

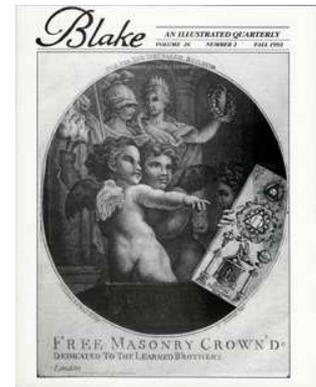
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R E V I E W

Hazard Adams, ed., *Critical Essays on William Blake*

Jeffrey D. Parker

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around the deity as its center" and with woman herself coming increasingly to fill "one part of that divine center" (157, 167). This book provides an underpinning logic for Milton's centering of both Christ and Eve in *Paradise Lost* and for the prominence later accorded the emanation in Blake's mythological system. Between Milton and Blake, Swedenborg derives certain perspectives from Milton, even occasionally echoing Milton's writings. In the process, Swedenborg subverts the "theocentric model" of heaven where worldly activities have no place and where the whole matter of "doing" is irrelevant: "the modern heaven comes clearly into focus: a heaven near at hand, material, full of activity and progress, and based on social relationships" (178, 228). If Milton is "a transitional figure in the development of an anthropocentric heaven," Swedenborg is the principal precursor of Blake and other romantic innovators for whom man and woman are "fragments of a once primordial whole" and for whom heaven is a place of intense mental activity, as well as highly developed social relationships—a place that, for Blake no less than for Wordsworth, is to be found *in this world*, or not at all (233, 234, 245). Among the unexpected rewards of this book are the paths of influence it charts between Milton and Swedenborg and then the heady observations it makes on Blake's Swedenborgianism.

Both of these books remind us that The Age of Blake was rife with prophetic expectations, which, if they invoked the idea of returning to an Age of Gold, also made clear that what really mattered was the forward thrust of history. The process envisioned was less a return to, or renewal of, past history than escaping from it into a future that was, nevertheless, always located within history, though history in the future tense. The prophet was

not a proponent but rather an opponent of the reigning orthodoxies; his obligation was not to predict but to create a future; and his—or her—means to that end was (Joachim-like) to roll stones away from the mind, letting the light shine forth; or (Blake-like) to open the doors of perception, thereby enlarging human consciousness and, simultaneously, bringing history to its consummation. Whether or not the romantics read him, Joachim of Fiore prophesies their agenda and in the case of the Shelleys, Mary no less than Percy, particularizes their program, giving definition to their heaven on earth—their paradise in history.

The terms in the title of this essay derive from a poem, "Eternal Evangel," in the second volume (entitled *Medieval Legends*) of the Czech poet Jaroslav Vrchlický's *Frescoes and Tapestries* (Prague, n. d.) 166-68, reprinted in Reeves and Gould, *Joachim of Fiore* (323-25).

¹ Morton Paley, *The Apocalyptic Sublime* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1986) 32.

² 3 vols. (G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1823) 2: 42.

³ B. S. Capp, *English Almanacs 1500-1800: Astrology and the Popular Press* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell UP, 1979) 166, 174, 252.

⁴ See T. Wilson Hayes, *Winstanley the Digger* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard UP, 1979) 225; and Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530-1645* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979) 2, 4-5.

⁵ Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978) 25, 211 (my italics).

⁶ Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1979) 50, 210.

⁷ Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study of Joachimism* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1969) 508.

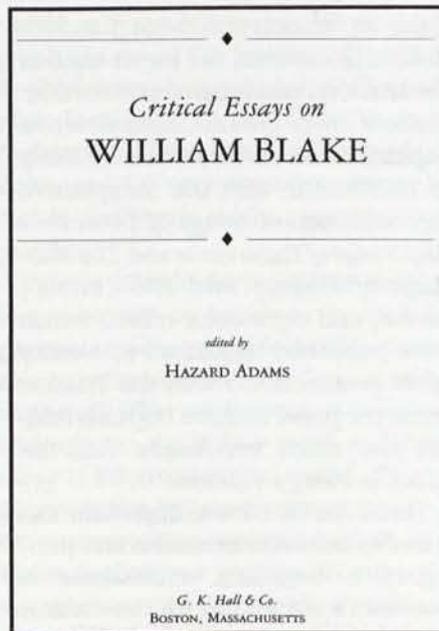
⁸ M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1971) 202, 351.

Critical Essays on William Blake. Ed. Hazard Adams. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1991. 207 pp. \$40.00.

Reviewed by
Jeffrey D. Parker

The most recent edition to the *Critical Essays on British Literature Series*, under the general editorship of Zack Bowen at the University of Miami, is *Critical Essays on William Blake*, edited by Hazard Adams. For this volume Adams includes an introductory essay, sixteen previously published essays, an afterward, and a selected bibliography. His introduction, like the volume itself, is divided into two parts.

Part one of the introduction provides a thumbnail sketch of Blake's reputation and notes the enormous amount of Blake scholarship accumulated during the past few decades. Adams then cites landmarks in modern Blake scholarship beginning in 1924 with the publication of S. Foster Damon's *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols*, followed in 1947 by Northrop Frye's *Fearful Symmetry*, and in 1954 by David V. Erdman's *Prophet Against Empire*. Although other scholars continued to follow the leads of Damon, Frye, and Erdman, the next major event does not occur until 1964 with the recognition of the important relationship between text and design. Inspired by Northrop Frye's pioneering essay "Poetry and Design in William Blake" published in 1951, the first detailed examination of this new avenue of scholarship begins with the publication of Jean Hagstrum's *William Blake: Poet and Painter*, and is followed by the scholarship of David V. Erdman, David Bindman, Raymond Lister, W. J. T. Mitchell, John Grant, Robert N. Es-



sick, Morris Eaves, and Morton D. Paley. It is from the critical contributions by Frye, Erdman, Hagstrum, Mitchell, Paley, and Essick that Adams selects six of the sixteen essays as representative examples of modern Blake scholarship.

In part two of his introduction Adams provides a rationale for having selected the sixteen essays reprinted for this volume, and for dividing the collection into two parts. The first part of the collection deals with Blake's reputation in the nineteenth century and begins with Deborah Dorfman's "Knowledge and Estimation of Blake during His Lifetime," followed by the well-known criticism of Blake by Robert Hunt in "Mr. Blake's Exhibition," Allan Cunningham's discussion of Blake from *Lives of The Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, and a selection from *Reminiscences* by Henry Crabb Robinson. Also included in part one is a letter to Alexander Gilchrist from Samuel Palmer providing information on Blake for Gilchrist's biography. Although the majority of these essays are quite familiar, they are included together here as examples of attitudes toward Blake during his lifetime.

The second part of this volume draws from recent Blake criticism and

is, according to Adams, meant to be read sequentially. This is a bit curious since Adams does not arrange these essays in chronological order, suggesting instead that the reader's attention be focused on the varieties of critical discourse rather than a concern for chronological developments in Blake scholarship as the first part of his introduction implies. Part two also includes "Spectre and Emanation," a selection from Morton D. Paley's *The Continuing City* (1983), Steven Shaviro's article "Striving with Systems: Blake and the Politics of Difference" (1982), and "The Return to Logos" from *William Blake and the Language of Adam* (1989) by Robert N. Essick, as examples of what Adams refers to as "the so-called postmodern emphasis on difference, deconstruction, Hegelian negation, and language" (6). The inclusion of these three essays by Paley, Shaviro, and Essick, produces a radically different Blake than the one presented in the earlier essays in part two by Frye, Erdman, Hagstrum, and Mitchell. In order to remedy this disparity, it would be more useful to the student unfamiliar with contemporary critical discourse, or for the generalist audience for whom the book is intended, to have divided the book into three sections, with the third section devoted to postmodern approaches to Blake.

Given the editorial objectives of the *Critical Essays on British Literature Series*, one of which is to develop a unique perspective on its subjects, Adams' strategy is successful. By providing essays on Blake from nineteenth century accounts of him, and selections representative of major critical directions taken by Blake scholars, Adams' *Critical Essays on William Blake* underscores the wide disparity between attitudes toward Blake's art and poetry by his contemporaries, and the wide range of critical directions taken by Blake scholars in the twentieth century.

William Blake. *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Morton D. Paley. Princeton: Princeton University Press, The William Blake Trust, and The Tate Gallery, 1991. Blake's Illuminated Books, vol. 1. General Editor David Bindman. \$75.00.

Reviewed by
Terence Allan Hoagwood

This book is an edition of the unique water-colored copy of *Jerusalem* (copy E, which is in the collection of Paul Mellon). This copy was reproduced in full only once before, in the facsimile produced by the Trianon Press for the William Blake Trust in 1951; only 516 copies of that book were distributed, including 16 which were reserved for Trustees of the William Blake Trust. The new book here under review includes photographic reproductions of all 100 plates of the poem—in full size, and in full color—as well as excellent introduction, notes, and commentary by Morton D. Paley. The publication of this book is a scholarly event of great importance, for two kinds of reasons: the quality of this publication itself, and the matchless importance of the work which is herein reproduced.

Blake finished only one copy of *Jerusalem*, in his sense of the word "finished"; and that one is his most important work intellectually and artistically.¹ This version of *Jerusalem* includes relief etching, white-line engraving, water color, and pen-and-ink. This work differs substantially from all other surviving versions of *Jerusalem*, including those copies which Blake prepared in monochrome prints and those which were made posthumously,