

Blake Newsletter

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NEWSLETTER BUSINESS

Morton D. Paley will be at his London address (24, West Heath Drive/ N.W. 11) until June 1. From June 29 until August 5, his address will be: c/o Dept. of English/ SUNY/ Buffalo, New York. Readers wishing to write to him might note these two addresses. As of September 1, his address will again be c/o the English Dept., University of California, Berkeley, California 94720.

This issue contains the first list of "Works in Progress" on Blake, as well as a substantial supplement consisting of the remaining entries of Robert Essick's "Finding List." We hope that readers will find both of these useful in guiding their own and their students' research. In honor of the Wordsworth Centennial, we are including articles on Blake and Wordsworth in this issue.

Our thanks again to all our contributors and subscribers, whose support makes the continued existence of the Blake Newsletter possible.

CONTENTS

News		74
Notes	"Blake, Wordsworth, Lamb, Etc.: Further Information from Henry Crabb Robinson" by Mark Reed; "Wordsworth's First Acquaintance with Blake's Poetry" by Paul Betz.	76-89
Minute Particulars	"Blake Items in the Library of Isaac Reed" by Thomas L. Minnick; "Blake and Tradition" by Kathleen Raine.	89-90
Reviews	G. E. Bentley Jr.'s <u>Blake Records</u> by Morton Paley; Deborah Dorfman's <u>Blake and Tradition</u> by Irene Chayes	90

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Contents Cont'd

Discussion	"The Devil's Syntax and the O.E.D." by Mary Lynn Johnson; "Discussing the Arlington Court Picture: Part I" by John E. Grant.	94-105
Queries		105
Works in Progress		106-110

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NEWS

Recent Publications

The Erdman-Bloom Poetry and Prose is now available as a Doubleday Anchor Book at \$6.95. This is the fourth printing; it includes some new changes, which are noted on p. xxiv.

TLS for 25 December 1969 (pp. 1461-63) featured a leading review article on Blake. The principal subject was Blake and Tradition by Kathleen Raine; William Blake, ed. Alvin Rosenfeld and Blake in the Nineteenth Century by Deborah Dorfman were also discussed. A letter from Miss Raine followed in the issue of 2 January 1970, p. 34, with a reply from the reviewer. On 22 January appeared a short letter (p. 85) by Mr. Edgar Foxhall. Also on 22 January, the Blake Trust edition of Europe is reviewed (p. 74).

Micro Methods Ltd. announces publication of a complete colour microfilm of the 537 Night Thoughts illustrations. Publication is scheduled for the end of March; price £50 sterling. (MM address is: East Ardsley, Wakefield, Yorks.

G. E. Bentley, Jr. "John Flaxman and Thomas Taylor," Notes and Queries, September, 1969, pp. 354-355.

Three Catalogues

The Westminster City Libraries have published a handsomely printed Catalogue of the Preston Blake Library (1969), with a foreword by Kerrison Preston and a preface by K. C. Harrison. 700 items are listed and described, and there is an extensive index. From the National Library of Scotland comes a catalogue of its 1969 loan exhibition: William Blake: Illuminated Books and Engravings, 34 pp. / cover and tailpiece ill. Note by William Beattie, "The Blake Trust" by Sir Geoffrey Keynes, Introduction by Isabel Henderson, and annotated list of 121 items. Last, and not yet seen by us: William Blake: Engraver/ A Descriptive Catalogue of an Exhibition by Charles Ryskamp with an

Introductory Essay by Sir Geoffrey Keynes. Princeton University Library, 1969/ exhibition held December 1969 - February 1970/ 61 pp. / pp. i-ix. Preface by Charles Ryskamp.

From The Times, January 9, 1970, p. 12:

A set of Blake's "Illustrations to the Book of Job," not of outstanding quality, made £1,100 (Western Australian Art Gallery) but a set of engravings by his follower, Edward Calvert, underlined even more forcibly the present interest in Blake and his circle. Comprising 11 tiny engravings of mysterious charm, the set was sold for £680 (Folio Fine Art Society); the price was particularly remarkable since the set was a reprint of 1904.

The Independent Shavian vol. VIII, No. 2 (Winter 1969-70), p. 31, reports a talk by Barbara Newsom - "Tracing the Origins of Heartbreak House: William Blake's Influence on Shaw":

In her talk, Mrs. Newsom pointed out the strong parallels between the characters and the atmosphere of Heartbreak House and Blake's Four Zoas. Not only were both works written during similar periods of crisis in the authors' lives, but Shaw seems, according to Mrs. Newsom, to have drawn his themes and even the title for Heartbreak House directly from the Four Zoas. Captain Shotover has his watery, delusive counterpart in Blake's Tharmas; Hesione Hushabye follows the seductive pattern of Blake's daughters of Beulah; and the labyrinthine figure that is so common in Blake's myth provides the clue to Shaw's own choice of Ariadne for the name of the Heartbreak House heroine who leads Hector out of that "palace of evil enchantment."

It was Mrs. Newsom's contention that passage after passage in Heartbreak House has been translated from The Four Zoas into what Shaw once referred to as the dialect of his own time. Shaw's title itself has its origin, according to Mrs. Newsom, in Blake's repeated reference to Enitharmon's "broken Gates" of her "poor broken heart," "her heart gates broken down," "the broken heart Gate of Enitharmon."

Mrs. Newsom concluded that a study of Blake's work is crucial to an understanding of Heartbreak House and that Blake was an important source of inspiration for Shaw. To discover that Shaw drew so obviously on the work of a poet like Blake, she said, indicates that it is time for serious Shaw critics to go beyond psychic, sexual, and political dissection to the more rewarding study connecting Shaw to the "whole mythopoeic content of English art."

An article by G. E. Bentley, Jr. on "Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth, Blake, and The Seaman's Recorder," forthcoming in the next issue of Studies in Romanticism (IX.1, Winter 1970) should be of special interest in that the article includes six hitherto unknown engravings by Blake.

A new newsletter, THE WORDSWORTH CIRCLE, is being edited by Marilyn Gaul and Charles Mauskopf (Dept. of English, Temple University, Philadelphia, Penn.) The subscription price is three dollars for one year (four issues).

M. Cormack informs us that the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, intends to publish a catalogue of their extensive Blake collection, edited by David Bindman, sometime in the autumn, provisionally to be in early October. It is intended to mark the publication of the catalogue (which will have 72 plates) with an exhibition of their Blake collection, and a small subsidiary exhibition of portraits of Blake.

The Royal Ballet (Touring Section) has revived the ballet Job, based on Blake's designs, and will give six performances of it at Covent Garden this Spring.

And the tabloid Express ran a picture article on London graffiti several months ago, with photographs and comments by passers-by. On a wall in Notting Hill Gate - THE ROAD OF EXCESS LEADS TO THE PALACE OF WISDOM. A "Warehouseman, about forty" says: "...I'm sure it's filth. It's best to look the other way in this district. You're not safe anywhere nowadays." While someone identified as "Irishman who declined to give his name" comments: "If it's true, I'm in the palace of wisdom all right."

* * * * *

NOTES

1. Blake, Wordsworth, Lamb, Etc.: Further Information from Henry Crabb Robinson

Mark L. Reed
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A significant link in the literary correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with Edward Quillinan, the widowed son-in-law of revered friend Wordsworth, as presented in Edith J. Morley's Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle (London, 1927) is supplied by the following letter at the Dove Cottage Library. These comments from the barrister to Quillinan, who was still an intimate of the poet's household, include revealing remarks on the

medallion of Wordsworth by Leonard Charles Wyon (1826-1891), but rather more excitingly contain Robinson's part of a short but explicit discussion of William Blake hitherto known only on Quillinan's side (Correspondence, pp. 675-77). They thus add a new item to what is properly reckoned "in many ways ... the best contemporary record we have of Blake."¹ More particularly, they add definition to Robinson's and Wordsworth's opinions of Blake and report amusingly if ambiguously on Charles Lamb's opinion of both Blake and Wordsworth.

A few words on the background of Robinson's statements will provide perspective. The event in which the exchange on Blake originated was a visit paid by Quillinan at Wordsworth's home, Rydal Mount, on 27 July 1848. There Quillinan noticed a parcel of books just arrived from the Poet Laureate's publisher Moxon, and later in the day he wrote to Robinson a letter containing these remarks:

I observed C. Lamb's Letters, & Blake's Poems - & as I was glancing over them for an hour or two, it seemed to me that both publications had the fault of too much. In Lamb's too much (for some may be well enough) of childish fun, or rather that strain at fun which is the trivial imitation of child's fun; - And some of Blake's verses, illustrated in the book you possess, want in this publication the poetry of painting to support them. They seemed to sound very like nonsense-verses, as we read them aloud. Some of them, I say; for others have a real charm in their wildness and oddness. Do not suppose I undervalue the man. I have on the contrary a sort of tenderness for him that makes me disposed perhaps to over-estimate the value of many of his verses.²

The diarist's answer was delayed by his travels, but he replied as follows from Bury St. Edmunds on 10 August. His letter, comment on which will be basically confined to portions directly relating to Blake and Wordsworth, is here published with the kind permission of the Dove Cottage Trustees. Superscript letters have been brought down to the line and accompanying subscript periods omitted. Misspellings are reproduced without comment. The dash-like periods with which Robinson habitually closes his sentences are transcribed as points.

Bury St. Edmunds

10th Augt 48

My dear Sir.

It was not forgetfulness of your letter so much as of my not having replied to it [tha]t I am to be reproached with: There was time for a rejoinder had the time [time del.] occasion been given.

I have now a cluster of letters to be thankful for.

But it suits [~~suits del. and rewritten~~] the scantiness of my materials to jumble together some notice of all. Tho' indeed the greater portion of what you & Mrs. W: have written calls only for & sometimes admits only of an acknowledgment.

As I was driving in an Omnibus to Hampstead on Saturday I fell in with young Wyon. He told me he was on his road to the North. There was a time when he had wished to have another Sitting from Mr. W: in order to complete his exercise on the poets physiognomy. There is no form of plastic work that I like so much as bas-relief Medallion (Italice Medalone) The small medal certainly fails [~~fails del.~~] as a likeness is a - failure But the expression is pure And the sadness will be understood. The next generation will be delighted with it.³

You speak more slightly⁴ than I should expected of Blake. Recollect they are not to be considered as works of art. but as fragments of a shattered intellect. Lamb used to call him a "mad Wordsworth" Enquire of Mrs. W: whether she has not a copy of his Catalogue. If she has not, enquire of me hereafter. Many years ago Mr. W: read some poems which I had copied and made a remark on them which I would not repeat to every one. "There is no doubt that this man is mad, but there is something in this madness which I enjoy more than the Sense of W: Sc: or Lord B:--I had lent him when he died the 8vo Edit in 2 Vols: of W. W's poems. They were sent me by his widow with the pencil marginalia which I inked over. He admired W:W: "tho' an atheist" And when I protested against this sentence it was thus supported. "Who ever worships nature denies God, for nature is the Devils work." I succumbed, for he always beat me in argument. He almost went into a fit of rapture at the platonic ode.⁵

I enjoyed our Lincoln trip: It was a mere social enjoyment. I shall continue to accompany the learned body, until I am become quite intolerable And considered as a burthen. I cannot now even learn on such an excursion. Teaching was never by [~~by del.~~] my forte. My single contribution consisted in repeatedly reciting

"How profitless the relics that they [~~they del.~~] we cull!"⁶

&c &c &c

We made among others, a wild trip to Tattershall-Castle and Boston Stump [~~Stump repeated~~]. The R:R: Comp: treated us with the journey over an unfinished road in iron sand trucks. And gave us a luncheon to boot. We had bishops deans lords & barronets And I enjoyed the excursion mightily. I shall stay here about a month. And how spend [~~sic~~] the other idle months will depend on accidents. I had meant to go to Germany, but really the uncertain, perhaps perillous state of the country is a sufficient reason for abandoning the scheme: As to France; I have really no inclination whatever to go thither again. I mean in a few days to go to Playford.⁷ And that journey will I trust supply materials for a short letter to Mrs. Wordsworth. You will have

seen Mrs. Reid by this time.⁸ her great worth lies in her perfect disinterestedness & great benevolence rather than in the judgement which directs that benevolence. When you fall in with her, just say I am here. She may favor me with a line. Indeed I am looking for one. To my dear friends at Rydal Mount The Miss Qus: Miss M: Mrs. D & Mrs. F & Lady R: The Doctor⁹ &c &c &c ... my Kind regards

Most truly yours

H. C. Robinson

E. Quillinan Esqr

Quillinan apparently completed the exchange on Blake in his response of 12 August, of which it is sufficient to note that the writer denies having spoken slightingly of Blake, one of his "pet spoiled children of genius." Robinson's more valuable comments are of course in large part variants of anecdotes or information recorded in hitherto published writings of the diarist. His remark that Blake "always beat" him in argument, however, although possibly intended to convey no more than "beat down," implies a recollection of Blake as more effective in rational dispute than he elsewhere acknowledges: His usual explanation of his failures to explain himself to, or convince, the poet, such as "I tried to twist this passage into a sense corresponding with Blake's own theories, but failed," or, "Objections were seldom of any use,"¹⁰ is the poet's singularity. Robinson's less ambiguous pronouncement on Blake's sanity, for all its suggestions of cataclysmic historiography, provides a new confirmation of the barrister's basic attitude on this subject as later reported, with concern, by Gilchrist: "Among those who think Blake to have been an 'insane man of genius' or at any rate a victim of monomania, [Robinson] is the only one to think so of all I have met with who actually knew anything of him."¹¹ Earlier remarks by Robinson on the subject were not uniformly unqualified--he told Dorothy Wordsworth in 1826, for example, that Blake "will interest you ... whatever character you give to his mind"; in 1836 he reassured Samuel Palmer that "in calling Blake insane I was not repeating the commonplace declamation against him."¹² Here he apparently settles conclusively on a description that fixes the pattern for the phrasing of his 1852 Reminiscences, on which Gilchrist's description of Robinson evidently draws in turn, where Blake is again described as an "insane man of genius" and victim of "that form of insanity or lunacy called Monomania."¹³

The immediate sequel of these comments in the 1852 Reminiscences is a repetition, again in phrasing almost identical to that of the 1848 letter, of Wordsworth's pronouncement upon Blake to Robinson after "reading" of a number of the poems: "There is no doubt this poor man was mad, but there is something in the madness of this man which interests me more than the sanity of Lord Byron or Walter Scott!"¹⁴ Wordsworth's alleged comment calls for scrutiny. Possibly it is reported accurately, but it differs radically from other of his comments on Byron's own mental condition. On 18 April 1816 the poet wrote

bluntly to John Scott that Byron was "insane; and will probably end his career in a mad-house."¹⁵ Earlier, on 24 May 1812, he is recorded in Robinson's Diary as remarking that he believed Byron "somewhat cracked." This comment, however, accompanied another of the same day, when, upon hearing Robinson read some of Blake's poems, Wordsworth said that he "considered Blake as having the elements of poetry a thousand times more than either Byron or Scott."¹⁶ In the absence of further evidence, it seems probable that this incident is the actual basis of the 1848-1852 recollection. Robinson's comment to Quillinan may thus represent a casual but, in the event, decisive misformulation of a recollection of an occasion "many years ago"--on 24 May 1812--when Wordsworth in fact expressed appreciation of Blake's powers and doubts of the sanity of Byron.

Wordsworth, whom Blake regarded as "the only poet of the age," and of whose Ode Blake "most enjoyed" the parts that Robinson "least" liked or comprehended, had probably known all of the poems of Blake's printed by Malkin in A Father's Memoir of His Child (1806) by 25 August 1807.¹⁷ and whether Wordsworth read or listened on 24 May 1812, Robinson then possessed transcripts of at least nineteen poems or excerpts from Blake, of which sixteen had not appeared in Malkin.¹⁸ It would thus be inappropriate, in view of the possible extent of Wordsworth's contact with Blake's work by this date, to overlook a last anecdote bearing on Wordsworth's opinions of Blake's mental balance, Gilchrist's rather vague report that he "spake in private of the Songs of Innocence and Experience ... as 'undoubtedly the production of insane genius' ... but as to him more significant than the works of many a famous poet."¹⁹ Gilchrist immediately afterward cites Robinson as the source of his repetition of the late story of Wordsworth on Blake's madness, and thus seems to distinguish the diarist from his source for this previous quotation. But the phrasing of the undocumented quotation is so Robinsonian that it must nonetheless be regarded on present evidence as most likely derivative from Robinson--possibly ultimately from the same events of 24 May 1812. The record in any event is hearsay. The case for Wordsworth's having termed Blake insane would appear to stand unproven.

Lamb's reported comment on Blake, perhaps the earliest direct suggestion, facetious or otherwise, by a critic of resemblances between the minds or purposes of Blake and Wordsworth, might add a minute, speculative measure to the other side of the balance. To characterize Blake as a "mad Wordsworth" is of course to characterize Wordsworth as well, and not necessarily to his praise: The positive qualities of the Wordsworthian sanity remain wickedly undefined. One readily recalls Lamb's irony when, in 1808, he understood remarks of the poet to be a claim of ability to write like Shakespeare if he "had a mind": "It is clear, then, nothing is wanting but the mind."²⁰ One might also be tempted to imagine Lamb (who died in 1834) responding, long before Robinson's account to Quillinan, to a conversational report that Wordsworth regarded Blake as a madman with a remark like "So he is-- a mad Wordsworth!"

Whether a copy of the Descriptive Catalogue, of which Robinson had purchased four copies in 1809 and perhaps received another copy as a gift from Miss Denman in 1842, was either already at Rydal Mount or later sent to Mary Wordsworth, is uncertain. No surviving copy is known, in any case, to have belonged to the Wordsworths. The trail possibly ends in another Catalogue, of the Sale of the Rydal Mount Library in July 1859, in which lot 635, sold on 21 July, is described as containing "Sundry Gallery Guides, etc."²¹

¹G. E. Bentley, Jr., in G. E. Bentley, Jr., and M. K. Nurmi, A Blake Bibliography (Minneapolis, 1964), p. 9. For valuable assistance and advice in the preparation of this note I am grateful to Professor Paul F. Betz, Professor Bentley, and Mr. John Creasey, Deputy Librarian of the Dr. Williams Library.

²T. N. Talfourd's Final Memorials of Charles Lamb, dedicated to Wordsworth, was published by Moxon 22 July 1848 (London Times of 17 and 30 July). Robinson's Diary shows that he read the book between 24 July and 5 August. As "Blake's Poems" lacked pictorial embellishment, Quillinan's reference is plainly to the edition of Songs of Innocence and of Experience of J. J. Garth Wilkinson published by Pickering and Newbery in 1839, the only unillustrated collection then extant of verses of Blake's of which an illustrated collection was also extant. Robinson had met Wilkinson on 16 April 1848, and by 27 April had received from him a copy of his edition of Blake and ordered more from Moxon. His Diary records four further meetings in May and June. The "book you possess" was probably Robinson's copy of the Songs, Keynes and Wolf copy Z, apparently purchased from Blake 18 February 1826. Robinson also owned copies of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, pl. 21-24 (K), Visions of the Daughters of Albion (O), and America (D). Probably all were acquired from Blake, and the first two were certainly, the last probably, in Robinson's possession at this time. (Geoffrey Keynes and Edwin Wolf 2nd, William Blake's Illuminated Books, New York, 1953, pp. 32, 39, 65; information from Professor Bentley derived primarily from John Pearson Catalogue no. 62, ?1886, item 70. See also note 18 below.) Robinson possibly received another copy of Songs from Miss Denman on 1 Oct 1842. See E. J. Morley, ed., Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and Their Writers (London, 1938), p. 625. (The phrasing of his 1848 references to the Garth Wilkinson volume does not suggest earlier familiarity with the book.)

³Robinson had written to Wordsworth on 18 April 1847 to arrange a sitting for Wyon, who made a pencil and chalk drawing of the poet on 21 April. Wordsworth sat again on 26 April for the model of his head on which Wyon based the profile medal which he cast in early 1848. Robinson ordered two silver medals. During the second sitting Wordsworth was called from the room to hear bad news about the health of his daughter Mrs. Quillinan, who died on 9 July. Wyon called at Rydal Mount probably on 9 or 10 August. See Henry Crabb Robinson on Books, pp. 664-65, 674; Correspondence, II, pp. 662, 677; Francis Blanchard, Portraits

of Wordsworth (Ithaca, 1959), pp. 18, 99-100, 173-74, plates 30a, 30b.

⁴"Slightly" underlined and annotated by Quillinan in pencil: "as usual a mistake of friend Crabbe's [7]"

⁵On the loan of Wordsworth's Poems (1815) see E. J. Morley, ed., Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb, Etc. (Manchester and London, 1922), p. 24. This letter confirms Erdman's conjecture (The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, New York, 1965, p. 802) that the inking-over was done by Robinson. Blake's most direct comments (apart from his marginalia) on Wordsworth as a worshipper of Nature and the voice of the Devil appear in Robinson's Diary under the dates of 24 December 1825 and 18 February and 12 May 1826. Robinson wrote to Dorothy Wordsworth about Blake's views of her brother as an atheist in February 1826 (see Blake, Coleridge, [etc.], pp. 14-16). He read the Ode to Blake on 24 December 1826, probably the occasion upon which Blake responded to the passage "But there's a tree..." with almost "hysterical rapture" (ibid., pp. 15, 23).

⁶Wordsworth, "Roman Antiquities," l. 1.

⁷Residence of Catherine Clarkson.

⁸See Correspondence, II, pp. 674-77.

⁹Jemima and Rotha Quillinan; Miss Martineau; Mrs. John Davy; Mrs. Fletcher; Lady Richardson; probably Doctor Christopher Wordsworth, Jr.

¹⁰Henry Crabb Robinson on Books, p. 327; Blake, Coleridge, [etc.], p. 7.

¹¹Alexander Gilchrist, The Life of William Blake (London and Cambridge, 1863), I, 338.

¹²Blake, Coleridge, [etc.], p. 14; Henry Crabb Robinson on Books, p. 498.

¹³Blake, Coleridge, [etc.], p. 18. Robinson, commenting on Gilchrist's biography on 11 November [1863], a few days after its publication, adds a remark on "one of Blake's coloured drawings, which was headed America": "When I attempted to read it some years since I thought it Sheer--Madness." (Letter to Mrs. F. W. Fields, Osborn Collection, Yale University Library; quoted with permission of the owner and Professor Bentley, who called my attention to Robinson's comment.) As early as 1810, in his essay on the poet for the Vaterländisches Museum, he had characterized Blake (whom he met on 10 December 1825), as demonstrating "the union of genius and madness." (See K. A. Esdaile, "An Early Appreciation of William Blake," The Library, V, 1914, p. 236: Mrs. Esdaile's re-translation from the German.)

¹⁴Blake, Coleridge, [etc.], p. 18.

¹⁵Ernest de Selincourt, ed., The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. The Middle Years (Oxford, 1937), p. 734. A more temperate view of Byron by Wordsworth is recorded in Henry Crabb Robinson on Books, pp. 486-87, but is too late (1836) to bear upon the present discussion.

¹⁶Henry Crabb Robinson on Books, p. 85.

¹⁷Blake, Coleridge, [etc.], p. 15; Henry Crabb Robinson on Books, pp. 330-31; Paul F. Betz, "Wordsworth's First Acquaintance with Blake's Poetry," elsewhere in this issue of Blake Newsletter. Poems of Blake's published in Malkin are "Laughing Song," "Holy Thursday" (Innocence), "The Divine Image," "How sweet I roamed," "I love the jocund dance," "The Tiger."

¹⁸Transcripts of or from poems not in Malkin included at least: "To the Muses," "Night," "The Little Black Boy," "The Chimney Sweeper" (Innocence), "A Dream," "The Sunflower," "Introduction" (Experience), "Earth's Answer," "The Garden of Love," "A Little Boy Lost," "The Poison Tree," "The Sick Rose," "The Human Abstract," the "Dedication" of the designs for Blair's Grave (1808), America, pl. 10, ll. 5-10, and Europe, pl. 1, ll. 12-15. Robinson's 1810 Vaterländisches Museum article (see note 13 above) had included one poem not among these transcripts, "Introduction" (Innocence); and Robinson also possessed transcripts from the Exhibition Advertisement (1809): See Esdaile, pp. 224-56. Mrs. Esdaile saw the transcripts which she describes at the Dr. Williams Library. An "old letter" upon which Robinson copied the excerpts from America, Europe, and the Advertisement seems to have disappeared since Mrs. Esdaile's examination. The lyric transcripts are in Bundle 1.VI.29 of the Robinson papers. I am indebted to Professor Bentley and Mr. John Creasey for information of these materials. Mr. Creasey has advised me, since the completion of this note, that "Introduction" (Innocence) is also found among a set of transcripts, otherwise containing no poems of Blake's not in Malkin or the copies already cited, in a pocket book of Robinson's also in the Dr. Williams Library.

¹⁹Gilchrist, I, pp. 17-2.

²⁰E. V. Lucas, ed., The Letters of Charles Lamb, to Which Are Added Those of His Sister Mary Lamb (London, 1935), II, p. 51. See also Henry Crabb Robinson on Books, pp. 466-67.

²¹Blake, Coleridge, [etc.], p. 17; Henry Crabb Robinson on Books, p. 625. For the Catalogue see Transactions of the Wordsworth Society, VI [1884], pp. 195-257. The same catalogue offers as one of the twelve items in lot 523 "Songs of Innocence, by W. Blake." The lot was sold for £ 1/18

[?0], a good price by the Sale's standards. The anonymous recorder of the price in the "Queen's Hotel" copy (see Correspondence, II, pp. 873-74) also wrote between "and six others" (the conclusion of the description) and "12" (the total number of items) the word "pamphlets." While the Garth Wilkinson volume was issued cloth-bound, and I know no information suggesting that it was issued otherwise, a casual use of the term pamphlet could have included this small book. The catalogue entry must on present evidence be regarded as a short title for the copy of the Garth Wilkinson edition that prompted Quillinan's uninspired but usefully evocative criticism in 1848. (Information on the annotations kindly provided by Professor Betz from G. G. Wordsworth's transcripts in a copy of the Catalogue at Dove Cottage. Keynes, A Bibliography of William Blake, New York, 1921, p. 264, quotes C. J. Wilkinson, Memoir of J. J. Garth Wilkinson, London, 1911, London, 1911, p. 25: "The edition, a thin cloth-bound octavo, was published jointly by Pickering and Newbery on July 9, 1839." Professor Bentley tells me of his copy of the volume that "even though it is in hard covers, its height and thickness are such that 'pamphlet' might be an appropriate description.")

* * * * *

2. Wordsworth's First Acquaintance With Blake's

Poetry

Paul F. Betz
Georgetown University

It is relatively well known that William Wordsworth's Commonplace Book (Dove Cottage MS. Prose 31) contains four of Blake's early poems: "Holy Thursday" and "Laughing Song" from the Songs of Innocence, "The Tyger" from the Songs of Experience, and "I love the jocund dance" from Poetical Sketches.¹ One might have hoped to discover that these transcripts had been taken directly from the rare primary sources, or indirectly from these sources through the agency of Southey, Lamb, or Crabb Robinson. But Mary Moorman, in an interesting article on "Wordsworth's Commonplace Book" in the September 1957 issue of Notes and Queries (pp. 400-405), has pointed out that the poems probably have been taken from Benjamin Heath Malkin's A Father's Memoir of his Child (1806), where six of Blake's short poems were printed for the first time.² G. E. Bentley, Jr., in Blake Records, has recently confirmed the Malkin source of the entries.³

However, the question of when the poems were read and transcribed into the Commonplace Book still remains to be settled. F. W. Bateson, in Wordsworth: A Re-Interpretation (second edition, 1956), writes that the entries were made "in or about 1804."⁴ He has perhaps been misled by the presence, several pages before the Blake poems, of seven pages of extracts (leaves 38 recto to 41 recto) from Sir John Barrow's Travels in China; at the top of leaf 38 recto, above the title of the

book, the Poet's grandson Gordon Graham Wordsworth has written: "First Published in 1804." But this is not to say that the Wordsworths read the book when it was first published; and as Mrs. Moorman has established Malkin as the source of the verses, a date before 1806 is almost impossible.

Mrs. Moorman does not attempt to specify the date of the Blake entries, although in another context she points out that what appears to be the final entry in the Commonplace Book is a part of Wordsworth's June 5, 1808, letter to Francis Wrangham.⁷ This narrows the probable date of the Blake transcripts to a period of approximately two years.

It now appears that the four Blake entries can be placed with some certainty within the period of six and one-half months between February 12, 1807 and August 25, 1807. Within this period, the most likely dates of transcription seem to be from mid-March to mid-April, and from mid-May to June 10.

On February 15, 1807, from the temporary home of the Wordsworths at Coleorton, Dorothy wrote to Lady Beaumont that "We received the Books a week ago" which had been lent by the Beaumonts, and that "I shall next begin with Barrow's Travels."⁶ Most and probably all of the literary extracts in the Commonplace Book seem likely to have been made at William's request, so that he might again consult passages or poems from books which he did not then own. As William would have needed to read the book first, Mary Wordsworth's seven extracts from Barrow were probably made after Dorothy's reading, and could not have been made earlier than two or three days before it. The Barrow entries are followed by John Mayne's poem "Logan Braes" (leaves 41 verso-42 recto) in the hand of Sara Hutchinson, a brief passage "From Aristotle's Synopsis of the virtues and vices" (leaf 42 recto) in Dorothy's hand, and excerpts from J. L. Buchanan's Travels in the Western Hebrides (leaves 42 recto-43 verso) in William's hand. Only then come Blake's "Holy Thursday" (leaf 43 verso), "Laughing Song" (leaf 44 recto), and the first quatrain of "The Tyger" (leaf 44 recto) in William's hand, followed by the rest of "The Tyger" (leaf 44 verso) and "I love the jocund dance" (leaf 45 recto) in Mary's hand. If one considers the time necessary for William to have read the works mentioned earlier, as well as other books quite probably read but not represented in the Commonplace Book (see Dorothy's letter to Lady Beaumont for three possibilities), a date earlier than mid-March for the Blake entries seems unlikely.

On August 25, 1807, William and Mary set out for a short stay at Eusemere at the foot of Ullswater. This would have been the Poet's first opportunity to see Thomas Wilkinson the Quaker poet, who lived nearby, since before the Wordsworths had moved to Coleorton during the previous autumn. During November 1806, when already at Coleorton, Wordsworth had written to Wilkinson:

I was prevented by a most severe cold from seeing you as I intended ... what shall I say in apology for your

Journal, which is now locked up with my manuscripts at Grasmere ... unluckily, most unluckily, in the hurry of departure I forgot it, together with two of my own manuscripts which were along with it ... it may be procured, for I can write to Grasmere to that effect; it is there in perfect safety If you do not want it, it is in a place where it can take no injury, and I may have the pleasure of delivering it to you myself in the spring.⁷

The "Journal" mentioned is the Scottish section of Wilkinson's Tours to the British Mountains, parts of which circulated in manuscript long before actual publication in 1824. Wordsworth had seen this section of the journal before 1806; he had based the final lines of "The Solitary Reaper," composed on November 5, 1805, upon a short passage from it. This very passage ("Pass'd by a Female who was reaping alone, she sung in Erse as she bended over her sickle, the sweetest human Voice I ever heard/.⁷ Her strains were tenderly melancholy and felt delicious long after they were heard no more") has been entered retrospectively by Wordsworth at the top of leaf 45 verso, directly after the Blake entries. It is followed by a second passage from Wilkinson which Wordsworth draws upon in The Excursion, IV, 489-504.⁸ There is no indication that Wilkinson asked for the immediate return of his manuscript, and it would not have been in character; but Wordsworth would surely have taken the first opportunity to return the overdue loan in person. Since the manuscript had been in Grasmere, Wordsworth would have entered these passages in his Commonplace Book between the family's return to Grasmere during July 1807 and the departure for Eusemere on August 25.

How did Wordsworth encounter A Father's Memoir of his Child? It may have been through Dorothy Wordsworth's friend, Catherine Clarkson. On August 26 (or 27), 1809, Dorothy wrote to Mrs. Clarkson:

We saw in the paper the other day that Mr. Malkin is elected to the Mastership of Bury School. I am afraid he will not fill the place so well as the late Master for I am told he is a coxcomb, and indeed it is plain enough from the manner in which that account of his Son is written.⁹

Dorothy seems to assume that Catherine Clarkson also is familiar with the book, and indeed the Clarksons lived in Bury St. Edmonds. If this is the source, then the book might have come ultimately from Henry Crabb Robinson. Crabb Robinson indicates that prior to his attendance at Blake's 1809 exhibition he had encountered Blake's work only through Malkin,¹⁰ and while not yet personally acquainted with the Wordsworths, he had been on terms of close friendship with Catherine Clarkson for some time.

However, a more likely source seems to be the Beaumonts, either through their library at Coleorton or through books sent on personal loan.

While there is no evidence that the Wordsworths were receiving books from the Clarksons during this period, they definitely were receiving books from the Beaumonts.¹¹ If Malkin's book came to them through the Beaumonts, then in line with the limitations already established, the Blake entries were probably made within either of two short periods: from mid-March to mid-April, when Wordsworth left Coleorton for London; and from mid-May, when Wordsworth returned to Coleorton, to June 10, when the family left Coleorton for an extended journey which was to take them at last back to Grasmere.

Important questions remain to be answered. Why did Wordsworth select these poems while omitting the other two printed by Malkin: "The Divine Image" and "How sweet I roam'd"? Did Wordsworth have in mind the possibility of publishing the poems himself in a collection of poetry he appears to have contemplated making at this time?¹² If he had actually done so, this would quite possibly have introduced Blake's poetry to a wider audience than it ever enjoyed during his lifetime. And what influence, if any, did Wordsworth's awareness of these poems have on his own work?

¹¹I am grateful for encouragement and advice given by Professors Morton D. Paley, Mark L. Reed, and David V. Erdman; and I wish to thank the Trustees of Dove Cottage for permission to examine MS. Prose 31. Wordsworth's Commonplace Book is complicated by the confusion of hands which so often plagues scholars working on Wordsworth manuscripts, and which has led to frequent examples of mis-attribution in the past. While the drafts of Wordsworth's verse notebooks have often not been entered chronologically, with the possible exception of pasted-in entries there seems almost always to be a steady chronological progression in the Commonplace Book entries.

Leaf numbers as given above refer only to the original leaves of the notebook, not to the slips and full leaves which have been pasted to those original leaves. All material cited here has been written directly on original leaves.

Entries in the notebook run from both ends toward the middle. All entries of a primarily literary interest are at one end. The few pages with entries at the other end are entirely taken up with household lists, accounts, medical remedies, and a page of notes by Dorothy about the infant language and activities of John, Wordsworth's first son, born in 1803.

My disagreement with F. W. Bateson's suggestion that Wordsworth may well have encountered some of Blake's poems as early as 1797 will be seen from the title of this note; although, of course, evidence to that effect may someday be discovered. Mr. Bateson's statement (pp. 133-134), that "Susan is one of the country girls in 'Laughing Song' and it may not be simply a coincidence that Wordsworth's poem is 'The Reverie of Poor Susan,'" is surprising. There is no indication that Wordsworth's

lack of invention in choosing names, to which Mr. Bateson alludes, ever extended this far. In addition, the title itself is a translation or Bürger's "Das Arme Süßchens Traum," a poem which Wordsworth praised (see Mary Moorman, William Wordsworth: The Early Years, 1770-1803, p. 428), although it must be added that when first published the poem was called only "Poor Susan."

²Moorman, "Wordsworth's Commonplace Book," p. 403.

³G. E. Bentley, Jr., Blake Records (Oxford, 1969), p. 430n.

⁴Bateson, Wordsworth: A Re-Interpretation (London, 1956), p. 133.

⁵Moorman, "Wordsworth's Commonplace Book," p. 400. The entire letter appears in The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years, I, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Mary Moorman (Oxford, 1969), pp. 246-251.

⁶Letters: The Middle Years, I, p. 133. The Wordsworths arrived at Coleorton in Leicestershire at the beginning of November, 1806, and did not depart to return to Grasmere until June 10, 1807. They stayed in the Coleorton farm house as the guests of Sir George Beaumont, Wordsworth's patron, while the Beaumonts themselves spent most of this period in London. Sara Hutchinson was at Coleorton from the beginning until mid-April; while Coleridge and his son Hartley arrived on December 21 and also remained until mid-April. It is certainly possible that Coleridge may have seen A Father's Memoir, with its Blake verses, during this stay.

⁷Letters: The Middle Years, I, p. 104.

⁸The first passage appears in Thomas Wilkinson, Tours to the British Mountains, with the Descriptive Poems of Lowther, and Emont Vale (London, 1824), p. 12. The second passage, also clearly from the Scottish tour, never appeared in the published version.

⁹Letters: The Middle Years, I, p. 368.

¹⁰See Crabb Robinson's account of this in Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb, Etc., being Selections from the Remains of Henry Crabb Robinson, ed. Edith J. Morley (Manchester, 1922), pp. 17-19.

¹¹See Letters: The Middle Years, I, pp. 129, 133, and 186. Of course, they may have first heard of the book from Catherine Clarkson, and may have asked the Beaumonts for the book or chosen it from the library at Coleorton for that reason.

¹² The only evidence for this proposed collection is Mary Lamb's comment, in a letter written to Mrs. Clarkson on December 25, 1806, that "my brother sometimes threatens to pass his holidays in town hunting over old plays at the Museum to extract passages for a work (a collection of poetry) Mr. Wordsworth intends to publish." The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb, II, ed. E. V. Lucas (London, 1935), p. 33.

* * * * *

MINUTE PARTICULARS

1. BLAKE ITEMS IN THE LIBRARY OF ISAAC REED

A glance through Bibliotheca Reediana (London, 1807), the sale catalogue of the library of Isaac Reed, reveals that gentleman as a bookbuyer with interests far outside his own profession of theater history. He was in fact a kind of bookstall omnivore. It is therefore not surprising that, as a friend of William Hayley and George Romney, Reed left two works by William Blake among the possessions to be auctioned after his death.

In their Blake Bibliography, Professors Bentley and Nurmi list one of these, but inaccurately (see item 431). "Blake's Poetical Sketches--1783" appears in the auction catalogue but as lot 6577 and on page 302, not as the bibliographers note. According to the priced catalogue in the Harvard College Library, the Poetical Sketches sold for six shillings sixpence, a respectable price for the sale, on the thirtieth day of the auction, December 5, 1807.

A second Blake item, not listed in Bentley and Nurmi, was sold nine days later among the prints and manuscripts. Lot 8936 (on page 404 of the catalogue) contained an unspecified number of prints including "Designs to a Series of Ballads, by Hayley, engraved by Blake, 2 No. 1802"--clearly Bentley and Nurmi number 375. This reference is the fifth known type-printed allusion to Blake during 1807 (see A Blake Bibliography, p. xvii). The entire lot, with the now very rare "Designs," brought eleven shillings sixpence.

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2. "Blake and Tradition"

I read with great interest the review of Blake and Tradition in your issue of December 15th by Professor Daniel Hughes. In this review Professor Hughes states that Keynes does not agree with my interpreta-

tion of the Arlington Court Tempera as an illustration of Porphyry's de Antro Nympharum, translated by Thomas Taylor. This is not so. Sir Geoffrey Keynes was one of the first Blake scholars to assent to this view, which he holds to be conclusive. I remember his asserting - as a doctor he was well able to judge - to my description of the gesture of the kneeling figure as that of "throwing with averted face," attributed to Odysseus in this work. He has since confirmed in writing his agreement with my interpretation.

I may add that he caught me out badly on another anatomical error - the sex in the figure in the lower panel of Jerusalem Plate 33!

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REVIEWS

1. G. E. Bentley, Jr. Blake Records. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969. 678 / xxviii pp. / 60 plates. £8. 10s.

In an earlier age of scholarship, this book would have been called "Materials Toward a Biography" of William Blake, or something of that sort. Our tighter-lipped times must be content with Blake Records. Anyone who works on Blake will be grateful to Professor Bentley for this compendious labor, which comprises not only contemporary references and documents, but also four invaluable appendices: "Early Essays on Blake," "Blake Residences," "Blake Accounts," and "Engravings by and after Blake." There is also a superbly comprehensive index. If one puts down Blake Records at last with a certain feeling of frustration, this is not owing to any dissatisfaction with the book itself; it is, rather, a reflection of the present state of our knowledge about Blake. If even this enormous, rich, plum pudding of a book does not solve any of the major biographical problems about Blake, does this mean they will never be solved at all?

This is not at all to say that no important biographical data emerges from Blake Records. On the contrary, Professor Bentley has substantially increased our knowledge of Blake's life, sometimes by single discoveries, sometimes by the accumulation of detail. The possibility that Blake's father was converted to Baptism in about 1769 (pp. 7-8) is certainly a very interesting one, to say the least. The curious claim of Charles Henry Bellenden Ker that Blake had him arrested for nonpayment for two drawings must give us all pause. (See pp. 227-228). Does this indicate a hitherto unsuspected aspect of Blake's character? But how could a man be arrested for debt as a result of a verbal offer made three years previously, and why should Ker have ended up paying ten guineas more

than he had originally promised? On firmer ground, the detailed exposure of Cromek's dealing with Blake leaves no room for doubt that Blake was swindled; previously we have tended to side with Blake on emotional or intuitive grounds, but Blake Records exposes Cromek's double-dealing very nicely. The Blake-Linnell accounts leave a much different impression: here one can see that Linnell was accused unjustly by Palmer and others. Linnell emerges as a hard-headed man, one who would not scruple to dun a nobleman, for example; more of an entrepreneur than a Maecenas. But he did not pretend to be Blake's benefactor (and would Blake have enjoyed it if he had?), and his dealings with Blake were dignified and straightforward. Frederick Tatham, it must be said, remains about as understandable as Antonio in The Tempest.

At times in reading Blake Records one feels very close to Blake indeed, seeing him through the eyes of his contemporaries. Professor Bentley has wisely not interfered with this feeling of contemporaneity, providing only short, lucid expository links where they are needed. The result is a sort of do-it-yourself Blake biography kit, which at this stage of Blake studies, is more useful than - in the absence of new major discoveries - a new biography.

--MDP

2. Blake in the Nineteenth Century: His Reputation as a Poet from Gilchrist to Yeats, by Deborah Dorfman. Yale Studies in English, Vol. 170. Yale University Press, 1969. Pp. vx + 314. \$8.75.

Exactly how, after Blake's death, the nineteenth century tried to come to terms with what remained of his work and what could be learned about his life: this is a subject on which a major publication has been long overdue. Previously, according to Miss Dorfman, there was only a 1953 dissertation; except for her footnote references, it seems to have sunk without a trace. The present study apparently began as a dissertation also, and the author has been faithful to the genre in approach and organization as well as in the paradigmatic title. Although the immense amount of material she has to draw on might have lent itself to any one of several emphases when the dissertation became a book, intended for a new audience, Miss Dorfman keeps almost exclusively to the main line of chronology, the shortest distance between the earliest date and the latest, and compromises with the other options as she goes. One result, as the footnotes threaten to rise into the text, is that we are aware of how much is being left out, a larger and more complex world of documents, personalities, cultural attitudes, and ideas, which is hinted in the citations at the bottom of the page but which the author is not able to explore in her dutiful march through the decades. Only in the relatively less compressed and more unified chapters on Gilchrist's Life and the Ellis-Yeats edition is there more than a glimpse of the kind of book that may have been one revision away.

Although the subtitle--also from the conventions of the dissertation-- makes "reputation" the key word, the account is concerned mainly with nineteenth-century editions of the poetry and the evolution of a Blake criticism. Qualitative judgments are inescapable, and here Miss Dorfman is most disappointing, not only because of her chronological approach and her exclusions. Her individual comments, though brief, are perceptive, pointed, often witty; but when she steps back for a general view, she allows her heterogeneous company of early Blakeans to fade together in a mist of retrospective compliment. There is no reason, certainly, to object to the statement that, starting from "nothing--no printed texts, no reading public, no confidence in a man presumed insane-- Blake's nineteenth-century editors cleared a narrow path for readers to approach him." The pioneer commentators, as well--and this is a point not sufficiently stressed, I think--were capable of incidental critical insights which are a vindication of the power of literary meanings to communicate themselves, even at an unpropitious time. Nevertheless, side by side with legitimate curiosity and admiration and a sense of scholarly responsibility, there was something else at work in the age which Miss Dorfman's own evidence suggests, although she does not follow it up.

It was not only that, as she observes, the critics tried to recreate Blake in images of themselves: Swinburne's arch-rebel, Smetham's "religio-aesthetic monk," Arthur Symons' precursor of Nietzsche, Ellis' Kabbalist initiate, Yeats' Irish poet. What Miss Dorfman calls the "educational diversion" of rewriting Blake's poems--Cunningham, Swinburne, the Rossettis, Edwin Ellis, and W. B. Yeats all indulged-- was of a piece with the cavalier editorial practice of "improving" his texts for publication; William Rossetti was, again, a particular offender. Tatham's sacrifice by fire and Ruskin's mutilations were more dramatic, but it is difficult to regard them as different except in form and degree from the other expressions of what at best was an ambivalence among Blake's professed champions. Prophetically, Blake himself had supplied the terms to describe what happened to the body of work he left behind. In the ideal contrariety of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, which was also the ideal relation between artist and public, the Prolific was inexhaustible and active, the Devourer insatiable but passive. But the precondition of their creative tension was that both should be "always upon earth"; by implication, if either disappeared, the other would lose his function and hence his identity. Blake did not foresee that when the Prolific ceased to produce, the Devourer would cease to be passive and would try to play both roles.

Edwin Ellis, in the edition whose character he appears to have done more than his collaborator to determine, also rewrote and recast some of the poems, as Miss Dorfman points out, and dated and rearranged those that were being published according to what he understood as their "technical vocabulary of symbols." The symbols belonged to the explicitly named occult "system" (unfortunately, the same word is used in the famous speech by Los, so that it is subject to double confusion) which was expounded by Ellis and Yeats in their first volume--no less

an arbitrary "improvement" of Blake than the textual and editorial changes; another example of the Devourer at his usurping work. But Miss Dorfman has changed the direction of her comparisons; in the last pages of her last chapter she is already backing away from the nineteenth century toward a vantage point of her own. She quotes Northrop Frye on the obvious critical faults of the Ellis-Yeats commentary, and she herself calls attention to the failure by both editors to recognize Blake's vitality and combativeness as a creator and thinker. Yet her estimate of the contribution of the Ellis-Yeats edition as a whole--that it laid the groundwork for serious later study of Blake's longer poems--ends as a selective acceptance of the Ellis-Yeats "system." Why? Because such an acceptance is what actually has occurred: "Once the existence of the four Zoas, the principle of fourfold meaning, the dialectical progression, and the theory of symbol had been absorbed, the 'System' was open to addition, qualification, documentation, and comparative studies."

A number of twentieth-century expositions of Blake, major and minor, have of course been related to the Ellis-Yeats interpretation in the ways listed by Miss Dorfman, even without direct influence by anything actually written by either man. But continuity is not necessarily progress, and the fact of the relationship may as well raise, or confirm, doubts about the twentieth-century commentators as elevate Ellis and Yeats. The number of years since the publication of the Ellis-Yeats edition in 1893 is now greater than that between 1893 and the date of Blake's death; even allowing for an unusual conservatism among many of those writing about Blake, the developments in the study of literature during the past three decades have had their effect on how his poetry too is approached. More accurate texts, new studies of his intellectual background and his literary and pictorial sources, and improved techniques of reading the poems themselves are making any overall, "systematic" interpretation unnecessary, even for the longer works; on the contrary, it may be a hindrance. Merely to try to imagine a Blake scholarship or criticism still limited to variations on Miss Dorfman's formula is to be reminded of the changes that have been taking place since mid-century, our mid-century. Practically, at least, the trend is away from diagrams and doctrine and more and more toward investigations of the language and the forms Blake actually used, in both his poetry and his designs.

Nowhere, however, does Deborah Dorfman indicate what the situation in Blake studies is today, or even what it was when she started on her own project. Except for a few documentary references and appeals to contemporary scholars in matters of opinion (but almost never opinion on Blake's poetry, and not their own interpretations), she might be writing at some indeterminate time in the middling past, demonstrably later only than 1924. When in a two-page "Afterword" she quotes from Blake's "first truly modern commentator," it is S. Foster Damon she means, and she cites him twice again before concluding. The particular quotations chosen sound "humanistic" enough, but ironically (and unavoidably, considering when he began his work), it is Damon who probably has been most responsible for keeping nineteenth-century views of Blake

at least formally alive. Most of the books listed in William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols were published before 1900, and the commentators Damon calls on are among those Miss Dorfman discusses. In one instance, the much later Blake Dictionary (s. v. "Thel") preserves as biographical fact what she shows to have been Edwin Ellis' invention: the supposed unborn child of the Blakes, supposedly lost by a miscarriage.

The small irony that involves the author herself does not affect the genuine scholarly value of her researches, which also enable us to see that the subject does not belong wholly to the past and that neither 1893 nor 1924 really marked the beginning of the "modern" in Blake studies. If Blake's story is, as Miss Dorfman sums it up, "peculiarly a history of reclamation," it would seem that the greater part of the task--reclaiming the man and his work from his Victorian heirs and exegetes--is barely under way.

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DISCUSSION

"With Intellectual Spears and Long-winged Arrows of Thought"

1. The Devil's Syntax and the O.E.D.

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How should we parse "Damn. braces: Bless relaxes"?¹ Does this proverb mean that damning braces [the one who damns] and blessing relaxes [the one who blesses]? Or are braces to be damned and relaxes to be blessed? The arguments on both sides are intriguing.

1. The act of damning is stimulating; the act of blessing is enervating. Although Damn and Bless are awkward nouns, the fact that they are capitalized, as well as the placing of a pause-period after Damn, strengthens the impression that they are nevertheless the subjects of balanced declarative clauses. The colon after braces and the period after relaxes further suggest the declarative sentence, the indicative mood, as in other paired statements among the Proverbs of Hall-- "Excess of sorrow laughs. Excess of joy weeps" or "The cistern contains: the fountain overflows," for example. Thus the pronouncing of the word "damn" or the act of damning anything deserving of an honest man's indignation is healthy, toning up the nerves and girding one for battle. The weak, "angelic" act of blessing, on the other hand, weakens

and debilitates. Or if the verbs are intransitive, "Damn" itself becomes resolute and "Bless" becomes slack.

2. Curse everything that braces; bless everything that relaxes (or curse restrains; bless releases). A more vigorous aphorism, in the imperative mood, is this command to condemn whatever holds in and to bless whatever lets go. The punctuation does not suggest an oath or an ejaculation (several other proverbs do end in exclamation points), however, and relaxes is an even odder noun than Damn or Bless. Yet the formula "Damn _____; Bless _____" in ordinary English word order leads us to expect nouns. Other proverbs begin with such imperatives as "Drive," "Dip," "Bring," "Think," "Expect," and "Listen." The OED definitions of brace as a noun which are relevant to this proverb are "that which clasps, tightens, secures, connects" and "that which imparts rigidity or steadiness." Since--fortunately--the use of braces to mean suspenders does not appear until 1816, the noun braces is a good synonym for the Urizenic laws, "mind-forg'd manacles," Newtonian systems, the thou-shalt-nots under which priests are "binding with briars my joys and desires." Blessed by angels, all such "braces" are damned by the Devil.

The noun form of relax is rare, but it is used by Milton, and the OED records it as late as 1773. It has even been known to occur in the plural form, in Owen Felltham's Resolves between 1627 and 1677. It means "relaxation, or that which causes relaxation." The legal meaning of relaxation, "partial (or complete) remission of some penalty, burden, duty, etc.," would certainly be considered praiseworthy by the Devil's party. Another definition, "diminution of, release or freedom from, strictness or severity," should be equally attractive to the apostles of exuberance. The religious would consider such "relaxes" a threat to the angelic code and its enforcement, but the Devil heartily blesses them.

Evidence from Blake's own usage elsewhere is inconclusive. According to David V. Erdman's Concordance (Ithaca, N.Y., 1967), relax appears nowhere else in Blake. Brace, in its three other appearances, is a noun modified by iron:

- A. Nought can deform the Human Race
Like to the Armours iron brace.

(Auguries of Innocence, ll. 99-100)

- B. The "golden builders" form Golgonooza from such materials as
stones of pity, bricks of affections, tiles of merciful labor,
beams and rafters of forgiveness, and
the nails,
And the screws & iron braces, are well wrought blandishments
And well contrived words, firm fixing, never forgotten,
Always comforting the remembrance.

(Jerusalem 12:33-36)

C. Los's sons Rintrah, Palamabron, Theotormon, and Bromion have endured long periods of anguish in the Furnaces at which they now labor. The machinery there includes
iron rollers, golden axle-trees & yokes
Of brass, iron chains & braces & the gold, silver & brass
Mingled or separate: for swords; arrows; cannons; mortars
The terrible ball: the wedge: the loud sounding hammer
of destruction.

(Jerusalem 73:9-12)

Damn and Bless are always verbs, although the direct objects of Bless are consistently ironic: Tiriel's bald pate or the seventh day on which the children of Urizen rest after having shrunk up from existence. Damn, on the other hand, is used as a straightforward expletive, as in "damn sneerers" in the annotations to Lavater (Keynes, p. 67, Erdman, p. 574).

It seems highly likely that "Damn. braces: Bless relaxes" has more than one infernal or diabolical meaning. E. J. Rose has commented on "Blake's synchronization of parts of speech with his symbolism."² In "Mental forms Creating," for instance, "Creating" is both a participle and a verb. When corrosives have melted away apparent grammatical surfaces, Blake's ambiguity of syntax (Empson's second type of ambiguity) emerges. Both the first and second meanings, at the very least, are simultaneously communicated in a double-edged statement of infernal wisdom.

¹All quotations are from The Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. David V. Erdman (Garden City, N.Y., 1965).

²Edward J. Rose, "Visionary Forms Dramatic: Grammatical and Iconographical Movement in Blake's Verse and Designs," Criticism, VIII (1966), 111-125.

* * * * *

2. Discussing the Arlington Court Picture
Part I: A Report on the Warner-Simmons Theory

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Seminar 23, devoted to Methods of Interpreting the Illustrations of William Blake, met for the second time at the Modern Language Association Convention in Denver on December 28, 1969, from 10:30 - 12 Noon, at the Brown Palace Hotel. About forty-five people were in attendance.

The topic was the Arlington Court Picture (ACP). For the first half-hour Janet Warner of Glendon College, York University, presented an interpretation of the picture which she had worked out in collaboration with Robert Simmons of Glendon College. Her exposition was greatly assisted by showing a number of good slides of the ACP, the preliminary drawing, and of several other Blake paintings. The ensuing discussion was a lively compound of comments and questions which continued after the formal conclusion of the meeting. David Erdman remarked afterward that the character of the discussion indicated real progress was being made toward achieving a consensus of understanding about the picture. But evidently non-Blakists in the audience were unable to recognize the progress or appreciate the broad base of agreement we felt we had achieved. It has always seemed to me that qualified Blakists tend to agree more than qualified Shakespearians or Miltonists, but there must be something in the idiom of our agreement that is subtly different from those of other consensi.

One thing that could hardly be disputed is that Blakists made their presence felt in Denver, due largely to the initiative of Roger Easson and Kay Long of Blake Studies. I first became acquainted with Roger in an elevator because he was wearing a good-sized white button with black lettering that declared for "Blake Power." Others of us were delighted to join in wearing these buttons, which Blake Studies generously made available, but it did occur to me that in the future we ought at least to change our colors so as not to seem to be denying that other good cause which is more exigent. Perhaps Liberty caps would be most appropriate even if Erdman has freed us from the legend that Blake himself wore one (of a certain color). Easson and Long had also had made up a number of large yellow posters based on the drawing that appeared on the cover of the second issue of Blake Studies with the Blake profile printed at various angles so as to give several-fold Zoa perspectives. With the Jerusalem hymn boldly printed at the bottom, it is mind-blowing. At this writing neither the costumes, the publicity, nor the agenda for the 1970 MLA has been settled, but a petition for a Discussion Group, rather than a seminar, has been submitted and Morton Paley is to act as chairman.

Concerning the discussion of ACP, I shall not attempt to present a complete summary of the interpretation put forward by Mrs. Warner because she and Simmons are completing a detailed study and it would be unfair for me to anticipate their final position. Instead I shall merely indicate the main points of Mrs. Warner's presentation and also some of the comments and questions that came up afterward. I have been assisted by a draft of her remarks which she kindly made available to me. But what follows is more involved than a secretary's notes. I have thought for a long time about the picture and have noticed many connections in symbolism with others of Blake's pictures, a number of which I shall mention even though there was no opportunity to discuss them in the Seminar. I wish to thank Mrs. Warner and David Erdman for reading a draft of this report and to apologize to the reader for its lack of polish.

According to Mrs. Warner ACP has to do with the assuming of mortality rather than casting it off, as both Raine and Digby tended variously to maintain. For her it also depicts the birth of mythology and history, "the illusions that man creates for himself -- both Greek and Christian illusions." She devoted considerable time to a description of the "composition," the geometry of the picture, believing it to be a key to meaning. In opposition to Keynes, who discerned a basically circular composition, Mrs. Warner prefers to distinguish a circular pattern in the upper left which includes the sky god and the sea goddess and, more loosely, implicates the central figures of the man in red and the standing Veiled Lady. The whole lower right area of the picture is seen as a triangle running from the shore at the lower left to the trees at the upper right. The foci of this area are three cave-like areas: at the lower left, the middle right, and the upper right. "The circle ... represents ... the eternal realm, outside of history. The triangle represents the mortal and rational -- man within history." The actions in these areas correspond to aspects of the central man dressed in red. His gaze is directed at the reader and the moment of eye-contact represents "the moment of the fall; the moment of sleep of the eternal world, and the creation of the mortal."

A crucial difference between this interpretation and those of Digby and Raine is that the central female figure, especially because of her veils, is taken to be sinister. Moreover the sun god is sleeping, his horses are being restrained, and the company of angels at the top right are contained within a cavelike area. The similarity in posture between the woman and such figures as the "Evening" (Tempera Paintings, no. 4) and "Eve Tempted by the Serpent" (Masters, pl. 7) particularly, indicates that the woman is "Nature" as sinister temptress, or Enitharmon in her sinister aspect.

The man can be identified with Los and the gesture he makes with his hands has both creative and spell-binding suggestions, as indicated by the similarities to both God in Job 14 and the Accusers in Job 10. A declension in the eternal realm is depicted in the upper left area where the sea goddess of night takes over from the sleeping sun god of day. But the sea goddess is at least a Beulah figure, who represents the creative potentiality of love guiding the four Zoas. Since the man in red turns away from her at the moment she is created, he confirms his bondage to the Veiled Lady who is Nature. These two, because they are on a larger scale than the other figures, dominate the picture and also serve to link the compositional circle and triangle. On the other hand, they have the curious effect of not quite being "in" the picture at all (cf. Gainsborough's otherwise utterly unlike Mr. and Mrs. Robert Andrews), which is additional evidence that ACP is about them.

The triangular area depicts Ulro and Generation: at the lower left man is in hell, dominated by the Fates. The horned man suffers from the deed of the man in red and is also the uncreative counterpart of the sea goddess, whose position he echoes, struggling against death. The focal figure in the second area is the woman trying to carry the water

of generation up to where she can participate in the work of the weavers of generation. The top level may be a kind of Beulah state also, but it is presented as an endless uncreative succession that is not transcended. It represents the upper level of Greek vision as indicated by the Greek temple depicted at the base of the cliff near the wild sea. Thus this cavernous area is characterized by a pseudo-serenity comparable to that in the heavenly realm above where the four women are unharnessing the horses of the sun god. Any apparent progress in the area of the triangle is delusory. Man's only chance to escape is to embrace the sea goddess, but according to the Warner-Simmons thesis his turning away from her means accepting the fruitless domination of the Veiled Lady.

Much of the ensuing discussion in the Seminar was devoted to achieving accurate descriptions of what is represented in every part of the picture. In my opinion this aspect of cooperative study is more valuable than a premature attempt to formulate a complete interpretation of the allegory. This opinion is not intended as a criticism of the propriety or success of the Warner-Simmons undertaking, for which there was time only for a preliminary report. Rather my point is that, as a group, our primary task was not to decide whether the Warner-Simmons interpretation is "correct," but to try to come to an agreement as to both the objects and actions depicted. I shall say something more on this subject later but here we should observe that no published account has so far given a wholly accurate description of the forty-one or more figures and the various symbolic items and places associated with them. Yet according to Blakean principles, until the interpreter has identified each "minute particular" he cannot understand the ways in which it is an "infinite particular."

Since the colored reproduction in the Masters' Blake volume has unaccountably been trimmed on both sides, one figure in the upper left is omitted and one of the three trees at the right is hardly discernable. Following Keynes, Mrs. Warner called attention to the double row of dots or bubbles extending between the right foot of the sea goddess and the head of the veiled lady. The two-color nimbus and aura of the sky god was mentioned and a member of the audience called attention to what appears to be the curious navel cord of the sea goddess, but the four white (lightning) tips extending down from the clouds and the two wheels of the sea goddess's chariot were not mentioned. There was little discussion of the five figures at the right wheel and none of the five behind the sun god's chariot. The question was raised as to whether the nymph touched by the sun god's scepter is indeed the same character who appears as the sea goddess below, as some interpreters have contended. The luna-esque configuration of the sea goddess's hair was remarked, and the man and woman at the sides of her four dark horses were taken to be "the male and female forms the goddess could assume when her potential was realized." Without attempting to refute this inference, I would point out that the male figure is almost identical with the smaller figure, that of Reuben, in J 15.

When the subject was broached at the end of the discussion, no one was

willing to support Miss Raine's contention that the vortex-cloud above the sea goddess's right hand is meant to represent the veil of Ino-Leucothea in the Odyssey. Neither could anyone agree that the gesture of the man in red is that of a person who had just thrown anything. Hughes rather equivocated in his review of Miss Raine's book in the last issue of the Newsletter, but no Blakist, except perhaps Harper, seems now to believe that the Neo-Platonic interpretation, so strenuously advanced by Miss Raine, is basically persuasive.

Mrs. Warner's assertion that the sea seems to be rising provoked no demurrals, but it was generally agreed that the gesture of the man in red is directed in front of the goddess's chariot, off the picture. It was noted that Bromion's attention, in the frontispiece to VDA, is likewise directed to something to the left of the picture. Blake also employed this device in "The Approach of Doom" (Separate Plates, pls. 8 + 9) and other pictures as well. The conjurer's gesture toward the sea of the man in red also recalls King Canute, whom Blake evidently depicted in Night Thoughts no. 262, though in a different position. The red "coral" on which the man is seated was observed by a member of the audience to resemble brain tissue. I pointed out that the angle of the man's arms was lowered, as well as the direction of his gaze, from what it had been in the preliminary drawing now in the Morgan Library (Pencil Drawings II, pl. 40). It is doubtful whether in either version his gesture is that of a diver, as was asserted to be the case by Keynes.

It has been observed the face of this man quite closely resembles that of the somnolent sun god. I briefly mentioned that the figure is also similar in appearance and position to the figure of Philoctetes in the rather unfamiliar drawing of Philoctetes and Neoptolemus at Lemnos (Figgis, pl. 87 -- Blake Studies plans to reproduce it in their Fall issue). I believe that this picture is highly relevant to the Arlington Court Picture because it helps to clarify Blake's attitude toward Classical culture, a problem unquestionably treated in ACP. Also closely connected is the Judgment of Paris (Graham Robertson, pl. 24), which I discussed in some detail in Blake Studies I, 2. One fact that should be asserted strongly on the basis of the Philoctetes: Odysseus is there carefully delineated as a Strong Man who stands at the right with two other suppliants. He looks not in the least like the man in red in ACP, though Raine has persisted in identifying the man in red as Odysseus. But Blake's actual Ulysses in the Philoctetes does resemble very closely the Odysseus depicted in Flaxman's Odyssey (conveniently repr. as pl. 25 of Raine's Blake and Tradition). To explain away the non-correspondences between ACP and her interpretation Raine has been willing to identify the Greek temple as Odysseus's house and to intimate that perhaps Blake hadn't read Homer for a long time before starting to illustrate him in ACP. It is doubtful whether even those who may have been attracted by Neo-Platonic explanations will hereafter attempt to connect the Conjurer in Red with Blake's Odysseus. A more fruitful connection might be with the Visionary Head of The Man Who Taught Blake Painting (Tate, no. 44). To be sure, the guru is clean

shaven and has bumps on his head rather than much hair. In any case the Conjurer in Red is similar in appearance and posture to Philoctetes.

I argued against the contention of Mrs. Warner that the Veiled Lady is necessarily sinister, instancing the similarity in posture of "Mirth" in the L'Allegro series--which is more striking in the second state of the engraved version (Keynes, Separate Plates, pls. 35 + 36). I also mentioned the figure of Jerusalem in J 46 [32], who is standing in a similar position, though she is undraped, as opposed to the draped figure of Vala shown from behind in that picture. I would add that the veil on the figures in J 28, which I discussed in the Festschrift for Damon, and the posture of Los in J 7 must also be considered. Mrs. Warner had overlooked Damon's pithy account of ACP (Dictionary, item "The Circle of Life") but could draw sustenance from Damon's identification of the Veiled Lady as Vala. It has been remarked that Beatrice in Purg. 30 (Masters, XIV) appears in similar form as Vala, but I am not satisfied with this identification either, as I have indicated elsewhere. One of Blake's primary concerns in Jerusalem is to unperplex the figures of Jerusalem and Vala. This is a nicer task of discrimination than one would gather from most published accounts. I shall return to the question of evaluating pictorial similarities and dissimilarities in my discussion of iconography in the second part of this article.

In ACP the sea goddess is undoubtedly a counterpart of the Veiled Lady and is to be preferred because of her primal nakedness. She is a version of triform Hecate as sea goddess, an association strengthened by the horns of her hair, but especially prompted by the fact that she drives dark horses while the sun god sleeps. In Blake's best known representation, Job 14, she drives two serpents but in "The Virgin Blest" for Milton's Hymn (Huntington, pl. 19) a similar lady who holds the Star of Bethlehem has two horses for her car. Basically her "recumbent Venus" posture is like that of Earth in "Introduction" to Songs of Experience, the figure brought to life in "Night Startled by the Lark" in the second design for L'Allegro. The fact that both are seen from the rear while the sea goddess is seen from the front is a meaningful difference, but it does not mean the figures are unrelated. If one compares the figure of "Nature" in On the Morning of Christ's Nativity with that of Eve in "Michael Foretells the Crucifixion" in the Paradise Lost series (Particularly the Whitworth and Boston versions) he will see two other visions of this woman. Even more closely related to ACP is the figure of Dawn, who, in this picture is represented as a woman drawn by a team of four horses. If the Indian lady J 11 were combined with Jerusalem as she appears in J 57 and J 93, the composite figure would be much like the sea goddess -- though this observation is not of much assistance for interpretation of ACP.

As Keynes observed, especially relevant to ACP is the third design for Il Penseroso, "Milton and the Spirit of Plato." The posture of Plato and even the position of his hands somewhat resembles that of the Veiled Lady in ACP, though he appears in front of his pupil, if invisibly, on a cloud standing before his pernicious book. In her discussion of this

picture Raine will not recognize how anti-Platonic the vision is and even Damon does not indicate how severe Blake makes his judgment against Platonism. In Plato's scheme the three Fates are above the realms of the three sinister Great Gods and are thus dominant in the universe, whereas in ACP the Fates are only attempting to triumph over the lower horned and shell-helmeted form of Blake's central man. As I pointed out, the three Fates in ACP are closely related to Tirzah, Vala, and Rahab who are shown undoing Albion in J 25, but they are less clearly dominant in ACP, in spite of the evident malice of Lachesis. For one thing, she is evidently compelled to draw the rope over her head as Urizen does in "The Human Abstract."

I also pointed out that in the drawing the horned and shell-helmeted man held a second river urn in his right hand, rather than the distaff of rope, but that in the painting this had been given to the sleeping Nixie in the lower right corner. The urn that the man still retains in his left hand appears to contain fire which spreads like burning oil above the water that is identified by Digby and Damon as the Water of Death. Mrs. Warner would prefer a less categorical identification of the water, perhaps as the source of "life" in Generation, but she is clear that the scales on the bucket indicate that this water is unredeemed. I would argue that the Water of Death has to be transformed by the Purgatorial fires in the lower cave before it can be carried as the Water of Life in scale-less buckets by the procession of good women in the upper cave. In its regenerated condition it is the fit source of the three visible rivers of Eden, which are discussed by Digby.

Three other resemblances between "Milton and the Spirit of Plato" and ACP may be mentioned though their applicability to ACP may remain problematic. The figure of Jupiter has his left foot depressed and holds a sceptre rather like that of the somnolent sun god in ACP. God with his left foot depressed is, of course, a familiar motif from Job 5. The connection with the sceptered figure of "The Great Sun" in the third design for L'Allegro is still closer in some ways. Behind Milton's chair a figure is netted and falls into water, a fate clearly in store for the girl carrying the scaled bucket in ACP if the figures at the right effect their wills. The closest connection of all is between the figures of woman and man lying at the lower right in the Il Penseroso picture and the almost identical figures just to the left of the upper cave of water carriers in ACP. According to Platonic vision, the male spirit of Earth must be dead, but in Blake he attends to the procession of the Water of Life which is to issue behind him and his consort as one of the rivers of Eden.

The girl with the scaled bucket certainly has to pass by the women on the landing of the first flight of stairs, both of whom are trying to hide their gins and snares, which have been well explained by Damon. She must also bring her water to be purified past the three weavers, daughters of Enitharmon, who is seen plying a similar shuttle in J 100 and the Cumberland card (Separate Plates, pl. 38). Just how their loom frame articulates with the net lines that pass around the third tree

from the right was the subject of considerable discussion. It was pointed out that this tree appears to have been disfigured as a result of having been so wrapped. But the fires in the lower cave also cut across beneath the ninth step on which the three weavers stand.

Presumably it will take such fire to purify the Storge water and make it fit for paradise above. One reason I am confident that the cavernous area at the top right is not sinister is that Milton's similar "Mossy Cell," depicted in the last design for Il Penseroso, is a home of vision, not of bondage. As I have mentioned before, almost every symbol in Blake is represented in both benign and malign aspects: caves are no exception. During the Seminar I suggested that the water carriers were reminiscent of the little girls in bondage at the bottom of "Holy Thursday," but, on further consideration, I doubt whether this is a correctly applied analogy. A more apposite analogy would be to the composed five Wise Virgins as opposed to the disorderly five Foolish Virgins (Masters, pls. XVII/cover).

It was noted that two cliffs were added at the left of the midmost tree in the picture (which is probably but not certainly leaved, rather than barren) in an awkward way which is incompatible with the original configuration of the hillside as it is represented between the two trees. Presumably Blake recognized that he had left out essential symbols and was willing to risk disfiguring this important painting in order to get them in. Perhaps the Greek temple as well as the additional river goddess were both added at this time, though one would have to study the picture with this hypothesis in mind to ascertain whether paint had thus been superadded. As was observed by Mrs. Warner, there is a considerable similarity between this part of the picture and that in "The Overthrow of Apollo" in the Nativity series (Huntington, pl. XVII--the Whitworth version is closer still).

A number of other aspects of the picture were also mentioned, such as the matted effect on the shoulders of the dress of the water carrier, the fact that her hair is bound up, as opposed to that of the weavers, and that the Nixie who sleeps on the bucket at the lower right seems to be her double, just as the guardians of the trees also have doubles. It is noteworthy that the Nixie was seated beside the girl who holds the skein and that her feet were probably also in the water in the drawing (cf. the Genesis title-pages, Huntington, pls. XXXII + XXXIII). Her hair is curiously curled in the final version and her original position is taken up by the extraordinary tree roots, one of which is touched by the left foot of the horned shell-helmeted man, among which other rope-like loops appear. One might also observe that of all the figures in the picture the girl who holds up the skein is evidently the most satisfied since she has at least a slight smile on her face.

A professed non-Blakist in the audience made an interesting criticism toward the end of the Seminar which I attempted to refute and perhaps did not succeed in doing very persuasively. The comment was somewhat as follows: the symbolism of this picture is fascinating but it really isn't a very successful painting and may not be worth the trouble.

This reminded me that an able Blakist had expressed much the same opinion in a conversation some months previous. The Blakist had contrasted the rather busy and disorganized impression created by ACP with the wonderful symmetry of Blake's Last Judgment or Jacob's Ladder.

At the Seminar I attempted to argue that in allegorical painting symbolical interest takes precedence over pictorial arrangement and representation and that, for example, even Rembrandt was often less concerned with character when he undertook allegorical painting. I would, of course, agree that some allegorical paintings are more satisfying than others but I am also aware that value judgments about painting are usually as opinionated and arbitrary as those about literature. If there are aesthetic standards for painting, they must be able to account for what may, contentiously, be called an art of clutter, as well as an art of symmetry. Though I suspect that Blake would not have approved of it, the aesthetic standards that can be applied to belittle such a picture as Bronzino's Allegory (National Gallery, London) are not compelling and may not be valid. Blake ought to be allowed to have departed with honor from his usual type of symmetry.

There is no doubt that a great deal of calculation went into ACP. A deep question for genuine aesthetics which respects ideas as well as images is whether all of the postures in the picture are deliberate and therefore meaningful or whether the picture is, as Northrop Frye once called it, "confused." For example, can we know for sure why the upraised left arm of the water carrier is out of drawing: is it a matter of stylization to fit a space as is the case with the right leg of the first weaver or the broken back of the horned shell-helmeted man? But having already lived to the end of the age of Picasso we are not likely to cavil over much about such distortions. Art is not life, as Blake also insisted.

A source of greater unease, perhaps comes when one tries to decide why directions are exactly as they are shown to be. For example, the Veiled Lady does not actually point at the Conjurer in Red with her right hand but downward to the women and man in the river. And her right hand indicates generally the women attending the horses, not the sleeping sun god. Is she looking at the same object toward which the conjurer is gesturing? Other details seem not to line up: the stairs of the sun god's chariot do not extend to a hypothetical back entrance to the cave of the angelic procession, though they may to one for the cave of the weavers. Is the sea goddess pointing with her left hand and looking at the Veiled Lady or just above her? Is the horned shell-helmeted man pointing, and at what, with his right hand or is he just holding his (more or less?) phallic distaff? Who are the five that follow the sun god's chariot and how are they related to the five at the wheel of the chariot (one of whom holds two horns and blows only one)? How are the various fires and ropes related? We know Blake could have answered such questions, but the indication that he was willing to graft on the seaside cliff implies that he was willing to change his

symbolism even in the "final" version--as in Jerusalem too, of course.

As a result of our discussion in Denver I am even more confident that Miss Raine has not discovered texts that this picture is primarily designed to illustrate. And I am much attracted to Mrs. Warner's idea that the viewer is expected to work out the meaning of the picture as a result of studying it rather than by looking elsewhere, even at other Blake pictures, for "the key." But other texts and pictures may at least strengthen our willingness to believe that what we are seeing is intelligible. It was evident that the company in Seminar 23 contained few art historians since the mere existence of the many river urns seemed remarkable, whereas Blake would have supposed this symbolism to be completely familiar to his viewer. But Blake almost always repeats his major symbols so that one can pick them up elsewhere in his work without having to ransack all previous periods of painting for a clue. He uses the river urns twice in the Gray designs, as was remarked during the Seminar, and again "The Sunshine Holiday," the fourth design for L'Allegro. And the huge rope distaff is often employed, notably on the titlepage for Night the First of Night Thoughts, no. 6 and, in a more closely related context, in Night Thoughts no. 30, as well as in the Cumberland card. Like the shuttle of Enitharmon in the cave of the weavers, also shown in the Cumberland card, it points to the beginning and the end of things, as in J 100, the MLA topic in 1968. The moral for interpreters is to be found by juxtaposing J 25 with J 77: in the former case the foolish curiosity of the three dispassionate virgins leads them to murder and dismember the father of us all. In the latter, the growing boy will not remain lost because he is able to follow the golden clue wherever it leads out of the forests of the night.

- TO BE CONTINUED -

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QUERIES

1. Can anyone produce a convincing explanation of the following curious coincidence? It is reported in a footnote on page 443 of the revised edition of Erdman's BLAKE: PROPHET AGAINST EMPIRE (paper & cloth):

... a curious pair of entries in Crabb Robinson's diary ... suggest that critical opinion somehow got from Flaxman to Blake at least as late as the latter part of 1814, after the publication of Wordsworth's Excursion. On Dec. 19, 1814, Flaxman heard Robinson read aloud some passages out of the Excursion and "took umbrage at some mystical expressions ... in which Wordsworth talks of seeing Jehovah unalarmed. 'If my brother had written that,' said Flaxman, 'I should say, "Burn it."'" Flaxman and Lamb and Robinson debated the passage. Eleven years later, Dec. 10, 1825, when Robinson first met Blake, the

latter, evidently primed by the earlier debate, asked about Wordsworth's Christianity and "said he had been much pained by reading the Introduction to 'The Excursion.' It brought on a fit of illness. The passage was produced and read ... This 'pass them unalarmed' greatly offended Blake ... Wordsworth was finally set down as a Pagan; but still with high praise, as the greatest poet of the age."

Does this mean that (as Erdman deduces) Flaxman told Blake what he thought of the passage? Or that Blake read the Excursion when it came out and told Flaxman? Or neither? What a brother's keeper Flaxman was!

David V. Erdman (SUNY)

2. Nobody knows how Blake spoke and so every Blake student is free to pronounce Blake's invented names as he or she chooses. The following instances are put forward tentatively for discussion:-

URIZEN	pronounced	URĪ'ZEN (near HORIZON)	not UR'ĪZEN
		UR like ERR	not YUR
		URĪ	not UREE
LOS	pronounced	LÖSS	not LÖCE
LUVAM	pronounced	LOVER	not LOOV
VALA	pronounced	VEILER (VĀ'LER)	not VAR
OLOLON	pronounced	OLÖ' LÖN	not OL'ÖLON

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

- ADLARD, John: a book on the folklore sources of William Blake, to be published in the near future by Cecil and Amelia Woolf, London.
- AULT, Donald: book-length study: "Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton;" and a shorter study of perspective ontology in The Four Zoas.

- BENTLEY, G. E., Jr.: 1) an edition of The Writings of William Blake (Clarendon Press), with bibliographical apparatus; 2) a revision of the Blake Bibliography, corrected and enlarged. Articles in the press: 1) on a new, minor Blake MS (The Library); 2) on new Blake engravings (The Seaman's Recorder in Studies in Romanticism); 3) on Blake's copperplates, particularly Job; 4) on pre-1827 facsimiles of Blake's Songs; 5) on new contemporary references by the Ancients to Blake (Blake Studies); 6) on Blake and Cromek, dealing with new contemporary references; 7) the Blake section of the New CBEL.
- BOYAJIAN, Aram: work on a half-hour film for television (WILLIAM ELAKE, to be shown on ABC's Directions in October, 1970), including short sequences on Carnaby Street, Westminster Abbey, Felpham; greater part of the film will be done from transparencies of plates from the illuminated books.
- BROGAN, Howard O: a book on English verse satire from Churchill to Byron, including a chapter on Burns and Blake, in which the two are compared and contrasted as peasant and artisan struggling against class barriers in a revolutionary era.
- BUTLIN, Martin: 1) a fully revised catalogue of the works by William Blake in the Tate Gallery (first published 1957); 2) a complete Blake catalogue; working on a catalogue raisonné of Blake's paintings, water colors, drawings, and separate color prints.
- CHAYES, Irene H.: a study, probably book-length, of Blake's designs; part of a larger project on his "modes and themes."
- EAVES, Morris: 1) an index for S. Foster Damon's A Blake Dictionary; 2) dissertation, "Blake's Artistic Strategy and His Medium, and the Evolution of His Early Narrative Art (Tulane University); 3) article, "Adam's Fall and the Evangelical Revival's Mythical Triangle;" a review of Allen Ginsberg's recording of the Songs of Innocence and Experience for the Blake Newsletter.
- ESSICK, Robert: a study of the designs in Blake's illuminated books, for the present excluding Milton and Jerusalem.
- GLECKNER, Robert: 1) a revised edition of Selected Writings of William Blake (Crofts Classics); 2) a critical study of Island in the Moon and its backgrounds. Dissertation directed: Jim S. Borck, William Blake: A Prophetic Tradition.

- GRANT, John E.: Books: 1) Blake's Designs for Young's Night Thoughts, with E. J. Rose and M. J. Tolley, in association with David V. Erdman (Clarendon Press, 5 vols.); 2) Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic, co-edited with David V. Erdman (Princeton, 1970); an anthology of twenty essays on his work in various media; 3) Blake's Designs of Innocence and of Experience, an interpretation of the pictures and a discussion of the poems. Articles: 1) "Blake and the Trojan War," an essay on form and politics; 2) "The Substance of Things Seen by Earth," on a persistent difficulty in communication; 3) "Blake and Prophetic Tradition," a chapter in a book called Expositions in Apocalypse: Dante to Beckett; 4) "The Golden Bow," an essay on symbolism; 5) "The Order of the 'Auguries of Innocence'."
- HARPER, George Mills: a study on numerology in the prophetic books; an article on "The Unholy Trinity in Blake's Prophetic Books."
- HEPPNER, Christopher: dissertation completed: an attempt to define the problem of form in Blake's prophecies in terms of a multi-level view of form, emphasizing narrative structures and the mixed medium Blake created.
- KIRALIS, Karl: books: 1) a critical study and annotated edition of Jerusalem, including a history of the criticism of the poem; 2) a critical study of Blake as a literary critic. Articles: "More on Chaucer's Fairies that the Poet Be Understood;" "Blake, the Beatles, and Ornette Coleman: A New Trip with 'The Mental Traveller'".
- KREMEN, Kathryn: dissertation: The Imagination of the Resurrection: The Poetic Continuity and Conversion of a Religious Motif in Donne, Blake, and Yeats; article: "The 'Second Writing': Jesus' Forgiving the Woman Taken in Adultery," on the watercolor "Women Taken in Adultery" and parallel passages in John, "The Everlasting Gospel," and "The Gates of Paradise."
- LEFCOWITZ, Barbara: dissertation: Self, Nature, and Madness in the Poetry of Christopher Smart and William Blake (in progress).
- LISTER, Raymond: a new and complete edition of the letters of Samuel Palmer (Clarendon Press, Oxford), many of which concern Blake.
- MELLOR, Anne Kostelanetz: book-length study, "Blake's Human Form Divine," on Blake developing theory of form in his poetry and prose in relation to his use of formal compositions and

iconography in art.

- METCALF, Francis W.: article: "Blake's Tiriel and Job: the Symmetry of the First and Last," maintaining that both works are constructed not only as verbal or pictorial narratives, but also as spatial configurations of radial or reflexive symmetry.
- MINER, Paul: book: Blake's London, to be illustrated with about 250 cuts.
- MINNICK, Thomas L.: dissertation: On Blake and Milton, considering the way in which Blake came to terms with Milton, through an examination both of Blake's writings and of the Milton available to Blake (through Hollis, Hayley, Warton, etc.). In progress.
- PALEY, Morton D.: book-length critical study of Jerusalem, to include a consideration of both text and illustrations.
- PELFREY, Patricia: dissertation: a study of Blake's prophetic works, especially Jerusalem, in the context of the utopian tradition. (In progress).
- PHILLIPS, Michael: Blake's Poetical Sketches: A Definitive Text, the Printing and Reputation of the Poems 1783 - 1969, and a Critical Interpretation.
- PIERCE, Hazel: dissertation: a critical analysis of Europe.
- SIMMONS, Robert: an article on Blake's Arlington Court Picture (with Janet Warner); an article on "The Mental Traveller."
- STEVENSON, W. H.: book: A Critical Introduction to Blake; articles: 1) "Centre and Circumference in Blake;" 2) on Blake's kind of symbolism.
- STEVENSON, Warren: book: The Creation Motif in Blake and Coleridge; directing a dissertation by Marney McLaughlin on text and design in Blake.
- TAYLER, Irene: book: Blake's Gray: A Visionary Reading (Princeton University Press), studies Blake's interpretive criticism of the poetry of Thomas Gray as delineated in his 116 illustrations to Gray's poems.
- TEBBETTS, Terrell L.: dissertation: A Critical Study of Blake's America (in progress).
- WARNER, Janet: a study of systems of structure and iconography in selected Blake designs (with Robert Simmons); an

article on "Blake and the Wirey Bounding Line:" a script for a videotape of America to be produced and directed at Glendon College by Robert Wallace (with John Sutherland).

WATSON, Alan: articles: 1) "Tiriell: The Fundamentals of Blake's Sublime Epic," emphasizing the theory behind illustrated epic; 2) "William Blake's Illustrated Poetry: A Typical Instance," a close look at the frontispiece to the Visions of the Daughters of Albion.

WHITEHEAD, Fred: dissertation: Blake and the Communist Tradition (in progress).

WITTREICH, Joseph: essays: 1) "The Epic Designs of Hayley and Blake" (a re-assessment of the Blake-Hayley relationship); 2) "William Blake: Illustrator-Interpreter of Paradise Regained" (a study of Blake's illustrations as a form of non-verbal criticism); book, Calm of Mind: Tercentenary Essays on Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes, ed. Joseph Wittreich, containing two appendices: 1) a catalogue of Blake's Milton illustrations and 2) a list of illustrators and subjects for PR before Blake (Case Western Reserve University Press). The book also contains the essay "Paradise Regained and the Four-Book Epic in the Romantic Period," by Stuart Curran. Introductions: 1) Early Accounts of William Blake; 2) William Hayley's The Life of Milton, second edition (1796), both to be published by Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints.

Due to an error in typing, the following entry was inadvertently omitted:

SAMUEL, George: dissertation: Blake's Opinions of Milton and Edward Young (in progress); directing the dissertation of Cecil Anthony Abrahams, The Fourfold Man in William Blake.