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Blake at Detroit and Philadelphia

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sun, and oddly she requotes the exact lines given in the catalogue (p. 166) of the exhibition, with this exception, that she quotes only part of the passage. The entire passage reads:

The Breath Divine went forth over the morning hills Albion rose
In anger: the wrath of God breaking bright flaming on all sides around
His awful limbs: into the Heavens he walked clothed in flames
Loud thundring, with broad flashes of flaming lightning & pillars
Of fire, speaking the Words of Eternity in Human Forms, in direful
Revolutions of Action & Passion, thro the Four Elements on all sides
Surrounding his awful Members. Thou seest the Sun in heavy clouds
Struggling to rise above the Mountains. in his burning hand
He takes his Bow, then chooses out his arrows of flaming gold
Murmuring the Bowstring breathes with ardor! clouds roll round the
Horns of the wide Bow, loud sounding winds sport on the mountain brows
Compelling Urizen to his Furrow; & Tharmas to his Sheepfold;
And Luvah to his Loom: Urthona he beheld mighty labouring at
His Anvil, in the Great Spectre Los unwearied labouring & weeping
Therefore the Sons of Eden praise Urthonas Spectre in songs
Because he kept the Divine Vision in time of trouble.

In the first few lines Blake is merging his resurrected Albion with an image of the sun. Admittedly, the language is obscure but there is little doubt that it is Albion who is clothed in flames, and it is clear that Albion is suddenly seen as an aggressive vision like the sun. It is Albion still whose bow, arrows, and the winds arising from this source of power over the mountains compel Urizen and the other Zoas to their tasks. The critic is right in seeing this image as the sun, but as so often in Blake there is a conflating of images which suddenly introduces a second level, giving it qualities beyond those possessed in the beginning. The error in methodology is that the critic has not considered the textual passage as a whole but has considered one of its parts in isolation.

After stating that the Yale drawing could only illustrate those italicized lines quoted above, the reviewer goes on to say that this figure could not be Albion in any case since Albion is old with a beard, and that if this were for *Jerusalem*, the character would have to be the youthful Los.

The critic must have forgotten that Blake's very design for plate 95 of *Jerusalem* illustrating the lines quoted above shows the youthful Albion rising out of the earthbound body of the ancient bearded Albion. Albion is at once the earth, England, and universal father. Once again, this is an instance of the conflation of images which is so essential to an understanding of Blake. As a newly awakened, aggressive being, Albion is in fact young, beardless and identified with the sun.

After making these inconclusive points, the critic refutes her own argument by stating that, in any case, the Yale drawing is not right in style for *Jerusalem* (c. 1815-18) but rather dates from the mid-1790's and is probably a preparatory drawing for Young's *Night Thoughts*. The size of the Yale drawing (9 7/8 x 12 5/16 in.) is used as support for this view. The critic concludes that this sheet corresponds to the 11 1/2 in. wide illustrations for Young's *Night Thoughts* and would fit the top of one of its pages nicely.

Oddly enough, it escaped her notice that there are no top of the page illustrations and no one-half page designs at all among Blake's engravings for

Young's *Night Thoughts*. The text is placed off center so that very wide margins on the outside and lower edges remain for figural scenes. Approximately 1/4 of the page is available at the bottom for an illustration and none at all at the top of a page. Moreover, no page of *Night Thoughts* is organized with a central focus as is this design. All the *Night Thoughts* illustrations are eccentric since they are designed for the outside and lower margins. Once again, the critic has made a major error in methodology by isolating one element rather than relating multiple controlling elements.

With this meager support the reviewer finally adduces that the style of the Yale drawing is more appropriate for the illustrations to Young and that it could not possibly be as late as the *Jerusalem* illustrations. I have already pointed out that the Yale drawing is centrally and bilaterally organized in contrast with all of the illustrations to Young. On the other hand, numerous of the *Jerusalem* illustrations are centrally organized. In addition, the use of flames in rhythms across the surface of the page like those in the Yale drawing is a leitmotif of the *Jerusalem* illustrations, and these incendiary arabesques allow the design to interweave with the flowing lines of the text. These flames were heightened with gold applied with a brush and contrasted with deep areas of shadow like that indicated on the left of the sheet at Yale. By contrast, the illustrations to Young are on a completely different spatial plane from the block of text and the text cuts across the illustration at right angles, leaving the figures in space behind. Later Blake unified illustration and text in a fluid linear pattern on the same surface plane, that of the page itself.

The linear surface rhythms of the Yale drawing are fused more completely with the movement of the figure than anything by Blake in the 1790's. The surface design of the *Jerusalem* illustrations in which text and figure are united in a sensitive extension of each other are the bridge to Blake's late style embodied in the *Job* illustrations. In these late works, the use of illusionistic space with traditional perspective devices is almost completely discarded for a richly interwoven surface pattern in which text and figure are fused. Finally, there is a tendency in Blake's drawings of the 1790's to retain the coherence of the silhouette of the figure in a way which is much closer to Flaxman's figural style. By contrast, the Yale drawing shows a fusion of figural movement and surrounding arabesques which is like that of the *Jerusalem* illustrations and Blake's late style.

Let me simply conclude by saying that if new evidence is brought forth to show that the Yale drawing does not illustrate the passage in Blake's text that I have quoted, I shall be more than interested and pleased to accept it. However, the reviewer under discussion has not given such evidence as would set it aside at this time.

Note: With reference to the article mentioned in Mr. Butlin's note (p. 39), "William Blake's Mr. Thomas" by Leslie Parris has now been published in the *Times Literary Supplement* for 5 Dec. 1968, p. 1390.