

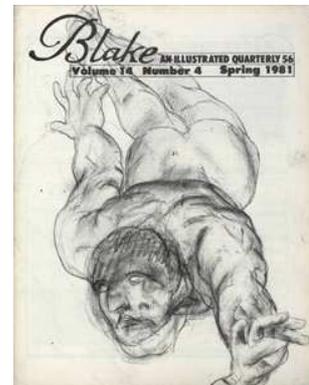
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
BLAKE

N E W S

“Blake and the Eighteenth Century” at the 1980
MLA

Nelson Hilton

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Confrontation and Complexity in Shakespeare's Scenes
--George Hunter, Professor of English, Yale University
University.

Acting Shakespeare--Eugene Waith, Douglas Tracy Smith
Professor of English Literature, Yale University.

Boydell's Shakespeare--G. E. Bentley, Professor of
English, University of Toronto.

2:30-4:30 p.m.

Shakespeare and the Artist in the Nineteenth Century
--Geoffrey Ashton, Librarian, Garrick Club, London,
England.

Turner's "Juliet and her Nurse"--Ronald Paulson,
Thomas E. Donnelly Professor of English, Yale
University.

*Shakespearean Paintings and Nineteenth-Century Art
Criticism*--Richard D. Altick, Professor of English,
The Ohio State University, Columbus.

*Honor and Dejection: Holman Hunt's Problem with a
Problem Play*--Mark Roskill, Professor of Art History,
University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

On Sunday, 26 April at 3 p.m., Ann Carter-Cox,
a soprano who has given solo recitals at Carnegie
Hall, Town Hall and Abraham Goodman House in New York
and appeared regularly at the Medieval Faires held
at the Cloisters each summer, will perform at the
Center. Accompanying herself on the lute and
dulcimer, she will sing songs of medieval and
Renaissance England, including lyrics from
Shakespeare's plays. The following Sunday (3 May),
also at 3 p.m., students in the Yale School of Drama
will present scenes from Shakespeare as performed
in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

As part of the Center's "Art in Context" series
Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m., Judith Colton, Associate
Professor of the History of Art, will present an
informal lecture on the oil painting by Adrien
Carpentiers entitled "Roubiliac Modeling his
Monument to Shakespeare" on 21 April, and Patrick
Noon, Acting Curator of Prints and Drawings, will
discuss "The Reconciliation of the Montagues and
the Capulets," a watercolor by Frederic Lord Leighton,
on 21 April.

Gallery talks by members of the Department of
Academic Programs are scheduled for the following
Thursdays at 2 p.m.: 23 and 30 April; 7 and 21 May;
4, 18 and 25 June. Special tours of the exhibition
may be arranged by contacting Teri Edelstein at
203/436-3013.

A summer film series, featuring Shakespearean
films made in the United States, Great Britain, and
Germany displaying a variety of cinematic techniques
and concepts, is scheduled for the following Saturdays
at 2:30 p.m.: 13 June--*Macbeth*; 27 June--*A Midsummer
Night's Dream*; 18 July--*Othello*; 1 August--*Romeo and
Juliet*; 15 August--*Hamlet*. All programs are open to
the public without charge.

"BLAKE AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY" AT THE 1980 MLA

That the 1980 MLA Special Session on "Blake and the
Eighteenth Century" was probably the longest such
meeting of the convention does not alone explain the
fact that the audience seemed to increase rather than
diminish in numbers during the presentation of the
four papers and a response. This was an eternity in
love indeed with its temporal productions. Leo
Damrosch, Jr. spoke first on "Blake and the Recovery
of the Lyric," arguing that Blake "recovers" the
lyric through poems "totally committed to meaning in
its deepest sense" and that the fullness of this
commitment is what separates Blake most decisively
from the tentative lyric poetry of the eighteenth
century. But at the same time, it is this "total
moral commitment to works of art that point beyond
themselves" that leads to Blake's later work and its
concern with "the gap between what art claims and
what it can perform." Jim Borck offered an illumi-
nated discussion of "Blake and the Topography of the
Human Imagination," and suggested that "Blake's
interest in London corresponds to other contemporary
interests in anatomy texts and cartographic develop-
ments during his life." Blake "must transform the
landscape from which his map has been drawn, an
external re-mapping which will cause distinctly new
interior maps to spring forth"--in particular, the
London that Blake "wishes to re-construct is an
artistically remapped London based upon anatomical
details." Jim's illustrations pointed to Vesalius'
Fabrica, an important anatomical text, as a source
for the poses of some Blake figures. In "Unlocking
Blake's Crystal CabiNet," Tom Vogler related some of
the significant details and the poetic argument of
that poem to Blake's understanding and detestation
of Lockean epistemology and metaphysics. Referring
to Barker's famous Panorama of 1787 and to Bentham's
proposed Panopticon, Tom characterized the speaker
of the poem as one who has entered "the tower of
observation, or the Lockean stage of self-reflection,
in which he can see himself seeing, while we see him
seeing himself and describing what he sees." Here,
however, "the power of observation does not unlock
the epistemological prison but rather constitutes it
and expands it." The speaker's attempt to "seize
the inmost Form" reveals that there is *nothing* there
that can be seized, perceived, or comprehended by
natural vision." In his remarks on "Classical Line
and Romantic Identity," Morris Eaves argued against
the recent tendency to use Blake's favorite aesthetic
opposition--line vs. color--to align him with artistic
neoclassicism and eighteenth-century attitudes toward
art. For Morris, "Blake--characteristically--reestab-
lishes Enlightenment principles on romantic grounds.
In the case of artistic line, he shears off certain
conventional associations (of line with reason and
nature, for instance), retains others (of line with
intellect), and adds still others (of line with
imagination). The result is a thoroughly romantic
cluster of metaphors." The Session closed with a
response in the spirit of true friendship from
Stephen Carr; addressing each of the preceding papers,
Steve's meta-critical effort attended to some charac-
teristic problems of placing Blake within standard
categories and sequences of literary history. "Read-
ing Blake forces us to explore, to question, and in

some sense to deconstruct received categories and methods of literary history and criticism . . . consequently a first stage or gesture in approaching this topic is to subject ourselves to a much more rigorous scrutiny than is usually the case." As the four papers and the response wonderfully demonstrate, we still have much to learn about Blake and the eighteenth century.

A petition urging the MLA to consider the creation of a Blake Discussion Group was signed by forty-three members of the audience. The petition was forwarded to the MLA, where it was promptly rejected. NELSON HILTON, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA.

JOSEPH JOHNSON'S IMPRINTS

In his review of G. P. Tyson's book on Joseph Johnson G. E. Bentley noted that the publication of a list of Johnson's imprints would be of value to Blake scholars.

Readers may be interested in knowing that such a list has been completed by Leslie F. Chard, Professor of English at the University of Cincinnati. Professor Chard describes the list as follows. The list contains over 2800 imprints (4800 separate entries when counting multiple editions) by some 1100 authors. Many of these imprints and authors probably influenced Blake; many of course are already known to have done so. More broadly, the list will help us understand more clearly the intellectual climate in which Blake worked.

The list has also been computer analyzed, so that students of the book trade in Blake's time can learn a good deal of firm information about the intricacies of publishing. This, too, should shed some light on Blake, notably in his dealings with publishers as an engraver.

If any of the readers of *Blake* would like to make preliminary inquiries about the contents of the list before it is published, Professor Chard would be happy to assist them.