



*Blake*

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY  
VOLUME 23 NUMBER 1 SUMMER 1989

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# Blake

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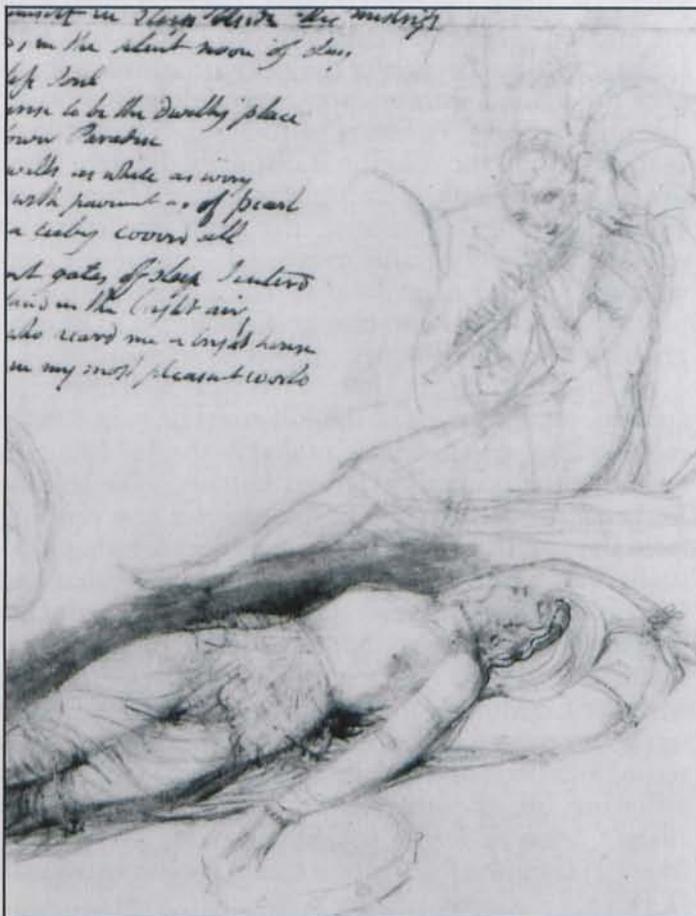
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# Blake in the Marketplace, 1988

BY ROBERT N. ESSICK

In my last sales review (*Blake* 22 [1988]: 4), I promised a report in the next installment on the Blake treasures to be sold from the Doheny Memorial Library. That auction has been postponed by Christie's until February 1989, and thus I will make the same promise once again. As if in compensation, the marketplace brought forth a number of important works, including two illuminated books and four individual relief-etchings (illus. 1-3). For the first time in many years, a Blake manuscript came to market (illus. 4). Only one significant separate plate — if that category can be extended to include a glass goblet — changed hands (illus. 5). For the second year in a row, no Blake drawings or paintings were sold (but see the first item under "RICHMOND" for an intriguing suggestion). In May, Quaritch issued a catalogue of "The English Romantics" that included the largest selection seen in many years of volumes containing plates by or after Blake, most from the collection of Lord Clark of Saltwood. The Blake Circle was as active as ever, with a new record set for a painting by Fuseli (illus. 9).

The 1988 Blake market produced a few economic surprises. In November, copy BB of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* — the only extant copy to include all the poems — failed to sell at a New York auction. Anyone who thought this a sign of a steep downturn in the Blake market would have been disabused exactly one month later by the sale in London of a single print, "A Poison Tree," for over \$55,000, a new record for a relief etching by Blake. If this roller coaster means anything, other than the unpredictability of auctions, it suggests that the lack of color in copy BB, hand tinted in black and gray only, and the rather optimistic estimate printed in the catalogue, may have put off most collectors and dealers. On the other hand, the rich color printing of "A Poison Tree," displayed in a color reproduction in the catalogue, and the very conservative estimate seem to have boosted its marketability. One other factor may have been significant: BB was a well-known copy and had been on the market in recent years, whereas "A Poison Tree" was a sudden and unexpected recovery from the limbo of the "untraced."

The 1987 sales review included brief mention of a newly discovered impression of *Little Tom the Sailor*, Blake's only broadside. Thanks to a full-size color reproduction kindly supplied by Andrew Edmunds, I can now report that the hand tinting is striking and in all prob-

ability by Blake. The brown ink of the text and designs is complemented by the autumnal tones added to the lower design, with a hint of a sunrise or sunset in the sky. The same palette is continued in the upper design, with a slate-blue sky and a brick-red cloud on the upper left. The brushwork shows Blake's usual dry delicacy; faces are detailed with pen (or a very small brush) and black ink. This impression, on wove paper 56 x 19.3 cm. without watermark, is the finest I have ever seen. It was sold in June 1988 by Edmunds and the Artemis Group of London to the same American private collector who now also owns *America* copy R (See *Blake* 21 [1988]: 138-42) and the "Poison Tree" reported here.

Two further events deserve notice. On 29 November, Christie's in London sold as lot 74 an impression of *There is No Natural Religion* pl. a9 (proposition VI), printed in brown and hand colored. The reproduction in the auction catalogue made Jenijoy La Belle and Tom Lange suspicious because of the awkward conventionality of the figure's redrawn face. Several details associate this print with W. Pickering's little-known facsimile of 1886, although the coloring is distinctly different from the published book. According to David Llewellyn of Christie's Print Department, the print was returned after its purchaser became convinced — apparently convincing Christie's as well — that it is a nineteenth-century facsimile with hand tinting. Christie's is to be congratulated for handling this matter so responsibly.

On 9 June, Swann Galleries in New York offered at auction, lot 24, a copy of the *Job* engravings in a fancy calf binding, described as "probably the 1874 edition issued by the printer[?] Herbert Linnell." The volume fetched only \$1100 — a great bargain for any printing from the original plates, but rather pricey for what it actually was, a copy of the 1902 Dent facsimile that had languished for several years at Zeitlin & Ver Brugge of Los Angeles. This copy next popped up in a September catalogue issued by the Nineteenth Century Shop, item 41, with the facsimile properly identified. The description was accompanied by a price of \$1800 (needless to say, a record for a book that usually brings about \$150) and the following bit of puffery: "This striking facsimile of Blake's *Book of Job* is indistinguishable [at least by Swann?] from the first edition except for the watermark 'T H SAU'." *Caveat emptor!*

The year of all sales and catalogues in the following lists is 1988 unless noted otherwise. The auction houses listed in the *Abbreviations* add their purchaser's surcharge to the hammer price in their price lists. These net amounts are given here, following the official price lists. Several late 1988 auctions, for which price lists are not yet available, will appear in the 1989 review. Copy designations and plate numbers for the illuminated books follow G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1977), hereafter cited as *BB* followed by the page numbers.

I am grateful for help in compiling this review to David Bindman, Chris Coover of Christie's, Detlef Dörrbecker, Ruth Fine, Richard Godfrey, Marsha Malinowski, and Henry Wemyss (the last three of Sotheby's), Alexander Gourlay, Richard Lanmon of the Corning Museum of Glass, Dr. Eckhard Schaar of the Hamburg Kunsthalle, Irena Zdanowicz of the National Gallery of Victoria, and especially Thomas Lange.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

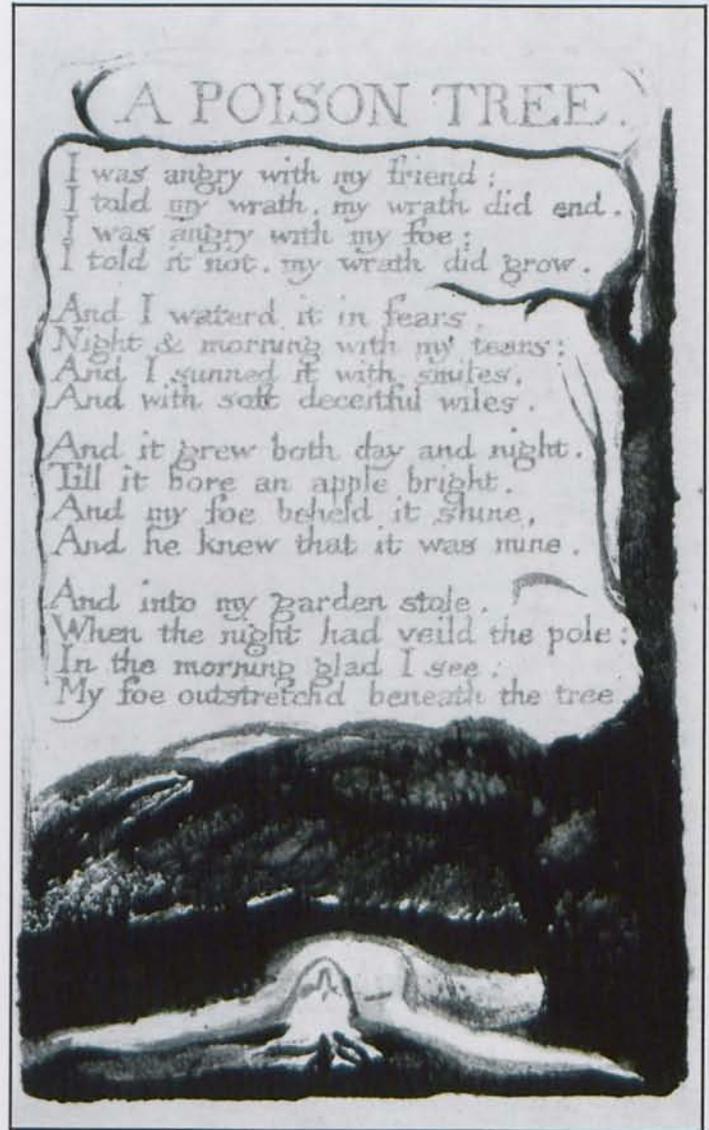
BBA cat.	Bloomsbury Book Auctions, London catalogue or sales list issued by a dealer (usually followed by a number or letter designation) or auction house (followed by the day and month of sale)
CL	Christie, Manson & Woods, Ltd., London
CNY illus.	Christie, Manson & Woods, New York the item or part thereof is reproduced in the catalogue
pl(s).	plate(s)
SL	Sotheby's London
SNY	Sotheby's New York
st.	state of an engraving, etching, or lithograph
Swann	Swann Galleries, Inc., auctioneers, New York
#	auction lot or catalogue item number

#### ILLUMINATED BOOKS

*America*, pl. 1 (frontispiece) only. Relief and white-line etching printed in dark green ink, 23.4 x 16.9 cm. on sheet 25.3 x 18.5 cm. Listed in *BB* 107, the last of three entries for separate impressions of pl. 1. Sold Dec. 1987 by Garton & Cooke, the London print dealer, to the Hamburg Kunsthalle, West Germany. Illus. in color in Raymond Lister, *Paintings by Blake* (1986), pl. 9.

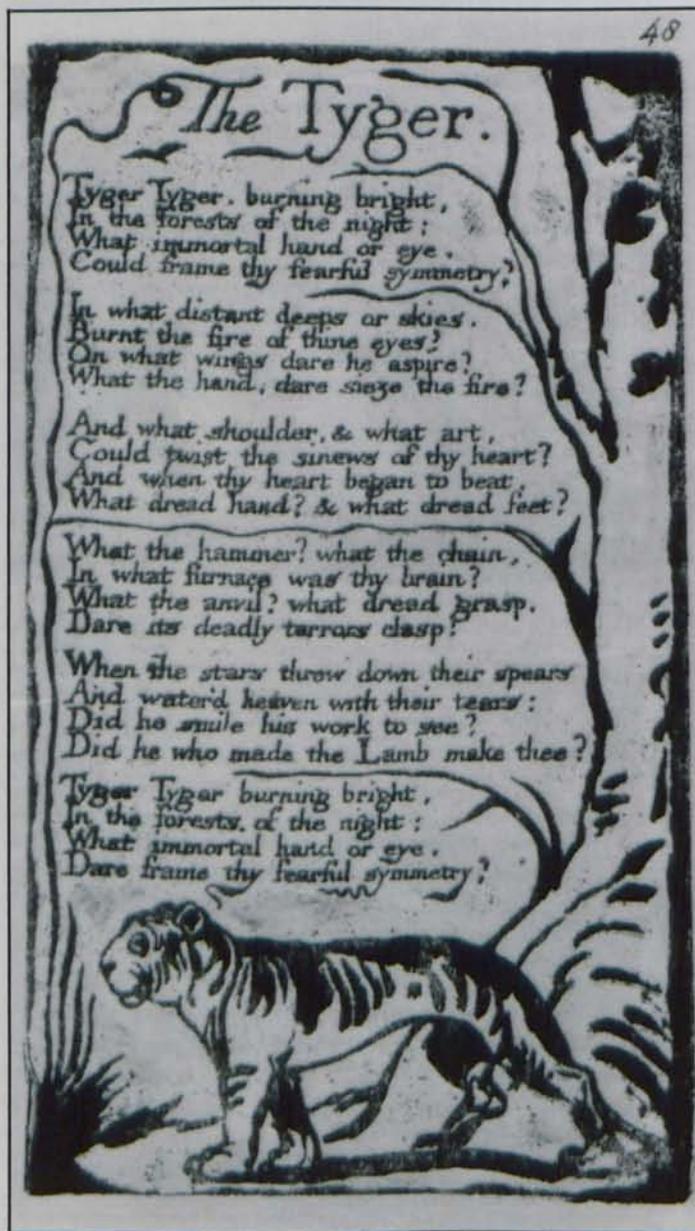
*America*, pl. 7 only. Posthumous impression in pale brick red; not listed in *BB*. Sold April by Garton & Cooke to a private client for an undisclosed price. Previously offered SL, 29 June 1987, #314 (not sold at £5000). For illus., see *Blake* 22 (1988): 6.

"A Poison Tree" from *Songs of Experience*. Relief etching, color-printed. SL, 1 December, #177, illus. color (£30,800 on an estimate of £5000–6000 to Libby Howie for a private client). See illus. 1.



1. Blake. "A Poison Tree" from *Songs of Experience*. Relief etching, 11.1 x 6.8 cm. on wove paper. Text printed in golden-brown ink with the design color printed in blue, pink, dark green, and brick red, with touches of hand tinting in blue, brick red, and black on the figure. Probably the previously untraced impression from copy G, disbound and dispersed between 1877 and 1904. See illus. 3 for another plate from this early color-printed copy, probably produced in 1794 along with copies F (*Experience* section only) and H. Photo courtesy of Sotheby's London.

*Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, copy BB. 55 pls. on 55 leaves, printed in black and hand tinted in black and gray washes. The only copy printed by Blake containing "A Divine Image." CNY, 1 Nov., #211, sold the "Property of Randolph Schlegel, Ltd.," 4 pls. illus. (not sold; estimate \$200,000–250,000). Now returned to the collection of Justin G. Schiller, New York. See illus. 2.



2. Blake. "The Tyger" from copy BB of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. Relief etching, 11 x 6.3 cm., printed in black ink, hand-tinted with black wash and numbered by Blake "48" in black ink, upper right. For other illus. and description, see *Blake* 15 (1981): 4–5. Photo courtesy of Christie's New York.

*Songs of Innocence*, copy X. 14 pls. on 7 leaves, sheet size approx. 18.6 x 13.5 cm. Relief etchings with white-line work and hand coloring. Garton & Co., May cat., #1, "The Little Girl Found" (second pl.), "The Little Boy lost," "The Little Boy found," and "The Lamb" (second pl.) illus. ("price on application"). Previously offered SL, 27 June 1986, #746 (not sold). Acquired fall 1988 by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia, with the assistance of a grant from the Felton Bequest. For illus., see *Blake* 21 (1987): 6, 8–10.

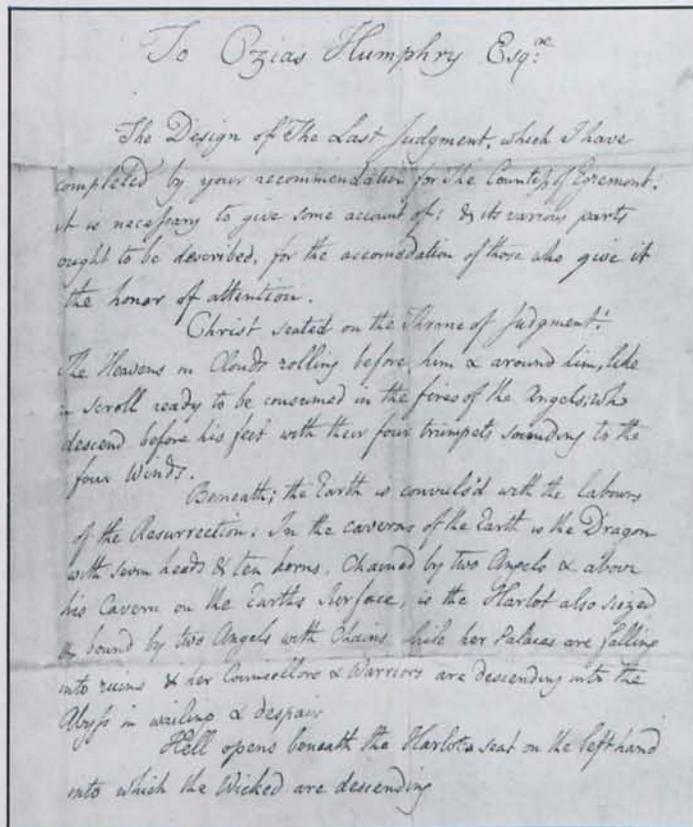


3. Blake. "Thy Fly" from *Songs of Experience*. Relief etching, 11.9 x 7.2 cm. on sheet of wove paper 18.1 x 11.2 cm. with two stab holes, 4.5 cm. apart, along the left margin. Text printed in golden-brown ink with the relief-etched surfaces of the design color printed in brown, black, blue-green, and dark red, with hand tinting in blue, pink, olive green, and brown. Probably from copy G (see illus. 1 and BB 415, item Bvii). Essick collection. For color illus., see Raymond Lister, *Infernal Methods* (1975), pl. III, and Lister, *Paintings of Blake* (1986), pl. 15.

"The Fly" from *Songs of Experience*. Purchased March by R. Essick from the London dealer Robin Garton. See illus. 3.

#### MANUSCRIPTS

Blake's letter of 18 Jan. 1808 to Ozias Humphry. SNY, 14 Dec., #58, with Humphry's letter of 15 June 1806 to Blake, both from the collection of Roger W. Barrett, p. 1 of Blake's letter illus. (\$24,600 to a dealer, probably for a private client). The new owner has yet to respond to my letter passed on by Sotheby's. See illus. 4.



4. Blake. Letter of 18 Jan. 1808 to Ozias Humphry, page 1 of 4. This is probably the earliest of three extant holograph manuscripts in which Blake describes his *Last Judgment* water color now at Petworth House. Justin Schiller, who kindly inspected this letter for me, reports that the writing has a very flat appearance, much as in a lithograph. Sotheby's experts explained that this was the result of Blake having used lithographic ink rather than one of the usual writing inks. This startling assertion deserves investigation. Photo courtesy of Sotheby's New York.

#### SEPARATE PLATES & PLATES IN SERIES, INCLUDING PLATES EXTRACTED FROM PRINTED BOOKS

Allen, *New and Improved History of England*, 1798, Blake's 5 pls. from. Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., #2-5, all illus. (£1200 the set or £350 each).

Blair, *Grave*, Blake's pls. from. Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., #10, pls. from the 1808 quarto (£35 each), pls. on laid India, 1813 (£25 each), "Death's Door" illus. These pls. on laid India are true 1813 3rd st. impressions, not the 1870 5th st. created in imitation of the 1813 st. Apparently, after Ackermann acquired the copperplates from Mrs. Cromek and altered the imprints, he pulled a few impressions on laid India. These may have been sold (if sold at all) as separate pls. in portfolio, for I have yet to find a copy of *The Grave* with India paper impressions of the pls. after Blake's designs.

Dante engravings. SL, 27 June, #168, complete set of 7 pls. on laid India, one support sheet with part of a J. Whatman Turkey Mill watermark (and thus the first printing?), some foxing, 3 pls. illus. (£24,000—the third time in the last few years that the Dante pls. have sold for more than £20,000 at auction).

"Felpham Rummer," with inscriptions and a design attributed to Blake. Pickering & Chatto, May cat. 668, #188, illus. (\$45,000); previously offered March 1983 cat. 651, #1, illus. color (same price). Acquired Oct. by the Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York, the gift of Arthur A. Houghton. See illus. 5.

Fuseli, *Lectures on Painting*, 1801, Blake's pl. from. Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., #9, illus. (£125).

"Hawker, Rev. Robert," engraving, 1820. SL, 27 Oct., #19, with "Rev. John Caspar Lavater," 3rd st., and Blake's six pls. from Hayley, *Life . . . of Cowper* (not sold).

Job engravings. Sims, Reed, April cat. 92, #9, complete set of published "Proof" impressions on French paper, recased in original boards, boxed, title-page and pl. 13 illus., showing considerable foxing not noted in the cat. entry (£20,000). Garton & Co., May cat., #3, complete set, regular issue on Whatman paper in a binding of "about 1830," pls. 1, 4, 19, 21 illus. ("price on application"). CL, 7 Dec., #122, apparently the regular issue of 1826 on Whatman paper, original wrappers bound in, Thomas Gaisford's copy with his bookplate, pl. 6 illus. (Finch, £15,400).

Malkin, *Father's Memoirs of His Child*, 1806, frontispiece from, Cromek after Blake. Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., #6, proof before all letters on laid sheet 27.2 x 20.1 cm. (larger than the leaves in uncut copies of the book), illus. (£175). Apparently several proofs of this sort were pulled, for this print is identical in state and sheet size to one in the Huntington Library.



5. "The Felpham Rummer." Lead glass goblet, 13.9 cm. high, with inscriptions and a winged figure (shown here) attributed to Blake. This reproduction is based on the clearest photograph yet made of the angel/devil. The glass experts at the Corning Museum have determined that this figure, previously thought to be etched, was cut in stipple with a diamond-pointed tool. For other illus. and discussion, see *Blake* 18 (1984): cover, 72, 79-83, 94-99. An essay on the rummer is forthcoming in the *Journal of Glass Studies*. Photo courtesy of the Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York.

*Novelist's Magazine*, Blake's first pl. from ("Don Quixote and a Barber's Basin"), 1782. Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., #8, 2nd st., illus. (£75).

Virgil wood engravings. Garton & Co., May cat., #2, the 17 cuts from the 1821 ed. sold separately, including duplicates, all illus. (£200–500 each). SL, 27 June, #167, the 17 cuts on laid India, Linnell impressions, some foxing, the oblong octavo vol. inscribed by J. C. Hook, "Seventeen woodcuts by Blake given to me by John Linnell Senr," 2 cuts illus. (Caroline Bullard, £5720).

#### BOOKS WITH ENGRAVINGS BY & AFTER BLAKE

Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, 1791. BBA, 22 Sept., #281, 2 vols., rubbed (Axe, £27).

Blair, *Grave*. BBA, 14 Jan., #191, 1813 "folio" (i.e., the 1870 folio?), "original cloth," worn, with *Works of Blake*, 1876 (R. Clark, £209). Dawson's Book Shop, Feb. Los Angeles Book Fair, 1808 quarto, imprint on engraved title page trimmed off, rebaked (\$1000). Robert Clark, April cat. 12, #189, 1813 quarto sheets reissued in a Victorian blue cloth binding, probably by J. C. Hotten c. 1870, some foxing (£280). Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #23, 1808 quarto, slight foxing (\$850). M & S Rare Books, Oct. cat. 47, #31, New York 1847 ed., foxed, original cloth (\$250). D. & E. Lake, Oct. cat., #24, 1808 quarto, half morocco (\$1150). James O'Neil, Nov. cat. 880, #7, 1813 quarto, rebound, margins foxed (\$400). Swann, 21 Nov., #27, 1870 folio (\$220). SL, 1 Dec., #28, 1808 "folio" (actually the quarto?), spotted, with 3 other vols. related to Blake (£190). CL, 7 Dec., #121, 1808 quarto (not sold).

Cumberland, *Outlines from the Antients*, 1829. Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #25, some foxing and water staining (\$450).

Cumberland, *Thoughts on Outline*, 1796. Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #24, uncut (\$900).

Darwin, *Botanic Garden*. Frew Mackenzie, Feb. cat. 10, #41, Part I 1791, Part II 1789, contemporary calf (£385). Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., #7, Part I 1791, Part II 1794, but with "Tornado" after Fuseli, "Tornado" and "Fertilization of Egypt" illus. (£500).

Emlyn, *Proposition for a New Order in Architecture*, 1797. BBA, 8 Sept., #230, spotted, worn, covers almost detached (Pagan, £220). All eds. of this title are scarce.

Enfield, *Speaker*. James Burmester, May cat. 7, #85, 1795 ed., contemporary sheep rebaked, rubbed (£40). Simon Finch, May cat. 3, #16, 1785 ed., contemporary calf rebaked, few stains (£85). Bluestem Books, June private offer, 1797 ed., 2nd st. of the pl. by Blake, contemporary calf (\$40— not bad for the rare final ed. with Blake's very worn, but reworked, pl.).

Flaxman, Hesiod designs, 1817. Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #26, lacking engraved half-title, some foxing (\$250). Swann, 15 Sept., #121, foxed, worn (\$165).

Fuseli, *Lectures on Painting*, 1801. Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #27 (\$375).

Gay, *Fables*, 1793. Sotheby's house sale, Mount Juliet, Ireland, 21 Oct. 1987, #284, pls. spotted (IR£260). BBA, 14 Jan., #108, 2 vols. in 1, some spotting, rebaked (Abbey Antiquarian Books, £77). Hobbyhorse Books, June cat. 11, #111, 2 vols., fancy binding, some browning (\$350). Wm. Reese Co., Oct. cat. 69, #60, 2 vols. rebaked, worn, soiled, foxed (\$100). Swann, 21 Nov., #130, fancy binding (\$385).

G. Hamilton, *Gallery of British Artists*, 1839. BBA, 12 May, #267, 4 vols., some foxing (Maggs for R. Essick, £88). See illus. 6.

Hayley, *Life of Romney*, 1809. Howes, Oct. cat. 240, #539, rebaked (£150).

Hayley, *Life . . . of William Cowper*, 1803–1804. Bernard Shapero, Feb. cat. 1, #68, apparently 1st ed., slightly spotted (£185). Frew Mackenzie, Sept. cat. 13, #70, apparently 1st ed. (£195). Howes, Oct. cat. 240, #229, 1st ed., 4 vols. in 3 (£250). SL, 1 Nov., #813, apparently 1st ed., rubbed (not sold).

Hayley, *Triumphs of Temper*, 1803. Larkhill Books, Jan. cat. 1, #15, small paper (£160). G. W. Stuart, Jan. cat. 15, #74, "large [paper?] copy," worn, rebaked (\$395); same copy, Nov. cat. 19, #61 (same price). Phillip Pirages, May cat., #423, apparently small paper, modern morocco, 1 pl. illus. (\$750); same copy and price, Nov. cat. 14, #162.

Hogarth, *Works*. Christie's, Doheny Sale, Camarillo, California, 2 Feb., #727, a Boydell issue of remainder impressions, no indication as to whether or not Blake's pl. is present (Gunter Collman, \$1980). SL, 27 Oct., #209, Baldwin and Craddock issue of c. 1840, some foxing (£638). CL, 8 Nov., #15, Baldwin and Craddock issue of c. 1828–1840, minor defects (not sold).

Hunter, *Historical Journal*, 1793. Blackwell's, Feb. cat. A88, #1169, quarto, title page "imprint slightly shaved," but "an exceptional copy" (£3900—an exceptional price). SL, 13 Jan., #97, quarto, few stains and repairs, Blake's pl. illus. (Marshall, £1485). CL, 26 Oct., #100, quarto, rebaked, Blake's pl. illus. (McCormick, £2090).

Josephus, *Works*. Sterling Books, Feb. cat. 65, #347, apparently the final issue listed in *BB* (£75). Suzanne Berglas Books, Glendale Book Fair, Oct., second issue, rebaked (\$675). BBA, 1 Dec., #247, lacking some pls., with 16 other vols. not described (Aoike, £66).



BLAKE.

## DEATH'S DOOR.

THIS composition is the work of an artist whose productions, though often disfigured by conceit and extravagance, and sometimes unintelligible, occasionally present much grace, beauty, and originality. It is one of a series of \* inventions, \* as Blake called them, illustrative of Robert Blair's poem, "The Grave," which were purchased of the artist by Cromek, whose admiration of their excellence induced him to place them in the hands of Louis Schiavonetti, by whom they were ably transferred to copper; and they were introduced to the world in a splendid edition of the poem accompanied by some observations on their design and execution from the pen of Fuseli, whose almost unqualified praise, stamped with the assent of the most distinguished professors and judges of Art, renders all farther commendation superfluous.

The subject is taken from the concluding lines of the poem:

\* 'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night;  
We make the grave our bed and then are gone.  
Thus at the shut of eve, the weary bird  
Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake  
Covers down, and dozes till the dawn of day;  
Then claps his well-leg'd wing'd and bears away. \*

In the explanation, which the symbolic nature of these compositions rendered necessary, we find the following description of Death's Door. "The Door opening that seems to make utter darkness visible; Age, on crutches, hurried by a tempest into it. Above is the renovated man seated in light and glory."

181.

6. "Death's Door." Line etching/engraving, 14.5 x 8.6 cm., by "Normand fils" after Blake's design for Robert Blair's *The Grave*. Published in G. Hamilton, *Gallery of British Artists* (Paris, 1839), vol. 1. Essick collection. BB 569 lists only the issue of 1831-1832. The first sentence of the description on the facing page expresses typical nineteenth-century attitudes towards Blake's art.

Kimpton, *History of the Bible*, c. 1781. Francis Edwards, spring cat. 1110, #230, a variant (earlier?) issue with a title page that differs considerably from the one transcribed in BB, no. 478 (£75). G. Ingle James, the lucky new owner of this rare volume, tells me that the plates are in the same states described and reproduced in vol. 2 of Eason and Essick, *William Blake: Book Illustrator*, no. XVIII. David Bindman, Oct. private offer (acquired by R. Essick). This copy includes a mixture of plate states, some with the Kimpton borders and inscriptions,

others with the later Josephus borders but with the "Josephus" inscriptions masked in some cases and scraped off the copper in others. This must be a late issue with the illustrations made up from remainders of Kimpton impressions and new impressions from the much-worn pls. after they had been reworked into their Josephus states. One of Blake's three pls., "The Fugitive Shechemites," has the Josephus inscription removed from the medallion in the top frame. This constitutes a previously unrecorded 3rd (final) st. of the pl.

Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*. SL, 2 Feb., #883, a mixed ed. (1789–1810), 3 vols. in 5, vol. 1 lacking 1 leaf, spotted, worn (Elliott, £55). Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #30, 1789–1798 ed. (\$1250). BBA, 14 July, #6, 1810 ed., lacking some pls., spotted, worn (Elliott, £33). D. & E. Lake, Oct. cat., #97, 1789–1798 ed. (\$950). CL, 16 Nov., #35, the rare 1792 issue (Titles of Oxford, £528).

Malkin, *Father's Memoirs of His Child*, 1806. T. Hannas, Jan. cat. 80, #70, contemporary cloth, uncut, lacking half-title (£250). Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #31, worn (\$375).

Nicholson, *Introduction to Natural Philosophy*, 1782. Marlborough Rare Books, Jan. cat. 37, #72, 2 vols., rebacked (£350); same copy, same price, Aug. cat. 129, #111.

*Novelist's Magazine*. SL, 15 Jan., #700, 19 vols., 1780–1788, apparently including all vols. with pls. by Blake, worn, some dampstaining (Saxon, £286).

Ritson, *Select Collection of English Songs*, 1783. James Burmester, May cat. 7, #261, 3 vols. bound in 2, rebacked (£300). Howes, Oct. cat. 240, #403, 3 vols., some staining and foxing (£150).

Salzmann, *Elements of Morality*, 1792. Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #32 (\$1250).

Salzmann, *Gymnastics for Youth*, 1800. Daniel Hirsch, Feb. Los Angeles Book Fair (\$1200).

Shakespeare, *Plays*, 1805. Howes, Oct. cat. 240, #142, 10 vol. (large paper) issue, extra-illus. with c. 175 additional pls., slight foxing (£1250).

Stedman, *Narrative*. Frew Mackenzie, Feb. cat. 10, 1813 ed., 2 vols., uncut in recent calf-backed marbled boards, few marginal tears (£600). CL, 13 April, #116, 1813 ed., 2 vols., 80 pls. hand colored, modern half-calf (Walford, £385). SL, 25 May, #897, 1796 ed., spotted, rebacked, rubbed (Lovejoy, £418).

Stuart and Revett, *Antiquities of Athens*. Sims, Reed & Fogg, Feb. cat. 90, #249, 5 vols., 1762–1830, new bindings (£5750). Quaritch, March cat. 1084, #92, 4 vols., 1762–1816, second issue (\$8500). CL, 29 Sept., #383, 5 vols., 1762–1830, some spotting, 1 pl. lacking in supplement vol. (Smidof, £2860); #384, 4 vols., 1762–1816, torn, browned (Arc, £2420). Charles Wood, Oct. cat. 65, #407, 5 vols., 1762–1830 (\$7500). CL, 26 Oct., #40, 3 vols., 1762–1794, lightly soiled, rubbed (Rainer, £1980); #265, 4 vols., 1762–1816, soiled, worn (Wattis, £3080).

Varley, *Treatise on Zodiacal Physiognomy*, 1828. Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #33, uncut, washed and with marginal repairs, modern sewing of gatherings, unbound in a box (\$3750). SL, 1 Nov., #812, slight staining, contemporary linen-backed boards (£220).

Virgil, *Blake's Wood Engravings for Thornton's Virgil*, restrikes from the original blocks, 1977. BBA, 4 Feb., #314, no. 7 of 150 copies, loose as issued in original cloth box (Deighton, Bell, £242); same copy, Deighton, Bell, April cat. 242, #35a, 2 cuts illus. (£400).

Virgil, *Pastorals*, 1821. SL, 3 Dec. 1987, #34, vol. 1 only, original sheep worn, covers loose, cuts 2–5 illus. (not sold, or perhaps withdrawn, on an estimate of £1750–2250). Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #34, 2 vols., modern morocco, from the collection of Lord Clark; vol. 1 p. 18, facing 4 cuts, and spine of vol. 2 illus. color (\$10,000—a record asking price). Marlborough Rare Books, May cat. 127, #94, vol. 1 only, original sheep worn in a fitted case, “Blake wood-engravings clean and fine impressions, except the last” (£3800).

Whitaker, *Seraph*, c. 1825–28. Stuart Bennett, Jan. cat., #18, 2 vols. in 1, “first edition” (but described as “Printed for Jones & Co.,” indicating the 3rd ed. listed in *BB*), rubbed (£375—a record asking price?).

*Wit's Magazine*, 1784–1785. W. & V. Dailey, July Blake list, #28, with the 1st version of the 1st pl., contemporary mottled calf (\$1500). Maggs Bros., July cat. 1089, #12, 2 vols. (Jan. 1784–May 1785), with the 2nd version of the 1st pl., early twentieth-century binding, 1 pl. illus. (£625).

Wollstonecraft, *Original Stories from Real Life*, 1791. Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #35, contemporary calf (\$1500).

Young, *Night Thoughts*, 1797. CL, 25 May, #174, with explanation leaf, “a few margins shaved, a few imprints cropped,” half-calf, rubbed, title page to Night the Third illus. (Rothman, £3850—a record auction price for an uncolored copy). BBA, 30 June, #517, lacking explanation leaf, trimmed, slight soiling, “original cloth”(?), worn (Sims & Reed, £2090). CL, 29 Nov., #75, “explanation [leaf] detached,” some foxing, with W. B. Scott's etching (1881) of Blake's portrait laid in, title to Night the Third illus. (£1540). CL, 7 Dec., #120, “final leaf of explanation watermarked 1833,” title to Night the First illus. (Traylen, £3080). John E. Grant has suggested to me in correspondence that some dealer, perhaps a member of the Edwards family, had a remainder stock of the *Night Thoughts* in 1833 or later, but an insufficiency of “Explanation” leaves, and thus had it reprinted. This would seem to be the best explanation for the 1833 watermark.

### UNIQUE (OR AT LEAST BIZARRE) BLAKEANA

Bulwer Lytton, E. *Conversations with an Ambitious Student in Ill-Health: with Other Pieces* (New York: J. and J. Harper, 1832). Ximenes Rare Books, May cat. 81, #35, half green morocco, bit rubbed (\$75). It has not been previously noted that this vol. contains (26–27) the first book publication of Bulwer Lytton's discussion of Blake's *Night Thoughts* illustrations. Bulwer Lytton's comments first appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine*, 29 (Dec. 1830): 511–19, and later in *The Student* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1853) 2: 152–55. See *BB*, no. 1313A–B.

Fremondière, Yves de la. A medal dedicated to Blake. Acquired March by R. Essick from Numismatic Services, London. See illus. 7.



7. Yves de la Fremondière. A silvered bronze medal, 9.5 cm. diameter, with a near-profile of Blake on one side (shown here) with his name and dates and a list in French of his illuminated books; and on the other side the "Ancient of Days" and an inscription, "Le chemin de l'exces mene au palais de la sagesse—(les livres prophetiques)." No. 4 of an edition of 100 cast in 1972. Essick collection.

Muir, W. Facsimiles of *Songs of Innocence* (1884) and *Songs of Experience* (1885). Ken Spelman, May cat. 13, #1, bound in 1 vol., parchment backed gray paper wrappers (£650). Inserted is a letter from Muir, quoted as follows in this cat.: "at long last you have herewith the copy of Songs Innocence. I can give you no more than this one because I have none and even this was imperfect so I have made it complete by hand. This is the cause of the delay.

The plates done by hand are the frontispiece, the Lamb, Infant Boy [sic], Spring, and the Ancient Bard, so you can see I have had some work on this book." Thus, this would seem to be a unique late issue, with 5 pls. facsimiled by hand without the usual lithographic base image.

Ottley, W. Y. *A Catalogue of . . . Italian Pictures, . . . Collected . . . by . . . William Young Ottley*, auction cat., Christie and Manson, 4 March 1837. Quaritch, Oct. cat. 1095, #182, from the collection of Lord Clark (\$375). This 1837 cat. includes, as lot 52\*, "Blake The happy family." I can find no other record of such a work by Blake, nor any other record of Ottley's ownership of any picture by Blake. Ottley was introduced to Blake by Linnell in April 1827, acquired a copy of *Jerusalem* from Linnell, and it is certainly possible for Ottley to have acquired one of Blake's pictures. While "pictures" in a sale cat. generally means "paintings," it is clear from other lots that some were drawings. Perhaps, if the attribution is correct, this "happy family" was a drawing associated with Blake's *Grave* illustration, "A Family Meeting in Heaven."

Scott, W. B. Galley proofs for the 1876 Burlington Fine Arts Club Blake exhibition catalogue with ink corrections and additions by Scott. Given Oct. to R. Essick by the former son-in-law of a friend of Panda Paley.

"A small oil painting of William Blake's Cottage at Felpham." Sold at auction, Stride of Chichester, 1 July. No other information available.

Smetham, J. His copy of Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of Blake*, 1863, with Smetham's marginal drawings. Acquired Oct. by R. Essick from D. Bindman. For description and illus., see Frances A. Carey, "James Smetham (1821–1889) and Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*," *Blake Newsletter* 8 (1974): 17–25.

### BLAKE'S CIRCLE & FOLLOWERS

*Works are listed under artists' names in the following order: untitled paintings and drawings sold in groups, single paintings and drawings, letters and manuscripts, separate plates, books by (or with plates by or after) the artist.*

#### BARRY, JAMES

*Portrait Head of a Young Lady*. Pencil, 15 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  in., dated 1800. CL, July 12, #142 (not sold).

Attributed to Barry. *River God of the Nile, after the Antique*. Pencil and ink, 10 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 19 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. CL, 15 Nov., #56 (£220).

Seven pls. from *A Series of Etchings*. CL, 17 May, #25, stained (not sold).

"Self Portrait," mezzotint. SL, 1 Dec., #171, illus. (£6380). See illus. 8.



8. James Barry. "Self Portrait." Mezzotint, image 35.3 x 25.3 cm., begun 1802. William Pressly, *Life and Art of Barry* (1981) 279, no. 36, records only three other impressions of this rare print, one of Barry's most direct portrayals of the care-worn melancholy dominating the last years of his life. Photo courtesy of Sotheby's London.

*Letter to the . . . Society for the Encouragement of the Arts*, 1793. Falkner Grierson, June cat. 49, #9, rebound (£75); same copy?, Marlborough Rare Books, Oct. cat. 130, #5 (£90).

#### BASIRE, JAMES

Rogers, *Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings*, 1778. Sims, Reed & Fogg, Feb. cat. 90, #242, uncut (£5750).

#### CALVERT, EDWARD

*Cyrene and Cattle*. Oil, 48.4 x 71.3 cm. CL, 14 Oct., #89, illus. (£770).

"Brook," wood engraving. Garton & Co., May cat., #4, from the *Memoir*, illus. (£1250).

"Chamber Idyll," wood engraving. Garton & Co., May cat., #5, from the *Memoir*, illus. (£2750).

Calvert, S., *Memoir of Edward Calvert*, 1893. Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #128, original cloth (\$5000). SL, 27 June, #169, rebound, "Ploughman" illus. (£3630—probably an auction record).

#### FLAXMAN, JOHN

*Sleeping Youth*. Pen and ink, gray wash, 11.5 x 16.5 cm., perhaps related to the *Pilgrim's Progress* designs. SL, 25 Jan., #134, illus. (£385).

*Studies of Figures Wrestling*. Pencil, 7¾ x 12¼ in., watermark 1802, with 3 pen and ink drawings. CL, 12 July, #68 (not sold).

*Anatomical Studies*, 1833. Swann, 15 Sept., #118, foxed, torn (\$88).

Dante Illustrations, 1807. Swann, 15 Sept., #120, foxed, waterstained (\$132). BBA, 20 Oct., #464, spotted, worn (R. Clark, £49).

*Iliad* Illustrations. Swann, 15 Sept., #122, London, n.d., foxed (\$99); #123, Rome, n.d., with *Odyssey* Illustrations, foxed, worn (\$110); #126, Berlin, n.d., with *Odyssey* Illustrations, crudely rebacked (\$55).

*Keepsake for 1831*. Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #251, vignette title by Flaxman (\$125).

*Lectures on Sculpture*. Dawson Book Service, March cat. 26, 1838 ed., contemporary calf (£140). Marlborough Rare Books, Oct. cat. 130, #21, 1838 ed. (£100). Swann, 15 Sept., #124, 1829 ed., foxed, worn (\$66); #125, 1838 ed. (\$66). Claude Cox, Nov. cat. 69, #272, 1838 ed., original cloth (£75).

*Odyssey* Illustrations, 1793. Quaritch, March cat. 1084, #26, original wrappers with Italian cover label indicating that this 1st ed. was probably sold in Rome by Piroli (\$650).

#### FUSELI, HENRY

*Bertalda Frightened by Appearances*. Oil, 90 x 70 cm. SL, 9 March, #91, illus. color (not sold on an estimate of £10,000–15,000, perhaps because of the pigment decay evident in the illus. Further, this lot immediately followed the sale of John Martin's *The Assuaging of the Waters* for £495,000, a sum that may have thrown the room into temporary bidding shock).

*Cleopatra Receiving the Asp.* Pencil, pen, touches of wash, 21.5 x 30.5 cm., datable to c. 1805–1810. SL, 14 July, #78, illus. (£7150).

*Death of Cordelia.* Oil, 114.5 x 141 cm., a previously unrecorded major painting of c. 1810–1820. SL, 16 Nov., #106, illus. color (£66,000).

*Head of Satan.* Oil, 53 x 33.7 cm., c. 1790. Kate Ganz Ltd., advertisement in *Apollo* 127 (June 1988): 15, illus. color (not priced).

*Perdita, with Ariel Flying on a Bat.* Oil, 65.4 x 51.4 cm., c. 1785. CL, 18 March, #158, illus. (£6820).

*Portrait of Lavinia de Irujo.* Pencil, black chalk, with a verso pencil sketch of a woman leaning on a parapet, 15.5 x 18.5 cm. SL, 14 July, #52, illus. (not sold).

*Satan Starting from the Touch of Ithuriel's Lance.* SL, 13 July, #94, sold "The Property of a Swiss Charitable Institute," illus. color (£770,000, no doubt a record for a painting by Fuseli). See illus. 9.



9. Henry Fuseli. *Satan Starting from the Touch of Ithuriel's Lance.* Oil on canvas, 212.5 x 274.5 cm. This enormous and previously untraced painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1780, when it was harshly criticized by John Williams ("... the most ill looking devil I ever saw painted") and Horace Walpole ("extravagant and ridiculous"). Fifteen years later, Fuseli painted an even larger version of the design (untraced) for his Milton Gallery. A smaller version of 1802 is now in a private collection. Photo courtesy of Sotheby's London.

*Second Allegory of Painting.* Pen and ink over pencil, 30.3 x 12.2 cm., inscribed "Da Fuzely 1777." Woman with a dagger sketched on verso. Kunsthandel Bellinger, Munich, advertisement in *Burlington Magazine* (Nov. 1987): xxix, illus. (not priced).

*Sieglinde, Siegfried's Mother, Roused by the Contest of the Good and Evil Genius about Her Infant Son.* Oil, 71 x 91.5 cm., exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1814. SL, 16 Nov., #108, illus. color (not sold). While the compositions are dissimilar, the subject of this painting, which Fuseli associated with the *Nibelungenlied* but which does not appear in that poem, cannot help reminding one of Blake's 1795 color-printed drawing, *The Good and Evil Angels Struggling for Possession of a Child*. Fuseli is not known to have worked on this subject until 1809, and thus any influence must have been from Blake to Fuseli.

*Standing Figure.* SL, 10 March, #32, illus. color (not sold; estimate too brave at £20,000–30,000). See illus. 10.

"Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 4." Engraving by Thew for the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery. The Prints & the Pauper, winter 1987 cat., p. 9, etched state dated 1793 (\$725).

*Bell's British Theatre, 1791–1793.* Time Portal Books, April private offer, 22 vols. (\$350). Charles Traylen, July cat. 103, #662, 22 vols., "1791–92" (actually 93?), "contemporary half red morocco" (£620). The 22 vols. of 1791–1793 would appear to be the first illustrated ed., published by John Bell. In 1797, George Cawthorn published a new ed., adding more plays and extending the work to 34 vols. All 5 of Fuseli's pls., and 1 of Stothard's, appear in both eds.; the remainder of Stothard's 20 pls. appear only in the second ed. Large paper copies of the Cawthorn ed., such as the one in the Huntington Library, have proofs of the pls., with scratched inscriptions. The prints in the first 22 vols. of these large-paper sets were apparently pulled prior to the 1791–1793 impressions used in the 1st ed.

Bible, pub. Macklin, 1800. Howes, Oct. cat. 240, #531, 6 vols., fancy binding (£550).

Boothby, *Sorrows Sacred to the Memory of Penelope*, 1796. Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #44, fancy binding (\$2000).

Boydell, *American Edition of Boydell's Illustrations . . . of Shakespeare*, c. 1850. Swann, June 23, #40, 95 (of 100) pls., worn, scattered foxing (\$1045 on an estimate of \$200–300).

Boydell, *Collection of Prints . . . Illustrating . . . Shakespeare*, 1803. Wooley and Wallis auction, Salisbury, 11 May, no lot no. reported (£1350).



10. Henry Fuseli. *Standing Figure*. Brown, green, and yellow washes over pencil, 27 x 20 cm., c. 1770–1778. Pencil study of a man on verso. Several classical statues, plus Michelangelo's Naason lunette, have been suggested as sources for this composition, once in the collection of Sir Thomas Lawrence. Photo courtesy of Sotheby's London.

Dragonetti, *Treatise on Virtue and Rewards*, 1769. James Burmester, May cat. 7, #76, lacking half-title, worn (£130).

Gray, *Poems*, pub. Du Roveray, 1800. Marlborough Rare Books, Jan. cat. 37, #42, "excellent copy" (£210); same copy and price, May cat. 127, #104.

Pope, *Rape of the Lock*, 1798. James Burmester, May cat. 7, #240, small paper, pls. foxed (£20). Howes, Oct. cat. 240, #388, apparently small paper, pls. foxed (£28).

Sotheby, *Oberon*, 1805. Cielou Books, fall 1987 cat., #0120, vol. 2 only (of 2), rubbed (£15).

## LINNELL, JOHN

*Crossing the Bridge.* Oil, 77.5 x 108 cm., signed and dated 1877. SL, 13 July, #80, illus. color (£20,900).

*Evening—Shepherds' Amusements.* Oil, 67 x 87 cm., signed and dated 1815. SL, 16 Nov., #89, illus. color (£12,100).

*Found* (shepherds and a lamb in an extensive landscape). Oil, 71 x 99.6 cm., signed and dated 1871. CNY, 26 Oct., #516, illus. color (not sold).

*Meadow: Shepherds with the Flocks in a Field,* by J. Linnell and Elizabeth Ann Linnell. Oil, 35.6 x 45.4 cm., signed and dated 1860. CL, 29 Jan., #66, illus. (£1210).

*Portrait of a Gentleman.* Water color, 28.5 x 18.5 cm., signed and dated 1831. SL, 21 Sept., #52 (not sold).

*Portrait of a Gentleman, perhaps Charles Aders.* Oil, 36.9 x 29.3 cm., signed and dated 1833. CL, 27 May, #139, illus. (£1980). Previously sold CL, 26 April 1985, #105, illus. color (£1296). For illus., see *Blake* 20 (1986): 29.

*Portrait of Rev. John Chin.* Oil, 30 x 22 cm., signed and dated 1816. SL, 26 Oct., #259, illus. (£1430).

*Sandpit.* Oil, 30.5 x 49 cm., signed and dated 1857. SL, 16 Dec. 1987, #46, illus. color (£5060).

*Sheep by a Woodland Road.* Water color, 14 x 21 cm., signed. SL, 17 Nov., #90, illus. (£1100).

*Shepherd and Shepherdess.* Oil, 71 x 91 cm., signed. SL, 28 Sept., #52, illus. (not sold). The small illus. makes me slightly suspicious of the attribution.

*Shepherds.* Water color, 7 x 11¼ in., signed. CL, 15 Nov., #66, illus. color (not sold).

*Sunset—Gleaners.* Oil, 80 x 110 cm., probably painted 1864. SL, 9 March, #85, illus. color (£14,300).

*Tatham's Garden, Alpha Road, at Evening.* Water color, 10.2 x 12.5 cm., signed and dated 1812. Sold CL, 19 Nov. 1985, #83, and listed in my 1985 sales review. Acquired in that year by the Tate Gallery, cat. #T04139. For color illus., see Judy Egerton, *British Watercolours* (London: Tate, 1986), pl. 26.

4 letters to Mr. White discussing frames, 1838 when dated. Phillips auction, London, 16 June, #73 (£75).

## MORTIMER, JOHN HAMILTON

11 pen and ink drawings in faithful imitation of Mortimer's Characters of Shakespeare, dated 1833 on manuscript title page. Marlborough Rare Books, May cat. 127, #70 (£1100).



11. Samuel Palmer. *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel.* Water color and body color with scratching out, arched top, 51 x 37.5 cm. Inscribed lower right, "S. Palmer / 4 Grove Street / Lisson Grove / Marylebone. London 1845." Raymond Lister, *Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of Palmer* (1988) 144, no. 390, dates this work to 1844 and suggests that the inscribed year was the date of sale. He also suggests that the bright star, just left of center at the top, "is probably a symbol of Christ," thereby giving the design a typological iconography. Lister catalogues only one other biblical subject by Palmer between 1837 and 1848. Photo courtesy of Sotheby's London.

*Beatrice.* Pen and ink, 34.5 x 26.5 cm. oval, a preliminary(?) for Mortimer's Shakespeare etching of 1776. SL, 25 Jan., #149 (not sold, perhaps because potential bidders were suspicious that this is an anon. drawing made after the print, like the 11 above).

*Classical Youth Holding the Folds of his Tunic in his Left Hand.* Pencil and pen, 10¾ x 8½ in., dated 1777. CL, 12 July, #48 (£198).

*Salvator Rosa.* Pen and ink, 28 x 21 cm., signed and dated 1776, a preliminary(?) for the etching. Advertised by W. M. Brady and Co., New York, *Burlington Magazine* (Nov. 1988): lv, illus. (not priced).

*Soldiers Resting beneath a Tree.* Pen and ink, 10 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 8 in. CL, 12 July, #49, illus. (£1540).

Plates for the series of 1778 dedicated to Reynolds. Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., #54, "Successful Monster," proof before all letters (£175); #55, "Tragedy," early impression on pale blue paper (£150); "Banditti," early impression (£120), all illus.

"Sailing Ferry in a Storm," etching by Blyth, 1803. Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., #60, proof before title and imprint, illus. (£75).

Shakespeare Characters, etchings, 1776. Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., Palser restrikes, #57, "Falstaff," #58, "Beatrice," #59, "York," all illus. (£100 each).

#### PALMER, SAMUEL

*Bay of Baiae from Monte Nuovo.* Water color, 14.5 x 40 cm., c. 1841. SL, 17 Nov., #172, illus. color (£19,800).

*Eastern Gate,* an illus. to "L'Allegro." Water color and gouache, 50 x 70 cm., completed 1881 (the last year of Palmer's life). SL, 14 July, #190, illus. color (£143,000 on an estimate of £40,000-60,000).

*Eventide—a Shepherd Boy on a Hill Top, the Sun Setting over the Sea Beyond.* Water color and body color, 19 x 42 cm., signed, a previously unrecorded work of the late 1850s. SL, 17 Nov., #138, illus. color (not sold).

*From Richmond Hill, Surrey.* Brown wash, 18 x 25.5 cm., signed and dated 1821. SL, 10 March, #86, illus. (£3520). This drawing, executed before Palmer's development of his Shoreham style, shows the strong influence of David Cox.

*Golden Hour.* Water color, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 14 in., signed, executed 1865. Leger Gallery, Feb. cat. of the Fitch Collection, #54, illus. color. Upon inquiry, I was informed that this splendid work had been sold at an undisclosed price.

*Jacob Wrestling with the Angel.* SL, 10 March, #66, illus. color (£22,000). See illus. 11.

*Sunset: Returning from Market.* Water color, 2 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  in., c. 1848. CL, 15 Nov., #67, illus. color (£11,550).

*Water-Organ, Tivoli.* Water color, 10 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 14 $\frac{3}{4}$  in., probably 1838. CL, 15 Nov., #43, illus. color (£26,400).

"Bellman," etching. SL, April 20, #523, 7th st., 1926 printing, slight foxing (£715). Garton & Co., May cat., #19, 6th st., illus. (£6000). CL, 28 Oct., #311, 7th st., 1926 printing, stained (£1540).

"Christmas," etching. CL, 19 April, #561, 3rd st., pencil signature, repaired tear in margin (£880); #562, 4th st., with "Sleeping Shepherd," 3rd st. (£1540). Garton & Co., May cat., #8, 4th st., illus. (£1100).

"Early Ploughman," etching. SL, 27 Oct., #618, 4th st., illus. (£440). CL, 28 Oct., #310, 6th st., with "Rising Moon," 9th st., foxed and stained (not sold).

"Harvest Under a Crescent Moon," wood engraving. SL, 3 Dec. 1987, #406, 1 of 5 trial proofs taken in preparation for the 1932 ed. of 50, illus. (£3190 on an estimate of £1000-1500).

"Herdsman's Cottage," etching. Garton & Co., May cat., #7, 2nd st., illus. (£500). Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., #61, 2nd st., illus. (£250).

"Homeward Star," etching. Garton & Co., May cat., #21, 2nd st., illus. (£300). CL, 28 Oct., #314, 3rd st., Dover's House Press printing of 1924 (£132).

"Lonely Tower," etching. CL, 28 Oct., #312, "fourth state" (actually 5th?), pencil signature, some discoloration, illus. (not sold).

"Opening the Fold," etching. Garton & Co., May cat., #20, 8th st., illus. (£500). CL, 28 Oct., #313, 6th st., pencil signature (£440).

"Rising Moon," etching. Garton & Co., May cat., #10, 7th st., illus. (£950). SL, 28 June, #753, 7th st., some foxing (£462). SL, 27 Oct., #613, 7th st., with "Morning of Life," 7th st. (£495).

"Skylark," etching. Garton & Co., May cat., #6, 7th st., illus. (£1000). SL, 28 June, #751, 7th st. (£550).

"Sleeping Shepherd," etching. Garton & Co., May cat., #9, 4th st., illus. ("sold"). SL, 28 June, #752, 4th st., some foxing (£935). SL, 27 Oct., #597, 4th st. (£1210).

"Weary Ploughman," etching. CL, 19 April, #563, 8th st., minor foxing (not sold). Garton & Co., May cat., #11, 8th st., illus. (£950). SL, 27 Oct., #614, 7th st., with 2 other, unnamed prints by Palmer (£352).

"Willow," etching. CL, 19 April, #560, 2nd st., pencil signature, foxed and stained (£352). SL, 28 June, #750, 2nd st., with 4 others by Palmer (£770).

Dickens, *Pictures from Italy*, 1846. Marlborough Rare Books, May cat. 127, #119, original cloth worn, leaves "somewhat browned" (£150). Antony Waley, June cat. 2, #47, original cloth, recased (£78).

Hamerton, *Etchings and Etchers*. SL, 15 Dec. 1987, #190, 1880 ed. with "Herdsman's Cottage" (£176). SL, 20 April, #524, 1880 ed., worn (£495). Sims, Reed, May cat. 93, #371, 1868 ed. with "Early Ploughman" (£875); #372, 1880 ed. (£575). Larkhill Books, Nov. cat. 3, #63, 1880 ed., rubbed (£750).

Palmer, A. H., *Life and Letters of S. Palmer*, 1892. Sims, Reed, May cat. 93, #209, original cloth (£285). Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #314, original cloth (\$300). BBA, 20 Oct., #491, minor foxing, original cloth worn (Rainer, £121). Larkhill Books, Nov. cat. 3, #119, original cloth (£250).

Palmer, S., *Shorter Poems of Milton*, 1889. Blackwell's, Dec. 1987 list "Florence," #76, large paper, "out of series," fancy binding by Roger de Coverley (£450); same copy and price, April cat. A90, #198. Larkhill Books, Jan. cat. 1, #107, original cloth (£125). Swann, 29 Sept., #248, large paper, original parchment boards (\$275).

Virgil, *Eclogues*, 1883. Larkhill Books, Jan. cat. 1, #106, small paper, original cloth (£380). SL, 1 Feb., #676, small paper, original cloth worn (Post, £242). Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., #62, small paper, original cloth (£850).

#### RICHMOND, GEORGE (excluding later portraits)

A sketchbook, 156 pp., 10.8 x 18.4 cm., datable to the 1820s. Acquired 1981 by the Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia. See Kimerly Rorschach, *Blake to Beardsley: The Artist as Illustrator*, exhibition cat. (Rosenbach Museum, 1988), #7, where a preliminary sketch for *The Creation of Light* (now Tate Gallery) is illus. and the sketchbook is said to contain portraits of Richmond and Palmer and "an inscription and perhaps a sketch by William Blake." The physical description of this notebook, but not the provenance information, matches that given in Martin Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings of Blake* (1981), no. 802A, for a Richmond sketchbook untraced since 1920.

*Artist's Father*. Medium not recorded; inscribed "Thomas Richmond about 1835-6 by his son George Richmond R.A."; 39.7 x 31.4 cm. Agnew, 115th Annual Exhibition of Watercolours and Drawings, Feb.-March, #134 (£1800).

*Bathsheba Seated on a Rock*. Pen and brown ink, gray wash, 11¾ x 7¾ in. CL, 19 July, #68 (not sold).

*Portrait of Julia, the Artist's Wife, Sewing*. Pencil, 33.6 x 24.7 cm. Agnew, 115th Annual Exhibition of Watercolours and Drawings, Feb.-March, #126, illus. (£1400).

*Prophet Daniel, after Michelangelo*, by Richmond and George Brown. Water color, 21 x 16¾ in. CL, 19 July, #117 (£330).

*William Palmer* [Samuel Palmer's brother], *Seated*. Pencil, 19.7 x 18.1 cm. Agnew, 115th Annual Exhibition of Watercolours and Drawings, Feb.-March, #140 (£600).

ROMNEY, GEORGE (excluding most portrait paintings)

*Emma Hamilton as Alope*. Oil, 113 x 156 cm. SL, 13 July, #91, illus. color (not sold; estimate £40,000-60,000). A striking combination of neoclassical figure norms and a brooding sublimity.

*Fall of the Rebel Angels*, sheet of studies for. Pencil, 15½ x 12¾ in., probably drawn c. 1794. CL, 15 Nov., #7, illus. (£440).

*Il Penseroso, or Melancholy* (full length female figure epitomizing Milton's poem). Oil, 236.1 x 143 cm., c. 1770. CL, 15 April, #120, illus. color (£55,000). The pendant painting of *Mirth* was sold CL, 13 July 1984, #122.

*Portrait of the Children of Charles Boone*. Oil, 151 x 121 cm., c. 1778. SL, 16 Nov., #45, illus. color (£132,000).

*Portrait of Emma, Lady Hamilton, as Ariadne*. Oil, 143.5 x 114 cm., mid-1780s. SL, 13 July, #53, illus. color (£71,500).

*Psyche in a Wood*. Oil, 73.5 x 109 cm., c. 1776-1777. SL, 13 July, #89, illus. color (not sold; estimate £20,000-30,000). A fine essay in neoclassicism, including a figure of Psyche with something of the same linear serenity as Blake's *Young Woman Reclining on a Couch* of c. 1780-1785 (D. Bindman collection).

*Studies of Standing Figures*, study of a standing classical figure on verso. Pen and brown ink (recto), pencil (verso), 11 x 16¾ in. CL, 12 July, #43 (not sold).

*Study for the Death of General Wolfe*. Ink and brown washes over pencil, 27 x 42.5 cm. SL, 15 July, #8, illus. (£1540).

#### RUNCIMAN, ALEXANDER

Etchings by. Campbell Fine Art, Oct. cat., 1826 impressions, #63, "Cormac Attacking the Spirit of the Waters," #64, "Perseus and Andromeda," #65, "Sigismunda Weeping over the Heart of Tancred," #66, "Musidora," #67, "Agrippina with the Ashes of Germanicus," all illus. (£50 each).

Edwards, *Anecdotes of Painters*, 1808, with 2 etchings by Runciman. Marlborough Rare Books, Oct. cat. 130, #19, large paper, original boards (£150).

#### STOTHARD, THOMAS

12 drawings for book illustrations, some attributed to Stothard and others to Richard Corbould. Pencil and water colors, 5¾ x 3¾ in. and smaller. CL, 12 July, #78 (£264).

*Good and Evil Spirits*. Oil, 4¾ x 6 in. CL, 15 Dec. 1987, #119 (£385).

*Merrymaking*, and *Music*, a pair. Oil, each 21.9 x 27.9 cm. CL, 27 May, #91 (£625).

*Project for the Decoration of a Wall with Three Pictures Flanked by Pilasters, a Cornice above*. Pen and ink, brown wash, 4¾ x 7½ in., with 4 pencil drawings. CL, 12 July, #77, illus. (£286).

*Portrait of Stothard* by Walter Francis Tiffin. Oil, signed and dated [18]75, 61 x 49.5 cm. CL, 14 Oct., #144, illus. (£1650).

"Lost Apple," lithograph, 1803. R. E. Lewis, March cat., #33, 3rd st., lacking mounting sheet, illus. (\$3000).

Aesop, *Fables*, 1793. Antony Waley, June cat. 2, #1 (£230). Charles Traylen, July cat. 103, #646, "contemporary full blue morocco" (£420).

*Bell's British Theatre*. See under Fuseli, above.

*Bell's Edition of the Poets of Great Britain*, 1807 reissue. Charles Traylen, July cat. 103, #663, 125 vols. bound in 61, fancy binding (£1900).

Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 1825. Pickering & Chatto, May cat. 668, #537, 10 "proof impressions," loose as issued in printed wrapper, frayed (\$650).

Bray, *Life of Stothard*, 1851 (extra-illus. copies only). James Cummins, Dec. cat. 23, #533, 2 vols. "with over 200" pls. added (\$450).

Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, series of 16 pls., 1790s. BBA, 22 Sept., #273, printed in sepia, soiled and spotted (Grosvenor Prints, £165).

Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, 1796. Deighton, Bell, Feb. cat. 241, #11, rebaked (£60).

Cowper, *Poems*. Claude Cox, March cat. 65, #39, 1800 ed., 2 vols. (£75). Howes, Oct. cat. 240, #228, 1798 ed., 2 vols. (£45).

Gessner, *Death of Abel*, 1797. Phillip Pirages, May cat., #215, "original marbled boards . . . large paper" (\$150).

Hayley, *Triumphs of Temper*. James Burmester, May cat. 7, #131, 1788 ed. (£38). Claude Cox, Sept. cat. 68, #52, 1799 ed. (the ed. probably owned by Blake), contemporary tree calf (£15).

*Keepsake*. Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #253, issue for 1834 (\$125); #254, for 1835 (\$100).

Pope, *Poetical Works*, 2 vols., 1811. Ken Nesheim, Nov. cat., #75, fancy binding (\$325).

Ritson, *Ancient Songs*, 1790. Ken Nesheim, Nov. cat., #77 (\$125).

Rogers, *Italy*. Frew Mackenzie, Feb. cat. 10, #93, 1838 ed., "large paper," pls. on laid India, light spotting, contemporary green morocco (£130). Jarndyce, May cat., #394, with *Poems*, both 1838, "large paper," fancy binding (£350); #402, 1830 ed., original boards (£200). Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #339, 1824 ed., 2 vols., with frontispiece after Stothard (\$250). Marlborough Rare Books, May cat. 127, #122, the 56 engravings only, large paper, as issued c. 1829-1830 (£850). William Wreden, Aug. cat. 73, #210, 1830 ed. (\$75).

Rogers, *Pleasures of Memory*. Jarndyce, May cat., #395, 1803 ed., "engraved title page only" (i.e., lacking the printed title page?), worn (£25); #396, 1806 ed. (£25).

Rogers, *Poems*. Anthony Garnett, Feb. Los Angeles Book Fair, 1825 ed., with Rogers, *Italy*, 1852, presentation inscription from Rogers to Lady Georgiana Grey (\$200). Blackwell's, April cat. A90, #236, 1834 ed., slight browning, letter by Rogers inserted, fancy binding (£90). Jarndyce, May cat., #404, 1834 ed. (£48); #407, 1854 ed. (£32). Claude Cox, May cat. 66, #199, 1834 ed., fancy binding, presentation inscription by Rogers (£60). Quaritch, May cat. 1087, #342, 1852 ed., 2 vols. (\$200). William Wreden, Aug. cat. 73, #211, 1834 ed. (\$75). Howes, Oct. cat. 240, #1097, 1834 ed. with *Italy*, 1830, original boards uncut, some foxing (£250); #1098, 1838 quarto ed., slight foxing (£120). SL, 14 Nov., #1093, 1834 ed., inscribed by John Ruskin to Arthur Burgess (£418).

Rogers, *Poetical Works*, 1869. Simon Finch, Feb. cat. 1, #99, some browning (£60).

Sargent, *The Mine*, 1796. Ximenes, Jan. cat. 80, #283 (\$150).

Shakespeare, *Seven Ages of Man*. Swann, 29 Sept., #337, 7 hand-colored pls. by Bromley, bound, pls. dated 1799 and printed on paper watermarked 1826 (\$468).

Sterne, *Works*, 10 vols., 1798. Ken Nesheim, Nov. cat., #130 (\$450).

Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, 1798. Country Lane Books, Feb. Los Angeles Book Fair, 2 vols., new binding (\$200).

Young, *Night Thoughts*, 1798. Phillip Pirages, May cat., #322, fancy binding (\$450). Swann, 21 April, #265, pls. foxed (\$88). W. & V. Dailey, July Blake list, #30, Hayley's copy with his auction ticket (\$250).

#### VON HOLST, THEODORE

*Bertalda Frightened by Appearances*. Oil, 79.5 x 61.5 cm., based on Fuseli's painting of the same subject (see first item under Fuseli, above). SL, 13 July, #95, illus. col. (£9350).

# Blake's Healing Trio: Magnetism, Medicine, and Mania

BY MARSHA KEITH SCHUCHARD

When William Blake returned to London from his "three years Slumber" at Felpham, he initially found sympathetic friends as he pursued his "visionary studies."<sup>1</sup> Blake participated throughout the 1780s and 90s in an eclectic network of *illuminés*, which included Swedenborgians, Freemasons, and Cabalists who shared his interest in animal magnetism, spirit-communication, and erotic trances.<sup>2</sup> In 1804 he apparently renewed his acquaintance with several theosophers, who continued their secret meetings and occult studies over the next decade. Unfortunately, the fragmentary evidence for this collaboration comes from an embittered notebook poem (c. 1808–11), when Blake accuses his friends of cowardly withdrawal from their mutual studies. Compressed into eight hostile lines, Blake's mental distress and spiritual commitment reveal the radical daring of his visionary enterprise:

Cosway, Frazer & Baldwin of Egypts Lake  
Fear to Associate with Blake  
This Life is a Warfare against Evils  
They heal the sick he casts out Devils  
Hayley Flaxman & Stothard are also in doubt  
Lest their Virtue should be put to the rout  
One grins tother spits & in corner hides  
And all the Virtuous have shewn their backsides  
(E 505)

The first three friends—Cosway, Frazer, and Baldwin—were drawn together by shared interest in animal magnetism, the bizarre pseudoscience that played a role in its day equivalent to Freudian and Jungian psychology in our own.<sup>3</sup> Animal magnetism was a "modern" version of ancient Cabalistic meditation techniques, merged with Hermetic, Paracelsan, and astrological theories of man as microcosm. Seventeenth-century speculation on the universal magnetic fluid was updated with new theories of electricity. Developed by Dr. Franz Anton Mesmer into a methodical science of hypnosis, trance, and nervous catharsis, magnetism became a kind of countercultural therapy and religion to the restless, millenarian spirits of the revolutionary decades. Despite its "holistic" claims, the new magnetic religion split into

rival schools which accused each other, respectively, of materialistic atheism and occultist fanaticism. Blake and his three friends were not immune to these bitter though often comical quarrels.

Richard Cosway (1740–1821), the fashionable miniature painter, was one of Blake's oldest friends. Fascinated by magic, alchemy, and Cabala, Cosway was intimately acquainted with radical Freemasons and millenarian *illuminés* in Europe as well as England.<sup>4</sup> Cosway joined the Swedenborg society in 1783–84, at a period when it was dominated by French and Swedish Freemasons who believed that Swedenborg himself was a Cabalist, alchemist, and Mason.<sup>5</sup> Working closely with the London society were Dr. Benedict Chastanier and the Marquis de Thomé, who founded the Masonic rite of *Illuminés Théosophes* in London and Paris.<sup>6</sup> They believed that Mesmer took his theories from Swedenborg and then perverted them into a materialistic science.<sup>7</sup> Cosway and the London group agreed, and John Flaxman still believed this in 1823.<sup>8</sup>

In 1784 a French governmental commission exposed animal magnetism as a fraud, which only drove its disciples into more radical defenses of the new science.<sup>9</sup> A disgusted Mesmer traveled to England in August 1785, hoping to establish a Mesmeric Masonic lodge.<sup>10</sup> But he found his rivals already dominating the popular magnetic stage. Mesmer faded from the English scene, while his apostate pupil, Dr. John Bonniot de Mainaduc, instituted a decade-long reign.<sup>11</sup> Cosway and his Swedenborgian friends became Mainaduc's earliest and, for a while, most ardent disciples. Born in Ireland to a French Protestant family, Mainaduc studied medicine in London in the 1770s under Drs. William and John Hunter, George Fordyce, and other eminent physicians. In 1782–84, he studied in France where he was caught up in the Mesmeric enthusiasm. When he offered Mesmer 200 guineas for his secret, the German doctor haughtily refused.<sup>12</sup> Mortified, Mainaduc turned to Dr. Charles Deslon, an early champion of Mesmer, who developed a different technique. Mainaduc claimed that Deslon raised the science beyond Mesmer's "crude state."

Returning to London in 1785, Mainaduc introduced magnetism into his medical treatment, drawing a clientele initially from his large midwifery practice. He soon deviated from the materialistic gadgetry of Deslon's style (tubs, tubes, rods, etc.), and declared a purely spiritual form of magnetism. A Freemason himself, Mainaduc attracted the interest of Swedenborgian Freemasons who appreciated his spiritualistic approach in which "divine influx" aided the cures. On 12 December 1785, he initiated Chastanier into "this Modern Magical Science."<sup>13</sup> For the next ten months, Chastanier served as Mainaduc's chief assistant at his lavish clinic in Bloomsbury Square. Attacked by a Mesmeric rival, Dr. John Bell, as superstitious and unscientific apostates, Mainaduc and Chastanier defended themselves by claiming to perform the same kind of spiritual cures as Christ and his disciples.<sup>14</sup> The two *illuminés* then invited "twenty gentlemen of distinction" to hear their lectures, in which Paracelsus, Fludd, Kircher, and Swedenborg were presented as precursors of Mesmer.<sup>15</sup> Mainaduc also recruited twenty women to form a "Hygeian Society," which was incorporated with a sister lodge in France. To demonstrate their Masonic notions of equality, Mainaduc instructed Chastanier to round up twenty poor patients for free treatment at Bloomsbury. Over the next decade, Mainaduc instructed over 270 paying customers in the secret science. Among the dozen identifiable Swedenborgians were four artistic peers of Blake — Maria and Richard Cosway, P. J. de Louthembourg, and William Sharp.

In Mainaduc's lectures, printed posthumously in 1798 with his portrait by Cosway, there are many striking similarities to terms and themes in Blake's work. In April 1786, Mainaduc revealed to an eager assembly that men and women "possess a power in themselves of which they are ignorant, and want but little instruction to do more than they are aware of; I open to you an astonishing field, if you dare to cultivate it, a field which must redouble the religionist's devotion, confirm the deist in the existence of his God, and fill the atheist with astonishment."<sup>16</sup> His first lecture covered "Atmospheres and Emanations of the Form," which proved that "emanating atoms continually fly from the earth, and from all its productions; and that, as the earth, so all its forms are surrounded by atmospheres, and passed through by emanations peculiar to themselves."<sup>17</sup> The "atmospherical part of the human body" may, by the magnetizer's effort, "be attracted from, or distended to, any unlimited distance"; it may then "penetrate any other form in nature." The healing occurs when through "the influence of Volition (or Spirit)" the Emanations are "forced out of their natural course" or "attracted into the Pores of the Operator."<sup>18</sup> The magnetizer is effective according

to the Intention and Energy of his or her "spiritual Volition." Mainaduc then gave detailed instructions, such as:

The Examiner should fix on some particular part of the Patient's external or internal Form; then, turning the backs of his hands, with the fingers a little bent, he must vigorously and steadily command the Emanations and Atmospheres, which derive from that part, to strike his Hands, and must closely attend to whatever Impressions are produced on them.<sup>19</sup>

Maria Cosway possessed great "spiritual Volition" and was easily magnetized. As she wrote her lover, Thomas Jefferson, "I am susceptible and everything that surrounds me has great power to magnetise me."<sup>20</sup>

Mainaduc and Chastanier soon faced stiff competition as new rivals entered the field. In France the Puysegur brothers rediscovered "induced hypnosis" or "magnetic sleep," in which the entranced patient spoke with spirits and displayed clairvoyance. In a derivation of the Cabalistic "revolution of perspective," the somnambulists saw the inner organs of their patients in externalized visions.<sup>21</sup> Mainaduc complained that this "new food" of somnambulism is "grasped at with avidity by impostors" and many "entertain their acquaintances with the wonder of their last comatose dream."<sup>22</sup> Even worse, "a most scientific lass, wishing me to believe she saw my brain," said it "resembled an oyster." Cosway and Sharp magnetized Henry Tresham (another friend of Blake) and told him he had a hole in his liver, "the form of which Cosway drew."<sup>23</sup> Blake probably refers to this magnetic effect when he proclaims: "Their eyes their ears nostrils & tongues roll outward they behold / What is within now seen without" (E 314). Moreover, Blake's strange descriptions of Bowlahoola and Allamanda seem to draw on the magnetizers' concept of the Archæus, the ganglion of sympathetic nerves in the abdominal region.

Paracelsus and Van Helmont believed the Archæus to be "a sort of demon presiding over the stomach, acting constantly by means of vital spirits, performing the most important offices in the animal economy, producing all the organic changes which take place within the corporeal frame."<sup>24</sup> Van Helmont further claimed that by virtue of the Archæus, man could be approximated to the realm of spirits. In somnambulistic trance, the "exalted sensibility" of the epigastric region transferred perception from the brain to the abdomen (including the erotically susceptible "loins"). The modern magnetizer manipulated the transfer of sensibility from one organ to another, in order to clear the flow of lucidity (health) from obstruction (disease). Mainaduc taught that "in Man is comprised in miniature, the entire vegetating system in its greatest perfection."<sup>25</sup> His form is composed of pipes and particles, "between which the

most extensive and minute porosity admits . . . the passage of atoms and fluids." Similarly, though with vivid mythic overtones, Blake describes "the Four States of Humanity in its Repose":

The First State is in the Head, the Second is in the Heart:  
The Third in the Loins & Seminal Vessels & the Fourth  
In the Stomach & Intestines terrible, deadly, unutterable  
And he whose Gates are open in those Regions of his Body  
Can from those Gates view all these wondrous Imaginations  
(E 134)

Blake's principal regions of vision are Bowlahoola, "the Stomach in every individual man," and Allamanda, "the Loins & Seminal Vessels" (E 121, 134). His strange physiology was entirely consistent with that of animal magnetism, especially in its Swedenborgian forms.

Where Mainaduc and his more radical disciples got into trouble was in their technique of stroking the Archaeus:

The fluids are to be conducted upward, slowly, softly, and gently . . . [in order to] carry up the fluids from the stomach to the brain . . . the operation is to commence at the pit of the stomach, and the first intention must be to separate the plexus, or heap of nerves, situated in that part . . . The nerves must then be pursued, through the diaphragm up the pleura, and into the skull to the Brain.<sup>26</sup>

Critics charged them with sexual designs on the women; in fact, this accusation was the real motive for the French Commission's hostile report. In an unpublished appendix, sent secretly to the French king, the commissioners revealed:

. . . the greater number of women who are magnetised are not really ill . . . their senses are not impaired, their youth has all its sensibility. Continued proximity, contact, the communication of bodily warmth, and the mingling of glances . . . effect a communication of sensations and affections. The man who magnetises had generally the knees of his female patient enclosed between his own . . . the hand is applied to the hypochondriac region, and sometimes over the ovaries. Touch is exercised over a large extent of surface, and in the neighborhood of the most sensitive parts of the body . . . the reciprocal attraction of the sexes acts, of course, with all its force. . . . When this state of crisis approaches, the visage fires by degrees, and the eyes light up with desire . . . the eyelids now become moist; the breathing hurried and irregular; the bosom heaves violently and rapidly, and convulsions and sudden twitchings take place in particular limbs, and sometimes all over the body. In lively and sensitive women, the last stage, the most agreeable termination of their emotions, is often a convulsion.<sup>27</sup>

One critic saw "a woman thrown by a magnetic process into a *furor uterinus*," and London wits ridiculed Maria Cosway and the high-born women who flocked to Mainaduc as Princesses of the "House of Libidinowsky."<sup>28</sup>

Undeterred by such criticism and inspired by visions into their patients' Bowlahoola and Allamanda, Cosway, Sharp, and Louthembourg enthusiastically practiced magnetic medicine. At Louthembourg's house in Hammersmith, thousands of patients sought the miracle cure. As Anthony Pasquin wickedly remarked, "The

blind followed the whoopings of the lame" to the "liberal chymists" of the clinic.<sup>29</sup> Initially with Mainaduc's approval, Chastanier opened a magnetic clinic in his residence at 62 Tottenham Court Road, where the Swedenborgian Freemasons also gathered.<sup>30</sup> But Chastanier eventually broke with Mainaduc, charging that he "made the art instrumental to horrid enormities."<sup>31</sup> Apparently worried by the competition of his own pupils, Mainaduc began to require a Masonic-style oath of secrecy from his clients.<sup>32</sup> For paying "Brothers," he would draw aside the veil of the sacred mysteries: "Here we shall find the *grand arcanum*, the steady *point d'appui*, the *philosopher's stone*, and *omnium uno*" — all under the Masonic "all-seeing Eye of the Creator."<sup>33</sup>

Blake probably could not have afforded Mainaduc's deluxe course, but he may have benefited from Chastanier's inexpensive instruction. Blake may also have attended the spin-off lectures of Thomas Holloway, the engraver, with whom he worked on Lavater's *Essay on Physiognomy*. (Lavater himself was an enthusiastic magnetist.<sup>34</sup>) Following the lead of his brother John, Thomas Holloway gave lectures on animal magnetism which attracted hundreds of artisans as well as professional people.<sup>35</sup> The Holloways' magnetic therapy was so successful that John Newton tried to persuade the poet William Cowper to accept their offer of treatment. However, a wary Cowper replied:

With respect to my own initiation into the Secret of Animal Magnetism, I have a thousand doubts. Twice, as you know, I have been overwhelmed with the blackest despair, and at those times every thing in which I have been at any period of my life concerned has afforded to the Enemy a handle against me. I tremble therefore almost at every step I take, lest on some future similar occasion, it should yield him opportunity and furnish him with means to torment me. Decide for me, if you can. And, in the mean time, . . . best thanks to Mr. Holloway for his most obliging offer. I am perhaps the only man living who would hesitate a moment whether on such easy terms he should, or should not accept it. But if he finds another like me, he will make a greater discovery than even that which he has already made of the principles of this wonderful art.<sup>36</sup>

Cowper's worry was later echoed by Blake, who resented those magnetic healers who tried to bind "all Mental Powers by Diseases," rather than allowing the artist to "spend his soul in Prophecy."<sup>37</sup>

As part of their sympathy for the French Revolution and the new egalitarian trends, the Holloways developed a simplified, democratic form of magnetism.<sup>38</sup> Though they were both Freemasons and enjoined secrecy on their pupils, they required neither oath nor bond.<sup>39</sup> Teaching a short, simplified form of hypnosis and making no supernatural claims, the Holloways avoided the illu-minist controversies that eventually placed animal magnetism on dangerous political grounds. John Holloway was still advertising his lectures in 1805, opposite the Shakespeare Gallery.



"Le Doigt Magique." Courtesy of Robert Darnton.

For many of Mainaduc's students, however, magnetism became increasingly a vehicle for political radicalism. Darnton points out that as the French Revolution developed, "mesmerists tended increasingly to neglect the sick in order to decipher hieroglyphics, manipulate magic numbers, communicate with spirits, and listen to speeches on Egyptian religion."<sup>40</sup> This development stemmed from the somnambulists' refined techniques of vision-inducement as well as a revival of Cabalistic meditation on Hebrew letters and talismans. The magnetizing Swedenborgians in London were soon linked with Cabalistic developments in France, for they were visited by three celebrated *gurus* of Cabalistic Freemasonry—Count Grabianka of the Avignon *Illuminés*, "Count" Cagliostro of the Egyptian Rite, and Louis Claude de Saint-Martin of the *Élus Coens*.<sup>41</sup> Their colorful personalities and visionary claims made a lasting impression on the London group, while at the same time accelerating the turbulent schisms over political and sexual controversies.

As the English government geared up for a counter-revolutionary crackdown on secret societies, followers of Swedenborg and Mainaduc were considered fair game for official spies and police. On 4 March 1795, the *London Times* charged that Swedenborg was "the Chief of the Somnambulists," whose influence on the "revolutionarily exalted" prophets prepared the public mind for "great political convulsions." In 1797 the Abbé Baruel (a former Freemason, now an emigré priest) proclaimed in London:

The brethren of Avignon recognized the *Illuminés* of Swedenborg as their parent Sect; neither were they unmindful of the embassy sent them by the Lodge of Hampstead. Under the auspices of *De Mainaduc*, they have seen their disciples thirsting after that *celestial Jerusalem*, that *purifying fire* (for these are the expressions I have heard them make use of) that was to kindle into general conflagration throughout the earth by means of the French Revolution—and thus Jacobin Equality and Liberty was to be universally triumphant in the streets of London.<sup>42</sup>

Unintimidated by the crackdown and encouraged by his Swedenborgian readers, the flamboyant William Belcher published *Intellectual Electricity, Novum Organum of Vision, and Grand Mystic System . . . the Connection between the Material and Spiritual World Elucidated, the Medium of Thought Rendered Visible, Instinct Seems Advancing to Intuition, Politics Assume a Form of Magical Intimation* (London, 1798). Boldly interpreting mystical vision and sexual passion in electromagnetic terms, Belcher praised the *illuminati* as the only society still practicing "this field of science."<sup>43</sup> To political radicals like Cosway, who acquired Belcher's work, his assertion that "mysticism carried Buonaparte into Egypt, its original school," must have rung with millenarian implications.<sup>44</sup> Among the Swedenborgian and Masonic acquaintances of Cosway and Blake, politi-

cal charge and countercharge proliferated, as increasingly polarized radicals and conservatives split into rival factions. However, the lines were not always clearly drawn, and radical devotees of animal magnetism were sometimes odd bedfellows of political conservatives.

Into this complex milieu in 1793–94 walked George Baldwin, who eagerly plunged into magnetic experiments regardless of their political ramifications.<sup>45</sup> Home on leave from his post as British Consul in Egypt, Baldwin renewed his acquaintance with various artists and Swedenborgians. Blake may already have known Baldwin in the period 1781–86, when the exotic traveler and his beautiful Greek wife, Jane, attracted much attention in London's social scene. Cosway and Bartolozzi painted portraits of Mrs. Baldwin, and Joshua Reynolds exhibited "The Fair Greek," in full Turkish costume, at the Royal Academy in 1782.<sup>46</sup> Baldwin also shared Blake's interest in Druid lore, Ossian, Boehme, Law, and Paracelsus.<sup>47</sup> During his adventures in the Middle East, Baldwin had investigated the contacts between Egypt and India, which he applied to the study of hieroglyphics.<sup>48</sup> These inquiries also fueled his interest in native medicines, with their heavy component of magic and trance. While in London, he read in *The Gazeteer and New Daily Advertiser* (6 October 1783) an article on Quinquet's "new discoveries in the electric arcana."<sup>49</sup> He studied the French Commission Report on magnetism in 1784 and interpreted its hostile criticism as testimony to "the stupendous power" of magnetism.<sup>50</sup>

Fired with enthusiasm for electric and magnetic therapy, Baldwin returned to Egypt in December 1786, where he ordered a continuing stream of literature on animal magnetism. One of these may have been Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* (London, 1789), with engravings by Blake and Holloway, for a "Captain Baldwin" subscribed to the first volume. As noted earlier, Lavater was widely viewed as a fanatic for animal magnetism, and his system of physiognomy was assimilated into the grab-bag of magnetic literature.<sup>51</sup> By 1789 Baldwin was tirelessly experimenting with magnetic therapy and even boasted of finding an effective preventative for the plague. Believing the disease traveled by "electric sparks," he advocated the coating of the body with sweet oils to prevent penetration of the pores.<sup>52</sup>

In 1793–94 Baldwin returned to London, where he showed off his collection of drawings of Eastern scenes.<sup>53</sup> He probably revisited Cosway and his artistic friends, as well as those Swedenborgians who still experimented with magnetic and electric cures. Baldwin subscribed to George Adams' *Lectures on Natural and Experimental Philosophy* (London, 1794), which combined Swedenborgianism and Freemasonry with advanced magnetic and electric theory. Blake almost certainly knew Adams, who was also the mentor of Blake's friend, Dr. John Birch. (Blake would later praise "Mr. Birch's Electrical

Magic" for relieving his wife's rheumatism [E 759].) George Adams embodied the contradictory strains among the Swedenborgians, for he was fascinated by occult and magnetic phenomenon but repelled by the radical politics which often accompanied its practice. Baldwin shared these polarized opinions but, like Adams in the 1790s, he was willing to keep his feet in both camps in the interest of the "new science."

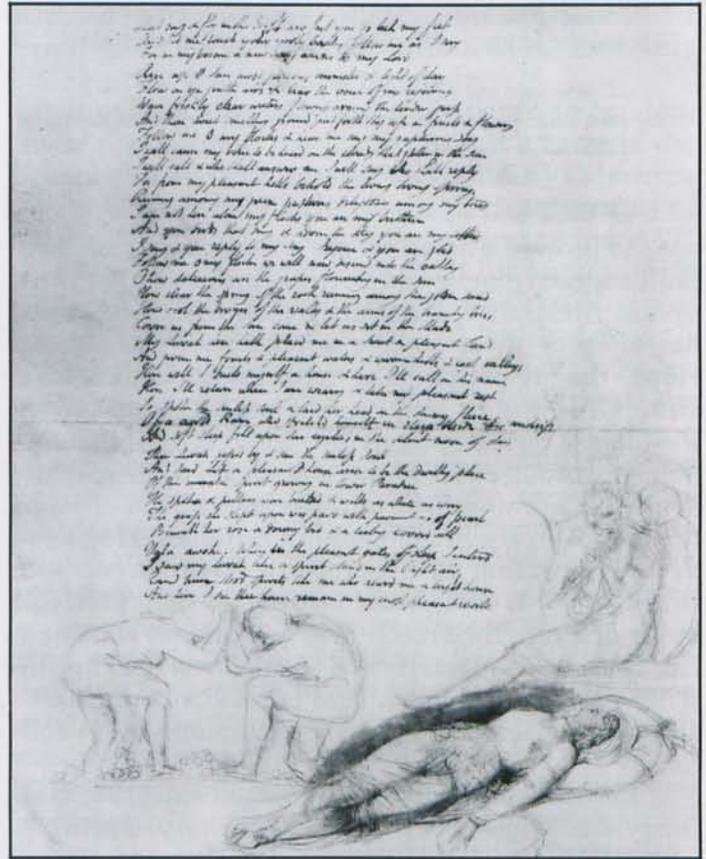
While he was in London, Baldwin apparently added somnambulistic techniques to his magnetic repertoire, for on his return to Egypt in late 1794, he plunged into experiments in spirit-communication, automatic writing, and dream analysis. Could he have learned these from Blake, Cosway, Loutherboung, Sharp, and their Swedenborgian friends? In 1794 Blake described his own involvement in spirit-dictation:

Eternals I hear your call gladly,  
 Dictate swift winged words, & fear not  
 To unfold your dark visions of torment.  
 (E 70)

In *Vala*, which he began in 1795, Blake describes various magnetic phenomenon: ". . . they behold / What is within now seen without"; Los has "sparks issuing from his hair"; emanations produce "sweet rapturd trance" (E 314, 332, 371). Most suggestive, though, of Blake's probable collaboration with Baldwin is the drawing in Night Nine of a woman dressed in Turkish costume, holding a tambourine, lying in a trance state on Oriental pillows.<sup>54</sup> In the earlier portraits of Mrs. Baldwin by Cosway and Reynolds, she holds a tambourine and sits on a divan, respectively. George Baldwin also dressed in Oriental garb in London and discoursed on magnetism while lolling on pillows.<sup>55</sup> The accompanying speech by Vala seems to echo Baldwin's new enthusiasm for the "magnetic sleep" which led to spirit-communication:

Vala awoke. "When in the pleasant gates of sleep I enter'd,  
 "I saw my Luvah like a spirit stand in the bright air.  
 "Round him stood spirits like me . . .  
 . . . . .  
 he laid his hand on my head,  
 "And when he laid his hand upon me, from the gates of sleep  
 I came."<sup>56</sup>

In Egypt from 1794 to 1798, Baldwin continued his experiments with the "magnetic sleep," which he explained as "the discovery of a spiritual influence on the physical temperature of man."<sup>57</sup> As he witnessed many "elevations of the soul," Baldwin became convinced that "no earthly bound could bound this spirit." Then, in January 1795, his life changed dramatically when a wandering Italian poet, Casare Avena de Valdieri, arrived in Alexandria and joined in Baldwin's sessions. Through the poet's magnetic trance, Baldwin achieved communication with the spirit of a young girl, his first love in the 1760s. He rapturously affirmed:



Page 128 in C. T. Magno and David V. Erdman, *The Four Zoas by William Blake* (Bucknell UP, 1987). Courtesy of the British Museum.

It is in common tradition over the world, that spirits will come and converse with men; mankind, in general, hath an involuntary dread of these spirits; why? — for my part I see nothing to dread; or something of the kind must exist to justify our fears. — I say indeed that these spirits do exist; — must of necessity exist . . .<sup>58</sup>

Baldwin and Valdieri magnetized an Arab servant, whose clairvoyant descriptions were verified by witnesses. But the most astounding of their feats was the massive output of poetry and operas produced by Valdieri from spirit-dictation. In a trance state, Valdieri claimed to travel through the celestial world, speak with spirits, and experience a state of ecstatic beatitude. The poetic works, produced by automatic writing, revealed "amid the most eccentric flights of fancy, an order, an intricacy of arrangement, a regular confusion, a wilderness of beauties, an harmony of verse, a reach of discovery that shall satisfy his (the reader's) mind about the real author of it."<sup>59</sup> Like Blake in *Milton*, Baldwin identified this dictating spirit as the same Muse who illumined Milton in *Paradise Lost*, 1.25. For Baldwin, Blake's description of automatic writing would seem precisely accurate:

... Muses who inspire the Poet's Song,  
Record the journey of immortal Milton thro' your Realms  
.....  
... Come into my hand  
By your mild power; descending down the Nerves of my right  
arm  
From out the Portals of my Brain . . . . .

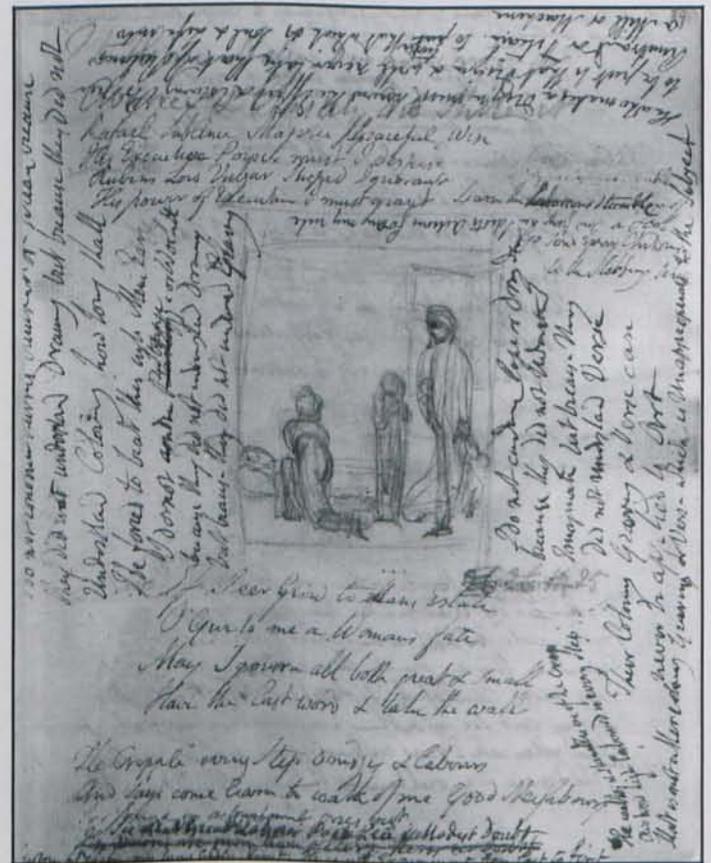
(E 96)

To provide a haven for the writing bouts, Baldwin built a special temple within the British consulary mansion in Alexandria. Baldwin's artistic friends may have heard about these psychic adventures from Thomas Hope, the art patron, who returned to London after visiting Baldwin in 1797.<sup>60</sup> Hope was also interested in the Cabala, Swedenborgianism, and magnetism; moreover, his brother Henry was a student of Mainaduc.<sup>61</sup> When Napoleon moved into Egypt, Baldwin opposed the French in a series of complex intrigues. He had to flee Egypt, losing all his property, but returned with British forces in 1801, where he played a significant role in the defeat of the French. Arriving back in London in late 1801, Baldwin was treated as a political hero by conservatives and as a psychic hero by magnetizers. Blake's allusion to Baldwin suggests his familiarity with both roles.

Immediately upon his arrival, Baldwin arranged for the private printing of *An Investigation into Principles* (1801). It was not for sale but was distributed by the author to his friends. The work traced the history of animal magnetism and told the romantic story of his contact with the spirit of his lost love. Evidently encouraged by his friends, he next printed privately *La Prima Musa Clio* (1802), which included his explanation of automatic writing and the Italian poems of Valdieri. Though Blake was in Felpham, he may have heard of these works from London friends or from Hayley, who was an inveterate student of electric and magnetic medicine.<sup>62</sup> When Blake returned to London in autumn 1803, he evidently joined the magnetic sessions of Baldwin, Cosway, and their friends. Baldwin soon gained a devoted following. As Thomas Wright observed, Baldwin was "in respect to the healing art, the Aloysius Horn of his day; he was now famous and lolled on Oriental cushions amid strange hangings."<sup>63</sup>

Baldwin's courageous commitment to his visionary studies would surely have appealed to Blake. In *Mr. Baldwin's Legacy to His Daughter, or the Divinity of Truth* (1811), he revealed his enthusiastic philosophy which merged Paracelsus, Van Helmont, Swedenborg, and Druidism into a therapeutic, visionary science. He had delayed publication of this work because "I have been told, that I shall be called a *Visionary*"; however, "I am told by Scripture that where there is no vision the people perish."<sup>64</sup> In *B. A.'s Book of Dreams* (London, 1813), he described his treatment of an extremely de-

formed young lady (B. A.), who not only saw visions but greatly improved physically. Blake seems to refer directly to this case in his *Notebook*, emblem 19, when he sketches a sick girl on a pallet, approached by a turbaned, cloaked man. Blake's odd lines may reflect his ambivalent feelings towards Baldwin: "The Cripple every step Drudges & labours / And says come learn to walk of me Good Neighbours."<sup>65</sup> The next lines scratched out and confused, either condemn the single vision ("doubt") of Newton, Bacon, and Reynolds, or possibly scorn the medical treatment of Baldwin: "He is all Experiments from last to first." On the same page where Blake criticizes "Cosway, Frazer, and Baldwin," for merely healing the sick, he shows five figures grouped in pyramidal form (suggestive of Egypt), who watch over the sickbed of a girl who holds a book (possibly B. A.'s *Book of Dreams*).<sup>66</sup>



N39, emblem 19, from *The Notebook of William Blake* by David V. Erdman (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973). Courtesy of the British Museum.

Blake's identification of Baldwin with "Egypt's Lake" may point to one reason for their broken friendship. Blake, whose acquittal of treason charges did not mean he gave up his radicalism, was possibly put off by Baldwin's contribution to Napoleon's defeat in Egypt. In 1802 Baldwin published *Political Recollections Relative to Egypt*, in which he revealed that it was his idea to cut the canal of Alexandria and let sea water into the dry bed of Lake Mareotis. When carried out by Sir Sydney Smith on 13 April 1801, the French were cut off from all communication with the interior of Egypt. This led to the English victory over Napoleon in August. Baldwin carried home "the famous Standard of the Invincible Legion of Bonaparte," and he was caught up in the outburst of patriotic enthusiasm.<sup>67</sup> Thus, Blake's phrase, "Baldwin of Egypt's Lake," had definite political connotations. Cosway, on the other hand, seemed to forgive Baldwin his political stance while benefitting from his magnetic expertise. Still as radical as Blake, Cosway could blithely boast of witnessing the King's birthday dinner (while invisible and "in a spiritual capacity") and then rejoice exceedingly at the victories of Bonaparte.<sup>68</sup>

The last four lines of Blake's poem suggest another possible reason for Baldwin's withdrawal from Blake. Blake accuses Hayley, Flaxman, and Stothard of prudish concern over his works. Certainly, if Baldwin saw Blake's *Vala* and believed that Mrs. Baldwin was portrayed in Oriental costume, he may have been offended. Through her diaphanous Turkish veil, her vulva is clearly revealed. For the Swedenborgian magnetizers of the 1790s, the mystical significance of the female genitals to the visionary process was considered the highest of "coelestial arcanæ."<sup>69</sup> William Belcher proclaimed, "As well almost might Paracelsus make a man, without female aid, as can be acquired mystic knowledge without woman, the centre of magnetic attraction."<sup>70</sup> Ebenezer Sibly, a Swedenborgian Freemason and magnetizer, made a series of Rosicrucian drawings which depicted the vulva as the center of the Cabalistic universe.<sup>71</sup>

The radical Swedenborgians among the magnetizers struggled to publish Swedenborg's more explicit writings on the methodology of the Cabalistic erotic trance, but their efforts were frustrated by a wave of counter-revolutionary prudery which developed at the turn of the century. By 1805, Fuseli complained about prudish objections to naked figures in art, and Thomas Hope feared that nude sculpture might have to be draped for exhibition.<sup>72</sup> In this new pre-Victorian climate, the radical magnetizers went underground. The explicit Cabalistic drawings of Sibly and manuscripts of erotic rituals were never published; rather, they became the provenance of a secretive Rosicrucian network that gathered at occult bookstores and clandestine lodges in the early decades of the century.<sup>73</sup> Cosway and Blake par-

ticipated in this network, whose members stimulated a revival of Hebrew and Cabalistic studies, especially among a new generation of magnetizers.<sup>74</sup>

Bindman observes that on his return to London, "Blake's rejection of the Classics is in the name of the Hebraic sublime."<sup>75</sup> In his renewed devotion to Hebrew studies, there may be a clue to the puzzling identity of "Frazer," the third member of Blake's healing trio. A "J" or "I" Frazer appears on Mainaduc's list of pupils. He may be the artist, G. Fraser, who painted a striking portrait of Solomon Bennett, a talented Jewish engraver.<sup>76</sup> Though nothing more is currently known of G. Fraser, the fact that Cosway was a patron of Bennett makes the possible linkage of Blake to Bennett (via Frazer and Cosway) worth pursuing. The question of Blake's access to Hebrew and Cabalistic instruction, through published sources or personal contacts, continues to perplex scholars.<sup>77</sup> Though the full context of Swedenborgian and Masonic connections with Jews in London needs extensive investigation, the immediate context of magnetism in 1804-11 makes Solomon Bennett a plausible candidate for a role in Blake's biography. Besides being an admirable artist and erudite man of letters, Bennett was the most accomplished Hebrew teacher in London. Moreover, the connection between magnetic healers and Jewish instructors is consistent with the experiences of Cosway and Baldwin among the Swedenborgians and students of Mainaduc. Dr. Isaac Benamore, a Jewish physician, was Mainaduc's most successful disciple.<sup>78</sup> Benamore was still practicing magnetic medicine, in collaboration with various Swedenborgians, in 1807. Curiously, though William Cowper turned down the Holloway's offer of magnetic therapy, he had only praise for Benamore's treatment of a friend.<sup>79</sup>

If Blake knew Solomon Bennett, through the medium of Cosway, Frazer, and their magnetizing friends, the two would have had much in common, as well as critical differences of religious opinion. Bennett (1761-1831) came from a Polish family in White Russia and seemed to have absorbed the peculiar, paradoxical mentality of the Sabbatian Jews of the period.<sup>80</sup> In his home area, many Jews became Freemasons and aspired to assimilation with Christians. Bennett recorded "the unbounded veneration I feel for our present Nazarenes . . . from my infancy I was their admirer, and exerted myself to be their imitator."<sup>81</sup> In 1792 Bennett set out for Copenhagen, determined to pursue a career in the arts that was impossible at home. He evidently had some contact with the alchemical circle headed by Prince Charles of Hesse-Cassel, who attempted to unite Christians and Jews in a new Masonic rite of "Asiatic Brethren," which synthesized Sabbatian Cabalism and Christian mysticism.<sup>82</sup> It was in this Danish lodge that Blake's idol Lavater, a vet-

eran magnetizer, achieved the visionary spirit-communication that made him a convinced Rosicrucian.<sup>83</sup>

As Scholem observes, the "Asiatic Brethren" occupied a "no man's land" between extreme tendencies of rationalism and mysticism, which it aspired to synthesize in a Christian-Cabalistic equilibrium.<sup>84</sup> Bennett exemplified this paradoxical mentality, for he was a skeptical, scientific rationalist, who also studied Cabala and alchemy. His strikingly engraved portrait of Lorenz Werskoss, a seventeenth-century alchemist, was said to reflect "his own mystic nature."<sup>85</sup> Bennett was elected to the Danish Royal Academy of Art, a singular honor for a Jew at the time. Moving to Berlin in 1795, Bennett achieved acclaim as a portraitist and evidently mixed in high Jewish-Masonic circles.<sup>86</sup> However, he chafed under Prussian anti-Semitism and, seeking a freer climate, he emigrated to London in November 1799.

Relishing English liberties, Bennett boldly expressed his eclectic and colorful views, compounded of radical free-thinking and ardent spirituality. Soon rejected as a heretic by orthodox rabbis, whom he scorned as "insignificant reptiles," he found supporters among gentile artists, literary men, and Freemasons.<sup>87</sup> While studying voraciously, he eked out a living by engraving and giving Hebrew lessons. William Beechey, who helped Blake in 1805, also helped Bennett that year, by allowing the poverty-stricken Jew to engrave his portrait of the Prince of Wales (Grand Master of the Freemasons).<sup>88</sup> Bennett's portrait of Shakespeare was used as the frontispiece to the 1807 Stockdale edition of *Shakespeare's Dramatic Works* (the edition used by Coleridge for his marginalia).<sup>89</sup> In 1808 Bennett boldly exhibited his own portrait of his hero, Napoleon, whom he praised in millenial terms for emancipating the Jews and spreading tolerance throughout Europe.<sup>90</sup>

Bennett may have met Cosway and Frazer by this time, for they evidently supported his effort to publish *The Constancy of Israel* (1809), by "a native of Poland . . . professing the Arts in London." Bennett stressed his appreciation for the artists who helped him publish, and Cosway owned the extremely rare first edition of the work.<sup>91</sup> The frontispiece was Bennett's engraving of his portrait by Frazer. As Kirchstein observes, Frazer's portrayal reveals the whole history of Bennett: "In the eyes are a penetrating spirituality and a quiet pensive melancholy. You can read from his face all his wanderings and striving, all his intellectual and artistic powers, all his lone battle with life."<sup>92</sup> Bennett's book was a learned defense of Judaism in the face of aggressive propaganda by the newly formed London Society for the Conversion of the Jews. Bennett heard in some chapels, "a crow from the pulpit, with a human voice," who ignorantly attacked Jewish beliefs, and he scorned the "religious barterers" who "spy among the poor, illiterate, and dis-

tressed" Jews of Petticoat-lane and Frying-pan Alley.<sup>93</sup> Cosway, who had long been a champion of the Jews, followed the conversionist controversy with interest and collected many of the treatises put forth by both radical and reactionary "philo-Semites."<sup>94</sup>

Though Bennett welcomed Christian students and enjoyed debating with sincere readers of the Hebrew Bible, he resented those conversionist efforts that were based on ignorant linguistic analysis and anachronistic Christological interpretations. It may have been Cosway who was the "friend" who showed Bennett *An Address to the Jews* (1710), by John Xeres.<sup>95</sup> Cosway owned a rare copy of the little known work, which described Xeres' reasons for abandoning Judaism and embracing Christianity. Bennett then refuted Xeres' argument that the Cabalists' notion of a plurality within God was the same as the Christians' Trinity.<sup>96</sup> Blake, who was immersed in Hebrew studies and mystical illustrations of the Old Testament, made his own contribution to the conversionist controversy with his address "To the Jews" in *Jerusalem*. As Bogan notes, in Blake's solution, "Hebrew Adam / English Albion joins the two seemingly disparate nations of England and Israel in a common patriarchal religion."<sup>97</sup> Even more suggestive of Blake's conversionist preoccupation with the Jewish visionary tradition is the frontispiece to *Jerusalem*, in which the illuminator, Los, is dressed like a Hasidic rabbi or Polish Jew.<sup>98</sup>

Cosway, Frazer, and their magnetizing friends may have sought out Bennett because of his expertise in Cabala, for the Jewish mystical traditions of the microcosmic Grand Man underlay the psychic physiology of animal magnetism. Bennett described his studies in published and manuscript works on "Kabala or Magic, which are merely extracts from the Hebrew."<sup>99</sup> He discusses the Cabalists' seven names for *Alohim*, but then urges that we must "proceed to a more sublime idea of this noble creation of the Microcosm," for Man's "qualities material and spiritual" are the "sublime of all Creations."<sup>100</sup> In Blake's address "To the Jews," he stresses this Cabalistic concept: "You have a tradition, that Man anciently containd in his mighty limbs all things in Heaven & Earth" (E 171). Unlike Blake, Cosway, and Baldwin, however, Bennett was determined to maintain a scientific and rational view of the Cabalistic microcosm. He scorned the revivers of occult notions of spirits:

The prophane doctrines of invisible beings who act on mankind, faith in sorcerers, visionaries, dreamers, etc. which had been but too successful on the human mind are now exploded, except in the brains of some chimerical individuals, or hypocrites, to dazzle the lowest class of humanity.<sup>101</sup>

For Blake, who was enthusiastically describing in *Milton* his celestial journeys among the Rosicrucian-style "Fairies, Nymphs, Gnomes, and Genii of the Four Elements," Bennett's scorn would have stung. Moreover,

Blake's defense of a "Professor of Sidereal Science" (an astrologer), who was arrested and "the cabalistical chattels of his profession" confiscated, would undoubtedly have been ridiculed by Bennett as the product of a low-class, chimerical brain.<sup>102</sup> Cosway, however, may have understood Bennett's desire to distance himself in print from spirit-communicators and magnetizers. Cosway acquired *The Supernatural Magazine* (Dublin, 1809), in which a critic charged that animal magnetism was a diabolical, anti-Christian practice, imported from France, which had insidious links with the naturalization of the Jews and the Revolution.<sup>103</sup> The same magazine noted that a recent book described the current revival of Rosicrucianism in London, out of the ashes of Egyptian Masonry, Illuminism, and the New Jerusalem Church.<sup>104</sup> Bennett may have become disillusioned with those of his Masonic friends whose interest in Cabalism led them into Rosicrucianism, for, as the radical republican Richard Carlile later charged, "the drift . . . of these Rosicrucian degrees, is to make Masonry begin in Judaism and end in Christianity."<sup>105</sup> Certainly, Blake seemed to share that "drift," for he challenged the Jews that "If your tradition that Man contained in his Limbs, all Animals, is True," then you should "Take up the Cross O Israel, & follow Jesus" (E 174).

Frustrated that Cabalism was being turned into "ill digested opinions" by conversionists and Rosicrucians, Bennett determined to reclaim the Temple of Ezekiel from the Christian visionaries and dreamers and to root it solidly in actual Jewish history. In February 1811, he announced a new work on the rebuilding of the Temple of Ezekiel, with an explanation of the Jews' "newly reformed *democratical* or rather theocratical government":

Although the explanation of the visionary Temple of Ezekiel upon scientific principles may be objectionable to some orthodox Jews or Christians, who prefer the mystical to the rational, especially in scriptural matters, yet I think . . . the prophets (independently of their divine inspiration) were able politicians and men of science.<sup>106</sup>

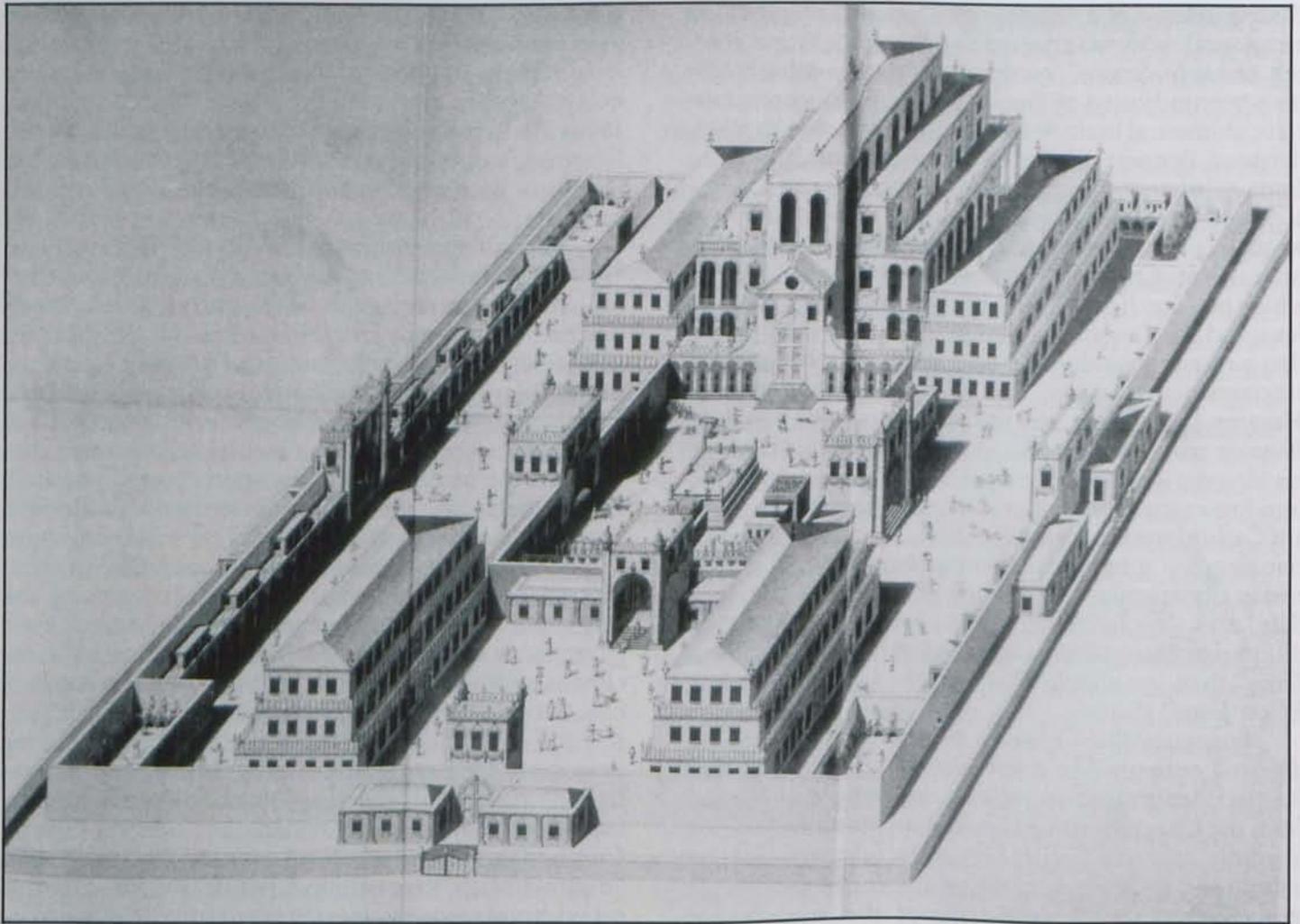
Bennett had prepared for the work a large, fold-out engraving of the Temple of Ezekiel which was considered a "masterpiece of imagination and technique," showing his "sound knowledge of architectural draftsmanship."<sup>107</sup> It is possible that Blake's preoccupation with the architectural design of Ezekiel's Temple in *Jerusalem* was stimulated by conversations or arguments with Bennett.<sup>108</sup> Told by a Christian printer that "It is our duty to suppress everything relating to Hebrew literature," Bennett turned to his artistic and Masonic friends for help.<sup>109</sup> Three current friends or patrons of Blake—William Friend, Prince Hoare, and Earl Spencer—subscribed to the project.<sup>110</sup> Another subscriber, the sculptor John Henning, utilized Bennett's Hebrew instruction to further his own investigations into alchemy, astrology, and

geomancy (studies Henning shared with John Varley, soon to become Blake's intimate friend).<sup>111</sup> Unfortunately, orthodox opposition (both Jewish and Christian) delayed publication of *The Temple of Ezekiel* until 1824. As Blake became more vociferous in his British Israelism, Bennett became more vehement in his Jewish Israelism. Both men became isolated in their own communities.

Though the withdrawal of Cosway, Baldwin, and Frazer from Blake may have also signaled the withdrawal of Bennett from their circle, Blake's break with his magnetizing friends may have been temporary. In fact, his suspicious and hostile reaction was possibly caused by overindulgence in Cabalistic-magnetic experiments. Cabalistic texts and Swedenborg's writings are full of warnings about the dangers of mental derangement that threaten the intense meditator upon magical arcana.<sup>112</sup> Podmore discusses the paranoia that often accompanied excessive attempts at magnetic trances.<sup>113</sup> The conviction of persecution by distant enemies, operating by Mesmerism or telepathy, occurred frequently among the magnetizers of the nineteenth century. Though such paranoia is one of "the commonest delusions of incipient insanity," many sane persons who dabble in psychic trances "have not escaped the contagion of this panic fear." In 1806 Blake accused Stothard of effacing his drawing of the Canterbury Pilgrims by means of a "malignant spell."<sup>114</sup> He railed against the plots of his steady supporters Hayley and Flaxman. The tolerant George Cumberland noted that he seemed "crack'd" and "dim'd with superstition," while Robert Southey pitied his obvious madness.<sup>115</sup> Curiously, Seymour Kirkup also diagnosed Blake as insane, a verdict Kirkup later retracted when he became an animal magnetizer.<sup>116</sup> Bentley points out that between 1807 and 1812, Blake seemed to lose his firm grasp of the nature and limits of reality:

He sometimes seems to have thought of the spiritual world as supplanting rather than supplementing the ordinary world of causality. More and more frequently the spirits seem to have been controlling Blake rather than merely advising him.<sup>117</sup>

Blake's insistence that animal magnetism include exorcism—"he casts out devils"—may have smacked of magical megalomania to his friends. However, his plight would have been well understood by Benedict Chastanier, the former "powerful assistant" to Mainaduc. After playing a lead role in disseminating animal magnetism, Chastanier "at last found out its evil tendency, and like an honest man first abandoned the practice and next exposed it."<sup>118</sup> Still friendly with Cosway in the early 1800s, Chastanier may have influenced Cosway's withdrawal from Blake's essentially magical practice.<sup>119</sup> As Chastanier explained in 1795, animal magnetism was



"The Temple of Ezekiel." Engraving, 26½ x 20½ inches. Designed by Bennett in the 1790s, engraved c. 1809–10, and published in 1824 in Bennett's book of the same title.

certainly a real and powerful science, which only increased its spiritual dangers:

... the very great danger there is for a man to meddle with any Science that openeth to them a freer communication with the world of Spirits, than that they naturally are to have; for as every man is by nature attached to his own peculiar evil, (and there is no Man, nor even any Angel, also free from evil,) the Spirits with whom he may thus communicate, can but confirm him more and more into that evil, peculiarly annexed to his own nature, and thus become an insurmountable bar to his Regeneration.<sup>120</sup>

Despite the timidity or genuine worry of his magnetizing friends, Blake was committed to his "perilous adventure," regardless of political, erotic, or psychic dangers. Though he would be driven to note, "Jan<sup>ry</sup>. 20. 1807 between Two & Seven in the Evening—Despair," he could also boast in happier times, "excuse my enthusiasm or rather madness, for I am really drunk with intellectual vision" (E 733, 694, 757).

<sup>1</sup>David V. Erdman, ed., *Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake*, newly rev. ed. (New York: Doubleday/Anchor, 1982) 728–29. Hereafter cited as E.

<sup>2</sup>Marsha Keith Schuchard, *Freemasonry, Secret Societies, and the Continuity of the Occult Traditions in English Literature* (Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of Texas at Austin, 1975); *The Men of Desire: Swedenborg, Blake, and Illuminist Freemasonry* (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup>Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Harvard UP, 1968); Clarke Garrett, *Respectable Folly: Millenarians and the French Revolution in France and England* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1975).

<sup>4</sup>George Williamson, *Richard Cosway*, rev. ed. (London: G. Bell, 1905); Frederick Daniell, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Engraved Works of Richard Cosway*, R. A. (London: F. B. Daniell, 1890).

<sup>5</sup>"Mr. Cosway, Painter in History," is listed by C. F. Nordenskjöld as a member of the group in 1783–84. Unpublished list in Academy Collection of Swedenborg Documents, Academy of the New Church, Bryn Athyn, PA. On Freemasonry and early Swedenborgianism, see Martin Lamm, *Upplysningstiden Romantik*, 2 vols. (Stockholm: Hugo Gebers, 1918) 1: 63; R. L. Tafel, "Swedenborg and Freemasonry," *New Jerusalem Messenger* (1869): 266–67.

<sup>6</sup>Karl-Erik Sjoden, "Swedenborg en France," *Stockholm Studies in the History of Literature*, 27 (1985): 10-40.

<sup>7</sup>*Intellectual Repository*, 2 (1874-75): 191-98; *Journal Encyclopédique*, 6 (1 Sept. 1785): 310-20.

<sup>8</sup>Henry Crabb Robinson, *Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence*, ed. Thomas Sadler, 2 vols. (Boston: J. R. Osgood, 1871) 1: 494-96.

<sup>9</sup>Darnton 62-66.

<sup>10</sup>See W. R. Dawson, ed., *The Banks Letters* (London: British Museum, 1958) 66, as a corrective to Vincent Buranelli, *The Wizard from Vienna* (New York, 1975) 182.

<sup>11</sup>*The Lectures of J. B. de Mainaduc, M.D.* (London: printed for the Executrix, 1798). Copy in Royal College of Surgeons, London. Includes list of paying students. I am grateful to Jonathon Miller, M.D., for informing me of this copy.

<sup>12</sup>John Martin, *Animal Magnetism Examined* (London, 1790) 5-6.

<sup>13</sup>Benedict Chastanier, *A Word of Advice to a Benighted World* (London, 1795) 30-31.

<sup>14</sup>Daniel Lysons, *Collectanea*, A Scrapbook of Eighteenth-Century Newspaper Clippings in the British Museum, 1: 156-63 on animal magnetism. Also, John Bell, *A New System of the World* (London, 1788).

<sup>15</sup>*Morning Herald* 15 Feb. 1786.

<sup>16</sup>Mainaduc xi.

<sup>17</sup>Mainaduc 28-29.

<sup>18</sup>Mainaduc 81-83.

<sup>19</sup>Mainaduc 97.

<sup>20</sup>Julian Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 22 vols. (Princeton UP, 1950) 4: 3-4; F. M. Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1974) 204-24.

<sup>21</sup>Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1954) 217.

<sup>22</sup>Mainaduc 196.

<sup>23</sup>K. Garlick and A. Macintyre, eds., *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, 16 vols. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1978) 3: 710.

<sup>24</sup>J. C. Colquhoun, trans., *Report of the Experiments on Animal Magnetism* (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1833) 101-03.

<sup>25</sup>Mainaduc 31.

<sup>26</sup>Mainaduc 207.

<sup>27</sup>"Animal Magnetism," *British and Foreign Medical Review* 14 (1839): 9.

<sup>28</sup>"Animal Magnetism" 19; *A Letter to a Physician in the Country on Animal Magnetism* (London: J. Debrett, 1786) 32.

<sup>29</sup>Anthony Pasquin [John Williams], *Memoirs of the Royal Academicians* (London: H. D. Symonds, 1796) 80-81.

<sup>30</sup>*Morning Post* 16 June 1786.

<sup>31</sup>*Monthly Observer and New Church Record* 1 (Jan.-Dec. 1857): 420.

<sup>32</sup>Mainaduc xi.

<sup>33</sup>Mainaduc 226-28.

<sup>34</sup>*Analytical Review* 6 (1790): 155-56.

<sup>35</sup>*World* 2 Oct. 1791; Thomas Holloway, *Memoir* (London, 1827) 29-32.

<sup>36</sup>J. King and C. Ryskamp, eds., *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979-82) 3: 404-05.

<sup>37</sup>David V. Erdman, *The Notebook of William Blake* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973) N50-51.

<sup>38</sup>Holloway, *Memoir* 24-25; Maria, *The Secret Revealed: or, Animal Magnetism Displayed* (London: T. Hawkins, 1790) 5-11.

<sup>39</sup>Grand Lodge, London: Atholl Register F., vol. 6, f.487; *Index to Moderns*, F series, vol. 14.

<sup>40</sup>Darnton 70.

<sup>41</sup>Garrett, *Respectable* 100-20; Constantin Photiades, *Count Cagliostro* (London: William Rider, 1932); M. Matter, *Saint-Martin* (Paris, 1862).

<sup>42</sup>Augustin Barruel, *Memoirs, Illustrating the History of Jacobinism*, 4 vols. (London: T. Burton, 1797-98) 4: 546.

<sup>43</sup>William Belcher, *Intellectual Electricity* (London, 1798) i, 27.

<sup>44</sup>Belcher (i); handlist of half the books in Cosway's library, compiled by the late Diana Wilson and now at the Huntington Library. I am grateful to Morton D. Paley for informing me about this list.

<sup>45</sup>"George Baldwin," *Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>46</sup>Freeman O'Donoghue, *Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits . . . in the British Museum* (London, 1910) 1: 107; J. T. H. Baily, *Francesco Bartolozzi* (London, 1907).

<sup>47</sup>George Baldwin, *Mr. Baldwin's Legacy to His Daughter* (London: William Bulmer, 1811) 4: 40-45.

<sup>48</sup>British Museum Additional Manuscripts. 29,198.f.379.

<sup>49</sup>George Baldwin, *An Investigation into Principles* (London: George Bulmer, 1801) 31.

<sup>50</sup>Baldwin, *Legacy* iv.

<sup>51</sup>Darnton *passim*.

<sup>52</sup>George Baldwin, *Political Recollections Relative to Egypt*, 2nd. rev. ed. (London: W. Bulmer, 1802) 127.

<sup>53</sup>Dawson 672.

<sup>54</sup>C. T. Magno and D. V. Erdman, *The Four Zoas* by William Blake (Bucknell UP, 1987) 242.

<sup>55</sup>Thomas Wright, *Life of William Blake*, 2 vols. (London: Olney, Bucks, 1929) 2: 31.

<sup>56</sup>Magno and Erdman 242.

<sup>57</sup>Baldwin, *Investigations* 88.

<sup>58</sup>Baldwin, *Investigations* 120.

<sup>59</sup>Baldwin, *Investigations* 93.

<sup>60</sup>Dawson 427.

<sup>61</sup>Sandor Baumgarten, *Le Crépuscule Neo-Classique: Thomas Hope* (Paris: Didier, 1958) 218-24, 254; also Mainaduc xii.

<sup>62</sup>Morchard Bishop, *Blake's Hayley* (London: Gollancz, 1951) 95-96.

<sup>63</sup>Wright, *Blake* 2: 31.

<sup>64</sup>Baldwin, *Legacy* iii.

<sup>65</sup>Erdman, *Notebook* N39.

<sup>66</sup>Erdman, *Notebook* N39.

<sup>67</sup>Baldwin, *Political Recollections* 145.

<sup>68</sup>Garlick and Macintyre, *Diary* 7: 3096.

<sup>69</sup>Based on Swedenborg's descriptions in his *Journal of Dreams, Spiritual Diary*, and *Conjugal Love* (especially #103, 146). See also Magno and Erdman 158.

<sup>70</sup>Belcher, *Intellectual* 109.

<sup>71</sup>Ebenezer Sibly, *The Dumb Made to Speak . . . or the Grand Arcanum of Adepts*. Manuscript #4594 in Wellcome Institute of History of Medicine.

<sup>72</sup>Garlick and Macintyre, *Diary* 7: 2518-19.

<sup>73</sup>Sibly, *Dumb; A Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts . . . on Astrology, Magic, and Alchymy, etc. . . the Stock of John Denley* (London, 1820).

<sup>74</sup>Schuchard, *Freemasonry* 476-505; and more extensively in *Men of Desire*.

<sup>75</sup>David Bindman, *Blake as an Artist* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1977) 141.

<sup>76</sup>Alfred Rubens, "Early Anglo-Jewish Artists," *Transactions of Jewish Historical Society of England* 14 (1935-39): 112-17. The initials to names on Mainaduc's list are often inaccurate. Keynes speculated that Blake referred to Alexander Fraser, a minor painter (*Blake: Complete Writings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes [Oxford UP, 1985] 911). But Fraser lived in Edinburgh until 1813, when he moved to London. Earlier, I speculated that Blake referred to Alexander Fraser, a Freemason and shorthand writer, who was also a friend of Bennett (Schuchard, *Freemasonry* 478-80). The question remains open.

<sup>77</sup>Sheila Spector, "Kabbalistic Sources—Blake's and his Critics," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 17 (1983-84): 84-99.

<sup>78</sup>Rainsford Papers, British Museum Add. Mss. 23,670.f.71; *Monthly Observer and New Church Record* 3 (Jan.–Dec. 1859): 281. Benamore's son was also a physician and student of Mainaduc.

<sup>79</sup>Cowper, *Letters* 3: 404.

<sup>80</sup>Arthur Barnett, "Solomon Bennett, 1761–1838: Artist, Hebraist, and Controversialist," *Transactions of Jewish Historical Society of England* 17 (1951–52): 91–111.

<sup>81</sup>Solomon Bennett, *The Constancy of Israel*, 2nd. ed. (London: printed for the author and sold by him at No. 475, Strand, 1812) iv–v.

<sup>82</sup>Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe* (Harvard UP, 1970) 27–53.

<sup>83</sup>Antoine Faivre, *Mystiques, Théosophes et Illuminés au Siècle des Lumières* (New York: Georg Olms, 1976) 175–90. Fuseli owned Lavater's *Reise nach Copenbagen* and was working on a biography of his friend in the early 1800s.

<sup>84</sup>Gershom Scholem, *Du frankisme au jacobinisme* (Paris: Galimard, 1981) 28.

<sup>85</sup>S. Kirchstein, *Juedische Graphiker* (Berlin, 1918) 20.

<sup>86</sup>Katz 27–53; Bennett, *Constancy* 224–25.

<sup>87</sup>Bennett, *Constancy* 216.

<sup>88</sup>G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969) 165; Rubens, "Anglo-Jewish" 114.

<sup>89</sup>Bentley 17; British Museum Catalogue entry for Stockdale edition.

<sup>90</sup>Barnett 96; Bennett, *Constancy* 5, 228.

<sup>91</sup>Handlist of Cosway's library.

<sup>92</sup>Barnett 94.

<sup>93</sup>Bennett, *Constancy* 34, 206.

<sup>94</sup>Handlist of Cosway's library.

<sup>95</sup>Bennett, *Constancy* 34, 206.

<sup>96</sup>Bennett, *Constancy* 105–06.

<sup>97</sup>E 171; J. M. Bogan, "Apocalypse Now: William Blake and the Conversion of the Jews," *English Language Notes* 19 (1981): 117.

<sup>98</sup>See entry on "William Blake" in *Encyclopedia Judaica*.

<sup>99</sup>Bennett, *Constancy* 200.

<sup>100</sup>Bennett, *Constancy* 106–09.

<sup>101</sup>Bennett, *Constancy* 77.

<sup>102</sup>E 769; "Police . . . Astrology," *Oracle and True Briton* (13 Oct. 1807).

<sup>103</sup>*The Supernatural Magazine* (Dublin, 1809) 7–9.

<sup>104</sup>*The Supernatural Magazine* 67–71.

<sup>105</sup>Richard Carlile, ed., *The Republican*, 12 (1825): 469. Bennett became the close friend of the Duke of Sussex, who, as Grand Master from 1813 on, struggled to maintain Jewish rights within Freemasonry and to suppress the exclusively Christian Rosicrucian degrees.

<sup>106</sup>Solomon Bennett, *The Temple of Ezekiel* (London, 1824) 151.

<sup>107</sup>Barnett 96.

<sup>108</sup>See Morton D. Paley, "'Wonderful Originals'—Blake and Ancient Sculpture," in *Blake in His Time*, eds. R. N. Essick and D. Pearce (Indiana UP, 1978) 183–92.

<sup>109</sup>Bennett, *Temple* 5.

<sup>110</sup>Bentley 273, 136, 232.

<sup>111</sup>William Bell Scott, *Autobiographical Notes*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper's, 1892) 1:115–20.

<sup>112</sup>Sheila Spector, *Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Garland, 1984) xi; Swedenborg's *Journal of Dreams and Spiritual Diary passim*.

<sup>113</sup>Frank Podmore, *From Mesmer to Christian Science* (New York: University Books, 1963) 258.

<sup>114</sup>Bentley 180.

<sup>115</sup>Bentley 229, 236.

<sup>116</sup>W. M. Rossetti, *Rossetti Papers* (London, 1903) 171–72.

<sup>117</sup>Bentley 180.

<sup>118</sup>William Spence, *Essays in Divinity and Physic* (London: Robert Hindmarsh, 1792) 58.

<sup>119</sup>Rainsford Papers, British Museum Add. Mss. 23, 670, vol. 2.f.275.

<sup>120</sup>Chastanier 31.

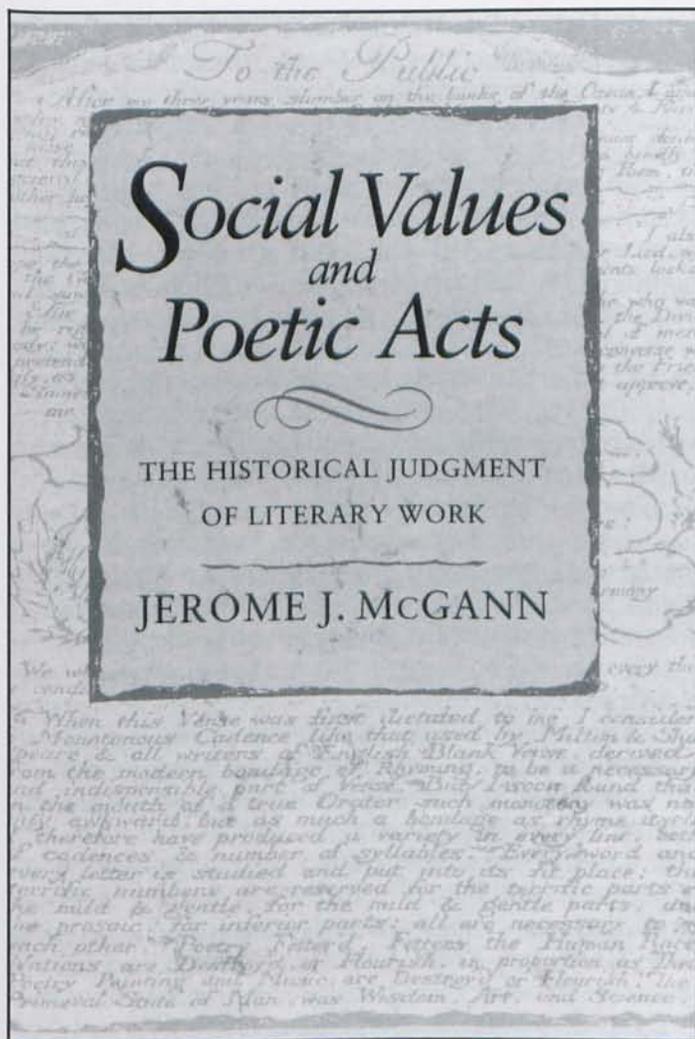
## REVIEWS

**Jerome J. McGann, *Social Values and the Poetic Acts*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988. xii + 279 pp. \$25.**

**Reviewed by Michael Fischer**

*Social Values and Poetic Acts* is the fourth in an important series of books that includes *The Romantic Ideology* and *A Critique of Textual Criticism* (both published in 1983) and *The Beauty of Inflections* (1985). (McGann has not yet said when the fifth and final installment, *The Literature of Knowledge*, will appear.) These books all aim at restoring historical consciousness to literary studies. Although the English romantics have figured in this project from the beginning, in *Social Values and Poetic Acts* Blake is especially important to McGann's argument. Part 1 of the book, with its four chapters addressed to the deconstructionists, the new historicists, the formalists, and the marxists, respectively, is of course patterned after *Jerusalem*, and what McGann calls Blake's "habit of returning to the same topics from slightly altered perspectives" (ix) influences the method of the several chapters that follow.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Blake's intervention in the "legitimation crisis of art" (x) of his own time guides McGann's response to the problem of revitalizing literary study today. Even the dust jacket of the book reproduces a plate from *Jerusalem*. Understanding why Blake has become so important to McGann sheds light not only on *Social Values and Poetic Acts* but on the series of books that it extends.

Although discussed in *The Romantic Ideology*, Blake is peripheral to that book's larger concerns and figures mainly as an example of the first, optimistic phase of romanticism, when the promise of the French Revolution could still be believed. Because politics was still "a pleasant exercise of hope and joy," as Wordsworth described this period in *The Prelude*, radical works like *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* could be exempt from



the self-criticism and anxiety that trouble later works like the *Lyrical Ballads*, not to mention the nihilism, cynicism, and despair that overtake still later works by Byron and Shelley. McGann may feel that his own historical moment has more in common with Shelley's England in 1819 (with its "Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know / But leech-like to their fainting country cling") than with Europe in the early 1790s (when, again to quote Wordsworth, "mighty were the auxiliars which then stood / Upon our side, we who were strong in love!").<sup>2</sup> In any case, Blake's understandably confident affirmation of change was less interesting to McGann in 1983 than the other romantics' response to political disappointment.

Blake's enviable historical position protects him from McGann's ambivalent assessment of the other romantics in *The Romantic Ideology*, especially Wordsworth.<sup>3</sup> According to McGann, Wordsworth's poetry typically takes up serious social problems—in "The Ruined Cottage," for example, the collapse of the cottage weaving industry and in "Tintern Abbey" the

newly impoverished and uprooted rural poor that frequented the ruined abbey. After acknowledging these problems, Wordsworth tries to evade or displace them. In "The Ruined Cottage" he changes the subject from the economic plight of the weaver's family to the natural deterioration of the family's neglected cottage, with the plants, weeds, and flowers (agents of what Wordsworth calls "the calm oblivious tendencies of nature") growing over the cottage and virtually incorporating it into the landscape. In "Tintern Abbey," the smoke from "the vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods" similarly blends in with the natural setting, almost like a cloud or breeze. Action gives way to peaceful contemplation, as painful historical realities yield to consoling natural processes, allowing the speaker in "The Ruined Cottage" to

Be wise and chearful, and no longer read  
The forms of things with an unworthy eye.  
She [Margaret] sleeps in the calm earth, and peace  
is here.

In "Tintern Abbey," the social crisis signified by transients and displaced persons—not to mention the failure of the French Revolution to remedy such inequality, which has to haunt a visit taking place the eve of Bastille Day—also dissolves into a tranquil setting that Wordsworth can observe "with an eye made quiet."

All of the romantics are subjected to this kind of analysis in *The Romantic Ideology*, again with the exception of Blake. Because Blake could still hope for political solutions, he presumably did not have to avoid social problems. Attacking God & his Priest & King could give Blake the satisfaction Wordsworth pursued in contemplating the "calm earth." But if Blake thus stands outside the evasions that tempt the other romantics, he also misses out on what McGann sees as their heroism. Although McGann repeatedly charges these poets with avoiding social realities, he is not attacking them, as some of his detractors have felt, but redefining what makes their poetry great. Their artistic successes come when they recognize the failure of their own attempts to escape history—when they see that nothing makes up for their political frustration, not musing on nature in solitude, not even writing poetry. Sometimes McGann pictures these poets as unwillingly suffering the exposure of their most cherished illusions. But more often he praises these writers for courageously struggling with the contradictions that attend their futile dreams of escape. In different ways, these writers all end up admitting that the fancy cannot cheat so well as they had wished.<sup>4</sup> They are great poets not because of their spurious consolations but because they refuse to be consoled. They remain dissatisfied with a harsh world that they feel cannot be avoided.

McGann is much harder on twentieth-century critics of romanticism than he is on the romantics themselves. These writers, especially, it seems, M. H. Abrams, mistake the romantics' wishes for achievements. In the guise of respecting the romantics' intentions, twentieth-century critics shy away from these writers' agonizing self-criticism. In academic criticism, as McGann describes it, a poetic tale (the ability of romantic poetry to transcend or otherwise make up for political pain) becomes a costly form of worship: costly, because "to generate a polemic for Romantic poetry on its own ideological terms is to vitiate criticism and to court mere intellectual sentiment."<sup>5</sup> Encouraging the sentimental illusion that poetry can compensate for political disappointment shortchanges these poets' critiques of their own evasions or, what is the same thing, obscures their heroic refusal to settle for anything less than a better society. By failing to see that the poets "keep [their] sorrow to the end," critics like Abrams encourage us to minimize our disappointment in our world, even to think that contemplating romantic poetry is abundant recompense for our own political grievances.<sup>6</sup> These "priests and clerics of Romanticism" thus vitiate criticism of a world that we ought to change. They refuse to admit that "Wordsworth's truth," for example, "is darker, more intransigent, more *faithful*" to a future that still has not arrived.<sup>7</sup>

Just as Blake stays marginal to McGann's critique of romanticism in *The Romantic Ideology*, Blake's critics are also exempt from this harsh attack on academic criticism. Northrop Frye, arguably the chief priest of romantic scholarship, is not even mentioned. These gaps begin to be filled in McGann's next two books, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* and *The Beauty of Inflections*, which set the stage for Blake's emergence as a central figure in *Social Values and Poetic Acts*. In *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* and in several of the essays collected in *Inflections*, McGann argues for healing the rift between what the "new critics" called scholarship and criticism, or what he terms textual and interpretive studies. By attending to the words on the page and ignoring how they got there, the new critics reinforced the romantic illusion that a poem is timeless (as immutable as print) and autonomous (intelligible apart from its genesis and reception). McGann suggests that modern textual scholarship, instead of contesting these illusions, has left them intact by doing its work and then getting out of the way, its work being to establish once and for all the definitive text. The "definitive text" is arrived at by heeding the final intention of the individual author and filtering out the "accidentals" or corruptions introduced by printers, editors, and other external forces.

McGann uses Blake to expose what these myths hide, namely, that every work emerges from a series of negotiations involving the individual author with publishers, printers, editors, distributors, booksellers, and even reviewers. Blake brings to light these negotiations by trying to circumvent them, by, in effect, aspiring "to become a literary institution unto himself."<sup>8</sup> The several different versions of works like *Jerusalem*, moreover, highlight the difficulties involved in fixing a definitive text: "In reality, there is no such Text; there are only texts, of various kinds, prepared by various people (some by the author), at various periods, for particular and various purposes."<sup>9</sup> McGann is not so much describing *Jerusalem* here as using it to unsettle distinctions between accidental and substantive variations, preliminary and final intentions. For him, all poems are social acts that bear the imprint of a particular place and time. It follows that textual scholarship ought to play a primary rather than a preliminary role in interpretation. Seemingly accidental intrusions or irrelevant, extrinsic considerations — the price of a book or the place of publication — help constitute literary meaning.

Although Blake assists McGann in making this argument, Byron does, too, by vigorously taking part in the dialogue with reviewers, publishers, and booksellers that McGann wants to highlight. In theory at least, any poet would do because all literary works illustrate the interpretive importance of historical scholarship. McGann accordingly uses works by a wide range of poets, among them Coleridge, Keats, Christina Rossetti, and Tennyson, to underscore the necessity of historical criticism.

*A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* and *The Beauty of Inflections* could have been written without Blake, but in *Social Values and Poetic Acts* he is indispensable. Much of this book continues the critique of academic criticism begun in *The Romantic Ideology*. Here, however, McGann turns from self-described traditionalists like Abrams to the poststructuralists who claim to have superseded them, in particular Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, and Stanley Fish. McGann's critique repeats a familiar, but still important, litany: poststructuralists neglect the historical and social dimensions of literary works ("For all its use of language," McGann complains, literature in de Man "has little to say or do beyond itself" [104]); perpetuate the new critics' myopic obsession with immanent interpretation or close reading ("The enemy which deconstructive critics like Miller will not face is history, and the fault line of such criticism appears as its elision of the sociohistorical dimensions of literary work" [121]); preach what is finally an "entirely benevolent and conservative" message (109–10) (in different ways, both "Fish's inconsequence" and "de Man's nihilism" "preserve and justify the known

world of literary criticism" [109]); and exacerbate the legitimation crisis currently facing literary study. "What is so special about those *literary* labyrinths guarded so cunningly by the professors" (97)? Why not concentrate on cybernetic systems that are equally challenging to the imagination and more useful in practical terms? "What possible use can a literary education serve"—a literary education defined as free play—"other than to train other [unneeded] literary persons" (97)? These are excellent questions. For McGann, the inability of post-structuralists to answer them contributes to the marginality of literary studies today.

Despite these accusations, de Man and Fish fare better in this book than Abrams did in *The Romantic Ideology*. McGann credits poststructuralism with debunking the self-serving myths of totalization, continuity, and finality that our culture has fostered and with being alert to the contradictions that disrupt literary works. De Man and Fish, moreover, rightly attack a crudely referential picture of language in which words mirror preexistent things or facts.<sup>10</sup> McGann tries to turn this attack into an opportunity, not to expunge the referential dimensions of poetry (as Miller and de Man apparently do) but to reconceive them along lines laid down by the historical critics and philologists of the recent past.

Other critics have brought similar charges against deconstruction, but McGann is the first to draw on Milman Parry and other historical critics in fashioning his alternative to deconstruction as well as to the traditional humanism that deconstruction challenges. The view of literature and literary criticism that results is impressive. McGann variously describes both literary works and critical texts as events, acts, activities, and social practices; their truth depends on what they do—the human interests that they serve. From this point of view, a poet intervenes in history, acting on behalf of certain values or ideologies. Poetic discourse, however, compels the poet to flesh out these ideologies and to make them concrete, thereby preventing the poet (as opposed to the propagandist) from simply promoting them intact: "literary forms do not permit the archive of knowledge to be reduced to the abstractness of proverbs or the illusions of ideology. Literary forms deploy such abstractions and illusions all the time, but they dispel these ghostly shapes by transforming them into recognizable human forms: by incarnating them in worlds that are detailed, specific, and circumstantial" (107). The details of literary works—the minute particulars that might appear in an anthology footnote, for instance—prove to be incommensurate with the ideologies that would master them. Poets thus cannot do without detail (and still write poetry); neither can they do with particulars what they would like (enforce certain ideologies). By including inevitably re-

calcitrant historical particulars, "the poetic performs a critical function which is not found in other forms of discourse" (82).

Poetic performativity overtakes and finally overcomes ideological performativity as the poetic strives to thicken and realize the entirety of the communicative field. Unlike predicative and propositional discourse, poetry is obliged, as it were, to represent all sides of a question. . . . Imaginative discourse does not stand apart from norms, imperatives, and ideologies. Operating in modes of representation, the poetic acts to display truth as a function of lived realities rather than formal relations or empirical correlations. For this reason one must say that, of all forms of communication, the poetic alone entails the *whole* of what is true; and this is the case because in the domain of the poetic—the domain of Imagination and Memory—all the details, and all the forms through which those details are known, remain conceptually free, remain open to their own discovery. (91–92)

"Only imaginative work does this," this inclusion of detail that subverts the work's ideological design on its reader: "*et tout le reste est idéologie*" (114).

It follows for McGann that critics who elide a work's details defuse its critical power. Glossing over the work's historical particulars takes many forms, among them insisting on the work's timelessness (thus allegorizing its details into illustrations of eternal truths) and celebrating the work's supposed autonomy (making what has to be footnoted irrelevant). Reinforcing a point first made against Abrams in *The Romantic Ideology*, McGann holds that any "thematizing hermeneutics which does not emphasize the sociohistorical particularities of the literary ideas and knowledge which it deploys runs a grave risk . . . of reproducing ideology rather than literature" (107). The canonical texts of Western culture—the Bible, Plato's dialogues, and Herodotus's *Histories* are a few of McGann's examples—become especially important not because they represent transhistorical values (as conservatives would have it) but because their remoteness is as hard to overlook as the editorial annotations that must now accompany them. "The footnote historicizes what the scholar is doing. It alerts the reader to the fact that what we call knowledge is not a corpus of information but a series of knowing acts that have been and are carried out under particular circumstances" (54)—and in the service of certain ideologies that McGann wants scholars always to examine.

McGann, in effect, does for the classics here what he did for the romantics in *The Romantic Ideology*. The immersion of ancient texts in history, not their alleged timelessness, makes them great. He similarly praises a modernist text like *The Cantos* for letting time and circumstance "play havoc with its most cherished illusions" (238), for being "littered with incommensurate materials" (240). The honesty of Pound the poet offsets the blindness of Pound the ideologue: "Pound's exposure of European and American imperialism loses none of its

*objective* truth because it comes from a source that is in so many ways repellent and blind" (239). While I agree with this exoneration of Pound and the classics, I would be interested in knowing what (if any) canonical text fails McGann's test for literary greatness and what (if any) non-canonical text passes it. I share McGann's wish to rescue the canon from "those who would use it to propagate retrograde ideas and social values" (viii). But he risks sounding as if the present literary archive (read against the grain) were all we need to know.<sup>11</sup>

The view of literature and criticism that I have been sketching shows McGann's indebtedness not only to historical criticism but to the formalist theories he is criticizing. Like the new critics, he privileges poetry, or at least great poetry, as the one kind of discourse that frustrates ideology. In "Poetry: A Note in Ontology" (1934) and "Criticism as Pure Speculation" (1941), John Crowe Ransom also wrote of the "huge wealth of local detail" in poetry, the "context of lively local details" that a good poem develops, and "the [poet's] excursions into particularity" that "give, in spite of the argument, which would seem to be perfectly self-sufficient, a sense of the real density and contingency of the world in which arguments and plans have to be pursued." Substituting "ideologue" for "moralist" or "prophet of idealism" in the following passage by Ransom yields something remarkably close to McGann's own point of view:

The moralist, the scientist, and the prophet of idealism think evidently that they must establish their conclusions in poetry, though they reach these conclusions upon quite other evidence. The poetry is likely to destroy the conclusions with a sort of death by drowning, if it is a free poetry.

A "free poetry" presumably leaves its details as "conceptually free" as possible, to borrow a phrase from McGann noted earlier.<sup>12</sup>

McGann, of course, takes this freedom a step further than Ransom, letting the poem's particulars not only drown its theme or argument but shatter its organic unity. A poem for Ransom moves against the resistance of its details but toward a point of rest that it finally earns.<sup>13</sup> For McGann, there is no point of rest: a poem finally comes apart and its implosion lays bare the heterogeneous world that Ransom thinks poetry can tame. In departing from the new criticism, McGann shows his respect for de Man and Derrida, not only their critique of organic form but their willingness to play off what a poem declares against what a poet intends to say. The classic deconstructionist dictum along these lines is Derrida's remark in *Of Grammatology*:

the writer writes *in* a language and *in* a logic whose proper system, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely. He uses them only by letting himself, after a fashion and up to

a point, be governed by the system. And the reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of the language that he uses.<sup>14</sup>

Putting "world" in place of "language" again results in something quite close to McGann's own point of view: the writer writes in a world whose conflict-ridden history his ideology cannot dominate absolutely. A reading must always aim at a certain asymmetry, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the historical detail that he uses. Particular facts turn out to be as unruly as tropes.

Modifying Derrida's statement this way suggests that we can distinguish facts from tropes and get outside language to history. To his credit, McGann realizes that these are controversial assumptions. "History" is not for him a magic wand that makes deconstructive doubts vanish. He concedes that all knowledge—history included—is mediated by language (116) and by the social circumstances of the observer (96). He nevertheless can say that "true criticism entails a self-conscious response to certain social and historical factors; it is a function of an objective state of affairs rather than a set of verbal configurations" (149) and he can confidently appeal to "the actual, the whole, the objective truth" (230). Sometimes he sounds more cautious (or less positivistic), as when he notes that "the 'referent' of any discourse . . . cannot be simply conceived as an empirical datum" (125). But he seems to want to have his facts—and problematize them, too. Whether he can have it both ways depends on how we take a passage like the following, his most explicit treatment of the problem:

There is a knowledge through the incommensurate which is a positive knowledge and which has its roots in the ancient understanding of the memorial function of poetic discourse. To understand this more clearly, however, we shall have to explore further the structure of knowledge through incommensurability. We shall find that incommensurates are not "facts"—or what Coleridge called "objects as objects"—they are details which already carry or imply those contexts of competing human interests by which meaning is constituted. At the dawning of the incommensurate we come to understand the human world is not made up of "facts" and/or "interpretations," it is made up of *events*—specific and worlded engagements in which meaning is rendered and used. Poetic work locates one type of event. Its special function is to display the eventuality of meaning through representations of the incommensurable. (72)

For me at least, the strained emphasis on *events* does not so much solve the problem of claiming positive knowledge for poetry as underscore it. Perhaps McGann is deferring further exploration of this admittedly difficult question to *The Literature of Knowledge*, the final volume in this series.

I am less patient with McGann's essentialist talk of "the poetic," "literary forms," "poetic performativity," and "poetic work," which runs through nearly all of the

statements by him that I have been quoting. *Social Values and Poetic Acts* is full of flat statements about "authentic literary work" (112), "all poetical discourse" (240), and "all poetry" (230). (I am tempted to add "poetry as such" or "poetry qua poetry": McGann can sound so much like T. S. Eliot.) In these remarks "poetry" or "poetic discourse" seems static, defined (by McGann) once and for all. McGann faults Frye's *Anatomy* for its "neglect of the historicity of literary practice: in fact, his resort to certain conceptual categories which are assumed to be transhistorical" (14). But only a few pages earlier McGann himself makes poetry a transhistorical conceptual category, when he unequivocally defines the "distinctive character" of "poetry" as "discourse deploying a form of total coherence—and thereby a hope of coherence—within the quotidian world . . ." (9).

I am not sure whether McGann is being inconsistent in these passages or whether we should always take "poetry" as being under some tacit form of historical erasure in his writing. (Derrida, of course, has run into a similar problem with "metaphysical" terms like "center" or "origin," which he can neither avoid nor use with a straight face.) In any case, something comparable to these apparent lapses into formalism or idealism recurs in his treatment of Blake. Opposing Blake to Kant, McGann praises Blake for developing "an activist and contestatory poetics" (42). By foregrounding its own production, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* carries out this aggressive poetics. The poem reveals itself "as a specific deed of imagination—mind not in meditation but in action, and with its acts located in a particular socio-historical frame of reference" (44). Implicitly criticizing Kantian disinterestedness, Blake further shows in *Milton* that "truth is a function, not a possession, and it merges in the dialectics of serious intellectual commitments" (47). In addition, the instabilities built into *The Book of Urizen* and the consequent difficulty of settling on a definitive text reflect Blake's attempt to parody Genesis along lines opened up by historical criticism of the Bible and by Alexander Geddes in particular (171). Finally, Blake's experiments with "nonnarrative" in *The Marriage* and "antinarrative" in *Milton* show his interest in subverting "the imperialism of narrativity" (205). In all these ways, "Blake's judgments . . . went far beyond those of other artists of his time" (232): "Blake's work is exactly a prophecy against empire, a model of how the poetic moves against the perpetuation of empires and toward the development of less exploitive societies, less alienated imaginations" (230).

Everything that McGann says here about Blake jibes with what he has already said. But he neglects to mention Blake's fortunate historical position, his writing *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, for example, be-

fore the promise of the French Revolution had soured. According to *The Romantic Ideology*, Blake's confidence in poetry as a radical act derived in part from the mighty auxiliaries which then stood on his side. Blake did not question his activist poetics because he did not have to: his prophecy against empire seemed on the verge of coming true.

Disengaging Blake's work from that dawn allows McGann to draw some misleading parallels between Blake's art and "postmodernism," in particular the recent "Content" exhibition at the Hirshhorn Museum and the work of the so-called L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets. These parallels are based on formal or stylistic affinities—a shared commitment to antinarrative, for example—that the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writers charge with subversive political meaning. Formal experimentation contributes to social change, or so these writers have argued in several manifestos and reviews that McGann quotes.

I unfortunately see very little evidence that the "textual activism" (210) of these writers is having the political consequences that they desire.<sup>15</sup> The modest (at best) political impact of this writing is at odds with its radical aspirations. Instead of analyzing this problem, McGann sympathetically focuses on these writers' statements of intent—the very mistake he accuses Abrams of making with the English romantics.<sup>16</sup> In *Social Values and Poetic Acts*, poetic tales (the activist claims of the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets) again become forms of worship, or at least objects of uncritical attention. From a historicist point of view, McGann makes things worse instead of better when he notes that "empires are maintained by imperial intellects" (230). By slighting the role played by military and economic power, McGann exaggerates the vulnerability of empires to the intellectual warfare carried on by writers like the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets. Picturing our manacles as (only) mind-forged encourages McGann to take these writers' militancy at face value.

McGann handles "Blake's distinctly nonradical reception history" (233) in a similarly disappointing way. Much of what I am implying about the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets McGann says about Blake, for McGann "the most ineffectual of [the romantic] period's many angels" (232). According to McGann, "no one had less influence on his age than Blake, and it was not until many decades after his death that he began to gather a public. And now he is [only?] an academic subject, central to the curriculum" (232). In analyzing what went wrong, McGann puts some of the blame on Blake for being "first and last a Christian" and thus opening his work "to those clerical interpretations which survive in the valley of their saying, which make nothing happen beyond what has been established as possible or acceptable" (234). ("We should not be surprised, therefore,

that Blake asked to have the Anglican service read at his funeral in 1827" [233].<sup>17</sup> In addition, although Blake aimed at short-circuiting the "machineries of mercantile capitalism" (233), his works have been so expensive that only "rich people and art connoisseurs" have been interested in owning them and so elliptical that only the privileged interpreters of "Blake Studies" (234) have been interested in decoding them. Blake's projects have had, "from the outset, small purchase among those who would be most interested in carrying out such social transformations" (233). Blake, like the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets, thus "looked forward to the advent of a New Jerusalem." But, in Blake's case, "it did not come. The violent would bear it away, and Blake would play his part in the closet dramas of the academy and the struggles in the auction salesrooms" (232).

This explanation of Blake's fate sounds too simple to me, but I am most troubled by McGann's again saying nothing about Blake's initially promising historical moment or, rather, saying only that "the violent" took it away. In this account, Blake's aspirations appear as hopeless as jamming the awesome machinery of industrial capitalism. His defeat seems as inevitable as the high price of his works. Little wonder that modernist writers went on to conclude that poetry makes nothing happen and to compare the poet to "a trifling, impertinent, vexatious thing, a tumbler who has unrolled his carpet in the way of a marching army," as Yeats, one of Blake's most serious readers, put it.<sup>18</sup> It is also not surprising that literature for de Man, as McGann represents his work, has little to say or do beyond itself (104): that would seem to be the moral of Blake's incarceration in the academy and auction room.

In Yeats and the English romantics (if not in de Man) pessimistic observations about the political powerlessness of literature oscillate with desperate, or at least unsubstantiated, tributes to unacknowledged poet-legislators and "solitary men in moments of contemplation" making and unmaking "mankind, and even the world itself," again to quote Yeats.<sup>19</sup> Much the same thing happens in *Social Values and Poetic Acts* when McGann leaps from Blake's disappointing fate to the activism of the writers he has influenced, among them the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets and, in criticism, McGann himself. McGann dedicates this book to his children, advising them (and us) "'Tis not too late to seek a newer world." But a firm persuasion that a thing is so does not make it so, except perhaps in ages of imagination when poets have political help. Many (not just de Man) are still not capable of a firm persuasion of anything and McGann needs to analyze why.<sup>20</sup> I am not asking him to abandon his optimism, only to earn it. How can a poetics anchored in Blake avoid sinking with him into the seminar room?

<sup>17</sup>These chapters include such already published essays as "Ulysses as a Postmodern Work," "Some Forms of Critical Discourse," "The Idea of an Indeterminate Text: Blake and Dr. Alexander Geddes," and "Contemporary Poetry, Alternate Routes." The first four chapters of the book are expanded versions of the Alexander Lectures McGann delivered at the University of Toronto in 1986. The book reads like a collection of interrelated but self-contained essays. In his preface, McGann justifies the book's "disciplined discontinuities" (ix) by appealing to the example of *Jerusalem*.

<sup>18</sup>McGann's political feelings come across most forcefully in "Thoughts after *The Romantic Ideology*," a paper he delivered at an MLA convention session. After noting that "forms of domination and exploitation have not been mitigated with the passage of the 20th century," he calls the present a "scene of wretchedness," "a world of vast and tragic social exploitation and personal alienation which is played out in literally millions of particular human lives." I thank Jerome McGann for providing me with a typescript of this paper.

<sup>19</sup>McGann hints at a distinction between early, "primary" works like *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and later "revisionist" ones like *Jerusalem*, but he is most interested in placing Blake in the first phase of romanticism: "Works of this kind [i.e., Blake's]—they are rare in the period—I would call 'primary' because they do not bring their own dialectical stance into question. They possess the special historical privilege which attached to English romantic poems written before the Reign of Terror, the Directory, and Napoleon's accession to power, as well as the political events in England which took place in response to continental circumstances." *The Romantic Ideology* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983) 108–09. For a fuller assessment of this book, see my review in *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 18 (1984–85): 152–55.

<sup>20</sup>See *The Romantic Ideology* 131, 133–34.

<sup>21</sup>*Romantic Ideology* 37.

<sup>22</sup>Jerome J. McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1985) 340.

<sup>23</sup>*Beauty of Inflections* 342.

<sup>24</sup>Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1983) 47.

<sup>25</sup>*The Beauty of Inflections* 119.

<sup>26</sup>So does Abrams, in essays such as his overlooked "What's the Use of Theorizing about the Arts?," in *In Search of Literary Theory*, ed. Morton W. Bloomfield (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1972) 2–54. For a more positive assessment of Abrams's contributions to contemporary literary theory, see my foreword to his forthcoming collection of essays, *Doing Things with Texts* (New York: Norton, 1989).

<sup>27</sup>McGann's sympathetic, insightful discussion of George Crabbe and Christina Rossetti (in *The Beauty of Inflections*) suggests to me his willingness to expand the canon as well as critically reread it.

<sup>28</sup>See John Crowe Ransom, "Poetry: A Note in Ontology" and "Criticism as Pure Speculation," in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971) 886, 885, 875.

<sup>29</sup>I adapt here a comment from Robert Penn Warren very much in the spirit of Ransom's work: "a poem to be good, must earn itself. It is motion toward a point of rest . . . movement through action toward rest, through complication toward simplicity of effect." "Pure and Impure Poetry," in *Critical Theory Since Plato* 991.

<sup>30</sup>Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976) 158.

<sup>31</sup>I suspect McGann would agree. In a later chapter he notes that "even the poetry committed to revolution—the 'reading' of Frederic [sic] Jameson, the 'writing' of Ron Silliman—is executed within the limits set for it by American imperialism . . ." (247). Before discuss-

ing the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E writers, he says, "Of course, much of this work is weak, some of it is trivial, and a great deal has only a formal or aesthetic significance, despite its political urgencies. My interest here, however, is not in such matters. Rather, what I want to indicate is the kind of intervention L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E work typically seeks to make [hence his reliance on these writers' statements of intent]—how it tries to enter the world in a political way, and what it means to carry out through that entrance" (201). McGann shies away from investigating whether these writers succeed in entering the world in a political way. After again noting that the program of these writers "has a strong, usually an explicit, social and political orientation," he once more decides "to leave that aside for the moment . . . in order to concentrate on its more local and even technical aspects" (207). Such reticence is disappointing in a writer so admirably concerned with social, and not just literary, change. L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry may stand "in the sharpest relief, stylistically, to the poetry of accommodation" (199) and still make very little happen.

<sup>16</sup>I will not pursue this parallel with Abrams except to say that insofar as it holds true, everything McGann says against Abrams would apply to himself (see above 0–0). Using McGann's own words against him, it would follow that to generate a polemic for L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry on its own ideological terms is to vitiate criticism and to court mere intellectual sentiment—not the sentiment that we can transcend history but the sentiment that by experimenting with syntax we can change history.

<sup>17</sup>See also 234, 241–43, where McGann elaborates on how Blake's Christianity, an "ideological deformation" comparable to his "sexist theory of the emanations," "introduced into his work a network of other, equally pernicious falsehoods." Frye is presumably the critic most captivated by this Christian, "mystified" strain in Blake's work.

<sup>18</sup>W. B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions* (New York: Collier Books, 1961) 318.

<sup>19</sup>Yeats 158–59.

<sup>20</sup>I echo here David Simpson's plea, "let us above all refuse the consolation of a 'return' to history, and ponder instead all the reasons why we have not yet been there." "Literary Criticism and the Return to 'History,'" *Critical Inquiry*, 14 (1988): 747. I am not accusing McGann of complacently settling for a return to history. I am, however, asking him to ponder another one of Simpson's points: the "new enthusiasm for a rhetoric of referentiality and relevance would be hard to attribute to any grand shift in the social or political culture at large" (721). Like Simpson, I fear "that the status of historical inquiry has been so eroded that its reactive renaissance, in whatever form, threatens to remain merely gestural and generic" (725).

**Rodney M. Baine, with the Assistance of Mary R. Baine. *The Scattered Portions: William Blake's Biological Symbolism*. Athens, GA: Distributed by the author, 1986. xx + 260 pp. Illus. \$24.95.**

**Reviewed by Terence Allan Hoagwood**

*The Scattered Portions* is a scholarly guide to the symbolic meanings of plant and animal imagery in Blake's poetry and designs, including many species of beast, bird, insect, reptile, fish, tree, and plant. Sources for the meanings of these images include Boehme, Swedenborg, the Bible, iconographical works (e.g., Caesare Ripa), emblem books (e.g., Francis Quarles, John Huddleston Wynne, and John Bunyan), and Blake's poetic predecessors, including Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. A ground thesis of *The Scattered Portions* is that Blake's poems and designs often portray a fallen humanity "perceiving projections of his own psyche in various biological forms" (8), while many of these objectified aspects of humanity are "capable of being reclaimed" in a Blakean vision of regeneration. This book learnedly decodes specific animal and plant images to disclose what human property each represents. *The Scattered Portions* thus shares concerns with previous studies of emblematic and iconographical language by Beryl Rowland, Mary Lynn Johnson, and Judith Wardle (all of whom Baine cites), as well as Janet A. Warner's *Blake and the Language of Art* (1984), also a valuable book on such matters. Baine's biological focus provides a distinctive and informative frame of reference.

As always, the limits of a critical work involve matters of theory and method, spoken or unspoken, and I shall have more to say about such matters shortly. Baine's notion of "symbol" apparently operates more like S. Foster Damon's confident assumptions (in *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* [1924] and *A Blake Dictionary* [1965]) than, for example, Hazard Adams's argument (in *Philosophy of the Literary Symbolic* [1983]), let alone the semiotic and post-semiotic complexity of Nelson Hilton's *Literal Imagination* (1983) or the essays gathered by Thomas Vogler and Hilton in *Unnam'd Forms: Blake and Textuality* (1985) or by Donald Ault, Mark Bracher, and Dan Miller in *Blake and the Argument of Method* (1988). The assumption that a symbol has *meaning*—that an image in word or design *refers* with some reliability to a conceptual object—is quali-

# THE SCATTERED PORTIONS

*William Blake's Biological Symbolism*

Rodney M. Baine

*With the assistance of Mary R. Baine*



fied responsibly when Baine notes exceptions to customary meanings, but that concept of "symbol" is not itself investigated or questioned.

That said, and that limit recognized, I want to emphasize at the outset that *The Scattered Portions* is a valuable work in numerous ways: richly annotated and responsibly scholarly, this compilation of examples and sources is a useful reference work; the book's 77 illustrations substantially enhance its value, and the index is among the best I have seen in a long while, making frequent and long-term use of the book easier and more rewarding. The prose is straightforward and clear, with some elegant writing especially in the chapters on herbivorous animals and carnivorous beasts.

Beyond the book's usefulness as a reference work, however, lie some important issues of argument, and to these I want to turn now in two ways: first, by illustrating Baine's arguments with some examples; and finally by suggesting some of the arguments that the book can open provocatively.

Carnivorous beasts are said to symbolize "aspects of fallen, malevolent man." This moral meaning (tiger = cruelty, Selfhood) is coupled with a political frame of reference (war in *Europe*, "tyrannizing emotions" of the Reign of Terror in *Abania*) (17). Lion, wolf, behemoth, and tiger appear in numerous examples from the poems and designs, typically after statements or examples from the Bible, Swedenborg, Boehme, Spenser, and Milton, often engravings (from Goltzius, e.g.), and often Shakespeare, or Chaucer, or Goldsmith. Herbivorous animals — lamb, sheep, goat, horse — are said sometimes to symbolize innocence or creativity, sometimes aspects of fallen humanity, and again an abundance of examples is produced.

The birds of prey include the vulture ("with one realistic exception [*VDA* 5. 36], invariably malignant"), raven (battlefield scavenger or priest), and crow ("malice and spiritual darkness") (77, 79). The "eagle of vision" in Blake's early works (drawn, for example, from iconographical associations with St. John) is distinguished from the "predatory eagle" of oppression and war, in Blake's later works, associated with the imperial eagle of Roman symbolism. (This reading of eagles, I add briefly, raises some problems, to which I shall return subsequently.)

"Man can be just as devouring as the caterpillar or intellectually dead as the chrysalis or as innocent and beautiful as the butterfly"; Baine finds that "in the insect metamorphosis Blake found the most dramatic analogy of his distinction between states and individuals" (84). This principle leads to an optimistic interpretation of the 1780 line engraving, *Albion Rose* (other readings of that design — notably Joseph Wittreich's, in *Angel of Apocalypse* — find darker ambiguities). The mixed implications of the insect imagery on the title-page of *Jerusalem* are read as an exhibit of an "interim state" between a lament and a promise (93). The contrary tones of this plate's imagery have been read as connotations, as simultaneous and contradictory signs, in my *Prophecy and the Philosophy of Mind* (1985). The insect chapter is particularly persuasive on spiders "and the manner in which moral, religious, and legal institutions entrap their victims" (99).

The chapter on reptiles includes a substantial discussion of the complex design of *Jerusalem* 41, which includes three serpents; this discussion alone amounts to a valuable contribution to studies of that poem. Other serpents abound among the exempla in this chapter, as well as dragons. (About the serpents, especially Orc's serpent imagery in *America*, I want to raise some issues below.)

Whereas those serpents "are capable of being redeemed and reincorporated within the body of Man, . . . all the creatures of the sea seem to be without the prospect of such redemption" (121): Nelson and his Leviathan and the famous polypus are among persuasive examples. Poor Orc in *America* is here labeled a "killer whale" (130): "in both verse and designs Orc is a destructive, not a constructive force" (131). While I do not share that moral attitude toward Orc in *America*, George III probably would; and Orc in later poems, I would argue, is a different story.

The chapter on trees shows convincingly that arborization is a symbol of materialized life. Further, "in the *French Revolution* the forest suggests also the domination of empire" (135), a level of reference that helps obviously with other poems, including "The Tyger," as well. "Innocence is characterized by shady, deciduous trees; Experience, by dead or dry ones" (136). While I am not as convinced that shadow or shade carries genuinely blessed or innocent connotations in Blake's designs or poems, Baine's descriptions do (in connection with the *Songs*) mark important pictorial distinctions. Looser usages of "Innocence" and "Experience," as states to be discerned in any and all Blake poems, constitute another kind of problem. In the tree chapter Baine marks many species distinctions perspicuously. Ambiguities among trees (e.g., tree of Death or Life, fruit-bearing and bare trees) are usefully observed in several Blakean examples. Baine claims that the oak loses its druidic and deadly associations when it appears in *Moses at the Burning Bush*, but this claim deserves some argument: how many of Blake's treatments of Moses present that patriarch as a "visionary shepherd-prophet"? Do the Moses designs (*Burial of Moses*, or the *Urizen* title-page, or *Job's Evil Dreams*) not suggest something "patriarchal"? Is the Moses painting to which Baine refers really an opposite to "patriarchal" imagery found elsewhere, as Baine says? Aren't "patriarchal" values, rather, present within this painting too?

"Man arborized is only a special form of man vegetated" (150): the mandrake, the brier, and the thorn are among examples presented persuasively in the plants chapter. Vines falling and rising have different meanings, and grapes are ambivalently associated with love, sex, life (*America*, *Songs of Innocence*) or death, war, and the dominion of nature (*French Revolution*, *Europe*). The well-known Blakean flowers (sunflower, rose, lily) are interpreted sensitively in the context of an "ambivalent symbolic heritage."

That ambivalence, however, opens some interpretive issues that warrant clarification and argument. Like the ambiguity of visual and verbal signs in Blake's works, oft-noted in *The Scattered Portions*, this ambivalence

might give rise to a sort of criticism very different from Baine's decoding of a relatively stable symbol-system. It might return us to the visual and verbal context in which the symbol appears, as the only determining frame (determine: limit) of reference. A context-bound specificity of the image is one response to its variability (indeterminacy) of meanings; another response (Baine's) is the construction of a relatively stable code. The book's conclusion — that "in his verse and designs Blake tried to guard against ambiguity" — works against the methodological recognition of variability. And such a code rests confidently, perhaps over-confidently, on the assumption of a signified thing, a conceptual object out there, to which the image refers. "The Tyger is neither Christ militant nor creative energy, but an ugly and malevolent manifestation of the Selfhood" (170): here, as codes of morals and meaning typically do, the translation separates opposites and disentangles contradiction. "The 'serpentine' vine, loosely entwining a tree, no longer appears a threat" (171): but threat and redemption, creation and malevolence, may not need to be disentwined by the interpreter, if the design entwines them in good earnest. The designs' disturbing complexity may involve a deep-level contrariness that is cognate with the pictorial paradox. Our thematized supplements (innocence, experience, love, malevolence) may be as ambiguous and perspectival as the literal and visual design elements themselves.

Examples of particular interpretive judgments resting on this presumption of code are numerous: is Orc's "inevitable degeneration" (119) necessarily present in *America*, because *Europe*, *The Four Zoas*, and Northrop Frye have taught us a theory of the Orc cycle? A method committed to a relatively stable code tends to separate differences rather than honor contradictions. The eagle in *Milton* 42 is a "predatory eagle" rather than one of the "eagles of inspiration" found in the *Marriage*, according to Baine (see chapter 5 *passim*). Never the twain shall meet. But the design might instead be seen to conflate these contexts — aggression, war, and prophecy — especially as the scriptural prophecy emblemized by the eagle of John was appropriated in both Milton's lifetime and Blake's as a war-cry (mark well the biblical commentators' words: they speak of corporeal war).

Considerably to the credit of *The Scattered Portions*, Baine does conscientiously acknowledge different meanings for animal symbols: a horse can "suggest the vehicular energies of three Zoas" (47), and any of them might represent fallen or unfallen aspects of humanity. In this way, Baine sets the signifier almost free. But the "fallen" horse or Zoa is located over here, and the "unfallen" one over there; the interpretation staves off the possibility that any given image might compress such conflicting connotations that its complexity eludes a fixed meaning.

The appeal of a stable reference is the appeal of closure, a settled question—good on the one hand and evil on the other, and so good night. But Blake's shifty and shifting forms might frustrate this quest for semantic stasis. Extreme forms of the stable code include the Mosaic tablets of the law (as in the *Urizen* and *Milton* designs). Just as the figure of Milton bursts past this stone closure (in the full-page design which is plate 18 in the Rosenwald copy), opening an infinity on the far side, so Blake's iconography may open, multiply, aggravate, and shift its implications, exploding moral norms into dynamic variability. The lion and ox may be said to symbolize different things: but the code within which those meanings are found is one law for the lion and the ox.

That *The Scattered Portions* provokes questions like these should be seen as a strength rather than a weakness. The book's compendiousness, its scholarship, its excellent apparatus, and its generous illustrations contribute to the book's utility, and I know that it will prompt me to argue again more than once. I've already started to analyze more critically Blake's supposed left-right symbolism, for example. Baine is uniform in applying it, but it seems to me that some reversals of the scriptural seating-chart for sheep and goats carry some ideological importance. For the provocation of argument, too, *The Scattered Portions* is a book of value.

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## NEWSLETTER

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### NEW NEWSLETTER

The *Northrop Frye Newsletter*, a new biannual edited by Robert D. Denham, publishes articles about Frye and his work and reviews of his books. Each issue also includes a bibliographic supplement. Copies are free. Address submissions and inquiries to Robert D. Denham, *Northrop Frye Newsletter*, Box D, Emory, VA 24327.

### LAST CHANCE FOR BLAKES

The summer of 1989 is almost certainly the last time it will be possible to see the Tate Gallery's Blake collection in its specially designed gallery. A smaller display of works by Blake will still be on view, and all works on paper that are not on display should be available on demand in the Study Room in the adjacent Clore Gallery (12 pm–5 pm, Tuesday through Saturday). For further information, please call the Tate Gallery at 01-821-1313.

### BLAKE COSTS!

Robert N. Essick reports that the sale of works by Blake from the Doheny Library at Christie's New York, 21 February 1989, established new records for an illuminated book and a water color. *Songs of Innocence* copy N sold for \$330,000 (including 10% buyer's premium) to the London dealer Libby Howie acting for an American private collector. *The Infant Jesus Saying His Prayers*, a water color of c. 1805 (Butlin #473), fetched the remarkable sum of \$352,000 from a bidder on the telephone. Blake's letter of 2 July 1826 to John Linnell sold for \$22,000 to another anonymous purchaser. Details and reproductions will appear in Essick's review of 1989 sales (summer 1990 issue).

### THE CUT WORM FORGIVES THE PLOW

Unfortunately, due to the inexorable rise of production and mailing costs, *Blake* is raising its subscription rates beginning with volume 23, 1989–90.

Individuals: \$20/year

Institutions: \$30/year for volume 23

\$40/year volume 24

Postal surcharges: Surface: \$6  
Airmail: \$15

New advertising rates: Half-page ad: \$80  
Full-page ad: \$120  
Inserts: \$115

Back issue rates: In print: \$6  
Out of print: \$9

## BLAKE STUDIES FROM THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY

The Huntington Library and Art Collections has a major group of Blake's watercolors and illuminated books and is a center for the study of William Blake and related matters.

### **William Blake and His Circle: Symposium Papers**

This collection of essays and a book review are reprinted from the *Huntington Library Quarterly* and represent the work of seven distinguished Blake experts. Reproduced in color for the first time anywhere is a recently discovered copy of *The Song of Los*. It is only the sixth copy known to exist and was found by Dr. D. W. Dörrbecker in the Bavarian State Library in Munich.

- The Physicality of William Blake: The Large Color Prints of "1795", by *Martin Bullin (Tate Gallery)*
- The Order of Blake's Large Color Prints by *David W. Lindsay*
- *The Song of Los*: The Munich Copy and a New Attempt to Understand Blake's Images by *D. W. Dörrbecker*
- "Sr Joshua and His Gang": William Blake and the Royal Academy by *Aileen Ward*
- The Art of "The Ancients" by *Morton Paley*
- Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England: The Comedy of the English School of Painting by *Morris Eaves*
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