

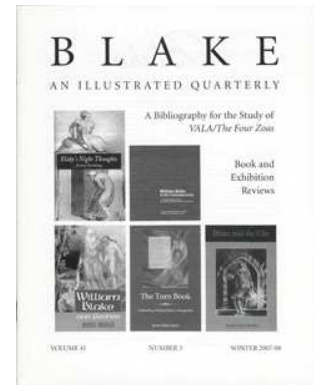
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P A R T I C U L A R

The Last Judgment by “B. Blake”

Morton D. Paley

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more nuanced and critical account of gender in the poem, arguing that while Blake's humanism seeks to transcend sexual division, he "does *not* succeed in writing beyond the sexes: the female remains within the structure of his prophecies as a degraded or an invisible term" (83). And especially importantly for Ankarsjö's reading, she claims that Ololon and Milton do not reunite but instead remain at odds, and that the figure she does merge with, "One Man Jesus the Saviour," sublates her identity: "this One Man seems to be grounded in a vanished female figure whose return to inanimate matter lends sacrificial strength to the prophet" (97). This is not to say that Bolton's reading is the correct one, but it does deserve scrutiny, especially since her approach has been extended in important ways by other scholars, especially Claire Colebrook. In "Blake and Feminism: Romanticism and the Question of the Other,"² Colebrook argues that Blake develops a positive theory of sexual difference, one which "dynamically sustains each term *in relation*" (4). She reads the ending of *Jerusalem* as more complex and ambivalent than does Ankarsjö, contending that in Albion's union with Jerusalem Blake recognizes the essential relation of two terms which are "never fully ... integrated" (6). Colebrook asserts that Blake's portrayal of unity actually includes a dimension of otherness: "Blake ... exploits the fact that Albion is specifically 'man' insofar as he needs to reinclude his female emanation; it is *this* aspect of Blake's figuring of gender which ... sustains an essential recognition of alterity" (7). These creative, subtle readings show that Blake can be placed in productive dialogue with recent feminist theory and literary scholarship.

The appearance of Ankarsjö's *William Blake and Gender* comes at an auspicious moment of renewed feminist interest in Blake's work. A recent collection, *Women Reading William Blake*,³ contains another solid essay by Colebrook, situating Blake in both feminist and literary history, and other essays that fill in contexts explored less fully by Ankarsjö, although his interest in Mary Hays and Blake remains a promising and unexplored connection. Along with Janet Warner's novel *Other Sorrows, Other Joys* (2003) and Marsha Keith Schuchard's *Why Mrs. Blake Cried* (2006), *Women Reading William Blake* indicates that the trend in feminist Blake scholarship is historical and biographical, with attention focused on Blake's wife Catherine and women in Blake's circle, including Ann Flaxman, and on his relation to contemporary women writers such as Joanna Baillie, Mary Robinson, Charlotte Smith, and Mary Tighe. Ankarsjö had the right idea at the right time, and his effort to uncover a more feminist humanism in Blake's work is laudable, but his study appears somewhat reductive in the light of resurgent feminist scholarship.

2. *Blake* 34.1 (summer 2000): 4-13.

3. Ed. Helen P. Bruder (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

MINUTE PARTICULAR

The Last Judgment by "B. Blake"

BY MORTON D. PALEY

AS is well known, William Blake exhibited three pictures at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1808. These are listed in the exhibition catalogue as "311 Jacob's dream,—vide Genesis, chap. xxviii, ver. 12"; "439 Christ in the sepulcher, guarded by angels"; and "477 The Last Judgment."¹ There is a peculiarity about the listing of the third that has been silently corrected in Blake scholarship. It seems indeed trivial, involving only one letter. The artist's name is given as "B. Blake."

Royal Academy catalogues were probably produced quickly and with little proofreading. Getting a letter wrong was nothing out of the ordinary. The miniature painter John Hazlitt's name was, for example, given as "T. Hazlitt" in the catalogue of 1802 in conjunction with Hazlitt's portrait of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.² However, there is an important difference here. There was in 1802 no exhibiting painter named T. Hazlitt, while John Hazlitt had exhibited every year from 1788 through 1801. The public could easily guess the real name of the artist who showed the Coleridge portrait and three others. In contrast, Benjamin Blake was the name of a painter of landscapes and of game who exhibited "View at Dumford, near Amesbury" (171) in 1808, and whose address is given in the catalogue as 37 Broad Street, Soho.³ (William Blake's address is correctly given as 17 South Molton Street, Oxford Street.) As the Royal Academy did not act as an agent for selling paintings, providing the artist's address was a way for prospective buyers to gain contact, and so giving the wrong artist's name for *The Last Judgment* was, though unintentional, a professional-disservice. It is also an indication of how obscure Blake was as he entered what Alexander Gilchrist was to call his "Years of Deepening Neglect."

1. *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy MDCCCVIII*.

2. See my *Portraits of Coleridge* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1999) 28.

3. Some details about B. Blake, but not the confusion about *The Last Judgment*, are given in appendix 2, "Blake Residences," in G. E. Bentley, Jr.'s *Blake Records*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale UP, 2004) 737. By 1811, when B. Blake showed "View at Great Dunford, Wiltshire" (*The Exhibition of the Royal Academy MDCCCXI*, 146), his address was Great Dunford, near Salisbury.

C O R R I G E N D U M

In "Blake's 'Annus Mirabilis': The Productions of 1795," *Blake* 41.2 (fall 2007): 52-83, illus. 28b is identified in both the text and caption (65, 66) as *The Song of Los* copy C, plate 3. It is in fact plate 7 of copy E, and the credit should be to the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. — Joseph Viscomi