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EUGENIE R. FREED ON *JERUSALEM 78*

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C O N T R I B U T O R S

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: *Jerusalem* plate 78, copy D. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, detail.

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"In the Darkness of Philisthea": The Design of Plate 78 of *Jerusalem*

BY EUGENIE R. FREED

With the hint of a tear in its eye, a hunched figure sits on a cliff sloping towards a dark sea. It has the body of a man and the profiled head of a bird, surmounted by a crest like a cock's comb, but with a hooked predatory beak like that of an eagle or even a vulture. The bird-head stares gloomily towards the viewer's left, past a quartered sun appearing on the horizon against the background of a clouded sky. Thus Blake opens the fourth chapter of *Jerusalem* (see illus. 1 and 2).

The scene on plate 78 of *Jerusalem* (henceforth *J*), and especially the figure dominating it, is a controversial one.¹ As Morton Paley comments, few of Blake's images have received more varied interpretations.² Various identities have been proposed for the figure: Joseph Wicksteed (226), W. J. T. Mitchell (211), Judith Ott (48), W. H. Stevenson (803) and Joanne Witke (180) see him as Los, S. Foster Damon ([1924]473) as Egypt, David Erdman (*IB* 357) and Henry Lesnick (400-01) as Hand. Erdman, Wicksteed and Lesnick perceive the head as that of a cock; John Beer (253), Mitchell, Witke, Stevenson and Ott see the head of an eagle; Paley ([1983] 89) suggests that Blake was inspired by the hawk-headed Osiris. Opinions differ as to whether the sun in the scene is rising or setting; for instance, while Paley (describing copy E, the unique colored version) sees "an angry sunset" (261) and Erdman (surveying all extant versions) "plainly the setting material sun—a signal for the rising of a more bright sun," to Beer, looking at the same version as Paley, the sun is "rising in splendour," and in Witke's view the bird-headed figure "looks towards a great globe of light reascending on the horizon in expectation of Albion's redemption."

Anyone surveying the agglomeration of conflicting critical views may well exclaim, with Blake himself, "But thou readst black where I read white" (*E* 524). Obviously these

¹ Blake texts are quoted from the Erdman edition, cited as *E* followed by the page numbers. Blake's illuminated plates other than those of copy E of *Jerusalem* are cited from Erdman, *The Illuminated Blake*, referred to as *IB* followed by the page number. Copy E of Blake's *Jerusalem* is discussed with reference to the facsimile edited by Morton Paley.

² Paley summarizes critical opinion in a note to the facsimile edition of *Jerusalem*, 261.

are matters on which ultimately readers will have to agree to differ from one another. But I would like, in what follows, to draw attention to one element in the context of this enigmatic image that may have been overlooked: that of "disease"—the "spiritual disease" referred to by the "Watcher" of the vision just preceding, when he directs the poet, as Jesus commanded his disciples, to "cast out devils in Christ's name / Heal thou the sick of spiritual disease" (*J* 77:24-25, *E* 233).³ No doubt this adds a further complication to a question already vexed enough, but it may go a little way towards articulating, if not clarifying, some of the ambiguities surrounding this scene.

The strongly hooked beak of the bird-head on *J* 78, the upper part overhanging the lower, suggests that of a predatory bird, like an eagle, or a bird of carrion, a vulture. Amongst the numerous eagles that hover and swoop through Blake's works are some whose heads can be clearly seen: for instance, on plate 15 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (*IB* 112), on plate 3 of *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (*IB* 131), on plate 42 [38] of *Milton* (*IB* 258), and in the upper left corner of Blake's 1805 painting "War" (Butlin, cat. no. 195, pl. 193; and see also cat. no. 189, pl. 195), where the bird (more like a raven or a crow than an eagle) seems to be attracted to carrion flesh. None of these has a crest like the bird-head on *J* 78—nor, moreover, do the two eagle-headed men riding man-faced bulls in *J* 46[41]. Blake made several sketches (presumably in 1802) illustrating William Hayley's ballad "The Eagle" (Butlin cat. nos. 360-63, pl. 467 and 470-72). Two of these (361 *recto* and 362 *recto*) show a neck-ruff of raised feathers behind the eagle's head, but 360 and especially 363, the most advanced of the sketches (tentatively dated by Butlin 1805) show Blake's usual smooth-headed eagle with a hooked upper beak. Paley (*Jerusalem* 261) points out that the gryphon pulling the car of Beatrice in Blake's *Paradiso* illustration "Beatrice addresses Dante from the Car" (Butlin cat. no. 812 88, pl. 973) resembles the head of the figure in *J* 78. But I would argue that the way in which the crest is deliberately extended forward in the figure on *J* 78 to meet the nostrils just above the beak differentiates it from the swept-back crest of the gryphon harnessed to Beatrice's car. The head of this bird-man is not obviously that of a crested eagle, but something more like a domestic fowl with a crest or comb that suggests (to me, at any rate) a modification of the rooster's head seen under the right arm of Comus at the banquet table in Blake's *Comus* illustration of c. 1801, *The Magic Banquet with the Lady Spell-Bound*, from the Thomas set (Butlin cat. no. 527 5, pl. 620) (illus 3).⁴

It would be appropriate—as Wicksteed (226) argued—for a cock to figure in the symbolism on this plate. Blake

³ Matthew 10:8: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils . . ." See also note 13 below.

⁴ Pace Judith Ott, who uses this same comparison to support her assertion that the bird's head in *J* 78 is not that of a cock (51n1). Blake



The Spectres of Albions Twelve Sons revolve mightily
 Over the Tomb & over the Body; raving to devour
 The sleeping Humanity. Los with his mace of iron
 Walks round: loud his threats, loud his blows fall
 On the rocky Spectres, as the Potter breaks the potsherd;
 Dashing in pieces, Self-righteousnesses: driving them from Albions
 Cliffs: dividing them into Male & Female forms in his Furnaces
 And on his Anvils; lest they destroy the Feminine Affections
 They are broken. Loud howl the Spectres in his iron Furnace

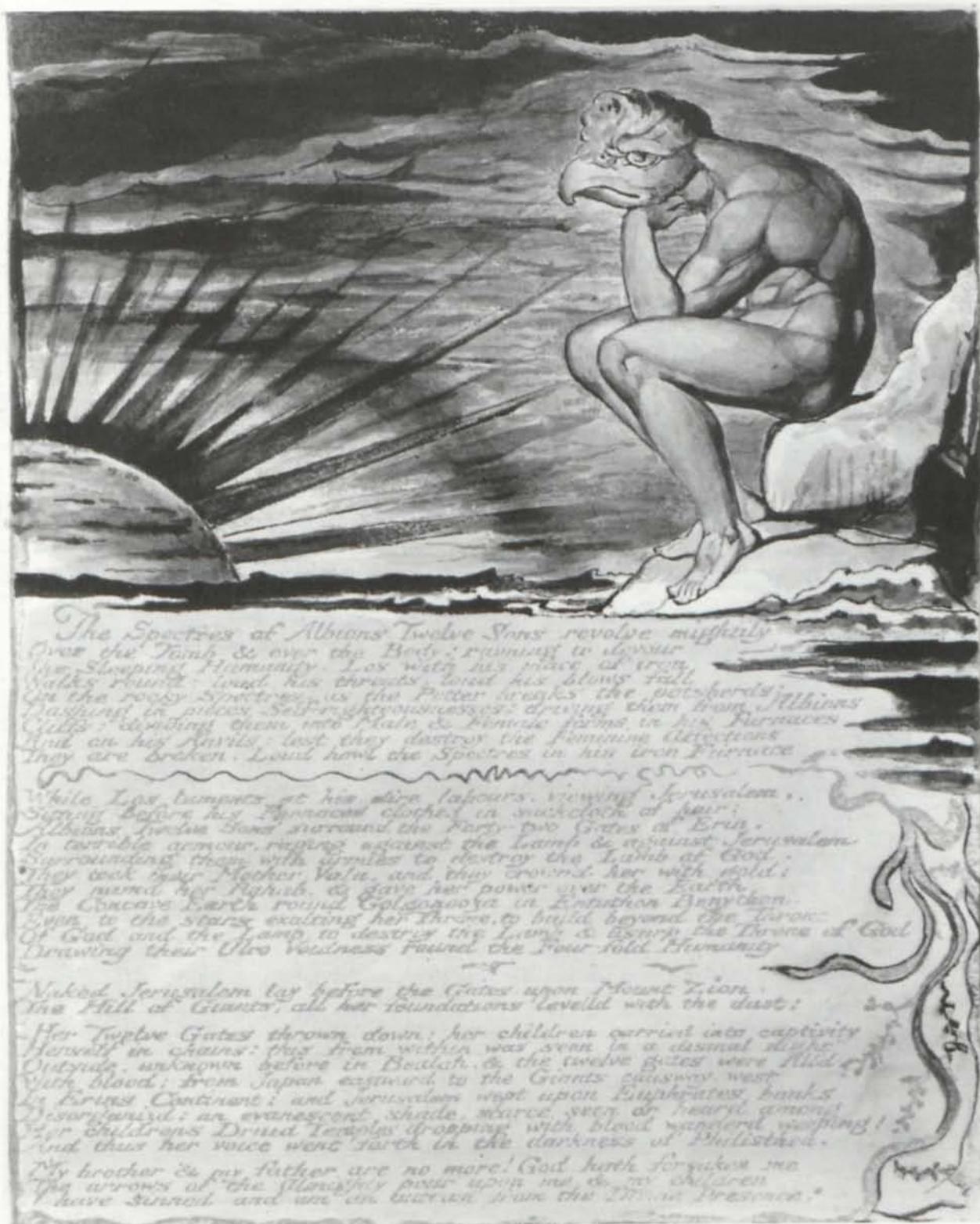
While Los laments at his dire labours, viewing Jerusalem,
 Sitting before his Furnaces clothed in sackcloth of hair;
 Albions Twelve Sons surround the Forty-two Gates of Erin,
 In terrible armour, raging against the Lamb & against Jerusalem,
 Surrounding them with armies to destroy the Lamb of God:
 They took their Mother Vala, and they crown'd her with gold:
 They round her Rahab, & gave her power over the Earth
 The Concave Earth round Golgathooza in Entickon Berython.
 Even to the stars exalting her Throne, to build beyond the Throne
 Of God and the Lamb, to destroy the Lamb & usurp the Throne of God
 Drawing their Ulro Voidness round the Four-fold Humanity

Naked Jerusalem lay before the Gates upon Mount Zion,
 The Hill of Giants, all her foundations level'd with the dust:

Her Twelve Gates thrown down; her children carried into captivity
 Herself in chains: this from within was seen in a dismal night
 Outside, unknown before in Beulah, & the twelve gates were fill'd
 With blood: from Japan eastward to the Giants causeway, west
 In Erins Continent: and Jerusalem wept upon Euphrates banks
 Disorganiz'd: an evanescent shade, scarce seen or heard among
 Her childrens Druid Temples dropping with blood wander'd weeping!
 And thus her voice went forth in the darkness of Philistea.

My brother & my father are no more: God hath forsaken me
 The arrows of the Almighty pour upon me, & my children
 I have sinned and am an outcast from the Divine Presence;

1 Jerusalem plate 78, copy D. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.



2 Jerusalem plate 78, copy E. Courtesy of the Yale Center for British Art.

wishes here to remind the reader of an event recounted in all four of the Gospels,⁵ the crowing of a cock that reminded the apostle Peter of Christ's prophecy in the Garden of Gethsemane that he, Peter, would thrice deny him before cockcrow at sunrise. The cock thus becomes a symbol of *the denial of Jesus*, "bright Preacher of Life" (*J 77:21, E 232*), by those who claim to follow his teachings, "the Christians" to whom this chapter is addressed. Because of its association with the sunrise, the cock is also traditionally a symbol of *resurrection*.⁶ Perhaps Blake's mind flashed back to the opening lines of *Night the Second of Young's Night Thoughts*, in which Young brings these elements together:

"When the cock crew, he wept"—smote by that eye
Which looks on me, on all; that power, who bids
This midnight centinel, with clarion shrill,
Emblem of that which shall awake the dead ...
(lines 1-4)

In the 1790s Blake had chosen to illustrate these lines with the powerful image of a trumpeting angel commanding the dead to arise.⁷

Erdman (*IB 357*) identifies the crest of the figure on Plate 78 as "a cock's comb—a signal of the morning," linking it with the dawning of the apocalyptic day of the resurrection of Albion. He also quotes Wicksteed's association of the image with "the Christian symbol upon Church steeples recalling Peter's denial of his Lord and the bitter repentance that was to make him the 'Rock' upon which the church itself was founded" (226). The sorrowful mien and suggestion of a tear in the eye of the bird-headed man could imply the "bitter repentance" Peter expressed by weeping.⁸

Peter's triple denial of Christ was uttered at the palace of the High Priest, Caiaphas, who had led the chief priests and Pharisees in plotting against Jesus and had counseled them to have him put to death.⁹ It was in Caiaphas's palace, be-

has given the bird-head in the *Comus* illustration both the comb and the pendent wattles of a barnyard cock, whereas the beak and lower part of the bird-head in *J 78* are definitely eagle-like, having no sign of wattles.

⁵ Matthew 26:34, 57-58 and 69-75, Mark 14:30 and 53-72, Luke 22:34 and 54-62, John 13:36-38, 18:15-18, 25-27.

⁶ The "crested Cock" is mentioned in *Milton* 28[30]:24, *E 126*. Kathleen Raine associates the image with a myth of resurrection and reincarnation linked to the Scandinavian war-god Odin, and also quotes from Thomas Taylor's *Plato* (1804) a passage from Proclus's *Dissertation on Magic* that attributes special powers to the cock because of its relationship with the "solar divinity." (Kathleen Raine, "The Crested Cock", *Blake Newsletter* 1 (1967-68): 9-10.) In my view, the cock-headed figure on *J 78* reflects these concepts ironically. (Special thanks to Morris Eaves for drawing my attention to Raine's note, and to Patricia Neill for sending it to me.)

⁷ Bindman, *Complete Graphic Works*, 348. Blake modified the figure of the angel in this emblem of resurrection and used it again in 1808 on the titlepage of Blair's *The Grave* (Bindman, 465).

⁸ Matthew 26:75, Mark 14:72, Luke 22:62.

⁹ Matthew 26:3-4, Mark 14:1, Luke 22:2, and especially John 11:47-53.

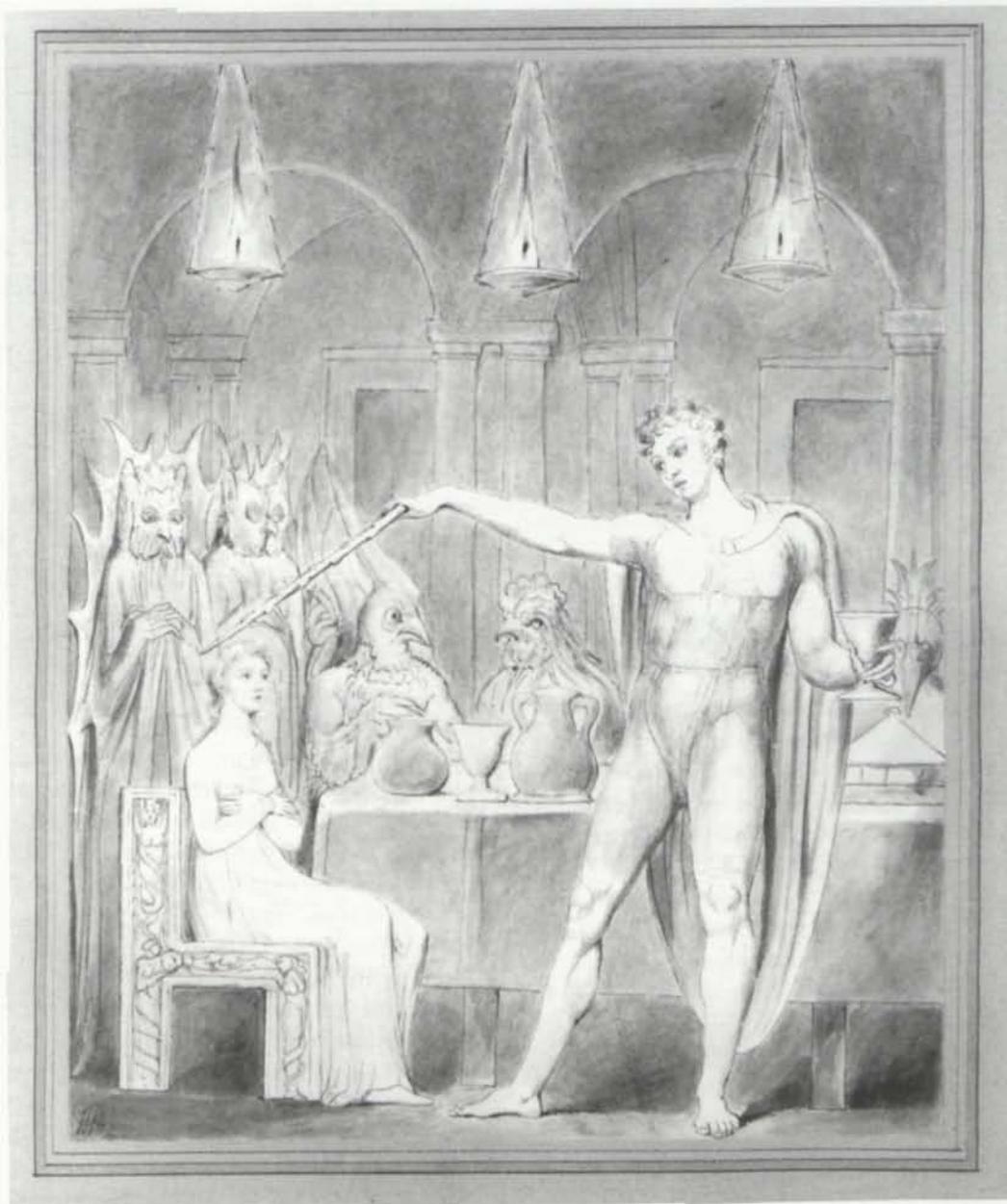
fore daylight, that Jesus was arraigned, reviled and buffeted immediately after his betrayal and arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Peter, who had followed his master "afar off unto the high priest's palace, went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end" (Matthew 26:58). He was warming himself at a coal fire "in the midst of the hall" (Luke 22:55) and trying to mingle unobtrusively with the household staff—in effect, he was hoping to pass himself off unnoticed as another of the High Priest's servitors—when, one after another, three of the servants recognized him as "one of them" (Mark 14:69-70). He responded to each by denying his association with Jesus of Nazareth. He was still within the palace of Caiaphas when he heard the cock crow, for after hearing it he "went out, and wept bitterly."¹⁰ The cock and its symbolic crowing can thus also be associated with "Caiaphas, the dark Preacher of Death / *Of sin, of sorrow, & of punishment*" (*J 77:18-19, E 232* [my emphasis]). In fact Caiaphas embodies what Blake elsewhere calls "the infection of Sin & stern Repentance," a "dread disease" from which "none but Jesus" can save Albion (*J 38[43]:75, E 186, J 40[45]:16, E 187*). The name "Caiaphas" is given to the "Wheel / Of fire" (*J 77:2-3, E 232*) of the poet's vision in the blank-verse lyric on *J 77*. Its movement "From west to east against the current of / Creation" (*J 77:4-5, E 232*)—and against the apparent movement of the *sun*—suggests that in this force opposed to Jesus, this "Wheel of Religion" (*J 77:13, E 232*) Blake chooses to call by Caiaphas's name, he approaches the concept of an "Antichrist" in Northrop Frye's sense of "the form which the social hatred of Jesus creates out of Jesus" (387).

The keynote for the theme of the denial of Jesus is sounded by the quotation from the Acts of the Apostles etched on the previous plate, plate 77: "Saul Saul" / "Why persecutest thou me." These quoted words of Christ recall that, before he heard them, Saul of Tarsus had set out for Damascus, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1), intending to suppress the teachings of Jesus and destroy his following. In Blake's view, the failure to give to the "Mental Gifts" of Genius their due recognition amounts to exactly that—the rejection, persecution and mockery of Jesus:

O ye Religious discountenance every one among you
who shall pretend to despise Art & Science! . . . expel
from among you those who pretend to despise the
labours of Art & Science, which alone are the labours
of the Gospel . . . And remember: He who despises &
mocks a Mental Gift in another . . . mocks Jesus the
giver of every Mental Gift, which always appear to the
ignorance-loving Hypocrite, as Sins. (*J 77, E 231-32*)

The last sentence quoted restates a lifelong conviction of Blake's, affirmed by a Devil in the final "Memorable Fancy"

¹⁰ Matthew 26:75, Luke 22:62; emphasis mine.



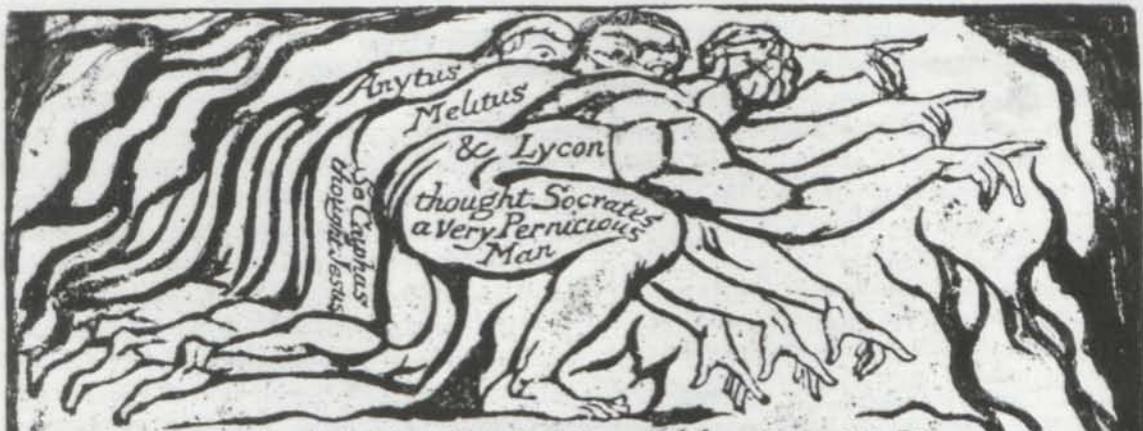
3 One of Blake's illustrations to Milton's *Comus* (1801 series): "The Magic Banquet with the Lady Spell-bound." Courtesy of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery.

of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* of 1790 (MHH 22-23, E 43) and reiterated in peals of thunder by Los in a metrical paraphrase in J 91:5-12 (E 251):

... Go to these Fiends of Righteousness ...
 Go, tell them that the Worship of God, is honouring
 his gifts
 In other men: & loving the greatest men best, each
 according
 To his Genius: which is the Holy Ghost in Man; there
 is no other

God, than that God who is the intellectual fountain
 of Humanity;
 He who envies or calumniates: which is murder & cru-
 elty,
 Murders the Holy-one: Go tell them this ...
 (J 91:4-12, E 251)

Through its association with the denial and persecution
 of Christ, the image of the cock thus hints as well at the



Enitharmon heard. She raised her head like the mild Moon.

*O Rintrah! O Palamabron! What are your dire & awful purposes
 Enitharmons name is nothing before you: you forget all my Love:
 The Mothers love of obedience is forgotten & you seek a Love
 Of the pride of dominion that will Divorce Ocalythron & Elynittria
 Upon East Moor in Derbyshire & along the Valleys of Cheviot
 Could you Love me Rintrah, if you Pride not in my Love
 As Reuben found Mandrakes in the field & gave them to his Mother
 Pride meets with Pride upon the Mountains in the stormy day
 In that terrible Day of Rintrahs Plow & of Satans driving the Team.
 Ah! then I heard my little ones weeping along the Valley:
 Ah! then I saw my beloved ones fleeing from my Tent
 Merlin was like thee Rintrah among the Giants of Albion
 Judah was like Palamabron: O Simeon: O Levi: ye fled away
 How can I hear my little ones weeping along the Valley
 Or how upon the distant Hills see my beloveds Tents.*

4 Jerusalem plate 93 (detail), copy D. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

gnawing private anguish Blake suffered because his own work had never achieved the recognition it deserved. Especially during the later period of *Jerusalem's* composition, Blake must have agonized over the obscurity and neglect in which his art languished.¹¹ In particular, he brooded upon the failure of his exhibition of 1809, and the critical derision it had attracted—notably in the excoriating review by Robert Hunt published in *The Examiner* in September 1809. Blake was still smarting from that when he executed the later plates of *Jerusalem*, for in the design of J 93 he explicitly links Caiaphas's persecution of Christ to the stinging criticism of his own work by Robert Hunt and his two brothers, co-editors of *The Examiner* (illus. 4). On the upper part of J 93 three male figures bend forward, each with one hand ostentatiously pointing ahead, as though in

accusation,¹² and the other pointing downward in condemnation. The name of Blake's "Hand," who—like Caiaphas—wishes "to Destroy the Divine Saviour" (J 18:37, E 163), is derived from the pointing hand used by the three Hunt brothers as their editorial siglum in *The Examiner*, and obviously caricatured in this design. Perhaps Blake also associates other "false friends" ("Blakes apology" 12, E 505) with these three figures, on which he has inscribed the words "Anytus / Melitus / & Lycon / thought Socrates / a Very Pernicious Man // So Caiaphas / thought Jesus" (J 93).¹³ The word "Pernicious," as Erdman

¹¹ Paley comments: "In the circumstances of his life from 1810 to 1818, years which Gilchrist rightly termed 'Years of Deepening Neglect,' it must have been difficult for Blake to soldier on with a work which no one might ever buy or even read" (*The Continuing City*, 6.).

¹² "The Accuser" (or "the Adversary") translates the Hebrew word "Satan," as Blake very well knew. The name "Satan" is used in this sense in the Book of Job and elsewhere in the Old Testament. Blake perceived these critics as "accusers" and "adversaries," the enemies of creative humanity.

¹³ The second sentence of this inscription appears on the rear end of the central figure. It is tempting to associate it with Blake's satirical "apology" in reply to the Hunts' searing criticism of his *Descriptive Catalogue* for his 1809 exhibition. Blake's reply concludes "This is my

has shown,¹⁴ is quoted from Robert Hunt's review, both hostile and intolerably condescending in its tone, of 1809. In it Hunt diagnosed Blake as mentally ill, calling him "an unfortunate lunatic," his paintings "the ebullitions of a distempered brain," and the catalogue he published for the 1809 exhibition "the wild effusions of a distempered brain." In effect Hunt declared that any critic of art who praised Blake's work must have been infected with his "malady." He wrote:

when the ebullitions of a distempered brain are mistaken for the sallies of genius the malady has indeed attained a pernicious height, and it becomes a duty to endeavour to arrest its progress. Such is the case with the productions and admirers of William Blake, an unfortunate lunatic, whose personal inoffensiveness secures him from confinement.¹⁵

"Hand," one of the most powerfully oppressive of the Sons of Albion, is Blake's imaginative characterization of what he perceived as the threat to art and indeed to *humanity* posed by such outrageous Philistinism as that displayed in critiques of his work published in *The Examiner*.

This is Blake's concern in the first few lines of the text on *J 78*. Los wields his "mace of iron," hitting out at "the rocky Spectres, as the Potter breaks the potsherds; / Dashing in pieces Self-righteousnesses . . . driving them from Albions / Cliffs . . ." (*J 78:5-7, E 233*). The lines refer to Isaiah 30:14, in which the prophet declares that the Lord will shatter the iniquity of the Children of Israel "as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces . . . so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth or to take water withal out of the pit." The verse Blake recalls is a rebuke to those "which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things" (Isaiah 30:9-10). Blake's text, and indeed, his whole book, enact the Lord's command to Isaiah to issue a warning to those who despise the prophet's vocation and his message: "write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come" (Isaiah 30:8).

sweet apology to my friends / That I may put them in mind of their latter Ends" (Notebook 65, *E 505*). Another vitriolic verse apparently related to this, addressed to "Cosway Frazer & Baldwin of Egypts lake . . .," ends with the line "And all the Virtuous have shewn their back-sides" (Notebook 37, *E 505*). The latter poem incorporates a reference to Matthew 10:8, the text Blake also quotes in the blank-verse poem of *J 77*: "This Life is a Warfare against Evils / They heal the sick he casts out Devils . . ." (3-4; Notebook 37, *E 505*). Though in *Jerusalem* the context of the quotation is serious, it seems to me that Blake is there concerned with exactly the same issues of betrayal as in the satirical outbursts.

¹⁴ Blake: *Prophet Against Empire*, 454.

¹⁵ Robert Hunt's comments on Blake and his art are reproduced in full by Bentley 215-18. The historical background is documented and discussed by David Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire*, 455-61.

The theme of the despising and mocking of "Mental Gifts," and most of all the prophetic gift of the visionary, is clearly uppermost in Blake's mind as he sends Los to drive "Self-righteousnesses . . . from Albions / Cliffs" in the text beneath his image of a bird-man perched on those cliffs.

Morton Paley points out, significantly, that "it would be uncharacteristic of Blake to present a human body with an animal head as a positively charged image."¹⁶ The scene on *J 78* is filled with "negatively charged" signs. I agree with Paley and those others who maintain that the sun is setting in this scene. Twice in the text on subsequent plates we are told that "the night falls thick" (*J 83:61, E 242, 84:20, E 243*), and when Los walks amongst his Furnaces at *J 85*, he does so "in the deadly darkness" (*J 85:10, E 244*). Perhaps, like the "Wheel of Religion," this sun is moving "against the current of / Creation"; and perhaps Blake intended the gathering darkness to be the ironic antithesis of the "light from heaven" (Acts 9:3) that miraculously surrounded Saul of Tarsus when, at high noon on the road to Damascus, he heard the voice of Jesus uttering the words Blake inscribed at the head of *J 77*. In copy E the atmosphere of the sunset is not peaceful and luminous, but threatening. The sun is circled by a black aura, and Blake even obliterated the heading "Jerusalem. C 4" that appears against a white cloud in the black-and-white copies (for instance copy D, *IB 357*), painting over it in dark purplish-black tones, "as though" Erdman comments, Blake "did not want anybody to be sure" (*IB 357*). The sun's disk in copy E is flecked with black, contributing to the pervading gloom reflected in the bird-man's sorrowful, even agonized, "expression" as he looks back on the preceding three-quarters of the work: for the quarter of the sun visible on the horizon here also represents the last quarter of the epic *Jerusalem* that is about to unfold.

The darkness and generally oppressive atmosphere could be attributed to the association of the cock with the denial of Christ. A human figure with a head suggesting that of a cock, herald of the dawn and symbol of resurrection, sadly, or angrily, contemplates a sun that appears to be *setting*, when, according to tradition, the cock should look toward the *rising* sun.¹⁷ But it seems to me that another factor enters into the image as well: one that expresses the concept of the "spiritual disease" which the poet is commanded to heal in the blank-verse lyric on *J 77*, and at the same time

¹⁶ *Jerusalem*, 261. Blake's reading of Milton's *Comus*, which he twice illustrated, may well have influenced his basic viewpoint. His second visual interpretation of Milton's masque was executed c. 1815, while work on *Jerusalem* was in progress. See especially his rendering of the "ugly-headed monsters" (line 694), *Comus's* dissolute followers, in *The Magic Banquet with the Lady Spell-Bound*, in the versions of both c. 1801 (reproduced above) and c. 1815 (Butlin, cat. no. 528 5, pl. 628).

¹⁷ Lesnick rightly describes the design as "basically ironic. The cock's comb might suggest . . . that the figure is announcing the rising of the sun. In fact, the sun at the left is setting, and the setting of the sun marks the beginning of the deepest night of Ulro" (400).

lashes back at the diagnosis of mental illness that Robert Hunt had applied broadly both to Blake and his art in his review of 1809. Perhaps, in one quite basic strand of meaning, Blake asserts that his detractors were "cock-brained" in their judgement.¹⁸

Blake's design on *J 78* has certain features in common with an illustration in a sixteenth-century medical text, *Feldtbuch der Wundartzney*, by Hans von Gerssdorff, a physician of Strassburg. I offer this illustration as a parallel only, since although it is well known that Blake was drawn to old alchemical and scientific texts, valuing especially their emblems and illustrative material,¹⁹ I have no means of proving that he ever saw this particular work. But neither have I any doubt that he saw and noted pictorial representations like this one, which is "generic" in its nature, as I will explain.

The first edition of von Gerssdorff's work was published in Strassburg by Joannē Schott in 1517. It was well enough received to run into at least one subsequent edition, which appeared in 1532.²⁰ The work is plentifully illustrated with woodcuts. Many of these show, with a degree of scientific accuracy, anatomical dissections, surgical instruments, and parts of the human body being subjected to their use by contemporary surgeons attempting to repair injuries, especially those received in battle. This category of illustrations may well have been "specific," printed from blocks prepared especially for this work. But other illustrations seem to be "generic," related in only a general manner to the text—for instance, the handsome frontispiece illustration showing the patron saints of medicine, Cosmas and Damian. The illustration I wish to discuss seems to fall into this second category. It appears in the third "Tractat" of the work, in a section of the text dealing with leprosy, but actually shows a victim of either smallpox or syphilis.²¹ This illustration, like the frontispiece portrait of Cosmas and

¹⁸ O.E.D. "Cock-brained: *a.* Having little judgement, foolish, light-headed." The latest example of usage is dated 1856.

¹⁹ Kathleen Raine offers multiple instances of Blake's interest in such writings in *Blake and Tradition*.

²⁰ The version I have used for reference is a facsimile of the first edition (1517), reproduced from two original copies, one in the Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, and the other in a private collection. I have also consulted a microfilm of a copy of the 1517 edition in the British Library in London. The illustration I discuss appeared in both the 1517 and the 1532 editions. Though the work is divided into numbered sections, the printer did not number individual pages. I am especially indebted to Professor Hildegard Stielau of the Department of German of the Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg, for translating, and for her scholarly guidance in reading, parts of this work. My thanks are due as well to Dr. Michael Milway, Curator of the Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies at the E. J. Pratt Library of Victoria University, University of Toronto, for his patient assistance in providing information and a photograph.

²¹ Jolande Jacobi (xiii; see note 24 below for reference) suggests that the disease represented may be syphilis; Hildegard Stielau (personal communication) believes that the word "blonen" in the couplet on the frame (discussed in the body of this essay) may indicate that whoever

Damian, may also have been used by the same or another printer in other books (a practice not uncommon at this period), and in contexts not necessarily medical.

Von Gerssdorff describes in detail the manifestations of various forms of leprosy, drawing heavily on such standard authorities as Galen, Avicenna, Averroes and Gordonius. He makes it clear that the physician can do little or nothing for the patient suffering from this affliction, beyond amputating members of the body that have become gangrenous in the course of the relentless degeneration characteristic of the disease. Though von Gerssdorff himself eschews philosophic reflections, his illustrious contemporary Paracelsus (with some of whose writings Blake had long been familiar²²) reminds both physician and patient that such a disease must be regarded as a scourge of God. Paracelsus articulates a widely held view that accords with Marsilio Ficino's concept of the "priest-physician"²³ when he divides the diseases of man into "those which arise in a natural way, and those which come upon us as God's scourges." For, he admonishes his colleagues,

God has sent us some diseases as a punishment, as a warning, as a sign by which we know that all our affairs are naught, that our knowledge rests upon no firm foundation, and that the truth is not known to us, but that we are inadequate and fragmentary in all ways, and that no ability or knowledge is ours.²⁴

composed the couplet believed that the personage in the picture was afflicted with smallpox. The consensus is that the disease depicted in the illustration is *not* the one discussed by von Gerssdorff in the surrounding text. It seems unlikely that this respected physician, who evidently wrote from extensive practical experience, would have confused leprosy with the symptoms and development of these other two diseases, both all too familiar at the time—which implies that the choice of illustration was not the author's but (probably) the printer's, and that it was not put in to illustrate a specific scientific point.

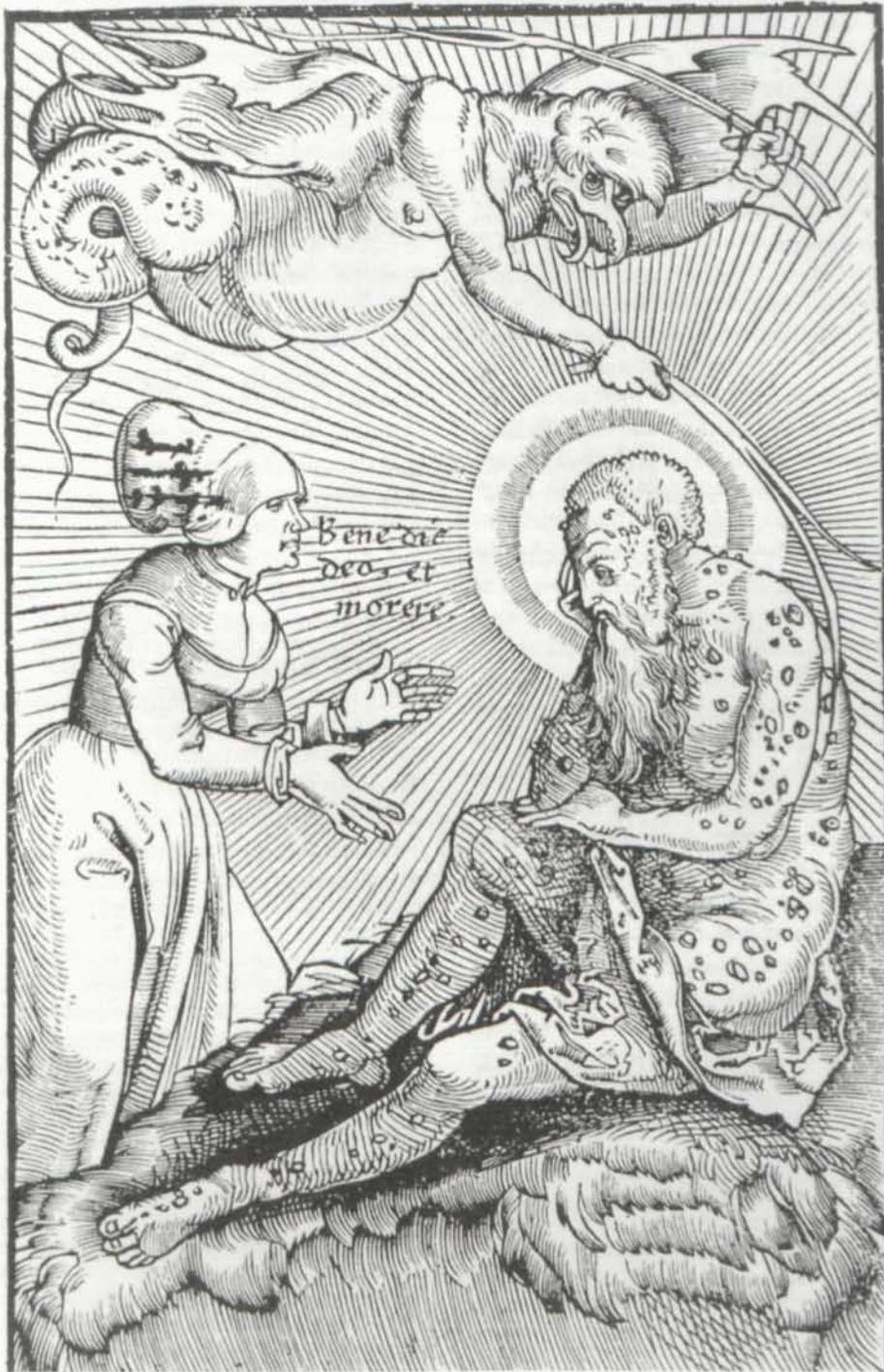
²² S. Foster Damon writes that Blake found in the works of Paracelsus "a preliminary sketch of his own universe" (Damon [1973], 322). In a poetic recapitulation of major influences in his own intellectual development, Blake implies that he first read Paracelsus before "the American War began"—that is, prior to 1776 (Letter to Flaxman, 12 September 1800, lines 7 and 9, E 707-08). See note 24 below.

²³ See Désirée Hirst's account of Ficino's influence on Paracelsus in chapter 2 of *Hidden Riches* (44-75).

²⁴ Paracelsus, *Sämtliche Werke*. II. Abteilung. Die theologischen und religionsphilosophischen Schriften. Ed. Karl Sudhoff and Wilhelm Matthiessen. Vol. 1. (Munich: O.W. Barth, 1923) 12: 226. Trans. Norbert Guterman in *Selected Writings*, ed. Jolande Jacobi, 81. Most of the major philosophical, medical and alchemical writings of Paracelsus had been translated into English in the latter half of the seventeenth century. There was widespread interest in them in England at this time, as there also was in the works of Jakob Boehme. Blake was equally interested in Boehme's work and also read it in seventeenth-century translations. Two of Paracelsus's works in translation that Blake is likely to have read are listed below under Works Cited. Jacobi uses the woodcut under discussion, reproduced from the 1532 edition of von Gerssdorff's book, to illustrate the passage from Paracelsus cited in my text.

Got gab/get nā huß/hoff/kind/güt/
Vnd sagt mich vnder teufels rüt.

Dein weyb/vñ blonē peingren mich/
Noch lydt ichs alles gdultiglich.



5 Woodcut from Hans von Gerssdorff's *Feldtbuch der Wundartzney* (1517). See note 20.



6 Albrecht Dürer's *Melencolia I*. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

Opposite the beginning of von Gerssdorff's section on leprosy, the printer has placed a woodcut showing a sufferer who evidently represents the biblical Job, sitting on a hillside that slopes quite sharply down from right to left (illus. 5). He is seen in profile on the viewer's right, facing into the picture, in an attitude comparable to that of Dürer's *Melencolia I* and of Blake's bird-man (illus. 6).²⁵ His right leg is bent, with his right elbow resting on it, left hand under the right elbow, head slightly bowed and resting against his right hand. He has no covering apart from a cloth draped across his loins, revealing that his whole body is covered with blisters. Above his head a creature resembling a cockatrice hovers on dragon-like wings. This "teüfel" has the head of a rooster, with the thin, sharply hooked beak of a fighting-cock or even a predatory bird. It has the tail of a dragon or serpent, but its trunk with sagging belly and its muscular arms and hands are those of a man. The creature grasps in each hand a long, bifurcated whip or scourge. It is engaged in lashing the hapless victim on his back with the scourge held in the right hand, while that in the left hand is drawn back to follow up swiftly with another cut. (The attitude of the partly serpentine "teüfel" and its positional relationship to its victim suggest those of Blake's serpent-entwined Satanic "Elohim" in his painting "Job's Evil Dreams," c. 1805-06 [illus. 7].²⁶) The victim's wife stands before him at the viewer's left, primly elegant in a tight-sleeved high-necked dress and elaborate headgear. She piously urges her husband "Benedic deo, et morere"—"Bless God, and die." Job's wife gave her husband this advice when the Lord afflicted him "ulcere pessimo, a planta pedis usque ad verticem eius"—"with a very grievous ulcer, from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head" (Job 2:7-9). At the top of the engraving two couplets are inscribed (no doubt by the printer), in German.²⁷ In the first of these the victim speaks, in a loose translation of Job 1:21, saying "Got gab / got na huss / hoff / kind / güt / // Und satz mich unders teüfels rut" ("God gave / God took away / property / children / goods // And set me under the devil's rod . . ."), while in the second he refers to his wife's additions to his sufferings—implying the context of the quotation included within the frame of the illustration: "Mein weyb / und blonen peingten mich // Noch lyde ichs alles gdultigslich"—"My wife / and my blisters afflict me // Yet I suffer all things

²⁵ Samuel Palmer, who visited Blake often in the rooms at Fountain Court in which he and his wife lived after 1821, recalled that Blake kept a print of this work "close by his engraving table" (Bentley 565n3). Judith Ott (49) first pointed out the parallel between the pose of Dürer's "melancholy angel" and Blake's bird-man; but see Hirst's discussion of the contextual significance of Dürer's image (44-48).

²⁶ Butlin cat. no. 550 11, pl. 707.

²⁷ Many of the other woodcut illustrations are surmounted by couplets in a similar tone, though those showing surgical procedures and instruments usually have explanatory prose inscriptions, in German.

in patience." The artist has emphasized this saintly submission by surrounding the sufferer's head with a double aureole, extending all the way to the border of the engraving on all sides. The visual effect is that of a sun, whose center is the profiled face of the sick man.

My guess is that this design was produced originally to illustrate a text of the Book of Job. Blake, whose preoccupation with the Book of Job extended throughout his creative life,²⁸ would have paid attention to such a representation in any context because of these specific associations. Kathleen Raine notes: "From an early stage Blake seems to have identified the sickness of Albion with the sickness of Job," and quotes from *The Four Zoas*, Night the Third, p.41, lines 15-16 (E 328): "the dark Body of Albion left prostrate upon the crystal pavement / Coverd with boils from head to foot."²⁹

To return to *J 78*: one element of Blake's creation is undoubtedly, I believe, the Christian emblem of the cock. On the one hand it stands for the *affirmation* of life, since it utters "that Signal of the Morning" of resurrection, here implied only through ironic association. On the other hand, the cock can represent the *denial* of Jesus "the bright Preacher of Life" (*J 77:21, E 232*) by those hypocrites who claim to follow him, but actually serve "Caiaphas, the dark Preacher of Death" (*J 77:18, E 232*). But I suggest that another element of Blake's composite figure may be represented by the monstrous cockatrice, which yet is partly human—for he is an aspect of "the Antichrist accursed . . . a Human Dragon terrible" (*J 89:10-11, E 248*). The creature embodies the "infection" transmuted by Blake from a physical to a "spiritual disease" (*J 77:25, E 233*), the "infection of Sin & stern Repentance" (*J 38[43]:75, E 186*). It is a scourge that causes the sufferer to long for death. If Blake did have in mind an emblem like the one included in von Gerssdorff's book, then he replaced the head of the seated personage with that of his cockatrice-like persecutor—thus casting the victim in the role of the disease itself—and removed the sun-like aureole from the head of the sufferer in order to place it on the horizon. Paracelsus wrote: "The imagination is . . . the sun of man . . . It irradiates the earth, which is man. . . ." ³⁰ The sun in the scene on *J 78* becomes a symbol of man's *diseased* imagination, sinking in an aura of deep melancholy and about to be engulfed by "the darkness of Philisthea" (*J 78:30, E 234*), from which the voices of both Jerusalem and the artist William Blake are heard lamenting. In the blank-verse poem on the preceding plate, a heavenly "Watcher" commands the poet to heal those af-

²⁸ Blake's earliest Job illustrations date back to c. 1785; the latest, the set of engravings commissioned by John Linnell, were executed in 1825, shortly before his death. Quotations from, and echoes of, the Book of Job abound in Blake's works from the earliest extant fragments to *Jerusalem*.

²⁹ *Blake and Tradition* 2: 256.

³⁰ *Paracelsus his Archidoxies* (London, 1661), quoted by Damon (1965) 322.

fllicted with this "spiritual disease." The "Holy-One" who guided the prophet Daniel (Daniel 4:13) and has now come to instruct the poet foresees that, through the "self-denial & forgiveness of Sin" (J 77:23, E 232) preached and practiced by Jesus, Albion may be cured of the moralistic malaise bringing down all the "seven diseases of the Soul" (the traditional "Seven Deadly Sins") that "settled around [him] . . . as he builded onwards / On the Gulph of Death in self-righteousness" (J 19:26-27, 30-31, E 164). The diminishing sun in the scene on J 78 sets beneath a "dark incessant sky" as the bird-man contemplates the "Gulph of Death" (J 19:22, 31, E 164).³¹ The bird-headed figure is both Philistine "ignorance with a rav'ning beak!" (J 19:13, E 152) and the "ignorance-loving Hypocrite" persistently misrepresenting "Mental Gift[s] . . . as Sins" (J 77, E 232), who compels Jesus to die on the cross just as surely as did Caiaphas at the head of his council of "Crucifying" Pharisees (J 77:28-30, E 233). The figure on J 78 embodies the "disease forming a Body of Death around the Lamb / Of God, to destroy Jerusalem & to devour the body of Albion" (J 9:9-10, E 152). In copy E the malaise seems to erupt on the sun's disk in black marks suggestive of the plague-sores covering the body of the suffering Job-figure in von Gerssdorff's book. The sick sun reflects the "corruptibility" that Los sees upon the limbs of Albion (J 81:84 - 82:1, E 241), the "spiritual disease" the poet is called upon to heal *by revitalizing the imagination*, which Blake identified with Jesus.³² Like other contemporary accounts of leprosy, von Gerssdorff's description of the disease defines its symptoms conventionally in terms of the medieval theory of humours, and stresses repeatedly the physical and psychological role of "melancholy" or "black bile" in the development and progress of the illness. For Blake too, as both Ott and Mitchell have observed, "melancholy" is a notable theme of the scene on J 78.

Albion is still "sick to death" as Blake opens this fourth chapter of his epic (J 36 [40]:12, E 182). He suffers "the torments of Eternal Death" (J 36 [40]:25, E 182), dying piecemeal like the miserable leper whose physical deterioration the good doctor of Strassburg records in ghastly de-

³¹ Perhaps Blake associated the dark expanse of sea over which the bird-man gazes with the "Sea of Rephaim" which eventually "oerwhelm[s] . . . all" in the revelation of the "Covering Cherub" on J 89:50-51, E 249. Since this overwhelming "Sea" extends to "Irelands furthest rocks where the Giants builded their Causeway," the bird-man of J 78 may be looking westwards across the Irish Sea (the "Giant's Causeway" is on the north coast of Antrim, Ireland). There is no mention of a "Sea of Rephaim" in the Bible (as Stevenson points out [829]), but since Philistines encamped repeatedly in the *Valley of Rephaim* (2 Samuel 5:18, 22 and 23:13), Blake may have coined the phrase to describe the invasion of Philistinism. Blake is pessimistically viewing the whole scene at this moment as the landscape of "Philisthea."

³² "The Eternal Body of Man is The IMAGINATION. / God himself / that is / The Divine Body / Y'shu'a JESUS we are his Members" (Blake, *The Laocoön*, E 273).

tail in his text. The "Watcher" from heaven calls upon the poet himself on J 77 to assume an apostolic and prophetic role like that of Peter and later Paul, "in Christs name" to "cast out [the] devils" that scourge Albion in his afflicted state, to "heal" the inhabitants of Albion of their "spiritual disease" (J 77:24-25, E 233). On J 78, Albion has not yet achieved the condition prophetically enacted on the chapter divider, J 76, in which he stands in the darkness of his benighted island before Jesus, crucified upon the "deadly Tree . . . [of] Moral Virtue" (J 28:15, E 174), and takes upon himself Christ's divine humanity.³³ But J 76 is a "visionary study." On J 78, Blake shows us symbolically the *actual* situation at this pivotal point of his epic. Albion at this moment is "shrunk to a narrow rock in the midst of the sea" (J 79:17, E 234) and is dominated—in fact, literally "sat upon"—by "Self-righteousnesses" (J 78:6, E 233), epitomized in the monstrous figure of the bird-headed man, "Self-righteousness / In all its Hypocritic turpitude" (*Milton* 38 [43]:43-44, E 139). As Caiaphas himself may have contemplated the dawning of that Friday on which he knew with certainty that the forces he had set into motion were to bring about the death of Jesus, so this figure contemplates a horizon on which a sun that should be rising as a bright source of life and light appears to be sinking into "deadly darkness." The parallel is an exact one. The bird-headed man embodies everything that Caiaphas, as the summation of the forces opposing Jesus, represents for Blake: the Pharisaic hypocrisy, and the Philistinism, of individuals who—like Saul of Tarsus and Robert Hunt—zealously persecute the spiritually gifted and vilify "Mental Gifts" like Blake's own, "which always appear to the ignorance-loving Hypocrite as Sins." These are all to "become One with the Antichrist" (J 89:62, E 249). Blake may well, as Erdman asserts, have meant this figure to represent "the sons of Albion . . . condensed . . . into Hand, with 'rav'ning' beak" (IB 357). But he also incorporates Caiaphas, the predator who preys on creative—which is to say, *meaningful*—human life, "ravning to devour / The Sleeping Humanity" (J 78:2-3, E 233). He embodies the "spiritual disease" of self-righteous morality from which Albion yet suffers, and expresses the immobilizing "melancholy" which is one of its most destructive symptoms throughout the epic Jerusalem.³⁴ The same melancholy afflicts the artist of genius whose gifts are reviled and refused recognition—by which Jesus the Savior is denied as Peter denied him in a fearful, though in his case momentary, fit of the "Hypocritic

³³ See Paley's summary of conflicting critical interpretations of J 76 in *The Continuing City*, 113-18. Paley's own conclusion, which I completely accept, is that "the 'naïve' view of this picture, deriving from its immediate affect, fully accords with the central doctrine of *Jerusalem* . . . which we find almost everywhere in Blake's works. 'Therefore God becomes as we are, that we may be as he is' (*There is No Natural Religion* [b], E 2) . . ." (117). See also Mitchell, 209-11.

³⁴ Compare J 36 [41]:59-60, E 183.

7 One of Blake's illustrations to *The Book of Job* (1805-06), "Job's Evil Dreams." By permission of the Trustees of the Pierpont Morgan Library.



turpitude" habitual to many of those of Blake's own time and place who call themselves "Christians," but are in effect serving the arch-enemy of Christ, Caiaphas.

True enlightenment will come—both the cock as an emblem of the sunrise and St. John's eagle with its apocalyptic associations imply that the "New Age" will dawn at last. So, towards the end of his life, Blake was to reassure a future audience, and himself, in an inscription on his engraving of "Job's Evil Dreams" (1825): "the triumphing of the wicked is short, the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment" (Job 20:5).³⁵ By hinting at the visionary evangelist whose symbol was the eagle, the bird-man asserts the visionary and prophetic role of the artist. And even though the figure in *J* 78 sits before a sun that appears, ironically, to be setting, Blake implies a latent hope by suggesting the positive symbolic aspect of the cock, whose call signalled the awakening to renewed life: "England! awake! awake! awake!" (*J* 77:1, *E* 233). It is this hope of spiritual renewal that Blake is to display as fulfilled in his prophetic conclusion to Jerusalem, when the diseased "Body of death" is

³⁵ William Blake, *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (London, 1825) 11; reproduced by Bindman, pl. 636.

driven out, and all the birds and beasts in his broad range of symbolism ". . . Humanize / In the Forgiveness of Sins" (*J* 98:20, 44-45, *E* 257-58).

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MINUTE PARTICULAR

An Unrecorded Copy of Blake's 1809 Chaucer Prospectus

BY J. B. MERTZ

In August 1830, shortly after his visit to Oxford in the company of his friend Isaac D'Israeli, the antiquarian and collector Francis Douce made his will, directing that his extensive collection of printed books, drawings, prints, illuminated manuscripts, coins and medals should be left to the Bodleian Library.¹ After his death in 1834 the library received one of its most valuable bequests, which included several works by Blake: *The Book of Thel* (I), *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (B), *A Descriptive Catalogue* (H), and the print *Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims* (impression 3D).² Douce kept a record of his purchases in a set of three notebooks entitled "Collecta," which show that he acquired "Blake's marr. of heaven & hell" in April 1821 from "Dyer"³ and "Blake's print of Canterbury pilgrimage" in November 1824 from the publishers and print sellers "Hurst [and Robinson]."⁴ Four months later, in March 1825, Douce returned to Hurst and Robinson's shop, recording the acquisition of "Blake's Canterbury Pilgr." Joan Stemmler suggests that this is "probably a double entry" for the print of the *Canterbury Pilgrims*,⁵ but more likely it refers to the hitherto unknown second copy of Blake's 1809 Chaucer Prospectus in the Bodleian Library. Douce pasted the prospectus onto the fly-leaf inside the back cover of his copy of the first volume of *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer* (edited by Thomas Tyrwhitt and published in 1798).⁷ Like the sole copy (A) in the British Museum Print Room recorded by G. E. Bentley, Jr., the Bodleian copy is a broadsheet approximately 18.65 x 22.7 cm., printed on the recto with the verso blank.⁸

¹ [Samuel Weller Singer], "Francis Douce, Esq. F. S. A.," *The Gentlemen's Magazine* 156 (1834): 216-17.

² G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford, 1977) 128, 134 and 298, and Robert N. Essick, *The Separate Plates of William Blake: A Catalogue* (Princeton, 1983) 63. Only *Thel* and *A Descriptive Catalogue* are listed in the *Catalogue of the Printed Books and Manuscripts Bequeathed by Francis Douce, esq., to the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1840) 32.

³ Bodleian Library, MS. Douce e. 67, fol. 40^v.

⁴ MS. Douce e. 68, fol. 2^v. The "Collecta" do not indicate when or from whom he acquired *Thel* or *A Descriptive Catalogue*.

⁵ MS. Douce e. 68, fol. 3^v.

⁶ "Undisturbed above once in a Lustre": Francis Douce, George Cumberland and William Blake at the Bodleian Library and Ashmolean Museum," *Blake* 26 (1992): 18n145.

⁷ See the *Catalogue of the Printed Books and Manuscripts Bequeathed by Francis Douce*, 63, and G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records Supplement* (Oxford, 1988) 132.

⁸ *William Blake's Writings*, ed. G. E. Bentley, Jr. (Oxford, 1978) ii, 823-24 and 1692.

We also have evidence that Douce's interest in illustrations of Chaucer extended beyond Blake's print. Facing Blake's prospectus in Douce's Chaucer (i.e., pasted on the inside of the back cover) is the prospectus for a rival project: Robert Hartley Cromek's print after Stothard's "The Procession of Chaucer's Pilgrims to Canterbury." This prospectus is dated "London, Feb. 10th, 1807." Douce praised Stothard's painting in his book *Illustrations of Shakspeare, and of Ancient Manners*, claiming that the "attention to accuracy of costume which it displays has never been exceeded, and but very seldom so well directed."⁹ In a notebook listing books received, he also records in 1809 that "Cromek" gave him a copy of "Carey's description of Stodart's picture of the pilgrimage to Canterbury,"¹⁰ but Douce apparently never purchased the print. Should he have desired a copy, Douce certainly had the means, especially after his receipt in 1827 of an estimated £50,000 as residuary legatee of the estate of his friend Joseph Nollekens. He was clearly aware of Cromek and Blake's projects, even placing their prospectuses facing one another in a volume of Chaucer. But perhaps he concluded, on the basis of his antiquarian expertise, that Blake's print was the more historically accurate representation and (like Charles Lamb) "preferred it greatly to Stoddart's."¹¹ There is a small engraving (approximately 5.1 x 17.6 cm.)¹² by W. H. Worthington after Stothard's painting pasted onto the titlepage of the same copy of Chaucer, but it is obviously not the print "3 Feet 1 Inch long, and 10 1/2 Inches high" that Cromek undertook to deliver to his subscribers. Although no definitive catalogue of the prints bequeathed by Douce to the Bodleian has been compiled, there appears to be no copy of Cromek's print after Stothard's painting in the present collection. Most of Douce's print collection (as well as some of the manuscripts and drawings he owned) was transferred to the Ashmolean Museum in 1863, and more prints and drawings were added from the Bodleian holdings in 1915.¹³

⁹ Francis Douce, *Illustrations of Shakspeare, and of Ancient Manners: with Dissertations on the Clowns and Fools of Shakspeare; on the Collection of Popular Tales Entitled Gesta Romanorum; and on the English Morris Dance* (London, 1808) ii, 285 fn.

¹⁰ MS. Douce e. 69, fol. 9^v. William [Paulet] Carey, *Critical Description of the Procession of Chaucer's Pilgrims to Canterbury, Painted by Thomas Stothard, Esq. R.A.* (London, 1808) 11, reprints Douce's commendatory remarks on Stothard's painting. Cromek circulated Carey's essay to promote the sale of the print. See *Blake Books*, 777 and G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books Supplement* (Oxford, 1995) 431-32.

¹¹ G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* (Oxford, 1969) 538.

¹² This engraving was published by "W. Pickering & R. & S. Prowett London 1822."

¹³ See Arthur Cornwallis Madan and George Rodney Scott's rough handlist *A Catalogue of the Collection of Engravings, &c. in Portfolios bequeathed by Francis Douce in 1835*, 2 vols. (1913-15, 1916). Douce's copies of *Theel*, *The Marriage*, and *A Descriptive Catalogue* remain in the Bodleian collection. I would like to thank Ursula Mayr-Harting of the Ashmolean Museum for her kind assistance.

R E V I E W S

Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III*. New Haven: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1996. viii + 248 pp. \$65/cloth; \$30/paper [Yale University Press, 1998].

Reviewed by ALEXANDER S. GOURLAY

Upon seeing it, most scholars of Blake and Romanticism will immediately want to read and even to own this book, which promises to cover a lot of material, little of it easily available elsewhere, that is essential background for any literary or art-historical study of the period. The book includes 210 high-quality reproductions of satirical prints, many in color and most in a large enough scale to permit study, and the text is extensive. Once one starts reading it, it becomes clear that Donald knows a great deal about these prints and that she thinks about them in sophisticated and original ways. But many readers are likely to be somewhat frustrated, not so much by shortcomings of the book as by the fact that the topic is simply too large and too complex to be susceptible to summary on this scale, however astute the summarizer. Each of the chapters could have been a lavishly illustrated book in itself, and while it is obvious that Donald has enough good ideas to fill a dozen volumes, this book provides only tantalizing and sometimes exasperating glimpses of the main topics. Donald knows well that works in popular culture embody and convey meaning in extremely complicated ways, and she tries gamely to indicate how various audiences would have responded to these works, but the result is barely adequate even as an overview. Other recent books that investigate the role of popular culture in Georgian political and literary discourse, such as those by Vincent Carretta, Iain McCalman and David Worrall, have been more satisfying and more coherent, mostly because they address similar material from well defined if comparatively limited perspectives. Donald's broader approach permits only cursory examination of the way a given constituency might read a few aspects of a given piece. As a result, we rarely get much feeling for the work as a whole, much less its place in the vast web of relevant contexts that inform it. It is captious to criticize a book for not being what it is not meant to be, but a narrower or a longer book would have been a better one.

A related problem is that the work of Gillray so thoroughly dominates the illustrations and the discussion of them. This is understandable—Gillray was the most powerful caricaturist of the period (perhaps of any period), and his works remain much more interesting than those of his

contemporaries. His fierce approach to caricature went to molecular depth: each form—animal, vegetable, and even mineral—appears to have a completely imagined grotesque anatomy, with hideous bones below the skin and nasty little corpuscles coursing through the veins. Further, Gillray's extraordinary command of the languages of high and low art, combined with his intellectual depth, broad learning (and that of his collaborators), profound political cynicism, and well documented susceptibility to influence and bribery from all quarters, permit (even require) every etching to be read in at least a half-dozen ways. His work is so powerful, so rich, and so influential that he inevitably dominated the scene, just as he continues to dominate modern studies of it. But as Donald tries to show, he was only one of many influential caricaturists: to understand the Age of Caricature, one must also be steeped in the work of James Sayers, Isaac Cruikshank, Richard Newton, William Dent, Thomas Rowlandson, and many others. And to understand even one work by Gillray or these secondary artists one must usually place it in the whole bubble of prints (and other ephemera) that arose about each public issue; most prints, even those by one-hit wonders and amateurs, respond elaborately to both immediate and broader contexts. A similar claim could be made about almost any work of art, and especially of such elaborately cross-referential works as Renaissance sonnets, but I am persuaded that caricature prints of this period are uniquely interdependent: they respond so intricately to each other and to the cultural currents around them that the essential context for a given print often seems limitless. Donald offers a pretty good selection of non-Gillray material—the work of all the artists listed above are represented by several good examples—and she even ventures beyond the world of satirical prints to show how they respond to other media and cultural forms. But one can't get a proportionate sense of Gillray's contribution to the caricature tradition unless one is willing to read this book while juggling M. Dorothy George's fat volumes of the British Museum's *Catalogue of Personal and Political Satires* and simultaneously rolling through the thousands of images in the Chadwyck-Healey microfilms of the British Museum collection.

Because most readers of this journal are likely to approach this book as an adjunct to studying Blake and his circle, it makes sense to consider it in those terms. David Erdman and others have demonstrated that Blake borrowed widely from contemporary caricatures, especially in his illuminated books, and although Blake famously claimed that excessive exposure to Rowlandson's caricature prints had "perverted" the eye of Dr. Trusler, there is plenty of evidence that Blake himself studied and responded to the work of both major and minor caricaturists. Donald is aware of all this, and at various times she reads the prints as a sophisticated artist of the 1790s might have done, but few will come away from reading this book with a substantially

different sense of the context of Blake's work. That is not to say there is nothing of interest to Blake scholars. Although the ideas are not developed very thoroughly, Donald comments suggestively about Gillray's debt to Lavater and current physiognomical literature, which were of great interest to Blake. Further, she outlines several ways in which modes of caricature that are not obviously political or personal—such as the low comic "drolls" by "Tim Bobbin" [John Collier]—could have varying political implications. Her insights on this point are also important for Blake scholars because they can help us in thinking about the significance of Blake's only foray into the caricature print trade, the work he did in engraving after Stothard (who couldn't quite get the hang of it) and Collings for *The Wit's Magazine* in 1784, when it was edited by the radical Thomas Holcroft. Blake's mixed-method etching/engravings after Collings's loopy drawings are firmly within the shaggy tradition of "Bobbin," Isaac Cruikshank and others, even if they seem very odd when we come upon them among his other commercial works.

Donald is particularly successful when she brings to bear her training as an art historian, which is probably why she is so good at spotting the many ways in which Gillray and to a lesser extent the others responded to higher art. She is deeply learned about Hogarth, and often notes that a particular device or theme in a caricature print is a crib or an homage—and that the later artists are often aware of the sources to which Hogarth himself was responding. Especially because the Tory wing of Hogarth criticism still howls whenever Ronald Paulson argues for a political and subversive Hogarth, it is instructive to see that the subtle mechanisms of conveying meaning that Paulson has elucidated were also recognized by artists only a generation away from Hogarth, and that they repeated them, often without his subtlety.

This is a well made book. The reproductions are usually large enough to reveal the features to which Donald's text refers, and while a few are too small to study even with a magnifying glass, most are very good. The paper is a little too glossy for comfortable reading, but it is fairly opaque, the typeface is small but readable, and the quality of the printed images is very good indeed. If the format, the illustrations, or the typeface had been larger, the book would have cost much more, and if the illustrations had been massed at the back and the text printed on less glossy paper it would have been much more difficult to follow Donald's exposition.

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Reviewed by ALEXANDER S. GOURLAY

David Worrall's contribution to the new series of Blake Trust editions of the illuminated books is a thoroughly creditable performance—like the other volumes, this well-constructed book offers a set of thoughtful introductions, carefully edited texts with informative but not exhaustive pictorial, critical, and textual notes, and colorful and minutely detailed images of the illuminated pages themselves. *The Urizen Books* includes *The Book of Urizen*, *The Book of Ahania*, and *The Book of Los*, but not *The Song of Los*, which was (appropriately) included in Detlef W. Dörrbecker's edition of *The Continental Prophecies*. Worrall has successfully negotiated the difficult path that one enters when editing a book in which the usefulness of the pictures will outlast that of most of the critical apparatus. Any editor might be tempted to retreat into the mode usually adopted by Sir Geoffrey Keynes in his slight commentaries in the even more glorious Trianon Press facsimiles. Worrall has done better than that. His introductions to the difficult Urizen books offer coherent and sensible interpretive suggestions that reflect a broad grasp of recent scholarship, and his critical, technical and bibliographical information is up to date. Inevitably, readers will find that he has neglected things they wish he had explained or at least mentioned, but most, now and for years to come, will find his apparatus to be a helpful, readable and reliable accompaniment to the illustrations.

In his acknowledgments Worrall cites the influence of the great learned lefties David V. Erdman and E. P. Thompson; he shares their interest in the ways that Blake responded to his times, especially contemporary politics, and his introductions reiterate and expand upon their work. Like them, he is especially good at showing how politics and religion were intertwined in the period, and adduces a score

of political, philosophical, and religious writers and artists whose works are variously analogous or at least relevant to Blake's, some of them well known to Blakeans, like Spence, Paine, Mallet and (more recently) Geddes, and some less familiar ones that Jon Mee, Iain McCalman, and Worrall himself have recently uncovered. Worrall is judicious in selecting these analogues and in his assessment of their relevance. As usually happens when studying Blake in context, even identifying materials or phenomena that the author was undoubtedly thinking of as he wrote (and expected his audience to know) helps the struggling modern reader only so much. As the analogues and potential allusions proliferate, it often becomes harder rather than easier to imagine how Blake could have expected his readers to negotiate these intertextual jungles. None of the contemporary analogues seems satisfactory to me as a rhetorical model for Blake's procedure in these books—something that Worrall, like most of us, usually calls a parody, even though we all know that the term is insufficient to describe the wide range of ways in which Blake's work is related to his most likely targets. When Spence or Paine (or Cruikshank or Gillray) did things like Blake's it is clear that they were operating as parodists of a complex but not particularly mysterious kind, but I still cannot clearly envision a reader for whom these books of Blake's would have been anything but opaque, however richly evocative, wittily suggestive, and potentially subversive we can show them to be.

Worrall is only a little less assured in treating the textual and related technical aspects of these books than in clarifying their political and social contexts. He is familiar with the latest developments in understanding Blake's means of production in general and the history of producing the Urizen books in particular, and throughout his apparatus Worrall shows that he understands the implications of the work of Joseph Viscomi and others for those trying to make sense of multiple versions of an illuminated Blake text. The assorted editorial notes are helpful and fairly efficient. The pictorial notes are much more carefully chosen than, for instance, the luxuriant tangle of implications and possibilities catalogued in David Erdman's *Illuminated Blake*, but Worrall nevertheless includes some ephemeral remarks by others on minute particulars that mean little outside the context of the discussion in which they originally appeared.

The facing-page letterpress texts presumably record the text as it appears in the page that is reproduced (as in the earlier volumes), and they are therefore somewhat different from the more familiar editorial texts (such as Bentley's or Keynes's) and also from the collated "largest printed mark" texts invented by Erdman. I couldn't find any explicit claim here about the editorial principle used, but Paley's rationale in the *Jerusalem* volume of this series is persuasive (126-27). A judicious and uncluttered record of the text of the copy reproduced is a useful thing to have and is not available elsewhere, even if it is not the best imag-

inable reconstruction of what Blake meant to write. And as transcriptions of the words and punctuation on the finished pages these texts seem to be very reliable: working from the reproductions in the book I found no apparent errors. In general the compositors did an excellent job of reproducing the format and lineation (and even the word-spacing) of Blake's pages—the only problem I can see is that when Blake inserted the end of a broken line above rather than below the line it completes, the typesetter (or the typesetting program) adjusted the line spacing so that the fragment is placed closer to the line above than to the broken line that it completes.

I can't testify about the color accuracy of the reproductions in this volume, for I have not examined them side by side with the originals. But because so many of the original pages are color-printed in thick smears of ink, the images here cannot be facsimiles of Blake's pages but rather very plausible color-offset reproductions of very sharp and carefully lit photographs. The reproductive processes used cannot even approximate the look of most of Blake's originals, which often feature richly textured impasto effects and other unreproducible elements such as gold leaf, but they do provide a reliable record of most of what is there to be seen. The photographs used were very sharp, and the offset screens so fine that it is impossible to perceive with the naked eye the tiny dots of ink that make up the image. In all seven copies that I have examined the printing plates were perfectly registered, so that the printing colors were applied exactly where they should be. As a result of all these circumstances, the images are exceptionally beautiful and very useful for scholars. The hairline features of the intaglio-etched texts of *Ahania* and *The Book of Los*, for instance, are almost as clearly reproduced as in the photo-collotype Trianon Press facsimiles, and all pages are sharper and more subtly colored than in any other reproductions now available except the best color slides and, perhaps, the digital images that will eventually be available from the electronic Blake Archive. This resource (<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/blake>), still under construction, presently offers a dazzling glimpse of the technology that will revolutionize the reproduction of Blake's pictures for scholarly purposes, and will undoubtedly (and unfortunately) forestall any future publishing projects like the one that produced the volume under review. (On the other hand, it seems likely that an electronic archive coupled to advanced printers could eventually be used to produce high-quality paper copies on demand, so all the romance of the printed page may not be lost forever.)

The problem of choosing copies to reproduce and determining the ordering of pages in them is simple for *The Book of Ahania* and *The Book of Los*, since the complete copies are unique, but devilishly difficult for *The Book of Urizen*, which is ordered and constituted differently in almost every copy. Blake made twenty eight printing plates for *Urizen*,

all at roughly the same time, but except for copies A and B he didn't use all the pages that the plates could print, and while some pages may have been extracted (or added) by later owners, Blake's foliation and other evidence suggest that he regarded several different forms of the book as complete and satisfactory. Indeed, the copy reproduced as a whole in this new edition, Copy D, lacks not only plate 16, but also plate 4, which includes about a tenth of all the text. Flawed but plausible cases could be made for several of the more complete copies as the "best" text to reproduce, but as long as one must choose an exemplar—and for paper editions of the illuminated books, I guess one must—Copy D of *Urizen* is an attractive copy and a sound choice. Worrall includes a generous sampling of variant pages (among them the two missing from Copy D) and indicates the variety of alternative orderings.

I am still slowly working my way through these new Blake Trust editions systematically, but I have been using them unsystematically for some time as my primary reference texts for the illuminated books. The whole series seems to me a resounding success—the level of the scholarship is high, the overall editorial approach sound, and the execution of the volumes very good. There is always room for caviling—such a magnificent presentation should be attended by both careful color-checking of the illustrations and perspicuous proofreading (and graceful editing for style), and some volumes didn't receive enough attention in these respects. But no serious Blake scholar can do without these books, and the Blake Trust, the Tate Gallery, Princeton University Press, and the editors should all be proud of all of them. David Worrall's contribution to the series is consistent with the high standard that prevails throughout.

William Richey, *Blake's Altering Aesthetic*.
Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996.
xii + 197 pp. \$37.50.

Reviewed by JENNIFER DAVIS MICHAEL

In this radical reassessment of Blake's aesthetic theory, William Richey takes aim at a sacred tenet of Blake scholarship: Blake's espousal of the Gothic and rejection of the classical mode of art. Given Blake's early sketching of medieval tombs in Westminster Abbey and his vehement denunciation of "Greek and Roman models" late in his career, most critics have followed Frye's assumption that his attitude toward the Gothic remained consistent throughout his life.¹ As recent criticism has tended to reject mono-

¹ See *Fearful Symmetry* 148-49.

lithic readings of Blake and to emphasize change and even contradiction over the course of his career, it is surprising that no one has seriously challenged the belief that, in Jean Hagstrum's words, "The Gothic became Blake's steadiest symbol for the good" (29).²

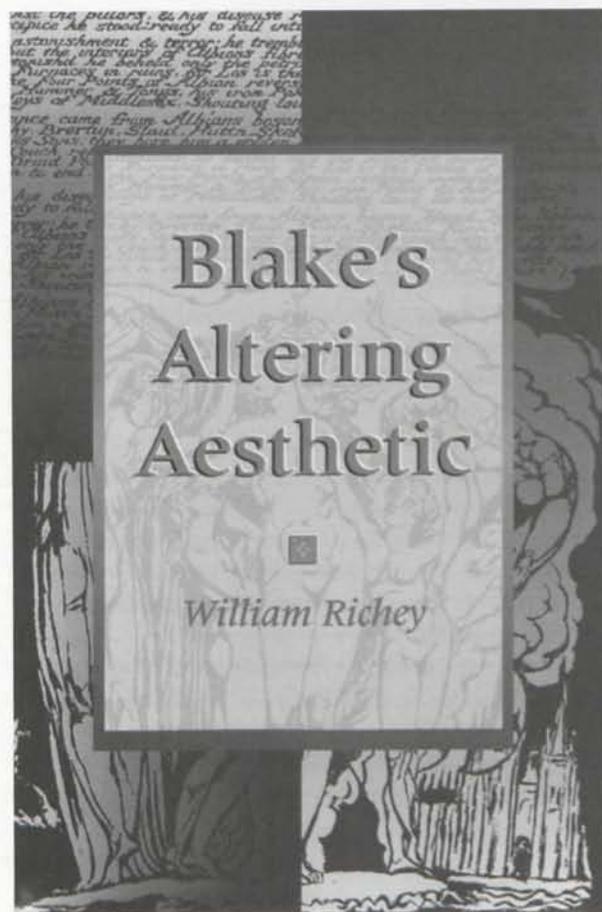
Anne K. Mellor (whom Richey acknowledges as a mentor) briefly mentions Blake's reaction against classical forms as a late development: "In Blake's late art, Gothic motifs replace Greek motifs as the vocabulary of the sublime language of primal imaginative vision" (246). Yet she does not examine this shift in detail or account for it in political and cultural terms, as does Richey. Richey challenges Hagstrum, Frye and others by arguing that "Blake before 1804 exhibited an appreciation for Greek art that was nearly as intense as his later antipathy for it" (4), and devotes his book to exploring and accounting for that radical shift. In the language of his title, Blake's aesthetic "alters" in both transitive and intransitive ways: it changes over time, while it also alters the categories of "classical" and "Gothic."

Central to Richey's argument is his recognition that for Blake, as for his contemporaries, aesthetic codes are "highly politicized mode[s] of discourse" (5) that can be modified by their users. While Reynolds and his colleagues used neoclassicism to support the aristocratic establishment, the young Blake embraced an "eclectic primitivism" common to the late eighteenth century in which a variety of ancient cultures—Hebraic, Norse, and Celtic as well as classical—provided models of liberty and purity. Richey contends that in his early work "Blake regularly opposed this classicized idiom to the Gothicism of the Middle Ages" (6), which he represented as a corrupt and decadent old order, replete with tyranny, hypocrisy, and sexual repression.

In Richey's first chapter, "Neoclassical Primitivism," Blake's early visual and verbal works receive the kind of attention that has been rare until very recently.³ His depictions of medieval subjects such as *The Penance of Jane Shore*, often dismissed as "the unscholarly historicism of 'Strawberry Hill' Gothic" (Butlin 5), are taken seriously here. Although Richey finds Blake's early work dominated by "the neoclassical ideal of simplicity" (18), what seems paramount at this point is not the aesthetic idiom but the Rousseauist idea of primitive virtue. In other words, both ancient Greece and ancient Britain could exemplify

² Hagstrum acknowledges that Blake derived some negative "visual motifs" from the Gothic, such as the tyrant's spiked crown, but he does not see in this usage any evidence of ambivalence toward Gothicism. On the other side of the issue, Morris Eaves has thoroughly examined Blake's use and adaptation of classical and neoclassical theories of art, but he makes surprisingly few references to Gothicism. David Bindman notes Blake's early attraction to simplicity of form in both Gothic sculpture and classical art, but he resists narrowly Gothicking Blake's English history paintings: "If Blake went so far as to have a conception of the Gothic period in his early years, it was a notably bleak one" (49).

³ The other recent example of note is Greenberg's collection of essays on *Poetical Sketches*.



"prelapsarian glory" (21). Turning to *Poetical Sketches*, Richey challenges the opposition between Hellenism and Hebraism that other readers have found in "To the Muses" and the seasonal poems. Not only through his close readings but also by stepping outside the East/West polarity, he shows that for the early Blake, both classical and biblical literature were authentic sources of inspiration.

In his second chapter, Richey contends that Blake's depiction of the medieval Gothic, already negative in "To Winter" and "Gwin, King of Norway," becomes even more so in his revolutionary poems of the 1790s. Blake's classical idiom blended naturally with the neoclassical iconography of the French Revolution, but more specifically, Richey suggests that Blake was motivated by his opposition to Edmund Burke, whose Gothic sublime he associated with Burke's defense of monarchy. Moreover, the Burkean sublime, emphasizing darkness, obscurity, terror and confusion, ran counter to the classical "humanistic sublime" that Blake espoused, with its focus on light, clear delineation, and the human form. Richey reads *The French Revolution* as a critique of both Burke's aesthetic and political theories, drawing also on Paine's *Rights of Man* and on Ossian's *Fingal* to distinguish between different uses of primitivism

and the sublime. This distinction, he shows, is even more apparent in the illuminated poems such as *America: A Prophecy*, where Albion's Angel appears as a Gothic tyrant, often cloaked in gloom, while Orc resembles a statue of Apollo or Hercules, gloriously naked and bathed in light. Whereas Burke's sublime gains its power through intimidation and obscurity, Blake's humanistic sublime is based on "naked beauty displayed." Burke's love of obscurity went hand in hand with medieval chivalry and chastity or, as Blake would call it, "pale religious lechery." Richey therefore interprets the rape in the prelude to *America* not only as a deliberate response to Burke's chivalrous defense of Marie Antoinette, but also as a redefinition of the revolutionary act as one that brings not destruction, but union, liberation, and new life.⁴ Many readers will not be able to excuse Orc's rape of the Shadowy Female on those grounds, but the reading of the Shadowy Female as Marie Antoinette, "bearing [Orc's] daily bread—or perhaps more accurately, his cake" (63) is provocative and memorable.

Richey finds that Blake's rejection of classicism accompanied his disenchantment with the French Revolution, as Blake blamed the Revolution's failure on its devotion to the Homeric cult of war. This reversal, however, was neither simple nor instantaneous. Richey's third chapter considers *Vala* as the high-water mark of Blake's classicism and its revised form, *The Four Zoas*, as his later attempt "to purge *Vala* of what he had come to consider its corrupt classical ideology" (77).⁵ Richey re-evaluates Hayley's influence on Blake, arguing that Hayley's attitude toward the classics was "more conservative than revolutionary" (79), and that under Hayley's tutelage, Blake enhanced his knowledge and use of classical sources. In a series of closely read passages, Richey shows Blake rewriting specific episodes from the *Iliad*, such as the confrontation between Achilles and Agamemnon, and relocating them within the psyche. Most important, he points out how the figure of Los/Urthona combines the determination of Achilles with the peaceful creativity of Vulcan, creating a new kind of hero.

The last part of the chapter turns to the composition of "The Grey Monk" as a pivotal point in Blake's attitude toward the classics and his revision of the epic. The early drafts of this lyric, Richey suggests, serve as "a wildly expressionistic transcript of his trial" for sedition after the encounter with Schofield (98). Here Blake rejects Achilles as a model of the heroic poet and, more generally, rejects physical warfare as a model for intellectual fight. Richey's attempt to

account for Blake's reversal in this way is scrupulously detailed, but the precise reason continues to elude him: "Having had his own virtue publicly held up to scrutiny, Blake appears to have radically rethought his former system of values . . ." (100). However, Blake's thought process is not outlined for us, nor is it clear why, as Richey notes, Blake suddenly portrays Gothic figures and images in a positive light. Richey is right, though, as he goes on to argue that Blake's revision of the epic was not just a christianizing of its mythology but also a purging of self-righteousness. In *The Four Zoas*, Los's problems arise more from his own character than from external causes (102). Rather than simply liberating himself, the artist now wins glory by sacrificing himself for others. Blake thus shifted the epic onto the new ground he would explore further in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. In those poems, Richey traces another change in Blake's approach, as Blake resumes some of his "classically derived self-righteousness" (109) to engage the classical aesthetic directly in "Mental Fight."

The fourth chapter addresses *Milton* as an account of Blake's own artistic conversion from classical self-righteousness. Complicating matters, Richey sees Blake modifying the position set forth in "The Grey Monk" and *The Four Zoas* in the conflict between Satan and Palamabron. Blake now believed that excessive "forbearance" was a form of self-righteousness, and that honest confrontation was in fact more generous because it could also free the enemy from error (118-119). At the same time, he adopted the belief of Milton and others that Greek art and literature had been "Stolen and Perverted" from Hebrew originals. Hence Blake turned to the classics with a new energy, to restore them to purity. Richey therefore reads *Milton* as a revision not only of *Vala/The Four Zoas* and Milton's *Paradise Regained*, but also of the *Odyssey*, as *Vala* is a reworking of the *Iliad*. Blake, he argues, purges not only Milton but himself of two equally flawed notions of justice: the vengeful justice of the *Odyssey* and the "repackaged" classical justice that passes for Christianity in Milton's own works (130). Richey concludes the chapter with a highly effective comparison of the climaxes of *Milton* and the *Odyssey*. Both are moments of unmasking, but "Blake has . . . transformed Homer's retributive bloodbath into a moment of self-awareness in which Milton returns to his unfallen form by casting off his moralistic classical mentality" (131). I only wish Richey had pushed further his suggestion that *Milton* becomes "something like a Pauline conversion narrative" (10): his reading of Blake's verse in terms of its classical sources is so skilled that at times he neglects to spell out Blake's Judeo-Christian modifications with equal care.

Richey begins his chapter on *Jerusalem*, which he calls "Blake's anticlassical epic," with a discussion of Blake's tract *On Homers Poetry [and] On Virgil*. Richey makes the case that Blake was concerned less with Homer's actual writing than with what it had come to stand for and what critics

⁴ One might think of some of the rapes in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, although Richey does not make this connection.

⁵ Richey could be more explicit about the textual problems involved in making any claim about Blake's revisions. Although he has compared Margoliouth's edition of *Vala* with Bentley's transcript and photographic reproduction of the manuscript, his idea of *Vala* as a finished and definable poem should be weighed against Erdman's comments (818).

had made of it (135). While much more time could be spent unraveling Blake's claims about synecdoche, generalization, and allegory, Richey characteristically makes Blake not a lone reader but a participant in an aesthetic dialogue, citing Winckelmann and Le Bossu as well as Aristotle. Richey's main interest in the tract, however, seems to be that it announces Blake's new aesthetic ideal: "Gothic is Living Form." In *Jerusalem*, then, Blake offers an epic that embodies this "living form," replacing the artificial Aristotelian unity with a unity of poet and audience through "an intensely self-reflexive poem that is about its own composition and reception" (147). Richey's emphasis on the "total communion" Blake seeks with the reader may be overstated, given the fact that Blake gouged out much of the language of love and friendship in the preface.⁶ But he also highlights Blake's other strategy of directly confronting the classical aesthetic, since that prevailing taste was the main obstacle between Blake and his audience. At this point, Richey's strategy in leading with *On Homers Poetry* also becomes clear. In *Jerusalem*, he argues, Blake attempts to reunite elements that Homer had wrongly separated in the name of a false aesthetic unity. Los combines elements of Ulysses and Achilles, and the individual journey of the *Odyssey* is interwoven with the collective struggle of the *Iliad*. Richey argues for the unity of *Jerusalem* not by analyzing its structure, but through close readings, which are a strength of his book as a whole. In each episode he examines, Blake is recasting and rewriting not only classical epics but his own earlier epics. With this approach, Richey makes *Jerusalem* the definitive "gothic" poem, achieving unity not through fixed form but through a "dazzling profusion of minute particulars" with which readers must actively engage (171).

In his conclusion, after examining several of the large designs in *Jerusalem* to address Blake's definitions of "classical" and "Gothic," Richey is forced to admit that Blake's conception of the Gothic is utterly idiosyncratic. While this idiosyncrasy prevents Richey from drawing strong connections to other Gothic Revivalists, as he has done with political and aesthetic critics in earlier chapters, he has done what he set out to do: to explore closely Blake's changing conceptions of the Gothic and classical modes and to liberate them from the stereotypical shorthand that many critics have applied. Along the way, however, he has drawn attention to the complexity surrounding classical and Gothic taste in the period, so his self-effacing conclusion understates what he has accomplished.

By using a specific lens to examine the bulk of Blake's oeuvre, Richey covers an extraordinary amount of material in fewer than 200 pages, and only occasionally does the

argument seem rushed. The book, while not an "art book," is attractively put together, with a fair number of black and white plates to illustrate key points (although I could have wished for more in chapter 1, since the medieval paintings are not as widely known). The two great strengths of the book are the close readings of Blake's passages alongside Homeric sources and the highly readable style which keeps jargon, Blakean and otherwise, to a minimum. For both these reasons, this is one recent book on Blake that I would unhesitatingly recommend to bright undergraduates. Its insights and arguments, however, merit the attention not only of advanced Blake scholars but also of art historians and anyone interested in the cultural currency of aesthetic codes in Blake's time.

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⁶ Paul Yoder addressed the implications of these deletions and Erdman's emendations in his paper, "Gouging *Jerusalem*: Reading Blake's Erasures," delivered at the NASSR/BARS Conference, Strawberry Hill, 7 July 1998.

Nicholas M. Williams, *Ideology and Utopia in the Poetry of William Blake*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. xviii + 250 pp. \$59.95.

Reviewed by MICHAEL FERBER

The opening gambit of Nicholas Williams's interesting book is uncharacteristically cute. He quotes Blake's denunciation of "Hirelings" in the "Preface" to *Milton*, those who would "for ever depress Mental & prolong Corporeal War," and then claims that the "state of war" among Blake critics is a "war between the mental and corporeal themselves," the "mental" critics being those who take Blake in an ahistorical and aesthetic way as internally coherent, the "corporeal" critics being "socially oriented." This is, surely, to extend the meaning of "corporeal" so far as to turn it into its opposite, for what war could be more mental than this supposed war between university professors? I'm quite sure that David Erdman has never killed another Blake critic. Williams himself, though he enlists under the banner of the corporeal forces, is not, in the end, very interested in situating Blake in his real corporeal context—where he lived, how he made his living, whom he knew, what he read, and so on; Williams cares more about a more abstract, shall we say mental, realm of "analogues" that Blake may not always have known much about and seldom agreed with: the ideas of Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Burke, Paine, and Robert Owen. Williams, in other words, is less interested in Blake's own ideology and how his social situation may have prompted it than he is in Blake's *concept* of ideology, Blake's own view of how ideology arises and gets a grip on us. Rousseau and the four others are invoked mainly as parallels, sometimes as contrasts, to Blake's notions. The book is not ahistorical, but it is largely "high history of ideas," despite its occasional Marxist gestures. It is only half about Blake; the other half not only analyzes the five analogues but dwells at some length on such modern theorists of ideology as Mannheim, Ricoeur, Althusser, Bourdieu, and Habermas. The result is impressive in many ways. The book is nearly always lucid and unpretentious; it raises interesting questions; it often casts new light on the poems. If I found myself often quarreling with it, it is well worth quarreling with.

That the pairing of another writer with Blake on five different themes often yields interesting results, insights into poems that Williams is led to by looking at them through the lenses of the analogue texts, might seem to justify his approach, but I think these pairings are rather arbitrary. Owen in particular seems far-fetched as a parallel to *Jerusalem* as a utopia. That Owen's factory community in New Lanark was in operation at the same time Blake was working on *Jerusalem*, and that both men were concerned about

the miserable conditions of the working class under the dominant economic system—these would seem to offer little ground for comparison, especially since Williams does not even try to argue, as he does with the other writers, that Blake knew anything at all about Owen. A third supposed similarity seems conjured up out of a need to reply to the obvious objection that Owen actually got something going with real workers manufacturing real things: Williams says the utopian thinking of both of them "is characterized by its realization in the actual world," though he admits after this amazing claim that this actuality is "less immediately obvious" than the other parallels (171). Even confining ourselves to the five figures Williams invokes, moreover, I wonder why Paine's *Rights of Man* is set next to *Milton* rather than, say, *America* and *Europe*; instead, *America* is compared to Burke, *Europe* to Wollstonecraft. Would there be no better insights, and no more of them, if the analogues were shuffled about?

Chapter two, which I will discuss in some detail, invokes the parallel between Rousseau's *Émile* and Blake's *Songs*; *Émile* is a "cognate text for the *Songs*" (39). That certainly seems reasonable, if hardly original (Williams acknowledges Zachary Leader's discussion); despite Blake's later hostility to Rousseau there is good reason to think that among the rich cache of pungently phrased ideas in Rousseau there will be some that prompt a fresh look at the *Songs*, which is not only an ostensibly "educational" children's book but is often about children's education as well. With *Émile* as a source of ideas, Williams offers subtle revisions of familiar readings of several *Songs* as well as the title page to *Innocence*. His discussion of "The School Boy" draws from Rousseau's dislike of book learning; he assumes, on not very much evidence, that Blake shared it. He points out that the lines "Nor in my book can I take delight, / Nor sit in learnings bower, / Worn thro' with the dreary shower" are difficult, it being unclear if the "bower" refers to the classroom where the boy sits unhappily or to an extracurricular alternative where learning might be a delight. If one prefers the first reading (as I do), one must note the design, which seems to show a bowery playground: Williams reminds us of the child in the upper right, sitting in a tree branch and absorbed in a book. Good point.

Williams generally presses the differences between text and design. Taking a cue from Rousseau's dilemma over how a good education can be given when no tutor could have had one, he interprets "The Human Abstract" as an account of the continual and inescapable transmission of miseducation ("mystery"). Taking a cue from Althusser, he takes the design as making visible the ideology of the text, for where the text said there is no tree of mystery in nature, the design seems to show us one, or show us at least a "visible scene of bondage" (43)—from which indeed the old man at the bottom of the page may be freeing himself. This may misapply Althusser's idea somewhat, for I don't think he meant that pictures make visible the ideologies embed-

ded in texts, but if so it's an interesting misapplication. One might try it out on "The Tyger." The trouble is that Williams understates the active role of Cruelty in creating the tree of mystery—the tree doesn't arise from automatic self-replication—and it seems not to have occurred to him that the old man in the design may be Cruelty himself, knitting a snare.

The Rousseauian context becomes a procrustean bed, I think, for the "Introduction" to *Innocence*, tormenting it into the shape of a "tutorial" where the initiative comes from the pupil (child) rather than the tutor (piper); the child emerges at the end not as a stable, educated subject but a "joyous hearer/reader" able to act on his/her desires (57). This only seems surprising or interesting if you take the child as a pupil in the first place, rather than as a muse (somewhat like the man in Caedmon's dream who said "Caedmon, sing me something") or as a kind of emissary from the world of children who know what they want. Williams is more concerned, in any case, with the argument in Heather Glen and W. J. T. Mitchell about the "stain" and "hollow" pen, that the final lines, which immediately follow on the vanishing of the child, chart a descent from the immediacy and spontaneity of the oral and musical exchanges to the distance and artificiality of writing: "And I pluck'd a hollow reed. // And I made a rural pen, / And I stain'd the water clear, / And I wrote my happy songs / Every child may joy to hear." If you take "stain" and "hollow" as having moral meanings you can convince yourself that something bad is going on at the end. (Williams might have cited Edward Said as having partly anticipated Glen and Mitchell in claiming that "stain'd" suggests a "troubling of innocence" in *Beginnings* [204], though Said thinks the piper writes on the water.) I've never liked this projection of sinister secondary meanings on what is manifestly, in my view, the innocent, even technical, uses of the words. (Is "stained" glass a bad thing in churches? Did not Blake stain things every day in his workshop?) It not only wrenches the poem into a new and weird direction that defeats its whole point, and undermines the mode of existence of the *Songs* itself, but it also misses the wit in having the same natural object that the shepherd uses for his pipe pressed into service as his pen (rather than plucking a swan); as pipe or pen, too, the reed had better be hollow. But rather than criticize Glen and Mitchell on these grounds Williams goes them one better, as if literary criticism can only make progress by dialectically absorbing and resituating previous stances. He thinks the "stain" fills the whole page, as the ink on Blake's page, and not only that: "The stain clearly seems related to the 'cloud' of the first stanza" (58). Several cloudy sentences later the stain and cloud are identified ("The stain or cloud"), and we are told that innocence is always already stained with experience, the work of miseducation is inevitable, and so on. A little later Williams suggests that not the *Songs* but their readings can be called innocent or experienced. I don't think the poems

are so malleable, but Williams in this case is certainly an "experienced," not to say jaundiced, reader. If all of us Blake critics have enlisted under a mental or a corporeal banner, then I must belong to some hybrid faction, the corporeal, history-oriented critics who think that Blake is sometimes simple and coherent.

Williams's third chapter uses Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* as a "looking glass" for *Visions and Europe* (74), and he offers interesting insights into both poems. I like what he says about Enitharmon's "female dream" in *Europe*, for instance, and why it is female (80 f). Another interesting discussion (though it leaves Wollstonecraft behind) concerns the notorious passage in *Visions* where Oothoon offers to catch girls for Theotormon in "silken nets and traps of adamant" and then watch them "In lovely copulation bliss on bliss with Theotormon": here Oothoon offers a "redeemed vision of this fallen image" of nets and traps, revealing "the utopian content within the ideological form" (95). But even in this chapter I wonder about the ground of comparison. As Williams says, "The influence of Mary Wollstonecraft upon the work of William Blake has by now been invoked so frequently as to have become a critical truism" (74), but rather than question this influence, as this sentence seems to promise, he accepts it, and argues that "thus far critics have largely ignored the deeper similarities between the two" (75). It seems to me that what critics have really ignored are the profound differences between the two, and because Williams also ignores them his deeper similarities strike me as superficial. The most important of these, he says, is "their mutual discovery of the concept of ideology as a device for the critique and the explanation of their social situations" (75). Of course, as Williams acknowledges, neither of them used the word "ideology," but as a concept, loosely defined, it seems to have been widely current. Bacon's four "idols" might not have been remembered, but surely Rousseau's critique of Hobbes as projecting modern social relations onto the state of nature is a good example of ideology-critique. So is Burke's reduction of the French Revolution to the interests of the lawyers who brought it about, or Godwin's more general claim in *Political Justice* that some people "regard everything as natural and right that happens, however capriciously or for however short a time, to prevail in the society in which they live." I fail to see that having a critique of ideology especially distinguishes Blake and Wollstonecraft from many others, and even if it did, surely any discussion of it is misleading that does not take account of their immense differences. Williams acknowledges Wollstonecraft's associationism, for example, suggesting that "associationism might seem the most universal of all theories of ideology" (77), but he never notes that Blake critiqued *her* ideology in his many attacks against associationism as a woefully inadequate account of the mind, notably in *Visions* itself, so often claimed to be inspired by her.

The two governing concepts of Williams's book are in the title, ideology and utopia. Williams draws them from Mannheim's classic study *Ideology and Utopia* (1929) and secondarily from Ricoeur's recent *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*. His discussion of the terms and their histories is well-informed but perhaps not fully considered; at least I found it misleading or puzzling at times. I don't think it is true, for instance, that Marx posited the "universality of ideology" at any time in his career (8), or assigned ideology to "consciousness *per se*" (9), but here I can only cite the standard works on the subject by Bhikhu Parekh and Jorge Larraín, which Williams does not mention. He rightly points out that the "Mannheim Paradox" haunts most formulations of the universal or global character of ideology—the *tu quoque* response that the critic of ideology must be no less contaminated by it—such as Althusser's; and he is right to cast doubt on Althusser's escape from the paradox by way of a supposedly scientific Marxism immune to ideological distortion (though that does not keep Williams from citing Althusser with apparent approval many more times in the book). Then he takes "utopia" as the opposite of "ideology," whereas I think it would make things much clearer to assign "utopia" to a third category and use "truth" as the opposite term. Surely the precondition of being an ideology is that it is, in part at least, false, and the first task of ideology-critique is to demonstrate its falsehood; then it may attribute its currency to the interests or distorting social position of those who believe it. This was Marx's view, as I understand it, and however well Marx's economic theories and predictions have stood up I see nothing wrong with this formulation. Marx, after all, thought that bourgeois economists understood economics very well; Smith and Ricardo were both scientific and ideological. He believed that science, reason, the dispassionate pursuit of truth provided a standpoint from which to criticize ideologies; he had a "strategic" concept of ideology, in Williams's terms, rather than a universalistic one (26). Williams wants to put both concepts into play at once, as he thinks Blake does, and so he resorts to "utopia": "What else is the import of utopianism but the realization that, if there really is no place from which to critique ideology, the ideology critic must position him/herself in the 'nowhere' of utopia?" (26). Yet I think he never convincingly explains just what this means or how one could do it. Simply to think up a utopia does not exempt one from ideological errors. Why cannot the same criteria (reason, justice, dispassionate examination of all the facts) apply both to existing ideologies and imaginary utopias? Williams cites Ricoeur as locating the strategic standpoint in the imagination: the power to imagine utopias in the mind is "the most formidable contestation of what is" (25). The imagination, of all Romantic places! But then the imagination is not "nowhere." The corporeal or Marxist questions immediately arise: Whose imagination? In how many minds? What conditions promote the utopian image? How can it gain purchase on the existing

social structures and change them? Who will oppose it? But these mundane and concrete questions seem less interesting to Williams than the paradox of universal ideology.

That paradox, according to Williams, pervades Blake's "London." "Blake's identification of the 'mind-forg'd manacles' is the equivalent of Mannheim's paradox, for it extends ideology even to the position of the poem's speaker, who can 'mark' weakness and woe in the faces which he meets but cannot perceive the mark of woe branded into his own consciousness," and even into that of the reader (19). Williams simply accepts the arguments of Heather Glen and David Punter without discussion, and without acknowledging subsequent criticisms of their interpretation, such as those in my essay (1981). He seems to think that courting the paradox makes the poem more powerful, whereas I think it makes the poem incoherent. The Mannheim paradox, which is a version of the Cretan paradox, explodes the logic of the poem: if the speaker's mind is also manacled, then perhaps he does not hear things truly, and if that is so then perhaps he is wrong about mind-forg'd manacles, and if that is so then perhaps he does hear things truly, and so on. But there is nothing in the phrase "mind-forg'd manacles" that requires us to impute them to the speaker, and there is every reason to exempt the speaker, who takes a visionary stance as if, like a prophet crying in the wilderness, he alone sees or hears the truth.

There are several places in Williams's book, in fact, where he fails to acknowledge previous discussion of the points he takes up. I don't want to be too hard on him, for I have cut a few corners myself at times in reading earlier scholarship, hoping that I have not missed something crucial, for life is short and so on, but it is a little frustrating to read an otherwise interesting comparison between Blake's utopian ideal of *Eternal Conversation* and Habermas's ideal speech situation (203) while knowing that Williams has himself failed to engage in conversation with certain predecessors, including, again, my own article which made just that comparison (1990). My book *The Social Vision of William Blake* (1985) goes over much of the same ground as Williams's book, though it is more about Blake's own ideology than his ideology-critique. In my introduction, for instance, I speak of synthesizing Frye and Erdman and I quote E. P. Thompson about placing Blake next to Marx together in his pantheon, in adjacent paragraphs; Williams begins his preface by invoking Frye and Erdman together and ends it by mentioning Thompson's pantheon with Blake and Marx. It's no big deal, but that and several other instances make me wonder if Williams has forgotten his encounter with my book, which he cites in general terms but never confronts. Other scholars might notice similar salient absences. Despite the absences, however, Williams's book deserves an attentive conversation of the sort I have tried to begin here.

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Wayne Glauesser, *Locke and Blake: A Conversation Across the Eighteenth Century*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998. xi + 201pp. \$49.95.

Reviewed by TERENCE ALLAN HOAGWOOD

Despite its title, this is not a philosophical book;¹ instead, it is "a composite critical biography . . . neither continuous nor complete" (ix), narrating and discussing episodes for comparison. The incompleteness of the biographical accounts results in part from a shortage of evidence ("records are scarce from [Locke's] years in political exile" [3], and "neither man said much of anything about his mother" [13], but to a greater degree it results from a selectivity in favor of coincidence.

An introductory chapter states the book's aim to suggest a conversation between Locke and Blake, in imitative or

¹ For accounts of the philosophical issues that are important for a comparison of Locke with Blake, see Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton UP, 1947), which Glauesser mentions briefly, and also two books which Glauesser does not mention: Morton Paley, *Energy and Imagination* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1970); and Terence Allan Hoagwood, *Prophecy and the Philosophy of Mind* (Tuscaloosa, U of Alabama P, 1985).

rhetorical accordance with Locke's remark that "'Difference of Opinions in conversation' brings about 'the greatest Advantage of Society'" (3, quoting Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*). The second chapter affirms that "both [Locke and Blake] participated in conventional representations of gendered desire, yet both of them resisted traditional romantic plots and looked for alternatives to ordinary marriage" (12); this chapter narrates some of Locke's "amorous relationships" (15) and "Blake's feelings about conjugal love" (43) that involved challenging Locke's representation of the body. Chapter 4 shows that Locke condemned slavery and also "participated in the slave trade" (62), whereas Blake's opposition to slavery was not similarly contradictory. In chapter 5, the book explains that "both were accused of sedition" but "neither was convicted" (92). A chapter on the topic of possessions and theory of property proceeds by comparing the anger that each man expressed when he thought that someone had stolen a picture from him. Another chapter explains "Locke's immersion in print consciousness and Blake's reaction against it" (145). The concluding chapter compares Locke's epitaph (" . . . A scholar by training, he devoted his studies wholly to the pursuit of truth") with Blake's inscription in an autograph album (" . . . what is done without meaning is very different from that which a Man Does with his Thought & Mind"), and Glauesser paraphrases: "artists try to create meaningful structures against the reign of 'Nature' and 'Chance,' full of hogs and humans, signifying nothing" (165).

Some of the research is primary, referring to Locke's papers that are now in the Bodleian Library, but most draws on familiar sources—e.g., Maurice Cranston's biography of Locke, E. S. DeBeer's edition of Locke's letters, and Bentley's *Blake Records*.² Some of the research and argumentation is both interesting and important—on, for example, the contradictions in Locke's responses (in writing and in his own financial investments) to slavery, and on Locke's involvement in the print trade, literally and in his development of print metaphors. Sometimes, however, the reliance on secondary research leads to problems, as it almost inevitably will: Glauesser attributes to a personal letter written by Damaris Cudworth a passage about "an Active Sagacitie in the Soul whereby something being Hinted to Her she runs out into a More Cleare and large Conception," whereas that passage was written by Henry More, her father's fellow Cambridge Platonist; Damaris Cudworth is merely quoting.³

² Maurice Cranston, *John Locke: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1957); E. S. DeBeer, *The Correspondence of John Locke*, 8 vols. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1976-83); G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969); Bentley, *Blake Records Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989).

³ The sentence, from Henry More's *Antidote Against Atheism*, is both quoted and attributed to More in Hoagwood's *Prophecy and the Philosophy of Mind* 14.

Given the readership of *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, I should point out that the discussions of Blake's writings are thematic in what was once a conventional manner, as in the important books by S. Foster Damon,⁴ translating Blake's signifiers into abstract ideas: for example, in *Jerusalem*, "Blake used 'female space' to mean an illusory infinity that makes someone feel small and impotent" (5). Clearly, some of the topics discussed in *Locke and Blake*—slavery, gender, sedition—are shared among studies much more recent than Damon's,⁵ but the interpretive method and project in this book are often apparently innocent of theoretical sophistication: "The speaker is Leutha, Satan/Hayley's emanation, who tells of his feminization and consequent attraction to Palambron/Blake." A note discredits the biographical equivalence ("no Blakean character should ever be reduced to its biographical referent" [171n90]), but there the discredited interpretation sits.

Sometimes the interpretive reductions involve an apparent exploitation of a coincidence, or an apparent attempt rhetorically to invent a connection between Locke and Blake: for example, in comparing Blake's putatively therapeutic mission with Locke's actual work as a physician, Glausser writes that Blake "liked to represent England as a single body (Albion), whose health . . . would be restored" (53). Observing that "Locke's philosophy had turned the body from 'the human form divine' into an atomized material object" and that "Blake's renovated imagination would undo the damage," Glausser produces this passage (*Milton* 26: 31-33) as an illustration of the supposedly shared interest in healing a physical body: "And every Generated Body in its inward form, / Built by the Sons of Los in Bowlahoola and Allamanda." I would suggest, however, that, rather than resembling Locke's work as a physician, that passage might be susceptible of a figurative interpretation. Sometimes the interpretive reductions in *Locke and Blake* express what might appear to be naive intentionalism, saying, for example, that "Blake wanted to reenchant the body by finding primary spiritual causes" (53); after a few decades of rigorously antifoundational theorizing, many of us would be shy of saying, on the basis of a literary text, what the author "wanted" thereby. To think of the author as a function, for instance, as Foucault suggests, dissolves the terms of the question; any variety of deconstruction (e.g., Kenneth Burke's, or Derrida's, or DeMan's) would see that the terms of the question *are terms* and not per-

sons; Marxists have been loudly critical of the bourgeois construction of the individual on which that interpretive remark about what Blake "wanted" is based; and I (or you) could go on: it is very late in the theoretical day to affirm, as if with confidence, and merely on the basis of a poem's text, what "Blake wanted." Even the desire to write in that way is starting to look obsolete.

What is best about the book, then, is not its scholarship or its interpretations, and not (to my mind) the sometimes far-fetched or merely rhetorical constructions of analogy, but rather its easy-going anecdotalism, which is most enjoyable when one no longer has to worry about whether the research is original, derived, or mixed, or whether the interpretations are rigorous. The chapter on seditious plots, for example, narrates Locke's possible involvement in conspiracies and comments interestingly on the legally seditious character of some passages in the manuscript of *Two Treatises of Government* as well as radical texts that may or may not have been written by Locke; and, noticing that Locke destroyed his letters that pertained to conspiracies against the king, Glausser infers sensibly that "Locke, like other radicals, may have encrypted his references to plots with metaphors of gardening, medicine, business, and so forth" (95). (I will add that the practice of encryption that Glausser describes was in fact so commonplace that Swift was able to satirize it hilariously in part 3 of *Gulliver's Travels*, where decryption experts in political employment decode the remark, "Our brother Tom has got the piles.")

Literary studies have been showing a great deal of interest in several of the topics mentioned in this clearly written book, including slavery, gender, and sedition; and further, the "conversation" model has been gathering interest as well, though *Locke and Blake* is innocent of the sort of theoretical complications associated with Jerome McGann's dialogues or the work of Bakhtin on which McGann's dialogism is largely based.⁶ Further still, the book is free of the sort of sentences that one's undergraduate students will profess an inability to understand. For Blakeans unfamiliar with Locke or for Lockeans unfamiliar with Blake, there is probably interesting biographical material here with some likewise interesting discussion of its implications in intellectual history. While one cannot foresee the book's having an effect in the scholarly fields, it is, for all those reasons, likely to interest those with sufficient leisure to read it.

⁴ S. Foster Damon, *William Blake* (New York: P. Smith, 1924); and Damon, *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake* (Providence: Brown UP, 1965).

⁵ See, e.g., John Mee, *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992); E. P. Thompson, *Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law* (New York: New Press, 1993); Terence Allan Hoagwood, *Politics, Philosophy, and the Production of Romantic Texts* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois UP, 1996).

⁶ For one example, see George Mannejc, Ann Mack, J. J. Rome, and Joann McGrem, "A Dialogue on Dialogue," *Postmodern Culture: An Electronic Journal of Interdisciplinary Criticism* 2 (1991). On McGann's interest in Bakhtin, see Anne Mack and Jay Rome, "Marxism, Romanticism, and Postmodernism: An American Case History," in *Dialogue and Critical Discourse: Language, Culture, Critical Theory*, ed. Michael Macovski (New York: Oxford UP, 1997).

THE APOCALYPSE AND THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Room 90 (Prints and Drawings Gallery) British Museum,
17 December 1999 - 24 April 2000

The close of the second millennium is an appropriate moment to evaluate the legacy of one of the most vivid and controversial writings in the Christian canon, the Book of Revelation. Its adumbration of an apocalypse that was both destructive and redemptive provided a universal metaphor for the expression of all future eschatology both personal and collective, a rich vein of imagery that remains a force in contemporary culture. This exhibition and its associated publication will examine the pictorial tradition it engendered as represented principally by illuminated manuscripts, books, prints and drawings from the eleventh century up to the end of the Second World War; attention is focused on particular episodes or apocalyptic phases which have often, though not invariably, occurred at the end of centuries and have always been rooted in historical and political circumstances. The material will be drawn principally from the collections of the Department of Prints and Drawings and the British Library, supplemented by loans from other collections within the United Kingdom, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and from East Coast American collections. British Museum Press will publish a fully illustrated catalogue edited by Frances Carey, Deputy Keeper of the Department of Prints and Drawings, with two introductory essays by Norman Cohn and Sir Frank Kermode. These will be followed by essays and catalogue entries accompanying the main chronological divisions by Jonathan Alexander (Institute of Fine Arts, New York), assisted by Michael Michael of Christie's Education Department, for the medieval section; Peter Parshall (Reed College, Oregon), with Giulia Bartrum of the Department of Prints and Drawings, on the Reformation period; David Bindman (University College London) on millenarianism in England from the mid-seventeenth to nineteenth centuries and Frances Carey on the twentieth century. The film historian, Ian Christie, will contribute the concluding essay on apocalyptic imagery and the cinema.

After the great medieval manuscript cycles, the defining moment in the development of the pictorial tradition was Dürer's publication of his Apocalypse woodcuts which first appeared in 1498; their resonance has been felt at all levels of subsequent portrayal, including examples such as the 1921 film, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, in which Rudolph Valentino is shown holding the Revelation of St John adorned with copies of Dürer's prints. Apocalyptic imagery was quickly appropriated as a vehicle for propaganda and satire, becoming secularised at the hands of art-

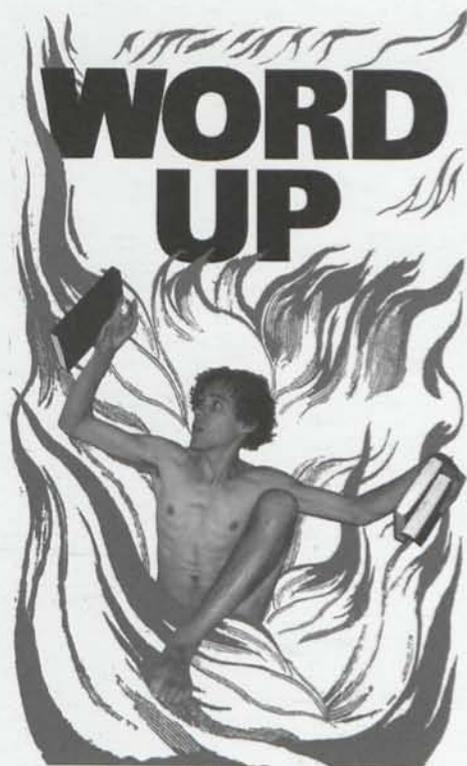


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ists like James Gillray in the late eighteenth-century. Gillray's contemporary, William Blake, evolved through his illuminated prophetic books of 1790-1820 and a series of watercolours c.1805-10, a concept of Apocalypse and Judgment that was part of a personal mythology responding to the millenarian currents and revolutionary upheavals of the period in question.

The growing secularisation of modern society has in no way diminished the power of apocalyptic metaphor which has become part of the language of popular culture. Throughout the twentieth century it has continued as a vehicle for visions of both destruction and regeneration, of nihilistic despair and futuristic fantasy, in the hands of many writers, artists, and film directors, for the cinema has been a critical factor in the transmission of such imagery. As the course of the First World War and its aftermath unfolded exultancy changed to despair; the hope of regeneration was replaced by a sense of ultimate destruction on a cosmic scale which continued to gather momentum under pressure of political developments in the 1930s, achieving a terrible realisation in the events of the Second World War.

In conjunction with the exhibition the London Philharmonic is staging an Apocalypse festival in December 1999 that will open with the film *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* accompanied by a full orchestra conducted by Carl Davis; the British Academy will hold a series of three lectures early in 2000, the National Film Theatre is scheduling a film season and there will be a joint British Museum/Warburg Institute scholarly symposium on the 17-18th March 2000.



Artwork from Jay's WordUp webpage, created by Inge Kaufmann and William Blake.

THE ANIMATED BLAKE

James Jay is creating a juggling show, "The Animated Blake," which will premiere at the Seattle Fringe Festival in March, 1999. Blake's work will be illuminated by a variety of physical arts: juggling, movement, staff spinning, incense burner swinging, puppetry, and book manipulation. The audience will be served a fortune cookie communion featuring the Proverbs of Hell. From Jay's webpage:

William Blake was considered a Freak during his lifetime and a Genius after his death. "The Animated Blake" embraces both the freak and the genius, illuminating the artist's visionary poetry with juggling and manipulation.

The show follows the "routine" format of a poetry reading or musical revue. It has no plot line, but is shaped by an aesthetic and conceptual progression. An opposition between Innocence and Experience gives way to subtle blends of good and evil through the "Marriage of Heaven and Hell." To underscore this thematic arrangement of the texts, the host has a split personality (a la Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde) which merges into a single character during the marriage.

In addition to recitations, Blake's poetry will be presented in musical accompaniment. The Proverbs of Hell will be dispensed in fortune cookies during a "communion" ceremony. Slide projections will bring Blake's visual art into the show, and may convey his texts, as well.

This literary freakshow will be created and performed by James Jay, the inventor of the high-tech Juggling Jukebox. The director is Jenny Iacobucci.

For a complete description, see www.jamesjay.com/wordup.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN BLAKE SCHOLARSHIP AND TEACHING

The Midwest American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Conference entitled "At the Century's End: New Directions in 18th-Century Studies" will be held in Columbia, Missouri on 7-9 October 1999. There will be a panel on New Directions in Blake Scholarship and Teaching.

Proposals for papers on any aspect of Blake's work or the teaching of Blake are welcome, especially those that consider the place of Blake in an "eighteenth-century" context. Please send 1-2 page abstracts, along with any requests for audio-visual equipment, to Jennifer Davis Michael, English Department, University of the South, Sewanee, TN 37383 or email jmichael@sewanee.edu. Deadline: 15 March 1999.

WILLIAM BLAKE ARCHIVE UPDATE

The editors of the William Blake Archive <<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/blake/>> are pleased to announce the opening of a major new wing of the site, devoted to documentation and supplementary materials "About the Archive." Available as the first entry on our main table of contents page from the URL above, the "About the Archive" materials consist of:

A brief overview of the Archive for first-time or hurried users, entitled *The Archive at a Glance*; a statement of Editorial Principles and Methodology; a technical summary of the Archive's design and implementation; a Frequently Asked Questions list; a reference page listing articles by members of the project team, as well as reviews and notices of the Archive by others; an updated and expanded version of the article-length Plan of the Archive, providing additional detail about our intentions with regard to Blake's non-illuminated works.

Also included are information about the editors, an account of the editors' collaboration with the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities, and a link to our extensive Help documentation. In addition, we will shortly be adding a Tour of the Archive to these materials (combining textual narration, graphical screenshots, and suggestions as to how to use the Archive). A complete update can be found at the Archive website. [Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph Viscomi]

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