

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
BLAKE

N E W S

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motifs elsewhere, to put a standardized Blakified spin on each design for Young, is to oversimplify both Blake and Young. The total corpus of Blake's work abounds with similarities that have no elucidatory power so far as the *Night Thoughts* series is concerned, even though that fact may be concealed, even from an interpreter, by the persuasive force of his or her critical rhetoric. I have not found a sure way to navigate such dilemmas with confidence of discovering interpretations unerringly consistent with Blake's own intentions and purposes, insofar as they can be recovered. But I do not consider the sifting of truth from error a utopian goal, even though the work can never be finished. I welcome the discovery of errors in interpretation, my own included, because recognition of false leads helps to close blind alleys and open more productive lines of exploration, clearing a temporary path to the next interpretive crossroads.

Let me end with these reflections on Blake's grandest design project, the 538 watercolor drawings for Young's *Night Thoughts*. I suppose that there were days when, faced with a text panel bearing some 22 lines of Young's discursive verses requiring a pictorial response, Blake's invention was not up to the challenge of producing something profoundly meaningful. Yet after many decades of pondering the designs and struggling with perplexities arising from them, often in collaboration with greatly gifted scholars, I continue to believe that Blake's imagination rarely failed him in his mighty endeavor to wrest art, life, energy, and meaning from what Young himself, at his most prophetic, acknowledged as his "parson'd Page" (IV, 842).

N E W S L E T T E R

BLAKE SIGHTINGS

"On the other hand, capitalism is inherently Darwinian, and a just society must provide a safety net for the poor. While intrusion by government into the market should be as minimal as possible, it is ethically imperative to monitor working conditions, product safety and environmental integrity. My lifelong scriptural texts are William Blake's radical poems "The Chimney Sweeper" and "London" (discussed in my first book), which heartbreakingly dramatize the disparity between the powerful and the powerless in newly industrialized, polluted England." From Camille Paglia's *Salon* column of 8 December 1999.

"William Blake was a painter, printmaker, and poet who was convinced his poetry far surpassed his art. In the 20th century, it's the art that's considered more important." Thomas Hoving, former director of the Metropolitan Museum, in *Art for Dummies* (IDG Books, 1999): 141. Try the *Idiot's Guide*?

"William Blake for goodness sake." The Montana Logging and Ballet Company reviews the last one thousand years of human history. Weekend Edition—Sunday, National Public Radio, 2 January 2000.

BLAKE AT STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

On 20 September-10 October 1999, in conjunction with the Midwestern regional meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, a small Blake show was held in the campus art gallery of Stephen's College, Columbia, Missouri. The show was drawn from items in the collection of Thomas Dillingham. It featured prints from the Dante and Job series plus a number of items that exemplify the range of twentieth-century interest in Blake, such as posters, facsimiles, LPs and CDs.

NEW POLICY ON *BLAKE* SUBMISSIONS

Please note the revisions in our policy on articles submitted for publication (p. 67, opposite table of contents).

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