

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY  
**BLAKE**

C O R R E C T I O N

Checklist corrections

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(or two offprints, for mounting) to Mr. Todd. His address is Ca'n Bielo/  
Galilea/ Mallorca/ Spain.

One of the articles missed in our last checklist is "Blake and the  
Grotesque" by Dennis Douglas, which appeared in *Balcony*, VI (Summer 1967),  
9-16. We thank Michael Tolley for sending us a copy (*Balcony* is published  
in Australia). And G. E. Bentley, Jr. writes: "The reference in the June  
1967 *BNL* to E. J. Rose, "The Circle of the Life of Man," *Connoisseur* CLXI  
(January 1966) is a ghost; on this page is merely a photograph of the  
Arlington Court picture; it is not connected with an article at all, and  
Rose has no article in the journal."

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Blake in the Institute

He said himself that he was speaking to future generations, and the fact  
is that William Blake is finally being exposed beyond the--to now--somewhat  
small circle of friendly Angels to a wider literary public, many of whom have  
considered him some kind of excrescence upon the otherwise smoothly cultivated  
land of English literary history. One of the most pleasant events in this  
progress of exposure occurred at the meeting of The English Institute, September  
3rd through September 5th, at Columbia University (where, coincidentally, Orc  
is currently being reborn and bound).

Under the careful guiding hand of David Erdman, three papers and a prize  
essay were read, each dealing with some aspect of the dramatic vision in Blake's  
work. Martha England read a superb piece, speculating upon Blake's debt, in  
"An Island in the Moon," to Samuel Foote's dramatic improvisations in the Hay-  
market. Her analogies between Blake's methods of characterization, his settings,  
his jokes, his songs in "An Island" and the things Foote was doing in his  
satirical stage pieces were rather convincing. Irene Taylor presented a meticu-  
lous analysis of Blake's illustrations to Gray's "Ode on the Death of a Favourite  
Cat," an analysis which attempted to demonstrate how Blake interpreted in visual  
terms Gray's satirical allegory. The prize essay, by Robert Simmons, was con-  
cerned with *The Book of Urizen*. It was an ingenious attempt to show an in-  
credibly formal symmetry in the structure of the book, in which all the elements,  
arrangement of stanzas, arrangement and style of illustrations, produce an in-  
tricate and literally graphable structure of vision. This was a valuable exer-  
cise, important perhaps to those who still think that Blake was some kind of  
disorderly thinker of half-baked ideas. But the dangers of such a subjectively  
formal analysis may outweigh the advantages: the prospect of abstracting the  
Prophecies into geometric forms is not a happy one, even though one might agree  
that in a book about Urizen, Blake might well have wanted to parody the very  
things Urizen is doing. Mr. Simmons recognized some of the parodic elements  
in the work, though he stressed too strongly his notion that in this book Blake  
is a "visionary of the comic."

The best event of the proceedings was David Erdman's slide lecture on  
*America*. Despite an intractable projector, he managed to demonstrate the full-  
ness, scope, detail, and power of Blake's vision and execution. If there were  
any unbelievers left in the audience, Mr. Erdman had to have convinced them of