THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN
APOCALYPTIC IMAGERY IN ENGLAND, 1750–1850
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Cover image:
John Martin
English, 1789–1854
The Opening of the Seventh Seal, ca.1837
Mezzotint
Sheet: 15 1/2 x 16 in. (39.4 x 40.6 cm)
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

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“The World’s End” © Gerry Canavan
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The exhibition of historic works of art allows museums to apply contemporary thinking to visual culture that long precedes us. This investigation often reveals consistencies in human thinking and cultural production that speak to aspects of our collective psyche. *The World Turned Upside Down: Apocalyptic Imagery in England, 1750–1850* is a case in point.

During the final years of the fifteenth century, Girolamo Savonarola’s impassioned apocalyptic prophecies inspired many—including artist Sandro Botticelli—to sacrifice “objectionable” works of art, classical literature, musical instruments, and tools of science to the bonfires of the vanities (1497–98). More than five hundred years later, many speculated that the December 21, 2012, end of the Mesoamerican Long Count calendar meant that the end of days had finally arrived. And on August 8, 2017, President Donald Trump—referencing a report that North Korea had developed a nuclear weapon small enough to fit on a missile—warned that threats to the United States would be met with “fire, fury and frankly power the likes of which this world has never seen before.” When faced with the threat of the unknown, the human condition tends to lean—especially during times of social and political instability—towards visions of Armageddon.

I’m grateful to Dr. Sarah Schaefer, Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Art History, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, for exploring this psychological construct—and archetype—through both the exhibition and the essay in this publication. Dr. Gerry Canavan’s lively essay contextualizes the “end of days” archetype in both historic and contemporary culture, referencing everything from *Star Trek* to William Hogarth. The generosity of lenders from across the country allowed us to include extraordinary works of art in this exhibition. Emilia Layden, Curator of Collections and Exhibitions at the Haggerty Museum of Art, led this project with characteristic intelligence and aplomb. I thank them all.

Susan Longhenry
Director
Haggerty Museum of Art
At the turn of the nineteenth century, England was in peril—or so it seemed to many of its citizens. The preceding fifty years had witnessed colonial rebels in America declaring independence from the British Empire, the rapid growth of industrial manufacturing, substantial populations moving from the country to the city, and the French masses overthrowing the authority of the monarchy and the Church. The world, in many ways, had indeed been turned upside down.

The artist James Sayers offered one response to these events in a print published on May 12, 1791 (opposite and p. 34). A diabolical vision that portends dire consequences for the English nation can be seen through the lenses of *Mr. Burke’s Pair of Spectacles for short sighted Politicians*. The Mr. Burke in question was Edmund Burke, the powerful statesman and philosopher whose views were highly influential (and still resonate in conservative politics today). Sayers’s print was produced not long after Burke published his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), which heavily criticized the actions of the French revolutionaries and warned against English radicals following suit. To the right of Burke’s pince-nez, Sayers depicts a funhouse grotesquerie of contemporary politics. Perhaps most notably, a grinning, wigged skeleton representing the fiery preacher Richard Price emerges from a hole in the ground at the lower right. Price (who died three weeks before Sayers’s print was published) represents the flip side of Burke’s views, having praised the actions of the French revolutionaries in a famous sermon. Significantly, Price saw the French Revolution not simply as an important political development, but as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, the climactic moment that would usher in the apocalyptic destruction that precedes God’s creation of a new heaven on earth.

Burke strongly contested these views—his *Reflections* was, in fact, a direct response to Price’s sermon. And although he criticized the preacher’s overblown rhetoric, Burke himself occasionally strayed into apocalyptic language. Speaking on the current state of the English nation, he warned, "In the present it can hardly remain; but before its final settlement it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, ‘through great varieties of untried being,’ and in all its transmigrations to be purified by fire and blood.” Sayers’s macabre inclusion of Price as a skeleton emerging from the depths of the earth certainly speaks to the concern that was rampant in the wake of the Revolution. It represents a satirical view of both Burke’s distorted vision and Price’s apocalyptic hyperbole. Burke’s perspective would prove highly prescient, but it would be another two years before the Reign of Terror took hold in France.
What Burke and Price articulated in their writings (and Sayers satirizes in this image) was a set of concerns that permeated the public consciousness in England in the period this exhibition examines: were the cataclysmic events of recent days the sparks that would ignite a conflagration of biblical proportions? Were they the preamble to what John of Patmos described in vivid detail in the final book of the New Testament? Would the near future come to resemble the terrifying scenes of destruction represented by countless artists and authors from Michelangelo to Albrecht Dürer to John Milton? Were these, in fact, the end times?

The urgency of these questions engendered numerous artistic responses, and the apocalypse became one of the most enduring and multifaceted subjects in English art and culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The beginnings of the French Revolution in 1789, although certainly among the most significant points in this narrative, were just one of many events that portended the end of days. Prognosticators eagerly applied prophetic texts to the interpretation of natural disasters, and Napoleon was frequently (and quite seriously) branded the Antichrist. From monumental paintings to inexpensive satirical prints, the apocalypse pervaded every aspect of visual culture.

While the history of Christianity is peppered with moments of peak anticipation of the world’s imminent end, this period offers a fascinating paradox: the apocalypse became a particularly powerful subject at precisely the moment when religious authority seemed under unprecedented threat. The years between 1750 and 1850 saw numerous developments that we now associate with “modernity”—perhaps most importantly, the decline of religious authority in public life and the rise of liberal, secular democracies. Religious thought did not, however, fade from view; and in some cases, it was even more urgently and aggressively touted. For many, the seismic shifts that shook the established order were evidence of the world turned upside down, and pointed to the coming war between the forces of good and evil.

The role of art and visual culture was central to the growth of this apocalyptic fever. In most cases, apocalyptic prophecies (from the Old Testament to the New, from Constantine to Nostradamus to Joseph Smith to Jim Jones) are the textual records of personal visions. The most significant prophecy for Christian audiences, the Book of Revelation, is in large part an ekphrastic account of the coming apocalypse as revealed to John of Patmos by “a great voice,” which said, “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book.” (Rev. 1:10–11). The question of how prophetic visions might be translated into visual form resulted in a diverse and ever-evolving corpus of images.

Interestingly, Edmund Burke supplied the philosophical framework through which much apocalyptic imagery was filtered. More than three decades before his analysis of the French Revolution, Burke published his influential A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757), which codified the characteristics of the term “sublime” as it would be used for the next century. (Many caricaturists, in fact, accompanied depictions of Burke with the phrase “Sublime and Beautiful.”) The sublime, according to Burke, has the capacity to astonish and overwhelm the viewer to the point of evoking a measure of terror. Coinciding with (and, in part, due to) Burke’s treatise was a rise in the popularity of landscape painting among British artists and audiences. The depiction of the sublime in nature—tempestuous seas, jagged cliffs, erupting volcanoes—enticed contemporary artists like Joseph Wright of Derby (and later John Martin and J. M. W. Turner). Their works elevated the landscape genre above the more quotidian representations of the English countryside that amateurs produced on sketching holidays. Despite the widespread vogue for sublime subjects, however, some projects proved too controversial. In 1779, George III commissioned American expatriate Benjamin West to paint a chapel in Windsor Castle that would include a series of scenes from the Book of Revelation. West’s monumental and chilling Death on the Pale Horse, shown at the Royal Academy in 1796 and on loan to the exhibition from the Detroit Institute of Arts (p.18), combined a skillful depiction of the human form with a sublime rendering of Hell unleashed. Despite having been chosen by respectable clergyman, the apocalyptic theme (along with West’s increasingly strained relationship with the Crown) proved too volatile in light of highly tense political circumstances, and the commission was ultimately rescinded.

Embodying the overwhelming and irrational, the sublime became a central component of Romanticism as it arose in the late eighteenth century. In contrast with Enlightenment emphasis on reason and empirical observation, Romantic artists and writers delved into the realms of the supernatural and the unknowable, culled historical and literary sources outside the accepted canons. For Burke, the epitome of the sublime in literature was John Milton’s Paradise Lost, which enjoyed new popularity from the mid-eighteenth century onwards (due in part to an emerging nationalistic interest in English authors, including Milton, William Shakespeare, and Edmund Spenser). Fascination with Satan as the definitive antihero made him a prime subject, along with those unfortunate souls who followed his example. The fallen, as represented by artists like John Martin and William Blake, retained their heroic physiques; in these Romantic depictions, evil manifests itself not outwardly (as often seen in the emaciated forms of the damned in medieval art), but even more dangerously, within the mind.
Blake occupies a central position within the apocalyptic landscape of this period. His fascination with prophetic literature corresponded with a thorough commitment to the ideals of the French Revolution, even in the wake of the Reign of Terror and the ongoing war between England and France. More significantly, Blake experienced numerous prophetic visions, which heavily informed both his literary and visual output. His prophetic books are indebted to the traditions of medieval manuscript illumination and biblical prophecy. Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion, a facsimile of which is included in this exhibition (p. 36), represents the epic culmination of Blake’s prophetic project. Poetic refrains emanate from his dramatic actors, evidence of the artist’s insistence on the inseparability of words and images. In this image, the fiery antagonist Hand appears as a kind of Antichrist—arms splayed in a mocking gesture of Christ’s crucifixion—as Jerusalem, the embodiment of redemption and here identified as liberty, steps back in an act of rejection. ²

Although Blake’s prophetic books were often provoked by contemporary events, their content remains obtuse, due to his complex cosmology and innovative poetic and visual languages. A significant group of artists dealt more explicitly with contemporary events, likewise conveyed through the lens of the apocalypse. The mid- and late eighteenth century saw the rise and flourishing of modern caricature, with artists like William Hogarth, Thomas Rowlandson, and James Gillray mobilizing apocalyptic themes for the purposes of political satire. By its very nature, caricature mocks contemporary events and political figures in order to expose and undercut those with power, be it religious, political, cultural, or economic. English caricaturists simultaneously lampooned the apocalyptic fever and the vogue for the sublime. A print from the Haggerty Museum’s collection (p. 31), made after a plate by the brilliant satirist William Hogarth, critiques the bloated market for sublime imagery. The print alludes to Hogarth’s impending demise: the exhausted figure of Time breathes the word “FINIS,” while at his feet rests a cracked palette and one of the artist’s earlier prints (also on view in the exhibition). This would, in fact, be Hogarth’s last print, produced seven months before his death as the talipiece to a set of volumes of his collected images. The apocalyptic devastation he represents thus takes on a much more personal tone.

More broadly, English caricaturists of the period from 1750 to 1850 contributed to an unprecedented shift: never before had the threat of the apocalypse been so fundamentally tied to revolutionary politics. In a print from 1795, Presages of the Millenium [sic] (p. 21), James Gillray represents Prime Minister William Pitt as the figure of Death, who will usher in the destruction of the apocalypse, trampling the multitudes who might challenge him. In his wake follow several demonic figures, the last of which is Burke (identifiable, once again, by his characteristic spectacles). Four years after the publication of Sayers’s print, during which time the French Revolution devolved into the Reign of Terror, Burke’s forewarnings had proven highly astute.

The threat of the unknown that accompanied the frenzied interest in the apocalypse was perhaps the most unnerving prospect of the age. A growing confidence in human inquiry, science, and reason did not negate the inevitability of apocalyptic destruction—in 1704, no less a figure than Isaac Newton had calculated that the apocalypse would happen in the year 2060. ³ When and where precisely will it occur? Who will be damned and who will be saved? And, most significantly, What will it look like? These questions prompted many visual responses, and their variety and evolution reveal the extent of uncertainty about the fate of the world and those living in its final days.

Notes


Further Reading


THE WORLD’S END
Gerry Canavan

In the 2013 science fiction comedy The World’s End, directed by Edgar Wright, a depressed alcoholic named Gary King (Simon Pegg) lures his childhood friends (Nick Frost’s Andy Knightley among them) back to the small town where they grew up. Their plan is to complete the notoriously difficult pub crawl, The Golden Mile, that they almost-but-didn’t-quite complete as teenagers. The characters move from The First Post to The Old Familiar to The Famous Cock, drinking a pint in each pub, on to The Cross Hands, The Good Companions, The Trusty Servant, The Two Headed Dog, The Mermaid, The Beehive, The King’s Head, and The Hole in the Wall, until they finally reach the twelfth and final pub, The World’s End. On the way, the nature of their journey changes: what seems at first a sad attempt to reclaim the glory of lost youth inexplicably becomes mixed up with an alien-invasion plot in the style of Invasion of the Body Snatchers, with the future of human civilization at stake. The inhabitants of their tiny hamlet have been replaced, nearly to a one, with “blanks,” machine clones who appear to be human but who in fact don’t age, don’t suffer, and don’t feel. Gary, Andy, and company stumble upon the last days of the plot and soon are next on the replacement list. The World’s End is revealed, fittingly, as the headquarters of the alien invasion force—not just a bar but a site of apocalyptic violence, and a final choice between salvation and destruction.

We should not be surprised to find that the iconography of The World’s End mirrors a William Hogarth engraving from 1764, Tail Piece: The Bathos (p. 31), which similarly depicts a ruined pub called The World’s End. In Hogarth’s engraving, as in Wright’s film, the pub’s sign is marked by the image of the Earth in flames—the invitation to drink there ironically doubles as an invitation to Armageddon. Likewise, in both the engraving and the film, we see a sublime vision of ultimate ruination: in Hogarth’s engraving a naked and dying Father Time breathes his last breath (“FINIS”), while in The World’s End our heroes reject the aliens’ offer to join their hyper-rationalist and cosmopolitan galactic utopia in favor of baser human desires:

GARY KING: We want to be free! We want to be free to do what we want to do! We want to get loaded, and we want to have a good time. And that’s what we’re gonna do.

In the film the aliens, exhausted and furious after Gary’s antics, resentfully accept the decision of “Gary, King of the Humans” and leave the planet, taking the advanced technology of the last few decades with them; the resulting chaos leaves the survivors huddled in an England
that has suddenly and permanently reverted to a pre-twentieth-century standard of living.

After the end of the world, though, it turns out they're happier; the apocalypse has given each of our heroes something they lacked in their pre-apocalyptic lives. Some find love, like Andy, who reunites with his estranged spouse, while others find renewed purpose—and Gary gets to be young again after all, traveling the blighted post-apocalyptic landscape with a Round Table of teenage “blanks” who revere him the way his friends did when he was eighteen. (And this time he gets to do it without the toxic alcoholism that had destroyed his life the first time around; when, at the end of the film, they enter a thirteenth and final pub, The Rising Sun, looking for a fight, they order five waters.) Quite unlike Hogarth’s engraving, where the end of the world seems to signify only exhaustion and extinction, in Wright’s film the encounter with the world’s end retains the life-changing theological potential of the sublime; the apocalypse is not simply a vision of wanton destruction but an opportunity to consider the true stakes of human existence, a spiritually portentous opportunity to choose once and for all who we are and who we want to be.

In our time we are awash in apocalyptic visions. The details change—sometimes nuclear bombs, sometimes superflus, sometimes zombies, sometimes robots, sometimes ecological collapse—but the fundamental futurological vision remains the same. In mass culture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, from our pulpiest, trashiest science fiction to the most sophisticated and self-serious film and literature, we seem incapable of imagining a near-term future that isn’t characterized by ultimate catastrophe. The discoveries of evolution in biology and entropy in physics tell us that this disaster is no longer just an unhappy intuition or a bad feeling but rather a matter of scientific certainty (indeed, something we are powerless to stop, that can wipe us out. That We were right, and we were wrong, undoubtedly: the apocalypse tends to be imagined as something to teach us.

But what? That we are wicked, certainly; look only to the vast number of apocalyptic imaginings that assume the apocalypse is karmic payback, from the undeserving, the wheat from the chaff. They were wrong, undoubtedly: the apocalypse is always shown us; “apocalypse” means, after all, “unveiling,” and comes to us as the Greek name for the final book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation. We imagine the end of the world, over and over and over again, across the millennia, because we think the apocalypse has something to teach us.

But what? That we are wicked, certainly; look only to the vast number of apocalyptic imaginings that assume the apocalypse is karmic payback, from the undeserving, the wheat from the chaff. They were wrong, undoubtedly: the apocalypse tends to be imagined as a Final Judgment that separates the good from the bad, the deserving from the undeserving, the wheat from the chaff.

But the apocalypse seems to have material political significance in our time, too, both as the looming threat politicians rhetorically invoke on both “sides” of the political aisle in order to gather support for the political programs they see as necessary, but also as the proof that our current way of life is unsustainable and unhappy, that it has no future that things simply can’t go on as they have and so they have to change. From this perspective, apocalypse starts to look less like a nightmare...
and almost like a fantasy, an event we not-so-secretly yearn for; no wonder there’s so much box office mojo in it.

It strikes me as weirdly appropriate that a new edition of Thomas More’s 1516 political treatise, *Utopia*, contains an introduction by the British author China Miéville that is almost entirely about the apocalypse. We think about apocalypse so much because we don’t believe in utopias anymore—or, perhaps, as critic Fredric Jameson once put it, we think about apocalypse because we don’t believe anything less could shake the foundations of the hostile, antihuman systems that now control the world. Miéville calls this bizarre hybrid formulation “apocatopia, utopalypse”:

> We’re surrounded by a culture of ruination, dreams of failing cities, a peopleless world where animals explore. We know the clichés. Vines reclaim Wall Street as if it belongs to them, rather than the other way round; trash vastness, dunes of garbage; the remains of some great just-recognisable bridge now broken to jut, a portentous diving board, into the void. Etcetera. . . .

> We’ve all scrolled slack-mouthed through images of the Chernobyl zone, of Japan’s deserted Gunkanjima island, of the ruins of Detroit, through clickbait lists of Top Ten Most Awesomely Creepy Abandoned Places. This shouldn’t occasion guilt. Our horror at the tragedies and crimes behind some such images is real: it coexists with, rather than effaces, our gasp of awe.

In an earlier age, these encounters with the sublime—both imaginary and all-too-real—might have activated our sense of the divine, the holy fear of God; in our age, paradoxically, they seem to generate simultaneously both a bleak resignation to cosmic pessimism and an urgent need to reform both the world and ourselves. The apocalypse today is spiritual, ethical, political. It always has been; that’s why we keep returning to it, with new imagery and with old—in these visions of wretched misery and mass death we perversely seek our own redemption, in whatever form we can still get it. On the other side of those grim apocalypses, after all, for those who make it through, is the New Jerusalem, the Kingdom of Heaven, The Rising Sun.

Notes


2. See the preface to *The Seeds of Time*, among other places, where he writes: “It seems to be easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than of late capitalism; perhaps that is due to some weakness in our imagination.” Fredric Jameson, *The Seeds of Time* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1994), xii.

"And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him."
Revelation 6:8

The Book of Revelation, the final book of the New Testament, is the primary source of the Christian apocalyptic tradition. In it, the apocalypse begins with the appearance of the Four Horsemen, who symbolize Conquest (or Pestilence), War, Famine, and Death. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these lieutenants of Hell appear in a variety of ways: with heroic, masculine physiques, as emaciated figures, or in the guise of contemporary politicians. In every case, however, destruction follows in their wake.
Benjamin West
American, 1738–1820, active in Great Britain
Death on the Pale Horse, 1796
Oil on canvas
23 3/8 x 50 5/8 in. (59.5 x 128.5 cm)
Collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts
Founders Society Purchase, Robert H. Tannahill Foundation Fund
Photo: Bridgeman Images
Joseph Haynes
English, 1769–1829
after John Hamilton Mortimer
English, 1740–1779
Death on a Pale Horse, 1784
Etching, published state
Sheet: 27 x 18 3/4 in (68.6 x 47.6 cm)
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

James Gillray
English, 1757–1815
after James Gillray
Presages of the Millennium, 1795
Etching and aquatint, hand-colored
Sheet: 13 x 14 13/16 in. (33 x 37.6 cm)
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection
After James Gillray
English, 1757–1815
Britannia, n.d.
Etching
11 1/4 x 8 1/2 in. (28.57 x 21.59 cm)
67.8.1
Gift of Mr. Oscar M. Pinsof
Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University

John Landseer
English, 1763 or 1769–1852
after Philip de Loutherbourg
French, 1740–1812, active in Great Britain
The Vision of the White Horse, 1800
from Macklin’s Bible, 1800
Etching and engraving, published state
18 7/8 x 13 13/16 in. (48 x 35 cm)
Collection of the University of Chicago Library, Special Collections
Photo: © Trustees of the British Museum
“For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”
Revelation 6:17

Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) had a major impact on art of this period. For Burke, the “sublime” consists of natural forces that have the capacity to overwhelm and terrify the human psyche. Many landscape artists began representing treacherous mountains and stormy seas, rather than quaint, familiar scenes of the countryside or calm, classical pastorals. Sublime landscapes proved the perfect settings for apocalyptic destruction.
John Martin  
English, 1789–1854  
*after John Martin*  
The Fall of Nineveh, 1829–30  
Hand-colored mezzotint  
Sheet: 25 1/16 x 34 9/16 in. (63.66 x 87.79 cm)  
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH  
Friends of Art Endowment Fund, 1974.59

John Martin  
English, 1789–1854  
The Destroying Angel, 1836  
Mezzotint  
Sheet: 21 7/16 x 30 7/16 in. (54.5 x 77.3 cm)  
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection
John Martin

English, 1789–1854

*The Opening of the Seventh Seal*, ca. 1837

Mezzotint

Sheet: 15 1/2 x 16 in. (39.4 x 40.6 cm)

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

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Thomas Milton

English, 1743–1827

after Philip de Loutherbourg

French, 1740–1812, active in Great Britain

*The Deluge*, 1797

from Macklin's Bible, 1800

Etching and engraving, published state

18 7/8 x 13 13/16 in. (48 x 35 cm)

Collection of the University of Chicago Library, Special Collections

Photo: © Trustees of the British Museum
James Gillray
English, 1757–1815
End of the Irish Invasion; or The Destruction of the French Armada, January 20, 1797
Hand-colored etching and aquatint
Sheet: 11 1/8 x 15 5/6 in. (28.26 x 39.69 cm)
Gift of Lester M. Gershan, 1983.169.129
UWM Art Collection

Thomas Cook
English, 1744–1818
after William Hogarth
English, 1697–1764
Tail Piece: The Bathos (The Bathos, or Manner of Sinking, in Sublime Paintings, inscribed to the Dealers in Dark Pictures), 1798
Engraving, published in Hogarth Restored, 1808
Sheet: 16 x 18 5/6 in. (40.6 x 47.3 cm)
00.145
Gift of anonymous donor
Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University
SECTION 3: PROPHETIC VISIONS

“If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.”
Numbers 12:6

The apocalypse is traditionally revealed through prophets, who experience the divine revelation of future events. The vivid and perplexing revelations of John of Patmos, recorded in the Book of Revelation, became the subject of renewed interest in the eighteenth century. At the same time, self-described prophets like Joanna Southcott and Richard Brothers found wide audiences. Perhaps most famously, William Blake, who experienced visions from a young age, produced a series of prophetic books that merged poetry and images in unprecedented ways.
James Sayers
English, 1748–1823
Mr. Burke’s Pair of Spectacles for short sighted Politicians, May 12, 1791
Etching and aquatint
Sheet: 15 1/8 x 11 1/8 in. (38.41 x 28.26 cm)
Gift of Lester M. Gershan, 1983.218
UWM Art Collection

John Martin
English, 1789–1854
after John Martin
Belshazzar’s Feast, 1832
Hand-colored mezzotint (re-engraved lettered print)
Sheet: 22 13/16 x 30 1/16 in. (57.94 x 77.94 cm)
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH
Friends of Art Endowment Fund, 1974.58
William Blake
English, 1757–1827
published by the Trianon Press, Cobham, Surrey
Jerusalem, 1951, facsimile of ca. 1821
13 3/4 x 11 1/4 in. (35 x 28.58 cm)
Special Collections, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries
William Blake
English, 1757–1827
published by E. P. Dutton & Co., New York
The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, 1927, facsimile of 1825–27
Reproduced in facsimile from an original copy of the work printed and illuminated by the author between the years 1825–27 and now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
11 7/16 x 8 1/2 in. (29 x 21.55 cm)
Special Collections, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries

Lewis Mayer
American, 1783–1849
The Prophetic Mirror; or, A Hint to England: Containing an Explanation of Prophecy that relates to the French Nation, and the Threatened Invasion, proving Bonaparte to be the Beast that arose out of the Earth, with Two Horns like a Lamb, and spake as a Dragon, whose Number is 666. Rev. xiii
3rd edition, with additions; London 1806
Marquette University Raynor Memorial Libraries
James Bicheno

English, d. 1831

The Signs of the Times: or The Overthrow of the Papal Tyranny in France, the prelude of Destruction to Popery and Despotism, but of Peace to Mankind
4th edition, with large additions; London 1794

Marquette University Raynor Memorial Libraries

William Blake

English, 1757–1827

The Fire of God is Fallen from Heaven, 1825

Plate 3 from Illustrations of the Book of Job

Engraving on chine colle

Sheet: 17 x 13 3/8 in. (43.18 x 33.97 cm)

Milwaukee Art Museum, Gift of Print Forum, M1994.365

Photo: John R. Glembin
William Blake
English, 1757–1827
Behold now Behemoth which I made with thee (Behemoth and Leviathan), 1825
Plate 15 from Illustrations of the Book of Job
Engraving
Sheet: 17 1/16 x 13 3/16 in. (43.34 x 33.5 cm)
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH
R.T. Miller Jr. Fund, 1943.105

William Blake
English, 1757–1827
Thou hast fulfilled the Judgment of the Wicked, 1825
Plate 16 from Illustrations of the Book of Job
Engraving
Sheet: 16 15/16 x 13 3/16 in. (43 x 33.5 cm)
Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH
R.T. Miller Jr. Fund, 1943.106
SECTION 4: DIVINE JUDGMENT

“For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.”
Isaiah 26:21

Much of the apocalyptic imagery of this period focused on those who were perceived as wicked or damned. One could not but look around, as satirists like Hogarth and Gillray did, and witness the sins that would lead to society’s doom. At the same time, interest in sources beyond the Bible led to more complicated visions of the nature of evil. John Milton’s Paradise Lost, with Satan as its antihero, gave greater psychological depth than the familiar dichotomy of good vs. evil.
After William Hogarth
English, 1697–1764
The Times, Plate 1, n.d.
Engraving
10 1/2 x 14 15/16 in. (26.7 x 37.9 cm)
00.157
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Pinsof
Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University

James Gillray
English, 1757–1815
Charon’s Boat, or the Ghosts of “all the Talents” taking their last voyage, from the Pope’s Gallery at Rome, July 17, 1807
Hand-colored etching
Sheet: 12 1/8 x 15 5/8 in. (30.8 x 39.69 cm)
Gift of the Gershan Family, 2001.001.094
UWM Art Collection
John Flaxman
English, 1755–1826
Evil Spirits Cast Out, an illustration to Arcana Coelestia, no. 1272, by Emanuel Swedenborg (1749), n.d.
Graphite and wash
Sheet: 8 3/4 x 7 1/4 in. (22.21 x 18.42 cm)
Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Edward Blake Blair Endowment Fund purchase, 1999.68

John Martin
English, 1789–1854
The Fall of the Rebel Angels, 1824–26
Mezzotint with etching
Sheet: 10 1/8 x 7 15/16 in. (25.7 x 20.2 cm)
Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Edward Blake Blair Endowment Fund purchase, 1993.5
Daniel Maclise
Irish, 1806–1870, active in England
Ithuriel’s Pursuit of Satan, n.d.
Gouache
Sheet: 25 x 31 in. (63.5 x 78.74 cm)
Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Edward Blake Blair Endowment Fund purchase, 1998.17

James Gillray
English, 1757–1815
The Apotheosis of Hoche, 1798
Hand-colored etching and aquatint
Sheet: 20 1/4 x 15 1/2 in. (51.43 x 38.37 cm)
Gift of the Gershan Family, 2001.001.102
UWM Art Collection