

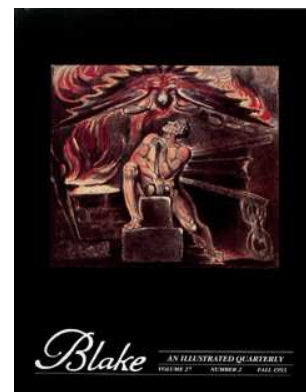
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To the Editors

Andrew Lincoln

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linked by the classically beautiful body of Newton crouched in the position which brings to mind Rodin's *Thinker*." More recently, in the *Times Literary Supplement* for 19 March 1993, the controversy was revived with a letter from Christopher and Muriel Armstrong arguing that "To judge from the photograph . . . , Sir Eduardo's figure does nothing to blunt the power of Blake's satirical conception, of 1795, which should be compared with his picture of the creating 'Ancient of Days' of 1794 . . . Blake detested Newton and all that he conceived him to represent . . ." They go on to say that "The Trustees are, however, in good company . . . since the newly opened Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Sciences in Cambridge has given pride of place in their Library to Sir Eduardo Paolozzi's model of his rejected monument" and they jokingly ask over which "of these illustrious doorways shall we see inscribed Blake's words . . . 'May God Us Keep / From single vision and Newton's sleep?'"

Strangely, Paolozzi had already used Blake's image of Newton in another context, as one of a number of portraits of the eminent British architect Richard Rogers. This was in the context of an exhibition of *Paolozzi Portraits* held at the National Portrait Gallery, London, from May to August 1988. The exhibition was a culmination of several years of portraits by Paolozzi and included portrait busts of Richard Rogers, smiling and unsmiling, but the catalogue also illustrated two other projects based on the Blake print, one for a relief, the other for a three-dimensional sculpture. It was seeing this three-dimensional sculpture, or something like it, that led Colin St. John Wilson to commission the large version for the Library. Paolozzi's own statement in the catalogue said nothing about his indebtedness to Blake but Robin Gibson, in his foreword, wrote of "Paolozzi's preoccupation with Blake's print of Newton, both for its formal and symbolic relevance" (7). Robin Spencer, in his

essay on "Paolozzi as a Portrait Sculptor" compared Blake's image to Rodin's *Thinker* and suggested that Paolozzi had chosen the image more for "Blake's belief in the primacy of Poetic Genius, and the ability of the senses. . . to see through and beyond materialism to an eternal truth . . ." and hence "as an allegory of the modern architect" (18-19). At the time Richard Rogers was Chairman of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, where I then worked, and I mentioned to a friend of the sculptor how surprised I was at this identification of our chairman with Blake's negative image of unenlightened reason. Eighteen months later, as his contribution to a series of "Picture Choices," Paolozzi chose Blake's *Newton*, accepting that "Ironically Newton concentrates on reducing the universe to mathematical dimensions" but going on to say that "While Blake may have been satirising Newton, I see in this work an exciting union of two British geniuses. Together they present to us nature and science, poetry, art, architecture—all welded, interconnected, interdependent. The link is the classically beautiful body of Newton crouched in a position which may bring to mind Rodin's *Thinker* with all that implies . . ." This statement clearly defined and gave authority to the arguments of the friends and defenders of the sculptor. Given the multiplicity of scholarly interpretations of Blake's works and the fact that we here have one artistic genius working on material created by another, perhaps we should not try to impose too strictly a Blakean interpretation on Paolozzi's sculpture.

To the Editors

Since the publication of the Blake Trust/Tate Gallery edition of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, my attention has been drawn to a sentence in the introduction that needs to be corrected. I'd be grateful for the chance to set the record straight in the pages of *Blake*.

The sentence appears on page 14. It reads:

Early in his professional career he [Blake] was commissioned to engrave designs for *The Speaker* (c1780), an anthology designed to 'facilitate the improvement of Youth in reading and Writing', and for Mrs Barbauld's *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781).

As it stands this sentence might imply a commission for more than one illustration in each volume. I'd like to make it clear that I know of no evidence that Blake was ever commissioned to engrave plates for the Barbauld book, or that he was ever commissioned to engrave more than one plate for *The Speaker*. (I can only account for this error by assuming that *Hymns in Prose* traveled from my list of books Blake seems to have read to my list of books for which he produced illustrations. Unfortunately I didn't pick this up in the proof-reading state—or notice that the quotation from *The Speaker* was transcribed incorrectly.) The sentence should read as follows:

Early in his professional career he was commissioned to engrave a design for *The Speaker* (c1780), an anthology designed to 'facilitate the Improvement of Youth in Reading and Speaking.'

I'd also like to take this opportunity to apologize to Mark Bracher, whose name was twice mangled in the edition.

I'm grateful to G. E. Bentley, Jr., Robert Essick and David Fuller for pointing out these errors to me.

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