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**BLAKE**

R E V I E W

Frederick Cummings and Allen Staley, eds.,  
Romantic Art in Britain: Drawings and Paintings  
1760-1860

Anne T. Kostelanetz

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Michael J. Tolley notes the existence of a University of London dissertation, William Michael Rossetti as Critic and Editor by Roger William Peattie (1966). Chapter VII (pp. 403-411) is on "Blake." There are "a few minor (marginal) additions to Blake bibliography."

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From Professors Kay Long and Roger R. Easson, University of Tulsa:

Blake Studies, a journal devoted to encouraging interest in William Blake, will be published bi-annually at the University of Tulsa -- the first issue to appear September, 1968. The subscription rate for one year is \$3.00, and checks should be made payable to Blake Studies, the University of Tulsa.

We project a journal containing approximately six to eight articles in the ten to thirty page range. Basically, we feel we would accept any item of interest to studies of William Blake, placing only one restriction on manuscripts submitted -- that they represent new insights and significant contributions to Blakean scholarship. We are now receiving manuscripts for future issues. All correspondence should be directed to:

Blake Studies  
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Tulsa, Oklahoma 74104

We are pleased to announce the members of the Advisory Board of Editors of the Studies: Hazard Adams, George M. Harper, Karl Kiralis, Martin K. Nurmi, Edward J. Rose, Mark Schorer, Ruthven Todd, Winston Weathers, Joseph A. Wittreich.

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REVIEW

Romantic Art in Britain: Drawings and Paintings 1760-1860, Exhibition Catalogue ed. by Frederick Cummings and Allen Staley (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1968)

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Blakists will probably be more impressed by Robert Rosenblum's single trenchant paragraph comparing Blake to Jakob Carstens than by Frederick Cummings' superficial, occasionally erroneous ten page entry on the Blake paintings and drawings exhibited in Detroit and Philadelphia this winter. In an introductory essay for this catalogue, "British Art and the Continent, 1760-1860," Rosenblum first locates Blake in the eighteenth century school which, having rejected as an impossibility the Academicians' attempt to fuse the real and the ideal, turned in the opposite direction from such empiricists as Stubbs and Joseph Wright toward a wholly non-illusionistic, visionary art. The taste for the "demonic and fantastic," for "the extravagantly heroic and sublime," first advocated by the Runcimans, John Mortimer and Henry Fuseli, among others, reached a simultaneous culmination in the totally "anti-empirical" art of Blake and Asmus Jakob Carstens.

Although unknown to each other, both Blake and Carstens felt "a compulsive need to invent strange private cosmologies that could replace stagnant religious beliefs"; both created "a Michaelangelesque style of heroic figures that soared through flattened, abstract spaces"; both were "vehement in their hatred of the academic art establishment"; and both used drawing, tempera and watercolor to "counter the earthbound illusionism of the oil medium" (p. 12). Rosenblum thus shows that Blake was not the isolated artistic figure we sometimes think him; rather, he derives from a specific eighteenth century nonillusionistic tradition which flourished both in England and on the Continent. Rosenblum develops this idea even further in his doctoral dissertation, "The International Style of 1800" (New York University, 1956); unfortunately he omitted his most illuminating analyses of Blake's art from his published Transformations in Late Eighteenth-Century Art (Princeton, 1966).

Although Frederick Cummings persuasively argues that the chalk drawing we know as a nude study of Robert Blake is only an academic figural exercise done when Blake was attending the Royal Academy school under Georg Moser in 1778, he errs in his descriptions of Catalogue Entry 98 ("Illustration to Milton's Paradise Lost: The Fall") and 99 ("Albion Compelling the Four Zoas to Their Proper Tasks"). Discussing Blake's Milton illustrations, Cummings unnecessarily confuses us by asserting that Blake did "three series of illustrations" to Paradise Lost (p. 164). To the two, and only two, known series of Blake's Paradise Lost illustrations--the complete twelve drawing set at the Huntington Library, and the scattered but now complete Butts set at the Boston Museum (nine drawings), the Huntington Library ("Satan, Sin and Death"), Victoria and Albert Museum ("Satan summons his Legions") and Harvard College Library (the recently "rediscovered" White drawing, "So judged he man," exhibited here)--Cummings has wrongly added a third set of Paradise Lost illustrations actually done by Edward Burney and bound into an extra-illustrated edition of Paradise Lost (London, 1827).

Cummings' identification of the pencil drawing titled "Los kneeling" in Keynes' Pencil Drawings, II as "Albion Compelling the Four Zoas to their Proper Tasks" is highly dubious. Although I have not had a chance to study the drawing first-hand, the reproductions in Keynes and in this catalogue depict a kneeling male figure with a sharply pointed spear or arrow in his left hand and the handle of what Keynes identifies as "(apparently) a sickle," rather than the bow Cummings sees, in his right hand. His radiating, spiky hair and the shafts (of light?) he hurls clearly identify him as a personification of the Sun; in fact he closely resembles the personified Sun on Plate 11 of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell. If this drawing was originally intended to illustrate Plate 95 of Jerusalem, as Cummings asserts, it pictures not Albion but "the Sun in heavy clouds/Struggling to rise above the Mountains. in his burning hand/He takes his Bow, then chooses out his arrows of flaming gold" (95:11-13). If this figure must be identified with a major character in Jerusalem, surely he more closely resembles the youthful Los who is pictured on Plates 6, 95, 97 and 100 than the aged Albion, the white-haired and bearded "Universal Father" (97:6) who appears on Plates 94, 96 and 99.

But I question whether Blake ever intended this drawing to illustrate Jerusalem. Such an obvious personification of the Sun is more characteristic of Blake's illustrations for Young's Night Thoughts (1797) than for his own late Prophetic Books. The sharply pointed arrows or spears in this drawing also appear on Pages 7, 8, 13, 57 and 63 of the published Night Thoughts engravings; the sensuously full lips are identical with those of

the "mighty hunter," Death, on Page 70 and of the Thunderer on Page 80; the heavy, wavy eyebrows span the brow of the figure of the Sun on Page 95; and throughout the illustrations, the sickle consistently symbolizes the destructions of Time. Perhaps this drawing was intended to illustrate a passage from Young, possibly the passage in Night III in which even the Sun, seeing the dying Narcissa, "(As if the sun could envy) check'd his beam, / Denied his wonted succor," and cruelly helped Death seize her. Certainly, the size of this drawing would make it more suitable for the Night Thoughts edition than for Jerusalem. Blake's drawing measures 12 5/16" x 9 7/8"; the Jerusalem full-plate pages measure only 6 5/8" x 8 3/4" (and this drawing could only have been a half-plate); while the Night Thoughts pages measure 12 1/4" x 21 1/2". Blake's drawing would fit the top of a Night Thoughts page almost perfectly. Since this drawing, both in style and content, so closely resembles the Night Thoughts illustrations (both the sketches in the British Museum and the published engravings), I would hesitate to accept a date as late as Cummings' "c. 1815-1818." A much earlier date, perhaps c. 1795-1797 when Blake was illustrating Young's poem, seems more probable.

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A Checklist of Blake Publications, June '67 to May '68

Readers are invited to send in any items we missed for inclusion next issue. Annotations, unless otherwise indicated, are by the editor. The checklist was compiled with the assistance of Karen Walowit.

A. Bibliography

1. MIA International Bibliography, 1966. PMLA, LXXII (June 1967), items 5418 through 5449; see also items 5367, 7343, 8180, 10956, 13066.
2. English Literature: A Current Bibliography. PQ, XLVI (July 1967), 327-331. (John E. Grant)
3. The Romantic Movement: A Selective and Critical Bibliography for 1966. ELN, V (September 1967), 21-25 (David V. Erdman, with the assistance of Kenneth Negus and James S. Patty)

Each of these has some listings not in the others. The MIA bibliography is the longest, but it is not annotated; PQ and ELN describe some items and review some others. Some of the ELN reviews are by Martin K. Nurmi. We might add that although the June '67 Newsletter missed some articles included in one or more of these lists, it also includes some not found in any of them.

B. Articles and Reviews.

1. Anon., "Illuminations," TLS, September 14, 1967, p. 820. Review of the Milton facsimile published for the Blake Trust. The reviewer praises the facsimile but has some trouble with Blake: Satan cannot be Hayley because Satan is the selfhood.
2. Baine, Rodney M., "Blake's 'Tyger': The Nature of the Beast," PQ, XLVI (October 1967), 488-498. "A reading of 'The Tyger' in the context of Songs of Innocence and of its analogues or sources reveals it as the shocked and fascinated reaction of an observer imaginatively visualizing the creation of brutal cruelty in nature and in man, as symbolized by the Tyger." Very little is added to previous discussions of the poem, and what remains is questionable -- how relevant, for example, is "Goldsmith's selection of the tiger as the most cruel and bloodthirsty of all the wild animals"?