

UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO

Colegio de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades

**The Real Book of William Blake:
Songs of Innocence and of Experience and the Materiality of the Blakean
Book**

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Tesis de grado presentada como requisito
para la obtención del título de Licenciatura en Artes Liberales

Quito, diciembre de 2014

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COLEGIO DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES Y HUMANIDADES

HOJA DE APROBACIÓN DE TESIS

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Dedicatoria

A mis padres, por su incondicional apoyo; a mi hermano, por la compañía en las largas noches de trabajo; a Valentina, por más ayuda de la que podría haber pedido, y finalmente a Jean, por sus consejos y observaciones.

Agradecimientos

A Jorge Gómez Tejada y a Carmen Fernandez-Salvador, por toda la ayuda, tanto académica como personal, pues sin su apoyo este trabajo no hubiese sido posible. De la misma manera, agradezco a Jorge Izquierdo Salvador por sus valiosas observaciones.

Resumen

Esta tesis se enfoca en el libro *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, de William Blake, y en la manera en la que nos permite reimaginar la materialidad del libro. Los métodos técnicos y creativos de Blake le permitieron crear objetos que son únicos, a pesar de ser reproducibles, y sus libros no operan solamente como medios, sino también son objetos de arte. A pesar de que hay varias copias de *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, cada copia es diferente a las demás, lo que individualiza a cada objeto. Al enfocarse en la materialidad del libro, los métodos gráficos de Blake, su relación con el mercado de libros británico y las cualidades físicas del libro, se buscará entender cómo los libros de Blake nos llevan a repensar las nociones de original y copia, unicidad y reproducibilidad y del libro como tal.

Abstract

This paper focuses on William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, and on the way Blake's books allow us to reimagine the materiality of the book, that is of the book as an art object. Blake's technical and creative methods allowed him to create reproducible yet unique objects. Although there are several copies of the *Songs*, there are important differences among them that individualize each object. By focusing on the book's materiality, Blake's graphic methods, the object's relation to the British book market, and the physical qualities of the book, we will see how Blake's books lead us to reconsider the notions of original and copy, uniqueness and reproduction, and of the book itself.

Table of Contents

Resumen	6
Abstract	7
Introduction	10
Chapter 1: The Materiality of the Book	15
The unique copy	15
The site of repetition	18
The multiple book	23
Chapter 2: The Image, the Word, and the Page	27
William Blake: Weaver	27
Words vs./as Images	30
The site of difference	34
Chapter 3: A Prophet Against Commodities	37
A world made of books	37
Blake's <i>Songs</i> and the <i>Lyrical Ballads</i>	40
Distributing Uniqueness	45
Epilogue: The Real Book	49
Bibliography	52
Images	55
Tables	58
Annex A: Complementary images	59

Introduction

During the eighteenth century, the relations between knowledge, literature, and books were redefined by the optimization of the printing press. As technological methods of reproduction became more advanced, books became a central cultural marker of knowledge. Industry, likewise, became a central aspect of the distribution and production of knowledge and art; the mechanically reproduced book became the main medium for its transmission and creation, displacing both oral tradition as well as the manuscript. By the seventeenth century, the periodical and the gazette became an affordable and popular medium, widespread through the different social strata.¹ The publication of the *Encyclopédie*, compiled by Denis Diderot, which sought to “summarize all the available information at the time,”² could be considered as the peak of this new trend. As a consequence, the book market also became a market of knowledge and of art, democratizing both of them.

It is in this setting in which William Blake, a British poet, painter, engraver, and printmaker, appeared. Blake used his various artistic talents to create objects that challenge classification. Blake created dissimilar copies of books; he used a printing press to reproduce the book with one hand, and painted over the pages with the other. Each one of his books is more or less different from other copies of the same publication. While the mechanically printed books tend towards an exact reproduction, making two copies indiscernible, Blake uses reproduction, oxymoronically, to create different objects with their own material presence.

¹ Burke, Peter. *Historia social del conocimiento*, 47.

² *Ibid*, 23.

Now, imagine a world in which books have become illegal, where fire fighters have become book-burners who hunt, imprison, or kill anyone who dares to own a book. One of the fire fighters, though, starts to doubt the need to burn books. Why are these objects so dangerous? How are they a peril to society? What is contained within their pages that could lead to the crumbling of the world order? With these doubts haunting him, the fire fighter puts his life in great danger, and steals and reads one of the books he was supposed to burn. Inside its pages he discovers stories, characters, and entire worlds that enamour him. On a terrible day, he is discovered in possession of the book, and is hunted down by his former companions; yet, he refuses to relinquish his newly found treasure. He leaves his whole life behind in his attempt to safeguard the object, or rather the story, the people living in it, the portrayed world. In his escape, he tries to memorize the words, one by one, until he loses the object. Wandering hopelessly through the outskirts of the city, he stumbles upon a secret community. He is well received by Plato's *Republic*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and the *Gospels*; each book embodied in a particular man or woman, and every person a book. There, in the secretiveness of the forest, books were hidden within memory, waiting for the world to change and for a chance to return to the pages they once inhabited.

The story narrated above is Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. The title makes reference to the temperature at which paper burns, yet the content cannot be eliminated as long as it remains in memory. The 'happy ending' of the novel soothes the reader; the 'important' part of the books is being saved, and only their carcasses have disappeared. The paper, the binding, the font, and all the material elements that compose a book were disposable elements, as long as its content was secured; its textual existence was safeguarded by a different medium. Bradbury fails to mention what would have happened to books whose meaning also depended on their visual elements and the script's interaction

with images, fonts, colours, and parallel narratives that depend on the interaction of these elements. What would have become of books of art, of illustrated children's books, of medieval manuscripts? In a world like this, how can we imagine William Blake?

Bradbury's novel highlights only the verbal importance of books, and (perhaps unknowingly) presents knowledge as solely verbal. Of William Blake's many manifestations, those of painter, engraver, printer, and bookmaker would have been lost, and the poet would have been the sole survivor. Interestingly enough, Blake was already thought of as just a poet, his other faces dismissed; nevertheless, the "Composite Art"³ of William Blake is comprised of poetry, drawings, colour, and printing. As such, the material object that resulted, the book as such, is the site where Blake brings together the different elements of his art. These books do not consist only of the communicative functions of a story or poem, but they are also comprised of material elements that help configure the meaning of Blake's art. They are objects whose physicality grants them a particular form of existence, different from that of other books; not only because they are unique, but also because there are multiple copies of the same book. As Robert N. Essick proposes, "Blake's graphic methods remind us that books have physical presences and not just semiotic functions."⁴ It is this physical presence, characterized by a creative combination of multiplicity and uniqueness, which gives the material book a central position in the understanding of William Blake as an artist.

The particular case of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* offers a wealth of examples for understanding the materiality of Blake's books, because it was printed several times throughout his life, and because it was comprised of two autonomous

³ W. J. T. Mitchell refers to Blake's weaving of words and images as a composite art.

⁴ Essick, Robert N. "Representation, Anxiety, and the Bibliographic Sublime" *Huntington Library Quarterly*. 59 (1996): 513. URL: <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3817697>>

projects that were synthesized by the author. From 1795, when Blake added *Songs of Experience* to the previously autonomous *Songs of Innocence*, and until his death in 1827, he printed 20 copies of the book. Moreover, several previously autonomous copies of *Songs of Innocence* and of *Songs of Experience* were joined together, either by Blake himself or by collectors later on, into the combined *Songs*. The comparatively large number of copies and the intricate history of the project make *Songs of Innocence*, *Songs of Experience*, and the combined *Songs* ideal examples when thinking on the extent to which Blake altered, and departed from, the “original conception” he had for each book.

Books are the physical medium Blake chose to transmit his poems and paintings. His books are the product of a complex relationship between the concepts of image, word, poetry, painting, pre-modern, modern, printed book, and manuscript. They were objects that sought to maintain an artistic aura, which was withering in his times, by maintaining individuality despite reproducibility. As W. J. T. Mitchell proposes, "If Blake's book and scroll symbolize [the] difference between mechanically reproduced and hand-inscribed texts, it seems clear that his own texts are both book and scroll – or neither."⁵ By examining Blake's composition method, the different extant copies of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, the specific ways Blake mixes words and images, and the way he understood his objects within the book market of his times, we can address how Blake revitalized the materiality of the book –as an object–, especially in an era dominated by mass-produced books, such as the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He might have not had the means to compete within the book market, and his books reflect an artist trying to create innovative objects to find a more suited audience. In sum, while William Wordsworth characterized print culture as a “dull and endless strife,” and Samuel Taylor

⁵ Mitchell, W. J. T. *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 146.

Coleridge characterized books as a vain idol⁶, Blake responded that “there are some kinds of printing (his own for example) that generate, not vain, hollow signifiers or ‘idols,’ but efficacious ‘types’ that are anything but vain.”⁷

⁶ Ibid, 127.

⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 1: The Materiality of the Book

The unique copy

It is commonplace, when speaking about Blake, to remark that his books are unique. Yet, this statement seems to crumble when we consider that he was a printer of books, and therefore there is more than one copy of each of his books. In spite of the concept of the first edition, which establishes a hierarchy between editions that share a same title, originality and uniqueness are unusual concepts when thinking about printed books from the perspective of materiality. Usually, when thinking about printed objects, we assume we are speaking about identical objects that have homogeneous and interchangeable presences. Blake's books, and their different copies, defy the notions of original and copy. We can trace the "original" to the copper plates on which Blake first "created" the poems and pictures of the books; yet, since each one is different, and in each we can see new meanings, new colours, and changes in "minute particulars", the same page on each copy becomes an "original" in its own right. The particular case of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, a compilation of illustrated and coloured poems, is a great example of how Blake's books problematize several of the aforementioned notions.

Songs of Innocence was first printed in 1789, and was one of Blake's first large works using his innovative printing method, which he called illuminated printing. In 1794, he would conceive a second project, *Songs of Experience*, in order to "[Show] the two contrary states of the human soul."⁸ He then went on to unite the two books and created *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, in 1795. *Innocence*, *Experience*, and the combined

⁸ Blake, William. "Songs of Innocence and of Experience" in *The Complete Illuminated Books*, ed. David Bindman. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 43.

Songs became the only books with which Blake had some commercial success and are, by far, Blake's most printed books.

Innocence and *Experience* were published individually several times, as was *Songs of Innocence and Experience*; so, it is difficult to determine which copies were intended to be together, and which were planned to be separate copies:

“The printing history of the combined *Songs* is complicated because Blake printed it while also continuing to print *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* separately, and because some copies of the combined *Songs* were assembled by collectors or dealers from copies of *Innocence* and *Experience* separately issued, while other copies now consist of only one section.”⁹

Even though Blake printed several copies throughout his life, because of his interest for original art works, each copy presents several differences from the others. Nevertheless, the different copies of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* offer important insights on how Blake's books alter notions of original and copies, reproducible and unique items, and readership, all centred on the specific material qualities of the objects he is making. Each copy reveals the material importance of Blake's books insofar as they have individual physical presences. The materiality of the object makes reference to the way in which the physical qualities of the book and the page are conveyers of meaning. The book attracts the spectator/reader towards its physical qualities, and not only to its verbal and visual meaning. The paper, texture, colour, words, images and so on, do not operate only on visual or verbal levels; they operate as material qualities that specify and differentiate the copies of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*.

In his works, we see how Blake relished and emphasized the notion of minute particulars and their relation to his works of art. The small changes that he used to create

⁹ “*Songs of Innocence and Experience*,” The William Blake Archive, accessed November 1, 2014. <http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive/work.xq?workid=songsie&java=no>

new designs and meanings within his books are what allowed him to create reproducible yet singular objects. During Blake's early career, he was trained in drawing in The Royal Academy of Arts, founded in London during his youth. Sir Joshua Reynolds, its first President, who had become the main figure in the artistic landscape of late eighteenth century Britain, dismissed 'accidentals' or 'minute particulars,' as "dry, Gothick, and even insipid" and, instead, favoured "the general and invariable ideas of nature."¹⁰ By "Gothick," Reynolds meant an almost barbaric art, characteristic of the middle (dark) ages. This epoch, in the eyes of Reynolds, dismissed the ideals of beauty of classical antiquity, an idea common to the Renaissance.¹¹ Meanwhile, Blake, in one of his annotations to Reynolds' discourses proposes that "To Generalize is to be an Idiot; to Particularize is the Alone Distinction of Merit."¹² Blake opposed Reynolds' notion of the accidental as a departure from the Platonic Ideal, which was an ever-present notion within the academic spheres of British art during Blake's life. Instead, he grants 'minute particulars,' a central place in his art. The small variations between some copies are not thoughtless or random elements; rather, they are Blake's way of individualizing his works. Therefore, a particular plate in a particular version becomes an "original" object, because of the changes Blake made between the different "copies" of the same project.

¹⁰ Reynolds, Joshua, *Discourses on Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 15-16.

¹¹ Gombrich, E. M. *La historia del arte* (Barcelona: Phaidon, 2011), 167.

¹² "Annotations to the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds," The William Blake Archive, accessed November 9, 2014. <http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive/erdman.xq?id=b12.8>

The site of repetition

The alterations between the different copies of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* go beyond changes in colour or design, even the order of the plates changes from copy to copy; likewise, material aspects shift, as is the case with page sizes. As a result, we can see how Blake's works resist reproducibility, as well as the possibility of commoditization; for, despite being reproducible, each copy of Blake's books has its own presence as a unique entity. This means that each book can be understood as a particular object, because of the distinct marks each one has. In order to understand this, we might turn to different copies of *The Songs*, and see how plate orders shift (table 1).

In copy B¹³, one of the poems in the *Songs*, "The Ecchoing Green", precedes the introduction; meanwhile, in copy C, the introduction is preceded by the poem "Infant Joy." Likewise, "Laughing Song" follows "The Ecchoing Green" in copy B, while "Infant Joy", in copy C, comes before "The Shepherd." There are several changes in the order of the poems in most copies of *The Songs*, but even in cases where the order is maintained, as is the case of copy Y and copy Z, the composition of each book can be startlingly different. The General Title Page (E1) of each copy is coloured with completely different tonalities. While the Title Page to copy Y (Img. 1) shows bright flames, painted in yellows, oranges, and reds, contrasted with light and dark blues, white, and pink, the title page to copy Z (Img. 2) shows dark purple and blue, with wine reds, contrasted with golden tonalities, and light shades of violet. Likewise, the letters in each have different colours, and the flames flowing from the letters change. Copy Y has the title letters painted in yellow; on the other hand, the letters in copy Z present a dark ochre tone. The margins of each page also differ. While copy Z has clean margins, and there is only a square framing the image, copy Y has

¹³ The nomenclature for Blake's works is that of the Blake Archive.

branches and leafs all along the margins. Although both copies present the same sequence in the poems, they differ considerably from one another.

The physical characteristics of each of the copies further differentiate them. Paper sizes vary from copy to copy. Rather than being bought in standard sizes, Blake cut the paper by hand. According to Joseph Viscomi, “[Blake] prepared it [the paper] as a printmaker rather than a book printer, tearing large sheets of paper into quarters, eights, or twelves.”¹⁴ Most copies of the book’s leafs vary between 17.7 x 12.7 cm., and 19.4 x 13.2 cm.¹⁵ and it is rare for two pages, even within the same book, to have the same size. In two copies of *The Songs*, contrastingly, Blake printed the book in a considerably larger leaf of paper. The sizes of copies R (img. 3) and V are 30.0 x 21.3 cm. and 33.0 x 27.2 cm., respectively. These material features alter the reading experience. Shifts in size would change the way and the location at which the text was read. The smaller books are the size of a regular contemporary paperback edition, a foolscap octavo, and would have been easy to carry around and read outdoors. The larger books, on the other hand, would have been too large to comfortably carry. The material presence of the book determines the way the book is read or, rather, experienced.

The illuminated books lead to a reconsideration of the concepts of reproducibility and uniqueness, which have been a major topic of debate in the field of art. Since the publication of Walter Benjamin’s essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, the technical breakthroughs of the First and Second Industrial Revolutions highly problematized the conception of the works of art as unique and irreproducible objects. According to Benjamin, “In principle a work of art has always been reproducible.

¹⁴ Viscomi, Joseph, “Illuminated Printing,” in *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*, ed. Morris Eaves. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 54.

¹⁵ All measures have been taken from the Blake Archive. They refer to the size of the complete leaf (recto and verso), and not to the size of each page.

Man-made artifacts could always be imitated by men. Replicas were made by pupils in practice of their craft, by masters for diffusing their works, and, finally, by third parties in the pursuit of gain.”¹⁶ These reproductions, according to Benjamin, could always be discriminated as such, since they tended to be ‘imperfect’ and were dismissed as mere imitations. With mechanical reproduction, Benjamin argues, original objects could no longer be discerned from their reproductions, because of the technical perfection brought on by new technologies.

Benjamin’s essay does not focus on book production, and only mentions it briefly. “The enormous changes which printing, the mechanical reproduction of writing, has brought about in literature are a familiar story. However, within the phenomenon which we are here examining from the perspective of world history, print is merely a special, though particularly important, case.”¹⁷ Other than this, there are no important references to the printing press in the essay. This might well be because during the era Benjamin was studying, namely the 19th and 20th centuries, print had already been established as the main way to produce and disseminate books. Likewise, the medieval manuscript and the book as a unique, contemplative object receive no mention in the essay. In this sense, Blake’s books are an oddity, yet they offer a series of elements to reconsider Benjamin’s concepts. After all, the Illuminated Books are both hand-made and printed objects, since they were made through printing and engraving –both understood by Benjamin as technologies of mechanical reproduction. Furthermore, the different copies of *The Songs* differ from one another despite being ‘reproduced’ objects. How, then, can we understand Benjamin’s notions when thinking about *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, or for that matter, on

¹⁶ Benjamin, Walter. “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” in *Selected Writings Volume 3: 1935-1938*. Eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 102.

¹⁷ Ibid.

any of Blake's Illuminated Books? As Joseph Viscomi notes, "the conventional relations between original and copy and between invention and execution presupposed by printmaking [or by any traditional understanding of reproductive technologies] do not apply to illuminated printing."¹⁸

The conflicting relations between original and copies present in the illuminated books problematize Benjamin's conceptions about the 'unique' work of art. When thinking of traditional works of art (paintings, sculptures, or buildings), Benjamin acknowledges that they have an element that cannot be reproduced: "its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be."¹⁹ This particular existence becomes an important element for understanding Blake's works. Despite being 'copies,' each has its own time and place; this is not because the books are scarce, but because when put together, they are discernible as different objects. Likewise, it is hard to apply the concept of 'aura,' since the ritualistic uniqueness (or cult value) Benjamin uses to portray the elite conception of the work of art escapes Blake's printed books. Benjamin claims that "that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art." If we take the aura as the unique presence of an object, then any Blakean book has it, inasmuch it is unique; nevertheless, since there are several copies, any single 'solution' becomes problematic and incomplete. Still, as Paul Mann proposes:

If Benjamin in fact described an actual historical moment when a new technology managed to disrupt ritual practice and the production of cult value, that moment was by no means final. The production of aura gives way to reproduction and reproduction to re-production of aura²⁰

¹⁸ Viscomi, Joseph. *Blake and the Idea of the Book*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 370.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Mann, Paul. "Apocalypse and Recuperation: Blake and the Maw of Commerce." *ELH* 52 (1985): 18. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2872826>

The notion of aura in opposition to mechanical reproduction is, then, rendered useless when thinking of Blake's books. In fact, we could say that the aura of the work of art is maintained in spite of, or because of, mechanical reproduction.

The seemingly contradictory elements present in Blake's books earned them Robert N. Essick's label of "printed manuscripts", applied to "suggest their almost oxymoronic combination of the printed and the autographic."²¹ The common conceptions regarding books, uniqueness, and reproducibility are hardly viable elements for the understanding of these objects. Blake "reproduced original images in graphic languages so exploitative of the medium that the resulting prints can hardly be called 'original' in the conventional sense, let alone 'translations' or 'copies'."²² Furthermore, it is difficult to speak about these objects as books, when thinking of the qualities books had during the 18th and 19th centuries. After all, when we think of books, we think that any particular copy of a book, such as *Childe Harlold's Pilgrimage* (to take a Romantic example), would possess the same content, independently of the copy; yet, as exemplified earlier, the changes in order, colour, and size, change the experience of the reader. This becomes even more important when analyzing the physical changes in order in *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

²¹ Essick, Robert. "Representation, Anxiety, and the Bibliographic Sublime." 523.

²² Viscomi, Joseph. *Idea of the Book*, 371.

The multiple book

Any particular copy of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, with the colour scheme employed, the coloured ink, and its design would have determined the particular experience of the reader. The order of the plates in different copies of *The Songs* drastically changes the way they are read, and the way meaning is conveyed. If we think, for instance, of the poems “The Little Boy Lost” and “The Little Boy Found,” we see that they are together in most copies, yet in copy A, they are separated by eleven poems. This significantly alters the way the two poems are read according to their own context. In the case of copy A, we might think that both poems are not connected, while on the other copies the similarity of the titles is enhanced by the direct proximity of the texts. In order to better understand this, it is important to turn to the poems themselves. “The Little Boy Lost” goes as follows:

Father! father! where are you going?
 O do not walk so fast.
 Speak, father, speak to your little boy,
 Or else I shall be lost.
 The night was dark, no father was there;
 The child was wet with dew;
 The mire was deep, & the child did weep,
 And away the vapour flew.

Meanwhile, “The Little Boy Found,” goes:

The little boy lost in the lonely fen,
 Led by the wand'ring light,
 Began to cry, but God ever nigh,
 Appeared like his father in white.
 He kissed the child and by the hand led
 And to his mother brought,
 Who in sorrow pale, thro' the lonely dale
 Her little weeping boy sought.

While the second poem makes a direct reference to the first, during the first verse, having another poem placed directly before “The Little Boy Lost”, such as “The Little Black Boy”, alters the way the reader understands the poem. In this case, we might think that the black boy is the one who got lost, since “The Little Boy Lost” makes no reference to particular racial features. Likewise, “The Little Boy Found” is preceded, in copy A, by “The School Boy”, so the reader might be inclined to think that the schoolboy was the one who met his end, and whom God brought back to his mother in Heaven. On the other hand, when the poems are together, the link is more evident, yet the children depicted in each poem’s pictures have different features and clothing.

Another poem in the collection that illustrates the shift in readership is “A Dream.” In copies A, E, F, and R, among others, the poem is part of *Songs of Innocence*; in copies B, C, and others, the poem belongs to *Songs of Experience*. The subtitle of *The Songs* is, as noted earlier, “Showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul.” What are we, then, to make of “A Dream”? Does it belong to a state of Innocence, as in some copies, or does the poem refer to the maturity of Experience? If, as Nelson Hilton proposes, “... Blake’s thinking about ‘contraries’ led him to create a series of poems which might respond to ‘innocence,’”²³ and “*Innocence*... [makes] plain the relativity of perception to a potentially infinite context or frame of reference,”²⁴ then the poem’s position within the book would ultimately change the way the reader understands “A Dream”. This helps show how the experience of reading entirely depends on the particular copy accessible to the reader.

These shifts in format, colour, and meaning, only become present if the reader has access to more than one copy. The possible narrative lines opened up by the ordering of the

²³ Hilton, Nelson, “Blake’s Early Works,” in *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*, ed. Morris Eaves. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 206.

²⁴ Ibid.

plates, and the different readings that are made apparent by Blake's books depend on their physical presence, even on their spatial locations as particular objects. Likewise, "Blake prided himself on using 'the most beautiful wove paper that could be procured.'"²⁵ This would have also endowed the books with characteristics that change the experience of reading. Besides, Blake might have conceived the extensive margins used in some of the copies of *The Songs* as a space that allowed the reader to get physically involved with the work. Since it was common in Blake's time for the reader to annotate books, as he himself did with John Caspar Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man*²⁶, he might have wanted for his readers to relate materially with the books. According to Jason Snart, "[Blake's] marginalia are thus important as evidence of [his] material encounter with books."²⁷ It is not unlikely, then, that Blake sought to open up that space (at least in some copies of his books) to his potential audience.

Finally, the alternative reading possibilities that the books present, and the disparate chronological sequences opened up by *The Songs*, are determined by the physical presence of each copy. As Viscomi points out, "The reader, of course, would not have known if the order of plates in the copy was different from that of any other copy, or that the reading experience of the book could differ."²⁸ Each copy can be understood as a different book that has alternative narrative lines; yet this only becomes visible when the different books

²⁵ Mann, Paul. "Apocalypse and Recuperation," 18.

²⁶ Snart, Jason, "Recentering Blake's Marginalia," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 66 (2003), 137. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3817967>. In this essay, Jason Snart explores Blake's annotations to Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man*, as well as Blake's habit of making annotations to the books he owned. Throughout the essay, Snart seeks to understand Blake's material relationship with books. As noted above, Blake could have sought to create a material link between book and reader, equal to that he had with books.

²⁷ Snart, Jason, "Recentering Blake's Marginalia," 137.

²⁸ Viscomi, Joseph. *Idea of the book*, 116.

are compared to one another. It is in the multiplicity of Blake's books, as individual material entities, that new meanings and alternative readings open up.

Chapter 2: The Image, the Word, and the Page

William Blake the Weaver

The interplay of words and images in Blake's books has been the focus of several scholarly studies, given the imaginative way in which the artist combines them. Joseph Viscomi explains: "no printmaker before Blake had incorporated the tools and techniques of writing, drawing, and painting in a graphic medium."²⁹ Blake goes well beyond placing words and images within the same page; he mixes them in far more daring ways. In *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* we can see how Blake seeks to dissolve cultural hierarchies, using image and script, without either one overpowering the other.

The combination of script and image granted Blake a particular position as a multidisciplinary artist, and "[his] ability to produce both words and images has made him doubly available and served him well as a signature, but it has often proved a serious liability."³⁰ Morris Eaves, studying the scholarly work about Blake, proposes that the importance of the word-image interplay in his works has often been underestimated and overlooked. This, in turn, has led to a disregard of the central place the book as a material object in the art of William Blake. Nineteenth century scholars, for example, edited Blake's poems in "clear print, reasonable division of lines, and the like aids to business-like perusal,"³¹ a few years after Blake's death. This resulted in

a poet who could be a major romantic once relieved of his pictorial burdens, while the pictures, relieved of their words, could be liberated for the sensual and

²⁹ Viscomi, Joseph. "Illuminated Printing," in *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*, ed. Morris Eaves. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 42.

³⁰ Eaves, Morris. "On Blakes We Want and Blakes We Don't" *Huntington Library Quarterly*. 58: *William Blake: Images and Texts* (1995): 413. URL: <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3817576>>

³¹ Eaves, Morris. "Crafting Editorial Settlements", *Romanticism on the Net* (41-42, 2006): 4. DOI: <10.7202/013150ar>

intellectual thrills afforded by a minor artist of special fascination for early adopters with an appetite for the unconventional.³²

Likewise, during the 20th century, the separation of words and images persisted; but images were brought back to the picture, so to speak. It would not be until the latter decades of the century that the editorial world reunited the Blakean interplay between words and images. According to Eaves, this cultural division that resulted in a separated Blake is the result of the disparate histories of poetry and painting in England.³³ As Eaves puts it, “while British poets were cast as world-class competitors for poetic fame, the painters were cast as latecomers of undemonstrated merit.”³⁴

Dividing words and images leads to misunderstanding Blake, because “any account of his work built too confidently upon the opportunities provided by the split is, at some level, bound to be mistaken.”³⁵ This is due to the complementary narratives created by the visual and verbal aspects of Blake’s works. In the same way, excluding the material page leads to a similar misunderstanding, because Blake uses the physical area of the page to create this multimedia site. Images do not work as compliments to the poetry, nor do they merely illustrate the page; rather, images function as part of the text with their own, occasionally separate, meaning. As David Bindman clarifies, “Sometimes an image acts in counterpoint to the text nearby; at other times the images fashion sequences that appear to be independent to the text.”³⁶

³² Ibid.

³³ Eaves, Morris, “The sister arts in British Romanticism.” In *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). 229-261. In this essay, Morris Eaves traces the different social status painting and poetry had in Romantic Britain. While the latter was much more respected, because of the great poetic tradition of poets as Milton and Shakespeare the former was considered to be a mere trade.

³⁴ Ibid, 240.

³⁵ Ibid, 5.

³⁶ Blake, William. *The Complete Illuminated Books*, edited by David Bindman. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 10.

Bindman's use of the word text is misleading, since it diverts us from the word's actual meaning, which might help to better understand the narrative qualities of images, the pictorial quality of words, and the image-script interplay in Blake. The etymology of the word 'text' helps explain the way Blake plays with the "dialectical trope" of words and images. As D. F. Mckenzie states, "[Text] derives, of course, from the Latin *textere*, 'to weave', and therefore refers, not to any specific material as such, but to its woven state, the web or texture of the materials."³⁷ In *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, and in most of his books, Blake uses image and script as elements that convey particular meanings, weaves them together, and uses the physical space of the book as a scenario where he marries the opposite worlds of the word and the picture. Thus, the interaction between words and images in Blake's works refers to the weaving together of different mediums to create a multimedia product—one that changes with different copies—, which, as we have seen, has specific material qualities that help enhance this textual and 'textile' condition. Blake, to use a suiting metaphor, is a weaver who uses the page as a cloth where he displays the marriage of words and images.

³⁷ Mckenzie, D. F. *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13.

Words vs./as Images³⁸

During Blake's lifetime, the world of images was separate from that of words, not only symbolically but also literally. The majority of books printed during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries had no images.³⁹ When they did, in conventional illustrated books, they were divided, because the technologies of printing and engraving were carried out in different instances of the book-making process, which divided labour between image reproduction through etching, and script reproduction through letterpress.⁴⁰ Images and words occupied different pages in books and in the cultural imaginary. Even when they were brought together in the same pages, "divisions of production were maintained."⁴¹ Blake, instead, used engraving as means to combine the different aspects of his art. As he stated in his prospectus of 1793, he had invented "a method of Printing which combines the Painter and the Poet."⁴² Blake, then, is not referring to a method that enables him to illustrate poetry or to poetize pictures, but a method that is characterized by the interaction of the pictorial and verbal elements of the text.

Images in Blake act as words, and words become visual elements of the narrative. It is very common to find in the page words that metamorphose into branches of leaves. By doing so, Blake erases the borderlines between the two artistic manifestations. For instance, "Nurses Song", Plate 38 of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (Img. 4) depicts a woman speaking with a child, and a third woman is sitting on the background.

³⁸ Mitchell, W. J. T. "Word and Image" in *Critical Terms for Art History*, edited by Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff. 2nd ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003), 48-56. In the essay Mitchell proposes that, in order to understand the relationship between words and images, it is necessary to understand the dialectical trope of words and images. "It is a dialectical trope because it resists stabilization as a binary opposition." (57)

³⁹ Viscomi, Joseph. "Illuminated Printing," 41.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Blake quoted in Viscomi, "Illuminated Printing," 41.

The first two appear to be crossing a passageway in what appears to be a vineyard. At both sides of the picture, two large vines frame the picture and flow upwards, where they meet the poem. Designs of leafs spring from the vines, leading towards the poem as they suddenly become letters. Three large branches, which emerge from some letters of the first verse, such as the ‘h’ in ‘the’, the letter ‘f’ in of, and the letter ‘d’ in ‘hard’, underline the title. Likewise, two large branches separate the first and second stanzas, and lead toward the design below, breaking the continuity of reading. The second verse of the second stanza ends with a branch that appears from the end of the letter ‘e’ in “arise”, which leads once more to the vine and, subsequently, to the design. Words and images, in fact, are united in ways that both elements of the text are integrated into one entity. Furthermore, the images are endowed with an equal communicative value. The first stanza ends with a semicolon, and immediately after we can observe leafs and branches. It is as if what the poem is referring to can be transmitted by looking at the picture, rather than by continue reading. It appears as if the words are flowing from the images, symbolizing the weaving together of "the seeable and the sayable"⁴³ aspects of the text. As Morris Eaves notes: “[It is] possible to appreciate the original pages of any illuminated book simply as a set of small-scale pictures. When the visual design is the main object of attention, the poem is perceived as one visual element among other visual elements.”⁴⁴ Blake's designs and handwriting both operate at visual and verbal levels of the text, appearing as if images became words and words turned into images.

In the same way that Blake grants images a ‘semiotic’ value, words have an important visual value, one that enhances the graphic elements of the page. For example,

⁴³ In “Word and Image” Mitchell distinguishes between the different elements that comprise a sign. In the case of Blake’s works, both elements of the text are brought together.

⁴⁴ Eaves, Morris. “Introduction: to Paradise the Hard Way” In *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*. Edited by Morris Eaves. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

while in *Songs of Innocence* the use of roman types is predominant, *Songs of Experience* is presented using an italic type. The contrast enhances precisely the differences between the “two contrary states of the human soul.” Blake uses the visual aspect of roman and italic types, in order to give more predominance to the distinction between innocence and experience. The visual value of Blake’s handwriting can be taken as a calligraphic gesture; at the same time, though, the words can also be understood as typography. What appears to be two excluding possibilities, are brought together into a single (and double) entity. As Mitchell states, “The distinction between calligraphy and typography [...] is impossible to apply to Blake’s work, for the art of engraved or etched writing is a composite of the two procedures.”⁴⁵ Further, Blake’s images do not have visual value in a calligraphic sense, but in a strictly graphic one. The words he uses have similar graphic qualities to the designs with which he adorns the page. In fact, “Blake’s art does not just involve pushing painting toward the ideogrammatic realm of writing; he also pushes alphabetic writing toward the realm of pictorial values, asking us to see his alphabetic forms with our senses, not just read through or past them to the signified speech or “concept” behind them.”⁴⁶

Culturally, W.J.T. Mitchell proposes, “[There is] a tacit assumption of the superiority of words to visual images.” He goes on to argue that “the ‘self’ is constructed as a speaking and seeing subject, the ‘other’ as a silent, observable object, an image.”⁴⁷ This dialectical trope, as Mitchell calls it, has led to understanding images as speechless objects, which can be put into discourse by words. Whereas images can be described and verbalized, words are only illustrated by images; the image, in both cases, is secondary to the word that gives meaning to it, or that acts as the main reason for the image to exist.

⁴⁵ Mitchell, W. J. T. *Picture Theory*, 145.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 147.

⁴⁷ Mitchell, W. J. T. “Word and Image,” 56.

However, as we have seen, Blake's books solve the cultural hierarchy of words over images, yet it should be added that his writing also functions as "visible language."⁴⁸

In Blake's pages, we cannot speak of images that are superior to words, but there is a strangely levelled 'battleground' between the two. Furthermore, Blake also uses writing beyond what is said, he uses the mediums of printing and calligraphy beyond their meaning, and turns them into visual aspects. In Mitchell's essay "Visible Language: Blake's Art of Writing", he proposes that "[the] specifically political character of Blake's commitment to making language visible can best be seen by reflecting on his 'graphocentrism,' his tendency to treat writing and printing as media capable of full presence, not as mere supplements to speech."⁴⁹ The relations between the verbal and visual aspects of Blake's illuminated pages not only merge, but also they crossover each other. As Joseph Viscomi states, "[For Blake] rewriting texts was also an act of visual invention."⁵⁰ The word, after all, is an image; it has visual characteristics that allow us to decipher its meaning. The written word acts as signifier inasmuch it is visible, understandable, and follows *graphic* conventions; in sum, "You can see them as black marks on a white background, with specific shapes, sizes, and locations."⁵¹ Blake's writing forces us toward the word as image. Since he is evading typography, and using his own handwriting instead, we have to focus on the visual characteristics of the word in order to decipher it.

⁴⁸ Mitchell, in his essay "Visible Language: Blake's Art of Writing," explores the way in which words have a visual condition in Blake's Illuminated pages.

⁴⁹ Mitchell, W. J. T. *Picture Theory*, 117.

⁵⁰ Viscomi, Joseph. "Illuminated Printing," 47.

⁵¹ Mitchell, W. J. T. "Word and Image," 51.

The site of difference

We cannot forget that inscribing words and drawing pictures is, in fact, a physical operation, where the author/artist uses tools to mark the surface where his composition is going to be contained. In the art of Blake, this process begins with a copper plate, in which he draws and inscribes his images and words, to print them on the page.⁵² Blake had to write the letters backwards, since the page mirrors the image on the plate; at this stage, words do not operate as signifiers, but as visual marks. Furthermore, Blake would print using coloured inks, and he would also colour the page after printing. During the printing process, the copper plate becomes a space in which Blake could "[Melt] apparent surfaces away, and [display] the infinite which was hid."⁵³ Blake would etch the words and pictures using a burin, quills, and needles, and he would cut directly on the plate. He did not copy from a drawing or any kind of model, so the plate becomes the place where the 'Creative Genius', the origin of artistic creativity in Blake's mythology, manifests itself. In sum, the weaving of words and images involves a deeply material process. In a Romanticized way, the union of hand, burin, and plate, were the *a priori* necessities for 'inspiration'. However, beyond auratic or divine interpretations, Blake created his poetry and images directly on a physical surface.

Joseph Viscomi notes that, "With no designs to transfer or reproduce, the placement and extent of text, letter size, line spacing, as well as placement and extent of illustration, were invented only during execution."⁵⁴ Likewise, Viscomi asserts: "Blake created a multi-media space in which execution was simultaneously visual invention."⁵⁵

⁵² Viscomi, Joseph. "Illuminated Printing", 43.

⁵³ Ibid, 48.

⁵⁴ Viscomi, Joseph. "Illuminated Printing," 47.

⁵⁵ Viscomi, Joseph. "Blake's Invention of Illuminated Printing, 1788." In *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*. Edited by Dino Franco Felluga. (Extension of

His self-devised method and his attempts to escape copying led him to use the copper plate as the primary space for creation. The instruments used were altered or made by Blake to suit his needs, as is the case of quills, inks, varnishes, and watercolours.⁵⁶ His involvement with the material objects used to produce his art within a material copper plate, shed light on the physical importance of the surface. The plate is, at the same time, the infinite surface where he could create and the limited area where he could embody his imagination.

The material importance of the plate is enhanced when we look at the printed page, specifically, at how these pages appear in different copies. After printing the pages, Blake proceeded to colour them. Paul Mann proposes that “Colour individuates the ‘copy’ more than any of its other elements does”⁵⁷ During this process, as noted earlier, he would change facial expressions and create different meanings, completely changing the way of reading and understanding the books. Furthermore, as Mann notes, “It is possible to add or drop or reorder plates, to add or delete textual and pictorial details, but the most striking means for autographing the plate is coloration. No two copies are or can be coloured exactly the same.”⁵⁸ Hence, colour becomes an element that intensifies the particularity of each book. Although copies from the same period have similar colouration, because they use a similar palette,⁵⁹ there was no way to exactly reproduce the colouring of any of the ‘copies’. Furthermore, since Blake’s wife, Catherine, assisted him throughout the process – including the colouring stage–, differences become even more apparent.⁶⁰

Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net, 2014): 11. URL:
http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=joseph-viscomi-blakes-invention-of-illuminated-printing-1788

⁵⁶ Viscomi, Joseph. “Illuminated Printing,” 55.

⁵⁷ Mann, Paul. “Apocalypse and Recuperation,” 16.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Viscomi, Joseph. *Idea of the Book*, 131

⁶⁰ Ibid, 133.

When we see images of Blake's plates, we tend to forget that they exist in a specific physical space. The page functions as the fabric where the weaving of words and images occurs. Given that when we read about Blake's books we are often reminded that they are unique objects, we must remember that a third element is included to the visual and verbal elements: the touchable page. The page is where meanings shift, details are changed, colours differ, and so on. Both plate and page become Blake's working –and creating– station. Mann states that “The primary function of Blake’s book is to (re)present or rather to *embody* imaginative activity, the ‘Poetic Genius’ in all its dimensions and operations ... These are the very pages on which the artist laboured; the whole book is a presented workshop.”⁶¹ The page embodies the uniqueness of each interplay between words and images, and, subsequently, of each book. Each leaf of paper becomes the minimal unity of contingent differentiation; it is where the possibility to discern between diverse copies becomes wholesome.

⁶¹ Mann, Paul. “Apocalypse and Recuperation,” 2.

Chapter 3: A Prophet Against Commodities

A world made of books

During Blake's lifetime there were radical changes in the way society understood the book and its meanings. In part, this was the result of an unprecedented abundance of books in the market brought on by the optimization of modes of production; moreover, these books became affordable to most. From cheap, pirated copies, up to lending libraries, acquiring and reading a book became quite inexpensive. Thus, the mass-production of books during the 17th and 18th centuries tended towards the democratization of reading; nevertheless, it appears as if Blake's books aimed in the opposite direction. The standard press run for the time was of 500 copies, as was the case of the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, by Wordsworth and Coleridge, or of *Prometheus Unbound* by Percy Bysshe Shelley. Meanwhile, Blake's *Songs of Innocence*, *Songs of Experience*, and the combined Songs –his most produced books– yielded sixty copies overall, printed over a 37 year period. The numbers reflect Blake's productive limitations that determined a reduced audience for his books.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the book market in Britain experienced an exponential growth, which granted books a more defined conspicuity; moreover, the market gained an unprecedented influence. No longer were books restricted to an elite audience, and thus their importance as an informative medium brought them to the centre of the social landscape. As Marilyn Butler proposes, “a combination of legal, financial and industrial factors produced a huge expansion in the bulk and influence of print culture.”⁶² By the end of the century, during the reign of Charles III, “over 3000 employers,

⁶² Butler, Marilyn. “Culture's medium: The Role of the Review” In *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 127.

apprentices and journeymen operated more than 600 presses.”⁶³ In addition, “in the course of the eighteenth century, the publishing industry averaged over 3,000 titles each year [...] between 1700 and 1800 over 150 million books were published.”⁶⁴ Because of this exponential growth, brought on by the new printing technologies, new symbolic relations were established between a book, its materiality, its author and publisher, and those who bought and read it.

Blake had almost no success in his book-selling enterprise. Nevertheless, he did interact with the London book market, and his books both relate to, and distance themselves from, conventional books. The book, all in all, was a site for an author to communicate with the public. Not only did the theory, story, or poem present the authors’ thoughts, styles, or political allegiances, but the material features of the book were also a language that was understood by the public and therefore became another channel of communication the author could exploit.

William Blake took part of the London book market, sought to find an audience among book-buyers, and established specific interactions with the conventions of the publishing business. He did not reject the market; however, he was opposed to the commodification of objects. As Saree Makdisi points out,

Blake developed a mode of production that necessarily produced heterogeneous products at precisely the historical moment when manufacturers – not just those in the art world – were seizing on the potential offered by another mode of production that would ultimately reorient not only the way people work but the entire cultural and political organizations of societies all over the world in order to spew out a stream of identical ‘Good for Nothing Commodities.’⁶⁵

⁶³ Ibid, 128.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Makdisi, Saree. “The political aesthetic of Blake’s images” in *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*, ed. Morris Eaves. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003),131.

Books are, without a doubt, a great example of the commodification of objects Blake opposed. He sought to produce objects suitable for reproduction that would still maintain their singularity, in spite of their multiplicity. The multimedia site Blake created allowed him to oppose the commodification of objects, though this meant his books were out of reach to all but a few. However, we cannot speak of Blake opposing the democratization of reading, or judge him on those terms, since he would not have been able to afford to print his books through a publisher, as the other (wealthier) major romantic poets did. Blake often hoped to publish his books in great numbers, however unlikely this might seem given his method. Had Blake had commercial success, it is possible that he would have attempted to reach a larger audience.

Blake's *Songs* and the *Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth and Coleridge

In order to find the relationship Blake had with the market, it is necessary to go through the different conventions in book publishing during the late eighteenth century. The publication by Joseph Cottle of the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, written by Wordsworth and Coleridge, will offer important insight. Alan D. Boehm, in his essay "The 1798 '*Lyrical Ballads*' and the Poetics of Late Eighteenth-century Book Production" raises important questions regarding the book-publishing tendencies in Great Britain during the time Blake was inventing, crafting, and publishing his Illuminated Books. In fact, by 1798, when *Lyrical Ballads* was published, Blake had already printed 10 copies of the combined *Songs* and several copies of both *Innocence* and *Experience*.

In the essay, Boehm explores the physical qualities of the book and seeks to understand how the reader would have understood these attributes. Boehm seeks to comprehend "why Cottle, Wordsworth, and Coleridge produced the book in the way they did, what the book's material features might have meant to the poets and their booksellers, and what the book was intended to signify to readers of 1798."⁶⁶ As Boehm goes through the different "material features" of this book, he traces the different meanings, typography, ink quality, size, and other physical qualities of the book had for the reading public. After all, as Boehm emphasizes, "booksellers gave authors a free hand to organize their work"⁶⁷ and, in the case of *Lyrical Ballads*, "the poets imposed their own notions of typography on Cottle, and the printed *Lyrical Ballads* reflects their ideas."⁶⁸ Thus, notions of authorship are envisioned in the formal choices regarding the book's different elements.

⁶⁶ Boehm, Alan D. "The '1798 *Lyrical Ballads*' and the Poetics of Late Eighteenth-Century Book Production" *ELH*. (63, 1996): 453. URL: <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30030228>>

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 455

⁶⁸ *Ibid*.

Robert N. Essick states that, “In the eighteenth century, the material forms of books began to record the new self-consciousness of linguistic media and their limitations. By the early decades of the century, the basic sizes and formats of books had become standardized, including title pages, dedications, chapter divisions [...] Punctuation and spelling were well on their way to a similar uniformity.”⁶⁹ The standardization in book production and publishing lead to the organization of “a system of signification and symbolization, which the tradesman used not merely to sell his publications, but to define a rapport with the reading public.”⁷⁰ The 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, as well as most books of the time, reflect how different decisions in design conveyed different meanings to the public.

The first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* was printed with an unelaborate typography, which

declared that learning and literature were not the exclusive domain of the few. In *Lyrical Ballads*, the reader of 1789 could discern a book that scrumptiously rejected costly engravings, typefaces, and exacting presswork, that conscientiously refused to distinguish the public in terms of an affluent, discriminating majority.⁷¹

This was a result of a widespread critique to a “trend towards the production of large-format, ultrafine books—tomes that were profusely illustrated [...] and that often used typefaces especially designed for the occasion.”⁷² These books, of course, were extremely expensive and, hence, only affordable to an elite minority. The popularity of fine facsimiles “raised concerns about the relationship between society and culture, and the trend was decried for placing an expensive barrier between books and readers.”⁷³

The different connotations that typography had in the eighteenth century regarding prices and social concerns were also given to size. Since paper was the most expensive

⁶⁹ Essick, Robert. “Representation, Anxiety, and the Bibliographic Sublime,” 506.

⁷⁰ Boehm, Alan. “1798 *Lyrical Ballads*,” 458.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 469.

⁷² *Ibid*, 467.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 468.

element in book production, “quartos and folios were identified with lettered and leisured readers”⁷⁴, and “many readers found small volumes [...] more attractive”⁷⁵ because they were less expensive. The relationship between formats and typographic styles and their relation to social class issues sheds light on the social status the illuminated books had. Not only were Blake’s books handmade, but they were also profusely coloured, merged words with images, and were usually printed in large formats.⁷⁶ Blake’s books reflected most of the attributes endowed to luxurious facsimiles. It is then difficult to believe Bindman’s proposition that Blake had “no specific audience in mind,”⁷⁷ or that “there was no natural limit to his mental exploration nor to the scope of the work to which he could aspire.”⁷⁸

As eighteenth century conventions in book production became more generally accepted, they also became more apparent.⁷⁹ Thus, rejecting or following these conventions became a means to grant the work with authorial marks beyond the written poem or prose and beyond the images displayed. The books then became a third way of communication, one in which Blake embedded meaning. Blake was acquainted with the market, and the conventions and meanings of “the Poetics” of book production were not alien to him. After all, he earned his living by engraving images for luxurious editions of books, which is the case of the illustrations to Edward Young’s *Night Thoughts*, commissioned by the bookseller Richard Edwards.⁸⁰ In light of this, the Illuminated Books

⁷⁴ Ibid, 470.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 469.

⁷⁶ Most of Blake’s books were printed in large volumes. Although *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* is printed in octavo (in most copies), his other works have larger formats. *Jerusalem* and *Milton*, for example, are printed in folio size.

⁷⁷ Bindman, David. *William Blake, his Art and Times*. (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1982), 15.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Essick, Robert. “Representation, Anxiety, and the Bibliographic Sublime,” 506.

⁸⁰ Ward, Aileen. “William Blake and his Circle” in *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*, ed. Morris Eaves. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 26.

are an elaborate product aimed towards an elite audience, which has the means and desire to purchase unique objects that take the form of books.

At the very least, the material features of his books do not reflect an object aimed to a middle-class audience, but to a wealthy public. This might explain why his books are often compared with medieval manuscripts; his own method, illuminated printing, appears to make a reference to the medieval illuminated manuscript. In fact, his books share many qualities with pre-modern bibles and psalters, and Blake has been related to the gothic revival in Europe, and became an important influence for the same movement in England.⁸¹ The medieval manuscript and the Blakean book both lead the spectator to contemplation and, like the illuminated books, medieval manuscripts “[use] what some art historians call ‘word-pictures,’ or images that cue the text they accompany.”⁸² This, according to Mary Carruthers relates reading and memory in ways printed books do not,⁸³ and the same happens in Blake’s books. Nevertheless, Blake’s books cannot be equated to “modern medieval manuscripts.” His objects, indeed, oppose commodification and open different reading patterns from those offered by printed books; yet, they are not completely singular objects. Their great distinction resides in the fact that they are reproducible objects, and that the artist used the technologies of reproduction against themselves. The return to a ‘handcrafted’ book not necessarily means the creation of a medieval manuscript in the industrial age. After all, as Viscomi proposes, “[Blake’s] illuminated books do not

⁸¹ Bindman, David. “Blake as a Painter” in *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake* ed. Morris Eaves. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 85-109. In this essay, Bindman suggest that there is “a kind of “Gothic Revival” in Blake’s art that parallels the interest at this time in the Gothic among German painters like the Nazarene group, Caspar David Friedrich, and especially Philipp Otto Runge” (97). In the same line, British nineteenth century critic John Ruskin, admires Blake for the gothic qualities of his art.

⁸² Carruthers, Mary. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 230.

⁸³ Ibid.

look like any of the books of his day and are far looser and bolder than illuminated manuscripts, to which they are often compared.”⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Viscomi, Joseph. “Invention of Illuminated Printing,” 1.

Distributing Uniqueness

Blake's Illuminated Books were not his main source of income, yet they are the main examples of Blake's most radical artistic and technical innovations, as well as the focus of his creative exploration. In "Apocalypse and Recuperation", Paul Mann proposes that, "Like any artist, Blake is firmly rooted in his age. He took his intellectual and technical materials from contemporary discourse and revised them radically to suit his own needs."⁸⁵ Blake hoped to publish and sell his works; he sought, through them, to take part of the book market. Despite having no commercial success, as Viscomi proposes, "he did not give up on the market,"⁸⁶ in fact, some of his most characteristic stylistic features, from the innovative process he invented to the objects he created, come from his willingness to participate in the book-filled London of his time. These intentions were, just as Blake's books, prone to revision, and Blake's ideas about the objects he was making changed over time.

According to Bindman, Blake saw in his method a way of freeing himself from the "tyranny of the marketplace,"⁸⁷ and publishers and sellers were often unjust with authors.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, Blake saw his method as a way to enter the market and become a competitive seller. In addition, with the mass-production of homogeneous objects, handmade crafts became a fetish for wealthy buyers. Thus, as Viscomi notes,

Blake [...] by actually using the tools and techniques of writing and drawing, had solved the technical problem of reproducing pen and brush marks in metal. He created a multi-media site where poetry, painting, and printmaking came together

⁸⁵ Mann, Paul. "Apocalypse and Recuperation," 8.

⁸⁶ Viscomi, Joseph. "Invention of Illuminated Printing," 11.

⁸⁷ Bindman, David. *Art and Times*, 14.

⁸⁸ Behrendt, Stephen, "Publishing and the provinces in Romantic-era Britain" in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 158.

in ways both original and characteristic of Romanticism's fascination with spontaneity and the idea of the sketch.⁸⁹

So, we can see Blake's method, in part at least, as a way of supplying for a market looking for objects that were both handmade and were characterized by autographic gestures, something conventional books commonly lacked. Some of the most characteristic elements in his books are the result of a man trying to find a place in the market, and “the evidence of letters and notebook entries demonstrates conclusively that Blake consciously desired and believed he actively sought a fair, fit audience.”⁹⁰ Prices are exemplary of this.

While, at first, the prices of the books were low, they exponentially increased later on. As noted earlier, paper was the most expensive component of the book, so a buyer would have assumed that the larger the book, the more expensive it would be. Length and format were directly linked with the prize of the book. The first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, for example, had 210 pages;⁹¹ meanwhile, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* consisted of 54 pages (with each poem on an individual page), or 27 pages in the early recto-verso format.⁹² Nevertheless, in 1798 the former and the latter had the same price, 10 schillings. As Viscomi notes, “each [one of Blake’s] book[s] was a rare artifact that was nonetheless affordable.”⁹³ However, by 1806, the price of the combined songs was of £6, 6s: more than twenty times the original prize⁹⁴. The rampant increase in prize is, according to Viscomi, the result of a shift in Blake’s conception of the objects he was making. In the

⁸⁹ Viscomi, Joseph. “Illuminated printing,” 43.

⁹⁰ Mann, Paul. “Apocalypse and Recuperation”, 9.

⁹¹ Boehm, Alan. “1798 Lyrical Ballads,” 454.

⁹² “Songs of Innocence and Experience,” The William Blake Archive, accessed November 1, 2014. <http://www.blakearchive.org/exist/blake/archive/work.xq?workid=songsie&java=no>

⁹³ Viscomi, Joseph. *Idea of the Book*, 155.

⁹⁴ Viscomi, Joseph. “Illuminated printing”, 39.

early years of Illuminated Printing, he understood them as “books of poems”; later on, they became a “series of hand-coloured prints.”⁹⁵

Blake stopped thinking of his books as “illustrated poems,” and henceforward regarded his works of art as something different from the book. His later works were printed in even smaller numbers. *Milton: a Poem*, and *Jerusalem the Emanation of Giant Albion*, his last two enterprises in bookmaking, yielded four and five copies respectively.⁹⁶ Although Blake produced most of the copies of the books from 1789 to 1795, he continued creating and printing them for the rest of his life, though he understood them under a different light. He no longer aspired to a large audience, and started printing on commission, or selling the copies he had left.⁹⁷ In his mind, Blake distanced his ideas of the Illuminated Books from that of the work of literature, and got closer to thinking of them as painting, or as works of art. As Paul Mann proposes, “The ‘meaning’ of any Blake book is thus, first and foremost, that Blake made it, and made it *this way*, not just textually, not even only as a composite art, but fully, materially as ‘Itself & Not Intermeasurable with of by any Thing Else.’”⁹⁸

The object created “fully, materially” becomes the main way to understand the Blakean book: it is an artefact. As the word’s etymology explains, it is an object created by the means of art. To this, we should add that it has an authorial force working behind it. Although, since the advent of the printing press not many books were created as art objects, Blake found a way to use the medium, with its social, cultural, and economic connotations, and radically reinvent it to create unique, yet reproducible, objects. Paul Mann proposes that,

⁹⁵ Viscomi, Joseph. *Idea of the Book*, 373.

⁹⁶ Viscomi, Joseph. *Idea of the Book*, 376-381.

⁹⁷ Viscomi, “Illuminated Printing,” 39-40.

⁹⁸ Mann, Paul. “Apocalypse and Recuperation”, 7.

Blake tried to develop a technology which could reproduce uniqueness and distribute that uniqueness in a distinct form for each of its recipients ... The project was itself unique: to conceive authenticity in such a way that it would neither 'wither' nor be transformed into a commodity. The work was intended to sell, but only once; an impossible wish.⁹⁹

Economically, Blake's project was doomed from the beginning. Yet, by resisting commoditization, the products he created allow us to reconsider our notions of original and copy, uniqueness and reproduction, and of the book itself. After all, "[Blake's] facsimile simultaneously represents and deposes the book; it represents not only the book but its difference from the book."¹⁰⁰ The Blakean book is, at the same time, "the not-book of William Blake."¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Ibid, 25.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 27

Epilogue: The Real Book

William Blake, Joseph Viscomi tells us, “did not abhor accidents, but saw them as part of the creative process, as revealing the maker’s hand and production process.”¹⁰² The word *accident* rings with a negative tone in our ears. Accidents are that which was not supposed to be, they are the product of errors, they tarnish an otherwise ideal product, “[they] are unfortunate mediations obstructing the dissemination of the original image.”¹⁰³ Thus, we distinguish between essential and accidental properties when we think of objects. “An *essential property of an object* is a property that it must have while an *accidental property of an object* is one that it happens to have but that it could lack.”¹⁰⁴ Fortunately, Blake found a way for his art objects to escape this generalizing distinction. For him, “these accidentals become occasions for re-vision, for developing unrealized potentials in a design.”¹⁰⁵ This way of understanding ‘accidentals’ is incompatible with the definition presented above. Blake found a way to turn accidents into individuating marks; he turned them into elements that recreate the design. Errors in production were transformed “into significant variants [that] suggest the aesthetic and imaginative value of his medium.”¹⁰⁶ The medium as such, the books themselves, became a site for exploration where uniqueness, reproduction, original, copy, and even book, become concepts that must be reimagined to better suit these objects.

¹⁰² Viscomi, Joseph. “Illuminated Printing,” 55.

¹⁰³ Leo Carr, Stephen. “William Blake’s Printmaking Process in Jerusalem” *ELH*. (47, 1980): 524. URL: <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2872794>>

¹⁰⁴ Robertson, Teresa and Atkins, Philip, “Essential vs. Accidental Properties” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2013 Edition). URL: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/essential-accidental/>>.

¹⁰⁵ Leo Carr, Stephen. “Printmaking Process”, 524.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 525.

Blake, “by using a medium that militated against a mechanical, dispassionate reproduction of the image, built into his print-making process a need for a continuous creative involvement with his ‘Images of Wonder.’”¹⁰⁷ Perhaps this need of continuous involvement with the work gives his books a distinguished material presence. The alterations from book to book allowed their multiplicity to bring together the apparently irreconcilable concepts of reproduced and original. Although copies from the same period share several features, the small accidents in them became a primordial element for granting an individual presence to each work. Furthermore, “his pages are not copies, more or less faded or derivative versions of the designs ... but rather are re-visions and renewals of those images.”¹⁰⁸ The act of recreation is different from that of reproduction insofar it creates a new product. As proposed earlier, each copy of the Songs *is* a different, and particular, book.

The materiality of the illuminated books is not a result of their scarcity, for a book might be rare and still conform to the traditional models; rather, it is the distinct property of an individuating presence, within multiplicity, which endows the books with this particular form of existence. Thus, the presence Blake bestowed to his objects of art is granted by difference within –or by the means of– repetition, borrowing Gilles Deleuze’s concepts.¹⁰⁹ For Deleuze, the concepts of *difference in itself* and *repetition for itself* are a way to grasp the reality of the object, instead of trying to reach the idea or the original that produced a copy. This definition allows us to understand the Blakean object in a new light. Copies are different from one another, but their “difference is freed from identities seen as

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 526.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 537.

¹⁰⁹ Deleuze, Gilles. *Diferencia y repetición*, 127.

metaphysically primary.”¹¹⁰ There is no ideal archetype from which copies divert, but rather a difference within multiplicity. Likewise, repetition for Deleuze is understood “as repetition that is freed from being repetition of an original self-identical thing so that it can be the repetition of difference.”¹¹¹

The books created by Blake are a perfect example of an object that is different inasmuch it is repeatable. On the other hand, mere copies are simulacra; they are objects that have escaped from the real and that are the copy of which there no longer exists an original.¹¹² Blake, then, embodies the image of the artist proposed by Michael Camille, that “sad remnant of production in a culture of consumption.”¹¹³ In the same line, Camille asks: “will the artist of the future be the sole creator, the auratic and archaic witch or wizard of ‘things’ stranded but godlike in a sea of ‘no-things’?”¹¹⁴ Blake, in addition to creating poetry or pictures, created real books and, although he is not an artist of the future, he became an “archaic wizard of things.”

¹¹⁰ Smith, Daniel and Protevi, John, "Gilles Deleuze" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Spring 2013 Edition), URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/deleuze/>.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Camille, Michael. “Simulacrum” in *Critical Terms for Art History*, eds. Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 45.

¹¹³ Ibid, 48.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

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Images

Chapter 1:



Image 1: General Title Page to Songs of Innocence and of Experience, Copy Y.
Source: The William Blake Archive

Image 2: General Title Page to Songs of Innocence and of Experience, Copy Z.
Source: The William Blake Archive

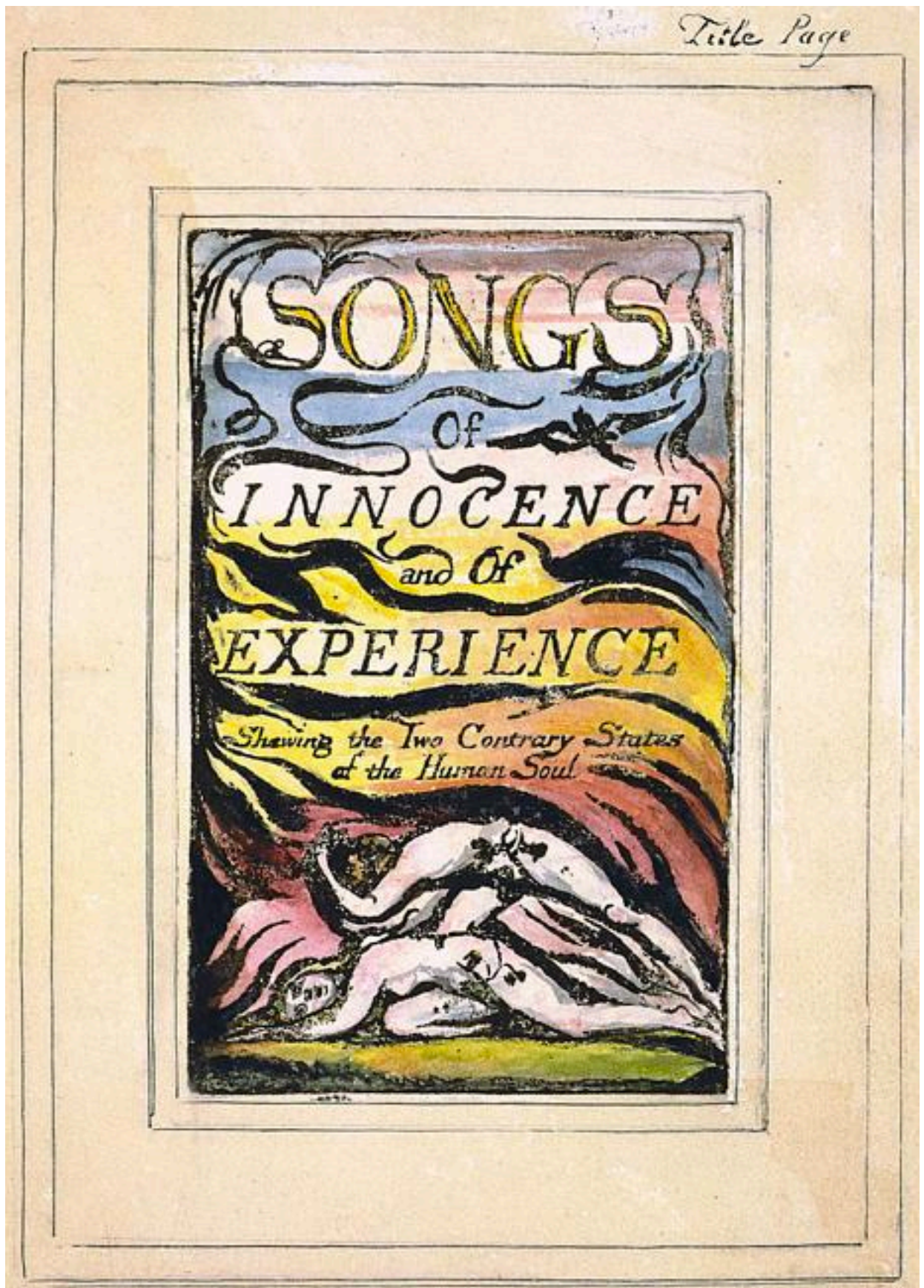


Image 3: Title page to Copy R of Songs of Innocence and of Experience. The image is presented in its original size. Source: The William Blake Archive

Chapter 2:



Image 4: Nurses Song, plate 38 from Copy R of Songs of Innocence and of Experience. Source: The William Blake Archive

Tables

Table 1: In the table below, we can see the different arrangements in some of the copies of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. In the table, each poem is represented by a different colour, so it is possible to observe the position of the poem in the different copies.

Copy A	Copy B	Copy C
object 1 (Bentley 3, Erdman 3, Keynes 3)-- "Title Page for Songs of Innocence"	object 1 (Bentley 1, Erdman 1, Keynes 1)-- "General Title Page"	object 1 (Bentley 2, Erdman 2, Keynes 2)-- "Frontispiece to Songs of Innocence"
object 2 (Bentley 2, Erdman 2, Keynes 2)-- "Frontispiece to Songs of Innocence"	object 2 (Bentley 2, Erdman 2, Keynes 2)-- "Frontispiece to Songs of Innocence"	object 2 (Bentley 1, Erdman 1, Keynes 1)-- "General Title Page"
object 3 (Bentley 4, Erdman 4, Keynes 4)-- "Introduction"	object 3 (Bentley 3, Erdman 3, Keynes 3)-- "Title Page for Songs of Innocence"	object 3 (Bentley 3, Erdman 3, Keynes 3)-- "Title Page for Songs of Innocence"
object 4 (Bentley 22, Erdman 22, Keynes 22)-- "Spring"	object 4 (Bentley 4, Erdman 4, Keynes 4)-- "Introduction"	object 4 (Bentley 4, Erdman 4, Keynes 4)-- "Introduction"
object 5 (Bentley 23, Erdman 23, Keynes 23)-- "Spring (continued)"	object 5 (Bentley 6, Erdman 6, Keynes 6)-- "The Echoing Green"	object 5 (Bentley 25, Erdman 25, Keynes 25)-- "Infant Joy"
object 6 (Bentley 6, Erdman 6, Keynes 6)-- "The Echoing Green"	object 6 (Bentley 7, Erdman 7, Keynes 7)-- "The Echoing Green (continued)"	object 6 (Bentley 5, Erdman 5, Keynes 5)-- "The Shepherd"
object 7 (Bentley 7, Erdman 7, Keynes 7)-- "The Echoing Green (continued)"	object 7 (Bentley 15, Erdman 15, Keynes 15)-- "Laughing Song"	object 7 (Bentley 16, Erdman 16, Keynes 16)-- "A CRADLE SONG"
object 8 (Bentley 9, Erdman 9, Keynes 9)-- "The Little Black Boy"	object 8 (Bentley 9, Erdman 9, Keynes 9)-- "The Little Black Boy"	object 8 (Bentley 17, Erdman 17, Keynes 17)-- "A CRADLE SONG (continued)"
object 9 (Bentley 10, Erdman 10, Keynes 10)-- "The Little Black Boy (continued)"	object 9 (Bentley 10, Erdman 10, Keynes 10)-- "The Little Black Boy (continued)"	object 9 (Bentley 8, Erdman 8, Keynes 8)-- "The Lamb"
object 10 (Bentley 13, Erdman 13, Keynes 13)-- "The Little Boy Lost"	object 10 (Bentley 54, Erdman 54, Keynes 54)-- "The Voice of the Ancient Bard"	object 10 (Bentley 11, Erdman 11, Keynes 11)-- "The Blossom"
object 11 (Bentley 20, Erdman 20, Keynes 20)-- "Night"	object 11 (Bentley 5, Erdman 5, Keynes 5)-- "The Shepherd"	object 11 (Bentley 24, Erdman 24, Keynes 24)-- "Nurse's Song"
object 12 (Bentley 21, Erdman 21, Keynes 21)-- "Night (continued)"	object 12 (Bentley 25, Erdman 25, Keynes 25)-- "Infant Joy"	object 12 (Bentley 19, Erdman 19, Keynes 19)-- "HOLY THURSDAY"
object 13 (Bentley 11, Erdman 11, Keynes 11)-- "The Blossom"	object 13 (Bentley 24, Erdman 24, Keynes 24)-- "Nurse's Song"	object 13 (Bentley 6, Erdman 6, Keynes 6)-- "The Echoing Green"
object 14 (Bentley 24, Erdman 24, Keynes 24)-- "Nurse's Song"	object 14 (Bentley 19, Erdman 19, Keynes 19)-- "HOLY THURSDAY"	object 14 (Bentley 7, Erdman 7, Keynes 7)-- "The Echoing Green (continued)"
object 15 (Bentley 27, Erdman 27, Keynes 27)-- "On Another's Sorrow"	object 15 (Bentley 11, Erdman 11, Keynes 11)-- "The Blossom"	object 15 (Bentley 27, Erdman 27, Keynes 27)-- "On Another's Sorrow"
object 16 (Bentley 54, Erdman 54, Keynes 54)-- "The Voice of the Ancient Bard"	object 16 (Bentley 8, Erdman 8, Keynes 8)-- "The Lamb"	object 16 (Bentley 22, Erdman 22, Keynes 22)-- "Spring"
object 17 (Bentley 15, Erdman 15, Keynes 15)-- "Laughing Song"	object 17 (Bentley 27, Erdman 27, Keynes 27)-- "On Another's Sorrow"	object 17 (Bentley 23, Erdman 23, Keynes 23)-- "Spring (continued)"
object 18 (Bentley 18, Erdman 18, Keynes 18)-- "The Divine Image"	object 18 (Bentley 22, Erdman 22, Keynes 22)-- "Spring"	object 18 (Bentley 33, Erdman 33, Keynes 33)-- "The School Boy"
object 19 (Bentley 12, Erdman 12, Keynes 12)-- "The Chimney Sweeper"	object 19 (Bentley 23, Erdman 23, Keynes 23)-- "Spring (continued)"	object 19 (Bentley 18, Erdman 18, Keynes 18)-- "The Divine Image"
object 20 (Bentley 19, Erdman 19, Keynes 19)-- "HOLY THURSDAY"	object 20 (Bentley 53, Erdman 53, Keynes 53)-- "The School Boy"	object 20 (Bentley 12, Erdman 12, Keynes 12)-- "The Chimney Sweeper"
object 21 (Bentley 53, Erdman 53, Keynes 53)-- "The School Boy"	object 21 (Bentley 16, Erdman 16, Keynes 16)-- "A CRADLE SONG"	object 21 (Bentley 13, Erdman 13, Keynes 13)-- "Laughing Song"
object 22 (Bentley 14, Erdman 14, Keynes 14)-- "The Little Boy Found"	object 22 (Bentley 17, Erdman 17, Keynes 17)-- "A CRADLE SONG (continued)"	object 22 (Bentley 9, Erdman 9, Keynes 9)-- "The Little Black Boy"
object 23 (Bentley 8, Erdman 8, Keynes 8)-- "The Lamb"	object 23 (Bentley 12, Erdman 12, Keynes 12)-- "The Chimney Sweeper"	object 23 (Bentley 10, Erdman 10, Keynes 10)-- "The Little Black Boy (continued)"
object 24 (Bentley 5, Erdman 5, Keynes 5)-- "The Shepherd"	object 24 (Bentley 18, Erdman 18, Keynes 18)-- "The Divine Image"	object 24 (Bentley 54, Erdman 54, Keynes 54)-- "The Voice of the Ancient Bard"
object 25 (Bentley 16, Erdman 16, Keynes 16)-- "A CRADLE SONG"	object 25 (Bentley 20, Erdman 20, Keynes 20)-- "Night"	object 25 (Bentley 20, Erdman 20, Keynes 20)-- "Night"
object 26 (Bentley 17, Erdman 17, Keynes 17)-- "A CRADLE SONG (continued)"	object 26 (Bentley 21, Erdman 21, Keynes 21)-- "Night (continued)"	object 26 (Bentley 21, Erdman 21, Keynes 21)-- "Night (continued)"
object 27 (Bentley 26, Erdman 26, Keynes 26)-- "A Dream"	object 27 (Bentley 13, Erdman 13, Keynes 13)-- "The Little Boy Lost"	object 27 (Bentley 13, Erdman 13, Keynes 13)-- "The Little Boy lost"
object 28 (Bentley 25, Erdman 25, Keynes 25)-- "Infant Joy"	object 28 (Bentley 14, Erdman 14, Keynes 14)-- "The Little Boy Found"	object 28 (Bentley 14, Erdman 14, Keynes 14)-- "The Little Boy Found"
object 29 (Bentley 29, Erdman 29, Keynes 29)-- "Title Page for Songs of Experience"	object 29 (Bentley 28, Erdman 28, Keynes 28)-- "Frontispiece to Songs of Experience"	object 29 (Bentley 28, Erdman 28, Keynes 28)-- "Frontispiece to Songs of Experience"
object 30 (Bentley 28, Erdman 28, Keynes 28)-- "Frontispiece to Songs of Experience"	object 30 (Bentley 29, Erdman 29, Keynes 29)-- "Title Page for Songs of Experience"	object 30 (Bentley 29, Erdman 29, Keynes 29)-- "Title Page for Songs of Experience"
object 31 (Bentley 30, Erdman 30, Keynes 30)-- "Introduction"	object 31 (Bentley 30, Erdman 30, Keynes 30)-- "Introduction"	object 31 (Bentley 30, Erdman 30, Keynes 30)-- "Introduction"
object 32 (Bentley 31, Erdman 31, Keynes 31)-- "EARTH'S ANSWER"	object 32 (Bentley 31, Erdman 31, Keynes 31)-- "EARTH'S ANSWER"	object 32 (Bentley 31, Erdman 31, Keynes 31)-- "EARTH'S ANSWER"
object 33 (Bentley 40, Erdman 40, Keynes 40)-- "THE FLY"	object 33 (Bentley 48, Erdman 48, Keynes 48)-- "INFANT SORROW"	object 33 (Bentley 48, Erdman 48, Keynes 48)-- "INFANT SORROW"
object 34 (Bentley 32, Erdman 32, Keynes 32)-- "THE CLOUD & THE PEBBLE"	object 34 (Bentley 51, Erdman 51, Keynes 51)-- "A Little GIRL Lost"	object 34 (Bentley 51, Erdman 51, Keynes 51)-- "A Little GIRL Lost"
object 35 (Bentley 41, Erdman 41, Keynes 41)-- "The Angel"	object 35 (Bentley 42, Erdman 42, Keynes 42)-- "The Tyger"	object 35 (Bentley 38, Erdman 38, Keynes 38)-- "NURSES SONG"
object 36 (Bentley 37, Erdman 37, Keynes 37)-- "THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER"	object 36 (Bentley 46, Erdman 46, Keynes 46)-- "LONDON"	object 36 (Bentley 41, Erdman 41, Keynes 41)-- "The Angel"
object 37 (Bentley 42, Erdman 42, Keynes 42)-- "The Tyger"	object 37 (Bentley 45, Erdman 45, Keynes 45)-- "The Little Vagabond"	object 37 (Bentley 39, Erdman 39, Keynes 39)-- "THE SICK ROSE"
object 38 (Bentley 48, Erdman 48, Keynes 48)-- "INFANT SORROW"	object 38 (Bentley 47, Erdman 47, Keynes 47)-- "The Human Abstract"	object 38 (Bentley 44, Erdman 44, Keynes 44)-- "THE GARDEN OF LOVE"
object 39 (Bentley 45, Erdman 45, Keynes 45)-- "The Little Vagabond"	object 39 (Bentley 26, Erdman 26, Keynes 26)-- "A Dream"	object 39 (Bentley 45, Erdman 45, Keynes 45)-- "The Little Vagabond"
object 40 (Bentley 38, Erdman 38, Keynes 38)-- "NURSES SONG"	object 40 (Bentley 34, Erdman 34, Keynes 34)-- "The Little Girl Lost"	object 40 (Bentley 47, Erdman 47, Keynes 47)-- "The Human Abstract"
object 41 (Bentley 47, Erdman 47, Keynes 47)-- "The Human Abstract"	object 41 (Bentley 35, Erdman 35, Keynes 35)-- "The Little Girl Found"	object 41 (Bentley 26, Erdman 26, Keynes 26)-- "A Dream"
object 42 (Bentley 34, Erdman 34, Keynes 34)-- "The Little Girl Lost"	object 42 (Bentley 36, Erdman 36, Keynes 36)-- "The Little Girl Found (continued)"	object 42 (Bentley 34, Erdman 34, Keynes 34)-- "The Little Girl Lost"
object 43 (Bentley 35, Erdman 35, Keynes 35)-- "The Little Girl Found"	object 43 (Bentley 44, Erdman 44, Keynes 44)-- "THE GARDEN OF LOVE"	object 43 (Bentley 35, Erdman 35, Keynes 35)-- "The Little Girl Found"
object 44 (Bentley 36, Erdman 36, Keynes 36)-- "The Little Girl Found (continued)"	object 44 (Bentley 39, Erdman 39, Keynes 39)-- "THE SICK ROSE"	object 44 (Bentley 36, Erdman 36, Keynes 36)-- "The Little Girl Found (continued)"
object 45 (Bentley 44, Erdman 44, Keynes 44)-- "THE GARDEN OF LOVE"	object 45 (Bentley 37, Erdman 37, Keynes 37)-- "THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER"	object 45 (Bentley 50, Erdman 50, Keynes 50)-- "A Little BOY Lost"
object 46 (Bentley 49, Erdman 49, Keynes 49)-- "A POISON TREE"	object 46 (Bentley 50, Erdman 50, Keynes 50)-- "A Little BOY Lost"	object 46 (Bentley 37, Erdman 37, Keynes 37)-- "THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER"
object 47 (Bentley 46, Erdman 46, Keynes 46)-- "LONDON"	object 47 (Bentley 40, Erdman 40, Keynes 40)-- "THE FLY"	object 47 (Bentley 40, Erdman 40, Keynes 40)-- "THE FLY"
object 48 (Bentley 39, Erdman 39, Keynes 39)-- "THE SICK ROSE"	object 48 (Bentley 49, Erdman 49, Keynes 49)-- "A POISON TREE"	object 48 (Bentley 49, Erdman 49, Keynes 49)-- "A POISON TREE"
object 49 (Bentley 33, Erdman 33, Keynes 33)-- "HOLY THURSDAY"	object 49 (Bentley 41, Erdman 41, Keynes 41)-- "The Angel"	object 49 (Bentley 46, Erdman 46, Keynes 46)-- "LONDON"
object 50 (Bentley 43, Erdman 43, Keynes 43)-- "My Pretty ROSE TREE"	object 50 (Bentley 38, Erdman 38, Keynes 38)-- "NURSES SONG"	object 50 (Bentley 42, Erdman 42, Keynes 42)-- "The Tyger"
	object 51 (Bentley 33, Erdman 33, Keynes 33)-- "HOLY THURSDAY"	object 51 (Bentley 43, Erdman 43, Keynes 43)-- "My Pretty ROSE TREE"
	object 52 (Bentley 43, Erdman 43, Keynes 43)-- "My Pretty ROSE TREE"	object 52 (Bentley 33, Erdman 33, Keynes 33)-- "HOLY THURSDAY"
	object 53 (Bentley 32, Erdman 32, Keynes 32)-- "THE CLOUD & THE PEBBLE"	object 53 (Bentley 32, Erdman 32, Keynes 32)-- "THE CLOUD & THE PEBBLE"
	object 54 (Bentley a, Erdman a, Keynes a)-- "Full Page Design"	object 54 (Bentley a, Erdman a, Keynes a)-- "Full Page Design"

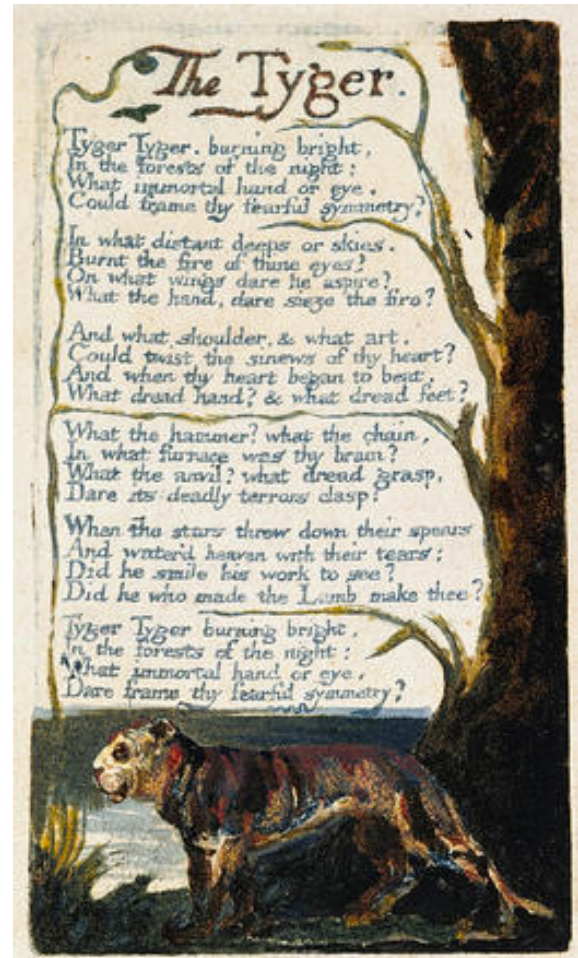
ANNEX A: Additional Images

Here follows the plate (42), with the poem “The Tyger,” as it appears in some of the different copies of Blake’s books. The contrast between the images is presented in order for the changes in appearance to be more notorious.



The Tyger, in Copy C of *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

Source: The William Blake Archive



The Tyger, in Copy F of *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

Source: The William Blake Archive



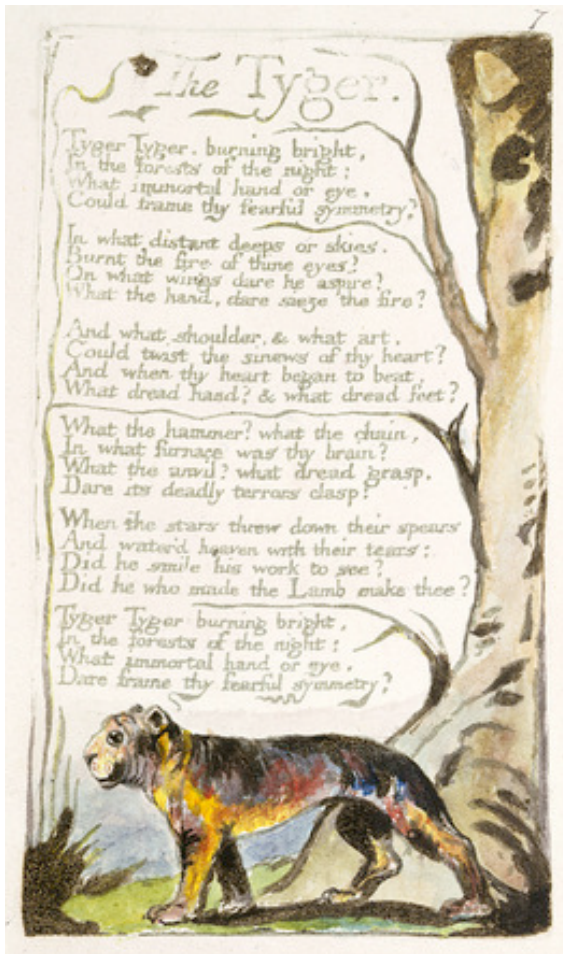
The Tyger, in Copy Z of *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

Source: The William Blake Archive



The Tyger, in Copy Y of *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

Source: The William Blake Archive



The Tyger, in Copy A of *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

Source: The William Blake Archive



The Tyger, in Copy L of *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

Source: The William Blake Archive