William Blake Critics

Timothy Vines:

- "Blake's writings are an endeavour to loosen or break society's 'mind forg'd manacles'..." Saying that Blake was a revolutionary poet as he aimed to drag society away from the oppression it was under.
- "Calling for the liberation of human energy and creativity, Blake's songs are scathing in their criticism of the prevailing mood of enlightenment rationality..." Enlightenment was the zeitgeist (spirit of the age) where everything was explained scientifically and logically and Blake did not like this as it went against his anti-rationalist views.
- "Experience was born out of the political troubles both in England and abroad which, to Blake, exemplified the struggle of spirit against oppression." Blake was inspired by events in France and America and wanted himself to start a revolution to fight against oppression.
- "Anything that came between the soul and God was appalling to Blake." Highlights Blake's spirituality and the theme of religion.
- "Experience is often shown as a dark forest in which mankind find himself lost and alone." Saying that Blake is disillusioned with the world in Experience and feels alone as mankind is being overrun by the shackles of rich authorities and industrialisation.

Felicity Currie (Feminist Critic)

- Praises Blake for highlighting in his poems (such as "Introduction" to Songs of Innocence) that children are not corrupt or hypocritical like adults.
- "Blake uses metre and rhyme like a musician..." She says and she adds that is he unlike the "crap versifiers of his time..." Critical of other poets but praising Blake as a poetical genius.
- "What the Songs never allow us to forget is how vulnerable children are." Again, she praises Blake for respecting and looking out for children and for showing us all that they are innocent. Links to Nichood.
- "...there was no easy transmission of Blake's songs..." She writes and she added that his poems in Innocence and Experience would "...reach, at best, only a few." Highlights from Brake was not appreciated on his lifetime and that he was well ahead of his time.

Alexander Gilchrist (one of Blake's publishers)

- Said that Blake was, "...a hat it and condemner of kings." Blake was evidently against the monarchy and he wanted social refurm and a revolution.
 Also refured to Dake as a "divine chin" which shows that he was special and gifted and perhaps always
- Also refused to Dake as a "divine chief" which shows that he was special and gifted and perhaps always
 had the freedom of his childhood instilled in him. This may explain why he was so concerned about other
 children.

T.S. Eliot:

The great modernist poet and critic T. S. Eliot writes that Blake's poetry has "a peculiar honesty, which, in a world too frightened to be honest, is peculiarly terrifying." Eliot praises Blake for being ahead of his time and daring to question authority and be open about his views when most others kept their heads down.

William Hazlitt:

Simply reviewed the songs as "beautiful".

Northrop Frye:

Frye said of Experience, "Contempt and Horror have never been more clearly spoken in English poetry". Not all people were fond of Blake's poetry and some saw his views as extreme, excessive and terrifying.

D. G. Rosetti's:

- Referred to some of Blake's poems from the songs as "cryptic", and indeed many are ambiguous.