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N O T E

Sterne and Blake

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I am grateful to Robert P. Kolker for another allusion to Pope which may be found in Night the Eighth of *The Four Zoas*. Ahania, in a horrible vision of decay and death, sees the fall of the "Strong Eagle", and

Beside him lies the Lion dead & in his belly worms
Feast on his death till universal death devours all
(109: 7-8)

The last phrase seems to be a version of the last line of *The Dunciad*:

And Universal Darkness buries All.

Robert P. Kolker notes that, interestingly enough, Pope's line, according to the Twickenham Edition, is an allusion to Shakespeare, *II. Henry IV*: "Let Order die . . . /And darknesse be the burier of the dead".

The concept of the fairy's functions in "A fairy skipd upon my knee" (Doubleday, p. 473) seems to have gained something from the machinery of Pope's mock-epic *The Rape of the Lock*, particularly the guarding of Belinda, and there is a further sign that Blake was familiar with this poem, in his adaption of the name "Naamah" for the wife of Noah, for which he need go no further than Pope's footnote to Canto I, line 145: "Antient Traditions of the Rabbi's relate, that several of the fallen Angels became amorous of Women, and particularize some; among the rest Asael, who lay with Naamah, the wife of Noah, or of Ham". Pope's reference is to "Bereshi Rabbi in *Genes.* 6.2".

Finally, as F. W. Hilles has noted in presenting "A 'New' Blake Letter" to the world (*Yale Review*, lvii, 1967, 85-9), Blake's letter to Hayley of 16 July 1804 includes a varied quotation from Pope's "The Temple of Fame", applied to Caroline Watson.

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2. Sterne and Blake

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There are few obvious connections between Blake and Sterne, beyond the fact that Blake made an engraving for *Sentimental Journey* in *The Novelist's Magazine*, Volume IX (1782) and, according to his letter of 4 May 1804, hoped to make others from *Tristram Shandy* for Hayley's *Romney* (1809). Certainly their imaginations appear to be pointed in quite different directions; the irrepressibly impulsive Yorick is difficult to picture in the same creative world as the titanic Los calling all his sons to the strife of blood.

There is however, a passage from *Sentimental Journey* (1768) which seems to be echoed in Blake's *America* (1793). In the chapter called "The Captive. Paris" Yorick relates how he heard a caged bird repeating pathetically "I can't get out" and immediately

begun to figure to myself the miseries of confinement. . . . I took a single captive, and having first shut him up in his dungeon, I then look'd through the twilight of his grated door to take his picture.

I beheld his body half wasted away with long expectation and confinement, and felt what kind of sickness of the heart it was which arises from hope deferr'd. Upon looking nearer I saw him pale and feverish: in thirty years the western breeze had not once fann'd his blood -- he had seen no sun, no moon in all that time -- nor had the voice of friend or kinsman breathed through his lattice -- his children--

--But here my heart began to bleed -- and I was forced to go on with another part of the portrait. . . .

The passage on *America* plate 6 is as different as possible in character, but the imagined situation of the languishing prisoner is remarkably similar to Sterne's. Orc is predicting the apocalypse:

The morning comes, the night decays, the watchmen leave their stations;
The grave is burst, the spices shed, the linen wrapp'd up.
The bones of death, the cov'ring clay, the sinews shrunk & dry'd
Reviving shake, inspiring move, breathing! awakening!
Spring like redeemed captives when their bonds & bars are burst;

Let the inchained soul shut up in darkness and in sighing,
Whose face has never seem a smile in thirty weary years;
Rise and look out, his chains are loose, his dungeon doors are open
And let his wife and children return . . .

Probably the association is only one of coincidence, but it is in some respects a striking coincidence of minds which one might otherwise say were as different as imaginable.

Lawrence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, ed. G. D. Stout, Jr. (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1967), 201-202; the italics here and below are mine.

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3. THOMAS JOHNES, "ANCIENT GUARDIAN OF WALES"

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In July of 1968, Ruthven Todd sent me an extremely interesting suggestion about the reference of *Jerusalem* 41 [46] 3-4:

Hereford, Ancient Guardian of Wales, whose hands
Builted the mountain palaces of Eden, stupendous works!

Mr. Todd wrote, "It is quite clearly Thomas Johnes, who built himself an Eden