The idea here set out comes in part from my work on Blake but in a wider way from my studies of 18th century life and culture that go back many years. The period was one of deep social change with consequent strain and stress. England was noted for its suicides, its melancholia. Gray and Collins are examples of the latter. Particularly as we come to the period of the French Revolution the strain grows stronger; the sense of profound change often issues in millenial and prophetic attitudes, of which Blake is the supreme example. These attitudes were not merely the property of poets and intellectuals, but affected large numbers of people as we see in the responses to prophets like Richard Brothers and Joanna Southcott. The insurrections of 1798 in Ireland had strong millenary and prophetic elements, and so on.

There are many affinities with our own period, also one of deep change and continuous strain, which also has its millenial cults ranging from Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientologists, followers of Moon, and its various offshoots, etc, to the large-scale response to science-fiction fantasies, especially those that tell of space-visiters and explain human civilisation as not a human product but the result of such visitors etc. To take one example Von Danikiin's Chariot of the Gods has sold some 34 million copies.

My suggestion then is to carry on from the study of Blake to accounts of how others, mainly artists, responded to the same situation. One could easily write two or three books on the subject, carrying on to the work of John Martin with its apocalyptic vision, and 1848. But what I propose here is a book that would cover the following:

- The poet Christopher Smart
- The painter Romney
- the caricaturist Gillray
- De Loutherbourg, artist
- Joanna Southcott

some 15,000 words
20,000
20,000
12,500
12,500
about 80,000 in all
Each character would be treated biographically, as I feel that this is
the best way for gaining the general reader’s interest, whereas an essay
is liable to have a much more limited appeal — though of course the
points most relevant to the thesis would be most stressed and elaborated.
Also the biographical approach would best enable me to link the particular
character of the poet or artist with his world and show how impact of the

cultural, temporal situation worked out.

1. Christopher Smart (1722-71), of an old northcountry family. His father
had come down to Kent to work as steward of the estates of Viscount Vane.
He wrote verse early and gained patronage of the Duchess of
Cleveland, was admitted to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, 1739; he had a
considerable success, became a fellow 1745, the MA, won Seatonian prize for
poetry 1750, 1751, 1752, 1754, 1756 with poems on the attributes of the
Supreme Being. Already developing dissolute habits and running into dx
who grew a pot belly
debt. A small pudgy man, who made fun of his looks. Deep need of society,
yet extremely shy and uncertain underneath. Very susceptible, at
Cambridge fell in love with the Mitre armid and the sister of a friend,
Pretty chambermaids common in his verse. Dropped out of the university
into Grub Street, editing lightweight periodicals and making prose
versions of the classics. Taking on the pantomime character of Mrs Mary
Midnight, the Man-Midwife. Got with child Anna Maria Carnan, step-daughter
of Newman the bookseller, who bore him two daughters before his first
mental break down in 1756. Marriage then broke down in 1757-8 in Bedlam,
He was a manic-depressive. In his manic states excessively jovial,
and given to drink. He started taking Christ’s injunction to pray without
ceasing. Prayed loudly in places of recreating eg St James’s Park, called
for friends from dinners or beds. (An odd delighting in suppetting the
respectable appears in Jubilate, ‘For I blessed God in St James’s Park
till I was all the company.’

No need here to detail further his life, which makes an amusing
and pathetic tale. The important thing is the way in which he a minor
poet on two occasions burst out into something like greatness, at least
into works of astonishing originality. Rejoice in the Lab pub gor first
time in 194, written during his incarceration as a madman, and the Song
to David pub in 1763 after he had again been in a madhouse. The strength
of the latter lies in its rapturous sense of the unity of all living; a passionate emotion that chafes against the regular stanza of form. In Rejoice he had written a wholly original work, using a structure of Biblical parallelist, but developing the idea of lined contrariety in a wild and yet ultimately complex philosophical puns and playing on words. Background of Berkeley, Masoic ideas and imagery,

The effect is of a mad medley, and yet there is a subtle dialectical vision of the interconnection of all things, of conflict and resolution. In a sense everything in universe is reduced to a dialectic interplay of words, but in the process the words (poetry) become expressions of the conflicts and resolutions of process symbols of reality and at the same time precipitations of a new deeper consciousness of process.

These generalisations need to be linked with exemplifications that show that Smart's symbolic system works in detail. But they give some idea of the strange revelation that comes out of his madness, the structure of a higher samity which has close relations with the system of correspondences that Blake was to develop.

Smart with his contingent forms and modes of expression, his under the stress of anxiety and breakdown, in his manic depressive state, brings out the deeper conflicts of his world and the way in which they can move to higher resolutions.

Take next 1734-1802, seems very different. Born at Beckside, Lancashire, son of a joiner and cabinet-maker, with one elder and 8 younger brothers.

Apprenticed to an intinerant artist, who set up at Kendal then eloped with a well-off girl. Romner fell ill and was nursed by his landlady, got her daughter with child and married her. Marriage soon broke down, though he remained on friendly terms with wife. Using £100 gained from a lottery of 20 pictures, he went to London in March 1762

Steadily made his way up the portrait career. First his initial work to 1762, then painting legal and bourgeois characters (1764-7, at Gtays Inn); mixed bourgeois and aristocratic (1767, Gt Newp St
then became favourite of high society (Favendish Sq, 1775 on (with bre
in 1786, illness). Fonal collapse of health; 799 nack to Westmoreland.

In many ways of a Painsboroughsit his robust element and his contiuous
re urn to natural scene. Keeps familiar reas;ism nut more nd more adds
elements of grace, using borrowed attitudds. Stro element of
sentiment, eg in his capac ty to ddpict generaliwd charms of youth.

One point of break through. in 1782 under spell of Emma Hart, painting
he in nedless classical or historical figures, from Bacchante or
Caenadra, Cal paso to Moranda, Sd of arr, s Cecilia, Mary Ma ga h n.
here evolves what may call the sket -portrait, where everything based
on the bold achi ement of a single lyrical effe t, simple as yet subt l

On later women portraits fuses the eoclassic line with painte ly
almost monc one chiaroscuro relived by bright colours. His capacity to
degine simple flowing shapes here to fore (in fahions key as well)
-sees dec poss of the big hats (of Gainsb vgh richmind walk drawings( while coured sash contrasts with whit muslin fro ds.

of Mrs Lee Acton 1791

farway faxe with some obscure anxiety, ev o clasp of fingers
-in formless landscape menaced by stormolouds. Much of elements of
G portraits but with less strength, sense of loss, relation to nature
thinned out.

Yet this artist fashion ble with his capacity to feel and i temsify
or a ing sentiment e c. grace neocla ic controlled to lesser graces.

prodoundly rad 1. wanting express moveme t of l fe.
tried death of Wolfe in 753 for siety of arts premium (Wests work a
RA not till 1771), and started 87 his picture of Tempest, done by april
1790 f Boydell gallery. (Lost, only engraving and some b ts), not
succe - note takes movent of sh ipwreck but with Preseor and Ariel
(controllers, saviours) unseen at side. amid dark clouds.

1784 reaction to Blake. N Records
his verse was capable but wholly conventional, without a spark of originality. Dr. Johnson said unkindly but hot altogether unfairly when asked if smart or derrick were the better poem. "Sir, there is settling the point of precedence between a louse and a flea."

Then he went mad and was admitted to St. Luke's Hospital in May 1577. Next year discharged uncured, he was proved madmen till 1763. His madness seems to have taken a harmless form. Dr. J. "As poor friend... M. Piozzi."

must have got a certain satisfaction in shaming the receivable and genteel of his world.

That lines from the poem given name of Jubilate Agor or Rejoice in the Lamb he wrote in madhouse.

Threw aside all accepted methods, uses Biblical forms of responsively or antiphonal poetry (based on Hebrew ritual), reptations of synonyms, antitheses and synecic forms.

And binds whole with a strange complex set of assonations and interlataons an ex of simple statements incit MS 28

some of his strange wisdom 31.
blakes eternity coming to pass by an improvement of sensual enjoyment here on flowers
Cat Jeoffroy. 48.5 6V 6. (6). Circle 4.11)

all critics have seen only entangled mss.
but in fact underlying a clear argument

summary MS 32-5

After his please he wrote more rodinary verse again. Much of it versions of psalms, hymns and songs for fasts and festivals, parables, hymns for children and so. Only in A Song to David we see his deep sense of the living interrelationship of universe break out again, struggling against the set forms and the conventional diction of age. A remarkable poem in its way but the great revelation is in Rejoice in the Lamb, one of the strangest and most moving docs in all poetry, 5ith a personal statement, a sustained psalm, a philosophic statement. Here we may say the mad poem reaches its height - unless we are to see Blake's prophecy as a continuation of this tradition. Certainly here a higher sanity, a vision of brotherhood and the unity of all living.
a Blakean power of transforming political and social reality into imaginative images, but without any central idea or corehension to make sense of the pantasmagoria.

Blake in
deeply stirred by idea of Boydell Gallery
in 1787 cursing rats, was let go imagintale
was tempest, raising of fiend in Henry VI (II)
Opie in macbeth and wiches and baquos ghost,
emmas as totania (57)
1791 p ted paine, among his few frie ds (57)
frenzied haste of stule (56)
brooding on human wretchedness, series on Howard and prisons
1790 in France at Paris with Hayley
(early as 88 oppressed by London (61-8 to Hampstead

1792 massacre of swiss guard. cite (66
light effe t (68

satanic pictures (69

illray
1757-1805
son of man who'd seved as trooper, lost an arm, and became an out-
pen ioner Chelsea Hospital, then sexton of the Moravian burial-ground
at celsea where self buried 1799 (Note likely link of Blake with
M ravias) ear y apprentice to letter-engraver, but ran off, joined
strilng actors, then student at RA, also studie engraving under
Rylants and Bartalozzi. (got dot-manner fro R)

already at age of 12 had made a ca iscture of Lord North with
owl on head, first in own name Paddy on Horseback(a bull) 1779
after 1780 mainly political, on till 1811
ready satitose anyone from royal famil and minus ers. Finally took up
with Miss Humphry with print shop (first in strand, then New Bond St, Old
St, and St James st
worked rapidly even wounding fingers by burr brought up by needle f om
copper
retiring, giving, drinking more and more till by end of 1811 sinking int
imbecility, spent rest of life mostly confined upstairs. Once tried throw
himself out of win ow. on 1 Jn 1815 escaped, was caught, died
some 1500 pieces.

imagint force keeps asserting itself, history into a sort of mad
magical nightmare

Cruckshank who knew h near and d scribes his excitement love his
work a extrao nary and even pwmf l to watc, in its wild hurry
like a premonition of lunacy.
I have done much work on the 18th century. Among published works apart from lives of Hogarth, Blake, The Death of the He o (David etc) Turner.

novels (Lost Birthright on Wilkite period, Pas onate Pastoral, 1790s, Lightin Ital – Italy of Byron and Shelley), direct works like book on Defoe's London, 1964 (The H ly of Life... one year), edition of Pries ley's Memoirs etc.

Much of the work leans into studies of Blake and Turner, and on consideration I should like to consider a series of studies centred on the impact of the French “revolution, esp on artists but in general dealing with the social and cultural crisis of the century. Much work done on reaction of the poets, eg Colerid ge Wordsworth, Southey and so on to the French Revolution, or but little on wider impact in any coherent way

I first mention a number of headings or individual artists who would come into the survey.

1. Th particular stragg round History Painting in England as compared with situation in France. The Kings aim in founding the RA, the direct struggle to take over His ry by revolutionary artist like David which reflects the struggle for state powe in France has no counterpart in Eng land. George was to use History, esp thru West, but situation is complex. Mortimer and Hamilton – fusion of elements with neoc ssic etc. leading on into Blake

Struggle as continued through th radical Barry. Forms taken in attitude to History by men like Romney, Lawrence, Opie.

Imagery of natural compulsion and disaster (volcanoes, earthquakes etc) and relation to the industrial landscape. Wright of Derby etc, eafing on into Turner

Interesting light effects in this relation. Fireworks and illuminations. Stage and panomr ant effects and machines. De Loutherbourg Gainsborough etc. Again leading into Turner. Many interesting experiments in his relation not yet examined.

Themes of Stanaism linked with History. Gibson, on into History.

Lawrence, & others