

Blake Newsletter

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Whole #7

December 15, 1968

The *Newsletter* sends Season's Greetings to all its readers, in the hope that we will soon see the fulfillment of the opening lines of "A Prophecy" in Blake's *Europe*:

The deep of winter came;
What time the secret child,
Descended thro' the orient gates of the eternal day:
War ceas'd, & all the troops like shadows fled to their abodes.

* * * * *

NEWS

Mr. Ruthven Todd's essay, "Blake's Dante Plates" has been reprinted, with additions, from *BOOK COLLECTING & LIBRARY MONTHLY* (147 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C. 1). Copies are available from the publisher at 75¢ each.

As readers of the *Newsletter* know, Mr. Todd has been working on a revised edition of *Gilchrist's Life*. We have sent him xeroxes of a number of Blake articles in connection with this, and he proposes to eventually give these, with whatever others are sent to him, to the Preston Blake Library in Westminster. The articles are to be mounted in large folio loose-leaf volumes--over a dozen volumes have been made up already--with an index volume for the set. The advantages of such a collection to Blake scholars working in London are self-evident, and we would like to encourage authors of articles to send xeroxes

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(or two offprints, for mounting) to Mr. Todd. His address is Ca'n Bielo/
Galilea/ Mallorca/ Spain.

One of the articles missed in our last checklist is "Blake and the
Grotesque" by Dennis Douglas, which appeared in *Balcony*, VI (Summer 1967),
9-16. We thank Michael Tolley for sending us a copy (*Balcony* is published
in Australia). And G. E. Bentley, Jr. writes: "The reference in the June
1967 *BNL* to E. J. Rose, "The Circle of the Life of Man," *Connoisseur* CLXI
(January 1966) is a ghost; on this page is merely a photograph of the
Arlington Court picture; it is not connected with an article at all, and
Rose has no article in the journal."

* * * * *

Blake in the Institute

He said himself that he was speaking to future generations, and the fact
is that William Blake is finally being exposed beyond the--to now--somewhat
small circle of friendly Angels to a wider literary public, many of whom have
considered him some kind of excrescence upon the otherwise smoothly cultivated
land of English literary history. One of the most pleasant events in this
progress of exposure occurred at the meeting of The English Institute, September
3rd through September 5th, at Columbia University (where, coincidentally, Orc
is currently being reborn and bound).

Under the careful guiding hand of David Erdman, three papers and a prize
essay were read, each dealing with some aspect of the dramatic vision in Blake's
work. Martha England read a superb piece, speculating upon Blake's debt, in
"An Island in the Moon," to Samuel Foote's dramatic improvisations in the Hay-
market. Her analogies between Blake's methods of characterization, his settings,
his jokes, his songs in "An Island" and the things Foote was doing in his
satirical stage pieces were rather convincing. Irene Taylor presented a meticu-
lous analysis of Blake's illustrations to Gray's "Ode on the Death of a Favourite
Cat," an analysis which attempted to demonstrate how Blake interpreted in visual
terms Gray's satirical allegory. The prize essay, by Robert Simmons, was con-
cerned with *The Book of Urizen*. It was an ingenious attempt to show an in-
credibly formal symmetry in the structure of the book, in which all the elements,
arrangement of stanzas, arrangement and style of illustrations, produce an in-
tricate and literally graphable structure of vision. This was a valuable exer-
cise, important perhaps to those who still think that Blake was some kind of
disorderly thinker of half-baked ideas. But the dangers of such a subjectively
formal analysis may outweigh the advantages: the prospect of abstracting the
Prophecies into geometric forms is not a happy one, even though one might agree
that in a book about Urizen, Blake might well have wanted to parody the very
things Urizen is doing. Mr. Simmons recognized some of the parodic elements
in the work, though he stressed too strongly his notion that in this book Blake
is a "visionary of the comic."

The best event of the proceedings was David Erdman's slide lecture on
America. Despite an intractable projector, he managed to demonstrate the full-
ness, scope, detail, and power of Blake's vision and execution. If there were
any unbelievers left in the audience, Mr. Erdman had to have convinced them of

the extraordinary synthesizing powers of Blake's imagination. The proceedings were properly friendly and informal; the papers served well to indicate the kind of work that is being carried on. But I think one bit of general criticism might be offered: more and more people are studying and writing about Blake, and although exposure of their findings to a wider academic public is beginning, it is only beginning. Would it not be proper, at this stage, for programs such as that at the English Institute to concentrate on Blake's place within the literary and artistic framework in which he was working? In other words, for a general audience of literary scholars and critics, is it not necessary still to establish Blake as a poet and painter among poets and painters and not some kind of sport to whom no one but a small group of enthusiasts need pay much attention? Certainly many of the papers read did take this problem into consideration to some degree. But my general impression was still of one group of the knowing talking to another group of the knowing. To my mind, the paper that did the most toward furthering a general understanding of what Blake was about was one read in another section. In a profoundly suggestive piece on the changing attitudes toward imitation in eighteenth-century English literature, William K. Wimsatt presented both a paean to and a brief analysis of *Poetical Sketches* that, hopefully, left the audience with a feeling that Blake is a creator they'd better come to grips with if they are to understand fully the organism of literary history.

Robert P. Kolker
Columbia University

David V. Erdman adds:

Honorable mentions were awarded to three people: Alicia Ostriker (Rutgers) for "Thomas Wyatt and Henry Surrey: Dissonance and Harmony" (not a Blake paper but by a Blake scholar); W. J. Thomas Mitchell (Ohio State University, Columbus) for "Blake's Composite Art"; and Helen T. McNeil (Hunter) for "Blake's Confidence: A Study of Formal Originality in *The Four Zoas*." Altogether 25 Blake papers were submitted; more than half of them well worthy publication.

MLA: Seminar 55

Blake discussion was so lively at this year's English Institute; so many people seem to be "finding out how" to read Blake's illuminations or to be changing their opinions on the question, I was encouraged to pop the topic into this year's MLA list of scheduled discussion groups (now called "seminars, limited to 35!!). The Annual Meeting program will announce: Seminar 55: Methods of Studying Blake's Illuminated Works and Illustrations, Malmaison 8, Americana (that's a hotel room). When? Like the third morning of the convention: Sunday, 29 December at 8:45 A.M. (to 10). Bring your own grapefruit. Seminar 60 sounds more feasible, at 1:15 P.M.: "Student Rebellions and the Profession of Literature." Same topic?

What shall we do, those of us who manage to reach Malmaison 8 before 10? No papers. No "presentation." But this: Come willing to discuss what goes on in certain puzzling plates--J 99 and J 100; America 4 and 6; Europe, the plate with the cauldron, woman, child. What others? The Arlington Court? I'll put some slides into the projector and be ready to listen.

David V. Erdman
Department of English
SUNY (Stonybrook)

* * * * *

The Gates of Paradise

Scheduled for publication this month: a facsimile reproduction of the complete *Gates of Paradise*, published for the William Blake Trust by the Trianon Press (Chateau de Boissia, Clairvaux, Jura, France).

Volume 1 includes seventeen preliminary sketches from Blake's *Notebook*, reproduced in facsimile by collotype, together with Sir Geoffrey Keynes's introduction, page-by-page explanation and comparative study of all three stages of the work, and a census of every known copy of the two volumes of engravings. In his illuminating text, Sir Geoffrey has outlined the origins of Blake's project from a series of sixty-four drawings in the *Notebook* which are listed and described. From these drawings Blake chose seventeen which he engraved and issued in 1793 entitled *For Children • The Gates of Paradise*. Later, in about 1818, he re-worked all the plates, adding three and issued them under the title *For the Sexes*. Volume 2 of this edition is a facsimile of the *For Children* series made from the Lessing J. Rosenwald copy in the Library of Congress; and contains additional states of an earlier version. Volume 3 is a facsimile of the Huntington Library copy of *For the Sexes*, together with a number of comparative plates from other sources.

The engravings have been reproduced in facsimile by two-tone collotype with the plate mark impressed from hand-bevelled copper plates. The paper is pure rag Arches Vergé. The edition is limited to 700 copies for sale: 50 copies numbered 1 to 50, containing extra plates and material used in printing the book, are bound in full morocco and presented in a cloth slip-case (49 gns.); 650 copies numbered 51 to 700 are bound in cloth and presented in a cloth-covered slip-case (16 gns.).

* * * * *

NOTES

1. William Rossetti's Annotations to Gilchrist's *Life of William Blake*

Martin Butlin

Tate Gallery

Some Blake scholars may not know of the copy of the first, 1863 edition of Gilchrist's *Life of William Blake* containing annotations by William Rossetti. This is now in the Houghton Library, Harvard University, where I examined it in the summer of 1966. It bears William Rossetti's name on the short title-page and also the inscription "Handed over to Olive/W.M.R./Sept. 1908," which presumably refers to his daughter Mrs. Olive Rossetti Agresti.

Most of the annotations were made to William Rossetti's own lists of Blake's works in the second volume. There are some corrections, for instance regarding the duplication of certain works in the 1863 lists. References are inserted to pictures in the sale of George Blamire, deceased, at Christie's on 7th and 9th November 1863 (which included "The Black Madonna" now in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon), and to works in the Aspland and H.A. Bright collections which were unknown to Rossetti when he compiled his lists. Some changes of ownership and two cases of cracked surfaces being repaired are noted and a few dates changed or inserted. Most valuable of all are two references to "Mr. Chase" which, as my colleague Leslie Parris will show in a forthcoming note, help in establishing the identity of a patron who commissioned a number of works from Blake surpassed in importance only by those executed for Thomas Butts and John Linnell.

Rossetti's notes also identify the *Tiriel* drawings, listed as "of uncertain subject" in the 1863 edition, and there are one or two annotations to Gilchrist's text in the first volume. It is difficult to date the notes precisely; indeed, they may have been done over a number of years, as is suggested by the references to both Chase and Aspland alongside the same items. One change of ownership, of List I no. 133 from "Mr. Strange" to "Mr. Scott," gives a terminus ante quem for this annotation of 1876, when William Bell Scott lent the work concerned to the Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition. The references to Mr. Chase were almost certainly done before 1872 when the watercolours were sold anonymously at Sotheby's while those to Aspland must follow this date, when they apply to the works in that sale.

The additional entries, corrections and dates, notes of condition and so on were incorporated in the revised lists included in the 1880 edition of Gilchrist's *Life*. The fresh information about ownership, on the other hand, was not. In fact the revised lists are less informative in this respect than those of 1863, only the works from the collections of Butts and Linnell being so noted. Doubtless William Rossetti found the task of keeping up with the increasingly frequent changes of ownership difficult; the present writer can sympathize.

May I take this opportunity of appealing for help over an untraced catalogue for a sale of works from the Butts collection? This included a number of illustrations to the Apocalypse which appear in Rossetti's list with the note

"Described in the Sale-catalogue as 'very fine'," ". . . 'very powerful and characteristic'," ". . . 'of grand conception and highly characteristic'," and so on. Although I have traced sales from the Butts collection at Sotheby's on the 26th March 1852, and at Foster's on the 29th June 1853 and again on 8th March 1854 (omitting sales later than 1863) none of them includes these works or these descriptions. Nor are they to be found in the Joseph Hogarth sale at Southgate's on 7th to 23rd June 1854 or the anonymous Frederick Tatham sale at Sotheby's on 29th April 1862. Any help in tracing this catalogue will be greatly appreciated.

Some Blake scholars may not know of the copy of the first, 1883 edition of *Christina's Life of William Blake* which was examined by William Rossetti. This is now in the Houghton Library, Harvard University, where I examined it in the summer of 1966. It bears William Rossetti's name on the short title-page and also the inscription "Handed over to Miss Groggery, 1908," which presumably refers to his daughter Mrs. Olive Rossetti Agresti.

Most of the annotations were made to William Rossetti's own lists of Blake's works in the second volume of the edition, for instance regarding the duplication of certain works in lists. References are inserted to pictures in the sale of George Blake, deceased, at Christie's on 7th and 9th November 1863 (which included "The Black Madonna" now in the collection of the University of California, Berkeley).

Blake could very well have seen and read about a tiger in the zoo in the Tower of London. In *An Historical Description of the Tower of London, and its Curiosities* (London, 1768) the anonymous writer refers to three tigers living in the Tower. This work was a popular guidebook published by John Newbery, the bookseller for whom the Newbery Award in children's literature is named.

One of the bookseller's most popular publications, the *Tower*, with its two companion volumes on Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, was reprinted frequently between 1753 and 1774; and the three works were sometimes bound together under one general title. During Blake's apprenticeship with the engraver James Basire, he spent some time sketching the monuments in Westminster Abbey, and he may very well have used Newbery's *Historical Description* to point out the most interesting of these monuments. It is at this time that he might have seen the *Tower*, and, either in the book or at the zoo, he may have been impressed by the tigers. The writer refers to Sir Richard, "a fine young Tyger presented to his Majesty by the Earl of Northumberland," (p. 17) and Miss Jenny, "a Bengal tygress, brought from Madrass by governor Piggot, and presented to his majesty as a great curiosity. She is a most beautiful creature, far exceeding any other in the whole collection." (p. 18) Of the three, however, the writer describes one, Miss Groggery, at considerable length, and that description may shed some light on the contrast between Blake's poem and the illustration which accompanied it:

It is an old maxim, that evil communication corrupts good manners, and as a companion to this adage, we may assert, that good company and kind treatment will tame the most savage animals. We have an instance of this, in the courteous behaviour of Miss Groggery, who is altogether as kind and familiar as her companion [Dunco, a lion], and, though a tygress, discovers no marks of ferocity ---But notwithstanding the polite and friendly behaviour of these beautiful creatures, I would not advise my friends to be too great with them; for, like other couples, they may sometimes happen to be out of temper.

The tyger is in shape not much unlike a cat, only much larger, and when wild is prodigious fierce and ravenous. It lurks in the woods, and seizes its prey by a sudden spring. Men in traversing the woods, are frequently surprized by this animal. Tygers are finely spotted; they are of a yellowish colour, and their spots black; they are very playful, and leap a prodigious height, when they are playing their gambols. (pp. 15-16)

Although the writer does describe tigers as being spotted, it is clear that he is not confusing them with leopards or jaguars, both of which he mentions later in the account of the zoo. This description of Miss Groggery includes almost precisely the contrast between the amiable, almost kittenish tiger of Blake's illustration and the ferocity of the subject of his poem.

3. A Census of Coloured Copies of Young's *Night Thoughts* (1797)

G. E. Bentley, Jr
University of Toronto

The list by W. E. Moss* of coloured copies of Young's *Night Thoughts* (1797) [*Blake Newsletter*, 11, No. 2 (15 Sept 1968), 19-23] may be somewhat amplified, chiefly with facts of their history since his essay was written about 1942.

Mr Martin Butlin tells me that copies of Young's *Night Thoughts* seem to have been coloured in two distinct styles, the first of about 1797, and the second, similar in effect to the coloured copies of Hayley's *Triumphs of Temper* (1803, owned by Mr George Goyder) and *Ballads* (1805, owned by Professor S. Foster Damon), of about 1805. The ascriptions of colouring dates below derive from Mr Butlin.

A Bound for Milnes by J. Leighton in half red-brown morocco, sago-brown cloth sides, with Milnes' crest, "a garb or";* 42.1 x 33 cm;* lacks the "Explanation of the Engravings" leaf.*

- (1) Sold anonymously for Thomas Butts at Sotheby's, 1852 March 26, lot 59 (not described as coloured) [for £2.1s. to R.M.M.];
- (2) Sold by the son of Richard Monckton Milnes, The Earl of Crewe, at Sotheby's, 1903 March 30, lot 13 [for £170 to Edwards];
- (3) Acquired by Algernon Methuen, lent to the National Gallery exhibition (1913), no. 73, and sold posthumously at Sotheby's, 1936 Feb 19, lot 505 [for £580 to Robinson];
- (4) Acquired by A. E. Newton, lent to the Philadelphia Museum exhibition (1939), no. 90, and sold posthumously at Parke-Bernet, 1941 April 16, lot 139 [for \$1,750 to Sessler];

In the Census, an asterisk () indicates that I have not verified information by Col. Moss.

¹Not (according to the British Museum master copy) for £260, as in Moss.

(5) Sold by Sessler's to a client, from whom it was inherited by a
PRIVATE U.S. OWNER.

B Coloured about 1805; bound in contemporary full straight-grain red morocco, with broad gilt borders, red and blue marbled paper fly-leaves, covers damaged with knife-cuts and ink-stains, leaves intact but slightly soiled; * 41.7 x 33 cm.*

(1) Possibly once the property of Richard Edwards;*

(2) Bound in 1910 from a London bookseller by Lt.-Col. W. E. Moss,* lent to the Manchester exhibition (1914), lot 150, and sold at Sotheby's, 1937 March 2, lot 261 [for £800 to Rosenbach];

(3) Acquired by Mr. Lessing J. Rosenwald and given to the LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

C Coloured about 1797; bound in half-leather and canvas, with a pencil(?) signature "W. Blake" at the bottom left corner of p. 7 and "as pattern" at the foot of p. 95; * lacks the "Explanation" leaf.

(1) A 19th(?) century inscription on the flyleaf indicates that it belonged to "Ottomar[?] Findlaw [or Fiedler]/ 360";

(2) Apparently acquired "from a Dresden collector"* by St. Goar, a bookseller of Frankfurt, who sold it in April 1925 to

(3) E. N. Adler,* who in turn sold it in 1940 to Lincolns, Ltd., London;*

(4) Acquired by Dr Fazekas of the Czech Diplomatic Staff, who sold it through a London agent (according to a note with the volume) to

(5) J. H. Lutchter Stark, who gave it to

(6) THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS.

D Coloured about 1797; bound in contemporary brown calf over blue and reddish-yellow marbled boards, rebacked with reddish-brown leather.¹

(1) Sold by Francis Barlow Robinson at Sotheby's, 1884 Feb 19, lot 423 [for £22 to Bennett];

(2) Owned by W. P. Bennett;

(3) Acquired by John Ruskin and sold at Sotheby's, 1930 July 24, lot 109*;

(4) Acquired by John Gribble, who inserted his bookplate and sold it at Parke-Bernet, 1945 April 16, lot 28² [for \$400];

(5) Sold by Paul Francis Webster at Parke-Bernet, 1947 April 28, lot 5;

(6) Acquired by Mrs Gerard B. Lambert, who gave it on 25 Jan 1961 to

(7) PRINCETON UNIVERSITY.

E Bound in half morocco.*

(1) Perhaps this is the copy (in half morocco, uncut, with the "Explanation" leaf) sold anonymously at Christie's, 1887 June 1, lot 256, and

(2) Offered in John Pearson's Catalogue 79 (?1894), lot 154, for £68;

(3) Sold for R. A. Potts at Sotheby's, 1913 Feb 20, lot 64;³

(4) Perhaps this is the copy offered by Francis Edwards in June 1914* and August 1920* for £100;

(5) UNTRACED. (This could be copy C, D, or Q.)

¹ According to Mr Paul R. Wagner, Curator of Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

² Erroneously described as imperfect.

³ Moss is apparently wrong in saying it was (?also) sold by Potts at Sotheby's on 18 June 1912.

F Bound in half brown morocco, sides and flyleaves of the same "frog-spawn" marbled paper.*

- (1) Acquired by Sir John Soane (1753-1837), who added his bookplate and left it to the
- (2) SIR JOHN SOANE MUSEUM, London.

G Bound in half red levant morocco by Riviere, t.e.g.

- (1) Acquired by Thomas Gaisford (1779-1855), who added his bookplate and and with whose library it was sold at Sotheby's, 1890¹ April 23, lot 192;*
- (2) Acquired by Bernard Buchanan Macgeorge, described in his private catalogues (1892, 1906), and sold by him at Sotheby's, 1924 July 1, lot 118 [for £125 to Quaritch];
- (3) Offered by Quaritch in Catalogue 388 (Oct 1924), lot 226 and Catalogue 401 (May 1926), lot 218 for £175;
- (4) UNTRACED.

H Coloured about 1805, perhaps Blake's model; bound in 1901 by Annie S. Macdonald of the Guild of Women Binders, Edinburgh, in undressed morocco* with embossed designs on the upper cover and Blake's head on the lower;* title in-laid.*

- (1) Perhaps acquired by W. Rae Macdonald* (it has a bookplate of "H. M."²) or J. M. Gray;*
- (2) Offered by Tregaskis at an unknown date for £25;
- (3) Offered by Ellis & Elvey in Catalogue 120 for £45;²
- (4) Owned by William Sargent;²
- (5) Sold at Sotheby's, 1908 June 4, lot 734 [for £24 to Stirling];*
- (6) Evidently it passed from Stirling in 1919 to
- (7) THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON.³

I Coloured about 1797; bound in brown morocco, panelled, by F. Bedford;* an inserted leaf of vellum⁴ contains pp. 3-4 and a watercolour drawing (on p. 3) and a proof of Blake's "Satan" after Fuseli was with it.*

- (1) Evidently once owned by "Pearson '86/rsi-:", according to the note on the flyleaf;*
- (2) Sold for T. G. Arthur at Sotheby's, 1914 July 17, lot 848;*
- (3) Bought from G. D. Smith in October 1914 by Henry E. Huntington and bequeathed by him to THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, San Marino, California.

J Coloured about 1797.

- (1) Acquired by Samuel Boddington (fl. 1830), who added his bookplate;
- (2) Acquired by Herschel V. Jones, who added his bookplate and sold it at

¹The Gaisford sale was not on 23 April 1891, as in Moss.

²According to Mr. Butlin.

³Moss does not connect the Stirling copy (H) with the Boston copy (his O).

⁴A copy printed on vellum without the plates was sold by A. G. Dew-Smith at Sotheby's, 1906 June 27-30, lot 587 [for 12s. to Rewin].

⁵See R. R. Wark, "A Minor Blake Conundrum", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, XXI (1957), 83-87.

Anderson Galleries, 1918 Dec 2, lot 186 [to Gabriel Wells] for
(3) W. A. White (according to Mr. Butlin);
(4) Acquired (probably with the rest of White's Blake collection on
1 May 1929) by Mr Lessing J. Rosenwald who gave it to THE LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS.

K Bound in full contemporary green straight-grain morocco, gilt and blind-
tooled, rubbed, the binding very slightly broken; 41.6 x 32.1 cm.*
(1) Acquired by Oliver Henry Perkins, who added his bookplate;
(2) Acquired by G. C. Smith Jr, described in his anonymous private cata-
logue (1927), lot 21, and sold posthumously at Parke-Bernet, 1938
Nov. 2, lot 45 [for \$675];
(3) UNTRACED.

L Coloured about 1805; Miss Belle da Costa Greene (Morgan's Librarian) thought
it may have been previously in a modern calf binding, rather broken at the
joints;* bound about 1919 in New York by Miss M. D. Lahey.*

(1) Perhaps this is the copy (bound in dark blue morocco, g.e., by
Riviere, with an appreciation on the title-page) offered in Ellis &
Elvéy Catalogue 100 (1903);
(2) Acquired by J. Pierpont Morgan, and bequeathed to THE PIERPONT MORGAN
LIBRARY, New York.

M Bound in blue crushed levant morocco, g.e., by Riviere, 41.5 x 32.2 cm;¹
(1) Inscribed at the foot of the title page J. Bingley Garland, August
1870;¹
(2) Another inscription says that it was given by W. A. White in 1903 to
(3) His daughter,¹ who may have lent it anonymously to the Grolier Club
exhibition (1905), no. 41, and who, as Mrs William Emerson, lent it
to the Fogg exhibition (1938),¹ and to the Philadelphia Museum exhibi-
tion (1939), lot 91, and sold it posthumously at Sotheby's, 1958 May
19, lot 6 [for £850 to Fleming];
(4) Acquired by MRS LANDON K. THORNE.

N Brown paper back, marbled boards, uncut (about 42.7 x 33.6 cm);* lacks the
leaves with pp. 45-46, 71-72;* a copy of the Prospectus is laid in.*
(1) Acquired by A. E. Newton, who lent it to the Philadelphia Museum exhibi-
tion (1939), lot 90, and sold it posthumously at Parke-Bernet, 1941
April 16, lot 138 [for \$400 to Sessler*];
(2) Acquired by MR WILMARTH S. LEWIS, of Farmington, Connecticut.

O² (1) The copy, acquired by George John Spencer (1758-1834), Third Earl
Spencer, whose portrait Blake etched in 1813, went with his library in
1892 to
(2) THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY, Manchester.

P Coloured about 1805; bound in old half brown calf, brown-black marbled paper
sides and end-papers, 41.2 cm high.³

¹ According to the 1958 catalogue.
² W. E. Moss described copy H under copies H and O; In order not to leave
a gap in the list, I have inserted the Rylands copy (which Moss did not men-
tion) under O.
³ According to Carolyn E. Jakeman of Houghton Library.

- (1) Perhaps this is the copy (bound in half russia, t.e.g.) sold for Charles Dew of Salisbury at Sotheby's, 1892 June 25, lot 1002;*
- (2) Offered by Quaritch in a letter of 24 May 1900¹ for £42 to
- (3) Miss Amy Lowell, who bought it and bequeathed it to
- (4) HARVARD UNIVERSITY, where it is kept in Houghton Library.

Q Coloured about 1797, perhaps Blake's original; bound in contemporary half calf, the upper cover detached (according to the 1958 catalogue).

- (1) Inscribed "This Copy was coloured for me by Mr Blake/ W. E", perhaps by William Ensom (1796-1832), who made a prize portrait of Blake in 1815, or by William Esdaile (1758-1837) as Sir Geoffrey Keynes and Mr Martin Butlin think;
- (2) An erased inscription, " Milne[?]/ The Rectory/ Farnham[?]", presumably represents another owner;
- (3) Perhaps this is the copy (in original boards, uncut, back defective) sold at Hodgson's, 1914 July 2, lot 528 [for £46 to Dobell*];
- (4) Acquired (for £5?) by a Lady in Geneva, who sold it anonymously at Sotheby's, 1958 March 3, lot 47 [for £680 to Traylen], evidently for Stonehill, who sold it to
- (5) MR PAUL MELLON, with whose collection it will probably go to Yale.

R Coloured about 1797; inscribed in a contemporary hand "This copy colrd by W. Blake";² bound in half calf and marbled boards and marbled endpapers, uncut² (42.5 cm high²), the spine repaired;² two flyleaves at each end are water-marked J WHATMAN 1808.²

- (1) Acquired by John S. Harford, Jr (1785-1866), who added his book-plate;
- (2) It was bought between 1913 and 1915 for the Widener Collection of HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

S Bound for the New York Public Library in maroon buckram.³

- (1) Acquired by Robert Lenox Kennedy,³ after whose death in 1887 it was bought with The Lenox Library by
- (2) THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY; where it is now in the Prints Division.

In case the above list should give the impression that most copies of the *Night Thoughts* (1797) are coloured, it may be worth remarking that there are uncoloured copies in the Ashmolean Museum, the Berg Collection (New York Public Library), Bodley, The British Museum, The British Museum Print Room, GEB, California (University of) at San Diego, Cincinnati Art Museum, Fitzwilliam Museum, Harvard (3 copies), Huntington Library (2 copies), Illinois (University of), Los Angeles County Museum, National Library of Scotland, Newberry Library, New York Public Library (2 copies), New York University, Pforzheimer Library, Princeton University, The Rosenback Foundation, St. David's College (Lampeter, Cardiganshire), Sterling Library (University of London, 2 copies), Syracuse University, Texas (University of, 2 copies), Toronto Public Library, Trinity College (Hartford, Connecticut), Victoria & Albert Museum, Wellesley College, Westminster Public Library, and Yale University (2 copies).

¹ According to Carolyn E. Jakeman of Houghton Library.

² According to Miss Mary C. Johnson, Assistant, Widener Memorial Rooms.

³ According to Miss Elizabeth E. Roth, Prints Division, New York Public Library.

sun, and oddly she requotes the exact lines given in the catalogue (p. 166) of the exhibition, with this exception, that she quotes only part of the passage. The entire passage reads:

The Breath Divine went forth over the morning hills
Albion rose in anger: the wrath of God breaking bright flaming on all sides around
His awful limbs: into the Heavens he walked clothed in flames
Loud thundring, with broad flashes of flaming lightning & pillars
Of fire, speaking the Words of Eternity in Human Forms, in direful
Revolutions of Action & Passion, thro the Four Elements on all sides
Surrounding his awful Members. Thou seest the Sun in heavy clouds
Struggling to rise above the Mountains. in his burning hand
He takes his Bow, then chooses out his arrows of flaming gold
Murmuring the Bowstring breathes with ardor! clouds roll round the
Horns of the wide Bow, loud sounding winds sport on the mountain brows
Compelling Urizen to his Furrow; & Tharmas to his Sheepfold;
And Luvah to his Loom: Urthona he beheld mighty labouring at
His Anvil, in the Great Spectre Los unwearied labouring & weeping
Therefore the Sons of Eden praise Urthonas Spectre in songs
Because he kept the Divine Vision in time of trouble.

In the first few lines Blake is merging his resurrected Albion with an image of the sun. Admittedly, the language is obscure but there is little doubt that it is Albion who is clothed in flames, and it is clear that Albion is suddenly seen as an aggressive vision like the sun. It is Albion still whose bow, arrows, and the winds arising from this source of power over the mountains compel Urizen and the other Zoas to their tasks. The critic is right in seeing this image as the sun, but as so often in Blake there is a conflating of images which suddenly introduces a second level, giving it qualities beyond those possessed in the beginning. The error in methodology is that the critic has not considered the textual passage as a whole but has considered one of its parts in isolation.

After stating that the Yale drawing could only illustrate those italicized lines quoted above, the reviewer goes on to say that this figure could not be Albion in any case since Albion is old with a beard, and that if this were for *Jerusalem*, the character would have to be the youthful Los.

The critic must have forgotten that Blake's very design for plate 95 of *Jerusalem* illustrating the lines quoted above shows the youthful Albion rising out of the earthbound body of the ancient bearded Albion. Albion is at once the earth, England, and universal father. Once again, this is an instance of the conflation of images which is so essential to an understanding of Blake. As a newly awakened, aggressive being, Albion is in fact young, beardless and identified with the sun.

After making these inconclusive points, the critic refutes her own argument by stating that, in any case, the Yale drawing is not right in style for *Jerusalem* (c. 1815-18) but rather dates from the mid-1790's and is probably a preparatory drawing for Young's *Night Thoughts*. The size of the Yale drawing (9 7/8 x 12 5/16 in.) is used as support for this view. The critic concludes that this sheet corresponds to the 11 1/2 in. wide illustrations for Young's *Night Thoughts* and would fit the top of one of its pages nicely.

Oddly enough, it escaped her notice that there are no top of the page illustrations and no one-half page designs at all among Blake's engravings for

Young's *Night Thoughts*. The text is placed off center so that very wide margins on the outside and lower edges remain for figural scenes. Approximately 1/4 of the page is available at the bottom for an illustration and none at all at the top of a page. Moreover, no page of *Night Thoughts* is organized with a central focus as is this design. All the *Night Thoughts* illustrations are eccentric since they are designed for the outside and lower margins. Once again, the critic has made a major error in methodology by isolating one element rather than relating multiple controlling elements.

With this meager support the reviewer finally adduces that the style of the Yale drawing is more appropriate for the illustrations to Young and that it could not possibly be as late as the *Jerusalem* illustrations. I have already pointed out that the Yale drawing is centrally and bilaterally organized in contrast with all of the illustrations to Young. On the other hand, numerous of the *Jerusalem* illustrations are centrally organized. In addition, the use of flames in rhythms across the surface of the page like those in the Yale drawing is a leitmotif of the *Jerusalem* illustrations, and these incendiary arabesques allow the design to interweave with the flowing lines of the text. These flames were heightened with gold applied with a brush and contrasted with deep areas of shadow like that indicated on the left of the sheet at Yale. By contrast, the illustrations to Young are on a completely different spatial plane from the block of text and the text cuts across the illustration at right angles, leaving the figures in space behind. Later Blake unified illustration and text in a fluid linear pattern on the same surface plane, that of the page itself.

The linear surface rhythms of the Yale drawing are fused more completely with the movement of the figure than anything by Blake in the 1790's. The surface design of the *Jerusalem* illustrations in which text and figure are united in a sensitive extension of each other are the bridge to Blake's late style embodied in the *Job* illustrations. In these late works, the use of illusionistic space with traditional perspective devices is almost completely discarded for a richly interwoven surface pattern in which text and figure are fused. Finally, there is a tendency in Blake's drawings of the 1790's to retain the coherence of the silhouette of the figure in a way which is much closer to Flaxman's figural style. By contrast, the Yale drawing shows a fusion of figural movement and surrounding arabesques which is like that of the *Jerusalem* illustrations and Blake's late style.

Let me simply conclude by saying that if new evidence is brought forth to show that the Yale drawing does not illustrate the passage in Blake's text that I have quoted, I shall be more than interested and pleased to accept it. However, the reviewer under discussion has not given such evidence as would set it aside at this time.

Note: With reference to the article mentioned in Mr. Butlin's note (p. 39), "William Blake's Mr. Thomas" by Leslie Parris has now been published in the *Times Literary Supplement* for 5 Dec. 1968, p. 1390.

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In the *Newsletter* for June 1968, page 5, Anne Kostelanetz refers to plate 95 of *Jerusalem* as depicting "not Albion but 'the Sun in heavy clouds'" who "takes his Bow" etc. I wonder if such a reading of the lines does not confuse vehicle and tenor. She cites lines 11-13 without recognizing that these lines ("Thou seest the Sun in heavy clouds / Struggling to rise . . .") begin an epic simile within a larger passage, lines 2-18, in which the subject is Albion as sun. Blake is describing the rising of Albion (pictured on the plate as a strong man rising up amid flamy radiation and with mouth open in commanding utterance): A dawn light of "Breath Divine" comes over the morning hills; as Albion rises "In anger," his wrath (that breath from his mouth) and "the wrath of God breaking bright flaming on all sides around / His awful limbs" become one; by the time he, Albion, walks "into the Heavens . . . clothed in flames / Loud thundring . . . / . . . speaking . . ." with "the Four Elements on all sides" around him, he is visualizable as a sun breathing fire through clouds. At that point we read: "Thou seest the Sun in heavy clouds / Struggling to rise above the Mountains. In his burning hand / He takes his Bow, . . ." If this were not Blake, we would expect and be given an epic simile, a picture of sunrise to put beside the picture of Albion for comparison. But it is Blake, and he not only fails to use "like" or "as," but he quickly incorporates what we might take as simile into the syntax of his main statement. If we forget that it is Albion-as-sun that we are to see, we may indulge in a vision of mere natural sun, personified, "Struggling to rise," taking "his Bow" in "his burning hand" and so on. But we are firmly reminded, at line 16, that it is Albion and his Zoas, not the sun and clouds, that we must be "seeing": "Compelling Urizen . . . Tharmas . . . / And Luvah . . . : Urthona he beheld . . ." Mrs. Kostelanetz takes it that the Sun does the compelling and is not Albion. The poet has tried to tell us that it is Albion uttering the wrath of God, the divine fire, who compels the elemental Zoas to their tasks.

Note, however, that one of the Zoas does not need compelling: "Urthona he beheld mighty labouring." Los was the one of his four elements that did not sleep; Albion's stand-in while Albion lay on the rock. I see that Anne refers in passing to the picture on plate 95 as "the youthful Los," and that figures Los with his youth renewed is of course Albion as bright-flaming utterer of the Breath Divine. Here we have a conundrum comparable to that of Plate 10 of *America*. Jack Grant nags me about the caption under the reproduction of that plate in the Doubleday Blake. When Los is Orc or Orc is Los, which single name do we use? And when Los is Albion or Albion Los, which? Or, to name the naked man in *Jerusalem* 95, can we employ Los's name in Eternity, Urthona? I think not; he is still Albion until he beholds Urthona, whom he then in effect becomes. And it only confuses to call him Los.

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3. Mothers and Methodology (continued from *Newsletter* 6)

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In an earlier statement I argued that the only possible principle for the interpreter of Blake is that every version of Blake's illuminated pages has independent authority.³ That is, if a figure appears to be thus and so in one copy and something else in another we are not justified in adding them up, dividing by two, and then telling the world that the golden mean is what Blake really intended. Blake himself was out of all patience with devotees of the general idea and alternately begged and commanded the reader to attend to "minute particulars." For the man with a different creed, Blake's dictum that only through the minute particulars can virtue or beauty be approached has no authority. Even if, it can be argued, Blake himself tried to live up to his principles, the critic has merely to invoke the Intentional Fallacy in order to obtain a license to take whatever pleases him from what Blake has left us.

It may seem unlikely that anyone would wish to take such an extreme position in public but this is essentially what Professor W. K. Wimsatt said in the Forum II conference, entitled *Literature and the Visual Arts: The Problem of Critical Terms*, at the 1967 MLA Annual Meeting. In a paper entitled "Laokoön Revisited" he declared that the pictures for "The Tyger" and "London" were obviously failures and irrelevant besides. Curiously enough, one of the discussants, Professor Jean Hagstrum, remonstrated with Wimsatt because of his principled indifference to Blake's union of the arts, but Hagstrum was unwilling to challenge Wimsatt's inaccurate description of Blake's picture of the Tyger. To be sure it was not easy for Hagstrum to do so because Wimsatt quoted Hagstrum's book which declares that "the magnificent verbal 'Tyger' is unworthily illustrated by a simpering animal" (p. 86). I found Hagstrum's refusal distressing because in my review of his book I had particularly commented on this point reminding him that the allegation is false--at least as a generalization--and pointing out that it also plays into the hands of dogmatic divorcers of the arts such as Warren and Wellek.⁴ Yet if one tacitly admits such allegations against Blake's design he cannot hope to prevail in arguments on this subject.

While he did not condescend to mention the names of the offending scholars, Wimsatt was very polemical in insisting that attempts to establish contrapuntal relationships between Blake's poems and designs must be ruled out of court. He was willing to tolerate some cases like "Infant Joy" (evidently because of the slightness of the poem) where poem and design are obviously antithetical, but he had no mercy on "London," which seemed to him downright incoherent when judged as a marriage of graphics and poetry. Because of the intransigence with which Wimsatt resists recognizing unequal unions of the arts, it would probably have been impossible to persuade him that the concurrence of poetry and picture in "London" is not fortuitous or inartistic. And in this case, as opposed to "The Tyger," no thorough attempt has been made in print to justify this design. If one chose he could begin such an apologia by combining brief comments in Hirsch's book and in one of my reviews,⁵ but this task remains unattempted. Clearly, however, and this is the immediate point of relationship between the

interpretational problem in "London" and LBI and F, the designs for *Songs* usually contain one or more pictorial elements that have no verbal correlatives in the poems. In a strict sense of the word Blake so rarely attempted literally to illustrate the *Songs*, that is, depict only objects mentioned in the poems without making suggestive additions, that scholars should be vigilant for significant differences even when there is a fairly close correspondence. Until more of these crucial problems in Blakean iconography have been studied, however, anti-Blakean opinions about Blake will doubtless remain current.

Let us consider again the fact, first remarked by Connolly and Levine, that the guide in LBF is often effeminate-looking and sometimes distinctly busty. When it is admitted that the figure in the margin undoubtedly is the mother described in the poem, the adult guide, who is always clothed in white, can be none other than "God ever nigh" who "appeared like his father in white." The interpretational problem, as posed by Connolly and Levine in their original article, was put backward and thus became the source of much confusion; it is not a question of why the mother looks like Christ but why God sometimes looks maternal. That is, what point is made when God is depicted as having feminine attributes, especially when the poem says that he appears as a father? Connolly and Levine can apparently think of nothing more reputable than "vaudeville" where matters of role playing are involved, but all Blake's theology is radically based on the relativity of perception; e.g., "The Vision of Christ that thou dost see / Is my Vision's Greatest Enemy. . . ." Certainly an essential part of Blake's interpretation of the Book of Job is that God looks like Job. It is not culpable pride but the beginning of wisdom to recognize that God "becomes as we are, that we may become as he is."

I do not believe that the further suggestions I shall make here constitute a significant change from what I have written before, but the depiction of God with female attributes does entail more explanation. In my piece, "Recognizing Fathers," I argued essentially that, from the Little Boy's point of view, the father imago presented in every version of the design must be sufficiently credible, just as the poem says it is. But in those copies of the design where the guide is busty, there is undeniably something more to explain. Elsewhere in *Songs of Innocence* God does appear as a paternal shepherd, or as a child, or as a lamb, but God the mother (as distinguished from the Mother of God) is a conception that would not have made Blake's contemporaries feel easy. And of course Blake himself had a profound mistrust of the Female Will, which is expressed over and over in the prophecies and is summed up in the tyranny of Mary, which is depicted in plate 99 of the illustrations to the *Divine Comedy*. Nevertheless Blake would have strenuously resisted the kind of presumptuous superstition which pretends to know that God "is really" either a male or a female.

Keynes puts the matter succinctly in his commentary for the photographic edition of the *Songs* when he declares that "probably [the rescuer] is one of Blake's not infrequent androgynous figures, having both mother and father attributes."⁶ In spite of the impropriety Connolly and Levine warned me would be involved in doing so, I thought it would not be indecent if I troubled to examine the breasts of God, as Blake chose to represent God. After all, Connolly and Levine wouldn't admit the authority of Schiavonetti's busty rendering of Blake's Jesus to which I had referred them. I must report that a quick survey through *William Blake's Illustrations to the Bible* revealed no pictures of either the Father or the Son that are as pendulous as some versions of the guide in LBF. Only in six pictures, nos. 76, Christ Girding Himself (see the reproduction in *The Blake Collection of W. Graham Robertson*, pl. 38); 110, The Third Temptation;

119, The Transfiguration; 122, Christ Blessing the Little Children; 125, The Raising of Lazarus; and 171, Christ the Mediator, does He seem notably effeminate and in all these pictures of His maturity Christ wears a beard. This lack of confirmation does not, however, subvert the specific evidence in LBF. Indeed, though it would be dangerous to attempt this form of argument if there were no other evidence, Blake often tried his daring ideas only once or rarely; precisely because he establishes iconographic norms, striking departures from them are strong evidence of allegorical meaning. Just as it can have been no accident that Blake once painted the "Sick Rose" white rather than Red, so he had a point to make when he painted a Black Madonna (no. 98)⁷ near the end of his life. It is quite probable that he also chose to produce a single indubitably busty guide in LBF because (so to speak) the Diana of Ephesus had been lost sight of at the time.

If we make a serious attempt to interpret LBF as a design in context, both of the *Songs* and of Blake's work as a whole a number of factors not previously considered must be born in mind. Several critics have observed that distinctly paternal roles are disfavored in *Songs of Innocence*, but the designs are not anti-paternal more than twice. So far as pictures are concerned, the masculine leadership role seems to be enacted in *Innocence* in the following plates: 7, 10, 12, 14, 18, 19, 26. To this one might add: 5, 8, 23, and possibly 54, "The Voice of the Ancient Bard," which was at first included in *Innocence*. In plates 12 and 19 the male guide is less authoritative or less human than he seems, but he is a benign presence elsewhere. In pl. 7, the second of "The Echoing Green," the guide is not really in charge because the gift of the grapes of pleasure behind his back unmistakably reveals him to be Mr. Parental Spoilsport, rather than a good guide. In 10 the Good Shepherd or Jesus (who is sometimes depicted as being almost without beard) suffers little children to come unto him--beside the waters (of Life), which are uniquely depicted on the original plate of this design.⁸ In 12 the "Angel with a bright key" has, in late versions, a halo, but no wings. Comparison with the water color drawing "The Woman Taken In Adultery" will show that the liberating "Angel" is almost identical, though reversed, with Jesus in the drawing. The Innocent but benighted Chimney Sweeper did not recognize Jesus when he saw Him, but the reader of Blake will recall the first picture of *Blair's Grave*, entitled "Christ Descending Into the Grave," because there the Savior carries a key in each hand. I referred to this design for Blair in my earlier article on "Recognizing Fathers" (pp. 8-9) because the posture of Christ is very similar to that of the boy's savior in LBF. I shall also mention some other designs related to pl. 14 but must first consider the other three designs in *Innocence* that depict masculine authority. In 18, "The Divine Image," at the bottom, Jesus, who is duly haloed in late copies, evidently raises Adam (who is shown under the flames of wrath in the general title page of the combined anthology, pl. 1) in a gesture that recalls Michelangelo's version of his Creation and anticipates Blake's own later depiction of Jesus in "The Creation of Eve" in the designs for *Paradise Lost*. The same motif occurs, with greater modification, in the second of the two versions of the Genesis frontispiece in the Huntington Library. The beadies regimenting the boys and girls in 19, "Holy Thursday," are, of course, trying to contain the work of Christ the Liberator. Finally, in 26, "A Dream," the glow-worm who impersonates the watchman of the night, is shown in his human form as he redirects the errant mother Emmet.

In Blake's work as a whole it is not inappropriate to ask what happens to the Little Boy who was Found and returned to his Mother by an androgyne who resembles Christ and the Boy's father as he imagined him.⁹ We can say that the

Boy, together with his archetypal sister who is not mentioned in this pair of poems, may be observed in such a tempera painting as "Bathsheba at the Bath" (Tate #22) in company with his mother. But insofar as the Boy and girl are always small they remain in the keeping of the Good Father, as shown in the tempera painting "Christ Blessing Little Children" (Tate #23) where Jesus sits under the same kind of tree depicted in *Innocence* 6, the first plate of "The Ecchoing Green," and in the background of 8, "The Lamb." In this tempera one should notice the river in the background and also observe the motif of the intertwined trees in the left background.¹⁰

This sweet company is delivered to its ultimate destiny in "The River of Life" (Tate #37), a painting which integrates most of the motifs that have been employed in the pictures we have chiefly been concerned with. Here Christ turns his back to us, taking the little boy and the girl by the hand as he swims up the river whose lower reaches were depicted in the other paintings. He has left the keys in the Grave into which he had descended facing the reader (as well as the Mother in LBF) and is departing with the regained children to the source of Life. The mother, who was about to accept the Little Boy Found and who submitted her children for Christ's blessing, here is shown cutting the line that connects them to this world. St. John, who flies out of the sun, points downward, in a posture comparable to that of Jesus in "The Woman Taken in Adultery" and the "Angel" in "The Chimney Sweeper," though adapted to this more complex design. One may also observe, on the right bank of the river, the standing mother holding a child, who also appears in "Christ Blessing" and the second plate of "The Ecchoing Green," and the girl reaching up for the fruit of the Tree of Life, which also supports bunches of grapes such as were handed down by a boy to a girl at the end of the procession in the latter design. She has at last reached the condition unencumbered by prohibitions. Potential naysayers are now on the other side of the River and in any case, they are now studying the Book of Life rather than the holy book of cursing. Music is provided by the Piper depicted in *Innocence* pls. 2, 3, and 27, accompanied by a flutist who is a wingless counterpart of the angel evidently required to "Sound the Flute" in pl. 22 of *Innocence*. The eternal counterpart of this music of "Spring" is provided by the chorus of angels standing on the Sun, having evidently foresworn the happy pipe. Between them putti enact ecstatic reunions such as appear on the title page of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. The joy here, as it were, on the top of Day, is to be contrasted with the sorrow depicted in the lower borders of LBI where (in later copies) the 4 angels stand despondently against the background of a starry night while the wingless creatures trailing ribbons separate from one another. The Little Boy will be Found in the next plate, and perhaps also Saved, but the pictures of *Innocence* contain only a few emblems of such blessedness and ecstasy. The strenuous future is only adumbrated in the world more attractive called the contrary state of Innocence.

³ See John E. Grant, "Tense and the Sense of Blake's 'The Tyger'" (A Controversy), *PMLA* LXXXI (1966), Section III, p. 601.

⁴ In *JAAC* xxiv, No. 1, Pt. 1 (1965), 127. Now that Copy U, which contains the most formidable Tyger I have seen, is publicly more accessible, in the Firestone Library at Princeton (see *Newsletter* 3, pp. 6-7), the existence of an heroic Tyger should be easier to prove.

⁵ *Innocence and Experience: An Introduction to Blake*, (New Haven, 1964), p. 265 and Grant, "The Colors of Prophecy," *The Nation*, CC (January 25, 1965), p. 92.

⁶ Mr. Tolley reminds me that the clearest example of androgyny in *Songs* is the main figure in the tailpiece design, Pl. a, which is reproduced in Wicksteed.

⁷ I have heard it alleged that the negroid coloration in this picture is the accidental result of the deterioration of the tempera. After having studied it quite closely twice I doubt that the allegation is correct. But if there is any evidence of accident having produced design this should be presented where all can read it.

⁸ In contrast with places 4, 7, 8, 20, and 21 where a small strip was added to the plate and the area was painted as water. In later copies of plates 12 and 23 indications of water are added in paint but the plates themselves were not similarly enlarged.

⁹ In Blake's cosmic myth we can also ask how it is that one can get lost in spite of essential innocence. Here the final design of the *Paradise Lost* series, "The Expulsion," is particularly apposite, since the angel Michael is depicted as an androgynous guide who grasps the hands of those adult children, Adam and Eve, and leads them down from freedom. The nadir of human fortunes is represented, it may be added, in the great picture "Pestilence: Death of the First Born," which is also in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. There Michael's Satanic aspect is inflated, as it were, by the four wild horsemen in the background of the "Expulsion" until he has become a giant reptile sowing the tares of disease. Conversely his polite but firm policeman's role in the "Expulsion" is represented by the diminished angel, seen between the Satanic legs, who modestly guards the way out as the Covering Cherub. The sequel to this, in turn, is shown in another great picture, "The Angel Binding the Dragon," which is in the Fogg Museum. The action here occurs in the time of the end when the alliance between Michael and Satan has been broken as a result of the further degeneration of Satan from a smiter with disease into a dragon old. This consolidation of error, brought about by the redemptive action of Christ in history, which I trace in the conclusion of this piece, is nevertheless not sufficient for Michael to free himself entirely by belated positive action. As some critics have previously noted, one coil of the chain is looping Michael's shoulder, presumably because his ages of complicity have taught him some bad habits.

¹⁰ This key symbol in *Songs* also appears on pls. 2, 7, 28 (in some copies), and 36, and in more attenuated forms on pls. 3, 4, and 53 as well as in pls. 5, 8, 9, 18, 20, 24, 27, 28, 34, 36, 38, (41), (43), 51, and 53, where the motif becomes a tree and clinging vine.

[In connection with previous discussion of "The Little Boy Found" in the *Newsletter* (#2, 7-9; #3, 17-18; #6, 29-32), we have an interesting suggestion from Mr. Niels Christian Hertz, who is writing a dissertation on *The Gates of Paradise* at the University of Copenhagen. Mr. Hertz writes "I thought it might be relevant in connection with 'the nightgowned adult' to mention a passage in Rev. i.13 describing 'one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.'"]

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REVIEW

William Blake's *Poetical Sketches*, by John W. Ehrstine.
Washington State University Press (1967); pp. [x] + 108 pp.

It is a pity that the first full-length study of the *Poetical Sketches* to be published since Margaret Ruth Lowery's pioneering work of 1940 should be so little worthy the serious attention of a Blake student. Ehrstine is one of the familiar new breed of academic book-producers, whose business is not scholarship but novel thesis-weaving. Having assimilated certain ideas and critical techniques, they apply them ruthlessly to any work that has hitherto been fortunate enough to escape such attentions. The process is simple and the result--that of book-production--is infallible. If the poor little poems protest while struggling in their Procrustean bed, one covers their noise with bland assertions and continues to mutilate them. Eventually they satisfy one's preconceptions. Unfortunately, they may also impose on other people. In reviewing such books one must blame mainly the publishers and their advisors; secondly the universities for their incredibly lax assessment and training of postgraduate students; thirdly the authors, who are usually dupes of their own processes, for rushing into print without consulting the best scholars in their field.

Ehrstine shows his lack of scholarship on the first two pages of his book; thereafter he has an uphill battle in convincing the reader that he has some special insights which compensate for this, once fashionable, disability. It is perhaps unfortunate that we should come to his most convincing work at the end of the book, as he is there discussing poems which come closest to satisfying his thesis, which is briefly that "the richest understanding of a poem depends on seeing it in the context of Blake's organic thought, in the context of what his vision later led him to". The poems addressed to the seasons are probably among the latest of the *Poetical Sketches* to have been composed; so at least Ehrstine has the best chance with them of seeing the fringes of Blake's later vision. I don't go in for precognition much myself, but even those who do will find it hard to credit the foreshadowings which Ehrstine finds in some of these early poems.

One's first shock is to find Ehrstine quoting Damon uncritically about the verse of Blake's time: "Then, the other versifiers were printing but heroic couplets and sentimental quatrains." We next find him castigating T. S. Eliot for finding that the poems show "immense power of assimilation", being "very eighteenth century" and "successful attempts to do something small". On page 2, also, he shows no knowledge of Coleridge's interest in Blake, and ignores Hewlett as well as Margoliouth's article on "Blake's Mr. Mathew". He also contrives to misspell Crabb Robinson and Northrop Frye. This is not prepossessing.

Ehrstine's understanding of Blake's later vision is mainly through assimilation of Gleckner's work, with an uncritical acceptance of Northrop Frye; he looks forward mainly to the *Songs* and the *Marriage*, but ignores *The French Revolution*, which would sometimes have been more to the point. He groups the *Poetical Sketches* themselves rather arbitrarily by subject and--he thinks--chronologically. This is, of course, somewhat dangerous. It is convenient to consider the "Songs" by themselves; whether or not as "Toppling Innocence", but even Ehrstine has difficulty in keeping "Fair Elenor" within his section headed "Fragments of Politics". One must also be mildly surprised to find "An Imitation of Spenser"

and "Blind-Man's Buff" in a section entitled "The Technique of Politics", with "King Edward the Third" and the prologues. In order to find thematic unity between poems so different, Ehrstine invokes "the technical devices of irony and symbolic allegory". The symbolic allegory is imported from later poems (without any consideration whether the symbols function ambivalently even there). For instance, Ehrstine manages to read dark meanings even into the light-hearted song, "I love the jocund dance" by saying: "The oak tree and the laughing 'old villagers' are ominous symbols in Blake, and he uses them as such in 'The Ecchoing Green' of *Innocence*. There, too, the speaker is not aware of the danger in the laughter of old people. Yet it is precisely those people, laughing at rather than enjoying and sharing the innocence, who will inflict the senility of their Experience on the young." To interpret the laughter in "The Ecchoing Green" as derision is itself fantastic; to suggest on the basis of this interpretation that we are supposed to find ominous implications in the laughter of the earlier poem is to deride Blake's control of that poem. Blake's control of the mood of "I love the jocund dance" does not permit ominous speculations, which can be found only by ignoring the poem as a poem--where parts are controlled by their relation to the whole--and treating it as a cipher. Similarly, Ehrstine ignores the whole mood of "Blind-Man's Buff" when he begins to decode its "symbolism": "The poem opens with the young people sitting in a hall in which the sun of pastoral simplicity, where children belong, is replaced by a seemingly cheery fire. It is winter outdoors, and the fire in the hearth, besides representing a contraction of the sun, is also symbolic of selfish passion, characteristic of oncoming Experience. The hall itself is indicative of a confinement. The world within the poem is then closed, and that is a sure sign of the closed sensory world of Experience." What could be more perverse than this? But this is what happens when one is more interested in the system, the thesis, than in the poem. There is never any thought given to the tradition of this kind of poem, which deals in shrewd insight not symbolism--Goldsmith being the obvious mentor here.

Ehrstine does pretend to read the *Poetical Sketches* first of all as poems, and he makes a few sketchy remarks about versification or style, but he seems incapable of responding to the poetry--or even to the humour--and is almost always found on the side of the mockers. His last two paragraphs are incredibly self-contradictory, praising the occasional brilliance, then assuming that Blake quite likely was ashamed of his work, then finding the "miracle of communication" in each of the poems. It turns out that the miracle consists in Blake's ability to "radiate the first heat" of his later vision--a miracle indeed. We can conclude that Ehrstine would find these poems devoid of interest if the later works had never been written. He does not look very carefully, often, at the poems themselves. Discussing the rhyming quatrains of "Fresh from the dewy hill", he observes that "Blake has attempted the kind of Miltonic blank verse of which other later eighteenth-century writers were fond". On the "Mad Song", he quotes Lindsay's remarks on the metre (ignoring Saintsbury), then tries to correct him by saying: "In each of the eight-line stanzas the first three lines are dimeter, making use indiscriminately of iambs and anapests. The fifth, sixth and seventh lines are trimeter, and then another dimeter forms the cadence of the stanza." This prosodic description is similar to Ostriker's, who is never mentioned, but it ignores the fourth line, the use of spondees, inversions and monosyllabic feet, the effect of climax and variety in each stanza. He makes simple errors in reading, as when, discussing "I love the jocund dance", he says "the colors of the 'innocent bow'r' are specific", showing he has not understood Blake's metonymic reference either to two kinds of bread, white and brown or to milk and bread. Considering "Fresh from the dewy hill", he thinks that the last

stanza implies that "the restrictions placed on the youth by adult morality force him to visit the girl by night"; though it is obvious that the black-ey'd maid sleeps in the village without him--as indeed the companion song, "When early morn walks forth" shows in its first stanza. Reading "Contemplation", he finds a formula, "sorrow plus mirth will make true joy"; but Blake obviously contrasts the mirth associated with artificiality (the painted cheek) against the "humble garb true joy puts on". True joy is associated with humility and natural simplicity, not at all with the conjunction of mirth and sorrow, which are both associated with pride and city life.

Apart from nonsense, Ehrstine adds very little to our knowledge of the *Poetical Sketches*. He leans heavily on Erdman when discussing the political aspects of the poems, and follows him in discerning irony in the apparently patriotic "King Edward the Third". Erdman's study is massively based on a knowledge of Blake's likely sources and is worth any number of books like Ehrstine's, and Erdman is more sensitive to the actual ambiguity of the fragment as it stands. We would be better helped by a critique of Erdman's position than by the simple variant which Ehrstine provides. Blake's position may be eventually seen as above, rather than below, the ironies implicit in the situation. His deep sympathy with character tends to outweigh irony here as in, say, "Earth's Answer"; delusions are presented in Blake most typically with dramatic sympathy rather than irony--his study of Edward III's tyranny may ultimately have excused rather than condemned him, in line with Blake's annotations to Boyd's Dante. The concern with motives, expressed in scenes 3 and 4, tends to support such a reading; if it were simply an anti-war play, the irony would be heavier and more pervasive. This fragment is the most tantalizing experiment in the *Poetical Sketches*; to me, it suggests that, had Blake been encouraged, he could have been a great deal more than Shakespeare's imitator. Perhaps the difficulty of plotting an action deterred him; rather, the complication of a traditional plot would not have interested him.

Before I received Ehrstine's book, I hoped that at least it would provide a critique of Lowery's source study, which is the most obvious need at present. But Ehrstine is curiously unaware of Lowery's deficiencies. The gap remains to be filled; though studies of individual poems and groups of poems, such as Erdman's, and Gleckner's (of the Season lyrics), have advanced our understanding a great deal. Ehrstine is wrong, incidentally, in saying that Gleckner's article establishes that "Blake's four poems owe very little to Thomson or others of the eighteenth century" (p. 108); Collins' *Ode to Evening* is a basic source, and Joseph Warton's *Ode I. To Fancy* most likely influenced the personification of Autumn, who in line 84, "stains with wine his jolly cheeks" (Blake of course using the biblical periphrasis, "blood of the grape" for wine, and modifying a snatch from *As You Like It* to read "And tune thy jolly voice to my fresh pipe").

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QUERIES

In the letter to Butts, Jan. 10, 1802, Blake adds a postscript "Your Obliging proposal of Exhibiting my two Pictures likewise calls for my thanks; I will finish the other, & then we shall judge of the matter with certainty," and again, on August 16, 1803, "that passage in my rough sketch which related to your kindness in offering to Exhibit my 2 last Pictures in the Gallery in Berners Street. . . ." Does anyone know anything about this exhibition, and did Blake exhibit?

Ruthven Todd

In the final version of Blake's Notebook poem "English Encouragement of Art," occurs the curious line "Menny wouwer both Bungleishness & skill (E 501). Erdman suggests that "Menny wouwer" is "Cromeklan for maneuver" (p. 787). Perhaps; but it occurs to me this may also be a pun on Meynheer Wouwerman, referring to the Dutch painter Phillips Wouwerman.

Morton D. Paley

Answers to Hard Questions: The Residence of Thomas Butts

Mr Ruthven Todd speculates about where Blake's patron Thomas Butts lived (*Blake Newsletter*, 11 [1968], 25-27). Thomas Butts was by 1789 living in a fine large house at about Number 9 on the north side of Great Marlborough Street, Westminster. The house was rated at £44, which suggests that it was considerably more pretentious than Blake's house a few hundred yards away at 28 Poland Street, which was rated at £18. I do not know when Butts arrived in the Marlborough Street house, but he had not been there when the rates were collected in 1787. (This information is based upon the rate books for Great Marlboro[ugh] Ward in Westminster Public Library, Buckingham Palace Road, London.) Blake's letters were addressed to him at this house through 1803.

Thereafter he moved to a more elegant neighbourhood, for in 1808 George Cumberland wrote that "Mr. Butts [lives at] Fitzroy Square Corner of Grafton Square 27 [word illeg]" (BM Add. MSS. 36519 1, f. 401). This is presumably the house at 17 Grafton Street (which was on the corner of Grafton Street and Fitzroy Square) where Butts died in 1845 ("Thomas Butts, White Collar Maecenas", *PMLA*, LXXI [1956], 1066n).

G. E. Bentley, Jr.

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