

MONUMENTS OF HUMAN ANTIQUITY:  
WILLIAM BLAKE'S *MILTON, A POEM*  
AS A TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF HUMAN CREATIVITY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influences of the eighteenth-century cultural interest in Antiquity on William Blake's illuminated book *Milton, a Poem*. Beginning with William Stukeley's guidebooks, *Stonehenge, A Temple Restor'd to the British Druids* and *Abury A Temple of the British Druids*, this thesis traces how Blake employs the cultural interest in and language of British Antiquities as a way to advance his cooperative theory of art. Branching from Stukeley's influence, this project also examines Blake's appropriation of antiquarian print culture and English garden culture in *Milton*. The second chapter outlines how aspects of Blake's illuminated books, such as mutable page order and greater variability in printing results, encourage participatory reading. These practices, along with the highly resistant full-page designs, call for interaction on the part of the reader. The third chapter takes up the many garden-related images and plot points in *Milton*, examining these elements in regards to eighteenth-century garden theory and practice. In both the spaces described and the actions taken in those spaces, *Milton* advocates for activity and engagement over pleasure and relaxation. This study seeks a more inclusive mapping of the ways Blake applies the idea of cooperative artistic creativity as an alternative to the more traditional model of art as a linear, one-way process.