

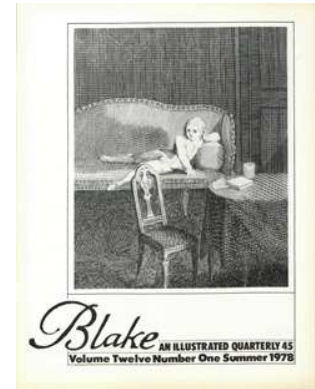
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
BLAKE

D I S C U S S I O N

Ruth Fine's review of the Blake exhibition at
Adelphi University

Erica Doctorow, Donald Wolf, Ruth E. Fine

Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 12, Issue 1, Summer 1978, pp. 72-73



NEWSLETTER

LEVINE'S BLAKE CARICATURE



Just after printing and mailing *Blake* 44, Spring 1978, we noticed that the credit for reproducing David Levine's caricature of Blake (on our cover) had somehow slipped from column four of the inside-cover spread. The credit should have read: "Drawing by David Levine. Reprinted with permission from *The New York Review of Books*. Copyright © 1970 New York Review, Inc.

The New York Review

A CONTRIBUTOR IDENTIFIED

We inadvertently omitted from the Notes on Contributors in #44 Michael Fischer, who reviewed Northrop Frye's criticism in its Blakean relations. The note should have read: Michael Fischer teaches critical theory at the University of New Mexico. He is writing a book on the defense of poetry in modern criticism, excerpts from which are appearing in *Centennial Review* and *Southern Humanities Review*.

HIGHER PRICES

Subscription prices for *Blake* have been raised considerably, as you will have no doubt noticed. The following explanation and apology was mailed with this year's bills:

Dear Subscriber

With your annual bill for another year's subscription to *Blake*, we would like to offer an apology for contributing to the increases in your cost of living.

You will notice that the price of a subscription has increased to \$10 for individuals, \$12 for institutions. We *hope* you have also noticed that the number of pages in an average issue of *Blake* has increased proportionately during the past year. Our issues have been running about 80 pages. When we were the *Blake Newsletter* issues averaged 24-44 pages. We hope you have also noticed that *Blake* gets a *lot* of text on a single page, much more than the average 6 x 9 scholarly journal that prints 1 column per page. And finally, we don't think you could have missed the illustrations, which are very

expensive to print, but which we think make *Blake* especially useful to you as a scholar.

We would also like to assure you that we take every economy to keep the cost of our issues as low as possible. *All* the layout and pasteup of our journal is done by unpaid volunteer editorial assistants, for example. That is extremely unusual for a scholarly journal, if not unique. If that work were turned over to professionals, the cost of *Blake* would soar.

And, despite the economies, despite the increase in your subscription price, the cost of *Blake* is still heavily subsidized by the University of New Mexico. The subsidy has, in fact, just been increased.

Finally, we hope that you will take a moment to consider that the fat issues of *Blake* are costing you only about \$2.50 each--even at the \$10 per year price.

Thank you in advance for your patience. Yours truly, The Editors.

FOUR ZOAS FOR FALL

The fall issue, #46, will feature a number of essays on Blake's *Four Zoas*, including a series on the editorial problem of the "two" Nights Seven, a pair of articles on the text of Night I, and interpretive articles on the influence of the Cabbala, on "atmospheres", and on the spectrous embrace in Night VII. In addition to the material on *The Four Zoas*, there will be several reviews and the annual checklist of Blake scholarship.

DISCUSSION

(with intellectual spears & long winged arrows of thought)

We received the following letter from Erica Doctorow and Donald Wolf and solicited the reply from Ruth E. Fine that follows it in turn:

To the Editors:

1 June 1978

This may seem like a tardy reply to Ruth Fine's review (*Blake* 42, fall 1977) of the Blake exhibition at Adelphi University, but the review itself appeared six months after the exhibition closed, and it raises some interesting questions.

To begin with, Miss Fine writes that it is a "disservice to late 18th-early 19th century England" to suggest that Blake confronted neglect and indifference. Isn't it an even greater disservice to Blake to imply that he may actually have received the recognition he deserved?

Miss Fine's review also does a disservice to the catalog, a reading of which can hardly justify her remark that it is "more spirited than informative," especially if one keeps in mind that it was intended

to be an introduction to Blake. Miss Fine notes this purpose but recalls it only fitfully.

"The crow wish'd every thing was black, the owl that every thing was white." Miss Fine wishes that the exhibition had made a major point of the fact that original prints and drawings are superior to reproductions. At least, that seems to be what she means when she says that it should have demonstrated "the differences in the tactile life of printed surfaces and their effects on one's responses to works of art." (Her style is definitely not spirited.) Adelphi focused on the content of Blake's art. Would it not have been a disservice to our students to teach them that they were doomed to inferior esthetic experiences by the unavailability of the original prints, which, as Miss Fine puts it, must remain in repositories like the Alverthorpe Gallery for the sake of "persons"--she seems to mean scholars--"who travel great distances and at great expense in anticipation of viewing particular works"? Apparently she is as content for Blake to belong to the few, not the many, in the present as in the past. As it happens, the exhibition itself contradicted her premise, thanks to the generosity of other institutions and private collectors who lent Adelphi many original works.

It is also a disservice to readers of *Blake, An Illustrated Quarterly* to permit the implication to stand, as Miss Fine does, that she attended any of the events related to the exhibition--in particular, the opera, "Auguries of Innocence," and the dance, "Eternity in an Hour." Since she did not, it does not much matter that she seems to find them praiseworthy. On the other hand, she does not mention that the exhibition opened with a talk on Blake's methods of printing; but she does criticize Adelphi for giving no attention to the matter.

Given a different tone, Miss Fine's criticisms might be understood as the opposition of true friendship. As it is, our reaction is better suggested by another of Blake's proverbs: "He whose face gives no light shall never become a star."

Erica Doctorow	Donald Wolf
Fine Arts Librarian	Professor of English
Adelphi University	Adelphi University

Ruth E. Fine replies: 27 June 1978
Ms. Doctorow and Professor Wolf were sent a copy of the Blake exhibition review manuscript, published in the fall 1977 issue of *Blake*, well in advance of its publication, a gesture to which they never responded; the elliptical implication of the sorrows of time passed with which they open their letter thus leaves a mysterious question as to motivation in writing now.

It remains extremely disturbing that the difference between reproductions and original works is a matter of such casual inconsequence to the organizers of a Blake exhibition. This, however, may account for the lack or superficiality of the descriptive material regarding such differences.

So far as viewing original material is concerned, Alverthorpe Gallery, as the review accurately stated, is open to "persons"--any person who will write or call and who shows genuine interest in examining the

collection. Hundreds do. The inference drawn by Ms. Doctorow and Professor Wolf that access to the collection is restricted to "scholars" (with no suggestion of what standards they would assign to that category) is inaccurate; it is also unscholarly since the truth of the matter could easily have been determined before it was committed to paper.

This is only one inaccuracy of several in their defensive response to my review, but it would be tedious beyond decent patience to refute them further.
Ruth E. Fine
Curator
Alverthorpe Gallery

ARTHUR FARWELL

Readers will recall that #42 featured an essay by Brice Farwell about the music of his father, Arthur Farwell, who was strongly influenced by Blake. A recent issue of the *Musical Heritage Review* (3 July 1978) announced the release of a new recording of Farwell's Piano Quintet in E minor, Op. 103.

ARTHUR FARWELL (1872-1952)

Piano Quintet in E Minor, Op. 103

new release

Handwritten musical score for Arthur Farwell's Piano Quintet in E Minor, Op. 103. The score is arranged in five systems, each with a different instrument: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Piano. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, dynamics, and articulation marks. The score is written in ink on aged paper.

First page of the score of Farwell's Piano Quintet. In the composer's handwriting

RONALD ERICKSON & CELIA ROSENBERGER, Violins
ELIZABETH KISSLING, Viola
WANDA WARKENTIN, Cello
AILEEN JAMES, Piano

In keeping with the Society's philosophy of bringing to light worthwhile music in outstanding performances, we excitedly release this attractive chamber work of another strangely neglected American, the talented Arthur Farwell, who established the now-famous Wa-Wan Press and contributed so much to our culture.