



# Blake's Drama: Theatre, Performance and Identity in the Illuminated Books

*Diane Piccitto*

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*Blake's Drama* explores the implications of taking the 'Visionary forms dramatic' of William Blake literally, providing an alternative perspective on the long-standing critical debate on the text-image dynamic in his works. It reinterprets his multimedia productions – poetry, painting and engraving – as dramas which provoke a spectatorship called on to act, and argues that the resulting depiction of identity is paradoxically both essential and constructed. By employing an interdisciplinary approach that brings medieval, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century, as well as modern discourses on theatre into dialogue with contemporary theory, this book situates these works in the performance and visual culture of their time. Doing so reveals the theatrical as well as linguistic performativity of Blake's verbal-visual art form, offering an unconventional picture of Blake as invested in drama, action, exteriority, and the body.

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