William Blake

by a Mental Traveller.

"The Road of Excess, said William Blake,
To the Palace of Wisdom leads one.
Open a bottle, for Wisdom's sake!
— And I am the boy that needs one!
It's the only horrible step to take —
Open a bottle for Mister Blake!"

Verily, Omar Khayyam was not the last, nor
Aleofribas Nasier the last, of the
Angelical Doctors of the Theology and Schools of Rhetoric.
The Word of the Oracle was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be, this very most
arcane monosyllable of the Adepts: TRINC.

For Rimbaud is he whose ~~father~~ sire is Zeus made manifest to Earth in the form of golden rain from Heaven; and the child, threatened by the malice of Respectability, conceals himself ~~with his~~ beneath the paternal purple, within that hollow reed wherein Prometheus brought down Fire from Olympus. This reed is ~~which~~ also that of Pan; and it is Aaron's Rod that budded, the Sacred Lance of Parzival, ~~and~~ the Sword that pruned the vine of John the Baptist, filling the chalice offered with his perfumed and prophetic blood.

It is Charles Baudelaire who says us: "One must be always drunk", adding this scholion, that the means of intoxication may be ~~drink~~ absinthe for one and music

for another. Each man must discover for himself the method most suitable in his own case whereby he may attain to cry "It is finished", so that the Veil of the Temple may be rent from the top to the bottom. — Hark! this is the moment of the death of the Man — Ecce to his earthly life, the birth of the God-Man to Life immortal. Destroy this temple, and within three days I will raise it up — a Temple not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens!

Because "Everything that lives is holy", because the Mystery of Ungodliness consists simply in the fact that there is a mystery at all before the face of Truth; therefore a "genius" may be defined as one who is able to express the genius — the Daimon of Socrates, the Angoeides, Adi-Buddha, the

"Holy Guardian Angel" of a Man – which is in him. "I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star" It is theoretically possible for all of us to split the valve of our muddy, weed-covered, calcareous husk, and reveal the Pearl of Great Price which we secrete. ~~Our~~ The common failure of mankind to do so is due to the fear of exposing to destruction that slimy succulent life of humanity which we foolishly seek to preserve, forgetting that Death the Oysterman will surely wedge his steel in our shell, that the harlot Babylon on whose forehead is written "Mystery", may devour us!

In this cause, when first the Candidate for initiation is restored to sight for a moment, his eyesight tells him of a dreadful God, sable and scarlet; and, ~~his hearing~~ thunder to that lurid, he hears the words of one: "Fear is failure, and the forerunner of failure: be there therefore without fear, for in the heart of the coward Virtue abideth not. Pass thou on!" Instantly the hoodwinks is replaced; instantly silence swoops like an hawk upon a sparrow; instantly he is dragged fiercely forward through the voiceless darkness — ——

It is not given to many of the sons of

men to tear the bandage from their brows with ruthless rage, demanding to face the Reality of the Universe, even should they have succeeded in striking the fetters from their hands and feet. ~~[illegible]~~ Few know, will, dare to face an Oracle from the Silence, even though the Speech of the Sphinx be their ~~sole~~ one Word of Power ~~[illegible]~~ ~~Salvation~~ to avail them in their souls' sore need. Yet the Vision ~~is~~ shows always ~~Self~~, and the Voice says always: TRINC.

Some there are who achieve ~~the natural~~ 'genius', ~~as opposed to him~~ A man there may be who hath mastered his own Nothing, ~~and~~ hath smitten on the Queen of Nothing, and with his own right arm hath rotten himself the

victory, ~~[illegible]~~ passing through Lohis' fires to the Virgin Valhagne of the World, his own immaculate Soul + [But the natural 'genius' is one in whom that fatuous circle is ~~[illegible]~~ congenitally apparent as phantasmal, and ~~[illegible]~~ by whom it is more or less, Easily dissoluble ~~by~~ at the will of either party.

The Universe being a coherent whole, each ~~any~~ item thereof is equal and opposite to the sum of the remainder. The corollary is obvious: "Every number is infinite; there is no difference." So also: "Every man and every woman is a star."

~~The~~ Anglo Saxon hypocrisy has claimed

which ~~it would be~~ only the most deplorable lack of taste would care to criticise; but Irishmen are notoriously defective in the sense of proprietry. They have abused their privileges, in the ~~extreme~~ ~~case~~ present case, by observing that the astronomical conditions which ~~refrain~~ support the Equilibrium of the Solar System ~~are~~ helped to counteract the illuminating fact – the devastating fact – that William Blake was an O'Neil. The artist's ~~incorrigible~~ curious devotion to places with such names as Felpham, and his attempted identification of London with Jerusalem – a task nobly seconded and ably executed in later days ~~and~~ on different lines – ~~point~~ mark still more indelibleably the Celtic

Lit Nationalism

face of him. ~~to that~~ The soul of Erie is visible ~~lies~~ only in those eyes like coals of fire of the Most High, and her voice in the melancholy yet an raptured melody of that mystical mouth, that vivid, that virginal vessel of Music!

It is not the traditional Catholic Ecstasy of the Isle of the Saints that enchants his pulse, but the almost mechanical rhapsodies of a Teutonic-Scandinavian visionary, ~~It is not the~~ which form the intellectual laws of his manifestation in Art.

~~But~~ He is nevertheless the ~~very~~ most authentically Gaelic spirit in history, the more essentially so, it may be, for the

very reason that it is emancipated so completely from the formal warrants of the ethnology; the absence of racial stigmata guarantees the nominal validity no less of its creative wisdom than of its transmissive innocence.

Like all true artists, William O'Neil is a Pantheist. To him the Holy Ghost is immanent in the All, equally in its every part. We find him therefore a partisan of the legendary Jesus who rebuked the exclusiveness and restrictions of the Pharisees, and of the Miltonic Satan who fulminates against the same qualities as they appear in Christianity.

He is, in brief, the Master of the Temple who is vowed to understand ~~all things~~, to love, ~~all things~~ to control, and to harmonize all things; ~~and~~ finally, "to interpret every phenomenon as a particular dealing of God with his soul." His only opponents are the "Brothers of the Left-Hand Path", that is, the representatives of the spirit that resists change, defies "love under will", and endeavours to shut itself out from the operation of the universal flux; that seeks to make "a difference between any one thing and any other thing", whereby "comes hunt". (How admirable the choice

of this word "hunt", from "heurter", to jostle!) That is the only evil, the only illusion; the conflict and division between any two things which refuse to recognize their identity, ~~and~~ to assert it ~~by~~ and enjoy it by means of "love under will".

The comprehension of this attitude, in its unchecked certainty as it was in him, is the Master-Key to his Art. He has been neglected abominably for his merits, and praised undiscriminatingly for his defects. Neither Swinburne nor Yeats, still less the clowns of cabbalistic critics which have beset him in this

present century, ~~have~~ have been capable of the Master's simplicity; or, receiving it from Pisgah, have been content ~~with~~ to leave it as it is. Yet all his serious poems ~~have been~~ are variations on this Theme, and all his symbolic pictures hieroglyphs of this Arcanum!

Whether he is with the burning Tyger in the forests of the night, in the Crystal Cabinet, or with Satan-Jesus in the Porch of Pythagoras, his sublimely simple Experience is the Identity of Contraries.

In time, from the beginning, the barrier between the conscious and unconscious is almost too tenuous, for the surge of the latter

washes over into the former so, ~~easily~~ mystifyingly that the intellectual machinery of this mind was never brought to perfection. His natural tendency to skepticism saves him indeed from the serfdom of mere sectarianism in its more fatal forms, but there are times when we cannot but feel irritated at his insistence on a symbolism which ~~but~~ does not possess, even, like that of the Hebrew Qabalah, a traditional ~~means~~ or instrument of interpretation. It may well be, of course, that the abominable crime of the dastard who destroyed the bulk of O'Neil's manuscripts was successful to the extent of depriving us of some general key to his formal modes of thought.

We are aware indeed that the Tree of life in the Cloakmale Nesettmale ~~formed~~ framed the ~~plan~~ code of his ~~mind~~ thought in some respects, that the ideas of Emanuel Swedenborg dominated his early development, and that the full fruit of his genius was informed by the Sun of the Fraternity A∴ A∴ although the secrecy to which he was pledged by that Holy Order forbade him to employ its symbols openly or even organically. There is also the influence of the more mystical sections of the Bible, interpreted sceptically and diabolically. This method is decidedly untidy and dangerous, owing to the absence of any philosophical unity in the diverse books of

that heterogeneous encyclopaedia of unscientific material.

The spontaneity of O'Neill's genius is thus, for ourselves, his most serious defect. It is necessary to build the Temple of Intellect with extreme accuracy before it is safe to invoke the Holy Spirit to indwell its sanctuary.

What then is the supreme significance of the work of the Master? It is, to speak plainly, absurd to pretend that his existing remains are in themselves so super-excellent and unique either for matter or for form. They are unfinished on the one hand,

and in minis on the other. Many of his ideas are totally unintelligible to us; others appear mere fads. There is no single masterpiece to which we can point as supremely perfect, as satisfying any of our deepest instincts to the uttermost. It is the existence of the man himself which compels us. For he is "a man of like passions as we are", exercising his arts with abundant ability. Yet his subject-matter is not the kinship of the common tailless primate, chief of the mammals and placental amniotes.

and in minus on the other. Many of his ideas are totally unintelligible to us; others appear mere fads. There is no single masterpiece to which we can point as supremely perfect, as satisfying any of our deepest instincts to the uttermost. It is the existence of the man himself which compels us. For he is "a man of like passions as we are", exercising his art with abundant ability. Yet his subject-matter is not the kinship of the common tailless primate, chief of the mammals and placental amniotes.

and in minus on the other. Many of his ideas are totally unintelligible to us; others appear mere fads. There is no single masterpiece to which we can point as supremely perfect, as satisfying any of our deepest instincts to the uttermost. It is the existence of the man himself which compels us. For he is "a man of like passions as we are", exercising his arts with abundant ability. Yet his subject-matter is not the kinship of the common tailless primate, chief of the mammals and placental amniotes.

His Reality is that of the philosopher, but it is an object of direct sense-perception. Instead of proclaiming the actuality of the ~~immaterial~~ 'invisible world', and proving it by syllogisms, he relies upon the direct appeal to sense: "I see it". ~~If~~ The man who does not 'believe in ~~angels~~ fairies' is not an unphilosophical man, but a man with cataract. ~~Wheatley~~ Varley tells us that O'Neil, asked to sketch Edward III or some such historical character, "as he exists in the other world", ought have to wait for the model to take the pose. Once, when he was drawing Corinna the Pictum, CORINNA Lais of Corinth stepped in front of her and insisted on ~~being~~ her portrait being executed before ~~stepping~~ allowing the completion

of the other.[x]

Tom O'Neil is therefore rather the great man of science than the ~~poet~~ artist in ~~words~~ idea or in form. He demonstrated an extension of ~~a~~ human faculties no less than did Röntgen and ~~a~~ Bell. The objectivity of his visions, the degree of validity of his clairaudience, the interpretation of his statements from an ontological point of view: these are minor matters. What is important is the fact that he himself took all that he saw and heard au pied de la lettre without losing ~~accuracy of~~ touch with the world of the man in the street. He was not hallucinated in

[x] There seems no valid reason for withholding this as a mere matter of mental concentration or an 'imaginary form.' Hamilton's Law of Parsimony forbids this to any observers who have practical acquaintance with the Astral Plane.

Unlike this to any observers who have practical acquaintance with the Astral Plane.

of the other.[x]

Tom O'Neil is therefore rather the great man of science than the ~~fact~~ artist in ~~[illegible]~~ idea or in form. He demonstrated an extension of ~~a~~ human faculties no less than did Röntgen and ~~a~~ Bell. The objectivity of his visions, the degree of validity of his clairaudience, the interpretation of his statements from an ontological point of view: these are minor matters. What is important is the fact that he himself took all that he saw and heard au pied de la lettre without losing ~~[illegible]~~ touch with the world of the man in the street. He was not hallucinated in

x There seems no valid reason for attributing this as a mere result of mental concentration or an 'imaginary form'. Hamilton's Law of Paramnesia

of the other.*

Tom O'Neil is therefore re
great man of science than
artist in ~~ends~~ idea or in form
an extension of a human
less than did Röntgen and Bell
of his visions, the degree of va
clairaudience, the interpret
statements from an ontolo
of view: these are minor ma
important is the fact that
took all that he saw and h
de la lettre without losing
touch with the world of the
street. He was not balla

* There seems no valid reason for interpreting this as a mere matter of mental concentration or an imaginary form, Hamilton's law of Parsimony forbids this as of [illegible] who have [illegible] with the Ext

of the other.*

Tom O'Neil is therefore re
great man of science than
artist in ~~ends~~ idea or in form
an extension of a human
less than did Röntgen and Bell
of his visions, the degree of va
clairaudience, the interpret
statements from an ontolo
of view: these are minor ma
important is the fact that
took all that he saw and h
de la lettre without losing
touch with the world of the
street. He was not balla

* There seems no valid reason for interpreting this as a mere matter of mental concentration or an imaginary form, Hamilton's law of Parsimony forbids this as of [illegible] who have [illegible] with the Ext

of the other.*

Tom O'Neil is therefore rather the great man of science than the ~~poet~~ artist in ~~words~~ idea or in form. He demonstrated an extension of ~~a~~ human faculties no less than did Röntgen and Bell. The objectivity of his visions, the degree of validity of his clairaudience, the interpretation of his statements from an ontological point of view: these are minor matters. What is important is the fact that he himself took all that he saw and heard au pied de la lettre without losing ~~[illegible]~~ touch with the world of

* Forbids this to any observers who have practical acquaintance with the Astral Plane.

He seems was valid reason for withholding it as a mere matter of tail concentration or an 'inimaginable' form. Hamilton's Law of Parsimony

of the other.*

Tom O'Neil is therefore rather the great man of science than the ~~poet~~ artist in ~~words~~ idea or in form. He demonstrated an extension of ~~a~~ human faculties no less than did Röntgen and ~~a~~ Bell. The objectivity of his visions, the degree of validity of his clairaudience, the interpretation of his statements from an ontological point of view: these are minor matters. What is important is the fact that he himself took all that he saw and heard au pied de la lettre without losing ~~[illegible]~~ touch with the world of the man in the street. He was not hallucinated in

* There seems no valid reason for withholding this as a mere matter of mental constitution or an 'inner meaning' from Hamilton's Law of Paramony

Forbids this to any observers who have practical acquaintance with the Astral Plane.

the sense in which the alienist uses the word; for his 'other world', while interpenetrating that of ordinary sense-perception, did not supplant it or even distort it. ~~to the~~ His conversations with Elijah ~~the~~ did not ~~make~~ interrupt his communications with his earthly friends. He strove to discover the laws of the spiritual world, and to measure its ~~the~~ relations with the material world, as a physicist should; and the ~~superior~~ reality of ~~the~~ that did not diminish, but increase, that of this, any more than the establishment of the electromagnetic properties of steel makes it any less fit to forge into a sword.

Every new Christ demands a John Baptist; every Renaissance is preceded by its proper prophet. This prophet is commonly himself an artist — Elias Artista, as Paracelsus calls him — of pantomorphous achievement. Thus the child born at that Renaissance of French art which found ~~its~~ their tester in our own Pre-Raphaelite movement was brought into the light by that successor of Merlin, Alphonse Louis Constant, or (as he chose to translate his name) Eliphas Levi Zahed. This great, neglected, misinterpreted man was not only the most famous magician of his generation, but a writer whose prose ~~it~~ would be universally recognized as worthy ~~that~~ of Apollo

18th Centuries

Prophet – J Robt Shelley, Rev Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Wordsworth – Wm – William Gifford – Robert Burns
Keats – John – Leigh Hunt

18th Centuries

Prophet – J. Robt. of Shelley, Rev. Mr. Coleridge

Wordsworth – Wm. – Southey, Robt. – Charles

Lamb – Wm. Hazlitt, Leigh

18th Lenkung

Prophet – J Pilot [illegible]

Windsight [illegible] – [illegible] – [illegible]

Lieb [illegible]

18th Lectures

Prophet – J Robt of Shelley, Mr Coleridge

Wordsworth – sinking to old – the Lord

Lich of the dead [illegible]

18th Lent Sunday

Prophet – J Baptist – Shelley – Coleridge

Wordsworth – Keats – Sitting to old – Poetest

Lists – The dead Prophets

18th Lent Kings

Prophet – J Robt of Shelley, Rob Southey, Coleridge

Wordsworth – Sitting Cold – the Lord

hath of the deep hunted

but for the oracular darkness with which he veiled his utterance. The Israelites did not comprehend the Sinaitic glooms and splendours of Moses; they continued to adore the golden Calf; but they went forward to the Promised Land. So also Levi was a curious dramatic man, not for the sake of the work, but as a medium for his ideas. "Maker of hieroglyphics" ~~in the~~ were a better term. ~~Artists be stand to~~ But his supreme importance to us is that in saying — two generations ago! — "a fine style is an aureole of holiness" he made Baudelaire, Verlaine, Swinburne, Manet, Whistler, ~~and~~ et tout le reste possible ~~and so many others~~ in a world which had neglected manner for matter.

The Italian Renaissance had similarly its own prophets — Luther, Andrea, and Pope — précipité —

Alexander VI stood Satan-fathers to that Child. Rabelais, see more, laid down the philosophical principles which determined the destiny of Shakespeare in literature and Bacon in science. We find the ~~mysterious~~ inscrutable shadow of Maximus looming behind Julian, that of Weishaupt whispering wisdom to the revolutionary spirit which culminated in '48. Rises then, stands the terrific Titan, O'Neil, as Hierophant of those Mysteries whose Neophytes were Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron, even Wordsworth. For he came at the end of that Eighteenth Century of artificiality and arrogance which, while indeed it had ~~broken~~ ground into powder the false

gods, had left the people prone before profaned and crumbles pedestals. The Zeitgeist appears simultaneously in Protean phases to innumerable individuals, each of whom perceives but one facet. They need not know their prophet, or communicate consciously with each other, in order to fulfil the Word of the Lord. But the Pantheism of William O'Neil created the comet of Byron, the evening star of Poe, the sun of Shelley, and the moon of Keats. He is responsible equally for 'Kubla Khan' and for the 'Intimations of Immortality'; for it is he whose attitude to life made transcendentalism the formula of Art, whose magical gesture destroyed the gods of the Firmament, Thor, or Zeus, whose strength had sundered Sea and Firm

Nint. With the fall of Jehovah the heavens fell; so (did not, as the proverb tells us;) we were able to catch skylarks!

It was the Sunshine who wrote the pantheistic paean Hadda, and the antinomian atonement, the formula of 'Salvation by Sin', that discovered the Daimon Blake. It was the Poets who wrote "The Tables of the Law" and other secret books, proclaiming fearfully the Dispensation of the Holy Ghost, so fearfully that he suppressed them, that analysed the mighty seer who talked with Satan and Elijah as familiar friends. But the dull world has failed to grasp the kill of this atrocious

gathering. We have sleepily acquiesced in Blake as a craftsman in words and forms; we have underpraised him idly for the qualities that he would himself have scorned to claim, being in truth unimportant to him, and of secondary value to the world. The Unconscious surged furiously through the frail dyke of his spiritual diaphragm, and expressed itself in which are terms, for the most part utterly inadequate, incomplete, unpolished, and unintelligible. As a technician, Blake was overwhelmed by the omniscience of his omnipresence. In him the Idea was too powerful for the words; the wizard could not control the tempest evoked by his enchantments; his command of Form was shaken by the energy of his enthusiasm. There is in

fact no Work of his extant to which we can point with serene confidence, and say: Ecce Homo! What can we put against the Ode to Psyche, the Ancient Mariner, Prometheus Unbound, or even the Monk? We stultify ourselves, and blaspheme Blake, if when we emphasize his attainment as an artist. What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? a prophet, and more than a prophet. Otherwise, he is but a reed, albeit the reed of Pan, shaken by the wind, the wind of the Spirit of Pan!

There has been at no time any no time critical genius of the first rank in England; the metrical character is (Arthur Machen in "Hieroglyphics" is our first string.) fatal to its development. We must

be always praising away, and blaming apropos des bottes. As a tragedian, Shakespeare was the brain of the barnstormers of the Surrey Side; as a theologian, Milton was a superstitious pedant; yet we concur in the verdict of the 'Chorus of Camberwell Costermongers' and the 'Consistory of Cold Boiled Calvinists'!

But — Shall not the judge of the whole Earth do right? Assuredly; and his name is Perspective, graduate of the Dame's school whose presiding genius is the Muse of History. The time has come for the children of Wisdom to justify their mother: we can see the members of this Revolution-

any group in their time as best as antagonists of the stupefying influence of the 'glories' of George the Third, exactly as Swinburne and Whistler were antitoxins to the smelling-sickness of Victorian complacency. No task is more important to the philosophers than this identification of the Zeitgeist through inspection of the Coat of Many Colours which he wears; we can place the men of genius of a period as we can place the elements in the spectrum. Our analysis of the galaxy which burst out so suddenly and spontaneously

nearly a century and a half ago – though it seem to us as yesterday – nay! as yesterday, to-day, and for ever! – shows the light of William O'Neil as almost wholly in the ultra-violet. He is the highest and holiest vibration of that light; but for this very reason, he is not wholly appreciable by our optical apparatus as human beings. He operated obscure chemical changes in the soul of the epoch; we worship him when we try to assign to him definite lines in the blue, green, or orange. But without the

invisible higher vibrations there can be no manifestation of those visible lower vibrations ~~of~~ which we perceive as Art, still less of those sombre and viewless tremors beyond the red which we know only as religious and political revolution. As a reformer, in the vulgar sense of the word, ~~it is~~ we may call O'Neil negligible; as an artist, in the technical sense of the word, we may call him imperfect; but as a spiritual current of the highest potential we must call him absolute. (The 'limit velocity' is that of the Light of the Unconscious of William O'Neil which initiated)

Aleister Crowley