revision of British history was based on the handed-down text: "Adam was a Druid, and Noah; also Abraham was called to succeed the Druidical age, which began to turn allegoric and mental signification into corporeal command, whereby human sacrifice would have depopulated the earth." (*DC* 41, E542-43) Bearing in mind what Blake had learned about textuality in the 1790s, by the time he came to write his *Descriptive Catalogue* he had found a solution. His new version of British History was based on the authority of a visual testimony made possible through visionary travel:

> All had originally one language, and one religion, this was the religion of Jesus, the everlasting Gospel. [...] The reasoning historian, turner and twister of causes and consequences, such as Hume, Gibbon and Voltaire; cannot with all their artifice, turn or twist one fact or disarrange self evident action and reality. (*DC* 44, E543-44)

Blake's unorthodox solution to the question of verifying authenticity allowed him to make firm declarations as to which version of the text was correct. In addition, while the Greek statues were "organised in solid marble," Blake was able to embody the British prototypes in flesh.

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[651] Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 60-61.

[652] Blake engraved for Stuart and Revett's influential work on ancient Athens and for Flaxman's *Iliad of Homer* (1805) and *Compositions from Hesiod* (1817). See Essick, *Commercial Book Illustrations* (1991), 65-66, 81, 91-93, 100-08.

In the late eighteenth century the archaeological discoveries of original artefacts was always an exciting event. Ancient sculpture was regarded more highly than contemporary art. Blake's friend George Cumberland admonished in his *Thoughts on Outline*, published with eight plates engraved by Blake,[653] that in Great Britain "the Arts, in general, have of late been rather declining from progressive improvement. [...] They have suffered from being too much practiced as a trade; [...] but most of all from the Royal Academy, and its injudicious exhibitions."[654] British Art ailed from being too market-orientated. In *Thoughts on Outline* Cumberland reviewed the recent publications on antique works singling out the engravings of Flaxman's designs to Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, both published in London in 1796, and Wilhelm Tischbein's illustrations to Sir William Hamilton's *Collection of Engravings from Ancient Vases* (1791-95). The engraver, wrote Cumberland, "has presented us with a heavy translation of these Greek vases, *finely flourished*, but materially unlike the originals, if proportion, character of heads, stile of hair, or flow of drapery, were considered as worth preserving." However, all his "flattering hopes, that, through the hands of learned draughtsmen, those precious monuments would, at length, reach us uncontaminated and pure" were dashed. As far as his own illustrations to *Thoughts on Outline* were concerned, there was no need to worry: "one thing may be asserted of this work, which can be said of few others that have passed the hands of an engraver": Blake, the engraver of his choice, succeeded in making "fac-similes" of the originals in his possession.[655]

The original-copy controversy addressed by Cumberland refers back to William Hamilton's *Collection of Engravings from Ancient Vases* (1791). This work contained the most recent acquisitions to Hamilton's collection of antique vases as well as information about the site from which they had been excavated. Some of these vases had been wrongly identified as Etruscan. Cumberland argued that the engravings of these vases were imprecise and misleading. In one case, a former owner had tampered with the original artefact. In his own review of the visual documentation of these vases, Lord Hamilton emphasised that they were catalogued by Etruscan scholars who had wanted to "do honor to their native country." Meanwhile, the excavation site had been identified as the location of an abandoned Greek colony. Lord Hamilton suggested that Etruscan artists copied and thus learned to produce vases in the ancient Grecian style. Eventually he dismissed this hypothesis because if "any of these Vases were made by Etruscans, they must at least have acknowledged the Greeks as their Masters." Once again, the supremacy of ancient Greek art was held up high: "A well chosen Collection of these Vases, may be consider'd as a Treasure of ancient drawings. [...] the study of them would

[653] Essick, *Commercial Book Illustrations* (1991), 67-71.
[654] George Cumberland, *Thoughts on Outline, Sculpture, and the System that Guided the Ancient Artists in Composing their Figures and Groups* (1796), 1-2.

be of more use to Artists, than they are at present aware of, for it is highly probable, [...] that the drawings on many of these were originally taken from paintings of the very first Masters in Greece."[656]

Available as engraved reproductions, ancient artwork had an immediate effect on the London art world. In *Thoughts on Outline* (1796) Cumberland discussed the different results produced by the modern copiers at great length. Blake and Cumberland were compatible in many ways. When it came to rendering antiques they both agreed that it was important to evoke the immediacy of the original, so that other artists could fully appreciate the absent original through its copy or recreation of the ancient form. Precise outline was not down to imitating nature but to intellectual creation.[657] As a consequence, no matter how damaged the archaeological discoveries were, their original appearance could be brought back.

This kind of imitation is referred to by Blake in a description of one of the paintings of 1809 exhibition: "The two pictures of Nelson and Pitt are compositions of a mythological cast, similar to those Apotheoses of Persian, Hindoo, and Egyptian Antiquity, which are still preserved on rude monuments, being copies from some stupendous originals now lost or perhaps buried till some happier age." (*DC* 3, E530-31)[658] With this he echoed Cumberland's critique of the Royal Academy and the way in which it managed its collection of engravings:

> when the student thinks he is admiring the antique, he often pants to equal the style of those who gave every thing a manner of their own, such as Santi Bartoli, &c. for even many of those honoured with the title of Artists, are, to this day, ignorant that there is no ancient work hitherto engraved, that can in the slightest degree, be depended on as a guide to a true knowledge."[659]

By stressing the immediacy of *The Ancient Britons* and their resemblance to their source the "British Antiquities," Blake explained that the gap between the modern and ancient, or the copied and original manifestation of the human body, could not be bridged by a simple act of copying nature. Blake returned to his ideas about the relationship between originals and copies when he integrated the different types of ancient Britons into his myth of separation and origin: "They were originally one man, who was fourfold; he was self-

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[655] Cumberland, *Thoughts on Outl*ine (1796), 16-17.
[656] Sir William Hamilton, *Collections of Engravings from Ancient Vases mostly of pure Greek Workmanship Discovered in Sepulchres in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies*, 3 vols. (Naples, 1791-95) 2, 8, 11-12, 14, 22, 38.
[657] Eaves, *Blake's Theory of Art* (1982), 13.
[658] The issue of copy and original is presented in terms of chronology. Morton D. Paley explains that Blake's description of the "Canterbury Pilgrims" and "The Ancient Britons" as ancient statues evidences an awareness of the contemporary debates: he claims to be able to go back in time to look at the "'wonderful originals' themselves in order to produce his own renditions of their archetypal forms." Paley delineates several points of contact for Blake's knowledge of ancient sculpture and stresses in particular the influence of James Barry, William Hayley, George Cumberland and Winckelmann. See Paley, "'Wonderful Originals' - Blake and Ancient Sculpture," in *Blake in His Time* (1978), ed. Essick and Pearce, 170-71.
[659] Cumberland, *Thoughts on Outline* (1796), 3.

divided, and his real humanity slain on the stems of generation, and the form of the fourth was like the Son of God." (*DC* 41, 42, E543)

Morris Eaves in *William Blake's Theory of Art* (1982) describes Blake's experimental pictures as "parody experiments against experiments" with Reynolds and the art aesthetic mentality he stood for as the butt of Blake's joke.[660] Eaves's interpretation is derived from one of Blake's concluding remarks about his experimental pictures written at the end of his *Descriptive Catalogue*: "These experiment Pictures have been bruized and knocked about, without mercy, to try all experiments." (*DC* 59, E548) On the one hand, this idea of the parody experiments contributed to an understanding of Blake's attitude to comedy and irony. On the other hand, through the recent emphasis on the technicalities of Blake's colour and printing technique it has become accepted that Blake was, indeed, a determined experimenter. Connolly's reading of the quality of Blake's flesh colours as transcending a natural representation of skin is correct. She is right to insist that Blake was not trying to surpass Hunter's naturalism by rendering human anatomy in colour. Connolly, however, brushes over Robert Hunt's review when she contextualises the "hung beef,"[661] a phrase used in that review, with the "meat" of Hunter's *Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus* published in 1774.[662] The argument is that the discrepancy between Hunt's description and Blake's theorisation of the painting ought not to be ignored. What does it mean if *The Ancient Britons* resemble more "hung beef" than heroic warriors? Blake had been working on the painting right until the opening of the exhibition and is said to have continued working on it until 1811. This struggle with the work indicates that it fell short of what he expected it to be - his masterpiece both in outline and colour.

In 1802 Blake wrote to Thomas Butts that for the last two years he had successfully analysed "those parts of the art which relate to light & shade & colour." (*L* November 22, 1802, E718) Together with this letter he delivered the commissioned paintings. In his own words, they were:

> Equal to Carrache or Rafael (and I am now Seven years older than Rafael was when he died) I say they are Equal to Carrache or Rafael or Else I am Blind Stupid Ignorant and Incapable in two years Study to understand those things which a Boarding School Miss can comprehend in a fortnight. (*L* November 22, 1802, E719)

Throughout his *Descriptive Catalogue*, written a few years later, Blake praised his art of colouring for its power, stability and strength. He argued that he had made his pictures "unchangable and permanent in Fresco." (Advertisement of the Exhibition, 1, E527)

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[660] Eaves, *Theory of Art* (1982), 113.
[661] Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2002), 329.
[662] Connolly associates the "hung beef" with Hunter's *Gravid Uterus*. She refers to Jordanova to explain how - during the preparation of the plates for Hunter's atlas – the female body is treated like "dead meats." See Connolly *Blake and the Body* (2002), 41.

On the pages of his *Descriptive Catalogue* Blake's lifelong tirade against oil colour reached its climax: "Oil will not drink or absorb Colour enough to stand the test of very little Time and of the Air; it grows yellow, and at length brown." (Advertisement of the Exhibition, 2, E527) Further explanations about the visual effects of his fresco technique were woven into the descriptions to the paintings exhibited in 1809: "Clear colours unmudded by oil, and firm and determinate lineaments unbroken by shadows, which ought to display and not to hide form." And "Oil has falsely [*sic*] been supposed to give strength to colours [...]. Oil will not drink or absorb colour enough to stand the test of very little time and of the air. It deadens every colour it is mixed with." (*DC* 2, E530) What was brought to the public in 1809 was the result of long and intense colour experiments. The tentative conclusions from 1802 were brought to a definition: "Colouring does not depend on where the Colours are put, but on where the lights and darks are put, and all depends on Form or Outline. On where that is put; where that is wrong, the Colouring never can be right." (*DC* iii, E529-30) Again, Blake argued on two levels. First about his colouring technique and second about the conception of it: "The painter of this work asserts that all his imaginations appear to him infinitely more perfect and more minutely organized than any thing seen by his mortal eye." (*DC* 37, E541-42)

Blake had great plans for his paintings. He hoped, for example, to be commissioned by the nation to do large scale frescos of the spiritual forms of Pitt and Nelson. He seemed to have envisaged pictures painted in lime-plaster, in the manner of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. Colour in frescos, according to Blake, could be controlled and mastered, because painting as fresco guaranteed on a conceptual level that colours could become an integral part of an image: "in high finished fresco [...] the colours would be as pure and as permanent as precious stones." (*DC* 5-6, E531) Blake's rhetoric implicitly challenged contemporary colour discourse. He had solved the great problem of his time, because he had given his colours clearness as well as stability: "Fresco Painting is the Most Minute,"(*AW* E653) and "Singular & Particular Detail is the Foundation of the Sublime." (*AW* E647)

Blake exhibited three of the paintings, first shown in 1809, at the spring exhibition of the Associated Painters in Watercolour in 1812: *The Spiritual Form of Nelson Guiding Leviathan* (1805), *The Spiritual Form of Pitt Guiding Behemoth* (1805), and *Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the nine and twenty Pilgrims* (c.1808).[663] That a Society founded to promote the significance of colours other than oil-based accepted Blake's pictures in 1812 is significant. It meant that the committee selecting the pictures for this exhibition was interested in Blake's colouring techniques. The foundation of the Society of Painters in

[663] Howard E. Wooden, *Art of A Changing Society: British Watercolors and Drawings 1775-1900* (Wichita, Kansas: Wichita Art Museum, 1983), 11-13. *The Royal Watercolour Society: The First Fifty Years 1805-1855* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club Ltd., 1912), 277-281.

Watercolour in 1804 is hardly surprising since the preparation of watercolours was so much easier than that of oil-colours. This was reflected in the publication of books on painting in watercolours. Carington Bowles's *The Art of Painting in Water-Colours* (1773), for example, with its various recipes and detailed instructions for application, had gone through 12 editions by 1802 while the third edition of Bowles's handbook on oil-colour, *The Art of Painting in Oil*, dates only from 1800.

Bentley found one review of this Watercolour exhibition. He stressed that Blake's pictures were scrutinised closely. The anonymous reviewer writing for *The Lady's Monthly Museum* stated that he preferred Stothard's *The Pilgrimage to Canterbury* to Blake's: "we wish not to possess a picture whose greatest merit seems to be an imitation of the arts in their degraded state."[664] Again, the discrepancy between Blake's intention and the public reception is striking. In his *Descriptive Catalogue* Blake dedicated a whole paragraph to the landscape of this painting, suggesting a harmonic interplay between colour and design: It "is an eastward view of the country, from the Tabarde Inn, in Southwark, as it may be supposed to have appeared in Chaucer's time [...]; the first beams of the Sun are seen above the horizon." (*DC* 8, 9, E532) It is not certain whether Blake failed to render his vision by means of an improved method in colouring or whether he simply failed in executing it. The gap between the 1809 exhibition pictures and their accompanying texts is impossible to bridge. What his reviewer seems to be suggesting is that his style was old-fashioned. The truth is certainly somewhere in the middle. Blake tried to be original by recuperating the original state and status of art. In suggesting that the mortal eye had difficulties with what had been revealed through vision, Blake could have argued at any point that the flaw was in the eye of the beholder.

While Blake's watercolours are usually highly rated, his tempera paintings, the so-called frescos, are quite fragile. How could he have celebrated his artistic achievements if the praxis was that the hues of many of the pigments used in the temperas would lose their brilliance? The Large Colour Prints have proved to be relatively stable. The difference between the Large Colour Prints and the temperas is that while each of the pulls connects back to its millboard original, the experimental paintings exhibited in 1809 are objects of layered paint. His exhibition was a statement made to an art world, obsessed with secret recipes. Blake even left paintings unfinished to document to the public how he had been able to resist the temptation to paint like either the Flemish or Venetian painters. (*DC* 51, E546) He continued his experiments and brought his fresco technique to perfection in *The Ghost of a Flea*. The following chapter will discuss both the cultural and aesthetic contexts of Blake's flea, part of the Visionary Heads collection.

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[664] Quoted from Bentley, *Blake Records Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 69. Bentley, *Blake Books* (1977), 651.

Chapter 5

Body and Soul:
Blake's Visionary Heads in and beyond John Varley's *Zodiacal Physiognomy*

> A Spirit and a Vision are not, as the modern philosophy supposes, a cloudy vapour or a nothing: they are organized and minutely articulated beyond all that the mortal and perishing nature can produce. He who does not image in stronger and better lineaments, and in stronger and better light than his perishing mortal eye can see does not imagine at all. (*DC* 37, E541)

With the Visionary Heads conventionally associated with the pseudo-scientific practices of physiognomy, phrenology and astrology this thesis will conclude the theme of embodiment and the representation of spirituality in Blake. The argument is that the Visionary Heads were a compound expression generated from texts and images. As such a mixed phenomena these spiritual portraits dramatised the problem of representation at the core of Blake's creation myth nearly thirty years earlier. In the Urizen Books, Blake explained why he perceived the physiognomical and anatomical approaches to man as ill-fated. With the Visionary Heads Blake's combination of portraiture with physiognomy took its final hurdle.

Most occult traditions were based on a clear cut differentiation between an external world in which spirits walked and an internal world of the mind. With the Visionary Heads, Blake was able to access and engage with the soul itself, the core of self-expression and self-representation. Within the context of John Varley's *Zodiacal Physiognomy* (1828) he conceived a form of existence which displaced birth as well as death without ever transcending the body. In these spiritual portraits Blake demonstrated how the spiritual merged into the material and vice versa. Consequently, in the Visionary Heads Blake's idea of the eternal body as a wholesome representation of body-soul relationships is at its clearest. This kind of body, embodied in the Visionary Heads, gave expression to his vision of a united of human identity.[665]

In the autumn of 1818 John Linnell, friend and patron of Blake, introduced him to his former teacher John Varley the British water-colourist and founder member of the Society of Painters in Watercolour.[666] Blake and Varley paired up for a project on zodiacal physiognomy which they carried out during nightly drawing sessions between 1818 and

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[664] Quoted from Bentley, *Blake Records Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 69. Bentley, *Blake Books* (1977), 651.
[665] Leonard M. Trawick, "Blake and the Occult," *Wordsworth Circle*, 8: 2 (1977), 161-62. Robert N. Essick, *The Works of William Blake in the Huntington Collections: A Complete Catalogue* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1985), 74.
[666] Alfred T. Story, *James Holmes and John Varley* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1894), 199, 231-32.

1825.[667] Blake allegedly recorded numerous sightings of the great heroes and villains of the past. He drew them into drawing books which belonged to Varley and contained several of Varley's landscape and figure sketches. They are now known as the large and the small Blake-Varley Sketchbooks. At the time, Varley dated Blake's images and also wrote down details about the colour in their physical appearance. In a few cases he recorded bits of conversation.[668] Some of the Visionary Heads were inscribed by Varley with the addition "drawn [...] at my request."[669] Consequently, there were two different ways in which Blake is reported to have encountered his visionary guests. He either summoned them or they visited him on their own accord and whenever they liked. Blake often told Varley on arrival about his experiences.[670]

Most of the information about the Visionary Heads has come down to us through Varley. However, Blake and Varley must have allowed visitors to observe what they were doing during their nightly meetings, because all existing accounts testify to the same basic principles.[671] Whenever criticism was uttered or doubt voiced, Blake defended the Visionary Heads: "'Oh, it's all right! [...] it *must* be right: I saw it so.'"[672] The idea that these portraits were faithful representations of what Blake saw in his visions is predominant in all the existing accounts. When asked by Crabb Robinson whether he had sketched any spirits before he met Varley, Blake shook his head: "Why he did not *draw* them [.] - ['] It is not worth while, ['] he said, ['] Besides there are so many that the labour would be too great - And there would be no use in it [.]"]"[673] Therefore, it must have been Varley who persuaded Blake to draw his visions.

Linnell's evaluation of the situation and his participation in the zodiacal physiognomy project shows him dithering, because - while he was indecisive about whether Blake's visions were real or not - he actually supported the project by engraving the plates to Varley's *Zodiacal Physiognomy* (1828). In his *Autobiography* Linnell emphasised that Varley continually tried to convince Blake of the usefulness of astrology. But Blake would not have any of it.[674] Linnell's uneasiness with Varley was probably down to how he used physiognomy and astrology to substantiate certain versions of British history. It is possible that Varley, as suspected by Linnell, was manipulative and did not randomly ask Blake to summon King Edward I or Wallace. He could have calculated the time when they ought to reveal themselves in order to align their spiritual physiognomy with the facts known about them.

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[667] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 272.
[668] Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 692.
[669] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 323.
[670] Story, *Holmes and Varley* (1894), 261.
[671] Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 371-72.
[672] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 272.
[673] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 547.
[674] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 263-64

From Linnell's point of view, astrological interpretations could easily supersede the evidence of what manifested itself in the human face. He was very clear about that and had less problems with spirits who manifested themselves spontaneously:

> I never saw anything the least like madness for I never opposed him spitefully as many did but being really anxious to fathom if possible the amount of truth which might be in his most startling assertions I generally met with a sufficiently rational explanation in the most really friendly & conciliatory tone. [...] even to Varley Blake would occasionally explain unasked how he beleived that both Varley & I could see the same visions as he saw making it evident to me that Blake claimed the possession of some powers only in a greater degree that all men possessed and which they undervalued in themselves & lost through love of sordid pursuits - pride, vanity, & the unrighteous mammon[.][675]

The argument is that Blake's Visionary Heads were coded representations of body-soul relationships. When collaborating with Varley, Blake's dealings with English history acquired a different mode of artistic expression. Likewise, it is important to note that Linnell's involvement with the Visionary Heads exceeded doing engravings for *Zodiacal Physiognomy*. He made an oil painting of Blake's drawing of Edward I and Wallace.[676] Blake used to theorise the collapse of the natural into the spiritual world as a change in perception. In his letter, written in August 1799, to the Reverend Dr. Trusler he delineated his idea about the transcending force of vision:

> This World Is a World of Imagination & Vision I see Every thing I paint In This World, but Every body does not see alike. [...] Some See Nature all Ridicule & Deformity & by these I shall not regulate my proportions, & Some Scarce see Nature at all But to the Eyes of the Man of Imagination Nature is Imagination itself. As a man is So he Sees. As the Eye is formed such are its Powers You certainly Mistake when you say that the Visions of Fancy are not be found in This World. To Me This World is all One continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination. (*L* August 28, 1799, E702)

Interestingly, in most of the existing narratives of Blake's life his visions are hardly ever introduced with such constructions as "Blake claimed" or "Blake asserted." Blake just and simply saw.[677] In this sense, the Visionary Heads are evidence of how Blake fused the natural with the spiritual world. What Blake put forth in these spiritual portraits was an ontological position which implied the expansion of the existing modes of perception and communication. The attempt undertaken in this thesis to interpret the Visionary Heads as a representational activity was prompted by the contemporary comments. Many of Blake's visions can, indeed, be related to prototypes both visual and textual and created by other artists as well as by himself at an earlier date.[678]

G.E. Bentley estimates that there exist about two hundred Visionary Heads. The small sketchbook was published by Martin Butlin in 1969. The large sketchbook,

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[675] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 257.
[676] *The Blake-Varley Sketchbook of 1819*, ed. Martin Butlin (London: Heinemann, 1969), 4-5. Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 734.
[677] Wilson, *Life of Blake* (1971), 3. Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 7, 60-61. Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 13.

rediscovered only in 1989, was reproduced in a Christie's catalogue.[679] In his recent article of 2002 Bentley has, for the first time, identified a third book. This "Folio Blake-Varley sketchbook" has yet to be discovered.[680] Some of the Visionary Heads were published in Varley's *Zodiacal Physiognomy* (1828) on picture-plates signed by Varley as inventor and Linnell as engraver. Blake's ghost of a flea was not only painted in tempera - *The Ghost of a Flea* (c.1819), it also appears on two of the picture-plates prepared for *Zodiacal Physiognomy*. These engravings were made from the pencil drawing which shows the head of the flea with its mouth closed and a thin tongue sticking out.[681] The reason why Linnell supported the project by providing the engravings is that he perceived Blake's drawings as objects of his imagination. He saw it as his duty to preserve the authenticity of these images when transferring them onto copperplates. What Blake, Varley and Linnell shared was a belief in the usefulness of physiognomy.

In the production process of the Visionary Heads, Blake had a central role. He was not only able to make a definitive statement about the pictorial representation of body-soul relationships, he shifted the emphasis to the text. So far, it has been argued that Blake's understanding of the performative forces of text originated in his friendship with Fuseli, the physiognomy project and his awareness of late eighteenth-century Bible exegesis. This chapter will delineate Blake's struggle with textual and visual representation within a more public context. It begins with an anecdote told about a Blake portrait in oil, painted by the Royal Academician Thomas Phillips in 1807. The theme of this anecdote not only leads to the Visionary Heads, it also creates a narrative which links such different projects as sitting for Phillips, making designs for Robert Blair's *The Grave*, the illuminated book *Milton* as well as *Jerusalem*.[682] The reason this portrait was not discussed in chapter 2 is that it was not part of the physiognomy project as such but came out of the Royal Academy.

Thomas Phillips's Blake portrait of 1807 is conventionally referred to as the official Blake portrait. It was engraved by Luigi Schiavonetti for R.H. Cromek's 1808 edition of Robert Blair's *The Grave* for which Blake had made the designs. Before it was published as an engraved frontispiece Phillips's Blake portrait was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1807[683] Phillips, like Reynolds, was interested in polished and perfect resemblance. To get Blake to assume the appropriate attitude of the inspired artist Phillips provoked him. He declared that that judging from the engravings and in comparison with Michelangelo

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[678] Gilchrist, *Life of Blake* (1998), 273.
[679] Bentley, *Blake Books Supplement* (1995), 177.
[680] G.E. Bentley, Jr., "Blake's Visionary Heads: Lost Drawings and a Lost Book," in *Romanticism and Millenarianism*, ed. Tim Fulford (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 192-93.
[681] Bentley, *Blake Books* (1977), 625-26.
[682] Next to the *Visionary Heads* Blake worked on illustrations to Job which had been commissioned by Linnell. In the accounts on the *Visionary Heads* the Job illustrations are frequently referred to. See Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 264. Bentley, *Stranger in Paradise* (2001), 373.
[683] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 182, 183, 195.

Raphael was much better at painting angels. Blake disagreed and pointed out that he had once spoken to the model the archangel Gabriel who assured him that it was Michelangelo who rendered his complete resemblance.[684]

Evaluations of this particular Blake portrait vary. For some it exudes the aura of a national icon. Others find it disturbing. Richard Holmes, for example, pointed out that even though Blake holds the tool of his trade, he is "sitting uneasily in the corner of a mahogany bench, uncharacteristically wearing a smart white waistcoat and cravat, and a gold seal on a red ribbon, the outfit of a successful small-businessman."[685] This anecdote found its way into a review published in *The Anti-Jacobin Review*. According to its reviewer the portrait shows Blake "with an open, expressive countenance, but accompanied by a wildness in the eye."[686] The general perception of Phillips's Blake portrait was, in fact, influenced by the combination of two texts, the above mentioned anecdote and the *Anti-Jacobin*'s interpretation of it. Thus, Phillips's portrait of Blake became a key statement in the debate of Blake's madness and eccentricity.

The portrait episode is important for the argument about the representation of spirituality in Blake. It encapsulates two different approaches to likeness-making. Whereas Phillips attempted to catch the impression of a fleeting moment, Blake defined eternal likeness as the ultimate goal of the portrait painter. He quoted Archangel Gabriel's testimony as proof of the original of Michelangelo. While Phillips claimed to be able to assess the quality of a represented likeness from an engraving, Blake went beyond even the original painting by claiming to have met the original model. So, Blake responded to Phillips's provocation by insinuating is that if Phillips's Blake portrait turned out to be disappointing, it would be Phillips's fault.

The anecdote about Blake sitting for Phillips links back to the complex theme of copy and original in Blake, because half of this portrait anecdote is about Blake making sure that he was not just talking to a "wandering voice." He asked the angel to manifest himself so that he could see him.[687] It was this story which gave weight to Blake's opinion of Michelangelo. Thinking of this anecdote as a shift from the literal to the figurative, it is possible that Phillips shared Blake's approach to original creation. In his *Lectures on the History and Principles of Painting* (1833) he differentiated between the potential creative powers of the painter and the poet:

> A character understood by human beings must be maintained in the vision; [...] it will be the leading principle in the mind of the reader of the poem, or the observer of the

[684] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 182-83.
[685] Robert Woof and Stephen Hebron, *Romantic Icons: The National Portrait Gallery at Dove Cottage, Grasmere* (Kendal: Wordsworth Trust, 1999), x-xi. David Piper, *The Image of the Poet: British Poets and their Portraits* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 113. Richard Holmes, *The Romantic Poets and Their Circle* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 1997), 17, 18.
[686] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 200.
[687] Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 166.

> picture. Though both the poet and the painter are confined in their compositions to this principle of reference to nature, the poet is infinitely the most unrestrained of the two. The instrument he employs, and the organ he addresses, require far less of materiality, than is demanded of the painter.[688]

Original for Blake was not in the original painting but in the original expression of the original man embodied in the painting. What he envisaged as the true portrait was a representation of the immaterial, the unseen or the soul. In connection with the Visionary Heads, he claimed that he was able to visualise what he imagined: "while he copied the vision (as he called it) upon his plate or canvas, he could not Err; & that error & defect could only arise from the departure or inaccurate delineation of his unsubstantial scene."[689] Blake did not simply create a literal or physical connection by suggesting that Michelangelo actually saw Gabriel, he reinstated the importance of the imagination. With his notion of an eternal likeness, Blake bridged the gap in time as well as the gap between painter and sitter.

Phillips's Blake portrait appeared as an engraved frontispiece to Robert Blair's *The Grave* together with introductionary notes to the designs written by Henry Fuseli.[690] Meanwhile in the *Examiner*, Robert Hunt commented on Blake's attempts at representing the spiritual world: "How '*the visible and the invisible world*' can be *connected* by the aid of the pencil without '*provoking probability,*' nay even without outraging it, none but such a visionary as Mr. Blake, or such a frantic as Mr. Fuseli, could possibly fancy."[691] According to Hunt, Blake failed to establish the connection between the natural and the spiritual. What got blurred in Blake's allegorising of the body-soul relationship were the categories themselves. Hunt insisted that Blake's extreme personification was too physical. Only by means of the captions can the scenes and figures be identified.[692] Jon Mee has argued that Blake's treatment of body-soul relationships was very different from the mainstream Romantic rhetoric. Blake may have expected too much of his readers, because the only way to tell the figures apart is to see how they related to gravity. Mee stresses that Blake thought of the soul as being part of the physical body: "the physicality of Blake's designs was likely to be judged as the sign of a vulgar and tasteless enthusiasm that could not tell the passions apart from the finer feelings."[693] So, again it is the text, that is Fuseli's descriptive notes to Blake's design which recontextualise the images. Without these comments the simultaneity of the natural and spiritual worlds in the illustrations to *The Grave* are baffling.

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[688] Thomas Phillips, *Lectures on the History and Principles of Painting* (1833), 195.
[689] Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 371.
[690] For the three known contemporary reviews of *The Grave*, see Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 199-208.
[691] Bentley, *Critical Heritage* (1995), 119.
[692] Bentley point out that Hunt thought Blake to be an enthusiast, or even a Methodist. See *Blake Records* (1969), 197.
[693] Jon Mee, "'As portentous as the written wall' Blake's Illustrations to *Night Thoughts*," in *Prophetic Character* (2002), ed. Gourlay, 186.

Judging from Blake's designs for Blair's *The Grave*, their main theme is the resurrection of the dead. Blair, however, dealt with this topic in no more than twenty-eight lines.[694] There are a few references to body-soul relationships. Body and soul are rendered as a couple and their drama of loss and gain is acted out against a fictitious but rather physical backdrop:

> In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
> Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,
> Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,
> But shrieks in vain! - How wishfully she looks
> On all she's leaving, now no longer her's! (354-358)
> [...]
> For they must part: body and soul must part;
> Fond couple! link'd more close than wedded pair. (376-377)
> [...]
> [...]. Nor shall the conscious soul
> Mistake its partner, but, amidst the crowd,
> Singling its other half, into its arms
> Shall rush, with all the impatience of a man
> That's new come home; and, having long been absent,
> With haste runs over every different room,
> In pain to see the whole. [...] (754-760)

Blake, according to Hunt, confused those who tried to make sense of his designs because he depicted spiritual forms as embodied in physical bodies. However, for those who knew Blake's work the dramatic set up of the illustrations to Blair was not as extraordinary as Hunt wants us to believe. A lot of Blake's works were private, but the figures used to illustrate *The Grave* originated in the Urizen Books. They can, moreover, be associated with the way in which body-soul relationships manifested themselves during complicated processes of creation. In his illustrations to Blair's *Grave* Blake chose a thematic focus. He followed Blair more closely than has so far been acknowledged, because with respect to the Visionary Heads it emerges that his own vision of the gender of body and soul was quite different. Within the public domain Blake was considered to be eccentric. No doubt, in his own time he had a reputation for madness.

The various madness themes were gathered by Paul Youngquist in *Madness and Blake's Myth* (1989). Youngquist has tried to explain Blake's visions as hallucinations. Next to this medical approach there exists yet another track of interpretation, namely the attempt to historicise the existing biographical narratives. In 1982 M.J.T. Mitchell suggested that the term madness had to be re-applied to Blake:

> A more radical recognition of Blake's madness would [...] not try to reconcile Blake's madness with his art. [...] Blake occupies an often ambiguous borderline between the

[694] *William Blake's Illustrations for Robert Blair's The Grave*, with a commentary by S. Foster Damon (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1963), n. p.

> divine madness of inspiration, and the demonic madness of incapacity and false or fruitless labor, a madness of irrationality.[695]

With such scholars as Youngquist or Mitchell madness was a destructive force which had to be resisted during artistic creation. This chapter intends to tackle the Visionary Heads from within their aesthetic context.[696] To do this the link to Swedenborgianism, first made by Alan Cunningham, is pursued in an attempt to resolve the madness issue: "all that is necessary to prove now is, that other men, other sensible men, such as scarcely could be designated as mad or stupid, did see into an immaterial life denied to most."[697] Interpretations of Blake's possible attitude to the Visionary Heads tend to originate in the question of their authenticity. Even if Blake did not share Varley's occult beliefs, we have to acknowledge that there existed a subculture which did.

With the help of astrology Varley tried to inaugurate yet another typology of human character. His *Zodiacal Physiognomy* was a time-based system, advancing resemblance in terms of simultaneity. If two different people were born at exactly the same moment they would resemble each other, because they shared the same ascendant. Varley was never clear on how strong this resemblance had to be; whether it was, for example, stronger than family resemblance. This treatment of time as a defining category must have struck a cord with Blake who had reiterated the moment of creation in his Urizen Books.

The very idea of zodiacal physiognomy was nothing new. Already in August 1793 the *Astrologer's Magazine* published a piece on "Elementary Principles of Astrology." Here the prototypes to what was to become Blake's Visionary Heads were spelled out. The constellation of Mercury in Leo, for example, attached the following physical features to the character of a person: "a pretty large stature, dull complexion, swarthy or sun-burnt, hair light brown, a round face, full eye, a broad or high nose." With Mercury in Pisces, however, the person would have had a "low stature, brown hair, thin face, pale complexion" and will be indeed "very hairy on the body."[698]

The connection between astrology and physiognomy in the 1790s was close. In January 1794 the same periodical published an article on the "Truth and Utility of Astrology and Physiognomy." The author defined both practices as "scientific methods of predicting future events." Lavater's works were mentioned and the author urged all physiognomists to study astrology. While physiognomy was based on the idea that man was created in the likeness of God, astrology explained the consistent differences

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[695] M.J.T. Mitchell, "Dangerous Blake," *Studies in Romanticism*, 21:3 (1982), 412-13.
[696] While Butlin suggests that Blake "humoured the credulous Varley's beliefs," David Bindman argues that the Visionary Heads are the result of a "parlour game." See Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 495. David Bindman, *Blake as an Artist* (Oxford: Phaidon Press Limited, 1977), 202. Bentley, "Blake's Visionary Heads: Lost Drawings and a Lost Book," in *Romanticism and Millenarianism* (2002), ed. Fulford, 184.
[697] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 519.
[698] *Astrologer's Magazine*, 1 (1793), 12-13.

between individuals: "not so easily discovered by the superficial observers, the same concordant variety [...] is universally preserved between all created substances or figures of the same genius."[699] Thus, astrological influence on the body came to serve as an explanation for the observed resemblances between individuals independent of their family or race.

Varley represented a long tradition. He purported that there existed twelve zodiac types which impressed themselves at birth into the human physiognomy. His zodiacal physiognomy was conceived as a new angle on Lavater's physiognomy. Whereas Lavater tried to bring everything back to Christ and while deploring that the initial and unifying likeness to God had been lost, Varley brought another force to the interpretation of the connection between external appearance and internal propensity: the shaping influence of the planets. From Varley's point of view, physical variety was fully explained. He argued that what Lavater had defined as the eternal human type had been mediated through the constellations of the heavenly bodies at the moment of birth. Accordingly he defined in the preface to his *Zodiacal Physiognomy*: "The apparent power of the various signs of the Zodiac in creating a great diversity in the features and complexions of the human race, has long been as well established among enquiring people as the operation of the moon on the tides; and may be properly termed a branch of natural philosophy."[700] When Blake in 1819 collaborated with Varley on *Zodiacal Physiognomy* he was able to relate this new angle on the relationship between individuality and general resemblance back to the Urizen Books and its theme of creation as embodiment.

In Varley's daily practice of astrology, the connection between astrology and physiognomy was continually reaffirmed. It was Varley's habit to ask newly made friends for the time and place of their births. Once he had acquired this information he quickly drew up their horoscopes by consulting the necessary tables, printed in the almanacs, the popular astrological handbooks, which he used to carry in his pockets and wherever he went.[701] Varley was considered a successful astrologer. Many of his predictions came true, but it is also known that he often adjusted the given time of birth. He justified these adaptations with reference to the particulars of a facial physiognomy:

> he would frequently be able to tell a person that he was in error as to the time of his birth, explaining that as Jupiter (or might it be some other planet) was at the time in such and such a conjunction, his countenance must necessarily have been different from what it was if he had been born under the aspect of the heavens prevailing at the reputed time of his birth. On the same principle he was able, it is said, from a person's

[699] *Astrologer's Magazine*, 1 (1794), 241.
[700] Varley, *Zodiacal Physiognomy* (1828), iii.
[701] Ackroyd, *Blake* (1995), 346. For use of almanacs as astrological guides to daily actions and handbooks containing the Ephemerides or tables showing the daily positions of the sun, moon from which the movement of the planets through the zodiacs could be calculated. See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), 347-49.

> physiognomy to name the star, or conjunction of stars, under whose influence he was born.[702]

The correction of birth times was common. Not only were individuals often unsure of the exact moment of their birth, time-keeping as such was very problematic. The issue of time or rather precise time-keeping in connections with birth horoscopes stretched back into the 1790s - it linked, in fact, astrology and Swedenborgianism.

In November 1791 the *Conjuror's Magazine* published a notice according to which Swedenborg once declared how a single vision had changed his whole life: "The Lord himself hath called me: who was graciously pleased to manifest himself to me his unworthy servant, in a personal appearance, in the year 1743; to open to me a sight of the spiritual world."[703] In the 1790s Swedenborg's status as spiritual founder of the Swedenborgian Church was, in fact, under attack. The Reverend Fordycke "a member of the old Church," so he introduced himself in his *Inquiry into the Commission and Doctrine of the New Apostle Swedenborg* (1794), reiterated Swedenborg's claims and aspiration to apostleship, while stressing that there were no miracles in the style of the Old Testament to confirm Swedenborg's exclusiveness. Swedenborg's claims to divine inspiration were really not that unique.[704]

The connection between astrology and Swedenborgianism was instrumental in giving justification to Swedenborg's ability to have genuine visions. His nativity was used to argue that Swedenborg was, indeed, the chosen one. Part of this campaign was a furious attack published in the correspondents' section of *Astrologer's Magazine* in August 1793. It turned out that Ebenezer Sibly had worked with the wrong date of birth:

> Swedenborg's significator is retrograde, in a cadent, dark, obscure house, shewing him, indeed, 'of a grave, and solitary turn,' shewing also, by the strength of Mars, and the position of Jupiter, a deceitful reputation about *cunningly devised fables.* [...] Had Mr. Sibly taken the planets' places for two years later than the period when Baron Swedenborg became an inhabitant of this terrestrial planet, they would have been more correspondent to his figure; [...].[705]

Adjustments in birth-horoscopes calculations were readily and frequently made to match the facts of life. In a commentary to the nativity of a child which died at four years and ten months, for example, the manipulation of birth-time was explained backwards from the time of death so that the nativity prognostication matched the cause of death. The author of this nativity explains: "I have only altered the estimate time five minutes, the estimate time was thirty-four minutes past ten in the morning, and I am sure cannot be far from

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[702] Story, *Holmes and Varley* (1894), 245-46, 248, 257-58.
[703] *Conjuror's Magazine*, 1 (1791), 130.
[704] Rev. Fordycke, *An Inquiry into the Commission and Doctrine of the New Apostle Swedenborg* (1794), 6, 7, 16.
[705] *Astrologer's Magazine*, 1 (1793), 24.

truth."[706] A consequence of such treatment of time for the philosophical specification of the condition of the body was that the notion of biological birth was displaced, because it was reassessed according to matters of biography. Something similar was happening within the context of the Visionary Heads with Varley trying to relate facial physiognomies to particular moments in time. This way of proceeding provoked an analogy between birth and spiritual manifestation.

What Blake and Varley had in common was their concern about time. They measure it and tried to determine its influences on the physiognomy of the human body. While Blake in his 1790's creation myth had demonstrated the immediate influence of time on the body, Varley cautioned and finally admitted that time was an unreliable factor. He decided to rely on the visual evidence he had in front of him. In his *Zodiacal Physiognomy* Varley hoped to present the different types of human variety to his readers:

> I have given in this work sufficient tables to enable the public to judge, equally with the astrologians, of the zodiacal classification of the human race. By referring to these, such persons as know the time of their own or their acquaintance's birth, may acquire the power of perceiving and distinguishing such differences between the persons born under two adjoining signs, as may be observed in the general style of the French and English nations.[707]

In the accompanying description he summarised the character studies he had made. Consequently, even though he considered physically manifested evidence, he claimed that the essentials were derived from astrological calculations.

In his *Confusion of Prophets* (1992) and in connection with Blake's Visionary Heads, Patrick Curry outlines the routines of Blake and Varley's nightly meetings. While Blake was drawing, Varley noted down "the moment that the vision appeared" to be able to "calculate the degree of the zodiac rising at that moment."[708] Only six of the known Visionary Heads have inscriptions which could have been used by Varley for his astrological calculations for the zodiacal types of human existence.[709] This meagre evidence of recorded time suggests that Varley did not really trust his pocket watch. Well, if he had so much confidence in Blake's visionary powers and ability to sketch, why should he not have relied on what he saw in front him and drawn on paper?

Bentley has pointed out that Varley made a mistake in the inscription to Richard I, who was not born in 1156 but in 1157.[710] This mistake is curious and invites two interpretations. One is, that either Blake or Varley got their facts wrong, or indeed, they put forward a correction of the handed down date of birth of Richard I. If the latter were the

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[706] *Astrologer's Magazine*, 1 (1793), 195.
[707] Varley, *Zodiacal Physiognomy* (1828), iii.
[708] Patrick Curry, *A Confusion of Prophets: Victorian and Edwardian Astrology* (London: Collins & Brown Ltd., 1992), 26.
[709] Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 371.
[710] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 259.

case, we have evidence for Varley preferring visual evidence to historical facts. In that sense their collaboration project becomes even more controversial.

Neither Blake nor Varley were content with how the time factor was handled. While Blake deplored the negative effects of time on the different measures of the body, Varley thought it was a relatively unreliable measurement. It is important to note that Varley distanced himself from the claim that astrology could reveal the future:

> Zodiacal Physiognomy has been justly admitted by many intelligent and scientific persons, to be properly a branch of Natural Philosophy, which can be pursued independently of judicial Astrology or prediction; and far from being a matter of dispute or mere speculation, may now, through the means of astronomical calculations and tables, be brought to immediate proof, in most instances where the true time of birth of the party can be obtained.[711]

Whether or not zodiacs predetermined or regulated physical appearance was one thing. Another was Varley's focus on the moment of birth or rather spiritual manifestation. His attempts at abstracting from the available data in order to develop a system, explaining all - both the typical and particular features contributing to human identity - must have reminded Blake of what he had done in the Urizen Books where, despite the many creations there was never a normal birth. Everything that existed in Blake's creation myth resulted from mental projection and material modification: the eternal interplay between body and soul, mediated through the mind.

The aesthetic dimension of the Visionary Heads was bound up with the preparations for Varley's *Zodiacal Physiognomy*. Martin Butlin has pointed out that the heads used for *Zodiacal Physiognomy* differed significantly from Blake's Visionary Heads. Only a few of the physiognomical heads were based on drawings by Blake as, for example, "Cancer" and several impressions of a Nebuchadnezzar Coin. From the various counterproofs it is possible to infer that great care was taken when transferring Blake's images onto the copperplates.[712] In particular, the image of the ghost of a flea was treated with the utmost care. The image was engraved by Linnell as two heads, one with its mouth shut and the other with its mouth opened.[713] The engraving of the Nebuchadnezzar Coin was completed - a back view of this coin together with a Taurus head and Blake's flea with its mouth shut were engraved.[714] Another important image, existing in at least three different versions, was *The Man Who Taught Blake Painting*. These versions were precise duplicates except for the fact that they were reversed. This suggests the use of an optical copying such as Cornelius Varley's Graphic Telescope.[715] With the evidence of the counterproof and replica and with the preparation work already underway, there is every

[711] Varley, *Zodiacal Physiognomy* (1828), 1.
[712] Essick, *Works of Blake in the Huntington* (1985), 74, 75.
[713] Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 692:12, 692:80, 692:98, 692:c, 704.
[714] Robert N. Essick, ""Blake in the Marketplace, 2000," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 34:4 (2001), 127, 128.
[715] Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 754, 755. Story, *Holmes and Varley* (1894), 221-225

reason to believe that the next big event of the zodiacal physiognomy project would have been *The Man Who Taught Blake Painting.*[716]

In the prospectus to *Zodiacal Physiognomy* Varley announced that his book would be published in four parts. Part one, published in 1828, stopped with Varley's analysis and documentation of the Gemini type and "The Head of the Ghost of a Flea" after Blake.[717] Interestingly, in the prospectus there was no mention of the flea. What would have been the second part of Varley's *Zodiacal Physiognomy* was advertised with great promises. According to Varley, the most likely author of the prospectus, this second part would have been dedicated to Blake who had died in 1827: "In a Memoir of the late William Blake, under the article 'Cancer,' will be found an account of some of his remarkable Visions, with engravings from some of the mist curious of them, including portraits of King Edward the First, Nebuchadnezzar, &c. &c."[718] However, this second part was never published. It is possible that Varley decided to abandon the project because part one did not receive the attention he had hoped for.[719] The first review of *Zodiacal Physiognomy* was published in the *Literary Gazette* and as early as December 27, 1828. The reviewer described it as the "phrenology of the skies" and mentioned the ghost of a flea and emphasised:

> we are angry with our author. [...] Why has he, like a fond lover, disowned his real mistress, Astrology – to blind us with mock amours with zodiacal phizzes? [...] We lament prodigiously that we cannot go through the zodiacal physiognomy, nor explain why children born under Mars have well-formed chins.[720]

Even years after its publication *Zodiacal Physiognomy* was occasionally referred to. Varley's proposed new science was described as "absurdity and nonsense," and a product of utter superstition.[721]

After Blake's death the Visionary Heads, nevertheless, assumed a life of their own. In particular, the drawings of Edward I and Sir William Wallace were readily absorbed as, for example, into the 1841 edition of Jane Porter's *Scottish Chiefs* and W.C. Dendy's chapter on "Poetic Phantasy, or Frenzy" published in his *Philosophy of Mystery* (1841).[722] Dendy, who drew on Varley, related an anecdote according to which Edward I and Wallace continued their confrontations as ghosts in front of Blake who was trying to sketch

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[716] Martin Butlin, "Blake, the Varleys, and the Patent Graphic Telescope," in *William Blake* (1973), ed. Paley and Phillips, 294, 299.
[717] "The drawing of the flea was used to illustrate a paragraph in Varley's book on zodiacal physiognomy, in effect to illustrate a Geminian facial type. It was probably Varley's idea to link Blake's flea with the sign Gemini: the fact is that Blake's drawing bears little resemblance to a flea at all, though it does have some proximity to a true Geminian face." See Fred Gettings, *The Hidden Art: A Study of Occult Symbolism in Art* (London: Studio Vista, 1978), 114.
[718] *Prospectus* (BL pressmark 1879 b. 1, vol. IV).
[719] For the reception of Varley's publication, see Curry, *Confusion of Prophets* (1992), 24.
[720] *Literary Gazette* (December 27, 1828), 822-23.
[721] Thomas Dick, *On the Improvement of Society by the Diffusion of Knowledge; or, An Illustration of the Advantages which Would Result from a More General Dissemination of Rational and Scientific Information among All Ranks* (Edinburgh, 1833), 521-22.
[722] Bentley, *Blake Books* (1977), 21.

them: "Wallace suddenly presented himself on the field, and by this uncourteous intrusion marred the studies of the painter for that day."[723]

This scenario is worth mentioning because it suggests that the political conflict between them was transformed into a struggle for attention. Without much effort one disembodied soul was dispersed by another more persistent one. According to Cunningham Wallace's sitting with Blake was interrupted by King Edward who stepped out in front of Wallace. After the King's likeness had been taken he disappeared.[724] Either way, the process of likeness-making was interrupted. In terms of the strictures which had been imposed on Blake while sitting for Phillips for the 1807 portrait it is important to note that the circumstances under which Blake made these spiritual portraits are utterly unconventional.

Jane Porter's very successful historical novel *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810) revolved around the political and military confrontations between Edward I and William Wallace. In the 1841 edition Porter included Varley's account about Blake's encounter with the protagonists of her novel. She introduced the episode by suggesting that Blake was possibly inspired by her novel.[725] Porter's rendering of the drawing session with Blake was highly dramatic. She emphasised that Wallace was instantly recognised by Blake: "The warrior Scot, in his vision, seemed as true to his historical mental picture, as his noble shade was to the manly bearing of his recorded person." In a moment this spirit disappeared and in its stead Blake saw King Edward whom he likewise recognised without hesitation. Porter admitted that she was generally very pleased with Blake's drawings: "I looked upon them with no small pleasure; for each bore a strong resemblance to the pictures my mind had before imbibed of both heroes, from all the historical descriptions I had ever heard or read."[726]

It is obvious that Porter's interest in these spiritual drawings was down to their physiognomical expressiveness. In the postscript added on to the 1841 edition Porter summarised what she learned from Varley:

> as Wallace is described to have been, even at the time in which he was cut off. There was neither helmet, nor any covering on his head, excepting the rich golden-tinted light-hair, that waved high and loosely from off his broad and very elevated forehead. The face was, nearly a front view, remarkably handsome - open in its expression, and full of an ardent, generous courage: the blue eye being bright and expanded, and the lips of a noble contour, seemed cheering his devoted followers to deeds of glory.[727]

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[723] Walter Copper Dendy, *The Philosophy of Mystery* (1841), 90.
[724] Alan Cunningham, *The Lives of the Most eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, 3 vols. (1829-33), II, 168.
[725] Jane Porter, *Scottish Chiefs*, 2 vols (1804; Dublin, 1841), II, 467.
[726] Porter, *Scottish Chiefs* (1841), II, 467-68.
[727] Porter, *Scottish Chiefs* (1841), Appendix dating from 1809 and than a "Postscript to the above Appendix," added May, 1841, II, 465, 467-68.

Porter's account of the drawing session is interesting. Her descriptions of Wallace differed conspicuously from those made by Varley during Blake's drawing session.[728] Porter had, indeed, mixed feelings about the Wallace drawing. The reason was that she initially did not find a likeness of Wallace which satisfied her. She clearly disliked Blake's drawing of Wallace but she could not ignore it. She never questioned its authenticity, but suggested that it might depict a relative of Wallace:

> it has two contradictions to attested facts, which completely disprove its authenticity as a likeness of that hero. It is the head of a weather-beaten, and evidently thickest elderly man, beyond fifty years of age. Whereas, Wallace was hardly more than thirty, when he died on the scaffold.[729]

With this extensive commentary Porter, in fact, emphasised the validity of Blake's portrait. The problem for her was that she had tried to install a good looking Wallace into the centre of her novel.

Likewise, it is interesting to consider Blake's different portraits of Edward I. According to Butlin, one was initially described by William Rossetti in the *Monthly Magazine* as a portrait of Edward III. There exists another drawing of a figure with a beard which is more likely to be Edward III. Blake's interest in Edward III and English history can be traced back to the *Poetical Sketches* (1783) and the play, *King Edward The Third.*[730] In the last decade of his life Blake, however, was much more interested in Edward I. In view of the relationships between text and image in the Visionary Heads it is helpful to compare the King Edward I portraits with the verbal descriptions of the King originating in the drawing sessions:

> Stern, calm and implacable, yet still happy. I have hitherto seen his profile only, he now turns his pale face towards me. What rude grandeur in those lineaments! . . . He bends the battlements of his brow upon you; and if you say another word, will vanish. Be quiet, while I take a sketch of him.[731]

In an attempt to match text and image Butlin disregarded the fact that this King Edward portrait was a companion piece to Wallace. He compared it to another Edward I portrait. Not only is there a resemblance between the two portraits, the inscription to the second portrait matched Blake's own description of King Edward I: "King Edward the first as he now exists in the other world. according to his appearance to M^{r} Blake. he here has his skull enlarged like a crown."[732]

Blake's interest in Edward I goes back to the time when he was working in Westminster Abbey in the 1770s. He was present when the tomb of this King was opened

[728] Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 373.
[729] Porter, *Scottish Chiefs* (1841), II, 469-70.
[730] David Bindman, "Blake's 'Gothicised Imagination' and the History of England," in *William Blake* (1973), ed. Paley and Phillips, 46.
[731] Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 735.

on May 2, 1774 by Sir Joseph Ayloffe of the Society of Antiquarians. Entrusted by his master James Basire Blake made drawings of what was discovered: "The Body of Edward y.^{e} 1.st as it appeared on first opening the Coffin" and "The body as it appeared when some of the vestments were remov'd." Later Blake worked these sketches up into two pen and sepia washes.[733] Blake's visionary portrait of King Edward showing him with a forehead, enlarged through brow battlements is an eerie continuation of the unwrapping undertaken during his exhumation.

According to Lavater the forehead revealed crucial information about character. In his *One Hundred Physiognomical Rules,* published posthumously in the second Holcroft edition of *Essays on Physiognomy* in 1804,[734] he wrote: "the more of smooth surface and apparently rectilinear contour are observable in a forehead; the more is that forehead common, mediocre, destitute of ideas, and incapable of invention."[735] The expanded skull of Blake's drawing of King Edward I echoed the methodologies used by physiognomists. Blake represented anger as embodied in bone.

If one is to believe the account of the drawing session, what made the person Edward I unusual was his ability to change his physiognomy at will. King Edward was impatient about being asked unnecessary questions. All he wanted was to have his likeness taken by Blake. The twist of the story is that Blake correctly interpreted the King's changing physiognomy and asked Varley to be silent. An odd predicament of ghosts is allegedly that they are only able to talk when they are addressed. In the episodes of the Visionary Heads, however, ghosts and angels speak whenever they want to or feel like it. More importantly, they do not always use words to communicate. With this King Edward portrait, Blake seemed to illustrate the flexible soul body which he envisaged on the final plates of *Jerusalem.*

Next to this notion of displayed physiognomical flexibility in the King Edward portraits it is important to remember that several other ghosts and spirits appeared to Blake more than once. In the drawings they look conspicuously different. Blake's contemporaries, however, did not seem to have difficulties when trying to identify what type of man, ghost or spirit Blake had depicted:

> 'There! that is a face of a different stamp – can you conjecture who he is?' 'Some scoundrel, I should think, Sir.' 'There now – that is a strong proof of the accuracy of Blake – he is a scoundrel indeed! The very individual task-master whom Moses slew in Egypt. And who is this now – only imagine who this is?' 'Other than a good one, I doubt, Sir.' 'You are right, it is the Devil – he resembles, and this is remarkable, two

[732] Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 735.
[733] Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 1, 2.
[734] Anne Mellor has already suggested that it possible that Blake knew of this Holcroft edition, see Mellor, "Physiognomy, Phrenology, and Blake's Visionary Heads," in *Blake in His Time* (1978), ed. Essick and Pearce, 54.
[735] Lavater (1804), III, 339.

> men who shall be nameless; one is a great lawyer, and the other – I wish I durst name him – is a suborner of false witnesses.[736]

Judging from the spontaneous responses to Blake's drawing, his Visionary Heads can be divided into three classes: First, the famous kings and warriors of English history. Second, the infamous murders, burned and hanged for their crimes. Third, a class of imaginary figures, such as Satan or Robin Hood. Particularly interesting of the latter class are the anonymous ones with long and elaborate inscriptions: "The Man who built the Pyramids, Oct. 18, 1819, fifteen degrees of 2, Cancer ascending," "The Egyptian Taskmaster who was killd & Buried by Moses," and "The Taxgatherer killed by Wat Tyler, from a spectral vision seen by Blake."[737] From these examples it emerges that during the nightly drawing sessions with Varley the minor figures of world legend and history used Blake to draw attention to themselves.[738] In other words, the existence of these drawings is once again proof of Blake and Varley's attempts to revise the official cannon of British and Biblical history.

There is strong evidence that Blake's interest in saintly and demonic physiognomies, the two categories in which the Visionary Heads can be divided, was not necessarily and solely bound up with his collaboration with Varley. The possible categorisation of the Visionary Heads suggests that there was a connection to phrenology, another new science of the interdependent relationship between body and soul. Next to Varley's *Zodiacal Physiognomy*, several works dealing with an analysis of facial expression were published in the late 1820s. Some punned on phrenology as, for example, George Cruikshank's *Phrenological Illustrations* (1826), or satirised it as, for example, John Trotter's *Travels to Phrenologasto* (1829). Just as with mesmerism or animal magnetism, phrenology was a popular medicinal practice. Already Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) engaged with the scientific aspirations of the age and warned against scientific hubris. From the outset, phrenological readings were considered pseudo-scientific. They were associated with "fairground showmanship," and therefore frowned upon by the official representatives of the established medical institutions.[739]

In the phrenological museums of the time it was common practice to exhibit life and death masks of the famous as well as the infamous. Such a display and categorisation of the population was deemed educational.[740] Phrenology had been founded by the Drs. Gall

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[736] Cunningham, *Lives of Painters* (1829-33), II, 169.
[737] Butlin (1981), catalogue, nos. 692:103, 696, 742.
[738] Albert S. Roe has argued that especially the taskmaster, the flea and the builder of the pyramids are "clearly intended as archetypes of humanity debased by servitude to the tyrannical systems of the Fallen World," see Roe, "The Thunder of Egypt," in *William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon*, ed. A.H. Rosenfeld (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969), 175.
[739] *Oxford Companion to the Romantic* Age (2001), eds. McCalman, et al., 88, 219, 362.
[740] *Death Masks and Life Masks of the Famous and Infamous: Catalogue of an, Exhibition of Items from the University of Edinburgh's Department of Anatomy*, ed. M.H. Kaufman (Edinburgh: Featherhall Press Ltd., 1988), n. p.

and Spurzheim. Blake's interest, so the standard interpretation goes, had not only been encouraged by Varley to return to questions of embodiment but also by the advent of phrenology. Probably in 1818, Blake read and annotated Spurzheim's *Observations on the Deranged Manifestations of the Mind*, published in 1817.[741] In his annotations Blake insisted on the predominance of the mind as a shaping and also a regulating factor. In Spurzheim's delineations about insanity Blake, while annotating, differentiated between corporeal and mental diseases, thus establishing that the mind is independent of the bodily organs: "Diseases of the mind I pity him. Denies mental health and perfection. Stick to this all is right." (*ASP* E662) Thus, by Blake's definition, the mind is given the role of a mediator in the manifestation of body-soul relationships.

Spurzheim and Gall's phrenological theories were closely associated with Lavater's physiognomy. They were based on the belief that brain size corresponded to skull size, that each part of the brain had a function which could be clearly identified and that each of the brain's faculties could be determined from the shape of the skull. The best way to analyse a head was to take a life mask. In the art world, phrenology was greeted as a diagnostic of man's natural character. Benjamin Robert Haydon, for example, exclaimed:

> Shew me a hero - a poet - a painter - a musician - a beauty insatiable amorous - a tyrant, a murderer, or a thief, - all, remember, illustrious in their respective departments, and in which their phrenological development does not prove the truth of the principle, and I yield.[742]

Many met Spurzheim during his visit to London in 1814 and attended his lectures on "Drs Gall and Spurzheim's physiognomical System."[743] Artists like Haydon not only responded to the conventions and demands of this new science which forced them to work in a more systematic way, they considered the available life masks as an indispensable tool for the accurate rendering of resemblances, needed, for example, in history paintings.[744] In his Visionary Heads Blake achieved the reverse. His historical figures were free of their material bodies and could therefore fully and accurately express themselves. As a consequence it was near to impossible to determine their natural character in the phrenological sense.

The impact of phrenology on British culture was delayed through the ongoing Napoleonic Wars.[745] Spurzheim's lectures were first published in the *Edinburgh Review* in

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[741] Bentley, *Blake Books Supplement* (1995), 81. Blake's copy of Spurzheim is lost. A transcript of his notes is published 1893 in *The Works of William Blake*, eds. E.J. Ellis & W.B. Yeats. See Bentley, *Blake Books* (1977), 694.

[742] Robert Benjamin Haydon, *Lectures on Painting and Design* (1844), 62.

[743] Stanley Jones, *Hazlitt: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 187.

[744] *The Autobiography and Journals of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, ed. Malcolm Elwin (London: Macdonald: 1950), 124, 358. *The Diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, ed. William Bissell Pope, 5 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Havard University Press, 1960), I, 450.

[745] Roger Cooter has pointed out that between 1802 and 1820 phrenology was mostly considered as a pseudo-science and pseudo-philosophy. The popular journals almost unanimously expressed their disdain,

1815. Edinburgh was to become to be the centre of British phrenology. Its Phrenological Society was founded in 1820 and the journal issued by that Society was published from 1824, and by 1828 George Combe's *Elements of Phrenology* had gone through three editions. The leading figure of the London phrenological movement was the plaster-figure maker James De Ville, trained by the sculptor Joseph Nollekens.

De Ville adopted his plaster figures to the demands of phrenology, after meeting with Spurzheim's great supporter Bryan Donkin. Donkin had attended Dr. Gall's lectures in Vienna and returned to England to help popularise phrenology. From 1817 onwards he employed De Ville to create a phrenological collection which would illustrate the fundamentals of the new theory. At first De Ville saw a great business opportunity in this project. It was only towards its completion that he began to understand the potential significance of phrenology. Encouraged by Donkin he started his own collection and from 1821 he made casts from nature. As De Ville gradually matured he began to be accepted as a successful phrenologist. After Nollekens's death in 1823, De Ville acquired many of Nollekens's plaster moulds and purchased the collection of John Flaxman's father who owned, for example, the original mould taken from Newton's face. With this huge collection in his possession he was able to open his own shop in Soho, where he single-handedly sold plaster figures as well as metal casts.[746]

The argument is that Blake's Visionary Heads lay beyond Varley's reach. Their connection to both Swedenborgianism and phrenology explain the appearance of some of the more unconventional images as, for example, *The Man who taught Blake Painting*. In the early 1800s many of the Swedenborgians used phrenology to substantiate their anti-Newtonian campaigns.[747] When James De Ville started his business on taking life masks in 1821, A.C. Tulk, Swedenborgian and friend of both Flaxman and Blake, was among his first sitters.[748] When De Ville started his own phrenological collection he was not yet a practising phrenologist. It was Tulk who explained to him the different organs of the brain and how to identify them on a bust.[749]

In 1824 De Ville published a small book *Outlines of Phrenology* in which he listed the different human faculties, embodied in the human brain and impressed into the human skull, and their function. According to De Ville, the "brain is the material instrument, by

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see Cooter, *The Cultural Meaning of Popular Science: Phrenology and the Organization of Consent in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 22-24.

[746] Rupert Forbes Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculpture 1660-1851*, new revised edition (1953; London: Abbey Library, 1968), 130.

[747] Cooter, *Cultural Meaning of Popular Science* (1984), 41-42.

[748] Raymond H. Deck, Jr., "New Light on C.A. Tulk, Blake's 19th Century Patron," in *Blake and Swedenborg: Opposition Is True Friendship*, ed. Harvey F. Bellin and Darrell Ruhl (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, Inc., 1985), 107-19.

[749] James Brown, M.D., "Memoir of the late James De Ville," *Phrenological Journal and Moral Magazine*, 19 (1846), 333-34.

means of which the mind carries on intercourse with the external world." He made, in fact, a similar case as Lavater made for physiognomy:

> Hence, it was not till after phrenology had been cultivated for several years, that its real nature and utility were discovered, and it was only then that its form became systematic; hence, also its character and its name changed as it proceeded, and from a mere species of physiognomy, it has become a science capable of the most useful and interesting application.[750]

De Ville not only pointed out that Lavater projected the science of phrenology, he claimed that phrenology superseded physiognomy. Phrenologists considered the brain to be the organ of the soul, and the skull to be a material manifestation of the mind. Finally, De Ville appealed to his readers to send distinguished and eminent persons to his studio and also advertised his plaster-figure making business as professional, efficient and painless: casts were made "by a new, simple, and easy process, occupying not more than seven minutes [...] by which means busts may be executed in a quarter or less of the time, that they can be by the usual mode of modelling, and with much more accuracy than has been the case in many instances."[751] This new method was one of De Ville's most important inventions. His collection came to 2450 specimen, plus about 3000 casts of animals which had been made for the purpose of comparative phrenology. De Ville was respected for his efforts and the good results of his examinations: he "never indulged in visionary speculations."[752] When he died in 1846 at the age of 70 he was remembered as a plaster figure-maker, lamp-manufacturer, and phrenologist.[753]

In 1823 De Ville approached Blake, made a cast of his head and produced two busts. Varley had likewise been subjected to De Ville's treatment. De Ville, according to Varley's late-Victorian biographer, analysed Varley while working with him: "'He believed nearly all he heard, and all he read,' was his judgment upon him. It appears to have been borne out his phrenology, a science which scientific men had not yet learned to taboo because unfashionable."[754] De Ville's diagnosis was readily accepted and disseminated within the phrenological circles. In 1843 at a Phrenological Society meeting, Varley was described as "the most credulous of all beings, and the most easily imposed upon."[755]

The Blake bust, kept in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, was signed and dated August 1, 1823. According to his friend George Richmond, De Ville's process so enthusiastically advertised, caused Blake a great deal of pain. His hair got stuck in the plaster and was pulled out when the plaster was taken off.[756] David Bindman pointed out

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[750] James De Ville, *Outlines of Phrenology* (1824), 2, 94-95.
[751] De Ville, *Outlines of Phrenology* (1824), 115-16.
[752] Brown, "Memoir of the late Mr. James De Ville" (1846), 343.
[753] From De Ville's Obituary. See *Gentleman's Magazine* (1846), part. II, 104.
[754] Story, *Holmes and Varley* (1894), 264.
[755] [Summary of a "paper on the character of the late John Varley, the painter and astrologer"] "London Phrenological Society," *ZOIST*, 1 (1843), 138.
[756] Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 278.

that he prefers the Fitzwilliam life mask. It was cast first from its mould and is therefore slightly cruder. This mask, moreover, ascertained the "discomfiture" Blake experienced during its making.[757] By Bindman's definition, the immediacy of the expression of pain brings the Fitzwilliam bust closer to the mould and consequently original.

Plaster-casting was a non-interventionist, almost mechanical process which was believed to render untainted and authentic likeness. Just as in photography the subject, taking the likeness and mediating between the two objects of original sitter and copied representations was eliminated. A plaster cast had all the minute particulars of the head, the face, and the skin. There was no subjective selection. Bindman's attempt at mythologising Blake's life mask is interesting. One is to prefer the Fitzwilliam bust because it was done first. It is allegedly more objective because it bears the traces of details, obscured during the making of the second bust. But even if the traces of pain, as argued by Bindman, give the bust a certain immediacy, the pain itself would cause Blake look unlike himself.

In 1825 *Urania; or, the Astrologer's Chronicle, and Mystical Magazine* published: "Nativity of Mr. Blake, The Mystical Artist." It is generally believed that Varley was the author of this piece on Blake.[758] In his introductory note the editor of *Urania* pointed out that this particular periodical was expensive and therefore exclusive: "It will now be seen, what part of the doctrines held forth by the ancients truth, are defensible, and what erroneous- what parts are really demonstrable, and what parts merit being assigned to oblivion."[759] What *Urania* claimed to offer was a secret truth and as usual this kind of truth was endowed with power and had therefore to be handled with the utmost care. It is important to note that Blake was not only chosen by De Ville, he was also used by Varley to exemplify and illustrate the new ideas about astrology. With the birth horoscope Varley claimed to publish the truth about Blake:

> it is probable, that the extraordinary faculties and eccentricities of ideas which this gentleman possesses, are the effects of the MOON in CANCER in the twelfth house (both sign and house being mystical), in trine to HERSCHELL from the mystical sign PISCES, from the house of science, and from the mundane trine to SATURN in the scientific sign of AQUARIUS, which latter planet is in square to MERCURY in SCORPIO, and in quintile to the SUN and JUPITER, in the mystical sign of SAGGITTARIUS. The square of MARS and MERCURY, from fixed signs, also, has a remarkable tendency to sharpen the intellects, and lay the foundation of extraordinary ideas.[760]

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[757] David Bindman, *Catalogue of the Collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1970), 59-60
[758] *Urania*, 1 (1825), 70-72. See also Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 369. Bentley has also argued that the predictions 'covering January and February' would have been meaningless if they had been issued *after* Dec. 1824. See Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 296.
[759] Verso of title page, see *Urania*, 1 (1825), 1, 2, 4-5.
[760] *Urania*, 1 (1825), 72.

HERSCHEL is an archaism and alternative term for Uranus commonly used within astrological and astronomical circles. Uranus had been discovered by William Herschel in 1781. According to the contemporary astrology books, this planet "infuses into the constitutions of those persons in whose nativities he is most powerful, a remarkable degree of eccentricity."[761] This elaborate paragraph on Blake gives a taste of the complex and longwinded process involved in calculating birth horoscopes. Many different aspects need to be taken into consideration.

Interestingly, the astrological analysis of the Moon in Cancer reads like a description of Blake as well as of "Cancer," one of Blake's Visionary Heads, which has traditionally been identified as a Blake self portrait:

> Represents a middle stature, well-proportioned, and fleshy person, a round full face, fair hair, a pale dusky complexion, a flexible person, jocular and pleasant; likes good company, very harmless, and generally well beloved; fortunate in most affairs, mutable and unsteady in resolves, but free from passion, rash actions, &c.[762]

According to another publication, contemporary with *Urania*, the Cancer type is "of a fair complexion, rather pale, of short and small stature, the upper part of the body generally large, with a round face, brown hair, and grey eyes, mostly phlegmatic and heavy, effeminate constitution, and small voice; if a woman, likely to have many children."[763] These two quite similar descriptions of the Cancer type exemplify that there was a clear idea of what the zodiacal types looked like just as with the concurrent aesthetic and character types used in Blake's painting of the Canterbury Pilgrims and the ancient Britons. It seems plausible to interpret the "Cancer" drawing as an illustration to Varley's nativity of Blake. In other words, Blake may have created a portrait which illustrated a certain aspect of his nativity.

Blake and Varley were part of the revival of physiognomy. Both men, moreover, were deemed important enough to be included into De Ville's collection. Their collaboration on zodiacal physiognomy, however, essentially preceded the great fashion of phrenology of the 1820s and their response to Lavater's physiognomical doctrines went down a different route. It was also part of the early nineteenth century revival of astrology. So, what De Ville was for phrenology, Varley was for astrology - a figurehead. As an ardent practitioner of judicial astrology, he cast his own horoscope every morning to see what the day would bring him. Of course, the astrologers insisted that the figure cast at a person's nativity was never more than a guide to the responsibilities open to him; it did not mean that he was in the clutch of an ineluctable destiny.[764] Self-knowledge generated freedom and freedom implied self-determination. While De Ville could afford to give head-

[761] *The Spirit of Partridge; or, the Astrologer's Pocket Companion, and General* Magazine, 1-17 (1825), 13.
[762] *Astrologer's Magazine*, 1 (1793), 13.
[763] *The Spirit of Partridge; or, the Astrologer's Pocket Companion, and General Magazine*, 1-17 (1825), 249.

readings free of charge, Varley was less fortunate. His gift did not bring him wealth and it is possible that the popularity of his drawing classes was partly due to his reputation as an astrologer.

Even though it was John Linnell who officially introduced Blake to Varley in 1818, Varley could have come across Blake in a different context and as early as 1812. Being a founder of the Watercolour Society (now the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours), Varley is certain to have attended the exhibition that year at which four significant Blake paintings were shown.[765] The two tempera pictures of Nelson and Pitt particularly prefigured what Blake was later to express and represent in the Visionary Heads. The affinity of these spiritual forms - originally painted for Blake's 1809 solo exhibition - with his later visual portraits emerges in connection with the later addition of "The Spiritual Form of Napoleon," probably intended as a companion piece to Pitt and Nelson.[766]

The spiritual forms of Pitt, Nelson and Napoleon are striking and provocative. While Erdman pointed out that Napoleon ought to have been dead before Blake painted his spiritual likeness, Butlin suggested that "The Spiritual Form of Napoleon" might as well have been painted at the same time as Nelson and Pitt. The painting could have been excluded from the 1808 exhibition since Britain was at war with France.[767] This argument about whether the originals or subjects of Blake's paintings were still alive, implies that these pictures of spiritual forms were believed to have been painted as portraits.

These three tempera paintings bring yet another challenge to the theme of the truthful portrait and the notion of the spiritual. The issues of representation and likeness have been blurred and it has been difficult to determine which models Blake was drawing from. Admiral Nelson, mortally wounded at Trafalgar, died in 1805 and William Pitt the younger, Prime Minister from 1783-1801 and 1804-06, died in February 1806. He was already very ill in 1805. Nelson had lost an eye at Calvi and his right arm at Santa Cruz in 1794. In his paintings Blake restored their bodies. The question of whether Blake made these portraits while Nelson, Pitt or Napoleon were still alive becomes irrelevant in connection with the Visionary Heads. If the Napoleon painting was contemporary to those of Nelson and Pitt, one has to assume that the spiritual form coexists with corporeal form of the living person.

When Blake explained how he captured the spiritual forms of Nelson and Pitt, he gave details about his visionary journeys to the "stupendous originals now lost or perhaps buried." (*DC* 3, E530) His own account of visionary travel makes it possible to associate Blake with Swedenborg who had cast himself as a frequent traveller between the spiritual

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[764] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971), 393, 347-48.
[765] It seems possible that Thomas Butts, who may have owned the Nelson and the Chaucer painting as early as 1812, lend the pictures to this exhibition. See Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 346.
[766] Erdman, *Prophet against Empire* (1977), 493-94.
[767] Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 652.

and the natural worlds, as well as between heaven and hell. In the *New Dictionary of Correspondences* James Hindmarsh summarised Swedenborg's special talent: "In the spirit he was amongst those who are in another life, and in the body with those who are in the world. [...] He was in each world at the same time." Swedenborg seemed to have had some kind of double existence. His own rhetoric tended to revolve around metaphors of travel, implying that in order to bridge his two modes of existence he had to relocate his spirit.[768]

> I am in a natural state, and at the same time in a spiritual state, in a natural state with men of the earth, and in a spiritual state with you; and when I am in a natural state, I am not seen by you, but when I am in a spiritual state, I am seen; that such should be my condition , was given of the Lord. [...] a man of the natural world doth not see a man of the spiritual world, nor *vice versa*; wherefore when I let my spirit into the body, I was not seen by thee, but when I let it out of the body, I was seen.[769]

For both Blake and Swedenborg, regaining access to the lost originals was linked to being able to reach beyond the material world.

Within the context of the Visionary Heads the metaphor of travelling into the past to get to the original form translates as plunging deep into the present and through the material manifestations of identity to get to the pure and original form of the human soul. Just as the representations of human beings have become more sophisticated over the centuries, so had the body itself acquired certain codified conventions which had to be resolved in order to unveil to true inner essence. What one is confronted with is a perception of body representations in their history.[770] The knowledge about the true identity of things was cut off. All that remained were modes of representation. Consequently, Varley's *Zodiacal Physiognomy* was yet another opportunity or rather context for Blake to picture and express his understanding of body-soul relationships.

Without doubt the relationship between Blake and his spiritual sitters is a peculiar one. It is clear that the official conventions Blake had had to follow during the life-classes, held at the Royal Academy, and had to suffer himself during the sessions with Thomas Phillips, have been turned upside down. Blake's sitters arrived suddenly and disappeared unexpectedly. They were easily embarrassed and needed coaxing. King Saul, for example, would not allow Blake to sketch his helmet, because "he could not *decently* go round to view the whole [of the helmet]."[771] The circumstances under which the portrait of the ghost of the flea was taken were the most difficult. The flea appeared to Blake at least twice. Only on the second occasion did it allow him to make a full-length portrait. It talked while Blake was sketching. It opened its mouth, because it wanted Blake to take a sketch

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[768] Hindmarsh, ed., *New Dictionary* (1794), 312-13, 317.
[769] Swedenborg, *Conjugial* [*sic*] *Love* (1794), 314 (no. 326).
[770] Foucault, *Order of Things* (1994), 68.
[771] Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 374.

of its teeth. The flea was a spirit with a bad temper. It suddenly moved or made its mouth disappear. It was a demanding customer and frowned a lot because it was not content with its portrait. Most of these anecdotal features highlight and ridicule aspects of the conventional sitter-painter relationship. The story about the sessions with the flea are certainly the funniest. It is certainly worthwhile to consider the Visionary Heads not solely as the existing images but also in terms of the circumstances under which they were recorded. From this angle, the Visionary Heads turn into a comment about Phillips and the strict procedure of the life-classes at the Royal Academy.

If one presumes that Blake commented on the role and status of the sitter it is only right to analyse the role which Blake created for himself, because it is not as simple as to call him some kind of medium. On one occasion when a visitor enquired whether he could pass on a question to King Edward, Blake retorted: "Of course I can; we have been talking all this time, not with our tongues, but with some more subtle, some undefined, some telegraphic organ; we look and we are understood. Language to spirits is useless."[772] Blake here cast himself as an interpreter. Interestingly, he claimed to be able to master, to use Lavater's phrase, the "language of heaven" which did not rely on spoken words but on a flexible physiognomy.

When Crabb Robinson interviewed Blake about the Visionary Heads, he was highly suspicious about the alleged interviews. As Blake told him that he had had "much intercourse with Voltaire" Robinson inquired "in what language Blake spoke." Surely Blake did not speak any French! But Robinson recalls: "His answer was injenious [*sic*] and gave me no encouragement to cross questioning: 'To my Sensations it was English [.] It was like the touch of a musical Key - he touched it probably French, but to my ear it became English.'"[773] Blake's explanation echoed both Lavater and Swedenborg's accounts of conversations with and between spirits and angels. While Lavater projected the "language of heaven," available to the resurrected, and simultaneously addressing all the senses,[774] Swedenborg's accounts of mystical conversations made it clear that he had been granted to see and hear angels. Likewise, he was able to use an angelic tongue.[775]

If Blake knew his Swedenborg it was not surprising that he was able to satisfy the inquisitive Crabb Robinson. In fact, in *Conjugial* [*sic*] *Love* Swedenborg related how he found out about the differences between the two languages. He asked his spiritual interlocutor to join him in an experiment:

> withdraw to your associates, and speak somewhat amongst them, then retain the expressions, and return with them in your memory, and utter them before me. And he

[772] Anonymous account, quoted after Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), 298.
[773] Crabb Robinson, *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence*, ed. Thomas Sadler, 3 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1869), II:2, 317.
[774] Lavater (1768-73), III, 48, 50-51.
[775] Hindmarsh, ed., *New Dictionary* (1794), 31, 315 (no. 326).

> did so, and returned to me with those expressions in his mouth, and uttered them; and they were expressions altogether strange and foreign, which do not occur in any language of the natural world.[776]

Repeatedly Swedenborg explained how he conversed with angels or spirits. He emphasised that they had human forms and that the language they used was similar to that of man. According to Swedenborg, spirits used the mother tongue of the man they were talking to:

> The speech of angels is equally divided into words with ours, and alike sonorous and audible, for they have mouths, tongues, and ears, as we have, and also an atmosphere to give articulation to their speech; [...] they make the same use of it for respiration and enunciation, as we do of our atmosphere."[777]

Swedenborg's conception of the universal language of the spiritual world, however, differed from Blake's. The argument is that what Blake practised with his ghostly visitors resembled more the Lavaterian conception of the "language of heaven" than the Swedenborgian angelic language. The language in which Blake communicated with his spiritual sitters did not depend or rely on speech organs. It was neither uttered nor could it be heard.

To support the possibility of Blake's adaptation of Lavater's notion of the "language of heaven" it is necessary to point out that even the Swedenborgians revised the above outlined definition of Swedenborg's spiritual language. As demonstrated in chapters 1 and 2, the Swedenborgians responded to Lavater and the vogue of his physiognomical doctrines in the 1790s. The argument is that there was a similar process of absorption with the early nineteenth-century movement of phrenology. The link between Swedenborgianism and phrenology is David G. Goyder, Swedenborgian preacher and phrenologist.[778] Goyder's publications on Swedenborg continued long after he retired from his duties in the Swedenborgian church: *A Concise History of the New Jerusalem Church* (1827), *A Defence of the Doctrines of the New Church* (1846), and *The Mission of Swedenborg* (1853).

When Goyder wrote his *Concise History* in the 1820s he included a report on Swedenborg's skull. It turns out that Swedenborg's grave had been opened twice. In 1790 it was done to find out whether his mortal remains were, indeed, in the coffin and in 1817 the body was desecrated when a visitor to the vault at the Swedish Church St. George at the East Church in London stole the skull. This thief hoped to sell the skull to the Swedenborgians, but since no purchaser could be found the said person kept it. When he died, however, shortly after, the skull was found in his possessions and immediately returned to the Swedenborgian Church. According to Goyder, it was quietly re-interred:

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[776] Swedenborg, *Conjugial* [*sic*] *Love* (1794), 315 (no. 326).
[777] Emanuel Swedenborg, *A Treatise on Concerning Heaven and Hell* (1778), 44, 138-39 (nos. 74, 234, 235).

> It is not true that the person who purloined the skull was one of Swedenborg's 'disciples,' it is not true that it was ever taken to Sweden, or preserved, either there or here, as a relic: and it is not true that its re-interment was attended with any 'solemnity,' or that, as the story affirmed, the circumstance 'excited unbounded,' (or even any) 'interest among his numerous followers.' Some of them had heard that the skull had been taken away; but none of them, except the gentleman who was the agent in the affair, knew when it was restored; and certainly none of them cared any thing about the matter.[779]

When Swedenborg's body was exhumed in 1908 to be reburied in the Uppsala Cathedral in Sweden, it was discovered that the skull was still missing.[780] It is, indeed, highly surprising that nobody in 1817, if one is to believe Goyder, was interested in the skull. Swedenborg was surely famous enough for his skull to be considered a worthy of being an important contribution to a phrenological collection. It is possible that Goyder in the above quoted statement wanted to clear the New Jerusalem Church of any dabbling with the popular cult of craniology. Whether or not he succeeded is difficult to determine.

Swedenborgian thought was based on the belief in the existence of a spiritual and a natural world. As a consequence Swedenborgians differentiated between representation and correspondence. Whereas correspondence was the actual link between the spiritual and the natural, a representation was derived from the spiritual and had an independent material existence. On this matter the *New Jerusalem Magazine* wrote in February 1790:

> it may suffice to reflect only on those things which appertain to the mind, viz. to the thought and will: these things usually so beam forth from the face, that they manifest themselves in the countenance thereof, especially the affections, such as are of an interior nature, discovering themselves from and in the eyes; when those things which appertain to the face act in unity with those which appertain to the mind, they are said to correspond, and are Correspondencies, and the looks *(Vultus)* of the face represent, and are Representations.[781]

What was defined as the relationship between representation and correspondence was what physiognomy was to pathognomy. Correspondence cannot be considered to be like pathognomy, because any kind of muscle movement is still representative.

The general idea is that these Swedenborgian categories defining body-soul relationships as degrees of likeness or true resemblance match Deleuze's terms copy and simulacrum. Both correspondencies and representatives are essentially expressions attributed to the eternal body. While the former is linked to the inner or spiritual world by means of resemblance, the latter bears no resemblance and has therefore an

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[778] Cooter, *Cultural Meaning of Popular Science* (1984), 156, 156, 176, 283.
[779] David G. Goyder, *My Battle of Life: The Autobiography of a Phrenologist* (London, 1857), 25.
[780] "An investigation revealed that Swedenborg's skull was stolen some 50 years after his death [...]. The skull had changed hands several times after that and finally found its way to a second hand shop in Wales. Swedenborg's family was informed of its whereabouts and they bought it for an unknown sum. But the story does not end there. In March 1978, Swedenborg's skull was auctioned at Sotheby's in London for $ (US) 3,200." See http/www.harpercollins.com.au/drstephenjuan/news_body_odysseys.htm. Dr. Stephen Juan quotes from Edwin Murphy's *After the Funeral: The Posthumous Adventures of Famous Corpses* (New York: Citadel Press, 1995).

independent existence in the human face. Deleuze's definition of the copy as a reproduction of the inner model,[782] is also formulated in the Swedenborgian Dictionary:

> wherever there is a correspondence, there is necessarily implied such an *union* between two things, as only takes place when the one is derived from the other, in the same manner as an effect is derived form it's efficient cause, or as speech is derived from thought, and the gestures of the body from the affections of the mind; in all which cases the exterior forms can no more be separated from the interior essences, without losing their existence, than the body of a man can be separated from his soul without death.[783]

Just as in Deleuze, the crucial problem of telling copy and simulacrum apart is made a matter of perception. While Deleuze - like Lavater - concentrated on the problem of representation and considered the body as the basis of all of man's communication, the Swedenborgians viewed its existence as a direct consequence of Mankind's fall from paradise. Whereas Lavater believed that material existence of the human form could be transcended by moral education, the Swedenborgians always had to differentiate between natural and spiritual as well as internal and external man. According to Swedenborg, the spiritual world was closed to most. This would change, however, once the material body had been cast off. Only after resurrection would the spirit be released from the body.[784]

The differentiation between inner and outer man, spiritual and natural existence, was continued by the Swedenborgians and in their teachings. In his *Compendium of the Chief Doctrines of the True Christian Religion* (1816) Robert Hindmarsh wrote about the relation between the external and the internal man:

> The mind of man is both internal and external: by the internal he has communication with heaven and the spiritual world in general; and by the external he has communication with the natural world. In addition to which internal and external of the mind, he is also furnished with a material body, which for a season confines him to the gross objects of matter, and sense, and space, and time. With the good man the internal is in the light and heat of heaven, which are spiritual; while his external is indeed in the light and heat of the world, which are natural, but at the same time in a state of subordination to, and correspondency with, the internal: and thus in both respects he takes the character of a spiritual man. But with the wicked man the internal of the mind is in a state of separation from heaven, and so far immersed in the delights and pleasures of sense, that with respect both to his internal and his external he is a merely natural man, and has no desire to elevate his thoughts and affections above the things of this world.[785]

Phrenology was eventually recruited by believers of the Christian faith to help gain an awareness of the relation existing between inner essence and outer form, between spiritual cause and material effect. In 1837 John Epps argued in his "Essay on the Words

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[781] *New Jerusalem Magazine*, 1 (1790), 55.
[782] Deleuze, *Logic of the Sense* (1990), 256, 258.
[783] Hindmarsh, ed., *New Dictionary* (1794), iv.
[784] *New Jerusalem Magazine*, 1 (1790), 55-56.

'Flesh' and 'Spirit,' Phrenologically Considered" that the perceptive powers of different individuals could be determined from the bumps on their heads. The meaning of words was vague, because objects were continually perceived in different ways. That is, the moral as well as intellectual progress of an individual could be determined by the advance in brain organisation and mind activities manifesting themselves in skull shapes. Most importantly that conscience was innate and not socially conditioned could be read from the head: "Phrenology gives a *physical* demonstration of the existence of organs, active in the production of this conscience, and, therefore, establishes thereby, that man has a moral constitution as well as an animal."[786]

A year later in an essay on phrenology and Christianity Epps outlined the order of the different organs of the mind:

> What do these *facts*, these *physically* evident facts, demonstrate? What but this, That the moral feelings, occupying the highest part of the head, should be *supreme*: that they should *rule*. That the animal feelings should never venture into action, until the *desires*, connected with their activity, have presented themselves for approval to the moral and religious feelings.[787]

The equation of anthropology with phrenology was at the core of a religious rhetoric which tried to prove that man and mind were part of the God's creation. All this sounds strangely similar to Lavater's belief in self-improvement through self-awareness and Blake's responses to the processes of redemption, made in his annotations to *Aphorisms on Man.*

By the time Goyder came to write his autobiography published as *My Battle for Life: The Autobiography Of A Phrenologist* in 1857, Swedenborgian thought had acquired a certain amount of jargon originating in phrenological practice. While in 1827 Goyder denied all interest in Swedenborg's skull, thirty years later he used skull descriptions to underline his fascination with one of the preachers of the Swedenborgian Church, the Reverend J. Proud:

> his forehead was broad and moderately deep; he had a beautifully arched eyebrow, and in the course of the temporal ridge of the frontal bone the brain projected to a considerable extent, giving great breadth above the temples; that portion of the brain assigned by Phrenologists to Ideality was essentially large. His head was very finely rounded at the vertex, rendering Firmness, Conscientiousness, and Cautiousness [sic] in equally fair proportion, and rather large. The posterior part of the vertex was somewhat elevated, giving prominence to both Self-esteem and Love of Approbation. [...] He was at the time I first saw him somewhat stately, it is true, and with much of the

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[785] Robert Hindmarsh, *A Compendium of the Chief Doctrines of the True Christian Religion* (Manchester, 1816), 52-53.
[786] John Epps, "Essay on the Words 'Flesh' and 'Spirit,' Phrenologically Considered," *The Christian Physician, and Anthropological Magazine*, 2 (1837), 379.
[787] John Epps, "Phrenology and Christianity," *Phrenological (Anthropological) Magazine and Christian Physician*, 4:5 (1838), 131.

> natural language of self-esteem in his manner, but this I have since thought added to the dignity of his appearance.[788]

Gradually, the vogue of phrenology began to prosper and with it representations and reconsiderations of body-soul relations once again became a matter of representation rather than of correspondence. When Blake came to draw the Visionary Heads, he picked up on the tendency of a spiritualization which was recognised by the Swedenborgians at around the same time. The combination of Swedenborgianism with phrenology made the image of King Edward with the brow battlements possible. Consequently, in this image Blake transcended the separation between the spiritual and the natural worlds as well as the differentiation of internal and external man.

Even though Blake did not believe in zodiacal physiognomy, it provided him with a context as well as an audience for which he was able to dramatise the coexistence of the spiritual and natural worlds as well as transparency of body-soul relationships and simultaneity of expression. Since time of manifestation proved such an important factor to Varley's astrological calculations of zodiacal type, it is important to understand the connection between Blake and the images he produced and to explore the occult meanings attributed to pregnancy and birth.

In occult beliefs the relationships between conception, time of pregnancy and physical appearance of the baby was commonly used to explain abnormalities. The magazine which printed Blake's nativity in 1825 also had a nativity of "A Monstrous Birth." In the letter to the editor the circumstances of this particular birth were summarised:

> A soldier going one night, in company with his wife, to the barracks, situated in Hulme, had just got there, when his wife was dreadfully alarmed by the braying of an ass close by her side, which, owing to the extreme darkness of the night, she had not observed; she was, in consequence, indisposed for a short time. She was pregnant, and within about two months of her time when this happened. At the birth of her child, it was privately whispered that it had an ass's head; and a consultation was held whether it should be destroyed or not; it was said to be decided it could not be suffered to live; however, it was very ill, and died in a day or two, which rendered such a step unnecessary. A female who obtained a view of it, told me its head was very *much similar* to that of an ass; and that it was otherwise deformed, but would not particularize in what manner. From her I also obtained the time, which was as near as the attending woman could guess, for they had no time-piece.[789]

These kind of superstitions had also been recorded and analysed by Lavater who tried to get to terms with birth-marks as well as any other deviations from what he had coined the standard human physiognomy.[790] Lavater pointed out that during pregnancy, human beings were very receptive to outside influence: "Sometimes it is the impression of a hand, on the same part which the pregnant woman had touched at a moment of surprise;

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[788] Goyder, *Battle of Life* (1857), 85.
[789] *Urania*, 1 (1825), 25.
[790] Lavater (1789-98), II, 416.

sometimes it is an insuperable aversion to the same object which disgusted the mother when pregnant."[791] In what follows it will be argued that pregnancy, explained as a cause and effect relationship, provides a context for the extraordinary shape and anatomy of Blake's *The Ghost of a Flea.*

Blake's flea has come down to us in a number of different images, in pencil drawings, engravings and the tempera painting. The argument is that the flea was crucial to Blake's conjunction of spiritual manifestation with artistic creation. Particularly regarding the displacement of birth, the artistic creation of the flea turns into an argument for good copies and original creations. So far, it has been suggested that the ghost of a flea appeared to Blake when or *whenever* Gemini was rising. However, by comparison with all the other Visionary Heads, the flea was not just a continually changing image; it developed into a more and more human-looking creature. This can be substantiated from the different pictures but also from the contemporary accounts. J.T. Smith, for example, wrote:

> his picture of the Transformation of the Flea to the form of a Man, is extremely curious. This personification, which he denominated a Cupper, or Blood-sucker, is covered with coat of armour, similar to the case of the flea, and is represented slowly pacing in the night, with a thorn attached to his right hand, and a cup in the other, as if ready to puncture the first person whose blood he might fancy, like Satan prowling about to seek whom he could devour. Blake said of the flea, that were that lively little fellow the size of an elephant, he was quite sure, from the calculations he had made of his wonderful strength, that he could bound from Dover to Calais in one leap.[792]

In particular the flea of the engraved illustration to *Zodiacal Physiognomy* has a coat of armour. It resembles, moreover, that of King Harold, another of Blake's Visionary Heads.[793] The tempera flea, however, looks quite different. It has lost its armour in exchange for a compact body.

Peter Tomory has pointed out that Blake equipped many of his spirits with material features. *The Ghost of a Flea*, writes Tomory, resembled one of Fuseli's *échorché* drawings. So, despite Varley's account the flea is really "an *échorché* study of an entomological specimen."[794] The argument of this thesis is that just as with the illustrations to Blair's *Grave*, Blake risked to potentially confuse the viewers of *The Ghost of a Flea* about its state and status of existence. Geoffrey Keynes, on the other hand, has suggested that "the details of the Flea's conversation [...] provide conclusive evidence that Blake was deliberately leading on his credulous friend." Keynes argues further that there are "certain resemblances between Blake's visionary Flea and the celebrated

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[791] Lavater (1789-98), III, 189.
[792] Smith, *Nollekens and his Times* (1828), II, 471-72.
[793] Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 692:76. Butlin points out that Blake got it wrong. Harold was shot into the eye. John Milton's *The History of Britain* (1670) and Charles Allen's *A New and Improved History of England* (1793), the history books possibly available to Blake, do not specify where in the head the king was hit.
[794] Tomory, *Life of Fuseli* (1972), 212.

engraving of a flea as seen under a microscope included by Dr. Robert Hooke in his *Micrographia* first published in 1665."[795] Bearing in mind that Blake's flea combined different features of the animal creation, it is useful to point out to yet another source which may have helped Blake to shape this flea-creature and its snake-like tongue. The clue is in the word "blood-sucker," mentioned in Smith's account above. This will explain Blake's use of animal features in a figure which looks anything but like a flea.

In 1819 James Morton published *The Poetical Remains of the late Dr. John Leyden.* Leyden was surgeon and a poet. In 1811 he travelled to Java where he was to die from a fever. Leyden recorded his impressions when first travelling out to India. One of his amazing first incidents was an encounter with a blood-sucker:

> The first night I slept ashore I was waked by my side smarting very severely, and rolling myself on my side, discovered [...] that the smart was occasioned by a large animal, which I imagined to be a snake. As the chamber was dark, I disengaged myself form it with as little [...] violence as possible, not wishing to irritate such an antagonist. [...] On the morn [...] I discovered it to be a large lizard, termed a blood-sucker here, which nods with its head when you look at it, and it saluted me with a nod from the window [...], though it would not condescend to enter into conversation.[796]

It is possible that Blake was aware of this book. It was published by Longman, Hurst and Rees the publishers Varley was going to approach for his *Zodiacal Physiognomy*. This passage is relevant to the conception of Blake's tempera, because the narrative of the episode, recorded by Dr. Leyden, not only confirms the peculiar manners of Blake's flea-man, it also places him onto a window-sill, between curtains and against a starry sky.

One of the reasons why Blake's flea was perceived as a monster, is that that he lived on blood. The blood-imagery was emphasised in Cunningham's first impression of Blake's tempera painting:

> a naked figure with a strong body and a short neck - with burning eyes which long for moisture, and a face worthy of a murderer, holding a bloody cup in its clawed hands, out of which it seems eager to drink. I never saw any shape so strange, nor did I ever see any colouring so curiously splendid - a kind of glistening green and dusky gold, beautifully varnished.[797]

What or who the flea was can be constructed from the accounts of Blake's contemporaries and also from other textual and visual sources, both Hooke's *Micrographia* and Leyden's description of the blood-sucker. Each is equally relevant because each illuminates different aspects of the image and so enriches our understanding of Blake's *The Ghost of a Flea.*

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[795] Geoffrey Keynes, *Blake Studies: Essays on his life and work,* second edition (1949; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 134.
[796] *The Poetical Remains of the late Dr. John Leyden*, ed. James Morton (1819), xc.
[797] Cunningham, *Life of Painters* (1829-33), II, 169.

In terms of the artistic creation of the tempera *The Ghost of a Flea*, its composition is by no means original, that is in the sense in which Varley perceived *The Ghost of a Flea* as an original. The tempera showed the flea as it manifested itself to Blake at one particular moment in time - possibly the final version in which it presented itself to Blake. For Blake, spiritual manifestation within the context of *Zodiacal Physiognomy* was bound up with the concept of time. While time was typical of human creation because man's body, as we have seen in the Urizen Books, was a container of time, the very existence of time generated the ontological differentiation between the spiritual and the material. Consequently, artists could only ever create versions while trying to achieve the status of the copy with a tendency to collapse with the original image. It often happened that a copy was conceived but a simulacrum was produced. Resemblances, so it has been argued in the previous chapter, could be lost just because of the limitations of the media available to the artist. Every artist hat to continuously perfect his technique in order to be able to transcend the possibilities of the medium.

The fact that time for Blake was a quality of the body, coming into existence as a by-product of embodiment, explains why the zodiacal heads used in *Zodiacal Physiognomy* are quite different from Blake's Visionary Heads. Even if Varley tried to control how Blake engaged with his spiritual sitters, he must have soon realised that he could not use most of Blake's drawings. Varley probably concentrated on aspects of general likeness. However, his calculations of the physiognomies of the ghosts and spirits may have been warped by their unconventional behaviour and Blake's difficulties in accurately recording their likeness. So, if there existed problems to do with sequence, with interrupted sittings and overlapping apparitions, the only aspect of the Visionary Heads which had clear significance was simultaneity.

In 1825 *Urania* prints a sequence of historical events, all of which share the same moment. This list is given as proof for the effect and power of the heavenly bodies:

> Columbus discovered America; the art of printing was discovered; the venereal disease brought to Europe; gardening introduced into England; the reformation began by Martin Luther; cannon first used for nautical purposes; engraving and etching in copper invented; and those renowned artists, Raphael, Michael Angelo, and others flourished. There must have been some remarkable aspects or combination of the heavenly bodies to have produced such sensible and universal influence; of which, probably, some of your correspondents may inform me. It is also singular, that at the period when the Reformation commenced, the newly-discovered planet Herschell was in the 14th degree of Capricorn, the exact place where he is *now* situated in the heavens: may not this be the cause why there seems to be such a tendency to universal heresy at the present time? for not only is the established religion of the land threatened with subversion, by powerful, but mercenary, writers, but even the *ancient* system of

> astrology does not escape the prevailing mania, being assailed even by its professed to votaries.[798]

Blake's understanding of simultaneity was close to Varley's. For both of them simultaneity suggested greatness. Particularly the juxtaposition of the invention of engraving, etching and printing must have been a significant parallel. Blake had tried throughout his life to mythologise both his relief-ecthing technique and his art of colouring. In *Zodiacal Physiognomy* Varley, furthermore, aligned an event related to John Milton's funeral with Herschel: "when the coffin of Milton was sought for in the Chancel of Cripplegate church, a short time before the erection of his monument in 1737, the Herschel planet was passing over and near his ascendant."[799] The issue of simultaneity can, indeed, be applied to Blake's works, and in particular to the illuminated book *Milton*. There are also visionary portraits of John Milton, Milton's first wife and two of his daughters.[800]

The production of Blake's *Milton* supposedly lasted from 1804, according to its title-page, to 1818 when Blake printed the fourth and final version of this illuminated book. Traditionally, the production of *Milton* has been perceived as a staged process starting with the text, which is believed to predate the first printed illuminated book version of 1811. Joseph Viscomi, however, has argued that Blake did not complete the text before 1810.[801] In *Milton*, so goes the argument, Blake responded to contemporary events. This thesis proposes to explain the ambiguity about the falling star in *Milton*, where it appears both as falling star and comet, with Herschel's discovery of a comet which turns out to be a planet.[802]

In 1808 Herschel discovered yet another comet.[803] In 1811 he published a paper in the *Philosophical Transactions* where he pondered on the inderdependence of the power of optical instruments and the construction of the heavens. Herschel stressed that whether space could be penetrated or not depended on the quality of the telescope used. In his own practice of astronomy he had been forced to revise what he had determined as the arrangements of the stars almost thirty years previously. Due to the tremendous improvements made in the technology of telescopes he was able to correct what he had believed to be an "equal scattering" of nebulae or a milky way. Seen through a stronger telescope these configurations resolved into different stars positioned at great distances

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[798] *Urania*, 1 (1825), 35-36.
[799] Varley, *Zodiacal Physiognomy* (1828), 5.
[800] Bentley, "Blake's Visionary Heads: Lost Drawings and a Lost Book," in *Romanticism and Millenarianism* (2002), ed. Fulford, 200.
[801] Viscomi, *Idea of the Book* (1993), 315.
[802] William Herschel, "Account of a Comet," *Philosophical Transactions*, 71:2 (1781), 492. In 1785 the *European Magazine* ran an article on Herschel. What is emphasised is Herschel's perfection of the Newtonian Reflector: "He persisted with such obstinacy in compleating the parabolical figure of a seven-feet telescope, that he made above two hundred obect-specula [*sic*], till at length he obtained one that would bear any power he could apply to it. [...] It has generally been supposed that it was a lucky accident that brought this start to his view; but this is an evident mistake." See *European Magazine*, 7 (1785), 2.

from each other: "undoutedly a cluster of stars may assume a nebulous appearance when it is too remote for us to discern the stars of which it is composed."[804]

The argument, establishing a connection of constructed simultaneity between *Milton* and the Visionary Heads, is that the comet or falling star is a metaphorical link between *The Ghost of a Flea* and two plates from *Milton*, "William" and "Robert." (*M* 29, 33)[805] These three designs are very similar in composition. The two plates from *Milton* have two figures arranged as mirror images to each other, which seems plausible since Robert has been dead for many years.[806] Interestingly, the figure of the "Robert" plate is facing the same way as *The Ghost of a Flea.* These two figures seem to be versions of one underlying idea, executed as different copies of one original moment of conception. That is to say, the argument for simultaneity hinges upon the image of the falling star which recurs in these compositions like a comet which appears on the sky at certain intervals. While it hits the figures of the "William" and "Robert" plates, it goes past the feet of the flea. Herschel's admission of having had to make revisions applies to Blake and his relationship to his works. Even though Robert died in 1787, he reoccurs in *Milton*. A reworking of an image is commonly taken to imply that an experience it is not yet closed. It still occupies the artist's mind. The image has been revised and redefined, because in *Milton* the two brothers are depicted as equals.

Next, this thesis proposes that the link between these three images is blood, because the simultaneity, suggested in these designs, is rendered through the notion of time's physicality embodied in the globe of blood. While it has been speculated that Robert died of consumption,[807] the flea lives on blood in eternity and the sons of Los in *Milton* create the different unifies of time from the arterial bloodstream:

> [...] the Sons of Los build Moments & Minutes & Hours
> And days & Months & Years & Ages & Periods; wondrous buildings
> And every Moment has a Couch of gold for soft repose,
> (A Moment equals a pulsation of the artery). (*M* 28 [30] 44-47 E126)

Common associations of blood in Blake are, first of all, with warfare, tyranny and bloodshed, and this is how Blake undoubtedly employs blood-imagery throughout his work. The notion of blood sacrifice has commonly been associated with Blake's

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[803] William Herschel, *Observations of a Comet. Made with a view to investigate its magnitude and the nature of its illumination* (1808).
[804] William Herschel, "Astronomical Observations relating to the Construction of the Heavens, arranged for the Purpose of a critical Examination, the Result of which appears to throw some new Light upon the Organization of the celestial Bodies," *Philosophical Transactions*, 101:2 (1811), 269.
[805] *Milton; a Poem*, eds. Robert N. Essick and Joseph Viscomi, vol. 5 (London: Tate Gallery Publications for The William Blake Trust, 1993), plates 29, 33.
[806] The idea of an inner doubleness in Blake's figures is discussed by Betsy Bolton, who discusses issues of gender in Blake's *Milton*, describes Blake's "metaphoric invocation of the hermaphrodite." See Betsy Bolton, "'A Garment dipped in blood': Ololon and Problems of Gender in Blake's *Milton*," *Studies in Romanticism*, 36:1 (1997), 74.
[807] Wilson, *Life of Blake* (1971), 22.

appropriation of druidism. His affinity to eighteenth-century antiquarianism and the possible sources for his druid symbolism have been delineated by A. L. Owen.[808] More recently, Jon Mee gave emphasis to the "ambivalences of Blake's presentation" of druids and bards. He combined the druid elements of Blake's creation myth with the "Urizenic system" and characterised both as part of Blake's reinterpretation of Genesis.[809] Jason Whittaker considered Blake's awareness of the contemporary knowledge of druidism and concentrated in connection with the issue of human sacrifice on "the profundity of horror."[810]

The argument is that blood-imagery in Blake can also be associated with performative powers. In the Urizen Books where Enitharmon developed out of a globe of blood, blood played a crucial part in Blake's rendering of creation as embodiment:

> The globe of life blood trembled
> Branching out into roots;
> Fib'rous, writhing upon the winds;
> Fibres of blood, milk and tears;
> In pangs, eternity on eternity.
> At length in tears & cries imbodied
> A female form trembling and pale
> Waves before his deathy face (*BU* 18:1-8, E78)

The creation of the first female was an extraordinary event. Not only was it blood-based, it took place outside the womb.

A similar illustration of creation as embodiment from a globe of blood was integrated into the pen and watercolour painting *The Fall of Man* (1807). This picture has spheres, red like blood, with human figures inside them. There are several of them and they are depicted in a way which makes them appear to come closer. In this staged progress of approach to the pictures foreground the human figures inside these spheres become more and more distinct. When they eventually burst the figures are released as complete humans. The connection of blood and creation is significant. What is taking place in the painting can be explained with Blake's inscription, written on the back of the sheet: "now awakens Sin, Death, & Hell, to celebrate with him the birth of War & Misery."[811] In the picture we see Satan pointing at the figures originating in the blood-spheres. Once released they fall towards him and into a cave where they join Sin, Death and Hell. This painting is a wonderful illustration of how the creation of man can be related to Blake's use of blood-imagery.

Closely associated with *The Fall of Man* is *The Vision of the last Judgment*, another watercolour painting, almost of the same size, dating from 1808. Their designs are very

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[808] A.L. Owen, *The Famous Druids: A Survey of three Centuries of English Literature on the Druids* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 82-83, 88, 224-236.
[809] Mee, *Dangerous Enthusiasm* (1992), 91-97.
[810] Jason Whittaker, *William Blake and the Myths of Britain* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1999), 160-67.

similar, except for the fact that in *The Fall of Man* figures are falling and in *The Vision of the last Judgment* figures are falling as well as rising between the two different spheres of heaven and hell.[812] These bodies, so we learn from Blake's poem, *A Vision of the Last Judgment* (c.1810), have a different ontological status. Blake explains how they have been revealed to him:

> All Things are comprehended in their Eternal Forms in the Divine body of the Saviour the True Vine of Eternity The Human Imagination who appeard to Me as Coming to Judgment. among his Saints & throwing off the Temporal that the Eternal might be Establishd. Around were seen the Images of Existences according to their aggregate Imaginations a certain order suited to my Imaginative Eye. (*VLJ* 69-70, E555)

Since blood in Blake is associated with the fall as well as creation, it is clear that it is the container of body time. Consequently, all that the flea is, it owes to his consumption of blood. According to the existing images and in terms of the evolutionary chronology, it seems possible that the flea evolved from being like a creature covered in plates as shown in the engraving to *Zodiacal Physiognomy*, to a person made out of muscles as depicted in the tempera.

It is interesting that during the flea's development from an insect into a humanlike being, there is no indication that the character of the flea changed. The flea is a dangerous monster. This emerges from two accounts of conversations between Blake and the flea. Varley in *Zodiacal Physiognomy* gave a full report on Blake's encounter with the flea:

> the Flea told him that all fleas were inhabited by the souls of such men, as were by nature bloodthirsty to excess, and were therefore providentially confined to the size and form of insects: otherwise, were he himself for instance the size of a horse, he would depopulate a great portion of the country. He added that if in attempting to leap from one island to another, he should fall into the sea, he could swim, and should not be lost.[813]

According to another anonymous author the flea explicitly referred to the moment of its creation and to the blueprint of its existence:

> It was first intended,' said he (the flea) 'to make me as big as a bullock; but then when it was considered from my construction, so armed - and so powerful withal, that in proportion to my bulk, (mischievous as I now am) that I should have been a too mighty destroyer; it was determined to make me - no bigger than I am.'[814]

Another association with blood in the Christian context is forgiveness. But while the flea continually incorporates blood into its body, it never reaches redemption. It is, indeed,

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[811] Butlin (1981), catalogue, no. 641.
[812] Bindman, *Blake as an Artist* (1977), 165-66. Morton D. Paley, *William Blake* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1978), 56-58.
[813] Varley, *Zodiacal Physiognomy* (1828), 54.
[814] Bentley, *Stranger from Paradise* (2001), 378.

transformed into even more dangerous monster, equipped with all the skills and cunning deceptions of the physical human body. With respect to Blake's use of blood sacrifice as druidic or Christian ritual, it is important to note that in the case of the flea there is no real break. Blood is not spilt to give or take life but continuously taken in order to sustain the existence of a monster.

The complex thought about the transformative power of blood is prefigured in *The Four Zoas*. While Blake in *The Book of Urizen* had Enitharmon develop out of a globe of blood in the next longer poem *The Four Zoas*, he redefined this notion of embodiment. In *The Four Zoas* the globe of blood is replaced by "robes of blood."

> For when Luvah sunk down himself put on the robes of blood
> Lest the state calld [*sic*] Luvah should cease. & the Divine Vision
> Walked in robes of blood till he who slept should awake
> Thus were the stars of heaven created like a golden chain
> To bind the Body of Man to heaven from falling into the Abyss (*FZ* 33: 13-17, E321)

These kind of robes can, indeed, be associated with the blood vessels that map the form of the human body like a set of clothing. Morton D. Paley analysed Blake's use of "the figure of garment" and described it as an "ambiguous symbol of the body" to argue that "Luvah's robes of blood" are "emblematic of the Incarnation." This implies that the physical body can be taken off just like a garment.[815] In *The Book of Urizen* Enitharmon's existence, moreover, was founded on a globe of blood. Just as Urizen before her, she created her own physical identity from inside and according to her own biological potential. Within the context of *The Four Zoas* it becomes clear that Blake used Enitharmon's manifestation as a globe of blood as a metaphor for an authentic and true expression of human identity. Consequently, in the globe of blood the inner hidden character has been turned inside out.

Blake's Luvah-Christ character is within the boundaries of traditional Christian iconography. His sacrifice will bring about human redemption. A tenet of the Protestant's faith is that Holy Communion confers forgiveness through the bread and the wine, the latter being a symbol of Christ's blood. In Blake's conception of "Luvah's robes of blood" blood and body are combined into a powerful metaphor of forgiveness through physical transformation. It is tempting to speculate that the composite image of Luvah's blood-body relates back to Lavater's notion of Christ as the best embodiment of the human form. Blake used blood-imagery to overcome the conventional separation between the inner and the outer man. Blood is the innermost essence of man and his attempts at creating his own identity. If this blood becomes bound up with the processes of the physical body, it loses its own body. The potential of the blood body was conceived in analogy to the

creative work of an artist. The blood-body in Blake was an alternative space in which human identity could be developed.

In *Milton* blood-imagery was once again linked to both Blake's understanding of artistic creation and to his concept of visionary experience:

> And every Month, silver paved Terrace builded high:
> And every Year, invulnerable Barriers with high Towers.
> And every Age is Moated deep with Bridges of silver & gold.
> And every Seven Ages is Incircled with a Flaming Fire.
> Now Seven Ages is amounting to Two Hundred Years
> Each has its Guard. each Moment Minute Hour Day Month & Year.
> All are the work of Fairy hands of the Four Elements
> The Guard are Angels of Providence on duty evermore
> Every Time less than a pulsation of the artery
> Is equal in its period & value to Six Thousand Years. (*M* 28: 62-63, E127)

Robert in his eternal body reappeared in *Milton* as the mirror image of Blake. He was an equal to Blake who as an artist was in control of his work and his body: "For in this Period the Poets Work is Done: and all the Great / Events of Time start forth & are conceived in such a Period / Within a Moment: a Pulsation of the Artery." (*M* 29:1-3, E127) By giving *The Ghost of a Flea* the dimension of *Milton*, it becomes obvious that Blake has - once again - given us a key-metaphor:

> For every Space larger than a red Globule of Man's blood
> Is visionary: and is created by the Hammer of Los
> And every Space larger than a red Globule of Mans blood. opens
> Into Eternity of which this vegetable Earth is but a shadow. (*M* 29:19-23, E127)

With Blake's use of blood-imagery in *Milton* it becomes clear that blood is a metaphor for self-creation and self-invention. In contrast to the bones of the skeleton which we have seen to solidify into the material body, blood when perceived as a new body is able to open up the limitations of human existence, not only to bring the expressions of human identity to the surface of the body, but also to transcend any known forms of the body.

Whereas Lavater capitulated before death while admitting that there was an eternal life which he could neither see nor access, Swedenborg talked about two separate but interconnected worlds. Blake was the only one who merged them into human existence by turning the material and the spiritual into a way of life or a mode of seeing and thus a matter of choice. Man's true and eternal identity is revealed as text on plate 98 of *Jerusalem*:

> In New Expanses, creating exemplars of Memory and Intellect
> Creating Space, Creating Time according to the wonders Divine
> Of Human Imagination, throughout all the Three Regions immense

[815] Morton D. Paley, "The Figure of Garment in *The Four Zoas*, *Milton*, and *Jerusalem*," in *Blake's Sublime Allegory: Essays on The Four Zoas, Milton, Jerusalem*, eds. Stuart Curran and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 119-22.

Of Childhood, Manhood & Old Age [;] & the all tremendous
unfathomable Non Ens
Of Death was seen in regenerations terrific or complacent varying
According to the subject of discourse & every Word & Every
Character
Was Human according to the Expansion or Contraction, the
Translucence or
Opakeness of Nervous fibres such was the variation of Time &
Space
Which vary according as the Organs of Perception vary & they
To & fro in Eternity as One Man reflecting each in each & clearly
seen
And seeing: according to fitness & order. (*J* 98:30-40, E258)

At the end of *Jerusalem* there is no transcendence of the human form nor the human body. If what exists can still be seen and is seen to vary, it still depends on the processes of embodiment. Blake's conception of the eternal body included the notion of Lavater's "language of heaven." What we see to take place on plate 98 are body-soul combinations which create their own time-space manifestations and alternate between appearing translucent and opaque. In Blake, the body is at the centre of the shifts between human and divine identity. It is the limited material nature of the human body and not human physical existence itself which is transcended in *Jerusalem*. Thus, the end of *Jerusalem* is not really an end but a beginning onwards from which human beings move between translucence and opaqueness and manipulate their body-soul relationships at will.

Conclusion

In this thesis it has been demonstrated why it is important to historicise William Blake's approach to likeness-making in terms of his familiarity with the arguments about the cultural practice of physiognomy. Although the only work of Johann Caspar Lavater's we can be absolutely certain Blake read is *Aphorisms on Man* (1788), with Lavater's pseudo-scientific approach to physiognomy it is possible to determine the field of identity in which Blake caused the material body-shapes of the figures from his creation myth to manifest themselves.

Lavater's interest in the spiritual world had its parallel in Emanuel Swedenborg's teachings. Whereas Swedenborg claimed to cross the border between life and death, Lavater never communicated visions, and Blake adopted a position somewhere in-between. He not only blurred the borders between life and death, he continually engaged with the representation of man's spiritual qualities by means of a complicated process of likeness-making. To substantiate the impact of Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* (1789-98) it has been argued that Swedenborg's translators and editors directly responded to the Lavaterian vogue in three ways: by referring to *Aphorisms on Man* in a footnote to Swedenborg's *The Wisdom of Angels* (1788); by publishing Lavater's Letters to Swedenborg, and by integrating a definition of physiognomy into the newly edited Swedenborgian Dictionary of 1794. It has been further contended that after writing *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in the late 1780s, Blake did not - as is widely assumed - completely disregard Swedenborgianism. He continued to share with Lavater and Swedenborg the interest in the manifestation and representation of body-soul relationships. Most importantly, Blake was already involved in the Lavater project when he annotated Swedenborg's *The Wisdom of Angels, concerning Divine Love and Divine Wisdom.*

Late eighteenth-century physiognomy originated in continental Europe, but the debates and arguments about it were not merely reiterated in England; some of the most forceful critiques of Lavater's empirical approach to physiognomy were born and refined in London. Thanks to the personal union between the British and Hanoverian states, ties were close and the exchange of ideas easy. Lavater's most important critic, the Göttingen physicist Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, travelled to England in the 1770s. He met not only the King and Queen but also Joseph Priestley and David Garrick. When the first volume of Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente* was published in 1774, Lichtenberg was already on his second visit to London. The reception of Lavater's physiognomy project was immediate and possibly influenced by Lichtenberg who devised a theoretical attack, *Über die Physiognomik; Wider den Physiognomen* (1778), a treatise in which he integrated his

experiences of the London metropolis. The problematic nature of the assumed interaction between body and soul climaxes in Lichtenberg's criticism of Lavater's categorical statements and moral judgements.

The controversy about Lavater's luxuriously illustrated Hunter translation (1789-98), and the more affordable and popular Holcroft translation (1789), was publicised through various literary journals. Possible points of contact emerge in connection with the radical publisher Joseph Johnson and, in particular, his *Analytical Review.* Johnson never printed any reviews of the Hunter translation, but he had Fuseli write on the Holcroft translation. Both Fuseli's criticism and response to Holcroft take account of the generally felt uneasiness about the methodology of the so-called science of physiognomy. Fuseli, however, not only promoted the Hunter translation, he was compelled to boost the reputation of Lavater, whose style was considered effusive and obscure, and whose public image had suffered when it had become known that he advocated and practised animal magnetism.

The genesis of Lavater's *magnum opus* is important because the controversies about Lavater and his physiognomy project reached England well ahead of its London publication. From the reviews of the different editions, and in particular the Hunter translation, it emerges that the illustrations of the physiognomy project were frequently discussed in terms of their status as originals or copies. The superiority of the Hunter translation, for example, was established by emphasising the skill of the English engravers. Lavater did not prepare a manuscript especially for the English publication but agreed to have the French edition translated into English. Fuseli, who had requested a more recent portrait of himself and a new accompanying commentary, found his own solution to updating Lavater's work by adding new illustrations.

The aspects revolving around issues of incompleteness and abridgement are echoed in the argument about the inconsistencies in the narrative of Blake's *The Book of Urizen* (1794), one of the most profound of Blake's illuminated books using his new process of colour-printing. In *Essays on Physiognomy* Lavater used a composite form in order to describe the relationships between body and soul. He frequently criticised the engravers, who had been commissioned to provide the illustrations, whenever their finished images fell short of his expectations. The need for high-quality portraits can be explained by the physiognomical belief that inner realities manifest themselves on the surface of the material body. So Lavater took care to ensure that the engraved images which accompanied his physiognomical analyses visually substantiated his perspective on certain body-soul relationships.

In this thesis it has been suggested that the problem inherent in the representation of spirituality can be explained in terms of Gilles Deleuze's notion of platonic motivation.

Deleuze's terms - copy and simulacrum - have been used to differentiate between first and second class representations of likeness. These terms, more significantly, describe both Lavater and Blake's tireless attempts at unifying the two objects of original sitter and copied representation. Within the religious contexts of Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* and Blake's creation myth, first expounded in the Urizen Books of the mid 1790s, the relationship between original and copy has become a matter of man's relationship to God. What has been shown is how artists using physiognomy and its supposedly more scientific sibling phrenology struggled with likeness-making when having to mediate between the original and its representation in engravings and plaster casts.

A new angle to the Blake-Fuseli collaboration was exposed in how both men responded to Lavater. Fuseli, on the one hand, helped to expand *Essays on Physiognomy* into a three volume edition, bound in five parts, while condensing Lavater's physiognomical rules, published as *Aphorisms on Man* in 1788, into 633 aphorisms. Blake, on the other hand, became aware of the problems of representation which were within the context of Lavater's physiognomy project theorised as first and second class engravings. He also learned, probably through Fuseli, that Lavater's ambition was to identify the divine, eternal likeness to God in living man.

Blake not only used the principles of physiognomy throughout his working life, he was intrigued by Lavater's combination of text and image. When reading *Aphorisms on Man*, Blake, probably inspired by Fuseli, annotated a text which claimed to generate textual profiles of its readers. In his choice of favourite aphorisms, Blake's own search for the human form divine first manifested itself. Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* provided a potentially definitive method of disclosing the true social value of the individual. It is possible that Blake's tendency towards self-representation beyond the constraints of class may have been fused into his heroic and nude Albion conceived as the one male figure.

In a close reading of Blake's annotations to *Aphorisms on Man* it has been argued that Blake responded to Lavater on two different levels. It even seems likely that Blake was familiar with Lavater's proof-reading and editing conventions. Most importantly, Carol Louise Hall's interpretation of the heart with which Blake surrounded Lavater's name and his own signature has been revised. With this heart, which is more than a symbol of Blake's love for Lavater, Blake established his status as equal, responsive reader and partner in the process of thought transmission. This, moreover, was the justification for the authenticity of Blake's textual portrait of himself. The next step of the analysis of Blake's annotations was to consider Blake portraits executed by Blake and his artist friends. It has been shown how Blake manipulated the representations of his own physiognomy by incorporating various features into his own. Thus, he not only chose but also generated physiognomies which reflected or rather embodied an expression which he deemed

adequate for his vision of himself. Interestingly, this tradition continued after Blake's death through his artist friends and their attempts at Blake portraits.

What all this points to is the general struggle of the cultural and artistic practices of physiognomy and portraiture with the codification of human beauty, and the representation of moral character as well as the rendering of a unified and authentic character expression. The issues addressed as notions of pure likeness and real character, combined with practical attempts at verisimilitude and accurate portraiture, are what links the surface of a portrait painting with the physiognomy of a person. The kind of physiognomical manipulation Blake may have experienced during his involvement with the Lavater project and his engagement as engraver to the Hunter translation influenced his perception of human identity. The cultural context of Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* has implications for attempts at restoring Blake's physical likeness. These insights leave us with no fixed portrait of Blake perhaps precisely because of this relationship with contemporary physiognomy.

Blake's creation myth of the 1790s, expounded in the Urizen Books, has its thematic parallels not only in Genesis but also in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In Blake the body exists prior to the fall, and it continues to exist after both death and redemption. Whereas in Genesis man is created in accordance with the perfect image of the almighty God, creation in the Urizen Books results from an ongoing process of fragmentation. On a structural level the myth is shaped through the perspectives of its two creator figures, Urizen and Los, who either witness or experience creation as bodily transformation. The Urizen Books have received much attention in recent years. There are three parameters according to which they tend to be read: First, Blake's creation myth is a parody of Genesis. Secondly, *The Book of Urizen* is the first book of Blake's *Bible of Hell*, announced in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790-93). Thirdly, its complex and complicated structure can be explained with Blake's awareness of German Higher Criticism and British contemporary Biblical exegesis.

Analyses of the creation theme of Blake's Urizen Books have recently been propelled by the Historicist argument, made by Tannenbaum, McGann, Mee and Worrall. However, these Blake scholars have not given sufficient weight to some aspects of Los's creative actions. With respect to Blake's interpretation of Lavater, so it has been suggested, it is rash to assess Urizen's humanisation as positive. *Essays on Physiognomy* is yet another unacknowledged precursor text. When linking Los's creative actions to the devices used by Lavater and Petrus Camper, it becomes possible to describe the fixation of the human form within the myth's own context: The nets and gins not only produce the body, they imprint morally coded meanings into its surface. The connection between the two creator figures is redefined, because when it comes to likeness-making their

relationship is interdependent. Los, in fact, never prevents the fall, rather he propels it by superimposing his nets and gins over Urizen's eternal body. In comparing creation from clay with creation from bones it has been argued that Blake's version of the creation is delivered as a gradual solidification of the bones.

To gain information about the body's hidden life, its interior had to be made accessible. While the anatomical gaze, as taught by William Hunter at the Royal Academy, was a form of perceptual dissection, the physiognomical gaze abstracted from the living body and produced verbal or visual descriptions. Lavater constantly emphasised the importance of anatomy. It was important for two reasons: first, to understand the interaction between bones and flesh in order to read the blueprint of human identity correctly; second, to be able to accurately and correctly represent the human body. The latter was reinforced through the work of Lavater's son Johann Heinrich Lavater who worked on an *Introduction to Anatomy* while staying with Fuseli in London in 1789. Johann Heinrich Lavater has been cast as another possible source for Blake's understanding of physiognomy and awareness of anatomy. Blake was not only working for *Essays on Physiognomy*; he was also part of its intended audience.

In *The Book of Urizen* Blake visualises that which usually remains unseen. He effectively dissolves the body-soul dualism by blurring the boundary between interior and exterior, and by delineating both the embryological and anatomical dimensions of man's biological existence. What is presented to be surveyed is the surface of both the material body and the disembodied soul. Their surfaces are shaped by forces acting from outside and inside, and initiated by self or other as recognition.

Blake's bodies essentially evade a clear cut definition from either the anatomical or physiognomical perspectives. What these two approaches to human identity have in common is that their interpretations are founded on death. Whereas the physiognomist fixes living human nature into a stable, solid and rigid grid of moral meanings, the anatomist formulates his statements over a decaying corpse. Into his creation myth of the 1790s, and in particular into *The Book of Urizen*, Blake weaves contemporary theories of healing. With the work of George Cheyne, this thesis has tried to indicate that Blake attributes a certain biological resourcefulness to the body. Most importantly, by reading Blake's description of the formation of the embryo inside Enitharmon's womb against Ebenezer Sibly's *Medical Mirror* (c.1796) and William Hunter's *Anatomia uteri humani gravidi* (1774 and 1794) the analysis of the theme of embodiment has been expanded with respect to the different attempts at representing unborn life.

In paintings, the body-space is defined through flesh colour. Blake's polemics about colour were written with the Royal Academy in mind: in response to the discovery of the Venetian Secret (c.1797) as well as to general problems to do with colour stability. From

the advertisement for his 1809 exhibition it emerges that Blake planned to exhibit all those paintings which had been rejected by the Royal Academy or the British Institution. Blake wrote that he has made his pictures "unchangable and permanent in Fresco." (Advertisement of the Exhibition, 1, E527) In the advertisement for the *Descriptive Catalogue* his stand against these institutions was developed further when he announced that his exhibition was a public space in which "England [is] protected from the too just imputation of being the Seat and Protectress of bad (that is blotting and blurring) Art." (*DC* i, E528)

Blake's pursuit of colour experiments is typical of this period. Through his own exhibition he parodied the artistic mentality, as for example expressed by Reynolds, which presupposes that aesthetic education and artistic improvements can be taught, learned and acquired. By arguing that he had resisted the temptations of the demons (the Flemish and Venetian painters, *DC* 54-57, E547) he also ridicules Benjamin West, Reynolds's successor, who had tried to monopolise the Venetian Secret with the hope of having an advantage at the next annual exhibition. In his *Descriptive Catalogue* Blake repeatedly emphasises that the true art of colouring cannot be learned, it can only be rediscovered. His rhetoric, I have argued, reiterates the importance of the status of the lost original which he had first encountered in the Lavater project and possibly also in connection with the scandal surrounding the event of the Venetian Secret.

The visual effects of Blake's colour-printing technique, first used in *The Book of Urizen*, is also reviewed in relation to medical illustrations. The iconographic approach to William Blake's Large Colour Prints (1795/1804) has been questioned by establishing a contemporary context for his colour discourse and print-making practices and by discussing them as originals and copies, thereby attempting to determine the relationship between the different versions of each print.

So far, the problematic relationship between original and copy, two concepts usually associated with a crucial opposition in Blake's thought, has been discussed primarily by Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi. Both have argued for several stages of Blake's revisionism and in favour of the unity of execution and invention in Blake's work. The physicality of Blake's Large Colour Prints was first emphasised by Gilchrist and Rossetti. Their strong and solid colours have been foregrounded repeatedly by Martin Butlin, John Gage and others. Chapter 4 has tried to build an argument for Blake the painter, because the space and design of the second and third pulls of these prints were retouched by Blake adding outline and more water-based colour.

The textual effect of the colour-printing is that with each pull the amount of printed pigment decreases. The surface of each colour print becomes more and more transparent. Whereas the usual order of working is to start from a drawing, Blake here

reversed the process. It is the colours that first form the features of both figures and backgrounds in different shades with shadows and lights. The drawing, in fact, is secured last. The conclusion is that the Large Colour Prints are not about reproduction but about visual effects and bodily physicality based on pigmentation.

Within this context of painterly expertise Blake's anti-Newtonian approach to colour has been delineated with respect to Jacob Christian Le Blon's mezzotint printing technique and colour combination theory. Even though many of his paintings, especially the so-called fresco paintings, proved unstable, Blake continued and excelled in the tempera *The Ghost of a Flea* (c.1819). In historicising Blake's bodies and bringing their material qualities and vitalistic forces to the existing interpretations of the creation myth, it has been explained how theories arguing for either the corporeal or immaterial qualities of colour influenced Blake's conception of the body, created after God's image and existing as copies.

A case for a late incarnation of Lavater's physiognomical ideas can be argued for Blake's portraits of disembodied souls, the Visionary Heads, and accordingly his collaboration with John Varley on *Zodiacal Physiognomy* (1828). Varley used Blake's Visionary Heads to determine how star and planet constellations manifested themselves on the human face. It has been argued that Blake and Varley's nightly drawing sessions parodied the life-drawing classes held at the Royal Academy. Blake seems to have suspended the time-space division by accentuating both the omnipresence of the disembodied souls and his own ability to cross the border between the worlds of the living and the dead. In the illuminated book *Milton* (1804-18) Blake dramatised the conceptions of self and other with regard to ever changing time-space settings and with the characters splitting and merging. In his *Zodiacal Physiognomy* Varley identified *The Ghost of a Flea* as a typical representation of Gemini; explaining the flea, which manifested itself as Gemini was rising, as an embodiment of the characteristics belonging to a typical Gemini.

In the Visionary Heads the concept of birth once again becomes displaced. It is substituted by manifestation as an embodied spirit. Thus, the boundary between the spiritual and material worlds dissolves. Blake's spiritual characters simultaneously occupy different spaces and have multiple identities. After its resurrection, claimed Lavater, the body becomes a transparent medium. It brings the truth of human thought to full and unambiguous expression. Because of his literal interpretation of the *Imitatio Christi*, Lavater stated that humans are able to restore their likeness to the Supreme Being. Blake's vision of eternity implies a notion of complete likeness, or the inner body turned inside out.

The changing shapes of both King Edward I and the ghost of a flea have been delineated to make the case that the Visionary Heads are a late example of Blake's

engagement with body-soul relationships. Not only were Lavater's physiognomical doctrines adapted by Varley who tried to found astrology as a natural science, the idea of a fixed human character appears in the guise of the zodiacal type. Blake, by contrast, seems to have expanded on the notion of the flexible soul body.

Especially in the Visionary Heads Blake's combination of physiognomy and portraiture shows a controlled use of the available modes and different contexts of representation. Works as diverse as the official Blake portrait painted by Thomas Phillips in 1808, Blake's designs for R.H. Cromek's 1808 edition of Robert Blair's *The Grave*, the illuminated book *Milton* (1804-18) as well as *Jerusalem* (1804-27) have been linked with a narrative of body-soul relationships which displaces both birth and death.

From the Visionary Heads one can extract two points. One is that Blake not only believes in the coexistence of the spiritual and material world, he also - in the manner of the Swedenborgians - treats the two as merging into one another. It all comes down to point of view and the recognition of inner potential: every man, according to Blake, has the choice to see all and everything at the same time and in the same place. The second point is to do with the blood body. With respect to Enitharmon, who develops out of a globe of blood, and the Christ-Luvah figure who takes on the physical body like a garment of blood, Blake suggests that there is an alternative material form into which man cannot be solidified or fixed. In contrast to the skeleton which ossifies Urizen into an identity which is prefigured by Los, Enitharmon is able to develop her own - female - identity. The same goes for Luvah who chooses the human body as a temporary habitat.

Blake's *The Ghost of a Flea* exemplifies the creative, transforming power of blood. Once integrated into the bodily functions of the flea, the blood changes it into a human being. Its inner nature, however, remains unaltered. This is what makes it a monster. With respect to *Milton* it becomes clear that blood embodies symbolic creative potential for self-invention and self-representation. In *Milton*, blood has become a metaphor for self-expression, specifically for a material which is completely at the artist's disposal. It has been freed of bodily time and can therefore open human existence to the dimension of eternal time in which the body continues to exist.

In essence my analysis of Blake's Visionary Heads is that they illustrate, both as images and textual accounts, Blake's vision of the physiognomical language of the eternal body, as presented on plate 98 of *Jerusalem*. While there is no transcendence of the body in Blake, there is a transcendence of its physical limitations. The eternal body of Blake's *Jerusalem* has the flexibility of a disembodied soul. Communication between human beings has become authentic and immediate. Thus we are made to realise that the body in Blake is an absolute necessity. It can be transformed but it ought never be transcended. It is at the core of all human expression.

Appendix A

Appendix A, transcription of 1788 Heisch letter by Mary Lynn Johnson and Sibylle Erle. See Zurich Central Library Lavater Family Archive, MS 512.138. Portions of this letter have already been published in 1901. See Georg Finsler, "Lavater in Amt und Privatleben," in *Denkschrift* (1902), ed. Stiftung von Schnyder von Wartensee, 20-22.

London, d. 16 May. 88.

Lieber, Lieber -- dieser Brief ist ein **b**esonderes Blätt-
chen für dich -- wird nur dir allein Verdruß machen,
so daß ich ihn schreiben muß ! --
Zu aller **Vörderst** dies ! Zwischen Dir, Johnson, und
Fuesly sind die schrecklichsten Mißverständniße.
Gott weiß, wie sie entstanden **(u.),** ich will und kann's nicht
untersuchen. **D**u glaubst, Johnson wolle für deine
Phisiognomik englisch Geld verwenden, und dich
englisch generös zahlen ? -- **D**ies scheint mir nicht
zu sey'n. **D**enn das erste Wort, was ich hörte, und was
mir bisher ununterbrochen wiederholt wurde ist, war
dies „ Lavater macht eine Menge Unkosten, Aus-
lagen, von denen wir nichts wißen wollen. Wir wollen
nichts als 2 Theile Umriße u. seinen Text. Zu was
dies alles, alle die Zeichner & ? Wer hat's von
ihm begehrt ? Uebrigens verändert er alle Tage
seine Meinung, macht neue Projekte, in die
wir uns schlechterdings nicht einlassen können, u.
wenn wir ihm darüber schreiben, so antwortet
er nicht, bleibt nie auf dem Punkt auf den wir
ihn festhalten wollen, und gibt immer Antwort
auf das, was wir nicht wissen wollen.[816] Er hat auf

[816] + ist, **by** Gott, nicht wahr.

Hofhams [one or two "f" ??] Bürgschaft hin schon 50 Guinees aufgenommen, und wir haben noch für keinen **H**eller Arbeit dafür. Sobald etwas kom(m)t, wollen wir's bezahlen, aber eher keinen Schilling. Json (=**Johnson**) bleibt das Risico der Sachen, die er uns zu schicken (**schreiben**) hat, und wir bürgen für nichts eher, als bis es in London ist. „ & &

Dies hört(**e**) ich immer so Wort für Wort, und habe nun den Auftrag bekom(m)en, **dirs** auch so zu schreiben, und so sehr mich's schmerzt, zu einem solchen Dollmetscher gegen dich gebraucht zu werden, so halte ich's für nothwendig **D**ir auch nicht ein Wort zu verbergen, damit du doch deutlich wißest, woran du seyest, und dich nicht noch tiefer in Verlegenheit setzest.

Fuesli scheint ungehalten zu seyn und zwar in einem hohen Grad. Er sagt, er habe dir Geld in die Hand spielen wollen, **D**u hättest nur schreiben u. schicken und um alles ü(**Ü**)brige dich nicht kümmern sollen; es seye aber mit dir nichts anzufangen, du wollest dich ruinieren, er

könne sich nu**n** mit all dem Misch-Masch nicht
mehr abgeben, er habe and**e**res zu thun & &
er scheint ein Mißtrauen in dich zu setzen, daß du
ein Mißtrauen in ihn setz**est** &
Von den 20 ihm geliehenen Louisd'or hat er
nur vor einigen Wochen **sch**on selbst zu sprechen
angefangen. Er sagte, du habest ihm dieselben
auf Arbeit hin geliehen; diese Arbeit (er glaubt
sie seye für den Hertz. v. Weimar) wäre nun fertig;
du sollest sie nur abholen laßen, er könne sie
aber unter 50 Guinees nicht geben &
Dein (**??**) billet an ihn zeigt ich ihm nicht, theils wegen
dem ebengesagten, theils weil er vielleicht nur
üblere Laune durch mich erhalten hätte, und du
leider vom Schicksal bestimmt bist, am Ende
immer der Sündenbo(**c**)k allein zu seyn. du hast
Fuesly hier nothwendig, und deswegen möchte ich
alles thun um ihn in **Thätigkeit** für dich zu er-
halten. **D**enn von all deinen geglaubten f(**F**)reunden
hab ich hier noch keine gefunden. d(**D**)ie trauen unend-
lich lieber Hofhams. [Die **treuen** unendlich liebe**n** Hofhams] Ja was können die ? Unter

den großen habe ich allerwärts angeklopft, aber
keine Thüre offen gefunden. Man kennt dich
in der **Ferne** als einen Menschen, der etwas ganz
curioses, Neues, Sonderbares über Phisionomi**k**
geschrieben hat -- mehr nichts ! --
Bei **Burkard** war ich; er sagte mir, der letztge-
schi(**c**)kte Pa(**c**)k Phisiognomiken läge noch bei dem
Commissionaire, dem er sie übergeben; er
hoffe, sie würden noch Fortgang finden, es
seye aber noch kein eintziges verkauft[817], und er
hätte, seit der letzten Remisse, die er dir
gemacht, keinen **H**eller für dich eingenommen,
so bald etwas ein**gehe**; würde er es dir durch
mich oder auf irgend eine and(**e**)re Art zu kommen
laßen. Er grüßt dich herzlich. --

[817] (??meaning while I was writing this:) **Indem** ich hier schrieb, kam Fuessli, (??) **wirs** mir deinen so eben erhaltenen Brief, worin du dich zufrieden gibst, bei dem allerersten Bescheid stehen zu bleiben. So wäre also dies in Richtigkeit! (**und**) Johnson er wertet (**erwartet**) von deinen Umrißen! Er will kein Folio ...Bei **dieser** Gelegenheit + weil derselbe Commissionnaire ... eigenen Exemplaren, dieser selbst direkt aus Hollan hatte kommen müßen. Zuerst verkauft gut.

muß ich dir 2 Anmerkungen an's Herz legen

1) Mache doch ja keinen einzigen Contrakt mehr

allein und ohne solche Leute, wie H. Escher, H. Bu(ü)r-

germeister & zu Rathe zu ziehen! Du bist gar

nicht geschaffen um Contrakte zu machen. Du ken(n)st

die Welt nicht, weil du sie nach dir beurteilst u.

glaubst, jeder wird mehr geben als er verspricht (**verkauft**).

Was ist die Folge davon ? „ dich läßt ,am im Koth

sitzen! „ -- So begehrt nun Johnson, auf eine (wie

ich es auch Fuesly sagte) unbillige Art, du sollest

das Risico von allein zu (??) sch**ickenden** auf dich

nehmen, er bekümmere sich nicht darum bis es

in London seye, u. bezahle nicht einen Moment

eher „ &

Fusely sagt weislich zu dir „ Gieb H. Hoffham

oder irgend einem anderen Kaufman den Auftrag

sein **Gemälde** für den Herzog v. Weimar abholen

u. einpa(**c**)ken zu laßen. Bei ihm ist es fertig; um

des ü(Ü)brigen bekümmert er sich nicht. **Ihr habt's** be-

stellt; wenn ihr's wollt, so könnt ihr's abholen

laßen -- er mag nicht die Umkosten des **Einpa(c)kens**

u. Ab**schickens** auch noch tragen. Uebrigens, so sehr

er glaubt, daß sein **Gemälde** in London 80 Guinees
(so sagte er heute) werth seye, so wolle er dir die Be-
stimmung des Preises für daßelbe überlaßen. --
Ich für mein Theil rathe dir hier sehr klug
zu Werk(**e**) zu gehen, denn du hast Fuesly nöthig
und er scheint wirklich in gewißen Momenten
dir als ein recht wahrer Freund dienen zu
wollen. Aber er wird leicht in Unmuth gebracht.
Also hüte dich von deiner Seite ihm die geringste
Gelegenheit zu geben. Deine Zugabe (aphorism
of men) sind übersetzt, aus den 1000 ungefähr
700 ausgesucht. Was ich **davon** sah gefiel mir
sehr. So auch der Kupferstich von **dir**, wozu die
Zeichnung bei Hoffham als Original gedient hat.
Fuesly wird mit Gelegenheit dir diese Sachen
überschi(**c**)ken. Soviel ich sehe, hat er hier als ein
sehr uninteressierter Mann gehandelt, denn
er hat von der Uebersetzung der Regeln nicht
einen **H**eller und sagt, er habe es lediglich gethan
um dir Geld in die Hand zu spielen.
Er fordert von dir folgendes. **D**a er unzufrieden
ist, mit dem, was du über ihn in der franz. Phisiogn.

hast setzen laßen, und da er behauptet, daß so
etwas ihm seinen ganzen Künstl**erruf allhier** zu
Grunde richten könnte, so wird er für Hunters
Uebersetzung u. d. Artikel, der ihn betrift neue
Zeichnungen geben und du sollest als dann auch
einen neuen Text dazu machen
Nach diesen beiläufigen Ausschweifungen kom(m)e
ich zu meiner zweiten Anmerkung
2) **H**üte dich doch vor dem Satan nicht so sehr, als
vor dem Gedanken „ irgend ein Buch selbst zu
verlegen ! „ Du bist genug gebrannt um das
Feuer zu fürchten ! Du läßt so etwas von diesem
Gedanken in deinem letzten Brief an Johnson
blicken u. es gab mir deinetwegen Unruhe. Was
diesen Brief betrifft, so muß ich dir sagen, daß
er bei Fuesly einen sehr üblen Eindruck gemacht
hat, weil du darin von den Summen sprichst,
die du bei andren Buchhändlern aus deiner
Arbeit heraus ziehen könntest. Er sagte „ in Gottes
Namen, wenn er 2000 Louisd' von andren erhalten
kann, warum giebt er's denselben dann nicht ?
Noch einmal -- ich schreibe dir dies alles so **wieder**

damit du wißest, wie es in den Gemüthern steht,
wie auf der einen Seite gut, auf der andren kritisch
und damit du deine Handlung(?**s**) (?**u.**) -Text darnach
einrichten und deine Worte abmeßen und deine
Klugheit schärfen mögest.
Johnson erwartet von dir ein Phisiognomisches
System: er will gar keine Raisonnements über
Gemälde Zeichnungen & Lieber Himmel, wie
sehe ich von Anfang bis zum Ende, daß ihr in
nichts einander verstanden habt. Du müßtest
hier seyn, so wäre all dieses Wir(r)war(r)'s ein Ende !
Ich möchte **dir's** auch noch **um der** Ursache wünschen,
weil du unendlich neue u. zwe(c)kmäßige **Ideen**
erhieltest, wenn du das Volk auf dem Hidepark
im KensingtonGarden, im Opern u. **Comödien**
Haus u. in den 2 Parlamentern die Hastings
Middleton, (?)**Jaipey**, Pitt, Fox, Sheridan,
Burk, Grey, den Lordchancellor & sähest.
doch dies ist ein Traum, den wir izt nicht träumen
müßen.
Stelle dir vor, von der Mutter haben wir nicht
einmal eine Nachricht wegen dem Empfang des

Portraits erhalten. Du wirst dich darüber wundern ?
ich nicht -- ich kenne meine Leute. Vom Vater
kommen immer noch mehr uns in Verlegenheit
setzende Briefe. Wir wissen nicht, wann wir abgehen.
Morgen speiße ich mit Hunter bei dem dich
1000fach grüßenden Hoffham. Die and(e)re Woche
wird dir Fuesly schreiben. Vielleicht lege ich
eineige Worte bei. Möcht ich dir etwas beßres
sagen können --- aber es ist keine Wahrscheinlich-
keit dazu. Noch einmal „ Suche Fuesli in dem
Eifer dir zu dienen zu erhalten „
Grüß alles und glaube, daß dir niemand
treuer bleibt als ich. Will's Gott, so wird
meine Stunde kommen dir's zu beweisen.
Jetzt bin ich mehr als unfähig dazu.

H.

p.s. die Briefe mit Couverts kosten hier
doppelt u. dreifach Geld, u. 2 Bögen in duodez
mehr als ein Bogen in Folio. So wie ich diesen itzigen
....., so mache ich ihn wohlfeil, gerade wo wie einen Bogen
in Quatro durch gehen

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how the late eighteenth-century cultural practice of physiognomy influenced William Blake's treatment of creation as embodiment in his 1790's creation myth, and also how the principles of phrenology, physiognomy's purportedly more scientific sibling, gave shape to the expressions of his sketches known as the Visionary Heads (c.1819-25). This goes further to consider Blake's approach to likeness-making as part of a European wide debate on the representation of spirituality and the relationship between body and soul. These issues are widely discussed in the works of Emanuel Swedenborg and expanded on by Johann Caspar Lavater in his *Essays on Physiognomy* (1789-98) - and it will be argued here that this work is an unacknowledged precursor to Blake's Urizen Books, *The Book of Urizen* (1794), *The Book of Ahania* (1795) and *The Book of Los* (1795).

This thesis takes an historical approach to the proposed Blake-Lavater connection and delineates the complex publishing history of the luxuriously illustrated *Essays on Physiognomy*. The copy-versus-original debate manifests itself not only in the work of Lavater's editors, but also in a problem of representation inherent in the copy engravings done for *Essays on Physiognomy*. Blake's engagement with Lavater's pseudo-scientific physiognomy led to a transposition of the copy-versus-original debate into Blake's Urizen Books. Indeed, the relationship between his two creator figures, Urizen and Los, exemplifies the struggle for an authentic representation of human character. [Deleuze (c.1969)]

In an attempt to complement this discussion of Blake's belief in precise outline as conveying essential physiognomical meaning, this thesis also suggests Blake saw and used colour as an expressive medium. The historical context to Blake's colour experiments gives evidence of his great concern with painting techniques and also his awareness of the popular search for ancient colouring methods - notably the scandal of the Venetian Secret of c.1797. The visual effects achieved in the different versions of *The Book of Urizen* and especially in the Large Colour Prints of 1795/1804 can therefore usefully be discussed in terms of the original-versus-copy debate. The argument is that colour and in particular colour-printing enabled Blake to express his ideas about perfect, spiritualised and original bodies whose individuality is retained throughout all their copied representations.