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Aethelred Eldridge

Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 10, Issue 2, Fall 1976, p. 47
one of the most important. I refer not to Romney's public, portrait art, with its many representations of Lady Hamilton, but to the private, subjective and emotional art that one finds in the drawings and sketches. I shall argue that this art was known to Blake and transmitted to him through personal contact. Although I shall take note of and even illustrate the "private side" of Romney's art, I shall "feature" the ones that embody that great and complex eighteenth-century quality of delusion. My argument is that these works by Romney lie back of Blake's First Book, The Book of Thel, and the Song of Innocence—and also the great illustrations to the poetry of John Milton.

David Irwin, Dept. of Art History, Aberdeen University
Scottish Contemporaries and Heirs of William Blake

The paper will examine the work of Scottish painters whose art runs parallel to that of Blake, and who also encountered similar neglect by their contemporaries. The discussion will be concerned primarily with two artists who spent most of their working lives in Edinburgh. Firstly, Alexander Runciman, who was 20 years senior to Blake and was producing the main body of his work in the 1770's and 80's; and secondly, David Scott, a true heir to Blake, born in 1806, and producing his mature works in the days of early Victorian Britain. The work of both artists is not as well known as it should be. Runciman, after all, was highly praised by Henry Fuseli, who was not a man to waste words in unnecessary flattery. When he described him as "the best painter of us in Rome." Scott, brother of the Pre-Raphaelite painter and poet, William Bell Scott, was admired by Rossetti for his independence and lack of compromise, and by Emerson for his genius.

SESSION EIGHT: Moderator, Seymour Howard, University of California, Davis
Morriss Eaves, Dept. of English, University of New Mexico
Blake and the Artistic Machine

Rubens hired a phalanx of specialists to execute hundreds of commissions under his trademark; following in the same artistic-commercial tradition, Reynolds customarily painted only the faces of his portraits and left the rest to the "drapery men"; printseller Rudolph Ackermann fitted engravings into a system of manufacture efficient enough to produce hundreds of thousands of colored prints for the Museum of London. This organization of production in the graphic arts and its associated technology are the right context for Blake's most important artistic principles, which have more often been described—as usual with apologies for his paranoid tone and narrow tastes—than understood. Against the proper background, with the transitions in the proper places, Blake's aesthetic comes together in a lively coherence that does not disintegrate even in the face of the magisterial enlightenment common sense of Reynolds' Discourses, where Blake learned, if he had not known it before, that principles of manufacture can become aesthetic principles, and that in a commercial empire the approved art is as many paints an allegory of commerce. Why was Reynolds a "plagiarist"? Why did Venetian and Flemish painters "cause that every thing in art shall become a Machine"? Why is the sign of the Machine "broken times, broken masses, and broken colours"? Why did Pope rewrite Donme's satires? The answer is the same in each case, and it lurks in Blake's cryptic assertion that "Execution is only the result of Invention."

How that might be so we shall discover from the lesson, variously taught by the modern dishwasher, Washington's face on the dollar bill, and decorum, the prissy but conventional word in criticism for the relation of form to content.

G. E. Bentley, Jr., Dept. of English, University of Toronto
A Jewel in an Ethiope's Ear (Read by Morton D. Paley)

The apocryphal Book of Enoch, a miscellaneous collection of prophetic texts including The Book of the Watchers, The Book of Noah, The Book of Abraham, seems to have been written down in its present form about the First Century before Christ. Its first complete printing was the English translation made by the Reverend Professor Richard Lawrence in 1821. The new publication made hardly any impression on thinking contemporaries; even theologians showed little interest in it for a time. However, within a few years its divine eroticism had attracted the attention of five major artists and poets: William Blake, John Flaxman, Thomas Moore, Richard Westall, Lord Byron.

It is the purpose of the present paper to indicate briefly when and how The Book of Enoch came to be known in Europe, then to examine and compare some of the ways in which Blake, Flaxman, Moore, Westall and Byron responded to it—in particular the section called The Book of Watchers, with its account of how angels (called the Watchers of Heaven) fell in love with the daughters of men and propagated a race of giants. In The Book of Enoch Blake found confirmation of his own prophetic visions—hence the gusto with which he began to illustrate it, a gusto that makes the illustrations for it of Flaxman and Westall seem "earth-bound and immature" by comparison.

FRIDAY EVENING: Reception, Art Gallery, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street. Visiting Blake scholars in Art and English are cordially invited to the reception and to the exhibition, The Following of William Blake: numerous original works by Palmer, Richmond, Varley, Calvert, et al. Organized by Larry Gleason, University of East Texas.

CONCURRENT PUBLIC EVENTS


2. The Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street:

(a) Film of William Blake: The Illuminated Books, organized by Robert Essick and Donald Fitch.

(b) Blake's Illuminated Books: A Historical Survey of Illuminations.

The evolution of facsimiles of Blake's colored books from 1860 to the recent Trianon Press editions. Rare items of great pictorial and bibliographic interest.

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