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D I S C U S S I O N

Fellow Travelers . . .

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First, apologies to anyone who felt bullied, intimidated, browbeaten, threatened, or insulted by my rhetorical aside. *Mea culpa*. As for Tyndale's translation, I pushed it in order to add to the single "under the hill" reference of AV Exodus 24:4 the two other specific instances of that formulation in Tyndale. Obviously they didn't make the case any more convincing, and Christopher Heppner's neglect of even the AV occurrence shows how turning to Tyndale cost me points for my point. But one minute particular can suffice to ground what, following Robert Gleckner (*Blake's Prelude*, 1982), we might term a Blakean "significant allusion"—and for all that can be said about the passage from *Pilgrim's Progress* quoted by each of the respondents to "Under the Hill," Bunyan does not use the telling phrase.

Michael Tolley's effort "to pull together the idea of an erotic dream with that of the rampant Spectre" seems a useful furthering of the discussion, and I agree that we should "think first of the dream as one of erotic desire." In this connection we might turn from "under the hill" to "the lost Traveller," and Thomas Carew's memorably licentious poem, "A Rapture." The speaker of Carew's poem flies with "Celia" past "Honour" to graphically imaged delights of "Love's Elysium." In this "Elysian ground. / All things are lawful"—Lucrece reads Aretine, for example, and

The Grecian Dame,
That in her endlesse webb, toyl'd for a
name
As fruitlesse as her worke, doth there
display
Her selfe before the Youth of *Ithaca*,
And th' amorous sport of gamesome
nights prefer,
Before dull dreames of the lost Traveller.
(125-30)

In the context of this allusion, Blake's "pilgrim" becomes a type of Ulysses we are to write off if we would embrace Carew's revisionary Penelope. Such a possibility is perhaps no less scandalous than the realization that the "Satan" intimately addressed by Blake's speaker is "Worshipd by the Names Divine / Of Jesus & Jehovah." The presence of "Satan" or what Blake calls "The Accuser who is The God of This World" and elsewhere "the Accuser of Sin" (J98.49) in the vicinity of "Every Harlot" can facilitate the accommodation Tolley proposes between Mount Sinai and the "dream . . . of erotic desire." The "sin" of mounting (or being under) a Fanny Hill—"that sweet golden clime [hear also 'climb'] / Where the travellers journey is done"—can be summarized as having been insinuated into culture at Mount Sinai (e.g., Ex. 21:17, "thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife"). The Bible's other name for the site of moral revelation is Mount Horeb, opening the possibility that in some weary night's decline a conflicted son of mourning might ponder the schizoid equation of "mount whore" with "mount sin" (ail).

But most would want, I think, more sympathy for "the lost Traveller." He, after all, seems the final avatar of the protagonist of *For the Sexes*: the speaking "I" specifically labeled in plate 14 as "The Traveller [who] hasteth in the Evening." Such a sympathetic identification, contra Carew, would no doubt duly approve Ulysses' dream of a faithful wife, even if supposing its twenty years' duration to border on wish-fulfillment. A dream of fidelity would have particular resonance for an author well versed in "the torments of Love & Jealousy" and might serve to gloss the curious possible inference of "To the Accuser . . ." lines 3 and 4 regarding Blake's wife, Catherine, and the wife of his sometimes best friend John Flaxman, Ann (also Anna and Nancy in Blake's writing):

Harlot : Virgin :: Kate : Nan

It was for Mrs. Flaxman that Blake, commissioned by her husband, had prepared his "Illustrations to Gray's *Poems*"—including the epigraph to "Ode on the Spring." This seemingly added comment or clue can be seen as presenting (to "Nancy F——" most of all) the designer self-reflexively addressing his "wild root" (phallus / sexuality / inspiration) as a "Traveller" which is now to dream among the "leaves"—each of which in its materialization represents a leave-taking or parting from his seminal desire:

Around the Springs of Gray my wild root
weaves
Traveller repose & dream among my
leaves.

In "The Keys of the Gates" the root has become "the Worm Weaving in the Ground" which, with the wo[r]m-en in the speaker's existence (Mother, Sister, Wife [Daughter?—as per S. Foster Damon's speculation about *Thel*], Catherine), ends "Weaving to Dreams the Sexual strife."

The speaker of Carew's "The Rapture" also worries about sexual strife—not only the toll of hypocritical chastity which Honor demands for women, but even more the unChristian bloody revenges and consequent potential damnation Honor expects of jealous men. He ends the poem with this question:

Then tell me why
This Goblin Honour which the world
adores,
Should make men Atheists, and not
women Whores?

The prologue to *For the Sexes: THE GATES of PARADISE* echoes Carew's satiric stance in its uncomprehending conclusion: "O Christians Christians! tell me Why / You rear it on your Altars high" (emphases added here and above).