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BLAKE

N E W S

Blake in Britain 1988

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The discussion following these two insightful papers focused first on Blake's partnership with James Parker in their printselling (as well as engraving) shop, which Ward suggested lasted for five (rather than one and a half) years and constituted Blake's primary source of income for this period; and on Blake's personal contacts with James Barry.

After lunch and a visit to the exhibition, where Robert Essick was on hand to answer numerous questions concerning the works in his collection, Morris Eaves gave a fascinating account of eighteenth-century art criticism, "An Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England: The Comedy of the English School." He traced the attempts of English artists and reviewers to establish the triumph of English art over its competition, primarily French and Italian art, and to consummate the happy marriage of a heroic English art with the world of commerce.

Morton Paley brought the symposium to a delightful conclusion with a detailed and convincing examination of the influence of William Blake on his followers, "The Art of 'The Ancients.'" Emphasizing the elegiac elements in Blake's illustrations to Thornton's Virgil (actually, as Paley noted, Blake was illustrating a poem by Ambrose Phillips), Paley then extensively and convincingly documented the ways in which Samuel Palmer, Edward Calvert and George Richmond adapted both the pictorial vocabulary and the media techniques of woodcut, engraving, fresco and tempera in their own later works.

In the discussion that followed, Hazard Adams asked whether English artists had promoted a myth of origins; Eaves responded that while James Barry had hailed Greek art as having discovered what he called the "master art" (its line, color, harmony, etc.), Blake tended to see the origin of art in an eternity variously identified with the Ancient Britons and Christianity; John Grant suggested the central role of Blake's image of Joseph of Arimathea in this context. Dörrbecker emphasized the ways in which Fuseli, in his promotion of Winckelmann, one of the three demons (along with Montesquieu and Dubos) who obstructed the triumph of English art on the European art market, somewhat qualified the plot of conspiracy successfully thwarted that Eaves had told. Eaves then acknowledged that his account was intended to emphasize the story that eighteenth-century English artists and art theorists told in common, rather than individual revisions and digressions.

The papers from the symposium will be published in *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, where those unable to attend will have the opportunity to relish their subtlety, excitement, and learning in greater detail. The exhibition, which continued through February 1988, was accompanied by a superbly annotated and finely il-

lustrated (in black and white) catalogue, *William Blake and His Contemporaries and Followers*, prepared by Robert N. Essick and available from the Huntington Library Bookstore or Publications Department for the phenomenally reasonable price of \$5.95. I urge all readers of *Blake* to send for it immediately before the edition is sold out.

NEWSLETTER

BIRTHDAY WISHES TO MARIÀ MANENT

John Adlard of Holland Road in London reminds us that 1988 will bring the ninetieth birthday of Marià Manent, the man who translated Blake's prophetic books into Catalan (*Libres Profètics de William Blake*, Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1962). Adlard goes on to say that "Stephen Spender considers Manent the finest living Catalan poet."

A BLAKE BICENTENARY LECTURE

Michael Phillips (University of Edinburgh) is to lecture in Paris at the invitation of the Collège de France, 9-16 October 1988, on the occasion of the bicentenary of Blake's invention of illuminated printing and the creation of *Songs of Innocence*. Times and location will be available from the Collège de France.

BLAKE IN BRITAIN 1988

The Blake Society at St. James's, Piccadilly, London presented two lectures and an exhibition for the summer of 1988. The exhibition, which ran from 31 May to 9 June, was based on enlarged photographs of Copy Z of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, accompanied by notes by Dr. Stanley Gardner. Gardner gave a two-part lecture on "Blake about the Children of Westminster" (Tuesday, 9 June), concerning a short-lived experiment in childcare undertaken in the 1780s in the vicinity of St. James's church. The first lecture dealt with Blake's closeness to these developments while the second lecture looked at *Songs of Experience* as a reaction to the tragedy of polite nannying and calculated deprivation. The other lecture, given by Professor Bo Lindberg (Tuesday, 31 May) on "William Blake and the Incarnation: The Oneness of Invention and Execution," discussed Blake's attitude to the human body and form, the relationship between invention and execution—with reference to Michelangelo

and Janet Warner's *William Blake and the Language of Art*. The Blake Society hopes to hold an autumn series of activities. Membership is by voluntary donation; the address is The Blake Society at St. James's, 197 Piccadilly, London, W1V 9LF.

The Brighton Festival in Sussex (6-29 May) was to have included a program of songs based on Blake's works but, unfortunately, the recital had to be canceled. The works listed in the program included familiar Blake pieces by Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten but also the first performance of a setting of "The Voice of the Ancient Bard" by Tony Hewitt-Jones.

The "Fourth Informal William Blake Congregation" was held on Thursday, 30 June 1988. The congregation is a twice-yearly forum for open readings and contributions on visionary subjects. The June session took place at the Bel and Dragon Hotel, Cookham, Berkshire at 1 p.m. to coincide with the birthday of the English painter Stanley Spencer, who lived in the village.

The Swedenborgian Church is celebrating the tricentenary of Emanuel Swedenborg's birth in 1688. In the U.K. there is a year-long series of lectures, meetings and exhibitions. The catalogue of events lists various publications by or on Swedenborg, usually at a very modest price. Teachers of Blake who, like me, would like to get beyond the Emanuel-Swedenborg-was-a-Swedish-theologian stage might be interested in a wall chart which summarizes Swedenborg's life and work or a broadsheet which is more detailed but less visual. Both are free and available on receipt of a large stamped, self-addressed envelope 12¾" x 9" (address below). Also available are an illustrated tea towel and a cardboard cutout model of a Swedenborg-designed flying machine (the latter is also the subject of a lecture by Henry Soderborg, "The Early History of Flight and the contribution of Emanuel Swedenborg"). Books, souvenirs and wall-charts are available from New Church House, 34 John Dalton Street, Manchester, M2 6LE, England. (David Worrall)

1688
Swedenborg
1988



Tricentenary
1988