

B L A K E

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY



VOLUME 29

NUMBER 3

WINTER 1995/96

Blake

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY

VOLUME 29

NUMBER 3

WINTER 1995/96

C O N T E N T S

Minute Particulars

A Rare Group of Early Twentieth-Century
Watercolors by a Follower of William Blake
by *Martin Butlin* 76

A Blake Source for von Holst
by *Max Browne* 78

Reviews

G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Studies in Japan:
A Bibliography of Works on William Blake
Published in Japan 1893-1993*
Reviewed by *Yoko Ima-Izumi* 82

William Blake, *The Early Illuminated Books*
Reviewed by *Michael Ferber* 88

William Blake, *Milton a Poem* and the Final
Illuminated Works: *The Ghost of Abel* [,]
on Homer's Poetry [and] *On Virgil* [,] *Laocoön*
Reviewed by *Dennis M. Read* 91

Molly Anne Rothenberg, *Rethinking Blake's Textuality*
Reviewed by *Harriet Linkin* 92

George Anthony Rosso, Jr., *Blake's Prophetic Workshop:
A Study of The Four Zoas*
Reviewed by *Andrew Lincoln* 95

Steven Vine, *Blake's Poetry: Spectral Visions*
Reviewed by *Janet Warner* 96

Elliot Hayes, *Blake: Innocence and Experience*
Reviewed by *Andrew Lincoln* 97

Jeanne Moskal, *Blake, Ethics, and Forgiveness*
Reviewed by *Stephen Cox* 97

Exhibition: "The Genitals are Beauty"
Reviewed by *Keri Davies* 102

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

MAX BROWNE is a Fuseli, Blake and Holst enthusiast and collector. He recently organized the first exhibition devoted to Holst and wrote the catalogue *The Romantic Art of Theodor Von Holst* (Lund Humphries, 1994).

MARTIN BUTLIN was formerly Keeper of the Historic British Collection at the Tate Gallery, where he was in charge of the notable groups of works by Blake and Turner. He is now a consultant at Christie's.

STEPHEN COX, Professor of Literature at the University of California, San Diego, is the author of *"The Stranger Within Thee": Concepts of the Self in Late-Eighteenth-Century Literature*, and of *Love and Logic: The Evolution of Blake's Thought*.

KERI DAVIES is Chair of the Blake Society at St James's. He is currently researching Blake's contemporary collectors.

MICHAEL FERBER is Professor of English at the University of New Hampshire. His most recent books are the Blake and Shelley volumes of the Penguin Critical Studies series.

WILLIAM F. HALLORAN, Professor of English, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, has returned full time to teaching and research on Blake, Yeats, William Sharp ("Fiona Macleod") and others after an inordinate number of years as dean.

YOKO IMA-IZUMI, Associate Professor of English at the University of Tsukuba in Japan, has published essays on Blake, romantic literature, and film. She is currently working on three books: *Blake's Re-Vision of the Female* (in Japanese), *Romantic Poetry and Postmodern Film* (in Japanese) and *Women in Japanese Film* (in English).

ANDREW LINCOLN teaches in the School of English and Drama at Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London. His book, *Spiritual History: A Reading of William Blake's The Four Zoas* was recently published by Oxford University Press.

HARRIET KRAMER LINKIN teaches courses in Blake, romanticism, and gender at New Mexico State University. She is currently co-editing *Approaches to Teaching British Women Poets of the Romantic Period* for the MLA and writing a study on the poetry of Mary Tighe.

DENNIS M. READ is an associate professor at Denison University, where he teaches courses in literature and writing.

JANET WARNER is Professor Emerita of English, Glendon College, York University, Toronto. She is now living on five acres near Vancouver, British Columbia, and studying garden design.

E D I T O R S

EDITORS: Morris Eaves and Morton D. Paley

BIBLIOGRAPHER: G. E. Bentley, Jr.

REVIEW EDITOR: Nelson Hilton

ASSOCIATE EDITOR FOR GREAT BRITAIN: David Worrall

PRODUCTION OFFICE: Patricia Neill, Department of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627

MANAGING EDITOR: Patricia Neill

TELEPHONE 716/275-3820

FAX 716/442-5769

PRODUCTION OFFICE EMAIL: pnpj@db1.cc.rochester.edu

Morris Eaves, Department of English, University of Rochester, Rochester NY 14627

Email: meav@db1.cc.rochester.edu

Morton D. Paley, Department of English, University of California, Berkeley CA 94720

Email: P72735@garnet.berkeley.edu

G. E. Bentley, Jr., University College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1 Canada

Email: gbentley@epas.utoronto.ca

Nelson Hilton, Department of English, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602

Email: nhilton@uga.cc.uga.edu

David Worrall, St. Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, Waldegrave Road, Twickenham TW1 4SX England

Email: 101510.2141@compuserve.com

I N F O R M A T I O N

BLAKE/AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY is published under the sponsorship of the Department of English, University of Rochester.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are \$50 for institutions, \$25 for individuals. All subscriptions are by the volume (1 year, 4 issues) and begin with the summer issue. Subscription payments received after the summer issue will be applied to the 4 issues of the current volume. Foreign addresses (except Canada and Mexico) require an \$8 per volume postal surcharge for surface, an \$18 per volume surcharge for air mail delivery. U.S. currency or international money order necessary. Make checks payable to *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*. Address all subscription orders and related communications to Patricia Neill, *Blake*, Department of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627.

BACK ISSUES are available at a reduced price. Address Patricia Neill for a list of issues and prices.

MANUSCRIPTS are welcome. Send two copies, typed and documented according to forms suggested in *The MLA Style Manual*, to either of the editors: Morris Eaves, Dept. of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627; Morton D. Paley, Dept. of English, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD SERIAL NUMBER: 0160-628x. *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography, the Modern Humanities Research Association's Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature, *The Romantic Movement: A Selective and Critical Bibliography* (ed. David V. Erdman et al.), American Humanities Index, Arts and Humanities Citation Index, Current Contents and the *Bibliography of the History of Art*.

© 1995 Copyright Morris Eaves and Morton D. Paley

COVER ILLUSTRATION: Henry John Stock (1853-1930), *The Beast cast into the Lake of Fire*.

MINUTE PARTICULARS

A Rare Group of Early Twentieth-Century Watercolors by a Follower of William Blake

BY MARTIN BUTLIN

One of the most extraordinary examples of the influence of William Blake on an English artist working in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was demonstrated by a group of watercolors sold at Christie's in November 1994.¹ Paradoxically, the most noticeable feature of these watercolors was their totally un-Blakean style, derived from G. F. Watts and through him Titian and Rubens.

The painter of these watercolors was Henry John Stock (1853-1930). Born like Blake in Soho, London he made a somewhat unusual start as an artist by going blind in childhood but recovered his sight on going to live at Beaulieu in the New Forest. Fully recovered, he studied at the St. Martin's School of Art and at the Royal Academy Schools and was befriended by the engraver W. J. Linton, who, perhaps significantly, had engraved the illustrations to Gilchrist's *Life of William Blake*, 1863. He exhibited at the Royal Academy between 1874 and 1910 and also at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, becoming a member in 1881, as well as at commercial galleries such as the Fine Arts Society. During the first half of his career he mainly painted portraits, often of upper class and fashionable sitters as in the group of portraits in the fancy dress worn at the Devonshire House Ball of 1897. However, later in his life he concentrated more on subject paintings and in 1909 moved to Felpham, with all its associations with William Blake.

His subject pictures included a number on musical themes such as *A Musician's Reverie* of 1888, *Listening to Brahms*, 1901, and *In the Night—Schumann* of which he exhibited three versions between 1908 and 1927. He also illustrated the Bible and literature including Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Goethe, Browning, William Morris and Walt Whitman, and, in a more Blakean context, Dante. Closer to Victorian genre were the painting of *The Kiss* and a related drawing, dated 1894 and 1891 respectively, also included in the Christie's sale.

The unprecedented group of works sold at Christie's was however more noticeable for the 10 watercolors of imagina-

¹ *Fine Victorian Pictures, Drawings and Watercolours*, Christie's 4 November 1994, lots 56-64, with two additional works by Stock, lots 66 and 68, all illustrated, all in color except lot 66. The information in this article is mainly derived from the introductory note on pp. 42-43 of the Christie's catalogue.



1 Henry John Stock (1853-1930), *The Angel standing in the Sun*, pencil and watercolor heightened with body color and touches of white, 33.3 x 23.2cm., signed and dated 1910, sold Christie's 4 November 1994, Lot 61.

tive subjects. These included one subject close to Watts, *Pain bringing Wings to a Soul*, signed and dated 1900, and an illustration to Dante's *Inferno*, *Dante and Virgil encounter Lucifer in Hell* of 1923. More specifically Blakean were the eight illustrations to the Book of Revelation: *The Whore of Babylon*, 1902, "And I saw a Star fall from Heaven," 1902, *The Great Red Dragon and the Woman clothed with the Sun*, 1902, *The Beast cast into the Lake of Fire*, 1904, *The Angel standing in the Sun*, 1910, "And the Moon became as Blood," 1910, *The Four and Twenty Elders*, 1911, and "God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes," 1912. Some of the compositions, such as *The Angel standing in the Sun* (illus. 1) and *The Great Red Dragon and the Woman clothed with the Sun* are Blakean at least in their airborne figures and spiral compositions. All however are painted in a manner far from the linear, crystalline style of William Blake, a manner of rich textures and blurred outlines derived from Watts. The obese figure of *The Beast cast into the Lake of Fire* (illus. 2) is Rubensian in its fleshiness and substance.

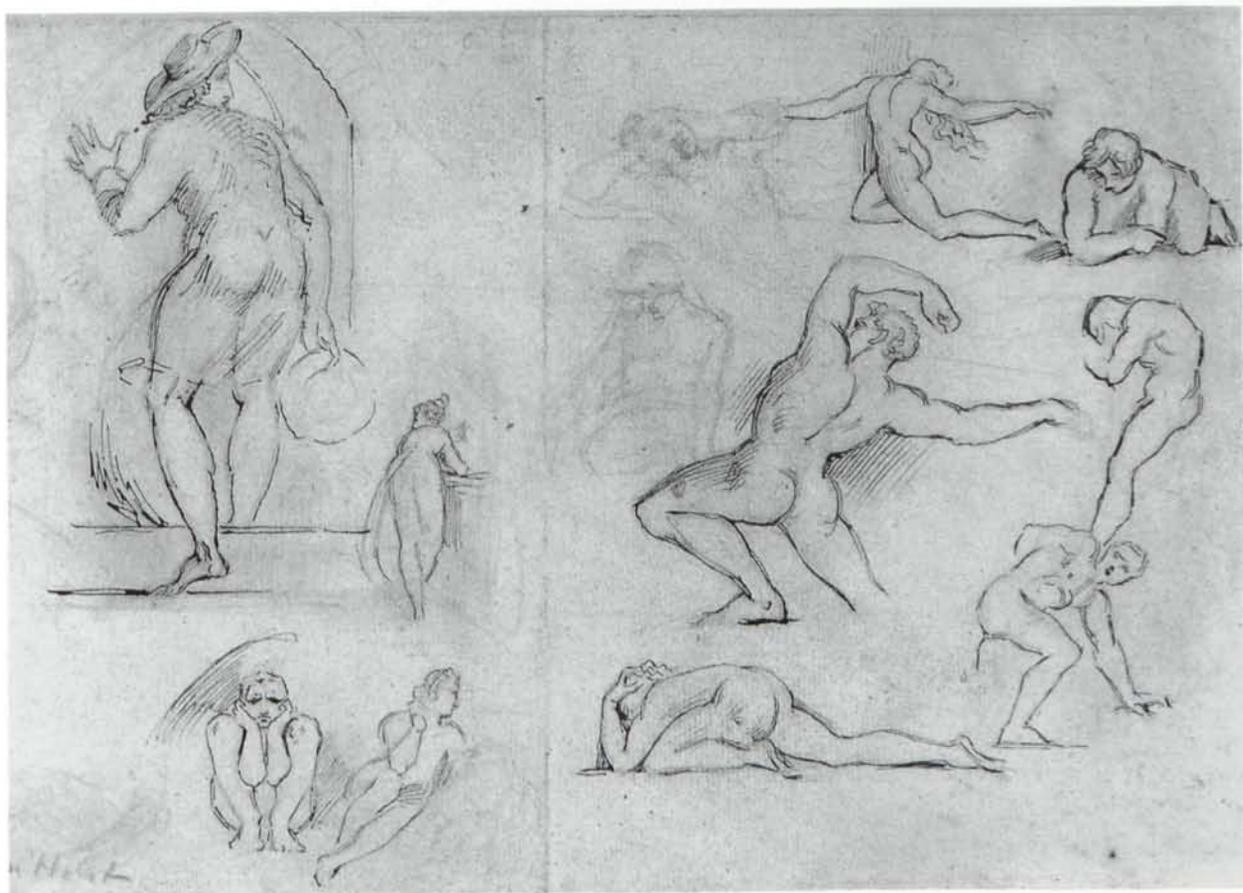
2 Henry John Stock (1853-1930),
The Beast cast into the Lake of Fire,
pencil and watercolor heightened
with body color, 33.3 x 23.2cm.,
signed and dated 1904, sold
Christie's 4 November 1994, Lot 60.



A further link with William Blake, and perhaps at least a partial explanation for this paradoxical illustration of Blakean subjects in totally un-Blakean style, was the commissioner of these watercolors, Francis P. Osmaston (1857-1925), an accomplished musician and author (including a translation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Fine Art* and two books on Tintoretto) and a patron of many struggling painters of his time. Osmaston owned a number of works by Blake: a copy of *The Book of Thel* and a color-printed copy of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, together with three individual works, the watercolor of *Christ raising the Son of the Widow*

of *Nain*, the tempera *Bathsheba at the Bath* and the color-printed *Dream of Thiralatha* (Butlin nos. 483, 390 and 267 respectively). It is possible that the textures of the color-printed works and the tempera may have helped to justify Stock in his combination of Blakean subjects and un-Blakean richness of effect.

The Blakean watercolors were sold for prices ranging from £1,100 to £5,500 with the exception of the perhaps overly porcine *Beast cast into the Lake of Fire* which was bought in.



1 Theodor von Holst, Figure Studies from Blake's *Jerusalem* and other sources, pencil, pen and ink on laid paper with a watermark of Britannia with her shield bearing the cross of St. George, 7 3/4 x 12 inches (20 x 30.7 cm.), Private Collection, England.

A Blake Source for von Holst

BY MAX BROWNE

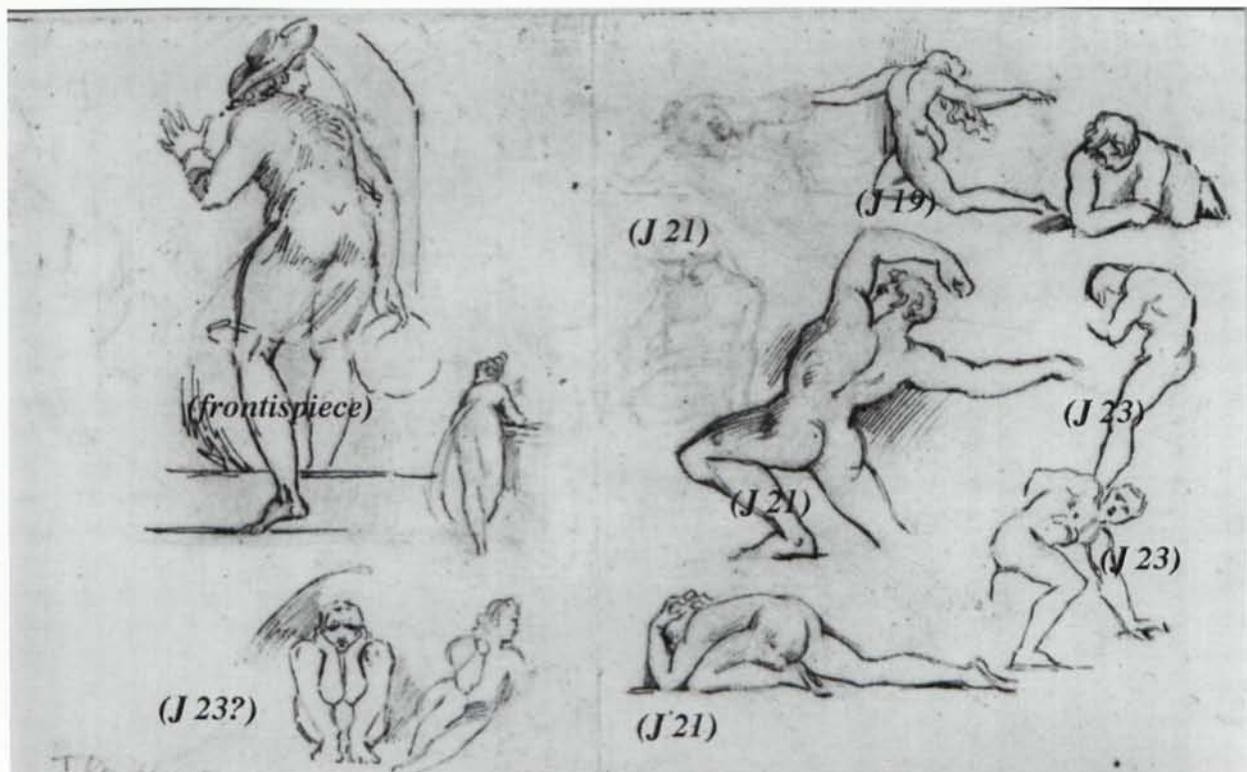
An important sheet of figure drawings by the English Romantic painter Theodor von Holst (1810-44) has recently come to light to reveal Blake as a stronger iconographic source for Fuseli's pupil than has previously been evident and hence further confirm Dante Gabriel Rossetti's view of Holst; "... in many of whose most characteristic works the influence of Blake, as well as that of Fuseli, has probably been felt."¹

As with Fuseli and Rossetti, Holst's family background was also rooted in continental Europe. His father, Matthias von Holst, had been a professor of music and taught members

¹ Supplementary chapter 39 in A. Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake*, 1863, 1: 379. Rossetti was Holst's greatest admirer and the inclusion of this short account of his one-time hero was both testimony to the romantic sympathy that he felt with Holst's work and the importance that he placed on his role as a disciple of the earlier generation of romantic artists.

of the imperial family in St. Petersburg. He returned to Riga with his young Russian wife but, amidst the upheavals of the Napoleonic wars, found that his political ideas had become so unwelcome that he was forced to flee with his family and they settled in London in 1807. Theodor was born there three years later and by the age of 10 his prodigious talent for drawing had attracted the attention of both Fuseli and Sir Thomas Lawrence, who was later criticized for leading Holst astray with commissions for erotic drawings of which several were destined for the portfolios of King George IV.

Holst steadfastly maintained an adherence to the artistic values of his Royal Academy masters throughout his short life but developed his own highly eclectic manner of stylistic and subject improvisation far beyond what was generally acceptable to the changing nature of English patronage during the age of reform. His vivacious, supernatural and daemonic pictures must have made many of the rising middle-class patrons blanch as they strolled along the exhibition walls of London looking for suitable scenes of religious and domestic genres to hang in their sittingrooms. In this way Holst was subjected to the same rejection and ne-



2 Key diagram to figures from the *Jerusalem* plates in illus. 1.

glect that had affected the reputations of both Blake and Fuseli until their resurrection in the present century.

Fortunately a sufficiently representative sample of works had become available for a sesquicentenary exhibition of Holst's paintings, drawings, and prints to take place last year—at Hazlitt, Gooden and Fox in London and at Cheltenham Art Gallery. Prior to this the very limited knowledge of Holst's work had greatly hindered both appraisal of him and confirmation of Rossetti's proposal of Holst as "one of the few connecting links" from the art of Fuseli and Blake to that of the Pre-Raphaelites. My catalogue of the exhibition,² I believe, establishes this connection at last but nevertheless provides only limited evidence of Blake's influence on Holst. However, subsequent to the exhibition and publication of the catalogue, I was delighted to discover that a group of six drawings by Holst in a private collection in England contains one that establishes this line of influence without a doubt.³ As can be clearly seen from the pen and

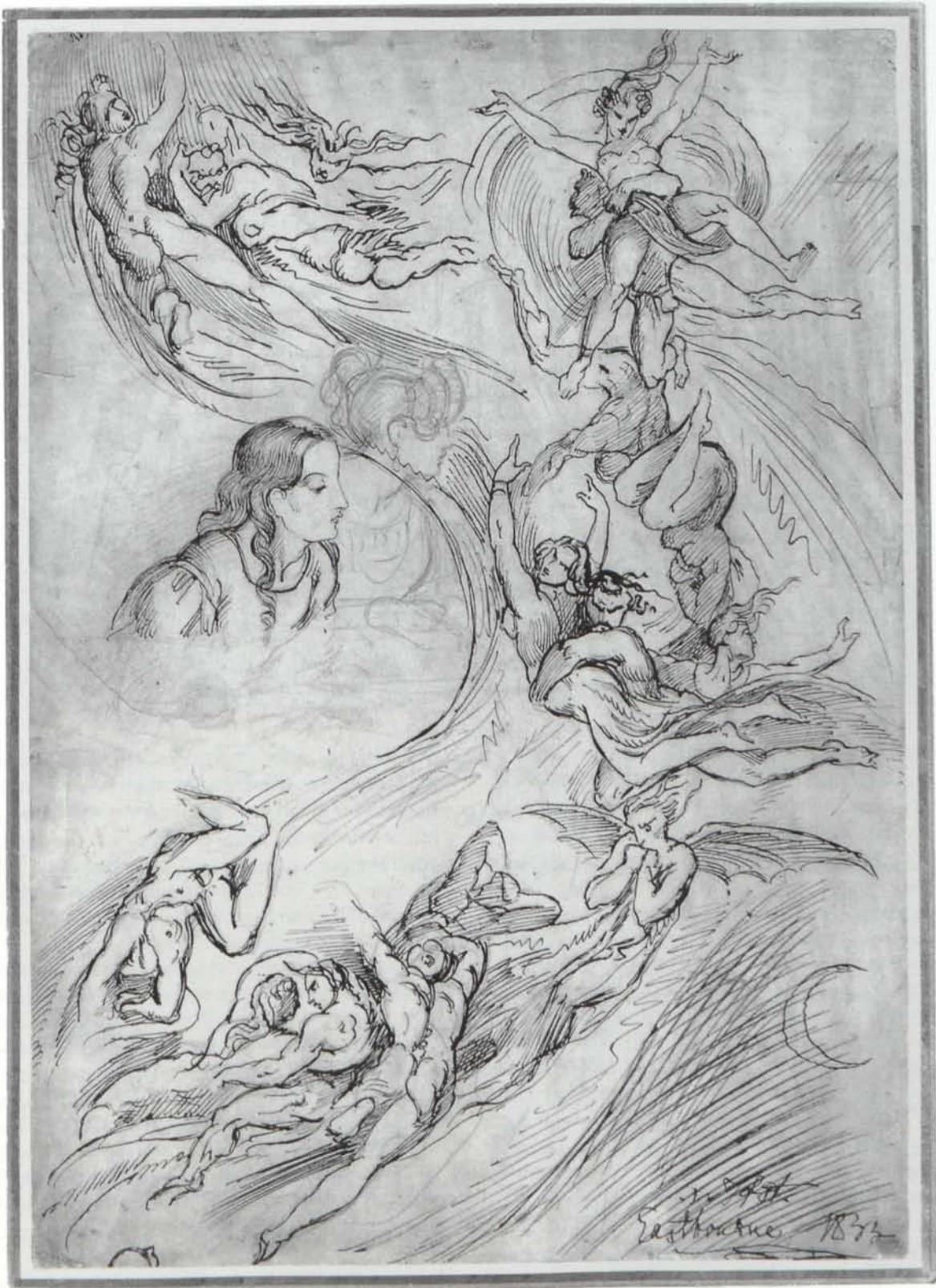
pencil studies on this sheet (illus. 1), the majority of the prominent figures are copies of those from Blake's *Jerusalem*. The key to this identification is the well-known figure of Los entering the gothic doorway from the frontispiece plate. The source for at least six further figures can be found in plates 19, 21, and 23 from the first chapter of *Jerusalem* (illus. 2). Holst has copied these with varying degrees of freedom but their source is unmistakable.

Unfortunately I have not been so successful in identifying the source for several other figures on the sheet of which at least one appears stylistically closer to Fuseli rather than Blake. With regard to the "seated man with his head in his hands," Martin Butlin has kindly pointed out to me the similarity to Blake's figure in plate 3 of *Europe*. Holst was certainly familiar with *Europe* as can be seen from his borrowing of figures from plates 1 and 9 used in a drawing—known as *Dream of Marguerite* (illus. 3)—executed in 1833. This was probably while on a visit to his elder brother, Gustavus,

² *The Romantic Art of Theodor Von Holst 1810-1844*, published by Lund Humphries, London 1994 (Distributed in the USA by the Antique Collectors Club).

³ All these drawings were originally contained in the "Rolls Album" which was purchased by Colnaghi's in 1959 and later dispersed (see Appendix II in my Holst catalogue). This particular sheet appears to have been purchased separately by Peter Pears sometime after the other

five drawings were given to Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears by Imogen Holst in the early 1960s. Imogen Holst was the daughter and biographer of the composer Gustav Holst, a great-nephew of the artist. I would like to take this opportunity of offering my warmest thanks to Rosamund Strode for bringing these drawings to my attention and for her most generous and enthusiastic support for the publication of the Holst catalogue last year.



3 Theodor von Holst, "Dream of Marguerite," 1833, pen and pencil on buff paper, 14 1/4 x 9 7/8 inches, Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino CA.

a musician then employed by an aristocratic patron near Eastbourne.⁴ It remains to be ascertained if Holst, at this time, had access to original copies of Blake's books, or separate plates, or had made copies of figures from them at some earlier date. It would certainly seem remarkable, although perhaps not impossible, for him to have retained these motifs from memory.⁵

Jerusalem is also of special interest since it was the one work by Blake singled out for inclusion in a review for the *London Magazine* by Holst's close friend the dilettante artist and writer Thomas Griffiths Wainwright (1794-1847). This characteristically jocular piece appeared in the issue for September 1820 and was considered by Gilchrist⁶ to be a "feeler" for a possible subsequent full article on Blake. At this point in time Wainwright was best known under his *nom-de-plume* as Charles Lamb's "light-hearted Janus [Weathercock]" and he was still several years away from the suspicion of his criminal activity which included strychnine poisoning and the Bank of England check forgery that finally led to his conviction and transportation "for life" to the penal colony of Hobart, Tasmania in 1837.⁷

Like Holst, Wainwright was a fervent follower of Fuseli and was also an admirer and patron of Blake. Gilchrist reported that Wainwright had purchased several of the illuminated books among which was one of the finest colored copies of the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* and the only known copy of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* embellished with gold.⁸ Such admiration was reciprocated in some degree for Blake was recorded as singling out

Wainwright's picture of *The Milk-Maid's Song* as "very fine" while walking round the Royal Academy exhibition of 1823 with Samuel Palmer.⁹ So, given the strength of these relationships, it seems very probable that it was Wainwright who introduced Holst to Blake's designs, although several other artist and connoisseur acquaintances of Holst were also friends or patrons of Blake during his last years including John Varley, William Young Ottley and Sir Thomas Lawrence. It would be most desirable to be able to pinpoint which copies of Blake's designs Holst employed as source material since this could shed further light on their provenance and also the circle of artists that the younger romantic associated with. However the rather free manner of the copying of the present sheet seems to preclude such identification.¹⁰ This is in marked contrast to some of Holst's copies after Fuseli which are sometimes almost impossible to distinguish from the original drawings, as the late Gert Schiff discovered when re-attributing the works of both these artists during his monumental work on Fuseli in the 1960s.¹¹

At present only about a quarter of Holst's documented work has appeared so far. We can thus look forward to further discoveries in the future with the possibility that more may also contain further evidence of the influence of Blake.

⁴ See Imogen Holst, *Gustav Holst*, Oxford 1938 (2nd. ed. 1969) 2-4. I must admit some doubt as to this title since the composition appears closer to the subject of Francesca Da Rimini and the "whirlwind of lovers" from Dante's *Inferno*. Holst is known to have executed several sketches inspired by Dante about this time and particularly while on at least one trip to Eastbourne.

⁵ If Holst possessed such a retentive faculty it may explain how he had, perhaps unconsciously, retained the figure of Adam by Michelangelo which he had subsequently employed in a sketch and claimed as original when challenged by William Young Ottley. This anecdote was reported by Holst's emigré engraver friend John Sartain nearly 70 years later in *The Reminiscences of a Very Old Man 1808-1897* (New York 1899, p. 118) although he doubted if such a feat of memory was possible.

⁶ *Life of William Blake* 1: 278-79.

⁷ For the fullest account of Wainwright see J. Curling, *Janus Weathercock*, London 1938.

⁸ *Ibid.* 277. I am grateful again to Martin Butlin for referring me to Joseph Viscomi's recent study *Blake and the Idea of the Book* which provides details of Wainwright's patronage of Blake and his purchase of several of the prophetic books (perhaps with the proceeds from his check forgery in 1826). In addition to *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (copy X) and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (copy I), Wainwright's collection was also known to contain *Milton* (copy C), a set of proof *Illustrations to the Book of Job*, *Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims* and possibly *Jerusalem* (monochrome copy D).

⁹ *Ibid.* 278.

¹⁰ However it may be possible to eliminate certain copies of *Jerusalem* as a source. Morton D. Paley points out several iconographic differences in various copies of the frontispiece design (see *Jerusalem*, William Blake Trust/Tate Gallery, 1991 [130] and additional plate illus. i-iii) and comparison with Holst's drawing would seem to preclude colored copy E (Paul Mellon's Collection) from the running. This is indicated in details such as Los's finger shapes and non-sandaled feet and the absence of full plate-sized rays emanating from the "globe of Light." Holst has his copy of this latter detail actually in front of the archway upright and this only appears to occur in colored copy B, although in this case it is not identical and the fingers that hold it are different. However the retouching of the garment and body shape below Los's left armpit in copy B is closer than the monochrome copies to Holst's figure as is the more curved shape of Los's hat brim. Such inconsistency is both puzzling and unfortunately inconclusive at present, particularly as Wainwright appears to have provided the most likely source for Holst but is believed to have owned monochrome copy D (see n8). Of course an alternative possibility may be that Holst was following the copying of another artist as intermediary.

¹¹ See G. Schiff, *Echtheits- und Zuschreibungsprobleme bei Johann Heinrich Füssli*, Schweizerisches Institut für Kunstwissenschaft, Annual Report, Zurich 1965 and my catalogue, *The Romantic Art of Theodor Von Holst*.

G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Studies in Japan: A Bibliography of Works on William Blake Published in Japan 1893-1993*. Tokyo: Japan Association of English Romanticism, 1994. xxv + 189 pp. ¥2,800.*

Reviewed by YOKO IMA-IZUMI

The arrival of G. E. Bentley's comprehensive bibliography, *Blake Studies in Japan*, may be a surprise to Western scholars, for it tells an unexpected story of Blake scholarship burgeoning in Japan from as early as the 1910s. The bibliography is organized, like his *Blake Books*, into six parts: "Blake's Writings," "Reproductions of Blake's Art," "Commercial Book-Engravings," "Bibliographies and Catalogues," "Books Blake Owned," and "Scholarship and Criticism." Though it shares basically the material compiled in his recent *Blake Books Supplement* (1995), *Blake Studies in Japan* is more than an excerpt of the Japan-related entries from the former; it contains new discoveries after the completion of the *Blake Books Supplement* manuscript and, more significantly, a valuable introduction, which is particularly rewarding for scholars who wish to understand the history of Blake's reception in Japan. The introduction is an informative story of "East meets West," with Blake being an intersection, "from the point of view of a western scholar" (xvi). I wish here, however, to supplement that account by telling the same story from within the Japanese scholarly tradition, so that my review, together with Bentley's introduction, may serve as a good invitation to his bibliography.

The Japanese contribution to Blake studies is massive. Bentley affirms it in the introduction: "Hundreds of Japanese scholars have published on Blake on an enormous range of subjects" (xxi). The introduction is a seamless fabric, but it can be divided in three sections, in all of which Bentley reiterates the vigor and profusion of Japanese scholarship. The first section presents interesting statistics on the yearly total numbers of Blake-related scholarly publications in Japan from 1893 to 1993. The statistics are followed by the second brief section which enumerates Japanese literary works influenced by Blake. The third and longest section concerns itself with characteristics of Japanese scholarship on Blake. Though lucid, Bentley's analysis is not always accompanied by necessary historical explanations. The statistics in the first section, for example, are both his strength and weakness:

his strength, because they enable him to point out that "the bulk is over a third (31.8%) of the number of works about Blake recorded in *Blake Books* (1977)" (xvii), and his weakness in that they allow him to put forth a picture of Japanese scholarship devoid of a first-hand understanding of the material. The remaining two sections of Bentley's introduction—his summaries of Japanese literature influenced by Blake and of characteristics of Japanese scholarship—also lack adequate historical explanation.

Bentley's statistics are fascinating data, because they show four spikes in the formative years of Blake studies in Japan, in the years 1914, 1927, 1931-32, and 1957. The year 1914 has an entry of 14 publications, which is a strikingly large number, considering that all preceding 21 years have entries of zero to three publications at most. The sudden surge of Blake studies in 1914, marking the first modern stream of publications on Blake in Japan, was inaugurated by the enormously influential Japanese scholar Muneyoshi Yanagi, and an artistic group called "White Birch School" or "Shirakaba Ha." Yanagi's legacy is still felt today in the academic distinction given to younger scholars employing Western methodologies. Yanagi's monumental book of 1914, *William Blake*, is 756 pages long, with 60 reproductions of the works of Blake. This lavish tome received international recognition, its titlepage being reproduced in the original language with English translations in Geoffrey Keynes's *Bibliography of William Blake* (1921).¹ Yanagi was a member of the White Birch School, a group of artists in various fields such as poetry, fiction, music, painting, and literary criticism and contributed essays on Blake to their journal, *White Birch*, which had a special issue on Blake in 1914. Yanagi sparked interest in Blake's works among the members of the group, who were enthusiastically waiting for Yanagi's completion of *William Blake* by reporting his progress on the book in almost every monthly issue of *White Birch* in 1914. These progress reports, together with Yanagi's essays (and one essay by another member of the school) published in *White Birch*, account for 13 out of 14 listed publications of 1914 in Bentley's statistics, the fourteenth being Yanagi's book itself.

Why did Yanagi, "an important Blake pioneer in Japan" (13) in Bentley's words, become interested in Blake in the first place? It is an intriguing question, to which I will briefly address myself. In the wake of enthusiastic mass Westernization, both politically and culturally, Yanagi was introduced to Blake's poetry. The whole of Japan was dominated by an obsession with the West. Professors from the West, such as W. A. Houghton and Lafcadio Hearn, had been teaching Blake at Tokyo University to students a generation before Yanagi's. Coming to the University later, Yanagi did not have

*This work may be obtained from the bookstore Tsurumi Shoten, Hongo 4-1-14, Bunkyo, Tokyo 113, Japan. Tel. 81-3-3814-0491. Fax 81-3-3814-9250.

¹ Geoffrey Keynes, *Bibliography of William Blake* (New York: Grolier Club, 1921) 365.

an opportunity to see these professors, but he was educated in this iconoclastic intellectual atmosphere. Yanagi was first introduced to Blake's poetry by Torahiko Kori, a fellow student of Tokyo University and a member of the White Birch School, who later went to England, produced Japanized experimental dramas and, most significantly, taught Noh Plays to W. B. Yeats. Soon after his initiation into Blake's poetry by Kori, Yanagi became friends with Bernard Leach, the only Western member of the White Birch School, who lent the Yeats edition of Blake's poetry to him. Yanagi "finally became haunted by Blake,"² as he himself confessed.³

The second and fourth spikes in Bentley's statistics fall in the years 1927 and 1957, Blake's centenary and bicentenary respectively. *The Rising Generation*, first published in 1897, had special issues of Blake on both occasions, resulting in the large numbers of publications recorded by Bentley.

The remarkable rise in the years 1931-32 is the third spike in Bentley's statistics. These two years significantly saw the publication of the first substantial Blake journal in the world, *Blake and Whitman*, edited by Yanagi and his scholar-friend Bunsho Jugaku. It is worth noting what led to the genesis of the journal and how it affected Japanese Blake scholars, thereby filling up the silence Bentley has left in his *Blake Studies in Japan*.

Prior to publishing *Blake and Whitman* Yanagi, together with other members of the White Birch School, had been involved in various activities to spread Blake in Japan. The activities included organizing Blake-related exhibitions and lectures. The first notable exhibition was held in Tokyo in 1915, in which were displayed 60 reproductions of the printings of Blake in color and black and white, together with 100 reproductions of the works of Michelangelo, Rembrandt, and Goya.⁴ It was followed by two exhibitions on Blake exclusively, arranged by Yanagi in 1919, one touring seven rural sites in Nagano in September, and the other, in Kyoto and Tokyo in November. Every single day during the September exhibition in Nagano, the audience could enjoy Yanagi's lecture on Blake and singing by his wife, a White Birch School singer. Yanagi further gave a series of lectures on Blake to schoolteachers in Nagano in 1921, for which he had ordered 110 copies of *The Poetical Works of William Blake* edited by J. Sampson. Meanwhile, another member of the White Birch School, well-known novelist Takeo Arishima, was giving a series of lectures on Walt Whitman in Nagano, for which he ordered 60 copies of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

² Muneyoshi Yanagi, *The Complete Writings of Muneyoshi Yanagi* (Tokyo: Chikuma, 1981) 4: 11.

³ As for Yanagi's socio-historical and intellectual background, see Kimiyoshi Yura, "Starting Station of Yanagi's Thought: His William Blake," in Yanagi, *Complete Writings* 4: 679-707.

⁴ The information is provided by Bernard Leach in his interview in 1973, which is incorporated in Kazuko Hisamori, "A Phase in the History of the Reception of Blake in Japan," *Faunus* 6 (special issue, 1976): 172. The exhibition of 1915 is not mentioned in Bentley's *Blake Studies in Japan*.

In the Maruzen Bookstore, which received both orders, "Nagano" was on everybody's lips as a strange and amazing place where so many people would gather to read foreign poets in the original language.⁵ Yanagi thus introduced Blake among the Japanese in the 1910s through the 1920s, and his work culminated in the publication of *Blake and Whitman*.

The journal was issued monthly for two years, from January 1931 until December 1932. It was printed on thick, expensive, yellow-white, handmade Echizen paper with the watermarks of a key to an intellectual treasury and of the initials of Blake and Whitman ("B W"). Five hundred copies per issue were carefully packed and mailed only to the preregistered subscribers. Each copy was numbered by hand, and a subscriber received a copy of the same serial number each month. Yanagi and Jugaku apologized to the public who clamored for more, but held to their intention not to print additional copies. The figure of 500 itself is surprisingly large for a circulation of this kind of journal in the 1930s. I. A. Richards, stopping in Japan on his way back to England from Harvard, was startled to learn about *Blake and Whitman* from Yanagi. "It is absolutely improbable that such a journal should exist in England," Richards remarked; "even if it did, it would never attract that huge number of subscribers."⁶

One of the major characteristics of the journal was its concentrated focus on Blake's graphic art. Mitsuharu Hashizume's laborious essay in three parts, "The Oriental Development of Blake's Conception of 'Line,'" is still the definitive article on this subject. Hashizume regards the "line" in an oriental art form called calligraphy⁸ as an operative factor in explicating Blake's art. Emphasizing the indivisible relationship between writing and painting in calligraphy, Hashizume points out the same relationship in Blake's illuminated works. He further brings out the contrast between Western art concerned with composition and Oriental art based on lines, regarding Blake's art as identical with the latter.

Yanagi already advocated, in 1914, the kind of approach that W. J. T. Mitchell later propagated in his *Blake's Compos-*

⁵ The lectures and exhibitions organized by the White Birch School concerning Blake in Nagano are recorded in Nobuo Imai, *The Periphery of the White Birch Journal: The Intersection of the White Birch Movement and School Education in Nagano* (Nagano: Shinano Educational Committee, 1986) esp. 70-77, 79.

⁶ These words of I. A. Richards, a friend of Yanagi's, were recorded in Muneyoshi Yanagi, "Miscellaneous Notes," *Blake and Whitman* 1 (1931): 429.

⁷ Mitsuharu Hashizume, "The Oriental Development of Blake's Conception of 'Line,'" *Blake and Whitman* 2 (1932): 147-55, 195-209, 243-52.

⁸ Brought from China to Japan together with Zen Buddhism, calligraphy was established in fifteenth-century Japan as an art form, characterized by an allusive mode of expression based on lines drawn in Chinese ink. It creates a composite of picture and words, with visual and verbal elements together producing meaning and vision.

ite Art: A Study of the Illuminated Poetry (1978). Using the term "picture book" instead of "composite art," Yanagi clearly stated the significance of examining Blake's works as composite art:

Jerusalem is great as a poem but greater with many illustrations. A reader familiar with his [Blake's] visual achievement can understand profound meanings that these illustrations have to poetical lines, which are themselves, in a sense, painting rather than letters. Blake expressed his thoughts with clarity in this picture book.⁹

To regard verbal and visual elements as inseparable from, and indispensable to, each other is, in fact, easily understood by the Japanese, who have a long history of calligraphy.

Yanagi was always concerned with intellectual contributions of the Japanese to Western scholarship. He believed that the only way for Japanese scholars to be internationally recognized, considering disadvantages such as their language handicap and their difficulty in obtaining material, would be to read Blake "in the perspective of eastern ideas and experiences,"¹⁰ by taking advantage of culturally cultivated aesthetic sensibility. He suggested some possible topics for the Japanese to pursue, one of which was an examination of Blake's visual art, particularly his "line," because the Japanese, Yanagi emphasized, had a finer-grained aesthetic sensibility that made them more sensitive than Western people to the beauty of line.¹¹ The contributors to *Blake and Whitman* grappled with Blake's graphic art, along the lines of Yanagi's advice, and yielded a rich harvest represented by Hashizume's essay, "The Oriental Development of Blake's Conception of 'Line.'"

Yanagi seems to have gained this confidence in Japanese aesthetic sensibility while staying in England and the United States in 1929-30. In London, Yanagi arranged for two successful exhibitions of Japanese folkcrafts, which inspired the Victoria and Albert Museum to acquire some of the Japanese folkcrafts in Yanagi's collection.¹² Having crossed the Atlantic Ocean to the United States, where he was invited to teach two courses on Art and Religion at Harvard University, Yanagi organized exhibitions of "Modern Japanese and British Folkcrafts" and "Japanese Otsu Painting." Engaged to research in the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard and lecturing on art at the college, Yanagi became fully assured that "it is time for the Japanese to go to the West and teach truth,"¹³ and that "Japan should contribute to the world in religion

and art . . . and histories of religion and art should be rewritten by the Japanese."¹⁴ He confidently concluded that "if some of the best Japanese studies [on art] were translated into English, western scholars would have more faith in and admiration for Japanese scholars."¹⁵

Yanagi embodied the Japanese nationalism that is succinctly described by Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto: "[a firm conviction that] there is something unique about Japan and the Japanese."¹⁶ Yanagi underlines unique Japaneseness in his efforts to understand Blake: "Japan is unique. . . . Japan is the only place where East and West meet each other. We should not end up being connoisseurs of the West, but should digest the West, yet retaining the East. It is not rewarding to appreciate Blake and Whitman as Western poets; we must discover the East in their works."¹⁷ Yanagi's attitude to Blake is not unrelated to the upheaval of Japan's eager domestication or commodification of the West.

Bentley does not attempt to recount the story of Yanagi and *Blake and Whitman*, explaining that "this is not the place, nor am I the scholar, to examine in detail the development of Blake studies in Japan" (xv). Instead, he lists 14 essays on the subject as references. But these essays are not of much help to Western scholars, because they are all written in Japanese which, as Bentley realizes, "very few western scholars can read" (xxii).

The second section of Bentley's introduction enumerates works of Japanese literature influenced by Blake. Beginning with Bin Ueda, a famous poet who referred to Blake in 1885, Bentley lists about 15 examples up to the entry of 1910 for novelist Homei Iwano. Significant literary names such as Soseki Natsume and Ariake Kanbara are included. But strangely, Bentley leaves out some 80 years from 1911 to the present with the exception of the entry of 1994 for Kenzaburo Oe, a novelist who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1994. Oe is given annotations in both the introduction and the bibliography itself, whereas other names, such as Yukio Mishima and Odaka Haniya,¹⁸ are totally omitted. Others—Koichi Ijima, Motomaro Senke, and Saneatsu Mushanokoji—are curtly treated in the bibliography, with no reference in the introduction. Why is Oe so special? Probably because he is a world celebrity, and because his works, particularly *Rouze Up, O Young Men of the New Age* (1983) with its title quotation from Blake's *Milton*, can be regarded as a unique analysis of Blake's poetry.

¹⁴ Yanagi, *Complete Writings* 5: 386.

¹⁵ Yanagi, *Complete Writings* 5: 37.

¹⁶ Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "The Postmodern and Mass Images in Japan," *Public Culture* 1 (1989): 8-25, quoted in Frederick Buell, *National Culture and the New Global System* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) 69.

¹⁷ Yanagi, "Miscellaneous Notes," *Blake and Whitman* 1 (1931): 429.

¹⁸ Shoichi Matsushima refers to these names in his essay about Blake's influence on Japanese literature, "Blake and Whitman, Part 2," *Journal of Kokugakuin University* 90 (1989): 60-77.

⁹ Yanagi, *Complete Writings* 4: 224.

¹⁰ Yanagi, "Miscellaneous Notes," *Blake and Whitman* 1 (1931): 429.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² The contract between Yanagi and the Victoria and Albert Museum is referred to in Yanagi, *Complete Writings* 5: 365, 369.

¹³ Yanagi's letter to Ryusaburo Shikiba, a member of the Folkcrafts Movement, written in Cambridge on 3 February 1930, reprinted in *Complete Writings* 5: 386.

Bentley does not employ a systematic method with which to compile works influenced by Blake. If all the examples were put together under a heading such as "Blake's Influence," the bibliography would be more valuable to scholars who are interested in how Blake was consumed and incorporated in Japanese literature. The inconsistency in the compilation of the material is probably caused by Bentley's endeavor to retain the six-part organization of his *Blake Books* and *Blake Books Supplement*, which does not offer the heading "Blake's Influence." Though given less priority by Bentley, research on Japanese literary works influenced by Blake is regarded as indispensable by Japanese Blake scholars. Jugaku in his later years asked members of the Japan Association of English Romanticism "to examine how English Romanticism influenced Japanese literature since the Meiji era [the late nineteenth century], on the basis of each member's intellectual background."¹⁹ Shoichi Matsushima, a notable Blake scholar, encourages his fellow scholars "to vigorously conduct research on modern Japanese literature [influenced by Blake], without limiting [their] scholarly perspective."²⁰

In his commentary on Oe, Bentley turns attention to Oe's incorporation of Blake, pointing out that Oe's personal life is presented as if it is decisively directed by his encounter with Blake" (85). It would be helpful to note that the novel belongs to a peculiarly Japanese fictive tradition called the "I" novel, in which the first person singular narrator is expected to reveal what can be regarded as the novelist's own private life. The narrator of *Rouze Up, O Young Men of the New Age*, as is expected, discloses his personal life with his retarded son, Iyo, and the reader is thrilled to think that s/he is reading Oe's secret diary in a private chamber, a diary that includes even a confession about the narrator's repressed desire to murder his own deformed child at an earlier time. With this traditional form of the "I" novel, Oe interweaves commentaries on the work of Blake to create an interesting blend of fiction and literary criticism. The novel consists of seven stories, the titles of which are, as Bentley observes, "quotations from Blake's works" (85). Each story presents interpretations of selected poetical lines of Blake in light of Iyo's growth. The two apparently unrelated elements, Blake's poetry and Iyo's growth, are deeply interwoven with each other by the manipulative, authoritative power of Oe, who appropriates works by Geoffrey Keynes, Alexander Gilchrist, Foster Damon, Northrop Frye, David V. Erdman, Kathleen Raine, and others. The reader is invited to take the narrator's interpretations of Blake's poems as clues to understanding Iyo's idiosyncratic behavior, and to regard Iyo's crisp and aphoristic utterances as reflecting Blake's fundamental messages.

¹⁹ Bunsho Jugaku, "The English Romantics and Myself: A Speech at the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Japan Association of English Romanticism," *Essays in English Romanticism* 12 (1988): 5.

²⁰ Shoichi Matsushima, "Studies of Romanticism: The Reception of Blake in Japan," *Essays in English Romanticism* 9-10 (1986): 27.

Transplanting Blake's poems thus in his own fictive space, Oe provides new meanings for them until they become a part of his own creations. It is a marriage of Japan and Blake, for Oe's writing is basically about Japanese society, his family, and himself. Oe deconstructs Blakean visions through the eyes of a Japanese living in the late twentieth century. In an interview, Oe discloses his ambition to become "a mediator between my generation of Japanese writers and European postmodern culture."²¹ This ambition may sound similar to the enthusiasm with which Yanagi and Jugaku tried to consume and domesticate the West. What distinguishes Oe's efforts from the earlier examples, however, is his awareness of a worldwide movement towards globalization devoid of cultural imperialism. Blake does not need to be Japanized. Jugaku admitted later in his life that his and Yanagi's method of imposing an Eastern framework upon Blake had its limitations.²²

The final section of the introduction to *Blake Studies in Japan* analyzes characteristics of Japanese Blake scholarship. The most conspicuous aspect that Bentley notes is the paucity of Japanese publications outside Japan. "Despite its profusion," Bentley says, "the work of these Japanese scholars is largely unknown to Blake scholars in the West (including Australia and India)" (xxii). What Bentley does not note, however, is the fact that the work of Japanese scholars is not widely circulated even inside Japan. There are only two refereed academic journals to which Blake scholars can send a contribution on Blake: *Essays in English Romanticism*, published by the Japan Association of English Romanticism, and *Studies in English Literature*, by the English Literary Society of Japan, which happens to have the same title as the American *SEL*. The alternatives left for Blake scholars are either a journal of their *alma mater* and/or a journal sponsored by the university where they currently teach, as Bentley correctly observes: "Most Japanese Blake scholars . . . publish in only one or two journals, often that of their *alma mater*" (xxii). There are a tremendous number of these kinds of university journals in Japan; Bentley lists 180. It is in them that the majority of Japanese Blake scholars publish their essays. The audience is usually limited to colleagues of their university, for the journals are not advertised or widely circulated. It would be easier and faster to refer to well-circulated Western publications than to these esoteric university journals. Bentley's *Blake Studies in Japan* provides, for the first time, comprehensive information about Japanese publications in these university journals. In this sense, the bibliography is epoch-making.

The paucity of refereed academic journals reflects the lack of the "publish or perish" creed in Japan. In order to be hired

²¹ *Boston Globe* 6 June 1995, 30.

²² Bunsho Jugaku, "Blake and Japan," *Lamplight of Learning* 70 (1973): 8-11, reprinted in Bunsho Jugaku, *My Days, My Footsteps* (Tokyo: Aratake, 1977) 80-86.

or promoted in academia, you are not expected to have many essays—refereed or not. It is simply because Japanese scholars wish to please themselves that they have contributed publications which, according to Bentley, account for fully one-fifth (71 essays) of the total essays in the world written on Blake (380 essays) during the past two decades.²³ Despite the profusion of these kinds of essays, Bentley is puzzled to discover that “there are very few dissertations” (xxii). Doctoral dissertations have a special meaning in Japan; they are regarded not as a prerequisite for the beginning of an academic career but as the final monumental lifework in such a career. This explains the small number of Ph.D. holders in Japan. There are only seven Ph.D. dissertations on Blake, despite the total of 285 Japanese scholars listed in Bentley’s bibliography. Two Ph.D. degrees out of the seven were obtained from North American universities, one from Yale University in 1985 and the other from the University of Manitoba in 1991.²⁴ More and more Japanese scholars go abroad for higher education or intellectual exchange and make efforts to write essays in English. One of the up-and-coming scholars, Masashi Suzuki, for example, has been publishing his essays in English since he returned from his one-year stay in the West in the late 1980s, though he wrote all of his former essays in Japanese.

The indigenous reading of Blake established by Yanagi and Jugaku has not entirely lost its power. It is characterized by an assimilation of the West (other) into the East (self), expressive of a romantic ideology of self-sanctification or indulgence in subjectivity. Yanagi explained that “to understand Blake is to locate Blake in myself, to discover myself in Blake.”²⁵ Jugaku, too, was concerned with “a Blake that is meaningful to me.”²⁶ This subjective temperament, with an emphasis on “myself” and “me,” was shared by all the members of the White Birch School. They regarded self-fulfillment as a way to human improvement, the term “self” being crucially important to them. “Self-annihilation does not mean self-denial,” Yanagi wrote, “It is a total expansion of self, unlimited expression of individuality, and unity of self and universe.”²⁷ The characteristic emphasis on “self” in the writings by Jugaku and Yanagi is also pointed out by Kimiyoshi Yura, who concludes that Yanagi was “able to read, or rather appropriate, Blake’s world as his own.”²⁸

The most remarkable and promising descendant of Jugaku/Yanagi is Narumi Umetsu, listed as one of the prodigious postwar scholars by Bentley. Umetsu was happy to

be identified as a follower of Jugaku.²⁹ It is Umetsu who carried out Jugaku’s “long cherished wish to render Blake readable in Japanese by every one.”³⁰ Umetsu translated all of Blake’s writings into Japanese, publishing in 1989 a majestic book in two volumes, *The Complete Works of William Blake*.

Two special Blake issues of *Faunus* in 1976 paid homage to the traditional Japanese way of reading Blake established by the White Birch School. They reprinted essays written in the 1910s through the 1930s by Yanagi, Jugaku, and Makoto Sangu, and devoted many pages to an interview with Bernard Leach concerning the Blake-related activities of the school. But the publication of these special issues can be also understood as taking the final retrospective look at the indigenous reading of Blake, because Japanese scholars have been increasingly practicing Western theoretical methods in the 1980s and 1990s.

Bentley’s reverence for the early Japanese scholars—particularly for Jugaku—is explicitly stated: “The most prodigious scholar of them [Japanese scholars] all, Bunsho Jugaku . . . has thus far (1927-1990) produced some fifty-five works related to William Blake” (xxi). Bentley continues to remark that “the only western scholar who approaches this productivity is Sir Geoffrey Keynes” (xxi). Thus brought into comparative perspective with Western scholars, Bentley’s high estimation of Jugaku might be disturbing to Western scholars, as it is at least to D. W. Dörrbecker, who regards the comment by Bentley as an “evident mistake”: “Since the times of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, members of a younger generation of western Blake scholars, such as Essick and Bentley himself (the latter with more than 80 Blake-related publications to his credit) have established new standards.”³¹ Bentley’s passage, however, pays homage to the long span of Jugaku’s continual efforts to contribute to Blake scholarship by drawing our attention to the range of more than six decades of Jugaku’s activity, “1927-1990,” thus observing a very Japanese institution called seniority. The length of time matters. Speaking of Keynes’s activity, Bentley equally makes a special point of his longevity: “Sir Geoffrey’s first article on Blake was published in 1910, and his last (thus far) appeared almost three-quarters of a century later in 1984.”³² Both Jugaku in Japan and Keynes in the West began their studies on Blake as pioneers when Blake was still a madman whose voice was not heard on the desolate heath, and both continued their studies until recent years, when we are well advised not to be “swept away or drowned in seas of speculation and accomplishment”³³ of Blake-related work.

²³ G. E. Bentley, Jr. *Blake Books Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) 23-24.

²⁴ Yoko Imaizumi, *Brotherhood in Blake: Psychology and Poetics* (diss. 1985, Yale University) and Yukiko Imamura, *Vision and Language of Prophecy in William Blake’s Poetry* (diss. 1991, University of Manitoba).

²⁵ Yanagi, *Complete Writings* 4: 22.

²⁶ Yanagi, *Complete Writings* 4: 627.

²⁷ Yanagi, *Complete Writings* 4: 306.

²⁸ Kimiyoshi Yura, “The Starting Station of Yanagi’s Thought,” in Yanagi, *Complete Writings* 4: 699.

²⁹ Narumi Umetsu, “On Man’s Mental Ability,” *Faunus* 5 (special issue, 1976): 53.

³⁰ Bunsho Jugaku, “Miscellaneous Notes,” *Blake and Whitman* 1 (1931): 36-37.

³¹ D. W. Dörrbecker, “Blake and His Circle: An Annotated Checklist of Recent Publications,” *Blake* 26 (1993): 83.

³² Bentley, *Blake Books Supplement*, 24.

³³ *Ibid.*

It was in fact Jugaku's speculative remark on the significance of Japanese Blake scholarship for Western scholars that triggered Bentley's decision to venture to Japan for the first time in 1970 to acquire information about Japanese publications. The remark runs as follows:

The day will come before long when, I believe, every Western student of Blake will have to learn the Japanese language if he does not wish to remain ignorant of the fruitful works of Japanese scholarship in the field of Blakean literature.³⁴

Bentley's trip in 1970, together with his second trip in 1990, resulted in the publication of *Blake Studies in Japan*.

On the second trip, Bentley had an opportunity to see two exhibitions of Blake's works in Japan. He does not conceal his perplexity to have found that "at the Mingeikan exhibition . . . almost all the enlarged reproductions of Blake's works were themselves made from reproductions, sometimes not very persuasive reproductions, rather than from originals" (xxiii). The Mingeikan is a folkcrafts museum founded by Yanagi, who became more and more involved, after the termination of *Blake and Whitman*, in collecting folkcrafts and preserving his collection in the form of a museum. It is not surprising that Yanagi's museum perpetuates his initial acceptance of reproductions. Bentley notes with regret that "relatively few Japanese scholars work with original Blake books or pictures; Even Dr Jugaku's study of Blake's Notebook was based upon a facsimile rather than the original" (xxii). *William Blake* and *Blake and Whitman* established a practice of using reproductions, for Yanagi, who recognized the crucial significance of studying Blake's visual art, encouraged scholars to use reproductions, which themselves were not easily obtained.

Bentley's veneration for Jugaku contrasts with his reluctance to value highly current Japanese scholarship. He comments, with surprise, that "very few Japanese works are concerned with feminism or homophobia or deconstruction or Communism or Freud, and [that] many seem to be on subjects which absorbed western scholars forty or fifty years ago" (xxii). This observation cannot apply to the circumstances today, though it may have been true some twenty years ago. At least one Japanese scholar expressed the same kind of discontent at the beginning of the 1970s. Yura pointed out, in 1972, the failing Blake industry in postwar Japan: "Yanagi's masterpiece *William Blake* and *Blake's Aphoristic Words* have not lost their impact even today. A little later, Jugaku's *William Blake Bibliography* was outstanding in world scholarship in its time. The postwar Blake studies in Japan, however, have not been prosperous."³⁵ Things have changed since Yura wrote this comment. Feminism, for ex-

ample, came into the realm of Blake scholarship in Japan in the 1980s. It has been providing a theoretical basis for examining representations of the female in Blake's poetry. Keiko Hori's essay, "Oothoon and Mary Wollstonecraft: A Study of *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*" (1984) analyzes how Blake fortunately swerves from Wollstonecraft though he followed her feminist ideas to a certain extent: "Even Mary [Wollstonecraft], who was marked as a radical feminist, based her ideas on reason. Oothoon neither admires reason nor argues about an educational system."³⁶ Masae Kawatsu's "A Speaking Woman in Blake's *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*" (1989) examines the poet's ambivalence towards woman's right to speak: "Unless Theotormon accepts her, Oothoon cannot fully exist as a woman. But if he turns his attention to her and satisfies her, she will no longer have to argue or speak."³⁷ Yoko Imaizumi's "Illness and the Female in Blake's Pickering Manuscript and *The Four Zoas*" (1991) illuminates Blake's repressed desire to assign a heavier task to the female than to the male: "Illness emerges when the self is fallen. In order for a sick woman to be cured, it is necessary for her to empty herself But a woman is expected to annihilate herself to redeem a sick man, though it is he, not she, who is sick."³⁸

These younger scholars do not acknowledge works of fellow Japanese scholars as if there were no Japanese scholarship on Blake; they refer only to Western scholarship. This unfair practice has been widespread among scholars in Japan. It can be taken positively as an indication of thorough permeation of Western scholarship among Japanese scholars. But it reflects, at the same time, the above-mentioned Japanese publication apparatus, which turns Japanese scholars to easily obtainable Western works rather than to poorly circulated Japanese university journals.

Bentley's *Blake Studies in Japan* is a good start for anyone interested in the early blossoming of Blake studies in Japan in the 1910s, the current Japanese scholarship on Blake, Japanese literature influenced by Blake, and cross-cultural studies. It is a far more comprehensive bibliography than any ever made on Japanese Blake scholarship. Only two Japanese journals are tracked by the bibliographers of the MLA International Bibliography: *The Rising Generation* and, occasionally, *Studies in English Literature*. Even the annual checklists compiled by Dörrbecker in *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* largely ignore Japanese scholarship.

³⁴ Keiko Hori, "Oothoon and Mary Wollstonecraft: A Study of *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*," *Bulletin of the English Society, Osaka Kyoiku University* 29 (1984): 40.

³⁵ Masae Kawatsu, "A Speaking Woman in Blake's *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*," *IVY: The Nagoya Review of English Studies* 22 (1989): 43.

³⁶ Yoko Imaizumi, "Illness and the Female in Blake's Pickering Manuscript and *The Four Zoas*," *Studies in Literature and Linguistics, University of Tsukuba* 19 (1991): 30.

³⁴ Bunsho Jugaku, "William Blake and Japan," *The Rising Generation* 103 (1957): 519.

³⁵ Kimiyoshi Yura, *Odd Lectures on European Romantic Literature* (Tokyo: Seidosha, 1972) 142.

Recounting his experiences as a compiler, Dörrbecker emphasizes the significance of an "annotated" bibliography: "In the future, they [annotations] will have to be considered as central to—and, in practice, the *raison d'être* of—the whole endeavor [of compiling a bibliography]."³⁹ If annotated, Bentley's bibliography would be tremendously useful to scholars who are involved in the promotion of global reading of Blake. There is in fact a plan for compiling an annotated bibliography, on CD-ROM, of Japanese Blake scholarship, conceived by Keiko Aoyama, who assisted Bentley in translating/transliterating the material for his bibliography. Bentley is to be congratulated for his commitment to international scholarship in bringing Japanese achievement to attention, and any future bibliographic work of Japanese scholarship will be made on the basis of *Blake Studies in Japan*.

William Blake, *The Early Illuminated Books*.

Edited with introductions and notes by
Morris Eaves, Robert N. Essick, and Joseph
Viscomi. Princeton: The William Blake Trust/
Princeton University Press, 1993. Blake's
Illuminated Books Volume 3. General Editor
David Bindman. 286 pp. \$75.

Reviewed by MICHAEL FERBER

This is an altogether splendid volume of plates and commentary. It covers all of Blake's "illuminated" work from 1788 to 1793 except for the *Songs*, which made up Volume 2. Of the three volumes I have seen (there will be six in all, not five, as originally announced), this is the most interesting and original in its commentary, though like the others it tries to be catholic and fair in its citations of scholarship. Unlike the first two volumes, however, it escapes serious damage from sleepy compositors and proofreaders. It gives us several of the works we are most likely to teach after the *Songs*: *Thel*, *Marriage*, and *Visions*, as well as the early tracts *All Religions are One* and *There is No Natural Religion*. It is too expensive to assign to students, but for almost any course on Blake professors must see that their library has it on reserve; for specialists the commentary alone is worth the price.

I have not tried to compare the plates with the originals, but they seem about as faithful as one could ask. Color variations are subtle, and nothing seems either too bright or too subdued. And the publishers have been generous. Besides the eight plates of *Thel* copy J, for example, we are given six supplementary plates: two proof copies of plates 2 and 3,

plate 6 of copy K, plate 7 of copy I, plate 8 of copy N, and pencil sketches of plates 6 and 7. There are particular reasons for including these (a bit of design or text is added), but it is also good to have them just for the differences in coloring, so a student will see that even in general impact Blake's versions of the same work differ dramatically. So with the other works: there are 14 extra plates for *Marriage* and 11 for *Visions*. We get four versions of *Marriage* 21, the wonderful nude male who reappears in *America* 8, and three versions of the great frontispiece of *Visions*, one of which is reproduced at about twice the original size on the dust jacket of the volume. Even with no scholarly questions in mind it is rewarding to gaze at the different versions of these designs.

The introduction presents the most lucid and succinct summary of Blake's methods of book production that I have seen. It stresses that Blake composed designs directly on the plate and thus did not need a fair copy, though he manifestly had pencil sketches of many if not all of them. The fundamental unit of production was not the individual copy of a work but the printing and coloring "session," which typically involved two copies and sometimes more. Different ink colors might be used in one session. "The products of each printing session correspond to an 'edition' of a book, while each ink colour can be considered a different 'issue' of the edition" (11). These categories reflect the brilliant reconstructive research of Joseph Viscomi, who elaborates his argument in *Blake and the Idea of the Book* (Princeton, 1993).

One result of his researches is a new approach to *There is No Natural Religion*. "Viscomi's recent discoveries" (22), as detailed in his book, showed that 50 of the 153 known impressions of the 20 plates of *NNR* were not done by Blake. The authentic ones represent just two sessions, one c. 1794 and one c. 1795. From the six copies that Viscomi determined stem from the first session, the same eight plates are lacking (that is, the bulk of the "b" series as usually printed now: b1-2, 5-11, including the one missing from all copies, b5). In other words, Blake printed and colored six sets with the same 12 plates, a1-9, b3, b4, and b12. It strongly appears that Blake's intention, at that time, was to make an independent work out of the two sequences he had engraved as early as 1788. Viscomi et al. go on to argue that there is no sharp inconsistency in combining the three "b" plates with the "a" plates, and that indeed "The 'a' part cannot stand alone; without its second half, the irony would not be apparent and Blake would have appeared to contemporary readers as an advocate of the very position he is attacking," namely the rational empiricism of Bacon and Locke (25). We are given a new work, and the plates are here so arranged. (The c. 1795 printing is the "b" series with the "a" title page.)

It is not to question Viscomi's research to wonder if it is so clear that the "a" series cannot stand alone. A *reductio ad absurdum* argument can be quite straight-faced; it needn't

³⁹ Dörrbecker, "Blake and His Circle," *Blake* 26 (1993): 76.

pounce on a conclusion as in b3 and b4. The fourth through sixth propositions (a7-9), involving thought and desires (e.g., "Mans desires are limited by his perceptions"), might well have struck a contemporary as evidently false without explicit prompting. The "a" series might (originally) have been intended to convey through a mixture of plausibly Lockean ideas and ironic distortions of them the sheer paltriness of such a philosophy, giving us not so much a logical absurdity as an outrage to the human spirit. This is all we can grind out of Locke's mill, it seems to say: Are you satisfied? The editors later concede, somewhat inconsistently, that "Blake exaggerates (and thereby parodies) their method [Bacon's and Locke's]" (28) and that "Even a reader favourably disposed toward Bacon and Locke might begin to suspect [with a8 and a9] that this strait jacket has been fitted a bit too tightly" (32). I agree. By 1794, it may be, Blake lost his nerve a little, and added the three "b" plates to make sure his readers got the point. In any case we do seem to have an evolving intention, and if we are to respect that intention then future editions of Blake should print three sequences, the "a" and "b" sequences (as in Erdman 1982) and the 1794 sequence.

With the otherwise very helpful commentary on *All Religions are One* I have only one quibble. The editors take the "Argument" as a statement no empiricist would question—for they take "experiment" and "experiences" to be used in the modern (Baconian) sense—concerning "the true method of knowledge"; "but Blake immediately begins to overturn that easy assumption by introducing as his first principle 'the Poetic Genius'" (29). I think Blake is slyer here, and is not exactly overturning his assumption. He may be trying to lure an empiricist to agree with his argument, but Blake can agree with it, too, for he is also using "experiment" and "experience" in the older and broader sense found in the language of religious enthusiasm. As William Haller writes, "the Preachers made experiment a familiar word on the plane of religion and morals long before it became supreme on that of natural science" (*The Rise of Puritanism* [NY: Columbia, 1938] 299). As an example from the radical sects, take Gerrard Winstanley, who wrote in 1649 that the Scriptures are a record of the "pure experience" of the prophets and apostles, and in reading them we gain "an experimental persuasion, grounded upon sight and feeling of the spirit of truth" (George Sabine, ed., *The Works of Gerrard Winstanley* [Ithaca: Cornell, 1941] 128-29). Methodists in Blake's day had "experience meetings" where people gave personal testimonies. Though Blake does not say that the Poetic Genius experiences anything, it is not inconsistent with his formulation to say that the Poetic Genius enables us to experience things not dreamt of in the philosophy of Bacon and Locke. The empiricists experience through the chinks of their caverns: we, at our best, experience through fourfold vision.

Most Blake scholars, I suspect, are closet commentators, near kin to classicists and medievalists who dream of producing the Great Commentary on their cherished author,

line by line and word by word. I for one have had to struggle, not always successfully, against an impulse to shovel gobbets out of my notebook of hard-earned annotations into my articles and books. What fun to have the license to fill 15 large pages with comments on *The!* But you thereby expose yourself to the jealous scrutiny of the commentary guild. Let me say, then, before I put forth my own additions and corrections, that the commentaries on *The!*, *Visions*, and *Marriage* are all excellent; I might have done them a little differently, but I could not have done them better.

I was a little surprised to see the point that "By referring to herself in the third person (4:11; see also 5:3), *The!* also separates herself from herself, as though consciousness without identity leads to a grammatical expression of alienation" (75). (The plate numbers here are two higher than the standard numbering, and there are four instances, not two, of *The!*'s calling herself "*The!*.") Aside from the fact that my two-year-old daughter, not yet self-alienated, calls herself by her name, I find this very far-fetched. What do we say about *Lyca*, then, who calls herself "*Lyca*" four times in a shorter poem, and uses "her" to mean "my"? Or *Oothoon*, who calls herself "*Oothoon*" six times? It is also awkward that *The!* drops that habit in the latter three plates. This idea should have been laid to rest, not preserved in a commentary that will be much consulted for a long time.

The discussion of the titlepage design for *The!* leaves out something important about the willow, and it strikes me as misleading to say that the "entwined vine forms a traditional emblem of marriage or education" (81). That may be true (though marriage and education are quite different things), but it ignores the symbolism of the willow by itself. The willow means just the opposite of marriage. In a tradition going back to Homer, the willow is "worne of forlorne Par-amours," in Spenser's phrase (*FQ* 1.1.9). It is described thus throughout Shakespeare: the report of Ophelia's drowning, for example, begins with a willow, and Desdemona sings of a willow before she is murdered by Othello. In Blake's day, "she is in her willows" meant "she is mourning her husband or betrothed." Willows were also frequently carved on tombstones; thus the tombstone shape that the willow describes on the title page is probably not our fancy. Indeed the sole willow in Homer is at the entrance to Hades.

In the "Notes" to *The!* (108f) I would add the following:
4.4 (=2.4) "crave" deserves a note. It means "ask" or "beg"; the "voiceless" are those who "cannot crave." See *King Edward the Third* 6:45-46: "nor shall the young / Crave or be heard" (E 438). Joseph of Arimathea "craved the body of Jesus" from Pilate (Mark 15.43). Yeats may have been inspired by Blake's line in "To the Rose upon the Rood of Time": "Lest I no more hear the common things that crave; / The weak worm hiding down in its small cave, / The field mouse running by me in the grass."

4.7 (=2.7) "taints": cf. *Lycidas* 46: "Or Taint-worm to the weanling Herds that graze." "Taint" by itself could mean "taint-worm."

6.6 (=4.6) "cherish" means "make warm" or "keep warm." Cf. *PL* 10.1068-69 ("some better warmth to cherish / Our limbs benumbed") and several occurrences in the AV.

8.1 (=6.1) "northern bar": cf. Job 17.16 ("the bars of the pit"); also *Auguries* 42 ("polar bar") and *Milton* 23.42 ("Satans Bar"). Perhaps also relevant are the "exclusive bars" of "membrane, joint, or limb" in *PL* 8.625; the editors cite this for the final line of *Thel* but treat "bars" as if it were a verb.

The editors make a good case against the standard view that the final plate of *Thel*, which seems different in tone and imagery from the others, was engraved two years after they were. The evidence rests in part on the changing shapes of the letter "g," David Erdman's discovery, and the editors show that Erdman's argument as to dating *Thel* and *Marriage* can no longer be sustained. There is also no direct evidence of an alternative ending. They acknowledge that Blake may have had difficulty coming up with an ending to the poem, but they deny there was an appreciable delay. We do not have a case like Wordsworth's "Intimations" ode. Those for whom the process of production, as evidence of Blake's intentions, is crucial to interpreting the work must take note. Those for whom it is the final product that counts (perhaps following Blake's intention there as well!), are left where they were, trying to make sense of a somewhat baffling ending.

The editors, following more work by Viscomi, argue that *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* was begun and very likely completed in 1790; Blake did not take until 1793 to do it, as most scholars have argued or assumed. He worked within discrete textual units, such as plates 16-20, probably did not produce them in the final order (departed from in copy G in any event), and could have assembled them in almost any order. In a recent talk at the "Blake 1794/1994" conference at St. Mary's College, Viscomi gave more details of the production of *Marriage*, and made a case that Blake may have intended one or more parts of it as a separate pamphlet or broadside. I couldn't help feeling a little surge of satisfaction, as I have recently claimed that *Marriage* has very little structure despite many ingenious efforts to reveal it. As an anti-intentionalist I would not rest my claim on evidence from the production process, but those who do not draw the line where I do should take careful note of the new evidence. (Viscomi is at work on a second book, which will expand and occasionally correct his first.) The editors do find a category for the form of *Marriage*, the "category called Menippean or Varronian satire" (118), but it is safe to say that no one has ever found a structure common to these satires.

The "Contexts and Themes" section of the introduction to *Marriage* is terrific. Among other merits it has a rich though concise discussion of just what it was in Swedenborg's style and beliefs that roused Blake's faculties to act. Their notes on the "Memorable Fancy" of plate 15, the "Printing house in Hell," are interesting, if not quite convincing, as

they have a good go at reading it as an allegory of the phases of Blake's printing method. In the commentary the point I missed most (perhaps they felt it was too obvious) is that the *Marriage* is not really a marriage after all, whatever the titlepage design may suggest. It is certainly not a marriage of two equals, resulting in a higher synthesis: it is more like a spiritual war, where the Angels lose every encounter or (once) convert to Devilhood. I thought the editors went over the top in suggesting that the titlepage design describes a large human face (131), but the road of excess, after all, leads you know where.

There are no surprises in the discussion of the production of *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, but the commentary is exemplary. I only missed an acknowledgment of the importance of the subject of epistemology, and of the startling turn in Oothoon's speech (at 5:30 = 2:30) from her claim to be pure after her rape to a tirade against empiricism and the five senses. To work out what these seemingly unconnected topics are doing in the same speech, I think, is pretty much to work out the whole poem.

Throughout their commentaries and notes the editors are generous in acknowledging scholarship and admitting many incompatible points as worth considering. Such hospitableness does not demand that we embrace "interpretive multiplicity" and refuse to resolve it into a unity. "The conclusion that *Thel* offers no such unity would be unsettling for readers of logical arguments," the editors conclude, "but need not be for readers of poems" (81), as if Blake deployed his logical arguments for the aesthetic delectation of poem readers. Undecidable interpretive multiplicity is now so ubiquitous a touchstone of literary criticism that it has grown invisible. This is not the place to argue it out, but I would at least ask the editors what Blake would think of it. Or of this: "ambivalence, both visual and linguistic, is one of Blake's most effective satirical tools [in *Marriage*]—an infernal tool, because heaven is not built on ambivalence" (130). I think Blake's response to this would not be ambivalent at all. Fortunately the editors don't hesitate to pass positive judgments and to rule out some interpretations as mistaken, and in this more Blakean spirit they have produced an outstanding commentary.

I have noticed the following typographical errors:

- p. 56: texts for plates b4 and b12 are transposed.
- p. 79: the Greek word should end in a nu, not an upsilon (and "Thalia" the noun is not strictly speaking *from* the verb form "thallein").
- p. 225 near the bottom: a line (or more) has dropped out.
- p. 228, l. 22: "entagled" for "entangled."
- p. 231, l. 13 from bottom: the accent is wrong.

William Blake, *Milton a Poem and the Final Illuminated Works: The Ghost of Abel[,] on Homer's Poetry [and] On Virgil[,] Laocoön.*

Edited with Introductions and Notes by Robert N. Essick and Joseph Viscomi. Princeton: William Blake Trust/Princeton University Press, 1993. Blake's Illuminated Books Volume 5. General Editor David Bindman. 286 pp. \$65.

Reviewed by DENNIS M. READ

From the 1950s to the early 70s, the William Blake Trust published more than a dozen beautiful facsimile volumes of Blake's works. This labor of love, carried out by the Trianon Press under the direction of Arnold D. Fawcus, made available for the first time the corpus of Blake's verbal-visual art as he had created it. The volumes, however, were published in very limited editions and carried price tags of hundreds and even thousands of dollars. Consequently, their purchasers were, by and large, college and university libraries. Most Blake scholars today cut their eyeteeth on these volumes in the rare books rooms of their graduate school libraries.

Now, in the 90s, we have from the William Blake Trust, in collaboration with Princeton University Press, a new series of Blake's works in photo-offset reproduction. While they are not as hand-crafted and bibliophilisticly precious as the first series, they are more affordable—certainly not cheap, but within the range of most Blakeans. *Milton* is the fifth volume. The others are *Jerusalem* (1991, reviewed in *Blake* fall 1992), *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1991, reviewed in *Blake* fall 1992), *All Religions are One, There is No Natural Religion, Book of Thel, Marriage of Heaven and Hell, and Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1993), and *Urizen, Ahania, Book of Los, America, Europe, and Song of Los* (forthcoming in two volumes, 1995). The recent release of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* in paperback induces the hope that the other volumes will follow suit; then even grad students will be able to buy them and instructors will be able to use them as texts without a guilty conscience. The entire project, with its uniform volumes, meticulously edited texts, extensive commentary, and glosses on critical studies, might be likened to the huge Library of America.

The editors of *Milton*, Robert N. Essick and Joseph Viscomi, are well credentialed for this undertaking. Essick is an accomplished commentator on Blake's meaning and method and the hands-down expert on Blake's engraving techniques, as well as a major Blake collector. Viscomi has established himself as the pre-eminent historian of Blake's artistic production, and the fruits of his landmark study,

Blake and the Idea of the Book, enrich this project. One example is in the discussion on pages 35-41 of the date of publication for *Milton* and the ordering of its plates. The upshot of this discussion is that Blake may not have printed a complete *Milton* until 1810-11, much later than previously postulated.

Only four copies of *Milton* are known to exist, and each is at least slightly different from the others in the number and arrangement of its plates. In 1967 the William Blake Trust chose to reproduce copy D, now in the Library of Congress, for its Trianon Press edition. As the alphabetical letter implies, it was thought to be the latest of the four, probably printed in 1818. Essick and Viscomi have chosen to reproduce copy C, now in the New York Public Library, and they argue that it is the final *Milton*; furthermore, because he did not sell it until 1826, that it embodies "Blake's final intentions" (41). (Kay Parkhurst Easson and Roger R. Easson reproduced copy B, now in the Huntington Library, for an edition published by Shambhala/Random House in 1978. Although the plates are less than full size, the volume is handy for quick comparisons. It still can be found in used bookstores.)

With its 40-odd to 50 plates, *Milton* is a hefty work, second in length only to *Jerusalem*. It is also a dense and confounding work. With its confusing narrative structure, constantly shifting cast of characters, and geographical and cosmological leapfrogging, it challenges the reader, sometimes beyond patience. Few, if any, in Blake's own day were up to this challenge. In our day, however, readers have become more accustomed to discontinuous narratives. No longer do commentators attempt to crack the code or come up with the definitive reading of this work. In their introduction, Essick and Viscomi provide a summary of the story in *Milton*:

Book 1. Milton leaves heaven and returns to earth to do battle with forces opposed to art and the human spirit.

Book 2. Milton's female counterpart, Ololon, returns to earth to unite with Milton in preparation for apocalypse. (9)

Those who have struggled with the meaning of the work might even argue about these descriptions of its actions. But none can deny that they are helpful. Also helpful is the discussion about biblical allegory and Blake's mythological creations (such as Ololon). The introduction gives the neophyte reader a foothold and the experienced reader a review of salient matters concerning the work.

Essick and Viscomi also provide an elucidating discussion of the genesis and history of *Milton*, as well as a careful analysis of the dating and pagination of the surviving copies. The reproduced plates of *Milton* follow. One can argue that the paper should be less glossy and more matte, like the paper Blake himself used; one can maintain that the dimensions of the pages should be the same as the original and

not larger; one can quibble over the authenticity of the coloring. No matter; the reproductions serve well and probably bring most of us as close to the original as we ever will be. The plates are supplemented with plates from other copies of *Milton* that Blake chose to exclude from copy C, as well as several sketches and engravings of related figures and designs.

Following the plates is the text of the poem in letterpress. Essick and Viscomi have minutely examined Blake's engraved text and consequently have dissented from David V. Erdman's version in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* on numerous small matters, for instance *ann*, not *can* on 42:30. (This difference, Essick and Viscomi note, comes from an inadvertence in etching, which Blake corrected in ink on copy B.) Other differences involve capitals instead of lowercase letters and colons instead of exclamation points. Along with the text are voluminous notes, which often surpass in length the page they accompany. They are impressively inclusive of *Milton* scholarship, and they are evenhanded, favoring no critical approach over others. A small oversight is the omission of Paul Youngquist's *Madness and Blake's Myth* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989) from "Works Cited," although the study is referred to on page 163.

A bonus to the volume are reproductions of three late Blake works: the two-plate *Ghost of Abel* and the single plates, *On Homers Poetry* [and] *On Virgil* and *Laocoön*, along with associated paintings, engravings, drawings, and sketches. These are slight works when compared with *Milton*, but worthy of study nevertheless. Essick and Viscomi find in *The Ghost of Abel* Blake's themes of vengeance, atonement, and apocalypse writ small and assert it "is about the ramifications of the murder, about the various responses to the material fact of death—that is, to 'Nature' (1: 2-4) itself" (222). They are more tentative in identifying the figures on the plates; the commentary is thick with such qualifiers as "may," "perhaps," "suggests," and "appears." In *On Homers Poetry* and *On Virgil* Essick and Viscomi find Blake ambivalent toward Homer and disparaging of Virgil. *Laocoön* has to do with "the contrast between what we think we know and what we are being told" (232). Essick and Viscomi choose to arrange the inscriptions swirling around the figures on the plate in an order quite different from Erdman's, attempting to approximate a clockwise arrangement. Erdman's is a "roughly thematic sequence" (E 814). The effort is similar to mapping the globe on a flat piece of paper—that is, not entirely a success. More successful is their argument that the date of composition of *Laocoön* should be 1826, not 1820.

All in all, there is much to praise, little to question, and less to criticize in this splendid volume. Its greatest virtue is in making available to a larger audience something remarkably close to Blake's own hand. And yet there is an irony in this effort. Most of this volume is taken up with the work of the editors; perhaps one-sixth of it is unadulterated Blake.

Blake, of course, engraved and published his works in order to reach his audience directly, without the agencies of editors, publishers, and booksellers. Yet that, we find, is the only way almost all of us can ever hope to know him. Under such conditions, we must be grateful to Essick and Viscomi for providing such an excellent interface.

Molly Anne Rothenberg, *Rethinking Blake's Textuality*. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1993. \$34.50.

Reviewed by HARRIET LINKIN

Given the deconstructive approach Molly Anne Rothenberg takes in her informed discussion of Blake's textuality, her first sentence appropriately points to a gap: "In the past decade a gap has opened up in Blake studies between commentators who continue to read Blake's poetry as a *work* and those who read it as a *text*, to use Roland Barthes' distinction" (1). While this gap still looms in some critical circles, it is no longer the most telling one in Blake studies or other fields of literary analysis, where the greater gulf that divides the deconstructive approaches of the 70s and 80s from the new historical/cultural-materialist approaches of the 80s and 90s now provokes alternate readings of literary works as *texts* or *sites*. *Rethinking Blake's Textuality* makes an admirable effort to bridge this gulf by demonstrating how Blake as "poststructuralist" responds to and critiques the late eighteenth-century philosophical assumptions that subsequently shape twentieth-century schools of thought. Rothenberg distinguishes her project from comparable endeavors to locate poststructuralist tenets in Blake's texts by looking at contemporary documents Blake would have known to historicize what she defines as his position: "Like the chaos theory of present-day science, Blake's philosophical inquiry into the conditions by which texts/subjects/objects are constituted as meaningful subverts linear and totalizing rationality" (2).

The introduction carefully situates Rothenberg's work in the school of Blake criticism most congenial to her approach, that practiced by Nelson Hilton, Thomas Vogler, Donald Ault, Paul Mann, and Jerome McGann.¹ Her contribution seeks to provide for *Jerusalem* what Ault furnishes for *The Four Zoas*, though in less "exhaustively minute" a fashion, offering close readings of local examples from *Jerusalem* to reveal the poem's strategic subversion of all absolutisms in-

¹ The text itself, however, most frequently refers to Leslie Tannenbaum, Joseph Wittreich, Leopold Damrosch, and Peter Otto, as if without these Bacon Newton Locke contraries there is no progression.

stituted by the Enlightenment's project of rationalization. She rightly cautions that we not view the sources introduced (such as Alexander Geddes, Thomas Gray, or F. A. Nitsch) as authorities who stabilize meaning but rather as participants in a discursive arena. She also asserts we need not read Blake's poem (or be overly familiar with Blake scholarship) to follow her argument, which strikes me as unfortunate, as then we must rely on her authority, but she means, of course, to underscore her own non-reading:

Ultimately, then, my argument seeks to make a contribution to contemporary poststructuralist thought as it engages questions of agency and political implication by means of a reading of *Jerusalem*, rather than to proffer an "interpretation" of the poem or an account of what Blake actually intended. (4)

This statement is followed by one that insists Blake is neither an advocate of liberationist politics nor a prophet of utopian Christian fellowship, and that Blake critics should recognize how Blake rejects all such positions:

critics who claim that Blake aims to redeem human society through the transformation of the consciousnesses of individual readers have not taken into account Blake's analysis of the evils produced by utopianism and have misunderstood his evaluations of "possessive selfhood." (4)

Despite the series of caveats, such statements do require authority to pass judgment (and veer into the quicksand that fills the pit of intentionality).

Rather than back away from the edge, Rothenberg ventures further out: "So I part company with most Blake scholars, including many poststructuralist critics of Blake, who insist that Blake wishes to give his readers access to a transcendental realm" (4). Whether or not this oppositional framing of her position indicates true friendship or an overdetermined gesture, she casts her challenge with a reckless defiance I respect, despite my own desire to part company at this juncture as just such a critic; time and again I resisted this book, which I view as a measure of its value. All the more courageous that she follows this assertion with a repudiation of her own previously published self in the best Blakean mode of casting out error.² Most important of all is her stipulating that she is only looking at *Jerusalem* to showcase Blake's refusal of all authorities, even those we liberally think of as "good." One question never addressed, however, is this: if she is not reading *Jerusalem* but offering methodology, does she mean us to extend her argument to all of Blake's texts? And does such extension effect a totalizing absolutism?

² Of the three longer sections that rework material from articles published in *Word and Image* (1987), and *Genre* (1990), two now arrive at different conclusions.

The argument itself opens with a quote from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (on Milton as "a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it" E 35) to establish that "the distinguishing characteristic of true Poets is their ignorance of the source and authority of their work" (9). So too *Jerusalem* on the matter of authority and origin, where Rothenberg points to Blake's typical narrative deflections to show his constructive problematizing of authority: Blake's preface claims the poem was dictated, a narrative voice identifies the savior dictating a song, the narrator says a theme calls him, and the text's last words identify some or all of the preceding as a song of Jerusalem, which recursively complicates the preface's discussion of tone and stylistic choice. More innovative than the insightful display of narrativity is the instructive turn to historicized religious and philosophical debates. She outlines the significance contemporary biblical criticism holds for Blake, when the basis for scriptural authenticity shifts from prophetic truth guaranteed by divine revelation to inspired interpretation marked by artful construction. Once Higher Criticism conjoins inspiration with rhetorical strategies, Blake sees "the Bible [as] a historical record of the means by which 'sacred' texts are constructed to oppress" (18). Rothenberg draws usefully and generously from prior arguments and primary sources offered by Tannenbaum, Wittreich, and McGann to document Blake's familiarity with Higher Criticism.³ The strength of her analysis manifests more powerfully in her own inspired interpretations, such as the lively reading of Matthew on Jesus's authority, where the parable of the sheep and goats assists Blake's theory of authorship by undercutting the idea of totalizing authority, because the parable authorizes a kind of individual participatory interpretation that unfixes universal authority.

Blake rejects the guarantee of transcendent authority to authenticate interpretation as well as the Dissenter belief in an immanent experience of God's intention through the individual's perceptual faculties; instead,

the individual can learn to perceive the mediations that make perceptions seem not only natural and unmediated but possible at all . . . that perception *could not*

³ I find it troubling that some primary materials are cited from secondary sources, such as Wittreich citing Pareus or Newton (25), or Tannenbaum citing Howes (22-23); while the bibliography does offer a primary source for Howes, none such is proffered for Newton or Pareus. As I give voice to my pedantic spectre, I will add that the bibliography not only contains errors (Thomas Frosch is renamed "Douglas") but also cites far too many works that receive no mention in or appear to have an impact on the text. Most works cited date from 1987 or earlier (except for Peter Otto's 1991 *Constructive Vision and Visionary Deconstruction* and Katherine Hayles's 1990 *Chaos Bound: Entropy, Information and Complexity in Contemporary Literature*); one cannot help but wonder what effect Robert Essick's 1989 *William Blake and the Language of Adam* or Vincent De Luca's 1991 *Words of Eternity* might have had.

take place without the prior mediation of ideologically constituted interpretations—in effect, that all perception traces the lineaments of its constitutive ideological assumptions—provides the key to Blakean textuality. (37)

Even so fine a critic as Northrop Frye fails to understand how ideological interpretation effects perception when he designates Blake's Hallelujah-Chorus perception of the sun as more imaginative than the duller seeing of the sun as like a guinea: for Rothenberg (and Otto), both heavenly host and lowly guinea establish metaphoric comparisons that emanate from ideological systems (44). While Blake views perception as ideological interpretation, he never loses sight of his bounding line's essentializing capacity to create form. Rothenberg's excellent exposition of several techniques Blake employs to disrupt his bounding line's potential for authorizing absolutisms, via punctuation, for instance, or intertextuality, brings the first of the book's two parts to conclusion. Part One/De-Signing Authority (9-61) focuses most carefully on Blake's projection of himself as inspired author in terms of changing definitions of inspiration and scriptural authenticity, so that Blake's intertextual citations of Gray's "The Bard" reflect on scriptural authors who establish assumptive authenticity through citation.

Part Two/The Subject of Discourse (65-137) situates Blake's subversive tactics among such architects of thought as Augustine, Kant, Husserl and Hume to consider how Blake undermines the totalizing effects of hermeneutics, epistemology, phenomenology, typology, and narrativity. A comparison of Blake and Augustine suggests "Blake's practice is Augustine's without God" (65) functioning as guarantor of transcendental signification to stabilize meaning. Rothenberg's elegant discussion of *Jerusalem's* opening as demonstration contends that most Blake criticism traditionally reads the scene as a dialogue between a savior and Albion, whereas local textual disruptions show the potentiality of multiple vantage points. More specific attention to other readers of *Jerusalem* might have substantiated this broad claim in helpful ways. As Augustine, so Kant: Blake affirms the "Kantian insight that mind resembles world because mind constitutes world" (82) but whereas Kant fends off charges of solipsism through a "turn to transcendent subjectivity and universal moral laws" (82-83), Blake presents a discursive formation of mind that produces transformative subjectivity. Rothenberg's treatment of plate 97 to evidence transformative subjectivity displays her fine critical imagination at work in identifying the plate as a scene of reading the viewer reads, with variant light sources that both suggest and offset centralized perspective: "The plate thematizes and dramatizes the necessity for a continual movement of displacement in order to subvert the bid for ultimate determinacy that attends the centralized subject's repression of its own limitations" (96).

Another superior local reading shows how typology's defense against the solipsism of phenomenism employs "Augustinian tropological strategies to interpret Christ's life as the *forma perfecta* of every life" (98) but thereby depends on circular reasoning, when Rothenberg looks at plates 61-62 for the story of Joseph and Mary told to Jerusalem as a means of her understanding herself (even as Jerusalem's story serves as paradigm for Joseph and Mary). Jerusalem not only sees the tautology of typological configuration, but also the range of types available that might supply and thereby destabilize meaning: "In biblical typology the value of the event proposed as the paradigm is known in advance, while in Blake's view that value changes with each reader, with each context" (106). The individual's seeming dependence on memory for personal identity is equally fictive or narrativized, as the two "authorized" locations for plate 29/33 suggest in undermining the referent for the opening identity pronoun "He." Rothenberg begins the kind of "exhaustive" but playful reading of indeterminacies that brings out the best in Hilton, Ault and Vogler to demonstrate the sorts of tautologies or complex circular reasonings that effect narrative causalities: "The 'authority' of the voice requires that 'causes,' which are in fact a product of the activity of the authoritative voice, appear to predate the narrative" (124).

These few important close readings beautifully ground Rothenberg's astute but sometimes theory-thick discussion of philosophical and religious contemporary contexts to compensate for whatever imperfections the book contains. Perhaps I betray my own hopeless desire for meaning when I confess what I would like from Rothenberg is an extended reading of *Jerusalem* that displays her sound method at work, decoding and recoding Blake's complex textual subversions of authority. She is indeed a sensitive "Reader! [lover] of books!" whose interpretive focus would bring us further along the road of understanding, even or especially a nontotalizing one, as we come to understand how Blake's textuality exposes the search for mastery as

a narrative of "errors": this is the "story" of *Jerusalem*. At any moment in the search, the reading subject can acknowledge the structure of what it has produced, a structure that articulates disjunct, incommensurable, or competing systems as though they derive from a transcendental subject and form a coherent totality. (132)

George Anthony Rosso, Jr., *Blake's Prophetic Workshop: A Study of The Four Zoas*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1993. 208 pp., 9 pls. \$36.50.

Reviewed by ANDREW LINCOLN

This is the first extensive study of *The Four Zoas* to relate the prophetic form of the narrative methodically to developments in the mainstream of eighteenth-century British and European culture. Rosso argues that the contending strands of Blake's narrative embody the divisions of a culture and society "adrift in a world without economic or transcendental guarantees." His study identifies two areas of contemporary thought as having special relevance: the struggle between biblical and scientific models of creation in the religious poetry of the eighteenth century; and the Enlightenment critique of the Bible's prefigurative form and language. It treats these two areas separately, moving in each case from a general discussion of the historical context to a detailed reading of the narrative.

Rosso's exploration of the first area focuses on the long poem of eighteenth-century Christian apologetics, which he sees as a "neglected but seminal" field for the study of Blake's poem. In a survey which includes Thomson's *The Seasons*, Pope's *Essay on Man*, and Young's *Night Thoughts*, he considers the importance of the Newtonian cosmology in the poets' theology, and briefly identifies some of the developments that "put eighteenth-century apologetics on the road to the internalized creation of Blake and the Romantic poets" (in particular Lowth's study of the poetics of biblical prophecy, and Alexander Geddes's account of Genesis as a "composite" text). Blake, writing in the wake of these and other (less clearly identified) factors, inherited "a cosmological system in collapse." Accordingly, he adopts the biblical cosmology as his model but "problematizes his source, repeating the Creation in various frames, depicting it from multiple perspectives, to indicate its 'fallen,' i.e., time-bound status."

In examining the second area, Rosso outlines a history of "the crucial seventeenth- and eighteenth-century religious debates that shape Blake's use of biblical typology." The survey considers the pressure exerted on the prefigurative language of the Bible by figures such as Bayle and the English Deists, and then touches on the responses of those who defended and modified typology, including antiquarians (such as William Stukeley and Jacob Bryant) and the German "higher critics." In Rosso's view, Blake resembles his German contemporaries (notably Herder) who "avoid reducing history to the empirical by raising the fact-claim of an event into the higher category of *understanding*." Since the

"fact-claim" is transformed rather than abandoned, an "emphasis on historical actuality remains crucial to Blake," whose narrative at times closely follows the linear development of biblical history (so that, for example, the temple building in Night II "ranges over Old Testament history from the rise of monarchy to Solomon's reign, roughly the period from 1200 to 900 B.C."). But although this linear development is discernable, the narrative is actually a "simulacrum of sequence," because "typological repetition neutralizes chronology and abandons causal links between events in favor of repeated type scenes." Such repetitions are part of "Blake's strategy for approximating simultaneity in his narrative." And so at one point Jerusalem may represent "not only the biblical Jerusalem of 1000 B.C. and, perhaps, 70 A.D., but also the contemporary eighteenth-century 'heavenly city' to be built among England's dark satanic mills." Past events are presented so as "to trigger their typical or figural meaning," activating the past "through the *kerygmatic* or transactive nature of prophetic rhetoric: readers must 'witness' the intrusion of spiritual agency within the text, within their own lives, and within history."

This view of the poem's method clearly determines Rosso's view of its conclusion: "Blake's hope is that, once his audience (re)learns to read history figuratively, the power of Rahab, or the whole system of natural religion, will self-destruct"—an event shown in the conclusion of Night VIII. In Night IX, accordingly, the representations of violence lose something of their actuality, since Blake continually emphasizes their symbolic nature, "translating the literal war of nations into a war of contending perspectives." It is an interpretation that seems to hand history over almost entirely to the process of writing and reading.

Rosso is theoretically informed, and handles complicated ideas deftly. Few who read his account of his chosen contexts will doubt their general relevance to Blake's poem. But some of the assumptions and methods involved seem questionable. The long poem that he cites as "seminal" does not assume as much importance in his detailed reading as we are led to expect, in spite of a determined attempt to establish the "generic relation" of Blake's narratives "to the graveyard tradition of Young's *Night Thoughts*." Perhaps this is not really surprising, given the manifestly encyclopedic nature of *The Four Zoas*. The discussion of biblical typology is developed with considerable subtlety—but the comparison with the higher critics seems to me pressed too hard. Against Rosso's claim that in approaching the Bible an "emphasis on historical actuality remains crucial to Blake," one might set some of Blake's own comments:

If Moses did not write the history of his acts, it takes away the authority altogether it ceases to be history & becomes a Poem of probable impossibilities fabricated for pleasure as moderns say but I say by Inspiration (E 616). I cannot conceive the Divinity of the . . . Bible to consist . . . in the historical evidence which may be all

false in the eyes of one man & true in the eyes of another. (E 618)

The statements will no doubt bear more than one interpretation. To me they don't suggest a need to emphasize "historical actuality" in order to transform it; instead they suggest that the "fact-claim" of the Bible is an irrelevance. They seem to undermine, that is, one of the foundations on which Rosso has based his reading.

There will always be differences of opinion about such statements, and about the most rewarding way of reading Blake's narratives (let's hope so). One of the agreeable features of Rosso's book is its flexibility and tolerance of other views. The flexibility of his method appears in his adaptation of, among other things, Northrop Frye's theory of the "Orc cycle," Jackie DiSalvo's application of the social history of Old Testament culture, and David Erdman's method of relating the poem to contemporary events. Apart from this incidental introduction to the larger field of *Four Zoas* criticism, Rosso's book has other features that will make it useful to new readers. It begins with a lucid explanation of the special problems associated with the manuscript; it provides a succinct account of the critical reception of the poem; it ends with a brief commentary on the drawings. It is a study which makes Blake's narrative seem less eccentric, more clearly of its time, and in doing so it should help readers to make up their own minds about Blake's visions of creation and history.

Steven Vine, *Blake's Poetry: Spectral Visions*.
New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. xv + 194
pp., 16 pls. \$45.

Reviewed by JANET WARNER

We've had the Visionary Blake, the Dangerous Blake, and now the Ambiguous Blake. Steven Vine states at the outset that his book examines Blake as a poet of contradiction and contrariety, and focuses on the elusive spectre, its shadowy ironies, and "the divided energies of Blake's poetics." Vine criticizes the idealist approaches to Blake of Frye and Erdman, who insist on the integrity of Blake's prophetic voice. He sees instead a Blake who relentlessly confronts the failure of visionary power, whose poetics are "ever building, ever falling."

In Vine's words, "... a spectral rhythm of continual building and falling is installed at the heart of Blake's account of visionary poetry, and it is the argument of this book that the poetic dramatisation of such inquiet energies is the measure of Blake's poetic daring and his rigour." This is nicely put; however, what emerges is a book emphasizing Blake's failure and the paradoxes of his doctrine. Vine gives illuminating close readings of selected passages of Blake's major

poems, quite often for the purpose of pointing out the ambiguities and contradictions and presumable failures. Yet paradox works both ways, and often the critic is undermined by the energy and mystery of his poet.

Vine's book charts a chronological path through Blake's work, and the second chapter considers Blake's critique of Edmund Burke's theory of the sublime by exploring Blake's revolutionary poems of the 1790s. Vine argues that Blake's "aesthetic of vision" fails to escape the paradoxes that bedevil it, essentially because in spite of his criticism of Burkean obscurity, Blake's is itself the language of mystification. Most importantly, there are "spectres" in these poems who are both kingly and revolutionary, and a general mistiness prevails which clouds the imagination in spite of Blake's avowed aim to the contrary.

Vine thinks Burke is successfully criticized in certain designs in *Job*, particularly the design "Behemoth and Leviathan" (1805-06; the design appears in plate XV of Blake's engraved collection). Because Burke used Eliphaz's vision as an example of sublime obscurity, Vine contends that the clarity of Blake's line renders these beasts less terrible than laughable and that Burke's vision of the sublime is being overturned by mockery. He then asks the key questions which the rest of the book examines: "... if these designs expose the collapse of a certain kind of sublimity, what of Blake's sublime of 'vision?' Is the Blakean sublime free of the blindness which darkens the visions of Burke, Eliphaz, and the God of Job?" Ambivalence is the answer here, as it is for Vine's reading of the Lambeth Prophecies, with their conjunction of the sublime and satiric modes.

When Vine carries his study of ambiguity into a consideration of the idea of form in *The Four Zoas* he becomes really interesting, though I think it is here that he goes astray, for he suggests that the veil of Enion ("Hide me some shadowy semblance" [FZ 1, 4: 24]) becomes in Beulah a "metaphor of redemptive form." This idea can only be valid if one rather willfully misreads the veils of Beulah as positive. By insisting upon ambiguity in Blake's idea of form, Vine misses the distinction in Blake between Eternal Form and Fallen Form. (Critical discussions of veils and form are not mentioned in Vine's references.)

Of course, Vine's point of view would not allow an idealist concept like Eternal Form, so I was interested to see what he would do to the idea of the Spectre in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. Somehow the approach that seemed confusing in *The Four Zoas* works brilliantly in Vine's concise discussions of *Milton* and *Jerusalem*. There is creative ambiguity in these poems and Vine's close readings of key sections are illuminating. His chapter on *Jerusalem* focuses on language, and also takes up the theme of the garment to argue that the ambiguous nature of apocalyptic language dissolves into a kind of chaos. As he writes at one point, "The language here makes and unmakes its revelations..." Although the Spectre is annihilated, he is still in the play, so to speak. The energy of *Jerusalem* belongs to the Spectre, and Blake is of the Spectre's party without knowing it.

Blake: Innocence and Experience by Elliot Hayes, with Michael Loughnan as William Blake. Directed by Valerie Doulton; designed by Gary Thorne; music for songs by Loreena McKennitt. At the Tristan Bates Theatre, Tower Street, London, 12-18 June 1995.

Reviewed by ANDREW LINCOLN

The one-person show is an apt vehicle for representing Blake, since it allows the voice so much freedom to determine the experience of time and space. In this production, the outward eye is repeatedly unsettled by the ear. The lights come up on an elderly man of shabby-genteel appearance—frock-coated, open-shirted, stubbled, balding and unkempt. Before long Blake announces that he is three months from his seventieth birthday, which would put him on (if not beyond) the brink of his death—"an Old Man feeble and tottering." Illness and weakness are figured by the medicine bottle and the occasional grimace, but the vigorous voice negates such evidence. At one point he appears to "fade away" in a chair, wrapped in a sheet—a winding sheet from which there is a semi-comic resurrection. This Blake is at once elderly and youthful, able to travel through the course of his own life at will, a man whose words are drawn in part from letters and poems spanning five decades.

In the restricted space of the Tristan Bates theatre, Michael Loughnan was able to use his full vocal range in making the invisible visible—as when expelling Joshua Reynolds's ghost in thunderous rage, or allowing us to overhear intimate exchanges with Catherine Blake. His enthralling delivery of lines from *America* suddenly transformed the tiny stage into a stormy Atlantic from which Orc arose "Intense! naked! a Human fire"—a vivid demonstration of the voice's ability to govern the eye, and overwhelming proof, should anyone need it, that Blake's prophetic books demand to be heard as well as read. A few of the songs were sung, unaccompanied, to specially composed melodies that Blake himself might have been pleased with. For me, the only point at which the direction faltered was when, as Loughnan recited "The Tyger," he wandered over the stage as if looking for something—a point at which the visual effect was allowed to compete with, and distract from, the voice.

Paradoxically, the very freedom of the voice can help to enforce a sense of the speaker's isolation and self-absorption. This Blake, devoted to recollection and recrimination, asserting his own convictions without fear of interruption (except from the visionary world), confronting and succumbing to his own driving envy, often seems to be addressing a mirror rather than the audience. In this context the familiar stories—of warning Paine to fly to France, of playing at Adam and Eve with Catherine in the garden—appear

as manifestations of a persistent tendency towards self-dramatization. Loughnan develops a convincing portrait of a passionate, tormented and unclubbable individual—one who might even become a hot-eyed bore—always ready to air his own ideas, but less ready to lend an ear to others.

The setting of the play allows the frustration and anger to be seen as manifestations of the selfhood that desire and vision must struggle to overcome. At the back of the stage three paint-covered easels stand like crosses. On the left is Blake's portrait of Catherine, on the right an empty sheet of paper—the focus for a tirade against portrait painting which prompts an exposition of the importance of the bounding line. In the center is Blake's painting "The Angel Rolling the Stone from the Tomb," in which the angel's outstretched arms enact the triumph over the cross. By the end of the play Blake has defined the limits of his own caverned existence: in the final stage picture, he stands with arms outspread, mirroring the angel in the painting behind him.

Any dramatization of Blake must inevitably exclude much. There is little room here for Blake the vulgarian; for the man who claimed to love laughing; for the man given to what is not too explicit ("London" is sung in an early version because, presumably, it seems easier for an audience to absorb). There is little room for the man immersed in the engraver's work, its negotiations and deadlines, its messy physical processes. But the limits of the play, and Valerie Doulton's expert handling of them, make for a portrait that is definite, determinate, and impossible to forget.

Jeanne Moskal, *Blake, Ethics, and Forgiveness*. Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1994. 240 pp., \$32.95.

Reviewed by STEPHEN COX

On the first page of her book, Jeanne Moskal suggests that consideration of Blake as an ethicist is a challenge to fashionable opinion. Literary scholars, she says, are reluctant to entertain ethical issues, because they are afraid of being led down the garden path to the abyss of "logocentric 'meanings.'" The public, meanwhile, has become convinced that Blake was a great "immoralist."

Moskal clearly exaggerates. The public, insofar as it is acquainted with Blake at all, regards him as the poet of certain commonly anthologized *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, poems which, as presented in most high-school and college classrooms, probably seem far from antinomian. And literary scholarship is in no danger at all of relinquishing its traditional moralism. Even when it claims to relinquish moralism for some higher purpose, such as the subversion of logocentrism, it seldom fails to insinuate that the pursuit

of this goal is itself morally bracing. Scholars of Blake have always been moralistic. No one has ever written on Blake without providing a moralizing gloss on what is obviously, though often unconsciously, regarded as Blake's moralizing text. (I include myself in that "no one.") The morality thus recommended is never the kind that would shock anyone likely to encounter it. No one has ever hesitated to pick up a book on Blake out of fear of reading something scandalous.

It is refreshing, however, to see a book on Blake that addresses moral questions straightforwardly, instead of representing its moral commentary as mere interpretation of Blake's attitudes toward Druids, the French Revolution, or the theology of Emanuel Swedenborg. Moskal focuses clearly on the ethical issues that arise in Blake's work, with special emphasis on his prophecies; and she places his ideas in relationship to a number of twentieth-century ethical theories. She pays Blake's moral ideas the compliment of searching criticism, exploring the various and at times incompatible ways in which he uses them.

Of special interest in this respect is her treatment of the difference between the "intersubjective" and the "intrapsychic" functions of those ideas. Forgiveness, in her account, is a central ethical concept for Blake because it is a means of adjusting both relations among people (the intersubjective function) and relations among the psychological forces within people (the intrapsychic function). Blake's assumption is that one's ability to forgive other persons depends on one's ability to deal with the accusing person within oneself.

This is an apparently simple idea. Complications arise when it is associated with another simple but powerful idea, Blake's doctrine of states.

If I want to stop accusing people of sin, I can try to remember that there is a difference between a person and what that person is currently doing or suffering, the "state" that he or she currently inhabits. When I make that distinction, I quiet the accuser inside me and forgive the sinners (or supposed sinners) outside. Blake's character Erin expounds the doctrine clearly:

Learn therefore O Sisters to distinguish the Eternal
Human
That walks about among the stones of fire in bliss &
woe
Alternate! from those States or Worlds in which the
Spirit
travels:
This is the only means to Forgiveness of Enemies.¹

Here is a bold and generous conception, one that invites

¹ Blake, *Jerusalem* 49.72-75, in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, newly rev. ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1982) 199. Subsequent references to this edition cite it as "E," followed by page number.

the forgiving spirit to discern eternity through every cloud of temporal imperfection and preoccupation.

But Moskal argues, with reason, that the doctrine of states has one kind of effect when it is applied to intersubjective relationships and another when it is applied to intrapsychic ones. When Blake applies it intersubjectively, it helps him to recognize and appreciate the diversity of human beings, visualizing their difficulties as temporary results of the states that they are passing through: "Like parents who forgive their children because they are 'going through a phase,' Blake's potential forgiver looks forward to the journey's continuance to a better destination" (81). But when Blake applies the doctrine of states intrapsychically, he is tempted to write as if everyone were one person and to reduce all relationships to one relationship, manifested in "the decision of just one party to forgive himself." Blake sometimes "implies that all instances of . . . intersubjective forgiveness depend solely upon the intrapsychic self-annihilation, or renunciation of accusation" (121-22). The tendency is both to hold everyone to the same standard of self-annihilation and to deplore variations as effects of people's involvement in a state of accusation.

"In Blake's emergent view," Moskal says, "it is no longer one party's *offense* that provides the occasion to be forgiven, but *the very fact of his otherness* from the forgiver"—an otherness that is "overcome" in the act of "forgiveness" (69). This is a radical and abstract statement of the problem. Read literally, perhaps too literally, it may imply that Blake resented people simply for being different from him; and that's not exactly the way Blake was. But Blake's own processes of abstraction are radical indeed; the pressure in his work toward subsuming variety in universality is very great; and, as Moskal sees, the pressures of his own life must often have made it difficult for him to see the "celebration" of human variety as a major ethical imperative.

Moskal suspects that Blake's concern with self-forgiveness gained emphasis from feelings of guilt over his trial for sedition, when he was unable to acknowledge a vision that actually was, in some sense, subversive. She also suspects that forgiveness appeared especially important to him because of his conflicting feelings about William Hayley, a would-be benefactor for whom Blake had contempt (6-7, 86, 89). Hayley was about as different from Blake as a person could be; Hayley's otherness, viewed in close quarters, would certainly be difficult to forgive. Moskal notices that in *Milton* Blake aims at forgiving Hayley and ends up forgiving Milton, who was a good deal easier to forgive (94). Milton had the intrapsychic advantage of seeming to resemble Blake himself much more closely than Hayley ever could.

Moskal's treatment of all these issues is well worth studying. Unfortunately, however, her book is a much harder study than it needs to be. Like many other books on Blake, it gives no help to the general reader and less help than it should to the specialist. If you think you may be interested in Blake's ideas about ethics but you don't know what the Spectre of

Urthona is or how John Milton ever got involved with something called Ololon, you will not get far with this book. If you do know these things, your progress will still be impeded by the author's unnecessary summaries and repetitions, her preference for wordy explanations of simple concepts (especially when those explanations can be quoted from alleged authorities), her frequent resistance to putting the clearest evidence for an hypothesis anywhere near the hypothesis itself, and her steady suppression of a sense of humor. In its rhetoric, in other words, *Blake, Ethics, and Forgiveness* is a typical academic book, and that is a pity.

The book's problems are not all stylistic and organizational. Some of Moskal's intellectual positions have not been thought through carefully enough. Consider, for example, one of her arguments about "alterity."

Discussing the idea that Blake finds it easier to illustrate forgiveness between characters who are alike than between characters who are different, she asserts that "he consistently (but not always) excludes the more radical versions of alterity (sexual alterity, generational alterity, and human-divine alterity) in order to clear the decks for a forgiveness between two versions of the same, for it is forgivenesses between men (who are parts of One Man) that Blake considers normative" (106). Moskal's point about Blake's treatment of otherness carries some force, but she is inclined to make it still more forceful by reading such terms as "Man" and "brotherhood" as obvious synonyms for "males" and "male relationships." Granted, many of Blake's attitudes toward women deserve criticism on ethical grounds, but he cannot be interpreted fairly by the application of modern-American inclusive-language norms.

Meanwhile, Moskal leaves several interesting aspects of the "alterity" issue unexplored. Why, one might ask, is sexual or generational "alterity" necessarily more "alter" than other kinds of "alterity"? Is it really true that the difference between males and females is harder for Blake to forgive than the difference manifested by males who think in ways that he does not agree with? And, speaking of differences among people, why did Blake write that "[i]t is easier to forgive an Enemy than to forgive a Friend" (*Jerusalem* 91.1, E 251)? Moskal quotes this passage (103). We all quote it. But why did he write it? What happens to the remark when it is put beside another hard saying, which Moskal also quotes (142): "Friendship cannot exist without Forgiveness of Sins continually" (*Jerusalem* 52, E 201)? I'm not sure that any of us has an answer to this now, but it would be interesting to have one, and it seems to lie in Moskal's field of inquiry.

Moskal's analysis might also benefit from a more thorough exploration of the historical relations of Blake's ideas. In describing his historical context, she relies so heavily on the conventions of Blake scholarship that a reader unfamiliar with those conventions might easily conclude that she had forgotten what century he was born in. She refers, for example, to Blake's "contemporaries, the heterodox Ranters

and other religious sects" (4). But didn't such "contemporaries" flourish a hundred years before Blake's birth? Well, yes, but what Moskal calls "the current consensus about Blake's antinomianism" (4) positions him as close to those worthies as possible, and this despite the fact that he never refers to them and in no sense required their influence—or the influence of any of their eighteenth-century intellectual heirs—for the development of his ideas.² You don't need to school yourself in an antinomian tradition in order to become an antinomian; every age offers enough laws and commandments to rebel against. And every age can find those interesting crossroads in the Pauline epistles where one can, if one wishes, take an antinomian turn.

Moskal argues that Blake finally rejects antinomianism, if antinomianism entails a conviction that defiance of law is valuable in itself. Blake realized that such a position would simply be a reactive concession to the significance of law. But what was Blake's reaction to ethical ideas that, unlike antinomianism, actually permeated his culture? Here Moskal discovers a curious view of the nature of late-eighteenth-century ideas. The era, she believes,

was singularly arid in its exclusive emphasis on duty, obligation, and reason. Some of the eccentric twists in Blake's treatment of human forgiveness were caused historically, I think, by the domination of ethical discourse in his time by theories of duty, obligation, and universal law over theories of sympathy and benevolence. (4)

Surely, if there was ever a time when "sympathy" and "benevolence" were in vogue, it was the later eighteenth century, which gave those moral concepts their typically modern forms and disseminated them with all its might. Moskal is apparently operating in the old tradition of scholarship that sees Blake as rebelling against "reason" and therefore projects an imperious cult of reason for him to rebel against. She misses the fact that for the eighteenth century, sympathy and benevolence, and the "sensibility" in which they were supposed to originate, were themselves a duty and an obligation.

² The antinomians who may have influenced Blake can be tracked through the scholarly literature from A. L. Morton's *The Everlasting Gospel: A Study in the Sources of William Blake* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1958)—a thin and thinly argued book, still routinely cited as an authority—to E. P. Thompson's vastly better informed *Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law* (New York: The New Press, 1993); but the quarry has never quite been captured. There are a good many cross-trails, too. "Antinomians" have a way of getting mixed up with "millenarians," or "radicals," or opponents of "hegemony" (Thompson, 108-109), or people who simply had peculiar ideas. There is the optimistic sense, in this scholarly literature, of an encounter with people who in one way or another *might* have influenced Blake—provided, of course, he didn't derive the influences in question directly from some more prominent source, such as the Bible.

It is hard to overemphasize the impression, both favorable and unfavorable, that the ethic of sensibility made on Blake.

Blake could satirize sensibility as effectively as he satirized anything else:

[H]e saw that life liv'd upon death
The Ox in the slaughter house moans
The Dog at the wintry door[.]
And he wept, & he called it Pity
And his tears flowed down on the winds.
(*The Book of Urizen* 23.27, 25.1-4, E 81-82)

Urizen's tears are those of thwarted benevolence and futile sympathy. But sympathy and benevolence are ethical values for Blake, too. The *Songs* and the great prophetic works are fully, if fractiously, at home in the beginning of the first historical era that was sympathetically concerned and then morally indignant about poverty, slavery, and the oppression of women.

There is a tendency in Blake scholarship to prefer the radical affiliation or influence to the bourgeois-liberal one, to emphasize the Ranters, say, rather than the preachers of sympathy and sensibility. Moskal follows this tendency, unaware of the fact that some of her own ideas are similar to those of the late-eighteenth-century liberal moralists. Describing the process of forgiveness, she says:

When we see the other, who has offended us, as a suffering human being, we project outward our own experience of suffering, an experience that we know intimately only when it is our own suffering, onto the other. Then we feel compassion for him as for ourselves. (9; see also 117)

This passage reflects Moskal's own thinking, inspired by remarks of Hannah Arendt and Reinhold Niebuhr. It could also pass for an outline of Adam Smith's argument, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, about the mechanism of compassion. It is certainly more useful than most of the passages Moskal cites from her long list of twentieth-century authorities (besides Arendt and Niebuhr, the list includes Martin Buber, Martin Heidegger, Alasdair MacIntyre, Luce Irigaray, Emmanuel Levinas, and others). It is useful because it identifies the problematic nature of the moral act with which Moskal is most concerned: the act of forgiving other people without losing a sharp sense that they are, in fact, *other people*.

Let me explain. Moskal is bothered (as Blake was) by ethical codes that neglect the individuality of the persons involved with them. She therefore derives her "basic definition of forgiveness" from Arendt's statement that "*what* is done is forgiven for the sake of *who* did it"; the idea, as Moskal says, is that "forgiveness establishes an eminently personal relationship" (7). Moskal is attracted, in addition,

to the far less perspicuous comments of Levinas, who writes about "redefining the other as exterior and excessive, 'a form of exteriority, separate from and unpredicted by the subject,' and 'the site of excess, an unabsorbable, indigestible residue the subject is unable to assimilate to itself'" (105). This says nothing, however, about how we can establish an eminently personal relationship with the "exteriority" of all those people whom we are supposed to know and forgive but with whom we try to sympathize through the medium of our own experience, an experience that we imaginatively "project outward . . . onto the other."

Adam Smith saw the difficulty with this approach. Imaginative projection has its limitations:

As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation. Though our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. They never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations. Neither can that faculty help us to this any other way, than by representing to us what would be our own, if we were in his case.³

It is quite possible, as any good late-eighteenth century moralist (or novelist) can tell you, that when I think I am sympathizing with you, I am actually just imagining how I would feel *if I were you*.

Blake saw this difficulty. He embodied it in his characters. Urizen is a good example: he thinks that all the other Eternals suffer as he does and that they should therefore submit to his special treatments of "love" and "forgiveness":

Why will you die O Eternals?
Why live in unquenchable burnings?
.....
Lo! I unfold my darkness: and on
This rock, place with strong hand the Book
Of eternal brass, written in my solitude.

Laws of peace, of love, of unity:
Of pity, compassion, forgiveness.
(*The Book of Urizen* 4.12-13, 31-35, E 71-72)

Blake's symbolism offered him a chance to escape the limitations of projective emotional sympathy. It offered him a chance to transcend his narrowly personal experience so as to see the great world beyond and try to forgive it. Every "alterity" could, at least theoretically, be expressed in symbols and make itself determinately known, both to his audi-

³ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976) 9.

ence (if any) and to himself. Yet the symbolism that emerged was all too clearly the projection of an extraordinarily powerful mind's own priorities upon all "others." Real, recognizably living "others" are so scarce in Blake's work that Moskal, looking assiduously for one such other, can produce none more "powerfully individualized" than Milton, in Blake's poem of that name (135). And even this claim may not carry much weight; Blake's Milton speaks as Blake would presumably speak and acts as Blake would presumably act under the various circumstances that Blake creates for him.

Blake's ability to create a universal symbolism permits him to imagine everyone at last "put[ting] off by forgiveness, every sin," in Albion's reunion with Jesus (*Jerusalem* 96.19, E 255). Moskal believes, however, that it also permits Blake to "minimize or deny altogether the intractable otherness," the individuality, of the people by whom forgiveness is achieved (10).

She has a point. Blake's symbolic forgiveness of his characters is often far from what Smith or Arendt or anyone else would regard as forgiveness of living, breathing, individual people. It is not the kind of forgiveness that Blake seems to request for himself when he addresses the readers of *Jerusalem*. Here he is interested in a personal relationship, with Jesus and with his audience:

I am perhaps the most sinful of men! I pretend not to holiness! yet I pretend to love, to see, to converse with daily, as man with man, & the more to have an interest in the Friend of Sinners. Therefore [Dear] Reader, [forgive] what you do not approve, & [love] me for this energetic exertion of my talent. (*Jerusalem* 3, E 145)

As Moskal observes, Blake begs his audience to forgive him, while deftly implying that he has the moral standing to forgive his audience (95). And there is a universalizing tendency even here. The audience is, potentially, everyone, all the members of Albion, the universal form, who neglected him, tried him for sedition, accused him of madness, and committed even worse sins against its own soul. Forgiving "Albion" was difficult. From the passage quoted above, Blake removed the words in brackets. His audience wasn't necessarily "Dear," and it wouldn't necessarily "love" and "forgive" him in return for his own offers of forgiveness. But forgiving Albion as a whole was much easier for Blake than forgiving some of the individual persons of whom Albion was composed.

Nevertheless, Blake's willingness to universalize comes off a good deal worse, in Moskal's analysis, than it deserves to do. She is worried not only about his universalizing symbolism but also about its connection with a universal "ethics of obligation," especially of the kind recommended by Christianity; and she is worried about this despite the fact that a sense of moral obligation, based on principles con-

sidered universally applicable, would appear to offer Blake another, quite promising means of transcending "the selfhood" and forgiving other people.

Blake's Jesus recognizes the difficulty of forgiveness and love; he declares that "every kindness to another is a little Death." Still, he says, Man can only "exist . . . by Brotherhood" (*Jerusalem* 96.27-28, E 256). It's hard, but it's an ethical imperative for everyone. Moskal, however, seems to see Christianity's universal ethic as something that necessarily reduced Blake's regard for the individuality of other people. She argues that in his early writings he attacked conventional notions of moral duty, exalting "contrariety" over the "universalizability" of moral precepts; but in his later, essentially Christian works, he "in a sense, defected, by practicing a version of the fault in obligation-based ethics that he earlier deplored—that is, its emphasis on the universalized individual" (9). She implies that no ethics of obligation can provide a fair treatment of "alterity."

This is a currently fashionable and superficially plausible assumption, but it is an assumption that undermines the very idea of ethics. The truth, in plain terms, is that there is no ethics that is not an ethics of obligation. Ethics does not merely describe all the things that various people are inclined to do; it prescribes what they ought to do, whether or not they are inclined to do it. An ethics without an "ought"—without a sense of obligation—would simply lack the distinctive quality of ethics. It would be scrambled eggs without the eggs.

Almost as hard to imagine is an ethics that excludes any reference to universally applicable ideas. Such an ethics would hardly be able to provide a coherent reason for its particular prescriptions; it would be a collection of double, triple, or multiple "standards." Adapt ethics as much as you like to individuality or (to use the Blakean term that Moskal prefers) "contrariety"; declare as loudly as you like that "One Law for the Lion & Ox is Oppression" (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 24, E 44); the sense of universal obligation remains, if only in the implication that all people, whoever they are, ought to respect individual freedom and refrain from imposing one law on both the lion and the ox. When we judge Blake as unfair to the individual human objects who get swept up in his universalizing symbolism, we judge him against a universal principle, a presumed obligation to show regard for individual differences of character.

Ethical relativists may pursue their line of reasoning to the boundaries of paradox, and beyond, without ever being able to lose the sense of obligation that inheres in the basic concept of ethics. Even orthodox and dogmatic moralists, however, ordinarily recognize the fact that fundamental moral obligations need to be fulfilled in different ways by different individuals. Jesus preached generosity and simplicity as general principles, but he did not tell everyone he met, "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor" (Luke 18:22).

A universal ethics of obligation may actually promote fair play for "alterity" by insisting that everyone, no matter how "other," is on the same moral footing. Blake's contemporary, the novelist Elizabeth Hamilton, made this point when she had one of her characters remark that Jesus was the first philosopher who taught respect for women, because he preached a truly universal ethic, one that decreed no special moral rules for women:

Women, we learn from the gospels, frequently composed a great part of his audience: but to them no particular precepts were addressed, no sexual virtues recommended. . . . His morality was addressed to the judgment without distinction of sex. His laws went not to fix the boundaries of prerogative, and to prescribe the minutiae of behaviour, but to fix purity and humility in the heart.⁴

Blake's Christianity may not have prompted him to worry very much about other people's "unabsorbable, indigestible residue"; but neither did it prompt him to prescribe the minutiae of their behavior. He thought that the commandment to love and forgive other people implied a commandment to let them be free: "Jerusalem is called Liberty among the Children of Albion" (*Jerusalem* 54.5, E 203). Liberty was grounded on moral principles that could be recommended to everyone.

The complexities of this kind of Christianity are not quite captured by Moskal's reference to Blake's Jesus as "an alternative way of looking at the moral life from the grid of obligations and duties used by promulgators of universal laws" (32). Still less helpful is Moskal's characterization, derived from Stanley Hauerwas, of ethics as it is ordinarily understood: "in its emphasis on duty and obligation as they pertain to all individuals interchangeably, the standard account [of ethics] alienates each individual from his plans, metaphors, and stories" (2).

Moskal tends to measure Blake's success as an ethicist by his (imperfect) success in forming ethical conceptions that escape the terms of the "standard account." But her idea of the "standard account" is needlessly reductive. The notion that people are morally obligated, for instance, to love their neighbors as themselves doesn't imply that they have to alienate themselves from their own plans, metaphors, and stories; it doesn't even imply that they have to *like* their neighbors. (Indeed, one's sense of the neighbors' otherness will probably be sharpened considerably by one's sense of an obligation to forgive them.) Every great system of belief associates its ethic of obligation with a rich variety of metaphors, stories, and plans of life. This richness is surely one of the reasons for Blake's attraction to Christianity and for

⁴ Elizabeth Hamilton, *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800; rpt. New York: Garland, 1974) I:199-200.

his ability to adapt its ethical narratives and metaphors to his own literary and intellectual plans.

It is regrettable that Moskal brings current intellectual assumptions to bear on Blake without subjecting them to the kind of criticism to which she subjects his own ideas. In this respect, however, she is by no means unusual; few contemporary critics interrogate their framework assumptions as skeptically as they interrogate their primary texts. Moskal's subject, however, is of unusual interest, and what she says about it is also of unusual interest, both for its own sake and for its ability to provoke debate.

"The Genitals are Beauty." Exhibition of "An Interior of William Blake." House of William Blake, London. July-August, 1994.

Reviewed by KERI DAVIES

"The Genitals are Beauty" is the second exhibition organized by Tim Heath at the House of William Blake. In July and August 1994, three floors of 17 South Molton Street were taken over by "An Interior for William Blake," a mixed show of artworks and craft pieces, some on a substantial scale, exploring the themes of Innocence and Experience in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the *Songs*. Monday-Friday, 6-17 February 1995, the House of William Blake staged a second show, on a more intimate scale and confined to one room of the former Blake residence (and the only survivor of his London homes). Tim Heath had invited a number of artists and craftspeople to respond to the line from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: "The head Sublime, the heart Pathos, the genitals Beauty, the hands & feet Proportion" (E 37).

The genitals, in art as in life, can still be a source of consternation and anxiety. Not all the artists who took part in the first show were willing to work to the new brief. In the event, 41 artists and craftspeople provided paintings, drawings, ceramics, jewelry, photographs and sculptures on the theme of the human sexual organs.

The history of genital display in English art is a history of concealment and suppression. Blake's erotic drawings in the Vala manuscript were mutilated (perhaps by John Linnell), while Turner's were burned with the agreement of the National Gallery.¹ There are, however, two notable early examples of upfront sexuality in the history of English art: the Cerne Giant (an ithyphallic figure, possibly of Hercules, cut

¹ Not by John Ruskin, as is sometimes claimed. Turner's erotic drawings were left to the nation. Ruskin couldn't possibly have been allowed to destroy state property—it was a government employee, the National Gallery curator Ralph Nicholson Wornum, that struck the match. See Tim Hilton, *John Ruskin: The Early Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) 250.

into the chalk hillside in Roman or pre-Roman times above the Dorset village of Cerne Abbas) and the sheela-na-gig (c. 1135) that boldly confronts the visitor to the church of St. Mary and St. David at Kilpeck (Herefordshire) with her *ostensio vulvae*.

Some of the artists displaying work in "The Genitals are Beauty" were clearly working in the tradition of the Cerne Giant and the sheela-na-gig, a tradition that is always confrontational and sometimes comic. Thus the self-portrait "Do I make myself clear?" from Sheila Brannigan was a photographic print which asked us to consider if portraiture can be genital. Equally confrontational were drawings of the female pudenda by Bryan Smith ("A Dangers Delight") and Sheena Vallely; while Frances Vallaydon-Pillay contributed a lovely painting ("He's so beautiful") of an erect penis surrounded by flowers.

Daniel Lehan's papier maché "Hermaphrodite holding Serpent Aloft," with a gold phallus and red breasts, had just the right tender clumsiness. I enjoyed Juliet Gatto's "Aliens took my Genitalia"—a flying merkin made of papier maché and wire. And Anne Hardy's fabric sculptures of wobbly-floppy penises were irresistibly joyful and comic. The spirit of punk (always sexually confrontational) lived on in James Anderson's lurid T-shirt "Nudity Costume," as it did in jewellers Spencer Smargiassi's silver and garnet "Giving Head Tiara." Jo Saunders's "Snatch & Sports Bag" offered one of the most imaginative interpretations of the brief: PVC and fake-fur mini rucksacks representing the vagina, and all-purpose denim sportsbags denoting the penis.

Blake's contemporary Richard Payne Knight, in his study of phallic worship, wrote that, in antiquity, "The Female Organs of Generation were revered as symbols of the generative powers of Nature, or matter, as the male were of the generative powers of God."² This "sex-as-mysticism" line has had its twentieth-century adherents, most notably Eric Gill. Throughout his life Gill obsessively drew his own and his friends's genitals. Similarly, the wood-sculptor David Gilbert carves each year a "Spring Phallus." They are beautifully crafted, but too self-consciously heroic for my taste.

But it's the makers of pots, vessels, and containers that find it all too easy to go for alchemical imagery—to turn every cunt into an alembic, as it were. Alison Wolfe-Patrick contributed some beautiful ceramics that nevertheless seemed to me to fall into that trap. But I very much admired Adaesi Ukairo's copper vessel entitled "Oriaku." Here the alchemical imagery didn't seem at all forced.

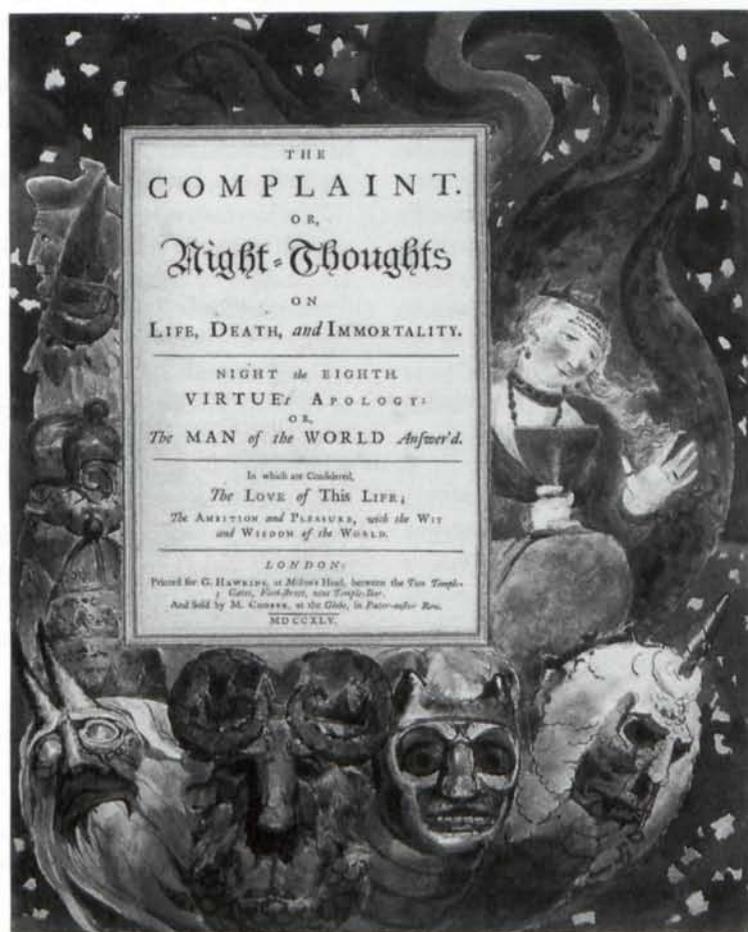
In the search for ever more recondite sources for Blake's art, it can be forgotten that sometimes he speaks directly

and simply from the heart, saying what he thinks and meaning what he says. Amongst those works which seemed to me to achieve just that directness and simplicity were water colours by Claudia Böse ("A Touch of Sweetness in my Heart") and Alan Young ("Joys Impregnate, Sorrows Bring Forth"), a suite of woodcuts ("The Genitals are Beauty") by Paul Peter Piech, and the delightful wooden toys of Peter Markey.

"The Genitals are Beauty" thus tied together a roomful of genitals with some of the kitschy inheritance of St. Valentine's Day. Instead of a catalogue, the exhibiting artists also contributed self-portraits of their genitals for an accompanying book.

The exhibition is part of a project to secure all five floors of 17 South Molton Street as a memorial to William Blake. With a foothold on the first floor, the House of William Blake is working toward a property buyout as an advertising and design consultancy. "The House," says Tim Heath, "wants to grow up to be a centre for the dissenting imagination in honour of Blake's enquiring yet awkward spirit."

² Richard Payne Knight, *An Account of the remains of the worship of Priapus, lately existing at Isernia in the kingdom of Naples, in two letters, one from Sir William Hamilton ... to Sir Joseph Banks... and the others from a person residing at Isernia; to which is added, A Discourse on the worship of Priapus, and its connexion with the mystic theology of the Ancients*, by R. P. Knight (London: T. Spilsbury, 1786) 47.



John Windle
Antiquarian Bookseller
Laurie Thompson - Associate
49 Geary Street, Suite 233
San Francisco CA 94108
Tel: 415-986-5826 Fax 415-986-5827
Email: johnwindle@aol.com

is pleased to announce the publication of catalogue 26, devoted entirely to William Blake. It includes the collection of Joseph Holland and Vincent Newton, almost 200 items including original prints, pencil drawings, a Blake manuscript receipt to Butts signed by Blake, books with original engravings, and a large number of the standard reference works. To this fine private collection we have added some fine items from inventory including a set of the Dante engravings, a proof copy of the Book of Job, Young's *Night Thoughts* in original boards, a fine *Canterbury Pilgrims* (5th state), *The Idle Laundress* (colored), and other works by and about Blake. At the end we have recorded auction purchases for private collectors in the last four years as scholars will be interested to know the disposition of these important lots from the McKell, Rinder, and other collections. The catalogue will have color plates and numerous black-and-white illustrations. Copies may be requested by mail, fax or email; the price is \$10, refunded in full with any purchase.