Burning sensations: how the devils in William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* illustrate the creation of new texts

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A Thesis

entitled

Burning Sensations: How the Devils in William Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Illustrate the Creation of New Texts

by:

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Abstract

Critics approaching Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1790?) have often described the Devils appearing in the work to be creatures that exemplify creative energy. This creative energy is seen by David V. Erdman as part of Blake’s revolutionary sympathies and by Northrop Frye as part of a mythical representation of actively procreative forces. I wish to explore how the Devils seen in MHH function as exemplary of a relation between existing texts such as those of the Bible or “Swedenborg’s volumes” (MHH 19) and the minds of those who are inspired to create new works from them. The Devils featured throughout MHH do not exist merely to destroy or negate existing texts in order to make way for new ones, nor do they wish to subjugate the minds of those who adhere to such documents to a status beneath that of themselves. Rather, the Devils enact their fiery energies upon religious texts or minds, altering them in an act of renewal that does not destroy but empowers the mind or text, treating it as if it were a medium for creating new art. I explore various examples of this devilish energy as illustrating of a creative vision that involves a dynamic relationship between a text and the human mind’s experience of it. In particular, I focus on how this type of vision is illustrated on plates four, six, seven, twenty-one, and twenty-two through twenty-four. I argue the Devils in MHH are personifications of creative energy that represents an idealistic merging of mind and text in imagination.

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Introduction

The Devils in William Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* function as satirical creations that offer “antidotes to conventional heavenly thinking” (Gourlay 274). Heavenly thinking is here exemplified by the conservative reason of the Swedenborgian Angels, who approach spirituality as adherence to divinely inspired law. In accordance with the well established notion of contraries that precede “The Voice of the Devil” on plate four of *MHH*, the devilish energy is not meant to exist independent of the reason responsible for maintaining texts, such as the Bible, as law. David V. Erdman has observed that the Devils in *MHH* exist to help give rise to new laws molded both by energy and reason, which ideally will conform better to the energy of human desire (*Blake: Prophet Against Empire* 195). As such, the Devils act as personifications of revolutionary poetic energy which Blake links to the human body and in turn the human mind. A careful exploration of some appearances of Devils in Blake’s *MHH* can illustrate how Blake understood the functions of this energy in the creative process: an understanding of creative vision that entailed combining one’s mind, which Northrop Frye, defines as meaning a human body as a whole perceiving being (26), with existing texts in order to re-imagine them and ultimately yield a new and distinct work in the process.

The Devils in *MHH* re-envision old texts and, in so doing, help to reform the minds of individuals, such as those of the Swedenborgian Angels, fettered by an inability to imagine works beyond those texts that currently exist. While the Devils in *MHH* are clearly favored over the highly conservative reason personified in the Swedenborgian Angels, Blake’s Devils do not exist merely to destroy and thus negate “Bibles or sacred
Neither do the Devils use their fiery powers as a means of eradicating the minds of those who follow those texts. As poetic geniuses, Devils re-imagine texts in their minds and then manifest their visions as new textual bodies that are a product of both their own imaginative energies and an original text. The Devils of *MHH* simultaneously encourage other minds, such as those of the Swedenborgian Angels, to utilize their imaginative mental faculties and form a similar creative relationship between their minds and bibles. Devilish minds can encourage other minds to be creative both by exposing the Angels to their own textual creations or by encouraging other minds to create through direct discourse with them.

In paradoxically remaining both a part of and apart from such bodies as those of the Swedenborgian Angels and their “volumes” (*MHH* 19), the Devils exemplify a new vision, or re-vision, of texts such as Swedenborg’s *Heaven and Hell*. This elicits a transformation of religious laws Blake found to be repressive of human energy into principles that run in accord with human energy, as seen with “The Voice of the Devil” (*MHH* 4). The way in which the production of new works can help expand human senses by creating new art from the power of the mind and body is illustrated by the Devil in the “Memorable Fancy” preceding “The Proverbs of Hell” (*MHH* 6-7). The Devils can also induce change in an Angel’s vision through direct exchanges with them, which is exemplified in the “Memorable Fancy” on plates 16-20 and the final “Memorable Fancy” on plates twenty-two through twenty-four. The Devils continue the process of creation without negating other minds, but rather incorporating them in a process of perpetual re-envisioning that expands humanity’s sensual enjoyment in new creations.
I will examine Devils as they appear in both the text and image of *MHH* as complementary to one another in illustrating the relationship between a textual and human body in creative vision. Chapter I examines how Blake’s Devils reform bodies of text through an exploration of “The Voice of the Devil” on plate four, as well as an examination of the Devil in the “Memorable Fancy” preceding “The Proverbs of Hell” on plates six and seven. I also examine the image of the Devil and two Angels at the end of “The Proverbs of Hell.” Chapter II approaches the relationship between devilish and angelic minds in later Blake plates, in particular the “Memorable Fancy” on plates seventeen through twenty, the refutation of Angels’ reason on plates twenty-one and twenty-two, and the final “Memorable Fancy” on pages twenty-two through twenty-four. In each of these, I demonstrate how Blake’s Devils transform the minds of the Angels from those that assume texts to be inalterable to minds that re-imagine new forms of the texts by assuming imagination rather than a single work to be a constant. This thesis demonstrates how the Devils transform both the products of the human mind, these being “Bibles or sacred codes” (*MHH* 4), and human minds that confine themselves to such codes, these being the Swedenborgian Angels. This encourages the manifestation of new objects of perception, or bodies, in order to ensure an “improvement of sensual enjoyment” (*MHH* 14) comes to pass.
Chapter 1: The Energy of Devils and the Creation of New Texts from Old Ones.

In accordance with Blake’s notion of contraries established on Plate Two systems based around moral codes of good and evil rely on a widely accepted belief that one interpretation of a phenomenon be deemed singularly correct. Such a proclamation can force others to restrain their desire to interpret a phenomenon in a manner different than the one deemed singularly correct. Blake does not believe that one can perceive “truth” through a single text. Instead, Blake believes human desire, or the energies of the human body, to be humanity’s means of experiencing eternal happiness and the existence of God within man (MHH 11). In opposing established laws of religion that demand suppression of subjective interpretation, Blake must take care that he does not create a new negation of the “Bibles or sacred codes” (MHH 4) he feels have restrained human desire.

If Blake were to allow his Devils to destroy existing bibles and sacred codes, he would only be encouraging a new system dependent on the negation of the desires of certain individuals (Frye Fearful 199). As such, Blake and his Devils create from bibles or sacred codes without being confined by the vision of their authors. He uses theological concepts such as Angels and Devils familiar to the religious, those who believe spirituality is a matter of following codes of law, in order to illustrate a spirituality based on contraries, necessary opposing forces. Blake does not wish to use the texts of the religious as kindling for an anarchistic all-annihilating fire, but as inspiration for new codes of law that better serve the prolific energies of the imaginative
human creature. This allows Blake to permit religious systems such as those Swedenborgians, to exist without allowing them to hamper new and better religious systems.

In *Fearful Symmetry*, Northrop Frye defines Blake’s use of the word “mind” to be synonymous with the idea of the whole human man as a perceiver and by default active interpreter of phenomenon (26). According to Frye’s understanding of the term, the human “mind” cannot be thought of as distinct from the body because “the eye does not see: the eye is a lens for the mind to look through (26). As such, in accordance with the “Voice of the Devil,” the “mind” or, as Frye would explain it, the whole man as perceiver, cannot be considered as a negation of the “body,” which Frye defines as man as an object of perception (26). “The Voice of the Devil” claims that “Man has no Body distinct from his Soul” (*MHH* 4). The Devil is claiming that the human soul cannot be thought of as superior to, and thus distinct from, the human person. Stripped of its common “theological overtones,” in this passage, “Soul” is synonymous with Frye’s idea of “mind” in Blake (Frye 26). The significance of this is that any vision as a product of the mind will not be distinct from the individual human who experiences that vision. If one forgets that a particular vision must “reside in the human breast” (*MHH* 11) and deems that vision to be universal, he or she risks being “dominated by a subordinate part of oneself” (Connolly 158). Such a vision risks being regarded as a new form of natural law that is outside of human control or alteration. Devils in Blake demonstrate how vision must be understood as specific to an individual mind rather than universally correct.
The first and foremost example of a creature directly identified as a Devil represented in the text of *MHH* appears on plate four, where the reader is first exposed to “The Voice of the Devil” (*MHH* 4). Here, Blake begins by presenting the errors of sacred theological codes that have established a dualistic view of the human form: that the body and soul are distinct from one another and that one part, namely the soul is more pure and thus to be favored over the “corporeal” (*MHH* 4). The Devil’s contraries to the errors of Bibles and sacred codes, link energy inexplicably to the body, and declare that the human body and the energies tied to it will lead one to happiness rather than torment. These “Energies” might best be thought of as any means available to a human being to physically manifest new corporeal forms. *MHH* as a whole can be seen as “a celebration of energy, of impulsive virtue, and of sexuality” (Ackroyd 153). “Energies” can include use of sexual organs during the act of reproduction, a means of making new bodies available to nearly everyone as easily as they could tools of the printing process or the use of a pen to write a sentence and draw a picture (Paananen 54). When the Body and Mind are indistinct, the natural drive to extend the self through interaction with and creation of other bodies becomes indistinct from one’s aesthetic experience of texts and art. Such an understanding of human energy as part of human vision incorporates the role of human energy, as sexual, insofar as it can elicit the release a new body of text from an existing one. As such, human bodily and mental energy, represented throughout as devilish energy, does not destroy a body of text it engages with, but rather helps to release the potential for a new body to emerge from an existing one.

Blake illustrates the role of human energy as a means of re-invention of human codes of reason, not as a negation of codes of reason, by placing the language of the
errors in Bibles or sacred codes into “The Voice of the Devil.” This plate begins with the errors that have been caused by following Bibles or sacred codes, and in choosing to present these before his contraries, Blake sets up these errors, as well as the language utilized in manifesting these errors on the page, as material for the Devilish energies of the body to work upon. The choice of the word “errors” as opposed to a word like “falsehoods” is significant. The word error originates from the concept of “errant” meaning “in travel” and did not until much later receive its connotation as a word many equate with miscalculation (OED 2nd ed). The errors below are inherent in following the paths of religious texts; one cannot expect to simply follow the words within the context of a sacred text as law, and thus outside one’s own imagination, and have a full and complete experience of life. Instead readers must take the words from the texts into their own mind to find their true significance, as the Devil speaking does here. “The Voice of The Devil” creates a new set of counters to these errors with contraries, which are manifested here as rules in order to maintain harmony with the errors. The Devil’s contraries utilize the same language as the errors; the words Body, Soul, Energy, Reason, and Man are all capitalized in both the errors and the contraries. The Devil has not destroyed the notions featured in the errors of biblical code, but placed them into a new vision that gives a reader a new “infernal or diabolical sense” (MHH 24). This allows a perceiving mind an alternative understanding of these words or “a new linguistic code” (Bracher 169) that better lends towards the creative behaviors and following one’s own energies rather than repressing them out of a false notion of separation between truth and one’s own personhood that “depends on the material world” (Tabrizi 104). Both the errors and the contraries exist as physical, textual bodies. That the contraries are declared
“true” by the Devil does not negate the errors, but provide an alternative to them through the creation of a new, separate doctrine resulting from the Devil’s vision of the works, “Bibles or Sacred codes” (MHH 4) preceding his own contrary vision (Bracher 203).

Since energy is supposed to originate from the body, Blake has fittingly portrayed the source of the energy responsible for voicing the contraries as a human body, a Devil, surrounded by great tongues of flame that match the direction of his body. These flames are reaching towards the Angel on his left as if they were a collection of new limbs. This Devil is chained about the ankle and presented in a scene that is reminiscent of a “later color print by Blake ‘The Good and Evil Angels’” (Keynes MHH 4). The fiery Devil represents “Bodily Energy” (Keynes MHH 4) and reaches out, straining his shackle, in an attempt to reach the figure with the child and join with them, perhaps in a manner that will be reminiscent of the embracing figures cover plate of MHH who appear to struggle to maintain hold of one another (Bracher 171). The Devil first lists three errors and then a list of contraries to those errors. If one observes the image below in the same direction that one reads English text, from left to right, the Angel, who is stifling an infant in his arms through the conservative reasoning he embodies, would appear to precede the Devil in the same manner that the errors of biblical code precede the contraries above when they are read top to bottom. This links the energies of the two bodies to their respective texts. The infant is turned inwards, towards the body of the Angel, and though the child turns its head towards the Devil, the Angel, a mind of law, appears to be trying to block the child’s vision by curbing his shoulder away. The Devil is fettered above the water by a shackle about the ankle that is anchored in the watery void of time and space, and reaches for a newborn, a “new body,” so as to liberate it from the Angel’s grasp. As
indicated by its chain, the Devil exists in a pre-revolutionary state, in which the bounds of
religion originating from within the vast space beneath him confine him and the energies
linked to his body (Keynes *MHH* 4).

Later copies of Blake’s *MHH* seem to further illustrate the relationship between
bodily energy and the re-imagining of texts through the use of color. In the copy from
the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge\(^2\) on which the Oxford University Press edition of
Blake’s *MHH* is based, the “errors” made by the sacred codes are printed in blue and the
“contraries” are printed in fiery orange. The words in the errors and contraries each
correspond to the creature they are associated with, a blue Angel with a blue infant and
the fiery colored Devil seen at the bottom of the page. The blue of the “Good Angel, or
restraint” (Keynes *MHH* 4) is linked to the “Bibles or Sacred codes” (*MHH* 4).
Beginning with the title, “The Voice of the Devil,” the only word that is colored in
orange is the word “Devil,” while the others are blue. This might be read as a caution
that the Devil’s words can themselves be a “sacred code” if they are examined separately
from an active, perceiving mind. The Devil voices his contraries in a similar manner to
the present erroneous laws. He separates them into three numeric parts, just as the errors
are listed in a 1,2,3 list. In other words, he presents his contraries in the same form as the
errors: as a body of potential laws. Erdman, in his famous approach to Blake’s texts as
indicative of his revolutionary political radicalism, calls Blake’s focus in *MHH* in
opposition to “the politics of moral restraint” (*Blake* 180), and argues that Blake mocks
of “those who can accept a spiritual apocalypse but are terrified at a resurrection of the
body of society itself” (178). As such, Blake is not opposed to manifesting new bodies of
text, such as that formed by the Devil’s voice, to guide and possibly to elicit new

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\(^2\) All images from *MHH* featured in this thesis are based on those featured on this copy of *MHH*. 
structure in human society (Erdman 178). Blake’s Devil is no anarchist, and Blake himself “did not condemn law as such, but its unjust or inhuman forms” (Tabrizi 178). The way that the Devil’s contraries do not become laws or negations themselves is by the same manner in which the Devil turns the words of the errors of religious law into contraries. They must be colored by the imaginative energies of other human minds that take up the words and thus must not remain separate from the bodily energies of nature within mankind.

Since the Devil cannot actively liberate the body held by the Angel as he desires, he is forced to cry out, vocalizing a re-imagined state in opposition to the Angel’s religious code. When the Devil proclaims that the “Body” is not distinct from the “Soul,” the Devil is creating a new reality through the bodily energy manifested as his voice, liberating his mind and manifesting Body and Soul as one in his proclamations (Quinney 36). While the Devil might not be able to hold the “Body” or “Soul” that the Angel grasps, he can engineer a scenario where such an act would be possible in his mind and manifest it through his body by voicing it aloud, which is in and of itself an act of using the body to manifest objects outside the self: specifically movements through the air as sounds. “The Voice of the Devil” exemplifies how devilish energy functions, or would function, on established doctrines of existence: it would embrace them. Far from destroying older notions of body and soul, this embrace would liberate such terms from the arbitrary limits of religious doctrine. The words body and soul, as part of existing doctrines or sacred codes, are part of a “a nature and culture that is only potential until the poet has done something with it” (Adams 47). The Devil acts as the poet, reforming the words Body and Soul, as part of a coordination of his body and mind. In so doing, the
Devil takes the words of the Angel’s sacred codes and makes them part of his mind and part of his body, perceiving them and manifesting them in himself before projecting them out as a new code.

The energy surrounding the Devil in the lower right hand corner, the flaming fires, move in coordination with the direction as his body. The Devil describes energy as being “from the Body” (*MHH* 4), and the flames reach out from him in the same manner as his arm reaches out from his body. These “fires” are not destroying his form; one can still clearly see his body as distinct from the fires. Rather the flames act as extensions of his body’s motion and a means of manifesting his will as a singular agent. The energy tied to the Devil’s body and by default also his mind (Frye 26) provide a means to expand vision by imagining new bodies as linked to the activity of one’s own body (Connolly 160). Just as the bodies of flame extend the Devil’s physical body, “The Voice of the Devil” expands the words of textual doctrine that, when used as religious law, form errors. A poet, or Devil, escapes these errors by replicating the Devil’s action: taking the words into their minds and, re-interpreting them there so as to create a new body for them to exist in. The word “Body,” as stated by the Devil in the contraries, is unburdened by the arbitrary Good and Evil that, assumed universal, makes following the energies tied to the word an error. In other words, the only way to avoid following the error of another’s path is to redefine the path on one’s own terms.

“The Voice of the Devil” creates new codes out of old ones and invites an interpretation of creation as a natural product of a relationship between one’s mind and a text. Blake, to think of him in devilish terms, takes the bible or sacred code of Emmanuel Swedenborg’s *Heaven and Hell* and creates *MHH*. The idea of Blake’s Devils as
personifications of the bodily energy that uses existing texts as potential to create new ones (Adams 47) speaks to a way of thinking about the creative process in which a singular interpretation of a text cannot be deemed singularly true or absolute. Rather, all texts, be they from an Angel’s mind or a Devil’s mind, exist as signifiers that must suffice for a sense of a concept behind a word that does not exist apart from one’s own mind (Bracher 184).

Since no text can be a complete signifier for truth, a text’s worth is dependent upon interpretation by a person other than the author. Blake chooses to incorporate illustrations of bodies and souls beneath the text of “The Voice of the Devil” and link the images to the text above them in order to show how words, as signifiers of meaning, are relative to individual perspective. A combination of word and image demonstrates how the meaning of words is perpetually linked to minds that attempt to extend themselves through them. If a text is believed to be infallible or perfect by minds creating or interpreting it, then an illusionary limit is created for all those who subscribe to such a belief. Blake makes use of another Devil in his first “Memorable Fancy” to demonstrate how such limits can become new mediums for creation.

When manifested, a textual body is distinct both from mind or body that created it as a child is separate from its parents. In his “Synecdoche and Method,” Hazard Adams places Blake’s Devils as part of a radical synecdoche characteristic of Blake “in which the part not only is itself but also is the whole” (47). To apply this notion of synecdoche directly to the image of the Devil in the first of Blake’s “Memorable Fancies,” which parody Swedenborg’s “Memorable Relations” (Ackroyd 153), the “corrosive fires” of Blake’s Devil are more than a metaphor for the burning materials by which Blake makes
his own prints. Blake’s Devil is a body, conceived in Blake’s thought, which aids his creative process while still being regarded as a singular entity distinct from himself (Connolly 159). If Blake were to declare his Devil as separate from his creative process, or unfit to be part of the processes within his mind, then the concept of a Devil would have the potential to act outside of Blake’s vision and thus risk negating his work (Connolly 172).

The process by which Devils are printed in MHH by Blake exemplifies a link between body and mind by which Blake extends the power of his mind by creating new bodies out of materials from the natural realm that act as potential for manifesting his vision (Adams 47). Books can be thought of as bodies just as corporal man can be thought of as a body, and the same approach of to man as “having no Body distinct from the Soul” ought to also extend to Blake’s own illuminated texts, and “the plate, then, also reflects the relationship between soul and body” (Connolly 16). However, this also marks any bodies manifested on plates to be of a different mind body relationship that of their creator.

The actions of the Devil in the “Memorable Fancy” on plates six and seven of MHH precede the famous “Proverbs of Hell” and link Blake’s engraving process to the energy of the Devil’s “corroding fires” (MHH 6-7). The “mighty Devil, folded in Black clouds, hovering on the sides of the rock” (MHH 6) is, like Blake, an engraver who utilizes corrosives to produce texts. Examining the process by which the Devil engraves the words “How do you know but ev’ry Bird that cuts the airy way, / Is an immense world of delight, clos’d by your senses five” (MHH 7) as inspired from the process by which Blake creates the text and imagery found in his plates requires an understanding of
the particulars of Blake’s printing process. Blake was trained by James Basire, “a distinguished topographical and antiquarian engraver in mid-career” (Bentley 32). Blake practiced “a form of engraving called relief etching” (Jones 29). This form of etching entailed burning designs onto copper plates using corrosive acids. Just as the Devil must utilize “corroding fires” in order to engrave his message regarding liberation of perception (MHH 6), so did the process of relief etching require Blake to employ the use of acid to burn designs into the copper plates (Jones 29).

Blake has related the Devil’s communication through burning energies as part of two bodies. The Devil is both the creator and the created, part of Blake’s textual body that emulates Blake’s own process of work as a body that functions similarly to Blake’s while simultaneously existing as a body distinct from Blake’s: a body extending from a body’s work (Connolly 160). The Devil, though distinct from Blake, acts as an extension of Blake’s bodily energies by mimicking the process by which Blake created him. The Devil was carved into existence on a copper plate, and he continues the process of creation by making his own engraving with his own bodily powers. The Devil is not merely an analogue or a metaphor for a printer; to Blake, “a word never merely stands for a thing, neither is it merely that thing” (Adams 46). Nonetheless, Blake with his acids and his Devil with its fires both prevent a slate from remaining perpetually blank or void, and existing as a barrier to the human senses rather than a means through which new vision may be manifest. The Devil copies the act of creation of its master by use of the corrosives specific to its own world, “among the fires of hell. . . where a flat sided steep frowns over the present world” (MHH 6) emulating Blake most in creating as an entity
singular and complete in and of itself rather than exclusively symbolic of the “higher process” of its maker (Adams 47-48).

However, it is critical to understand that these energies of the Devil must function actively upon an established body, or better yet, within an established body, altering the perceived form of an object without annihilation of it in order to exist as a true contrary and not a false one, or “unnecessary opposite” (Erdman Blake 178). To Blake, the energies of the Devils in MHH, rebellious though they may be, do not simply erase existing material bodies, for to do so would be problematic: erasing the energy of a body to make way for another body does not yield any net gain in energy and therefore “Eternal Delight” (MHH 4). The Devil’s corroding fires are not merely blasting away the “steep that frowns over the present world” (MHH 6) into total oblivion. Complete destruction of an object is a reckless use of energies, it is “pouring acid all over the plate” (Frye Fearful 201). The Devil is unleashing the potential of limited perception in “the mind of men” (MHH 4) by penetrating through the form of these said limits of human senses with a burning question, “How do you know but ev’ry Bird that cuts through the airy way, / Is an immense world of delight, clos’d by your senses five?” (MHH 7). This engraving does not eliminate our senses five any more than a graffiti artist’s paint or chisel eliminates the side of a building. Rather, the Devil’s work brings human perception to a new renewed sense by altering what was before deemed a barrier, an imperturbable void, into a new object subject to the power of human vision. The state of the limited senses is no longer immune to the imagination inherent in human perception (Paananen 50-51). The Devil’s engraving is a question; it asks humanity to cast some doubt on its initial perception of an object, in this case a bird, and see the possibilities of
what a bird might be beyond what it is presently perceived as. The question asks “the minds of men” (*MHH* 7) to experience the bird in relation to the medium its body, and thus its energies, travels through. The bird does not merely fly, but “cuts the airy way” (*MHH* 7), which implies that it alters the empty space of nature it projects itself through (Tabrizi 174). The image of the bird becomes a continuation of Blake’s vision of the creative process, a glimpse of infinite possibility in which one creation begets another and inspires human minds to manifest new bodies of art and text. Blake himself cuts into his blank copperplates with acid when he engraves to make a living, the Devil cuts into the rock with his fires onto what is supposed to be the limits of our senses so as to spread the power of his being, and the bird survives by acting as a disruption, however brief, to the emptiness of the air. The bird challenges the human vision of the sky as a limit for life as an artist reveals blankness on a canvass to be a medium for his or her vision, revealing “an intense world of delight” (*MHH* 7). One must look beyond the confines of how things are presently perceived, be they blank sheets of metal, barren stones reminiscent of Blake’s Ulro (Frye “Archetypes” 193-194), or the emptiness of the sky. Then, by the incisions of burning materials or the edge of a bird’s living wing, one’s vision is liberated from the passive, devouring voids of nature (Tabrizi 174).

In altering one’s state of mind, Blake’s Devil does not condemn the “senses five” to annihilation, but rather allows for perception to run through them and consider things beyond the limited realm of experience. In either sense, the energy, manifested as pure flames for the Devil in Blake’s imagination and chemical substances in reality, ought to function not as destroying agents, but ones that re-make an existing body into a new body and thus a new object included in the realm of the senses.
At the very end of the “Proverbs of Hell,” there is another image of a Devil (MHH 10), this one not a man in flames, but a winged and horned figure who spreads out a great scroll across his lap (MHH 10). Behind the Devil is a seat or “a kind of throne or judgment seat from which he appears to have descended” (Keynes MHH 10). The Devil is flanked on either side by two Angels, each of which attempt to transcribe the Devil’s writings in their manuscripts. Geoffrey Keynes reads the Devil’s forsaking of his seat as an action motivated by impatience with the “slow-witted” Angel the Devil is looking at. Furthermore Keynes assumes the Angel, located to the left of the Devil, who is looking with the Devil at the writing Angel, has more or less completed his writings and is thus the more intelligent of the two Angels (Keynes MHH 10).

Keynes cites Erdman’s observation that “the spiky plant” beside the writing Angel is copied from the fifteenth plate of Erasmus Darwin’s love of plants and is a carnivorous sundew plant (Keynes MHH 10). This, he argues, links the Angel with the notion of flesh-devouring vegetation, or bodily energy of imagination being nullified in the physical world insofar as it is “rooted” into it (Frye Fearful 225-26). As such, he presumes this Angel to be misunderstanding the Devil’s proverbs, and favors the Angel on the Devil’s left.

Nonetheless, one ought to note that the left Angel’s vision is not upon his work, his gaze does not meet his medium, and so he writes nothing, or more particularly, nothing new because his vision is not his own (Connolly 70-71). He is at present mired in analytics, trying to see as the Devil, author of the many proverbs on the scroll sees rather than using his own vision and his own mind to continue creation. The Angel on the Devil’s right is transcribing the proverbs and staring at the work in front of him. The
Angel’s pen writes in a book as the Devil’s hand runs along the scroll, but the Angel is looking at his own work, not at the Devil and his scroll, as he writes. Even if the Angel on the left is assumed to be “nearly finished,” he is not actually creating anything new in the depiction while the Angel Keynes deems stupid is. Examining the direction of each Angel’s vision in relation to the work they are doing on their respective texts, one notices that the Angel who is actually creating is immersed in his own work; his eyes are focused on the page as he transfers what are presumably the “Proverbs of Hell” onto a new medium. The Angel who is not writing, however, is instead trying to imitate the vision of the Devil by looking in the Devil’s direction. The Devil’s gaze is on the Angel who is writing, not on the Angel who is attempting to mimic the Devil’s own vision. As such, even if the Angel who is still writing is assumed to be doing so out of mental “slowness,” he is presently a more prolific entity than the Angel who is acting as if he is of the same vision or mind as the Devil. Neither Angel is unproblematic; this is why both are portrayed as Angels rather than Devils.

The object in question, namely the body of text on the scroll, will not be preserved if it is to encourage new bodies into existence from old ones. If no single text can be declared truth, then truth “exists beyond the reach of words” (Hilton 203). The mind which writes will not continue the creative process by copying a text verbatim, but by internalizing, and by default altering the signifier of truth that is represented by the Devil’s scrolls (Bracher 184-186). Hence, the Angel on the right that is presently the focus of the Devil’s prolific vision may not be alike in his product, but his product is not the constant for humanity: the process of re-imagining an object is. The problem with this is that the Angel on the left experiences “only a portion of a changeable object as
opposed to ‘Imagination’ or the unchangeable ‘Form’ which is ‘Human Existence’.”
(Tabrizi 154-55).

One ought to note the position of the Devil during the presentation of his scroll to
the Angels: he has left his throne behind him and gotten down on his knees. Perhaps, as
Keynes implies, this is an act done out of impatience with the Angel on his right, but this
is not as important as the significance of the Devil’s body being absent from a seat of
judgment. In order to induce the two seated Angels to create, he has vacated a
“convenient seat” that would allow him a notion of royalty and allowed him to decree the
codes within his proverbs as extraneous to himself and therefore existing as part of the
universal moral law. In leaving the seat and opening his scroll to the Angel, however, he
permits the creative process to continue in placing himself in a position beneath that of
the Angels. This parallels Blake’s understanding of Jesus not as a “king” distributing
laws, but rather as willing to appreciate the value of the works of God in other human
beings (MHH 22). The Devil can only continue poetic genius by abandoning his throne,
and whether he does this out of compassion for the two Angels or impatience, he cannot
exist as a tyrant, enforcing his original codes as the only ones (Erdman Blake 193). His
proverbs can only be part of the constant of human imagination if he is willing to let
other minds mould their own inspiration from them, however problematic their
interpretations may turn out to be. In fact, a Devil unwilling to leave his seat and inspire
new codes would likely be little different from an Angel that erroneously assumes his
experiences to be universal (Tabrizi 154-155).

Distinctly, the image of fire in this picture, as seen with the first two textual
Devils, is gone, but the creative energy that acts through the bodies of fire is not. Blake
must never grow too attached to one signifier of creative energy in particular least it be interpreted as singularly correct (Bracher 185-86). Similarly, the means of creation portrayed on *MHH* 10 involves not growing too attached to one form of a document and fearing to create out of fear that one is abandoning the original author’s vision.

The Devils, in these three instances, illustrate the relationship between mind and text and how this encourages the authorship of new material from existing textual materials by combining the energy inherent in a body of text with one’s own. Blake does not hope to preserve the minds of those who originally wrote the old texts, for to so would make him a demoniac “possessed” of many “demons” who subjugate his imaginative potential (Connolly 70-71). Rather, Blake believes that to experience the divine in a work, one must utilize their own mind and alter it in the imagination, least one forget “All deities reside in the human breast” (*MHH* 11) and discourage creation of future generations of texts by refusing to re-imagine existing ones.
Chapter 2: How the Devils in Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Free Fettered Minds.

Critics of Blake’s art, such as Mark Bracher, observe the human body as the primary basis for form in Blake’s art. But just as the soul is inseparable from the human form in Blake’s understanding of the “whole” man, the same principle also applies to Blake’s understanding of textual bodies. Blake’s illuminated works do not merely “state” the unity of the body and the soul, but “also demonstrate it. The illuminated books depend on their medium, their physical form or body . . . in another form, for instance ordinary typeface, part of their meaning is left behind: they are no longer the same” (Connolly 15). The Devils in Blake exemplify an intimate connection between the mind and text that is equitable to the relationship between the mediums on which a work of art is presented. Blake considers the fundamental category of perception of a text fulfilled by the interpretation of a human body’s mind (Bracher 173). As such, a creative vision is had whenever an agent observes a creative work, and the potential for a new body to be made manifest is always present in an observer whether or not he or she willfully acknowledges it. Either Angel featured on plate ten has a book and a pen before them; therefore, either one has the potential to create a new body of text from the Devil’s scroll. The only real difference between them is their willingness to manifest their own vision of a text as minds independent from the author. When Devil’s inspire other minds, they do not force other minds to defer their visionary energy or minds to the Devils’. Rather, Devils try to
encourage other minds to follow their own energies. Devils seek to reveal all minds to be of equal creative potential. They have no desire to form a new system in which they are masters over Angels, for such a system does not provide liberation even for the Devils themselves as masters (Frye *Fearful* 223). This is why Blake’s Devil on *MHH* plate 10, in encouraging the two Angels to create, is seen to have vacated a throne of judgment, because in dictating, and acting like a master over the slaving Angels, “he is equally enslaved (Frye *Fearful* 223).

In satirizing Swedenborg’s *Heaven and Hell*, Blake is certainly not negating the works of Emmanuel Swedenborg, and in fact numerous beliefs featured throughout Blake’s work are inspired by him, including “speaking of the Divine Humanity and of using the human form as the index of perfection” (Paanaan 47). As a satire, *MHH* exists to “cure” the Swedenborgian vision of its presumptions of singular divine inspiration which have reduced the power of Swedenborg’s vision to a calculating bureaucracy of religious law and the “order of nature” (Frye *Fearful* 212). Blake believes that Swedenborg’s error is in presuming his own experience-based visions as singularly divine (Tabrizi 114). Blake maintained a good deal of admiration for Swedenborg as an individual who formed a church in opposition to the established spirituality, and maintained a certain degree of respect for Swedenborg as the “strongest of men, the Samson shorn by the Churches” (Bentley 128). Bentley calls the influence of Swedenborg on Blake “profound,” but it is not long before Blake’s membership in the New Jerusalem Church lead him to become “profoundly disillusioned” with Swedenborg’s vision (128). Ultimately, the flaw in Swedenborg’s vision is not creation of a sacred text, like *Heaven and Hell*, but that Swedenborg presumes the vision
contained in the work as universal. To presume a text as universal is to erroneously declare it as immune from individual human interpretation; to turn a text into a barrier beyond which man cannot cross (Tabrizi 174). A text that has become law returned to the void and passive state it began as; it is once again a barren, untouchable page and one who uphold such laws “understands deserts better than people” (Erdman Blake 193). As the Devil preceding the proverbs is writing on the barren steep in order to create for humanity a means of extending their perception of objects, Blake is utilizing Swedenborg’s philosophical statements as templates, his “Memorable Fancies” are titles rather explicitly based on Swedenborgs “Memorable Relations” (Erdman Blake 175).

The tenets of the Swedenborgian church can be thought of as barren steeps, for presenting his own ideas in redeeming codes Swedenborg presumes to be synonymous with natural law and external regulations of the human person back into the realm of human imagination. In so doing, Devils must not only alter religious laws, but also the religious minds, which in this text are represented by the Swedenborgian Angels.

Devilish minds are capable of interacting with other, religious minds and unleashing their repressed potential energy as prolific energy, and just as the Devil on the tenth plate is communicating his vision to the two Angels and thus attempting, with difficulty, to continue the creative process through other minds. Devils must also encourage other minds to interpret texts according to their own imaginative faculties, least they find themselves reduced to unproulific idlers as masters, or tyrants, of a new religious system (Frye Fearful 65-66). The later plates of MHH, present scenarios in which devilish minds attempt to inspire angelic ones to unleash their creative potential through direct interaction with them.
The first of these instances is the famous sequence in which the narrator of the poem interacts directly with a Swedenborgian Angel in an adventure spanning plates seventeen through twenty, leading to the refutation of the Angels’ reason-based vision on plates twenty-one and twenty-two as an inhibiting misuse of creative power. In the scenario on plates seventeen through twenty, an Angel approaches the narrator, who here fulfills the role of a Devil as a contrary to the Angel. The interactions between the narrator, who will be henceforth referred to by the title of his role as Devil, and the Angel take place in two spaces, those that occur when they are mounted over the “nether sky,” and thus when the Devil is lead by the Angel, and those that occur in the re-envisioning the Angel’s mills which occur after the Devil takes hold of the Angel in an attempt “to counter an Angelic ‘phantasy’ of abjection with one of energetic co-existence” (Hilton 203). In both instances, a fantastic scene appears in the space when the two figures cast their respective visions upon a void, which “represents the vacuum. . .(a) metaphysical world formed by passive impressions” (Tabrizi 196). Upon these voids, the two minds derive perplexing new forms and imagery. In both instances, however, the images formed when both the Devil and the Angel observe their respective lots from within a void simultaneously, are visions of abomination. The Devil’s lot appears as one in which Devils are netted in the snares cast by “vast spiders crawling after their prey” (MHH 18). This Angelic “phantasy” imposed on the Devil’s lot is similar to the “net of religion” woven by the hypocritical tyrant Urizen from Blake’s later prophetic works (Erdman Blake 255). One of Blake’s most famous symbols of repression appears as well, the covering cherub or Leviathan whose great reptile form (Frye “Archetype” 195) swims towards the two observers and frightens the Angel back to the security of the Mills. The
beast exists to reinforce the Angel’s aversion to the devilish narrator and his rebellious energies, though it fails to scare the Devil (Erdman Blake 181-182). Similarly monstrous animal forms appear when the Devil and the Angel simultaneously envision the realm of the Angel from the void “between Saturn and the fixed stars” (MHH 19). Descending into a Bible, the two discover more anti-prolific devourers, this time a myriad of cannibalistic monkeys who devour each other when they grow too prolific or eat their own flesh. A retreat into the Mill yields only a pale, “white terror” (Frye Fearful 211) of a skeleton, “Aristotle’s Analytics” (MHH 20). A skeleton, little more than a mechanical body, absent of a soul or energy, and incapable of moving itself, similarly has no appeal to either party (Connolly 66). Again, a monstrous image that is repulsive to human experience is conjured by both minds in this “Memorable Fancy,” and since only one of the two minds is alight with creative poetic energy, the Angelic mind proves to be nothing more than an encumbrance to the narrator’s. Both visions appear upon a void, as all visions that are works of art must to some degree, so perhaps the best way to think of the source of these abominable visions is to consider this fancy in terms of multiple projections, one vision being creative and poetic and the other being analytic and priestly (Tabrizi 154-155). When the Devil looks out over the void after the Angel leaves him, the vision of this “Hell” is immediately altered. Leviathan and the spiders vanish, and only a moment of revelation manifested in the genius of art remains behind “The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind” (MHH 19). When the Devil is left unfettered by the code of the Angel, the monstrous images give way to a vision of peace. The space in which the Devil casts his creative energies, no longer laden by the Angel’s fearful projections into it, yields a scene of harmony that
the conservative Angel, operating strictly from his own experience, cannot bring his 
priestly mind, limited by presumption of its own experience as universal, to partake in 
(Tabrizi 154-155).

The Angel’s limited reason only breeds innumerable devouring forms, markers 
that indicate the place as uninhabitable to the prolific. As such, the Devil reveals the 
Bible, when in the “lot” of the Angel, to be little more than a portal to a world just as 
hideous as the Angel construed the Devil’s space to be. The problem here is one of 
visions impeding on one another in a manner that is similar to two film-reels projecting 
onto the same screen simultaneously, thus producing a thoroughly unpleasant and 
disorienting viewing experience for either party. The Devil and the Angel cannot look at 
the same space without combining their visions, and nothing good can be seen owing to 
the Devil’s opinion of Angel’s good and evil “metaphysics” (MHH 20). The Devil 
cannot create any forms that are pleasing to either of them. Therefore, the energies of the 
Devil, the prolific artist (Hilton 203) are incompatible with those of the Angel, the priest 
(Hilton 203), if both try to envision the same space or object at the same time. Both 
perceive each other’s productions as monstrous, the Angel placing horrific predatory 
forms in the Devil’s “phanasy” and the Devil revealing the codes of natural religion to 
be little more than places to conceal wretched, self-devourers who prefer to consume 
their own kind instead of escaping their chains. As such, this “Memorable Fancy” ends 
with the devilish narrator abandoning the Angel once he has established that both of their 
visions impose on one another. The particulars of the Devil’s vision have not triumphed 
over the Angel’s; both visions are equally revolting to both parties and have to be either
dissipated with the removal of the fetters of analytics as in the first, or mutually retreated from as in the second.

The Devil’s triumph over the Angel is one of demonstrated subjectivity of perspective rather than particular features of vision. The problem of the Angel’s vision, which Blake ties with the textual writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg and his followers, is that the Angel presumes himself “as the only wise. . .with a confident insolence sprouting from systematic reasoning” (*MHH* 21). In this lengthy journey, the Devil has shown that the Angel’s perception is not universal, and in the Angel’s final attempt to defend himself “thy phantasy has imposed upon me, & thou oughtest to be ashamed” (*MHH* 20), the Devil defeats the Angel by pointing out that both of their visions “impose on each other” (*MHH* 19). The Devil does not claim that the Angel’s lot is more horrific than his, for to do so would be to claim a superiority of one mind’s experience over the other’s, risking negation. Both their visions are a “phantasy” of the other’s “lot,” but not the reality; both the Devil and the Angel’s respective image force the other to adopt a perspective distinct from their “dominant, habitual codes” (Bracher 190). As such, neither of them possess a “true” vision of reality and the error of the Angel is not his vision itself, his presumption that his vision of space is the only “correct” one, “a recapitulation of all superficial opinions, but nothing further” (*MHH* 21-22). The Devil abandons the Angel, but makes no indication that he wishes to converse with the Angel any further, saying “it is but lost time to converse with you whose works are only analytics” (*MHH* 20). Aside from trying to make the Angel see things from a Devilish point of view, the Devil has no other way of altering the vision of the Angel other than casting its integrity as a universal truth in doubt. As Blake makes clear on the plates following this “Memorable Fancy,” Blake is
looking to combat the error of “oneness,” or singular correctness, by “recognition of a
dialectic between different views of the world” (Beer 75). As the Devil in the first
“Memorable Fancy” questions the limits of human empirical senses, the Devil here has
forced the Angel to question whether or not the seven brick houses, representative of
churches formed within the confines of the Bible are immune from corruption. The space
presumed by the Angel to be sacred and unchanged, “between saturn and the fixed stars”
(MHH 19) or outside the realm of time affixed to the classical Roman name for time, and
among the predestination of astrological bodies, is just as vulnerable to subjective
interpretation as the “infinite Abyss” presumed the Angel’s lot (MHH 18).

The Angel is defeated by the Devil not in the grandiosity of his dragon-ridden
visions, but rather in the sense that the Devil’s visions are always made as a means of
inspiring others to achieve a new vision specific to themselves. Tabrizi’s passages from
Swedenborg’s Heaven and Hell featured in The ‘Heaven’ and ‘Hell’ of William Blake
reveal that Swedenborg could conjure scenes of cosmic delight and torment just as Blake
could. The Angel’s creations, and the Devil’s vision of the Angel’s realm, are both non-
prolific visions featuring devouring animal figures, symbolic of the Angel’s presumption
to be possessed of the one and only truth (Frye “Archetypes” 198). This was the
fundamental error Blake saw in Swedenborg’s texts: that Swedenborg viewed the world
exclusively from his own experience, placing all that he found favorable as “good” and
all that he found averse as “evil,” in other words, failing to understand that his limited
state was not, in fact, a vision eternity (Tabrizi 112-113). An Angel will never be able to
experience true divinity because an Angel will only operate in the confines of his own
limited world-view, and thus view only impossible or menacing forms from all it perceives as outside itself.

That is, unless the Angel’s mind is changed, which is what occurs in Blake’s final “Memorable Fancy.” In this sequence, the Devil and the Angel do not part ways as they do at the end of the “Memorable Fancy” on plates seventeen through twenty. After the Angel is bested by the Devil’s infernal vision of Jesus, the Angel embraces the Devil’s energy, here represented again as burning fires (*MHH* 22-24). In this final “Memorable Fancy,” a Swedenborgian Angel, who adheres to the notion of Jesus as manifested in laws, is bettered by the rebuttals of the Devil who provides a portrait of a much more contrary Jesus who adhered not to the laws of the time as dictated by God, but by the human impulse that resided within him. Afterwards, there follows a most provocative scene that exemplifies the relationship of the devilish energy to the bodies it affects:

When he (the devil) had spoken, I beheld the Angel, who stretched out his arms, embracing the flame of fire, and he was consumed and arose as Elijah.

Note: This Angel, who is now become a Devil, is my particular friend; we often read the Bible together in its infernal or diabolical sense, which the world shall have if they behave well (43-44).

The Angel is described as being consumed by the flames. Since there is not an accompanying image to this scene, one can only attempt to imagine what the Angel’s body being consumed by flames would look like, and given the imagery preceding this “Memorable Fancy,” one might reasonably deduce that the image might look something like the one at the bottom of plate four, which features “The Voice of the Devil.” One should recall that the fires surrounding this Devil are not destroying his human form, but
acting as an extension of the energy tied to his body, where the Angel, blandly lacking in any means of extension of his self, can only confine a smaller and newer form. The choice of the word “consume” by Blake should not be thought synonymous with “devour,” although the common connection of the word with notions of annihilation is certainly part of the reason Blake chose to use it. The Oxford English dictionary offers two separate meanings to the word consume as a transitive verb, both of which were in use at the time of Blake’s printings. The first of these is “to cause to evaporate or disappear” (OED 2nd ed.). The second definition proves to be much more descriptive to the fate of the Angel in embracing devilish energies: “to accomplish, complete; to consummate” (OED 2nd ed.). Blake likely intends for readers to first believe that the Angel and his memories will be reduced to vapor, or “consumed” in the conventional sense, when he embraces the flames of poetic genius. However, insofar as MHH is meant to show that conventional senses are not reality, the Angel’s body and mind are instead “consummated” by devilish energies which turn him from a passive priest to a prolific prophet. The Angel is not annihilated, but rather transformed from a passive being whose mind operates through the confines of reason into a lively and energetic being who perceives through the imagination, and thus through the divine, rather than merely through the implementation of the moral law. As a Devil, and thus charged with revolutionary energies, this character is able to align himself to Blake as a friend who can now observe the Bible as perpetually changing through poetic genius, in other words, in an “infernal sense” (MHH 24) where the words of the Bible are not the constant, but instead the human poetic genius is (Tabrizi 154-155). When the Angel is consumed by fire, thus becoming devilish, he is not being destroyed as much as he is being energized
in accepting “enlightenment” (Erdman 177). Devil in encouraging the Angel to create and thus move away from the notion of virtue as separate from himself in moral law (Frye Fearful 201), must ensure that he does not create a system in which one entity is seen as superior over the other, for a mere reversal of that which is called evil taking prescience over that which is called good will not eliminate the problem of one vision taking prescience over others (Frye Fearful 199). If the burning energies of the Devil were to, for example destroy the Angel rather than help him ascend to a higher state, or sense of vision, then Blake would have only continued a system of negation, doing little more than continuing “all the old falsehoods” (MHH 22) that presume one vision of abomination to be superior to another’s.

That the Angel is consumed by fire does not mean that the Angel itself is destroyed, but rather that his older body, in particular his older mind, has been “completed” by an acceptance of bodily energy to change him into a prophet, “Elija” who gives off prolific energy (MHH 24). The Angel, in embracing the fire of the Devils, has been changed as the “flat sided steep” (MHH 6) has been: not destroyed, but distinctly and profoundly altered, liberated into a new existence as a charged being that might transfer these burning energies and further expand and alter minds, allowing the Angel to expand vision and see human genius in new spaces. As Blake assures us in the following note, “This Angel, who is now become a Devil, is my particular friend” (MHH 24); Blake, despite the fact that the character in the work is now devilish, still introduces him in the present as an Angel, implying that his friend’s mind has not been neutralized or brainwashed. Rather, the two now share a new means of perception that accepts change in original forms “we often read the Bible together in its infernal or diabolical sense”
The narrator and the Angel, in sharing the infernal energy, now perceive an old form differently, not as a book of laws or restrictions outside of the human mind, but as part of the human mind and interpreted so as to accommodate desire rather than operate against it (Bracher 203). The Bible, in this “infernal sense” is only granted through the destruction of the errors of viewing the Bible as external to human bodily energy (Connolly 166). This sense of the Bible will require that old laws and forms be understood as inconstant and not eternal with the knowledge that liberation of the senses, not chaos and negation of the self as defined by the old laws, will follow (Bracher 202-203). The promise of the “Bible of Hell, which the world will have whether they will or no” (MHH 24) can be seen as a final note on the nature of devilish energy. The ambiguous Bible of Hell, which Geoffrey Keynes asserts in his commentary on the passage has been conjectured to be the illuminated printings of Blake’s later prophetic works, would be an example of Blake’s individual manifestation of Biblical inspiration, a product of his own will and an explicitly alternative code (Bracher 203). As such, this might be seen as a final reminder that the embrace of devilish energy is not an annihilation of even a religious person’s will or selfhood, but a means of revealing a religious person’s will or selfhood to be the constant (Tabrizi154-155). As such, the devilish friend shares a sense, but not a mind; he is no longer willing to be restrained by the Bible as Law, but as a friend, he is an equal to other devilish minds, as this would make him merely under another code of law (Frye Fearful 223). That Blake acknowledges his friend as an Angel indicates that the individual in question is still separate from him in his experience and not possessed of his same mind (Connolly 70-71). This friend will no doubt envision quite a different Bible than Blake’s once the
Bible is accepted into the devilish friend’s mind, but this act ensures that they are friends, and “two friends of equal status are not necessarily uniform in their in their minds” (Frye Fearful 223). Neither mind is mastered by the other, and the “Memorable Fancy” ends with a caution of “One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression” (MHH 24) that the Devil and the Angel, do not become a Lion and Ox nor an Orc and an Urizen (Bloom 899), but remain as friends rather than the products of an unjust system (Tabrizi 188-89).
Conclusion

Blake uses the imagery of Devils to embody the revolutionary poetic energy he hopes will redeem the human vision and encourage readers to embrace their own visions of a text. This is why Blake chooses to use Devils as symbolic of a distinctly beneficial phenomenon: because doing so forces the reader to alter his or her own perception of a creature that has been marked as synonymous with evil by most religions, including that of Swedenborg. The Devils illicit the creation of new texts by placing their own perception through existing bodies; in other words, they animate existing objects, such as texts, by means of making new mind and body relationships beyond their own bodies. The Devils encourage others to do the same by taking doctrines of religious codes into themselves so as to use them as material for the creation of new bodies of text, eliciting an expansion of the amount of phenomena available to human perception and thus potential for the imagination.

A Devil inspires others to utilize their imaginative potential through the bodies of text and art he creates. A Devil also encourages other minds to re-imagine existing works of art through direct communication with them. In either case, a Devil’s creation, be it a text or an image, ought to encourage others to create their own works (Adams 46). Devilish energy in the mind creates a new perspective or sense, whereas Devilish energy in the textual world forms a new body of work. Where a new perspective or sense may lead to a new body of work, a new body of work can lead to a new perspective or sense.
A Devil, as a figure thought monstrous by others but embraced and cherished within Blake’s mind, is precisely the illustration of the creative process in Blake: that one can only defeat a potential “evil” by abandoning the notion that one is too “good” to accept such a phenomenon into his or her mind.

A diabolic mind functions in a relationship between itself and a textual body where neither his or her vision nor the author’s is triumphant, but rather each simply are, and there is no need of a master to define a vision or slaves to be possessed of it (Connolly 70). Simultaneously, no creative work manifested can be declared a complete vision of that mind, because no object can be declared a constant beyond the human imagination (Tabrizi 154-155). This process of combining one’s own vision with another assures that there is always potential for man to create a new body of text out of his or her own will, and in so doing, find God within him or her self by acting as the source of a body beyond his or her own mind.
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