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# BLAKE

N E W S

## Graduate Symposium at University of Tulsa

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## News

### CORRECTION

The following is a correction by Martin Butlin of a point made in his note on "William Blake in the Herbert P. Horne Collection," *Blake Newsletter* 21 (Summer 1973), p. 19:

I gave the alternative datings for Moore & Co's advertisement given by Keynes and David Bindman but regrettably failed to record the definitive arguments for dating the print, and hence the related drawing, to 1797-98 by David Erdman in his article "The Suppressed and Altered Passages in Blake's *Jerusalem*," in *Studies in Bibliography*, 17 (1964), 36, n. 34.

Although the figure style of this print is relatively tame in its delicacy and neo-classicism when one thinks of the dramatic impact of the large color prints of 1795, the style is perfectly acceptable in view of the commercial nature of the undertaking and considerably more accomplished than Blake's earlier work for commercial engravings such as the illustrations to Mary Wollstonecroft of 1791. There are indeed close similarities, allowing for the differences in scale and subject, to some of the *Night Thoughts* illustrations of 1796-97, for instance the smaller figures on the title-page to *Night the First*.

That the crude drawing on the reverse can still be dated c. 1779 is no objection to a later dating for the recto. Thanks to Bentley, Blake's economic re-use of paper is now well documented and there are a number of cases in which a sheet of paper has been used at widely differing dates, sometimes after being cut in half in the process (e.g., the drawing for "The Eagle" in the Rosenwald collection, on the back of which Blake drew two alternative title-page [?] designs considerably later in style).

### TEMPORARY CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Morton Paley, Executive Editor of the *Newsletter*, will be in England from May 1973 until 15 September 1973. During that time, mail will reach him most quickly if addressed to him in care of the Chelsea Arts Club, 143 Old Church Street, London S.W. 3.

### MLA BLAKE SEMINAR, DECEMBER 1972

Report by Joseph A. Wittreich, Jr., University of Wisconsin. A distinguished interpreter of Blake has observed that "Blake studies have, until recently, been hampered by a lack of scholarly interaction that leads to a progressive growth of understanding." The Blake Seminar, instituted five years ago through the efforts of David Erdman, is

one of many contributions to the *scholarly interaction* and cooperation that have come to mark Blake studies in recent years. The Seminar has consistently provided a forum for new ideas on Blake and has attracted a wide range of students--graduates and some undergraduates, seasoned scholars and new ones, most of them writing about Blake, but some of them art historians and literary scholars whose interests extend far beyond Blake. With an audience so diverse in its interests and commitments, it has seemed desirable to change the format of the Seminar in order to achieve an even greater exchange of ideas among those attending it. This year, instead of listening and responding to a single paper, those attending the Seminar were asked to read and to come prepared to discuss four essays presented under the rubric of "Blake and Tradition" and published in the Fall 1972 issue of *Blake Studies*: Florence Sandler's "The Iconoclastic Enterprise: Blake's Critique of Milton's Religion"; Robert N. Essick's "Blake and the Tradition of Reproductive Engraving"; Thomas H. Helmstadter's "Blake and the Age of Reason: Spectres in the *Night Thoughts*"; and Leslie Tannenbaum's "Blake's Art of Crypsis: *The Book of Urizen* and Genesis."

The scheduled time for the Seminar was less than ideal: the last hour of the last day of the convention. Even so, attendance was impressive--fifty-five people, according to the official MLA representative assigned to the meeting. Discussion was not as lively as one may have wished, partly because of the hour and partly because of the topic which, however engaging, prevented sharply focused discussion. It may be, too, that at least two of the papers required an awareness of the Bible and its traditions that Blake assuredly had but that few of us possess.

Next year's seminar, following essentially this same format, will focus on a more restricted topic, "Perspectives on Blake's *Milton*." The discussion leader will be Professor Karl Kroeber, Department of English, Columbia University; and the papers chosen by him to provide a point of departure for next year's discussion will, once again, appear in the Fall issue of *Blake Studies*. Its editors, Professors Kay and Roger Easson, merit special notice for their cooperation and for their generosity which have made it possible to continue this year's "experiment"--an experiment that provides for maximum participation of those attending the Seminar and that invites the "scholarly interaction" that will further our understanding of Blake.

### GRADUATE SYMPOSIUM AT UNIVERSITY OF TULSA

In April and May of 1973 the University of Tulsa will present a Blake graduate symposium under the general direction of Winston Weathers, Professor of English. The first lecture in the symposium will be given Wednesday, 11 April, by Robert Gleckner, University of California at Riverside. The next four weekly lectures will be given by Professor Weathers. Two final sessions, late in May, will be devoted to the presentation of papers by the ten graduate students participating in the symposium for credit. All sessions of the symposium will be open to the public free of charge.

This will be the third graduate offering of Blake at the University of Tulsa. The first was a seminar in 1968 concentrating upon *Milton*, and, according to Professor Weathers, "it was in that seminar that the idea for *Blake Studies* was developed by Kay Parkhurst and Roger Easson." The second offering was a seminar in 1971 with special emphasis upon student creative work--plays and poems primarily--written in response to Blake's work.

ANOTHER BLAKE WATERCOLOR CLEANED  
AT THE TATE GALLERY

Report by Martin Butlin, Keeper of the British Collection, The Tate Gallery, London. The Tate Gallery, continuing its policy of cleaning and, where necessary, remounting and re-framing its Blakes, has just treated the large early watercolor of "Oberon, Titania and Puck with Fairies Dancing," c. 1785-90. As can be seen from the reproduction in the second, 1971, edition of the Tate Gallery Blake catalogue, it was badly discolored with, in addition, several localized stains. The main discoloration was in the paper itself and this has been successfully bleached out and practically all of the stains removed, revealing the original delicacy and translucency of Blake's watercolor washes. In particular, the reds are now much cooler and accord better with the exceptionally delicate blue of Titania's dress; Oberon's robe is now white. Also more evident is the pentimento by which Blake changed the position of Titania's head; this was originally higher on the paper, making her tower over her consort. The first pair of eyes drawn by Blake can now be seen in the middle of her forehead and the original chaplet round her hair retains its blue coloring, whereas that in the revised position was left uncolored.

BLAKE ON EXHIBITION

The John Linnell Exhibition at Colnaghi's was something of a revelation for those who had been reluctant to take him seriously as a painter. It is clear from the extensive showing of his work that he could hold his own in perhaps the greatest period of English landscape. Even more remarkable is the individuality of his talent; his best work has a freshness and directness that one might compare with Constable, but in a subtler sense the analogy is really more with the minute naturalism of his German contemporaries. One remembers his advice to Samuel Palmer to look at Dürer, and his connection with the Aders circle, who were pioneers in the appreciation of Northern "Primitives," and who regarded Blake as a fellow spirit. Although there are in the exhibition a number of Blakes that were formerly in the Linnell collection and a fine selection of portraits of Blake by Linnell, there is little that sheds new light on Blake. There is a recently discovered Linnell portrait drawing purportedly of Blake, but I doubt if such a ponderous and respectable figure can be identified as the

poet, although the features are undeniably like. Linnell's proven portraits of Blake are always more animated and usually have some hint of prophetic fire, particularly in the eyes. (Report by David Bindman, University of London)

A Blake Exhibit at the Rockefeller Library of Brown University was held in January, featuring Trianon Press and other facsimiles. John J. Kupersmith prepared a section showing Blake's illustrations of other authors, and Tom Bodkin prepared a presentation showing the evolution in design of Blake's illuminated books. The project grew out of a bibliography class taught by librarian Stuart Sherman.

FUSELIS AT AUCTION

On Tuesday, 6 March 1973, Christie's auctioned "Fine English Drawings and Watercolours." Among them were a standing male nude, two studies of female heads, and an album of letters by Fuseli, as well as works by Romney, Rowlandson, and Varley.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Ann Dunlap: a study of "The Mental Traveller" in relation to twentieth-century literary criticism; a Ph.D. dissertation directed by Morris Eaves at the University of New Mexico.

James Ferguson: a study of the reintegrating or religious vision of *Jerusalem* and Biblical prophecy, with special reference to the Book of Ezekiel; and the structure of *Jerusalem* with regard to eighteenth-century ideas of Biblical prophecy; a Ph.D. dissertation directed by Michael Phillips at the University of Edinburgh.

Frank M. Parisi: a study of the relationship of the Book of Job to Blake's painting, engraving, and poetry by research in the visual, poetic, and theological sources from which Blake drew both for his understanding of the Book of Job as a work of literature and for the imagery in *The Gates of Paradise*, the *Songs*, some of the early prophetic books, and the engravings and watercolors of the Book of Job; a Ph.D. dissertation directed by Michael Phillips at the University of Edinburgh.

Lois Viscoli: a study of Prometheus as an archetype of creativity in the works of Blake and Shelley; a Ph.D. dissertation directed by Morris Eaves at the University of New Mexico.

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Robert Essick, ed., *The Visionary Hand: Essays for the Study of William Blake's Art and Aesthetics*. Reprinted articles, some revised. 500 pp., 174 ill. Early fall, 1973, from Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc.

Robert Essick and Jenijoy LaBelle, eds., *Blake's Night Thoughts Engravings*. Facsimile of poem with designs and a commentary. In preparation for Dover.