

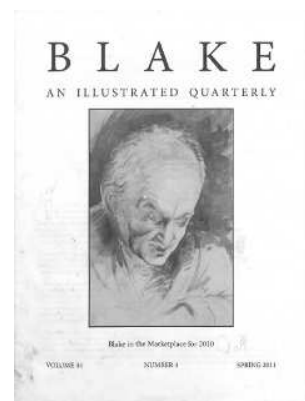
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY BLAKE

R E V I E W

Mind-Forg'd Manacles: William Blake and Slavery, Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, 26 January-6 April 2008; Blake's Shadow: William Blake and His Artistic Legacy, Whitworth Gallery, 26 January-20 April 2008

Jeremy Tambling

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any subsequent career he may have had as an engraver might warrant more detailed investigations, or at least speculations.

P. 110, Rees, *Cyclopædia*, pls. 3A and 3B. The three views of a gem showing the head of Jupiter Serapis, very probably the only images on these pls. engraved by Blake, were copied after pl. 2 in Lorenz Natter, *A Treatise on the Ancient Method of Engraving on Precious Stones* (London: for the author, 1754). Pls. 3A and 3B are 2 different copperplates of the same design; both are inscribed lower left, "Drawn by Farey." This may be either John Farey, Jr., who "made numerous Mechanical Drawings," or Joseph Farey, who "made many mechanical and miscellaneous Drawings," according to a list of contributors to Rees's *Cyclopædia* in Anon. (possibly Alexander Tilloch), "Notices Respecting New Books," *Philosophical Magazine and Journal* 56 (Sept. 1820): 220. I am indebted to Mark Crosby for the information about Natter's book.

Addendum

"A Census of Complete Copies" of *Designs to a Series of Ballads, Written by William Hayley ... Drawn, Engraved, and Published, by William Blake* (Chichester, 1802) was appended to my 1999 sales review; see *Blake* 33.4 (spring 2000): 125-27. I can now add the following sales records for copies containing the prefatory material and all 4 ballads:

a. Mr. Evans, London, 13 Feb. 1821 and 12 following days, auction of William Hayley's library. Lot 1636 on the 8th day, "Hayley's Ballads, with Blake's Designs, 4 Numbers, 1802" (4s.6d. to "Smith," probably a dealer). No recorded copy can be traced back to this lot. The auction also included a copy containing 3 ballads (lot 1637, 3s.6d. to "Rivington," probably one of the booksellers and publishers of that name or the firm of Rivingtons and Cochran). This may be the volume now in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, the only traced copy with 3 ballads.

b. Sotheby's, 29 Nov.-9 Dec. 1843, auction of the "second portion" of the library of Archdeacon Francis Wrangham (poet and translator, 1769-1842). Lot 557 on 30 Nov., "Blake (W.) Designs to a series of Ballads written by W. Hayley, plates, 4 parts Chichester, 1802" (13s. to "Evans," probably the dealer R. H. Evans). The cat. description is insufficient to identify this copy with any of the 7 traced, and 1 untraced, copies listed in the "Census." Wrangham also owned a copy of Blake's *Descriptive Catalogue* of 1809, listed in the cat. of "the English portion" of his library in 1827, p. 630 of the supplement (BBS pp. 65 [copy C], 284). Wrangham may have obtained his copy of the 1802 *Ballads* directly from Hayley. Mark Crosby tells me that there is a draft of an undated note by Hayley to Wrangham in the collection of Princeton University Library.

c. Sotheby's, 29-30 Jan. 1878, auction of the library of Albert George Dew-Smith (collector and photographer, 1848-1903). Lot 197 on 29 Jan., "Blake (W.) Designs to a Series of Ballads written by W. Hayley, with the Ballads annexed, fine im-

pressions of the plates, green morocco extra, g. e. [gilt edges] Chichester, 1802" (£9 to "Jones," presumably a dealer). Although the lot description does not record the number of ballads, this may be copy B in the "Census," still bound in green morocco with all edges gilt, sold from the Earl of Gosford's collection in 1884 and now in my collection. Dew-Smith also owned copies of Blake's *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (copy N, American private collection) and *America* (copy B, Morgan Library), sold in lots 196 and 247. For information on Dew-Smith, see Joseph Viscomi, "Two Fake Blakes Revisited; One Dew-Smith Revealed," *Blake in Our Time: Essays in Honour of G. E. Bentley Jr.*, ed. Karen Mulhallen (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2010) 35-78.

R E V I E W

Mind-Forg'd Manacles: William Blake and Slavery. Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, 26 January-6 April 2008. Blake's Shadow: William Blake and His Artistic Legacy. Whitworth Gallery, 26 January-20 April 2008.

Reviewed by Jeremy Tambling

TWO Blake exhibitions were to be seen at the same moment at Manchester's Whitworth Gallery in 2008. The first, which was touring Britain, originated in 2007 as a dual anniversary: 250 years after Blake's birth, and the bicentenary of the abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade. Called *Mind-Forg'd Manacles: William Blake and Slavery*, it was curated by David Bindman, who wrote one of the two essays in the catalogue, published by the British Museum (the other essay is by Darryl Pinckney); the catalogue claims that the British Museum has "the most complete representation of Blake's work anywhere in the world," and everything in the exhibition came from there.

I will discuss this after the other, which was curated by Colin Trodd (University of Manchester) and Heather Birchall (Whitworth Gallery). While called *Blake's Shadow*, the exhibition was not drawing attention to the Spectre in Blake, but to the shadow Blake's work has cast over three groups: his contemporaries, and then the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Virtually all the pictures and books on display were to be found in the holdings of the Whitworth Gallery, with one or two from Manchester City Galleries. While it was very pleasant to note how much material there is in the possession of the gallery that could be brought in so easily, the limitation also made the exhibition, however carefully put together, necessarily appear patchy, especially in contrast to *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*.

Yet there was also much to admire in the concept of Blake's Shadow. In the first group of works were pictures by Calvert, Flaxman, Fuseli, Linnell, and Palmer, and five pen and ink and watercolor by Stothard. Also, though Dickens's artist George Cattermole (1800-68) was classed as a Victorian, it was good to see his *Unidentified Historical Scene*, both Gothic and Scott-like, but also suggesting some of the Blake of the *Poetical Sketches*, such as "King Edward the Third." The second group comprised work that comes after Gilchrist's *Life* (1863), Swinburne's *Critical Essay* (1868), and the Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition of 1876. The first of these laid much emphasis on Blake as a book illustrator, and therefore, in a pre-Morris way, as an artist integrating design with craftwork and with the production of artifacts; the effects of this are seen in Walter Crane's wallpaper design, and in the work of all the artists here: William Linton, John Everett Millais, John Trivett Nettleship, George Richmond, Charles Ricketts, D. G. Rossetti, Frederic Shields, Simeon Solomon, Henry Stock, and G. F. Watts, whose huge *Chaos* (c. 1875) works on an entirely different scale—an overstated one—from anything Blakean, or the woodcuts or book illustrations made by Blake and his contemporaries. The Shields work included *William Blake's Work-Room and Death-Room* (1882), showing Blake's lodging in Fountain Court, looking over the Thames, with angels dimly seen, hovering over the bed where Blake died; the D. G. Rossetti sonnet written for Shields about the picture, "This is the place," was also quoted in full. A certain quasi-Catholic spirituality is evident in both the painting and the poem; Rossetti was outstanding for bringing together Blake and Dante in his thinking, and the influence of his reading of Dante is apparent. Shields's contribution to the exhibition included another picture featuring London: *The Plague of London: Solomon Eagle Denouncing the Impenitent* (1863). Solomon Eagle, a figure written about by Defoe, and also depicted by Cruikshank, becomes a Blakean prophet (a radical Quaker, he denounced London's sins during the plague of 1665): this Nonconformist tradition suggests another Blake, more marginal, more mad, but as interesting as the Dante Blake was so ambivalent about.

The section devoted to "Modern and Contemporary Blake" included Austin Osman Spare, Paul Nash, David Jones (another artist and poet), Ceri Richards, Cecil Collins, Leslie Hurry, John Craxton, Keith Vaughan, Patrick Proctor, Anish Kapoor, and Christopher Bucklow. A final section, "Blake and Popular Culture," stressed the filmwork of Jim Jarmusch (*Dead Man*) and Gus Van Sant (*Last Days*). Here, the exhibition would have needed much more substantiation to have been effective or less suspiciously cliché-like. While a few of the artworks from the twentieth century required a certain special pleading, and assumed a dehistoricized Blake, the exhibition was beautiful in places, and useful in showing how many Blakean shadows there are and how many have been the appropriations of his work: that there is no single Blake is apparent from all the images that can claim to have drawn from his already plural and composite art.

Mind-Forg'd Manacles was full of essential material: for example, some of Blake's sixteen engravings for J. G. Stedman's *Narrative, of a Five Years' Expedition, against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*, which appeared in 1796, some Gillray cartoons, and William Hackwood's design for the 1787 medallion inscribed with the words "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?" and used by Josiah Wedgwood. The main part of the exhibition, however, was given over to plates from the *Songs*, notably "The Little Black Boy," and then to *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, *The First Book of Urizen*, *The House of Death*, one of the twelve color prints, *America*, *Queen Katharine's Dream*, various designs for *Night Thoughts* and *The Grave*, and *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. Everything here was interesting, obviously, and well presented, but I couldn't help wondering at the certainty of some of Bindman's interpretations, which consequently seemed oversimplifying, as with his characterizations of Innocence as related to childhood, and, for "London," that "the poem expresses the idea in its reference to 'mind-forg'd manacles' that enslavement to false values and the materialism of society can be self-inflicted." Of course this is true, but there are three caveats: manacles do not necessarily suggest slavery, and so the use of the trope of chains is a little imprecise for considering the issue of the slave trade; the manacles are not, in the expression in "London," necessarily self-inflicted, and education and the church and state, to say nothing of the minds of others, do the work of inflicting effectively enough for Blake; and third, however much "mental slavery," one of Bindman's headings, may mean, it is not the same as physical slavery, and runs the danger of minimizing what slavery meant, and perhaps means: it makes slavery too metaphorical a concept.

N E W S L E T T E R

Blake Goes Online

This year marks the 180th anniversary of the death of Catherine Blake, but a rebirth of sorts for *Blake*: as of the summer 2011 issue (vol. 45, no. 1), our content will be online. We will offer two subscription options: online only (at the same price as currently charged for print), or online plus print (more expensive). The online and print content will be the same.

We are using the open-source Open Journal Systems software and the server space of the library of the University of Rochester to accomplish the transition. The address for online access will be our present web address <<http://www.blakequarterly.org>>.

Online content will remain by subscription for five years, then will be archived and freely available in the *William Blake Archive* <<http://www.blakearchive.org>>. We are also working to put our back issues online in the archive.

Individual subscribers will receive renewal notices or e-mails for vol. 45 as usual, with full details.