

Jason Whittaker

Blake and the New Jerusalem: A very English form of Modernism

Abstract

For over a century, Hubert Parry's hymn 'Jerusalem', taken from Blake's stanzas that preface his epic poem *Milton*, has been a defining factor in the reception of Blake's work. This article concentrates on the influence of the Blake-Parry hymn on arts and culture since the turn of 2000, concentrating on events such as the 2012 London Olympics, its various invocations as part of the EU Referendum, and visual responses to the Blake-Parry hymn as part of the 2016 exhibition 'And Did Those Feet?' at Roundhay, Leeds.

Keywords

Blake, Elgar, Englishness, Jerusalem, nationalism, Olympics, Parry, Roundhay artists

When William Blake composed the stanzas beginning 'And did those feet' some two centuries ago, little could he have imagined that they would eventually become one of the most important of English poems once they were set to music a hundred years later by Hubert Parry. While Parry's hymn, 'Jerusalem', was a stalwart of English nationalism in the mid-twentieth century, many could have been forgiven for thinking that its status as a relic of former colonial glories had completely diminished in the new millennium. And yet, due to a combination of such things as its adoption by sporting events as well as a renewed nostalgia for supposedly simpler days, 'Jerusalem' has, if anything, become more entrenched in English cultural life. It was a key part of the royal wedding between Prince William and Kate Middleton in 2011, while the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics included the hymn as part of a celebration of Britain's cultural heritage. While the title of the opening ceremony, 'Isles of Wonder', was taken from Caliban's speech about the magical island of *The Tempest* (with the lines delivered by Kenneth Branagh, dressed as Isambard Kingdom Brunel), it was perhaps the words of William Blake that had the greatest effect on Danny Boyle's preparation for the ceremony. The green and pleasant land of the Olympic ceremony, as well as the dark satanic mills of industry (referred to as the Pandemonium of Milton's *Paradise Lost*), were drawn from that poem which has become emblematic not only of Blake's visions of England, but of England itself. Standing before an artificial hill, the opening verses of 'Jerusalem' were sung by eleven-year-old Humphrey Keeper before he was joined by the Dockhead Choir from Southwark who performed 'Danny Boy', 'Flower of Scotland' and 'Bread of Heaven' as well as the final verses of the Blake-Parry hymn. While 'God Save the Queen' remains the official anthem of the United Kingdom and thus is indicative of Great Britain, the message was clear: like the five rings of the Olympics, designed by Baron Pierre de Coubertin in 1912 to symbolise the meeting of athletes from the five regions of the world, the UK is the meeting of four nations. That

'Jerusalem' topped and tailed the piece could no doubt be read as some not-so-hidden indication of the special importance of England in the union, but in many respects, it was fitting to conclude the opening hymn of London 2012 with the words of one of the few English poets to have actually been a Londoner.

The anthemic status of the songs - 'Danny Boy' aside - has become well established in recent years, though the youth of these anthems is frequently surprising. Thus 'Flower of Scotland' (*Flùr na h-Alba* in Gaelic) was first performed in 1967, referring to the victory of the Scots led by Robert the Bruce over the English. 'Bread of Heaven' (*Cwm Rhondda*) does not necessarily have the same status as 'Land of My Fathers', but since its composition in 1905 has frequently been used on state occasions, such as the state funerals of Diana, Princess of Wales and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. Along with 'Jerusalem', set to music by Parry in 1916, these three anthems draw attention to a long-standing desire throughout the twentieth century on the part of many in Great Britain (and, more importantly in many respects, the sovereign state of the United Kingdom), to identify the role played by their individual nationalisms. The Acts of Union of 1707 and 1800, which brought together those separate nations, may have been acts of convenience or, with Ireland, a direct political imposition that was the first to unravel. The consequences of such entanglement in a larger identity may have been more easily disguised when Britannia thought to rule the waves, but since our twining with another, European Union, the ramifications of the United Kingdom have become a Gordian knot that many would seek to sever.

Such a desire was very much in evidence during the frequently ill-tempered debate during the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU in 2016, and 'Jerusalem' had its own role to play in the months surrounding the vote on June 23. On the morning after the referendum result was announced, with the a 52 to 48 percent vote to leave, Allison Pearson in *The Telegraph* invoked another line of Blake's - 'England! awake! awake! awake!' (*Jerusalem* plate 77, E232) - to assert that the citizens of the UK had voted to stand up for their country, and that Blake's words 'foresaw the spiritual renewal of a once-vital country that had fallen into a coma but 'now the time returns again'.¹ The lines from *Jerusalem the Emanation of the Giant Albion* (reproduced in Colin Trodd's article) Blake's great prophetic book on the spiritual, political, moral and psychological decline of Albion. In their original context, they are part of an address 'To the Christians', and the invocation of that address to live in 'our Eternal or Imaginative bodies' is, frankly, more difficult to interpret than the call for England to awake often appears. Yet, as with those few lines from *Jerusalem*, those who appealed to the song 'Jerusalem' frequently spoke or wrote as though its meaning was self evident. Thus, for example, on May 19 one commentator on Twitter, responding to a remark concerning the patriotism of Enoch Powell, wrote: 'Enoch Powell will live on forever, In the true British People. VOTE LEAVE!! SAVE THIS GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND 'JERUSALEM'!!'

In the first decade and a half of the twenty-first century, William Blake's words, set to music by Parry in 1916, have frequently been utilised for political purposes – whether spectacular and liberal, as in the case of the Olympics, or more private and reactionary as in some of the responses on social media following the EU referendum. Tomlinson and Archetti have demonstrated at some length the various tensions between the ceremonies and ritual spectacle of major sporting events such as the Olympics and national and international discourses made evident within those spectacles which are not always reconciled, as in the military nationalism of the 1978 Argentina World Cup (in which the world's teams gathered together against a literal background of paramilitary force) or the final throes of the Cold War as enacted via the Olympic contests of Moscow in 1980 and Los Angeles in 1984.² By contrast, the organised spectacle of London 2012 appears somewhat innocent by contrast, and certainly so when compared to the context of the chaotic fallout of British politics barely four years later: in contrast to the televisual spectacle of the Olympics, invocations of 'Jerusalem' as part of the EU referendum tended

to be a verbal affair, with one significant – if entirely expected – exception. On the eve of yet another performance of ‘Jerusalem’ as part of the traditional celebrities at Last Night of the Proms, Ian Jack in *The Guardian* asked whether the event would show itself up as jingoistic or ironic, observing that ‘after the vote for Brexit, the singing and the flag-waving could be seen as a symptom of a wider public mood rather than as a musical ritual *sui generis*.’³ In the end, neither of these two polarities was entirely true: campaigners handed out thousands of EU flags as part of an anti-Brexit protest so that, in the opinion of more than a few commentators, two visions of nationalism and internationalism ‘clashed’ as post-referendum feelings ran high. Nick Groom’s autobiography of the Union Jack might end with the conclusion that disbanding one particular union is ‘simply not feasible’ because of a shared economy, infrastructure, history and culture shared for hundreds of years,⁴ but the vote against a more recent union has left the United Kingdom feeling more fragile than at any point since 1707, while the status of ‘Jerusalem’ as an *English* anthem has become much more poignant in recent months.

Last Night of the Proms and the London Olympics do not, by any means, comprise the totality of responses invoking the Blake-Parry hymn. In recent years popular musical versions have included those by Matt Burnett – a particularly beautiful arrangement for piano from 2005 that is one of the closest in spirit to Parry’s original 2016 version for many years – a somewhat more bombastic rendition by Bruce Dickinson (of Iron Maiden fame) for his Blakean 1998 album *The Chemical Wedding*, and an especially powerful mashup of elements of both the hymn and *Jerusalem the Emanation of the Giant Albion* by John Harle and Marc Almond for their 2014 album *The Tyburn Tree (Dark London)*. These – and many other musical renditions of the hymn – are beyond the remit of this particular article, which will concentrate on how Blake’s poem, with its radical call to build the new Jerusalem, has inspired various visual artists – whether directly, as in Tracey Moberly’s series of paintings for the 2012 exhibition *William Blake – Visionary Anarchist*, Jaume Plensa’s sculpture *Jerusalem*, or more ironically as in the 2014 British Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale entitled *A Clockwork Jerusalem* which, in its explorations of Romanticism, pastoral traditions and science fiction, proposed a vision of what it called ‘the founding text of British modernity’. The Biennale exhibition set out to explore the various cultural productions of British modernity through the perspectives of architecture and visual motifs of the British isles, from Stonehenge to Cliff Richard and back-to-the-land rural fantasies. Unsurprisingly considering its title, the curators of the exhibition, Sam Jacobs and Wouter Vanstiphout, remark that ‘Jerusalem’ has a particular role to play in this vision, so that by invoking Blake in the creation of the welfare state, for example, ‘Attlee was outlining more than a social or economic project. He was drawing on specifically British myths to face the forces of modernity.’⁵

While contributions by figures such as Plensa demonstrate the ongoing appeal of Blake to international artists, in general the stanzas from *Milton* attract a greater number of British artists, and one focus of this article will be the tension between *British* and *English* contemporary art, whereby groups and organisations that regularly invoke Blake’s lines in order to supplement and support British institutions must also deal with the underlying English nationalism that ‘Jerusalem’ frequently invokes. A particularly poignant version, falling between the overblown pomp and circumstance of Danny Boyle’s invocation of Team GB and the battle of flags at the post-Brexit Proms, is the exploration of visual and artistic responses that was on display in the months leading up to the EU Referendum. Entitled *And Did Those Feet*, the exhibition exploring Blake’s Jerusalem and Englishness brought together the work of sixteen artists in St Edmund’s Church, Roundhay, Leeds, to offer their own responses to the original hymn.

Blake had written the original stanzas adapted by Parry probably in 1804 or shortly thereafter when he began composition of his long epic, *Milton, a Poem*. While the Preface in which those stanzas appear is as

famous among Blake scholars as the lyric itself, it is almost unknown among the wider public (many of whom are probably not even aware that Blake composed a visionary poem drawing on Milton for its inspiration). The Preface begins with a denunciation of Classical modes of art and a call to the 'Young Men of the New Age' to return to the Bible, and ends with a quotation from Numbers (see Mike Sanders's article for a reproduction of the Preface):

The Stolen and Perverted Writings of Homer & Ovid: of Plato & Cicero. which all Men ought to condemn: are set up by artifice against the Sublime of the Bible. but when the New Age is at leisure to Pronounce; all will be set right: & those Grand Works of the more ancient & consciously & professedly Inspired Men, will hold their proper rank, & the Daughters of Memory shall become the Daughters of Inspiration. Shakspeare & Milton were both curbd by the general malady & infection from the silly Greek & Latin slaves of the Sword.

Rouze up O Young Men of the New Age! set your foreheads against the ignorant Hirelings! For we have Hirelings in the Camp, the Court, & the University: who would if they could, for ever depress Mental & prolong Corporeal War. Painters! on you I call! Sculptors! Architects! Suffer not the fash[i]onable Fools to depress your powers by the prices they pretend to give for contemptible works or the expensive advertizing boasts that they make of such works; believe Christ & his Apostles that there is a Class of Men whose whole delight is in Destroying. We do not want either Greek or Roman Models if we are but just & true to our own Imaginations, those Worlds of Eternity in which we shall live for ever; in Jesus our Lord.

And did those feet in ancient time,
Walk upon Englands mountains green:
And was the holy Lamb of God,
On Englands pleasant pastures seen!

And did the Countenance Divine,
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold:
Bring me my Arrows of desire:
Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of fire!

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand:
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In Englands green & pleasant Land.

Would to God that all the Lords people were Prophets.

Numbers XI. ch 29 v. (E95-6)

By the time of Blake's death the lyrics that were later to become so famous appear to have been more or less forgotten, though it did achieve some circulation during the nineteenth century, for example being included in the section on 'Patriotism' in H. C. Beeching's *A Paradise of English Poetry*, from 1893. The poem's true afterlife, however, only begins in 1915, when the Poet Laureate Robert Bridges included it in the anthology *The Spirit of Man* and then commissioned Parry to compose music for the text. It is

from this point onwards that 'Jerusalem' can be seen as part of English national life in particular, but also as a nexus of agencies seeking to use the text to perform a series of often-contradictory ambitions.

Keri Davies has drawn attention to the fact that while Parry's music was composed for a patriotic setting, he was very unhappy with the jingoism with which it soon became associated. Having completed his anthology, *The Spirit of Man* – which included Blake's stanzas from the Preface to Milton – for publication in early 1916, it was the poet laureate Robert Bridges who suggested that Parry should write 'suitable, simple music to Blake's stanzas – music that an audience could take up and join in' in order to promote the organisation Fight for Right, set up by General Sir Francis Younghusband to counteract German propaganda.⁷ While Parry's initial commitment may have been uncertain, the hymn's first performance was at the Queen's Hall on March 28, 1916, at an event organised by Younghusband's movement and sung by a choir 300 strong. Nor was this the first setting of Blake's verses. Henry Walford Davies, who had studied under Parry at the Royal College of Music and who conducted the performance at the Queen's Hall, had composed an *a capella* piece for the Morecombe Festival of 1908, setting Blake's words to music alongside verses from Shakespeare and A. H. Clough. The appearance of Parry's setting in *Hymns of the Kingdom* and *Students Hymnal*, both edited by Davies in 1923, established one foundation of its reputation as a stalwart of congregational services, and as Fitch records from the 1920s to the 1980s it was to appear in more than a dozen important hymnal collections.⁸ Parry's hymn, then, was not the first musical setting of Blake's words, nor was it the last: other versions noted by Fitch include those by Bernard Sidney Garte (1946), John Linton Gardner (1951), Virgil Garnett Thomson (c. 1953), John Chorbajian (1972), William Russell Smith (c. 1974) and James Austin Collingnon (1983).

Parry grew to dislike the propaganda espoused by Fight for Right, withdrawing his support for Fight for Right in May 1917. Yet it had already begun to find other causes: on 17 March, 1917, the hymn was performed at the Albert Hall as part of a Suffrage Demonstration meeting, and the next year Millicent Garrett Fawcett asked for it to be sung at another Demonstration concert in 1918, after which Parry wrote to her suggesting his hope that it would become 'the Women Voters' hymn'.⁹ At the same time, as James Carroll suggests, the hymn invited English soldiers to keep fighting 'till we have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land'.¹⁰ Parry shared Blake's distaste of such martial uses and, prior to his death, allocated copyright of his hymn to the Millicent Fawcett and the Women's Suffragette movement.

After Parry's death, the contested early history of 'Jerusalem' continued in the subsequent decades following the war. Invoked by the Labour Party during the 1945 election as part of the project to build a better Britain and, of course, the National Health Service (as celebrated during the 2012 Olympic ceremony), the song seemed to share in many of the cultural anxieties afflicting Britain following the Suez crisis of 1956. As such, from the late 1950s through the 1960s and 70s it seemed to be more often appealed to ironically, as a sign of rapidly disintegrating imperial ambitions. Iain Sinclair remarked that it was little more than a 'heritage token' by the early 1990s,¹¹ and even when treated with more respect as in the movies *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962) and *Privilege* (1967), it was very much an emblem of lost, even forgotten, glories. And yet, during the 1980s, 'Jerusalem' returned as a mental fight for Englishness (and Britishness, two increasingly complex and no longer interchangeable terms). For many, David Puttnam's and Hugh Hudson's *Chariots of Fire* (1982), based on the struggles and eventual victories of Harold Abrahams and Eric Liddle in the 1924 Olympics, came to define the spirit of 'Jerusalem' as a Thatcherite celebration of British successes (ignoring the movie's exploration of the case that both Abrahams and Liddle had been despised by the establishment because of their Jewishness and class respectively). While *Chariots* represented the mainstream, however, there were plenty of

other, more oppositional interpretations, most notably Mark Stewart and the Mafia's dub version from the same year, or Billy Bragg's rendition recorded at the time of the Poll Tax protests in 1990.¹² These left-wing appropriations, however, were not necessarily the loudest voices: a mock celebration of the hymn for Euro 2000 by *Fat Les* did not rescue it from the worst excesses of the right. By the time of the 2016 EU Referendum, the hymn had endured a decade of appropriation by the British National Party. While not necessarily as extreme in their nationalism, there were plenty of supporters of Brexit who were keen to appeal to this anthem to support their cause, as with @RayFerguson19 who wrote on May 20, 'Vote OUT of the EU, read Jerusalem – The Poem by William Blake or just listen to the song. Free our Country' or, more pithily, via @vincefitt: 'You know the words well Jerusalem the only way is Brexit.'

For two months, it could have largely seemed to a bemused British public that the only way for Jerusalem was indeed Brexit. But this was not the case – as with the first few months of Parry's song where his change of heart caused him to remove it from Fight for Right and present the copyright to Millicent Fawcett, the music has never entirely belonged to the causes of right-wing nationalism. Indeed, even on social media there was much more chatter about the imminent publication of long-time Blake fanatic Alan Moore's novel, *Jerusalem*, than there was about Brexit. Similarly, around the time of the EU Referendum, another, very different invocation of Blake and Parry was taking place at St Edmund's Church, Roundhay. Entitled 'And did those feet', the exhibition exploring 'Blake's Jerusalem' (the organisers' emphasis) opened on 30 April, 2016, and ran for almost a month: planned many months previously as a centenary celebration, the fact that it offered an alternative vision of the Blake-Parry song was entirely circumstantial rather than planned. Sixteen artists, including John Vogler, David Honeybone, Shaeron Caton-Rose and Ian Kirkpatrick, presented artworks, installations and sculpture that offered either a very direct response to the lyrics of 'Jerusalem' or a more tangential reflection on themes of national identity. Of the artists, some were long participants in the artistic community based in Leeds, such as John Vogler, who had originally trained as an engineer specialising in environmental projects before gaining an MA in contemporary art practice at Leeds College of Art. Vogler brought his interests in ecology to his installations and sculpture, and his contribution to the Roundhay exhibition was virtually his last project before his death in 2017. His lifelong interest in ecology is very much in evidence in the installations produced for the exhibition, and though titled 'Arrows of Desire' some of the pieces included at Roundhay could perhaps as easily invoke – if somewhat ironically – Blake's invocation of England's green and pleasant land. In an interview with the organisers, Vogler offers a vision of Blake that is, in many respects, entirely conventional:

I see Blake as a perpetual protestor – protesting against poverty, against rationalism, against industrialisation that destroys creativity, against the exploitation of women and children and animals, against the establishment and, particularly, the established church.¹³

This vision of a radical Blake is most familiar from Erdman's conceptualisation of Blake as a prophet against Empire, and has its roots in Swinburne's 1868 essay on Blake that placed him fully – and knowingly – within the devil's party. It is not that there is anything wrong with this vision of Blake, more that, since the 1960s at least, it has very much become the orthodoxy of Blakean reception and as a critical response to the Romantic artist's life and works is much less radical than it first appears. Blake as perpetual protestor is very much in accordance with the standard interpretation and, as such, Vogler's verbal response (if not his artistic one) can be taken as a degree zero of artistic reception of Blake's work. In many respects, it is much less interesting than many of the other pieces on display, although his visual contributions – especially one installation of an industrial and rural scene juxtaposed side by side and a melancholy rendition of a broken clock that is reminiscent of the work of Doris

Salcedo or Cornelia Parker (who took a very different form of inspiration from William Blake for her 2015 show at the Whitworth Art Gallery, working with physicist Kostya Novoselov to ignite a firework display with a fragment of graphite from one of Blake's drawings).

Visually, then, Vogler demonstrates a reworking of Blake in line with twenty-first ecological concerns that is refreshing, but conceptually his responses to the notion of Blake are, at best, mundane. By contrast, some others of those involved with the exhibition provided more difficult, sometimes contested, readings of 'Jerusalem'. The Roundhay artist David Honeybone's initial focus, for example, was less on Blake than the specifics of the text, one that he very much associated with 'doing well in exams or playing for the First XI'.¹⁴ As an emblematic text of the British Establishment, Honeybone was further alienated by what he saw as Blake's 'grotesque' figures, but while working at the West Yorkshire Print Shop he was inspired to engage in a series of prints that would experiment with fabrics, textures and handwritten texts in a style more reminiscent of Tracey Emin's work, a collaboration much less fanciful following her association of the notorious installation *My Bed* (1998) with Blake's paintings at Tate Liverpool in the same year. Emin's frequent use of textiles, particularly in the form of *appliqué*, as with *Automatic Orgasms (Come Unto Me)* (2001), as well as her extensive monotype prints, are frequently deployed in the form of confessional pieces of art in a tradition that Miquel Ángel Medina, citing Galenson, links Emin to Van Gogh and later artists of the twentieth century.¹⁵ More significant in this context is Medina's emphasis on the materiality, craft even, of Emin's art: seen in this light, it is less surprising that she wished to emphasise a connection with Blake – held up since Gilchrist's biography as one of greatest of British artisans – at Tate Liverpool, and Honeybone's own work is much less an appropriation of Blake's visual iconography (something that he actually rejects, along with the more obvious verbal connotations inspired by Parry's hymn) than a return to the methods of *craft* as proper inspiration. The distinction between art versus craft has been deliberately problematised by a recent generation of artists such as Grayson Perry's ceramics or Cayce Zavaglia's embroideries, and Honeybone takes as an important ground for his printmaking Hainsworth royal blue cloth, linking the crafts of printing to symbolic associations of a Yorkshire mill that has produced what it describes (unironically) as the 'fabric of the nation', furnishing garments worn by the Household Division for the Trooping of the Colour at Buckingham Palace and the royal family during state occasions. Honeybone's monoprint (Figure 1), the handprinted word 'Jerusalem' on a golden burst of colour overlaying a deep, Hainsworth shade, is a variant of Emin's monotypes, an artistic invocation of Matisse's blue nudes, Yves Klein's *IKB* and Derek Jarman's *Blue* (1993) that contrasts the heritage of this very British hue with the sunburst of Blake's famous print, *Albion Rose* (1794-6). Building Jerusalem, therefore, becomes more than passing exams or playing cricket: rather it is a vision to rouse up those young men of the new age to mental fight rather than corporeal war.

While Honeybone offers an ironic inversion of the values he imbibed listening to 'Jerusalem' as a youth, Shaeron Caton-Rose's initial response was much more hostile. In an interview for the exhibition, she remarked that it was only through being commissioned to engage with Blake's work directly that she finally began to explore the ideas behind his imagery, something she had resolutely refused to do before because of her belief that 'Jerusalem' was 'a jingoistic and embarrassing hymn'.¹⁶ One of her contributions to the exhibition (Figure 2), a layered palimpsest of text that would itself function as an ideological icon of the city, continues to read Blake's words elliptically: rather than using the text from the stanzas from *Milton*, Caton-Rose employs instead Doug Gay's 'The Prophet's Speech':

I saw a vision – it was last Thursday at eleven o'clock in the morning.

I was standing on the Necropolis, looking down over the city

- and the cold blue autumn sky broke open over my head and the Spirit of God breathed on my eyes, and my eyes were opened:

I saw Glasgow, the holy city, coming down out of heaven, shining like a rare jewel, sparkling like clear water in the eye of the sun and all the sickness was gone from the city and there were no more suburbs and schemes no difference between Bearsden and Drumchapel.¹⁷

Gay's poem, originally published in 1993, clearly shares a similar psychogeographic impulse to Blake's *Jerusalem*, locating the holy city in the very profane city of his daily life. A key figure in the Alternative Worship Movement, Gay's Late Late Service in Glasgow emphasised congregational participation, avoiding the reliance on charismatic leadership found in the Evangelical movement. More recently, he has argued that for a new approach to nationalism in Christian ethics, one that focusses less on the exclusivity and jingoism of western eurocentric traditions and, instead, draws upon the post-colonial experiences of Africa and eastern Europe in terms of a search for self-determination in the wake of imperial and colonial projects, a task for which the 'thickness' of Christian doctrine may help in terms of 'a deep hermeneutics and a deep poetics'¹⁸ rather than typically offering up suspicion of the language of nationalism while quietly acquiescing in the political legitimacy of most nation-states. Such an ambition, whereby the Christian theologian finds 'Jerusalem' in the city of Glasgow (or Belfast, or Liverpool - 'The Prophet's Speech' has been rewritten many times) is a truly Blakean endeavour, a truly prophetic task that holds the people of God – wherever they may be – to task, an endeavour that Gay believes situates the action of prophecy within the remit of Habermas's public sphere. This is consonant with Blake's wish that 'all the Lord's people were Prophets', for then they would stand up to abuses wherever they occurred, not simply within the external other but also in the heart of their own cities and nations.

While Caton-Rose may have become more enamoured of Blake's art while working on her own prints, the cumulative force of a century of singing 'Jerusalem' in the end remained too much for her to engage with directly. Instead, it is the liberation theology of Gay and others associated with Alternative Worship (a theology that, she clearly realises, would have appealed directly to Blake) that offers its own form of redaction criticism on Parry's hymn. Perhaps the most extreme form of the anxiety of influence on display at the Roundhay exhibition, it is precisely because opposition is true friendship that her own responses are in some ways the most profound: just as Blake's struggles with Milton's views on sexuality, religion and politics led him to rewrite the figure of Albion's prophet in the book from which 'Jerusalem' is taken, so Caton-Rose reconfigures Blake as the prophet of the British public sphere, taking his mental fight away from the cloisters and cricket fields and into the backstreets and housing estates of the nation, as more befitting of an artist who was always attuned to the struggles of the poor:

And one Daughter of Los sat at the fiery Reel & another
Sat at the shining Loom with her Sisters attending round
Terrible their distress & their sorrow cannot be utterd
And another Daughter of Los sat at the Spinning Wheel
Endless their labour, with bitter food. void of sleep,
Tho hungry they labour: they rouze themselves anxious
Hour after hour labouring at the whirling Wheel
Many Wheels & as many lovely Daughters sit weeping (*Jerusalem*, 59:26-33 E209)

These lines, describing the labours of the poor in Albion's cities may, however, serve also to highlight some of the distinctions between the artistic appropriation of craft in the service of art and craft as utilitarian labour. The Daughters of Los work at their looms because they have to, pressed into service

in Britain's textile industries through indigence and hunger, and as they work they weep. Such a distinction is important because it demonstrates just how aware Blake was – much more so than many other artists – of the extremes of poverty that existed all around him (and which, indeed, threatened him and his wife at various times in the early nineteenth century). This is not to make a glib remark at the expense of those such as Vogels, Honeybone, Caton-Rose and others who respond on a profound visual level to the complex emotions, political and otherwise, raised by the Blake-Parry hymn, and indeed Blake himself refuses to distinguish between art for art's sake and craft for utilitarian purpose. The Daughters of Los may be driven to work through poverty, but yet there remains beauty in what they create:

Yet the intoxicating delight that they take in their work
Obliterates every other evil; none pities their tears
Yet they regard not pity & they expect no one to pity
For they labour for life & love, regardless of any one
But the poor Spectres that they work for, always incessantly (*Jerusalem*, 59:34-8, E209)

One of the glories of the Jerusalem that Blake sought to build was that it was not one where art would be created and enjoyed by the privileged few, but which would be art made and savoured by the many. And yet the contrasts – and conflicts – of a vision of 'Jerusalem' as envisioned at the Roundhay and the bile and xenophobia frequently invoked during the EU referendum often appear to be an opposition that does not lead to true friendship. For nearly a century after his death, Blake's words that were printed in the Preface to *Milton* were either simply neglected or caused bemusement among the few readers who encountered the poem. Parry's hymn appeared (much to the composer's own consternation) a much more rigid and muscular vision of the Christian nation, one that was often completely counter to his own desires as much as those of the Romantic artist who opposed utterly corporeal war. In the first decades of the twenty-first century, if 'Jerusalem' once more encapsulates a very British form of Modernism, it is that of a fallen Albion at war with himself, engaged in the bitterest of mental fight.

Notes

¹¹ Pearson. 'In an act of considerable daring, we stood up for our country'. 24 June, 2016.

² Archetti. 'Argentina, 1978', 135-6; Tomlinson, 'Los Angeles, 1984 and 1932', 163.

³ Jack, 'Is Last Night of the Proms jingoistic or ironic?' 20 September, 2016.

⁴ Groom, *The Union Jack*, 313.

⁵ Jacob 'A Clockwork Jerusalem', 7.

⁶ Davies, 'Blake Set to Music', 192-3.

⁷ Cited in Graves, *Hubert Parry*, vol. 2, 92.

⁸ Fitch, *Blake Set to Music*, 57.

⁹ Graves, vol. 2, 92.

¹⁰ Carroll, 236.

¹¹ Cited in Davies, 193.

¹² See my 'Mental Fight, Corporeal War, and Righteous Dub' for a fuller discussion of these versions of the hymn.

¹³ Smith, Interview with the artist for 'And Did those Feet'.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Medina, 'Tracey Emin', 56-8.

¹⁶ Smith.

¹⁷ Gay, 'The Prophet's Speech', 68.

¹⁸ Gay, *Honey from the Lion*, 3.

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Jason Whittaker (The University of Lincoln) is the author and co-editor of a number of books on Blake, including *William Blake and the Myths of Britain* (1999), *Radical Blake: Influence and Afterlife since 1827*

(2002, with Shirley Dent), *Blake, Modernity and Popular Culture* (2007, with Steve Clark) and *William Blake and the Digital Humanities* (2012, with Roger Whitson). He is currently working on a book on the cultural reception of the Blake-Parry hymn, 'Jerusalem'.

Image captions

Figure 1. David Honeybone. 'Jerusalem' (2016). Monoprint, artist's photo.

Figure 2. Shaeron Caton-Rose. 'Untitled' (2016). Monochrome print, artist's photo.