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This article considers William Blake's illustrations to Dante and the prominence of landscape imagery in the artist's designs. Blake's emphasis on the topography of the Divine Comedy is unprecedented in the history of Dante illustration and his drawings therefore represent the most significant attempt to visualise Dante's epic in a coherent spatial setting. As this article shows, the series is, on the one hand, intrinsically linked to the great revival of Dante that occurred in England in the early nineteenth century, but it also seems to have been conceived as a conscious departure from the established modes of representation – namely John Flaxman's highly acclaimed outline illustrations. Blake's apparent preoccupation with the physicality of Dante's journey is discussed both in terms of the viewer's subsequent interpretation of the narrative and Blake's characterisation as a 'visionary' artist.

In the context of Dante studies, the illustrations to the *Divine Comedy* executed by William Blake (1757-1827) at the end of the 1820s are testament to the high esteem in which the poet was held in England in the early nineteenth century. Blake's eminence as a visionary writer is such that he is often heralded as Dante's ideal illustrator: «It is important to remember», says one critic, «that we are not dealing with the usual relationship between author and illustrator, but with a very rare instance of one creative mind observing, interpreting and commenting on the work of another»¹. The drawings remain the only complete set of illustrations to the *Comedy* executed in colour. They also, as this article will argue, represent the first – and perhaps only – attempt to visualise the setting of Dante's epic as a coherent and convincing space. Alternatively, in the context of Blake studies, the illustrations represent a heroic conclusion to the life and art of a seminal figure of British Romanticism. The loose application of watercolour and its atmospheric effects mark a departure from Blake's usual style and technique, though it is arguably the emphasis on landscape which most distinguishes the series from the artist's previous work.

Blake began working on his designs for Dante in 1824, just three years before his death (in fact many of the drawings were left unfinished). The project was commissioned by the landscape painter John Linnell (1792-1882), an important friend and patron to Blake in his final years. Both artist and patron would have

been aware that Dante had become increasingly modish in England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Most significantly, the first complete translation of the *Comedy* had finally appeared in 1802. This was quickly followed by Henry Francis Cary's translation of 1814. Cary's work was famously praised by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) and was soon established as the preferred go-to text: notably, Blake used Cary's translation in the formation of his illustrations².

One direct outcome of this new vogue for Dante was John Flaxman's series of engraved illustrations to the *Comedy*, issued in a commercial volume of 1807. The publication was an international success and Linnell was no doubt aware of the fame and fortune Flaxman (1755-1826) – a rival of Blake's – had achieved, and intended to emulate the success for his friend. Flaxman's designs are clearly indebted to antiquity and were partly inspired by the artist's knowledge of the Renaissance masters, whose work he had seen in Italy³. Comparatively, Blake was unfamiliar with the European tradition of Dante illustration, though it would appear that he studied Flaxman's series in detail. There is a clear relationship, for example, between Flaxman's portrayal of the hypocrites (whom Dante encounters in the eighth circle of Hell) and Blake's image of the same subject, which depicts an extended procession of the anonymous cloaked figures (www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/blake-the-hypocrites-with-caiaphas-verso-sketch-of-a-stooping-figure-n03359 and www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/flaxman-hypocrites-t11099)⁴. It seems logical to assume that Blake would have copied from Flaxman's work, which pre-dates Blake's, though one should perhaps not ignore Blake's claim that Flaxman stole some of *his* ideas for Dante⁵. The two artists also shared a determination to represent every episode of the *Comedy*, each producing just over a hundred designs.

However, Blake's overall treatment of the subject was fundamentally different to Flaxman's – as can be discerned from their respective illustrations of Dante's encounter with the hypocrites, despite the shared motif. In the text, Dante observes the punishment of the hypocrites, who are forced to continually stride around a vast gulf, under the pressure of their metal-lined hoods. Flaxman appears to have concentrated on the poet's description of the hooded figures – they occupy most of the picture space and are very much the subject of the design. Blake, on the other hand, attends to the setting and shows the hypocrites on a winding path that sweeps through the landscape. This contrast, generally speaking, epitomises the artists' divergent approach: whilst Blake responds to Dante's staging of the ep-

isodes, Flaxman concentrates on the figures and overlooks such theatrical details.

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Another aspect of Blake's series which differs considerably from Flaxman's is the visual contrast between Hell, Purgatory and Paradise in terms of mood, colour and the description of the physical environment. Blake aptly portrays Hell as a dark and oppressive arena of suffering, with a threatening and overbearing landscape. The pastel palette the artist uses to represent Purgatory, on the other hand, accentuates the natural surroundings and calmer atmosphere afforded by the mountainous setting. Paradise is depicted in the palest tones, reflecting the translucency of a utopia where every feeling and action is expressed by light. Flaxman appears to have been much less concerned with conveying the changing environment of the underworld – all one hundred and nine designs are executed in the same monochrome linear style. The purity of Flaxman's outlines emphasises the spirituality of Dante's poem, and thus removes the narrative from any physical world.

Blake's emphasis on the physicality of the journey is evident in his very first design, *Dante Running from the three Beasts* (fig. 1). The drawing includes one pictorial element not mentioned in the text; the sea – the addition of which alludes to Blake's perception of the journey as one which begins at the very edges of the earth. Throughout the series, Blake continues to use landscape to accentuate the notion of the journey, an integral aspect of Dante's poem. In *The Circle of the Gluttons* (fig. 2), for example, Blake presents a panoramic view of the third circle of Hell. Cerberus, the monstrous three-headed guard, is discernible on the distant shoreline. In the next two plates, Dante is shown alongside the beast, indicating the progression of his journey and the depth of the landscape. A similar device links the two drawings which describe Dante's encounter with the hypocrites. The first design depicts a group of flying devils in pursuit of Dante and Virgil, who are hiding under a bridge-like structure, through which a small procession of the hooded figures can be made out in the background (fig. 3). In the following illustration, the poets are shown to have passed through the bridge and now stand amongst the parade beside the crucified figure of Caiaphas, who was not visible in the previous plate (www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/blake-the-hypocrites-with-caiaphas-verso-sketch-of-a-stooping-figure-n03359)⁶.

As these examples demonstrate, the landscape details of Blake's drawings

function as visual links, which not only mark specific sequences but also unify the series as a whole. Whilst Flaxman interrupts the narrative by separating its episodes into a series of stark designs, in Blake's illustrations, the narrative of the journey flows in accordance with the text. Flaxman presents the *Comedy* as a series of encounters – which, of course, it is – but it is also an exploration of an unfamiliar world – and it is this aspect which Blake seems to have privileged.

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Blake's determination to present a vivid impression of the unearthly regions that stage Dante's poem is unprecedented – though it has not gone without notice. Several British artists have cited the illustrations as an inspiration for their own landscape work, including Blake's most-famous successor, Samuel Palmer (1805-81) and the twentieth-century painter Graham Sutherland (1903-80)⁷. Furthermore, in 1936, the art historian Charles Henry Collins Baker declared that in the Dante drawings:

Blake developed an interpretative expression of landscape [...] Superb as some of the figures are, the grandest of his illustrations are those in which the mood of sky or sea or mountain landscape predominates⁸.

Collins Baker is one of the few scholars to discuss Blake's illustrations in terms of landscape imagery. Indeed, though the prominence of landscape has been noticed by other artists, the academic discourse that emerged in the twentieth century tended to focus on different aspects of the series. Most Blake scholars are determined to preserve the artist's status as an esoteric visionary thinker. The extensive and complex historiography of Blake's *Dante* certainly supports this trend, though the constraints of this article allow for only a brief overview.

The standard interpretation of the drawings has evolved from the few, sporadic remarks Blake made about the Italian poet. Blake declared, for example, that Dante «saw devils where I see none» indicating an aversion to the Catholic system of sin and punishment, which the *Comedy* endorsed⁹. Since Blake's comments seem to suggest a discrepancy, the illustrations have traditionally been approached with the preconception that they will embody a critical commentary of Dante's poem. Scholars have thus looked for evidence of conflict in the iconography and have celebrated any apparent diversions from the text. Subsequently, Blake's own belief system – gleaned from his poetry and also known as Blake's

'mythology' – has been employed to explain these contradictions. It therefore stands to reason that the landscape elements of the Dante designs have been ignored by scholars, as landscape, or natural forms in general, play little part in Blake's mythological system¹⁰.

The scholarly tradition outlined above has relied on a simplification of Blake's attitude towards Dante and has failed to consider the illustrations as a self-contained response to the *Comedy*. This oversight is the subject of an essay by David Fuller, who proposes that Blake's series represents a more literal interpretation of the poem than has previously been acknowledged¹¹. Fuller's argument is reinforced by his revelation that many of Blake's supposed deviations can actually be explained by a closer examination of Dante's text¹². The relevance of Blake's mythology is also disputed by Fuller, who suggests that Blake is unlikely to have purposefully recited these ideas in his commercial illustrations, as this would be to draw on poems unfamiliar to his intended audience. Fuller's principal thesis is that Blake was a loyal and committed illustrator and, whilst this article supports this view, it also proposes that Blake's fidelity to the poem is equally expressed, if not more so, in his representation of the landscape settings – in short, by his adopted role as Dante's topographer.

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The topographical features Dante alludes to in the text assume a prominent role in Blake's drawings, particularly in the illustrations for Hell and Purgatory. Several compositions are arranged around lakes, swamps and rivers, for example. Cliffs, rock-faces and caves also appear frequently and many key drawings are set in forests or feature other areas of woodland. Furthermore, some designs are almost entirely focused on the arrangement of Dante's surroundings and offer panoramic views of the landscape. The aforementioned *Circle of the Gluttons* (fig. 2), for example, visualises the atmosphere and topographical setting of Dante's encounter with Cerberus, as opposed to the meeting itself – arguably, the key episode. The landscape also appears to have been Blake's primary concern in *Dante and Virgil about to Pass the Stygian Lake* (fig. 4). Once again, Dante's encounter with the persecuted – in this case, the politician Filippo Argenti, who accosts the poets during their passage across the water – is depicted in separate designs. Blake also identified the Stygian lake with a verbal inscription, a technique reminiscent of cartography that perhaps signifies a very conscious attempt to 'map' Dante's world.

Blake's effort to convey the layout of Hell is also apparent in *The Devils with Dante and Virgil by the Side of the Pool* (www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/blake-the-devils-with-dante-and-virgil-by-the-side-of-the-pool-n03358). The drawing shows the poets, escorted by demons, beholding the lake of boiling pitch, where the fraudulent are punished. At this stage in the narrative, Dante and Virgil are journeying through Malebolge, the eighth circle of Hell, made up of ten individual trenches. Again, Blake treats the scene as a landscape and no specific incident is portrayed. The design is best understood as a general impression of the structure and environment of Malebolge. The oppressive and terrifying nature of Hell is certainly pronounced here. This is primarily achieved through the representation of the landscape, aptly described by Morton D. Paley as «nightmarish» – a reference to the giant foreboding arches, the thick tar-like substance of the lake and the scorching flames, which produce an ominous red glow on the horizon¹³.

Of the twenty-nine drawings Blake produced to illustrate Dante's journey through Malebolge, many depict the same arched structures that dominate the landscape in *The Devils*, the appearance and form of which is pre-empted by the text. Dante describes the eighth circle as «flank'd with bridges, from rock's low base» and also refers to the «flinty paths» created by these causeways¹⁴. The bridges form passages and platforms, which mark and determine the poets' route and position. Their prominence in Blake's illustrations suggests that the artist consciously absorbed Dante's account of the space and structure of Malebolge and was receptive to its distinctive character and topography. It is this sort of attention to the setting of the *Inferno* that is completely lacking in Flaxman's designs: if the artist included such details at all, it was only to provide a rudimentary stage for the figures (www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/flaxman-the-bridge-t11097).

Blake also paid close attention to the topographical description of Purgatory. The artist's designs for the second cantica can be separated into three discrete groups, each representing a key stage of Dante's journey through Purgatory¹⁵. The poets' arrival on the shores of the mountain of Purgatory, described in the *Comedy* as a secluded island in the Southern hemisphere, is illustrated by the first few drawings. Dante and Virgil's ascent of the mountain is the subject of the next group. In the final sequence, the poets are shown to have reached the top of the mountain, where Beatrice awaits in the garden of Paradise. Each stage is clearly defined by the distinctive landscape imagery. The mountain, for example, is grey, stony and barren, whereas the garden at its peak is portrayed as a beautiful

concoction of pastel lushness, a contrast which reinforces the notion of Dante's continual movement through new and different environments.

The majority of Blake's designs for Purgatory belong to the second sequence showing the poets' staggered climb of the mountain. In the text, Dante discovers seven terraces, upon which he encounters various sinners working towards absolution – such as the proud, who are made to carry heavy loads, symbolising the burden of their ambition. In some drawings, the landscape is prioritised and specific encounters are ignored. For example, the *Ascent of the Mountain* (www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/blake-the-ascent-of-the-mountain-of-purgatory-n03366) highlights the craggy contours of the rocky pathway and the strenuous climb on which the poets are about to embark. In one unfinished sketch, the tiny poets are shown on a grassy ledge, in a scene almost entirely devoted to landscape (fig. 5). Throughout this sequence, a great prominence is afforded to the mountain itself. Comparatively, in Flaxman's series, the mountain only appears in one illustration. In keeping with his designs for the *Inferno*, Flaxman presents Purgatory as a series of encounters and discards most of the background detail. There is merely an occasional hint of a rocky path beneath the poets' feet (www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/flaxman-the-meeting-with-stattius-t11138).

Blake appears to have developed a compositional template for the climb scenes, made up of three key elements – the mountain (usually foregrounded on the left or right), the sky and the sea (fig. 5; see also www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/blake-the-ascent-of-the-mountain-of-purgatory-n03366 and www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/blake-the-rock-sculptured-with-the-recovery-of-the-ark-and-the-annunciation-n03368). The repetition of these particular components of the landscape not only implies a succession of alternative vantage points within one coherent space, but also alludes to the fact that the events depicted are taking place at a significant height above sea level. Comparatively, in Flaxman's Purgatory designs, the presence of clouds provides the only impression of altitude and of the poets' elevated location. The inclusion of a sun or moon-lit sky in Blake's mountain drawings also indicates the time of day at which each scene takes place and highlights the progression of the journey in terms of space and time. In the text, Dante occasionally notes the sun's movement or position and Blake was clearly receptive to this narrative device.

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It is evident that Blake regarded the landscape of the *Comedy* of paramount importance. However, what influenced or motivated the artist to assemble such a convincing evocation of Dante's surroundings is less clear. The following paragraphs seek to answer this question by considering Blake's sources – both textual and pictorial – in closer detail.

As has been implied, Flaxman's series was the only visual interpretation of Dante with which Blake appears to have been familiar – and it was not an appropriate source for landscape. An intriguing alternative exists in the form of Alessandro Vellutello's sixteenth-century edition of the *Comedy*, a copy of which was found amongst Blake's possessions in 1827¹⁶. The book is illustrated with a series of woodcut engravings by an anonymous artist and there is some indication that Blake studied and borrowed from these designs. In the woodcut showing circle of the adulterers, for example, a swirl of naked figures anticipates Blake's composition for the same scene (*The Circle of the Lustful*, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery)¹⁷. The most striking parallel is that between the first illustration from Blake's series (fig. 1) and the corresponding engraving (fig. 6): Blake's figure of Dante – with his arms outstretched and head turned in alarm – is clearly derived from the earlier precedent.

The woodcuts pertaining to Purgatory also bear some resemblance to Blake's, owing to the prominence of the mountain, the side-viewpoint, and the recurring depiction of the sun, sea and sky (fig. 7). However, Blake's concentration on the mountain should also be considered in the context of early nineteenth-century landscape painting, a time when many British artists developed a new interest in mountain scenery¹⁸. In the 1820s specifically, William Brockedon (1787-1854) published his *Illustrations of the Passes of the Alps, by which Italy Communicates with France, Switzerland and Germany*. Several of Brockedon's designs anticipate Blake's emphasis on the figures' ascent and the foregrounding of the pathway on the far left of the composition. Tours of the Alps were particularly common and many artists – most famously, J.M.W. Turner (1771-1851) – went on to exhibit views of the region at the Royal Academy, which Blake may well have seen¹⁹. The significance of a journey to a distant land, with its spiritual and fateful connotations, would not have been lost on a student of the *Divine Comedy*.

There is some indication that Blake read his Vellutello edition in the original Italian, based on a surviving anecdote that the artist learnt the language in a few short weeks. However, this seems unlikely and most scholars are now agreed

that whilst Blake no doubt consulted the Italian text on occasion – more likely, as has been suggested, for its illustrative contents – «his main source must have been the new Cary translation»²⁰. In a study of the various English translations of the *Comedy*, Valeria Tinkler-Villani has pointed to Cary's misunderstanding of the physical world in which the narrative takes place. Notably, Cary is shown to have overlooked the rapid pace and shifting settings of the original – producing an increased, but inaccurate, effect of continuity – an effect which, as has been shown, characterises many of Blake's drawings²¹.

Cary is also accused of exaggerating the space and sublimity of Dante's world. In the third canto of the *Inferno*, for example, which describes the poet's first steps into Hell, the translator ignores Dante's description of a prison enclosed by darkness, where visibility is restricted to a low horizontal line, and adds words which suggest height and grandiosity²². Blake was clearly influenced by Cary's interpretation and in the corresponding illustration depicts a clearer, vaster landscape than Dante originally intended (www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/blake-the-inscription-over-the-gate-n03352). Cary's emphasis on the spaciousness of the *Comedy* was also admired by Coleridge, who praised the «picturesqueness» and «topographic quality of Dante's journey through hell» in his lectures²³. Evidence suggests that Blake and Coleridge were acquainted in the 1820s and furthermore Linnell, Blake's patron, had previously attended some of Coleridge's lectures²⁴. Collectively, Blake's connection to Coleridge and his reliance on Cary's translation points to a topical interest in the description of landscape in Dante's poem.

The emphasis on landscape in Blake's Dante series might also be explained by the artist's agenda. Blake is often described as a 'visionary' and it is not without significance that Cary titled his translation «The Vision of Dante», a phrase that stresses the reportage of an imaginary experience and emphasises the unreality of the world of the poem²⁵. One is inclined to wonder how important this distinction was to Blake, and how differently he perceived his role as Dante's illustrator to that of Turner or, indeed, Brockedon, both of whom travelled to a distant land to paint and interpret an unfamiliar environment. It is quite possible that Blake believed in his ability to similarly 'visit' Dante's world and the sketchy manner in which the watercolours have been executed only serves to accentuate the notion of on-the-spot topography. One of the designs from the Dante series, a structure diagram (http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=6540&partId=1&searchText=blake+circles+of+hell&page=1), takes on a potential new meaning in this context – as a

key or map of Dante's world. To distinguish – but at the same time, partly align – Blake's designs from those by the conventional landscape topographers, the term 'visionary topography' might be applied.

- 1 A.S. ROE, *Blake's Illustrations to the Divine Comedy*, Princeton 1953, p. v.
- 2 For an overview of the various English translations that were published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see V. TINKLER-VILLANI, *Visions of Dante in English Poetry: Translations of the Commedia from Jonathan Richardson to William Blake*, Amsterdam 1989. Coleridge praised Cary's translation in his letters and lectures, following a chance meeting in 1817. See *Dante Rediscovered: From Blake to Rodin*, Grasmere 2007, eds D. BINDMAN et al., pp. 1-22.
- 3 Flaxman had visited the cathedral of Orvieto, the site of Luca Signorelli's great fresco cycle, in the 1780s. It is supposed that Flaxman would have been aware of the references to Dante in this painted scheme and may have referred back to Signorelli's dramatic scenes of hell in the conception of his own designs. See D. IRWIN, *John Flaxman 1775-1826: Sculptor Illustrator Designer*, London 1979, p. 42.
- 4 Flaxman's image of the hypocrites has been identified as «one of the most copied and imitated of Flaxman's designs». See BINDMAN et al., *Dante Rediscovered*, p. 230.
- 5 In his *Public Address* of 1810, Blake angrily wrote that: «Flaxman cannot deny that one of the very first Monuments he did, I gratuitously design'd for him [...] how much of his Homer and Dante he will allow to be mine I do not know, as he went far enough off to Publish them, even to Italy, but the Public will know & Posterity will know». See *Blake: Complete Writings, with variant readings*, ed. G. Keynes, Oxford 1971, p. 592.
- 6 TINKLER-VILLANI, *Visions of Dante*, p. 268.
- 7 In an oft-cited recollection, Palmer described a visit to Blake in 1824, in which he found Blake «like one of the Antique patriarchs, or a dying Michel Angelo [...] making in the leaves of a great book the sublimest design from his (not superior) Dante» (see A.H. PALMER, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Palmer*, London 1892, pp. 9-10). In the early twentieth century, Sutherland responded enthusiastically to the Tate's acquisition of some of Blake's Dante drawings. The artist's series of paintings showing the Welsh steelworks are said to owe a significant debt to Blake's apocalyptic illustrations (see M. HAMMER, *Graham Sutherland: Landscapes, War Scenes, Portraits 1924-1950*, London 2005, p. 24).
- 8 C.H. COLLINS BAKER, *William Blake, Painter*, «The Huntington Library Bulletin», X, 1936, pp. 135-148 : 147.

- 9 This quote derives from Henry Crabb Robinson's recollections of Blake. Cited in *Blake Records*, ed. G.E. Bentley, New Haven and London 2004, p. 424.
- 10 The most significant analysis of Blake's Dante designs as manifestations of his own complex belief system is contained in ROE, *Blake's Divine Comedy*. For an overview of Blake's mythology see N. FRYE, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake*, Boston 1967.
- 11 D. FULLER, *Blake and Dante*, «Art History», XI, 1988, pp. 349-373.
- 12 In one particular example, Fuller shows how Blake's striking image of *Beatrice Addressing Dante from the Car* (Tate Collection, London) – the most overt expression of Blake's antagonism toward Dante, according to Roe – is best understood «in terms of the Dante's text, its explicit Biblical source, and the well-known iconographic tradition». See FULLER, *Blake and Dante*, pp. 355-356.
- 13 M.D. PALEY, *The Traveller in the Evening: The Last Works of William Blake*, Oxford 2007, p.136.
- 14 *Inferno* 18:16-17. Translation taken from R. PITE, *The Divine Comedy: the Vision of Dante*, London 1994 (ed. or. H.R. CARY, 1814).
- 15 TINKLER-VILLANI, *Visions of Dante*, p. 276.
- 16 See *Blake Records*, p. 466. There were at least six editions of Vellutello's Dante published between 1544 and 1596. Blake is believed to have owned the 1564 edition. Venice 1564.
- 17 PALEY, *The Last Works*, p. 127.
- 18 See L. HAWES, *Presences of Nature: Late Georgian Landscape 1780-1830*, New Haven and London 1982, p. 16.
- 19 Turner exhibited *The Passage of Mount St. Gotthard* (Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal), one of several views the artist painted of the Swiss mountain, at the Royal Academy in 1815. It is well documented that Blake frequented the Royal Academy in the early nineteenth century, having exhibited there in 1808. See *Blake Records*, pp. 378, 386, 389 and 411.
- 20 PALEY, *The Last Works*, p. 112. Paley also outlines the origins of the anecdote and lists the various commentators to have endorsed its authenticity, including Blake's biographer Alexander Gilchrist (1828-61) and the artist John Thomas Smith (1766-1833).
- 21 TINKER-VILLANI, *Visions of Dante*, p. 188-190.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 195.
- 23 See *Ibid.*, p. 185.
- 24 Bentley records that Linnell attended several of Coleridge's lectures on philosophy in March 1819 It also seems as though Blake and Coleridge came to know each other through their mutual acquaintance with Linnell. See *Blake Records*, pp. 341 and 411.
- 25 TINKLER-VILLANI, *Visions of Dante*, pp. 178-179 and 228.



Fig. 1: WILLIAM BLAKE, *Dante running from the Three Beasts* (1824–1827); illustration for *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri (*Inferno* I, 1-90), pen and ink and watercolour over pencil and black chalk, 37.3 x 52.8 cm (sheet) *Butlin* 812.1; *Butlin & Gott* 3, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest, 1920 (988-3).



Fig. 2: WILLIAM BLAKE, *The Circle of the Gluttons* (from Dante's "*Divine Comedy*"); verso: a soaring figure amid stars, probably for "Enoch", 1824–1827, watercolor, black ink, graphite, and black chalk, 36.9 x 52.3 cm, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Bequest of renville L. Winthrop, 1943.440, photo: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

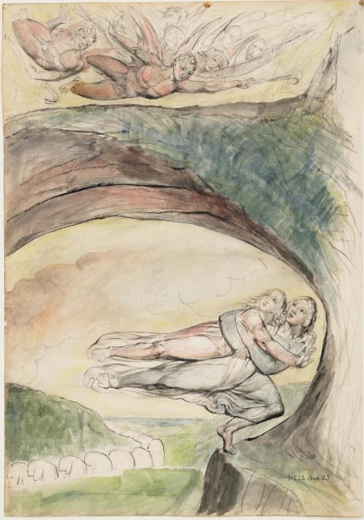


Fig. 3: WILLIAM BLAKE, *Virgil Rescues Dante from the Evil Demons* (from Dante's "Divine Comedy"); verso: *Sketch of rocks*, 1824-1827, watercolor, black ink, graphite, and black chalk, 52.3 x 36.9 cm, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop, 1943.443, photo: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College.



Fig. 4: WILLIAM BLAKE, *Dante and Virgil on the Edge of the Stygian Pool* (from Dante's "Divine Comedy"), 1824-1827, gray wash, graphite, black ink, black chalk and watercolor, 37 x 52.3 cm, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop, 1943.658, photo: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College.



Fig. 5: WILLIAM BLAKE, *The Rest on the Mountain leading to Purgatory* (1824–27); illustration for *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri (*Purgatorio* VI, 46-57) pen and ink and watercolour over black chalk and pencil, 52.7 x 37.2 cm (sheet) *Butlin* 812.73; *Butlin & Gott* 29, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest, 1920 (1014-3).



Fig. 6: ANONYMOUS, *Dante and Virgil before the three Beasts in the Dark Wood*, woodcut engraving, ca. 1544



Fig. 7: ANONYMOUS, *The Envious*, woodcut engraving, ca. 1544