



Blake

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY 67

VOLUME 17 NUMBER 3 WINTER 1983-84

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Kabbalistic Sources— Blake's and His Critics'

BY SHEILA SPECTOR

One of the most provocative, if poorly understood, statements from a poem replete with confusing and ambiguous passages is Blake's assertion in *Jerusalem* that the Jews "have a tradition, that Man anciently contain'd in his mighty limbs all things in Heaven & Earth," or, as he says later, "all Animals."¹ In attempting to discern Blake's true intent, critics have turned to the Kabbalah for help; yet, rather than clarify the problem, they have only added to our confusion. In 1920, Bernhard Fehr, assuming that like all men of his time, Blake knew Latin, Greek, French and Hebrew, concludes that Blake knew Kabbalah, the only problem being to decide which of the many recensions available the poet actually used.² For his study, Fehr relies on the seventeenth-century Latin compendium, the *Kabbala Denudata*. In contrast, four years later S. Foster Damon asserts that "It is very difficult to discover just what Blake knew of the Kabala, . . . But from [*To the Jews*] we must assume that he knew something."³ Then, three years later in 1927, Helen C. White, returning to Fehr, remarks that "Herr Fehr certainly presents a convincing case for Blake's having in some way got hold of cabalistic ideas," though she misreads Fehr to the extent of assuming that the *Kabbala Denudata* is a German kabbalistic text.⁴ And to finish the twenties, Denis Saurat declares: "We shall see that the Cabala explains much more of the detail of Blake's visions. Indeed the Cabalistic element is so closely woven into the very fabric of the *Prophetic Books* that it is only in studying Blake's system as a whole that we shall be able to judge of the influence of the Cabala upon him."⁵

For almost a decade after Saurat, there was silence upon the subject, until 1938 when Milton O. Percival, taking a different tack, places Kabbalah within the context of the "the Blakean heterodoxy," comprised of "The Orphic and Pythagorean tradition, Neoplatonism in the whole of its extent, the Hermetic, kabbalistic, Gnostic, and alchemical writings, Erigena, Paracelsus, Boehme, and Swedenborg," what he considers to be "a consistent body of tradition extending over nearly twenty-five hundred years. In the light of this tradition, not in the light of Christian orthodoxy, Blake read his Bible, weighing

and deciding for himself, formulating a 'Bible of Hell.'"⁶ Three years later, Joseph L. Blau, agreeing with Percival, states that "there exists a strong possibility that those elements in Blake which are Cabalistic may have entered his thought thus indirectly, through Swedenborg."⁷

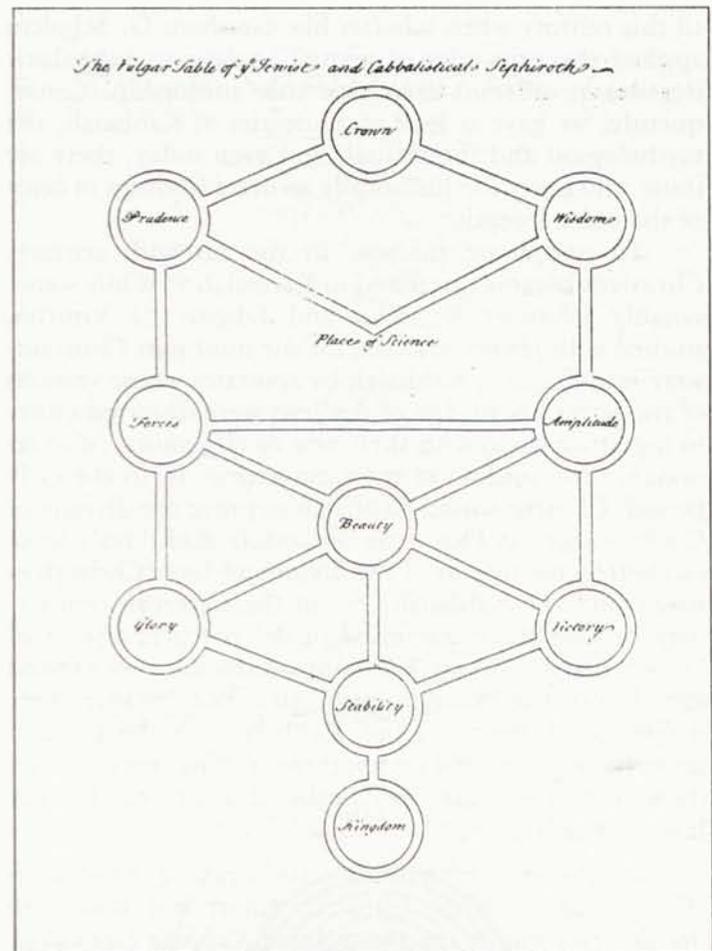
Fifteen years were to elapse before another scholar considered the question seriously. In 1956, Laura de Witt James uses several kabbalistic doctrines in order to interpret "one of Blake's most deftly hidden doctrines: The doctrine of the False Tongue beneath Beulah."⁸ In 1964, Desirée Hirst explores the influence of the Christian mystical tradition on Blake, as it derived "from the ancient world, by a kind of Neo-Platonism blended with Hebrew symbolism."⁹ The following year, Harold Bloom exclaims that "the actual cabalists would have been outraged at the humanistic 'impieties' of Blake's myth";¹⁰ and in the same year, Damon returns to the subject with the statement that "Apparently Blake took nothing directly from the Kabbalah, if he knew of it, although Denis Saurat . . . points out various parallels."¹¹ Three years later, referring to the use of Eden in the kabbalistic creation myth, Kathleen Raine says that "This name Blake could not have learned from the Christian cabalists Fludd and Agrippa, for they do not use it in their writings. He may have learned this venerable tradition from conversation with some rabbi," thus apparently picking up on Damon's suggestion that Blake studied Hebrew "probably with some local rabbi, who must have been a remarkable person, as the information he gave Blake was a tremendous stimulus."¹² The following year, Asloob Ahmad Ansari tells us that "Blake's interest in this tradition may have been stimulated by his reading of Swedenborg and the mystical doctrines of Jacob Böhme and the innumerable translations of the *Zohar* that were in vogue in the eighteenth century."¹³ And finally, in 1972, Harold H. Fisch, referring to Saurat and Hirst, explains that "Although he knew little or no Hebrew, and was not Jewish, Blake was also influenced by ideas which can be traced to the Kabbalah."¹⁴

While we generally assume that the problem of Blake's Kabbalah would be clarified if only we had his direct

source, actually, the question is much more fundamental, for as this survey of critical opinion suggests, there is no universal agreement about the material with which we are dealing. If Saurat insists that Blake was strongly influenced by Kabbalah, while Damon questions any influence at all; and if Bloom says that a real kabbalist would have been "outraged" by Blake's use of Kabbalah, while Raine posits rabbinic training for the nonconforming Christian; then, it is most likely that everyone is, in fact, talking about something different, that the word Kabbalah has a different meaning for each of these scholars and, as is quite likely, had still a different meaning for Blake. Therefore, before we can even begin to assess the relative influence of Kabbalah on Blake, much less seek his specific source, we must first consider the nature of Kabbalah in general, English Kabbalah in particular, and the history of kabbalistic scholarship in the twentieth century, for only then will we be able to place Blake and his critics in their proper perspectives.

Fittingly, the history of Kabbalah is reminiscent of the biblical story about the Tower of Babel, when the Lord did "confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (Gen. 11.7), for even though the word has been part of the English language for over four hundred years, beyond etymology there is no universally accepted definition of the field.¹⁵ Deriving from the Hebrew word *kabel*, to receive, Kabbalah denotes the secret knowledge of the Jews. Although the term specifically signifies the movement of Jewish mysticism begun around the twelfth century in Provence, it is usually generalized to include the entire history of Jewish mysticism, beginning around the time of Christ and extending to contemporary movements.

The key word of the definition is "secret." Mysticism is traditionally reserved strictly for those capable of assimilating what is believed to be "dangerous knowledge."¹⁶ Only those who were old enough and specially prepared were allowed to engage in mystical pursuits, the masses being told, in the words of Maimonides, that "There is a considerable difference between one person and another as regards these faculties, as is well known to philosophers. While one man can discover a certain thing by himself, another is never able to understand it, even if taught by means of all possible expressions and metaphors, and during a long period; his mind can in no way grasp it, his capacity is insufficient for it."¹⁷ Because of the secret nature of Kabbalah, Jewish mystics seldom record their visions for others to read, passing them down, instead, in an oral tradition.¹⁸ In conjunction with the secrecy is the tradition of pseudonymity, attribution of texts to eminent figures of earlier periods. Wishing to remain anonymous, authors deliberately wrote in archaic languages in order to disguise the true origins of their work, and as a result, a complicated mythological history of Kabbalah developed, one which was not disproved un-



The basis of all Kabbalah, both Jewish and Christian, is the theory of the *Sefirot*, the emanations through which *Ein-Sof*, the Godhead (the active manifestation of God), created the universe. Originally ten, in the thirteenth century, kabbalists added an eleventh *Sefirah*, *Da'at* (Knowledge), which in time became the focal point of the occult versions of Kabbalah.

1. Casway, inserted between pp. 358 and 359. Traditional picture of the Sefirotic Tree through which kabbalists portrayed the harmony of Creation. Vertically, the identical right and left columns (Pity—Male, and Wrath—Female) depict the fragmentation which occurred at the time of the Fall and suggest the unity to be achieved at the end of time when right and left merge with the Central Column. Horizontally, the four *Sefirot* of the Central Column correspond to the four worlds, as governed by the four souls, of the macrocosm and corresponding microcosm. This particular rendition is unusual in two respects. First, the title specifically distinguishes between "Jewish" and "Cababistical" pursuits, thus suggesting that the occult use of Kabbalah was considered different from the traditional Jewish teachings. Also, the specification of the "Place of Science" is unique since the Tree usually depicts only the original ten *Sefirot*. According to Isaac Luria, the sixteenth-century kabbalist whose interpretation of Jewish mysticism radically altered the traditional myth, *Da'at*, the *Sefirah* of the Female Will, wished to draw all of the lights of creation into her vessel, and attempted to replace the *Sefirah* of the heart, which corresponds to the Spiritual Soul, thereby causing the Fall. The inclusion of the "Place of Science," which projects the action of Lurianic Kabbalah, could suggest parallels between *Da'at*, the Female Will, and the Spiritual Soul; and Vala, Blake's Female Will, and Luvah, his Heart. In addition, Blake's drawing on *Jerusalem* 54 could be an abbreviated inversion of the Sefirotic Tree, used to depict the fallen world, especially since in the first few lines of the plate, Blake alludes to the process of emanation (the *Sefirot*).

til this century when scholars like Gershom G. Scholem applied the principles of textual analysis to kabbalistic treatises in order to determine true authorship. Consequently, we have at least two histories of Kabbalah, the mythological and the factual, and even today, there are those who reject the historically accurate findings in favor of the older legends.

To complicate matters, in the fifteenth century, Christians became interested in Kabbalah.¹⁹ While some, notably Johannes Reuchlin and Edigius da Viturbo, studied with Jewish scholars, for the most part Christians were introduced to Kabbalah by apostates whose versions of the secret knowledge of the Jews were distorted either to ingratiate them with their new coreligionists, or to rationalize the wisdom of their converting. If, in the early period, Christians used Kabbalah to prove the divinity of Christ—since, as Pico della Mirandola said, “no science can better convince us of the divinity of Jesus Christ than magic and the Kabbalah,”²⁰—in the sixteenth century, they became more interested in the practical aspects of “white magic,” using kabbalistic principles to expand already existing hermetic principles. But because these magicians called their practice Kabbalah, in the popular mind the word earned yet another meaning, even though these practices were specifically discouraged by the Jews themselves.

In the seventeenth century, the meaning of Kabbalah changed again, when Christian Knorr von Rosenroth decided to compile the two-volume *Kabbala Denudata*, still the most comprehensive compendium of Latin Kabbalah in existence.²¹ Von Rosenroth had a number of Jewish kabbalistic treatises translated for the *Denudata*, but at the same time, he censored the work, for his primary purpose was evangelical. When Henry More suggested that von Rosenroth affirm “nothing for true, but what the Christian as well as the Jew is agreed in,” von Rosenroth considered the suggestion “not only useful, but necessary.”²² Many of these treatises were translated by Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont, one of the few Christian kabbalists of the seventeenth century capable of reading Kabbalah in the original, and his own *Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae* was appended to the second edition.²³ Von Rosenroth and van Helmont believed in a universal religion which could embrace Judaism and all forms of Christianity, and they used their own version of Kabbalah to foster that belief.

At the same time that Christian evangelists were promulgating their brand of Kabbalah, the Jews, responding to the disaster of the mystical messiah Sabbatai Ševi, became even more stringent than ever about discouraging kabbalistic pursuits among their own people, a tendency which culminated in the mid-nineteenth century when Heinrich Graetz, the foremost Jewish historian, called Kabbalah a “monstrosity” produced by “Discord,” and “a

daughter of embarrassment,” among other things.²⁴ Thus, having virtually abandoned the field, the Jews gave Christians free reign to establish yet another strand of Kabbalah—Theosophy. Although Mme. Blavatzky was herself not particularly attracted to Kabbalah, other Theosophists were, and by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, a number of Theosophical treatises with the word “Qabbalah” in the title were produced, though frequently having very little to do with Jewish mysticism.²⁵ And rather than credit the Jews with the special knowledge, many Theosophists denied Jewish origins to the field altogether, claiming, as does Henry Burry Pullen-Burry, that “To speak therefore of the Qabalah of the Jews in the sense that they were the recipients of the Secret Arcane Wisdom is entirely misleading.”²⁶

By the twentieth century, then, we have a variety of kabbalisms from which to choose. Jewish Kabbalah from the standpoint of myth or modern scholarship, and Christian Kabbalah intended to demonstrate the divinity of Christ, permutate matter, convert the Jews, or simply ignore the Jews. And the questions are: which Kabbalah did Blake have access to? and from the perspective of which Kabbalah do his critics measure him?

Assuming that Blake knew neither Hebrew nor Latin well enough to study the known kabbalistic texts, we must determine the kinds of material available to the eighteenth-century poet—Jewish or Christian—in English.²⁷ While it is tempting to assume that Blake studied with a local rabbi, a brief glance at eighteenth-century Anglo-Jewry is sufficient to indicate that English Jews were by and large incapable of teaching Blake the rudiments of Judaica, much less their esoteric doctrines.²⁸

The primary characteristic of English Jewry at the time was ignorance of Judaica. Throughout the century, the rabbis complained of having no one with whom to discuss religious matters and, according to Charles Duschinsky, the complaint of Rabbi David Tevele Schiff (d. 1792), that “I have no pupil and not even anyone to whom I could speak on Talmudic subjects,” echoes that of his predecessor Rabbi Hirschel Levin, made in the late 1750s.²⁹ Since one had to master Talmud before he could begin studying Kabbalah, few English Jews were qualified, apparently, to study mysticism in the England of Blake’s day. In addition, because the Anglo-Jewish community of the period placed so little emphasis on Jewish learning, the rabbinate had to be imported from abroad, and even if the rabbis knew Kabbalah (a questionable assumption since, by the eighteenth century, Kabbalah was no longer an integral part of the Jewish curriculum), they would have been incapable of teaching Blake: as immigrants, they knew little English and Blake had no significant background in Hebrew, Yiddish or the languages of the Continent.³⁰

It should also be noted that the Jews were not granted full emancipation until 1890. In practical terms, this meant that they were not permitted to study in the universities, hold political office or, more to the point, publish without restraint or censorship. Not until the second half of the eighteenth century were bilingual Jewish prayer books and Bibles permitted in England, and purely English works were usually confined either to prayers for the king, to demonstrate the patriotism of these non-citizens, or, towards the end of the century, polemics to defend the Jews against the anti-Semitic attacks of Priestley and others.³¹

The only literate Anglo-Jewish kabbalist, Jacob Hart (1745–1814), wrote his treatises in Hebrew and published them on the Continent under his Hebrew name, Eliakim ben Abraham.³² Whether motivated by censorship or, as is quite likely, the absence of an audience at home, Hart reserved his English writing for polemics. A second so-called kabbalist, Samuel Jacob Hayyim Falk (c. 1710–1782), known as the “Ba’al Shem of London,” was an adventurer who “achieved notoriety in both Jewish and non-Jewish circles for his kabbalistic practices based on the use of the mysterious name of God, hence becoming known as Ba’al Shem (‘Master of the [Divine] Name’).” If generally regarded as an alchemist and magician, Falk was also “denounced as a Shabbatean heretic and fraud.”³³

Historically, the first kabbalistic work produced in English by an English Jew is *The Kabbalah: Its Doctrine, Development and Literature*, written in 1863 by Christian D. Ginsburg, an apostate who wrote because “with the exception of the notice in Basnage’s *Histoire des Juifs* . . . and the defective descriptions given by Allen and Etheridge . . ., no Treatise exists in English on this esoteric doctrine.” Ginsburg’s work is intended “to be a guide for those who wish to be initiated into the mysteries of this theosophy.”³⁴ This is clearly not a religious work intended for a religious audience.

Ginsburg was not quite correct in his assessment of English Kabbalah. In fact, up to the time of Blake’s death, there were over fifteen sources of Kabbalah available to the poet, though none of them accurately reflects the mysticism of the Jews.³⁵ With one exception, all were written by Christians for Christians; all are based on the Latin recensions of the subject which are distorted to make Kabbalah conform with Christianity; and the one exception, John Peter Stehelin’s *Traditions of the Jews*, distorts the Jewish sources in order to ridicule the secret knowledge of the people of the Book.

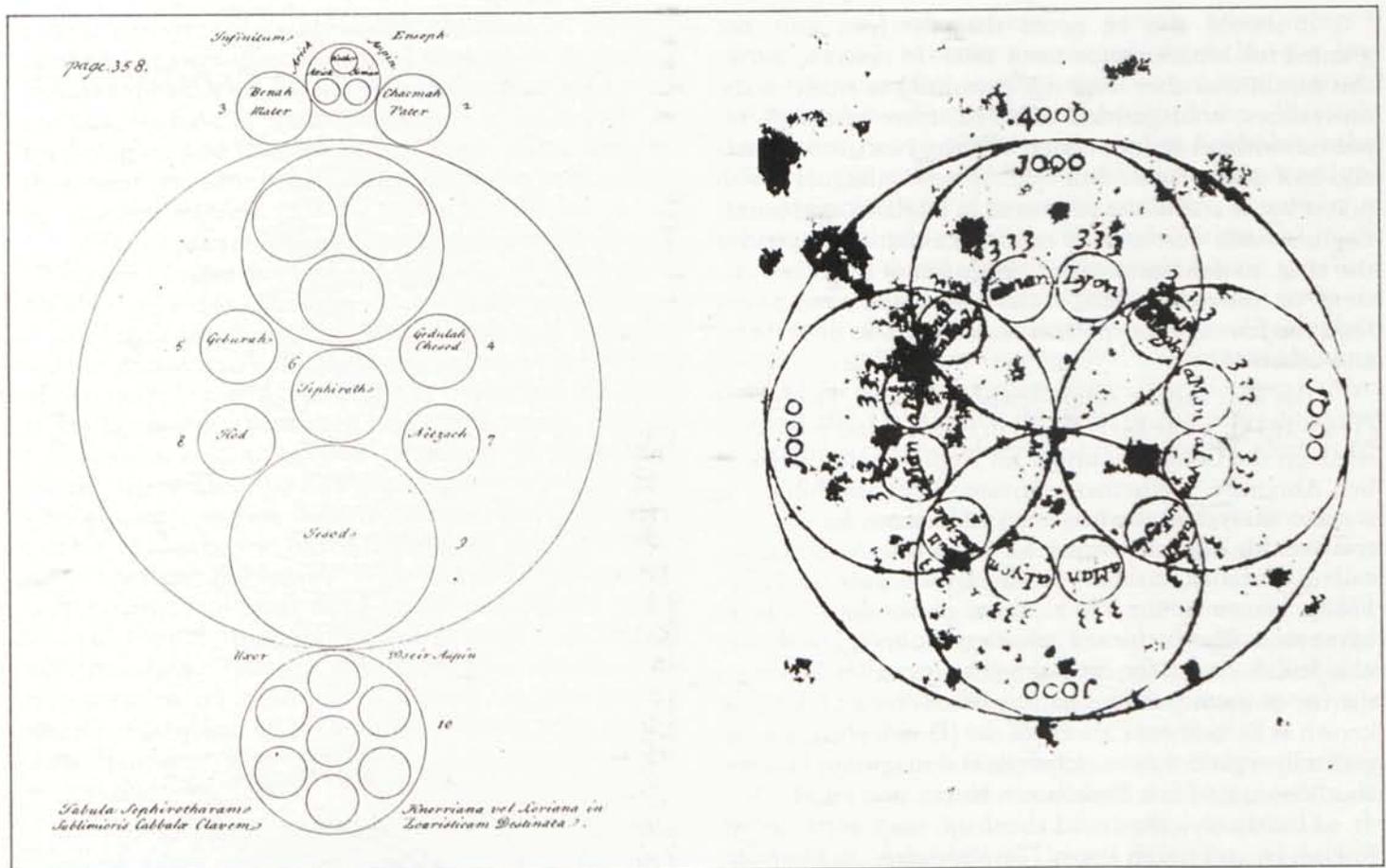
In the seventeenth century, Christian Kabbalists used their own versions of Jewish mysticism to buttress their own, non-Jewish attitudes towards the occult. Cornelius Agrippa, who refers to Kabbalah throughout his *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (English translation, London 1651), devotes several chapters of the third book specif-

Table of the SEPHIROTHS in Circles.



2. Basnage, p. 195. The circular configuration of the *Sefirot* usually indicates *Adam Kadmon*, primordial man, the first completed being of Creation. As the culmination of the process of emanation, *Adam Kadmon* was to be a spiritual model for *Adam Rishon*, first man, the last completed being of Creation. In this configuration, *Adam Kadmon* was to be purely passive, but after the Fall, when *Adam Kadmon* had to assume an active role in restoration, he fragmented into physiognomies and assumed a new configuration, corresponding to the Sefirotic Tree (see illus. 4). The description of the Spectre as “A Circle in continual gyrations” (J 29.20) suggests the negation of *Adam Kadmon* in his circular form.

3. According to Luria, the first form which the lights of the Creator (Or Haen Soph) assumed was that of *Adam Kadmon*, who was to reflect the lights of the Godhead towards the world to come. In our post-lapsarian state, the chief medium of restoration is the lights issuing from *Adam Kadmon*’s forehead, intended to reorganize the cosmos. Similarly, in *The Four Zoas*, Los reorganizes his cosmos “in his furious pride sparks issuing from his hair” (n. 4, 48.11).



4. Casway, between pp. 358 and 359. Reproduction of a drawing from the *Kabbala Denudata* depicting the cosmos after the Fall. Superimposed over the Sefirotic Tree (note that the names of the *Sefirot* are transliterated rather than translated) is the Lurianic configuration of *Adam Kadmon* after the Fall. Below the Infinity of *Ein-Sof* is the "Long-Faced One," also known as the "Ancient of Days" (*Attik Yomim*), corresponding to the first *Sefirah*, *Keter* (Crown); then come the Father and Mother, corresponding respectively to *Hokhmah* (Divine Wisdom) and *Binah* (Human Intelligence). The central portion of the drawing, comprised of the next six *Sefirot*, corresponds to the "Short-Tempered One," also known as the "Son," whose job it is to perform the active work of regeneration. Naturally, to Christian kabbalists, the "Son" is Christ. The last circle, representing the last *Sefirah*, signifies the female counterpart of the "Son," the "Daughter." Could Los's fragmentation into male and female forms which then produce Orc, their son, and the Shadowy Female (*M 3*), correspond to a Blakean version of the kabbalistic "Divine Family," the Father, Mother, Son and Daughter?

Christian kabbalists, especially those interested in the occult, frequently used the Jewish cosmogony as the basis for their own interpretation of the cosmos. While they retained the Jewish names for various elements, they then superimposed any combination of Christian, alchemical or astrological symbols over the Jewish base to produce completely new versions of existence.

5. Van Helmont, *Seder Olam*, p. 73. As van Helmont's visualization of Ezekiel's chariot, the drawing depicts a circumscribing circle containing four intersecting circles, to represent the four wheels, each containing four smaller circles, for the four beasts. The fourfoldness suggests not only Blake's description of Golgonooza in *Jerusalem*, but also, the drawing on *Milton* 36. Since to Christian kabbalists the figure on the chariot is Christ, Blake's inclusion of Milton's track leading to the center, the limits of which are Adam and Satan, could suggest the process by which Milton will become Christ.

ically to kabbalistic numerology, thus establishing in English letters the popular notion of Kabbalah as magic. Following Agrippa, Robert Fludd uses his predecessor's recension of Kabbalah "to prove and maintain the true and essential Philosophy, with the virtuous properties of that eternal Wisdom, which is the Foundation and Corner-stone, whereon it is grounded," in the *Mosaical Philosophy: Grounded upon the Essential Truth or Eternal Sapience* (English translation, London 1659). Later in the century, several works by van Helmont, the collaborator on the *Kabbala Denudata* who resided in England for ten years, were translated into English. In *A Cabballistical Dialogue in Answer to the Opinion of a Learned Doctor in Philosophy and Theology that the World Was Made of Nothing. As It is Contained in the Second Part of the Cabballa Denudata & Apparatus in Lib. Sohar, p. 308 &c. To Which is Subjoyned A Rabbinical and Paraphrastical Exposition of Genesis 1* (London, 1682), van Helmont provides information about the Christian Kabbalist's theory of Creation and a good example of kabbalistic methods for interpreting the Bible. His *Two Hundred Queries Moderately Propounded Concerning the Doctrine of the Revolution of Humane Souls, and Its Conformity to the Truths of Christianity* (London, 1684), is a defense of the doctrine of *gilgul*, transmigration of the soul; and the fourth chapter of *The Paradoxal*

Discourses of F.M. Van Helmont, Concerning the Macrocosm and Microcosm, or the Greater and Lesser World, and Their Union (London, 1685, pp. 105-61), contains a detailed exposition of *gilgul*. Finally, in *Seder Olam: or, the Order, Series, or Succession of All the Ages, Periods, and Times of the Whole World is Theologically, Philosophically, and Chronologically Explicated and Stated. Also the Hypothesis of the Pre-existancy and Revolution, of Humane Souls. Together with the Thousand Years Reign of Christ on the Earth, Probably Evinced, and Deliver'd in an Historical Enarration Thereof, According to the Holy Scriptures* (London, 1694), van Helmont establishes the basis for his theories about the succession of all ages through the use of his Christian interpretation of Kabbalah.

By the Age of Reason, the emphasis shifted, as Kabbalah was no longer presented as a serious pursuit, but an historical curiosity of the Jews. The first modern historian of the Jews, Jacques Basnage, includes an extensive 150-page discussion of Kabbalah in his *History of the Jews, from Jesus Christ to the Present Time: Containing their Antiquities, their Religion, their Rites, the Dispersion of the Ten Tribes in the East, and the Persecutions this Nation has Suffer'd in the West. Being a Supplement and Continuation of the History of Josephus* (English translation, London 1708, pp. 184-256). Unable to read Hebrew, Basnage relied on Latin sources, especially the *Kabbala Denudata*, for his discussion of Jewish mysticism, so he misrepresented a distorted version of Kabbalah as an accurate account of the subject.³⁶ Unfortunately, Basnage became the source of many English studies of Kabbalah which followed.

The next kabbalistic publication is an English translation of *Aesch Mezareph, or Purifying Fire, a Chymico-Kabalistic Treatise Collected from the Kabala Denudata of Knorr von Rosenroth* (London, 1714), an alchemical text included in the *Denudata*. Historically interesting as an example of the popular notion of Kabbalah, the text, whose Hebrew original has been lost, represents the attempt to "harmonize" Kabbalah and alchemy, even though "there was a basic symbolic divergence between the two from the start."³⁷

During the course of the eighteenth century, several writers included sections on what they believed to be Kabbalah, not only in studies of Jewish traditions, but also in works with theses totally unrelated to the Jews. In 1724-1725, Thomas Lewis wrote *Origines Hebraeae: the Antiquities of the Hebrew Republick . . . Designed as an Explanation of Every Branch of the Levitical Law, and of all the Ceremonies and Usages of the Hebrews, both Civil and Sacred*, which contains five pages (IV.164-69) devoted to Kabbalah, discussing the pseudepigraphical history of Kabbalah, the kabbalistic explication of Scripture (mystical, allegorical, or analogical), practical Kab-

balah and Gematria (numerology). Roughly the same material is contained in Ephraim Chamber's *Cyclopaedia: or an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (2 vols.; London, 1728), under entries on Cabbala, Cabbalists, Gematria and Notaricon. (During the course of the century, Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* underwent numerous editions, including a revision to five volumes in 1778-1788 by Abraham Rees. Finally, into the next century, Rees revised the *Cyclopaedia* entirely, expanding it to a total of thirty-nine volumes, including several devoted to illustrations, some of which were engraved by Blake.) Following Chambers is the English translation of Augustin Calmet's *Historical, Critical, Chronological and Etymological Dictionary of the Holy Bible*, translated by Samuel D'Oyly and John Colson (3 vols.; London, 1732). While the brief entry "Cabala" focuses primarily on Gematria, Calmet includes kabbalistic materials throughout the *Dictionary*. In 1736, Thomas Burnet's *Doctrine Antiqua de Rerum Originibus; or, an Inquiry into the Doctrine of the Philosophies of all Nations, concerning the Original of the World*, was translated into English. Much less objective than his predecessors, Burnet includes a chapter on "the Hebrews and their Cabala" in order to demonstrate that the Jews, "the most trifling of all the Barbarians," wasted their time on a subject "good for nothing but to be thrown away." Burnet relies primarily on the *Denudata* when describing kabbalistic theories of the *Sefirot* (emanations), cosmogony, Lurianic Kabbalah, the Zohar, Creation and Apocalypse (pp. 56-90).

John Peter Stehelin, a German divine residing in England, provides the only text not based on the Latin sources—*The Traditions of the Jews, or the Doctrines and Expositions contained in the Talmud and Other Rabbinical Writings. Translated from the High-Dutch. To which is Added, A Preliminary Preface: or, An Enquiry into the Origin, Progress, Authority, and Usefulness of Those Traditions, wherein the Mystical Sense of the Allegories in the Talmud and Other Writings of the Rabbins is Explained* (London, 1732-1734; 2nd ed. 1742-1743, II.142-66). Instead, he relies on Johann Eisenmenger's *Entdecktes Judenthum [Judaism Unmasked]* (1711), a flagrantly anti-Semitic text which, though based on 182 Hebrew books, thirteen Yiddish, and eight written by apostates, is deliberately distorted to dissuade Christians from converting to Judaism.³⁸ In his toned-down version of the work, Stehelin converts Eisenmenger's anti-Semitism to philo-Semitism, the belief that the Jews would of their own accord choose Christianity if only Christians would calmly and logically point out the absurdities of the older faith. Although Stehelin's section on Kabbalah is overlaid with his philo-Semitic attitude, he presents what in the eighteenth century was considered to be an historically accurate account of Kabbalah, including the only clear discussion of Jewish gematria available in English.

Stehelin was followed by an abridged translation of Henry More's essay "Expositio Mercavae," contemplation of Ezekiel's chariot, included as an appendix to R. Casway's *Miscellaneous Metaphysical Essay: Or, an Hypothesis Concerning the Formation and Generation of Spiritual Material Beings. With Their Several Characteristics and Properties, and How Far the Several Surrounding Beings Partake of Either Property. To Which is Added, Some Thoughts upon Creation in General, upon Pre-existence, the Cabalistic Account of the Mosaic Creation, the Formation of Adam, and Fall of Mankind; and upon the Nature of Noah's Deluge. As Also upon the Dormant State of the Soul, from the Creation to our Birth, and from Our Death to the Resurrection. The Whole Considered upon the Principles of Reason, and from the Tenor of the Revelations in the Holy Scriptures* (London, 1748). Casway's text is an eclectic compilation of various esoteric theories, but the "Expositio Mercavae" provides a Christianized version of the earliest form Jewish mysticism; unfortunately, More felt no need to be encumbered by either historical accuracy or Jewish scholarship, so his text reflects his own belief and not that of the Jews.³⁹

Towards the end of the century, interest shifted from Jewish history to philosophy, the primary recension being found in William Enfield's *The History of Philosophy from the Earliest Periods: Drawn up from Brucker's Historia Critica Philosophiae* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1792). Not an accurate translation of the Latin original, Enfield renders what he calls "the substance" of Brucker's work, including a hostile and inaccurate account of Kabbalah which relies on Basnage and the Latin kabbalists for information (pp. 408-18). In 1780, Blake engraved one illustration for Enfield's *The Speaker* (1780-1820?). While we have no way of knowing whether the two men actually knew each other, were one to speculate, it would be more realistic to assume that Blake learned his Kabbalah from Enfield than from a local rabbi.

Thomas Maurice, not interested in the Jews at all, uses the information found in Basnage for his *Indian Antiquities: or, Dissertations, Relative to the Ancient Geographical Divisions, the Pure System of Primeval Theology, the Grand Code of Civil Laws, the Original Form of Government, the Widely-Extended Commerce, and the Various and Profound Literature, of Hindostan: Compared, throughout, with the Religion, Laws, Government, and Literature, of Persia, Egypt, and Greece. The Whole Intended as Introductory to, and Illustrative of, The History of Hindostan, upon a Comprehensive Scale* (London, 1793-1800; IV.166-210), in order to demonstrate the primacy of Hindostan, discussing the oral transmission of doctrine, major kabbalistic texts, the *Sefirot*—as they relate to Mithraic and Eleusinian mysteries—and the names of God and numerology, as resembling Hinduism.

At the turn of the century, Francis Barrett's *The Magus, or Celestial Intelligencer; Being a Complete System of Occult Philosophy. In Three Books: Containing the Antient and Modern Practice of the Cabalistic Art, Natural and Celestial Magic, &c.; Shewing the Wonderful Effects that May be Performed by a Knowledge of the Celestial Influences, the Occult Properties of Metals, Herbs, and Stone, and the Application of Active to Passive Principles* (London, 1801), points the way to be taken by the Theosophists of the late nineteenth century. Attempting to unite all forms of the occult into a single system, Barrett intends his treatment of the Kabbalah, though he is both sloppy and far from the mysticism of the Jews, to be "a complete treatise on the mysteries of the Cabala and Ceremonial Magic; by the study of which, a man (who can separate himself from material objects, by the mortification of the Sensual appetite—abstinence from drunkenness, gluttony, and other bestial passions, and who lives pure and temperate, free from those actions which denigrate a man to a brute) may become a recipient of Divine light and knowledge" (pp. 33-72).

Finally, in *Modern Judaism: or, a Brief Account of the Opinions, Traditions, Rites, and Ceremonies, of the Jews in Modern Times* (London, 1816; pp. 65-94), John Allen, who cannot help but confess to finding his subject "an awful delusion," is fairminded enough "to describe things as they are," or rather, as he believes them to be, including a chapter on Kabbalah based on the Latin studies and Maurice's *Indian Antiquities*.

As is evident from this survey, Blake's possible sources of Kabbalah were inaccurate and distorted discussions of Jewish mysticism which had little to do with the Jews at all. Even if, as is quite possible, there are other sources of English Kabbalah which have yet to be located, in all likelihood they are like those just surveyed, quite far from the mysticism of the Jews. Thus when considering the influence of Kabbalah on Blake, it is, while true, tautological to note with Bloom that "actual cabalists would have been outraged" at Blake's use of Kabbalah—it would be impossible for things to be otherwise. But if we cannot apply Jewish scholarship to Blake's Kabbalah, we also should be wary about any other twentieth-century source of information as well, given the strange history of kabbalistic scholarship until the middle of this century.⁴⁰

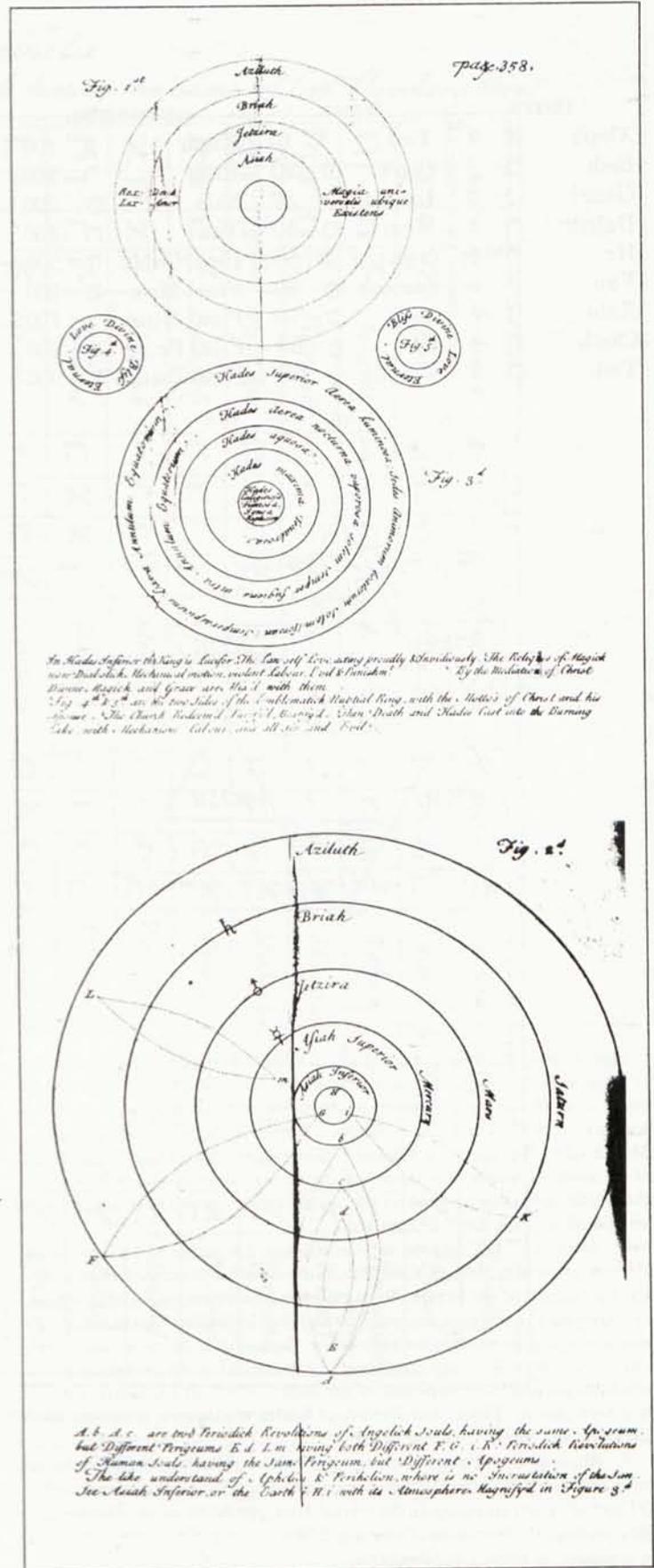
The origin of scholarly interest in Kabbalah is closely linked to the Theosophical movement of the nineteenth century which promulgated a universal secret knowledge of which Jewish mysticism was considered only a part. In the nineteenth century, people like Eliphas Lévi (Alphonse Louis Constant, 1810-1875), Papus (Gérard Encausse, 1868-1916), and Frater Perdurabo (Aleister Crowley, 1875-1946), produced works purporting to be about Kabbalah but, as Scholem explains, these "supreme charlatan[s] . . . had an infinitesimal knowledge of Kab-

balah that did not prevent them from drawing freely on their imaginations instead" (*Kabbalah*, p. 203).

In an attempt to codify this secret knowledge, Theosophists not only wrote their own books, but also translated a number of kabbalistic treatises; given the ignorance of twentieth-century readers, many of these flawed renditions are still accepted today as being accurate. The earliest translation of the Zohar—the major kabbalistic text—is the French *Le Livre de la Splendeur* of de Pauly⁴¹ which, as Werblowsky points out, is "one of the most astounding combinations of sheer ignorance and brazen forgery" (p. 98). Yet, Saurat relies on the Pauly translation for much of his criticism. A second so-called translation of the Zohar is S.L. MacGregor Mathers' *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, an English rendition of several treatises contained in the *Denudata*, thus a translation of a translation, to which this member of the Golden Dawn Society appends his own notes.⁴² Even though Scholem pointed out the shortcomings of Theosophical scholarship a half century ago, Mathers is still being reprinted as though it were a historically accurate text.⁴³

At the turn of the century, Christian scholars began assessing the history of Kabbalah. In England, Edward Arthur Waite produced *The Doctrine and Literature of the Kabbalah* (1902), and *The Secret Doctrine in Israel* (1913), both of which were incorporated in his *Holy Kabbalah: A Study of the Secret Tradition in Israel as Unfolded by Sons of the Doctrine for the Benefit and Consolation of the Elect Dispersed through the Lands and Ages of the Greater Exile* (1929). But, according to Scholem, these "were essentially rather confused compilations made from secondhand sources" (*Kabbalah*, p. 203).

After World War I, Jewish scholars began reevaluating Kabbalah as an integral aspect of Jewish history. Pioneers in the field, such as Gershom G. Scholem, Ernst Müller and S. A. Horodetzky, were joined by other scholars, including I. Tishby, Joseph Dan and Rivka Schatz-Uffenheimer, in Israel, G. Vajda and François Secret in France, and Joseph L. Blau and Alexander Altmann in America, to establish the objective principles of historical scholarship from which to evaluate the



6. Casway, between pp. 358 and 359. While the top figure contains the Jewish names for the four worlds, the drawing is not Jewish. To the Jews, there are seven earths, covered by seven heavens, and corresponding to the positive image of the cosmos, seven hells. In this picture, Casway has four hells to correspond to the four worlds, and gives them all a Christian interpretation.

7. Casway, between pp. 358 and 359. In another modification of the Jewish cosmos, here Casway superimposes astrology on Jewish mysticism, having the four worlds corresponding to four planets (Asia, the World of Fact, is Earth). This association with astrology has been a central aspect of occult versions of Kabbalah having little to do with Jewish mysticism; but the paths of the "Angelick Souls" could suggest the lines from Milton, "For travellers from Eternity, pass outward to Satans seat, / But travellers to Eternity, pass inward to Golgonooza" (17.29-30), as the "traveller thro Eternity" (15.22) passes through the various vortices.

UNITS.		TENS.		HUNDREDS.	
Aleph	א	Yod	י	Koph	ק
Beth	ב	Caph	כ	Resh	ר
Gimel	ג	Lamed	ל	Shin	ש
Daleth	ד	Mem	מ	Tau	ט
He	ה	Nun	נ	Final Caph	כפ
Vau	ו	Samech	ס	Final Mem	מפ
Zain	ז	Ain	ע	Final Nun	נפ
Cheth	ח	Pe	פ	Final Pe	פפ
Teth	ט	Tsaddi	צ	Final Tsaddi	צפ



Historically, the most popular form of Kabbalah is Gematria, the science of permutations applied to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order to create new words for interpreting the Bible, devise magical charms for warding off evil, or fabricate alchemical formulae for permutating matter. Most English discussions of Kabbalah have sections on Gematria, and most of the sources contain illustrations of these magical processes. It is possible that some of Blake's anomalous use of Hebrew in his illustrations can be attributed to some form of Gematria.

8. Allen, p. 74. Common to virtually any discussion of Judaica, from Hebrew grammars through Kabbalah, is the alphabet chart with the numerical equivalents of the letters. Since Hebrew uses letters rather than Arabic numerals for counting, it was only natural that kabbalists would substitute words of equivalent values for each other, Gematria at its most basic level, and from there perform any number of mathematical computations to derive wholly ingenious interpretations of the Bible. Through Gematria, Christians were able to "prove" the divinity of Christ while Jews, of course, used Gematria to "prove" just the opposite.

9. Allen, p. 69. A magical charm in the form of the Star of David, based on an abbreviation of the Hebrew phrase meaning "Thou art strong for ever, O Lord! or, Thou art strong in the eternal God," as Allen notes. This kind of abbreviation, the formation of new words based on the initial letters of words in a phrase, is known as Notaricon.

material.⁴⁴ As a result, we now have a significant body of scholarship from which to draw when studying Kabbalah.⁴⁵

In view of the history of kabbalistic scholarship, we can make several broad assumptions concerning the English sources against which we measure Blake. Anything written before 1863 was most likely strongly influenced by the Latin kabbalists, and therefore is distorted to make Kabbalah conform to Christianity. Between 1863, the date of Ginsburg's *Kabbalah*, and 1902, that of Waite's *Doctrine and Literature of the Kabbalah*, works are probably more and more infected by the Theosophical movement. The first two decades of the twentieth century witness the vain attempt to sort out the material by scholars relying on flawed secondary sources; and from World War I on, we find more and more historically accurate texts appearing in English.

If Blake was likely influenced by the first trend, his critics all reflect their own historical milieu, and therefore, are interpreting from the perspectives of kinds of Kabbalah to which he could not have had access. In keeping with the occultists of his time, Fehr, writing in 1920, assumes that in addition to the Latin *Kabbala Denudata*, Blake's sources consisted of More's *Conjectura Cabalistica*, Joseph Glanville's *Sadducismus Triumphatus, or a Full and Plain Evidence Concerning Witches* (London, 1681), and Richard Baxter's *The Certainty of the World of Spirits fully Evidenced by the Unquestionable Histories of Apparitions, Witchcrafts, Voices &c.* (London, 1691). While it is true that these works were part of the broader occult movement of the seventeenth century, none reflects the mysticism of the Jews, not even the *Conjectura Cabalistica*. As More explains in his Preface, "That though I call this Interpretation of mine Cabbala, yet I must confesse I received it neither from Man nor Angel. . . . And I know nothing to the contrary, but that I have been so successful as to have light upon the old true Cabbala indeed."

Unlike Fehr, who makes no references to the nascent kabbalistic scholarship of his time, Damon uses Waite's *Doctrine and Literature of the Kabalah* for his 1924 pronouncement, unaware, as Scholem points out, that the book is "unfortunately of little value" (*Major Trends*, p. 400, n. 25); in contrast, White simply turns to Fehr for information. Saurat, using Mathers' *Kabbalah Unveiled*, contradicts his predecessors, but the Frenchman is clearly imbued with the Theosophists' approach and is incapable of distinguishing Kabbalah from the mass of Theosophy, according to Blau.⁴⁶

In 1938, Percival uses everything available to him, but with no indication that he can assess the relative value of his sources. He turns to Louis Ginzberg's historically accurate article in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* for information about *Adam Kadmon* (the kabbalistic Primordial Man);⁴⁷ Christian Ginsburg's early attempt at describing Jewish mysticism; as well as the Theosophical Mathers, and well-intentioned though inaccurate studies of

The Tabula
Showing at one View the Seventy-two Angels bearing the name of God, Shemhamphorah

⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Vehuiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Leuiiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Aniel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Mebahiah
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Jehiel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Pahaliah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Haumiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Poel
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Sitael	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Nelchael	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Rehael	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Nemamaiah
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Elemiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Ieiaiel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Ihiazel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Ieiael
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Mahasiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Melahel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Hahahel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Harahel
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Lelahel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Hahuiiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Michael	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Mizrael
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Akhariah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Nithhaiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Vealiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Umabel
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Cahethel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Haaiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Ielaliah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Iahhel
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Haniel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Ierathel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Saeliah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Annauel
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Aladiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Seehiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Ariel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Mochael
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Lauiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Reiel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Asaliah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Damabiah
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Hahiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Omael	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Mihael	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Menkel
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Ielael	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Leocabel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Vehuel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Eiael
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Mebahel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Vasariah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Daniel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Habuiiah
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Haniel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Iehuiiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Hahariah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Rochel
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Hakamiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Lehahiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Imamiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Ilbamiah
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Leviah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Chavakiah	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Nanael	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Haiiael
⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Caliel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Monadel	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Nithael	⌒	⌒	⌒	⌒	Mevamaiah

10. Barrett. Chart, possibly based on Temurah (the principle of substituting letters for each other according to magical formulae, like the first for the last, the second for the next-to-the-last, etc.). The English names of the angels are recognizable, as are the names of God, in the columns to the left of the angels, but the rest represent magical permutations of letters with hidden meanings.

The Cabala

Table 2: The Right Table of the Commutations.

א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה
ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א
ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב
ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג
ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד
ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה
ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו
ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז
ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח
י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט
כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י
ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ
מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל
נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ
ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ
ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס
פ	צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע
צ	ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ
ק	ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ
ר	ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק
ש	ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר
ה	א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש

11. Barrett. A chart of Temurah in which the Hebrew alphabet is written out both horizontally, from right to left, and vertically, along the right-hand column. Then, the letters of the rest of the chart are filled into their appropriate places to produce a basis for magical permutations.

The Cabala

Fig. A

א	י	ק
ב	כ	ר
ג	ל	ש
ד	מ	ת
ה	נ	ו
ס	פ	צ
ק	ר	ש
ל	מ	נ
ש	ו	צ

Fig. B

רחזכסאנאל

Fig. C

א"ט ט"א

Fig. D

א"י י"א

Fig. E

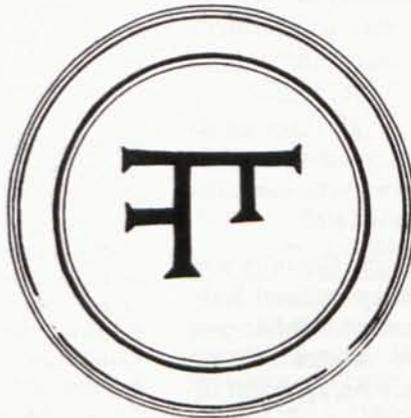


Fig. F The Cabalistic Character of the Spirit Michael as Composed out of the above Tables A B C D

12. Barrett. Figure A depicts an anagram of the Hebrew alphabet in which the twenty-seven characters are presented in a series on threes. Reading from right to left, the first letter of each block traces the progression of the first nine letters, the middle letter of each block, the second nine letters, and the last letter the last nine letters of the alphabet.

Adolph Franck and S. Karppe.⁴⁸ In the "Diffusion," Blau relies on Joshua Abelson's brief article "Swedenborg and the Zohar," written in 1924, to assert that "There exists a strong possibility that those elements in Blake which are Cabalistic may have entered his thought thus indirectly, through Swedenborg."⁴⁹ And James cites no authorities at all.

Hirst, whose approach is similar to Percival's, uses her sources in a comparable manner. While referring to van Helmont's historical impact on Kabbalah, she relies on a mixture of modern scholarship (Scholem, Secret and Blau), and inaccurate texts (Mathers), to draw parallels between Kabbalah and Blake. In contrast, Bloom is fully in line with modern scholarship. Given his background in Judaica and the criticism he has written since 1965, we can assume that Bloom's concept of Kabbalah is historically accurate; however, Blake's could not have been, so there is no point in measuring the poet against what a real kabbalist would have believed.

Damon apparently did not really consider the progress of kabbalistic scholarship in the forty years intervening between his *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* and *Blake Dictionary*, for he simply denies influence while nodding at Saurat, crediting him with a degree of authority in the field. Ironically, while studying all of the other hermetic traditions in great depth, Raine begs the question when it comes to Blake's Kabbalah, attributing it to a local rabbi.

Ansari tends to be cavalier in handling the question of Blake's Kabbalah. In my research, I have been unable to locate any reference to a single of "the innumerable translations of the Zohar" which he asserts "were in vogue in the eighteenth century." And for information about the subject, Ansari relies on two historical surveys of Jewish mysticism—Scholem's *Major Trends* and Müller's *History of Jewish Mysticism*, and two inaccurate translations of the Zohar—Sperling and Simon's and Mathers'.⁵⁰ And Fisch sums up the field by relying on all three kinds of sources available to a twentieth-century scholar: well-intentioned though inaccurate—Damon's *Dictionary*; occultist—Saurat; and historically accurate—Hirst.

As is true with any study of influence, the only way to determine how—or even if—Blake knew or used Kabbalah is to go to his source of information. Unlike any other field, however, in this case we cannot rely on modern scholarship even for rudimentary background information, for the kind of Kabbalah available in eighteenth-century England was far different from that published at any time during the following two hundred years. Even to rely on the historically accurate studies currently available in English is misleading for Blake, who had no access to anything other than the distorted interpretations of the Latin kabbalists; so it is to them, or

English renditions of their works, that we must turn if we wish to determine the extent of kabbalistic influence on Blake.

¹ *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman (1965; newly rev. ed. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1982), pp. 171, 174. Blake's line seems to be a variation or combination of two statements found in William Enfield's *History of Philosophy* (see below): "All souls were produced at once, and pre-existed in Adam"; and "The En-Soph, or Deity, contains all things within himself" (p. 416). Interestingly, neither statement refers to *Adam Kadmon* (primordial man), the kabbalistic figure with whom Albion is usually associated.

² William Blake und die Kabbala," *Englische Studien*, 54 (1920), 139-48.

³ *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* (1924; rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), p. 446.

⁴ *The Mysticism of William Blake* (1927; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), p. 162.

⁵ *Blake and Modern Thought* (1929; rpt. London and New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), pp. 102-103.

⁶ *William Blake's Circle of Destiny* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 1.

⁷ "The Diffusion of the Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in English Literature," *Review of Religion*, 6 (1941-1942), 166.

⁸ *William Blake: The Finger on the Furnace* (New York: Vantage Press, 1956), p. 13.

⁹ *Hidden Riches: Traditional Symbolism from the Renaissance to Blake* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1964), p. 3. Throughout her text, Hirst points out various kabbalistic parallels in Blake's work.

¹⁰ "Commentary" to the Erdman edition, p. 935.

¹¹ *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake* (1965; rpt. Boulder; Shambhala, 1979), p. 215.

¹² *Blake and Tradition*, Bollingen Series XXV.11 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), II.202; Damon, *Dictionary*, p. 215. Raine also refers to Gershom G. Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 3rd ed. (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1954).

¹³ "Blake and the Kabbalah," in *William Blake: Essays for S. Foster Damon*, Alvin H. Rosenfeld, ed. (Providence: Brown University Press, 1969), pp. 199-200.

¹⁴ "William Blake," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971).

¹⁵ In his *Dictionary*, Samuel Johnson glosses "Cabal" as "The secret science of the Hebrew rabbins"; "A body of men united in some close design"; and "Intrigue"; a "Cabalist" being "One skilled in the traditions of the Hebrews," but "Caballistical" or "Cabbalistical" meaning "Something that has an occult meaning." Similarly, in defining "Cabbala," the *OED* blurs the distinction between "The name given in post-biblical Hebrew to the oral tradition handed down from Moses to the Rabbis of the Mishnah and the Talmud," and "the pretended tradition of the mystical interpretation of the Old Testament"; and "An unwritten tradition" and "Mystery, secret or esoteric doctrine or art." The best general studies of Kabbalah are those of Gershom Scholem, primarily: *Major Trends* and *Kabbalah* (New York: Quadrangle, 1974), a compilation of all material on Kabbalah, by Scholem and others, in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. An earlier study, though not as comprehensive as the studies of Scholem, is Ernst Müller's *The History of Jewish Mysticism*, tr. Maurice Simon, East and West Library (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1946).

13-16. Very often, Kabbalah became the inspiration for original drawings, barely related to the Jewish origins. Here are some purely imaginative heads found in Barrett, presumably inspired by kabbalistic reading.

Fallen Angels' Notes

A. Druver



Apollon



Spheres of Iniquity

¹⁶ The oft-cited parable in the Talmud (Hag 14b) used to discourage mystical pursuits concerns "Four men [who] entered the 'Garden,' namely Ben 'Azzai and Ben Zoma, Aher [Lit., 'another,' by which term Elisha b. Abuyah is referred to after his apostasy], and R. Akiba said to them: When ye arrive at the stones of pure marble, say not, Water, water! For it is said: 'He that speaketh falsehood shall not be established before mine eyes.' [Ps. 101.7] Ben 'Azzai cast a look and died. Of him Scripture says: 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.' [Ps. 116.15] Ben Zoma looked and became demented. Of him Scripture says: 'Hast thou found Honey? Eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.' [Prov. 25.16] Aher mutilated the shoots. [i.e. apostasized]. R. Akiba departed unhurt." Thus, only one in four, and that one of the caliber of the great Rabbi Akiba, is capable of pursuing this dangerous knowledge.

¹⁷ Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, M. Friedländer, tr., 2nd ed. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), p. 41.

¹⁸ See Louis Jacobs, *Jewish Mystical Testimonies*, for examples of extant records of mystical experiences (New York: Schocken Books, 1976).

¹⁹ The only studies of Christian Kabbalah in English are Blau's *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance* (1944; rpt. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1965) and Scholem's section on "The Christian Kabbalah" in *Kabbalah*, pp. 196-201. There are, however, several good sources available in German and French: Ernst Benz, *Die christliche Kabbala: Ein Stiefkind der Theologie* (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1958); François Secret, *Les Kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance* (Paris and The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1964); and most recently, the anthology *Kabbalistes Chrétiens* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1979), which contains a French translation of Scholem's "Zur Geschichte der Anfänge des christlichen Kabbala," originally published in *Essays . . . Leo Baeck* (1954), pp. 158-93. In "Milton and the *Conjectura Cabbalistica*," R.J. Zwi Werblowsky provides a cogent analysis of the distinctions between Jewish and Christian Kabbalah (*Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 18 [1955], 91-94).

²⁰ As cited by Scholem (*Kabbalah*, p. 197).

²¹ *Kabbala Denudata*, 2 vols. (Sulzbach, 1677-84; facs. rpt. Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1974). On von Rosenroth and the *Kabbala Denudata*, see: Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 416-19; and Ernst Benz, "La Kabbale chrétienne en Allemagne, du xvi^e au xviii^e siècle," in *Kabbalistes Chrétiens*, pp. 103-109.

²² More's letter is printed in English, while von Rosenroth's response is in Latin, *Kabbala Denudata*, part 2, pp. 176-77. In the light of More and von Rosenroth's correspondence, as well as, for example, the Christian adaptation of Isaac Luria's "De Revolutionibus Animarum" in the *Denudata*, Scholem's assertion that "there is no justification for the contemporary Jewish claims that the author misrepresented the Kabbalah" (*Kabbalah*, p. 416), is somewhat puzzling.

²³ The *Adumbratio*, not included in the 1974 facsimile of the *Kabbala Denudata*, was translated into French by Gilly de Givry (Paris: Bibliothèque Chacornac, 1899). The sixth chapter of Marjorie Hope Nicolson's *Conway Letters: The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends, 1642-1684*, is devoted to van Helmont (New Haven: Yale University Press, and London: Oxford University Press, 1930, pp. 309-77). In addition, Allison Coudert has published two articles on van Helmont's influence on English Kabbalah: "A Cambridge Platonist's Kabbalist Nightmare," on Henry More's attitude towards van Helmont (*Journal of the History of Ideas*, 36 [1975], 633-52); and "A Quaker-Kabbalist Controversy: George Fox's Reaction to Francis Mercury van Helmont," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 39 (1976), 171-89.

²⁴ *History of the Jews*, tr. Bella Loewy (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1891-92), III.547, 549. To be more

specific, Kabbalah was tolerated among Jews until the seventeenth-century false messiah Sabbatai Sevi converted to Islam, taking with him a large number of Jewish followers (see Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah*, tr. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, Bollingen Series XCIII [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973]). As a result, for the next two centuries, Kabbalah was perceived as a threat to the Jewish community. Influenced by German rationalism, Graetz denigrated the importance of Kabbalah entirely, reducing it to a historical embarrassment.

²⁵ For examples of Mme. Blavatzky's use of Kabbalah, see: "Mysteries of the Kabala," *Isis Unveiled: A Master Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology* (New York: J.W. Bouton, 1877), II.212-50, rpt. in her *Collected Writings* (Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House, 1972); "The Kabala and the Kabalists at the Close of the Nineteenth Century," *Lucifer*, 10 (May 1892), 185-96; rpt. in *Collected Writings*, VII.250-92; and "The Ten Sephiroth," *The Theosophist*, 47 (1925), 383-88, rpt. in *Collected Writings*, VI.315-21.

²⁶ *Qabalism* (Chicago: Yogi Publication Society, 1925), p. xiii.

²⁷ Although Blake claims in a letter to his brother James (30 January 1803) to "go on Merrily with my Greek & Latin: . . . am now learning my Hebrew" (Erdman edition, p. 727), we have no evidence that he was proficient enough in Latin to tackle this difficult material, and Arnold Cheskin claims that Blake's knowledge of Hebrew was at best rudimentary ("The Echoing Greenhorn: Blake as Hebraist," *Blake*, 12 [1978-79], 178-83).

²⁸ The standard Anglo-Jewish history is Cecil Roth's *History of the Jews in England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964). Todd M. Endelman's *The Jews in Georgian England, 1714-1830: Tradition and Change in a Liberal Society* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), focuses on Anglo-Jewish history in the time of Blake.

²⁹ *The Rabbinate of the Great Synagogue, London, from 1756-1842* (1921; rpt. London: Gregg International Publishers Limited, 1971), p. 94.

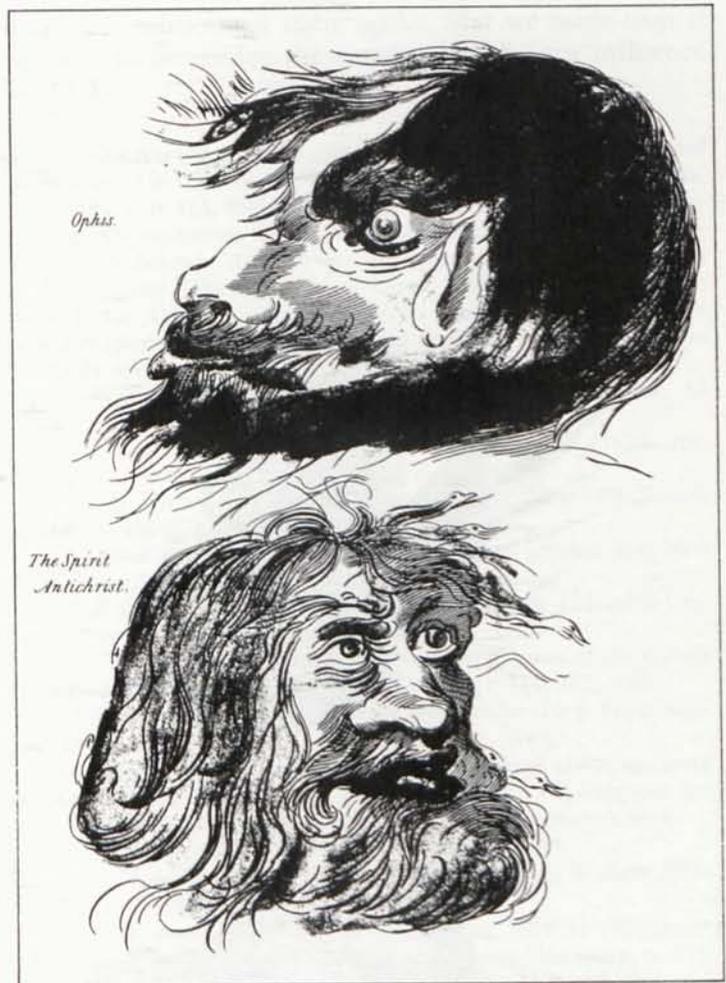
³⁰ Not even Rabbi Solomon Hirschel (1762-1842), who was born in England but raised on the Continent, knew English. Also, we should not overlook the likelihood that even if the rabbis had been able to teach Blake, the non-conforming Christian would probably have scorned their instruction. Chosen because they were scions of eminent families on the Continent, the rabbis were strict constructionists of Jewish law (this was before the age of Reform Judaism) and tried to impose rigorous control over the Jewish community. That London's Great Synagogue was unable to fill the post of chief rabbi for the decade before Rabbi Hirschel assumed office in 1802 was probably as much due to the populace's desire to remain free of such religious constraint as the inability to find a candidate with suitable credentials.

³¹ On Jewish publications in eighteenth and nineteenth century England, see: Cecil Roth, *Magna Bibliotheca Anglo-Judaica: A Bibliographical Guide to Anglo-Jewish History* (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 1937).

³² See Roth's article on Hart in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. It is interesting to note that in the *History of the Jews in England*, Roth omits any references to Hart's kabbalistic work, mentioning only "scientific brochures of high interest" (p. 242).

³³ Cecil Roth, "Samuel Jacob Hayyim Falk," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

³⁴ (1863; rpt. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955), Preface. Originally a lecture delivered to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool, Ginsburg's *Kabbalah* was included in their *Proceedings*, no. 19, appendix (1863); and then reprinted in London by Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green in 1866. Ginsburg's references are to Jacques Basnage's *History of the Jews* (see below); and John Allen's *Modern Judaism* (see below); and John Wesley Etheridge, *Jerusalem and Tiberias: Sora and Cordova: A Survey of the Religious and Scho-*



Ophus.

The Spirit
Antichrist.

lastic Learning of the Jews (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longman, 1856), written too late to have influenced Blake.

³⁵ While this is only a bibliographic study, the literary sources contain illustrations which Blake may have found as interesting as the texts themselves; therefore, I have included a few of the more suggestive.

³⁶ Ben Zion Dinur, "Jacques Christian Basnage," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

³⁷ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, p. 187. An extremely popular treatise, the *Aesch Mezareph* has been reprinted several times: as the fourth volume of W. Wynn Westcott's series, *Collectanea Hermetica* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1894); (New York: Occult Research Press, 1956); and (Mokelumne Hill, Calif.: Health Research, 1974).

³⁸ Zvi Avneri, "Johann Andreas Eisenmenger," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

³⁹ According to Blau, More's "first interest in the Cabala was that of a good Christian; he regarded Cabalism as a fitting instrument for the conversion of both Jews and Pagans" ("Diffusion," p. 159).

⁴⁰ See Scholem's "Scholarship and the Kabbalah," in *Kabbalah*, pp. 201-203.

⁴¹ Jean de Pauly, ed. and tr., *Sepher ha-Zohar (Le Livre de Splendeur) doctrine ésotériques des Hébreux* (Lyon: V. Achard, 1904); posthumous ed. rev. by Émile Lafuma-Giraud (Paris: E. Leroux, 1906-11).

⁴² Not, strictly speaking, a translation of the Zohar, Mathers' *Kabbalah Unveiled* is comprised of the three sections of the Zohar contained in von Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata*: "The Book of Concealed Mystery," "The Greater Holy Assembly" and "The Lesser Holy

Assembly" (1888; rpt. New York: Samuel Weiser, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).

⁴³ For example, in 1957, Dagobert D. Runes used the Mathers translation to illustrate *The Wisdom of the Kabbalah, as Represented by Chapters Taken from the Book Zohar* (New York: Philosophical Library); and in the bilingual edition of 1977, *Idra Zuta Kadisha: The Lesser Holy Assembly*, Zev Zahary uses the Mathers translation to augment the Aramaic original (New York: Sage Books, Inc.).

⁴⁴ For a study of Scholem's approach to Jewish history, see David Biale's *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979).

⁴⁵ The earliest bibliography of Kabbalah is Scholem's *Bibliographia Kabbalistica* (Leipzig: W. Drugulin, 1927). Jochanan H.A. Wijnhoven compiled a bibliography of "Medieval Jewish Mysticism" which contains an epilogue on contemporary Jewish mysticism (*Bibliographical Essays in Medieval Jewish Studies*, The Study of Judaism, vol. II [New York: Published for the Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'rith by Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1976], pp. 269-330); and I have compiled *Jewish Mysticism: An Annotated Bibliography on the Kabbalah in English* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., forthcoming).

⁴⁶ "Professor Saurat gained his picture of the Cabala from modern occultism—from the Eliphas Levi type of Theosophy which takes all the astrological, Masonic, Rosicrucian, alchemical, and magical strains in European thought and bundles them all together in a package labeled Cabala" ("Diffusion," pp. 163-64).

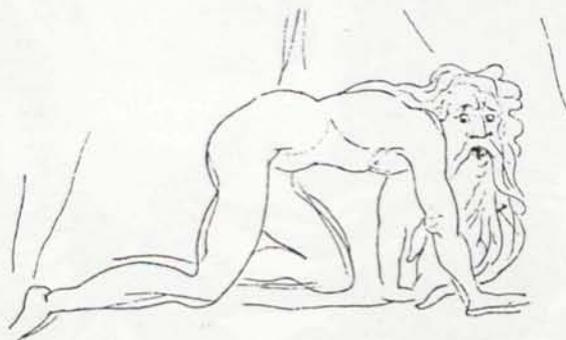
⁴⁷ "Adam Kadmon," *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (1901; new ed. New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1925).

⁴⁸ Adolphe Franck, *La Kabbale; ou, La Philosophie religieuse des Hébreux* (Paris: L. Hachette, 1843); rev. and English tr. I. Sosnitz (New York: Kabbalah Publishing Company, 1926; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1973). A shorter version of the translation, excluding the

notes, was published in 1967 (New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books). Sylv. Karppe, *Étude sur les origines et la nature du Zohar; précédée d'une étude sur l'histoire de la Kabbale* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1901).

⁴⁹ In "Swedenborg and the Zohar," Abelson explains that because it is difficult to separate different strands of mysticism, "it is not to be wondered at that a writer like Swedenborg should betray many an affinity of thought with a book like the Zohar. He may, of course, have been, as were many eminent Christian divines of his day, a student of the Zohar or other Kabbalistic writing. But there is a greater probability that he came to these conclusions as a result of his own independent thought" (*Jewish Chronicle Supplement*, no. 41 [30 May 1924], vii-viii). Blau supplements Abelson with a report from Marguerite Block "that there was a converted Jew who taught the Zohar at the University of Upsala at the time when Swedenborg was in attendance there" ("Diffusion," p. 166, n. 52), to draw his conclusion that Blake may have derived his Kabbalah through Swedenborg. But other than Blau, no one has contradicted Franck's earlier conclusion that "the Church of Swedenborg, or the 'New Jerusalem,' although represented by its adepts as one of the most important forms of Theosophy, can surely not join the Kabbalah simply because it leans upon an esoteric interpretation of sacred books. The results of this interpretation and the personal visions of the Swedish prophet resemble but little, barring a few exceptions, the teachings contained in the Kabbalistic books—the Zohar and the Sefer Yetzirah" (p. xxv).

⁵⁰ The Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon translation of *The Zohar* contains roughly half of the material included in the original (5 vols. [London and New York: Soncino Press, 1933-34]). Scholars universally accept Scholem's comment that "this translation is not always correct but it conveys a clear impression of what the Zohar is. It is to be regretted that too much has been omitted" (*Major Trends*, p. 387, n. 34).



*Heads of Evil
Demons
V.2.*



Theutus

Vesels of Wrath



Asmodeus

The Incubus



Heads of Evil Demons

Powers of Evil

Astaroth



Abaddon



Mammon

MINUTE PARTICULARS

Shaw, Tolstoy and Blake's Russian Reputation

Nicholas O. Warner

Among Blake's admirers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one of the most enthusiastic and well-known in his own right was George Bernard Shaw. Throughout the prefaces to his plays, Shaw mentions Blake in the company of other Shavian heroes such as Voltaire, Gibbon, Butler, Nietzsche and Wilde. It is not surprising, then, though nonetheless intriguing, that Blake's name should find its way into a letter from Shaw to one of his living heroes, Leo Tolstoy. Responding to Shaw's gift of a copy of *Man and Superman*, Tolstoy had taken issue with the apparent flippancy of Shaw's religious attitudes; in February 1910, Shaw sent Tolstoy a copy of his new play, *The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet*, along with a letter in which he answers Tolstoy's rebuke, using a famous line from Blake's most famous poem to illustrate his own views: ". . . we are compelled by the theory of God's already achieved perfection to make Him a devil as well as a god, because of the existence of evil. The god of love, if omnipotent and omniscient, must be the god of cancer and epilepsy as well. The great English poet William Blake concludes his poem 'The Tiger' with the question: Did he who made the lamb make thee?"¹ In a comment obviously related to his interest in "The Tyger," Shaw concludes his letter by asking, "Suppose the world were only one of God's jokes, would you work any the less to make it a good joke instead of a bad one?" (*Letters*, p. 902).

Archly thanking Shaw for his "witty letter," Tolstoy, who read and wrote English well, indicated that he was neither amused nor impressed by Shaw's argument. Regarding the point Shaw makes with the quotation from Blake, Tolstoy writes: "I cannot agree with what you call your theology. You enter into controversy with that in which no thinking person of our time believes or can believe—with a God-creator; and yet you seem yourself to recognize a God who has got definite aims comprehensible to you" (*Letters*, p. 902). No direct comment by Tolstoy on Blake is contained in his reply to Shaw, or in the diary entry (15 April) where Tolstoy mentions receipt of Shaw's play and letter. On the envelope in which the Shaw material arrived, Tolstoy simply scrawled, "Intelligent stupidities from Shaw" (*Letters*, p. 902).

We do not know whether Tolstoy had heard of Blake before receiving Shaw's letter. As G. E. Bentley, Jr. has pointed out, Blake was the subject of a Russian journal article as early as 1834;² however, the references to Blake in nineteenth-century Russia, as throughout the rest of Europe, were few and far between. It is possible, though, that Konstantin Bal'mont, the symbolist poet who first translated Blake's verse into Russian, may have mentioned the English poet on one of his visits to Tolstoy's estate at Yasnaya Polyana. If he had, then Tolstoy would have been exposed to a Blake significantly sentimentalized and distorted along Russian symbolist-decadent lines. This is the Blake who appears in the Bal'mont translations and in one of Bal'mont's own belletristic books, as well as in an article by Z. A. Vengerova, "William Blake: The Forefather of English Symbolism," that was published first in a well-known literary journal and later as a chapter in Vengerova's book on English poetry.³

Given Blake's miniscule reputation outside England at this time, it is worth noting that a writer like Tolstoy would have even heard of Blake, albeit at third hand. Still, Blake's name for Tolstoy, during the last months of his life, doubtless remained a mere footnote to Shaw's letter, the name of yet another dupe, along with Shaw himself, in the God-creator controversy.

Leo Tolstoy died in 1910, only a few months after exchanging letters with Shaw. Yet had he miraculously lived another half-century, Tolstoy could have observed the curious development of Blake's image in Russian criticism, from a quasi-symbolist eccentric to a bourgeois mystic to a great revolutionary spokesman for the struggling proletariat of eighteenth-century England. Earlier Soviet treatments of Blake, based mostly on Ellis and Yeats and Gilchrist, describe him as an original but "petty bourgeois" writer of small gifts, capable of being appreciated only by a similar "mystically oriented bourgeois" like Swinburne (*Literaturnaya Entsiklopediya [Literary Encyclopedia]*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Kommunisticheskoi Akademii, 1929, vol. 1, p. 521). This attitude persisted as late as the 1950 edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, where the brief entry on Blake states that "Blake's work is marked by an inconsistency peculiar to this petty-bourgeois poet" (*Velikaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatel'stvo, 1950, vol. 5, pp. 292-93). As early as 1945, however, M. N. Gutner, apparently the first Soviet critic to recognize the distance between Blake's thought and a bourgeois mentality, petty or not, had emphasized the political radicalism of Blake's work.⁴ Yet it was not until 1957, when a spate of articles and notices appeared commemorating the bicentenary of Blake's birth, that the general Soviet view of Blake changed. Partly as a result of Gutner's work, but more because of the serious attention given Blake in the late 50s and early 60s by E. A. Nekrasova and Anna Elistratova,⁵ Blake began to take on

his present status in Soviet criticism as a proto-Hegelian, proto-Marxian, proto-Leninist revolutionary hero-artist.

In her first book devoted to Blake (the second goes over much the same ground), Nekrasova detects an indirect connection between Blake and communism: Blake was attracted to Godwin's philosophy, and Godwin's philosophy, says Nekrasova, quoting a letter from Engels to Marx, "borders on communism" (p. 71). Nekrasova accuses western critics of covering up Blake's radical sympathies by depicting him as a "harmless mystic" (p. 6), praises Blake for anticipating Hegel's dialectic in his own concept of contraries (p. 12), and claims that the view of Blake as a battler for revolutionary causes, "long ago expressed among us [presumably by Gutner] has begun to be shared by the more progressively inclined foreign scholars of Blake's work—Bronowski, Schorer, Erdman and several others" (p. 15).

In a more broadly based book than Nekrasova's, one that deals with the English Romantic period as a whole, Anna Elistratova echoes the condemnation of western critics for ignoring or playing down the political aspects of Blake's poetry. Speaking not only of Blake but of Byron and Shelley as well, Elistratova writes that the works and lives of these poets, dedicated to "the people's struggle for liberation," have been falsified by much western criticism, "most often by Freudian 'psychoanalysis' or other quasi-scholarly devices" (pp. 11-12). S. Foster Damon, Milton O. Percival and Northrop Frye are among those criticized for obscuring the essence of Blake's message by overemphasizing his religious as opposed to political leanings (pp. 53-67), while such critics as Bronowski, Schorer, Erdman and A. L. Morton receive commendation for their treatment of the revolutionary element in Blake (p. 69).

Among English-speaking authors, as opposed to critics, Elistratova gives special praise to Bernard Shaw for his early appreciation of Blake. Yet while admittedly drawing on Irving Fiske's article on Blake and Shaw,⁶ Elistratova upbraids Fiske for concentrating on the philosophical and religious rather than political ties between these two writers (p. 47ff.). In light of such views, it is ironic that for all of the Soviet political adulation given over the past twenty-five years to Blake, Shaw and also to Tolstoy, the only document linking these three figures is Shaw's letter to Tolstoy, which centers on a distinctly religious issue. Elistratova, incidentally, mentions many of Shaw's references to Blake, but does not cite the letter to Tolstoy.

A jab at western Blakeans similar to those contained in the books of Nekrasova and Elistratova appears in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* of 1950: "Contemporary bourgeois art criticism in the west, extolling Blake's anti-realistic graphics, has declared him to be the forerunner of formalist-decadent art" (vol. 5, p. 203); even the 1962 edition of the *Concise Literary Encyclopedia*, which

praises Blake's work itself, informs us that "Contemporary bourgeois criticism attempts to present Blake as a visionary, a mystic and almost as a precursor of decadence. Progressive English criticism and Soviet and literary scholarship examine the freedom-loving and democratic elements in Blake's work" (*Kratkaya Literaturnaya Entsiklopediya*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatel'stvo "Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya," 1962, vol. 1, p. 640). In all fairness it must be pointed out that more recent Soviet references to western Blake criticism lack the strident tone of some earlier statements; the 1970 edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, for example, does not mention western critics negatively, though it goes further than previous editions in stressing Blake's revolutionary sympathies (see the entry on Blake, vol. 3, p. 416). In its bibliography, however, this entry lists Erdman and A.L. Morton but omits any reference to Frye or Damon!

Apart from the issue of western criticism, one of the most significant signs of Blake's own literary and political respectability in the Soviet Union came in 1965, when the distinguished journal *Novyi Mir* published some of S.I. Marshak's translations of Blake (far superior to the Bal'mont versions), accompanied by an intelligent general preface by one of Soviet Russia's most important critics and literary theorists, Victor Zhirmunski, who had long ago been loosely associated with Russian Formalist circles.⁷ (It was some two-and-a-half years earlier, in November of 1962, that *Novyi Mir* made literary history with the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.) Zhirmunski's preface contains no new information for the Blake scholar, but its restraint in dealing with Blake's politics and its overall balance are notable among Soviet accounts of Blake.

While Soviet Blake criticism seems to be largely introductory and derivative, there are points of value in the work of Gutner, Nekrasova, Elistratova and others. And it is, of course, gratifying to see Blake's reputation improving and at least one aspect of his work, the political, receiving close attention. But one still contemplates with sadness the obvious pressure on Soviet scholars to explain all great pre-revolutionary writers as forerunners of Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Certainly Blake's Soviet reputation has been defined almost entirely in terms of that doctrine—first when he was dismissed as a bourgeois mystical crank (partly a reaction to the symbolist admiration of Blake before 1917), and now when he is glorified as a heroic proletarian writer and artist. Considering the odd history of Blake's image from his own time to the present, it will be interesting to see what further turns it takes, not only in the West but also back in the U.S.S.R.

¹ George Bernard Shaw, *Collected Letters, 1898-1910*, ed. Dan H. Laurence (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1972), p. 901 (referred to as *Letters* in the text).

² G. E. Bentley, Jr., "The Vicissitudes of Vision, the First Account of William Blake in Russian (1834)," *Blake Newsletter*, 4 (1977), 112-14; see also Bentley, "Blake Among the Slavs: A

Checklist," *Blake Newsletter*, 11 (1977), 50-54. Both of these articles have been very helpful to my study of Blake's Russian reputation. (In the present article, all translations are my own.)

³ Konstantin Bal'mont, "Vil'yam Bleik: Praotets Sovremennykh Simvolistov" ["William Blake: Forefather of Contemporary Symbolists"], in his *Gornyye Vershiny* [*Mountain Peaks*] Moscow: Griff, 1904), pp. 43-48; Z. A. Vengerova, "Vil'yam Bleik: Rodonachal'nik Angliiskogo Simvolizma" ["William Blake: Forefather of English Symbolism"], *Sievernii Vestnik*, IX (1896), 81-99, reprinted in Vengerova's *Angliiskie Pisateli XIX Veka* [*English Writers of the 19th Century*] (St. Petersburg: n.p., 1913), n. pag.

⁴ M. N. Gutner, "Blake," in *Istoriya Angliiskoi Literatury* [*A History of English Literature*], 2nd ed. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1945), vol. 1, 613-22.

⁵ Anna Elistratova, *Naslediye Angliiskogo Romantizma i Sovremennost'* [*The Legacy of English Romanticism and the Present*] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1960); E. A. Nekrasova, *William Blake* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1960), and *Tvorchestvo Uil'yama Bleika* [*The Work of William Blake*] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1962).

⁶ Irving Fiske, "Bernard Shaw's Debt to William Blake," *Shavian Tract*, 2 (1951).

⁷ "William Blake v Perevodakh S. Marshaka" ["William Blake in the Translations of S. Marshak"], *Novyi Mir*, 6 (1965), 157-67.

A Note on William Blake and the Druids of Primrose Hill

Dena Taylor

On the second of January, 1810, Charles Lamb wrote to Thomas Manning that "The Persian ambassador is the principal thing talked of now. I sent some people to see him worship the sun on Primrose Hill at half past six in the morning, 28th November; but he did not come, which makes me think the old fire-worshippers are a sect almost extinct in Persia."¹ Lamb was of course merely being mischievous in pretending that the dignified Moslem ambassador was likely to indulge in ancient Zoroastrian rites on—as it happens—the morning of Blake's forty-second birthday. The rather curious thing about Lamb's bit of humor, however, is the fact that he expected the rites to be performed specifically on Primrose Hill, without giving any explanation as to why that particular site was appropriate. The curiosity of the specification becomes greater in light of the fact that Blake too made reference to Primrose Hill as being in some way sacred to the sun. Blake told Crabb Robinson that

["]I have conversed with the—Spiritual Sun—I saw him on Primrose-hill[.] He said 'Do you take me for the Greek Apollo[?]' ["] No['] I said 'that (and Bl pointed to the sky) that is the Greek Apollo—He is Satan [.'"]²

The sun-worshipping Druid religion as "revived" by Stukeley, Henry Rowlands and other eighteenth-century antiquarians was of widespread and active interest in the latter part of that century. In fact, on the wall of the King's Arms Tavern, very close to where Blake lived in Poland Street, there is a plaque inscribed: "In this Old King's Arms Tavern the ANCIENT ORDER OF DRUIDS was revived 28th November 1781." Something about this day seems to have been very attractive to the Druids—some prophetic insight perhaps—for this date was Blake's twenty-fourth birthday.

Primrose Hill is apparently the highest spot in London, and, in addition to the rather dubious distinction of being the spot on which Judge Jeffries of the Popish Plot was found murdered, it was also the site of a Druid procession in 1792, and every year thereafter. The Welsh poet and lexicographer Edward Williams (Iolo Morganwg, 1747-1826) was convinced that the bardic traditions of his native Glamorgan had preserved the true esoteric lore of the Druids. He accordingly devised a ritual called the Gorsedd of Bards, which involved the ceremonious sheathing of a naked sword inside a magic circle of stones. With a small group of fellow Welshmen that included Blake's friend William Owen, he performed this rite on Primrose Hill at the Autumn Equinox of 1792. There are a couple of contemporary references to the meeting. A lengthy account, giving details of the ritual, was published in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 62 (October, 1792), 956:

Saturday, Sept. 22.

This being the day on which the autumnal equinox occurred, some Welsh Bards, resident in London, assembled in congress on Primrose Hill, according to ancient usage, which requires that it should be in the eye of public observation, in the open air, in a conspicuous place, and whilst the sun is above the horizon. The wonted ceremonies were observed. . . . On this occasion the Bards appeared in the insignia of their various orders. The presiding Bards were David Samwell, of the primitive, and claimant of the ovation order; William Owen, of the ovation and primitive orders; Edward Jones, of the ovation, and claimant of the primitive order; and Edward Williams, of the primitive and druidic orders. The Bardic traditions, and several odes, were recited. . . .

Williams himself described the meeting in *The Monthly Register*, 3 (January, 1793), 16-19. In this article of "Biographical Anecdotes of Mr. David Thomas, an eminent Welch Bard," age 26, Williams included a poem, "The Banks of the Menai. An Ode. Inscribed to the Druidical Society of Anglesey. Recited at the Meeting of the Welch Bards on Primrose Hill, September 22d, 1792." Williams also says that "It is not a little remarkable that the order, or hierarchy of the *ancient British Bards* has been continued in regular succession from remotest antiquity down to the present day, without any interruption; for some time, indeed, it has been in a languishing state, but is now recovering apace. . . ." (p. 19). Williams was so successful in aiding the recovery of ailing Druidism that his ritual is performed to this day as

a public ceremony on Primrose Hill every autumn equinox by the spiritual heirs of Williams' small group of Welsh Bards, The Ancient Druid Order/The British Circle of the Universal Bond. One of their pamphlets is entitled *The Ceremony of the Autumn Equinox (Primrose Hill Ceremony)* (London, n.d.).

What is Blake's relation to this ceremony? The Ancient Druid Order itself claims that Blake was their "Chosen Chief" from 1799 until his death³ but, alas, no evidence of this is visible in their literature or elsewhere. Blake apparently did, however, know of the Primrose Hill ceremony, and his words even indicate the possibility that he attended one of the rituals. He may have known Edward Williams, who was a close friend of William Owen. Even if he didn't, the enthusiastic Owen may have interested Blake in seeing a ritual of the original "Patriarchal Religion."

¹ J. Marrs, Jr., ed., *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), III, 36.

² G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 313-14.

³ In a pamphlet history of their order, *The Ancient Druid Order/The British Circle of the Universal Bond* (London, n.d.), p. 19.

The National Gallery & Blake's "Spiritual Form of Pitt Guiding Behemoth"

Raymond Lister

I recently acquired a small group of letters written by George Richmond and Samuel Palmer to William Boxall, director of the National Gallery, concerning the proposed sale of Blake's tempera, "The Spiritual Form of Pitt Guiding Behemoth," then owned by Palmer. They have not, so far as I am aware, been previously published or even recorded.

The idea that the work ought to be acquired by the National Gallery apparently came from Richmond, a close friend of Boxall, who a little later was to suggest that on his own retirement, Richmond should become director of the Gallery, a proposal rejected by Richmond.¹ The first letter is undated, and appears to be a confirmation of a discussion as to the quality and importance of the Blake, perhaps for Boxall to show his committee.

Saturday
10 York St

Dear Boxall,

As I knew Blake and saw his works at his own house this of Pitt among the number I venture to say there is hardly to be found now another picture in such good preservation as this one, and certainly no more characteristic one of his wayward and wild *but true genius*.

That the illustrations of Dante, the Book of Job &c. &c and another of the Songs of Innocence and Experience

should be unrepresented in our national collection seems a *reproach* to us and I cannot but hope and believe that you will have the honour of removing it.

ever affy yrs

G Richmond

The price asked for this picture is Five hundred guineas
G.R.

Richmond's next letter takes the matter a little further, and suggests that Boxall should deal direct with Palmer. The reference in the postscript to a "friendly and most liberal offer" perhaps means that Boxall had suggested that he should buy the work for the Gallery himself, or that he should perhaps make a donation towards its acquisition. This would also explain what is said in the third and fourth paragraphs.

In Palmer's short letter of the same date the picture is offered at the greatly reduced price of 300 guineas. But in his next (undated) letter Richmond raised the price to 350 guineas as he thought 300 guineas were not enough. The short note in Palmer's hand following this was apparently sent with this letter.

10 York St
Portman Sq
July 7 1870

My dear Boxall

As there was no minute made about the Blake, and I had stated to Palmer in writing on your authority that there was one, I felt it my duty to go to Reigate personally, and explain to him.

I also desired him to put himself into communication with you as in your note to me you say "I shall be happy to hear from Palmer as to the price &c". I therefore now leave the matter wholly in his hands.

With regard to a subscription to purchase the picture and present it to the National Gallery I could take no part in that.

I would willingly have given £50 to see the Blake in the National Gallery of England, upon such terms as other great works find entrance there that is by National purchase through the responsible officers, but after it had been submitted to them and refused at the price I put upon it (I am sure you must see upon reflection) that it would be highly impertinent in me to take any part in bringing it again before the Trustees, who if the attempt were made, might finally say, and I hope they would say, "What we have refused as a *purchase* for the Nation we cannot accept as a *gift*."

The picture is either worth buying for the Nat. Gal. or it is not. If I asked too much for it the Possessor may ask less but when I had made the offer of it in the spirit of a publick ^xduty and the offer was rejected my function in the matter was at an end and now, I shall do no more, and try to think no more about it although of course it has distressed me a good deal.

Ever dear Boxall

faithfully yrs

Geo Richmond

*P.S. I quite appreciated your friendly and most liberal offer but should be extremely grieved to see it carried out for I am sure it is not right.

Furze Hill, Red Hill
July 7, '70

My dear Boxall,

Understanding from Mr. Richmond that you wish me to communicate with you as to the price of Blake's Picture of "Pitt guiding Leviathan [*sic*]", I may mention three hundred guineas as the lowest price I should be likely to take. So far as a landscape painter can judge, I think it one of his very finest works.

Believe me to be,

Yours most sincerely,
W. Boxall Esq. R.A. Samuel Palmer

Saturday morning

Dear Boxall

Since I saw you I have not been able to hold up my head and obliged to put off all engagements and hide myself from everybody—my brain such as it is, is quite overdone. but I leave word with Mr Chance to take the Blake and send the description along with it.

The price for such a picture cannot be dear at 350 guineas. I think 300 is too little.

I send a note of Palmers for you to see.

ever affy yrs

G Richmond

Please return Mr Palmers note by Post

[written on a separate sheet by Palmer]

"The spiritual form of Pitt guiding Behemoth"

by William Blake,

signed, & dated 1805.

Quotation from Blake's catalogue of his pictures exhibited 1809. (This picture was No 2 in the catalogue)

"The spiritual form of Pitt guiding Behemoth: he is that angel who, pleased to perform the Almighty's orders, rides on the whirlwind, directing the storms of war. He is ordering the reaper to reap the vine of the earth, and the ploughman to plough up the cities and towers."

See Gilchrist's Life of Blake,

Macmillan, 1863.

Vol 2, page 120

In the last letter of the group, again undated, Richmond laments the unsuccessful outcome of the negotiations.

Half past twelve
Monday night
10 York St

Dear Boxall

I have desired Mr Chance² to fetch away the Blake, and have written to Palmer to tell him what price I put upon it and that the Trustees refused it at that price.

I have done my best both towards the National Collection and to the holder (as I conceive) of a precious, and perhaps unique work and my best efforts for both have failed.

But what I have done does not compromise Palmer in the least as the price I put upon the picture was put upon it, without concert with him, and while I am writing this note, he is wholly ignorant that the picture was sent to the National Gallery at all, for my note to him is not yet posted and you will remember also from the statement in his letter to me, that it was in deference to my earnest wish only, that the picture was ever laid before the Trustees.

so that if you and they desire to see the works of Blake in our National Collection and think this picture of Pitt worthy of that honour

you can treat with Palmer upon the subject as freely as if nothing had transpired between yourself and me.

Of course I can have no more to say to it, and when I have forwarded to Palmer the minute which you kindly offer to send to me, I shall make my bow with the feelings of one who having intended well, has yet utterly failed,

Palmers address is

Mead Vale

Furze Hill

Reigate Surrey

and mine will be bed in 5 minutes for the dinner seemed heavy to me and the air most dreadfully close and hot.

I run away in haste to call at Dr Ogles³ as since Jones told me just before dinner that he was very ill, and I found that he had been in bed since Wednesday and the doctors think him seriously ill

ever dear Boxall

affy yrs

Geo Richmond

The possibility of the National Gallery acquiring "The Spiritual Form of Pitt" was again raised in 1874, as Palmer indicates in a letter to Richmond, written in June of that year.

Should the Right Hon. William Pitt . . . be invited to join the new ministry at Trafalgar Square, we should both be glad, as it would in a manner consolidate Blake's identity in our archives . . . As to the Pitt, I can truly say that I have scarcely thought of pounds, shillings, and pence in connection with it; yet it is the farthest from my thoughts, as a political economist would say, to "pauperize" the British Lion by making him a present of what he might think scarcely worth a wag of his tail if he took it in alms.⁴

Again this came to nothing, and indeed the picture was still in Palmer's possession when he died in 1881. It was inherited by his son A. H. Palmer, on whose behalf it was offered for sale by Christie's on 20 March 1882, but was bought in. At last, later in 1882, it was acquired by the National Gallery, "from the Executors of the late Mr Samuel Palmer, the landscape painter, for £100,"⁵ and in 1931 it was transferred to the Tate Gallery where it remains.

¹ R. Lister, *George Richmond* (London, 1981), pp. 99-100.

² James Henry Chance (1810-?), picture framer, related to Palmer by marriage.

³ Probably John William Ogle (1824-1905), physician and writer on medicine.

⁴ R. Lister, ed., *The Letters of Samuel Palmer* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 896-97.

⁵ I am indebted to Miss Britt Harrison, Research Assistant at the National Gallery, for this information. Cf. M. Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (New Haven and London, 1981), p. 473.



REVIEWS

MORRIS EAVES

William Blake's THEORY OF ART

PRINCETON ESSAYS ON THE ARTS



Morris Eaves. *William Blake's Theory of Art*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982. 216 pp., 3 illus. Cloth, \$18.50; paper, \$8.95.

Reviewed by Hazard Adams

Morris Eaves has taken the familiar triad artist-work-audience as the basis for his study of Blake's theory of art. From this triad (lest some of you are worried), he has managed to produce a fourfold structure, bifurcating his study of Blake's notion of the work into two separate chapters. But wait! We are not out of the forests. Chapter Three (one could make much of this) is subdivided into six parts. It might even be regarded as a sort of Behemoth, being over ninety pages in length.

Not to worry! We discover that this sixfold emanation in its entirety is promptly redeemed in the form of one set of variations on the relation (in Reynolds) and the

identity (in Blake) of content and form. More of that (since there is an immense amount) later.

Eaves limits himself largely to Blake's theory of art (in the sense of all the arts) as it is expressed outside his poems, instead of what might be abstracted from his artistic practice; and to the so-called "direct" statements rather than to what can be abstracted as statements from his poetry. These distinctions are not easy ones to hold to in dealing with Blake, since little in him is "direct" in Eaves's sense, which in any case is a somewhat Reynoldsian sense, I think. I shall, however, pass beyond querying where and how Eaves draws the line, only to remark that he seems to think that the "indirect" poem *Jerusalem* contains all of Blake's theorizing in the form of identity and that the so-called "direct" theorizing is scattered abroad in a lesser or fallen form through letters, annotations, prose pieces, and various fragments. This view is decidedly *not* Reynoldsian, though I suspect that Blake would consider *Jerusalem* direct and the rest some fallen emanation of it—cloudy coloring of *Jerusalem's* lines, perhaps. This might have led Eaves to observe that there must be something fallen about "direct" theorizing and to consider the consequences of this for what he is doing. That does not occur here, though it seems to me that Eaves is on the edge of it and may know that he is.

The reason I make the assumptions above is that Eaves's book actually moves toward and culminates in the famous lines from *Jerusalem* (plate 97:28-40) about the imaginative conversation of the Zoas. The whole book, we suddenly see, is a way of presenting an explication of that passage. This in turn seems to endorse my sense that Eaves knows he is on the edge of having to write an ironic metacommentary. As a result of this, however, there is a large question in my mind as to why there must be a one-paragraph epilogue containing the following sentence, certainly *not* a metacommentary.

The creative moment that Satan cannot corrupt is the expressive moment defined in these pages: the moment in which the artist's imagination expresses itself in clear outline; the moment in which readers find themselves in those outlines; the moment that reveals the potential integrity of artist, artistic work, and audience. (p. 205)

Do I detect a Reynoldsian editor encaverned on Nassau Street, and worried about what is not explicit to idiots, or has the Spectre of strong Eaves gotten in the last word? And how would Blake have liked the very last sentence: "Seen properly, any one of the three can be seen from the perspective of the others; as, in Coleridge's formula, multeity in unity, unity in multeity?" Formula? A Mock! Multeity in unity? Isn't the notion corrupted by all that nonsense having to do with harmony inherited from the silly Greek and Latin slaves of the sword? The Blake-Coleridge connection is too abstract. But I grant Eaves his problem and allow him this slip, after proper chastisement. The critic must always, I am afraid, have a little of the Reynoldsian pedagogy about him, though perhaps

not *in* him. The shape of Eaves's book (except for the lapse of the epilogue) is consistent with its message.

To be frank, I am having a good deal of trouble writing this review because I am in fundamental agreement with Eaves's argument. Eaves has written an excellent, thoughtful book, which performs a synthesis useful to all scholars and students of neoclassicism, romanticism, and the history of criticism, both in the visual and the literary arts. Having to say all this in Eaves's own journal is embarrassing; it ought to be obligatory in such situations to take issue with the author if only to escape accusations of complicity. Therefore, I begin this paragraph again in a deliberately crankier mood, conjured up into a hoar frost and a mildew: I have had a good deal of trouble writing this review because I have found myself vacillating from page to page between "Indeed, that must be so" and "Yes, I know, get on with it." This may only be to say that Eaves leaves no page of Blake (outside the poems) on the subject of art unturned. The two fundamental themes of Eaves's work have to do with (1) Blake's wily bounding line of "rectitude," which contains both an artistic and an ethical principle, and (2) the concept of identity, which begins as a term denoting the integrity of artistic imagination and becomes a term redeeming the relation artist-work-audience. Eaves believes that Blake reestablishes the Enlightenment value of line over color, but on new, romantic grounds. The line is now connected with the idea that art always expresses personal identity. As Blake takes the value of linearity over into romanticism, so does he take over the idea of expression from the Enlightenment idea that expression is the expression of character in a painting to the romantic idea that it is the expression of the artist not just *in* but *as* the work. These points are the principal themes of Eaves's first and second chapters. The third offers six variations on the theme of the identity of form and content in Blake, and the final chapter, which is a repetition of Eaves's well known *PMLA* article of 1980, carries the Blakean notions of identity into the relation of work to audience, thus completing a four-fold unification of the fallen, dispersed trinity.

One of the vexing aspects of the history of Blake criticism has been the lack of common interest, taste, and vocabulary among art and literary critics. Eaves observes rightly that Blake raises issues important in the history of painting and printmaking rather than in the history of literature. This is perhaps stated not quite rightly: the point is that the figurative language of Blake's theory is drawn from the visual arts and their criticism and that literary commentators have not given enough attention to this fact. At the same time, art historians have not paid sufficient attention to the relation of Blake's words to his visual art. Eaves remarks,

A reader coming to Blake from his poetry will have more difficulty figuring out Blake's objections to generalization than someone who thinks of it as Blake did: as a blurred line unable to decide its own

identity. The complication is that Blake, who did not think of his principles as visual rather than literary, applied them to both arts and implicitly to all arts. Because art historians have a clear view of one aspect of the history behind Blake's theory, they have tended to conclude that the theory is simpler than it is. Because literary historians see it in a distorted context, they have tended to conclude that it is more bizarre than it is, or no proper theory at all. . . . (p. 5)

This seems to me an exact assessment of the situation and an excellent reason for Eaves to have written his book.

I add that Blake's work was for a long time caught between a view of him as an outsider in the eighteenth century and one that saw him as an outsider in the early nineteenth. The result was that he was not taught in the academy by specialists in either field. Eaves doesn't mention this, but he makes some interesting observations connected with this now happily distant phenomenon. Eaves points out that Blake's principle of the line repeats Enlightenment glorification of the line over color. In Enlightenment theory the emphasis on drawing and line comes from doubts about the senses. Color is merely a secondary quality of experience. Line is connected with objectivity or primary experience, and it shapes nature according to intellect rather than sense. Blake also glorifies the line, not because it produces a primary imitation of the real, but because it is the projection of an internality, the intellect, but an intellect that unifies experience according to imagination. Nature as primary may have no outline. Imagination is outline. This projective imagination, I might add, is the contrary of the form of art theory that offers us either a subjective, totally internal act or an objective, totally external one—Mallarmé on the one hand; Zola, on the other.

At this point, Eaves makes a shrewd remark that reveals the important difference between Blake and certain other romantic theorists: "While Blake's shift to imagination is characteristically romantic, his opposition of mind and nature is not. . . . the center of authority is imagination, which (to put it simply) finally realizes that the external is a metaphor invented by the imagination itself . . ." (p. 32). This is an immensely important point. It might have been approached somewhat differently by a more rigorous examination of just how Blake uses the words "nature" and "imagination" in his writings. Eaves's important notion of the external as a metaphor suggests that with Blake we might profit from starting with his words when we discuss him and thereby avoid misunderstandings that arise when we seem to be positing meanings that we think the word "nature" *ought* to have in Coleridge, Wordsworth, Blake, and others. The notion of the projection of externality in a word suggests a theory of fictions, not in the sense of a falsity but in the sense of a creation. It is everywhere in Blake, not least in his creation of the emanation. Projection, as I have described it, allows Eaves to make the claim for art as personal identity, and that connects with the identification of the line as the true emanation of imagination.

I wish that Eaves had explored the word "identity" a little more for its richness and paradoxicality. Identity is at least twofold, and I think Blake would have insisted on the identity of its twofoldness. "Identity" means, of course, self-identity; but it also suggests identity with other things: sameness and difference at once, which is the true contrary to the negation difference/indifference. Eaves is very good on the idea of self-identity, but doesn't do much of anything with the side of the term I would call "identity," though he edges up to it by claiming Blake thinks metaphorically. At the end of the first chapter, Eaves leaves undeveloped the important point, ". . . making a line signals readiness for relation [identity?], and the result is the opening of a line of communication" (p. 44). This isn't quite what I have in mind, but it is close, and matters become closer as the book proceeds.

In the title of Eaves's second chapter "Works: Artists Expressing Themselves as Works of Art," we see all at once the important Blakean idea that the projective power of imagination puts one into one's words, leaving for the critic only an historical husk in the form of an anti-author to query about intention. Expression for Blake has moved from the periphery of enlightenment theory, where it does not refer to the artist but to what is expressed *as* the work. This chapter weaves a neat opposition between Blake and Reynolds on this point, claiming for Blake the "only truly unmediated vision in English romanticism" (p. 55)—a large claim to be made about any poet today, but one I am willing to accept, with certain reservations, as a fair means by which to contrast Blake with Wordsworth and Coleridge. It might make sense, however, to say that in Blake's long poems a sort of mediation is performed by the fallen world, the stubborn structure of the language, under the hammer of Blake-Los. In the end, though, the consolidation of this error is consumed by a world of pure conversation behind which there need be nothing. There is some careful argument by Eaves in this chapter, contrasting Coleridge and Blake on the creative process: "The difference," he says, "can be measured by the extent to which Blake's arguments overwhelm descriptions of process with identities" (p. 56). But there are times when the connections Eaves makes are too easy, as in his brief comment on "negative capability" or his willingness to equate "organic" as used by Coleridge and the German romantics with Blake's "physiognomic." He should be more sensitive to the differences here, particularly since he claims we must pay attention to the figurative character of theoretical discourse. Again here it would be better to work outward from Blake's use of certain words rather than inward from somewhere else.

These have been for the most part quibbling remarks. One readership for this book ought to be the historians and critics of the visual arts, who need to escape the criticism Eaves makes of Reynolds:

Reynolds' suspicion of any style that appears characteristic makes it no surprise to find Gainsborough's style compared to the language of a person who doesn't know what he is saying as he tries to communicate the impression of an energetic mind. But the most remarkable feature of the description lies in the implication that Gainsborough cannot know the language he speaks because others do not know it. This is of course an extreme and unconscious Enlightenment parody of the oracular knowledge that the oracle may deliver but cannot understand. The resulting vision of one who speaks, then steps outside oneself to learn one's own language with a group, then presumably translates oneself for oneself into the language of the community, is a stunning indicator of one of the limits of Enlightenment comprehension. (p. 75)

Concluding Chapter Two, Eaves remarks that Blake's idea of originality lies in the originality (identity) of the human personality "expressed in works of art that perfectly unite conception and execution" (p. 77). It is interesting to notice that a century later Yeats completes the movement that begins with the romantic wrenching of the term "character" and opposes the older notion of character to "personality." This is further carried out in his primary/antithetical distinction. Character is imposed from without; personality emanates from within.

The third chapter considers the identity of conception and execution mentioned in the quotation above. This is, as I have said, a very long chapter—almost half the book—and like Wordsworth we are never quite certain whether we have passed the summit. Early on, Eaves reminds us again that Blake's vocabulary is conservative Enlightenment and his position radical romantic. The chapter is a thorough investigation of ideas surrounding the following two statements of Blake taken as one: "Execution is only the result of invention" and "Invention depends altogether upon execution or organization." Eaves claims that Blake's assertion of "significance in every letter and mark differs fundamentally from similar assertions associated with various critical schools of this century that want to emphasize the formal and internal properties of the work apart from any notion of the author's intention" (p. 83). Eaves does not name these schools or discuss them so we are left only with the assertion. I believe it is misleading and in some sense perhaps wrongly put. Blake's view doesn't differ so much fundamentally as superficially from, say, Wimsatt and Beardsley on the "intentional fallacy," where their argument is principally the practical one that as critics we can't exhume a dead author and ask the ultimate question, nor if we could ought we to trust the author's answer. They write from a practical critic's perspective. Now, indeed, Blake's insistence on the artist *becoming* his work and the historical artist as only a husk or elaborate fiction of externality or anti-author can be made to be very close to Wimsatt and Beardsley's position, though a different perspective.

There are parts of this chapter that could have been compressed if Eaves were to have queried certain words Blake uses as words. What is really contained in Blake's use of "essence" and "accident"? Why does Blake deliberately

insist on *his* meanings for these words and not Reynolds'. Does this behavior distort our sense of Reynolds' intent? What is involved in their respective uses of "genius"? Are they talking about the same thing? But in general Eaves is on target. Blake sees Reynolds degrading the individual in favor of the community of taste, which for Blake gives a false meaning to the word "genius." What is a false meaning? How does one find the true meaning? Or is it, as Stanley Fish has implied, all a matter of power? Some previous critics have defended Reynolds because they say he is writing to audiences of students at different stages and that this rhetorical situation brings an air of pedagogic practicality into Reynolds' discourse that Blake pays no respect to. Eaves's answer here is that Reynolds' principles lend themselves to the sort of pedagogy that Reynolds indulges in and that is the trouble. True enough, and in this sense it is surely correct to say that Blake was fair to meet the argument where he does. But whether Blake was not something of his own enemy in the tenor of his remarks remains a question. Here (fn. p. 95) Eaves becomes more a champion of the resentful and self-pitying Blake than I think he need be.

Eaves's chapter carefully interweaves the idea of the identity of invention and execution with Blake's argument that art is not progressive, that artists may improve within their identities but that *art* does not. He makes the excellent point that Blake's experimental pictures parody the idea of experiment (p. 113) with its connections back to Bacon as the avenue to truth. He invents the term "anti-experiment" for this, as one wishes Blake had allowed Los to invent "anti-system" for the famous speech in *Jerusalem*: "I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's." Eaves shows that for Blake the statement that an artist has not brought something off ought to be corrected to say that the artist produced something trivial. There was no previous thing in the sense of an idea to be brought off. (In this matter Blake is more radical than Croce, who joined intuition and expression, but separated them off from externalization.) Eaves observes that Enlightenment pedagogy can't grasp this example of identity and produces differences, principally those of invention/execution and form/content. Eaves then quotes his co-editor Morton Paley (for him no doubt this was as obligatory as my own carping here) as saying of Blake's view that when form and content are together, works are successful. But Eaves goes on to say that for Blake form and content are always together, and this is what defines art as an activity. It is the nature of the activity to be so. "On Homer's Poetry" is puzzling on this point until one reads it as Blake's complaint that the identity that must be there is obscure to him. (I would have liked to see a full analysis of this work right about here in Eaves's text.)

I believe there is a third term missing from Eaves's discourse. What he calls "identity" is too much like

"indifference." The term "identity" ought to be reserved as a contrary to the negation difference/indifference, in which difference is always going to win out, as do soul over body and good over evil in Blake's fallen history—and as difference indeed does in the discourse of structuralism and post-structuralism. Art holds for identity against this negation, which is necessary to the discourses of the natural sciences and is employed in the social sciences (sometimes to their detriment).

Blake's identity opposes the negation. Needless to say, by the nature of what they do, critics have to separate form and content even as they theoretically claim their identity. They need the tool of irony for this.

Inevitably Eaves comes to discussion of such things as "decorum" and stylistic bowdlerizations. Much fun is had at the expense of Roger De Piles' and Jonathan Richardson's scorecards of artists' abilities in composition, drawing, coloring, and expression respectively. This is difference with a vengeance. Blake's remark is sufficient: "Instead of Following One Great Master . . . follow a Great Many Fools." In connection with stylistic bowdlerization Eaves offers us a marvelous, dreadful example in his reproductions of Blake's "Resurrection of the Dead" and William Bell Scott's "There Shall Be No More Death," based on it. The latter is a travesty of stylistic bowdlerization resulting in an identity of the most inane sort.

Eaves's last chapter is already familiar to romantic period scholars from its *PMLA* appearance. In this new context it accounts for the third part of Eaves's triad. Eaves sees another side to the picture of romantic privacy and suspicion of audience. These things, he rightly claims, were not a necessary product of romantic theories. Indeed, it seems to me, they are a necessary end point for the Enlightenment attitude that makes subject and object differ, leaving the negated subject the only domain of art. The romantics inherited this problem, and some accepted it as truth. Not Blake. For Blake, the issue is whether public tastes will so dominate artists that they will not be able to break out of stifling conventions and give in to outrageous expectations. Blake never philosophically indulged in the negation subject/object except to raise up its contrary. The true opponent, as Eaves rightly sees, is an artificial public and connoisseurship. Eaves contrasts the Enlightenment ideal of logical detachment to the romantic one of empathetic identification and notes that the themes of Blake's illuminated works are: (1) the battle to reintegrate the disintegrating identity of the artist and thus reunite the artist with the work; (2) the struggle to reunite the artist with the audience of art. This may be taking a somewhat special view of what Blake's works are about (separating form and content), but there is no doubt that these themes are abstractable from the works, just as Eaves finds them in Blake's more "direct" statements.

Relation of work to audience raises the old question (said by some to be a red herring) of value judgments and

how they might be expressed. If identification is the appropriate mode of reading, and if it is opposed to logical detachment, then Eaves must believe that Northrop Frye is correct in claiming that *statements* of value judgments are always based on some extra-artistic principle in politics, psychology, or whatever. This similarity to the views of Frye is not the only one in Eaves's book. In the emphasis of the following paragraph, coming at a moment of climactic importance in Eaves's book, the relation to Frye is clear, even though the emphasis at the end sounds, out of context, more Shelleyan than anything else:

In theories that generate a social order from the individual, public is an expression of private, in contrast to a theory like Marxism, in which the true form of the individual is an expression of social need. By defining the individual in terms of imagination, the theory produces a social order of imagination, just as, by defining the individual in terms of economic needs, other theories produce an economic order for "economic man." Under the social contract generated from economic values, individuals are bound one to another by the cash nexus; in the religious and artistic versions the nexus is love or some other strong emotion that conditions all other relationships. (p. 196)

Eaves's view of Blake's theory belongs in the tradition of "symbolic form" criticism with which Frye has strong affinities. The often unrecognized patron saint of that tradition is William Blake. I'm not about to quarrel with this latest expression of that tradition.

Joachim J. Scholz. *Blake and Novalis: A Comparison of Romanticism's High Arguments*. Frankfurt am Main, Bern, Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1978. ["European University Papers," Series XVIII: Comparative Literature, vol. 19]. 397 pp., SFr. 64.00

Reviewed by Detlef W. Dörrbecker

This rather expensive book, reproduced photographically from the corrected typescript, contains Joachim Scholz's Ph.D. thesis, written under the guidance of such literary critics as Victor Turner, Manfred Hoppe, and Edith Hartnett at the University of Chicago. A comparative study may investigate the reception and remodeling of one poet's works in the writings of another author, and this is what all the recent publications on Blake's *Milton* have in common, despite their otherwise differing approaches. Or a comparative study may make a parallel investigation of the formal and iconographical concepts of two or more

poets who were contemporaries of each other, and this is what Scholz attempts in *Blake and Novalis*. (The same subject has been dealt with before in a short essay by Jean Wahl, in Jacques Roos's study of Boehme's and Swedenborg's influence on early romanticism, and, more recently, in the dissertations of Susan Skelton and Amala M. Hanke.)

Joachim J. Scholz might have written a rewarding and competent book on either Novalis or Blake. The strictures hinted at in the following notes come in where he tries to write on both of these poets at the same time. Thus where I disagree with the results of his study I deal with more general problems in methodology which by no means are those of Scholz alone. What makes two poets comparable? Is it their biography?—certainly not as long as we try to take poetry as an independent and peculiar mode of gaining knowledge. Is it their subject matter or their style?—though the emphasis is clearly on the former, Scholz sometimes attempts to work both fields. If, nevertheless, I argue that his book fails where he actually compares the German romantic with the London poet and painter, it is because of a "mechanical parallelization" which takes style and subject matter as only loosely connected, and leaves the level of creative method (which initially unifies the realms of style and content) unexamined. Comparability in literature must have to do with similar workings of the poetic imagination, and the use of comparable methods of molding the material which outward experience supplies must be more important than the arbitrary allusions in any two poets' "high arguments."

Knowing what I knew about the subject matter, the imagery, and the style of Blake's and Novalis' major works, I could not imagine that an attempt to compare (for example) the *Hymnen an die Nacht* with the nine "Nächte" of *Vala* would lead to any remarkable new insights. Now, having read Scholz's study, I still cannot see that the actual contrasts in both poetical structure and imagery are outweighed by the rather abstract similarities in content which are brought forward by the author. In addition—and arguing from the stance provided by Blake's own aesthetics—I doubt that there is much critical value in a method which is based on the division or separation of the minute particulars of form from the meaning of a work of art. They then are conceived of in terms of "abstract philosophy," and only as such do they become "intermeasurable" with each other. And yet "Art & Science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars / And not in generalizing Demonstrations of the Rational Power" (*Jerusalem* 55:62-63). Even though the latter tendency is perpetually lurking behind the pages of this book, Scholz's work may still serve as an example of both the advantages and the dangers of the comparative method. In his finest moments the author actually succeeds in elucidating one poet's work by confronting it with the other's, and one might argue that, in the end, it

is of secondary importance whether this aim has been achieved by a clarification of the similarities or—though involuntarily—by a presentation of the disparities between the poems under discussion.

The book opens not with the "comparison of romanticism's high arguments," but with an introductory chapter comparing first the outlines of Blake's and Novalis' biographies, and then the reception of their respective works during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The contrasts, of course, prevail in the lives of the two poets (pp. 1-2). Carlyle's essay on Novalis and Crabb Robinson's article on Blake have something in common and prepare the ground for the first yoking together of the two poets in 1830 (pp. 2-4). Scholz's attacks on the nineteenth-century view of the lives of Novalis and Blake as "more inspiring than [their] poems or paintings" and on the attitude by which "character is saved at the expense of . . . art" (p. 5) are of course fully justified; and yet this similarity in the reception of the two poets' *vitae* does not necessarily imply any peculiar similarity in their poetry. Scholz seems to forget that the interdependent phenomena of "biographism" and the later concept of *l'art pour l'art* dominated aesthetics in the second half of the nineteenth century not just where Blake and Novalis were concerned; in fact, these concerns gained ascendancy in almost every field of historical research during that period.

The argument of this chapter and, in consequence, of the whole book is hampered by another misunderstanding similarly produced by the author's need to establish a parallel between Novalis' and Blake's poetical works. Since Scholz takes no notice of William Blake's activities as a pictorial artist (see pp. 19-20)—a procedure which might seem legitimate in a *literature* study—a mistaken picture of "comparatively brief . . . times of insight and creativity" in Blake's long artistic career evolves. According to Scholz the development of "Novalis' thought and poetry . . . that occurred over just five short years" otherwise could not have been "compared with an artistic career that spanned more than forty years" (p. 16). The "non-creative" years in Blake's life, i.e., all those apart from "the years from 1789 to 1795 and the years from 1802 to 1804" (p. 16), were in fact taken up by the creation of some of the most important prints and paintings ever to be produced by an English artist, and by the creation of Blake's major epics, *Vala*, *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. (The distinction made by Scholz between the "conception" and the "time-consuming execution" of these works [p. 16] is not only utterly un-Blakean, but contradictory to the bibliographical evidence gained from proofs and finished copies of the illuminated books.)

Serving as Scholz's model is S. Foster Damon's essay on "Blake and Milton" (in *The Divine Vision*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto [London: Victor Gollancz, 1957], pp. 91-96), which provides him with a "methodological ex-

emplar" by "juxtaposing representative works for each given stage" in the development of the two poets' oeuvres. This "developmental comparison," though less "succinct or smooth [than] a thematic approach," "should be rewarded by an increasing ability to elucidate the problems and solutions of one poet through the problems and solutions of the other" (p. 18). That Scholz actually had to combine the chronological with the thematic reading in order to reach his aim is quite evident from his chapter headings ("The Discovery of the Poetic Genius," "Visions of Romantic Politics," "The Encyclopedic Imagination and Its Myth," etc.), as well as from the programmatic contention that "both poets started out from a similar problem: man's divided existence in a divisive and contradictory world" (p. 18), a problem which became a theme for both Novalis and Blake that serves as the starting point for Scholz's detailed analyses. In his third chapter the author discusses the concepts of the poetic genius in Novalis and Blake, and then goes on to deal with their view of "a political utopia," of an "all-encompassing system of creative references" and of "a tradition of visionary progress," of "Romantic criticism [and] the ethical foundation of all creative advancement," and finally of the "poetry of life in which all of us can be poets and all poets are heroes" (all quotations from p. 19).

The achievement of both Blake and Novalis, as seen by Scholz, at the same time becomes the "message" of his analysis: "Blake and Novalis reached a synthesis of such apparent incompatibilities as desire and fulfillment, vision and action, imagination and reality, poet and hero, aesthetics and ethics" (p. 19). "It is certainly wrong to confuse poetry with life; they are quite obviously different. Still, they are also related: poetry not only telling us about life but holding out to us, in the very practice of the poetic process, a crucial pattern, an imaginative figure which, if only writ large, will lead to a creative conduct beyond words" (p. 381). This "mission" (p. 382) of poetry then constitutes the basic similarity between Novalis and Blake. I do not want to enlarge upon my doubts in respect to this assumed ideology, yet I must question the underlying assumption that any such general statement might describe what is related in the work of two specific poets. Scholz is arguing here on a level of "philosophical" abstraction which to me appears to be in closer contact with a bastardized version of modern German aesthetic theories than with the minute particulars of the works from which he says he extracted these thoughts. (Benjamin, Adorno, Marcuse et al. in one sense all started out from a critical reevaluation of nineteenth-century aesthetics; in their conclusions, however, they remained much more careful than Scholz and well aware of the dialectics of such an ideology.) This is not to say that I completely disagree with Scholz's positive view of the possible effect of art in post-secularized socie-

ty; on the contrary, I wish I could be as naively optimistic. Still, I ask myself whether or not such a stance can serve as a justification for seeing Blake in a more particular and closer relationship to Hardenberg than, say, to Hölderlin, who shared at least as many "thoughts and concepts" with the British poet-painter as did Novalis. On the other hand we will have to remember that, more or less, Scholz employs the whole system of comparative methodology as a heuristic technique which proves to be legitimate, or disqualifies itself, according to its success. We add to our knowledge most of all by asking new questions; Scholz's study shows that the context of German romanticism's "high arguments" may provide a number of such questions relevant to the study of Blake and vice versa, even though the common denominator of the work of Novalis and Blake appears to be a rather amorphous abstractum.

Interested readers may appreciate the following substitute for the missing index. The body of Scholz's book is devoted to interpretations of Blake's *Poetical Sketches* (pp. 21-24), *An Island in the Moon* (pp. 24-27), *Songs of Innocence* (pp. 27-38), *Tiriell* (pp. 38-39), *The Book of Thel* (pp. 39-41), and the *Songs of Experience* (pp. 41-49), which are compared with Novalis' so-called *Dichterische Jugendarbeiten* (pp. 50-53) and *Fichte-Studien* (pp. 53-72). Next come the *Blüthenstaub* fragments (pp. 84-93), compared with Blake's "Annotations to Lavater" (pp. 95-97), the three *Religion* tracts (pp. 97-103), and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (pp. 103-19). *The French Revolution* (pp. 120-26), *America* (pp. 128-32), *Europe* (pp. 132-37), *Urizen* (pp. 138-42), *Ahania*, *The Book* (and *The Song*) of *Los* (pp. 142-46) are compared with Novalis' political studies of the 1790s (pp. 147-52), his *Blumen* (pp. 153-60), his eulogy on feudalism, entitled *Glauben und Liebe* (pp. 160-68), and the *Politische Aphorismen* (pp. 168-69). This is followed by a comparison of the *Allgemeines Brouillon* (pp. 180-200) with *Vala, or The Four Zoas* (pp. 201-32). *Milton* (pp. 235-66) is discussed as the developmental parallel of *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais* (pp. 268-87), the *Geistliche Lieder* (pp. 287-91), and the *Hymnen an die Nacht* (pp. 292-300). Finally, Novalis' novel fragment *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (pp. 312-38) is put side by side with Blake's epic *Jerusalem* (pp. 339-75).

This inventory of subjects shows that the main corpus of both Novalis' and Blake's writings has been taken into account; it fails, however, to demonstrate how Scholz's comparisons actually work. These are primarily concerned with the imagery of the texts and with the "similar ideas" behind them, seldom ever with structural elements such as diction, syntax, rhythm, and meter (which in most cases would have shown fundamental disparities). If this implied demand for formal analysis sounds rather old-fashioned, it is telling to consider that even on his "elevated" level of discussion Scholz misses some important points. Thus, the basic difference be-

tween Blake and Novalis in both their poetic theory and practice goes unobserved. For the German, the romanticization of the world—Blake's "this world"—in a sense remains an "artige[r] Kunstgriff" [a pretty artifice] and does *not* mean "much more than a game"; for Hardenberg, it is the "schwärmerische Dichter" [the enraptured poet] himself who actively supplies the finite with an "unendliche[n] Schein" [the semblance of infinity] (pp. 90-91; italics mine), whereas Blake the poet-etcher, "by printing in the infernal method," claims to display the *reality*, not merely a *semblance* of "the infinite which was hid" (MHH 14). Thus, Blake is clearly denying the *Scheincharakter* of art. There are, however, examples of similar imagery by Novalis and Blake in Scholz's book which admittedly are rather breathtaking. Thus Novalis' draft for the ending of his *Ofterdingen* finds a mirror image in the last lines of *Jerusalem*:

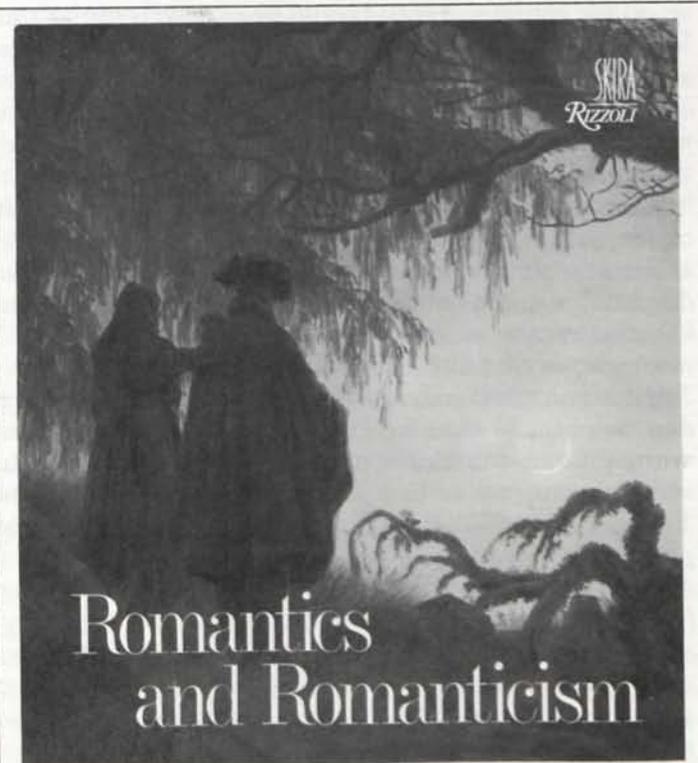
Sketching the end of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Novalis had written: 'Menschen, Tiere, Pflanzen, Steine und Gestirne, Flammen, Töne, Farben müssen hinten zusammen, wie Eine Familie oder Gesellsch[af]t, wie Ein Geschlecht handeln und sprechen.' [Men, animals, plants, stones, and stars, flames, sounds, colors all must be linked together at the end, act and speak like One family or society, like One race]. . . . Blake, who had never heard of his young German companion in vision, fulfilled the promise as he let *Jerusalem* conclude with just such an end in Albion: 'All Human Forms identified, even Tree, Metal, Earth & Stone: all / Human Forms identified, living, going forth & returning wearied / Into the Planetary lives of Years, Months, Days & Hours; reposing, / And then Awaking into his Bosom in the Life of Immortality.' (pp. 374-375)

In his notes, Scholz frequently provides a secondary or *meta* level of arguments concerned with methodological discussions of both modern Novalis and Blake scholarship (see, e.g., pp. 119n1, 121n1, 244-45n2, 376-87 and *passim*). The apparatus here not only serves to demonstrate that the author is well versed in the scholarly literature on his subject, but at the same time provides the reader with a valuable commentary on other critics' approaches.

I strongly agree with Scholz's belief that criticism cannot do without value judgments, even though these are necessarily subject to ideological prejudices (see Scholz's chapter of "Conclusions"). On the other hand, Scholz himself tends to develop his criteria in what appears to me to be a rather arbitrary procedure. He does not start out from the task as faced by each poet under certain historical conditions (which themselves need interpretation) and its counterpart in our own present-day attitude towards the relevance of the poet's problem and its "solution"; rather, Scholz works from a perspective that is offered by the critic's own evaluation of the *other* poet's work, which by chance he believes to offer the correct correlative. To me, at least, it is neither self-evident, nor following from my appreciation of Novalis' aphorisms that Blake's *Marriage* has to be considered a "failure," filled with "not particularly successful" allegories which, in addition, are to be understood as offering a reactionary apology for "the managers, the exploiters of the human

mind," and thus forming an "ominous anticlimax" (pp. 115-16)! Since for me there *is* a qualitative difference between the satiric mocker and the satirized mocked, I cannot follow Scholz's logic when he states that Blake's "Memorable Fancies" as a whole do not differ "from Swedenborg's predestinarian theology" (p. 117). If this critique of Blake's concept of contraries in the *Marriage* is to be justified by reference to his later doctrine of the forgiveness of sins (which of course is an anti-doctrinal idea), Scholz would not only violate his "developmental approach," but at the very same time misinterpret both ideas: error has to be cast out, not less so in *Jerusalem* than in Blake's early works such as *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. "Blake, for one," as Scholz himself states, "did not hesitate about where he wanted to belong" (p. 119). Similarly, Blake's prophetic books of the Lambeth period hardly provide the criteria to evaluate Novalis' *Glauben und Liebe*. Written under widely different political and social conditions, the respective "vision of romantic politics" had to be as different, and we ought to be careful not to reproach poets with the historical situation which to a certain extent determines their production.

It may well be that other readers of this book will find all the shortcomings I have tried to point out rather irrelevant when *compared* with the many interesting and erudite interpretations the book certainly contains. Yet, as Scholz himself puts it in a passage related to Novalis' fragments, the "quest towards truth demands an endless progression in which every step has to be exceeded and every gain has to remain a mere approximation" (p. 90). This review, then, is simply intended to supply the Blakean contrary which is necessary for such a progression. "Reflection must sooner or later begin to stagnate because it relates 'nur unter dem Gleichen' . . . ; poetry can progress because it relates what is unlike and unlikely. Only from such unlikely marriages, such incongruous crossbreeding, can we expect any new and promising offspring" (p. 92). Though (or because?) Novalis and Blake remain an unlikely marriage, this last quotation may well legitimate the procedure chosen by Joachim J. Scholz. He has written a provocative book, well worth the attention of any literary critic dealing with the international phenomenon of romanticism and its "high arguments."



Michel Le Bris. *Romantics and Romanticism*, trans. by Barbara Bray and Bernard C. Swift. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1981. 224 pp., 214 illus. \$85.00.

Reviewed by Dennis M. Read

This is a book divided against itself. On the one hand, it is a richly illustrated coffee table book, with nearly half its 214 reproductions in full color and all of them printed on heavy paper stock. It is a book that practically dictates a certain ambience: the coffee table, certainly, along with the warm glow of logs burning in a fireplace, a magnum of Perrier-Jouët chilling in an ice bucket, and a tray of caviar and toast. A man and a woman, each with champagne glass in hand, bend over the Rizzoli *Romantics and Romanticism*, slowly turning the pages and admiring the paintings. "Ah, yes," the woman says languorously to the man. "We saw that one in the Rouen Musée des Beaux-Arts in 1978." She turns her head to look deep into his eyes. "Do you remember?"

They have a lavish selection of reproductions to linger over. Included in the volume are works of artists from Germany (Carstens, Friedrich, Pforr, Runge, Schnorr von Carolsfeld, Schwind), France (Boulangier, Daumier, David, Delacroix, Fragonard, Géricault, Gros, Ingres, Millet), Spain (Goya), and England (Blake, Calvert, Constable, Flaxman, Fuseli, Linnell, Martin, Palmer, Turner, Wright of Derby). Practically every page

contains at least one reproduction, with the layout of the book divided rather evenly between pictures and text. From this standpoint the volume delivers a great deal: numerous and large reproductions of paintings, drawings, and engravings in rich color or vivid black and white and in sharp detail.

On the other hand, the text of the book seems to cry out against this luxurious production and the opulent society it was made for. The text is a manifesto calling upon readers to resist all forms of institutional oppression and to discover the absolute sovereignty of the individual through the transfiguring power of language. Such a manifesto seems better suited to a pamphlet, or to the newsprint pages of an ephemeral paperback, illustrated with blurred black-and-white photos of demonstrators marching against the state. In fact, the author of the text, Michel Le Bris, is accustomed to such a format for most of his previous publications. Three of them, *Occitanie: Volem viure! (Nous voulons vivre!)*, *Les fous du Larzac*, and *La revolte du Midi*, published in 1974 and succeeding years, are part of a series called *Le France Sauvage*, directed by Le Bris, along with Jean-Pierre Le Dantec and Jean-Paul Sartre. Each of these three volumes deals with specific contemporary incidents involving the French government's suppression of an indigenous population and the resistance of that population—a resistance that, Le Bris asserts, has its origins in the French Resistance of World War II.

The thumbnail biography of Le Bris on the book-jacket of *Romantics and Romanticism* describes him as a participant in the 1968 student riots, a founder of the *Magazine Litteraire*, a past editor of *Jazz Hot*, and co-collaborator (with Sartre) on the journals *La Cause du Peuple* and *J'Accuse*. He currently contributes regularly to the *Nouvel Observateur*. Early in *Romantics and Romanticism* Le Bris refers to his two most recent books, *The Man with the Wind at His Heels* (1977) and *The Lost Paradise* (1981), in which he discourses broadly on his version of romantic anarchy. Le Bris is more a fiery Orc than a faithkeeping Los.

Le Bris defines romanticism as "not so much a structured movement with an explicit programme as an insight, an impulse; . . . perhaps merely a dream of an as yet unknown form of thought which it is incumbent upon us of the twentieth century to discover" (p. 56). If Le Bris refuses to interpret the subject matter and treatment of various poems, novels, and paintings as forming a coherent and consistent pattern within a historical period, he nevertheless confines his discussion to British and European painters and writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, therefore establishing *de facto* a romantic period. Still, Le Bris is intent on identifying within this group a certain imaginative act which transcends time and place, history and geography, rather than describing certain philosophic, stylistic, and

ideological characteristics which a number of artists happened, more or less, to share. In order to make that imaginative act more evident, Le Bris intends first to establish "an area of liberty where the unprejudiced mind and eye may appreciate the amazing growth and profusion of art in the Romantic age and after" (p. 194).

Le Bris conceives of the romantic ideal as a mediating realm in which symbols and images supply new meanings and form a new reality. This realm is essential to any aspiration for freedom because it not only defines a perfect state of thought and action but also provides a fixed point from which all mundane experience can be measured. Transcendent knowledge is impossible otherwise. Human history, for instance, according to Le Bris, "has no meaning without a point of reference outside history from which to measure it; without a metahistory or dimension of eternity" (p. 68). The artist who produces such a "metahistory" is a prophet, "not because he foresees the future but because he discloses the unseen" (p. 175).

In the opinion of Le Bris, two artists best disclose the unseen. The first is Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840), whom Le Bris calls the finest artist of German romanticism. Le Bris finds in Friedrich's *Monk by the Sea* (1809–10) "nothing less than a break in the course of Western painting, the sudden rising of a new continent, a shift in the very meaning of art" (p. 77). In this and other paintings Friedrich discloses a sense of both isolation and communion through one or several figures standing in a stark or barren landscape (often a seashore) and staring away from the viewer at a crescent moon or cloud-filled sky. Friedrich's achievement is in fulfilling a dual truth of aesthetics and eschatology; in Le Bris's words, "beauty is always the manifestation of the infinite in the finite: *theophany*" (p. 85). More than a dozen of Friedrich's paintings of this kind are reproduced in *Romantics and Romanticism*, including a detail of *A Man and Woman Contemplating the Moon* (1830–40) on the bookjacket. But Le Bris believes Friedrich "brought romanticism to fruition" when he "led the symbol back to the very simple test of the face, in the sudden concerted appearance of the Law and of love . . ." (p. 90).

The second artist is Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), who found that the painted line, according to Le Bris, "identifies, localizes, represents. . . . The outlines, together with what may be called the non-colours of the palette, white, grey, and black, therefore function in painting as the 'bearers of allegory,' the conveyors of those meanings which always refer the work back to a discourse outside the work itself" (p. 184). Delacroix, however, fell short of the achievement of Friedrich, for he disregarded "the transcendental dimension of the symbol and its character as an epiphany, as an ultimate, *intransitive* sign . . . [H]e failed to realize, because still too much a man of the world, that his salvation lay, not in contending with this dualism [of matter and extension], but in distinguishing between its elements and *symbolizing*

them in terms of a third mediating world where the meaning of *Presence* would emerge clearly" (p. 186). Delacroix, in other words, is a failed romantic, in spite of the possibilities his own art discloses.

At the other extreme of romanticism are the Don Juans, those figures whose insatiable hunger for a certain knowledge condemned them to wander the world their whole lives, strangers to every person and in every place. One such figure is Byron, who became in the public view "a rebellious satanic aristocrat, a fated hero who died for Greece" (p. 131). Another is Napoleon, who represented "both freedom and terror, both fate and willpower, under the sign of Satan" (p. 131). A third is Turner, whose paintings extol "the delights of catastrophe" (p. 113) and who was incapable of painting the human face, "the very place where the symbolic is revealed . . ." (p. 188). Turner's "pictures of nothing—and very like" (Hazlitt's phrase) are, in the view of Le Bris, "absolute anti-romanticism" (p. 188). Each of these figures isolated himself from the rest of humanity, assuming "an independent, individual State, owing allegiance to no one, acknowledging only the fact of his own future death . . ." (p. 130). In disavowing the existence of a World-Soul, they embraced an unyielding cynicism.

Le Bris finds a special place for Blake in his pantheon of romantics, devoting six pages to his "search for an inner Jerusalem" in a chapter titled "In the Beginning was the Word" and including six Blake reproductions: *Jerusalem* pls. 25 and 35, *Elohim Creating Adam*, *The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Sun*, the Dante *Circle of the Lustful*, and the Job "When the Morning Stars Sang Together." Blake, as opposed to the romantic Don Juans, did not reject society but rather was rejected by society. This fate makes Blake "probably a unique example of a man of genius who was almost unusable by English society, and therefore doomed to the most terrible loneliness" (p. 66).

This and other general statements about Blake are made in the right spirit, even if they are hyperbolic. More troubling within Le Bris's six-page discussion are the numerous factual errors: *Poetical Sketches* "remained unsold." (In fact, Blake never attempted to sell copies of the volume.) *The French Revolution* was printed and published in 1791. (It actually advanced no further than printer's proofs.) Leigh Hunt wrote the *Examiner* review of the 1809 Public Exhibition. (The true author was his brother, Robert Hunt.) At the time of Blake's death, Tatham was "a recent convert to a sect that regarded Blake as the devil incarnate." (On the contrary, Tatham wrote of Blake, "the serpent had no share in his nature.") Swinburne's critical study of Blake did more to establish Blake's modern reputation than any other work. (In fact, the public reception was so dismal that Swinburne called the volume "the most unlucky and despised of all my brain-children.") Bowlahoola is a mythical figure. (It is in

Blake's mythological structure the inward body of stomach, heart, and lungs.) This extensive list is eclipsed only by Le Bris's statement later in the volume that "In 1836, together with Thoreau and Walt Whitman, Emerson founded the Transcendental Club" (p. 172), a non-existent meeting establishing a non-existent society nearly twenty years before Emerson wrote his famous letter greeting Whitman at the beginning of a great career.

The problem, of course, is that Le Bris is not an authority on his subject, however passionately he writes about it. He therefore misstates information, perhaps without realizing it. He also maintains silent reliance on unidentified or only vaguely identified authorities. His chapter on "The East of the Imagination," for instance, is deeply indebted to Raymond Schwab's *La Renaissance orientale*, a work Le Bris never mentions. The other chapters are similarly derivative of other unnamed sources.

For Le Bris, these criticisms would be simply the carplings of scholars, the "frosty custodians of defunct signs" (p. 93), or of linguists, who "are always failed writers" (p. 193). What matters to him is whether his discussion radicalizes his audience. On the last page of his text Le Bris quotes from a letter sent to him by Maurice Clavel, the leader of the French Resistance who liberated Chartres cathedral from the Nazis and presented it to De Gaulle and who was a leading figure in the 1968 student riots. The source of the statement is more important than the statement itself. Politics is all. Art history and literary history are important primarily in teaching political lessons. Art of the twentieth century, Le Bris claims, has "proceeded to exterminate the Subject, swamping it in the flux of Becoming, dissolving it into 'fields of intensity,' shattering it in the lyrical explosion of matter—exterminating and shattering to less spectacular effect no doubt than Hitler, Mussolini, Lenin and Stalin, but they have been moving in the same direction" (p. 194). Clearly Le Bris is not addressing cognoscenti of the fine arts but rather "those readers who hold, with Thomas Jefferson, that 'a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing' . . ." (p. 9).

But are those readers the sort who spend eighty-five dollars on a coffee-table book? More likely Le Bris's readers are closer to the champagne-sipping couple. And their interests lie elsewhere than the text. "This is a quite beautiful book," the man says, closing its cover and turning to the woman. "Shall we order the *Impressionists and Impressionism* volume?"



James D. Boulger

The Calvinist Temper in English Poetry

Mouton

James D. Boulger. *The Calvinist Temper in English Poetry*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1980. xii + 498 pp.

Reviewed by Dennis M. Welch

This book is unconvincing and overwritten; its argument is often biased, unclear and inaccurate, based more on rhetorical assertion and repetition than on solid evidence. Boulger seeks to establish a Calvinist-Puritan tradition in poets like Spenser, Marvell, Milton, Blake, and Wordsworth. This tradition, he says, has too often been neglected, misunderstood, and even despised; but for him it presents "a world view which is at once religious, wholesome, sane, and a high form of Christian contemplation."

This enthusiasm undoubtedly prompted Boulger to introduce his book with eight background chapters dealing with such Calvinist beliefs as the primacy of conscience, the power and majesty of God in relation to human depravity, and the cycle of salvation: election, vocation,

justification, sanctification, and glorification. Very little of what the author says about these doctrines is new, most of them having already been dealt with by authorities like John T. McNeill, William Haller, and Perry Miller. Boulger also traces these doctrines in several treatises by such early Puritan divines as Richard Sibbes, William Ames, and John Dodd. But nowhere does *The Calvinist Temper* show that these divines had any direct influence on the poets of their day or thereafter.

When Boulger eventually gets around to discussing the poets themselves, his book is equally disappointing. The Calvinism that it proposes to show in English poetry ends up not being a set of beliefs artistically transformed in terms of the drama of individual souls, but a "temper," as he says, a vague notion ranging anywhere from Christian temperance to versified doctrine (though rarely the latter among major poets). The point here is that Boulger cannot, except perhaps in a figure like John Bunyan, point to a belief or set of beliefs and say that Calvinism or Puritanism is *the* source. For example, after quoting some verses from Spenser's *Hymnes* containing words with "Calvinist theological resonances," he must admit that they are also "common to the religious language of other traditions." In addition, the episodes from *The Fairie Queene* that Boulger finds Calvinistic—such as the Cave of Mammon scene and the confrontation between the Red Cross Knight and Despair—are as much influenced by medieval and Catholic traditions as by Protestant and Calvinist.

Even when Boulger notes direct references to Calvinist terms, as in *Paradise Lost*, he distorts their meaning. Forgetting Samuel Johnson's observation that Milton's theological views were "at first Calvinistical, and afterwards . . . tended toward Arminianism," Boulger cites passages from *Paradise Lost* on election (e.g., 3.183-97), arguing that the poet believed in Calvinist predestination. But Milton's chapter "On Predestination" in *Christian Doctrine* shows that he did not accept Calvin's doctrine. Sympathetic to Arminianism in the latter part of his career, Milton believed that the Elect are all Christian believers, who have the capacity to choose their salvation. Whether or not a believer decides to respond affirmatively to "prevenient" grace is up to him.

Boulger is clearly mistaken to assert Calvinism in Milton's later work; but if he had focused on the poet's early career he might have found that elements of "At a Vacation Exercise," "Elegy VI," *A Maske*, "Epitaphium Damonis," and "Lycidas" involve the transformation of Calvinist notions into ideas of poetic election and vocation, whose assuring "marks" or "signs" are faith, a firm conscience, and chastity. And just as virtue is reduced to passivity and self-regard in the Calvinist scheme, where the spirit and grace overshadow the elect, so it is with the Lady in *A Maske*. "Despatch'd" for her "defence and guard" and "safe convoy," the Attendant Spirit prompts her: "Come, Lady, while Heaven lends us grace." With

the aid of the Attendant Spirit, sacred haemony, and Sabrina's "precious cure," the Lady is assuredly of the elect ("favour'd of high Jove"), though without knowing it, protected and self-protecting, her life a pure poem and her voice articulating young Milton's highest ideals as a poet.

Perhaps these are the reasons why Blake portrays the Lady as such a static, mystified, and unapproachable figure and why he critiques Milton's concept of poetic vocation as election versus reprobation in the epic *Milton*. To revive the role of the poet-prophet in his epic, Blake has Milton return to time and space, not in self-regarding virtue but in self-annihilation, casting off his dark Puritan robe of election (14:13) and "shewing to the Earth / The Idol Virtues of the Natural Heart" (38:45-46). The pun on the word "Idol" (idle/ideal) is extremely important. But Milton's regenerative action is more than a mere disclosure and rejection of false idols. He unites with Ololon, his emanation, a virgin twelve years old like the Lady, an embodiment of his former ideal of poetry and his idol of chastity, which she too casts off (42:3-7). In their union, poetry and the poet-prophet are redeemed and raised above morality and religion. But Boulger in his Calvinism sees none of this.

And when he discusses other aspects of Blake's career, he sees even less. To try to correct all of his oversights and inaccuracies regarding Blake would require much more space and would give the impression that we

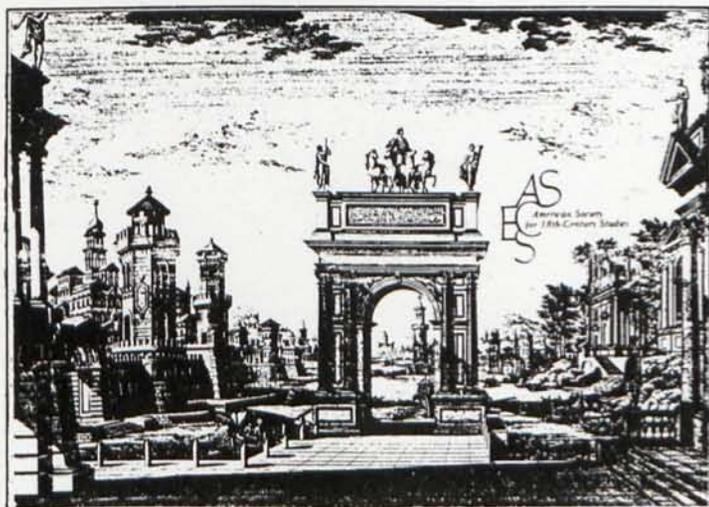
are dealing with the work of serious Blake scholarship. But concerning Boulger's more egregious errors, a few words must be said. Aside from missing Blake's critique of poetic election and vocation in *Milton*, the author asserts mistakenly that "imagination and grace are virtually identical in Blake's final vision, and that there is also a kind of predestination in the mind of the poet . . . which arbitrarily, in good Calvinist fashion, turns . . . *Milton* and *Jerusalem* from despairing facts to affirmative conclusions." Such assertions ignore the humanism in Blake's concept of imagination and the freedom and affirmation in Milton's act of throwing off his "robe of the promise" and in Los's act of searching Albion's "interiors" to find out what sickens and disables him (*J* 44:20-45:9). These acts are not arbitrary "quick fixes" in their respective poems but acts of imagination. Grace has nothing to do with them. Boulger misrepresents Blake's overall career. Simply because the poet was influenced by some Swedenborgian ideas in his early career and by some antinomian attitudes throughout it does not make him any more Calvinist or Puritan than do Boulger's attempts to force grace and predestination on him. "Reformed, rebellious, Puritan Christian Blake" is a fabrication that obscures instead of enlightens our understanding of the poet. Anyone wanting to know how Blake's or any other poet's "relationship with the Calvinist-Puritan tradition was meaningful to his poetry" will not find the answers in *The Calvinist Temper*.



NEWSLETTER

LITERARY THEORY & THE ROMANTIC SELF

Morris Eaves and Michael Fischer of the University of New Mexico will be teaching an NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers on "Literary Theory and the Romantic Self" in the summer of 1984. The course will begin with the seminal dispute between Blake and Reynolds, but it will focus on the importance of romanticism to contemporary critical theory. For information write Eaves or Fischer at the Department of English, Hum 217, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131.



1982-1983 Clifford Prize

The James L. Clifford Prize carries an award of \$300 and goes to the best submitted article appearing in a journal, festschrift, or other serial publication in 1982-1983.

1. The article should not be longer than 7500 words.
2. The winner must be a member of the Society at the time of the award, and the article must have appeared in print between July 1982 and June 1983.
3. The article must be an outstanding study of some aspect of eighteenth-century culture, interesting to any eighteenth-century specialist, regardless of discipline.
4. The article may be nominated by any member of the Society or by its author. Nominations must be accompanied by an offprint or copy of the article and must be received by the ASECS office by February 15, 1984. It would be helpful to the committee if five copies of all articles are submitted with any nominations.

Address Nominations or Enquiries to:

American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies
Richard G. Peterson, Executive Secretary
St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN 55057
Telephone: (507) 663-3488

EDITORS AWEIGH!!

From 16 March 1984 until 28 July 1984, Morton D. Paley will be Fulbright lecturer at the University of Heidelberg, where he will offer a seminar on Blake and courses on Romantic literature and art. Those wishing to correspond with him directly during that period should write to him at the following address:

Anglistisches Seminar
Universität Heidelberg
Kettengasse 12
6900 Heidelberg 1
Federal Republic of Germany

From 14 December 1983 until 1 June 1984 Morris Eaves may be reached directly at:

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