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C O N T E N T S

Morton D. Paley

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# Blake Newsletter

Number 2

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The Gnomes were at work in issue number 1, and the following errors and omissions should be noted:

The report on the Blake--Varley sketchbook (p. 2) appeared not in TLS but in the London Times. We thank Mr. Martin Butlin for pointing this out and Miss Mary Hanna for having sent us the clipping.

Mr. Fred Whithead, whom we again thank for a list of ongoing Blake projects, was incorrectly renamed Robert.

Our masthead was designed by Miss Amy Tsuji, who also compiled the list of articles on pp. 2-4 of number 1. On page 3, we should have included the contributions by Fred C. Robinson to the December 1966 PMLA discussion "Tense and the Sense of Blake's 'The Tyger'" (599-600, 602-603).

On p. 7 (Stevenson note 3), there were two obvious typos for "Keynes" and "Greek."

All of which reminds us that the crooked roads without Improvement are roads of Genius.

Newsletter number 3 is scheduled for publication on December 15, 1967. It will be dedicated to S. Foster Damon. We had originally intended to dedicate the present issue to Professor Damon, but have changed the date in hopes of getting more material from his students and colleagues. The deadline for copy will be December 1.

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of thunder, Leviathan and Behemoth are all terrible creations as is the Tyger, yet they were made by God. You haven't given any reason for believing that Blake is criticizing the sublimity of the original here. The weeping of the stars is certainly an act of despair on their part, but considering the meaning of the stars in Blake's symbolism, their despair is auspicious--it means that man is about to emerge from their domination. Blake may be alluding to Job 38.7 here, as you suggest, as well as to Revelation 12.4; but in any case it is to invest the stars with his own meaning. He is saying, in effect, that the stars should have wept when the Tyger was created, for it meant that their power would be overthrown.

Blake does, later, create a demonic parody of Leviathan in the Nelson portrait, and this is a parody of the sublime, along with Behemoth in Pitt and the two monsters in the Job engraving. But this was after Blake had concluded that all violence was evil, that revolutionary violence corrupted the ends which revolution was supposed to bring about, and that the only solution for human society was regeneration through love. This was not his view in 1792, as we see in the "Fayette" poem, for example, where LaFayette's pity for the Queen is vehemently criticized. Blake's pacifism emerges with the failure of the French Revolution and the development of the Napoleonic tyranny; his later views should not be back-read into his earlier ones. This, I think, accounts for most of the differences in our interpretations--you are assuming that all Blake's works fit into a consistent pattern of thought, while it seems clear to me that there are some profound changes in his ideas between The Marriage of Heaven and Hell and Jerusalem, with the main transition taking place during the years when Blake was working on The Four Zoas.

MDP

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One of the pleasantest results of publishing the Newsletter has been receiving letters from many Blake scholars in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world. All too often, I'm afraid, my answers have been shorter and later than I could wish. This situation will probably get worse rather than better, as it would be impossible for me to take the time to answer letters as they deserve and put out the Newsletter, in addition to doing my own work. Therefore I ask the understanding and indulgence of our readers, who have been (and will, I hope, continue to be) generous with their contributions of material and comment.

This winter I expect to be travelling to a number of Blake collections, and although mail will eventually reach me, forwarding may take as much as two weeks. It would be helpful if readers marked Newsletter correspondence "Blake Newsletter" in the lower left hand corner of the envelope. In that way, I can make whatever special arrangements are necessary more easily. The deadline for copy for the next issue is December 10. --MDP