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Sent: Wednesday, March 08, 2006 2:07 PM
To: RomanticGender@listproc.sjsu.edu
Subject: For 3/9: Blake's _Visions of the Daughters of Albion_ & Goslee article

Hi everyone -

Following are my questions and annotated bibliographic entry for the Goslee article paired with Blake's _Visions of the Daughters of Albion_.

- Julie

1) _Visions of the Daughters of Albion_ is thought to be part of a matched pair with _The Book of Thel_. Northrop Frye summarizes this connection in his book, _Fearful Symmetry_, when he says "_The Book of Thel_ thus represents the failure to take the state of innocence into the state of experience [...] _Visions of the Daughters of Albion_ is complementary to this, and illustrates the failure to unite the state of experience with that of innocence." Having read both works, what elements do you see in _Visions_ that support Frye's argument?

2) Take a look at the plate in our anthology, on the third page of the inserts, the one identified as a tailpiece for _Visions_. What do you make of the positions of Bromion, Oothoon and Theotormon, and do you think the presence of this plate as a frontispiece as opposed to a tailpiece (as it sometimes was) changes the way in which the narrative is framed? [Goslee discusses this briefly on page 105 of her article.]

3) _Visions_ begins and ends with strong connections to Mary Wollstonecraft's _A Vindication of the Rights of Woman_. What are some of these connections, and do you think Blake agrees or disagrees with Wollstonecraft's positions? In other words, how does _Visions_ support or criticize Wollstonecraft?

Goslee, Nancy Moore. "Slavery and Sexual Character: Questioning the Master Trope in Blake's Visions of the Daughters of Albion." ELH 57:1 (Spring 1990). 101-128.

In this article, Goslee dissects the arguments of several critical responses to Blake's Visions of the Daughters of Albion, and discusses the relative success or failure of these critics to provide readings that synthesize the pervasive issues of race, gender, and class. She describes the need to understand the interdependent relationships between these issues, and delineates the critical inconsistencies that arise when approaching the text with only one of these issues in mind.

While providing the sociopolitical context of Blake's work along with a discussion of subsequent critical responses, Goslee raises more questions than she answers. However, she ultimately achieves her goal of deconstructing both Oothoon and the master trope of slavery; in doing so she provides the sort of synthesized response that was missing from the work of other critics.