A

CATALOGUE

Of CURIOUS and

True Original PICTURES,

By the Beſt Italian and other Maſters,

VIZ.

Mich. Angelo, Lucas Jordans, Vanderdoes, Vanzon, Burguignon, Hondecoeter, Saftleven, Brower, Rubens, Polenbergh, Dobſon, Wyck, Wenix, Baptiſt, Huiſman, &c.

Will be ſold by Auction at the *Marlborough* Coffee-Houſe the Corner of *Great Marlborough-Street*, on *Thurſday* next, being the 7th of this Inſtant *February*, 1712. the Sale to begin exactly at Three a Clock in the Afternoon, and muſt be all ſold off that day. The Pictures may be ſeen on the *Tueſday* and *Wedneſday* before, and Catalogues had *gratis* at the Place of Sale.

Conditions of Sale as uſual.

1 A Goat and other Cattle an original
2 a Shepherd and Shepherdeſs by the Life
3 Mrs. Claypole Olivers Daughter by Sir P. Lely
4 an Eaſt India Pidgeon and a Cockatoo by the Life
5 a Landſcape and figures by Mankendam
6 The Earl of Rocheſter by Sir Peter Lely (develde
7 a Sea piece with Smacks turning windward by Van-
8 a piece of Conjuration by Long Franck of Antwerp
9 Dobſon the famous Painter by himſelf
10 The King and Queen of Spain
11 a Sea Calm by Cornelius Vandevelde
12 The holy Family of Perugino Raphaels Maſter
13 a piece of flowers by Mr Rooſtrate
14 a Robbery by Peter Codder
15 The Siege of Mons by Vangaalen
16 a piece of Boys and a Goat by an Italian
17 a Droll by Hemskirk
18 Bacchus and Ariadne a curious piece by Seig. Marco
19 a Droll by Laroon
20 a piece of live and dead Birds by a good Maſter
21 a Cock and Hens rarely painted by Mr Wilſon
22 a Battle piece an original finely painted
23 an 8 ſquare piece of Italian fruit
24 The Roman Charity by Seig. Marco
25 a Converſation by Hemskirk
26 a Landſcape by Salvator Roſa
27 Pride treading on Love by a Diſciple of Guido
28 a Sea triumph by Rubens
29 a Basket of flowers by Baptiſt
30 a Robbery by Bruce the Landſcape by Huiſman
31 a proſpect of Rome by an Italian in an Ebony Frame
49 a Rummer and fruit by Caſteels
50 a Landſcape by Henny after Pouſſine
51 an admirable Landſcape with Cattle by Beneditto Caſtiglione
52 2 Droll pieces by Brower and Molinaer
53 Our Saviour crown'd with Thorns by Bramer
54 a curious picture with figutes by Teniers
55 a piece of Horſes and figures with Buildings by Hughtenbergh
56 Boors fuddling by Brower
57 a rare piece of live and dead Birds by Hondecoeter
58.4
59 a Landſcape and figures by Polenbergh
60 a Battle a capital picture by Burguignon
a very fine Blake
62 a curious piece of Italian fruit by Gaſperini
63 The Duke of Florence between Vertue and Vice finely painted
64 a man playing on a Lyre by Oſtade
Spring 2025
66 an hiſtorical picture admirably painted by Rubens
67 a womans Head and a Droll by Molinaer
68 a fruit piece by Cornelius van Marlen
69 Sleeping Women and Satyrs by Mr Berchet
70 a fine piece of Plovers by Mr Wilſon
71 Jupiter and Pomona by Fabritius
72 a capital piece of Fruit by de Heem
73 a Landſcape with figures by Philip Van As
74 a Sea port by Lingerbock
75 Muſick, Poety and Painting, and excellent picture by Seig. Vario
76 a Converſation by Hemskirk

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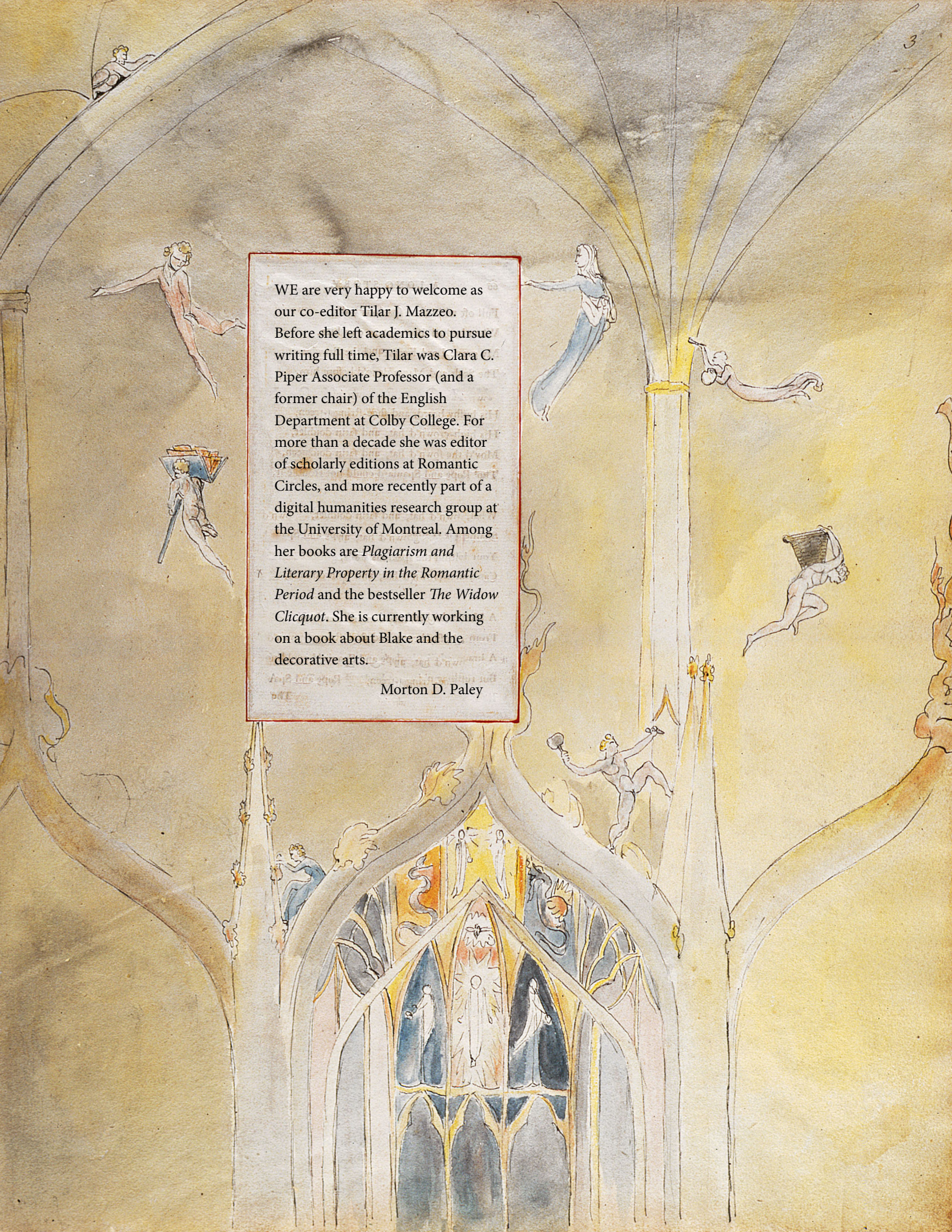


WE are very happy to welcome as our co-editor Tilar J. Mazzeo. Before she left academics to pursue writing full time, Tilar was Clara C. Piper Associate Professor (and a former chair) of the English Department at Colby College. For more than a decade she was editor of scholarly editions at Romantic Circles, and more recently part of a digital humanities research group at the University of Montreal. Among her books are *Plagiarism and Literary Property in the Romantic Period* and the bestseller *The Widow Clicquot*. She is currently working on a book about Blake and the decorative arts.

Morton D. Paley

A R T I C L E

Blake in the Marketplace, 2024

By Mark Crosby

Mark Crosby (crosbym@ksu.edu), FSA, is an associate professor in the Department of English at Kansas State University. He has published on Blake, Hayley, William Godwin, and Thomas Paine.

1 AFTER the excitement surrounding the surprising discovery of the *Deaths Door* wash drawing in 2023, the Blake market was relatively quiet in 2024 until late June, when *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy J came to the auction block at Sotheby's in New York. Also known as the Tulk/Rothschild/Blunt copy, it was the first of only three lots in an auction titled "Three Poets," with the other lots comprising manuscripts and published works by A. E. Housman and Robert Frost. At the start of the auction, there were three parties interested in *Songs* copy J, with bidding beginning at the low estimate of $1,200,000 before surpassing $3,000,000. The bidders continued to compete until the winning bid of $3,600,000 ($4,320,000 inclusive of buyer's premium) came from Stephan Loewentheil, founder and president of the 19th Century Rare Book and Photograph Shop in New York. This was a record sum for an illuminated book sold at auction. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy D fetched $1,200,000 ($1,320,000 inclusive of buyer's premium) in 1989 (see *Blake* 24.1) and *Songs of Innocence* copy A fetched $550,000 in 1990 (*Blake* 24.4), while *The Book of Urizen* copy E was sold for a then record $2,300,000 ($2,532,500 inclusive of buyer's premium) in 1999 (*Blake* 33.4). *Songs* copy J also surpassed the $3,500,000 ($3,928,000 inclusive of buyer's premium) realized by *The Good and Evil Angels Struggling for Possession of a Child*, from the Betsey Cushing Whitney estate, on 5 May 2004 at Sotheby's, New York (*Blake* 38.4). At the time, this color-printed drawing established the record for any Blake work sold at auction. As of 26 June 2024, *Songs* copy J holds that distinction.

2 Loewentheil was present at the auction and, in a post-sale interview, described *Songs* J as "a manifestation of both artistic and poetical genius at a level that few in the history of literature and art have achieved," adding, "It was too much for me to resist—and almost too much to pay for."[1] As discussed below, copy J comprises fifty-four plates, with all but one plate trimmed within millimeters of the images and mounted on larger sheets that create the illusion of platemarks. The only plate that has not been trimmed and mounted in this way is pl. 28 (see illus. 2), the frontispiece to *Experience*, which is matted separately, originates from another copy, and was added "by 1927" (*BB* 417). Another possible reason for such a staggering purchase price may be the copy's provenance and the accompanying manuscript commentary on Blake's poems and relief-etched designs by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

3 The first owner of copy J was Charles Augustus Tulk, a Swedenborgian and close friend of the Flaxmans (*BR*[2] 335). Tulk may have purchased the book directly from Blake;[2] he also owned a copy of *Poetical Sketches* with the inscription "To Charles Tulk Esq^{re} / from William Blake" (see *William Blake Archive*), as well as *No Natural Religion* copy M and *All Religions Are One* pl. 1 (*BB* 82n4; *BR*[2] 383n). At the beginning of 1818, Tulk lent *Songs* copy J to Coleridge. In a postscript to his letter to H. F. Cary of 6 February, Coleridge describes reading "a strange publication—viz. Poems with very wild and interesting pictures," before stating that their creator "is a man of Genius—and I apprehend, a Swedenborgian—certainly, a mystic emphatically." Addressing the irony in his identification of Blake as a "mystic," he concludes: "You perhaps smile at my calling another Poet, a Mystic; but verily I am in the very mire of common-place commonsense compared with Mr Blake, apo– or rather ana-calyptic Poet, and Painter" (*BR*[2] 336). When Coleridge returned the work to Tulk in mid-February, he included an analysis of "Blake's poesies, metrical and graphic." His criticism ranks the poems according to the amount of pleasure that he experienced in reading them, from "The Divine Image," "The Little Black Boy," and "Night" "in the highest degree" to "The Chimney Sweeper" and others "in the lowest." He notes that he "would have had ["A Little Girl Lost"] omitted—not for the want of innocence in the poem, but for the too probable want of it in many readers" (*BR*[2] 337). Coleridge also suggests revising the final lines of "Infant Joy" to "When wilt thou smile, or—O smile, o smile! I'll sing the while," with the rationale that "a Babe two days old does not, cannot smile—and innocence and the very truth of Nature must go together. Infancy is too holy a thing to be ornamented."

4 In 1838 Tulk lent his copy of *Songs* to J. J. Garth Wilkinson to produce an edition of the poems that was published by

1. Joe Dziemianowicz, "'Extraordinary' Poetry Book by William Blake Sold by Sotheby's for Record $4.3M," *Penta* (28 June 2024): <https://www.barrons.com/articles/extraordinary-poetry-book-by-william-blake-sold-by-sothebys-for-record-4-3m-9698427c>.

2. See Joseph Viscomi, "The Myth of Commissioned Illuminated Books: George Romney, Isaac D'Israeli, and 'ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY designs … of Blake's,'" *Blake* 23.2 (fall 1989): 67n2, 70n26.

William Pickering in 1839. Presumably along with Coleridge's manuscript, it was bought by the bookseller James Bain in 1870, "from a member of Tulk's family then resident in Australia."[3] It was subsequently acquired by Albert George Dew-Smith, co-founder of the Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company, "rebought by Bain about 1900," and then sold to Nathaniel Mayer de Rothschild, first Baron Rothschild. After his death, copy J passed to his wife, Emma Louise von Rothschild, who in 1933 gave the work to her grandson, Victor Rothschild, third Baron Rothschild.[4] In 1949, Victor apparently entrusted it, together with Coleridge's manuscript, to the art historian Anthony Blunt, who was later revealed to be the so-called "fourth man" in the Cambridge spy ring. As David Worrall notes, Blunt kept copy J "in an office safe at the Courtauld Institute" and often consulted it in his private apartment on the top floor of the Courtauld building in Portman Square.[5] Worrall also shows how Blunt was a temporary custodian of *Songs* J and, after his spying activities had been revealed to the Rothschilds in the mid-1960s, was convinced by Victor and his second wife, Teresa, to give it to their daughter Emma Rothschild in 1969.[6] Presumably Emma Rothschild was responsible for putting copy J and Coleridge's commentary up for auction in 2024.

5 In April there was activity with Blake's drawings, when the visionary head of Solomon that was previously in the collection of Edwin Wolf 2nd came to auction. There is another version of this drawing in the Courtauld Institute of Art and a counterproof in the Huntington Library. The existence of two left-facing originals and a single counterproof is curious and suggests that Blake may have sketched two versions, one of which was used for the counterproof, or that John Linnell may have been responsible for one of the originals. This year's review also contains an entry for a recent discovery: a preparatory drawing (illus. 4), auctioned in 2022, for Blake's frontispiece to Thomas Commins's *An Elegy, Set to Music* (1786). The frontispiece adorns a pamphlet comprising five pages of sheet music composed by Commins, the organist of Penzance, Cornwall, with lyrics from Anne Home Hunter's "Elegy."[7] This drawing was listed in the auction house's online catalogue as "in the manner of William Blake," although the subject was not identified until December 2024. It depicts the figures of a mother and child and appears to be an intermediate stage between an earlier, smaller, very loose sketch (illus. 3) and the published engraving (illus. 5). This new drawing probably dates to c. 1786 and may relate to Butlin #98. A comparison between the early sketch, the intermediate drawing, and the frontispiece shows Blake developing the positions of the arms, hands, and heads of the figures. A comparison of the chain lines and watermarks suggests that the earlier sketch and the intermediate drawing once belonged to the same sheet or same batch of paper. Unfortunately, the auction house could not provide information regarding the provenance of the drawing beyond reporting that it came "from a deceased estate."[8]

6 Last year also saw the re-emergence and private sale of Blake's letter to Linnell of 2 July 1826, one of a series that he composed during the summer of 1826 in which he reports on the various ailments that prevent him from visiting Linnell in Hampstead. It was originally sold in the Linnell auction at Christie's on 15 March 1918 (#210) and became part of the Estelle Doheny Collection from the Edward Laurence Doheny Memorial Library at St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, California. On 21 February 1989, it was sold on behalf of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles to a private collector in California. The letter is transcribed in both editions of Gilchrist and by Erdman. There are some minor differences between these transcriptions and the actual letter; of particular note is the mistranscription of "M^{rs} Hards" as "M^{rs} Hurds" in Gilchrist's and Erdman's versions. A new transcription is offered below (see illus. 6).

7 Of the engravings that appeared on the market in 2024, perhaps the most significant was a proof before signatures and title of "Robin Hood & Clorinda" after Meheux (1783). Hitherto there had been only one recorded state (see Essick, *SP* XXIV). The market for commercial books with Blake's engravings was buoyant, with copies of *The Grave*, *The Botanic Garden*, and Gay's *Fables* regularly appearing at auction or in bookseller listings. A fine copy of José Joaquín de Mora's exceedingly rare *Meditaciones poéticas* (1826) came to auction in Bogota, Colombia, at the beginning of the year. As detailed in the "Advertencia," Mora's verses were inspired by Blake's designs for Blair's *Grave*, engraved by Schiavonetti.[9] The Anglo-German publisher and bookseller Rudolph Ackermann purchased Schiavonetti's plates after Blake's designs, publishing the 1813 edition of

3. Geoffrey Keynes and Edwin Wolf 2nd, *William Blake's Illuminated Books: A Census* (New York: Grolier Club, 1953) 59.
4. Victor also owned *Poetical Sketches* copy L (see *BB* 350-51).
5. David Worrall, "The 'Secret' Life of William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, Copy J: Anthony Blunt, the Rothschilds and MI5 in the Cold War," *Visual Culture in Britain* (published online 18 Mar. 2025): 1-15 (especially 1 and 6).
6. Worrall 9-10.
7. For bibliographical information on this pamphlet, see Roger R. Easson and Robert N. Essick, *William Blake, Book Illustrator*, vol. 1 (Normal, IL: American Blake Foundation, 1972) 8.
8. Glen Charman, saleroom manager, Eastbourne Auctions, e-mails of 10 and 12 Feb. 2025.
9. See *BB* 596. The "Advertencia" refers to the author of the designs as "Guillermo Black" (José Joaquín de Mora, *Meditaciones poéticas* [Londres: lo publica R. Ackermann, 1826] ii).

The Grave (*BB* 526) before reusing the plates in *Meditaciones poéticas*.

8 Following previous sales reviews, there is a Blakeana section recording Blake-related materials such as Muir facsimiles and copies of Gilchrist and of Ellis and Yeats. One notable item sold in 2024 was a copy of John Quincy, *Pharmacopœia Officinalis & Extemporanea; or, a Complete English Dispensatory* (1733) that may have belonged to Blake. As with last year's sales review, the section covering Blake's circle includes works by James Basire that may be dated to the period of Blake's apprenticeship, including Richard Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments, in Great Britain* (1786–96).

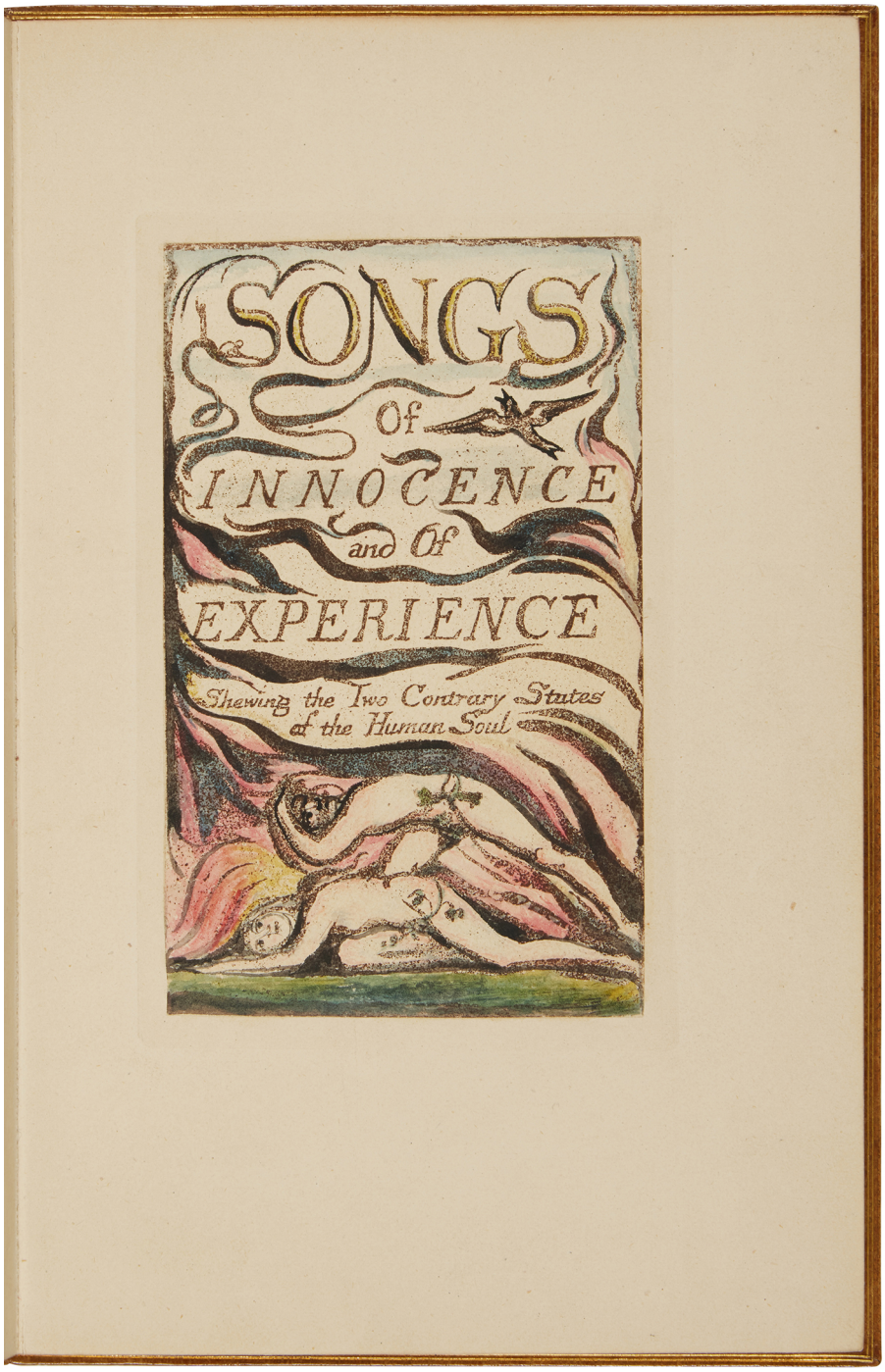
9 The year of all sales, catalogues, and correspondence in the following lists is 2024, unless otherwise indicated. With a few exceptions, such as Blake's engraving after William Hogarth and rare items such as prepublication proofs, only complete copies of plates in series and letterpress books with Blake's commercial illustrations are included. Most reports about auction catalogues are based on the online versions. Coverage of regional auctions is necessarily selective. Dates for dealers' online catalogues are the dates accessed, not the dates of publication. Works offered online by dealers and listed in previous sales reviews are not repeated here. Most of the auction houses add their purchaser's surcharge to the hammer price in their price lists; where possible, these net amounts are given here, following the official price lists. Estimates in auction catalogues are usually for hammer prices. I am grateful for help in compiling this review to David Bindman, Glen Charman, Robert N. Essick, Stephan Loewentheil, Michael Phillips, Nicholas Shrimpton, Joseph Viscomi, and John Windle. Sarah Jones's editorial expertise has, as always, been invaluable.

Abbreviations

BB	G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). Plate numbers and copy designations for Blake's illuminated books and commercial book illustrations follow *BB*.
BBS	G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995)
BHL	Bonhams, London
BR(2)	G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004)
Butlin	Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981)
cat(s).	catalogue(s)
CB	Robert N. Essick, *William Blake's Commercial Book Illustrations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991)
Cheffins	Cheffins, Cambridge, UK
CL	Christie's, London
CW	Chiswick Auctions, London
DW	Dominic Winter Auctioneers, South Cerney, Gloucestershire
E	David V. Erdman, ed., *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, newly rev. ed. (New York: Anchor-Random House, 1988)
EB	eBay online auctions
FH	Freeman's-Hindman, Philadelphia
FM	Forum Auctions, London
Gilchrist	Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1863 [1st ed.]; 1880 [2nd ed.])
illus.	illustration(s), illustrated
Lister	Raymond Lister, *Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of Samuel Palmer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)
LLY	Lowell Libson & Jonny Yarker Ltd., London
PBA	PBA Galleries, Berkeley
pl(s).	plate(s)
Roseberys	Roseberys, London
SL	Sotheby's, London
SP	Robert N. Essick, *The Separate Plates of William Blake: A Catalogue* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983)
Swann	Swann Galleries, New York
Windle	John Windle Antiquarian Bookseller, San Francisco
#	auction lot or catalogue item number

Illuminated Books

Songs of Innocence and of Experience copy J, 1795. Sotheby's, New York, 26 June, #1 ($4,320,000). Fifty-four plates printed in black and brown inks, with watercolor washes and pen and ink handwork on fifty-four leaves of unwatermarked wove paper. Fifty-three plates have been trimmed to within 0.5-0.2 cm. of the relief etching; they measure approximately 11 x 7 cm. The trimmed wove paper is inlaid on larger sheets of unwatermarked, late nineteenth-century wove paper, measuring 19.7 x 11.7 cm. As Bentley notes, there is "careful indent[ing] at the join of the inner and outer leaves … to look like platemarks" (*BB* 416). Keynes and Wolf indicate that these "artificial plate-marks" were made "by putting each print, damped, in press with blank plate" (59). Bentley describes the remaining plate, pl. 28—the frontispiece to *Experience*—as "loosely inserted by 1927" (*BB* 417). This plate measures 16.2 x 12.4 cm. and is



1. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy J, 1795, general title page. Reproduced with the kind permission of Stephan Loewentheil, 19th Century Rare Book and Photograph Shop, New York.

Blake, or perhaps Catherine, used gray wash on the lettering, interlinear flourishes, and the figures of Adam and Eve. The wash was probably applied with a finely pointed brush (also known as a pencil in Blake's time), particularly on the faces. Unlike other copies that were printed around same time—such as B and C, which depict Eve with her head bowed and face hidden—copy J shows Eve's full face. The use of gray wash and the orientation of her face is consistent with copy L, also printed c. 1795. The delineation of Eve's nose in copy J, however, is extremely delicate, with two thin parallel lines joining the nostrils and inner eyebrows.

2. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy J, 1795, frontispiece to *Experience*. Reproduced with the kind permission of Stephan Loewentheil, 19th Century Rare Book and Photograph Shop, New York.

This plate is matted separately and is not original to copy J. Bentley speculates that the original "may be the one belonging" to Robert N. Essick (*BBS* 125n). While there is some consistency in ink color and hand coloring between the frontispiece to *Experience* in Essick's collection and the plates in copy J, the former has the number "2" written in pen and ink on the upper right of the plate in what appears to be Blake's hand. There are no such pen and ink plate designations in copy J, apart from the "29" in the top right corner of the frontispiece to *Experience*. It is possible that any plate numbers were removed when the plates were trimmed and inlaid.

now matted separately. The fifty-three trimmed plates are bound in honey-brown morocco, possibly by Riviere (see *BB* 416-17), with marbled endpapers and linings. The cover is decorated with a border of gilt fillets; a gilt-ruled spine comprises six compartments, with the second containing the title with gilt-edge letters. The volume is housed in a blue cloth slipcase.

The order of the plates—using Bentley's numbering—and descriptions of the textual emendations made by Blake in this copy are:

1) Combined title page (illus. 1)
2) *Innocence*, frontispiece
3) *Innocence*, title page
4) "Introduction"
5) "The Shepherd"
22) "Spring"
23) "Spring," second plate
19) "Holy Thursday"
15) "Laughing Song"
24) "Nurse's Song"
18) "The Divine Image"
8) "The Lamb"
9) "The Little Black Boy"
10) "The Little Black Boy," second plate
25) "Infant Joy"
6) "The Ecchoing Green"
7) "The Ecchoing Green," second plate: the first word of the third line—"Such such were the joys."—is printed indistinctly
16) "A Cradle Song"
17) "A Cradle Song," second plate: in the last two lines, the terminal *s*'s in the second "smiles" and in "beguiles" have been overpainted in brown; the word "are" has been overpainted in brown, with "like" interlined as a substitute above
53) "The School Boy"
20) "Night": overpainting obscures the catchword, "When", at the foot of the plate
21) "Night," second plate
27) "On Anothers Sorrow"
26) "A Dream"
13) "The Little Boy Lost"
14) "The Little Boy Found"
11) "The Blossom"
12) "The Chimney Sweeper"
54) "The Voice of the Ancient Bard"
29) *Experience*, title page
30) "Introduction"
31) "Earth's Answer"
48) "Infant Sorrow"
32) "The Clod & the Pebble"
44) "The Garden of Love"
40) "The Fly"
42) "The Tyger"
50) "A Little Boy Lost"
33) "Holy Thursday"
43) "My Pretty Rose Tree" / "Ah! Sun-Flower" / "The Lilly"
41) "The Angel"
38) "Nurses Song"
34) "The Little Girl Lost"
35) "The Little Girl Lost," second plate / "The Little Girl Found"
36) "The Little Girl Found," second plate
47) "The Human Abstract"
37) "The Chimney Sweeper"
52) "To Tirzah"
49) "A Poison Tree"
51) "A Little Girl Lost"
46) "London"
39) "The Sick Rose"
45) "The Little Vagabond"
28) *Experience*, frontispiece: the plate is numbered 29 (illus. 2)

The coloring in copy J is consistent with some other copies that Blake produced during the mid-1790s, including pen and ink outlining on many of the plates (*Songs* copy A and copy N [*Experience* only], for example).[10] Gray wash has also been used on some plates (see illus. 1).

Accompanying the volume is an autograph manuscript signed "S.T.C." (Samuel Taylor Coleridge), comprising an address leaf and two pages on a single leaf of unwatermarked wove paper, 22.2 x 18.2 cm. The address leaf bears the following in Coleridge's hand: "C. A. Tulk, Esq^{re} / (or M^{rs} Tulk) S^{t} John's Lodge / Regent's Park". In early 1818 Tulk lent his copy of *Songs* to Coleridge, who drafted a commentary on the poems and illustrations (see *BR*[2] 336-38). As Bentley notes, Coleridge's commentary follows "the order [the poems] are found" in copy J (*BR*[2] 337n), with no mention of the *Experience* frontispiece (pl. 28).[11] In 1838 Tulk allowed Wilkinson to use copy J for the 1839 Pickering edition of *Songs*, which makes no mention of the frontispiece to *Experience*. As both Keynes and Wolf and Bentley note, the current pl. 28 is not original to copy J.

10. See <https://www.blakearchive.org/copy/songsie.a> and <https://www.blakearchive.org/copy/songsie.n>.

11. Bentley infers the existence of the *Experience* frontispiece from Coleridge's labeling of the plates between "Holy Thursday" and "Nurses Song" as "P. 13" (*BR*[2] 337n). The two leaves between these poems include "My Pretty Rose Tree" / "Ah! Sun-Flower" / "The Lilly" on one leaf and "The Angel" on the other. These two leaves, according to Bentley, would be pages 12 and 13 if the frontispiece was present when Coleridge examined copy J. Coleridge does not refer to "My Pretty Rose Tree" / "Ah! Sun-Flower" / "The Lilly" and "The Angel" by name in his commentary.

Drawings and Paintings

Solomon, c. 1819–20. Pencil on paper, 25.4 x 20.3 cm. FH, 17 Apr., #16 ($30,000). Inscribed on the bottom right "J Linnell from Mr Blake" and in the center "SOLOMON". This drawing was previously in the collection of Edwin Wolf 2nd (Butlin #701). There are two other versions of this visionary head: the drawing in the Witt Collection, Courtauld Institute of Art (Butlin #700) has the same left-facing orientation, and there is a counterproof in the Huntington Library with lines that have been "heavily pencilled over" and some alterations to the neck (Butlin #702). The pencil lines in #701 are darker than in #700, with details of the hair more firmly delineated. As Butlin notes, the lettering in #700 is "probably by Linnell," although this does not necessarily mean that Linnell was also responsible for the visionary head. Rossetti has a single entry for a drawing of Solomon in his lists (Gilchrist [1863] 2: 244, list 2, no. 43; [1880] 2: 260, list 2, no. 35).

Study of Two Figures for the Frontispiece to Thomas Commins's "An Elegy, Set to Music," c. 1786. Pencil on laid paper, 27 x 20.5 cm. Eastbourne Auctions, 7 Sept. 2022, #771 (£90). According to the auction house, the drawing came "from a deceased estate"[12] in Eastbourne, East Sussex, UK. On the verso are the remains of trimmed brown mounting tape on or near the top corners. Inscribed on the right-hand-side tape in blue ink is the number "87" and on the lower portion of the verso in pencil is "William Blake attr,". There is a James Whatman watermark comprising a double-banded shield (also known as bend in shield) adorned with fleur-de-lis above and partial "GR" initials below.[13] The chain lines are 3 cm. apart. This drawing (illus. 4) appears to be preparatory to Blake's engraved frontispiece to Commins, which is inscribed "W. Blake del^{t}. & sculp^{t}."; it may be related to Butlin #98, *Sketch for Thomas Commins's "An Elegy."* Both Bentley (*BB* 540) and Butlin follow Geoffrey Keynes's description of a drawing for the frontispiece being "in the hands of Messrs. Robson" in 1913.[14] That drawing was thought untraced until the early 1990s, when a series of pencil sketches and pen and ink wash drawings relating to Commins (and other subjects) appeared on the market.[15] In his account of these drawings, Butlin identifies a sheet that includes a "summarily executed" oval composition (illus. 3) corresponding "closely to" Blake's frontispiece (illus. 5) as a candidate for the work in the possession of Messrs. Robson in 1913.[16] The newly discovered drawing is a larger, more detailed rendering of two of the three figures from the oval sketch. The watermark and chain lines are the same in both, suggesting that these two drawings were sketched on the same batch of paper around the same time, or may have been part of the same sheet when originally sketched.

3. (next page, top) *Sketches for Thomas Commins's "An Elegy,"* c. 1786, verso. Pencil on laid paper, 30.7 x 46 cm. Reproduced with the kind permission of Robert N. Essick.

(next page, bottom) Enlarged detail of the verso. This composition was drawn within an oval frame over an earlier design of a figure that is inverted in this image. The looseness of the pencil lines, the partially delineated figures, and the landscape suggest that Blake worked quickly as he developed his ideas for the frontispiece. Within the frame, he depicts the outlines of the father, mother, and child that we see in the published engraving (illus. 5). To the left, the father is stepping from a boat with arms extended to greet his wife and child on the shoreline. At this stage of development, Blake was still working on the positioning of the father's arms, with three different placements, and, unlike in the engraving, the father's left leg extends beyond the prow of the boat. The figures on the right occupy a similarly proximate compositional arrangement to the engraving, with the child's right arm raised and right foot extending forward. The mother is slightly less defined than the child, with head, torso, and legs loosely drawn. The darker pencil on her extended left foot, like that of the child's foot and head, suggests that Blake had a clear idea of where each figure would be situated within the composition and had yet to work out details such as clothing, hair, and, in the case of the mother, arm positions.

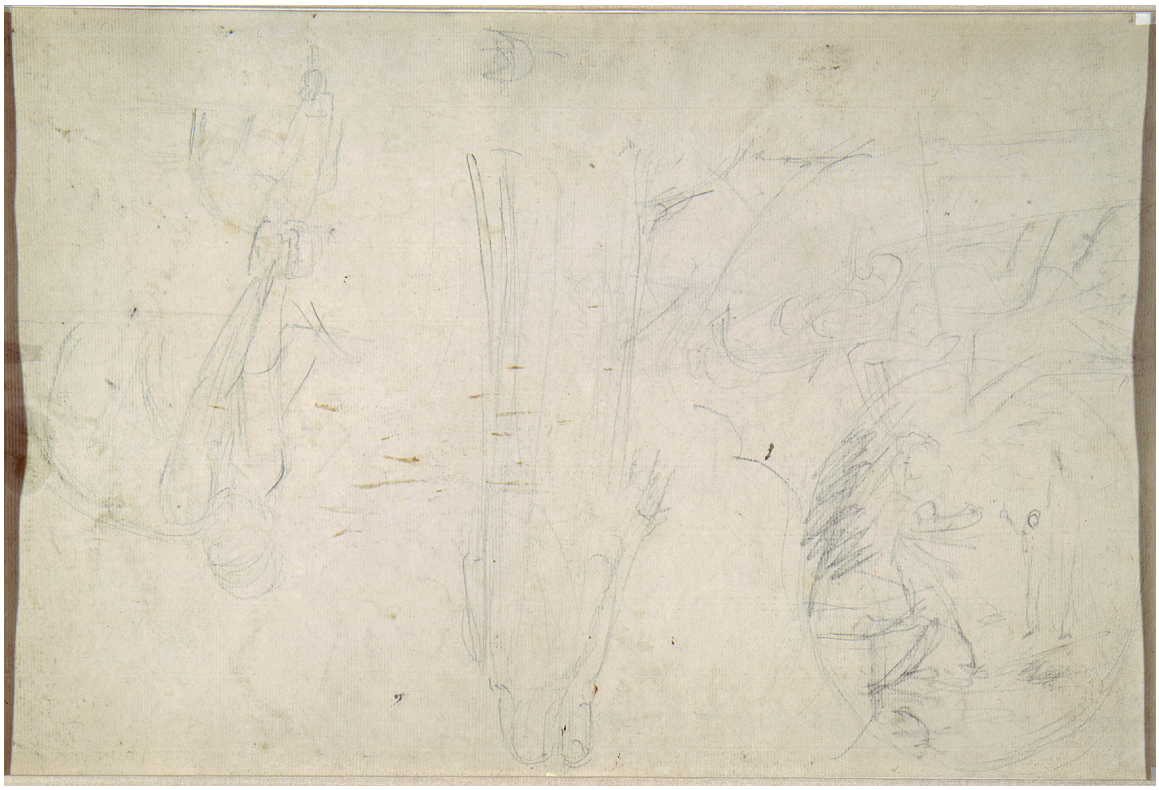
12. See note 8.

13. We find the same watermark on several of Blake's apprenticeship drawings in the Gough Collection, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, such as *The Children of Edward III* (1777) (see Gough Maps 225, f. 160, and Butlin #37). For examples of this watermark, see Edward Heawood, *Watermarks, Mainly of the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Hilversum, Netherlands: Paper Publications Society, 1986) pl. 16, nos. 103, 105; pl. 17, nos. 107-08, 111; pl. 18, nos. 113-14.

14. Geoffrey Keynes, *A Bibliography of William Blake* (1921; New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969) 198. See also Easson and Essick 8.

15. Martin Butlin, "Two Newly Identified Sketches for Thomas Commins's *An Elegy* and Further Rediscovered Drawings of the 1780s," *Blake* 26.1 (summer 1992): 21-26, and "Two Newly Identified Sketches for Thomas Commins's *An Elegy*: A Postscript," *Blake* 27.2 (fall 1993): 42-44.

16. Butlin, "A Postscript" 43-44.



4. *Study of Two Figures for the Frontispiece to Thomas Commins's "An Elegy, Set to Music,"* c. 1786. Pencil on laid paper, 27 x 20.5 cm. Reproduced with the permission of the owner.

With this drawing, Blake has developed the positioning, arm gestures, and clothing of the mother and child. To the left is the lightly sketched outline of the father's head and arms, which extend above the child's head. Below the mother and child, Blake has sketched the outline of the shore. He has used firm pencil lines to delineate the forms of the mother and child, with looser and lighter lines depicting clothing and hair. Like the compositional arrangement in the engraving, the child is situated beside, yet slightly behind, the mother. We see evidence of *pentimenti* in the positions of the mother's limbs, particularly evident with the two different positions of the left hand and extended left foot. The position of the toes on the mother's foot, including the prominent gap between the big toe and the index toe, is similar to the engraving. While the more detailed figures of the mother and child are closer to the engraving, there are some differences here in the mother's hair and dress, which billows out behind her, and the child's bent right leg, revealing that Blake made revisions in either another drawing, now untraced, or during the engraving process. This newly discovered drawing was probably executed after the oval sketch (illus. 3).

5. Thomas Commins, *An Elegy, Set to Music*, 1786, frontispiece, colored. The color in this print was probably added later. Reproduced with the kind permission of Robert N. Essick. For an uncolored impression, see <https://www.themorgan.org/collection/William-Blakes-World/4>.

Commins was the "organist of Penzance, Cornwall," according to the pamphlet; Anne Home Hunter, the author

(caption to illus. 5, continued)

of the "Elegy," is not mentioned in the pamphlet.[17] The inscription below the leafy oval frame ("W. Blake del^{t}. & sculp^{t}.") indicates that Blake was responsible for the original design and the engraving. The design illustrates the third stanza of the "Elegy," inscribed beneath the oval:

> The shatter'd bark from adverse winds
> Rest in this peaceful haven finds
> And when the storms of life are past
> Hope drops her anchor here at last

Hunter's verse is separated by a serpentine flourish that anticipates similar interlinear devices in Blake's illuminated books.[18] Given his extensive use of this motif in his later work, it is possible that he was responsible for the decorative flourish on the Commins frontispiece, along with the lettering of the signature, Hunter's verse, and the imprint.

The design follows the compositional arrangement we see in both preparatory drawings (illus. 3 and 4). For the engraving, Blake altered the position of the man's foot, which is placed on the prow, and added the left leg of the child. He created the oval with two leaves and filled out the scene with details of the boat, including the arm, fluke, and line of the anchor, and the addition of clouds, trees, sky, horizon, and water.

Manuscripts

Autograph letter, Blake to Linnell, postmarked 2 July 1826. James S. Jaffe Rare Books, Apr. cat., #3 ($225,000). Sold to Robert N. Essick via Windle (for a reduced price). One page, small quarto, 16.5 x 20.3 cm., edges uncut, verso addressed by Blake in black ink and with original postal markings. Transcribed in Gilchrist ([1863] 1: 350-51; [1880] 1: 393-94) and Erdman (E 778). This letter was previously auctioned in 1989; see the 1989 sales review, *Blake* 24.1 (summer 1990). See illus. 6.

Receipt signed by Blake, 5 July 1805, to Thomas Butts for £5.7s. Purchased by the University of Victoria Library from Windle. Previously listed in Windle's Apr. 2023 cat. for the New York Book Fair ($150,000); see the 2023 sales review, *Blake* 57.4 (spring 2024). For earlier sales and comments, see the 2019 sales review, *Blake* 53.4 (spring 2020), and 2022 sales review, *Blake* 56.4 (spring 2023).

Separate Plates and Plates in Series

"Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims," c. 1820–23. FM, 28 Mar., #322, 4th state (of 5), apparently a few small nicks to extremities, printer's creases visible in the lower-right quadrant, framed (£6000). Windle to private collector, 5th (final) state ($15,000). For states, see *SP* XVI.

"The Idle Laundress," after George Morland, 1788. Anderson and Garland, 25 Apr., #12, together with "Industrious Cottager," both framed and colored (£480). See *SP* XXX-XXXI.

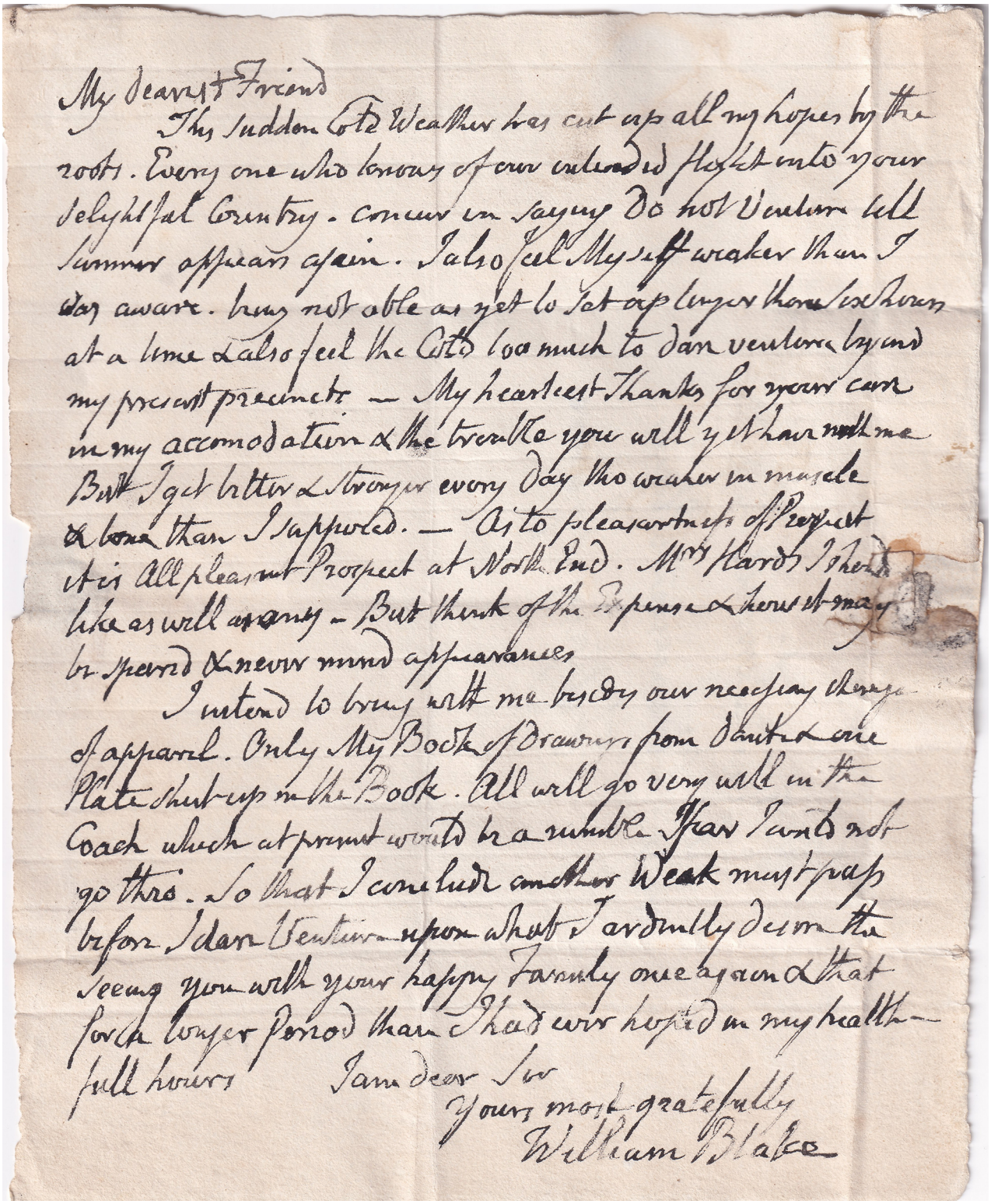
"Industrious Cottager," after George Morland, 1788. See "The Idle Laundress," above.

"M^{rs} Q," after François Huet Villiers, 1820. Grosvenor Prints, two impressions from the collection of C. A. Lennox-Boyd, acquired by Windle Nov. and sold to a private collector (price not disclosed). These impressions are 1A and 2F as listed in *SP* XLII. Impression 1A has signatures and imprint but lacks the title. See corrections in the appendix, below.

"Robin Hood & Clorinda," after J. Meheux, 1783. Campbell Fine Art, proof before signatures and title (and probably all lettering) printed in black ink on a leaf of laid paper

17. Hunter was a member of the Bluestockings, hosted and attended salons, and counted Hester Thrale, Elizabeth Carter, and Elizabeth Montagu as friends. At these salons, she developed a reputation for composing lyrics set to music. In the early 1790s, Haydn composed settings of several of her poems, most famously with his *Six Original Canzonettas* (1794). For Hunter's "Elegy," see *Poems, by Mrs. John Hunter* (London: Printed for T. Payne, Mews Gate, by T. Bensley, 1802) 91. See also Jane M. Oppenheimer, "Anne Home Hunter and Her Friends," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 1.3 (July 1946): 434-45, the *ODNB* entry, and Caroline Grigson, *The Life and Poems of Anne Hunter: Haydn's Tuneful Voice* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009).

18. Blake regularly deployed these spiral motifs vertically and horizontally, often as vegetative tendrils that border or separate his relief-etched text. For vertical examples, see "My Pretty Rose Tree" and "Ah! Sun-Flower," *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* pl. 8, and *Jerusalem* pls. 27, 52, 71, 77, and 90. For horizontal examples, see *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* pl. 22, *Milton* pls. 6, 9, and 27, and *The Ghost of Abel* pl. 1.



My dearest Friend

The sudden Cold Weather has cut up all my hopes by the roots. Every one who knows of your intended flight into your delightful Country. concurr in saying Do not Venture till Summer appears again. I also feel My self weaker than I was aware. being not able as yet to Set up longer than Six hours at a time & also feel the Cold too much to dare venture beyond my present precincts — My heartiest Thanks for your care in my accomodation & the trouble you will yet have with me But I get better & Stronger every day tho weaker in muscle & bone than I supposed. — As to pleasantness of Prospect this is all pleasant Prospect at North End. Mrs Hards I think like as well as any — But think of the Expense & there it may be spared & never mind appearances

I intend to bring with me besides our necessary changes of apparel. Only My Book of Drawings from Dante & one Plate shut up in the Book. All will go very well in the Coach which at present would be a trouble & fear I could not go thro. So that I conclude another Week must pass before I dare Venture upon what I ardently desire the Seeing you with your happy Family once again & that for a longer Period than I had ever hoped in my health — full hours I am dear Sir

Yours most gratefully

William Blake

6. Letter from Blake to Linnell, 2 July 1826. Reproduced with the kind permission of Robert N. Essick.

There are some minor differences in the Gilchrist and Erdman transcriptions of the letter, including punctuation, line breaks, and spelling. A revised transcription that preserves Blake's lineation is as follows:

(caption to illus. 6, continued)

My dearest Friend
This sudden Cold Weather has cut up all my hopes by the roots. Every one who knows of our intended flight into your delightful Country . concur in saying do not Venture till Summer appears again. I also feel Myself weaker than I was aware. being not able as yet to sat [*sic*] up longer than six hours at a time & also feel the Cold too much to dare venture beyond my present precincts — My heartiest Thanks for your care in my accomodation & the trouble you will yet have with me But I get better & stronger every day tho weaker in muscle & bone than I supposed. — As to pleasantness of Prospect it is all pleasant Prospect at North End. M^{rs} Hards I should like as well as any — But think of the Expense & how it may be spared & never mind appearances
I intend to bring with me besides our necessary change of apparel. Only My Book of drawings from Dante & one Plate shut up in the Book. All will go very well in the Coach which at present would be a rumble I fear I could not go thro. So that I conclude another Week must pass before I dare Venture upon what I ardently desire the seeing you with your happy Family once again & that for a longer Period than I had ever hoped in my health— full hours I am dear Sir
yours most gratefully
William Blake

This is one of a number of letters that refer to Linnell's attempts to relocate the Blakes to Hampstead or 6 Cirencester Place, Fitzroy Square. Blake's deteriorating health meant that he was not always able to visit Linnell in Hampstead, let alone "venture" far from Fountain Court, so Linnell proposed that the Blakes instead lodge at Cirencester Place. "M^{rs} Hards" appears to be the "M.^{rs} Hard" mentioned by Linnell in the Ivimy manuscripts; she was his neighbor in Hampstead, whom he lodged with in June 1822 (*BR*[2] 754n). In *Stranger from Paradise*, Bentley follows Gilchrist's and Erdman's mistranscription of "M^{rs} Hurds" for "M^{rs} Hards", identifying her as Linnell's housekeeper at the Cirencester Place residence.[19] After Blake's death, Catherine briefly moved to Cirencester Place until spring 1828 (*BR*[2] 754). The "Plate" that Blake mentions was likely one of the Dante engravings after his watercolors.

trimmed to a circle with a diameter of 24.5 cm., acquired by Robert N. Essick in Oct. See *SP* XXIV, this impression not recorded. See illus. 7 and corrections in the appendix, below.

Letterpress Books with Engravings by and after Blake

Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*. William George Online Auctions, 17 Jan., #17, 1783 ed., 5 vols., including vol. 3 with Blake's frontispiece, illus. (price not disclosed). Galerie du Louvre, Canada, 9 Mar., #20, Blake's frontispiece only, glued on cardboard (passed). PBA, 25 July, #191, 1799 ed., 5 vols., 3rd state of Blake's plate, illus. (passed).

Blair, *The Grave*. FM, 11 Jan., #142, 1808 quarto, containing modern bookplate of W. & P. J. Kupfer, illus. (£600). FM, 28 Mar., #318 (same lot as Hayley, *Life of Cowper*; see below), "1813" [1870] ed., illus. (£500); #321, 1808 quarto, illus. (£900); #326, "1813" [1870] ed., original blind-stamped black cloth, illus. (£320). EB, 2 May, 1808 ed., bound in dark-brown calf, ribbed gilt-decorated spine, panels tooled in blind, gilt-lettered green morocco spine label, illus. ($1800). FM, 23 May, #145, [1870] portfolio of plates only, illus. (£320). FH, 7 June, #129, 1808 quarto, illus.

19. G. E. Bentley, Jr., *The Stranger from Paradise: A Biography of William Blake* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) 433, 515.

7. "Robin Hood & Clorinda," engraved by Blake after J. Meheux, 1783. Reproduced with the kind permission of Robert N. Essick. Printed in black ink on laid paper that has been trimmed in a circle. Part of the platemark appears on the right and left sides of the image. For information on Meheux, see Vincent Carretta, "Blake's Meheux?," *Blake* 31.3 (winter 1997–98): 84.

($476). EB, 20 Aug., [1870] portfolio of plates only ($299). Cheffins, 10 Oct., #299, "1813" [1870] ed. (£140). EB, 16 Oct., 1808 ed., illus. (£599.99). CW, 27 Nov., #78, 1808 quarto, brown staining on five plates, illus. (£120). FM, 28 Nov., #266, "1813" [1870] ed., marginal staining, illus. (£170). EB, 17 Dec., 1808 ed., original boards ($2999). Windle to private collector, 1808 folio, untrimmed copy ($9750). Windle to private collector, 1813 folio, containing signature of Horace Scudder, dated May 1864 ($9750).

Boydell's Graphic Illustrations … of Shakspeare, c. 1803. DW, 6 Mar., #147, 90 plates, no mention of Blake's plate, illus. (£1400).

Catullus, *Poems*, 1795. EB, 20 May, 2 vols., scuffed leather boards, illus. (offered for $600).

Cumberland, *An Attempt to Describe Hafod*, 1796. Windle to private collector ($4500).

Darwin. DW, 7 Mar., #554, *The Botanic Garden*, 2 vols., 1st ed. of part 1, 1791, 2nd ed. of part 2, 1790, with Darwin, *Zoonomia*, 2 vols., 1796, illus. (£260); #558, *The Botanic Garden*, 2 parts in 1 vol., 1st ed. of part 1, 1791, 4th ed. of part 2, 1794, with Darwin, *Phytologia*, 1800 (passed). PBA, 4 Apr., #117, *The Botanic Garden*, 2 parts in 1 vol., 1st ed. of part 1, 1791, 3rd ed. of part 2, 1791, illus. (passed); same copy, 25 July, #224 (passed). EB, 9 Apr., *Poetical Works*, 1806, vol. 1 only, lacking covers, illus. ($295). EB, Apr., *Poetical Works*, 1806, 3 vols., with some of the non-Blake plates colored, each vol. containing the armorial bookplate of Michael Pepper, illus. (£1750). Mallams, 22 May, #511, *The Botanic Garden*, 2 parts in 1 vol., 1795 general title page, presumably 3rd ed. of part 1, 1795, ed. of part 2 not specified, boards loose, illus. (£480). PBA, 25 July, #225, *The Botanic Garden*, 2 parts in 1 vol., 3rd ed. of part 1, 1795, 3rd ed. of part 2, 1791, illus. ($375). DW, 11 Sept., #89, *The Botanic Garden*, 2 parts in 1 vol., 1st ed. of part 1, 1791, 1st ed. of part 2, 1789, illus. (£260). EB, 16 Oct., *The Botanic Garden*, 4th ed., 1799, vol. 1 only, illus. ($168.50). EB, 20 Oct., *The Botanic Garden*, 2 parts in 1 vol., ed. of part 1 not specified, 1st ed. of part 2, 1789, illus. (£850). Bubb Kuyper, 20 Nov., #2089, *The Botanic Garden*, 4th ed., 1799, illus. (€130). PBA, 21 Nov., #27, *The Botanic Garden*, 2 parts in 1 vol., 1st ed. of part 1, 1791, 3rd ed. of part 2, 1791, illus. ($281.25).

Flaxman, Hesiod designs, 1817. PBA, 25 July, #227, quarter calf, paper label, illus. ($187.50). New England Book Auctions, 22 Oct., #146, illus. ($40).

Flaxman, *Iliad*, 1805. EB, 3 June, extensive foxing, containing Blake's plates, illus. (offered for $225).

Gay, *Fables*, 1793. Quinn's Auction Galleries, 26 Mar., #27, 2 vols. in 1, illus. ($100); #28, 2 vols. in 1, illus. ($150). PBA, 4 Apr., #69, 2 vols., illus. ($250). Rug Life Auctions, 23 Apr., #64, 2 vols. in 1, half calf with marbled boards, illus. (passed); same copy, relisted May-Dec. (passed). BHL, 7 June, #72, 2 vols., contemporary red straight-grained morocco gilt, illus. (£1024). FM, 13 June, #118, 2 vols., illus. (£400). Bonhams, New York, 15-25 June, #139, 2 vols., illus. ($768). DW, 24 July, #346, 2 vols., illus. (passed); another copy, 11 Sept., #34 (£200). Potter & Potter, 26 Oct., #325, illus. ($390). PBA, 21 Nov., #275, 2 vols., Bayntun binding, illus. ($687.50).

Hayley, *Ballads*, 1805. FM, 28 Mar., #319, bound with Gessner, *The Death of Abel*, trans. Mary Collyer, illus. (£400).

Hayley, *Life of Cowper*, 1803–04. FM, 28 Mar., #318 (same lot as Blair, *The Grave*; see above), 4 vols. in 3, including the 1806 supplement, with the 2nd state (of 4) of the Weatherhouse plate, illus. (£500). Auctioneum, 8 May, #102, 3 vols., including the 2nd state of the Weatherhouse plate (2: 415) misbound vertically, illus. (£240). PBA, 25 July, #265 (passed). For the four states of the Weatherhouse plate, see *CB* 88-89.

Hayley, *Life of Romney*, 1809. Mellors & Kirk, 6 Feb., #14, containing the armorial bookplate of John Bolton (1756–1837), merchant and slave trader and owner, illus. (£45).

Hayley, *Triumphs of Temper*, 1803. EB, 29 Apr., illus. (£500).

Hogarth, *Works*. Windle to private collector, Blake's plate only, 3rd state (of 7) ($500).

Hunter, *Historical Journal*, 1793. EB, 6 Feb., calf binding with marbled boards, scuffed and worn, illus. ($1600). Australian Book Auctions, 21 Aug., #16, contemporary binding with cracked hinges, illus. (AUD 3200). Michael Treloar Antiquarian Booksellers, 9 Dec., #81, full morocco binding, extensively decorated in gilt, illus. (AUD 850).

Josephus, *Works*. EB, 8 Nov., apparently missing the title page (passed). According to the vendor, the copy was printed by C. Cooke, so it is probably the D or E issue. See *BB* 586-87.

Lavater, *Aphorisms*, 1794. EB, 6 Feb., loose boards and detached frontispiece, illus. (£99.99).

Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, 1789–98. DW, 19 June, #307, 3 vols., front board of vol. 3 nearly cracked and nearly detached, illus. (£300).

Malkin, *A Father's Memoirs*, 1806. FM, 28 Mar., #320, illus. (£350).

Mora, *Meditaciones poéticas*, 1826. Bogota Auctions, 25 Jan., #176 (COP 15,000,000).

Remember Me!, 1826. FM, 28 Mar., #325, foxing and water staining, including Blake's plate, lightly foxed, illus. (£1800).

Ritson, *Select Collection of English Songs*, 1783. Bassenge Auctions, 16 Apr., #575, 3 vols., illus. (passed).

Salzmann, *Elements of Morality*, 1805. EB, 1 Dec., vol. 1 only, illus. (£115 or nearest offer); same copy, 11 Dec. (£85 or nearest offer).

Shakespeare, *Dramatic Works*, 1802. FH, 7 June, #282, 9 vols., 91 plates, no mention of Blake's plate, illus. ($2159). FM, 18 July, #60, 9 vols., 96 plates, no mention of Blake's plate, illus. (£800).

Shakespeare, *Plays*, 1805. FH, 14 Nov., #184, 10 vols., including Blake's plates, illus. ($1300).

Stedman, *Narrative*, uncolored copies. FM, 28 Mar., #323, 1813 ed., 2 vols. in 1, contemporary ink signature and extensive notes on the author to front free endpaper, bookplate of William Monson, illus. (£1000). Alde Auctions, 16 Apr., #184, 1806 ed., 2 vols., illus. (€900). EB (Aardvark Rare Books), 7 Aug., 1813 ed., 2 vols., illus. ($3000).

Virgil, *Pastorals*. FM, 28 Mar., #324, 1821 ed., rubbed and scuffed, rebacked, spines ruled in gilt with blue morocco labels, corners repaired, illus. (£5500). FH, 14 Nov., #259, 2nd ed., 1814, extra illustrated with Blake's woodcuts, inscribed by Thornton on the front flyleaf "Presented by the Author to the Rev: Dr. Goodall as a Testimony of Respect, Esteem & Gratitude", illus. ($6500). FH, 5 Dec., #28, 1821 ed., from the collection of Justin Schiller ($7500).

Whitaker, *The Seraph*, 1818–28. EB, 23 Apr., 2 vols. ($154.14). The title page for vol. 2 contains the inscription "Drawn by the late W. Blake Esq^{r}. R.A."

Wit's Magazine. FM, 28 Mar., #316, seventeen issues in 2 vols., including Blake's plates, illus. (£420).

Young, *Night Thoughts*, 1797. Bonhams Skinner, 22 Jan., #1, nineteenth-century black pebble-grain morocco, top edge gilt, rebacked (price not disclosed). FM, 28 Mar., #317, letterpress "Explanation" leaf tipped into blank leaf following title page, 1874 prospectus for a reproduction set of original watercolors bound at the end, bookplate of William T. Moore, illus. (£2800). PBA, 4 Apr., #67, rare 1st state of the second title page inserted into *Illustrations to Young's "Night Thoughts"* (Cambridge, MA: Fogg Museum of Art, 1927), illus. ($350). This is not a prepublication proof since the state appears in a few copies of the 1797 *Night Thoughts*.

Interesting Blakeana

John Quincy, *Pharmacopœia Officinalis & Extemporanea; or, a Complete English Dispensatory*, London, 1733. Purchased by the University of Victoria Library from Windle (price not disclosed). Possibly a copy owned by Blake. See illus. 2 and its caption in the 2000 sales review, *Blake* 34.4 (spring 2001).

An album of materials compiled by Caroline Tulk, daughter of Charles Augustus Tulk (1786–1849), including six miniatures attributed to Samuel Prout and three drawings after Flaxman's designs for Hesiod pl. 15 ("The Evil Race") and *The Odyssey* pls. 7 ("Penelope's Dream") and 16 ("Ulysses at the Table of Circe"). CW, 14 May, #185 (together with an unrelated album) (passed). This is a different album from the one sold at Cheffins on 13 Oct. 2022; see the 2022 sales review, *Blake* 56.4 (spring 2023).

George Cumberland, Jr., [*Views in Spain and Portugal*], c. 1818. Toovey's, 24 Apr., #3064 (£180). One of only thirty copies, printed on Whatman paper, comprising ten soft-ground etched plates by the son of Blake's friend George Cumberland. The views were taken during the Peninsular War. Cumberland Jr. exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1816–18. In 1823 he reworked these images and added a further seven, which were published by William Nicol in an edition of 100.

Death of John Flaxman, 1826. Commemorative medal by A. J. Stothard after E. H. Baily. Noonans Mayfair, 9 May, #135 (£150).

Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, London: W. Pickering and W. Newberry, 1839. Windle to private collector, original pebbled plum cloth, upper cover lettered in gilt (partly worn away), enclosed in a modern protective box ($17,000).

Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake* (1st ed. 1863, 2nd ed. 1880). Quinn's Auction Galleries, 26 Mar., #4, 1880 ed., 2 vols., illus. ($80). EB, 2 May, 1880 ed., 2 vols. ($587). FM, 5 July, #126, 1880 ed., 2 vols. (£340). DW, 11 Sept., #397, 1863 ed., 2 vols., illus. (£420). FM, 31 Oct., #234, 1863 ed., 2 vols., illus. (passed).

Works by William Blake, 1876. PBA, 8 Feb., #10, a rare colored copy, illus. ($5625).

William Muir, facsimile of Blake's *Little Tom the Sailor*, 1886. FM, 28 Mar., #328, a few small spots and light soiling, some creases from folding and across the lower-right corner of the lower illustration, short tear and traces of mounting tape to verso of left edge (£260).

William Muir, facsimile of Blake's *Milton*, 1886. Manhattan Rare Book Company, online cat., formerly the copy of the collector John Quinn (1870–1924) ($9000).

E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats, *Works*, 1893. PBA, 25 July, #223, 3 vols. ($875). Swann, 24 Oct., #195, 3 vols., with inscriptions by Ellis's widow: "This is my husband & mine Copy & give it with kind / Memory of my dear Husband to you & F[?] / D^{r}. Völker" and "to our own selves from William Blake" ($3000). Another copy, Windle to private collector, 3 vols., original green cloth ($13,700). This copy is unique as four of the facsimile illuminated books (*Urizen*, *Ahania*, *Europe*, and *Milton*) are colored in ways that correspond to the originals colored by Blake and Catherine. A manuscript note in pencil at the front of vol. 3 states: "Edward Shaw—the coloured pages have been specially tinted for this volume. Complete and with the pages 3, 8*, 17, & 32 not in index which follows the 'Death of Abel' [*sic*]."[20] The colorist (possibly a Muir family member or friend) appears to have been familiar with Blake's original coloring and may have seen originals of the four books or at least the Muir facsimiles.

Leonard Baskin, *Head of William Blake* (*after Life Mask*), 1955. FH, 5 Dec., #22, from the collection of Justin Schiller ($3493).

Leonard Baskin, wood engravings of Blake's "Auguries of Innocence," Northampton, MA: Gehenna Press, 1959. Windle to private collector ($1195). Baskin is recognized as one of the greatest American artists of the twentieth century; Ted Hughes was a close friend.

The Beggar's Opera by Hogarth and Blake, 1965. John Nicholson's, 4 June, #32 (passed). FM, 31 Oct., #230 (£140).

Maurice Sendak, *Poems from William Blake's "Songs of Innocence*," 1967. EB, 21 Aug. (£750). FH, 5 Dec., #223, with an inscription by Sendak: "For Mrs. Kane—All Superb best wishes! I'm feeling fine—& am spending my time happily & slowly illustrating another Little Bear book—feels like old times! Almost. Wishing you a Marvelous New Year! and Love to dear Martha—Maurice Sendak" ($1397). Another copy, Windle to private collector ($4250).

Trianon Press, facsimile of Blake's *The Song of Los*, 1975. Windle to private collector ($1750).

The Wood Engravings of William Blake for Thornton's Virgil, 1821, 1977. Seventeen wood engravings on Japanese Hosho paper, reprinted by Iain Bain and David Chambers from the original woodblocks in the British Museum. FM, 21 Nov., #374, #127 of 150 sets (£2800).

20. Shaw owned several Blake works, including *Songs of Innocence* copy J (*BB* 407) and pl. 3 from *For the Sexes* (*BB* 204). His collection was auctioned at SL, 29-31 July 1925 (*BB* 668).

William Blake's Watercolour Inventions in Illustration of "The Grave" by Robert Blair, ed. with essays and commentary by Martin Butlin and an essay on the poem by Morton D. Paley, Lavenham, Suffolk: William Blake Trust, 2009. Windle to private collector ($5950).

Blake's Circle and Followers

Works are listed under artists' names in the following order: paintings and drawings sold in groups, single paintings and drawings, letters and manuscripts, separate plates, book illustrations.

BASIRE, JAMES
Engravings between 1770 and 1780

"Man in Christmas Sound, Tierra del Fuego," after William Hodges, 1777. Cheffins, 18 Sept., #142 (£130). This print was published in James Cook, *A Voyage towards the South Pole* (London: Strahan and Cadell, 1777).

Richard Gough, *Sepulchral Monuments, in Great Britain*, 1786–96. Cheffins, 10 Oct., #123, 2 vols. in 5 (£220). As an apprentice, Blake made a series of preparatory drawings of the tombs and effigies in Westminster Abbey. According to Malkin, he engraved some of these drawings, which were published in Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments*. For Blake's apprenticeship engravings, see *CB* 115-20.

FLAXMAN, JOHN
Drawings and manuscripts

See also Flaxman under Letterpress Books with Engravings by and after Blake.

Athena Attempts to Prevent Hercules from Murdering Iphtius, c. 1790. Pen and ink and wash on laid paper, 35 x 44 cm., titled and dated on the verso in an unknown hand. Waddington's, 12 Dec., #41 (CAD 11,250). This drawing was part of the collection of Christopher Powney, who was a dealer in, among other things, Flaxman drawings.

Classical Relief, n.d. Pen and gray ink on paper, 17.5 x 25.5 cm., signed lower right. Olympia Auctions, 2 Oct., #74, together with a pair of designs by Biagio Rebecca (£3200). The drawing contains three panels of designs; the central panel is a variant of the preliminary design for *The Iliad* (1805) pl. 1, engraved by Blake.

Design for a Monument: Possibly the Duke of Dorset, c. 1815. Pen and ink and wash, 18.5 x 15.7 cm. LLY, *Paper Monuments: Designs for Sculpture in Britain, 1720–1820* exhibition, Apr.-June 2024. The drawing depicts "a marble mon-

ument, crowned with a triangular pediment, with acroteria at the corners and containing a roundel with a ducal coronet framed by laurel leaves. The central part … contains two mourning female figures clutching an urn."

Design for the Monument of George Ellis, 1818. Pen and ink and wash, 14.5 x 11.3 cm. LLY, *Paper Monuments: Designs for Sculpture in Britain, 1720–1820* exhibition, Apr.-June 2024. The Flaxman account book now at Columbia University reveals that the monument was ordered for Ellis—a poet, antiquary, and MP—on 18 Sept. 1818 and erected on 6 July 1820 at Sunninghill, Berkshire.

Hercules, 1797. Pen and ink on paper, 32 x 22 cm., signed and dated "J. Flaxman, 1797". Reeman Dansie, 19 Jan., #9 (£250).

Life Studies for the Nelson Monument, St. Paul's Cathedral (recto), *Study of a Veiled Woman* (verso), c. 1807. Pencil on paper, 17 x 20.7 cm. LLY, *Paper Monuments: Designs for Sculpture in Britain, 1720–1820* exhibition, Apr.-June 2024. Flaxman was commissioned in 1807 to execute a monument to commemorate Nelson. This drawing "shows him experimenting with the pose of the younge[r] of the two midshipmen" who appear on the finished monument.

Lord Mansfield's Monument, Westminster Abbey, c. 1801. Pencil and brown wash, 27.9 x 21.6 cm., signed and inscribed on the recto "Lord Mansfield's Monument. Westminster Abbey. J. Flaxman RA.", inscribed in pencil on the verso "Ld Mansfield's monument / Westminster Abbey / Flaxman RA". LLY, *Paper Monuments: Designs for Sculpture in Britain, 1720–1820* exhibition, Apr.-June 2024.

Autograph receipt, 13 Mar. 1784. One p., with the date and inscription "Received of Sir John Sebright five Guineas the remainder of Miss. Sebright's statue a bust of Mercury &c in full". International Autograph Auctions, 24 Sept., #887 (€90). See also the 2023 sales review, *Blake* 57.4 (spring 2024).

FUSELI, HENRY
Drawings

A Captive Woman, c. 1781. Black chalks on buff-colored paper, 45.9 x 31.5 cm., stamped on verso "Baroness Norths Collection / of Drawings by H Fuseli Esq." LLY, 4 Nov. (price on request).

LINNELL, JOHN
Early drawings, paintings, and graphics

A collection of drawings. SL, 4 July, #274 (£15,600). These drawings were the property of the late Mrs. Hugh Linnell (1938–2023) and comprise a Linnell self-portrait (1815); an 1819 portrait of James Linnell (1759–1836), the artist's father; three drawings of workmen in Russell Square, Bloomsbury (1806); and a study of Collins's Farm, Hampstead.

Six watercolor sketches of contemporary figures mounted in a single frame, variously inscribed, with one signed and dated 1841. Lawrences, Bletchingley, 30 Jan., #767 (£520).

Two drawings: *A Woman Collecting Water below a Wooden Bridge*, 1858. Pencil with white chalk on paper, 35 x 24.5 cm., signed lower left, inscribed lower right "Near Heavitree Devon 1858". *A Fisherman Casting in a Woodland Pond*, n.d. Pencil on paper, no dimensions given. Bearnes Hampton & Littlewood, 17 July, #605 (£90).

Two paintings: *Eel Pie House, Twickenham*, 1806. Oil on board, 16.5 x 25.5 cm., inscribed on the verso "Eel Pye House, Twickenham / 1806 / by John Linnell". *The Willow*, 1806. Oil on board, 25.5 x 16.5 cm., inscribed on the verso "Study from Nature / by John Linnell / 1806". SL, 4 July, #273 (£18,000).

Driving Cattle at Sunset, n.d. Oil on paper, 21.3 x 33.4 cm. SL, 4 July, #271 (£3120).

Full-Length Portrait of a Lady in a Black Dress with Her Small Dog in a Parlour, 1844. Oil on canvas, 92.7 x 71.1 cm., signed and dated lower left "J Linnell F. 1844". Nadeau's Auction Gallery, 27 Apr., #267 ($2750).

Hay Cart with Rainbow, n.d. Oil on panel, 46.5 x 31 cm., signed lower left "J Linnell". BHL, 13 Mar., #12 (passed).

James Thomas Linnell, n.d. Watercolor and pen, 25 x 20 cm., signed "John Linnell fecit" and inscribed on the verso "James Thos. Linnell's Given to him by his father John Linnell 1879". Dawson Auctioneers, 25 Jan., #96 (£5500). Reminiscent of the famous miniature on ivory of some of the Linnell children, the "Little Ancients": *The Favourite, a Group, with Portraits of the Artist's Children*, as it was titled when Linnell showed it at the Royal Academy in 1825. James Thomas was Linnell's second son; he became a successful landscape artist, exhibiting at the RA from 1850 to 1888.

Mrs. Robert Hudleston with Her Children, Robert and Annette, 1838. Watercolor and colored chalks on paper, 46.5 x 59 cm., signed and dated "J. Linnell fc 1838". Bellmans, 28 Mar., #1257 (passed); 16 Oct., #1070 (passed). Previously sold CL, 12 Apr. 1994, #29 (£2185); see the 1994 sales review, *Blake* 28.4 (spring 1995): 135.

Portrait of Arthur Heywood, 1842. Charcoal and white chalk on paper, 57 x 44 cm., signed lower left "J. Linnell 1842". Busby, 7 Nov., #752 (£45).

Portrait of William Russell, n.d. Pencil and colored chalks on brown paper, 52 x 41 cm. Elstob Auctions, 11 Sept., #599 (£140).

Studies of a Herdsman, 1820. Black and white chalk on blue-green wove paper, 27 x 34.9 cm., inscribed and dated in black ink, bottom right, "J. Linnell Ciren^{r} place 1820". LLY, *Recent Acquisitions 2024* cat., pp. 44-45. The drawing consists of two studies of a herdsman leaning on a crook or stick.

Study of a Girl Reading, n.d. Pencil on paper, 19 x 14 cm., signed lower right "J. Linnell". Sworders, 28 Aug., #352 (£100).

Study of Miss Bogle, 1820. Pencil, 22 x 17 cm., signed and dated "March 21 1820". Dawson Auctioneers, 25 Jan., #91 (£400).

Twilight, n.d. Oil on board, 14 x 11 cm. SL, 4 July, #272 (£31,200). This painting was the property of the late Mrs. Hugh Linnell. It was exhibited (no. 50) at the Linnell centennial exhibition shown at the Fitzwilliam Museum and at the Yale Center for British Art, 1982–83. It may relate to Linnell's journal entry for Mar. 1819: "small picture of twilight 5 x 4 (tiny sketch showing trees and crescent moon). Upright and low horizon".[21] If so, he executed this work less than a year after he first met Blake.

Untitled Landscape with a Group of Figures and a Dog, n.d. Oil on canvas, 61 x 91 cm., signed lower left "J Linnell". Rago Arts and Auction Center, 10 May, #176 (passed); 14 Nov., #162 ($2400).

The Woodcutters, n.d. Oil on board, 32 x 36 cm., signed lower right. Dore & Rees, 21 Feb., #68 (£2100). Exhibited at the Samuel Palmer and John Linnell exhibition for the Reigate centenary, July-Aug. 1963.

[*Michael Angelo's Frescoes in the Sistine Chapel*], 1833–35. Engravings. Doyle, New York, 1 May, #33, illus. ($640). The album was originally issued in parts. "The plates are based on a set of original drawings that had been in the collection first of Sir Peter Lely, then Sir Joshua Reynolds, and subsequently Samuel Rogers, who gave Linnell permission to produce these prints."

21. SL cat. entry, following *John Linnell: A Centennial Exhibition*, selected and catalogued by Katharine Crouan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Fitzwilliam Museum, 1982) 19.

PALMER, SAMUEL
Drawings, paintings, and graphics

Eventide, 1841. Pencil, watercolor, and body color with gum arabic on artist's board, 20 x 43 cm., signed and dated lower right "S. PALMER 1841". CL, 4 Dec., #231 (£22,680). See Lister #364.

A Landscape at Sunset; A Cloud Study; A Landscape, n.d. Pencil and watercolor on paper, 9.5 x 19 cm., somewhat discolored, watercolor has faded, pencil notes run along the bottom regarding details of the sketches, original label for Colnaghi & Co. Gorringe's, 12 Mar., #208 (£5000). Formerly in the collection of A. H. Palmer.

La Vocatella near Corpo di Cava, Italy, datable to 1838. Pencil and watercolor with scratching on paper, 26.7 x 37.8 cm. BHL, 3 July, #56 (passed). Previously sold CL, 10 July 2012, #147, illus. (£13,750), and SL, 23 Sept. 2021, #148 (£11,340); see the 2012 sales review, *Blake* 46.4 (spring 2013). Another view of La Vocatella by Palmer (Lister #311) is in the collection of the Graves Gallery, Sheffield; for another (Lister #392), see the 2023 sales review, *Blake* 57.4 (spring 2024).

Four etchings from *Eclogues of Virgil*, 1883. Millea Bros., 15 Oct., #1182 ($550).

"The Bellman," 1879. Roseberys, 9 July, #240, 4th state (of 7) (£236). Swann, 17 Oct., #125, 5th state, signed in pencil, lower left ($7500).

"Christmas (Folding the Last Sheep)," 1850. Swann, 17 Oct., #123, 3rd state (of 5) ($4600).

"The Early Ploughman," c. 1861. CW, 17 Jan., #176, 5th state (of 9) (£440).

"The Herdsman's Cottage (Sunset)," 1850. DW, 16 Oct., #224, 2nd (final) state, with printed initials "SP" lower left indicating that this state of the print was first published in the *Portfolio* (1872) (£360).

"The Sleeping Shepherd," 1857. Roseberys, 4 Sept., #4, 4th (final) state, signed in pencil (passed); same impression, 21 Nov., #1 (£1968).

"The Weary Ploughman," 1858. Swann, 17 Oct., #124, 5th state (of 8) ($1375).

Eclogues of Virgil (1st ed. 1883, 2nd ed. 1884). Bearnes Hampton & Littlewood, 14 May, #64, 1884 ed., illus. (passed); another copy, 29 Oct., #85 (£350). Mellors & Kirk, 20 Sept., #261, 1883 ed., illus. (£500).

Etchings for the Art-Union of London by the Etching Club, 1872. BHL, 22-31 Jan., #122 (£704). Includes Palmer's "The Morning of Life."

RICHMOND, GEORGE
Drawings and paintings

Portrait of a Gentleman, 1853. Black, white, and colored chalks on paper, 59.8 x 46.5 cm., signed lower left "George Richmond delit 1853". Roseberys, 9 July, #212 (£446). A similar drawing by Richmond of William Benson, dated to 1855, sold CL, 16 June 2015, #34 (£4500).

Portrait of a Gentleman in Blue, n.d. Blue, black, white, and red chalks on buff paper, 55.8 x 42 cm. Sloan Street Auctions, 23 Oct., #240 (£400).

Portrait of a Young Boy, 1846. Pencil and watercolor, 41 x 30 cm., signed and dated lower left "Geor. Richmond del.t 1846". Bearnes Hampton & Littlewood, 16 Apr., #852 (£700).

Portrait of a Young Lady, n.d. Pencil and colored chalks on paper, 27 x 18 cm., unsigned. David Duggleby, 21 June, #180 (£2600). It has been speculated that the subject of the portrait is Charlotte Bronte.

Portrait of Hugh Seymour Tremenheere, n.d. Black, white, and red chalks on canvas, 44 x 35.5 cm. Roseberys, 9 July, #211 (£656).

Portrait of Mr. Ormroid, n.d. Black, white, and colored chalks on paper, 58.5 x 44.2 cm., inscribed lower left "Mr. Ormroid / Study for Pictures / GR". Roseberys, 20 Nov., #176 (£340). Previously offered CL, 23 Apr. 1974, #155.

Study after a Portrait by Parmigianino, n.d. Pencil on paper, 25 x 18 cm., initialed lower right. Bamfords, 10 Oct., #293 (£50).

Study of a Woman's Hand, n.d. Pencil and crayon on paper, 15 x 24 cm. Clarke's, 12 July, #222 (£140). The same work was included in a group of Richmond drawings sold CL, 18 July 2012; see the 2012 sales review, *Blake* 46.4 (spring 2013).

Appendix: New Information on Blake's Engravings

Listed below are substantive additions or corrections to Essick, *The Separate Plates of William Blake: A Catalogue* (1983).

XXIV: "Robin Hood & Clorinda." For a proof before letters (a previously unrecorded impression), see illus. 7, above.

XLII: "M^{rs} Q," impression 1A. This impression was originally listed as a proof before title and imprint (p. 191); it has signatures and imprint, lacking only the title.

A R T I C L E

Blake's Juxtapositional Prosodic Method in "Holy Thursday" (*Innocence*)

By Francesca Cauchi

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Damn. braces: Bless relaxes.
(William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*)

1 At first glance, Blake's "Holy Thursday" (*Songs of Innocence*) depicts the heartwarming scene of brightly clad charity-school children parading toward St. Paul's Cathedral to join the congregation in hymn and prayer.[1] On closer inspection, however, the poem's metrical variation, barbed similes, and juxtapositional prosodic method jointly execute a subtle indictment of the "cold and usurous hand" ("Holy Thursday," *Experience*) of institutionalized charity. Such an indictment is further illuminated by viewing the *Innocence* poem retrospectively through the lens of its identically titled counterpart in *Songs of Experience* and prospectively through the lens of *An Island in the Moon*, Blake's unpublished prose satire or burlesque.

2 Written in the mid-1780s, *An Island in the Moon* contains the first drafts of three poems that would appear a few years later in *Songs of Innocence* (1789)—namely, "Holy Thursday," "Nurse's Song," and "The Little Boy Lost." The ironic subtext of the first is signaled to the reader of the satire by the name of the character who delivers the song: Obtuse Angle, a caricature of the "amiable pedant"[2] who is wont to display the minutiae of his knowledge but, in his obtuseness, "always understood better when he shut his eyes."[3] Thus it is that in his "Holy Thursday" rendition he sees only the pious annual spectacle of charity-school children "rais[ing] to heavn the voice of song" (E 463) and not the flogging and severe undernourishment to which they were routinely subjected.[4] Similarly, in his earlier verse panegyric to Richard Sutton, the founder of the Charterhouse pensioners' home and charity school for boys, Obtuse Angle is so awed by Sutton's installation of "sinks & gutters … / … / To hinder pestilence" that he remains blind to the institutionalized "pestilence" metastasizing within the penned confines of the school's "walls of brick & stone" (E 461).

3 As David Fairer astutely observes at the start of his illuminating essay on the historical context of "Holy Thursday" (*Innocence*), "Blake's texts lose their innocence more easily than most" (535). Drawing on an array of archival records from the period, including charity-school rule-books and reforms, ordinances, sermons, and hymns publicly performed by the children, Fairer builds a compelling argument on the extent to which eighteenth-century charity children were caught up in a system that not only controlled, regulated, and exhibited them, but groomed them for a life of drudgery.[5] The control and regulation, I shall argue, are reenacted in "Holy Thursday" (*Innocence*) through the poem's juxtapositional verse structure, whereby the first half of a line, connoting discipline and restraint, is antithetically linked to the second half, figuring the innocent children. More specifically, this antithetical dynamic is reinforced through the poem's metrical shifts and barbed similes—the foci of the ensuing analysis.

4 To offset the granular nature of my argument, I shall begin by highlighting the poem's intralinear juxtapositions (itali-

1. For the critic Stanley Gardner, "[Blake] knew the children's feelings as they filled the cathedral with excited murmurings. He knew that … the workhouse children in the King Street school had been granted a special self-respect" (*The Tyger, the Lamb, and the Terrible Desart* [London: Cygnus Arts; Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998] 63, cited in David Fairer, "Experience Reading Innocence: Contextualizing Blake's 'Holy Thursday,'" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35.4 [2002]: 535-62, on 538). Similarly, for W. H. Stevenson, the poem suggests that Blake was as moved as Joseph Haydn (their "eyes began to fill") by the singing of the children ("The Sound of 'Holy Thursday,'" *Blake* 36.4 [spring 2003]: 137-140, on 140).

2. See David V. Erdman, *Blake, Prophet against Empire: A Poet's Interpretation of the History of His Own Times*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977) 119.

3. David V. Erdman, ed., *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, newly rev. ed. (New York: Anchor-Random House, 1988) [hereafter E] 450.

4. Erdman notes that "concern over charity-school abuses rose early in the 1780's" and in the same footnote references Jones's oft-cited account of the appalling treatment of the children in some of the schools, especially the boarding schools, where masters and mistresses "lined their pockets with money saved from the children's rations" (see M. G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938] 103, cited in Erdman, *Prophet* 122-23n23).

5. Fairer (543) cites the Bishop of Norwich's 1755 address to the Charity Schools Anniversary Meeting in which he asserts that "there must be drudges of labour …. These poor children are born to be daily labourers, for the most part to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows."

"Holy Thursday," *Songs of Innocence* copy U (printed 1789). Houghton Library, Harvard University, Typ 6500.34u. Image courtesy of the *William Blake Archive*.

cized below), and then proceed sequentially by stanza. Since the metrical shifts and similes are presented in this article as exemplifications of the poem's juxtapositional framework, the latter, when not explicitly stated, is implicit in my readings of the former.

> Twas on a *Holy Thursday* their *innocent faces clean*
> The children walking two & two in red & blue & green
> *Grey headed beadles* walkd before with *wands as white as snow*
> Till into *the high dome of Pauls* they *like Thames waters flow*
>
> O what a multitude they seemd these flowers of London town
> *Seated in companies* they sit with *radiance all their own*
> The hum of *multitudes* was there but multitudes of *lambs*
> Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent hands
>
> Now like a *mighty wind* they raise to heaven the *voice of song*
> Or like *harmonious thunderings* the seats of heaven among
> Beneath them sit the aged men wise guardians of the poor
> Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door
>
> (E 13)

5 The poem's iambic heptameter is interrupted twice in the first stanza: once in the first line and again in the third. In the former, "Twas **on** / a **Ho** / ly **Thurs** / day their **in** / nocent **fa** / ces **clean**" (stresses marked in bold), the two anapests in the second half of the line, caught between an ostensibly "holy" day of obligation[6] and obligatory clean faces, set into relief the uniformed children's iambic lockstep procession in the second line, "The **chil** / dren **wal** / king **two** / & **two** / in **red** / & **blue** / & **green**." Note, too, the tautological incongruity of "innocent" faces having been scrubbed "clean"—not for God, it would seem, given the poem's subsequent depiction of the children as inherently radiant and as "lambs" and "angel[s]," but for public consumption.[7] The implied censure in the word "clean" also calls into question the timeworn proverb "Cleanliness is next to godliness," immortalized by Blake's contemporary John Wesley, who cited it in support of his rather dubious claim that "slovenliness is no part of religion."[8]

6 The second metrical shift in the first stanza is the spondee that opens the third line, "**Grey head** / ed **bea** / dles **walkd** / be**fore** / with **wands** / as **white** / as **snow**." Taken in conjunction with the reiterated dental plosive ("d") in "headed" and "beadles," the spondaic foot accentuates the oppressive nature of a hoary, hidebound authority, metonymically figured in the beadles' ceremonial staves and hinted at in the simile "wands as white as snow." The simile itself evokes a cluster of associations: the snow-cold hands of the grey-haired beadles wielding their disciplinary rods; the contrast between a ceremonial staff of office and the Lord's metonymical shepherd's staff—the first emblematizing discipline and authority, the second love and nurture; and lastly, Isaiah 1:17-18, "Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless …. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (KJV). According to Ellicott's *Commentary*,[9] the phrases "relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless" are principally addressed to men in office "to restrain the wrong-doing of the men of their own order … [and to] be true to their calling." Correspondingly, while the invitation to "reason together" in the Authorized Version of the Bible "suggests the thought of a discussion between equals[,] the Hebrew implies rather the tone of one who gives an authoritative *ultimatum*, as from a judge to the accused, who had no defence, or only a sham defence, to offer (Micah vi. 2, 3)"—an ultimatum, perhaps, not dissimilar to the one given by Blake in the last line of the poem.

7 Another simile rich in associations is in the last line of the first stanza, "Till into the high dome of Pauls they like Thames waters flow." Mirroring the earlier juxtaposition of "Holy Thursday" and "innocent faces clean," the image of charity-school children streaming into St. Paul's "like Thames waters" suggests on the one hand the moral uncleanliness of coercing children into an orchestrated public display of well-invested charity[10] and on the other the stark

6. As Clare Simmons reminds us, the titular Holy Thursday of Blake's *Innocence* and *Experience* poems "is not functioning as a date in the Christian calendar, but … serves as an ironic reminder that an annual event held on a Thursday merely for the convenience of St. Paul's and its patrons is now a substitute for true holiness and humility toward the poor that Christ showed by example on the Thursday before his death" ("Blake's 'Holy Thursday' and 'The Martyrdom of St. Paul's,'" *Blake* 53.3 [winter 2019–20]: par. 24).

7. The lamb epithet clearly suggests Lamb of God, echoing lines from another *Innocence* poem: "Little Lamb who made thee / … / Little Lamb I'll tell thee, / … / He is meek & he is mild, / He became a little child: / I a child & thou a lamb, / We are called by his name" (E 9).

8. "Sermon XCIII—*On Dress*," in John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions*, vol. 2 (New York: Carlton & Phillips, 1855) 259. Michael Farrell has argued that notwithstanding the evangelical commonalities between Blake and Wesley, the former's attitude to the latter was "complex and problematic," not least because of what Blake would have viewed as Wesley's authoritarianism (*Blake and the Methodists* [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014] 67).

9. Charles John Ellicott, ed., *An Old Testament Commentary for English Readers by Various Writers*, vol. 4 (London: Cassell & Company, 1884) 419.

10. Fairer notes how "inside the cathedral [the children's] massed ranks on specially erected scaffolds made an impressive statement about the organization of national charity, the grandeur of its benev-

contrast between the staggering number of London's poor and the sheer volume of mercantile profit flowing into the River Thames, a synecdoche for Britannia's imperial wealth via the East India Company. As Blake rhetorically asks in "Holy Thursday" (*Experience*):

> Is this a holy thing to see,
> In a rich and fruitful land,
> Babes reducd to misery,
> Fed with cold and usurous hand? (E 19)

Just as the East India Company capitalized on its exploitation and monopolization of trade with Britain's colonies in India and Southeast Asia, so the charity schools capitalized on the annual spectacle of serried ranks of colorfully dressed charity children as an effective method of loosening the purse strings of the well-heeled cathedral congregation.[11]

8 A more positive association invited by the Thames water simile is brought out by the plate's illumination. Unlike any of the other poems in either *Innocence* or *Experience*, "Holy Thursday" contains wavy strokes of varying lengths between each line. In marked contrast to the density of the text—the heptameter lines, crammed cheek by jowl and extending the full width of the copperplate, give the impression of being compressed between the comparatively commodious space allocated to anodyne illustrations of a beadle-led row of boys above and girls below—the interlineal wavy lines evoke an image of unencumbered fluidity. A possible interpretation of this distinctive "underlining" is that in spite of the regimented conformity imposed upon the children, satirically masked by the publicity-type images of leisurely parading boys and girls, the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Revelation 22:1) flows unimpeded within these multitudinous lambs.

9 The metrical variation in the second stanza, which occurs in the second and last lines, performs the same antithetical function as that in the first stanza. In the second line, "**Sea**ted / in **com** / pa**nies** / they **sit** / with **ra** / diance **all** / their **own**," the opening trochee ("Seated"), reinforced by the repetition in the third iambic foot ("they sit"), militates against the children's radiance. In other words, the battalion-like "companies" of charity children on the left-hand side of the line are juxtaposed to the angelic-like host on the right—a positioning that recalls Christ's seat at the right hand of God (1 Peter 3:22; Acts 7:55-56). In the last line, "**Thou**sands / of **lit** / tle **boys** / & **girls** / **rai**sing / their **in** / nocent **hands**," the stanza's second metrical shift is effected through Blake's deployment of two trochaic feet ("Thousands" and "raising"), demarcating the two halves of the line, and a closing anapest ("nocent hands") that produces the poem's sole hypermetrical line. In sum, the metrical shifts in the second stanza impress upon the reader the incongruity of a veritable army—hence the anomalous hypermetrical line and the stanza's thrice-reiterated "multitude"—of little Christian foot soldiers raising "innocent hands" that would be better employed in play.

10 In the third and final stanza, the poem's antithetical dynamic is condensed into the second line's oxymoronic collocation "harmonious thunderings" ("Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven among"), which simultaneously reverses the hierarchical order between the beadles and the children[12] and encapsulates the stanza's eschatological warning. The reversal inheres in the references to placement and the two similes "like a mighty wind" and "like harmonious thunderings": the seated ranks of uniformed children in the first stanza are now being critically observed from the "seats of heaven" above; the "mighty wind" of "thousands of little boys & girls" singing psalms and hymns in (arduously rehearsed?)[13] unison is likened to a thunderous aural assault upon the celestial realm; the beadles who in the first stanza had "walkd before" their charges are now seated "beneath" the cherubic children in accordance with the synoptic Gospels: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:16); and the ironic epithet "wise guardians" is a warning to the old beadles to exercise less of the guard and more of the guardian angel lest they find themselves driven from the "door" of heaven—the door, moreover, that is eternally open to the "little children."

olence" (536). See also Sarah Lloyd: "Charities … took shape within eighteenth-century consumer culture. They exchanged spectacle for money …. Midcentury, charities advertised alongside quacks, publishers, and auctioneers" ("Pleasing Spectacles and Elegant Dinners: Conviviality, Benevolence, and Charity Anniversaries in Eighteenth-Century London," *Journal of British Studies* 41.1 [2002]: 23-57, on 27).

11. See Fairer 557. It is also worth noting that "the East India Company, the South Sea Company and the Bank of England were the three most popular investment opportunities offered to the eighteenth century public. Investors varied in social status, being predominantly merchants and landowners, but also included members of the clergy" (Giada Pizzoni, "The English Catholic Church and the Age of Mercantilism: Bishop Richard Challoner and the South Sea Company," *Journal of Early Modern History* 24 [2020]: 111-35, on 115).

12. As the Reverend Thomas Bisse was at pains to point out at the opening of a charity school in Birmingham in 1725, the purpose of the charity school was "not to change the subordination of mankind," but to keep "the lowest order of mankind, viz. the poor, in its proper situation" (cited in Fairer 543).

13. In the first draft of the poem in *An Island in the Moon*, Blake deletes the last line of the second stanza, "And all in order sit waiting the chief chanters commands" and replaces it with "Thousands of little girls & boys raising their innocent hands" (E 850).

11 In short, Blake's juxtapositional prosodic method in "Holy Thursday" (*Innocence*), together with the juxtapositional relation between the poem and its earlier draft in *An Island in the Moon* and later counterpart in *Experience*, brings sharply into focus the tension between institutionalized charity and the well-being of the young charges.

Jason Whittaker. *Jerusalem: Blake, Parry, and the Fight for Englishness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. 249 pp. £28.99/$38.99, hardcover; £12.99/$38.99, e-book.

Reviewed by Camila Oliveira

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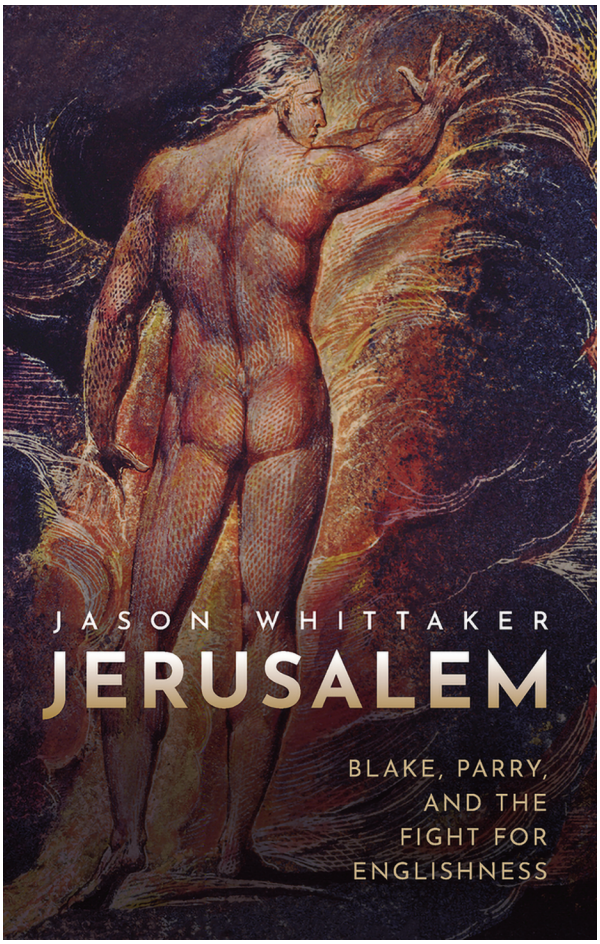


1 Blake famously stated "Without Contraries is no progression," and the history of the hymn "Jerusalem" proves his dictum. Elevated to the status of anthem, the opening lines of *Milton*, set to music by Hubert Parry in 1916, have been adopted not only by national teams in sporting events but also by antagonistic political forces and by a diverse multitude of artists. Such a phenomenon demonstrates that Blake's ode to England accommodates a polyphony of voices with different understandings of the meaning and implications of Englishness. This is precisely the sum and substance of Jason Whittaker's *Jerusalem: Blake, Parry, and the Fight for Englishness*. By presenting a well-knit study of the hymn's history and reception, Whittaker examines in detail how "Jerusalem" has been converted into an ambivalent and often problematic emblem of patriotism and nationalism, terms translated by George Orwell as the "love of home" in opposition to the "fear of the other" (Whittaker 19).[1]

2 The opening chapter is dedicated to an account of the context in which the epic *Milton* was produced. In order to shed light on the contrast between—and irony of—Blake's radical political stands and the conservative movement for which the hymn was initially composed, Whittaker rightfully evokes Blake's trial for sedition, which took place around the time that the poem was penned. After an altercation with a soldier in the village of Felpham in the first year of the Napoleonic Wars, Blake was accused of treason for uttering seditious words against the king, an offense that could have landed him in prison. This episode reinforced his disapproval of war and violence, conveyed by the manifesto that opens *Milton* and underlined by the oxymoronic appropriation of martial imagery in the stanzas of "And did those feet": "Mental Fight" and "Arrows of desire." Whittaker traces the genealogy and sources of the poem, demonstrating Blake's departure from the notion that Western civilization is modeled on Greek antiquity and calling attention to the Judeo-Christian influence to sustain, among other things, his view that the feet Blake refers to are those of Joseph of Arimathea, the precursor of the Christian faith in England, according to twelfth-century legends.

3 Chapter 2 discusses the circulation and reception of the opening stanzas of *Milton*, placing emphasis on the difficulties found with the prophetic books by early critics such as Blake's biographer Alexander Gilchrist, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and, most notably, W. B. Yeats and Edwin J. El-

1. See Orwell's essays "England Your England" (1941) and "Notes on Nationalism" (1945).

lis, who published the controversial yet indispensable *Works of William Blake* in 1893, which offered an allegorical and overtly mystic interpretation of the English poet, but nonetheless helped to boost Blake's popularity in the twentieth century. Whittaker highlights the pivotal role of anthologies in the dissemination of "And did those feet," once the lines were detached from their original and rather cryptic context. He argues that anthologies, which are often thematic, were also responsible for the promotion of certain interpretations; the very early inclusion of the stanzas in nationalist-tinted collections fostered a perception of them as a defense of England's supremacy, which appealed to the spirit of the time, although utterly disregarded what nationalism or Englishness meant to Blake. This was precisely the case for Henry Charles Beeching's *A Paradise of English Poetry* (1893)[2] and Robert Bridges's *The Spirit of Man* (1915, published 1916). The latter played a crucial role in the composition of Parry's famed setting, for Bridges—after a meeting of Fight for Right, a movement deeply connected to Britain's War Propaganda Bureau—offered a copy to the composer and asked him to set *Milton*'s opening lines to music as an endeavor to boost morale. Whittaker assigns equal importance to the earliest musical rendering of "And did those feet" (1907, published 1908), by Henry Walford Davies, Parry's former student, who set a handful of Blake's poems to music at a time when Blake was still paving his way toward the English canon.

4 The third chapter focuses on the context in which Parry's setting was produced and problematizes the intrinsic contradictions of the composition: for instance, Parry wrote the music to support the war against Germany while highly sympathetic toward German culture; on the political spectrum, he was some kind of moderate Liberal, but composed the hymn for a rather conservative movement, under the influence of his comrades Walford Davies and Bridges. After withdrawing his support from Fight for Right for its escalating jingoistic propaganda, Parry found a more suitable home for the hymn with the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS); a rearranged version, with "Jerusalem" as its official name, was performed in support of the campaign for Votes for Women in 1918. Significantly, Parry left the copyright to the NUWSS.

5 In chapter 4, the book moves on to the interwar period, when the fluidity of "Jerusalem" in the political spectrum becomes even more evident. Whittaker argues that the new arrangement by Edward Elgar in 1922 not only secured Parry's setting in the canon but also elevated it to the status of anthem, while restoring its former nationalistic appeal and diluting its association with progressive causes. In the following decade, the anthem was readopted by the Left in an attempt to resurrect Blake's revolutionary spirit. The political momentum embodied by the British Labour Party leader, Clement Attlee, added new layers of interpretation to the hymn. Drawing attention to images once overlooked, the Left underscored the perniciousness of industrialization by harnessing Blake's evocation of "dark Satanic Mills," and converted it into a well-established expression. Whittaker also highlights the recording in 1939 by the African-American actor and singer Paul Robeson, known for his political activism, which reinforced the anti-establishment appeal of "Jerusalem."

6 The tide turned and the turbulent waters of the Second World War awakened the nationalist spirit. The anthem was appropriated by the Right once more, but the public response was less celebratory and more pragmatic, compared to the early days of the Fight for Right movement, because of concerns about the prospect of a catastrophic defeat. Surprisingly, the Allies' victory in 1945 didn't translate into a favorable result in the polls for the Conservatives, and Labour took power for the rest of the forties, adopting "Jerusalem" as the hymn of the postwar welfare state. The Conservative administration that followed in the fifties encouraged the singing of the anthem in schools as part of the propaganda of empire. In 1953, "Jerusalem" featured in the film of the coronation of Elizabeth II and enjoyed patriotism's *heure de gloire* when it was incorporated into the closing section of the Last Night of the Proms.

7 As Whittaker demonstrates in chapter 5, in the next two decades the revolution that again changed the status of "Jerusalem" was less political than cultural. Defiant baby boomers sneered at the outdated and tacky symbols of a crumbled empire and Parry's hymn was deemed an obsolete reminder of the past. In desacralizing "Jerusalem," this new generation turned it into a rather ambivalent and profane symbol of Englishness. Neoteric visions of it began to emerge in popular culture as a reflection of the spirit and tastes of the time. Whittaker duly stresses that the social backgrounds of the artists had a role to play; they were particularly keen to use Blake's words against the purposes to which Parry's hymn had often been put. In music, it was adapted to a variety of genres: Don Partridge's folk, a bolero by the Castells, and a progressive version by the trio Emerson, Lake & Palmer. In the TV and film industry, "Jerusalem" was largely used as an ironic or metaphorical trope, as in the case of Monty Python and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, etc. While not particularly celebratory, the sixties and seventies indubitably imbued "Jerusalem" with new life and secured its endurance for the next generation.

2. Whittaker also mentions Beeching's anthology *Lyra Sacra* (1895), which puts together the lines of "And did those feet" and a fragment from *Jerusalem*. The combined form is titled "The New Jerusalem," a detail that cannot go unnoticed, given the later title of the hymn.

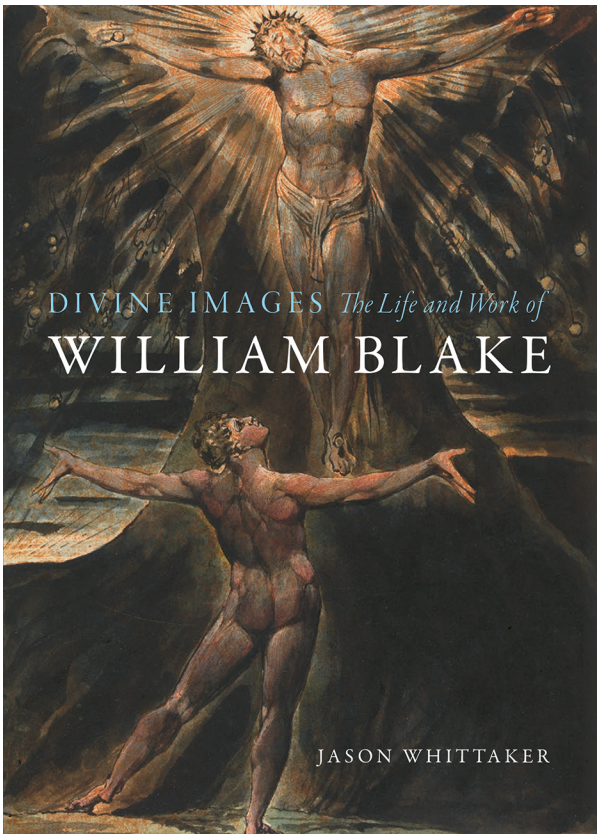
8 When Whittaker turns his eyes and ears to the eighties, he observes the ironic tone of the sixties and seventies giving way to hostility in the emerging and marginal punk scene in England. Thatcherism resulted in an even more aggressive form of patriotism, stirred by the Falklands War; an unprecedented antagonism toward unions and social movements; and a blind devotion to the "free-market god." In chapter 6, Whittaker offers a gloomy portrait of the gray and unpleasant land that England had become in the name of the so-called progress cemented in the nostalgic grandeur of the old and mouldy empire of the never-setting sun. As a more immediate result, Parry's anthem was reestablished as a trope of Englishness. The end of the Thatcher era in the 1990s represented an opening for more promising and inclusive forms of Englishness to arise. The Left was inspired by the socialist ideals of the postwar Labour Party, which were reechoed in the versions of "Jerusalem" by Billy Bragg and Test Dept. The two decades from the height of punk to the fall of the Conservative Party from office in 1997 saw a remarkable transformation of the political, artistic, and cultural contexts in which "Jerusalem" would henceforth be invoked. Whittaker also remarks on the escalating influence of the opening lines of *Milton* on writers such as Kenzaburō Ōe, Angela Carter, and J. G. Ballard, to name a few.

9 Chapter 7 is devoted to the reception of "Jerusalem" from the end of the 1990s into the 2000s, from the rise of Tony Blair to the controversial referendum in 2016 on whether the United Kingdom should leave the European Union. Ingrained in the English collective unconscious, the imagery of "Jerusalem" framed new myths, like that of Diana, Princess of Wales, in Elton John's elegy "Goodbye England's Rose" (1997). As a well-established emblem of the nation, the hymn featured in the royal wedding (2011), the Diamond Jubilee (2012), and the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in London (2012).

10 Whittaker argues that the adoption of "Jerusalem" as an anthem in the arena of sports is less ecumenical than in the aforementioned examples. By celebrating England and its green and pleasant fields alone, the stanzas inevitably stress the intrinsically fractured nature of the United Kingdom. "Jerusalem" was declared the official anthem of England for the 2010 Commonwealth Games, and has been sung by England supporters at cricket and rugby union matches, though less so at the football. In an analogous divisive spirit, in 2016 the right wing used the words as a rallying cry of the Brexit campaign; the vote was, ironically enough, in the same year as the centennial of Parry's setting.

11 As a counterweight to virulent jingoistic revivals in the 2000s, Whittaker celebrates the last few decades as the golden age in terms of artistic responses to "Jerusalem," which bring a multiplicity of new perspectives. In music, innovative experiments such as Bruce Dickinson's heavy-metal version, a new tune by Bob Davenport, and the musical collage of Marc Almond and John Harle set the tone of the times. Whittaker also offers examples of playwrights, poets, novelists, filmmakers, and painters who engage with "Jerusalem" with a less sarcastic and more nonconformist attitude than that of the seventies. In addition, he emphasizes the pivotal role of multiculturalism in the expansion, problematization, and resignification of the stanzas and the hymn itself. In the epilogue, he reminds us that the One Nation that England has become is constituted by an amalgamation of peoples and ethnicities, as Blake makes explicit in his epic *Jerusalem*. Ultimately, the anthem "Jerusalem" does nothing but celebrate those origins and rouse men of the New Age to rebel against the ignorant hirelings who promote corporeal war and discord through a pernicious nationalist discourse. It epitomizes Blake's projection of the pleasant and welcoming land he hoped England would become one day.

12 *Jerusalem: Blake, Parry, and the Fight for Englishness* is, beyond doubt, an indispensable book for Blake scholars and all those interested in understanding the recent history of England told through the reception of its most popular anthem. The book makes it evident that Blake's oeuvre encapsulates ideas that can be read in today's world through antithetical lenses, and attests that the greatest works of art, for good and bad, are "self-living" and pay no heed to the artist's motives.



R E V I E W

Jason Whittaker. *Divine Images: The Life and Work of William Blake*. London: Reaktion Books, 2021. 392 pp. £30.00, hardcover or e-book.

Reviewed by Matthew Leporati

Matthew Leporati is associate professor of English at the University of Mount Saint Vincent. He is the author of *Romantic Epics and the Mission of Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2024).

1 One of the challenges of reading Blake is acquiring the contextual knowledge that illuminates his work and that is often necessary to understand him at all. Academics and enthusiasts can easily take for granted their familiarity with the culture and politics of Blake's day, the major events of his personal life, and the details of his idiosyncratic mythology as it develops across his poems, but newcomers are faced with a daunting task. While gaining contextual knowledge is important in understanding all artists, it is both indispensable and more difficult in Blake's case because of his method: on top of his obscure style, his poetry and visual art exist in a state of dynamic conversation with the Romantic period and with his other works. Frequently, he takes discourse from the world around him and presents it in strange, defamiliarizing ways that often resonate with other aspects of his corpus, works written sometimes decades earlier or later.

2 Jason Whittaker's impressive *Divine Images: The Life and Work of William Blake* opens with an examination of a deceptively familiar image, one of Blake's most famous: "The Ancient of Days." Whittaker discusses how it uncannily remains both recognizable and alien. What seems on the surface a straightforward depiction of the Christian God in fact engages not just with the Bible (Daniel 7:13), but with ideas as diverse as Deism, the work of Isaac Newton, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Blake's own character Urizen, as developed throughout his work. "*The Ancient of Days*," Whittaker concludes, "is an image that demonstrates Blake's highly idiosyncratic reading of the religious and political events of his day, showing his wide-ranging knowledge of other writers and artists" (12). Those without a working knowledge of this context will miss important layers of meaning.

3 *Divine Images* is a thorough introduction to Blake's work and a guide to understanding it, written for an audience unfamiliar with the necessary context. Students will find it immensely useful, and even seasoned readers of Blake will appreciate the succinct survey of his life, poetry, and visual art. The balance between his life, the relevant history around him, and an overview of all of his major works marks *Divine Images* as distinct from biographies, such as Tobias Churton's *Jerusalem! The Real Life of William Blake* (2014), and guides to reading Blake, such as Saree Makdisi's *Reading William Blake* (2015) and Kathryn S. Freeman's *A Guide to the Cosmology of William Blake* (2017). Whittaker's book is neither an account of minute details of Blake's life nor a survey of themes that his work addresses nor a dictionary of his symbols. This exploration of Blake in context perhaps most distinguishes itself by heavily emphasizing the visual aspects of his career.

4 Whittaker's book moves chronologically across Blake's biography and the surrounding history and culture, and it succeeds in weaving these elements into the discussion of the works without overwhelming the reader or oversimplifying the subject. This is quite an achievement, given the wide array of topics that need to be covered in short order. The introduction and first chapter alone introduce Deism,

Locke's philosophy, the Established Church and Dissent, London's urbanization, the beginning of the French Revolution, Blake's possible participation in the Gordon Riots, a description of his work as an engraver, his method of producing texts, his belief that all religions have their origin in the imagination, and more. Where possible, Whittaker refers to the work of scholars who deepen the discussion of Blake, but the book is not overly "scholarly" in the pejorative sense: the prose is very readable for an audience of non-academics, and it engagingly explores how Blake's poems "contain multitudes."

5 One of the first things a reader will notice about the book is, appropriate to its title, the generous use of images. At least once every few pages, and often more frequently, Blake's divine images illustrate Whittaker's discussion—in full color in the e-book, which is the edition I read, and many times occupying an entire page. A discussion of Blake without a strong visual component is incomplete. Readers need to see *Eve Tempted by the Serpent* (1799–1800) in order to appreciate Whittaker's comment that the use of gold highlights, as in *Jerusalem*, "make[s] this image shine," and his observation that Eve is not "revelling in the act of taking the forbidden fruit," but that her expression is "calm and peaceful," a reflection of "mankind at the final moment before the Fall" (219-20). Similarly, it is necessary to see *Abraham and Isaac* (1799–1800) to note how the former resembles a druid—that important figure in Blake's work—while the latter is "naked and dynamic … innocent and unafraid," possessing a "childlike perception that sees more clearly the way to reconcile God and man as opposed to the false religion followed by his father" (222). Another example is Whittaker's examination of *Satan, Sin, and Death: Satan Comes to the Gates of Hell* (1807) from *Paradise Lost*, which is followed on the next page by James Gillray's "Sin, Death, and the Devil" of 1792 (279-80). I would have loved for Whittaker to elaborate on this connection and explain how Blake responds to Gillray, but in this one instance, he oddly does not remark on the resemblance between the images. I suspect that this point was one that had to be cut for space. No doubt much material ended up on the cutting-room floor in writing this book, but what remains is a treasure trove of information and insights, beautifully and helpfully illustrated.

6 These divine images are more than ornamentation: Whittaker consistently shows how images are important to Blake's meaning. For instance, in discussing *America a Prophecy*, he introduces Frye's concept of the Orc cycle with reference to the similar poses of Urizen and Orc on plates 10 and 12 (139). As another example, he points out that the illustrations of Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* reflect aspects of Blake's mythology that he had developed in the Lambeth prophecies (196). As Whittaker notes, "Illustration was a means for Blake to explore fertile dialogues with those works that inspired him" (274), and this is especially true of the Bible and John Milton. In discussing the 1799 paintings of biblical subjects for Thomas Butts, Whittaker draws on the work of Naomi Billingsley to contrast Blake's depictions with those of contemporaries, indicating how Blake's "renounce any form of naturalism: they are intended to inspire the viewer to consider the nature of Christ rather than to seek out the historical Jesus" (218). Indeed, Whittaker is sure to note that in the illustrations to *Paradise Lost* and especially *Paradise Regained*, it is Christ's humanity that is central for Blake (282-83). In fact, the devil appears as an old, bearded man in the illustrations to *Paradise Regained*, connecting Blake's conception of the ultimate enemy with orthodox notions of God, as depicted in "The Ancient of Days" and Blake's character Urizen (284).

7 Whittaker observes throughout the book how Blake's work emerges from his relationships with others, his economic circumstances, and the political realities of his age. Given the cooperative spirit of his ethos ("I am in you and you in me, mutual in love divine," *Jerusalem* 4.7, E 146), a study of his works needs to appreciate, for instance, the importance of the Johnson circle and friends/patrons like Butts and John Linnell. Further, *The Four Zoas* needs to be understood in the context of the failure of the *Night Thoughts* project, and the book helpfully situates the poem alongside this failure. Whittaker treats at length the conflicted relationship with William Hayley and the circumstances surrounding Blake's trial for sedition, which directly influenced *Milton* and *Jerusalem* and almost certainly contributed to Blake's increasingly obscure style. Blake's relationships with others continue beyond his death; in the final chapter, Whittaker covers a detailed reception history spanning nearly two centuries.

8 The book will also help students to grasp the development of Blake's characters and ideas, and his presentation of those ideas over the course of his career. *The Book of Thel*, for instance, appears as a step toward Blake's later prophecies, both by employing the fourteener and by giving the "first indication that Blake was considering a new style of mythological thinking in his work" (83). Whittaker traces Los from the "agonized individual" of *The Book of Urizen*—"full of terror and apparently resentful of his task"—to the "quietly heroic figure who guides Albion from death in *Jerusalem*" (168). And he nicely shows how, even as the use of symbols can change from work to work, Blake consistently tends to attribute "demonic aspects to the traditional conception of God" (249). Blake could align himself with the "Devils party" in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, but the "devil" of that work is distinct from the satanic, Urizenic figure worshipped by many people under the name of God.

9 Whittaker presents Blake (correctly, in my estimation) as never having abandoned his early radicalism. As he notes, Blake was already well aware of social injustice before the French Revolution, and was not "suddenly radicalized" by it (122); later in life, he never renounced his support for the Revolution, even as his opinion of it changed after the Reign of Terror. Where others saw it as the product of irreligion, Blake "gradually came to view its failures as the inability to rise above the corrupting influence of power, best exemplified as priestcraft" (161). Ironically, Blake saw the French Revolution as *too* religious: the "cult of reason" and rationalism were not the negation of religion but another form of it. To the end of his career, his work remains deeply radical, as Whittaker shows with a discussion of the heretical ideas of *The Everlasting Gospel* and their relation to earlier works, especially *Marriage*. As Whittaker indicates, the later Blake continues to believe that God is "entirely internal," and he opposes the "common misconception of a god *out there*." His unorthodox stances are reflected in his illustrations to the book of Job and to Dante's *Divine Comedy* (321).

10 There is little a reader could criticize. While I naturally found myself wanting the analysis of Blake's works to be extended, and for even more illustrations to appear (in support of every single detail referenced), this would have been impractical. Further, it would have undermined the purpose of the book as a launching pad for readers to explore Blake on their own. The only aspect of Blake's work that would have benefited from greater examination is the concept of emanations. This key idea is explained only on one page, where emanations are described as female aspects of fallen Zoas who are "somehow intrinsically inferior to the male Zoas," a presentation that "introduces an increasingly misogynistic tone to parts of Blake's later prophecies" (213). While this is not exactly inaccurate, there is much more to say, as several passages in Blake complicate the concept. Though all of these details are not necessary for beginners to understand Blake, it would have been good to gesture toward this greater complexity here, as Whittaker does elsewhere so well.

11 Critiques like these are quibbles at best. *Divine Images* is overall an enjoyable, thorough, and useful guide to Blake, especially for students, that pays particular and much-needed attention to the visual aspects of his work. Frequently while reading the book, I thought how excellent it would be as a text for an undergraduate or graduate seminar. When I teach Blake to undergraduates, I often find myself overwhelmed with the amount of groundwork I need to lay so that they can make sense of even the most apparently simple texts. A book like *Divine Images* would greatly enrich the classroom, as well as any reader's understanding of Blake's art.

R E V I E W

Timothy Morton. *Hell: In Search of a Christian Ecology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2024. liii + 257 pp. $110.00/£92.00, hardcover; $26.95/£22.00, paperback; $25.99/£22.00, e-book.

Reviewed by William Ilan Rubel

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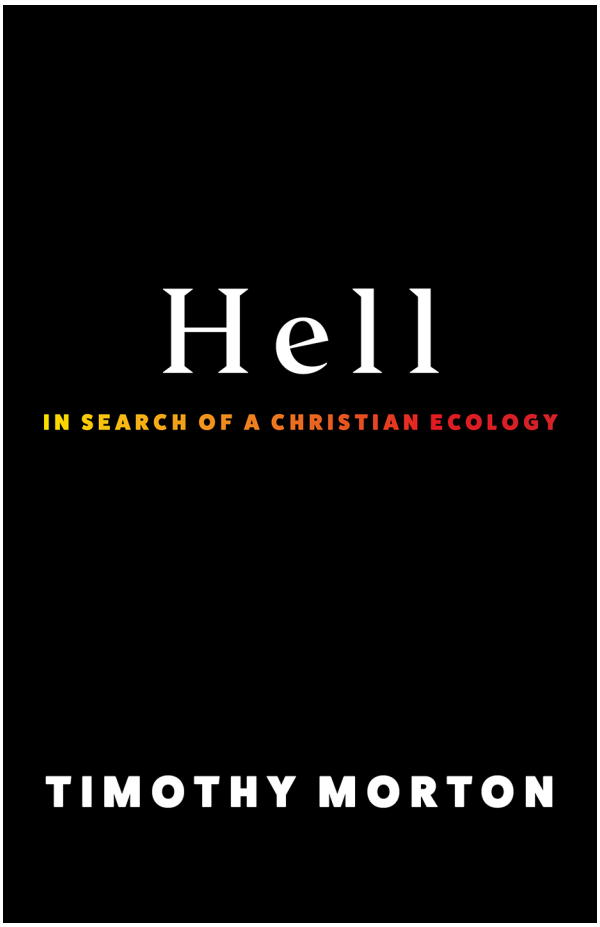

1 IN *Hell: In Search of a Christian Ecology*, Timothy Morton takes the question of our future coexistence with each other and with nonhumans into the "absolute contingency of a genuinely future future" (lii). A self-professed "dark ecologist" who grew up in the 1980s on a combination of acid house, *Star Wars*, Monty Python, and William Blake, they bring the counterepistemological sensibility of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* to bear on our situation. It is high time. Blake has often been celebrated as an inimitable poet and painter whose vision of "a Heaven in a Wild Flower" (E 490) expands as much out of quantum-tangled indeterminacy as enraptured beauty, but *Hell* is perhaps the first book to apply that vision to the climate emergency, inviting us to see beyond the iron jaws of the future closing around us.

2 Fortunately, it accomplishes this without didacticism. Written in a wildly engaging and improvisatory style, the book brims with scintillating puns, winks, and synchronicities. From the outset, it is clear that *Hell* engages with Blake because what Blake means by imagination is difficult, in the way that ecophilosophy is difficult, undoing "the Ratio" (E 3) or the modern optics that circumscribes ecosophical or haptic attention. Scarcely using the word imagination, *Hell* opens imagination's doors in the "infernal or diabolical sense" (E 44), as a mode not of mere problem-solving or pastiche but of attention. In this haptic sense, imagination is the permeable perception that the earthly is the divine, the spiritual is the ecological, and "every thing that lives is Holy" (E 45).

3 An Oxford-trained Romanticist, Morton has helped awaken environmentalism from its dogmatic slumbers with works such as *The Ecological Thought* (2010) and *Hyperobjects* (2013). Written "in the form of a violently beautiful conversion" (244n18), *Hell* arrives as a more personal testament. Its hyperpersonal tenor generates "affect … a transpersonal vibe-like thing" (121) in response to the reality that we are madly, frenetically working against ourselves as we careen toward three-plus degrees Celsius by the mid-twenty-first century. Like Los carrying a "red Globe of fire," "putting on his golden sandals," and entering the "Door of Death for Albions sake Inspired" (E 244, 242, 144), Morton steps into the fiery milieu of *Marriage* to write about our ecological hell. Although *Hell* makes only indirect reference to it, Blake's famed design of Los entering the caverns of the grave offers a curiously fitting image for what it feels like to read a book that ventures where mainstream environmental discourse does not go: a radically ecosophical descent into accident, mutation, anomaly, and miracle.[1]

1. *Hell* seems to allude to the image in the context of an invitation into the phenomenological "*feel*" of the "not-yet subjunctivity shimmering in the very realness of the real" (xxix): "A primordial uncertainty, a lovely hiddenness, a 'selva oscura' (Dante), a gate to a secret garden slightly open, stairs down into the darkness of a beautiful under-

4 Admirers of the decentering critical streak in Morton's dark ecology may be dismayed by *Hell*'s evangelical direction, but the emphasis on the awareness of strange entanglement ("the ecological thought") remains sharp. Embracing indeterminacy and comedy, they eschew tired words like nature and imagination for the "*feel*" (xxix) of life as the "possibility of abortion," the "pulsation" of a "miraculous stupidity" or "basic peristaltic wave" of "*thumos*" with "nothing 'underneath'" (151-52). The point is not to know, with Einstein, but to not know, with Bohr. Mutation and symbiosis may be how the world weaves itself, "but actualizing this truth must be a perpetual act of decolonial, liberating love" (183).

5 In that sense, *Hell*'s Christian ecology could well adopt Blake's motto "the Eye altering alters all" (E 485). Morton emphasizes that this alteration is not about tearing away, but about taking the risk of being open and attentive to indeterminate aesthetic interrelations. Its mode is tenderness or "mercy" (xviii), which releases us from a vision of life as the "endless wheels within wheels of revenge" (110). Indeed, the immediate context for *Hell*'s reconnection with the works of Blake is Morton's own unexpected bodily experience, after decades as a Buddhist, of receiving a "massive … dose" (228) of Christian mercy, felt as "snakes of golden energy" (244n18). Yet their reasons for taking dark ecology into Christian ecology, via Blake, are more practical than esoteric and evangelical. What may look like a sales pitch to the cult of personality proves to be a brilliant exploration of Blake's relevance to the climate emergency.

6 Blake appears as a kind of psychopomp, our guide in a descent that inverts transcendentalism and flips Gnosticism, emphasizing imagination as an active, affective force that can break open the tacit modern sense of deterministic entrapment in the ecosphere.[2] An underlying "liberation phenomenology" (l), flowing more from poiesis than formal logic, leads Morton to connect Blake with Martin Luther King, offering a vision of climate action as the courage to open the possibility of imagining together a future without fossil fuels: "'I have a dream' gave everyone a stunning 'reason to buy' antiracism. One bought it as soon as one did the thing that the phrase makes one do—open one's mind to the future" (xxix). In this sense, *Hell* is not another book intended to compel the reader to feel the closing grip of climate doom, but one that dwells in possibility: "Right here and now, one can sense the affective power, the surging sonority, the outrageous poetry, of *I have a dream*" (210). Morton is not only interested in the increasingly common comparisons of our ecological reality to hell; they insist that the subtitle, "In Search of a Christian Ecology," is as important as the title.

7 *Hell* is, in these respects, a deeply Romantic book. A model of poiesis as counterepistemological medicine is central to Morton's notion of a "Christian ecology." The point is less to critique Romantic "aesthetic ideology" (Eagleton) than to register how the live aesthetic current facilitates a shift to a universe that feels entangled rather than pure, intimately open ended rather than deterministic. They repeatedly offer the book as the "Blue Pill," not the "Red Pill" (10). In this view, Blake's rejection of "nature,"[3] like his rejection of "Bad Art" (E 565), is not an expression of puritanical recalcitrance but an affirmation of more-than-materialist modes of attention. As Morton might put it, Blake flips the modern idea of nature because it is intensely anti-ecological. An aim, then, of their disarming Blakean style is to convert evangelism from "transphobia, misogyny, white supremacy" to an embrace of love and art: "I can't help talking about it. … It's called Gospel. … I feel like dancing" (226). *Hell* draws on Blake to invite daring rethinking of the role that Christianity can play in a landscape where liberated love and art have been demonized as threats to the nation.

8 Morton is perhaps the first Blake scholar to all but invite us to come and pet the "plushy Tyger" (85). Part of this call to play is also an uncomfortable invitation into their personal life. Their decision to say "What the hell" and lay it all bare might be greeted as a catastrophe for dark ecology—a capitulation to salvationism and the caving in of a critical thinker to climate anxiety. Their epiphany can easily be read as a nervous breakdown. Yet Blake too was suspected by his contemporaries of being someone whose tendency to care too much—"sweetness of … countenance" and "gentility of … manner" (Crabb Robinson)—was the corollary of a presumed excitability or nervous instability.[4] Today one is more likely to link his enthusiasm to his remarkable ability to transmit haptic insights. By anchoring *Hell* in Blake, a "sacred, blazing artist of liberation" (45), Morton not only gives us a context for understanding their intensely personal approach but also deepens the grounding of dark ecology in art rather than intellectual trends. If Alfred

world" (210). Imagination, in this context, is haptic; it depends on an active effort to pay attention in ways that precede and exceed the optic, "melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid" (E 39).

2. In *Crossing the Threshold: Etheric Imagination in the Post-Kantian Process Philosophy of Schelling and Whitehead* (Olympia, WA: Revelore Press, 2023), Matthew David Segall likewise links imagination to an active force and "descendental aesthetic ontology" that can heal the rift that Kant, and modernity, opened between cognition and reality.

3. "I fear Wordsworth loves Nature" (as reported by Crabb Robinson; see G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records*, 2nd ed. [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004] 429).

4. See Bentley, *Blake Records*, 2nd ed., 698.

North Whitehead's assessment of the Romantics is of any relevance, then the "testimony of great poets" endures precisely because it replies to optic abstractions with haptic aesthetics, expressing "deep intuitions of mankind penetrating into what is universal in concrete fact."[5]

9 *Marriage*, in particular, is vital to Morton's efforts to draw on the enduring haptic intuition that the ecological is "sacred," but not in the usual optic (anthropocentric, colonizing) transcendental or teleological ways:

> In Blake's Hell, the sacred comes down off a high horse, a "horse of instruction" …. After a very messy divorce, the sacred is getting hitched again to the biosphere it comes out of. … The human form grew out of the biosphere: a beauteous, disturbing, blissful thing made of lifeforms messily and incompletely glued together without rhyme or reason, without a telos. (41)

Using the word sacred in its heretical sense, explaining that it "feels wrong, but … it's at least a quality or a feeling or a feel" (1-2), they link it to the feel of the biosphere, and, further, to their phenomenological feeling that the "biosphere is the body of Christ" (liii):

> The sacred is the feel of biology, its *phenomenology*. By "feel" (and by "phenomenology") I absolutely do not mean "subjective experience of," and in particular I absolutely do not mean "human subjective experience of." … The basic slogan of phenomenology is, "The *how* is the *what*." (4)

Maintaining that "Blake understood that the sacred belongs to the body" (31), they emphasize immanence or "*subscendence*" (112) rather than transcendence: "What is best about the sacred is its immanence to the physical world, and what is worst about religion are its horrified and violent attempts to achieve escape velocity from this immanence" (44-45).

10 In rethinking the sacred as the ecological, *Hell* engages in the distinctly Blakean strategy of inviting us, with compassion and humor, to look at the "deadly terrors" (E 25) of modern optics. In Blake's work, these terrors are on awful display, from the hammering doubts of the speaker in "The Tyger" to the hoary anguish of manacled Urizen. Yet, as the infernal narrator tells the officious Angel in *Marriage*, "All that we saw was owing to your metaphysics … & it is but lost time to converse with you whose works are only Analytics" (E 42). Contemporary speculative thinker Isabelle Stengers might be writing about Blake when (discussing the relevance of Whitehead's haptic metaphysics for our "times of collapse") she pinpoints the germ of ecocide and suicide implicit in what Blake might call modern epistemic "doubt" (E 142):

> His [Whitehead's] call is: "We are children of the universe." We have become so accustomed to thinking that the universe is indifferent to what makes us thrill that we recognize any thesis whatsoever as "undoubtedly objective" so long as it has the allure of a "truth that hurts," a truth translatable into the defeat of commonsense.[6]

11 Throughout *Hell*, Blake appears as a "Glad Day" figure—that is, not as an apocalyptic one but as a counterepistemological one, radiating the joy that comes with undoing epistemic and perceptual regimes, or with relaxing the optic circumscription of the haptic. In that sense, Morton contributes to an ongoing intervention into Blake studies. Northrop Frye cast Blake as an apocalyptic visionary who, like Jesus, met with trials and consolidated the "whole body of error in his society into a resolve to destroy him,"[7] yet numerous scholars after Frye (including Steven Goldsmith, Mark Lussier, and Peter Otto) have qualified this assessment, emphasizing Blake's counterapocalypse: a moment of attention that, rather than announcing a pure discourse at the end of historical time, opens into the promiscuous event.[8]

12 One of the great appeals of Morton's dark ecology has been its ability to disrupt essentialist (protofascist) notions of the "sacred" and "natural." In *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (2009), they insist on critical theory as an antidote to ecocriticism's "petty, small-mind-

5. Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (1925; New York: Free Press, 1967) 122.

6. Isabelle Stengers, *Making Sense in Common: A Reading of Whitehead in Times of Collapse*, trans. Thomas Lamarre (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2023) 32.

7. Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947) 403.

8. Arguably, this liberation occurs in the world and not in the text of *Jerusalem*, despite its initial call to expand the senses into the awareness that "I am in you and you in me, mutual in love divine" (E 146) and its marvelously condensed concluding lines:

> All Human Forms identified even Tree Metal Earth & Stone. all
> Human Forms identified, living going forth & returning wearied
> Into the Planetary lives of Years Months Days & Hours reposing
> And then Awaking into his Bosom in the Life of Immortality.
> (E 258)

That conveying the event of ecological attention is exceedingly difficult is evidenced as much in the lucid yet elusive philosophical recursions of *Hell* as in Blake's intimation that all things are "Human Forms" going forth and returning into "Planetary lives." Morton's use of the word "biosphere" resonates, at least, with Blake's word "Bosom," a kind of virtual fold of infinite interrelation.

ed, anti-'theory' vibe" (*Hell* xxxvi). *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence* (2018) pushes even further, suggesting that ecological awareness and ecological phenomenon share the form of a Möbius strip: our coexistence with nonhumans, which looks like a tragedy, may flip into a comedy. In *Hell,* the most wild and unexpected part of the comedy, "where someone cries just after they smile as they notice the other guy is their long-lost brother" (9), turns out to be Morton's sudden recognition that Jesus is the biosphere:

> I had a weird experience while serving vegan meatballs to my son Simon (fourteen). I palpably "saw" that my whole life had been a prodigal-son-style cosmic joke. It was as if I had made my way around a thirty-seven-year-long Moebius strip. I thought I had been transcending Christianity in the most decisive ways possible, only to find that the last thirty-seven years had been training me to receive a massive (I mean, *massive*) dose of it. (228)

In *Hell*, there is certainly the sense that a massive joke is being played, with the cry of "Holy Holy Holy" (E 566) even as "Earth is burning, as if becoming Hell" (xxviii), but humor is its vital strategy to shake up the ponderous and violent "ontotheology" of "beautiful soul[s]" (32, 7).

13 Arguably, *Hell* focuses on *Marriage* and *Songs* because the satirical, playful Blake of the revolutionary 1790s offers expedient antidotes to our climate doomism, even if, in the Blake of later texts too, the full-blown visions of the "mighty Polypus growing / From Albion over the whole Earth" (E 159) or "the Great Red Dragon with Seven heads & ten Horns" (E 558) prove puffs of air. "Error" is "Burnt up the Moment Men cease to behold it" (E 565). Climate doom fails to recognize that the apocalyptic image of the "green & purple" streaked Leviathan rushing "toward us with all the fury of a spiritual existence" is one of the "reptiles of the mind" (E 41-42). In *Songs* and *Marriage*, the whole game is to laugh at the ecocidal ego:

> Charlie Chaplin declared that tragedy is about close-ups, whereas the wide shot is comedic: tragedy is a small distorted region of comedy space. … I want a biodiversity of emotional responses to our plight; that we see our plight not as some tragic destiny of the human race but as the necessarily awful part of a comedy when actual violence might break out. Wouldn't it be great if global warming gave us the chance to see that humans are interrelated and that humans are interrelated with nonhumans? That being the Devil's body parts isn't so bad? (65)

When the monstrous reptile of the mind vanishes, the biosphere appears (in haptic, intensive form) as the "Divine Body of the Lord Jesus" or the "Imagination" (E 148), and seeing this leads to relationship, not sanctimony:

> If there's no way out of Hell, because every way out drills me down further into it, because I am a physical being, then there's less than no point trying to scorch my way out. I might (as well) get on with it. Do my best to be kind. Smile. (70)

In brief, Morton emphasizes the lighter sides of Blake's Christian wrath. Their sensibility remains that of a DJ, remixing speculative realism and poststructuralism as salutary acid tabs. Like the "plushy" image and "willful misspelling" (85, 192) that belie "The Tyger," their wrath is meant to melt the cold secular rationality of the horses of instruction.

14 Through their relentlessly playful emphasis on wrath as rhythm or haptics, Morton makes *Marriage* and *Songs* as relevant to our times of collapse as to our times of EDM festivals:

> Palpitating in Greek is *thumos*, which we hear in the last syllable of *rhythm*. (The *rhy* comes from *rhein*, "to flow," as in body fluids.) This is the "life" that Blake means when he writes "every thing that lives is holy." Everything that palpitates is holy. Everything means … everything. (149)

Hell is their way of stepping out as the fool, less climate crusader than scandalous lover of the biosphere, a naked young rainbow figure:

> One of my favorite Blakes is *Glad Day* …. A good alternative title would be *Vitruvian Man Goes to the Disco*. … *Glad Day* is Vitruvian Man stepping out of the square and the circle, putting his best foot forward. He's gotten on the good foot and there's rainbow light exploding behind him. *Glad Day* is the visual equivalent of "The Divine Image" with its line "Love, the human form divine" …. The human form—the human body, part of the biosphere. (63-64)

With lucid contemporary references, they make Blake's counterapocalypse relevant to our moment.

15 In short, Morton offers brilliant insights into the Blakean links between wrath, enjoyment, and imaginative energy. Speculative metaphysics clarifies these links. For Blake, as for Whitehead, "enjoyment" is wild in the sense that it is more primary to experience, and to the universe, than consciousness: "The term 'enjoyment' refers to the fact that what is felt is an element contributory to the real internal constitution of its subject."[9] Arguably, enjoyment is essen-

9. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, corrected ed., ed. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press, 1978) 220.

tial to what Blake means by imagination: the etho-ecological intensity that escapes the "Watch Fiends" (E 136) of mechanical time. Wrath is the release of aesthetic enjoyment. In a vivid passage, Morton hints that the key to shifting from an ecocidal to a multispecies Christianity is to intensify the aesthetic, not vaporize it. A growing problem with grim climate discourses is the tendency, in the name of stark realism, to subordinate imagination (which opens into new narratives, the future) to the logic and arithmetic of the past:

> How to see global warming as part of the human drama, not as the end of it? How to rebuild the play when there is a fourth wall collapse, and when this collapse coincides with the actual theater on fire? When being on fire is what causes this collapse, what happens? The play was shit. We need another play. (220)

16 Against moralistic, abstract climate ethics, Morton emphasizes the aesthetic. Ethics is "about being a body" (14) with "sensual enjoyment." Blake's tygers of wrath set loose a joyous haptics that dissolves the optic circumscription that makes the world appear "finite & corrupt" (E 39):

> It makes one think about "wrath." That's the chemical composition of these tigers. Wrath is not destructive anger that is acted out in the master-slave duality. … Wrath is wise because it creates in the form of acknowledgment. Seeing slavery for what it is, really seeing it, not slavishly, and not masterfully, would be seeing with the burning eyes of the tyger in the distant deeps or skies of the imagination. (107)

Hell picks out Blake's deeply spiritual theme: friendship. What seems so simple, coexistence, requires an altering of the eye, a shift from optic (frozen) to haptic (flowing) attention. Yet we are "*angelic demons*" (42). Self-centered optics is our default mode. To see that is, itself, to melt the freeze: "Friendship cannot exist without Forgiveness of Sins continually" (E 201).

17 Where the didactic horses of instruction have failed, Morton's act of friendship is to risk writing with passion to spark "the shared transpersonal rush that would actually motivate people to get out of bed thinking that ending fossil fuels was … exciting, even sexy" (xxviii). They choose, likewise, to focus on exciting—even sexy—poems, such as "The Tyger," a song of experience that asks devastating irresolvable questions. For them, the poem is, more than a work of art, a work of wrath or living creature. To many, it may seem to have lost its claws, but Morton's reading makes playing with "The Tyger" exhilarating precisely because its claws are bright and sharp, highlighting Blake's use of ambiguity to unsettle binary optics:

> Conceptual rigidity is the enemy. Ambiguity is how to defeat it. "The Tyger" hinges around the ambiguous border between person (wise) and machine (idiot)—there's no way to decide whether the singer and the tyger are either of these. (68)

What is the tyger's symmetry, which optics finds fearful, other than ecopoiesis? "I can never be sure that I am done with it. That damn tyger is still burning bright somewhere. It is as if Blake had created life" (198-99). Marvelous resonances bounce between Morton's reading and their point that the ecological cannot be tamed: "I *am* the tyger. Don't frame my symmetry, baby" (198).

18 From start to end, *Hell* throws Blakean wrenches into the mills that might domesticate ecological literary criticism or constrain it to the merely formal or impersonal. This argument for wrath, as the tyger's play, bookends *Hell* and is vibrantly expressed in its exordium and in its closing pages. Profoundly personal, the exordium opens with a vigorous rejection of the conversion of "And did those feet" into a patriotic anthem: "I never did understand that poem. But I always understood the hymn … only too well." In response to the questions of whether Christ's merciful countenance shone forth, and whether Jerusalem was built, in England, Morton answers, unequivocally, "No, it didn't. No it wasn't" (xvii). But, in response to the call to build Jerusalem, they reply, "Yes, we can. We will" (xviii). With this radical affirmation, they recline, like Albion on the analyst's couch (E 114), and deliver a free associative account of the dark ecologist as a young man, recounting the traumas of sexual abuse, poverty, and patriotic education alongside the lifelines provided by DJ David Dorrell's LOVE Records, acid house, and Blake. Their recollections of being saved by LSD, MDMA, and raves are as important to *Hell* as their recollections of finding refuge "almost every week from the ages of thirteen to eighteen" in room 7 of the Tate Gallery, "a smoked glass paradise in the middle of the ground floor, where the Blake paintings were" (45). Toward the end of the book, Morton once again addresses their refusal to be framed, or to allow professional embarrassment to inhibit their coming out as "born again":

> Conversion? *Being born again*? I like the latter. It has the right kind of absurd, abject, embarrassingly-worst-thing-that-could-possibly-have-happened-to-me, definitely-not-a-professor-thing vibe: why I trust it. (225)

As if Morton had not already taken enough risks, they press on, sharing intimate details of the "flowing and rippling" sensations of their ecotheological awakening. Far from riding these currents above the world, they ride them deeper into the world, taking them as prehensions of a "future future":

> It's really quite obvious, isn't it? The past sucked. Just look around you. So we had better make a future world. Jesus is all about the future being better than the past. … That's what mercy and forgiveness mean. Trust me, I have only just learned that, after fifty years of unforgiving revenge. (xviii)

Consciously written "with" Blake (45), *Hell* is daring on many levels. Its move closer to the "feel" of a different ecological future is also a move closer to the feeling of Blake's friendship, at a time when we need it most.

R E V I E W

Joshua Schouten de Jel. *William Blake's Divine Love: Visions of Oothoon*. New York: Routledge, 2024. 290 pp. $180.00/£135.00, hardcover; $56.99/£42.99, e-book.

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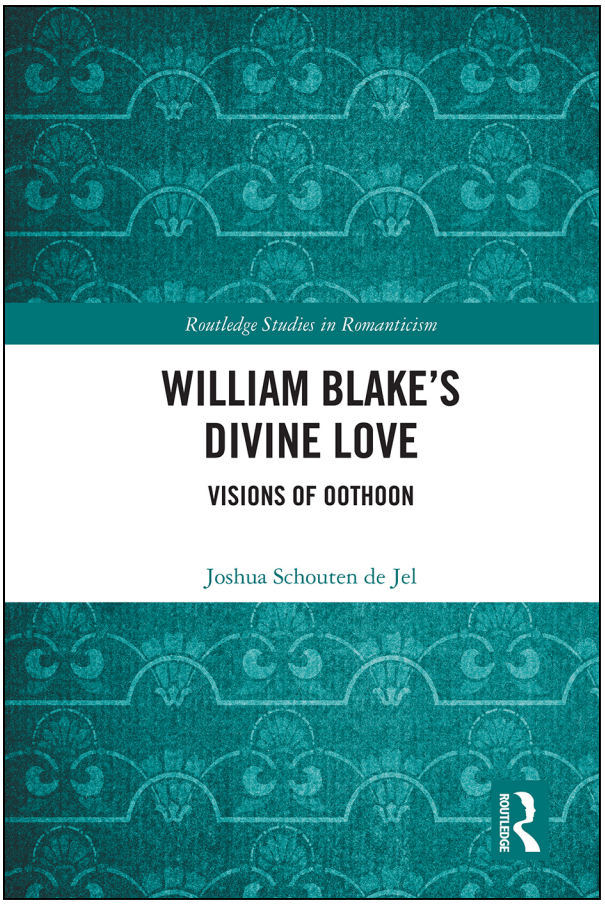

1 WITH its stunning frontispiece, shocking themes—even for our time, let alone Blake's—of sexuality, rape, and possession, and its erotic imagery and provocative advocacy of free love through one of Blake's most interesting heroines, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* is an outstanding and controversial poem. Critics such as Josephine McQuail, Irene Tayler, and Kathryn Freeman celebrate Oothoon's feminism as triumphant as she manages to refuse being branded a harlot by the patriarchal morality. Others—such as Lucy Cogan, V. A. De Luca, Brenda Webster, Michelle Leigh Gompf, and, most notably, Helen Bruder—claim that her short-lived sexual freedom is a failure; they contend that despite her revelation, her inability to make her triumph over Urizenic reasoning heard by the male characters of the poem makes her a tragic heroine whose initial achievement deteriorates into patriarchal standards. Joshua Schouten de Jel's book is an extensive study of *Visions* that celebrates and defends Oothoon's transcendent acceptance of free love as visionary and argues further that even when her words fall on deaf ears, the significance of her visionary attitude is not diminished.

2 In this very detailed and well-researched work, Schouten de Jel analyzes Oothoon's spiritual transformation as an expression of divine love through self-annihilation. Against claims that reduce her sexual liberation to "merely an expansion of senses" (4, quoting Gompf), he asserts that "by reclaiming her body, Oothoon attains a prophetic power that undermines the patriarchal injunctions of her former existence" (5). His well-articulated argument is supported by extensive research of the literature not only on *Visions* and Blake, but also on the expression of divine love through different media.

3 The introductory first chapter provides an outline of the book and delineates the scope of the research. The main argument here is a compelling one: "Blakean salvation is an intellectual recovery of the whole man as a body of vision, which includes the restoration of man's sexual being as a prolific emanative force" (16). Accordingly, Schouten de Jel considers Oothoon's self-annihilation not as a defeat,[1] but as a triumphant spiritual exaltation that places her "within a female-centred ecstatic tradition in European painting, sculpture, and literature" (6). He carefully draws parallels between Blake's designs and representations of this tradition. The consideration of Oothoon's self-annihilation is not only based on the verbal component of the poem; the pictorial component is thoroughly analyzed too.

4 The second chapter, "'The Nakedness of Women Is the Work of God,'" focuses mainly on discussions concerning

1. He gives a detailed exegesis of the scholarly debate in his notes (27-28).

nakedness in art. Unlike those with more orthodox tendencies, Blake believed nakedness to be a celebration of the Human Form Divine. As Schouten de Jel asserts, "Blake's artwork was an expression of spiritual truth and the naked body could be manoeuvred as a semiotic vehicle for telling this truth" (42). He deftly engages with discussions of the erotic nature of the depictions of Oothoon, and argues strongly against claims that "Blake uses rhetoric to mask 'aggressive or selfish … sexual fantasies'" (53, quoting Webster). He maintains that by focusing not on the pornographic but on the transformative nature of the sexual act, Blake highlights the significance of sensual gratification of desire for spiritual enlightenment. With a well-rounded argument and a very clear outline, the chapter concludes that "these scenes imbue the biological body with the potential for spiritual transformation and thus map the socio-somatic revolutionary flames of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790–3) onto Oothoon's narrative of sexual liberation" (53).

5 Chapter 3, "The Tityus Tradition after Michaelangelo," contains the strongest and most original argument of the book. Since Blake believed Michelangelo to be one of the masters of true art, along with Raphael and Albrecht Dürer, Michelangelo's influence on Blake's art cannot be ignored. Schouten de Jel draws parallels between Michelangelo's Tityus drawing and Blake's depiction of Oothoon, especially on plate 6, claiming that "such a model transposed a 'core artistic vocabulary' which imbues Oothoon's self-annihilation in *Visions* with eschatological signification" (95, quoting Edina Adam and Julian Brooks). He believes that the Tityus drawing is a representation of "not the weakness but the fortitude of the spirit facing adversity" (104), since Michelangelo drew not the gory moment of punishment but right before it, thus focusing on the wholeness of the body as Tityus unwaveringly accepts his punishment. After delineating the significance of Blake's drawing, comparing it to other renditions of the myth both pictorially and in literature, he claims that "Blake, by feminising Tityus … as the rape victim Oothoon, meaningfully reinvigorates the iconography of Tityus (and Christ) so that somatic suffering becomes not the punishment for sensuality but a spiritual redemption from those urges" (95). The discussion turns the perspective toward the moral and sociosomatic dimensions of rape by highlighting the social and political structures that tolerate it.

6 Chapter 4, "Divine Love: The Transverberation," places Oothoon within the European female mystic tradition. Concentrating especially on Teresa of Ávila's idea of transverberation, Schouten de Jel claims that Oothoon's self-annihilation "draws upon the violence of divine love (such as the pleasurable pain of the transverberation), the social abandonment of those female mystics who give themselves to divine love, and the eroticised language of divine love as it was communicated through the *Song of Songs*" (174). The fourth section of the chapter focuses on the theatricality of Oothoon's experience, and is the most striking part. Highlighting the performativity of the images and lines to direct the reader's gaze to form a controlled narrative, Schouten de Jel contends that "theatricality becomes a mode of revelation … [employed to] explain to us … spiritual meaning by offering us ways of seeing, visioning, the poetic action" (189-90).

7 The final chapter, "*L'Estasi di Santa Teresa*," introduces unique and really interesting ideas of spectatorship, voyeurism, and *jouissance*; however, most of these intriguing ideas are quickly glossed over, with the result that they fail to deliver the expected effect. Schouten de Jel here recapitulates most of the arguments of the other chapters and loses the promise of the questions posed. This also leads the book to end abruptly, without a conclusion that wraps up the argument as a whole. Despite this shortcoming, the chapter still offers exceptional questions relevant to discussions of Oothoon's transformative revelation.

8 Overall, *William Blake's Divine Love* offers a potentially significant argument; however, it fails to fully realize that potential, perhaps because of too many questions that surpass the scope of the book. Schouten de Jel shows that he excels at his field, but his ambitious agenda sometimes hinders his otherwise excellent research. Nevertheless, with its unique perspective on *Visions* and clear arguments, the book is a significant addition to scholarship on sexual freedom and emancipation in terms of Blake's ideas of free love and sexuality and on Blake's attitude toward women.