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N E W S

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NEWSLETTER

MLA BLAKE 1979

W. J. T. Mitchell of the University of Chicago will be discussion leader for the 1979 Special Session on Blake at the MLA Annual Meeting. The topic will be "Blake on Language and Writing." Those interested in being on a panel should send Mitchell a paper of not more than fifteen pages by 30 March 1979 at the latest, sooner if possible.

MLA

The topic for the 1979 meeting of the English Romanticism Group of the MLA will be "Death & Dying in the Romantics." Papers should have a reading time of 20 minutes, and they should be submitted before 15 April to David V. Erdman, Crane Neck Point, Setauket, New York 11733.

At the next meeting of the Modern Language Association of America (San Francisco, 27-30 December 1979), the Division of Literature and the Other Arts will sponsor a meeting on the subject of literary illustration. If you or any of your colleagues would like to submit a paper to be considered for inclusion on the program for this meeting, I would be very grateful for your interest and participation.

By literary illustration, the Executive Committee means visual art designed to be viewed and interpreted in conjunction with literary texts. The texts may be written in any of the languages normally represented at the MLA, and may date from any period. Medieval manuscript illuminations are no less eligible than, say, the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery or the works of Phiz. The Executive Committee does not encourage the submission of papers on pictorialist texts which are not actually illustrated.

Three or four papers will be selected for oral presentation by the authors in San Francisco. Papers should be 15-20 minutes in length, and should be submitted in full rather than in abstract. If slides are included in the presentation, please send them with the manuscript or describe them on an accompanying list. (Projection facilities will be provided at the meeting.) Papers should be sent to me at the Department of English, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131, by April 20 (March 20 for non-members of the MLA which has some travel funds for distinguished speakers in fields other than those directly represented by the MLA (such as art history), and for speakers who reside outside the United States and Canada. The Division must request such funds no later than April 15, and is not certain to receive them). Results will be announced by May 20. HUGH WITEMEYER, UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, DIVISION OF LITERATURE AND THE OTHER ARTS, MLA.

MLA BLAKE 1978

Each year the MLA awards the William Riley Parker prize to the author of an outstanding article published in *PMLA* during the year. This year the Prize went to Morris Eaves, University of New Mexico, for "Blake & the Artistic Machine: An Essay in Decorum & Technology," which appeared in the October 1977 issue. At the general meeting Eaves accepted the cash prize of \$500 and a citation which reads as follows: "This essay not only illuminates William Blake's esthetic and his stance as an artist and a critic of society but also casts new light on the relationship between art and technology. Morris E. Eaves sets his lucid exposition of Blake's attitudes toward technological change within the broad contexts of conceptual analysis, cultural history from the Renaissance to the present, and the influence of the machine on the human condition."

At the Special Session on "Editing the Romantics" (discussion leader E. B. Murray, University of Missouri, St. Louis), G. E. Bentley, Jr., presented an illustrated lecture on the special editorial problems faced by an editor of Blake.

An overflow audience of more than 100 attended the 1978 MLA Special Session on Blake's Concept of Self. Since abstracts of the first three papers read by John H. Sutherland, Christine Gallant, and Robert N. Essick appeared in the fall 1978 issue of *Blake*, I shall summarize them only briefly here. The discussion focused primarily upon points raised in the last paper on Blake's Spectre by Morton Paley, which I shall therefore report in more detail.

In "Some Blake Self-Images in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*: The Blake-Los Relationship," John Sutherland traced Blake's move from self-division to self-integration (defined as a union with Los) in *Milton* 10 and *Milton* 47. In *Jerusalem*, Los and Blake seem "close to full identification" with each other: both are engaged in the same "great task" and both are visually fused in the frontispiece. In *Jerusalem* 6, Los/Blake has gained control over his Spectre, his own self-defeating "pride and self-righteousness" which had appeared as separate entities in *Milton* 10. And on *Jerusalem* 100, Los/Blake compels his Spectre (his rational powers) and his Emanation (his now acknowledged "unconscious realms of imagination") to work "harmoniously for the integrated individual" and at the same time to create the world of space and time in which that individual can exist. Here, Sutherland concluded, Los "represents Blake's integrated self" and this plate therefore is "Blake's most convincing demonstration of his own hard-won inner harmony."

Christine Gallant then argued, in "Blake's Presence as First-Person Voice in *Jerusalem*," that the first-person voice operates much as does the authoritative dream-voice that Jung said emerged from the center of the total personality or what he called "the supraordinate Self." The message of this dream-voice "is a final summing-up of a long process of unconscious deliberation and weighing of arguments." In *Jerusalem*, Blake acts "as spokesman