

The Rise and Fall of the Myth of Orc (1):
Orc's Origin Traced in Blake's Poems Composed
Between 1789 and 1792

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Northrop Frye attributed the failure of *Vala/The Four Zoas* partly to the indeterminacy of who—Orc or Los—was the true protagonist in precipitating the Last Judgment. He says:

The Last Judgment simply starts off with a bang, as an instinctive shudder of self-preservation against a tyranny of intolerable menace. If so, then it is not really the work of Los. . . . it is old revolutionary doctrine of a spontaneous reappearance of Orc.¹

Frye overlooked the hidden dynamics by which Los attains heroic status and thereby occasions the Last Judgment. Remarkable, nevertheless, is his insight that Orc used to be the central figure of *Vala*. Indeed, *Vala* was almost certainly projected to evolve from the fragmentary myths developed in Blake's earlier works a comprehensive vision of the Fall and Judgment of the cosmic Man. Those fragmentary myths came together when Orc was identified as the generated form of Luvah. This crucial idea is not found in *The Book of Urizen*, as is clear from the fact that the poem, although meant to be the first book of a longer study of the Fall and probably Judgment, came to a dead end because of the lack of this crucial identity of Orc. This moment of inspiration is, in my view, expressed in *America*.² The completion of the myth of Orc and its collapse is found only in the Preludium of *America*. This rise and fall of the myth of Orc can be seen as reflecting the formation and collapse of the earliest structure of *Vala*. In what follows, therefore, the myth of Orc is pursued from its origin to the disintegration in Blake's works produced before *Vala*. Although Frye is one of the most perceptive critics who discerned Orc's importance in Blake and his nature, he is also responsible for the propagation of the distorted image of Orc. According to his paradigm known as the 'Orc Cycle', Orc (the Apocalyptic dragon-slayer) stiffens into Urizen (the dragon) and renews his form cyclically as though he were essentially a dragon which sloughs off its skin from time to time.³ This is certainly not what Blake intended and requires revision as, far from accepting Orc's degeneration into a serpent, he strived hard to renovate Orc's myth or at least tried to explain why Orc became a serpent.

Blake experienced something analogous to a Fall when the myth of Orc or *Vala* collapsed and his poetic genius stood or fell depending on its renovation as the following discussion indicates.

The mythological figure who holds the key to the formation of the Urizen-Luvah myth is Orc, for the myth evolved out of the clash between Urizen and Orc, although neither of them were given names in the early stages. In spite of the first appearance of Orc's name in *America*, and the overall importance of the myth throughout Blake's works, his genesis seems to be obscured in the *Prophecy*, in which Orc is already born and the myth concerning Orc comes close to its completion. Orc's origin is transcribed elsewhere, and the formation of his myth—specifically, his conception, birth and life—was already implicit before *America* and *The Book of Urizen* were written, while original visions were retained in the later works. Blake spent several years grasping Orc's form, and even longer penetrating his nature. Before Orc's nature is traced in *America*, his formation must be sought elsewhere.

It is generally agreed that Orc is the incarnation of the revolutionary spirit, to some extent overlapping with the image of Jesus. On the other hand, in 'The Tyger' cruelty is given the form of a beast, which, nevertheless, has an undeniable kinship with Orc, as many critics have perceived. The apparent paradox of two extremes—the tiger and the lamb—is resolved in Blake's view of the French Revolution, his perception of which shifted between 1789 and 1795. From Martin Nurmi's argument concerning the three stages of its Notebook drafts,⁴ other historical evidence, and the poem's relation to Blake's other works, it can be surmised that 'The Tyger' was composed between 1792 and 1794. In order to understand the fluctuating image of the tiger and Orc, the discussion needs to begin from the lamb—that is, an aspect of Blake's original view of the Revolution.

Songs of Innocence begins with an 'Introduction' in which a child asks a piper to 'Pipe a song about a Lamb' (E,7). This line reveals in simple words the theme of the collection. As decreed by the visionary child, the image of a Lamb or Jesus is perceived throughout the work: he appears in the image of an innocent child, the rising sun, a meek lamb, a new-born baby and a shepherd tending his sheep. Also, 'Introduction' manifests the nature of Blake's writing in *Songs of Innocence*. A soaring poetic inspiration is the first principle, accompanied by visions and musical notes as if it were the rapturous song of spring-birds. The purpose of writing is to seize the moment of exultation, to manifest and transmit it. What is remarkable is Blake's 'pen'. As Kathleen Raine pointed out, Prometheus stole the fire from heaven with 'a hollow reed'.⁵ *Songs of Innocence* may be considered Blake's attempt to set a fiery joy on earth. The Promethean vision, darkened however, is observed in 'The Tyger':

In what distant deeps or skies.
 Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
 On what wings dare he aspire?
 What the hand, dare sieze the fire?

(E,24)

The fire brought down in 'The Tyger' is not for joy or mirth but for destruction: the nature of this fire is burning and consuming wrath.

The fire Blake seized with a reed from his poetic inspiration is visible in the designs of such poems as 'The Blossom', 'Infant Joy' and 'The Divine Image' flourishing up towards heaven. This glow of orange and yellow flame is present too in Blake's other designs for poems in the collection. Blake produced this delightful work during a period of soaring apocalyptic hope that people's perceptions might be cleansed with the dawn of a new age. Blake's approval of a series of democratic movements in France in 1789—movements such as the establishment of the National Assembly and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen as well as the Fall of the Bastille—is crystallized in these poetic forms.

Blake's belief in the arrival of the new age continued into 1790. As if echoing Richard Price's pro-revolutionary pamphlet of 1790 which was based on his sermon of November 4, 1789, Blake launched his manifesto in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Blake's vision of Man as a microcosm, and of the macrocosm as the image of Man of the cosmic scale, gave him an analysis of the first crisis as the battle between Reason and Desire in the human psyche, where the divine image dwells. As he puts it:

Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.

And being restrained it by degrees becomes passive till it is only the shadow of desire.

(MHH, 5; E,34)

While Reason is accused of usurpation, the main failure seems to be attributed to Desire which remained passive due to a lack of strength and energy. This point echoes what Price emphasized:

Cherish in your breasts this conviction, and act under its influence; detesting the odious doctrines of passive obedience, [and] non-resistance.⁶

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell was written and engraved between 1790 and 1793. Given that, as Erdman discovered, between 1791 and 1802 Blake used g with its serif on the left side with unwavering consistency,⁷ pages produced in 1790 can be distinguished from the rest.⁸ The result is a clear picture of the exaltation of Hell-fire without a sense that it might carry negative values.⁹ Blake apparently thought that changing people's view of Hell and making it balance with that of Heaven might lead to their ultimate liberation. The values which stand opposite to angelic ones and, as a result, were expelled and suppressed, must be revived and duly acknowledged. The emphasis of Blake's important doctrine that 'Without Contraries is no progression' (MHH, 3; E,34) is on the weaker and inferior side so that it may be encouraged to be as strong as its contrary. (Blake was apparently in a degree sympathetic to Mary Wollstonecraft's revolutionary view concerning the equality of sexes, which geared the political and social upheaval between the oppressor and the oppressed to the relationships between men

and women.) Moreover, what is remarkable is that in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Blake presented Jesus as the antithesis of the conventional view: a transgressor who broke the law out of love and impulsiveness, whereas in the conventional view he was a meek lamb and a man of forbearing and long suffering, as his icon on the cross indicates. In a sense, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* was written for Blake's own liberation. It was only after his battle with Swedenborgian angels and their followers to convert them to his party that Blake was able to describe Jesus in ways true to his own vision.

Blake started apprehending the course of the revolutionary movements in the same climate in which Edmund Burke's reactionary *Reflections on the Revolution in France* appeared on November 1, 1790. Burke scented the Republican exultation in Richard Price's pamphlet:

What an eventful period is this! I am thankful that I have lived to it; and I could almost say *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen thy salvation . . .* I have lived to see THIRTY MILLIONS of people, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice; their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects.¹⁰

Price refers to the incident on October 5, 1789 when the French royal family was transported from Versailles to Paris. Burke read the same incident with an opposite sense of values and compared Price with Hugh Peters, who took sides with Cromwell and the regicides:

That sermon is in a strain which I believe has not been heard in this kingdom, in any of the pulpits which are tolerated or encouraged in it, since the year 1648, when a predecessor of Dr. Price, the Reverend Hugh Peters, made the vault of the king's own chapel at St. James's ring with the honour and privilege of the Saints, who, with the 'high praises of God in their mouths, and a *two*-edged sword in their hands, were to execute judgement on the heathen, and punishments upon the *people*; to bind their *kings* with chains, and their *nobles* with fetters of iron'.¹¹

Although Burke blamed Enlightenment philosophers for being the leading guides of the Revolution, as did Blake, while Price paid tribute to them, how unlike the spirits of Burke and Blake were! Blake attributed Deism or Natural Religion to Bacon, Locke, Rousseau and Voltaire, whereas Burke blamed them for demolishing the social hierarchy which he saw as rooted in 'the spirit of philosophic analogy'.¹² Blake exposed Burke's error in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* revealing the process by which spiritual truth was externalized and petrified into systematic reasoning (11; E,38).

'A two-edged sword', mentioned here as a sign of malice or rebellion, was in fact produced and cast by Burke into parliament on December 28, 1792,¹³ when he made an anti-Jacobin speech in favour of the alien bill and the war with France which overthrew the monarchy and assisted

the spread of the republicanism in Europe. Ironically, it was Burke who was regarded as a dagger-bearer by the revolutionaries. Erdman pointed out the close relation between Burke and the design of the Preludium to *Europe*, where a figure bearing a dagger hides in a cave to assault a pilgrim.¹⁴

Price's sermon was given to the members of the Revolution Society to commemorate the Revolution of 1688—an audience which was well aware of the possibility of linking the English and French Revolutions.

And now, methinks, I see the ardour for liberty catching and spreading;

Behold, the light you have struck out, after setting AMERICA free, reflected to FRANCE, and there kindled into a blaze that lays despotism in ashes, and warms and illuminates EUROPE!¹⁵

Is it a mere coincidence that two titles of Blake's Prophecies are in capital letters here? Although it was after the abolition of monarchy in France that Blake produced the first draft of *America*, the core of the Prophecy may have occurred to Blake when he decided to show the French Revolution as originating in the American war of Independence, which likewise spurned the yoke and overthrew the despotism of George III.

'A Song of Liberty', which was added to *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* towards the end of 1792¹⁶ is the pivotal work which reviews *The French Revolution* and anticipates *America*. The subtle shift of Blake's vision of the Revolution—the addition in particular of the fallen-light image to 'A Song of Liberty'—can be explicated in a series of poems starting from *The French Revolution*.

This poem is a beautiful crystallization of the brightest phase of the French Revolution, although this was short-lived and its light soon faded with no hope of recovery. The poem shows the transition from the darkest moment to the dawn, also expressed in 'The Tyger': 'When the stars threw down their spears / And water'd heaven with their tears' (E,25). *The French Revolution* is on the utmost frontier of historical writing looking towards the mythological: the immediate historic event, the Fall of the Bastille, becomes a vision that 'the bars of Chaos are burst', 'the bottoms of the world were open'd' (FR, 11.141,301; E,292,299). The poem also initiates Blake's use of symbolic imagery of stars, the earliest form of Urizen, while the structure of the poem manifests Blake's cosmology, anticipating the Eternal Man or Albion.

The first two-thirds of the poem depicts the Council which elucidates the line, 'In that dread night when Urizen call'd the stars round his feet' (A, cancelled plate b; E,58). Blake made the royalist infernal Council pre-eminent, as against the Commons' heavenly one. The latter is evoked in a single line which is repeated like a flash of lightning illuminating the darkness: 'For the Commons convene in the Hall of the Nation' (FR, 11. 16,54; E,286,288). As many critics have perceived, Satan's Council in Book II of *Paradise Lost* was in Blake's mind. The Council in *The*

French Revolution is a revision of Satan's Council. Whereas in Milton the four infernal speakers, Moloch, Belial, Mammon and Beëlzebub, are burning with 'Republican' hatred against their King, in Blake it is the side of the King which burns jealously against the people. The result is not a simple parody of Milton but a serious attempt to expose the truth, as Blake believed Milton a true poet and of the Devil's party.

Other differences between Satan's Council in *Paradise Lost* and the Council in *The French Revolution* are also significant. Although Milton's infernal speakers argue for different tactics according to their own natures,¹⁷ all their views nevertheless correspond with those which Satan expresses in soliloquy in Book IV.¹⁸ Blake's four speakers do not express views parallel to those of their monarch. Instead, they represent the different parts of the body. The head or brain is the King or the Duke of Burgundy; the heart the Priest, or the Archbishop of Paris; the hands and loins Orleans; and the feet the Nation's Ambassador. Although each part of the body is at a different level, locations do not imply a hierarchical order as the Proverb of Hell regards the lower or circumferential parts as equally important: 'The head Sublime, the heart Pathos, the genitals Beauty, the hands & feet Proportion' (*MHH*, 10; E,299). In the poem the brain and heart, which held the absolute power over the genitals and hands and feet, are now terrified by their rebellion. Burgundy—strongly associated with wine, blood and war—seated at the right hand of the monarch, perceives the King's intense military hope when 'his bosom/Expanded like starry heaven' (*FR*, 82; E,289). Thus Burgundy utters the view closest to his master's, as Beëlzebub did for Satan.¹⁹ The King praises him as 'a lion' (*FR*, 1. 107; E,290) finding his own view reflected, that the earth is craving for blood and the eagles for prey. In Blake's view, maddened arbitrary power first took a bestial form, whereas Burke abused Price's Enlightenment citizens as 'a swinish multitude'.²⁰ The image of a lion-like monarch on all fours with his long hair and beard like a lion's mane (comparable with the image of the sulphurous sun) first appears on pages 44 and 48 of Blake's Notebook and plate 24 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. With the King's mental disorder after losing control over the American colonies in mind, in *America* (4<6>) Blake made George III reveal himself as a lion-headed, eagle-winged, serpent-tailed monster.

In contrast to the lion image of the Duke of Burgundy, the Archbishop of Paris works on the King's heart as a serpent tempting with a fatal draught—a version of the serpent who gave the fruit of good and evil to Adam and Eve:

... as risen from beneath the Archbishop of Paris arose,

In the rushing of scales and hissing of flames and rolling of sulphurous smoke.

Hearken, Monarch of France, to the terrors of heaven, and let thy soul drink of my counsel.
(*FR*, 11.126-8; E,291)

His counsel contains at its heart a vision of the earliest form of Urizen, 'An aged form, white as snow, hov'ring in mist, weeping in the uncertain light' (*FR*, 1.13; E,292). As ancient Patriarch and moralistic law giver he is associated with ecclesiastical religion and the preservation of the privileges of the few. The Archbishop concludes his speech by comparing the people's

revolutionary movements to the lower part of the body rebelling against the upper, with a strong bias towards the existing social hierarchy:

Let thy soldiers possess this city of rebels, that threaten to bathe their feet
 In the blood of Nobility; trampling the heart and the head; let the Bastile devour
 These rebellious seditious; seal them up, O Anointed, in everlasting chains.

(FR, 11.155-7; E,293)

On the other hand, Orleans, who appears with 'His benevolent hand' (FR, 1.176; E,294) blesses the liberation of the lower part of the body and the resultant healthiness of the whole body in a vision of Man as a microcosm, and of the whole world in the image of a giant Man. His view makes a sharp contrast with the Archbishop's which names the bodily organs only as a rhetorical device. Orleans expressed the view of the loins or genitals thus:

Is the body diseas'd when the members are healthful? can the man be bound in sorrow
 Whose ev'ry function is fill'd with its fiery desire? can the soul whose brain and heart
 Cast their rivers in equal tides thro' the great Paradise, languish because the feet
 Hands, head, bosom, and parts of love, follow their high breathing joy?

(FR, 11.182-5; E,294)

Finally, the Nation's Ambassador (the Abbé de Sieyès) 'rais'd his feet / On the steps of the Louvre' (FR, 11.201-2; E,295): he represents the voice of the people. His speech makes use of important symbols which recur in *Songs of Experience*. The vision of the cosmic Man is accompanied by corresponding images drawn from nature. Isaiah 34.4 would have been in Blake's mind when he imaged the King as the starry pole or the host of heaven.²¹ This is comparable to Isaiah's prophecy of 'the starry harvest' of all the monarchies of the earth being dissolved. The nobility and priests are counted among those stars forming constellations, but they are also imaged in other terms, as clouds and mountains. The people, on the other hand, are regarded as hills, valleys, cities and villages.

Blake gives the Abbé de Sieyès an inspired speech, two lines of which in particular recapitulate the process by which the eternal heavens were darkened:

When the heavens were seal'd with a stone, and the terrible sun clos'd in an orb,
 and the moon Rent from the nations, and each star appointed for watchers of night.

(FR, 11.211-12; E,295)

'A stone' may be identical with 'a Stone of night' (A, 5<7>; E,53), meaning the tablet on which the Ten Commandments were engraved.²² This stone is likewise associated with the petrified philosophy which is the cause of corrupt social hierarchies. The result is similar to the scene of Genesis 1.16. The sun was conglobed for day, while the moon was rent from the same sphere as the sun for night, and the stars took their stations. This vision was first given in a mythological form in *The Book of Urizen*; that is, Enitharmon was divided from Los as a globe of blood as the sign of the Fall.

The Abbé de Sieyès's speech also foreshadows 'The Tyger'. He envisages an apocalyptic transformation in which the oppressors will join the poor at their labours, and bless the laborious plow by which the curse on sexes dissolves,

That the wild raging millions, that wander in forests, and howl in law blasted wastes,
Strength madden'd with slavery, honesty, bound in the dens of superstition,
May sing in the village, and shout in the harvest, and woo in pleasant gardens.

(FR, 11.227-9; E,296)

This is Blake's sympathetic view of the fierceness of the multitude of people who would recover their full humanity at dawn. As Nurmi argues, it was probably around the autumn of 1792, when royalists and counter-revolutionaries were massacred, that the first draft of 'The Tyger' was written in Blake's Notebook.²³ To Blake's disappointment, although Orleans questioned, 'Can the fires of Nobility ever be quench'd, or the stars by a stormy night?' (FR, 1.181; E,294), his bright vision was overshadowed by the turmoil. Instead, as the Archbishop of Paris feared, the multitude 'bathed their feet in the blood of Nobility' (FR, 11.155-6; E,293). The vision of the revolutionary spirit, which was once entirely positive, now becomes ambiguous, with the ferocious image of the tiger wandering in the forest of the night—though the sign of its former holiness is traced in its black and yellow pattern of the flame on its now fallen body.

'The Tyger' in its second draft had only four stanzas, including a new stanza beginning 'When the stars threw down their spears'. As Nurmi argues, when France abolished monarchy and became a Republic towards the end of September 1792, 'The Tyger' was probably in its second stage in which the beast's cruelty was much diminished. Nurmi further argues that the earlier negative view of the tiger was changed to a more positive one. According to him, Blake implied the divine origin of the tiger in the capitalization of 'Immortal' in the first stanza and also in the line: 'Did he who make the Lamb make thee?' On the other hand, it is certain that Blake was not entirely satisfied with the ascription of divine origins to the tiger, for he took the view that true divinity can shine in the human form alone—an idea manifested in 'The Divine Image' of *Songs of Innocence* and in Blake's often repeated references to 'the Human Form Divine'. Thus Blake made efforts to give a human form to the once fallen revolutionary spirit. What is entirely missing in Nurmi's argument, and needs due attention, is the pencil design on page 108 of Blake's Notebook where the second stage of 'The Tyger' is transcribed. The faint pencil design, which Keynes recognized as Orc of plate 12 of *America*,²⁴ should not be dismissed as peripheral: it is evidence of a link between the tiger and Orc. In the first stage of drawing on page 108 of Blake's Notebook, angelic figures were sketched with their hands raised in the style of 'the morning stars' on plate 14 of Blake's Job designs. The rough sketch is relevant to the image of the morning transcribed in the new stanza (later stanza five) of 'The Tyger'. In the second stage, an angelic figure's hands were made horizontal and one of his wings was transformed into his raised leg. Thus the preliminary draft of Orc on plate 12 of *America* emerged in Blake's Notebook. Moreover, the very moment of Orc's birth is described in 'A Song of Liberty' composed towards the end of 1792. While a vision of child-birth was already shown on plate 3

of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake added the song to record the auspicious time starting with the pains of labour, 'The Eternal Female groand! it was heard over all the Earth' (MHH, 25; E,44). The song finally reaches its climax with the abolition of monarchy, and Blake triumphantly declares, 'Empire is no more! and now the lion & wolf shall cease' (MHH, 27; E,45).

While 'A Song of Liberty' looks towards *America*, the poem shows a retrospective visionary transformation of the course of the French Revolution in which the early bright vision of the Revolution is juxtaposed with its subsequent shattered image:

. . . On those infinite mountains of light now barr'd out by the atlantic sea, the new born fire
stood before the starry king! (MHH, 25; E,44)

We recall the legend of the lost Atlantis in Plato's *Critias*, and the fact that Blake regarded the land of Albion as a part of the lost continent. However, in the line of thought traced so far, 'the infinite mountains of light now barr'd out by the atlantic sea' where once the new born fire confronted the starry king is, at one level, *The French Revolution* itself, now sunk in the sea of time and space, an argument which is supported by Blake's Notebook poem written around 1807 with its similar symbolism.²⁵ The infinite Atlantic mountains must have been for him reminiscent of his short-lived poem as well as the bright image of the French Revolution, both of which were completely overwhelmed by raging time.

To return to 'A Song of Liberty', the starry king (whose symbolism Blake studied in *The French Revolution*) rejected the new born fire with 'jealous wings' (25.9; E,44). Instead, he prepared himself for war and 'hurl'd the new born wonder thro' the starry night' (25.10; E, 44). Blake attributed the transformation of the new born fire into a consuming fire to the King's jealousy. As a result, the King's allies were utterly devastated, as in the September massacres of 1792 (25.14-16; E,44). On the other hand, the fallen fire, like Blake's lost poem, was imaged as a sinking sun which emerged out of the sea again in the morning as 'A Song of Liberty'.

This paper is a revised version of a chapter of the thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Durham, England. I'm grateful to David Fuller for his invaluable comments. My gratitude is also due to Patricia Kaim-Caudle and John Douglas Macarthur who gave me helpful suggestions.

Notes

All quotations from Blake are taken from *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, edited by David V. Erdman, commentary by Harold Bloom, New York, Anchor Press, 1965, revised edition, 1982.

Quotations are identified by the abbreviated title of the poem, followed by page (or plate) and line number, and page number in Erdman, thus: FR, 11. 227-9; E,296.

G.E.Bentley's plate numbering is used for *America* and is supplied in brackets in reference to the work, thus, A, 2<4>.7-9; E,52.

Frequently cited Blake's works are abbreviated thus:

- A *America a Prophecy*
 FR *The French Revolution*
 MHH *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

1. *Fearful Symmetry. A Study of William Blake*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1947, p.308.
2. As detailed later, the date of *America*, which is currently accepted as 1793, is the same as that of the bitter quatrain of the *America* Preludium, whose probable date is 1795.
3. For the idea of an 'Orc cycle', see Frye, op. cit., pp.206-26.
4. Martin K. Nurmi, 'Blake's Revisions of "THE TYGER"' (1956), *William Blake: Songs of Innocence and Experience*, ed. Margaret Bottrall, London, Macmillan, 1970, pp.198-217.
5. Kathleen Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, 2 vols., Princeton University Press, 1968, vol.1, p.9.
6. Richard Price, 'A Discourse on the Love of our Country' delivered on November 4, 1789, at the Meeting-House in the Old Jewry, to the Society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain (3rd edn., 1790), in *Burke, Paine, Godwin, and the Revolution Controversy*, ed. Marilyn Butler, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p.29.
7. Erdman first thought that Blake used g with its serif on the left side between 1791 and 1805 ('The Suppressed and Altered Passages in Blake's *Jerusalem*', *Studies in Bibliography*, 17 (1964), pp.1-51 [pp.52-3]). Later, he revised the view and showed that Blake used the particular g until November 1802 (E,817).
8. Pages which, according to this argument, were written in 1790 are pp. 2-3, 5-6, 11-13, 21-24.
9. 'The Argument' on page 2 has a different tone. It may have been engraved towards the end of 1790. Erdman notes, 'I have given up the idea that the "Argument" is a late part of the work; in style of

- lettering it is early, as are plates 3 (containing allusion to Blake's 33rd birthday, i.e. Nov. 28, 1790, alongside which Blake wrote "1790" in one copy), 5-6, 11-13, and 21-24' (*Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1954 third edn., 1977, p.152).
10. Richard Price, op.cit., pp.31-2.
 11. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790, ed. E.J.Paine, *Burke: Select Works*, 3 vols, vol.2, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1877, p.13.
 12. Ibid., p.39.
 13. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, op.cit., pp.218-19.
 14. Erdman pointed out that the scene was satirized by Gillray on December 30, 1792 in a cartoon titled 'The Dagger Scene; or, the Plot Discover'd'. Blake's is 'a prophetic transformation of the Gillray satire' (ibid., p.219).
 15. Richard Price, op.cit., p.32.
 16. For the date of 'A Song of Liberty', see Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, op.cit., p.192
 17. Moloch, Belial, Mammon and Beëlzebub argue respectively for open war with the Heavenly monarch, enduring the present condition rather than losing it for worse, enjoying liberty in Hell, and the fraud of the easier enterprise of conquering earth.
 18. Book IV. 32-113. While Satan's own remorse and despair are key-notes, his ire, fear, hope and envy echo the views of Moloch, Belial, Mammon and Beëlzebub.
 19. The Duke of Burgundy, because of his speech in favour of open war, was seen as Moloch by William F. Halloran, 'The French Revolution: Revelation's New Form', *Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic*, ed. David V. Erdman and John E. Grant, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970, p.40.
 20. Edmund Burke, op.cit., p.93.
 21. Blake specifically refers to this chapter in *MHH*, 3; E,34.
 22. John Beer argues that the stone is rolled against a cave in which Man is closed, preventing his resurrection. See *Blake's Humanism*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1968, p.104. The tablet of law is identical with a tombstone in the design for the title page of *The Book of Urizen*.
 23. Martin K. Nurmi, 'Blake's Revisions of "THE TYGER"', op.cit., p.200 ff.
 24. *The Note-Book of William Blake called The Rossetti Manuscript*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, London, Nonesuch Press, 1935, p.162. Erdman, who produced a facsimile version of Blake's Notebook partly using infra-red photography, regarded the roughly sketched figure of page 108 as Satan springing up from Chaos (*The Notebook of William Blake. A Photographic and Typographic Facsimile*, ed. David V. Erdman with the assistance of Donald K. Moore, 1973, Readex Books, revised edn., 1977).
 25. The poem reads thus:

Re engraved Time after Time
 Ever in their Youthful prime
 My Designs unchanged remain
 Time may rage but rage in vain
 For above Times troubled Fountains
 On the Great Atlantic Mountains
 In my Golden House on high
 There they Shine Eternally.

