

# AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY BLAKE

R E V I E W

Shelley M. Bennett, Thomas Stothard: The  
Mechanisms of Art Patronage in England circa  
1800

G. E. Bentley, Jr.

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## REVIEWS

Shelley M. Bennett.  
*Thomas Stothard: The  
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Reviewed by  
G. E. Bentley, Jr.

Thomas Stothard was "probably the most prolific" book-illustrator of his day (1755-1834) with some three thousand designs published in his lifetime.<sup>1</sup> He was also a painter of note, a Royal Academician and Librarian of the Royal Academy—his charming catalogue of the Royal Academy Library consists of pictures of each bookcase with the title on the spine of each volume. He was a man of considerable importance and influence in the art world of his day, and it is somewhat surprising that more attention has not been devoted to him.<sup>2</sup> Shelley Bennett's book is welcome in supplying a long-felt want and in providing a good deal of abstruse and diverse information not previously available about one of the best known artists of his time.

Stothard was also the intimate friend of George Cumberland, John Flaxman, and William Blake. Indeed, Blake was with Stothard on a sailing jaunt the first time Blake was arrested for treason.<sup>3</sup> Surprisingly little is known about the relationship of Stothard and Blake, though it is clear that they were good friends for a time. According to contemporaries, "Trotter, the engraver, . . . introduced his friend Stothard to Blake,"<sup>4</sup> and "in early life" they formed a little circle with other fledgling artists

and craftsmen, including Flaxman the sculptor, "Mr. George Cumberland, and Mr. Sharp [the engraver]," who were "in the habit of frequently passing . . . [their] evenings in drawing and designing" together.<sup>5</sup> Each of Blake's friends went on to a career of distinction, Flaxman as the most famous English sculptor of his day, Stothard as the most productive contemporary designer of book-illustrations, Sharp as one of the finest line-engravers, and Cumberland as a prolific gentleman poet, artist, novelist, and inventor. In later life, Blake was professionally the most obscure of the five friends, but

He was considered by Stothard and Flaxman . . . with the highest admiration. These artists allowed him their utmost unqualified praise, and were ever anxious to recommend him and his productions to the patrons of the Arts. . . .<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps with encouragement from Stothard, the book-sellers commissioned Blake to engrave thirty-two book-illustrations after Stothard in 1779-84; this is as many as he signed than after all other designers combined. Stothard was of far more importance in Blake's early professional career than vice versa. The thirty-two plates Blake engraved after Stothard formed only a fraction of Stothard's book-illustrations; he designed 244 plates for *The Novelist's Magazine* (1780-86) alone, of which Blake engraved only eight. Blake is dealt with here (chiefly on 11-15) as being, of course, only incidental to Stothard's career.

For most of these book-illustrations, Blake was probably paid at the rate of about £5 each, or perhaps £160 for all of them. One of the most remarkable features of the relationship between Blake and Stothard is that Stothard designed the only two prints known to have been published by the short-lived firm of Parker & Blake (1784-85). When Blake engraved Stothard's designs of "Callisto" and "Zephyrus & Flora" in 1784, he should have expected a commercial return for each,

as engraver and part-publisher, of at least as much as the £80 he had received from Macklin in 1783 for engraving Stothard's "The Fall of Rosamund." From this he and Parker would have had to pay the cost (usually modest) of Stothard's two designs, perhaps £20 each.<sup>7</sup> However, very few copies of "Callisto" and "Zephyrus & Flora" survive, and perhaps not many were sold. It is likely that Blake and Parker had some difficulty in finding the money to pay Stothard for his designs. And it is notable that after 1785 Blake engraved no more of Stothard's designs and the firm of Parker & Blake went out of business.

Bennett remarks that in a scene from Fénelon's *Adventures of Telemachus* (1795), "Stothard's sentimental interpretation of Venus (Vice) has subverted the didactic message of this scene" (29), and the same could be said of numerous other Stothard designs, such as those for Pope's *Rape of the Lock* (1798). The point is not so much that he perverted the "message" of his authors as that he chose from them what he could best give visible form to. Had such changes been made by William Blake, his modern critics would say that he was "correcting" or "criticizing" his author or treating him ironically. Stothard's temper is sweeter than Blake's, his consistency greater—and his superficiality is often striking. Bennett tends to speak of him somewhat dismissively: "his illustrations are always attractive, decorative designs with little or no dramatic impact" (29). This is true, but it would have been more relevant if Stothard had been striving for dramatic impact. The need for drama is ours, not his.

To us, there seems to be a predictability about Stothard's designs, which often depict fluttering females in agitating circumstances, but to his contemporaries his adaptability was as remarkable as his reliable gracefulness. In 1825 Pickering published a puff about Stothard which said:

Of all our artists who have applied their talents to the illustration of books, he is unquestionably the most original in composition, the most varied, refined and characteristic. In this latter quality he is especially distinguished; it being wonderful to see with what spirit he identifies himself with his subject, and makes his composition appear, as well in the character of their figures, as in their inferior adjuncts of scenery, buildings, costume, &c. to belong inseparably to the time and story which he treats. . . . With Milton his [i.e., he?] is *primeval and angelical*; with Bunyan *dreamy* and Calvinistic . . .; he flutters with *infinite grace* in the courtly and sparkling scenes of Pope's "Rape of the Lock." (30)

His publisher Harrison said that he had received "numerous encomiums" upon "that most astonishing artist, the truly ingenious Mr. Stothard . . . all uniformly declaring him the first Genius of the Age in this department [of book-illustration]" (8). One of his admirers in the 1780s was Charles Lamb, who wrote:

How often have I with a child's fond gaze  
Pored on the pictured wonder thou  
hadst done:  
Clarissa mournful, and prim Grandison!  
All Fielding's, Smollett's heroes, rose to  
view;  
I saw, and I believed the phantoms true.  
(54)

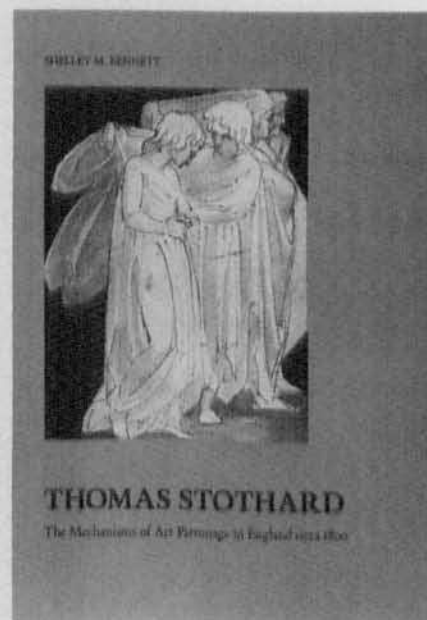
We are more likely to think of Stothard in the floral world of Leigh Hunt (and of the early Keats), who wrote of him:

. . . never since those southern masters  
fine . . .  
Has true woman's gentle mien divine  
Looked so, as in those breathing heads  
of thine  
With parted locks, and simple cheek  
sincere.  
Therefore, against our climate's chilly  
hold,  
Thou hast a nest in sunny glades and  
bowers;  
And there, about thee, never growing  
old,  
Are these fair things, clear as the lily  
flowers,  
Such as great Petrarch loved,—only less  
cold,  
More truly virtuous, and of gladdening  
powers. (32)

But Turner called him admiringly "the Giotto of England" (53), and Thomas Lawrence wrote that "Mr. Stothard is perhaps the first genius, after Mr. Fuseli and Mr. Flaxman, that the English school or modern Europe has known" (90). The breadth and taste of this praise should make us suspect that we are narrow-minded, not that they were blind.

Shelley Bennett's focus is more upon Stothard's versatility and about changes in the art world to which he was responding than on his most characteristic achievements. "Stothard's career provides numerous insights into the effect these new market conditions had on the mechanisms of art patronage" (vii). She effectively demonstrates the range of his work from "banknotes and theatre tickets, to silver work and funerary monuments" (36). The book is organized into chapters on his formative years, his entry into the art world, his elevation in status as an artist, additional sources of [artistic] income, and the influence of the market in Stothard's last years, with appendices on Stothard's excursions (e.g., with Blake when they were suspected of treason) and books illustrated by Stothard. She has searched widely for Stothard materials, particularly for drawings by him, listing four collections which among them have over 1,700 drawings. Bennett records many curious facts about Stothard; for instance, he was an enthusiastic lepidopterist, with what a contemporary called "a large collection of moths and flies" (36). This should remind us that the moth-wings on many of his celestial maidens may well be derived from nature—and that Blake's poem called "The Fly" is clearly about a butterfly.

But the accomplishments for which Stothard was best known by his contemporaries, and for which he was most important to William Blake, were his book-illustrations. There are some fascinating accounts of Stothard's work here, such as his collaboration



with Turner on the illustrations for the famous edition of Rogers' *Italy* (1830), and Bennett gives an enormous list of contemporary books and periodicals which bear Stothard's designs. This list seems to be far more extensive and reliable than anything previously in print, chiefly Coxhead's *Thomas Stothard* (1908), but the difficulties of tracing the original publication of some three thousand designs and of their reprintings and copies (legal and fraudulent) are very formidable. Indeed, I know of no attempt so ambitious as this one for any artist. Some of the problems were created by Stothard himself. Joseph Farington wrote in his diary for 20 May 1811 that "Stothard was makeing small drawings, Head Pieces, for a Lady's Pocket Book published annually. He has done this for the publication many years, but does not put His name to them." It is hard enough to find all the plates with Stothard's name on them without having to look for his designs which were published anonymously.

Partly because of such difficulties, Bennett has relied heavily upon collections of Stothard's prints made by his contemporaries, and upon their manuscript notes on the prints. Her list of over two hundred fifty publications



with plates after Stothard's designs forms a very substantial portion of her book (63-89) and perhaps its most lastingly valuable feature. But for many of these works she has seen only the loose prints in the collections of Robert Balmanno (about 2,200, in the British Museum Print Room), Samuel Boddington (about 2,500, in the Huntington Library), and W. E. Frost (12 volumes, in the Royal Academy Library); she has not examined the books themselves, and there are numerous entries such as "1785 [unknown author and title]" (67). Her necessary reliance upon the Balmanno and Boddington inscriptions has led her into a number of difficulties. For instance, she lists for Pope:

*The Rape of the Lock* (Du Roveray, 1798), 3 Stothard plates plus "1 proof (never published)" in the Huntington;  
*Essay on Criticism* (Du Roveray, 1802), "part of Du Roveray's *Classics*?", 1 Stothard plate;  
*Poetical Works* (Du Roveray, 1804), "part of Du Roveray's *Classics*?", 7 Stothard plates;  
 Homer, *The Illiad*, tr. Pope (Du Roveray, 1805), "part of Du Roveray's *Classics*?", 6 Stothard plates.

In the first place, "Du Roveray's *Classics*" is a red herring; it is merely the idiosyncratic way Boddington, in his inscriptions on Stothard proofs, referred to all Du Roveray's publications. Second, the "never published" plate for *The Rape of the Lock* in the Huntington was in fact published in *The Poetical Works* of 1804. And third, there is no separate publication of Pope's *Essay on Criticism* (Du Roveray, 1802); the work referred to is also part of Pope's *Poetical Works* (1804). It would have been a superhuman labor to see all those proliferating books with Stothard's designs and to remember each design when it reappeared in a new edition. But the lack of such labor means that the list of Stothard book-illustrations has numerous ghosts.

Anyone who has looked at a number of illustrated English books during the period when Stothard flourished, 1780-1830, is likely to have seen many

engravings after his designs. I have made notes on books with Stothard prints I have encountered, and these include a number which Bennett has not recorded. As her list is the most comprehensive and systematic one in print, it may therefore be useful to supplement it. I am sure that my supplement could easily be extended by others—and I hope that they will do so in *Blake*.

The list that follows is in alphabetical order, though Bennett's is chronological by the date of first printing of the book or periodical in which the design appeared. When the book I record is already given under a different date in her list, I record her date at the end of the entry within parentheses. (Note that Bennett did not attempt to cite "later reprints . . . except in a few notable instances" [63].)

#### *Stothard Book-Illustrations not in Bennett*

Or very incompletely in Bennett

Addison, Joseph, and Richard Steele, *The Spectator* (1803).

Plates engraved after Stothard by Cromek dated 19 Feb. and 20 Aug. 1803 are in the extra-illustrated set of A. E. Bray, *Life of Thomas Stothard* (1851) in Princeton, and pen-and-ink studies were offered in the Emily Driscoll catalogue 29 [1972], lot 349 (1812).

Bible. *The Old [and The New] Testament*, Embellished with Engravings from Pictures and Designs by the Most Eminent English Artists (London: Thomas Macklin, 1800 [i.e., issued in Parts 1791-1800]). <Bodley, British Library, G. E. B., Huntington, &c>.

Six folio volumes with 5 Stothard plates. (It is not "*The Holy Bible*" "1800-1816" as Bennett states—the "1816" applies only to *The Apocrypha*, which had no plate by Stothard. And the whole was reprinted in 1816-24.)

— *The New Evangelical Family Bible*, ed. T. Priestley, A New Edition, Embellished with Large Elegant Scripture Prints, finely Engraved in Copper (London: Printed [under the Inspection of the Author (sic)] for the

Proprietor; Sold Wholesale and Retail by Alex. Hogg [et al.], n.d. [1793-94?]). <British Library: L 14 a 2; Chicago: f BS 185 1793>.

Folio. The plates are headed "Engraved for the Revd Mr Priestley's Evangelical Family Bible." Among the 92 plates, Stothard's represents Elijah Ascending to Heaven—apparently pirated from the Macklin Bible then being issued in Parts.

— *The Universal Family Bible*, ed. Benjamin Kennicott, Embellished and Enriched with Upwards of Fifty Engravings (Dublin: Zachariah Jackson, 1793-1795). <Bodley: Bib Eng 1793 b 1; British Library: L 12 G 1>.

Folio. The 53 plates include 4 apparently pirated from the Macklin Bible and 1 unsigned for Ruth which is apparently after Stothard also.

— *The Holy Bible: . . . The Old Testament*, First Published by The English College at Doway, A.D. 1609. And The New Testament, First Printed by The English College at Rhemes, A.D. 1582. The Sixth Edition Newly Corrected. (Dublin: James Reilly, 1794). <British Library: L 15 f 1 & Huntington>.

Folio. Called on the frontispiece "Reilly's Doway Bible"—Bennett identifies it as "*Reilly's Doway Bible*. [Published by the English College at Doway.] For James Reilly, Dublin." Of the 7 plates, 4 bear Stothard's name and 2 anonymous ones are after him, all apparently pirated from the Macklin Bible.

— *The Holy Bible*, Doway . . . Rhemes [translations] (Manchester: Oswald Syers, 1813). <British Library: L 15 c 1>.

Large quarto. The 18 plates, headed "Engraved for Syers Edition," include an anonymous one of the resurrection probably after Stothard.

*Book of Common Prayer* (London: Joseph Good, 1791 [-92]), 12'. <Bodley>.

5 Stothard plates.

Bunyan, John, *Select Works*, Illustrated in a series of [20] Drawings in Chromo-Lithography After Designs by T. Stothard (Glasgow, Edinburgh, London, 1865). <G. E. B.>.

20 colored Stothard plates.

- Cowper, William, *Poetical Works*, New Edition, 2 vols. (London: Joseph Johnson, 1800). <British Library>. 11 Stothard plates (*Poems*, 1798).
- . *Poems*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Robert Johnson, 1803), 12'. <G. E. B.> 5 Stothard plates (1798).
- Dante Alighieri, *The Divina Commedia*, trans. Henry Boyd, 3 vols. (London: T. Cadell Jun. & W. Davies, 1802). <G. E. B.>. Frontispiece after Stothard.
- Dodsley, Robert, *The Economy of Human Life* (London: S. Sael, 1799). <G. E. B.>. 3 Stothard plates (1796).
- Glover, Richard, *Leonidas*, Seventh Edition (London: Cadell & Davies, et al., 1804). <British Library>. 4 Stothard plates (1798).
- Hazlitt, William, ed., *Select British Poets* (1824). The first (suppressed) edition had 1 Stothard plate, according to Geoffrey Keynes, *Bibliography of William Hazlitt* (1931) 24.
- Hoole, John, *Cleontice, Princess of Bithynia*: A Tragedy (London: John Bell, 1795). <G. E. B.>. 1 Stothard plate.
- . *Cyrus*: A Tragedy (London: John Bell, 1795). <G. E. B.>. 1 Stothard plate.
- . *Timanthes*: A Tragedy (London: John Bell, 1795). <G.E.B.>. 1 Stothard plate.
- Lady's Poetical Magazine*; or, Beauties of British Poetry (London: Harrison & Co., 1791). <Princeton: 2538.554>. 15 Stothard plates (1781).
- Literary Magazine and British Review* (London: The Proprietors and C. Forster, July 1788). <Bodley>. 1 Stothard titlepage vignette (1790).
- Macklin's [Thomas] *British Poets Part V* (London: Thomas Macklin, 1796). <British Library>. 1 Stothard plate.
- Milton, John, *Paradise Lost* (London: John Sharpe, 1827). <G. E. B.>. 1 Stothard titlepage vignette.
- . *Poetical Works*, ed. Samuel Johnson & John Aiken, 3 vols. (London: John Sharpe, 1810). <Bodley>. 3 Stothard plates.
- Moore, Thomas, *A Selection of Popular National Airs With Symphonies and Accompaniments by Sir John Stevenson*, Numbers 1 and 4 (London: James Power, 1818, 1822). <G. E. B.>. 3 Stothard plates.
- Pope, Alexander, *The Rape of the Lock* (London: John Wright et al., 1801). 2 Stothard plates (1798).
- Rogers, Samuel, *Fifty-Six Engravings Illustrative of the Pleasures of Memory, and Other Poems, By Samuel Rogers, Esq. from Drawings by J. M. W. Turner, R. A. and Thomas Stothard* (London: Moon, Boys, & Graves, 1834).
- . *The Pleasures of Memory* (1793). 2 Stothard plates (1794).
- . *The Pleasures of Memory*, Ninth Edition (London: T. Cadell, Junior, and W. Davies, 1796). <G. E. B. & Bodley>. 2 Stothard plates (1794).
- . *The Pleasures of Memory* (1802). 15 Stothard plates (1801).
- Shakespeare, William, *One Hundred Plates Illustrative of the Principal Scenes in Shakespeare's Plays* (London: H. R. Young, 1819), 4'. <G. E. B.>. 7 Stothard plates.
- . *Picturesque Beauties . . . Engraved under the Direction of Charles Taylor* (London: C. Taylor, 1784-87). <British Library & Huntington>. 7 Stothard plates.
- . Stothard signed receipts to Mr. [presumably George] Robinson for two pictures for the *Comedy of Errors* (11 Oct. 1792, £31.10.0), two for *Romeo and Juliet* (28 May 1793, £31.10.0), and two for *King John* (7 Dec. 1793, £31.10.0 plus £2 for "two Drawings for a Pocket Book"). <British Museum Print Room, Anderson Collection>. Shelley Bennett has a number of Robinson entries but nothing significantly like this and nothing under 1790-93.
- . and Milton. *A Series of Magnificent Engravings to Illustrate the Various Folio or Quarto Editions of the Works of Shakespeare and Milton* (London: J. Barfield, 1818), folio. <G. E. B. & Huntington>. 15 Stothard plates for Shakespeare (engraved by J. Heath with imprints of 1802-03) and 13 for Milton (engraved by Bartolozzi, n.d.).
- Shenstone, William, *The Poetical Works* (London: Cadell & Davies, 1798). Bennett guesses that it has "4-6" plates after Stothard, but Stothard's receipt of 22 November 1797 for £10.10.0 from Cadell & Davies is for four (not six) drawings for Shenstone's poems (a copy is in the Anderson Collection of Royal Academy Catalogues in the British Museum Print Room).
- Smith, Charlotte, *Elegiac Sonnets*, Seventh Edition (London: T. Cadell Jun & W. Davies, 1795). <Bodley>. 1 Stothard plate (1789).
- Specimens of Polyautography* (London: P. André, [lithographic] Patentee, & J. Heath, 30 April 1805). <British Library, Metropolitan Museum (New York), Museum of Art (Philadelphia), Museum of Fine Art (Boston), National Gallery (Washington), Staatliche Graphische Sammlung (Munich)>. 1 Stothard lithograph.
- Thomson, James, *The Seasons* (London: T. Chapman, 1795). 4 plates and 8 vignettes after Stothard.
- . *The Works*, 3 vols. (London: J. Rivington et al., 1788), 8'. <G. E. B., 2 copies>. 3 Stothard plates.

<sup>1</sup> According to the obituary of Stothard in *The Gentleman's Magazine* ns 2 (1834): 321-23, Stothard made 5,000 designs, of which 3,000 were engraved. The immense list of books with Stothard illustrations on 63-89 in Shelley Bennett's book records less than 2,000.

<sup>2</sup> Among the more important predecessors of this book are (1) \**Gentleman's Magazine* ns 2 (1834): 321-23; (2) [Mrs. Anna Elizabeth Bray] "Reminiscences of Stothard," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 39 (1836): 669-88, 753-68, expanded in (3) Mrs. [A. E.] Bray, *Life of Thomas Stothard*, R. A. (1851)—note that there are a number of copies of this work extra-illustrated with Stothard ephemera, especially engravings, e.g., in Yale University Library, Princeton University Library (3 vols.), Boston Public Library (4 vols.), and The Huntington Library (7 vols.); (4) A. C. Coxhead, *Thomas Stothard, R. A.: An Illustrated Monograph* (1908); and (5) \*Shel-



ley Margaret Bennett, "Thomas Stothard, R. A." UCLA Ph.D., 1977 (the basis of the present book). (\* = Not in her "Selected Bibliography" 100-06.) The life of Stothard which Bennett attributes to Allan Cunningham in his *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters* (1880) 149-52, is in fact by the editor of the 1880 edition, Mrs. Heaton.

<sup>3</sup> This incident is dated here "perhaps . . . 1779" (11, 91) and "ca. 1781" (62). *Blake Records* (1969) guesses 1780 (19).

William Blake. *Äktenskapet mellan Himmel och Helvete*, trans. Folke Isaksson with an afterword by Göran Malmquist. Tystberga, Sweden: Bokförlaget Epokhe. n.d. 71 pp. + frontispiece and 27 color plates.

Reviewed by Morton D. Paley and Gunnel Tottie

Although this is not the first rendition of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* to appear in Swedish,<sup>1</sup> it is by far the most ambitious. It comprises four elements: a translation of the text by the well-known poet Folke Isaksson, a short foreword by the translator, color reproductions of all the plates, and an afterword by the sinologist, Blake scholar, and member of the Swedish Academy, Göran Malmquist. These parts are of such disparate quality that it is impossible to render a single judgment of the volume. Perhaps the best way to begin is by asking what such a book ought to accomplish.

An edition of Blake in a foreign language should presumably provide a clear, accurate text, a critical introduction and select bibliography, and in the case of an illuminated book, trustworthy reproductions of Blake's etched pages. *Äktenskapet* succeeds

I am told by Mrs. H. E. Jones, Assistant Keeper of the Search Department of the Public Record Office, that there is "no mention of the arrest of William Blake or Thomas Stothard" in the *Alphabetical Guide to War Office and other Military Records Preserved in the Public Record Office*—but of course the index is not exhaustive.

<sup>4</sup> J. T. Smith, *Nollekens* (1828)—see *Blake Records* 466.

<sup>5</sup> Obituary of Flaxman in *The Annual Obituary* (1828)—see *Blake Records* 362.

<sup>6</sup> J. T. Smith, *A Book for a Rainy Day* (1845)—see *Blake Records* 26.

<sup>7</sup> For his large oil of "The Pilgrimage to Canterbury" at the height of his reputation in 1807, Stothard received £60 (Bennett 48). It was conventional for the publisher to buy the design from the artist and thus acquire publication rights to it.

admirably in the first category, fails in the second (although some compensation is provided in the afterword), and achieves only mediocre results in the third. A review of this book is therefore bound to be somewhat fragmentary, taking up each of these parts separately.

Folke Isaksson's translation is on the whole excellent. Isaksson manages to render the tone and rhythm of Blake's English in a Swedish version that is poetic but free of unnecessary archaism. Isaksson retains Blake's use of uppercase lettering but alters his punctuation; the latter is sometimes but not always necessary. (Cf. for instance pl. 14, where Isaksson substitutes a period for a comma after *Hell* and a semicolon for a comma after *tree of life*.) Isaksson shows a sure sense of style in his freer renderings; thus for instance *poetic tales* (pl. 11) is translated as *sågen och dikt* rather than the literal *poetiska berättelser*.

Mistakes are few and unimportant. It would probably have been better to render *This said he, like all firm persuasions, is come to pass* (pl. 13) as *Denna . . . har liksom varje annan fast övertygelse blivit fullbordad* or *har blivit uppfylld*, rather than *har blivit godtagen*, as Isaksson does. In plate 10, one might question the translation of *unacted desires* as *otillfredsställda* ("unsatisfied") *begär*; perhaps *oprövade lustar* would have served. But these are mostly suggestions; Isaksson has splendidly performed his difficult task and has managed to provide Swedish readers (who, if they are interested in Blake, may know some English but

probably not enough to fully understand the original) with an excellent text to accompany the plates.

The (untitled) foreword is another matter. Although Isaksson, as one would expect of a poet of his caliber, has some interesting observations to make, the uninitiated reader is not provided with enough information about the historical context and internal references of *The Marriage* to approach it with any degree of confidence. The foreword also perpetuates the myth of Blake's later works as a farrago of muddy prophecies:

During the long last years of his life, William Blake, the unknown giant, lived in a state of disappointment, depression, [and] perhaps at times derangement, writing enormous poetical works where the songs and blasphemies of his earlier periods turn into prophetic murmurings. But some critics also believe that Blake was in danger of his life and was driven underground because of his political radicalism, and that, resorting to allegory and eccentricity, he made himself invisible. (5)

This is consonant with the know-nothing view of Alfred Kazin, whose essay of 1941 (or perhaps a later reprint of it) is the most recent critical work to be referred to here (5). Shouldn't an introduction to *The Marriage* invite the curious reader to further exploration rather than uninformed dismissal? As there is neither annotation nor bibliography, however, such a reader is going to be hard put to understand even the work at hand. Why is a new heaven begun, and why is it thirty-three years since its advent? Who is Rintrah, merely referred to as "wrathful, fire-shaking" in the foreword (6)? Shouldn't an edition such as this provide answers to