

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY BLAKE

N E W S

Santa Barbara Conference

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NEWS



The Muggeridge Blake

Public television in the U.S. recently offered a series of six hour-long programs based on the hypothesis that the ideas of St. Augustine, Pascal, Blake, Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, and Bonhoeffer add up to a kind of *Third Testament* (which is thus the title of the series). The host for the series was Malcolm Muggeridge, who devoted an hour of broadcast time to the ideas of each of the six men.

Colby Quarterly Blake Issue

According to John Sutherland, the editor, *Colby Library Quarterly* is planning a special issue devoted to Blake for the spring of 1977: "We invite papers on any aspect of Blake's life and works. Illustrations are not required, but may be used freely." The *Quarterly* has special interests that may be of interest to our readers: Blake, psychology and literature, the visual arts and literature. Address the editor at Colby College, Waterville, Maine 04901.

Work in Progress and a Query

Stephen Cobb: a dissertation at Sussex University on "The Role of the Genesis Ms. in Blake's Last Works"--an indication of the importance we may attach to the didactic works within Blake's overall artistic and intellectual development. Cobb has the following query for our readers:

I am looking for any published discussions, reproductions, or descriptions of the thirteen-page transcription of Genesis begun by Blake in manuscript with rough drawings and some coloring. I am writing a dissertation at Sussex on "The Role of the Genesis Ms. in Blake's Last Works," examining the imagery of the Genesis Ms. in order to shed light on the final years of Blake's work, his final interests and statements. There is some evidence to suggest continuity between his first simple didactic statements in illuminated form and the last works, *The Everlasting Gospel*, *The Ghost of Abel*, the Laocöon engraving, and of course the Genesis Ms.

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Santa Barbara Conference

The conference on "Blake in the Art of His Time" held at the University of California, Santa Barbara, 2-5 March 1976, included papers on the theme, art exhibitions, music, and a radio play.

According to the organizers, tapes are now available of the evening performance of "Songs of William Blake and Music of Blake's Time" by professional soloists and chorus:

3 7-inch reels, \$12.50

3 60-minute cassettes, \$5.85

Write Bud Bridgers, Learning Resources, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106. Enclose a check made out to the Regents of the University of California. Delivery will be immediate.

The following is an outline of the conference program, with abstracts of the papers presented.

SESSION ONE: Moderator, Morton D. Paley, Dept. of English, Boston University; Editor, *Studies in Romanticism*

Robert Essick, Dept. of English, California State University, Northridge
"Meditations on a Fiery Pegasus"

The art historian and the literary scholar look at Blake from the two different perspectives inherent in the structures and histories of their respective professions. We will progress most rapidly in our understanding of Blake by realizing the strengths and limitations of these points of view, discovering what each can contribute to the other, and thereby developing an approach as interdisciplinary as Blake's own art. The illuminated books and color prints of the 1790's provide particularly clear examples of the continuity and interdependence between Blake's technological inventions, the pictorial effects they produce, and the themes and structures of his poetry.

W. J. T. Mitchell*, Dept. of English, Ohio State University (*Sponsored by the Alumni Association, University of California)
"Style as Epistemology: Blake and the International Style of Linear Abstraction"

This essay tries to define Blake's pictorial style in relation to the movement toward linear abstraction in his time, and in relation to his own epistemology--that is, his theories of sensation, perception, and aesthetics. A large part of this

essay is a critique of the common view that Blake's style reflects an otherworldly idealism, a transcendent realm of ineffable archetypes, that his pictures, like Flaxman's, render "a distilled, immutable ideal, shed of sensuous qualities and fixed for eternity" (Robert Rosenblum, *Transformation in Late Eighteenth Century Art*). Against this view I argue that Blake employs the conventions of linear abstraction to produce a style of vivid, sensuous immediacy and dynamic movement. Instead of seeing Blake's art as the record of a static system of archetypes, I suggest that we view it as a process of visionary exploration, a rigorously empirical study of the encounter between imagination and concrete, sensuous reality. Blake's place in the art of his time begins with Flaxman and Fuseli, but his full achievement can be best understood alongside the visionary paintings of Turner and Goya.

Robert R. Wark, Curator of Collections, The Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California
"William Blake and His Circle at the Huntington Library and Art Gallery"

A brief descriptive account of the works of art (drawings, watercolors, paintings, prints, illustrated books) by Blake and members of his circle in the collection of the Huntington Art Gallery and Library. The works by Blake himself have been catalogued and are well-known to interested students. Much less familiar are the substantial groups of drawings and prints by Blake's contemporaries (Mortimer, Barry, Fuseli, Flaxman, Stothard, Romney, Locke, Hoare, etc.) and the so-called Blake followers (Palmer, Linnell, Richmond, Calvert, etc.). The visual resources for the study of Blake and his circle are probably richer at the Huntington than at any other public institution outside London.

SESSION TWO: Moderator, Robert Essick, California State University, Northridge

Roger Easson, Dept. of English, Illinois State University
"Blake and the Idea of the Gothic"

Blake's interest in the Gothic is part of his larger preoccupation with the living forms of Visionary Experience as preserved in the frozen lineaments of ancient religious traditions. The Gothic for Blake represents not merely his interest in medieval culture and the mystical Christian vision it embodies but, specifically, a rejection of the narrow historical perspective of religious tradition for a more comprehensive mythic view. I will show that Blake's interest in patriarchal religion, his visionary Christian stance, as well as his antiquarian researches into ancient Asiatic, Celtic, and British history fit clearly into what Blake conceived of as the Gothic tradition.

Thomas Pelzel, Dept. of Art, University of California, Riverside
"Mengs and His English Critics"

The name of Anton Raphael Mengs will be familiar enough to anyone even passingly familiar with 18th century art and aesthetic criticism. In much of the literature of the period, Mengs together with his compatriot J. J. Winckelmann is presented as one of the prime movers of Neoclassicism, that attitude of taste first spawned in Rome ca. 1760, soon influencing to one degree or another virtually every artist of rank from Britain to Russia, and ultimately proving to be the watershed between a moribund Baroque tradition and the rise of modern art. The "School of Mengs" in Rome is postulated to have been a magnet to which any young artist of taste and ambition would have been relentlessly drawn. In respect to British art, Mengs is assumed to have left his mark upon artists of such varied taste and background as Gavin Hamilton, Benjamin West, Nathaniel Dance, Richard Wilson, Angelica Kauffmann, and Henry Fuseli. It is certainly true that Mengs's name was familiar in Britain in the late 18th century: he was frequently sought out for portraits by Britons on the Grand Tour; the *Collected Works of Anton Mengs* were translated into English and widely read; his name and reputation were unavoidably to be reckoned with in the Academy lectures of Barry, Reynolds, and Fuseli. Yet, the degree of impact of the "School of Mengs" upon British taste has been more assumed than substantiated.

Mengs's original reputation has long since diminished, and from our present perspective, his chief interest is more as a phenomenon of taste rather than of personal artistic merit, as a focal point of reaction against the rigid precepts of academicism, rather than as a genuinely innovative force. It is interesting that it was precisely in Britain, so deprecated by Winckelmann as a backwater of benighted taste and

connoisseurship, that this more critical perspective was first articulated. It is also ironic that Henry Fuseli, whose translation of *Reflections of the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks* (1756) first introduced Winckelmann to English readers, should have launched the most devastating attack upon both Winckelmann and Mengs, in whom he could find only a chilling "instance of what perseverance . . . can achieve to supply the place of genius."

The focus of this paper is to trace these shifts in British taste in the late 18th and early 19th century as reflected in the critical evaluations of Mengs's art and theory.

Hazard Adams, Dept. of English, University of California, Irvine
"Revisiting Reynolds' *Discourses* and Blake's Annotations"

Blake did not annotate discourses nine to fifteen, where Reynolds takes up certain subjects of obvious interest to him: genius, imagination, and the art of Michelangelo. If we look closely at Blake's disagreements with Reynolds in his annotations to the first eight discourses, is there any ground to think that the last six would have required Blake in any way to have softened his views of Reynolds' thought?

SESSION THREE: Moderator, Thomas Pelzel, Dept. of Art, University of California, Riverside

Joseph Wittreich*, Dept. of English, University of Wisconsin
(*Sponsored by the American Blake Foundation)
"Painted Prophecies: the Tradition of Blake's Illuminated Books"

Henry Fuseli has singled out John's Book of Revelation as the model for Christian art, praising John's method there as the proper medium of art for all those poets and painters who are committed to purveying the truths of the spirit. When it is remembered with Benjamin Malkin that Blake was a careful student of John's prophecy and when it is recalled with various biblical commentators that the Book of Revelation was composed of both pictures and words, then it may be proposed that John's prophecy is the prototype for Blake's own prophecies, which assault the mind both through picture and word. Blake's objective, like John's, is to open the doors of perception, thereby bringing man to the highest stage of consciousness that is possible. John's methods are Blake's methods, but also the strategies and themes, the structures and ideology of John's prophecy are appropriated by Blake and used in his various illuminated books--nowhere more effectively than in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*.

Kay Parkhurst Easson, Dept. of English, Illinois State University
"Blake and the Art of the Book"

Although Blake's illuminated books are often assumed to be in the illuminated manuscript tradition, more accurate generic perspective of these graphic-poetic works demands acknowledgment of their relationship both to the tradition of book illustration and to the context of book illustration in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Examining Blake's conception of "the book," his traditional and innovative techniques of book illustration and, thus, his engagement with the conventions of printed format clarifies the structural methodology of the illuminated books.

Yvonne Carothers, Dept. of English, University of California, Irvine
"Space and Time in *Milton*: 'The Bard's Song'"

Lessing's distinction in his *Laocoön* between painting and poetry rests upon an understanding of space and time as empirical realities which exist apart from man. Blake, however, understood space and time differently--as forms of intuition latent within human consciousness and imposed by man upon his experience. This view, which anticipated Kant's, enabled Blake to create a verbal-visual art whose formative principle derives not from empirical modes of organization such as perspective and chronology but solely from the forms of human consciousness. In "The Bard's Song" of *Milton*, Blake used his radical epistemology to create an art of pure forms, which he assigns to "spaces," and to interrelate these forms according to the dictates of his own "psychic" time.

SESSION FOUR: Moderator, Kay Parkhurst Easson, Dept. of English, Illinois State University

Anne K. Mellor, Dept. of English, Stanford University
 "Physiognomy, Phrenology and Blake's Visionary Heads"

This paper explores Blake's familiarity with and sympathy for the physiognomical theories of Johann Caspar Lavater and the phrenological system of Drs. Gall and Spurzheim. When we look at three of Blake's Visionary Heads (The Man who Taught Blake Painting in his Dreams, Socrates, and The Man who Built the Pyramids) in the context of these physiognomic systems, the Heads take on more meaning and moral significance than has hitherto been recognized.

E. J. Rose*, Dept. of English, University of Alberta (*Sponsored by the American Blake Foundation)
 "Blake and the Gothic"

This paper attempts an assessment of Blake's unification of Gothic and Michelangelesque ideas and attitudes towards art. It tries to answer such questions as "What was it in Gothic art that so appealed to Blake? How important to his literary and pictorial imagination is the Gothic? How could Blake fuse the apparent contrary states of art represented by the Gothic and Michelangelo?"

Martin Butlin, Keeper of the British Collection, The Tate Gallery, London
 "Cataloguing Blake: An Art Historian's Approach"

This paper discusses the importance of cataloguing as providing firm points of reference in such things as authenticity, dating and the physical state of the work of art. Contemporary and later documentary evidence needs to be supplemented by the almost intuitive judgment of the eye, but there are cases when these two forms of approach contradict each other. Characteristics peculiar to the cataloguing of Blake are the small number of early collectors of his work, the importance of William Rossetti's list catalogue of 1863, the fact that quality is relatively unimportant in assessing authenticity, the existence of many works in a number of versions or as parts of series or groups of designs, the possible importance for dating of the form of signature used by Blake and, most important of all, the fact that Blake was a creative writer as well as a visual artist.

WEDNESDAY EVENING:

Songs of William Blake and Music of Blake's Time

Lotte Lehmann Hall, UCSB Campus

Performed by: Peter Roberts, Carl Zytowski, Michael Ingham, Jill Feldman, Stephen Kelly, John Beckner.
 The Schubertians. The Dordians.

Settings by: Ralph Vaughan Williams, Charles Parry, Arthur Farwell, John Crawford, and others.

Interlocutor: Eloise Hay.

SESSION FIVE: Moderator, Joseph Wittreich, Dept. of English, University of Wisconsin

Jenijoy LaBelle*, Dept. of English, California Institute of Technology (*Sponsored by the American Blake Foundation)
 "Blake's Visions and Revisions of Michael Angelo"

Although the influence of the Sistine frescoes on Blake's art has been generally acknowledged, the most direct evidence of his indebtedness to Michelangelo--a series of seven wash drawings in the British Museum--has received little attention. These prophets and forefathers of Christ, carefully copied after Adam Ghisi's engravings, help us to trace the lineage of some of Blake's most significant *pathos formulae*. His transformation of Michelangelo's figures into his own pictorial vocabulary indicates the ways Blake responded to the art of the past as an essential part of original composition.

David Bindman*, Dept. of Art History, University of London
 (*Sponsored by the Art Affiliates, UCSB)
 "Repetition and Transformation in Blake's Art"

Leslie Tannenbaum*, Dept. of English, Wright State University
 (*Sponsored by the Alumni Association, University of California)
 "Blake and the Iconography of Cain"

The myth of Cain and Abel became increasingly important in Blake's art, as he used the biblical story to embody the themes of pity, wrath, divine justice and atonement. Blake's pictorial versions of the consequences of Abel's death emphasize these themes by invoking pictorial tradition, thereby placing his work within a context that shows him to be

criticizing and subverting orthodox aspects of that tradition, particularly those orthodoxies that appear in the work of his contemporaries. In contrast to his fellow artists, Blake sympathized with Cain rather than Abel and rejected the orthodox morality and the belief in retributive justice that their versions of the biblical myth affirm. Against his contemporaries' essentially tragic vision, which evokes pity in the representation of the slaughtered Abel and evokes terror in the representation of the divine wrath descending upon Cain, Blake develops a comic vision, in the Dantean sense, that calls for and creates a redefinition of atonement.

SESSION SIX: Moderator, Anne K. Mellor, Dept. of English, Stanford University

Morton D. Paley, Dept. of English, Boston University
 "The Truchsessian Gallery Revisited"

In October 1804, "on the day after visiting the Truchsessian Gallery of pictures," Blake had an intensely significant experience which led him to re-dedicate himself to his art. "I was again enlightened with the light I enjoyed in my youth, and which has for exactly twenty years been closed from me as by a door and by window-shutters." What was the nature of this experience, and what had it to do with the Truchsessian Gallery? Using the catalogue of 1803 and the sale catalogue of 1806, we can reconstruct Blake's experience. First we must realize that the lack of authenticity of many of these pictures would in no way have impeded Blake's response: for his purposes a good Old Master copy was as good as a genuine original. The nature of the pictures in the Gallery will then show that here Blake was dramatically confronted with an overwhelming number of examples of the type of art he was coming to regard as "true" in juxtaposition with at least as much that he regarded, after about 1800, as "false." His ideas about form and outline *versus* colorism and chiaroscuro had no doubt been growing for several years, but they crystallized at the Truchsessian Gallery. As a result, Blake rejected the eclecticism he had practised in his art for many years and embraced the ideas about art which we now think of as characteristic of him.

Seymour Howard, Dept. of Art History, University of California, Davis
 "Blake, the Antique, Nudity, and Nakedness"

The art of antiquity was an early and continuous source of inspiration for Blake. The youthful and beautiful unself-conscious nudes of ancient classical art were, of course, essential models for the pervasive neo-classic taste of his time. The influence of such figures, or their Renaissance and contemporary reinterpretations, upon his own very eclectic compositions is patent. There is, however, often an apparent ambiguity or ambivalence toward primary nakedness in the otherwise sensual and uninhibited art of Blake, at least in his finished work. This prophetic inconsistency may be less attributable to personal scruple than to Blake's efforts to diminish or disguise polarities of gender in the mystic utopian universe of his making.

David Erdman, Dept. of English, S.U.N.Y., Stony Brook
 "Blake's Body English"

Crucial messages are signalled to us from the articulate limbs of the giant forms and struggling infants and wrestling groups in Blake's illuminations--messages crucial to our eternal salvation.

THURSDAY EVENING:

An Island in the Moon, by William Blake

A performance on audiotape of Blake's celebrated satire, produced and directed by Everett Frost, Associate Professor, Dept. of English, California State University, Fresno. Music composed and conducted by Edward Cansino. Professor Frost will introduce the performance and lead a discussion afterwards.

SESSION SEVEN: Moderator, Lorenz Eitner, Dept. of Art, Stanford University

Jean Hagstrum*, Dept. of English, Northwestern University,
 (*Sponsored by the American Blake Foundation)
 "Blake and Romney: The Gift of Grace"

I shall argue that among the many other influences from Continental and English art that Blake absorbed, that of Romney was

one of the most important. I refer not to Romney's public, portrait art, with its many representations of Lady Hamilton, but to the private, highly subjective, and emotional art that one finds in the drawings and sketches. I shall argue that this art was known to Blake and transmitted to him through personal contact. Although I shall take note of and even illustrate the "sublime" side of Romney's drawings, I shall "feature" the ones that embody that great and complex eighteenth-century quality of *delicacy*. My argument is that these works by Romney lie back of Blake's *Tiriel*, the *Book of Thel*, and the *Songs of Innocence*--and also the great illustrations to the poetry of John Milton.

David Irwin, Dept. of Art History, Aberdeen University
"Scottish Contemporaries and Heirs of William Blake"

The paper will examine the work of Scottish painters whose art runs parallel to that of Blake, and who also encountered similar neglect by their contemporaries. The discussion will be concerned primarily with two artists who spent most of their working lives in Edinburgh. Firstly, Alexander Runciman, who was 20 years senior to Blake and was producing the main body of his work in the 1770's and 80's; and secondly, David Scott, a true heir to Blake, born in 1806, and producing his mature works in the days of early Victorian Britain. The work of both artists is not as well known as it should be. Runciman, after all, was highly praised by Henry Fuseli, who was not a man to waste words in unnecessary flattery, when he described him as "the best painter of us in Rome." Scott, brother of the Pre-Raphaelite painter and poet, William Bell Scott, was admired by Rossetti for his independence and lack of compromise, and by Emerson for his genius.

SESSION EIGHT: Moderator, Seymour Howard, University of California, Davis

Morris Eaves, Dept. of English, University of New Mexico
"Blake and the Artistic Machine"

Rubens hired a phalanx of specialists to execute hundreds of commissions under his trademark; following in the same artistic-commercial tradition, Reynolds customarily painted only the faces of his portraits and left the rest to the "drapery men"; printseller Rudolph Ackermann fitted emigrés into a system of manufacture efficient enough to produce hundreds of thousands of colored prints for the *Mirror of London*. This organization of production in the graphic arts and its associated technology are the right context for Blake's most important artistic principles, which have more often been described--usually with apologies for his paranoid tone and narrow tastes--than understood. Against the proper background, with the transitions in the proper places, Blake's aesthetic comes together in a lively coherence that does not disintegrate even in the face of the magisterial Enlightenment common sense of Reynolds' *Discourses*, where Blake learned, if he had not known it before, that principles of manufacture can become aesthetic principles, and that in a commercial empire the approved art is at many points an allegory of commerce. Why was Reynolds a "plagiarist"? Why did Venetian and Flemish painters "cause that every thing in art shall become a Machine"? Why is the sign of the Machine "broken lines, broken masses, and broken colours"? Why did Pope rewrite Donne's satires? The answer is the same in each case, and it lurks in Blake's cryptic assertion that "Execution is only the result of invention." How that might be so we shall discover from the lesson variously taught by the modern dishwasher, Washington's face on the dollar bill, and decorum, the prissy but conventional word in criticism for the relation of form to content.

G. E. Bentley, Jr., Dept. of English, University of Toronto
"A Jewel in an Ethiope's Ear" (Read by Morton D. Paley)

The apocryphal *Book of Enoch*, a miscellaneous collection of prophetic texts including The Book of the Watchers, The Vision of Noah, The Book of Astronomy, seems to have been written down in its present form about the First Century before Christ. Its first complete printing was the English translation made by the Reverend Professor Richard Lawrence in 1821. The new publication made hardly any impression on thinking contemporaries; even theologians showed little interest in it for a time. However, within a few years its divine eroticism had attracted the attention of five major artists and poets: William Blake, John Flaxman, Thomas Moore, Richard Westall, Lord Byron.

It is the purpose of the present paper to indicate briefly when and how *The Book of Enoch* came to be known in Europe, then

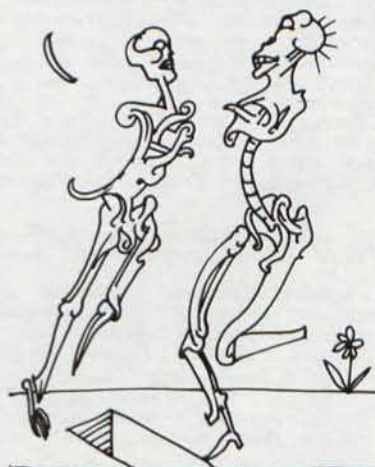
to examine and compare some of the ways in which Blake, Flaxman, Moore, Westall and Byron responded to it--in particular the section called The Book of Watchers, with its account of how angels (called the Watchers of Heaven) fell in love with the daughters of men and propagated a race of giants. In *The Book of Enoch* Blake found confirmation of his own prophetic visions--hence the gusto with which he began to illustrate it, a gusto that makes the illustrations for it of Flaxman and Westall seem "earth-bound and immature" by comparison.

FRIDAY EVENING: Reception, Art Gallery, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street. Visiting Blake scholars in Art and English are cordially invited to the reception and to the exhibition, *The Followers of William Blake*: numerous original works by Palmer, Richmond, Varley, Calvert, et al. Organized by Larry Gleason, University of East Texas.

CONCURRENT PUBLIC EVENTS

1. UCSB Art Galleries. Daily, Feb. 24-Mar. 28.
Blake in the Art of His Time, organized by Corlette Walker. 100 original paintings and drawings by Blake, Flaxman, Fuseli, Barry, Mortimer and others.
2. The Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State Street. Daily, Mar. 2-5.
The Followers of William Blake: paintings by Samuel Palmer, George Richmond, John Varley, John Linnell. Organized by Larry Gleason, University of East Texas.
3. UCSB Main Library. Daily, Feb. 26-Mar. 26.
Two related exhibitions, organized by Robert Essick and Donald Fitch:
 - (a) *William Blake, Book Illustrator*. Blake's illustrations for various projects, narratives, encyclopedias, commercial works, etc.
 - (b) *Blake's Illuminated Books: A Historical Survey of Facsimiles*. The evolution of facsimiles of Blake's colored books from 1860 to the recent Trianon Press editions. Rare items of great pictorial and bibliographic interest.

Albion-gram. There is only one endangered Species: Me!
And I have sent Arrows pursuing in attempt upon the
Individual's life--which return, for the most part, bloodied.
BLAKE published to the Angels--a mean Telepath, He--
They bereft of Messages selecting furtherance upon the
Certain Sons of Steadfast Man. Hear the Devils; Jeru-
salem, yet awake, lies in ruins. And hear again what will
Be seen: The Serpent Temple's writing in the Dusty
Clouds of ALBION comes--though the invisible pricking-
Up of Angelic ears must fail to catch the dronish
Mistral's hum--Sleep yet, my darlings; till the awful Hand.



Golgonooza

*What a Secret! Nothing is of Consequence! Health and
Beauty aids, rainbow's hand upon the Midnight moat--
Go! And what is left? No one hears a knock upon
The Door without its apprehension. How many cells
In your Body like stock, believing in their Flesh?
ALBION is not a Corporate Entity. Awake! I am buried
Literally in one Sportive Cell--that the children of
Jerusalem may become the Children of Los.*