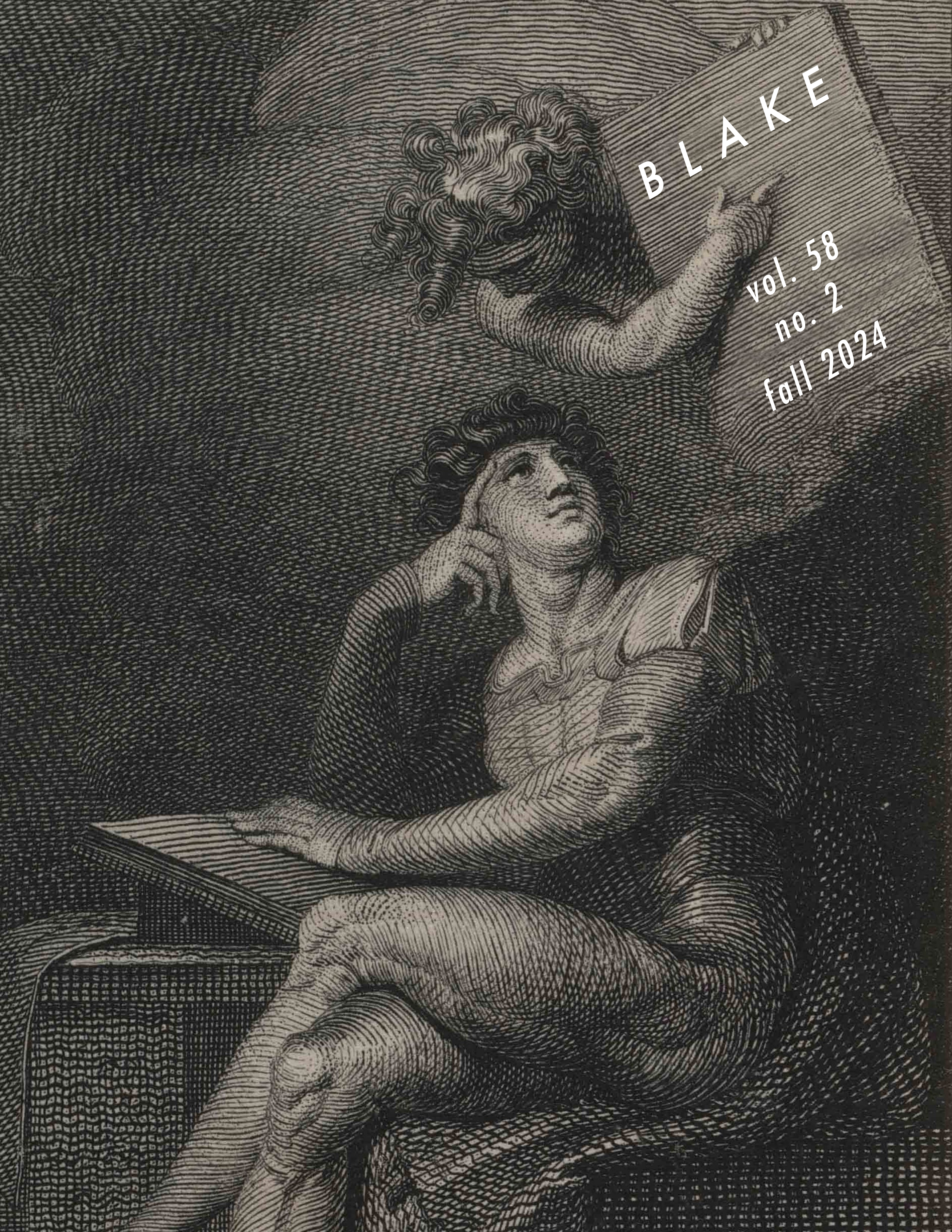

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Cover: Adapted detail of Blake's frontispiece (after Fuseli) to J. C. Lavater, *Aphorisms on Man* (1788). Huntington Library, San Marino, California, call no. 57431 (Blake's copy). Image courtesy of the *William Blake Archive*.

ARTICLE

The Ambiguities of Translation: Fuseli, Blake, and the Making of *Aphorisms on Man*

By Sarah Carter

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1 JOHANN Caspar Lavater's *Vermischte unphysiognomische Regeln zur Selbst- und Menschenkenntnis* (1787) is a classic work of Enlightenment thinking that entered English circulation with a split identity. Published as *Aphorisms on Man* in 1788,[1] it was brought before an English audience through the printmaking skills of William Blake and the agency of Lavater's childhood friend Henry Fuseli. However, Lavater might well have recalled the saying "Traduttore, traditore" (Translator, traitor). Fuseli had not failed to close the lexical gaps between the German and the English. Rather, his ideas had transformed the work, from its ambiguous frontispiece through to its concluding lines—interventions that challenged Lavater's claim to authorship of the book. If the usual stories told about *Aphorisms on Man* describe the volume as a "product of friendship" or a "labour of love," I turn this convivial alliance on its head to suggest that a closer look at its behind-the-scenes production reveals a different narrative, one that pivots on rivalry as much as collaboration.[2]

2 Translation, broadly conceived as a cultural transference, has long been a topic of debate. The German Romantics, for example, qualified it as an impossible feat, arguing that no perfect equivalence could be achieved between an original text and a foreign variant. Still, some translations were better than others. Lavater could therefore malign the "bungling Translator who disfigures an excellent original, and who fails to convey the spirit of his Author."[3] More recently, scholars investigating the "devious side" of translation have shown that translators can do more harm than frustrating a savvy reader or undermining authorial voice.[4] As Federico Italiano argues, translation can enact cultural violence, becoming "an instrument of concealment, silencing and misdirection— … something that darkens and obscures."[5] These assessments, although rooted in radically different contexts, share the idea that translation is always conflictual. The reason, to borrow from Homi Bhabha, is that as classic intermediate spaces, translations "provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself."[6] Put another way, they are personal and political. Bhabha's particular emphasis on indeterminacy is helpful for approaching *Aphorisms on Man* since, as this article will demonstrate, the book liaised between not only distinct linguistic milieu but also the ideas of the author, translator, and engraver. Although conceptualized as an introduction to forthcoming books on physiognomy, it pursued a different agenda to serve as one such innovative site of collaboration, contestation, and social definition.

3 To illuminate these complexities, I begin with the modification of the original German manuscript to show that Fuseli approached the book as a co-author. The second section brings *Aphorisms on Man* into conversation with Lavater's second English title, *Essays on Physiognomy* (1789–98), to reveal how the same opposing priorities shaped both. The third section looks at the frontispiece. By comparing the preliminary drawing that Fuseli gave to Blake with the final engraving, I pursue the possibility that their partnership deviated from industry standards—an arrangement that invites us to rethink the work that the frontispiece does. Finally, I turn to the reception of the book to explore how it

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I would like to thank Matthew C. Hunter, Andrei Pop, Colin Jones, and my peer reviewer for their thoughtful feedback on this paper. I would also like to thank Sarah Jones for her editorial expertise and Robert N. Essick for sharing the Fuseli drawing for the frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Man* with me. I am grateful to the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, for supporting research for this article through a short-term fellowship and the Newberry Library in Chicago for providing research space and resources while I was a scholar in residence. I also benefited from the expertise and help of the staff at McGill Rare Books and Special Collections. All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

[1] *Aphorisms on Man* also included *Regeln* from a second work, *Vermischte unphysiognomische Regeln zur Menschen- und Selbstkenntnis* (1788).

[2] See Erle, *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 99; Ackroyd 107. Daisy Hay has likewise called the book a "celebration of friendship" (174).

[3] Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy* 2: 241.

[4] Italiano 4.

[5] Italiano 1.

[6] Bhabha 2; Italiano 3.

involved readers and what their participation can tell us about changing identity regimes in the late eighteenth century. *Aphorisms on Man* emerges from my analysis a composite creation—one that registers the competing visions of its several authors and constitutes the idea of self emerging in tandem with Romanticism.

Translating: The Aphorisms

4 Fuseli was first drawn to *Aphorisms on Man* as a friend. His translation, for which he declined compensation, has been interpreted as a favor to his childhood classmate Lavater, who supported him financially while he was studying to become a painter in Rome.[7] It has also been understood as fulfilling a commitment to become an informal cultural emissary between England and the German-speaking world. Fuseli's former mentors at the Collegium Carolinum in Zürich, Johann Jakob Bodmer and Johann Jakob Breitinger, hoped that he would introduce German authors to English readers while keeping themselves and other literati abreast of literary news in London.[8] Fuseli did well; by the late 1780s, he had already successfully translated several important essays by Johann Joachim Winckelmann, including *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (published as *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks* in 1765).[9] With these translations in mind, scholars have advanced Fuseli as a robust cultural force—not only a visual artist but a mediator of ideas.[10] They have also shown that he was not an impartial transcriber; for one, his English diction, as exemplified in *Reflections*, contained its own theoretical arguments.[11] *Aphorisms on Man* is consistent with these titles insofar as something of the same "unique Fuseliesque orientation" that Marcia Allentuck identifies in his Winckelmann is also present in his Lavater.[12] Put simply, the book sounds as though Fuseli wrote it, modeling the same obscure "epigrammatic style" as his letters.[13] Perhaps more importantly, it also worked *for* him by advancing his literary career.

5 Fuseli began translating in 1787, working from a manuscript that combined *Regeln* (rules) from Lavater's aforementioned texts.[14] Although this manuscript is now lost, there is evidence to suggest that he did not faithfully adhere to the "original, … composed … during the autumn of 1787, and transmitted in the author's own manuscript to the publisher," as claimed in the advertisement (*Aphorisms* vii). A letter to Lavater from his friend Gottfried Heisch reveals that Fuseli had selected only 700 from the original 1000 *Regeln*.[15] This abridgment was not unwarranted; Lavater had written to Fuseli in 1787, giving him the authority to omit what he thought "false or unimportant" and to "make improvements" where needed.[16] But in addition to abridging the manuscript and condensing the original German phrases, he also divorced and combined sentence elements to alter meanings or advance new ideas altogether.[17] Carol Louise Hall has underscored the differences between the original and the translation through comparative analysis. One example will suffice here:

> Die Menschenkenntnis soll dir das zeigen, was in Andern Vereinbares und Unvereinbares ist mit dir selbst. Sie zeigt dir das in dem Andern, was dich existenter und harmonischer mit dir selbst und mit allem Guten um dich her, macht. Selbstkenntniss zeigt dir, was dich Andern geniessbar und ungeniessbar macht.[18]
>
> (Knowledge of human nature will allow you to see where you are compatible and incompatible with others. It shows

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[7] Erle, *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 99.

[8] Fuseli's biographer John Knowles reports that "some of the literati of Germany and Switzerland had it in contemplation to establish a regular channel of literary communication between those countries and England. Fuseli's tutors and friends, Bodmer, Breitinger, and Sulzer, felt a lively interest in this project, and took an active part in carrying the design to execution" (1: 27). See also Regier 97.

[9] Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks: With Instructions for the Connoisseur, and an Essay on Grace in Works of Art*, trans. Henry Fuseli (London: Printed for the Translator, and Sold by A. Millar, 1765).

[10] For more on Fuseli's role as a cultural mediator, see Regier; Pop, *Antiquity*; and Hall.

[11] Allentuck, "Fuseli's Translations" 181; see also Pop, "Henry Fuseli" 83.

[12] Allentuck, "Fuseli's Translations" 178.

[13] Quoted in Weinglass, *Collected English Letters* x. The quotation, attributed to Thomas Lawrence, is given by Joseph Farington (*The Farington Diary*, ed. James Greig, vol. 3 [London: Hutchinson & Co., 1924] 60).

[14] Schroyer's timeline has Fuseli translating Lavater's manuscript between October 1787 and May 1788. According to Schroyer, the manuscript contained *Regeln* that appeared in Lavater's 1787 and 1788 volumes. See "The 1788 Publication Date of Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man*" 24; the introduction to the reproduction of Blake's copy of *Aphorisms* (xi); and Erle, "Leaving Their Mark" 349.

[15] Letter from Heisch to Lavater, 16 May 1788 (FA Lav Ms 512.138, Zentralbibliothek Zürich): "Your rules / Aphorism of men / are translated, from the 1000 about 700 were selected. I really liked what I saw of it." (Deine Regeln / Aphorism of men / sind übersetzt, aus der 1000 ungefehr 700 ausgesucht. Was ich davon sah gefiel mir sehr.)

Further evidence that the original manuscript contained 1000 rules (compared to Fuseli's 633) is found in a letter of 19 August 1788 from Sophia Hoffham to Lavater (FA Lav Ms 512.143, Zentralbibliothek Zürich). She requests that an "Exemplar der 1000 Unphisiognomishe Regeln" be sent to London with Lavater's son, Johann Heinrich.

[16] Letter from Lavater to Fuseli, 13 October 1787 (Weinglass, *Collected English Letters* 38-39). As if to forestall an accusation that he had exceeded the limits of translation, Fuseli printed this letter in the frontmatter to *Aphorisms on Man*.

[17] Erle, *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 98; Hall 132.

[18] This is rule 18 in Lavater, *Vermischte unphysiognomische Regeln zur Selbst- und Menschenkenntnis* (Zürich, 1787) 15. See Hall 134.

> you in the other, that which makes you more real and more harmonious with yourself and with everything good around you. Self-awareness shows you what makes you either pleasant or unpleasant to others.)

Fuseli renders this long passage as "The study of man is the doctrine of unisons and discords between ourselves and others" (*Aphorisms* 9). The synoptic brevity of his translation is undeniably more impactful.[19] But if translators continued, well into the eighteenth century, to see themselves as co-authors, permitted to omit, add, or modify as they saw fit, the scale of revision found in *Aphorisms on Man* deviates from standard practice.[20]

6 Knowing that Fuseli had been given permission to edit freely allows us to see how he may have envisioned the translation as advancing his literary reputation without compromising his service to Lavater. Certainly, one way to read the dedication to Fuseli that opens the volume (the same one in which Lavater gives him permission to edit freely) is as an implicit argument rooted in like-mindedness.[21] It assured the reader from the outset that Fuseli's modifications were "natural," since the translator was of the same mind as the original author—at least when it came to the content of the book: "All the world know that this is no flattery; for, in an hundred things, I am not of your opinion; but, in what concerns the knowledge of mankind, we are nearer to one another than any two in ten thousand" (*Aphorisms* v). However, if this proverbial passing of the authorial torch signals an exceptional trust between friends with shared values, the fact that the pair were in near constant disagreement on numerous fronts during this period challenges this assumption. Fuseli had his own priorities. *Aphorisms on Man* was clearly not piracy, but like the translations and reprints that did circulate without the consent or input of the original author, it participated in what one scholar has termed the "culture of the upgrade." Where one rival author "might silently abridge; another might translate creatively; a third might add material or critical comments."[22] Fuseli engaged in all three to refine and enhance the original, adding his own material while also trimming and polishing Lavater's.

7 The originality of the translation was not lost on readers. Joseph Johnson's *Analytical Review* printed the following praise in July 1788: "Many of the aphorisms are so well expressed in the translation, that they have all the merit of an original thought almost intuitively struck off."[23] This compliment to linguistic proficiency is of interest because it anticipates the fact that some of the ideas *had* been formulated in English. Comparative research reveals that over sixty of the aphorisms are exclusive to the translation.[24] Crucially, one appears on the frontispiece engraving—"ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ" (Know thyself)—while another concludes the book: "If you mean to know yourself, interline such of these aphorisms as affected you agreeably in reading, and set a mark to such as left a sense of uneasiness with you; and then shew your copy to whom you please" (*Aphorisms* 224).[25] I will return to these aphorisms in more detail later, but their placement is of importance here. As literary bookends, they frame the contents while highlighting the authorial intervention that gave the translator the essential first and last words.

8 In addition to his loose translations, Fuseli also commandeered the concept. Anticipating the book's commercial success (the letter of 19 August 1788 from Sophia Hoffham to Lavater notes that *Aphorisms on Man* had already sold 800 copies at three shillings apiece in its first edition),[26] Fuseli took full advantage of his strategic position as translator, contributor, editor, and designer. He used the advertisement to communicate a plan to turn the book into a series: "It is the intention of the editor to add another volume of *Aphorisms on Art, with Characters and Examples*, not indeed by the same author, which the reader may expect in the course of the year" (*Aphorisms* viii). This second volume would focus on his area of expertise—art theory and practice. Fuseli even inserted "End of Vol. 1" on the final page as a reminder of the forthcoming sequel. Although *Aphorisms on Art* would not materialize until 1831, there is a strong sense of authorial continuity between the works; the aphorisms share structural similarities and turns of phrase.[27] These parallels support the idea that *Aphorisms on Man* was a double primer. It functioned not only as an English introduction to Lavater, but also to Fuseli. The follow-

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[19] Hall 133.

[20] Burke 34.

[21] Erle, *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 98.

[22] Johns 49.

[23] *Analytical Review* 1 (May-August 1788): 286-89 (on 287).

[24] See Shroyer's introduction to the reproduction of Blake's copy of *Aphorisms* (xi-xii).

[25] Recent studies credit the final aphorism to Fuseli. See, for example, Erle, *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 98.

[26] FA Lav Ms 512.143, Zentralbibliothek Zürich: "Heisch hatt mir gebeten Ihnen mein Lieber zu sagen das er sie unrecht gesagt hatt von dem preis des Buches die Aphorisms of Man— anstatt 5 Shillings so sinds nur 3— Sind schon ungefähr 8 Hundred davon verkauft von die erste Edition."

[27] This delay has been attributed to the loss of the corrected proofs in a fire at Johnson's publishing house, but Fuseli's letters reveal a distracted but persistent effort to refine the material over time. Though admitting that the aphorisms had been "neglected, for Milton's sake," his letter to William Roscoe dated 15 January 1795 makes mention of Roscoe's recent comments on them, suggesting an ongoing writing and revision process. In that letter, he admits the benefits of deferral: "Yet by the delay what they have lost in time they may have gained in Value" (Weinglass, *Collected English Letters* 125).

ing section brings this authorial appropriation into conversation with a second venture seeking to import Lavater into England, *Essays on Physiognomy*. As we will see, although Fuseli assisted in its production, disagreements caused more than minor hiccups. The pair may have been good friends, but they were seldom on the same page—a fact that helps to elucidate why Fuseli made the changes that he did.

Editing: Rival Texts

9 Published in four volumes between 1775 and 1778, *Physiognomische Fragmente, zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe* reclaimed the truth of physiognomy.[28] It stated that a correlation between "the visible surface" of the body and its "invisible spirit" not only existed but could be measured and studied to improve society. What set *Physiognomische Fragmente* apart from other, older physiognomic texts was its impressive visuals and their evidentiary promise. More than mere illustrations, the book's many engravings allowed Lavater to realign his physiognomic "art" with empirical sensibilities. During the 1770s, when he was preparing the work for publication, he invited Fuseli to provide designs. This is not surprising, given their enduring friendship and the latter's novel painterly enterprise in Rome. But where the pair should have had much to agree on, since both physiognomy and visual art "read" the human body as an indexical sign, Fuseli found himself constantly at odds with his compatriot. As Stephanie O'Rourke has compellingly shown, Lavater was exceptionally particular about his visual aids.[29] Concerned that his draftsmen and engravers would deviate from their instructions, he personally oversaw each commission.[30] Predictably, Fuseli did not respond well to demands for revisions.[31] An impassioned letter of 1771 laid out his grievances while also expressing an emerging sense of artistic identity:

> The biggest mistake that you commit towards me is presenting me with subjects that have been already formed in advance. Know that invention is the soul of a painter, and a painter without it may as well be in the shoemakers' guild. Your imagination and mine may be the same, but if I am to execute your images they must flame up in my head and not in yours.[32]

Although the brief had been simple—"the painter must forget himself and give his undivided attention to Nature alone"—Fuseli was loath to comply.[33] As he put it, he had neither the desire nor the ability to "shrink [his] great thoughts and noble lines" to fit the desired specifications.[34] With both parties bristling, only one of Fuseli's illustrations appeared in the *Fragmente*.[35]

10 Fuseli commanded more space in the English edition that followed. Translated by Henry Hunter, *Essays on Physiognomy* was published in fascicles between 1789 and 1799 with instructions for binding into three quarto volumes (divided into five parts). The book was one of three hopeful ventures to capitalize on Lavater's growing popularity. In 1787, Joseph Johnson began preparations for an edition, having enlisted Mary Wollstonecraft to translate from the French adaptation, *Essai sur la physiognomonie, destiné à faire connoître l'homme et à le faire aimer* (1781–1803). However, as Mary Lynn Johnson has shown, he soon abandoned the work to become a financier of the Hunter translation, published by John Murray.[36] Writing to Lavater in July 1787, his friend Luder Hoffham explained that the decision was a good one from a business perspective, since Hunter was already ahead and the market could likely support only one English edition:

> [Hunter] has been occupied for some time with the translation of your French physiognomic work, which is to appear here in print next year with beautiful engravings. The price of each copy is £24 for subscribers, and, as I hear, there are several subscriptions already. I fear this will do Johnson harm if he publishes a new physiognomic work of yours, for many of those who have subscribed to that work will hardly subscribe again to this one.[37]

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[28] See Graham; Percival and Tytler; Porter; Graczyk; and O'Rourke.

[29] O'Rourke 67-69.

[30] Johnson 56.

[31] Johnson 56; Allentuck, "Fuseli and Lavater" 93-94.

[32] Letter from Fuseli, in Rome, to Lavater, May 1771 (Füssli, *Briefe* 165-66, 234). (Der größte Fehler, den du in allen deinen mir vorgelegten Sujets begangen, ist, daß du mir immer vormunzest. Wisse, daß Invention die Seele des Malers, und ein Maler ohne sie auf der Schuhmacherzunft ist. Deine und meine Imagination mögen dieselbe sein; aber um ihre Bilder auszuführen, muß sie in meinem und nicht in deinem Kopf aufflammen.) Muschg suggests that *vormunzen* means prechewed, as if for an infant (*vorkäuen* [*für Säuglinge*]). This interpretation of the word is strengthened by the entry for *munzen* in Franz Joseph Stalder's Swiss dictionary published in 1812. It lists *vormunzen* under *munzen* as a synonym for *vorkauen*. See Stalder, *Versuch eines schweizerischen Idiotikon*, 2 vols. (Aarau: Heinrich Remigius Sauerländer, 1812) 2: 221. I thank Andrei Pop for calling my attention to this definition.

[33] Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy* 2: 280. There is a certain irony to this statement insofar as it appears in the text in relation to a portrait of Fuseli, whom Lavater accused of not following nature.

[34] Füssli, *Briefe* 161. (Die Lust und vielleicht das Vermögen, große Gedanken und edle Linien so, daß sie auch einem hölzernen Stecher in die Augen leuchten mögen, innert drei Zolle zu bringen, habe ich verloren.)

[35] "Head of a Dying Man" is in vol. 4, p. 415. See Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations*, nos. 36 and 37.

[36] Johnson 70-71.

[37] Letter from Luder Hoffham to Lavater, dated London, 27 July 1787 (FA Lav Ms 513.288, Zentralbibliothek Zürich). (Dieser Doctor Hunter wünschet sehr, Ihnen persönlich kennen zu lernen, er hat sich seit eini-

But if competition discouraged Johnson, it does not appear to have been much of a concern for Murray, whose translation already had a rival—an abridged version in octavo published by Thomas Holcroft in 1789. Murray, it seems, was confident that the superiority of his own edition was sufficiently obvious to ensure its success. In a letter to William Creech, his bookseller in Edinburgh, he stated: "The greatest service you can render us is to let the two editions be seen at the same time."[38] Murray believed that the abundance of plates after designs by important English artists would sell the book.

11 The plates were an advantage in terms of desirability, but they also made the book expensive to produce. In fact, its price tag—an astounding £10,000—required joint financing.[39] Profits from the 809 copies sold to 795 subscribers were to be divided between publishers and makers (the publishers John Murray and Joseph Johnson, the translator Henry Hunter, and the head engraver Thomas Holloway).[40] The sheer expense of publishing the *Essays* made certain that profitability was prioritized over lavish presentation. Writing to Lavater from London in May 1788, Gottfried Heisch warned him not to ask too much of his English publishers, especially if his demands incurred further costs. The letter communicates a rather harsh assessment of the physiognomist's position, seemingly in an effort to temper his unrealistic expectations:

> Between you, Fuseli, and Johnson there are the most dreadful misunderstandings. God knows how they arose—I won't and can't investigate. You think Johnson will use English money and expend English generosity for your Physiognomy? [I]t does not seem to me to be the case. The first word, which has been repeated continuously until now, is this: Lavater incurs a lot of expenses, outlays, which we don't know anything about. We don't want anything except two sections of outline drawings and his text. What's the purpose of all the rest, all these draftsmen, etc.? [W]ho asked him for them? Incidentally, he changes his mind every day, starts new projects that we simply can't get involved in, and if we write to him about it, he doesn't answer, doesn't stay to the point that we want him to, and always gives answers that we don't want to know.[41]

Whether for his own benefit, or with a view to a future reader, Lavater expressed his disbelief directly on the page: "This, by God, is not true" (Ist, bey gott, nicht wahr). Heisch may have discouraged his grand ambitions—Lavater wanted to include new material, publish the work in folio, and have the drawings remade for the new format—but it ultimately fell to Fuseli to mediate. Lavater's proposals were quickly dismissed for being economically impractical, but Fuseli framed the smaller format as good marketing. He convinced Lavater that a quarto edition would better "[please] the British public."[42]

12 If the publishers thought only of the profits that *Essays on Physiognomy* might generate, Heisch offered an altogether more optimistic assessment of *Aphorisms on Man*. In the same letter, he wrote of Fuseli, "As far as I can see, a very uninterested man has acted here, for he has not taken a penny for the translation of the rules and says he did it to put the money in your hands." This was despite the fact that distance and lingering discord had created a feeling of mutual distrust. However, this is not to say that Fuseli acted al-

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ger Zeit mit der Übersetzung Ihres Französischen Physiognomischen Werkes beschäftiget, welches hier nechstes Jahr mit schönen Kupfern im Druck erscheinen soll, der preis von jedem Exemplar für Prenumeranten ist £24, wie ich höre sollen schon verschiedene prenumerirt haben, ich fürchte dieses wird Johnson großen schaden thun, wenn er das neue Physiognomische Werck von Ihnen heraus-giebt, denn viele die auf jenes Werck prenumerit haben, werden schwerlich auf dieses wieder prenumeriren.)

[38] Quoted in Zachs 83.

[39] Erle, *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 135. William Zachs describes Murray's long-standing partnership with Johnson, including Johnson's becoming his "silent partner" for *Essays on Physiognomy* (83).

[40] Erle, *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 134.

[41] Letter from Heisch to Lavater, 16 May 1788 (FA Lav Ms 512.138, Zentralbibliothek Zürich). Transcribed in Finsler 20; translation modified from Johnson 71. (Zwischen dir, Füessli und Johnson sind die schrecklichsten Missverständnisse. Gott weiss, wie sie entstanden, ich will und kann's nicht untersuchen. Du glaubst, Johnson wolle für deine Physiognomik englisch Geld verwenden und englisch generös zahlen? dies scheint mir nicht zu sein. Denn das erste Wort, was ich hörte und was mir bisher ununterbrochen wiederholt worden ist, war dies: Lavater macht eine Menge Unkosten, Auslagen, von denen wir nichts wißen wollen. Wir wollen nichts als 2 Theile Umriße u. seinen Text. Zu was dies alles, alle die Zeichner &? Wer hat's von ihm begehrt? Uebrigens verändert er alle Tage seine Meinung, macht neue Projekten, in die wir uns schlechterdings nicht einlassen können, und wenn wir ihm darüber schreiben, so antwortet er nicht, bleibt nie auf dem Punkt, auf dem wir ihn festhalten wollen und gibt immer Atwort auf das, was wir nicht wißen wollen.)

Sophia Hoffham agreed that the problems facing Lavater were due to misunderstandings and not enmity with either Fuseli or Johnson (letter to Lavater, 2 September 1788, FA Lav Ms 513.291, Zentralbibliothek Zürich): "I believe, my dear friend, that there is more of a misunderstanding between you than that the local party is mocking you. Fuseli, whom Heisch praised to me the other day, said that he certainly meant well with you and thinks very highly of Johnson. Heisch asked me again to tell you that you should try to stay on good terms with Fuseli as much as possible." (Ich glaube mein Lieber Freund das es mehr Misverständniß zwischen Ihnen ist; als das die hiesige partie Ihnen spotte. Fusli dem mir Heisch noch den letzten Tag gerühm hatt, und sagte daß er es gewiß recht gut mit Ihnen meine, hält sehr viel auf Johnson. Heisch bath mir nochmals Ihnen zu bitten sagen daß sie so viel wie möglich trachten möchten auf ein guten fuß mit Fusli zu bleiben. Diss war der raht von einem der Lavater glücklich sehen muß.)

[42] Knowles 1: 79.

truistically. As with Johnson and Murray, whose collaboration proceeded from "principles of reciprocity," Fuseli had demands of his own.[43] We learn from Heisch that Fuseli wanted Lavater to make changes to the *Essays* in return for his translation of the *Regeln*.

> He demands the following from you as he is dissatisfied with what you have written about him in the French Physiognomy. Since he claims that something like this could ruin his reputation as an artist, he will provide new drawings for Hunter's translation and the article concerning him, and you should then also make a new text for it.[44]

It is unclear why the solicited text failed to materialize. There are no surviving letters between Fuseli and Lavater from the late 1780s or thereafter, barring a cursory note concerning Lavater's son, Heinrich, who lived with Fuseli for five or six months while visiting London.[45] We do, however, learn from Sophia Hoffham that something was amiss between Fuseli, Lavater, and Johnson. She wrote the following to Heinrich in July 1792:

> We recently met Fuseli, and he seems to be very annoyed that he has not heard from you or your dear father. I cannot judge why they are not good to you, so I cannot comment on the matter—only I fear that it might harm your father, for Fuseli and Johnson are very good friends—the latter, when my husband was with him recently, said that he was very surprised that he did not receive anything from your father, the work is now at a stand still, and Johnson says that he will not send your father any more money until he receives the work from him—please let us know, my dearest, how it all fits together—there must be a misunderstanding somewhere.[46]

As late as May 1793, Sophia was still attempting to mediate between Fuseli and Lavater, albeit without knowing what had caused the fissure between them.[47]

13 In any case, the missing text for *Essays on Physiognomy* presented challenges. To redress the engravers' errors in the French edition, Fuseli used his position as consulting editor to commission new engravings based on his old designs.[48] However, without the new texts from Lavater (those that he had requested), the illustrations created a glaring discrepancy: the physiognomic analysis that Lavater had originally written applied to faces that now looked different.[49] To compensate, copies of the old French engravings were printed alongside the new English additions. When confronted with both versions, one is sympathetic to Fuseli. Considered together, Thomas Holloway's "Mary Sister of Martha" (illus. 1) is more accomplished than the copy of Johann Heinrich Lips's engraving of the same figure (illus. 2). The differences are indeed striking. While each depicts the woman in profile, Lips renders Mary in strong, harsh lines that elongate and enlarge her features. One fascinating aspect of this intertextual dialogue is the fact that the copy is not a true reproduction of the engraving in the French edition (illus. 3). Instead of printing from the French plates, too difficult logistically, Fuseli had new line engravings made after them. Incidentally, these further emphasize the supposed errors of their referents. The strong chiaroscuro of the French engraving of Mary accents already distorted features—an oversized hand, a bulging neck, and a liquid eye—but the copy further impoverishes the likeness through pictorial reduction. This, in turn, makes Holloway's Mary appear exceptionally delicate in comparison. The shading, which uses a dot and lozenge technique, softens her facial contours. Her hand and eye have been redrawn in more natural proportions, and her parted lips create a sense of momentary pause, as if she is preparing to articulate her thoughts. Fuseli sets up a dramatic confrontation between the "French" Mary, shown with parted lips and exposed teeth (an expression that reads more like a grimace than a smile), and her far more enchanting "English" twin.[50] Predictably, this printing ruse complicated interpretation, since the reader now had to negotiate between

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[43] Murray's words, quoted in Zachs 83.

[44] (Er fordert von Dir folgendes. Da er unzufrieden ist, mit dem, was du über ihn in die Franz Phisiögnomische hast setzen laßen, und da er behauptet, daß so etwas ihm seinen ganzen Künstlerruf allhier zu Grunde richten könnte, so wird er für Hunters Uebersetzung u. d. Artikel, der ihn betrift neue Zeichnungen geben und du sollest als dann auch einen neuen Text dazu machen.)

[45] See Füssli, *Briefe* 202.

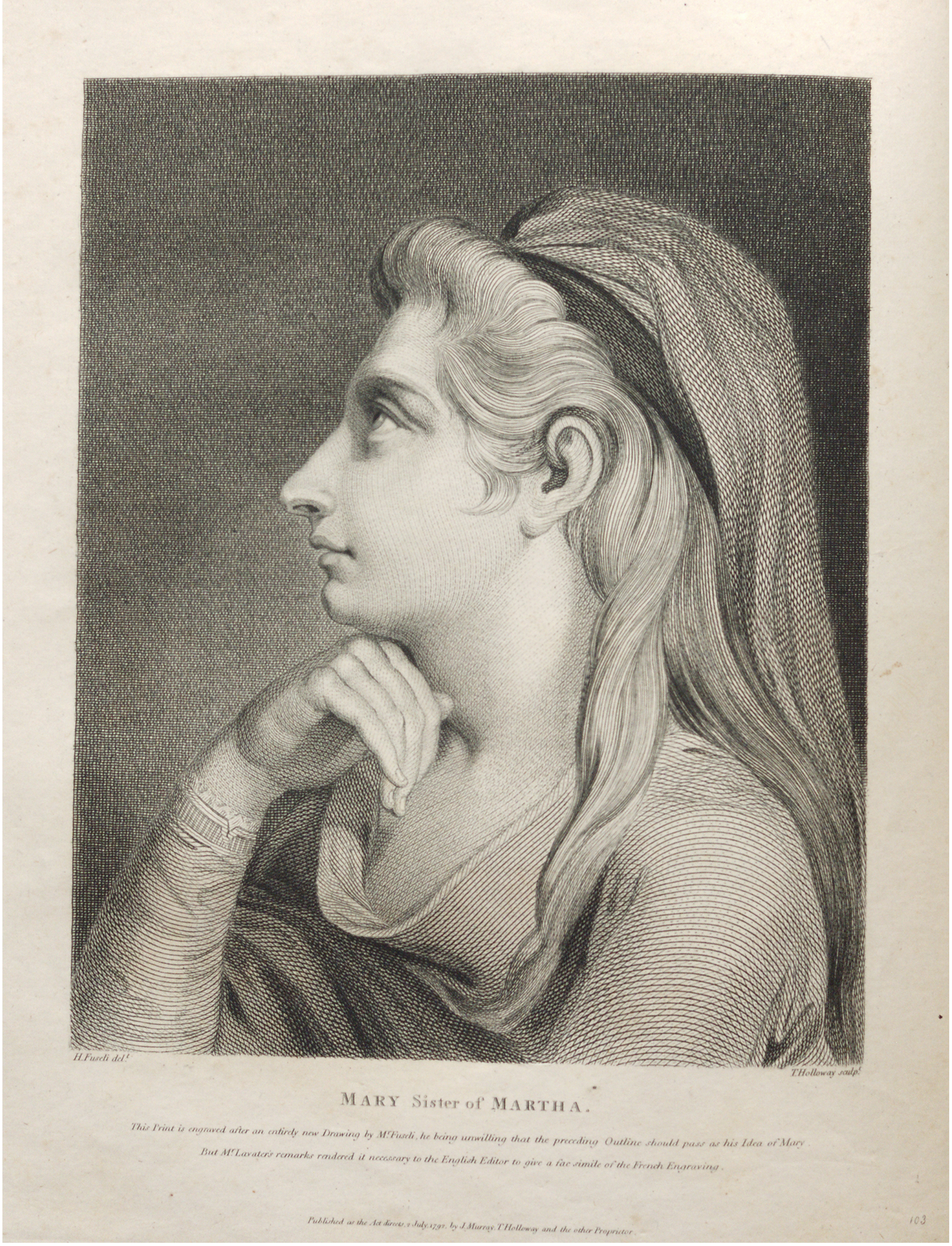
[46] Letter from Sophia Hoffham to Heinrich Lavater, 10 July 1792 (FA Lav Ms 513.292, Zentralbibliothek Zürich). (Wir haben kürzlich die bekantshaft von Fußli gemacht, er scheinet sehr belendiget zu seyn, daß er nicht von Ihnen, noch Ihren lieben Vater gehört. Ich kann nicht urtheilen warum sie Ihnen nicht gut sind—kann daher von dem puncte gar nichts mittheilen sagen—nur allein fürchte ich, es könte Ihren Vater schaden, den Fußli und Johnson sind sehr grose Freunde—der letztere als mein Mann kurzlich bey ihm war, sagte daß er sich sehr wunderte nichts von Ihren Vater erhalten zu haben, daß werk liegt nun gans stille, und Johnson sagt er wird Ihren Vatter kein mehr Gelt schicken, bis er daß werk von Ihm erhält—. Lassen sie uns doch mein Bester wißen wie es zuzammen hängt—es muß irgend wo ein misverständniß seyn.)

[47] Sophia wrote again to Lavater on 31 May 1793 (FA Lav Ms 513.293, Zentralbibliothek Zürich), asking to know what had happened between him and Fuseli, emphasizing once again that their conflict must be a product of misunderstanding and not irreconcilable differences.

[48] For more on the publishing history of the Hunter edition of *Essays* and Fuseli's interventions, see Erle, *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 149-58.

[49] Percival 86; O'Rourke 70.

[50] As Colin Jones has argued, the smile itself was associated with French culture and, for some viewers, might have recalled "hypocrisy, untrustworthiness, and artificiality" (91).


H. Fuseli del^{t}

T. Holloway sculp^{t}

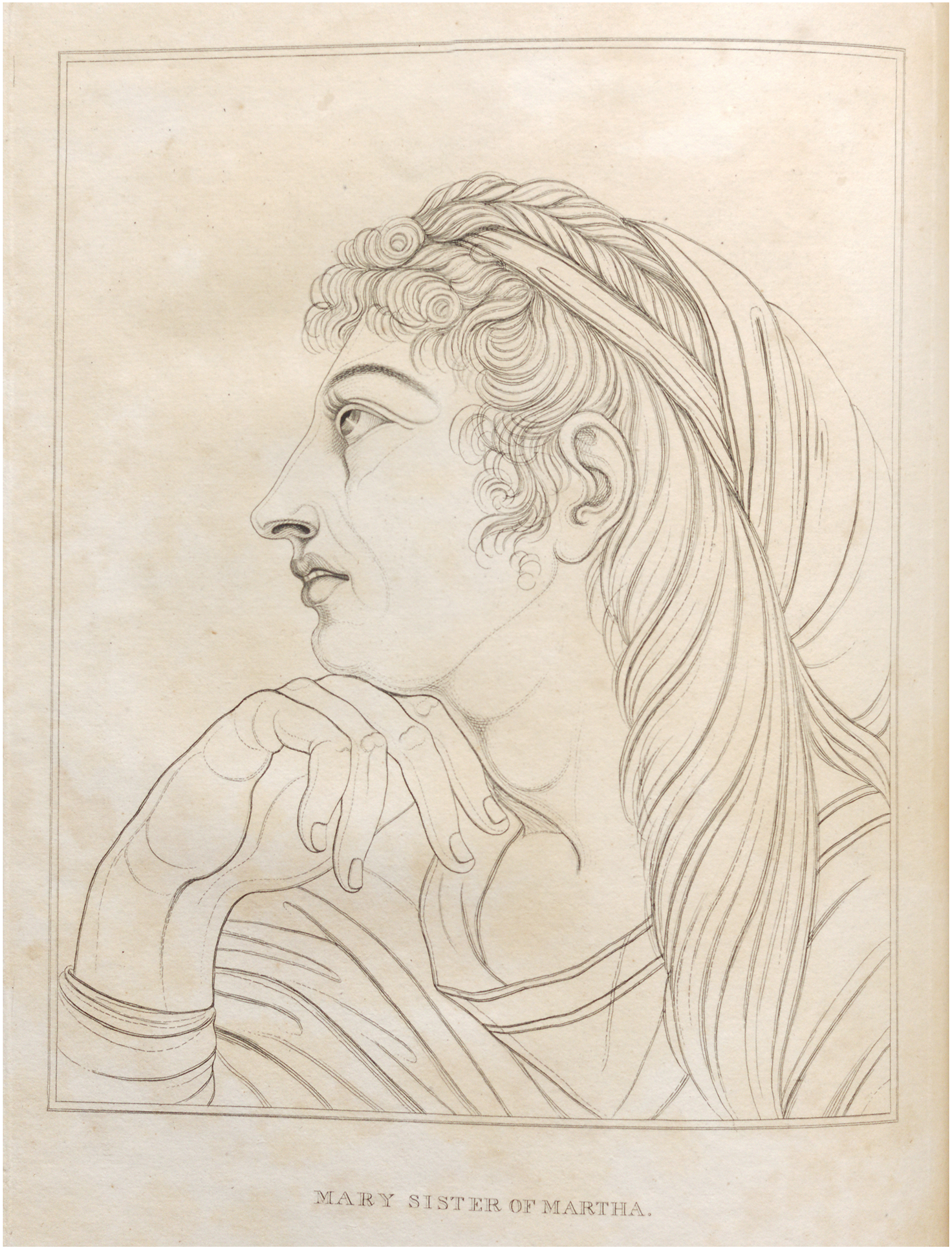
MARY Sister of MARTHA.

This Print is engraved after an entirely new Drawing by M^{r} Fuseli, he being unwilling that the preceding Outline should pass as his Idea of Mary.
But M^{r} Lavater's remarks rendered it necessary to the English Editor to give a fac simile of the French Engraving.

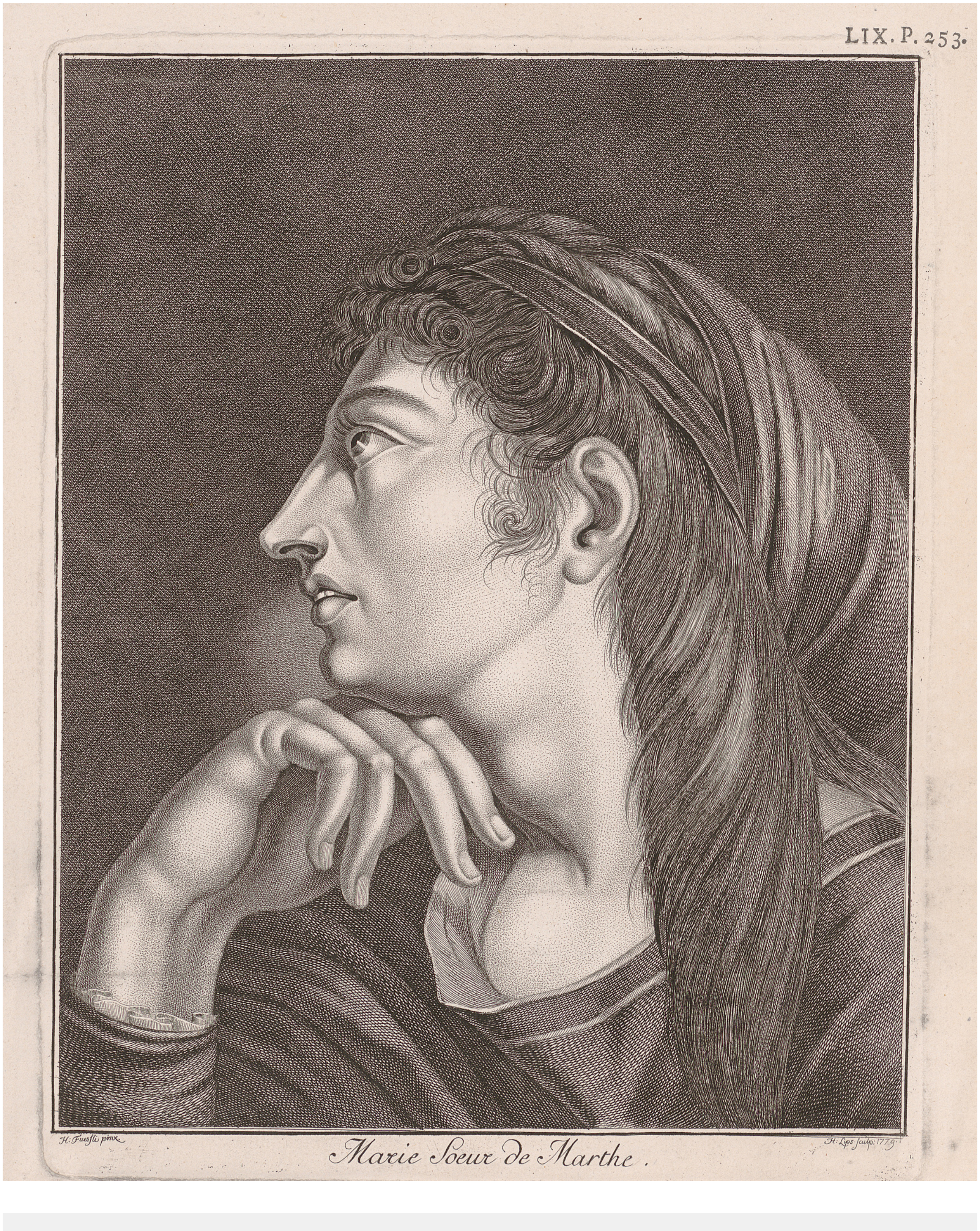
Published as the Act directs, 2 July 1792. by J. Murray, T. Holloway and the other Proprietor.

103

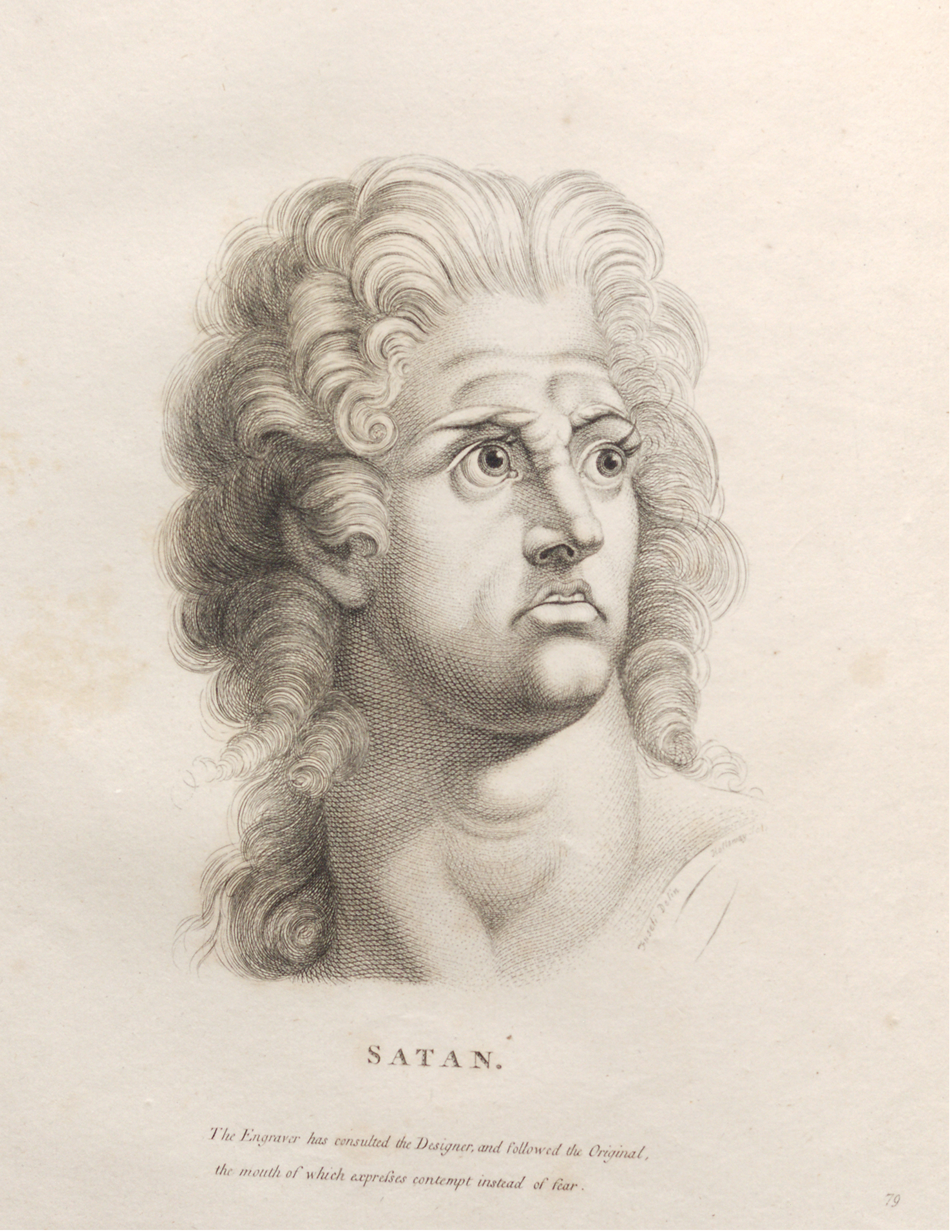
1. Thomas Holloway (after Henry Fuseli), "Mary Sister of Martha," from J. C. Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy* (London: Printed for John Murray et al., 1789–98), vol. 2, facing p. 283. E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria University, University of Toronto, Bentley Blake collection, Blake no. 750.


MARY SISTER OF MARTHA.

2. Unsigned, “Mary Sister of Martha,” from J. C. Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy* (London: Printed for John Murray et al., 1789–98), vol. 2, between pp. 282-83. E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria University, University of Toronto, Bentley Blake collection, Blake no. 750.


LIX. P. 253.
H: Fueſsli pinx.
Marie Soeur de Marthe.
H: Lips ſculp: 1779

3. Johann Heinrich Lips (after Henry Fuseli), “Marie Soeur de Marthe,” from J. C. Lavater, *Essai sur la physiognomonie* (La Haye, 1781–1803), vol. 2, facing p. 253. Zentralbibliothek Zürich, PAS 2302, Mappe 1, 592, <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-36352>.


Fuseli Delin
Holloway
SATAN.
The Engraver has consulted the Designer, and followed the Original,
the mouth of which expreſses contempt instead of fear.
79

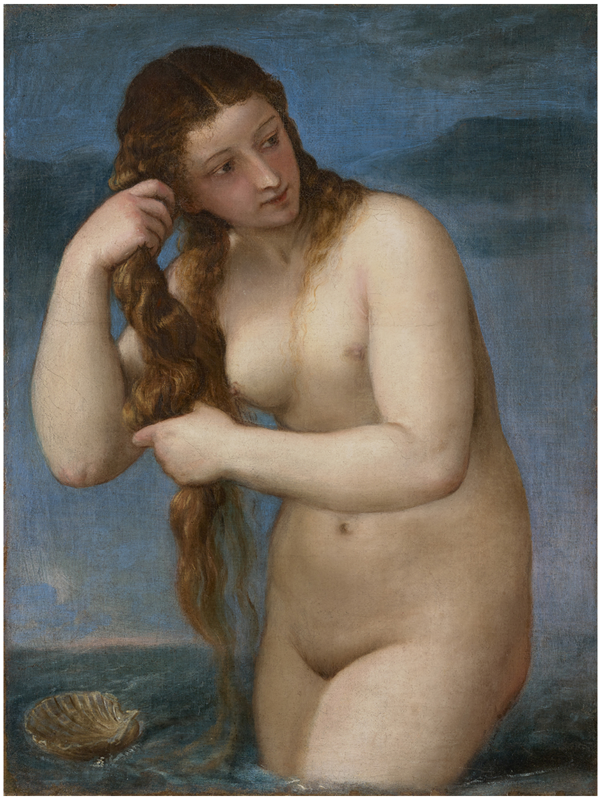
4. Thomas Holloway (after Henry Fuseli), "Satan," from J. C. Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy* (London: Printed for John Murray et al., 1789–98), vol. 2, facing p. 285. E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria University, University of Toronto, Bentley Blake collection, Blake no. 750.

different versions of the same figure. In a footnote, Fuseli offered the rationale for his interventions:

> The Painter has been consulted, with respect to this subject, and has endeavored to regain what was lost or disfigured by the Engraver of the head in the French edition. It is left to the Reader to determine, whether the criticisms of the Author, on spurious deformities, were worth retaining at the expense of propriety and beauty?[51]

Evidently, Fuseli was not afraid to subordinate physiognomy to his primary concern: the presentation and reception of his art.[52] As Heisch put it in the letter quoted above, Fuseli claimed the intervention as a necessity. Maintaining the status quo could put his reputation at risk.

14 Fuseli's interference also countered the criticism that Lavater advanced against the alleged weaknesses of his drawing. To preserve the gloss of impartial empiricism that supported his system, Lavater was not above highlighting instances where Fuseli or other contributors had exercised undue artistic license—that is, artists who had deviated from their models (nature for draftsmen and original drawings for engravers). But neither was Fuseli immune from challenging Lavater in this arena. A head of Satan (illus. 4) sits on a protuberant neck resembling nothing so much as the fleshy lower torso of a Venus anadyomene (illus. 5).[53] Was this visual double entendre a response to the condescending prose of the author? It certainly appears to indulge ironically in the wild imagination that Lavater accused him of. Meanwhile, "The Daughter of Herodias" (also engraved by Holloway; illus. 6) similarly looks out of place in the English edition. Its beguiling narrative infringes upon the scientific paradigm, offering more to the art critic than the physiognomist. Lavater could analyze fantasy portraits of historical or biblical figures, but the severed head of Saint John the Baptist presented a stern hermeneutic challenge. The copy of the French engraving (illus. 7) delivers deathly stillness, presenting an upright profile that clearly articulates the slant of the forehead and the shape of the nose, but the same cannot be said of the Holloway engraving. One could mistake the head, radically foreshortened and partially hidden within loose curls, for a leafy cabbage! It would be difficult to read, even for Lavater, and quixotic for an amateur physiognomist using the book as a manual.[54] To make matters worse, the new engraving has neither of the subsidiary figures found in the original. Fuseli exchanges the older male attendant for a female



5. Titian, *Venus Rising from the Sea* (*Venus Anadyomene*), c. 1520. 74 x 56.2 cm. National Galleries of Scotland, NG 2751. Accepted in lieu of inheritance tax by HM Government (hybrid arrangement) and allocated to the Scottish National Gallery, with additional funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Art Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation), and the Scottish Executive, 2003.

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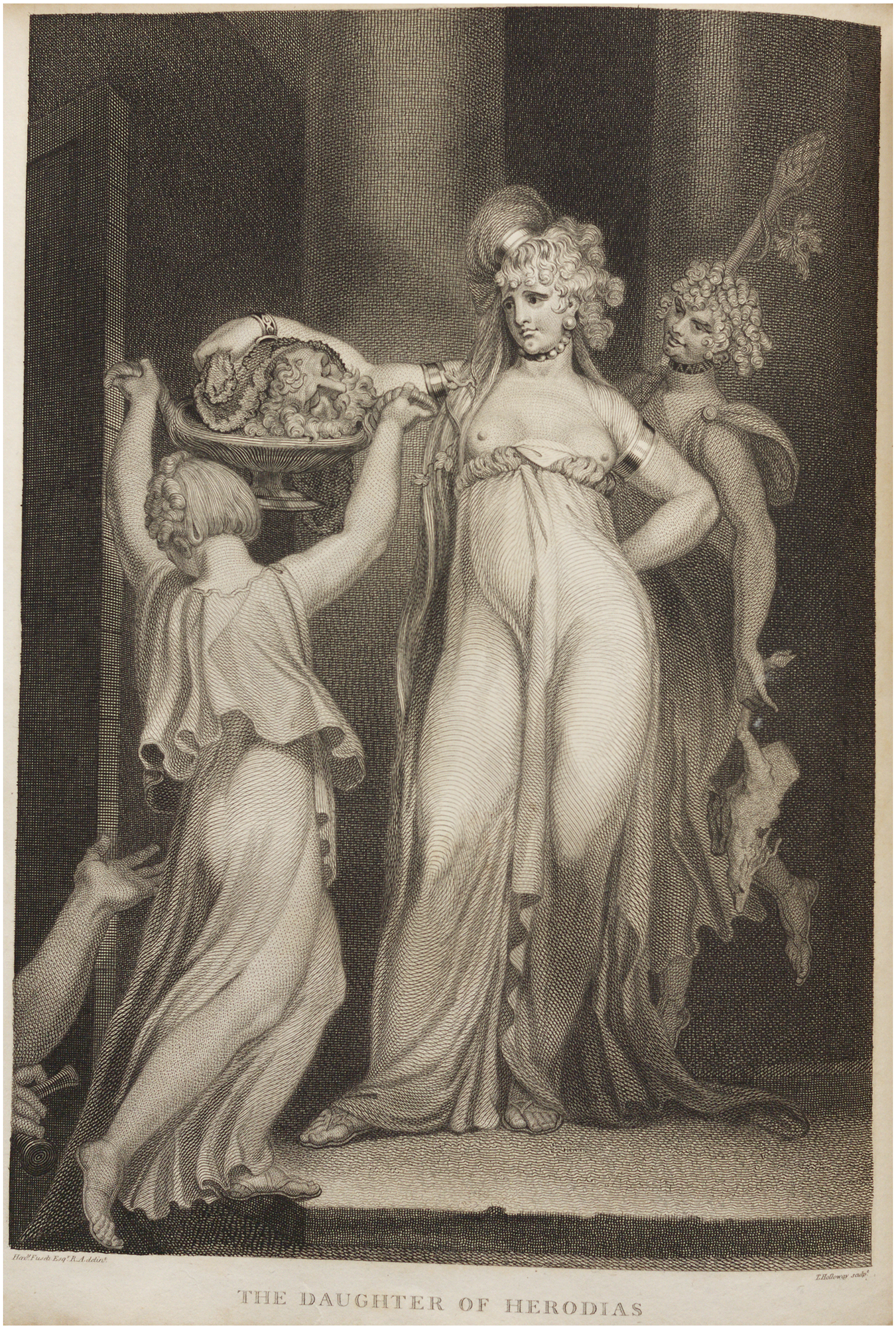
[51] Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy* 2: 283.

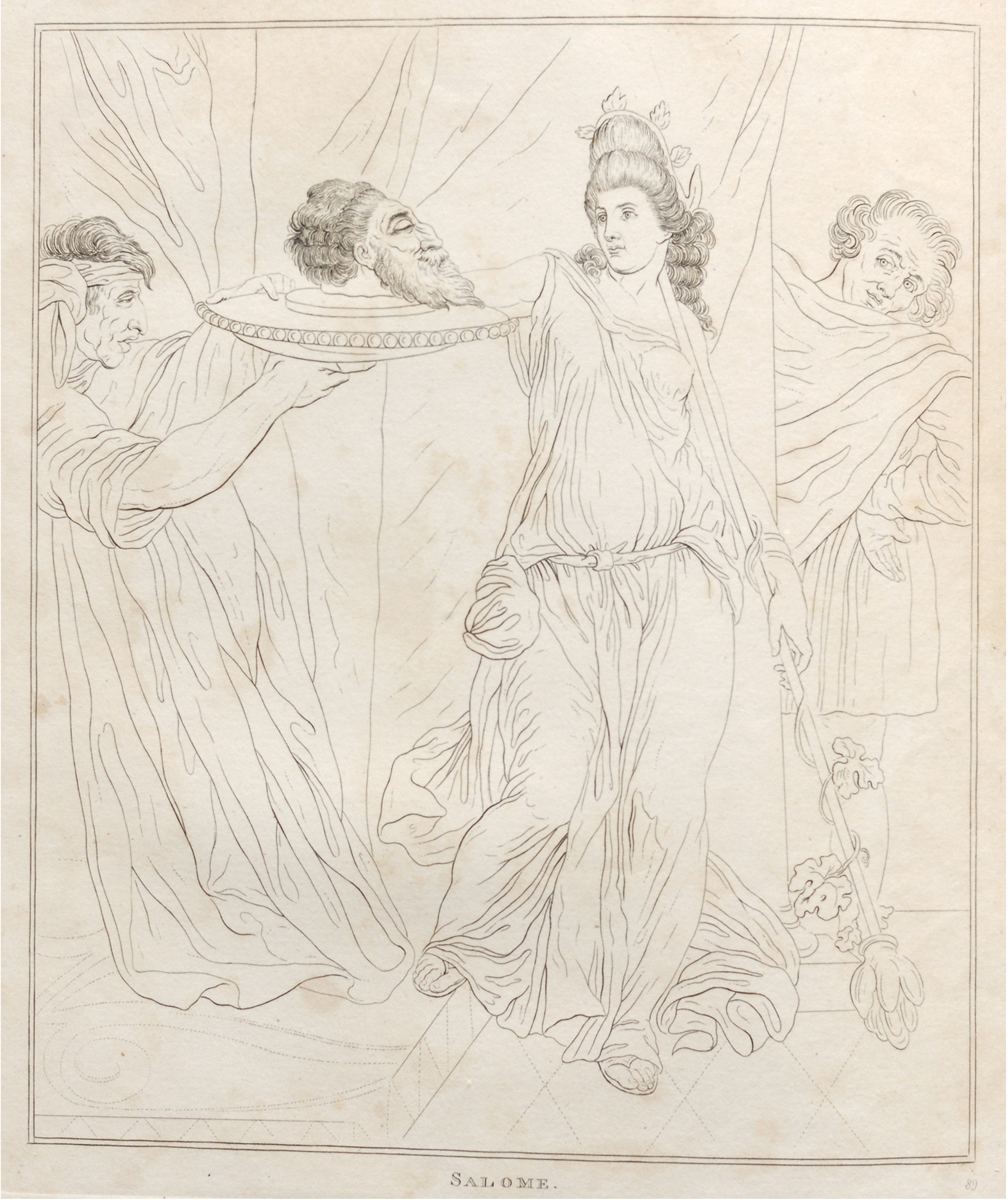
[52] Erle (*Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 153-58), Percival (85), and O'Rourke (70-73) discuss some of the other strategies that Fuseli employed. Percival notes that he rearranged his engravings from their placement in the French edition to form a "gallery" in the English—one that assumed greater importance through its proximity to the chapter on Raphael. This was important, since subscribers to the *Essays* were not only consumers of expensive books, but also potential patrons of Fuseli's art. Erle discusses a new portrait of Fuseli by Thomas Lawrence engraved by Holloway for *Aphorisms on Man*. She argues that it, together with its Greek inscription, presents Fuseli as if ready for literary combat with Lavater.

[53] I thank Matthew C. Hunter for this observation. The strange combination of Satan's physiognomic portrait with the lower half of a female body is perhaps suggestive of lines from Milton's *Paradise Lost* (book 2, lines 757-58) in which Sin describes her birth from Satan's head: "Then shining heav'nly fair, a goddess arm'd, / Out of thy head I sprung" (John Milton, *Paradise Lost. A Poem in Twelve Books* [London: Printed for W. Strahan et al., 1778] 46).

[54] O'Rourke argues that the four heads from Dante's *Inferno* (Holloway after Fuseli) in *Essays on Physiognomy* similarly render physiognomic analysis impossible (76-83).


Henʳʸ Fuseli Esqʳ R.A. delinᵗ.
T. Holloway sculpᵗ.
THE DAUGHTER OF HERODIAS

6. Thomas Holloway (after Henry Fuseli), “The Daughter of Herodias,” from J. C. Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy* (London: Printed for John Murray et al., 1789–98), vol. 2, facing p. 291. E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria University, University of Toronto, Bentley Blake collection, Blake no. 750.



7. Unsigned, “Salome,” from J. C. Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy* (London: Printed for John Murray et al., 1789–98), vol. 2, between pp. 290-91. E. J. Pratt Library, Victoria University, University of Toronto, Bentley Blake collection, Blake no. 750.

form. Her twisting body, although beautifully curvilinear, is illegible. Having turned her face away from the reader/viewer, she resists the physiognomic gaze.

15 The troubled relationship between the hard truth of physiognomy and its mutable evidence is vibrantly expressed by Fuseli in a review of Holcroft's version of *Essays on Physiognomy*, translated from Johann Michael Armbruster's abridged edition. It bears quoting at length:

> The same sympathies with external appearances, pervade the cottage and the palace intuitively and without instruction; whatever is within or beyond this great outline, as it becomes merely a matter of taste, must forever fluctuate on conjecture, confined to the few who have leisure, sagacity, or whim, to follow its minute ramifications, to trace its more refined and fugitive forms, and to dispute for ever: their observations must be individual, mere *aperçus*, incapable of settled rules, and recommended only by the ingenuity that perceived them, the wit that sparkles through them, the ornaments that surround them: to strip them of these, to reduce them to naked substance, is to annihilate, not to abridge them.[55]

While the criticism functioned to promote the Hunter translation over and above its rival, it also illuminates a crucial difference between Fuseli's thinking and Lavater's. Fuseli, for one, stressed the merits of the work that did *not* depend on its empirical claims.[56] A concise format, free from distraction, was ideal for a scientific treatise, but the value in the Hunter edition was to be found in its ornaments—the wit of the author and the novelty of the engravings. Incidentally, these were the very things that the abridged edition omitted. As John Graham rightly notes, prospective buyers of the book were likely less concerned with the infallibility of the evidence presented than with its visual appeal. What one essentially "acquired in such a purchase [was] a picture gallery executed by some of the leading painters and engravers of the century."[57] This debate over the nature of the Hunter version underscores physiognomy's indivisibility from visual culture as well as the role of collaboration in a book that became a vehicle for different authorial priorities.

16 The synchronous production of *Aphorisms on Man* with early fascicles of *Essays on Physiognomy* has led some scholars to interpret it as a soft launch—an inexpensive introduction to physiognomic thinking.[58] However, when the engravings for *Essays on Physiognomy* are read in conversation with disagreements unfolding on and off its pages, we become attentive to the fact that it allowed Fuseli to support Lavater while also promoting himself. Knowing this, we can appreciate that *Aphorisms on Man* is not a singular instance of a translator gone rogue, but rather one example of the ways in which early modern translations functioned as highly contested spaces.

Engraving: The Frontispiece

17 It is important to remember that Fuseli and Lavater were not the only collaborators in the production of *Aphorisms on Man*. Bringing the book into the hands of English readers required a small team of skilled laborers. The radical publisher Joseph Johnson directed the enterprise, which relied on different trades, including papermakers, printers, binders, and engravers, among others. The focus of this section is on one such engraver, William Blake, for whom the book unusually collapsed divisions between the personal and the professional. He was already a peripheral member of the Johnson circle when he was commissioned to engrave the frontispiece (illus. 8), having received his first contract from the publisher in 1780.[59] There is no record of when or where he and Fuseli first met, but they probably crossed paths around that time, when Fuseli moved to no. 1 Broad Street, close to Blake's family residence at no. 28.[60] We do know that they did not begin working together until the late 1780s, a moment that Blake later qualified poetically as a time when Fuseli had been given to him for a season.[61]

18 Scholars have long been fascinated with their relationship. Upon discovering the preliminary drawing for the frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Man* (illus. 9), Ruthven Todd wondered why Fuseli had left "so much to the imagination of the engraver" in a book to which he had given "so much of himself."[62] Todd was describing the "liberties" that Fuseli had taken in the process of translation. Mirroring his own free negotiations with the original manuscript, Fuseli invited Blake to rework his drawing. Why allow a man then known only as a commercial engraver to perform his own transformation? The question is a good one, especially given how inimical Fuseli could be to engravers who worked on his designs during this period. In a biting letter to William Roscoe penned in 1796, for example, he voices his

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[55] See Henry Fuseli's unsigned review in *Analytical Review* 5 (September-December 1789): 454-62 (on 456).

[56] Pop, "Henry Fuseli" 79.

[57] Graham 45.

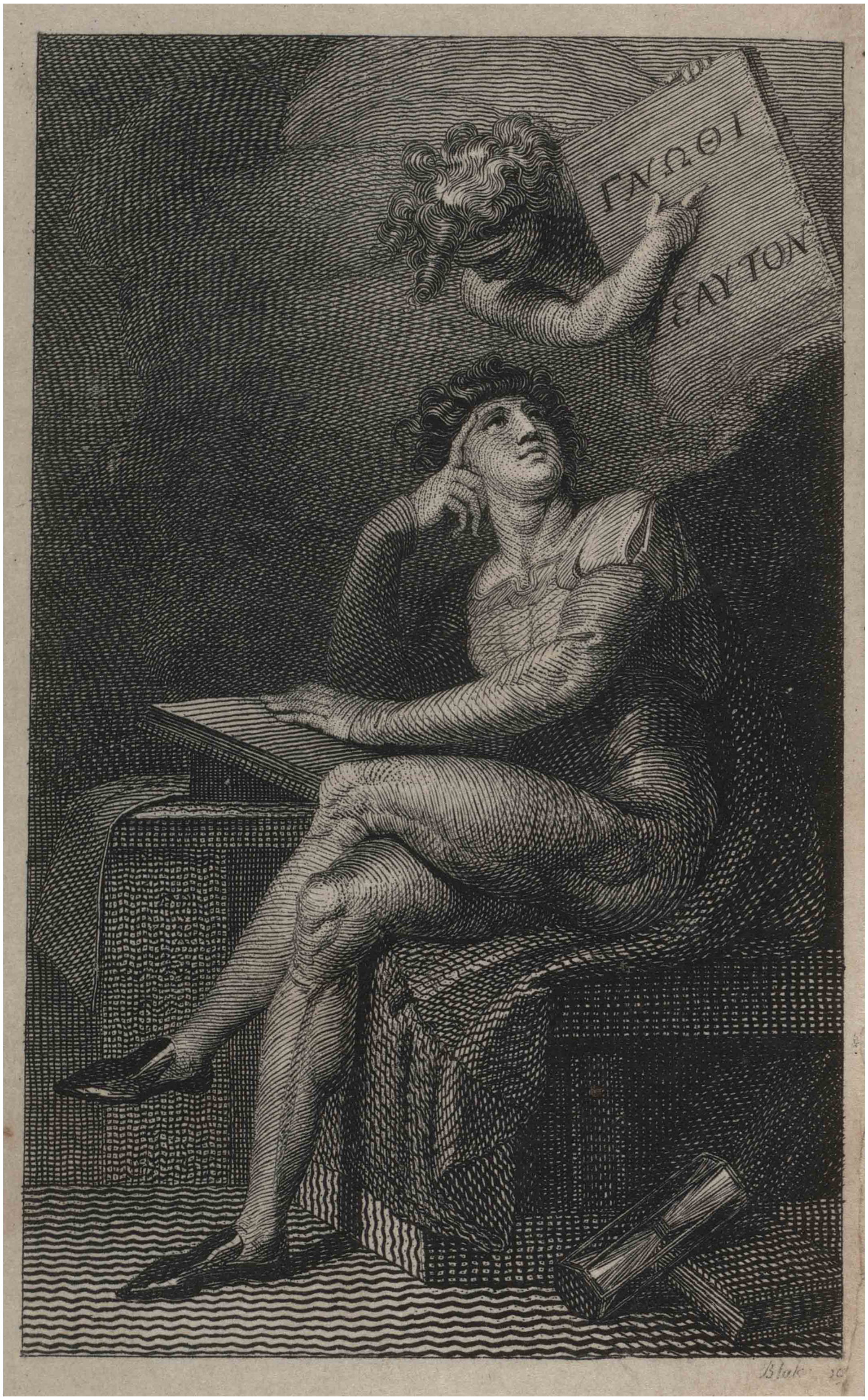
[58] The first fascicle was available in January 1788 (Johnson 54); for more on the relationship between the *Essays* and *Aphorisms*, see Allentuck, "Fuseli and Lavater" 97.

[59] This commissioned plate was for the fifth edition of William Enfield's *The Speaker* (1780).

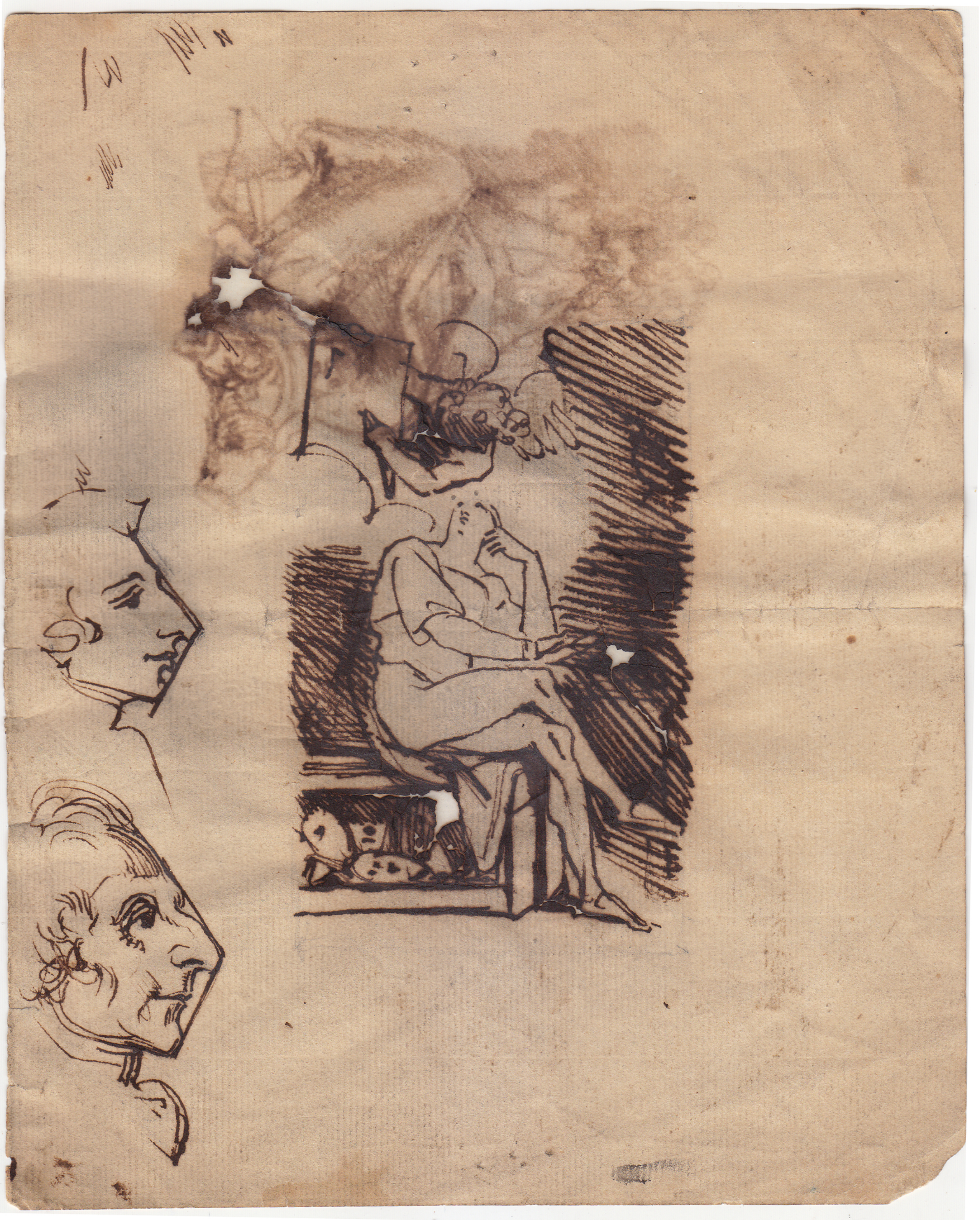
[60] For more on the artistic community living in the vicinity of Broad Street, see Martin Myrone, "'Blake Be an Artist!,'" *William Blake*, ed. Martin Myrone and Amy Concannon (London: Tate Publishing, 2019) 27-28.

[61] Letter from Blake to John Flaxman, 12 September 1800 (E 707).

[62] Todd 174.



8. William Blake, frontispiece to J. C. Lavater, *Aphorisms on Man* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1788). Huntington Library, San Marino, California, call no. 57431 (Blake's copy). Image courtesy of the *William Blake Archive*.



9. Henry Fuseli, preliminary drawing for the frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Man*. Collection of Robert N. Essick.

displeasure with "one Mr. Thomson," an engraver to whom a painting of his had been assigned without his consent:

> He may be a Man of talents, and if he is not, I Care not, for as Your friend Politian Says, the Length of the Shadow makes no alteration in the hig[h]th of the Man. Nor will I Say any thing about the Credit they *force* me to give them. … All, the best Engraver Can do, is, to mar Your work and empty Your pocket.[63]

Fuseli casts engravers as inconvenient middlemen who not only profit from but actually render a disservice to artists. In 1798, it was the engraver Moses Haughton who troubled him. Fuseli suggested that Haughton might have done more justice to his drawing *The Nurse*, designed as the frontispiece to Roscoe's translation of a poem by Luigi Tansillo. "It is done with more freedom than taste," he complained, "and with more assurance than penetration or *Amore* …. It wants much more finishing to front Your work with propriety—or to be intitled to the pompous Fecit under it."[64] In both cases, Fuseli questioned whether engravers deserved credit for their efforts.[65] Haughton, it seems, failed to appease. Roscoe printed his translation without the engraving, a choice that Fuseli later thanked him for, since Haughton had "travestied" his figures.[66] Haughton would later win Fuseli's approval, managing to balance those qualities that his employer valued most in an engraver, "fidelity, diligence and taste," but only, it seems, when he began working under close supervision.[67]

19 As Robert Essick has argued, this hierarchical dynamic between artists and engravers was predetermined by the market:

> Certainly it was an activity demanding disciplined skill, but reproductive engraving was dependent upon a rigorous division of labour and the subordination of individual expression to uniformity and repeatability. All illustrations in a book had to conform to its format, and this mechanical unity was extended to graphic style. If more than one engraver was employed, all had to practise compatible techniques. In spite of an engraver's prerogative to "sign" his plates, the truly autographic tended to be submerged beneath the anonymity of a corporate and systematic enterprise.[68]

Essick, like Fuseli, pinpoints a tension between engravers' signatures and their claim to authorship. They may have signed their work, but they were rarely given much freedom of expression. Working with Fuseli and Johnson thus provided Blake with a rare opportunity to contribute his own ideas.[69] Blake may not have been able to pursue his ambition to become a professional painter, assuming full membership of the Royal Academy as both John Flaxman and Fuseli had done once they had returned from Italy, but Johnson did support Blake as an author. He exhibited his illuminated books in his shop and later printed proofs of his poem *The French Revolution* (1791), although it was never formally published. Moreover, comparisons between Fuseli's original drawings and Blake's final engravings suggest that Blake had more input than one would expect of an engraver. Exactly how much of the detail he worked out on his own is difficult to determine in any of their several collaborative plates. This is especially true for the frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Man*, for which there is no extant intermediate drawing. However, visual analysis can provide important clues toward determining his artistic agency.

20 Fuseli's drawing illustrates a moment of contemplation and composition. The seated male figure rests his right hand on his writing table and supports his head with his left. With one index finger extending across his temple, he turns to look up. There, a winged cherub holds aloft a tablet inscribed with the Greek letter Γ (gamma). In the left margin, independent of this composition, two profiles have been delineated, each with a measured line that reaches from expansive forehead to pointed chin. These heads contend with physiognomy in its most basic form. Challenging our confidence in the power of an image to communicate anatomical precision, however, is the fact that neither of the faces is distinctly recognizable. Impeding our efforts further, their resemblance and the intervening lines invite comparison. Is this the same individual shown in different life stages, or is one the author and the other the transla-

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[63] Letter from Fuseli to Roscoe, 14 September 1796 (Weinglass, *Collected English Letters* 160-62).

[64] Letter from Fuseli to Roscoe, 17 August 1798 (Weinglass, *Collected English Letters* 187); Weinglass corrects his original attribution from Matthew Haughton to Moses Haughton in his *Prints and Engraved Illustrations* 186-87.

[65] In another dramatic disavowal, Fuseli renounced authorship of the engravings after his work that appeared in the German and French editions of *Essays on Physiognomy*. Advising his cousin, who wanted to publish a book after his work in the style of Flaxman's outline drawings, he bade him avoid republishing those "disgusting things in Lavater's *physiognomies* that he claims are copies after me." The only designs that he acknowledged as his own were those that he personally reworked and saw printed in the English edition of *Essays*. See the letter from Fuseli to Heinrich Füssli (his cousin) dated 1805, quoted in Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations* 320.

[66] Weinglass, *Collected English Letters* 192.

[67] Letter from Fuseli to Roscoe, 20 August 1802 (Weinglass, *Collected English Letters* 250, 263-64).

[68] Essick, *Commercial Book Illustrations* 5.

[69] For more on Johnson and Blake, see Erdman, *Prophet against Empire* 156-57. See also Hay 183-234 and Mee 16.

tor?[70] Scholars have wondered if the older profile could be Lavater and the younger Fuseli. Meanwhile, Sibylle Erle has suggested that the similarities between them—made explicit through the addition of triangulating lines—indicate their shared vision.[71] But a closer look at the hooked nose of the lower profile discloses an important difference. If compared with a portrait of Lavater that Blake was working on around the same time, it does not coincide with the "almost imperceptible arch" of the "ferret nose" for which he was known (illus. 10).[72] Neither does the angularity of the chin match the squareness of his jaw. These small departures may seem insignificant, but attention to minutiae was the basis of physiognomy. In any case, Blake selects a younger model for the frontispiece, who, even if he shares features with the upper profile, nonetheless resists easy identification.

21 Reading the figure in the frontispiece as one of the profiles assumes that physiognomy is at work in the final engraving. Given the use of measured lines (a physiognomic method), this seems right, but what if the design has been leading us in the wrong direction? As the debates over the *Essays* show, physiognomy occupied a middle ground between the empirical demands of science and the aesthetic concerns of art. What if Blake opted for the latter, choosing to emphasize artistic quirks instead of facial ones? Put another way, what if Blake "pictures" one of the authors, in this case Fuseli, through means other than portraiture? The composition, for example, recalls a series of paintings and drawings that Fuseli made in the late 1770s and early 1780s featuring male figures in pensive postures.[73] While the rough drawing provided the basic compositional structure, Blake may have drawn details from other sources, including Fuseli's *Dispute between Hotspur, Glendower, Mortimer, and Worcester* (illus. 11). This canvas, shown and sold at the Exhibition of the Society for Promoting Painting and Design in Liverpool in 1784, depicts a scene from Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1*.[74] Hotspur, the figure at left, boasts loose curls, pointed shoes, a square neckline, puffed, slashed garments, and tight leggings that show off his leg musculature—elements that reappear in Blake's frontispiece engraving.[75] The brooding figure and the hourglass also find precedent in *Ezzelin Bracciaferro Musing over Meduna, Destroyed by Him, for Disloyalty, during His Absence in the Holy Land*, exhibited in 1780 at the Royal Academy and published as an engraving in 1781 (illus. 12).[76] It is perhaps also worth noting that the hollow of the table in "Ezzelin Count of Ravenna" contains a singular human skull, resembling the faces crowded in the hollow of the bench in Fuseli's original drawing for the frontispiece to *Aphorisms on Man*. But whether or not Blake had a specific work in mind is not as important as the fact that the engraving is familiar because of its Fuselian idiosyncrasies.

22 Readers noticed this correspondence. In addition to commenting on the superior quality of Blake's engraving compared to the "general run of frontispieces" found in most books, one reviewer stated that "the drawing seems to be in the style of Fuseli."[77] This observation would be remarkable if Blake had worked up the final engraving from the drawing alone. Of course, it is possible that Fuseli made a second, more finished drawing that is now lost, or otherwise gave Blake detailed instructions. However, further collaborations do suggest that the pair worked on more equal

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[70] Essick speculates as to the identities of the heads and their physiognomic relationship to the seated figure (whose ambiguous identity he remains open to). He writes, "Thus, the seated figure represents Lavater composing his aphorisms—and perhaps also Fuseli in the act of translating and editing his friend's words" (*Commercial Book Illustrations* 40).

[71] Erle, *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 102.

[72] Essick dates the first state of this engraving to 1787 (*Separate Plates* 150). It should be noted that Blake never met Lavater and would have been working from a likeness. The letter from Heisch to Lavater in which he mentions Fuseli's choice of aphorisms (see note 15) suggests that the engraving might have been intended for the book, or otherwise as promotional material: "Your rules / Aphorism of men / are translated, from the 1000 about 700 were selected. I really liked what I saw of it. This also applies to the copperplate engraving of you, for which the drawing at Hofham served as the original." (Deine Regeln / Aphorism of men / sind übersetzt, aus der 1000 ungefehr 700 ausgesucht. Was ich davon sah gefiel mir sehr. So auch der Kupferstich von dir, wozu die zeichnung bei Hofham als Original gedient hat.)

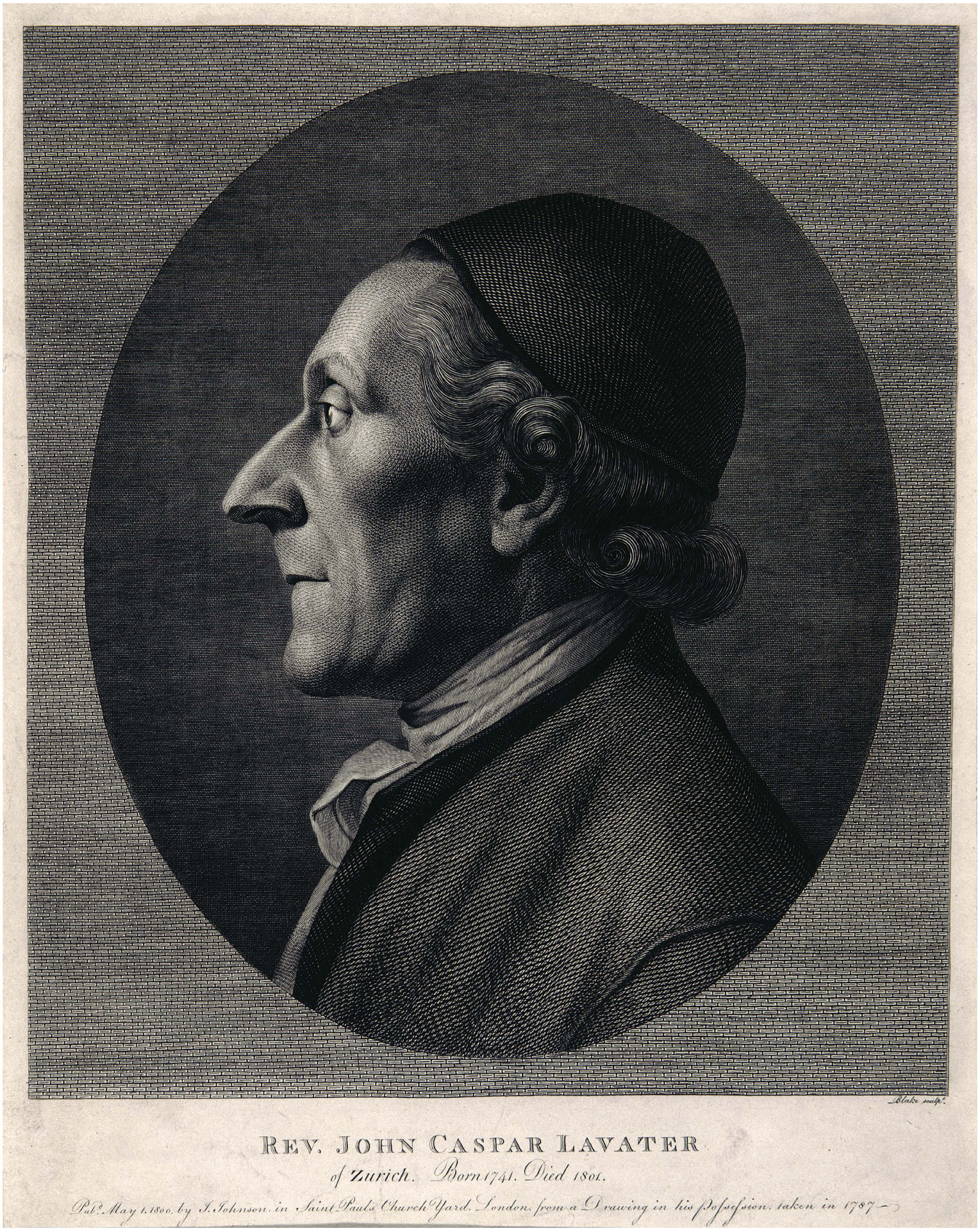
[73] Both Weinglass and Hall have noted these similarities. See Schiff nos. 560-63.

[74] For more on this painting and the sources that Fuseli draws on, see Messina 80.

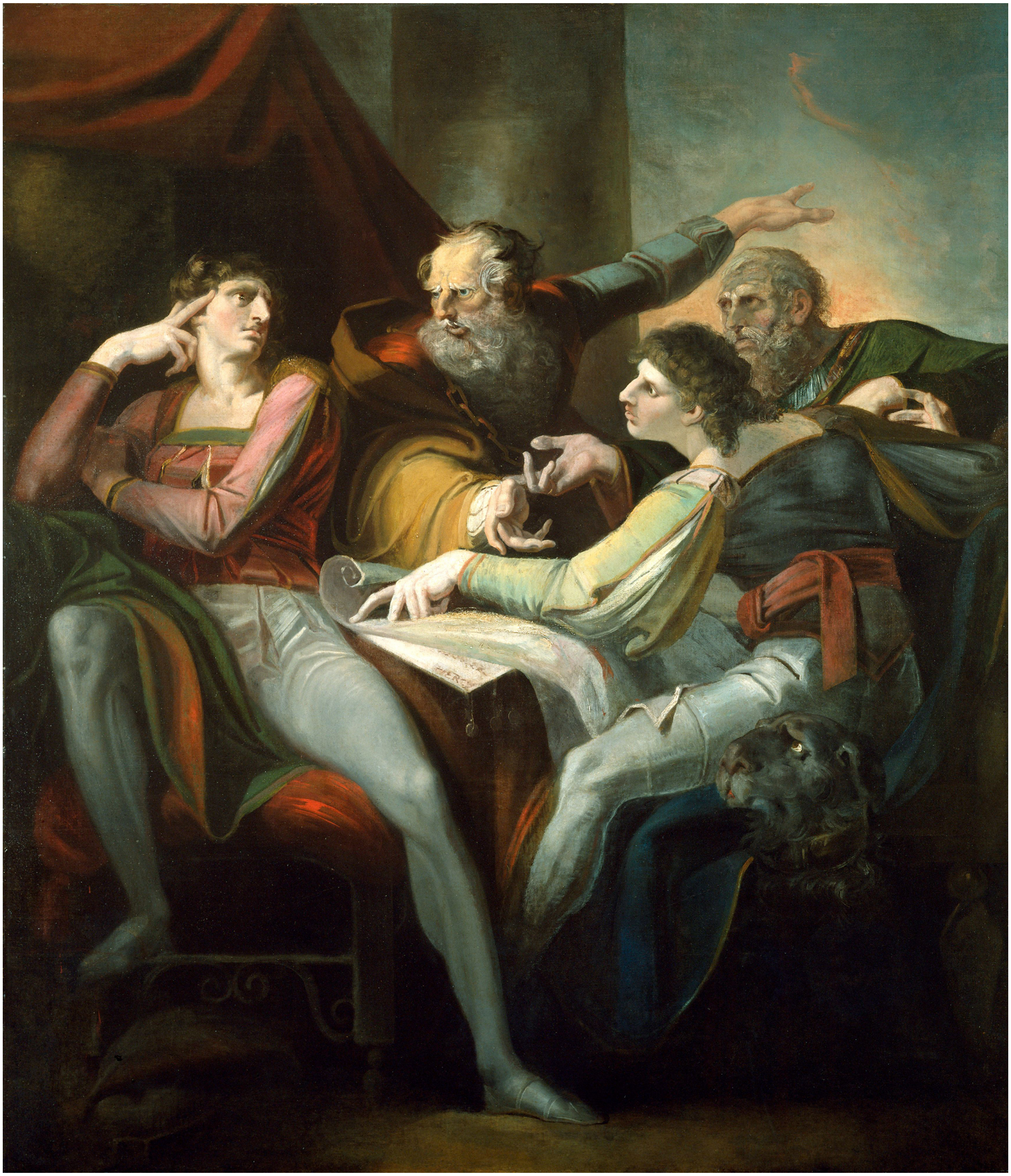
[75] Morton Paley has commented more broadly on this formal similitude: "Indeed, Blake so assimilated certain aspects of Fuseli's style that at times it is hard to tell conscious from unconscious imitation" (12). If Blake did not have access to the original painting, he could have seen preliminary drawings for it in Fuseli's collection. Certainly, Richard Rhodes had access to the materials he needed to engrave it for the 1805 edition of George Steevens's *Plays of Shakespeare*.

[76] Lavater, for one, was drawn to this composition. In October 1781, Fuseli responded to his request for prints (see Füssli, *Briefe* 200): "The twenty-five impressions of 'Ezzelin' that you asked for come to a little less than half a guinea apiece. But since the plate is not mine, but Smith's, who made it, I wish that you would write to him yourself or have him write to you—in order to avoid all suspicion that I was trying to gain something in the process." (Fünfundzwanzig Abdrücke von "Ezzelin," wie du sie verlangest, kommen etwas weniger als eine halbe Guinee das Stück. Weil aber die Platte nicht mir, sonder der Smithe, der sie geschabet, angehöret, so wünsche ich, daß du ihm selber schreibest oder schreiben lassen könntest—um allem Argwohne auszuweichen, als ob ich dabei zu gewinnen suchte.) He is referring to the mezzotint engraved by John Raphael Smith and published in March 1781. The composition reappeared as an engraving by Thomas Holloway in the second volume of *Essays on Physiognomy*.

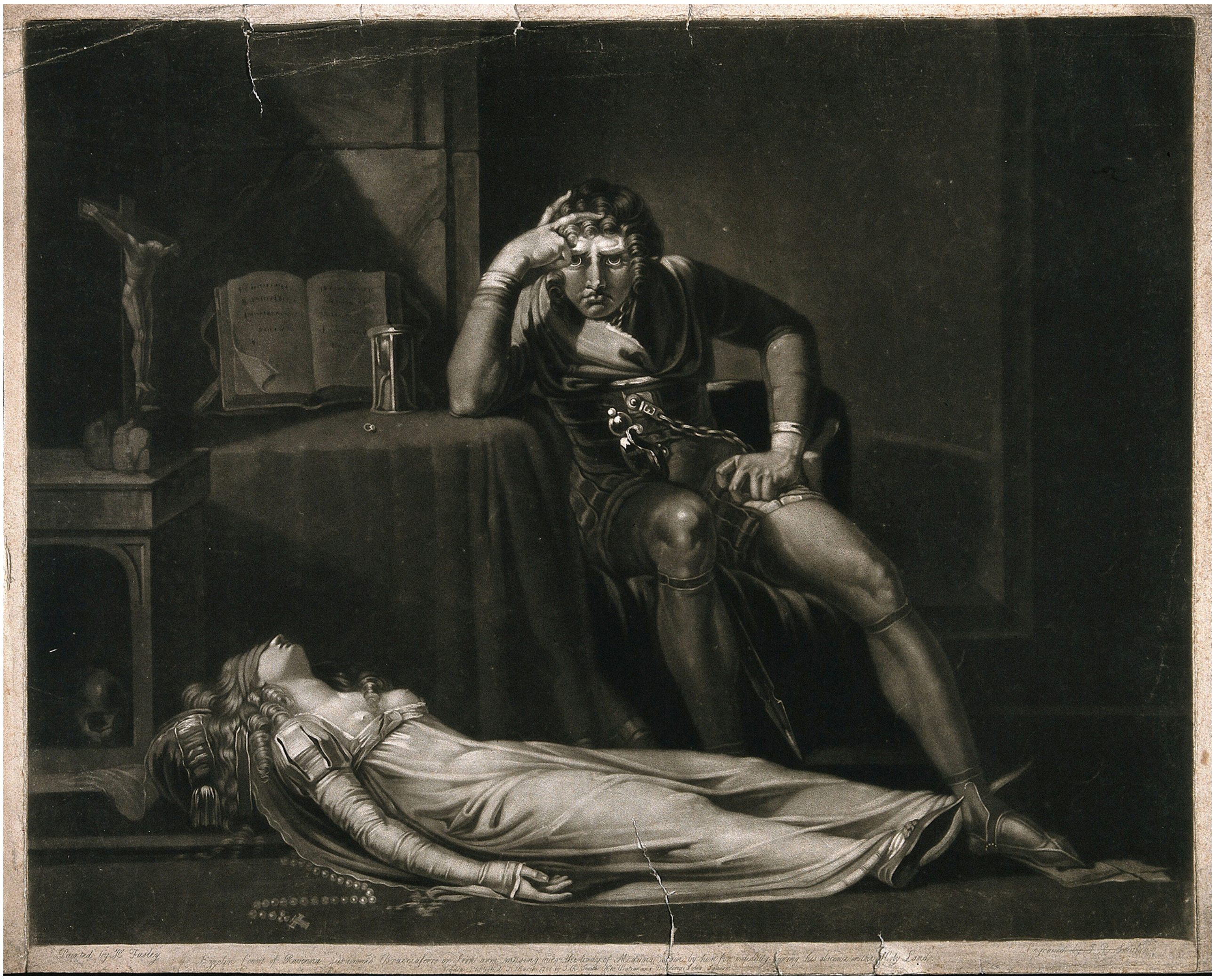
[77] *English Review; or, An Abstract of English and Foreign Literature* 13 (1789): 121-23 (on 123).


Blake sculp.
REV. JOHN CASPAR LAVATER
of Zurich. Born 1741. Died 1801.
Pub.d May 1.1800, by J. Johnson. in Saint Paul's Church Yard. London. from a Drawing in his Poſseſsion. taken in 1787

10. William Blake, "Rev. John Caspar Lavater" (3rd state, 1801). Collection of Robert N. Essick. Image courtesy of the *William Blake Archive*.



11. Henry Fuseli, *Dispute between Hotspur, Glendower, Mortimer, and Worcester* (1784). 211 x 180 cm. Birmingham Museums Trust/Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, 1947P6. Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CC0.



12. John Raphael Smith (after Henry Fuseli), "Ezzelin Count of Ravenna Surnamed Bracciaferro or Iron Arm, Musing over the Body of Meduna, Slain by Him for Infidelity during His Absence in the Holy Land" (1781). Wellcome Collection, 46766i, <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/c8srwvev>.

terms than was usual for the industry.[78] Take, for example, Blake's wash drawing of Fertilization of Egypt, now in the collection of the British Museum, which appears to mediate between a very rough line drawing by Fuseli and his own polished engraving as published in Erasmus Darwin's *The Botanic Garden* (1791). This evidence is especially telling, since the figure of the rain god, barely discernible in the Fuseli, assumes Urizenic features in the print.[79] It suggests, at the very least, a reciprocity of ideas (between Blake and Fuseli as well as Blake in his different professional roles), even if it cannot confirm that the designer and engraver were creative partners. One final clue that Blake may have shaped the design for *Aphorisms on Man* is found further afield, in his own work. He had at least enough claim to the composition to repurpose it for the frontispiece to his collection of poems *Songs of Innocence* (illus. 13), a work dated only one year later.[80] Here, the male figure is not quietly withdrawn from the world but framed within a lively pastoral setting. Poised in contrapposto, he cuts a graceful, classicizing figure as he looks up toward the source of interruption—a buoyant child above his left shoulder. If we read the first poem of the book alongside the image, we find that he has paused momentarily from piping to listen to the laughing child, which leads to further merry music. But the closing stanzas describe the transformation of the piper from a rustic musician to an author of books: "Piper sit thee down and write / In a book that all may read." The divine origin of the message suggests a prophecy, an association that returns us to Blake and his authorial motivations.[81] The intertextual dialogue between *Aphorisms on Man* and *Songs of Innocence* strengthens a partial claim to authorship. Like Fuseli penning his *Aphorisms on Art*, Blake made the work his own.

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[78] Todd 175. Todd makes the same case for Blake's engraving of Michelangelo after Fuseli, which, he argues, was based on a rough sketch and worked up by Blake. There is, however, evidence to suggest that Fuseli may have made equally rough drawings for other engravers. Weinglass points out that he gave John June a very rudimentary drawing for the plate of David and Goliath as published in Willoughby's *Practical Family Bible* (1772). The drawing, now preserved in the Swedish National Museum, is significantly different from the final plate. See Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations* 90-91.

[79] Roe 160, 174. More recently, Martin Priestman has suggested that Fuseli's role remained "embryonic" and that "a great deal of the final picture's detail is purely the work of … William Blake" (105). Essick and Rosamund A. Paice survey the debate over the artists' respective contributions and propose that the sketch of a sistrum on the verso of Fuseli's drawing was added by Blake (88). John Beer and Susan Matthews have convincingly taken the middle path and argued that the engraving reflects an active dialogue between the artists (Beer 35, 38; Matthews 45-47).

23 This position, which I share with Todd and others, means that the engraving traverses the same murky waters between fidelity and originality that Fuseli had to navigate in his role as translator. Just as we cannot be sure to what extent we read Fuseli or Lavater, neither can we confidently demarcate the boundary between Fuseli and his engraver. Moreover, it seems to me that Blake relishes the opportunity to outdo his colleague—challenging Fuseli using a borrowed visual vernacular. But how should this shape our reading of the image, or indeed the book? One enticing path forward is to embrace the authorial ambiguity that the frontispiece supports visually.

24 For this reading to work, we must first attend to the established frontispiece conventions that Blake subverts. His singular male protagonist, for example, is strongly reminiscent of an evangelist shown in the act of penning his gospel. Caravaggio's *The Inspiration of Saint Matthew* or Michelangelo's prophet Isaiah on the Sistine Chapel ceiling are familiar early modern variations of the medieval iconographic formula that usually also featured an "angel as a spectacular apparition emerging from heaven at a distance above and behind."[82] Such portraits visualized divine intervention in the creative act. The angel in the frontispiece, together with the epigraph on the title page ("è cœlo descendit γνωθι σεαυτον" [It descended from heaven Know thyself]), confirms that divine power is operative here too. But thereafter Blake departs from canonical sources by depicting his "author" without a quill or pen. The male figure lays his free hand flat on the surface before him. If we take into consideration the collaborative nature of *Aphorisms on Man*, it is perhaps intentional that the frontispiece is equivocal. The figure could be the author, the translator, the engraver, or all three at once, since each had a hand in the making of the book. In this way, the frontispiece can be said to welcome the same intellectual exercise required of the aphorisms themselves.[83] It encourages the reader/viewer to pause and reassess initial assumptions.

25 With these frames in place, we can return to the details of the final engraving that Blake would have us consider more carefully. The hollow space below the seated figure is no longer filled with an assortment of artifacts resembling masks, cranial casts, or real human skulls, as in the drawing. Instead, it boasts the accoutrements of a library—a collection of tomes and an overturned hourglass. If the discarded accessories resemble the death masks that Lavater privileged as ideal evidence for physiognomic inquiry, Blake pursues a different theme. The books connote knowledge, but the blank page of the open volume insists on a specific kind: self-definition. One learns something of oneself, as per the inaugural maxim, through the active and introspective practices of close reading and thoughtful annotation. Remember that the final aphorism explicitly emboldens the reader to put pen or pencil to paper: "If you mean to know yourself, interline such of these aphorisms as affected you agreeably in reading, and set a mark to such as left a sense of uneasiness with you." The importance placed on making known one's ideas evokes the autobiographical practice of the Swiss-French *philosophe* Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose work Fuseli admired. It also shifts emphasis from the legible surfaces of the body to the invisible contours of the mind. Whereas Lavater argued that the profile portrait offered unmediated access to the sitter it represented, Rousseau conceptualized it as a tool of concealment.[84] Profiles, after all, reveal only one half of the face. Instead, Rousseau believed in bringing a true and distinct self into focus through a conscious exploration of his thoughts in writing. The reader/viewers of *Aphorisms on Man* were similarly equipped to emerge from the experience knowing their own minds.[85] This interpretation opens up another

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[80] Essick, *Commercial Book Illustrations* 41.

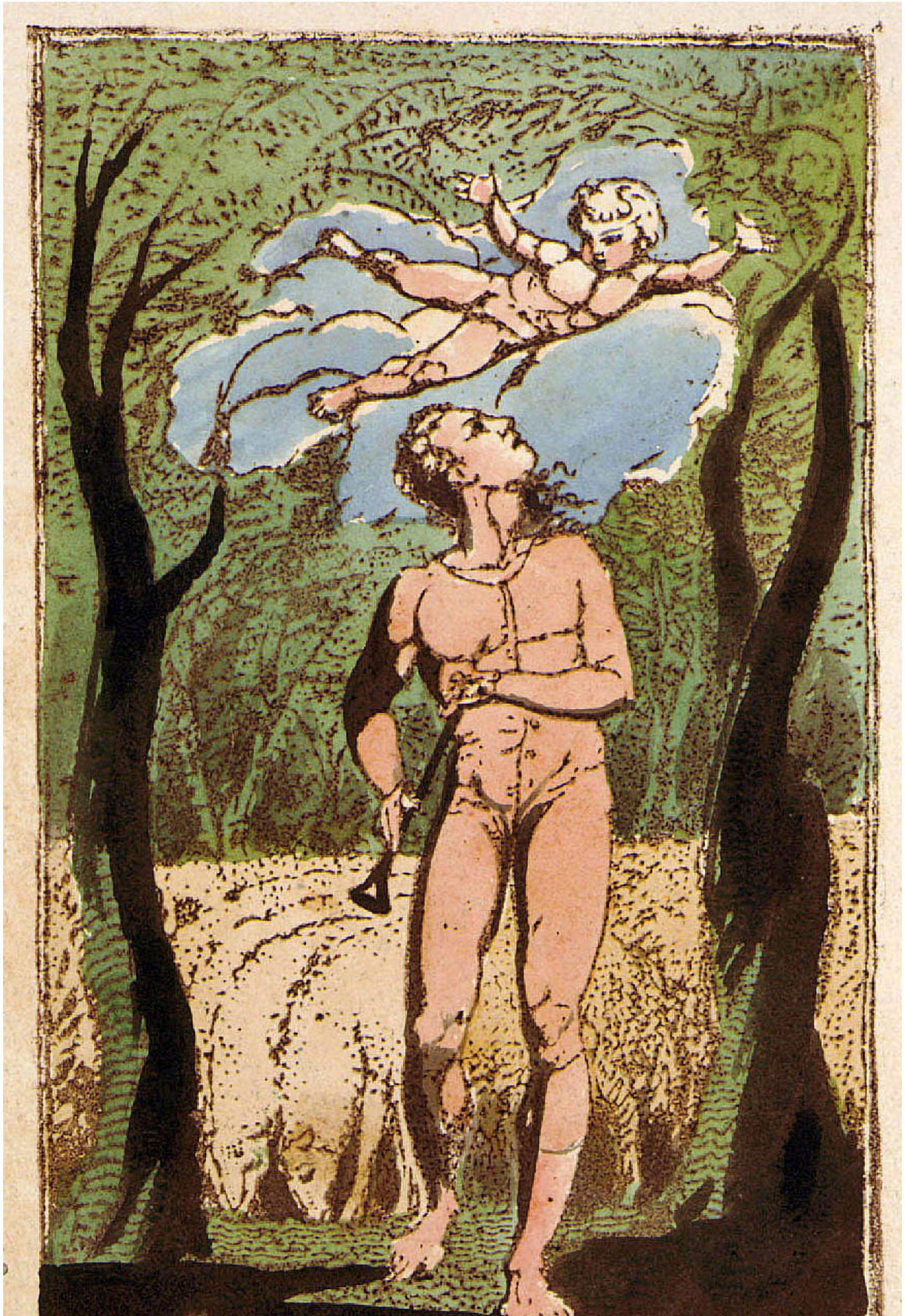
[81] Mitchell 128-29.

[82] Lavin 79. Fuseli made a drawing after Michelangelo's prophet between 1776 and 1778. See Schiff no. 672.

[83] Fuseli explained to his biographer Knowles "that an aphorism … ought not to contain its own explication" (Knowles 1: 160).

[84] MacCannell 286; Rousseau, "Préambule du manuscrit de Neufchâtel," *Œuvres complètes* 1: 1149-50.

[85] Both Erdman (E 883) and Erle (*Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 116) note the emphasis that the book places on self-awareness.



13. William Blake, frontispiece to *Songs of Innocence* copy B (composed and printed 1789). 11 x 7 cm. Library of Congress, Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, call no. PR4144.S6 1789b. Image courtesy of the *William Blake Archive*.

possibility for the pensive youth. As a neoclassical ideal, he is a candidate for the superlative anonym—an allegory of the self. He is the very self that readers discovered through their intimate engagement with the book.

Reading: Dissenting in the Margins

26 The material nature of *Aphorisms on Man* supports the idea that the book functioned as an exercise in self-discovery. Its wide margins and the generous space between aphorisms allowed not only for simple marks but also for the kind of discursive annotation contained in Blake's personal copy, now in the collection of the Huntington Library. Its small format (octavo) made it exceptionally mobile; it could be set on a bedside table or carried in a pocket. As one contemporary reviewer asserted, it was also a book that *wanted* to be read more than once.[86] We know that Blake returned to it several times, since his annotations cross-reference each other.[87] Other evidence, such as staining and damage, implies that it was well loved by him, if not also lent to friends.[88] The latter is speculative, but taking seriously the prospect that he shared his copy returns us to the question of self-presentation. Blake was not alone in responding to the book as instructed; many copies of *Aphorisms on Man* contain marks.[89] Neither was this unusual. Writing marginalia was common in the eighteenth century, and as one scholar has demonstrated, handwritten notes were "identified with named individuals (normally the owners of the books) and understood to reflect their personal views."[90] Thus scholars have increasingly turned to Blake's annotations as a means to access his ideas. Scott Juengel, for example, compellingly argues that the marginalia register "the minute calibrations of his [Blake's] critical sympathy and retreat as if annotation were a viable substitute for the conversable world" (707). Crucial here is the fact that Blake addresses a reader or a community of readers. The implication of the command "and then shew your copy to whom you please" (*Aphorisms* 224) is that once complete with manuscript notes, *Aphorisms on Man* became a "portrait" of its owner—intelligible to others.[91] Apprehending the book as a literary equivalent of a self-portrait reminds us that the image is mediated—that it cannot provide perfect "access to a 'real' Blake" or any reader.[92] Nonetheless, it is fair to assume that the marginalia illuminate something of Blake's thought, especially concerning social relations.

27 Insofar as the book allows us to better understand Blake, we can also invert the lens and use Blake to further explore the authorial complexities of *Aphorisms on Man*.[93] There is evidence to suggest that Blake invited others to contribute to his unfolding conversation with Fuseli and Lavater on its pages. He wrote most of his annotations horizontally in black ink, prompting speculation that notes written otherwise may be those of another reader. For example, the word "Admirable!" is written vertically in pencil in the margin on page 10 beside aphorism 20, a deviation that could indicate a different hand. Similarly, "no fumbler kisses" next to aphorism 503 on page 169 is written clumsily with a dull pencil, suggesting the same. The pencil lines through aphorism 287 on page 101, the word "unsophisticated" underneath, and the ochre ink that appears next to aphorisms 21 ("See 384") and 384 ("See 20 & 21") pose more difficulty. The handwriting is like Blake's elsewhere in the book, so it may be that he wrote these later using a different pen (or pencil).[94] Although we are not able to determine who may have read the book and when, these clues substantiate the theory that he extended the call to annotate among friends; in other words, that he solicited new voices—new authorial rivals.[95]

28 Blake is likely to have received his copy between May and July 1788 (E 883). He must have begun annotating it in its unbound state, since his notes run deep into the inner margins and appear as offsets on pages remote from their original placement. While he finds many of the aphorisms agreeable, underlining liberally and praising those that

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[86] *Critical Review: or, Annals of Literature* 66 (July-December 1788): 141-43.

[87] Earlier notes that address later ones could only have been written during secondary readings. See Erle, "Leaving Their Mark" 358.

[88] A note written by a subsequent owner, Robert Hoe, is pasted on the front flyleaf: "This copy which was Blake's, had to be rebound; it was in broken Sheepskin, & more than dirty." The book was rebound in ochre morocco by R. W. Smith and finished by F. Mansell (Essick, *Huntington Collections* 182; E 883).

[89] See, for example, copies held at Rare Books and Special Collections at McGill University, the Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center at the University of Chicago, Harvard University Library, the Getty Research Institute, and the Wellcome Collection. The copy at McGill (Blake 2.1 L3A6 1789), which belonged to John Sherwen (M.D., Member of the Royal College of Physicians, also of the Royal College of Surgeons and corresponding member of the Medical Society of London), contains underlined words, lines, curly brackets (braces), x notations, and notes written in pencil and black pen by different hands. It should be noted that no other copy that I have encountered is as wonderfully discursive as Blake's.

[90] Jackson 60. This is consistent with *Aphorisms on Man*. Blake inscribed his name twice (once below that of Lavater and once on the flyleaf); other copies of the book, including many of those listed above, contain the names of their owners. See also Bloom 84-85.

[91] Hall makes a similar observation, stating that the book functioned as a vade-mecum that provided "an instant psychological profile of the reader" (135).

[92] Snart, "Recentering" 137.

[93] See Snart, *The Torn Book* 22-23.

[94] E 883. For a discussion of Blake's annotating practices, see Snart, "Recentering" 141, 145-46.

[95] Erle stresses the collaborative nature of reading ("Leaving Their Mark" 358).

strike him as true using exclamations such as "Most Excellent" and "Pure gold," he also asserts himself when he disagrees, judging specific aphorisms "false" or observing that they make him feel "very uneasy." Some of the aphorisms produce more complex responses, especially those that make him uncomfortable because he finds them to be true, such as no. 518, "You may have hot enemies without having a warm friend; but not a fervid friend without a bitter enemy. The qualities of your friends will be those of your enemies: cold friends, cold enemies—half friends, half enemies—fervid enemies, warm friends," to which he responds with an X and "very Uneasy indeed but truth." He had learned this from personal experience; his enmities burned as brightly as his friendships. In addition to his discursive engagement, Blake also read with an editorial eye. He corrects small typographical errors, like those noted on the errata page, and revises aphorisms based on his own ideas. An interesting example is no. 549, where he substitutes antonyms: "He, who ~~hates~~ [loves] the wisest and best of men, ~~hates~~ [loves] the Father of men; for where is the Father of men to be seen but in the most perfect of his children?" Reinforcing his position, he responds in the margin with "This is true worship." Although the meaning remains unchanged—that we find god in the best of humankind irrespective of whether we love or hate our fellow mortals—it is love that makes the recognition of the divine in man the basis of true worship. The change is subtle, but it encapsulates what Blake seeks to accomplish with his marginalia. Transforming the page into "a site of contestable authority," as Jason Snart has argued, he critiques Fuseli's Lavater while at the same time establishing common philosophical ground.[96] One must locate unisons and discords with others in order to know and better oneself.

29 Finally, Blake's thoughts are not limited by what appears on the page, since he engages with his own ideas as expressed in other annotations and external sources. These intra- and intertextual connections create a rich countertext that leads the reader in directions that only Blake could determine. One annotation that speaks directly to his relationship with the book as a collaborator is found on page 7. Here, he underlines the concluding line of aphorism 14, "The object of your love is your God," to which he responds, "This should be written in gold letters on our temples." Erle has offered several interpretative pathways for the ambiguous line. The word "temple," she ventures, "could mean church, in which case it would be a critique of the institution which neglected to tell believers [of the true nature of their religion], or it could mean forehead, in which case it would be an expression of moral character."[97] I find the former reading more compelling for its intertextual specificity. Pliny tells us that "Know thyself" was one of a series of maxims inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi, "written in letters of gold." Blake may be suggesting that "The object of your love is your God" is the modern equivalent of that ancient aphorism and should be carved on Christian churches in the same manner as the oracular truths on the temple of Apollo. If this is correct, he is also nodding to the Greek aphorism itself, which he could not but have discussed with Fuseli while engraving the frontispiece. Fuseli likely chose ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ, since he provides the first letter in his drawing, but neither should we rule out the possibility that Blake proposed the idea.[98] In any case, his annotations suggest more than a casual engagement with the aphorisms. In many ways, Blake assumes the responsibility of the ideal reader, modeling the critical engagement that Fuseli envisioned when he wrote his concluding aphorism as a command.

30 Finally, it is important to emphasize that Blake's revisions and critical comments do not indicate that he found *Aphorisms on Man* to be unsuccessful. Rather, they suggest that, like Fuseli, he thought to improve it.[99] On the last printed page, he justified his comments in these exact terms: "I hope no one will call what I have written cavilling because he may think my remarks of small consequence For I write from the warmth of my heart. & cannot resist the impulse I feel to rectify what I think false in a book I love so much. & approve so generally" (p. 224). He expressed his admiration even further by inscribing his name on the title page below that of Lavater, enclosing them together inside a heart (illus. 14). I think it is safe to conclude that this is a gesture of friendship, although we should be careful to distinguish what kind.[100] Whereas Lavater stressed like-mindedness between friends, Blake rebuffed William Hayley's concept of companionship as a "Sweet subduer of all mental strife."[101] Instead, he pressed upon the important role of conflict in maintaining worthwhile interpersonal relationships. On plate 20 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in the raging surf below an awful vision of Leviathian, he declares unequivocally that "Opposition is True Friendship."[102] This declaration returns us to the proposition that I dismissed in

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[96] Snart, "Recentering" 137.

[97] Erle, *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 117.

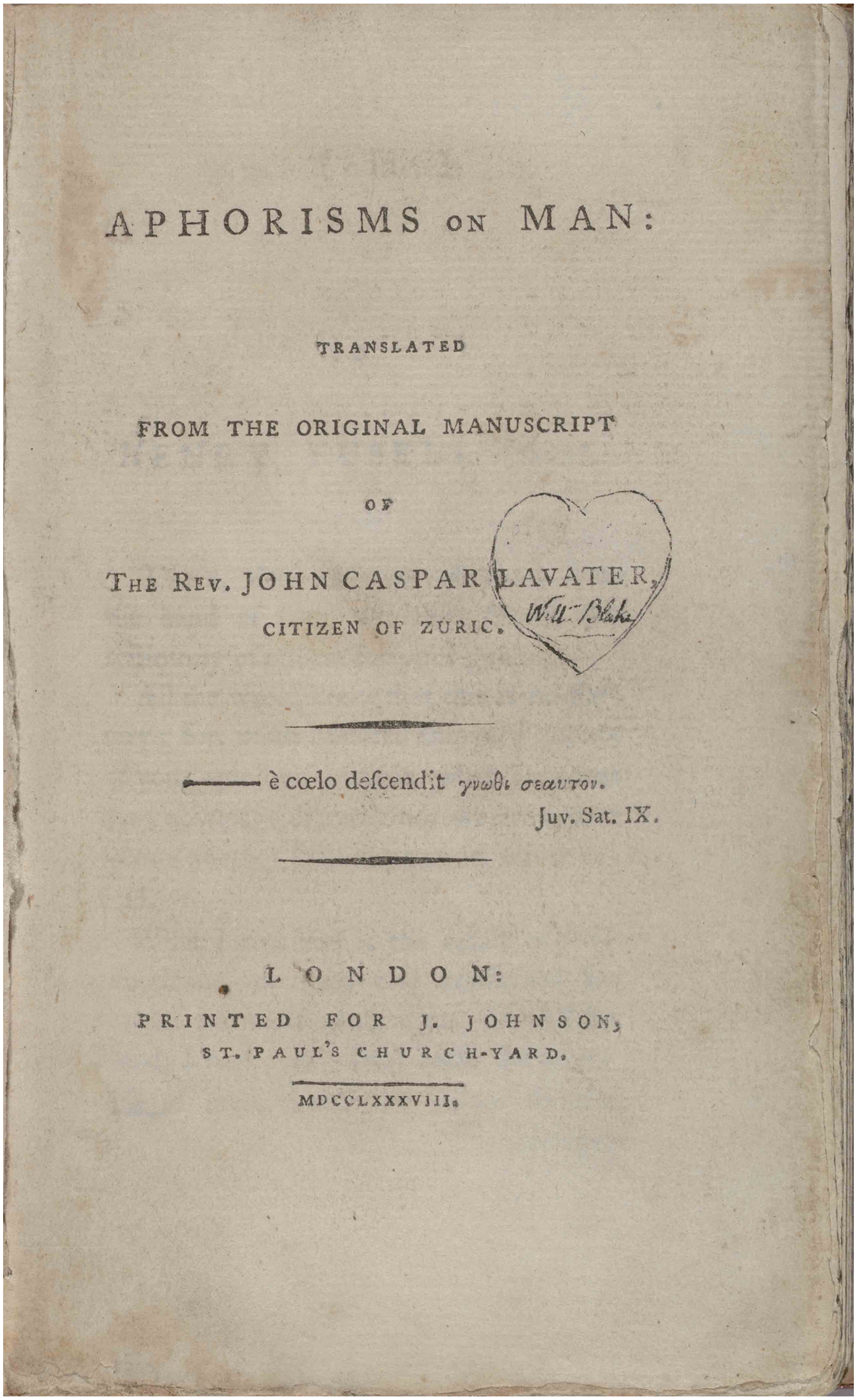
[98] We should also consider the fact that Fuseli often chose Greek inscriptions to embellish his drawings (and, notably, for portraits of himself). Todd ventures that Fuseli provided the inscription, since Blake had no knowledge of Greek at this time (174).

[99] Like Fuseli, Blake exceeded his revisions and went on to pen his own aphorisms, "Proverbs of Hell." See Essick, *Commercial Book Illustrations* 41; Erle, "Leaving Their Mark" 351; Hall 136.

[100] Erle, *Blake, Lavater and Physiognomy* 100.

[101] William Hayley, *Poems and Plays, by William Hayley, Esq.*, 6 vols. (London: Printed for T. Cadell, 1785) 3: 25.

[102] See, for example, *Marriage* copy A. For more on Blake and opposition, see Mee and Haggarty 5.



APHORISMS ON MAN:

TRANSLATED

FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

OF

THE REV. JOHN CASPAR LAVATER,
CITIZEN OF ZURIC.

Will: Blake

—— è cœlo deſcendit γνωθι σεαυτον.
Juv. Sat. IX.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
MDCCLXXXVIII.

14. Title page of Blake's copy of J. C. Lavater, *Aphorisms on Man* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1788). Huntington Library, San Marino, California, call no. 57431. Image courtesy of the *William Blake Archive*.

the introduction—the idea that the book is a "product of friendship." Erle may be correct after all. However, we must acknowledge that this friendship, with its openness toward rivalry, is of a Blakean sort—one that embraces conflict as a precondition for progress.

Conclusion

31 In calling upon its reader/viewers to focus on their thoughts in the private act of reading, *Aphorisms on Man* may be understood as participating in a broader psychosociological shift. As Dror Wahrman has argued, those once predisposed to resist self-scrutiny began to look inward at exactly this moment in the late eighteenth century. *Aphorisms on Man* aligns with the new identity regime that Wahrman describes as emerging in tandem with Romanticism to the degree that it privileges "the characterization of self in terms of psychological depth; the emphasis on human difference and individuality; the rekindled interest in innate, intuitive, and instinctive traits or behaviors, [and] the developmental perspective on human growth."[103] As a novel interface between the self and others, the book functioned as an ideal terrain for elaborating modern selfhood. But, as I have argued, this was true not only for its reader/viewers, but also for its authors. It is only when we look closer at the working relationships behind *Aphorisms on Man* and other early modern translations like *Essays on Physiognomy* that we see the importance of rivalry as well as friendship. Shifting emphasis away from physiognomy, Fuseli used his translations as platforms to assert an authorial identity that complemented his artistic ambitions and rising professional stature. And, as if recognizing the authorial ambiguity already operative in his loose translation, he invited Blake to do the same with the frontispiece design. Although not radical in the usual political sense associated with books published under the auspices of Joseph Johnson, *Aphorisms on Man* bred its own critical form of dissent. Its contributors—author, translator, engraver, and readers—wrote or rewrote the book in their own images.

32 While "Designed to Promote the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind" in a similar spirit to the *Essays*, *Aphorisms on Man* ultimately pursued a different goal. Instead of proving formal relationships between internal and external traits, it invited readers to learn about themselves through the practices of reading and writing. It created, as it were, a portrait of the mind. Indeed, according to Alexander Gilchrist, "Blake showed his notes to Fuseli; who said one assuredly could read their writer's character in *them*."[104] While I agree that the marginalia allow us to glimpse something of Blake's philosophy, I propose that we examine his copy with the same prudence as Rousseau when faced with a profile—mindful of the fact that while it reproduces a likeness, it shows us only one side. Finally, a book as clever as *Aphorisms on Man* similarly prompts us to reconsider the limits of our own methodological frameworks. Turning it inside out to consider how it was made, as I have done, prompts new thinking about authorship in light of the ambiguities of translation.

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[103] Wahrman 290.

[104] Gilchrist 1: 62.

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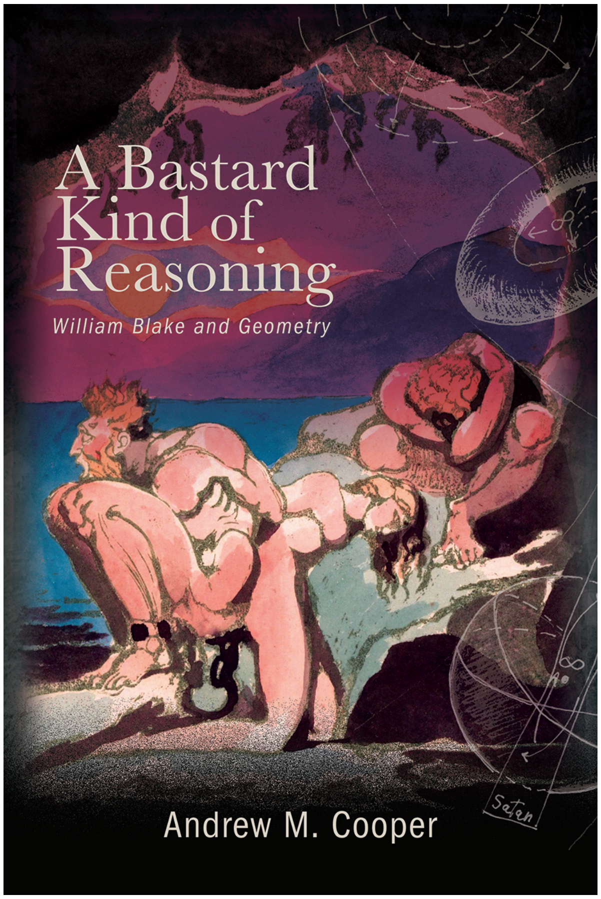
REVIEW

Andrew M. Cooper. *A Bastard Kind of Reasoning: William Blake and Geometry*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2023. xvi + 323 pp. $99.00, hardcover; also available in paperback and as an e-book.

Reviewed by Sharon Choe

Sharon Choe (sharon.choe@hum.ku.dk) is a Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Copenhagen, where she researches representations of Norse death and ritual in eighteenth-century British literature, and British cultural politics. Her doctoral research examined Blake's engagement with Old Norse myth and culture in his development of a disabled body politic. Her broad interests include the medical humanities, disability studies, and political theories.



1 ANDREW Cooper's *A Bastard Kind of Reasoning: William Blake and Geometry* is a thorough and complex examination of the illuminated books alongside geometry, Enlightenment science, and phenomenology. It claims that "Blake did not simply reject Newton, geometry, and science" (2) and positions itself alongside Donald Ault's *Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton* (1974). Cooper, with his provocatively tongue-in-cheek title, is eager to differentiate his views from Ault's and offers "a less binary, more interinvolved, yin-yang or Blakean-Contrary view of the relation of Eternity to three-dimensional existence" (12). His main argument hinges on the suggestion that geometry is in fact "cosmology," a term that will be familiar to scholars working on the illuminated books. Cooper establishes that "Blake's engagements with geometry were not incidental but key to how he understood the workings of the universe" (6), and that prophecy is a transmission of a geometric vision (235). The opening discussion on Blake's *Newton* print acknowledges the general consensus that Blake is anti-Newtonian, before boldly shifting gears. While musing over the design's paradoxical nature, Cooper claims that *Newton* reveals a post-Newtonian mindset. The rest of the book extends into a steady revision of the illuminated books with Enlightenment (meta)physics and math. Of course, *A Bastard Kind of Reasoning* does not aim to cover the breadth of Blake's repertoire, but what Cooper offers is a thought-provoking—and sometimes challenging—reconsideration of Blake's relationship with science, and its impact on his visionary universe.

Geometry as Cosmology

2 This is perhaps the most interesting claim, and it is indeed the driving force of the argument. To support this assertion, Cooper centers most of his discussion around spacetime and a careful reassessment of perception. While the majority of the book pivots around Enlightenment science —thus further contextualizing Blake's imagery—Cooper does not shy away from using modern mathematical theorems and hypotheses to conceptualize the paradoxes within Blake's universe. For example, he reexamines the frontispiece to *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* in light of the Klein bottle—a higher-dimensional Möbius strip—and phenomenology to conclude that the design is illusory and representative of "how the natural order exceeds all human conceptual systems for imagining it, so allowing new concepts to emerge, inexhaustibly" (19). In some ways, what *A Bastard Kind of Reasoning* does is not to offer brand new revelations about the source material. What it provides is a scientifically driven guide to these poems and their designs; in an incisive manner, Cooper recenters discussions con-

cerning the (im)materiality of Blake's vision around scientific hypotheses. As such, the book moves from poem to poem, trope to trope, to confirm that "Blake himself … wanted to exploit the imaginative reach of formal abstractions to generate a model of how the physical world extends beyond ordinary human sense" (41).

3 There is a nice balance between close readings of the illuminated books, summaries of eighteenth-century scientific output, and mathematics. The novelty of Cooper's discussion lies in the way that he deftly transitions between all three, with the help of visuals. *A Bastard Kind of Reasoning* is heavily illustrated throughout, as one might expect, but the smattering of mathematical illustrations between Blake's designs is a pleasant surprise. They alleviate the sheer volume of scientific terminology and theory that directs the argument and, as a result, they clarify the connections between geometry and Blake's universe building.

Geometrical Perception and Visions

4 A question that *A Bastard Kind of Reasoning* tries to answer is "how, if the perception of matter's immateriality is natural and innocent … it somehow gave way to the prevailing belief of matter's impenetrable hardness and solidity" (82). Discussions on perception and vision augment the overarching argument about space-time, as demonstrated in Cooper's examination of Blake's Mundane Soul. Here, he suggests that the Mundane Soul is exploited to develop a cosmology of space-time that is plastic—where Creation, Fall, and Apocalypse are ongoing events. He further relates this to prophecy and the way that Albion "houses the prophet's reluctant acknowledgment of the past's necessary drag on the present, without which the future would lack any real connection to time and passage" (186). The book gently builds on each chapter to push our understanding of how Blake collapses time, space, and perception. While the density of the points can be daunting, the argument is always clear: Blake gleans from an array of sources a fourth dimension that can "impart depth, space, and freedom of motion to the rigid Euclidean geometry of the New Science" (117).

5 Cooper does not just consider perception and vision *within* the illuminated books; he also addresses our own critical purview as scholars. He invites readers to separate their analysis of Blake from the sociopolitical issues that many scholars are prone to rely on. While he does not deny the importance of historical context, he boldly states that we should not cling to the historicist underpinnings to Blake's work. In doing so, he draws attention once more to the book's raison d'être: visualizing Blake's fourth-dimensional vision. Cooper is careful not to return to the structuralism and systemization of Blake's works, most visible in Northrop Frye and S. Foster Damon, but he suggests that thinking about space-time as a physical field will naturally contribute to our understanding of how Blake's work addresses sociopolitical issues (20-21). This is a refreshing take on the relevance of Blake's prophetic power across history, which, he argues, is due to Blake's ability to think about inheritors—which we, in turn, can use to consider his vision within present-day analogues (21). The book's argument, then, is also a self-reflexive exercise where we confront our own perceptions of Blake so that we may independently see his vision.

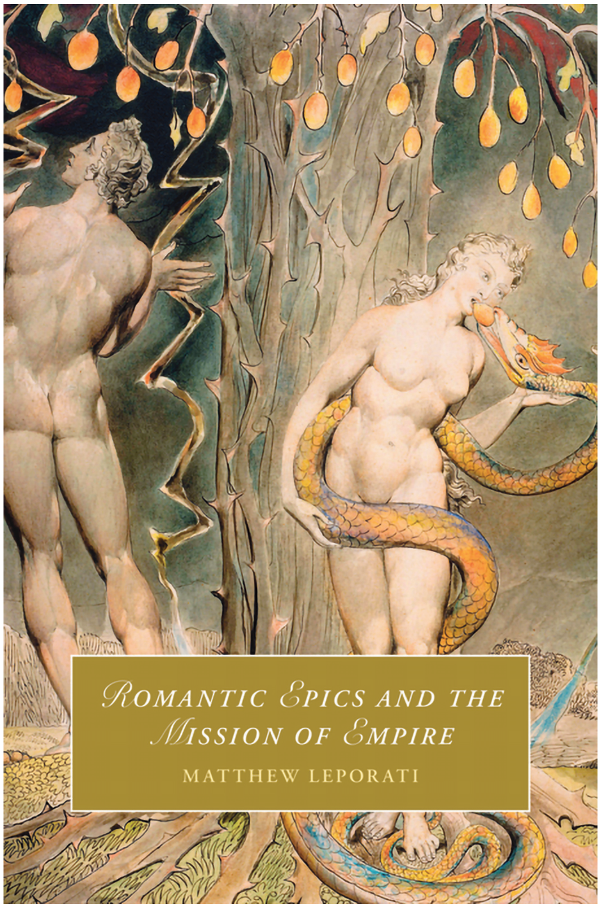
6 *A Bastard Kind of Reasoning* takes some of the contradictions found within the illuminated books and offers an answer through geometry. The title itself is a playful double entendre of what one might find within the book: a reconstituted view of Blake and Enlightenment that begins with prior work on the subject and then ends with an alternative analysis that seeks to unite reason and imagination within Blake's work. Cooper reinforces what is already known, such as Blake's knowledge of Joseph Priestley and Erasmus Darwin through Joseph Johnson, before revising Blake's world through ideas like fractals (61-83), Cartesian space (128-32), Neoplatonism (chapter 5), and the works of R. J. Boscovich, George Berkeley, and David Hartley, to name a few. The book is a valuable addition to the field and would be of interest to many who work on Blake, science, and theories of objectivity, like phenomenology. The depth of knowledge that it demands may make it a challenging read for those who are not theoretically inclined, so it is perhaps not an introductory text to Blake and science. Nevertheless, *A Bastard Kind of Reasoning* is an engaging read and a surprisingly succinct exploration of how Enlightenment science and geometry contribute to Blake's vision of the universe.

REVIEW

Matthew Leporati. *Romantic Epics and the Mission of Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024. ix + 295 pp. £85.00/ $110.00, hardcover; also available as an e-book.

Reviewed by Jason Whittaker

Jason Whittaker (jwhittaker@lincoln.ac.uk) works in the College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities at the University of Lincoln. He is the author and editor of several works on Blake, including *William Blake and the Myths of Britain* (Palgrave, 1999), *Radical Blake: Influence and Afterlife from 1827* (with Shirley Dent, Palgrave, 2002), *Divine Images: The Life and Work of William Blake* (Reaktion Books, 2021), and *Jerusalem: Blake, Parry, and the Fight for Englishness* (Oxford University Press, 2022). His main research interests deal with the reception of Blake, and he is the editor of the site *Zoamorphosis* and one of the editors for Global Blake.



1 Matthew Leporati's wide-ranging and compelling study considers two features of the Romantic era that are rarely contemplated side by side: the explosion of epic poetry at the turn of the nineteenth century and the turn toward a more evangelical and proselytizing form of Christian missionary activity. The latter is, as Leporati observes, often in opposition to the demands of empire in the early stages of colonization, but then is effectively co-opted into colonial activities as the century progresses. His book deals only tangentially with Blake, the subject of one of its chapters, but in many respects Blake's writing in general and *Milton a Poem* in particular fuel several of the more critical conclusions.

2 *Romantic Epics and the Mission of Empire* is divided into two main parts, beginning with an overview that bounds through a series of epic poems—some of them famous, or relatively so, such as Keats's *Hyperion* and Henry James Pye's *Alfred*, but many more obscure even at the time of their composition. On a general note, what is astonishing in this first section of the book is how many epic poems were written during the Romantic period. As the author observes in his introduction, the "vast and unprecedented production of epics suggests that writers found in this ancient genre unique tools to speak to the tensions of the historical moment" (1). In the following chapter, "Epic Conversions," Leporati provides one of the most succinct and useful definitions of that metamorphic genre, and demonstrates that this prodigious production gave the lie to the notion that epic declined with the end of aristocratic patronage and the rise of the novel. By contrast, he suggests that it was a suitably elevated means to engage with the aspirations—both lofty and, inevitably, often degrading—of empire. In this, it paralleled the revival of history painting at the end of the eighteenth century. A core theme of the book is how Romantic-era epics frequently interact with evangelical enterprises, something dealt with in considerable detail in the second and third chapters, which explore the revival of the missionary enterprise and the links between epic and heroic conversion narratives. If epic is a means to lift up national consciousness (for, as Leporati demonstrates, epic is, with only a few exceptions, both implicitly and explicitly a genre of the nation), its coincidence with missionary activity is also no historical accident, being prompted in part by a change in focus in Anglican theology from administering to the elect to achieving salvation through faith.

3 And yet this combination of heroic epic and evangelical missionary activity was not always a happy, nor even a necessary, one. As Leporati points out, early missionaries were frequently at odds with the activities of empire, not only in the South Americas, where Catholic priests saw the depredations of slavery as distinctly un-Christian, but also in India, where the mercantile and mercenary perspective of the East India Company frequently viewed any attempt to save souls as a hindrance to the more prosperous activity of exploiting bodies. Nonetheless, within a generation the activities of missionaries increasingly harmonized with those of temporal imperial powers and, through detailed readings of largely neglected epics such as Thomas Beck's *The Mission* (1796) and Thomas Williams's *The Missionary* (1795), Leporati explores with considerable nuance the shifting tensions that existed between empire and Christianity.

4 Despite our opening observation that this is a text that deals with Blake only in a minor explicit role, many writers discussed in *Romantic Epics* would have been read by him. What is more, Leporati draws attention to the significant role played by William Hayley in the revival of epic, through both his *Essay on Epic Poetry* and, more valuably, his important work as a biographer and editor of Milton. Whatever their other differences, conservatives and the liberal inheritors of the Whig tradition were keen to use epic to buttress national identity. Leporati's dictum that by "seeking to fix a stable British Protestant national and imperial identity" epic poets "posit[ed] an 'Other' that possesses both savage elements and uncanny resemblances to the British" (80) is a familiar one now, although few other writers have waded through the glut of long narrative poems that appeared from the 1790s onward. As he points out in chapter 3, "Heroes of Conquest and Conversion," many epics were deliberately and openly instructive—dogmatic, even—following the model laid down by Archbishop Fénelon's *Les Aventures de Télémaque* (1699). At their most overt, narratives such as Pye's *Alfred* (1801) or Sarah Leigh Pike's *Israel* (1795) celebrated a god-given hero as an emblem of the chosen nation, leading through divine right, subtly elided from absolutism to a more delicate form of constitutional monarchy. Yet even progressive poems such as John Thelwall's fragmentary *The Hope of Albion* tended to rely on the opposition of the Christian and the Other, even as they eschewed imperial violence.

5 Of the chapters dealing with individual authors and their epics in the second part, those other than Blake will be dealt with briefly here insofar as they demonstrate differences from or similarities to him. This is by no means a comment on the value of the individual readings: in at least three instances—Byron's *Don Juan*, Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, and Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*—these are perhaps more popular (or, at least, more frequently read) works than *Milton*, while Ann Yearsley's *Brutus* and Robert Southey's *Madoc* deserve to be better known than they are. Yearsley's "abbreviated epic" (108) and Southey's poem demonstrate more of the concerns of the middle classes toward burgeoning empire, exploring the belief that Britain did indeed possess some divine manifesto to convert the nations. Yet, argues Leporati, these two poems also exhibit considerable tension toward the practice of slavery and the subjugation of indigenous peoples. Equiano and Byron are included as examples of "more transgressive understandings of identity" (161) that could be pursued within the epic form; Equiano incorporated epic elements into his text to reconfigure himself as a hybrid figure, while Byron subverted not merely the themes but also the form of epic in his incomplete poem, features that Leporati suggests he shares with Blake.

6 Turning to Blake, the subject of chapter 7, Leporati suggests that Blake's purpose in his poetry follows what Saree Makdisi points to as humanity founded in heterogeneity, as in the invocation "And all must love the human form, / In heathen, turk or jew" in "The Divine Image." Such an approach denies a basis of self-identity formed from the tired binary of self/Other, a subversion matched by Blake's radical approach to epic, which undermines a genre based on themes of war and conquest. While *Milton* may appear to be a teleological epic, leading up to a crescendo where Milton confronts his own creation, Satan, the actual experience of reading the poem undermines the sense of cohesion that such narratives typically require. Rather, suggests Leporati, "The character of Satan spreads over the globe a punishment-obsessed interpretation of Christianity that attempts to assimilate all people into a single model of duty conducive to imperial oppression" (187). While Blake's version of Satan presents the devil as seeking to unite the world in submission, Milton becomes a counter-missionary who recognizes how he unwittingly promoted such a Satanic and imperial ideology.

7 While Leporati seeks to engage with a critique of Blake's cooption by colonial and evangelical orthodoxy, the strain of critical work over the past two decades that reconsiders Blake as a prophet *for* empire sometimes seems contrarian for its own sake. Certainly, Blake was frequently affected by a spreading colonial worldview where Britain saw itself beholden to its own form of manifest destiny, but, as Leporati points out, Blake's anti-classicist position is almost unique among his contemporaries and resists a neoclassical cult of self-sacrifice. As such, Blake opposes both the content of classical epics and their style. Likewise, while Milton had become subsumed during the eighteenth century as an icon of the British Protestant self in service to the state as a greater good, so Blake's *Milton* has to save that poet who was unknowingly of the devil's party from himself. Ulti-

mately, while Blake, like many of his contemporaries, may have wished to restore Christianity in Britain, his view of what such faith meant was very different from theirs.

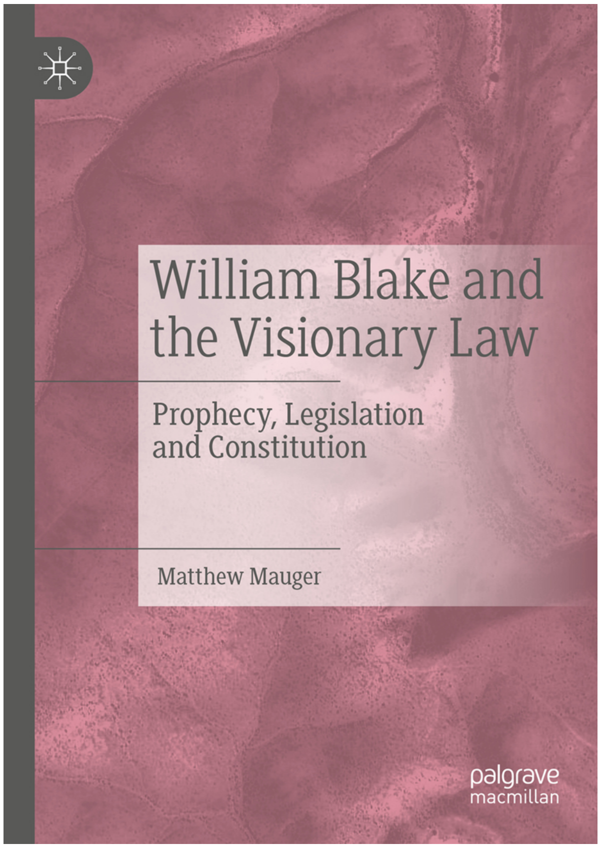
REVIEW

Matthew Mauger. *William Blake and the Visionary Law: Prophecy, Legislation and Constitution*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan-Springer Nature, 2023. xiii + 231 pp. £99.99/$119.99, hardcover; also available in paperback and as an e-book.

Reviewed by David Worrall

David Worrall (david.worrall@ntu.ac.uk) is Emeritus Professor of English at Nottingham Trent University. He is editor of *The Urizen Books* (1995), and (with Steve Clark) co-editor of *Historicizing Blake* (1994), *Blake in the Nineties* (1999), and *Blake, Nation and Empire* (2006). He was principal investigator (2004–06), with Keri Davies, on the AHRC project that helped uncover Blake's Moravian heritage and (with Nancy Jiwon Cho) on a charity-funded project (2010–12) identifying Dorothy Gott, the prophetic author who—like the Blakes—attended the 1789 Swedenborg conference. His monograph, *William Blake's Visions: Art, Hallucinations, Synaesthesia* (Palgrave Studies in Literature, Science, and Medicine), was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2024.

1 It is perhaps a bit disconcerting to find "antinomianism" resurfacing in the mid-2020s. Matthew Mauger's *William Blake and the Visionary Law: Prophecy, Legislation and Constitution* presents the thesis that "sustained interest in the antinomian resonances of Blake's corpus effectively distracts us from his consistent aspiration for the law as a framework which affords protection for Humanity against incoherence, dissolution, and despair" (8). This modification signals his point of departure from Jon Mee's *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (1992), Saree Makdisi's *William Blake and the Impossible History of the 1790s* (2003), and G. A. Rosso's *The Religion of Empire: Political Theology in Blake's Prophetic Symbolism* (2016), the leading exponents of tracing antinomian ideologies in Blake. Although Mauger proposes a distinctive path, these critics are referenced so frequently in *William Blake and the Visionary Law* that the book seems almost in constant dialogue with them.


William Blake and the Visionary Law
Prophecy, Legislation and Constitution
Matthew Mauger
palgrave macmillan

2 An immediate problem, however, is to work out exactly what antinomianism was (or was not). Mauger elects not to use citations such as one in the *OED* (from David Hume), "Antinomians … insisted, that the obligations of morality and natural law were suspended," a quotation that provides the gist of the term's meaning. Of course, for some scholars, antinomianism's original sin is that it is not a word that Blake ever used in his extant writings. The concept's ultimate critical progenitor in modern times was A. L. Morton's *The Everlasting Gospel: A Study in the Sources of William Blake* (1958), a work founded on tracing similarities between Blake's rhetorical stances and English seventeenth-century Levellers, Ranters, and Muggletonians. Morton was part of a wave of British postwar Marxist critics that included the historians Christopher Hill and E. P. Thompson. As Mauger comments, however, Morton "was unable to establish direct connections between these groups and Blake's own world" (4). And neither has anyone else. The journalist Henry Crabb Robinson, the only person known to have interviewed Blake face to face about his religious beliefs, told Dorothy Wordsworth in 1826 that his were "a strange compound of Christianity Spinosism [*sic*] & Platonism." Crabb Robinson knew what an antinomian was but apparently did not think that the description applied to Blake. Mau-

ger's consideration of Blake's degree of proximity to "antinomian dissent," "dissenting culture," and "radical dissenters," terms used frequently in the book, takes no account of the possible relevance of his mother's connection to the Moravians, a belief community that had austere dress codes and restrictions on marrying out.

3 Mauger provides a significant clarification of his own position with respect to antinomianism by recognizing an important insight in Jeanne Moskal's often overlooked study *Blake, Ethics, and Forgiveness* (1994). Moskal writes that "antinomianism, interwoven with law, consistently re-presents the obverse image of the system it seeks to escape" (quoted on p. 8), a crucial corrective providing Mauger with "critical authority" for his own study. In one of her essays—pre-dating Mee's influential usage of the term—Moskal describes even more provocatively the central conundrum that "antinomianism remains a parasite on the host of law."[1] For the reader of *William Blake and the Visionary Law*, Moskal's vivid analogy of 1988 may help to grasp the idea that Blake's impulse toward antinomian radicalism was tempered by the necessity of having laws stable and flexible enough to protect the Human Form Divine.

4 Blake's paintings are largely missing from Mauger's account, although there is a fascinating exploration of the biblical theme of adultery that includes a discussion (with a black-and-white plate) of the Butts watercolor *The Woman Taken in Adultery* (c. 1805). One would have loved to have had a systematic interrogation of how Blake handles figures such as Moses or Solomon, not to mention the notorious lawbreakers who crop up in the Visionary Heads. Otherwise, the book follows a straightforward chronology of Blake's writings, from *An Island in the Moon* to *Jerusalem* and covering just about everything else in between, including the ever-daunting terrain of *The Four Zoas*. Chapters 1 and 2 are largely introductory, contrasting the case for antinomian rebelliousness against the bedrock legal constitutionalism embodied in William Blackstone's four-volume *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765–69). Mauger returns several times to one of Blackstone's striking analogies for English law, "We inherit an old Gothic castle, erected in the days of chivalry, but fitted up for a modern inhabitant. The moated ramparts, the embattled towers, and the trophied halls, are magnificent and venerable, but useless" (quoted on p. 21). These Gothic edifices are "moated" and "embattled" by legal, statutory, and constitutional challenges that antinomianism spurns yet depends upon for ideological focus. Or, as Mauger puts it in what one might call law's eternal existential conundrum, the Gothic castle "might have been erected 'in days of chivalry,'" but it is now "'fitted up for a modern inhabitant'" (23). His strategy throughout is to chart Blake's relationship to religious, legal, and legislative codes, guided by the poet's "innate antinomian suspicion of constraining legal frameworks that ordain limits for behaviour, knowledge, sensory engagement, and imaginative potential" (210).

5 The book's principal hermeneutic technique is close reading, involving a myriad of elegant nuances largely beyond the scope of this review. Sometimes, however, Mauger provides a helpfully panoramic sweep: "In *The Book of Urizen*, *The Book of Ahania*, and *The Book of Los*, the mythology that Blake has introduced in *The Book of Thel*, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* develops into a cosmology, an account of the development of a human world called into being through an act of legal definition" (92). At a more detailed level, according to Mauger, the symptomatic antinomian "stony law" that Orc "stamp[s] to dust" in *America a Prophecy* is considered something less than a positive revolutionary activity: "Orc's fires burn down the ancient constitutions, his violent attacks will 'stamp the stony law to dust,' but they propose no apparent alternative, no basis upon which the 'right' of a new social organisation might be based" (101). Drawing on a later period of Blake's writings in analyzing the closing plates of *Jerusalem*, Mauger argues that the poem's culminating "Covenant of Jehovah" is "a dispensation based on community and shared humanity rather than self-indulgent individual antinomian sovereignty" (196). Both examples seem to imply reversions toward a civic mean of harmony, but without Blake's having identified any "new social organisation" to maintain community survival.

6 If the specifics of the *Visionary Law* subtitle may prove elusive to some readers, the mythological layers of London in *Jerusalem* are tantalizingly described: "The London that coalesces within the poem is nevertheless inconstant and evolving, a space over which the core protagonists fight for constitutional control in their desire to build—or to corrupt—Jerusalem" (197). As Mauger points out, "It is clear that the city that has taken shape within London is very far from the elegant symmetry of Jerusalem" (198). In this amalgamation, London as Jerusalem/Babylon/Golgonooza is a city whose "core protagonists fight" in spiritual—and perhaps borderline civil—war, although without the constitutional or legislative center that visionary law might require. Instead, as he concedes, "Amid the prophetic exuberance of the poem's account of Humanity's recovery, the poem pointedly withholds any kind of 'legislative programme' for this visionary law. To do so would be to contradict Blake's vision of prophetic legislation, to lay down a set of architectural drawings for Jerusalem which would lead humanity back to the destructive cycles which are so

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[1] Jeanne Moskal, "Forgiveness, Love, and Pride in Blake's *The Everlasting Gospel*," *Religion and Literature* 20.2 (1988): 19-39 (on 26).

compelling in his long poems" (210). After so much strenuous close reading, some might be disappointed with the flatness of the conclusion: "As we have seen, law is a broad and flexible category for Blake, and he moves sometimes dizzyingly between associations with constitutional texts, moral frameworks, the laws established through natural philosophical enquiry, secular laws established across centuries of customary practice, Parliamentary statute, and biblical law" (210).

7 Mauger's references to "secular laws …, Parliamentary statute, and biblical law," approximated through the example of Blackstone's *Commentaries*, are not without their own problems. Some of the demarcations that he makes are difficult to recognize. The book does not always sufficiently simplify the basics. The major challenge that the eighteenth-century legal system faced was that, while there existed a body of English common law that had coped quite well in less sophisticated ages—for example, when adjudicating property theft or crimes of violence—it was geared much less well toward things such as promissory notes on contracts or cases where natural and civil rights were not self-evidently tangible. Trying their best, judges attempted to identify what they called the *equity* in the case—that is, they sought to find the principle of justice residing in common law that could be legitimately extrapolated to cover the challenge of novel legal cases coming to the courts as by-products of Britain's imperial and commercial expansion.

8 Blake was both directly and indirectly affected by developments in contemporary legislation aimed at surmounting the limitations of the ancient common law. One such issue was the copyright of visual images. The Engraving Copyright Act (1735; 8 George 2 c.13), originally promoted by William Hogarth, meant that all Blake's commercial engravings had to be "Truly engraved, with the name of the Proprietor on each Plate, and printed on every such Print or Prints." This included his independently issued plates, such as "Ezekiel" (c. 1794/1825). Hogarth's Act affected him throughout his working life. When in 1826 he sold "The Plates & Copy-right of Job" (E 779) to John Linnell he would have needed to understand both the benefits of retaining copyright title and the implications of selling it. However, eighteenth-century English case history encompassed matters of much greater significance than copyright. Arguably, the case of the century was Somerset v. Stewart (1772), the decision on a habeas corpus brought to King's Bench concerning James Somerset, a Black man living in London whom Charles Stewart alleged was his slave. William Murray, Lord Mansfield, found in Somerset's favor: "The black must be discharged," he ruled. Presumably, when Blake wrote "The Little Black Boy" (1789) or engraved Stedman's *Narrative, of a Five Years' Expedition* (1796), the Somerset judgment was somewhere in the back of his mind. By contrast, struggling to find the equity of slavery in common law, Blackstone changed his opinion several times in successive editions of the *Commentaries*. It is difficult to conceive of any historical version of Blake in which he would not have been interested in copyright law or the implications of the Somerset judgment.

9 The issue is not that Mauger does not refer to these cases but, rather, that their presence in the legal record illustrates the challenges that Blake, along with the rest of the population, faced in trying to absorb their implications. Indeed, Mauger is even a bit hard on himself in his conclusion about *Jerusalem*: "The narrative of law constitutes, in my view, a tenuous fabric that connects Blake's cosmology with that of early nineteenth-century Britain, and instruments [*sic*] the psychogeographic layering of Golgonooza, Babylon, Jerusalem, and London which is a striking feature of Blake's final long poem" (211). As his book overwhelmingly persuades us, law is not merely "a tenuous fabric" but a concern that was a constant presence in Blake's consciousness, possibly somewhat diaphanous in its tangibility but certainly encompassing. The strengths of Mauger's considerable sensitivity and insight into Blake's writings are perhaps best seen in his account of the final two chapters of *Jerusalem*, where the emergence of a continuously rebuilding Golgonooza, almost as if it were a parliamentary legislative assembly constituted by the Human Form Divine, seems a possibility Blake was reaching toward. In all these arguments, the book is thoroughly up to date in its critical sources. Indeed, this secondary scholarship, and Mauger's use of it, are wonderful reminders of the continuing attractiveness of Blake to scholars of outstanding critical caliber.

10 As a challenging excursion tracing a single theme across virtually the totality of Blake's writings, Mauger's *William Blake and the Visionary Law: Prophecy, Legislation and Constitution* is an invigorating exploration of a significant subject viewed from an entirely unfamiliar perspective.