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CONTRIBUTORS

G. E. BENTLEY, JR., of the University of Toronto, writes chiefly about Blake and about illustrated books of Blake’s time.

DAVID V. ERDMAN has two books in press, a photograph of The Four Zoas with commentary (in collaboration with Cettina Tramontano Magno) and a study of John Oswald and the British in Paris 1790–1793.

NELSON HILTON teaches English at the University of Georgia and is the Review Editor for Blake.

TIM HOYER, graduate student in the Department of English, University of California at Berkeley, is working on a dissertation on Blake. He also heads the automated cataloging unit of the Bancroft Library.

WALLACE JACKSON is Professor of English at Duke University. His most recent book is Alexander Pope: Vision and Re-Vision (Wayne State University Press, 1983). He is presently at work on an inquiry into the historical bases of Pope’s literary reputation and an intertextual study of Thomas Gray’s poetry.

EDWARD LARRISSY, Lecturer in English, University of Warwick, is author of William Blake in the Rereading Literature series. His poems have appeared in various periodicals, and he is currently writing a book on contemporary British and American poetry.
RAYMOND LISTER, an Emeritus Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge, and a Syndic of the Fitzwilliam Museum, has just completed a catalogue raisonné of the works of Samuel Palmer to be published in 1987 by Cambridge University Press.

MORTON D. PALEY's most recent book is The Apocalyptic Sublime (Yale University Press, 1986), a study of works on apocalyptic subjects by British artists from John Hamilton Mortimer to Lord Leighton.

DAVID PUNTER is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of East Anglia. His books include The Literature of Terror (1980), Blake, Hegel and Dialectic (1982), and The Hidden Script: Writing and the Unconscious (1985). A book on romanticism and the unconscious is forthcoming from Harvester Press later in 1986.

DAVID SCRASE, Keeper of Paintings, Drawings, and Prints at the Fitzwilliam Museum, is responsible for the cataloging and exhibitions of the holdings in that museum, which is, as is well known, particularly rich in Blake's works.

DAVID SIMPSON is Professor of English at the University of Colorado, Boulder. His most recent book is The Politics of American English, 1776-1830 (Oxford University Press, 1986).

DENA BAIN TAYLOR completed her Ph.D. at the University of Toronto, writing on the Kabbalistic elements in Blake's poetry and designs. She lectures part-time at Erindale College, University of Toronto.

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EDITORS

Editors: Morris Eaves, University of Rochester, and Morton D. Paley, University of California, Berkeley.

Bibliographer: Detlef W. Dörrbecker, Universität Trier, West Germany.

Review Editor: Nelson Hilton, University of Georgia, Athens.

Associate Editor for Great Britain: Frances A. Carey, Assistant Curator, Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum.

Production Office: Morris Eaves, Department of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627, Telephone 716/275-3820.

Morton D. Paley, Department of English, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.
Detlef W. Dörrbecker, Universität Trier, FB III Kunstgeschichte, Postfach 3825, 5500 Trier, West Germany.
Nelson Hilton, Department of English, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.
Frances A. Carey, Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG, United Kingdom.

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INFORMATION

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Silent as departing love, and strong as jealousy.
The hairy shoulders rend the links, tree are the wrists of fire.
Round the terror of lions he seized the panting, struggling womb.
As joy, she put aside her clouds & smiled her first-born smile.
As when a black cloud shows its lightnings to the silent deep.

Soon as she saw the terrible boy then burst the virgin cry.

I know thee, I have found thee, & I will not let thee go;
Thou art the image of God who dwells in darkness of Africa
And thou art fallen to give me life in regions of dark death.
On my American plains I feel the struggling, afflicting
Endued by roots that writhes their arms into the nether deep.
I see a sergeant in Canada, who courts me to his love.
In Mexico an eagle, and a Lion in Peru.
I see a Whale in the South-sea, drinking my soul away.
O what limb rending pains I feel, thy fire & my frost
Mingle in howling pains, in sorrors by thy lightnings rent.
This is eternal death; and thus the torment long foretold.

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1. America (I) pl. 4 (Huntington Library). Notice that the plate is masked at the bottom, so that the last four lines beneath the emerging man ("The stern Bard ceas'd... in sick & drear lamentings") are invisible and that the lowest root of the tree forks five times after it leaves the main root.
MINUTE PARTICULARS

A New America

G.E. Bentley, Jr.

From time to time new Blakes turn up in surprising ways. A previously unknown poem apparently by Blake was inscribed on a drinking glass which appeared modestly in a sale of glassware at Christie’s in 1981, and a poem about Mrs. Butts signed by Blake along with other Butts family memorabilia was brought to the British Library Department of Manuscripts by a descendant of Mrs. Butts to inquire whether they were of any interest or value. So one must be prepared to find curious things associated with Blake in the most unlikely places and in the most remote parts of the world. And one should, of course, greet them with a judicious blend of enthusiasm and incredulity.

In June 1984 my wife arranged for temporary insurance on her new car, and I bicycled over to a hilly village in Toronto to pick up the document. As I was about to leave, the insurance agent’s secretary said to me, “You were in China last year, weren’t you?”

“Yes, we were,” I confessed, surprised at the question, “why do you ask?”

“Then perhaps you can give us some advice,” she said. “You see, my husband is an enthusiast for William Blake, and twenty years ago he bought a Blake in England which he has never been able to identify. And when he went to the great Blake exhibition last winter, he asked if there was anyone who could help him, and the lady [Kathy Lochman, Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Art Gallery of Ontario] told him that the person he wanted to see was in China just then but would be back next year. But my husband didn’t catch the name, and I didn’t think of it again until I talked to your wife a few minutes ago.”

Well, we went over to her house to see this print or drawing, and to my astonishment she produced a huge folder containing twenty-one designs from Blake’s America. They were certainly prints, not drawings, and they looked very good indeed to me (see illus. 3 & 6). Most were on pretty poor paper, but two were colored, and they did not look like any facsimile I had seen. Unfortunately, we planned to leave Toronto next day for fifteen months, and so an extensive examination of them was not possible, but her husband very generously brought the prints to our house that evening, and next morning I got up early in order to have five or six hours to inspect them.

The raw facts are as follows:

HISTORY: (1) Bought from a London bookshop (which one not remembered) in 1963 by (2) An Anonymous Collector.

BINDING: The leaves are now loose, between unwatermarked sheets of flimsy tissue, in a white cardboard folder. They are printed on at least three kinds of paper, and they have been gathered in at least three different ways: (1) Most of the leaves (pls. 1–10, 12–17), of very poor quality paper, were stabbed through two holes, about 15.2 cm from the top and 9.5 cm apart; (2) Two of the leaves (pls. 8a, 11a), of much better quality paper, were stabbed through two holes, 14.2 cm from the top and 8.4 cm apart, and could never have been thus stabbed with the first group; (3) And three leaves of the better paper (pls. 10a, 17a, 17b) were never stabbed at all. The edges are deckled, not gilt—and therefore this cannot be the untraced Copy R which was bound in Green morocco with gilt edges.

LEAF SIZE: 27.5 to 29.2 cm wide by 38.5 to 40.4 cm high. The poor-quality paper and the good paper leaves show the same variations in size.

PLATE SIZES: Most of the plates are within 0.2 cm of the standard size of Blake’s plates (this normal variation being due to such things as shrinking and stretching of damp paper). The only irregularities are in the widths of pls. 1–2 and 11a and the heights of pls. 11a, 15, 17a, and 17b; for instance, pl. 11a is 17.4 × 23.7 cm, whereas the norm is 16.9 × 23.4 cm.

PAPER: There are several distinct lots of paper. (1) For most of the plates (pls. 1–10, 12–17), the paper is poor, thin, with holes and almost-holes as manufactured; there are chain-lines 2.8 cm apart, a fleur de lis, and “IV” (or, conceivably, “VI” as seen from the other side, though the extra thickness of the side of the “V” next to the “I” makes “IV” seem more likely). (2) One print (pl. 17a) is on good, heavy paper with chain-lines 2.7 cm apart but no watermark. (3) Pls. 8a, 10a–11a, and 17b are on good quality, heavy paper without chain lines, and in pl. 8a is the watermark J WHATMAN / 1885.

PRINTING COLORS: Dull, flat Green, quite dark—pl. 17b is almost Black—on all the plates but pl. 11, which is a rather heavy Black.

21 LEAVES, printed on one side only: pls. 1–8, 8a, 9–10, 10a, 11–17, 17a, 17b.

NUMBERS: None of the numbers is by Blake. All the
Silent as despairing love, and strong as jealousy.
The hairy shoulders rend the links, free are the wrists of fire;
Round the terrific loins he seized the panting, struggling womb;
It foal; she put aside her clouds & smiled her first-born smile:
As when a black cloud shows its lightnings to the silent deep.

Soon as she saw the terrible boy then burst the virgin pity.

I know thee. I have found thee, & I will not let thee go:
Thou art the image of God who dwells in darkens of Africa;
And thou art fall’n to give me life in regions of dark death.

On my American plains I feel the struggling afflictions
Endured by roots that writh their arms into the nether deep:
I see a serpent in Canada, who courts me to his love;
In Mexico an Eagle, and a Lion in Peru;
I see a Whale in the South-sea, drinking my soul away.

O what limb rending pains I feel, thy fire & my frost
Mingle in howling pains, in furrows by thy lightnings rent;
This is eternal death, and this the torment long foretold.

2. America pl. 4, facsimile like that in Copy B (Robert N. Essick). Notice that the lowest root of the tree forks only thrice after it leaves the main root. Many of the other apparent differences in this facsimile from Copy I, such as the flourish from the "d" of "despairing" in line 1 and the smudge above "Serpent" in line 12, might be caused by differences in inking, but remark the clear differences in the formation of the initial "e" in "eternal" in the last line and the flourish after "Africa" in line 8.
Silent as despairing love: and strong as jealousy.
The hairy shoulders rend the links: free are the wrists of fire.
Round the terrific loins he seiz'd the panting, struggling womb.
At yea: she put aside her clouds & smiled her first-born smile:
As when a black cloud shews its lightnings to the silent deep.

Soon as she saw the terrible boy then burst the virgin cry.

I know thee, I have found thee, & I will not let thee go:
Thou art the image of God who dwells in darkness of Africa;
And thou art fain to give me life in regions of dark death.

On my American plains I feel the struggling affections
Endued by roots that wrathe their arms into the nether deep:
I see a serpent in Canada who courtes me to his love
In Mexico an Eagle, and a Lion in Peru:
I see a Whale in the South-sea, thinking my soul away.
O what limb rending, pains I feel, thy fire & my frost
Minute in howling pains, in furrows by thy lightnings rent:
This is eternal death: and this the torment long foretold.

3. America pl. 4, from the “new” America.
plates are correctly numbered at the bottom left in pencil within a circle (except that there is no circle for pls. 8a, 11a, 17b); note that this order corresponds to that in Blake Books (1977) but not to the previously standard order in Keynes’s Bibliography of William Blake (1921) and in the Keynes & Wolf Census (1953), suggesting that this pencil numbering was made after 1977. There are old Brown ink numbers at the top right corners (pl. 1), top right verso (pls. 4, 6–7, 9–10), bottom left upside down (pls. 5, 7), and upside down on the verso (pls. 8, 14–17) on most of the plates on the thin, poor paper, as follows:

**Number (Plate):** 183 (15)–184 (4), 187 (1), 193 (5), 195 (17), 197 (16), 199 (14)–200 (10)–201 (8), 205 (6)–206 (9)–207 (7).

This order corresponds to nothing known to me; in particular, it seems to be unrelated to the similar numbers on the miscellaneous collection of genuine Blake prints including the “Order” of the Songs (see Blake Books [1977], pp. 338–41), which goes only as high as 103.

In addition, there is an “A” on pl. 8a and “398” on pl. 2 in pencil, and on pls. 5, 6, 7, 14, 16 there are tiny scraps of paper pasted near the old Brown ink numbers, some of them partly torn off or visible only in offset, with a frame round “Cha II. C! XII”. America is not divided into Chapters, and I can make nothing of these notes.

**OFFSETS:** There is no offset from one print to another, indicating the order in which they were arranged, but there are very small fragments of larger printed sheets pasted to the versos of some leaves of poor paper (pls. 6–10, 12–14, 16–17); the printing (e.g., “effect / standard” on pl. 14 verso) is on the under side of the added paper and appears as mirror-writing.

**COLORING:** Only two plates are colored, both on good paper:

pl. 10a) There is smudged blue watercolor on the sky and on the cloud at the top behind the man, and there may perhaps be faint Pink on the cloud below the man’s right hand.

pl. 11a) Heavy opaque colors, sometimes obscuring the words, color the grass Yellow, the leaves Green, and the baby orangish Pink. There is a shaft of light from the middle at the right slanting towards the bottom of the middle left margin, with a little Blue to the left of the shaft. The opaque coloring has smudged through to the verso.

**VARIANTS:** Some of the plates are rather faint, and all the borders are wiped clean. As is common with Blake’s printing, there is no indentation from the plate.

Pl. 1 has a framing line round it and is not well printed.

Pl. 2: The top left margin was not wiped clean.

Pl. 3 has pl. e printed on it, as in Copies C–L, R.

Pl. 4 is masked at the bottom 0.3 cm below the man’s toe (see illus. 3 here); Copies C–M are also masked (see illus. 1).

Pl. 11a: The coloring has made the plants at bottom very different, and the last line of text seems to have been emphasized by hand.

Pl. 12: The lines of the man’s eyes are quite clear, not a solid dark mass, as in most copies.


**CONCLUSIONS:** By breakfast time, I had concluded that this seems to be an excellent photographic facsimile, otherwise unknown, made about 1885 with intent to deceive. When Blake printed his plates, he carefully wiped most of the borders clean of ink, and of course the pattern of wiping is different in each copy. But in the duplicates here, pls. 8 and 8a, 10 and 10a, 17, 17a, and 17b, the borders are identical in a way virtually impossible to achieve manually. Pl. 17b, on whiter paper, shows faint color throughout the “white” areas, implying a photographic original. The watermark of 1885 indicates that at least pl. 8a was printed in or after that year. The exact resemblance of the designs, in every detail I noticed, to undoubted copies of Blake’s originals—cp. illus. 1 and illus. 3, illus. 4 and illus. 6 here—indicates that these facsimiles were made from photographs. The extremely poor quality of the paper used for most of the prints, with irrelevant notes and numbers and scraps of paper on the back, suggests that they were experimental proofs, not intended for sale, and the fact that the coloring was begun only on prints on better quality paper suggests to me that an attempt was being made to deceive—though the coloring is quite different from any by Blake which I have seen. The price of “2/10/-” on pl. 11 may indicate that the prints on better quality paper were designed by the maker for separate sale.

If one were trying to identify the original from which this facsimile was made, one should notice (1) that pl. 3 has pl. e with the word “Preludium” printed at the top, as in Copies C–L, R; (2) that pl. 4 (illus. 3 here) is masked, as in Copies C–M, and that it is masked 0.3 cm below the man’s toe, as in Copies C, F, H (0.4 cm), and L (0.4 cm); (3) and that the serpent on pl. 13 has one tail, as in Copies A–D, H, M–Q, not three, as in Copies E–G, J–L. The only copies with all these characteristics are C, D, and H, and pl. 4 of Copy D is masked in a different way from this facsimile. Copy H has been in the British Museum Print Room since 1856 and seems to be the most likely candidate.

This is quite different from the Muir facsimile of 1887 (though one leaf of tissue paper is erroneously inscribed in pencil “America (Muir’s facsimile[])” or
In thunders ends the voice. Then Albans' Angel wrathful burst Beside the Stone of Night; and like the Eternal Lions' howl In famine's war, replied. Art thou not Orc, who serpent form'd Stands at the gate of Faithammon to devour her children: Blasphemous Demon, Antichrist, hater of Dignity: Lover of wild rebellion, and transgressor of God's Law. Why dost thou come to Angels' eyes in this terrible form?

4. America (I) pl. 9 (Huntington Library). Two of the most curious features of this lovely design are the contrast between the bellicose words and the Edenic scene, and the apparently detached ankle and foot visible to the right of the ram's head.
In thunders ends the voice
Then Albions Angel wrathful burnt.
Beside the Stone of Night; and like the Eternal Lions howl.
In famine & war, replied. Art thou not Orc, who serpent formed
Stands at the gate of Enitharmon to devour her children;
Blasphemous Demon Antichrist, hater of Dignities;
Lover of wild rebellion, and transgresser of Gods Law;
Why dost thou come to Angels eyes in this terrific form?

5. America pl. 9, facsimile like that in Copy B (Robert N. Essick). Note that the plate lacks the flying birds under the branches. The border was wiped free of ink in a manner different than the print in Copy 1, especially at the bottom left, bottom margin, bottom right, and to the right of the tree. The smudges on the top boy’s cheek, the bottom boy’s calf, the leaf at the bottom right, and elsewhere are probably produced merely by over-heavy printing. The differences in the flourish on the “b” of “burnt” (line 1) and the “W” of “Why” (line 7) could have been the result of different inking, but the flourish in the “G” of “Gods” (line 6) is formed differently in the stereotype.
In thunder ends the voice. Then Albions' Angel, wrothfull burnt
Beside the Stone of Night; and like the Eternal Lions howl
in famine & war, replied. Art thou not Orc, who serpent formed
Stands at the gate of Enitharmon to devour her children;
Blasphemous Demon, Antichrist, hater of Dignities;
Lover of wild rebellion, and transgresser of Gods Law;
Why dost thou come to Angels eyes in this terrific harm?

6. America pl. 9 from the “new” America.
any other known to me, and it is in most respects far harder to distinguish from Blake’s originals than any other facsimile. Indeed, without the 1885 watermark and the duplication of plates with identically wiped borders, I should have found it extremely difficult to distinguish this from a Blake original.

There is a troubling parallel to this facsimile. In *Blake*, 16 (1983), 212–23, Joseph Viscomi and Thomas Lange described two facsimile plates (pls. 4 and 9) previously undetected among the genuine plates of the Pierpont Morgan copy of *America*. Copy B. Only three other copies of those two plates are known, in the collections of Robert N. Essick (pls. 4 and 9—see illus. 2 & 5 here) and Thomas Lange (pl. 9), and Essick’s came through the hands of Walter T. Spencer, who is known to have forged the coloring of *America* Copy Q and *Europe* Copy L about 1913. It seems at least possible, then, that pls. 4 and 9 were made for Walter T. Spencer for purposes of commercial deception.

However, the “new” *America* is distinct from the facsimile plates in Copy B. Essick and Lange generously compared reproductions of the “new” *America* with their copies of the facsimile pls. 4 and 9 and concluded that their prints were made from different stereotypes than the corresponding “new” plates.* They believe that the stereotypes for the “new” plates were made from lithographs (stone, rather than zinc) onto which the *America* outlines were carefully but not flawlessly copied—there are too many minute differences in proportions and in flourishes of letter-forms and tendrils to make photography seem likely. The grainy areas were probably traced with a lithographic crayon and the solid areas with tusche applied with a pen or brush.

They also point out that pl. 1 in the “new” *America* seems to be imitated from the proof in Copy a, with all its unique qualities including the framing-line round the plate, on the backing-mat, of Copy a—and this may have been made photographically. Copy a, however, includes only pls. 1, 4, 11–12, and 15, and consequently the “new” *America*, which reproduces all the plates save pl. 18, must have been based on models beyond those in Copy a. Copy a was in the hands of Quaritch and Muir in 1880, and Muir made facsimiles from other prints which were in the same collection as Copy a (see *Blake Books* [1977], p. 339). The “new” facsimile seems therefore to be eclectic, choosing plates from at least two different copies.

* I must depend, with confidence and gratitude, upon the comparisons made by Essick and Lange, for though I have examined in detail the genuine *America* plates, the “new” prints, and the Morgan-Essick-Lange facsimiles of pls. 4 and 9, I have never been able to examine the “new” plates (or reproductions of them) and the Morgan-Essick-Lange facsimiles together.

The existence of this excellent facsimile should make us extremely cautious in judging the authenticity of Blake’s works in Illuminated Printing, particularly unwatermarked plates of *America* printed in Green: Copy C, pls. 10, 12, 14, 15; Copy D, pls. 12, 14, 16, 18; Copy E, pls. 1–12, 15–16; Copy F; Copy G, pls. 2, 5–6, 9–18; Copy I, pls. 1–2, 7–12, 15–18; Copy K, pls. 1–2, 5–18; Copy L (sold as “a facsimile” in 1927); Copy M, pls. 10, 14–16; Copy R (the basis of the Muir facsimile); Copy a, pls. 11–12; pl. 1 (Lister); and pl. 4 (Morgan). Perhaps they too are hitherto unidentified copies of this late nineteenth century facsimile. Perhaps those copies indifferently printed or colored are not by Blake or his wife at all; perhaps some of them are facsimiles so good that they have fooled us all—just as, for almost a hundred years, pls. 4 and 9 in *America* Copy B fooled all who saw it, including myself, until their spuriousness was noticed for reasons other than the inaccuracy of the printed images by Joseph Viscomi and Thomas Lange. Caveat emptor!

Blake and the Hutchinsonians

Edward Larrissy

Albert J. Kuhn was the first and perhaps the only person to notice Blake’s debt to the Hutchinsonians. 1 These “thinkers,” followers of John Hutchinson (1674–1737) were the main school of anti-Newtonians with any claim to scientific method in eighteenth-century England. 2 Kuhn, whose article is not confined to a study of them, is chiefly concerned with their notion that the “cherubim” had originally represented the Trinity, and that “heathens” had debased those “cherubim” into their gods and idols. 3 Clearly, such a notion might well have contributed to Blake’s idea that “the Grecian gods were the ancient Cherubim of Phoenicia” (*Descriptive Catalogue, E536*/K571). But Kuhn’s case is not conclusively made. It is, however, possible to demonstrate quite clearly Blake’s indebtedness to Hutchinsonian ideas, for there are precise verbal echoes as well as general resemblances; nor is this indebtedness confined to the matter of the “cherubim,” for it appears to be evident in a number of Blake’s later ideas.

Hutchinson, like Blake, believed that the original faith was Christian, and that it had been perverted by the Jews, and stolen in a corrupt form by the Greeks...
and the Druids. The Trinity had been emblazoned in the Cherubim, but were in themselves better thought of as “Elohim” (or “Aleim,” as Hutchinson often spells it). In accordance with his belief in primeval Christianity Hutchinson insisted that the idea of Man was included in the Trinity.

These ideas may be illustrated from the following passage, obscure though it is:

As the ... cherubim, was a similitude of the Divinity, and of man taken into the Essence, and becoming ... one Mighty to save; so the supreme (rubim, i.e., “rubim”) are the Great ones, of whom we are allowed to take ideas from ... the names, or the heavens. They, ere the world began, became confederates under the band of an oath, and so [rubim, i.e., “Elohim”].

Compare the passage from the Descriptive Catalogue:

Visions of these eternal principles or characters of human life appear to poets, in all ages; the Grecian gods were the ancient Cherubim of Phoenicia; but the Greeks, and since them the Moderns, have neglected to subdue the gods of Priam. These Gods are visions of the eternal attributes, or divine names, which, when erected into gods, become destructive to humanity. (E536/K571; my emphasis)

Hutchinson held that the cherubim were emblems of aspects of God. These aspects became the objects of idolatrous worship:

The human head and body, the wings, hands, corona, and other insignia of the Cherubim, appear so frequently among the idolatrous symbols of worship, that a very small attention may serve to convince one, by comparing particulars, that the whole heathen cultus had a plain resemblance to the sacred institutions, from which it was originally stolen.

In modern times, according to Hutchinson,

the cause of Christianity is betray’d, revelation disbelieved, and men trust to their own merit, morality, repentance, &c. to inrile them to the joys of another world: youth have their heads early filled with heathen authors, mythology &c. but are never taught to understand them by a comparison with the perfect original from whence they are stolen and perverted. . . .

Blake, using the same words, stated that “the Poetry of the Heathen” was “Stolen & Perverted from the Bible” (notes on Dante illustrations, E689/K785). As for modern philosophy, Hutchinson says (in what may be an allusion to his hatred of Newton) that it is “made up of senseless Words for Non-Entities, instead of the Agents, their Powers and Actions, described in the Bible.”

The “oath” or “covenant” referred to above is that of “Jehovah Aleim” (i.e., Jehovah Elohim). The covenant is that Jehovah Aleim will become a man, Christ, and redeem men by forgiveness of sins. This goes a long way towards explaining certain obscure passages in Blake’s The Ghost of Abel. Thus Hutchinson says:

The heathens were never so stupid as to think their crimes could be blotted out, unless their Aleim were propitiated; and so they could listen to our Almighty Saviour without prejudice, when he declared his merciful intentions, that himself was as ready as able to forgive sins.

This refers to the idea that the heathens, or gentiles, although they made sacrifices, were ready to give up “their” Elohim (i.e., the corrupt forms they worshipped) and listen to Christ; whereas the Jews, according to Hutchinson, were complacent enough to believe they could utterly propitiate their Elohim, and did not feel the need of Christ. Neither heathens nor Jews believed in forgiveness of sins once the original “covenant” of forgiveness was forgotten.

In The Ghost of Abel Satan says:

I will have Human Blood & not the blood of Bulls or Goats
And no Atonement O Jehovah the Elohim
live on Sacrifice
Of Men: hence I am God of Men. . . .

(E272/K780)

But Jehovah says that Satan must go to Eternal Death. And then a chorus of angels enters singing:

The Elohim of the Heathen Swore Vengeance for Sin! Then Thou stoodst!
Forth O Elohim Jehovah! in the midst of the darkness of the Oath! All Clothed
In Thy Covenant of the Forgiveness of Sins . . .

(E272/K781)

The correspondences are very close, even to the distinction between Elohim Jehovah on the one hand and the “Elohim of the Heathen” on the other.

“The emblem of this grand adjuration [i.e., the covenant] between the Aleim,” says Hutchinson, “was . . . an oak-tree,” signifying peace. He adds that “This memorial was not lost even among the latter heathens.”

He quotes Homer, where Hector signifies the antagonism between himself and Achilles by saying, “There’s now no way from this oak, or from the rock! To hold discourse with him.” For Hutchinson, the rock is the pillar of a supposed Druid temple. And he adds that “Maximus Tyrius observes of the Druids, that they worshipped Jupiter under the form of a tall oak.” This is the oak as object of idolatry, where it was once merely an emblem of the covenant. These two types of oak are to be found in Blake. Thus at the introduction to chapter 2 of Jerusalem he addresses the Jews:

Your ancestors derived their origin from Abraham, Heber, Shem, and Noah, who were Druids: as the Druid Temples (which are the Patriarchal Pillars & Oak Groves) over the whole Earth Witness to this day. (E171/K649)

But, on the other hand, in The Ghost of Abel Satan promises to crucify Christ “By the rock & Oak of the Druid” (E272/K781): this refers to that period of fallen Druidism when the Elohim have become externalized gods, and the Divine Humanity is sacrificed on the Tree of Mystery. The Rock and the Oak become the “serpent temple” at Avebury.

Speaking of Avebury, William Cooke (d. 1780), who
was interested in Hutchinson, provides important clues about the nature of that "temple," and of the religion practiced there, in his Enquiry into the Patriarchal and Druidical Religion. This is an ingeniously eclectic selection of plagiarisms, mostly culled from Stukeley's pages. Explaining the name "Abury" Cooke maintains that "such as were the ABIIRI worshipped in Britain; such also originally were the CABIRI worshipped in the East." He agrees with the opinion that "the Cabiri were the Gods of the Phoenicians" (cf. "Cherubim of the Phoenicians") and claims, arguing from Hebrew and Arabic, that "Cabiri in the plural are THE GREAT OR MIGHTY ONES." It will be recalled that Hutchinson referred to his Cherubim as "Great ones." Cooke uses Hutchinson's description of the Cherubim to support his own argument. But what should particularly interest the scholar of Blake is the graphic way in which the decline from "Cherubim" to "Abiri"—a decline of vision—can be illustrated from these sources. The difference between the imagined splendors of the Phoenician temples and the "geometric" crudity of Avebury's "Drauid" rocks is very suggestive.

The fuessiness of the Hutchinsonians about the terms "Elohim" and "Jehovah" might also serve to illuminate Blake's own use of these terms. It should be clear from his writings that the tendency to talk about Urizen as a kind of "Jehovah" is at best a guide to the novice. In fact Blake seems to have regarded Elohim as more normally the evil Demiurge. The distinction between Jehovah as visible and Elohim as invisible God, which was based on the distinction between "Elohim" and "Jehovah Elohim" in the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1-10, was well known. The two were commonly interpreted as God the Father and the Logos respectively. Hutchinson's claim that "In a special manner CHRIST was JEHOWAH" was not especially radical. Nor is Blake's that "after Christ's death, he became Jehovah" (Marriage, pl. 6). The novel thing about this passage is the claim that "the Jehovah of the Bible" is "no other than he, who dwells in flaming fire"—that is, Jehovah is Energy. Elohim, the hidden God, is its deprivation. Blake's Elohim Creating Adam belongs with his Newton: and the Hutchinsonians had much to say about Sir Isaac. Many of their remarks have a distinctly Blakean ring:

Prodigious fabricator! who wanted only an air-pump to make a vacuum, and a pendulum or swing to prove it; a loadstone, a bit of amber or jet, to form a philosophy; a spyglass, and a pair of compasses, to find out infinite worlds....

It will be recalled that the Application of No Natural Religion (series 2) reads: "He who sees the Infinite in all things sees God. He who sees the Ratio only sees himself only." And the illumination for this aphorism shows a bearded man on hands and knees drawing a triangle with the aid of a pair of compasses. The Hutchinsonian description of Newton contains much the same sense of a ludicrous disparity between ends and means. And according to Hutchinson Newton's God was really "the heathen Jupiter." He, as we know, was the "iron-hearted tyrant, the ruin of ancient Greece" mentioned by Blake in his letter to Hayley of 23 October 1804; and whom he seems, with some reason perhaps, to have regarded as the God of the Deists.

It may be that Blake was not alone in including John Hutchinson, along with Paracelsus, Boehme and Swedenborg, among his interests. The Behmenist John Byrom is the source of some of the fascinating information in Désirée Hirst's Hidden Riches about eighteenth-century English Behmenists. He, like Blake, attacked the "Selfhood." And like Blake he was interested in Hutchinson, though he did not like his system. And he corresponded with the Hutchinsonian William Jones of Nayland. Possibly John Wood of Bath had come across Hutchinson's ideas, but in any case he was concerned to show "the Plagiarism of the Heathens" from the Jews in his work on The Origin of Building. Blake had likeminded antecedents and contemporaries: there is still much to discover about their world.

11. Kuhn, p. 570.
12. Anon., An Abstract from the Works of John Hutchinson (Edinburgh, 1753), p. 221. This work (henceforth Abstract) is cited frequently because there is evidence that Blake had read it. Its formulations are more concise than those of Hutchinson's unreduced works, and lend themselves more readily to selective quotation. Hebrew script is transliterated in square brackets according to the conventional notation. I am grateful to Richard Judd, recently of Keble College, for helping me with this.
22. Enquiry, p. 54.
23. Enquiry, p. 65 n.
The Visual Context of “Joseph of Arimathea among The Rocks of Albion”

Dena Bain Taylor

When Blake came, later in life, to re engrave his youthful line engraving of Joseph of Arimathea, he added inscriptions which gave it a title, a provenance and an allegorical meaning. The title he engraved in the top right corner, and the provenance he acknowledged beneath the design: “Engraved by W. Blake 1773 from an old Italian Drawing . . . Michael Angelo Pinxit.” Blake’s figure of Joseph derives from an unidentified figure in the bottom right corner of a fresco in the Pauline Chapel entitled “The Crucifixion of St. Peter.” We do not know if Blake could also have seen a drawing or engraving of Michelangelo’s The Deposition, but the figure helping the two Marys to support the fallen Christ—a figure which is very similar to Blake’s—is in fact Joseph of Arimathea.

The allegorical meaning of the coming of Joseph of Arimathea to Britain Blake gives in his inscription: “This is One of the Gothic Artists who Built the Cathedrals in what we call the Dark Ages / Wandering about in sheep skins & goat skins of whom the World was not worthy/such were the Christians/in all ages . . . .” As David Bindman points out, “His rocky isolation and the grimness of his mission, as the inscription makes clear, are also emblematic of the fate in all ages of the artist, who brings the divine message to an unworthy world, yet is sustained by the light of Eternity, hinted at in the background.” There is, however, another allegory in Blake’s engraving, related not to the inscription but to the visual context. For Blake took an unidentified figure out of the crowded context of “The Crucifixion of St. Peter” and placed it on Albion’s Ancient Druid Rocky Shore, and in so doing placed the figure into the context of the visual image of the British Druids which had been built up during the eighteenth century.

The eighteenth-century antiquaries composed their histories of the British Druids from the writings of the classical authors, from later traditions about the Druids, and from a goodly portion of purely imaginative speculation and inference. Aylott Sammes included a drawing depicting a Druid as a bearded sage in his Britannia Antiqua Restaurata, published in London, 1676. This was copied by Henry Rowlands in 1723 in his Mona Antiqua Restaurata—whose title alone betrays Rowlands’ debt to Sammes—with small alterations. The Druid’s feet now are shod in sandals; the book of ancient lore becomes a branch of the sacred oak; and prehistoric circular huts adorned with rather gothic spires now dot the background. The background was altered slightly when it was reengraved for the second edition, published in 1766 (illus.). There was a copy of Sammes’ Britannia in the library of William Stukeley’ and Stukeley’s renditions of a Druid sage was drawn in February 1723–24, and thus just after the publication of Rowlands’ Mona. It was published as the frontispiece to Stonehenge, A Temple restored to the British Druids (1740), which we can be fairly certain Blake knew. Stukeley’s figure again shows minor alterations—he has a shortened beard and a bronze age axe at his belt. His left hand no longer holds an oak branch, but he is standing beneath an oak tree. The background now contains barrows and a hill-fort appropriate to the Wiltshire downland. The most obvious difference, of course, is the reversal of the direction in which the head is turned.

A comparison of these renditions with Blake’s shows many remarkable similarities. In all cases, the general stance and dress are very much alike, as is the expression on the face. Unlike the Druids of the antiquaries, however, Blake’s Joseph bears no symbols of power or authority. Similarly, his clothing barely covers his muscular body as he stands by the cold sea against a background of dreary rocks from behind which the rays of the sun barely escape. Unlike the Druids of the antiquaries, he has no warm clock, no sandals, no rolling hills and established settlement behind him.

To Bindman’s assessment of the allegory of Joseph as artist, therefore, we must also add the significance of the Druid context for the engraving. Blake had received from the antiquaries—notably from Stukeley but very likely from others as well—particular ideas about the nature of the Christianity of ancient Britain. The eighteenth-century antiquaries speak of an original patriarchal religion which was the result of the divine knowledge and language given to Adam before the Fall. Adam communicated this knowledge to his posterity, and it was preserved by Noah and his sons after the Flood. The first inhabitants of Britain were Druids, by virtue of the

The fact that they were of the family of Gomer, son of Japhet, son of Noah, who was the first Druid. They were, as Henry Rowlands explained,

so near in descent to the fountains of true religion and worship as to have one of Noah's sons for grandsire or great-grand sire, and may be well imagined to have carried and conveyed here some of the rites and usages of that true religion, pure and untainted in their first propagating of them: though I must confess they soon after became, as well here as in other countries, abominably corrupted, and perverted into the grossest heathenish fictions and barbarities.  

William Stukeley, as a good shepherd of the Church of England, was as greatly alarmed by the rise of Deism in eighteenth-century thought as Blake was later to be. His response was to develop ideas of a "natural" patriarchal religion that was strongly Christian. He wrote that the first Druids in Britain, who came "soon after Noah's flood" were "of Abraham's religion intirely" and that they may have had "a knowledge of the plurality of persons in the Deity." Because they were isolated in Britain, they maintained the true traditions of the patriarchal religion intact, and he says that this religion "is so extremely like Christianity, that in effect it differ'd from it only in this; they believed in a Messiah who was to come into this world, as we believe in him that is come." He wrote in the preface to *Stonehenge* that "My intent is (besides preserving the memory of these extraordinary monuments, so much to the honour of our country, now in great danger of ruin) to promote, as much as I am able, the knowledge and practice of ancient and true Religion; to revive in the minds of the learned the spirit of Christianity. . . ."

By the time Blake conceived the idea of reengraving his youthful attempt, he must have been aware at least of Stukeley's *Stonehenge*, and possibly of his two sources, themselves important writers on the British Druids. By using a figure that was so like their image of the enlightened Druid priesthood, Blake put his Joseph into the context of ancient British history and made him a British Druid. Joseph of Arimathea's mission is grim and the rocks on which he stands are barren because the primal Christianity of the land to which he comes alone and with empty hands has degenerated into a state of human sacrifice and corporeal rather than mental war. The Christianity which Blake's Joseph brings, embodied in the imagination of the artist, thus represents the forgiveness of sins given again to a land which had known and forgotten it.

5 Quoted Piggott, p. 119.
6 P. 120.
7 P. 128.
William Muir

Raymond Lister

Robert Essick's review of the Manchester Etching Workshop's Blake facsimile, in which he says that "little is known about Muir and why he labored so long and hard on Blake facsimiles," reminds me that in 1961, when I was running the Golden Head Press at Cambridge, and was experimenting, among other things, with hand-colored books, I planned to write and publish a small book on Muir. Unfortunately I was, owing to other commitments, unable to do this, but the plan did produce some comments in a letter from the late Kerrison Preston which, in view of the small amount known about Muir, ought to be placed on record.

The Georgian House
Rockshaw Road
Merstham, Surrey
22 August, 1961

Dear Mr. Lister,

Many thanks for your letter to-day. I congratulate you on getting Muir's "Visions," which is well worth having. If it is the same as Lot 467 at Sotheby's on the 1st August, I think Quaritch paid £16 for it, so they are not making an unfair profit. The Lot included a loosely inserted letter from Muir to the Editor of The Academy, which would be interesting.1 I had many letters myself from Muir, some of which I still have.2 When I knew him he was a little, wizened old man, undecorated (like Blake) and very quiet and calm in spite of his great enthusiasm. He lived with his little old wife in East London and I think he had a Chemist's shop there. I happened to mention this to Geoffrey3 on the other day but he did not seem to know of any shop.

I never went to Muir's house or shop, but he used to come to see me at Bournemouth. He talked incessantly about Blake who was his great hero but in spite of this he always struck me as having more of a scientific than artistic cast of mind. He made these remarkable facsimiles with the aid of his wife and other helpers, using any mechanical means available as well as his artistic skill.

I knew nothing of Chemistry or the scientific side in which he was so interested, but he often used to go on from Bournemouth to Kimmeridge Bay in Dorset where he had a great scheme for extracting oil from shale, which he thought might become enormously valuable and lucrative. But he was by no means a money-grubber and his ideas were mostly unworldly, like Blake's. He lived in a very modest way and was utterly unpretentious.

There— that is about all I know about Muir. I have very friendly and admiring recollections of him, but I am afraid they do not amount to enough to help you with constructing a Biography. I should be greatly interested to hear what contributions there might be from other people to a composite portrait of him. He must have had a number of Blake friends through his Agent, Quaritch, and others, but his facsimiles were, of course, laborious and therefore limited in number. Their artistic success, especially in colour, depends largely on which of the Blake originals he happened to get hold of. He would not have a wide choice in that. I think the "America" is the best, with its brilliant colouring.

I hope you will have a go at making at least a sketch of his life. It might, as you say, make a "pretty little booklet," if not more.

I will remember (probably) not to pester you in September. I hope you will have the thoroughly good holiday you deserve, despite the Welsh language.

Kindest regards,
Yours sincerely,
Kerrison Preston

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1 Apparently my copy of the Visions of the Daughters of Albion was not this same lot; there was no letter in it from Muir when I acquired it.
2 I do not know the present whereabouts of these, but it is probable that they are in the Westminster Public Library with Preston's Blake collection.
3 Sir Geoffrey Keynes.

Improving the Text of The Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake

David V. Erdman

Despite the extended cooperative effort of several Blake scholars to make it a faithful and accurate as well as complete edition, the Doubleday and California text of 1982 retained a sprinkling of misprints and even a few mistranscriptions. By the summer of 1983, Blake 17 (1983), 14, could report about a score of mostly simple errata and note the problems of some of Blake's Hebrew lettering.

By the autumn of 1984 a sizable list of errata was sent to Doubleday and to California. And now that the Doubleday (paperback) is in a second printing, it is comforting to find that proper corrections have been made of that first score and another two score errata. When the California hardback goes into its next printing, we can expect these to be attended to there.

It is a curious thing, however, that one mistake, which the California printers corrected before their first printing, has been left alone by the Doubleday printers. Illustration 2, The Lacocin, facing page 272, as first printed gives a negative instead of a positive impression: the text reads white on black instead of black on white as Blake wanted it. Let's hope that the third Anchor printing will get the joke.

In the list that follows, it seems best to include the earlier as well as the later errors discovered—so that possessors of the first printing (hard or soft) will not
need to buy a new edition to make the noted improvements. Corrections already made, in the Doubleday second printing, will be marked with asterisks. Most of the mistakes were in text; some were in headings and apparatus.

**ERRATA EMENDATA**

**p. xvii** Line 28: Centerbury should read canterbury

**p.xx** Preceding "TEXTUAL NOTES . . . ERD-MAN": insert RECENT CONJECTURAL ATTRIBUTIONS 785

**p. 3** Top: reverse the paragraphs headed "Conclusion" and "Application." As John Grant points out, it would be a further nicety if the closing "line" were to be printed thus:

Therefore
God becomes as we are.
that we may be as he is

**p. 71** Margin: [line number] 50 should read 40
Line 26: abominable should read abominable [the one erratum spotted by the Santa Cruz collective]

**p. 85** Running head: THE BOOK OF URIZEN should read THE BOOK OF AHANIA

**p. 103** Lines 42–44 have broken letters

**p. 121** Line 63: flutes should read flute[s]?

**p. 131** Margin, bottom: The Hebrew letter at the top of Blake's marginal note is Kaph but should be Khaph.

**p. 145** After line 3 of paragraph 2: insert ' in the margin

**p. 148** Line 60: Jersaulam should read Jerusalem

**p. 167** Line 25: Jerusalem should read Jerusalem

**p. 271** Running head: ADEL should read ABEL

**p. 273** [Jah, for Jehovah] should read [Jehovah] [The Hebrew letters are Heh and Yod, not Jah.]

**p. 371** Beside "End of The Seventh Night": delete ' 

**p. 387** Line 11: Roaming should read Roaring

**p. 15** asterial should read [asterial]

**p. 390** Line 40: self destroying should read self-destroying

**p. 45** deceit should read deceit

**p. 24** self cursed should read self-cursed

**p. 391** Line 40: guard should read Guard

**p. 3** Line 3: awake from deaths should read awake to life from deaths

**p. 21** Line 21: said should read Said

**p. 392** Line 34: autumn should read Autumn

**p. 1** slaves should read Slaves

**p. 19** While should read while

**p. 393** Line 31: your should read Your

**p. 395** Line 39: thro the Mercy should read thro Mercy

**p. 12** oblivion should read Oblivion

**p. 397** Line 19: branching should read branchy

**p. 398** Line 11: o my flocks should read O my flocks

**p. 399** Line 14 (of p. 131): Tharmas, O should read Tharmas O

**p. 400** Line 35: depart the clouds should read depart. the clouds

**p. 401** Line 32: What should read what

**p. 38** dead should read Dead

**p. 402** Line 32: inconceivable should read inconceivable

**p. 404** Line 16: sons & daughters should read Sons & Daughters

**p. 405** Line 10: by sons should read by the sons

**p. 482** The Pickering Manuscript (Morgan Library): In my textual note on "Auguries of Innocence" (p. 860), I indicated that the Pickering ms was hastily written; one more look at the ms makes me realize that it is not only the mending of letters that causes trouble, but the difficulty of making sure whether a capital or lower case was intended. Most of these make little significant difference, but I'd now like to report the following somewhat—i.e., more or less—conjectural readings of letters.

**p. 483** Line 5: disdain should read Disdain

**p. 484** Line 21: day should read Day

**p. 486** Line 8: sow should read Sow

**p. 488** Line 28: seventy should read Seventy

**p. 489** Line 52: Beggar should read Beggar

**p. 485** Line 57: allay should read Allay

**p. 486** insert ' in margin

**p. 486** Line 15: waters should read Waters

**p. 487** Line 25: dove should read Dove

**p. 488** Line 32: Envy be free was mended from Envy is free

**p. 489** ["Auguries of Innocence"] ["The Crystal Cabinet"] Line 27: air should read Air

**p. 490** Line 6: dove should read Dove
doves should read Doves

**p. 491** Line 23: strife should read Strife

**p. 491** Line 52: on was mended from in

**p. 491** Line 53: truth should read Truth

**p. 492** Line 74: death should read Death

**p. 492** Line 99: deform should read Deform

**p. 492** Line 109: doubt should read Doubt

**p. 492** Line 111: do should read Do

**p. 496** Title: John Brown & Mary Bell became expanded to Long John Brown & Pretty Mary Bell, and then Pretty was changed to Little

**p. 496** Line 1: Pretty became Little

**p. 496** Line 2: Young John became Long John
After line 7 (from bottom): insert Maries at the Sepulcher. 4 The Death of Joseph. 5 The Death of the Virgin

Two sentences of the letter are repeated: delete lines 8–10 and the first word of line 11.

Under “Recent Conjectural Attributions”: delete last three lines; insert A more evidently genuine “piece of Blakean doggerel written in pale blue water colour with a brush” and discovered by Geoffrey Keynes is “The Phoenix to Mrs Butts,” a manuscript now in the family of a great grandson of Mrs. Butts and signed by an authenticated Blake signature. We include it above (p 517).

After “imperfection.” (bottom): insert That the “Conclusion” belongs before the “Application” has been pointed out by John Grant. (One cannot apply a conclusion until it has been reached.)

[“The Blossom” note] should read 6 my] falsely reported as “thy” in posthumous copies, but see M.E. Reisner in Blake Newsletter 40: 130.
[“The Chimney Sweeper” note]: insert 20 He’d] But inked tracing in copy AA (destroying the sense).

Note on Hebrew for Milton 32: 15: This entry makes no sense, since the “wrong” reading has been silently corrected by the printer to the “right” reading. Blake wrote a Kaph (ała) where he should have written a Khaph (ן). So we must change the first Hebrew word in this line, having it begin (at the right end) with a Kaph (ן). Leslie Brisman, however, argues that Blake may have intended an etymological pun; so the letters as Blake place them may be allowed to stand (with the Kaph at the beginning but above the line).

After 1:19: insert 1:28 serpents] serpents (?all) 1st rdg

Left margin, bottom, above “Night the Ninth”: insert PAGE 117
Left margin, bottom: [First line under PAGE 118] should read 15 asterial 2nd rdg del] eternal 1st rdg del]

Near top: PAGE 136 should read 135 and PAGE 135 should read 136

Line 12 (from bottom): [30 . . . line] should read 30 ninefold inserted above the line
Line 2 (from bottom): [11 . . . man] should read 11 After “said” Blake first wrote “Beli”, a start for “Believe”; my previous
reading “Rich” has been corrected by G. E. Bentley, Jr.


p. 891 *Under [Inscriptions in . . . Job, 1825] *add a new paragraph after Insignificant variants . . . pp 55–66: The canceled sentences on plates I and XXI were first discovered by Robert N. Essick, as reported in Blake 19 (1985–86) 96–102, on early versions of Blake’s plates. These recovered declarations somewhat conflict with modern critical interpretation which assumes a sharp contrast between Job’s beginning and his latter end. Before and after Job’s trials, he and his family were concentrating on the Right Thing.

p. 974 Line 10: 494, ‘782 should read 503, ‘864
*p. 981 Line 5: 6830 should read ‘850
*p. 982 After line 13 (from bottom): *insert Nightingale, To the 785
p. 983 After line 7 (from bottom): *insert The Phoenix to Mrs Butts 517
*p. 983 Bottom line: ‘864 should read ‘846
*p. 985 Line 20: 622 should read 662
*p. 985 Line 30: birth should read birth
*p. 986 Line 7: Cert should read Art
After line 14 (from bottom): *insert “The Use of Money & its Wars” 687
p. 987 After line 16: *insert “Till thou dost injure . . .” 835
*p. 988 After line 7: *insert “To the Nightingale” 785

Has anyone found other errata? If so, please let me know, to make corrections in the next printings.

A Reply to Martin Butlin
Raymond Lister

I refer to the note by Martin Butlin printed in the Spring 1986 issue of Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly. I regret if in my review I unintentionally misrepresented what Mr. Butlin said about the Keating forgeries; I of course accept his version. But so far as I know he did not at the time nor at any subsequent time publicly deny the Times report (his alleged comments were printed in The Times on 16 July 1976; Keating’s admission appeared there on 20 August 1976).

As a principal prosecution witness at the Keating trial I saw most of the newspaper and other reports, but I do not recall seeing a denial, so my assumption that the report was correct was natural. If, however, a denial was published, it would be helpful if Mr. Butlin would state when and where it appeared. I suggest this in no hectoring spirit, but simply, if the record is wrong, to get it right.

My main point is not invalidated: that some members of the British art establishment, both trade and curatorial, were badly taken in by the forgeries (perhaps it would be more accurate to say by the forged provenance). I do not agree with Mr. Butlin that I have accorded the affair more attention than it deserves. Under all circumstances what I wrote was mild enough; it is a good thing to be reminded that such things are possible, even among the well informed. Surely, too, it is proper that reference to the Keating affair should be made in a scholarly journal, the main subject of which is so closely related to Samuel Palmer.

Mr. Butlin is kind enough to refer to what he calls “the reviewer’s cleverness.” I make no claim to have been clever; little perception was required, if one looked at the forgeries properly, to see them for what they were.

As for being an “enthusiastic amateur,” I can only say that I agree. There is nothing wrong with having enthusiasm for one’s subject; and as an amateur I am in excellent company.
such a Blake’s-eye view of the subject might do well to begin with the book’s concluding essay, M.H. Abrams’s “Apocalypse: Theme and Variations” and then to return to it at the end; here, as in Natural Supernaturalism, Abrams is concerned with the manner in which Blake and some of his contemporaries transformed biblical hermeneutics into personal poetic statements with immediate applications to history. Thus essays like the two opening ones in The Apocalypse may have no immediate reference to the Romantic period and yet be full of implications about it.

The initial essay, “Early Apocalypticism: The Ongoing Debate” by Bernard McGinn, declares the necessity “for a synthetic view as the proper background for detailed study of special epochs and topics,” and McGinn’s discussion is itself a masterful contribution towards such a view. The apocalyptic genre is defined as a revelation by an angel to a usually pseudonymous recipient, a message encoded in visionary symbols to be written down. The rise of apocalypticism is traced to the Judaism of the third and second centuries B.C., and the apocalyptic elements of the New Testament are briefly described. McGinn also demonstrates the extent to which the chiliastic nature of Christianity was fully accepted by early Church Fathers such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Lactantius, all of whom believed in the coming thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. It was Augustine who, rejecting his own earlier view, made the idea of the millennium, once an article of faith, a matter of controversy.

There were nevertheless always those within the Church who attempted to re-establish the thousand-year reign as a central doctrine. The medieval manifestations of such attitudes are the subject of Marjorie Reeves’s essay “The Development of Apocalyptic Thought.” The structuring of time is particularly important here. In Augustine’s later writings the conception of a world-week of six ages plus a seventh existing outside of time was transformed into “a one-directional process” whereby God unfolded His purpose within history. Paul’s doctrine of three phases of salvation (Romans v. 13–15) continued nevertheless to provide a model for millennial speculation. Joachim of Fiore, to the study of whose thought Reeves has made such an immense contribution elsewhere, made the third status the Age of the Spirit and combined it with the Seventh Day of the world-week. The effects of this idea were indeed far-reaching; whether far enough to reach Blake is a subject demanding further investigation.

Following these two rich essays, Jaroslav Pelikan’s “Some Uses of Apocalypse in the Magisterial Reformers” is somewhat disappointing, not for any fault of its own as a specialized contribution to the history of theology but because of the relative lack of importance, remarked upon in some of the other essays in this vol-


Reviewed by Morton D. Paley
ume, that Luther and Calvin attached to the Book of Revelation: Luther, as Pelikan himself notes, at one time expressed the view that the Apocalypse did not belong in the Bible at all, and Calvin did not include it among his New Testament commentaries. What Pelikan does show is that Revelation nevertheless played a role in the preaching of both. More valuable in creating a frame of reference for the literary essays to follow is Bernard Capp's "The Political Dimensions of Apocalyptic Thought." Capp argues that Foxe's Acts and Monuments, more commonly known as The Book of Martyrs, along with John Bale's The Image of Both Churches, inculcated a form of "apocalyptic nationalism" that was to have important consequences for the next century in the millenarian aspect of the English Revolution. The works of Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton that are discussed in Part III of The Apocalypse also show, in varying degrees, characteristics of such an attitude.

"Revelation and the Seventeenth Century" by Michael Murrin, the last essay in Part II, has as its subject the two seventeenth-century commentators most important to literary scholars—David Pareus and Joseph Mede. Both of these men have been connected with Milton. Murrin's critical approach to Pareus's Commentary and to Mede's Key to the Revelation is in some ways puzzling. It may be, for example, that Pareus made "strained act divisions [in Revelation] as with the seals"—but from what standpoint is such a judgment made, and what are its implications? Again, if Mede's interpretations lack originality as Murrin says, how does this affect our view of Mede? We do not read David Pareus for a "true" exposition of John's meaning; for that we would go to modern scholars (only to find considerable disagreement despite the use of linguistic and cultural evidence). Mede's originality lies not in his individual glosses but in the idea of synchronicity as applied to John's visions. No author is beyond criticism, but it seems centuries late to concentrate on the problems these two had in their approaches to their chosen text.

The heart of The Apocalypse is Part III, where Florence Sandler begins by arguing cogently that the Legend of Holiness in The Faerie Queene is patterned after Revelation. Many of Sandler's statements about Spenser's typology seem equally applicable to Blake's in his later works. This is of course not surprising, considering the interest in Spenser evidenced by Blake's Characters in Spenser's Faerie Queen (National Trust, Petworth). Nor need we hypothesize about Blake's sense of engagement with Joseph Wittreich's subject in "Image of that Horror: The Apocalypse in King Lear." Positioning a "poet's revelation" different from the theologians in that Shakespeare's goal is "to turn responsibility for the shaping of history over to man and thereby secularize the Christian prophecy," this finely considered essay makes us think once more of Blake. C.A. Patrides treats of the most important English poet of all to Blake in his "Something like Prophetick Strain": Apocalyptic Configurations in Milton." In opposition to Michael Fixler's view that 'Milton based Paradise Lost on an elaborate systematic transformation of the Apocalypse or Revelation of St. John," Patrides sees the apocalyptic content as projected into the pretemporal realm of the War in Heaven in Book VI. Nevertheless, Patrides recognizes the apocalyptic structuring of history according to typological patterns as "descriptive of the strategy at the heart of Paradise Lost" (and, one might add, of Blake's Milton as well).

In Part IV we begin to approach Blake's era or at least its background with Paul Korshin's "Queuing and Waiting: the Apocalypse in England, 1660–1750." Korshin begins with a brief but informative consideration of some later seventeenth-century figures, most notably the Behmenist Jane Lead, whose writings continued to be studied in millenarian circles a century later. Curiously, there is no mention of Thomas Beverley, who is too important a figure to be left out, as he was a prolific millenarian writer—the bibliography of this book lists eleven titles published in the decade beginning 1684—at a time when the Commonwealth flood of apocalyptic tracts had subsided to a Restoration and then post-Restoration trickle. Even more curious is the manner in which the essay appears gradually to adopt the attitude of the millenarians' critics and enemies. One expects to find A Tale of a Tub and The Dunciad discussed here, but it is surprising that the view of the satires is assumed by the author as well: "Swift pays special attention to certain aspects of millenarian behavior—sexual licentiousness, glossolalia, visionary experiences, madness. His gaze is almost medical, as if the fanatic were a patient in an asylum (as, no doubt, some of them were) and he were the physician writing a case history" (p. 259). Such a remark as this recalls the bad old days typified by Hoxie Neale Fairchild's Religious Trends in English Poetry, where all forms of Dissent are viewed as deviations from an implied norm. There is, moreover, another omission of an important writer on apocalyptic subjects, in this instance Richard Roach, who assumed leadership of the Philadelphian Society from Jane Lead. As Roach's works do not appear in the bibliography, they should be mentioned here: The Great Crisis; or, the Mystery of the Times and Seasons Unfolded (1725) and The Imperial Standard of the Messiah Triumphant (1727).

There is unfortunately no essay to link the mid-eighteenth century to the Romantic period in this book, and consequently the early Swedenborgian milieu in England is left undiscovered, as are the writings of Richard Brothers, Joanna Southcott, and their respective followers. The American side of the subject is, however, thoroughly presented by Stephen Stein in "Transatlantic Extensions: Apocalyptic in Early New England," begin-
ning with the Puritans of the first generation and extending to the aftermath of the American Revolution. Most pertinent, perhaps, for one interested in speculating about Blake's connection with this subject is the Great Awakening. Could Blake in calling his Milton 'the Awakener' have had in mind the Awakening in America? Blake must have known that George Whitefield, whom he praises in Milton, had a prominent role in the latter part of this phenomenon.

The post-Romantic period is the subject of two important essays in The Apocalypse. Mary Wilson Carpenter and George P. Landow center their exposition of the Apocalypse in Victorian literature upon George Eliot, remarking that Eliot's fascination with the fulfillment of Revelation is related to a renewed sense of the importance of this subject among contemporary intellectuals. The latter part of their essay argues that in Romola Eliot structures her novel according to a sevenfold division based on Revelation. Last before Abrams's fine Omega comes 'The Millenarian Structure of The Communist Manifesto' by Ernest L. Tuveson, whose Millennium and Utopia (1949) remains a classic study of millenialist thought. Tuveson's thesis that the communism of Marx and Engels involves a displacement of religious belief is familiar, but his application of this view to the Communist Manifesto succeeds in bringing out some striking parallels between Engels' document and John's.

One might wish for a full-fledged index rather than a scant "Index nominum" to this book, but the elaborate and extremely helpful bibliography compiled by Wittreich deserves the last word. Divided into commentaries on/interpretations of Revelation (arranged chronologically) and ancillary reading (alphabetized), this section of some seventy pages will be helpful to scholars for a long time to come—as, indeed, will this entire book.

3. I do not know whether there may be new material on this subject in two as-yet-unpublished works: a study of the later influence of Joachim of Fiore by Reeves and Warwick Gould and E.P. Thompson's book on Blake (which, he has informed me, places considerable emphasis on millenarianism).

2. From The Beast. Chick Publications, P.O. Box 662, Chino, Calif. 91710. (I thank Alan H. Pesetsky for bringing this booklet to my attention).
Reviewed by Wallace Jackson

At the beginning of his study Fredric Bogel offers the view that “English writers in the Age of Sensibility were, to a surprising degree, united by a perception of the impoverishment or insubstantiality of their experience and by their effort to register and resist that insubstantiality.” He more or less concludes with the observation that, for the later eighteenth century, “There is only one major order of being, that of common natural and human reality.” Many positions often congruent with Bogel’s have been suggested in the past, and what comes directly to mind are such recent works as Stephen Cox’s *The Stranger Within Thee*: Concepts of the Self in Late-Eighteenth-Century Literature and John Sitter’s Literary Loneliness in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England. Bogel’s book is specifically grounded on the perception and definition of the last half of the century as “an ontological field in which questions of being . . . take precedence over other kinds of question.” He postis “two centers of gravity that organize eighteenth-century works,” here identified as the “epistemological” (Augustan) and the “ontological” (later eighteenth century). In general it seems advisable to accept Bogel’s notion of epistemological skepticism as a function of Pope’s or Swift’s conception of man, though such a view is not consistent with, say, Shaftesbury’s or those of other moral sense philosophers who contribute to the definition of a secure and stable self. My caveat shrinks Bogel’s domain of the “Augustan” to the more manageable territory inhabited by the satirists, but that in effect is pretty much what he means by Augustan. The major issue is the adequacy of the self, and Sitter has noted the way in which Locke had based the self on memory, whereas “in Hume personal identity is a construct of the imagination.” Yet even with Locke the self is not a securely grounded entity, having perhaps, as Sitter argues, more of a “forensic” status than otherwise. The point may be, however, that an assumed ontological adequacy in the earlier years of the century has much to do with eighteenth-century theodicy and such governing values as those that arise from uniformitarianism and related concepts.

It might also be worth noting in passing that Bogel’s counters (early vs. late) do not organize distinctions between humanists and non-humanists; the kind, for example, that Paul Fussell provided in *The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism*. In addition there are formidable omissions. We nowhere hear of Defoe or Addison, or Akenside, Young, or Thomson, and their absence must complicate a thesis that is, after all, predicated rather broadly on the differences between the two halves of the century.

In any event, Bogel bases his abiding notion of ontological insecurity, an “insubstantiality” uniting the perception of the world and the self, on the central issue of personal discontinuity, the impression that identity is dislocatedly composed of incongruent experiential episodes. For this malady, then, the age seeks its cure. To some large extent Bogel is writing to a Humanist thesis, organizing the age in response to the diagnosis provided early as 1739–40: one “may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continu’d, which he calls himself; tho’ I am certain there is no such principle in me” (*Treatise of Human Nature*). Patently, British philosophy at mid-century had much to do with breaking down the concept of substance, but the breakdown did not affect everyone in quite the same way (and Bogel does not say it did).

Cox, who deals with a similar subject in his study, remarks that “Both [Thomas] Reid and [James] Beattie are alarmed at scepticism concerning the existence of a continuous, responsible self or the self’s ability to perceive the external world objectively.” It is true also that the re-emergence of “benevolence” as eighteenth-century “sensibility” and “sympathy” served to oppose the consequences that Reid and Beattie feared, and helped, as Cox puts it, “to provide eighteenth-century philosophers with a means of describing the self, evaluating its significance, and conceptualizing its relations with the outside world.”

Yet in various ways Bogel works effectively within patterns that elucidate the ontological insecurity of which he speaks. Thus Boswell’s “simultaneous doublessness of self and role” is brought forth to illustrate his “real goal,” which is “an unattainable consciousness of depth, complexity, and substantiality of identity.” While this is undoubtedly true of Boswell, it is not characteristic of such other memoirists as Franklin and Gibbon, and may tend to render Boswell a special case. It may also indicate oddly and even paradoxically that Boswell’s particular disabilities have “Augustan” origins implicit in Fussell’s summation: “In his interesting psychic career we find projected with almost unique poignantness this confrontation of Ancient and Modern in the eighteenth century.”

Despite Bogel’s use of Trilling’s comment, that the age was marked by an “increasing concern with the actual, with the substance of life in all its ordinariness and lack of elevation,” it was also one in which the flight from the actual is strongly evidenced in the varieties of sublime experience that exercised their own fascination and also in the encounter with the antique and the marvelous. Something also needs to be added by way
of Sitter's position that a "quest for radical innocence" distinguishes the "plot...most genuinely characteristic of mid-eighteenth-century poetry." Though Bogel is responsive to and, I gather, generally accepting of Frye's formulation of an "age of sensibility," it sometimes seems inconsistent with his own premises. At the center of Frye's definition is a poetry that is "oracular, and the medium of the oracle is often in an ecstatic or trance-like state: autonomous voices seem to speak through him, and as he is concerned to utter rather than to address, he is turned away from his listener, so to speak, in a state of rapt self-communion." Little that Bogel proposes can quite figure here: neither his quasi-representative man, the epitomizing Dr. Johnson (to whom I will return shortly) nor Crabbe or Goldsmith can be adapted to such terms. However, the agility of Bogel's argument often permits him to seize upon radically opposed orientations and to suit them to the requirements that "experience" or "substantiality" (the key terms of his text) demand. Thus the "substantial" is the "quantity of being things seem to possess." It is apparent in "metaphors of fullness or vacancy, or of presence and absence," in "Stoic and Christian commonplace," in "imagery of the obscure and the clear," etc. One might question whether the substantiality of "ontological character" so described is any more substantial than that of ancient and modern, fancy and imagination, or any other "ontological character[s] that experience presents to the individual consciousness." But from the very "rhetoric of substantiality" Bogel evokes the notion that the later eighteenth century is, of all things, "an age of experience."

The tensions of ontological insecurity are extended in all directions. Smart's Jubilate Agno evidences the "two worlds in which his poetry partakes, the natural and the supernatural, [which] are forever straining against the forces that hold them together." Maybe so, but the "supernatural" defines a turning away from the adequacy of the actual, and A Song to David moves exultantly and rhapsodically from the glories of earth to those of heaven.

Often, too, the methodology raises problems of affiliation and juxtaposition. Smart and Johnson are introduced at one point for the purpose of exploring "the large role that the substantial dimension of experience played in the literature and thought of the later eighteenth century," but Johnson and Smart are "as different from each other as they are from the majority of their contemporaries." On the other hand, they are not "merely craggy and singular anomalies." What is offered, then, is a principle momentarily linking writers normally quite unlike, yet joined by their participation in "characteristic modes of consciousness." Such modes include equally the "various flourishes of the biographical and autobiographical impulses in Boswell, Franklin, Gibbon, Rousseau, and even Sterne's Tristram." From the intro-

duction of such "impulses" it is but a short slide "from the factual to the factual seeming, the effort to render the texture of common experience without regard to literal truth." But other than the kinship of autobiographical impulse linking Boswell to Franklin, there is little else that compels us to think of the one when we reflect on the other. And how, moreover, are such "impulses" to be distinguished from those in Defoe or Richardson or from those in any literary enterprise where the line between fictional and factual representation is blurred?

At the opposite extreme Bogel's schematization projects Gray, Collins, Macpherson, and all those others "whose works either express that perception of insubstantiality or project a vision—bardic, oracular, sublime—of a world more intensely present, more substantial and imposing." Ontological insecurity is manifest in a rich hunger for the particulars of experience or is made apparent in a flight from the adequacy of ordinary life. Some of the familiar topics of pre-romanticism are factored into Bogel's system, but they are disposed along a spectrum of ontological desire and thus sophisticatedly disguised in the conception that renders oppositions a function of equivalent appetites. Something called the "sphere of experience" rules in this cosmos: "the sphere of experience itself was invested with new value, new explanatory power, and heightened interest." Alongside the immediately experiencing imagination of a Dryden, a Swift, and a Pope, the curious evasions of the mid-century romancers suggest an encounter with that which is well beyond experience and valued precisely for that reason. Though Bogel opposes such writers to Wordsworth ("it is clear that the value with which he invested it [i.e., experience] did not derive from experience or perception themselves but from their metaphysical foundations") the judgment seems to me both partial and evasive itself. Wordsworth's poetry begins in the fact of witness, of actions that he performed ("Nutting"), or losses that he suffered (the Lucy poems). There is something clearly more sensational about the poetry of Collins and the Wartons, something highly marginal in whatever experiential commitment Gray was able to make. Bogel would have it that the absent powers of the historical past shade into the present, as in Goldsmith or Collins, "and the substantiality of an earlier time informs, for a moment, the sphere of the present." Is it not more accurate to remark that the nostalgic invocation of lost romance is more often than not asked to fill the vacuity of the present? And is it not also true, as Sitter states, that what is feared is not the "loss of history but...its crushing presence"? The metamorphic act of many of the mid-century poets is to turn history into legend, and human nature into a theater upon the stage of which are to be seen the spectral objectifications of the passions. Bogel believes that "Gray's chief subject" in "The Bard" is "the human need for
images of the past," but the past is only another stage, like the graveyard, on which the poet may assume an identity that the present cannot give him or that he cannot take from it.

However, Bogel's claims extend far beyond the recovery of the past as a simple fiction and reach toward the proposal that "the new kind of past" envisioned by Walpole and Gray and Hume is "the product of an effort to create a new realm of values." Such a past seems rather to emphasize a temporal disjunctiveness and to take its value from precisely that fact, and thus functions to create illusions of identity and possibility that are inconsistent with Johnsonian or Burkean requirements. Is, for example, Burke's conservatism to be allied with the fabled past imagined by Hurd or Lowth or Thomas Warton?

The space between Walpole and Burke is nevertheless filled through the instrumentation of "prejudice." Burke is quoted to the effect that "Many of our men of speculation . . . employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them. If they find what they seek, and they seldom fail, they think it more wise to continue the prejudice. . . ." But, as Fussell reminds us, prejudice is itself founded on the "premise of the historical uniformity of human nature," and the premise is not consistent with experimentations in the realm of identity conducted in the name of ontological insecurity. In no way, to my mind, do Burkean principles justify the counterfeit past of a Chatterton or a Macpherson. Bogel calls such forgeries a "freer expression" of a "controlled impulse." Since he thinks according to the model of a spectrum, such a conception makes sense to him, and he tends to see radical propositions as polarized extremes of a common impulse. If, for him, time past and time present cannot be brought quite into relation by the poets, then the "principal locus of substantiality" is nothing less than "the written text." Writing is thus its own reality; its real referents begin and end in itself, and both past and present are vacated for the sake of the greater substantiality of the text. What emerges here is something called "the theater of literature itself." In this case polarities are collapsed inward upon the object that contains them and is greater than them. Not for the first time does one sense in Bogel's work, otherwise so heavily reliant upon such terms as experience and substantiality, the ghostly apparition of a non-thing called "literature itself." What eighteenth-century category could have domiciled this abstraction and what would it have meant to such as Johnson and Burke?

The penultimate chapter, "The Recovery of the Present," is predicated on another dualism: that the recovery of the present and the appeal to the past "are two parts of a single complex movement." Using Burke's Philosophical Enquiry he argues that the complexity of aesthetic experience resituates the immediate as a primary attribute of aesthetic response, another way thereby "to bring into being, to establish and authenticate, the sphere of the substantial." We might remember that Addison had much earlier been occupied with the ontological significance of immediate response and had explored the forms best calculated to impress themselves strongly and forcibly upon the perceiver. Here again, ontological insecurity is not addressed as a function of a shrunk identity that history can, so to speak, cure, for the sublime is pre-eminently a realm into which the ego expands. The effort to "win for present experience an adequacy of being" is, I think, a reasonable way of regarding the appeal of the sublime. To associate the sublime, however, with varieties of eighteenth-century autobiography on the ground that present in the latter is the "typically eighteenth-century withdrawal of faith from the idea of decisive and transforming moments" offers a correspondence that I find highly problematic. The sublime is that which does transform, reshaping through the exaltation attendant upon the escape from the confines of ordinary identity. Yet (and this is Bogel's argument and characteristic of his method) the sublime does touch the need to fill present experience. If in all other ways it is to be dissociated from the ordinary, Bogel's methodology nevertheless permits him to extract from the sublime that particular relevance it bears to the increasingly baggy category of the "substantial."

Thus diminished possibilities of transcendence are said to be consistent with later eighteenth-century autobiography, which is devoid of "genuinely critical moments," moments in which identity is threatened or challenged. Sitter makes quite the opposite point in suggesting that "Salvational conversions are central to . . . Night Thoughts, The Pleasures of the Imagination, and The Castle of Indolence." And if the lesson Bogel learns from the autobiographies is that "there is no second self to spring phoenixlike from the first in a moment of spiritual rebirth, [yet] there is a remarkable range of roles and postures available to us," how do such roles and postures differ significantly from those of Augustan personae, which are surely not predicated on either the desire for or possibility of an emergent second self?

Arising from the consuming, characterizing rage for substance, for experience, for all the appetitive forms of life, is the champion Johnson, "a center of presence." At such a moment in Bogel's text one feels that the summoning has something of a fictive grandeur about it, and that Johnson fulfills and embodies the most deeply felt urgencies of the age and comes forth in all of his "ontological plenitude." It may be so. It should be so. It is surely a neat invention to define the malady of the age and to offer a hero who both provides the cure and bears the wound. What lies under Johnsonian plenitude, as it underlies and underscores the age, is
“the pervasiveness of the elegiac in the Literature of Sensibility.” Some years ago Fussell had noticed that “of all the Augustan humanist images and motifs, it is elegiac action which conducts us into the closest recesses of the humanist experience,” and from the perspective of Romantic literature Wordsworth presents himself as one of the greater elegists in the language. What is the distinctly period malady that summons the elegiac mode, rendering it the special possession of writers in the later half century?

These and other objections can be brought against Bogel’s work. I most emphatically do not offer them as disqualifying, and I want strongly to resist anything like a conclusive judgment about this book. It is a subtle enterprise that Bogel conducts with skill and learning. For myself, I do not see that his sense of the period can be said to stand more adequately or definitively than others I have cited here. His fascination with ontological insecurity, Sitter’s with literary loneliness, Cox’s with “eighteenth-century efforts to conceptualize what Young called the ‘naked self’,” my own, if I may say so, with the theme of the probable and the marvelous, seem to me to move more or less in unison (though not entirely in agreement) in one generally accepted and common direction. Something of a consensus is in process of shaping a new and large-scale idea of the second half of the century. It has the merit of not suffering, as Frye put it, from the false teleology of “pre-romanticism,” but assumes the value and specific presence of a literature complex and vexed. Bogel’s contribution will command our respect and attention for quite some time to come. Most importantly, it will be something for us to think with and against.


Reviewed by David Punter

*Romantic Contraries: Freedom versus Destiny* is a learned and complex book which invites reading on two levels. At the first level is a substantial meditation on freedom and destiny, free will and determinism, that “philosophical morass of ‘providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate’” (p. 6), into which Thorslev introduces a considerable degree of clarity. He concentrates several times on the significant differences between romantic discourse and the Anglo-American philosophical discourse within which similar issues have later been captured, and moves thoughtfully between them. At this level, the book is an argument; consisting broadly of an outlining of problems about human purpose, as they may have appeared to the major romantic writers; and then a depiction of three “universes,” three constructs within which attempts were made to tackle those problems—the “organic universe,” the “Gothic alternative,” and the “open universe,” which is intimately associated with the practice of irony.

Interestingly, though, when read at this level the book leaves an unsatisfied feeling; there is no conclusion, and no attempt at the end to “read back” the apparent discoveries. I think this is largely because this central argument is couched in humanist terms. I do not mean anything very polemical by this, only that Thorslev is happy to talk about the romantic poets as being, for instance, “in general too concerned with the loss of destiny to feel it as a burden”; about Shelley as happy to accept “the suffering and sacrifice that go with the role” of poet (p. 19); about Walter Pater as keeping “his true self detached from actuality and history” and feeling “free to treat all philosophy either as the subject of esthetic contemplation, or as a means to an end of further experience” (p. 181). I have no quarrel with any of these judgments, within their own frame of reference; but they do help to reveal a problem endemic to humanist criticism, which has to do with the object of attention. If our focus is squarely upon the writers (or, we might want to say, on the mythically reconstructed figures whom we produce from the texts), then how do we escape from this individualist closure into a wider realm of structured history?

We may well, of course, not want to; and here we come upon an important knot in our cultural attention to romanticism. Part of Thorslev’s argument is about the pressure of history; part of our own cultural problem, clearly, is continuous with that. Thus some of the established discourses about romanticism fit neatly into an ideological frame: attempts, for instance, to recapture Shelley as a radical tend to offer only marginal displacements of the myth of soaring individual supremacy which is inscribed on the surface of the poetry itself. Reading has to do with systems of identification; where better to find refuge for the harried self than in the myths of the west wind?

Yet, of course, things are not as simple as that. In speaking of identification (and I mean to allude specifically to the Kleinian concept) we are touching already upon the shadow, upon that which haunts: haunts romanticism with the hovering suggestion that the individual may not have his or her own responsibility within grasp; haunts contemporary philosophy with the prospect that the “I” itself may be that which invites
deconstruction; haunts language with the awareness that the bedrock of pronouns through which we appear to organize our everyday discourse and behavior are really only "shifters," least conclusive of all the items we count on as we painstakingly assure ourselves of coherence.

I am not talking only of Thorslev’s book; this haunting is painfully there in much of the material he adduces—in, for instance, Oswald’s perceptual shift in The Borderers:

> Action is transitory—a step, a blow  
> The motion of a muscle—this way or that—  
> Tis done, and in the after-vacancy  
> We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:  
> Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,  
> And shares the nature of infinity.

There is a paradox here in Oswald’s act of recognition, summarized neatly in the juxtaposition of “permanent” and the “nature of infinity”; this realization, after the event, that even an apparent excess of individualism—the performance, for instance, of a seemingly irrevocable act—may only have demonstrated our alignment with a working out of larger forces binds us to an iron law at the same time as it removes the cognizance of that law from human apprehension. Thus even as we glimpse the tantalizing contours of a determined universe, with all the possibilities of explanation attendant upon it, we sense the possibilities of explanation attendant upon it, we sense the origin and meaning of that set of determinations being progressively distanced from us.

And thus it is also in the twentieth century, as Thorslev says when he subsequently alludes to the contemporary coming of the uncertainty principle: just as we begin to grasp the structures produced by the interaction of subnuclear particles, so our conceptualization of those particles explodes and we find ourselves once more among the shards of explanation, trying to cobble together a metaphor—matter, wave, light—which will retain purchase on the shifting landscape of construction. And it is indeed metaphors that we here deal in; romantic attempts to “explain” the creative act can and should be read as the coming of a new series of metaphors, and these metaphors transcend the field of obvious “influence” in ways which continue to alarm literary historians.

Thorslev is thus, I would say, quite right to assimilate metaphor to myth, although he prefers Santayana on myth (p. 74) to the more structuralist formulations which run through Lévi-Strauss and Barthes. “Dialectical thinking” during the romantic period has, so Thorslev claims, this kind of force: “it represents an attitude toward life, art, and moral action, rather than a philosophic, abstract, or scientific description of them”; it is a “metaphor” which “is implicit in much of Romantic poetry” (p. 75). But the question, it seems to me, is not only about the ramifications of such myths, about where we can find them cropping up, about the peculiarity, dwelt upon so much by Abrams, McFarland and other critics, that we do indeed find a similar range of metaphor during this period in writers and whole schools of thought which clearly had little or no contact with one another; the question is about what we do with this perception of similarity, and within what discourses we try to contain it.

We can trace a series of possible fields of interpretation here. At the first level, there is the possibility of letting the coincidence lie, or referring it to the incomprehensible wonder of the human mind. This we could characterize as the romantic attitude itself; and it is still very much alive. This position can, of course, be refined through the deployment of psychological concepts: although they have rarely been taken up, the perceptions about the collective unconscious contained in Freud’s work on group psychology would clearly lend themselves to a first-stage critique of the unreflexive concept of coincidence.

And at a second stage, we can look for explanations largely in sociological terms: we can talk about the structural similarities between, say, the British and German states in the period and suggest that particular parallel developments in the economy and in social organization are likely to conduce to the evolution of a common set of metaphors to express alienation, lack, a common conjoining of that which is other. Thorslev organizes some of his argument in terms similar to this: for instance, he has an interesting passage on the emergence of notions of the unconscious (p. 91) in which he dwells upon the conditions under which such notions could emerge, and traces their history from the “seventeenth-century anti-Cartesians,” via Enlightenment repudiation of unconscious activity, to the romantics, who, “in the excitement of their rediscovery, may at times have gone to the opposite extremes.”

But the question raised by these attempted modes of explanation is, of course, the primary contemporary critical question: what is it that we are doing in seeking for explanation in terms of sources, of origins, at all? And at several points Thorslev touches on this question, in ways which threaten to undermine the rational sequence of his argument—a rational sequence to which he is deeply wedded. There is a continuous polemic running through the book about the dangers of irrationalism. It is very strongly there, for instance, in his objections to those thinkers who have attempted to relativize the law of contradiction. In relation, for instance, to Friedrich Schlegel, he quotes Anne Mellor: “identity and contradiction are useful categories for dealing with the exigencies of daily life, and especially in matters relating to the corporeal world, but they have no absolute validity”; and goes on:
To which one can only respond that on the contrary, the law of contradiction is denied every day in household arguments or in political debates, with no lasting ill effects; it is precisely in one's dealings with ultimate reality that it cannot be denied, or one's philosophical system loses all coherence. It is worth respecting the elementary truth of logic that once one allows even a single contradiction into one's language system, it becomes possible to prove anything whatever. (p. 163)

In separating the realms of “household arguments” and “ultimate reality,” Thorløv is surely taking on himself some of the protective coloration of romanticism: in the sublunary sphere, things may indeed be messy, and people may refuse to subscribe to those neat rules which “ought” to govern human behavior and our perceptions of the “truth,” but out there beyond the stars, in the windy depths of metaphysicalization, there continues to exist a world in which the categories are not confused—although, of course, that transcendent world needs rather a lot of continuous work to maintain it in being, work on the boundary of what is or is not “allowed.”

But second, and more important: who or what is the “one” which is the apparent agent of this passage? Clearly it is the hypostasized individual, directly contiguous with Blake’s agent who takes his free choice about whether or not to subscribe to philosophical systematization. The other side of this, of course, would be a very different approach to the power and role of language; and in saying that Thorløv’s text works on two levels, I mean to draw attention to the moments when this different view invades the stockade of individualism. He mentions, for instance, Paul de Man’s assessment of romantic irony as existing only “in and through language” and as consisting “in the recognition that there is no escape from the ‘prison-house’ of language into the world of the actual” (p. 177). There is another kind of invasion going on when Thorløv mentions the various kinds of notational translation which may be happening in approaches to the Gothic:

There is surely a sense in which the world of modern analytic theory . . . is merely the Gothic universe internalized: the grisly phantoms and indifferent or even malevolent fates replaced with the conflicting desires and irreconcilable forces of the unconscious, or with such (almost personified) abstractions as Eros and Thanatos. (p. 137)

It is these invading forces which, I suggest, this text tries to keep out; and it is in this sense that I believe that a book which apparently addresses itself to a romantic problematic in fact engages in its own subtext with a whole range of argument about contemporary critical practice.

This, one might say, is in some sense inevitable; we can only write against the background of what is, and certainly the spectre of Derrida and deconstructionism is one of those which hovers outside the carefully sealed gates (albeit of Troy). But some of Thorløv’s formulations go beyond this: he argues, for instance, that there is “no clear evidence that any of the major Romantics despaired of factual history . . . nor of the referential capacities of language. They choose to take an esthetic and ironic attitude towards history, just as they choose a poetry of ironic ‘inclusion,’ a poetry which avoids closure . . . .” (p. 180). The point I would want to make about this is that it is not a critical judgment at all: it is an unverifiable statement, precisely in the irrationalist area from which Thorløv claims to be distancing himself, and it embodies within itself a search for origins.

What I mean by this is that Thorløv’s deployment of the romantic writers is as figures of reassurance, complexly related to childling and adulthood. The world may be limited by our conceptual apparatus; or by perceptual difficulty; or by the overarching claims of language and the ineradicable but forbidden memories of our induction into the word. But these pinions cannot hold down the romantics: even where they themselves manifest a troubled awareness of the voices which speak through them, this awareness is relieved by a strenuous effort at self-fulfillment. Our parents cannot, after all, be impotent.

And, of course, this is the point at which, in order to be consistent, I need to “depersonalize” Thorløv, the author of this text, and to refer instead to this critical discourse in its manifold articulations with other discourses, critical and otherwise. This would be an enormous task, but one point stands out. In its very structure, this text is an enactment of a search for origins and of an attempted validation of free choice, and these structural coordinates underlie the argument. The text begins from definitions: from an attempt to set up clear structures in the void. It then proceeds to use these structures as a “background” (the first set of three chapters) against which the romantics can be perceived choosing which of three universes to inhabit (the second set of three chapters). Between these two parts comes a brief “Prologue” (to Part Two), in which there is an interesting passage which depicts what a romantic poem might actually be (a brave attempt!): “poems as wholes, or relatively self-contained passages in them, can be viewed as phenomenological exercises in which problems of existence are bracketed so that questions of ontology or of ultimate beliefs need not arise” (p. 82).

Between the “background” and the act of choice, then, there is interposed an “époché”; a space is constructed in which the poet can find elbow-room, can distance himself from the pressure of history, of, no doubt, household arguments—Wordsworth can, for instance, distance himself from Dorothy. Thus we are prepared for the possibility of entry into different and self-contained universes as an act of generational free will; although the point is made that no single poet should be categorized so simply, this has no structural
effect on the argument. What is operating here is a restriction of the signifier to linearity: genealogy and choice become a single prerogative, as they have been to aristocracies through the ages.

What is needed, I suggest, is a alertness to, and a reflexiveness about, what romanticism may itself signify as a sign in a system, and as itself still a productive generator of other chains of signification. The subtitle of the book is highly relevant: “freedom” and “destiny” are the terms, a doubled pride, in exemption or in a special placement. What is ignored, or suppressed, is the massive process of instituting; a perception that the processes which induct us without our acquiescence into the family have also a relevance to our induction into other processes: reading, professionalization, taking up membership of a larger structure (in whatever mode, including anarchistic rejection). The absence of conclusion in the book, I would say, is crucial: insofar as we explore sources in a non-reflexive way, we are enacting displacement, refusing the difficult trajectory through undifferentiation, refusing the knowledge of subversion which is the suppressed inverse of the melodrama of the Garden of Eden, and which takes on and recognizes death within life. That the romantics themselves had hints of this unmarked shadow is obvious; what, though, is the inner meaning of the critical act which continues to seek in romanticism a wide sphere of action, an unrammelled freedom of subject-position against all odds?


Reviewed by David Simpson

For a number of years historians of ideas and literary critics have been interested in eighteenth-century philosophies of language, both for their intrinsic epistemological sophistication and for their obvious analogies with syndromes apparent in other fields of discourse—perhaps indeed in all fields of discourse, given the fashionable tendency to identify language in particular with mind or culture in general. Studies by Hans Aarsleff, Murray Cohen, James Knowlson, Stephen Land, and James Stam, among others, have insured that students of the eighteenth century are now very likely to pay some attention to its linguistics. Along with these largely philosophical and descriptive accounts there is another tradition, most recently and thoroughly explored by John Barrell in *English Literature in History, 1730–80* (London, 1983), which insists that arguments about dialect, about a “common” language, and about the priorities among the various parts of speech, are not only analogous to the political debates of the time but are more directly determined by and addressed to them.

Olivia Smith’s book is a valuable contribution to this second tradition, arguing as it does that “late eighteenth-century theories of language were centrally and explicitly concerned with class division and . . . cannot be entirely understood without their political component being taken into account” (p. viii). Her study avoids what many readers might regard as the “highlights” of the period, in order to describe the language debate during the crucial thirty years or so of the French wars. We are well enough aware of the political crisis of this period, but rather less well-informed of the debate over the language, and its relation to that larger crisis.

The book limits itself to a discussion of the printed word—suitably so, given the amount of material to be recaptured. Its six chapters deal with, among other things, the Rights of Man controversy, the pamphlet wars (Eaton, Spence, Hannah More), Horne Tooke, the Hone trials, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Cobbett. But Smith’s study ranges much more widely than a mere summary of its major themes might suggest. She writes superbly about the debate over the classics, about Harris’ assumptions in privileging abstract concepts over particular vocabularies, and about Samuel Johnson and the contemporary reactions to his work. She is constantly attentive to the empirical results of the language debate, showing us (for example) how press and Parliament used “the notion of vulgarity to argue against the concept of extended or universal male suffrage” (p. 29). She convincingly locates Paine’s challenge to the linguistic establishment as consisting in his mastery of an “intellectual vernacular prose” (p. 36), a medium that many would have preferred to believe could not exist. And she offers the challenging thesis that this medium vanishes (to reappear after 1815) as a result of the “hystera” that greeted its publication, and because of the status granted to the “refined language” among the radicals themselves (p. 77). These radicals, according to Smith, were disabled by their inexperience of any alternative to the language and images of their opponents. Hence, for example, they constantly cast themselves as a “swinish multitude,” their ironic embracing of Burke’s famous phrase speaking for the absence of an antithetical language of their own. To test out Smith’s thesis here would require rather more evidence than her book itself offers; given the strong case for authentic self-consciousness made by E.P. Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class* and elsewhere, opinions are likely to remain divided. But the issue she raises is important, and likely to stimulate further important research.

Among the many fine things in this book, the
chapter on Horne Tooke is exemplary. Smith shows clearly how Tooke's "tracing of all parts of speech to nouns and verbs disregards the prevalent assumption that two distinct vocabularies exist for the learned and the vulgar, one which was pure and the other corrupt or barbaric" (p. 123). I at least am quite convinced by this account that those who have sought to make sense of Tooke in exclusively philosophical or linguistic terms have seen only part of the point.

The main thesis of this study, as has already been implied, is that by 1815 there had occurred a "weakening of the hegemony of the concept of vulgarity" (p. 154), so that radical writers are free to emerge into discursive self-confidence, and to project for themselves a serious and attentive audience. The conservative writers, reciprocally, have lost their grip on the "official" language. Whether this analysis contains a grain or a large measure of truth is again something that scholars will wish to ponder carefully.

Smith's final chapter offers a fascinating interpretation of the preface to Lyric Ballads, and of the Biographia Literaria as an answer to it. The complex and ambivalent radicalism of the preface is much illuminated by Smith's approach, as is the sophisticated reactionary alternative laid forth in Coleridge's later book. It is fitting that this study concludes with an account of Cobbett's Grammar, a text that apparently sold a hundred thousand copies by 1834 (p. 231), but which is now scarcely known to students of the period.

The importance of this book to an understanding of Romanticism as a whole will by now surely be apparent. It also provides a new and provocative perspective on Blake. Blake is not much discussed here, but his ghost is constantly visible. Smith's comparison of Tooke's campaign against the privileging of abstract thought with Blake's against "mind forg'd manacles" (p. 139) suggests much about why the poet might have thought that to particularize is the alone distinction of merit. The analogies between Blake's writings and those of William Hone (as here described) are especially fascinating. Hone's "mock innocence" (p. 165), Smith suggests, speaks for a mastery of a whole range of styles whereby all distinctions between the polite and the vulgar, and the adult and the infantile, are made redundant in the face of "a unified, organic whole" (p. 171). Hone's use of the forms of the nursery rhyme seems very close to Blake's. But we would have to question whether the case made for Hone could also work for Blake: that his synthesizing stylistic posture effectively denies (as it might deny in principle) the "restrictive basis of concepts of language and literature" (p. 177). If Smith is right, however, then her thesis offers another account, besides that invoking the obscurity of Blake's medium, of why his poems had no significant audience in the 1790s: such inclusive and supple stylistic resources could not have registered as fully intelligible to a readership still intimidated by the hegemony of the polite culture. Writing after 1815, Hone was more fortunate.

We still have much to learn about the historical energies that flow through the obscurities of Blake's languages. Olivia Smith's book is one of the most valuable contributions yet made to our recovery of such forms of knowledge.


Reviewed by David Scrase

It is a little difficult to pinpoint the market at which this handsomely produced volume is aimed. All institutions who own prints by William Blake will need it as a standard reference work, but these are not many; for the layman, interested in Blake, but neither the happy owner of one of his separate plates nor a scholar to whose interest Blake studies is central, Bindman's
The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake is more likely to find a place upon his library shelf. This is a less comprehensive account of the minutaie of theories and analyses of the various states, known or suggested by Essick, but it is very much cheaper, and, with the illustrations integrated into the body of the text easier to handle.

Essick is a scholar of the comprehensive kind. In the tradition of G.E. Bentley, Jr. he has attempted an exhaustive study of his chosen field, which is admirable where the evidence and material is small but becomes confused and confusing when, as with Chaucer’s Canterbury Pilgrims (XVI) his list of untraced impressions runs to 142, some of which he admits “are no doubt the same as the traced prints, and there are in all probability other extant impressions not recorded here in either category” (75). After wading through the description of the 142 items one is tempted to ask what is the point of the exercise, unless to show how careful Essick has been to incorporate everything he knows into his text lest some eager reviewer points out something which has escaped him. This may sound unnecessarily tart, but this reviewer feels it sufficient to list examples in public collections only, except where a unique state is in the private domain.

To an Englishman there are always some problems of different nuance of meaning when reading an American book. Essick’s style, in accordance with the high seriousness with which he treats his subject, is measured and a little ponderous, but not obscure or difficult to read. A few things confused me. In his description of Charity (II), he uses the technical description “planographic transfer print,” a term which usually implies the lithographic process, whereas this looks much more like a “monotype,” as Essick admits in the text. A similar confusion arises in his description of the making of the large color monotypes, worked up by hand, in his introduction, p. xxv. But on the whole Essick is accurate and intelligible in his description of the processes of printmaking and his introduction is well balanced and interesting. The main text is clear and for the most part he avoids subjective judgments, a major pitfall in Blake studies. One comment with which I had to take exception is Essick’s description of the reworking of the Job and Ezekiel prints: “Job’s heavy burden is underscored by the thick cross hatching defining his covering. The more delicate lines of ‘Ezekiel’ follow the flowing contours of garments and the burnedish areas suggest enlightenment rather than oppression” (23). But on the whole this book is remarkably free of such attempts at interpretation.

Under Albion Rose (VII), as it is impossible to see the first state in an intaglio impression, it is not possible that the Huntington Library impression is a 2nd state with the “bat-winged moth” burnished out, or that Essick’s state 1 should be state 2 in accordance with the evidence of The Accusers of Theft Adultery Murder (VIII) and that there was an earlier “hypothetical” state 1, no examples of which have yet been found? To suggest this may sound perverse—all, just because Blake produced a preliminary pull of one print does not prove that this was his invariable practice. Whilst conceding that in some instances it is likely that there were trial “states” which have not survived—the plates after Mordant, The Idle Laundress (XXX) and Industrious Cottager (XXXI), are cases in point—to presuppose them and list them as hypothetical states is hedging one’s bets a bit. Better to have made an aside, suggesting that there may have been an additional state rather than boldly to list one.

In a work which is in so many ways so admirable and accurate, it is a little disconcerting to read with reference to the Butts, “Under these circumstances it is impossible to disentangle the father’s work from the son’s. Fortunately this quandary is of little consequence: the important issue is to determine the extent of Blake’s involvement in the Butts family’s graphic activities” (211). This may put the viewpoint of the Blake scholar, but the art historian is every bit as involved in ascertaining which Butts, father or son, is responsible for which print. To uncover the truth is after all our aim and responsibility. Christ Trampling on Satan (XLIV) seems to this reviewer to owe rather more to Blake in its handling than Essick allows, nor does it seem logical to dismiss his participation in the Lear and Cordelia plate (XLV), and both of the odd plates of afflicted children, Two Afflicted Children (XLVI) and Two Views of an Afflicted Child (XLVII), can only, in the light of their relationship in draughtsmanship to the series of imaginary heads, be attributed to Blake himself.

The book is extremely well produced: the print clear and the paper of high quality. There are remarkably few errors of proofreading. It should be noted that the Industrious Cottager (165) is no. XXXI; on p. 146, C, the owner is the Ashmolean Museum, and on p. 230 an unnecessary “d” is attached to the word “once” (paragraph 2, line 8). The color plates are a little disappointing, but Blake’s color is so intense and vivid that it is almost impossible to reproduce. It would have been useful to have had the ownership of the items reproduced listed below each illustration as well as in the acknowledgments.

Comments: The dating of Blake’s prints is not easy. On the whole Essick’s conclusions seem to be justified, although Erdman’s “left-pointing serif” hypothesis (see The Accusers (VIII)) is by no means conclusive.

Edward & Eleanor (IV): Bindman’s date of late 1770s or early 1780s makes sense.

The Chaining of Orc (XVII): From the reproduction the date appears to be 1813.
Rev. John Caspar Lavater (XXIX): Bindman’s suggestion that this was intended as a frontispiece to Lavater’s Physiognomy is attractive.


Falsa ad Coelum (XXXIV): Schiff’s rejection of “Ganesa” as a type for the elephant and his proposal of the phallic symbolism of the trunk and the pun on elephant are plausible.

An Estuary with Figures in a Boat (XXXV): Although it cannot be established that this relates to the sketching party on the Medway taken by Blake, Stothard and Mr. Ogley, Bindman’s dating of c. 1780 is preferable in terms both of composition and coloring to 1790–94.

Edmund Piits, Esq. (XXXVI): Much more probable that “Armit” was added after Earle’s knighthood in 1802, even if it counters the “left-pointing serif” theory.

Addenda:
The Pierpont Morgan Library now owns Head of a Damned Soul in Dante’s Inferno (XXXII, 1E; given by Charles Ryskamp). The British Museum owns the unique state of Mirth (XXVIII, 2; allocated by Her Majesty’s Treasury).

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, has been allocated the following items by Her Majesty’s Treasury, through the Minister of the Arts, accepted in lieu of capital taxes from the estate of the late Sir Geoffrey Keynes: Joseph of Arimathea Among the Rocks of Albian (I, 1A, 2E, 2F); The Accusers of Theft Adultery Murder (VIII, 3F); Enoch (XV, 1C); Lacooin (XIX, 1A); The Man Sweeping the Interpreter’s Parlor (XX, 2H); George Cumberland’s Card (XXI, 1N, 1O, 1P, 1Q); Morning Amusement (XXII, 1B, 1C); The Fall of Rosamond (XXV, 1A, 2C); Zephyrus and Flora (XXXVI, 1A, 1B, F); Calisto (XXXVII, 2C, 2D, F); Venus dissuades Adonis from Hunting (XVIII, 2A, 2B); Rev. John Caspar Lavater (XXXIX, 2B, 3J, 3K); The Idle Laundress (XXX, 2C, 3E, 3F); Industrious Cottager (XXXI, 3D, 4G, 4H); Head of a Damned Soul in Dante’s Inferno (XXXII, 1D); An Estuary with Figures in a Boat (XXXV); The Child of Nature (XXXVIII, 1B, 1C); James Upton (XL, 1C); M. Q. (XLII, 2E); Wilson Lowry (XLIII, 2B, 3D, 3E, 4J); Bust and large wings of an angel looking to the left (Part 3, a); Centaur in a landscape with a Lapith on his back (Part 3, b); Classical figure seated on a pedestal and holding a lyre (Part 3, c); Head of a Saint (Part 3, d); Satyr with a dancing figure (Part 3, e); Christ Trampling on Satan (XLIV, 1K); Lear and Cordelia (XLV, 3C, 4E); Two Afflicted Children (XLVI); Two Views of an Afflicted Child (XLVII); Coin of Nebuchadnezzar and Head of Cancer (LVII).

The following items, which are the property of the Keynes Family Trust, are on deposit at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge: Job V, 1A; Chaucer’s Canterbury Pilgrims (XVI, 2B, 3O); The Ancient of Days (LXVII). This last item does not appear to be a print at all. Under 7 X magnification there was no evidence of a printed line, nor does it appear to have been produced by a lithographic process. The underlying image may have been reproduced by a mechanical process, but the watercolor is applied by hand. The support is card, which is unusual in Blake’s work, and Essick’s hypothesis that this is some sort of facsimile is probably correct.


Reviewed by Nelson Hilton

A key word for this “rereading” (as well as our rereading of it) is “ambivalence”—so much so that the general editor’s preface, having opened by declaring Blake “England’s greatest revolutionary artist,” concludes by pointing to his “revolutionary ambiguity” (ix, xi). Eagleton here recycles Larrissy’s contention that Blake is “the greatest radical poet in English” (3) and that Blake’s firmness is meant to conceal what it in fact reveals: a fear that all firmness, like all definite form, is limiting because it excludes other possible views or forms. This fear is balanced against the suspicion that without firmness, without form—in fact without limitation and exclusion—no expression would be possible. The two points of view comprise an ambivalence about form and the means of expression which appears throughout Blake’s work.

Certain key words, for instance, constantly carry the weight of this ambivalence. ‘Bound’... is one. (6)

Later we read of “those ambiguous Blakean words” (51) and the “curious ambiguity in Blake’s use of . . . ‘bound’” (69). The fundamental problem with this short but ambitious book is that its reliance on “ambivalence” and “ambiguity” sets up a false double bind (“Two Horn’d Reasoning Cloven Fiction”) so that posited ambivalence about form and expression degenerates into the contention that “the question whether form is expressive or limiting remains a question, though a profoundly troubling one” (59, emphasis added). As a result, Larrissy’s Blake is marked by deep anxiety (37); it is “anxious and ambivalent” (126), and (as in The Book of Urizen) the “ambiguities derive, of course, from Blake’s doubts about form” (131); we can see “Blake’s anxiety” in “his ambivalent feeling... inscribed in the am-
biguous form" (133); elsewhere Blake “reveals a true anxiety” (145). Given this schizophrenic double bind, Larrissy has to conclude (here regarding Songs of Innocence) that “To oscillate between two readings . . . may be the fullest response we can have” (63). Needless to say, the possibility of a vision “twofold always”—not to mention threefold or fourfold—does not appear.

One problem can be neatly framed by considering Larrissy’s discussion of the motif-idea-concept-practice of “frame” and “framing” in Blake. Having identified “the [graphic] frame that surrounds many of the songs” as a way in which “Blake signals the necessary limitation of innocence” [my emphasis], Larrissy opens considerations of rereading: “What is interesting about Blake’s frames is that they can be seen as a metaphor for the paradoxical process described by Derrida” (25). That process, as victims of “Jack de Reader” (Scritti Politti’s epitaph) may remember, concerns the instantiation of a margin, a “supplementary” work (parergon) which is itself paradoxically necessary to the constitution of the work. The issue, finally, is where interpretation can stop—whether there is in fact anything intrinsic in the framed work for interpretation to fix upon; if there is no such thing or place, then clearly rereading is the condition of our existence. As for Blake: “Working back from the graphic frames to the text, we can now see more clearly that Blake has ‘framed’ his innocents: he has depicted them as limited, and thus as requiring some other level of interpretation to explain them. But he has also exposed and, by implication, questioned his own framing of them . . . “ (25). This is well taken and nicely supported by a detailed consideration of “The Chimney Sweeper” in Songs of Innocence, all building to the observation that ‘irony combined with irony of irony’ (the ironic speaker is himself limited) is characteristic of all Blake’s work” (48). For “limited,” as we have just seen, one may reread “framed.”

This interesting use of “framing” may also serve to frame the fascinating three pages on “The Tyger,” a discussion more remarkable for what it omits than what it argues, as one would be hard pressed to find any other consideration of “The Tyger” which manages wholly to suppress any reference to the first and last stanzas and the highlighted transition of “Could frame” to “Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?” For Larrissy, as already quoted, “The Tyger” reveals that “The question whether form is expressive or limiting remains a question.” But the question is (isn’t it?) whether this is in fact “a profoundly troubling” question (for Blake, for us) or a rhetorical one. The question is (isn’t it?) whether we could (or dare?) move from either/or to both/and (expressive/limiting). The problematic relation between “reality” (the “referent”) and language thus assumes a crucial or, exactly, critical importance, as, for instance, when Larrissy situates his own frame: “A Marxist criticism which is aware of the implication of human subjects in signifying practices . . . is well placed to conduct properly sensitive analyses of the relations between the ‘referential’ and the ‘rhetorical’. . . . The price of this advance, however, will have to be the recognition that the ‘referential’ only ever appears in rhetorical form” (49). Yet the discussion of the “manufacturing-process” or “harsh mechanical process” (58, 59) which sets up the Tyger as “a symbol for the position of the emerging industrial proletariat” (59) displaces precisely the insistence of “The Tyger” that the “referential” only ever appears in rhetorical form. Blake questions “his own” framing not just “by implication,” but in crafting frames which inextricably implicate readers in their questioning. “The implication of human subjects in signifying practices” is not something about which one may be simply “aware,” and not something it is enough simply to imply.

Larrissy expands our vocabulary for Blake’s craft by invoking another Derrideanism, “graft”—though one misses a link to the now general conception of Blake’s “composite art” which would have supplemented the argument. “The Chimney Sweeper” of Songs of Innocence, for instance, is “the product of grafts: children’s hymns, liberal education theories and occult emblems” (37). Via the “graft,” Larrissy can turn resolutely from the idea of a single, “unified” interpretation of some idealized organic “whole” work and find in Blake “probably the greatest reviser and cobbler-together of fragments and odd ends until T.S. Eliot” (90).

Yet the shape of Larrissy’s book bespeaks desire for the unity it rejects as it spends its first seven chapters getting up to and through The Book of Urizen and its last speeding—in twenty-two pages—all the way “From The Book of Ahania (1795) to Jerusalem (1804–c. 1820).” And while the bulk of the rereading in various ways develops Blake’s “shying-away from unity, and courting of process” (88), the rereading of the bulk of Blake’s work finds that here “Blake yearns for a unity” and “longs for a lost unity” (148, 154), even though it is these works that most engage “a process of endlessly deferred sense making” (153, also 145). The reason for this shift in Blake and/or in this view of his oeuvre is political. Larrissy’s Blake wants “to make an effective political intervention in the revolutionary period 1790–3” (98) but that desire is not realized, and so “The slow-moving tableaux of his later works are the index of a political despair which sees all history as telling one dire story, and the only way out as mental, rather than physical, fight” (154). Yet in the book’s stirring peroration we learn what it means to have, like Blake, a “thoroughly political” view of humanity: “the individual is the bearer and mediator of traditions; the world is interpreted and transformed by those traditions. To transform the world you must institute the struggle of tradition against tradition, of discourse against discourse. This struggle is
shown in Blake's works" (finis). Amen! Huza! Selah! But this struggle can only be—being for hearts, minds, and cognitive processes—a "mental, rather than physical, fight," and one wonders to see evident commitment to it reread as an "index of political despair." Such an "index" seems, rather, itself an icon of the ambivalent judgment that posits its existence.

One's overall response to this study, at turns provoking, rewarding, irritating, and disappointing, and to its challenge of "rereading" Blake will probably hinge on whether or not one agrees that The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, for all its delights, warrants more attention than Milton and Jerusalem together. As for Blake's "revolutionary ambiguity," one is reminded of the ambiguously revolutionary comment "I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure."

**Blake: The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.** Television docudrama written by Harvey Bellin and Tom Kieffer. Produced by the Swedenborg Foundation, New York, 1984. Film or 3/4" videocassette, 30 minutes. Rental free (Swedenborg Foundation, 139 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010).


Reviewed by Tim Hoyer

As video has mushroomed in the last several years it is not surprising that Blake has become the subject of several films now available on videocassette. The Swedenborg Foundation has been a good deal more generous with Blake in this film and recent publications than he was with the master in the work from which the film’s title is taken. Unfortunately, the film in many ways justifies Blake's original treatment of the institutional Swedenborg in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,* lopsided though it was. What the writers and producers have given us is a distinctly "angelic" picture of Blake and his marriage to his wife and to his work, thus misrepresenting both.

The film opens with Blake sitting up in bed coloring a print of *The Ancient of Days* under the adoring eye of his wife, Kate. The Blakes are represented as living in spotless cleanliness in a small but tidy apartment even though, according to George Cumberland, Jr., who visited Blake with some frequency on his father's business during Blake's later years, their actual Fountain Court "studio" was dirty and crowded. The time is 1827, ostensibly during Blake's last days, but the film does not attempt anything resembling a narrative of this period in Blake's life and career. Instead Blake's pictures are used to illustrate his doctrine of the creative life as it is described in readings from his works. The acting (William is played by George Rose; Catherine by Anne Baxter) is limited to recitation and dumb show and the effect is not dramatic.

Overlooking for a moment the filmmakers' use of *The Ancient of Days* as a focal point for Blake's artistic consciousness in the last days of his life (though Tatham reports that Blake was coloring a copy of this print for him on his death bed, Blake was undoubtedly more concerned at the time with the Dante illustrations he was making for John Linnell), the most obvious problem with the film from the outset is its unremitting sentimentality. Blake and his wife are portrayed as luminously happy, constantly smiling at the world and one another through glistening eyes. Catherine plays a role in many ways more important than Blake's; she is a kind of dewy-eyed docent and nurse to the art and man. The filmmakers' conception of the Blakes' marriage seems extraordinarily off the mark. One does not expect to see the elder Blakes at each other's throats, but the pious couple we do see does not look like a marriage of heaven and hell, nor does it betray a shred of earthly reality. Blake's art contains a sometimes dark and ambivalent view of women and we suspect, on evidence from poems and notebook entries, that his marriage to Catherine was at times extremely difficult for both of them. Any hint of these things is completely absent here and, though it is not completely unrealistic to see the old couple mellowed and accommodated to one another at the end of their long marriage, one expects to see signs, however subtle, of the years of hard poverty and marital difficulties. Instead everything is sanitized and sentimentalized. The tone of the production is pious, almost in the religious sense. We are being given a view of a secular sainthood.

Realism is lacking in other respects too. The only "real" event in the film is Blake's death at the end. But that one event is seen through the sentimental filter of
Victorian accounts of it. This treatment of Blake is not "historical." There is no sense of his relation to his profession, to art, to the political events that engaged him. Though he spent most of his life in London, when we are shown scenes outside the room in Fountain Court in flashback they are of Blake and Catherine walking on a beach and playing with children in the sand, supposedly in the 1790s (this is the filmmakers' way of representing "eternity in a grain of sand" in combination with the children of the Songs of Innocence). All is private, internal, just Blake and his dear wife. No Cumberland, no Lin nell, no Burts, no Sartor, no Varley, no hint of the artistic and city life that Blake was always a part of even when he was "hid," an obscure figure to an indifferent public.

Still worse is the simplistic view of Blake's art. Blake's visions are portrayed with a literalism that belies their real source, his artistic imagination. Using flashbacks and special effects, the film attempts to show, through a blend of brilliantly luminous reproductions of his works and dramatizations of his "visions," Blake's creative process as a battle between Urizen and Los (thus the emphasis on The Ancient of Days instead of the drawings after Dante). The special effect "visions" are supposed to illustrate Blake's internal "struggle." Some of them, especially the Devil and Urizen, are absurd. Blake's hell is entirely missing from these scenes. To portray Blakean vision in this literal way is inappropriate and finally inaccurate.

The inaccuracy lies in the attempt to make key Blakean ideas (e.g., imagination and reason) from his early work represent Blake's actual psychic and artistic concerns at the end of his life. The psychomachia of the Lambeth prophecies becomes the central "doctrines" of his artistic career and the literal "state" of his mind as well. References to Jerusalem, both visual and verbal, do occur but they are few and simple. There is no hint of the work and development after 1795, of Job or Dante or any of Blake's other later concerns, either in poetry or art. With the exception of Glad Day, selection of the art shown is also limited to illuminated manuscripts, mostly work done between 1789-95. To criticize the selection of art, however, is perhaps a little too harsh. The vivid, full-color reproductions of Blake's pictures, including a number that are not commonly seen by the public, is the strongest point of this film. Though we would like to see more and a wider variety of Blake's pictures, what we are shown in this film is splendid.

Overall, however, the effect of the piety and the simplification is embarrassing and misleading. Though it shows a generous selection from Blake's illuminated art rather nicely, it also misrepresents him. Though it is rather highly produced it lacks a really imaginative view of Blake. Heaven is not opposed by hell and Blake's true humanity suffers as a result. This sort of popular treatment presents an image of Blake that modern scholarship has worked hard to banish.

A second Blake film on videocassette does not fall prey to the faults of Blake: The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. Blake's readers have always found in An Island in the Moon a counterbalance to the image of Blake the gentle, dotty mystic. Joseph Viscomi's adaptation of An Island in the Moon as it was performed by student actors before a live audience at Cornell University's Drummond Studio Theatre reveals in this counterbalancing and is at once more lively and truer to Blake than the film produced by the Swedenborg Foundation. The adaptation stays quite close to the text of Blake's manuscript fragment and, though it has shortcomings, it catches the spirit of the piece, placing it within the context of late eighteenth century English popular comedy and musical theater.

Of the few changes made by the adapter the most obvious is the confinement of the action to one act and one scene. Some songs from elsewhere in Blake's work have been added (e.g., "The Garden of Love"). Some of the characters have been fused together in order to simplify the stage business (Etruscan Column and Steele's L. become a single character). A few of the songs and parts of the original manuscript have been repeated and slightly reshuffled in order to give dramatic form and coherence (material from the last page of the manuscript has been used in several places so that references to Blake's illuminated printing become a theme through repetition).

The stage is unadorned and the characters are disposed as if they were in a drawing room. There are a few entrances and exits but the scene is essentially unchanging. Musicians with their instruments (a piano and a flute) are included among the actors on stage and the music, for the most part, is excellent, enhancing the lively, period atmosphere of the production. The characters are costumed but not elaborately in period dress and, although some props are used, these too are minimal. More might have been done to identify the individual characters with the costuming and mannerisms to mark them as types since Blake, having given each a stock name, clearly intends this. But it is clear that the show must depend almost entirely on the talk and the songs.

Having accepted Blake's words as the focus, the adapter gives this production a good deal of life despite the inherent shortcomings of Blake's manuscript. The film's flaws as drama are primarily Blake's flaws as a dramatist. Perhaps he was writing, as Martha W. England has suggested, with the chaotic virtuosity of Samuel Foote's comic reviews of current events and popular or notorious personalities in his mind. This would account for the loose structure and lack of dramatic continuity in the piece as well as the topical nature of its satire. The film, despite its high spirits, suffers from these things and is at times somewhat confusing and
lifeless because of them. The repartee, interesting to a Blakean, is not sufficiently interesting for a general audience. The deficiencies of the unfinished manuscript are ultimately impossible to fully overcome.

Much of what might have been obscure in the text, however, has been made clear on the stage. A successful effort is made to render the atmosphere of the late eighteenth century London of this group of ambitious young men and women with all their pretensions to better society (whether the society of better drawing rooms or that of better artists than those who governed the Royal Academy). The acting is amateur and this has its drawbacks. But it also has the value of matching the youthful spirit of Blake's own work and the enthusiasm of his young characters. The energy, briskness, vulgarity, and adolescent critical irony of the original is well conveyed. We get something of Blake's own curious ambivalence toward success, both social and artistic. Miss Grittin is nicely done up like a Reynolds or Romney portrait of a fashionable lady. This makes an interesting tension between the obvious satire of this type, on one hand, and the equally obvious attraction she exerts on Blakean Quid, on the other, bringing out Blake's ambivalence toward sexual and artistic success very adroitly. The philosophers, in their close puppy-like grouping, nicely convey a touchy adolescent violence of emotion and expression mingled with the almost physical need for close contact with others, another characteristically Blakean problem. Blake's youthful cockney wit is occasionally shown to advantage and all of this works to give the audience a Blake that is not the common property of the public, which is probably the best thing about An Island in the Moon. Of course, it also contains many of the preoccupations of the maturer Blake but, at first sight, in an un-Blakean setting. An Island in the Moon adds a dimension to Blake despite its shortcomings as art, dramatic or otherwise. Young Blake comes across as a brash, bloodminded fellow, who could be self-critical while lambasting everyone else. He manages to spread his own defects among the characters, ridiculing his own pretensions along with those of his society. This self-implication is at the core of Blake's art; Blake is never detached from his time or scene, even when he is railing against it.

On the negative side, frequently the lyrics are poorly presented. Sometimes the sound equipment is inadequate to pick up the singing but often the singing is simply too weak to be heard over the musical accompaniment. In most cases, it does not adequately show off the lyrics (especially in the case of "Holy Thursday"). Part of the problem is a natural consequence of taping before a live audience. Still, Blake's lyrics are of greatest interest here and they are hard to understand, even when the hearer already is quite familiar with them.

Despite its defects this production provides a ready way for the student into Blake's world. As a piece of drama, however, it is less appealing, somewhat amateurish and lacking in compelling action.
NEWSLETTER

The Blake Society
AT ST. JAMES, PICCADILLY

As one of the speakers remarked on the evening of the inauguration of the Blake Society, poor William Blake's shade must be contemplating rather ruefully the formation of a Society to his honor within the portals of a church of the authorized Church of England (and the Society's future plans include a "Blake" stained-glass window). He need not fear, however, since the place of his baptism is now opened up to reveal the infinite which was hid. Under the enthusiastic arts management of Peter Pelz, St. James' church has become home for a wide variety of activities and interests extending far beyond Blake to cover current theology, sociology, and politics (Norman Tebbit, the British Cabinet's Dracula lookalike/thinkalike, was a recent speaker). St. James' is looking to its heritage, and it is natural that it should recognize Blake as one of its most celebrated alumni.

At the Inaugural Event held in May 1986 there were two main lectures held over the three days, one by Bishop John Taylor on "Blake's God" and one by Professor David Erdman on "Blake the Satirist," but other activities included two plays by Oliver Parker in addition to readings, musical settings, and films. The inaugural evening itself was something of a revelation with the whole of the ground floor of the church being packed out with enthusiasts of all ages and showing, once again, that interest in Blake extends far beyond the world of scholarship and the academy.

The Blake Society hopes to commission and promote new art, music, and drama inspired by Blake as well as to publish, in conjunction with Essex University, an annual lecture. The Society is already busy planning events for the autumn of 1986 and has Northrop Frye, Stanley Gardner, and Morton Paley lined up to lecture in 1987.

Naturally the Blake Society would welcome financial contributions to support its various programs and £15 has been suggested as an annual subscription (British taxpayers should write to request a deed of covenant form to increase the sum that this Registered Charity actually receives). The Society stresses, however, that payment of the subscription is purely for those who can afford it and should not bar anyone from attending and contributing to the Society's events.

If the opening events are anything to go by, the Blake Society at St. James' should be a lively umbrella organization for both the scholarly and the popular interest in Blake, and it is the latter which might prove more significant in the long run.

The address from which to obtain further details and a deed of covenant form is: The Blake Society at St. James', 197 Piccadilly, London, WIV 9LF, tel. 01 734 4511. [David Worrall, St. Mary's College, England].

NEW BEINECKE FELLOWSHIPS

The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, will offer in 1987–88 a number of visiting fellowships, to enable scholars engaged in postdoctoral or equivalent research to visit New Haven to make use of the collections. The grants will support travel to and from New Haven and a stipend for housing and meals for the term of the fellowship, which will normally be for one or two months. Deadline for applications will be 1st February 1987, with announcement of the awards by May 1987. For information write to the Director, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 1603A Yale Station, New Haven, CT 06520.

DESIGNER BLAKE

Mary Lynn Johnson, University of Iowa, recently spotted the Blake label in a line of clothes—"fiber quality . . . dubious," "mostly . . . frumpy styles"—on the racks at Younkers department store, headquartered in Des Moines. We reproduce the label here.