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Terence Allan Hoagwood, *Prophecy and the Philosophy of Mind: Traditions of Blake and Shelley*

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REVIEWS

PROPHECY AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIND TRADITIONS OF BLAKE AND SHELLEY

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Terence Allan Hoagwood. *Prophecy and the Philosophy of Mind: Traditions of Blake and Shelley*. University, AL: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1985. xiv + 247 pp. \$23.50.

Reviewed by Mark Bracher

Terence Hoagwood's *Prophecy and the Philosophy of Mind: Traditions of Blake and Shelley* uses the prophetic tradition and (to a lesser extent) British empiricism as a basis for understanding *Jerusalem* and *Prometheus Unbound*. After an extended and very able explanation of important elements of the two traditions, Hoagwood demonstrates numerous ways in which the two poems embody the form and substance of prophecy as well as certain ep-

istemological and ontological issues central to British empiricism. In doing so, he illuminates significant details of the poems and also makes some astute and valuable generalizations about the poems' meanings and purposes.

One such generalization, made at the outset, reminds us of a fact that is widely acknowledged in principle but too often ignored in the practice of Blake criticism. "An epistemology and a metaphysic are embodied in [Blake's and Shelley's] masterpieces," Hoagwood observes (p. ix). "The theater of Blake's intellectual war includes these traditions, philosophical and religious. Accordingly, to disparage 'outside readings' while trying to interpret *Jerusalem* is literary blind man's buff: Blake's art simply cannot be understood without reference to philosophical and religious tradition" (p. 1).

More specifically, Hoagwood maintains that the two traditions he focuses on will help us answer "four questions [that] still require attention from readers of *Jerusalem* and *Prometheus Unbound*: the question of their context, of their real subject, of their symbolic technique, and of their literary form" (p. 2). Concerning their context and subject, Hoagwood observes that "*Jerusalem* and *Prometheus Unbound* exploit three points of contact between prophecy and the philosophy of mind" (p. 5). First, both poems and both traditions involve "an idealist philosophy of being." Second, all exhibit a concern with mental activity, especially perception in general and vision in particular. And third, they are all concerned with "intellectual liberation" or "the overthrow of spiritual tyranny" (p. 5).

With an eye to these three themes, Hoagwood proceeds to an enlightening exposition of "philosophers of mind," by which he means Descartes and the British empiricists, primarily. This informative discussion does not constitute the strength of the book, however. For while the account provides a worthwhile explanation of the humanization of absolutes in philosophy, this element only fleshes out a thesis that has already been developed by others (most notably by Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism*). And although it reveals some interesting similarities in, for instance, Blake and Berkeley, and Shelley and Hume, these glosses do not add appreciably to our understanding of either poet. One might expect the payoff to come in the subsequent analyses of *Jerusalem* and *Prometheus Unbound*, but that hope is not really fulfilled, for the specifics of these "philosophies of mind" are rarely used productively in the analyses of the poems. The only notion from these philosophies that is fruitfully employed in interpreting the poetry is the idea that the principle of mind unifies all things, a rather vague and ambiguous notion that, as we will see, produces as much confusion as illumination.

Happily, Hoagwood's account of the prophetic tradition produces a greater yield. Most significant for an understanding of Blake and Shelley is the purpose of prophecy. Hoagwood notes that

for some commentators, including Thomas Goodwin, prophecy supplies a mental model. John's vision [in Revelation] was a modification of "his Faculties," and the purpose of John's book is to enable his readers to model their minds after it—"that is, to give up our Selves, our Powers and Faculties, to the Spirit's Rule and Guidance" by submitting to the mental conformations displayed in Revelation; the prophecy portrays "the Form or Pattern . . . into which all Saints on Earth should be moulded." (p. 38)

Prophecy's "guiding purpose," then, Hoagwood asserts, was "to cleanse the doors of perception, sweeping the clutter of binding fictions from before the mind's eye and allowing it to perceive the infinite—the universal—which was hid" (p. 41). The connection with Blake and Shelley is obvious: for the poets, as for the biblical commentators, "prophecy effects a revolution of mind, of perception" (p. 45). More specifically, "in the case of *Jerusalem* Blake forces his reader to undergo an effort of cognitive unification. . . . The plot of *Jerusalem*, [like that] of Revelation, is the audience's progress from darkness to light, gradually apprehending thematic significance amid narrative discontinuity" (p. 81).

In addition to purpose, the poetry of Blake and Shelley also shares particular doctrines with the prophetic tradition, Hoagwood finds. Most noteworthy is their common reliance upon an idealist ontology. This ontology is implicit first of all in the prophetic purpose, which is "to strip the veil of illusion—literality and materiality—from the intellectual tenor of art and human life" (p. 48). Hoagwood finds this idealism to be implicit in prophecy's form and technique as well. Asserting that the generally figurative technique of biblical prophecy is implicitly idealist (p. 38), he explains that prophecy "requires readers to lift their minds, by the vehicle of vision, from the perception of sensible to intellectual forms" (p. 48). Readers are thus forced into an idealist perspective by prophecy, because "its palpable terms have spiritual tenors: the winepress in Revelation, for example, is interpreted as 'pressure of conscience'" (p. 42). Here again, the connection with Blake and Shelley is clear, as it also is with regard to two specific techniques that Hoagwood comments on: synchronism and typology. Synchronism, the separate or sequential presentation of events that occur simultaneously, forces the interpreter to "rise above the distinctions of time" (p. 41); various visions "are distinguished spatially and symbolically" in the narrative, and to make sense of the prophecy, the audience must perceive the "essential unity" of these separate visions (p. 41). Biblical typology, the "allusive or allegorical use of imagery from the biblical past" (p. 53), also "transforms a concrete diversity (different places, or things) into an intellectual unity (a common idea or theme)" (p. 54).

To understand the prophetic poems of Blake and Shelley, one must thus recognize their prophetic nature:

As Blake and Shelley knew, visionary symbolism had been studied systematically for centuries before they wrote. This art and its aesthetic were known to them, and they employ its tradition.

Readers of Romantic prophecies who do not share the poets' knowledge of tradition, nor acknowledge the existence of such a tradition, complain of the poets' obscurity, treating their poems as solipsistic impromptus, originating "in the private emotions and imaginings of their authors." Without reference to the tradition of visionary symbolism, a reader finds that such poems are not "immediately referable . . . to any extrinsic system of beliefs or truths," and so loses patience. (p. 47)

Recognizing the prophetic nature of these poems also means, Hoagwood argues, that one must not try to reduce the visionary symbols to a single, historical meaning. He observes that some commentators (notably Isaac Newton) tried to do precisely that, and he notes and condemns a similar reductive tendency among some modern readers: "To the present, a class of readers blithely subsumes visionary art under the name of political prophecy, treating each visionary poem as if it were a willfully obscured news announcement" (p. 50). Hoagwood rejects such a reading of Blake for the same reasons that most biblical commentators repudiated Newton's interpretive method: "first, the symbols of prophecy have multiple meanings, and no single perspective will suffice for understanding them. Second, terrestrial 'Applications are too small and petty usually for these Prophecies,' which are designed to address spiritual matters: 'the Prophecies themselves, if they had no other meaning, might very well have been spared'" (pp. 49-50). The poetry of Blake and Shelley cannot be understood merely in relation to historical and physical reality, Hoagwood asserts, for to do so is to render much of the poetry incomprehensible and the rest trivial.

As well as illuminating the general purposes and techniques of Blake's and Shelley's poetry, Hoagwood also makes effective use of the prophetic tradition in explicating numerous details of the opening plates of *Jerusalem*. In the frontispiece, he carefully shows how the globe of fire, the door, the space beyond the door, and the wind coming from the space function as allusions to and reworkings of numerous prophetic themes and images. These elements, together with details assimilated from Blake's own previously executed designs, constitute "a deliberately complex and disturbingly ambiguous picture" which "invokes and yet contradicts the salvation promised by the New Testament" (p. 65): "insofar as Los resembles John with his lights at the door of heaven, the frontispiece strikes an optimistic note as it conveys us into Blake's vision. Insofar as he recalls Old Testament antecedents, of which Blake was equally aware, the frontispiece is a dark design of death" (p. 64).

Hoagwood discerns a similar message in the major symbols of the title page. Finding an allusion to both the biblical and the Newtonian rainbow in the dazzling colors of the plate's later stage, he uncovers contraries of wrath and mercy, and materialism and spirituality, simultaneously present in the picture (pp. 66-68), thus demonstrating how "the theologies of vengeance and mercy, their respective biblical canons, and sacred and

profane models of mind all clash at the prophecy's outset" (pp. 69-70).

Although Hoagwood's use of the prophetic tradition provides valuable illumination of both the general purpose and numerous concrete details of *Jerusalem*, this tradition does not serve him as well when he attempts to articulate the poem's message. While sometimes incisive and even mildly innovative, Hoagwood's generalizations about the poem's message are often either truistic, or ambiguous, or reductive. The characterization of truism applies to his repeated emphasis on the contrast between Blake's valorization of redemption and the biblical concern with vengeance. To his credit, he at times tries to move beyond this truism, but when he does so, other problems arise. At one point, for instance, he states: "the absolute forgiveness that Blake celebrates arises from a philosophical principle: interiority" (p. 76). But his explanation of this point contributes more confusion than clarification:

Jesus—another name for human imagination—is "in" men because he is a mental faculty; in fact he is the origin of mental life. Converting theological unities into epistemological unities is exactly the process that enables Blake to purge the prophetic stance of its violence and wrath. (p. 76)

One key problem with this explanation lies in the ambiguity of terms like "interiority," "mental," "theological unities," and "epistemological unities." Underlying the imprecision of these terms is a fundamental ambiguity that plagues the entire book—namely, the meaning of "idealism" and "unity." Hoagwood uses "idealism," and its correlatives "mind" and "mental," as though only one meaning were possible for each term. When, for instance, he speaks of "the philosophy of idealism" (p. 41; emphasis added), he seems unaware of the important differences that exist among the various types of idealism. Plato, Berkeley, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel (to name some of the more prominent examples) each had a "philosophy of idealism," but idealism meant something rather different for each of them—and in fact, its precise nature in any one of these philosophers is itself subject to question. Hoagwood himself implicitly acknowledges this problem in relation to Berkeley, when he comments on the fact that Berkeley's idealism is often thought—wrongly, he argues—to be solipsistic. But after a very interesting and perceptive discussion of the nuances of Berkeley's idealism, Hoagwood reverts to an indiscriminate use of this term and of correlative phrases such as "philosophy of mind," using them to characterize the New Testament, biblical commentary, the philosophy of Berkeley and the British empiricists, and the poetry of Blake and Shelley. Such usage is at best unilluminating and at worst misleading, since it implies a fundamental coincidence of vision where differences may in fact be more significant than similarities.

The problem emerges at the beginning of the chap-

ter on *Jerusalem*, in Hoagwood's characterization of Blake's overriding vision and purpose: "To cause his reader to perceive the unity of all mental endeavor is to lead him in at heaven's gate, studiously built in *Jerusalem's* wall. It is for this reason that *Jerusalem* ends where the universe begins, in mental unity. In the light of vision all beings and forms—material and ideal, historical and moral—are revealed as multiples of an imagining mind" (p. 60). The confusion resulting here from the ambiguity of terms such as "mental," "mind," and "unity" reaches a crisis at the end of the chapter when, in discussing *Jerusalem's* climax, Hoagwood claims that the "final subject" of the poem is "the mind of man," and that the poem's celebration of the "principle of mental unification" (p. 94) shows that "the mind creates the objects of its perception" (p. 93) and thus allows "man [to reclaim] to his bosom that which originally emanated from within him" (p. 94). One wishes for a more precise explanation of the nature of "mental unity." Does it imply total lack of real difference between the mental and the physical? Or does it mean that mind and matter retain essential differences but are united by virtue of a common ground, as in the statement of Coleridge's that Hoagwood quotes at the end of the book: "The ground of existence, and the ground of the knowledge of existence, are absolutely identical" (p. 190)? Similarly, when we are told that "the mind creates the objects of its perception," does "mind" refer to an individual subjectivity that is of a different essence from its objects? If so, is the creation of its objects essentially an act of hallucination? Of projection? Or of interpretation? Or are we to take "mind" in a more Hegelian, less Cartesian sense: as the common ground or essence which underlies both human subjectivity and the objects of that subjectivity (a sense which, as Berkeley's *Siris* indicates, was also available to Blake and Shelley)?

Such imprecision concerning concepts that are crucial both to the poetry and to the traditions used to explicate the poetry casts a shadow over important parts of Hoagwood's analysis and obscures areas of inquiry that could have been quite enlightening. (It would have been valuable, for instance, to have had a rigorous analysis of Blake's idealism, for which Hoagwood's careful account of Berkeley's idealism seemed to be laying the foundation.) Part of the reason for this imprecision may lie in Hoagwood's purpose and methodology, which entail not the explication of *Jerusalem* as such but rather the demonstration of the relevance that two traditions have for the poem. Since this demonstration is much more conclusive when one can point to identities between ideas in poem and in tradition, the method itself encourages the ignoring of differences.

This homogenizing tendency entailed by Hoagwood's method also helps account for a certain reductiveness in his characterization of *Jerusalem*. Though he claims at several points that *Jerusalem* goes beyond Revelation to embrace an absolute humanism centered on

forgiveness, the thrust of his explanations of numerous details is to make the poem seem more like a pastiche of biblical elements than a revelatory vision in its own right. Such, too, is the suggestion of the concluding paragraph on the poem, where the following summary is given of the relation between *Jerusalem* and Revelation: "*Jerusalem's* ending is precisely the same, symbolically, as Revelation's. Blake's poem thus begins and ends with signals of its visionary context, the Revelation of Saint John; but throughout, Blake's poem brings this visionary light to bear on the new shapes of crisis in his age—war and the philosophy that separates mind from matter" (p. 99). The implication is that Blake's poem, rather than creating its own system as its protagonist says one must do to avoid enslavement, is simply the application of the system of another man (John) to contemporary issues ("the new shapes of crisis in [Blake's] age"). In this passage Hoagwood does go on to salvage some uniqueness for Blake by emphasizing that Blake's apocalypse is an intellectual revolution rather than "an end to corporeal creation," but in other places even this qualification is absent. Most noteworthy, perhaps, is an earlier passage where Hoagwood reduces the message of *Jerusalem* to a cabalistic principle:

Gershom G. Scholem's summary of a cabalistic principle applies equally to Blake's theology: "The Tree of Knowledge became the tree of restrictions, prohibitions, and delimitations, whereas the Tree of Life was the tree of freedom, symbolic of an age when the dualism of good and evil was not yet (or no longer) conceivable, and everything bore witness to the unity of divine life, as yet untouched by any restrictions, by the power of death, or any of the other negative aspects of life, which made their appearance only after the fall of man." *It is difficult to find a clearer summary of Jerusalem's themes.* (p. 71; emphasis added)

The danger of the historical contextualist method, then, is that one will come to see in the poetry only reflections of the tradition one happens to be investigating. Hoagwood could have guarded against this danger if he had taken to heart two points that he himself seems to be at least partially aware of. First is the recognition that no single philosophical or religious tradition can satisfactorily explain the message of Blake's poetry. While Hoagwood seems to acknowledge this point in principle (pp. 188-90), in practice he virtually ignores all other traditions and perspectives. Kathleen Raine's work, for instance, is never mentioned, nor, except for a few minor exceptions, is the Platonic-Neoplatonic-Hermetic tradition that Raine finds permeating Blake's poetry and pictures. The writings of Boehme, Paracelsus, and (again, with minor exceptions) Swedenborg are passed over in silence, as are the translations of Thomas Taylor.

Even taking into account alternative traditions would not, of course, guarantee access to "the message" of Blake's poetry, for as Hoagwood also acknowledges in principle—and this is the second point—Blake goes

beyond his predecessors. Here again, Hoagwood's practice fails to do justice to his principle. If the principle is sound—if Blake did in fact surpass his precursors—one might argue that the best access to Blake is not through his predecessors but through successors who had the same precursors as Blake—if, indeed, one must approach Blake through an intermediary at all. Thus instead of seeking access to Blake via the British empiricists (for whom he expressed little admiration), it might be more productive to approach him through, say, process philosophy, which is described by its primary exponent, Alfred North Whitehead, as largely an extension of and reaction against Descartes and the British empiricists. There is justification for such an approach in Blake's own writings. One of the messages of *Milton*, for instance, is that if we want to understand the significance of *Paradise Lost*, we should read Milton's successor Blake (rather than Milton's predecessors). Likewise, if we want to understand the grounds for this claim of Blake's, we might do better to read Heidegger or Gadamer than to seek clarification in Milton or Spenser.

Hoagwood's analysis of *Prometheus Unbound* exhibits many of the same strengths and weaknesses as his investigation of *Jerusalem*, although the treatment of Shelley's poem is more coherent and systematic. Like Blake, Shelley is seen to be concerned with humanizing Biblical prophecy, making the supernatural natural, and working to harmonize contending creeds and unify religion with other forms of thought (p. 136). Like *Jerusalem*, *Prometheus Unbound* employs major elements of prophecy: "an aesthetic based on multiple imagery, an ethos whose points of reference are vengeance and mercy, a mental ontology that informs both those elements, and, for a final purpose, creation of a new heaven and earth" (p. 138). These elements are connected by the fact that "poetry's ideal forms, Shelley implies, subsume into apprehensible unity the previously discrete data of mental and natural life" (p. 132).

It is this idea of the unity of the mental and the natural, or thoughts and objects, that constitutes both the strength and the major weakness of Hoagwood's analysis. On the positive side, the notion provides admirable explanatory power. With it Hoagwood is able to construct a coherent and illuminating reading of major characters and events of the poem which, in all its different characters and episodes, is seen to embody the central insight that all things—both mental and physical—are ultimately united in the mind.

But as in the discussion of *Jerusalem*, the nature of this unity is not adequately explained. As a result, Hoagwood repeatedly moves from the unobjectionable assertion that thoughts and things are related to each other to the very different and quite dubious contention that there is no real difference between them. We can observe this fudging of terms in Hoagwood's discussion of metaphor, which he perceptively identifies as a formal en-

actment of the unity between thought and things. Noting that "the predominant kind of metaphor in act 1 converts thoughts to things," Hoagwood reflects that "this technique, a condition of all poetic art, implies a relation between internal and external things . . ." (p. 157). But, observing that in act 2 Shelley reverses the process and converts things to thought, he concludes that this technique implies that "the distinction between thoughts and things is nominal . . . , a matter of words" (p. 157). Having recognized that metaphor implies a sharing of ground or essence between the mental and the physical, Hoagwood equates this sharing with lack of any real difference between thoughts and things.

This same fudging occurs in Hoagwood's discussion of the significance of repeated patterns in the poem. He begins once again with an insightful and valuable observation:

This strategy of patterning, whereby multiple structures are assembled in order to reveal the unity that they share, enters the details of Shelley's poetry, just as his ontological theme of mental philosophy enters his particular metaphors. Just as act 2 is superimposed over act 1, to reveal differently the same vision, so too the function of the echoing spirits' song—which is symbolically identical with the prophetic spirits' song—assembles multiple images as analogies for a single idea. (p. 165)

In the very next sentence, however, the relation of sharing and analogy between multiple particulars and a single idea or unity is changed into a subsumption of particulars into a universal—an annihilation of all difference between particulars and between thoughts and things:

The sensible diversity of these images is designed to dissolve into the intellectual unity of their common tenor. . . . Such a technique, like biblical synchronism, embodies intellectual philosophy. If thoughts are *identical* with things, as in Shelley's philosophy they are, and "all things exist as they are perceived; at least in relation to the percipient" (*Prose*, 7:137), then the use of metaphor, multiple symbolism, and thematically parallel acts reproduces Shelley's philosophy in poetic form, by *converting* sensibles to intelligibles. (p. 165; emphasis added)

The problem of unity is complicated by the fact that in some instances Hoagwood does try to explain its nature. "The absolute unity that structures the entire poem" (p. 162), he comments at one point, is due to the fact that the natural world is just a projection of thought: "Shelley's subject is the exteriorization, attribution, and worship of that which arose from within" (p. 164). Instead of clarifying the issue, however, this explanation confuses it still further, for two reasons. First, it implies a solipsistic position, and Hoagwood insists that Shelley is not a solipsist (pp. 152-54). Second, this projective notion of unity results in an impoverishing and reductive reading of the poem. Nowhere is this clearer than in the discussion of Asia's confrontation with Demogorgon.

According to Hoagwood, Demogorgon is a projection of Asia; "he does not exist, considered apart from the fruitful solitude in which Asia's mind unfolds itself"

(p. 168). And to substantiate this claim, he finds it necessary to argue that Demogorgon is "utterly uninformative," that "he tells Asia nothing that she does not already know," and that, in fact, "all of his answers are meaningless" (p. 166). Hoagwood's reasoning runs as follows:

Asia asks, "Who made the living world?" and Demogorgon begs the question, saying only "God" (2.4.9). As Shelley had understood since at least 1811, that bare word is merely a device by which ignorance disguises itself as piety. . . . When Asia presses the question by rephrasing it, Demogorgon can only repeat himself (2.4.11). Her own language, however, is more informative: she lists "all / That it [the world] contains—thought, passion, reason, will, / Imagination" (2.4.9-11), defining a mental universe. As her questions grow gradually more complex and specific, Demogorgon repeats "Merciful God" (2.4.18). . . . (p. 166)

Hoagwood's reading is quite plausible. But an alternative reading is equally possible, and it has the added virtue of avoiding the solipsism that Hoagwood's reading implicitly attributes to Asia. It is possible, that is, to see Demogorgon's responses as being extremely meaningful, providing the most important information of all—namely, the fact of unity that Hoagwood himself sees as the central theme of the poem. By replying "God" to all Asia's questions, Demogorgon is indicating that the same fundamental power underlies all the myriad phenomena—mental as well as physical—that Asia mentions. This reading also provides a satisfactory explanation of the nature of the unity between mind and matter, something that is missing from Hoagwood's account. It implies that mind and matter (all things) are united not because they are identical or lack difference, but because of their common ground.

Hoagwood's insistence that Demogorgon is just a projection of Asia leads him to dismiss other meaningful responses of Demogorgon as being meaningless. "When Asia asks Demogorgon for a definition of God," Hoagwood declares, "he admits that 'I spoke but as ye speak' (2.4.112); that is, he has told her nothing that she did not already know. His famous declaration that 'the deep truth is imageless' (2.4.116) is merely a means of avoiding the necessity of answering the question" (p. 167). This reading overlooks two crucial points. First of all, Demogorgon says he speaks "*as*," not *what*, Asia speaks; he thus is not necessarily admitting that "he has told her nothing that she did not already know." Rather, he might simply mean that his use of (human) language inevitably fails to grasp the reality he is speaking of. Similarly, his declaration that "the deep truth is imageless" seems to be not a means of evading the question but an attempt to express the notion that the reality he is referring to (with the word "God") transcends linguistic and perceptual paradigms. This notion should certainly be familiar to one as well versed in biblical tradition as Hoagwood is.

It appears not to be, however, for Hoagwood is bewildered by a very similar notion advanced by Was-

serman with regard to Demogorgon. "It is . . . misleading," Hoagwood writes, "to identify [Demogorgon], as Wasserman has done, as 'the repealing powers that are outside the One Mind, outside Existence.'" Calling this characterization a "bewildering claim," Hoagwood declares that Wasserman "confuses the issue by insisting that 'we must also recognize [Demogorgon's] isolation and absolute difference from the world'" (p. 169). The bewilderment and confusion that Hoagwood finds here, however, are due not to Wasserman but to the inadequacy of Hoagwood's own interpretive paradigms (those of biblical prophecy and British empiricism). Had Hoagwood employed other contexts, he would not have found it necessary to reject such statements as mere confusion. Had he viewed these statements in light of Heidegger's thought, for instance, he might have recognized in Demogorgon's utterances and in Wasserman's characterization of Demogorgon the notion of what Heidegger called the ontological difference: the fact that Being, the ground of beings, is not itself a being, and thus cannot be spoken of accurately, since language is constructed around beings, not Being. This, in fact, seems to be the notion that Shelley was trying to embody in Demogorgon, for as Wasserman notes in a comment cited by Hoagwood, Shelley's manuscript characterized Demogorgon's realm as "beyond the world of being" (p. 169). Hoagwood attempts to dismiss this piece of evidence as a misguided notion on Shelley's part, declaring: "but Shelley certainly would have understood that that which is distinct from all that is, is not" (p. 169). Perhaps. But Shelley might also have understood that although it is not, yet in a certain sense it *is*, as Heidegger observed. Thus when Hoagwood criticizes Wasserman for speaking "in such a way as both to predicate a thing and simultaneously to claim that it is remote from existence" (p. 169), he is perhaps justified in the context of Aristotelian logic (which, however, is not a context that he explicitly invokes), but not in other philosophical contexts that might offer a richer understanding of the poem. The same is true of Hoagwood's assertion that "it is contradictory to imagine a primal power, an ultimate force, asleep," as Wasserman does of Demogorgon (p. 169). Contradictory in some philosophical contexts, perhaps, but meaningful in others, such as that of Heidegger. For Wasserman's statement expresses basically the same thought that Heidegger articulated in his notion that Being has withdrawn in the present age.

Hoagwood's projectivist interpretation of Asia's encounter with Demogorgon thus excludes ideas that could have provided enrichment and further substantiation for his own basic line of interpretation. Rather than categorizing Demogorgon as a merely intrapsychic reality, it might be more interesting to think of him in the context, for instance, of Hegel's *Geist*, which is at once the essence of the human mind and also the ultimate

ground of everything, or in the context of Heidegger's notion of human being as the shepherd of Being. Such a context would also be more adequate to the concerns of the poem. For what is at issue in *Prometheus Unbound* is the relation between human beings and the ultimate powers or principles of the universe, and Asia's discovery that Demogorgon resides in herself is not merely the recovery of a projection but the recognition that the ultimate powers governing the universe are the same powers that constitute her own being. As noted above, such a reading is more coherent and more congruent with Hoagwood's own aims than is the projectivist view that he advances, for this alternative reading avoids the solipsist hypothesis which Hoagwood opposes yet implicitly embraces in offering his projectivist interpretation.

However, to arrive at a richer understanding of this episode—and of the poem as a whole—it is not necessary to invoke Hegelian, Heideggerian, or any other philosophical contexts. If an explicit context is required, one can employ a much more immediate one: that of Shelley's other poems. The opening lines of the final stanza of Shelley's "Hymn of Apollo," for instance, express quite clearly the notion that mind and matter have a common ground, and that everything the mind perceives is in a sense a perception of itself: "I am the eye with which the Universe / Beholds itself and knows itself divine." This poem is doubly significant because it also speaks of prophecy. The stanza continues: "All harmony or instrument or verse, / All prophecy, all medicine is mine, / All light of art or nature. . . ." It is curious that in his discussion of Shelley's relation to the prophetic tradition and philosophies of mind, Hoagwood does not consider an explicit reference such as this. A more obvious oversight is the omission of any reference to "Ode to the West Wind," where the relation between the individual mind and a universal mind or spirit is treated explicitly—and, moreover, with reference to prophecy. "Be thou, Spirit fierce, / My spirit! Be thou me. . . !" the poet cries. "Be through my lips to unawakened earth / The trumpet of a prophecy!" An even more valuable gloss on this relation is provided by "Mont Blanc," where "the everlasting universe of *things* / Flows through the *mind*," and "the secret Strength of *things*" also "governs *thought*" (emphasis added). Since Hoagwood frequently makes use of Shelley's prose and other poetry to elaborate on issues much less central than these, this omission is unjustified. One suspects that the omission may be due to the fact that these poems weigh heavily against the projectivist explanation of the unity of thought and things that Hoagwood insists on in *Prometheus Unbound*. Significantly, this neglect of the most immediate context—other poems of the poet's *oeuvre*—is also present in the discussion of Blake: Hoagwood does not mention the two prophecies whose titles bear the name of Blake's "Eternal Prophet," nor does he

discuss such obvious documents of Blake's philosophy of mind as *The Book of Urizen* and "The Mental Traveller."

Thus while Hoagwood's reliance on two traditions does offer valuable insights, his historical contextualist perspective and the understanding derived from it need to be seen in the context of other contexts—including not only other historical contexts but the rest of the poet's *oeuvre* and anachronistic contexts as well. Had Hoagwood taken more notice of this larger context of his historical contextualism, his study could have gained considerable explanatory power without sacrificing any of its present virtues. Such an awareness of larger horizons might also have reduced some of the other apparent problems inherent in Hoagwood's book, which, some Blakeists might observe, is a rather priestly study of prophecy: a codifying, historicist study of a poet who scorned such devotion to generalization and memory and apotheosized their contraries, the particular and the imagination. Despite its shortcomings, however, *Prophecy and the Philosophy of Mind* makes a definite contribution to our understanding of Blake and Shelley, for in addition to numerous local insights, it gives us new understanding of the purposes of these two poets, and of the ways they attempted to realize these purposes.

Robert N. Essick. *The Works of William Blake in the Huntington Collections: A Complete Catalogue.* San Marino: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, Botanical Gardens, 1985. xviii + 256 pp. \$20.00.

Reviewed by G. E. Bentley, Jr.

The Huntington Library and Art Gallery has one of the great Blake collections in the world, including seventeen of his printed books (*All Religions Are One*, the "Exhibition of Paintings in Fresco," and *The French Revolution* in the only copies known),¹ seventeen of about ninety-six known letters, some of his greatest series of designs including those for *Comus* (8), *Paradise Lost* (12), "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" (6), Visionary Heads (6), the Illuminated Genesis Manuscript (12), color-prints (3), and eighty-two works with his commercial engravings. Only five other collections have anything like such Blake riches—the British Library and Museum, the Library of Congress plus the National Gallery, Harvard, Yale, and Cambridge University—and probably none of these has been so extensively described and exhibited as that in the Huntington. There is of course a special need

THE WORKS OF WILLIAM BLAKE in the Huntington Collections

A Complete Catalogue by Robert N. Essick



for such exhibition and description of the Huntington collections, for they are not easily accessible to most Blake students, and they are never loaned to other institutions. To make up for this isolation, the Huntington is uniquely beautiful and wonderfully gracious and accommodating to students who do wend their way to the imaginary barony of San Marino in the avocado groves in the foothills of the mountains above Los Angeles.

The Huntington collection of Blakes has been repeatedly and extensively described, in the catalogue of drawings and paintings by C. H. Collins Baker (1938), revised and extended by R. R. Wark (1957, reprinted 1969), and in the handlist of the entire collection by R. N. Essick in *Blake* (1978). There have been Huntington exhibitions focusing on Blake in 1936 (*Paradise Lost* drawings), 1940 (*ibid.*), 1953, 1965-66 (William Blake and his Circle), 1972-73 (the followers of William Blake), 1974, 1978 (Prints by Blake), 1981-82 (prints by the Blake Followers), 1983, and 1984. The administra-