

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY  
**BLAKE**

R E V I E W

**Pour Les Sexes: Les Grilles de Paradise**

Les Nouvelles Littéraires, Claude-Marie Senninger

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(pls. 1, 3, 8, 10)--generally the compositions suffer from a non-integrated eclecticism.

Iconographically, Stewart borrows much from Yeats and the Christian mystical-magical symbolism of the Rosicrucians (pls. 1, 4, 7, 9). The rose and other emblems like the stag and horned goat have a prominence in these drawings that is foreign to Blake. But Blake is certainly the main source of Stewart's imagery and some of his drawings follow the text of *The Marriage* closely. Plate 8 is clearly the "Printing House in Hell," complete with Dragon-Man, viper, eagle, lion (shown as a cat) and books "arranged in libraries" (Blake and Stewart's books among them). Many of the other illustrations can be convincingly linked with a line from the text: plate 6 with the poet "sitting on a pleasant bank beside a river by moonlight"; plate 5 with "man [who] has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern" and plate 4 with "a mighty Devil folded in black clouds, hovering on the sides of a rock."

There are other drawings by Stewart that owe more to Blake's images than to his text. Plates 1 and 2 compare in theme with Blake's title-page for *The Marriage* and plate 3 seems to elaborate on the image of "The Sick Rose" from *Songs of Experience*. Although there is much of Blake in these drawings, Stewart has not attempted to illustrate *The Marriage* literally. Each of his plates contain fresh and intriguing combinations of old and new motifs and this is their greatest strength. Significantly, Stewart

is most successful in the few designs in which he goes beyond the text. For example, plate 12 represents the "cherub with flaming sword" with an intense visionary grandeur comparable to Blake's own.

In a well-bound, signed and limited edition, Clark Stewart's illustrations for *The Marriage* should be of interest to any Blake admirer who has struggled with the poet-artist's complex visions in the past, knows the joys born of careful thought and close observation, and is willing to apply these techniques to the work of another. As with Blake's illustrations to the works of other poets, Stewart's drawings inevitably reveal more about the illustrator than about the subject being illustrated. Those who would seek only an echo of Blake's imagery should look elsewhere.

**Raw Material [Matière Première] by Denis Roche, and For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise [Pour les Sexes: Les Grilles de Paradise] by William Blake. Paris: L'Energumène (31, Rue Victor-Duruy, 75015).**

*L'Energumène*, a collection linked to the journal of the same name, presents a combined volume, unless it be only one book of mirrors and reflections. Denis Roche provides the reader with his translation of *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise* by William Blake. These are short poems which either frame a series of prints (run off by the poet on 17 May 1793), or provide them with a title.

Denis Roche does not utilize the traditional preface or introduction. Instead, he makes use of an ensemble of poetry, narrative, and criticism which might be characterized as poetic fiction or creative reading. It should be noted that there is often little more than a slight phonetic slippage separating poetics from politics. This is made apparent to the reader by the appearance of Fourier, Herbart, Restif and Sade in the black romantic and red revolutionary landscape of William Blake's time, or of Denis Roche's inner realm.

Denis Roche rereads Blake, follows him in his garden (where he and his wife played Adam and Eve), or into his studio in front of his plates, where he engraves his illuminations in the form of words and drawings. Denis Roche seeks out, brings to light, makes audible and visible that which constitutes for Blake (but also for himself, as author of *Louve Basse*) the raw material of writing--the bursting forth of words, images, and phantasms.

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