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978-0-521-11728-9 - Blake's Gifts: Poetry and the Politics of Exchange

Sarah Haggarty

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BLAKE'S GIFTS

The idea of the gift, in contrast to concepts of commercial exchange or the exercise of self-interest at the expense of social ties, is integral to the ways in which William Blake thought about his art, and the production and dissemination of his work. Sarah Haggarty offers a sophisticated and thorough account of the idea of the gift in Blake's writing and designs, examining both the theoretical implications of the term, and the way it plays out in specific textual and visual contexts within Blake's works. Elegantly written, thoughtful, and closely argued, this book explores particular passages with great dexterity and in a style that enables the reader to participate in the experience of discovering the significance of "the gift" for understanding Blake's work.

SARAH HAGGARTY is Teaching Fellow in English at Southampton University. She is co-editor of and a contributor to *Blake and Conflict* (with Jon Mee, 2008), and co-author of *William Blake: Songs of Innocence and of Experience (1794)* (with Jon Mee, forthcoming).

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SARAH HAGGARTY



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Parts of [Chapter 3](#) of this book have been published elsewhere, as "From Donation to Demand? Blake and the Annotations to Thornton," in *Blake and Conflict*, ed. Sarah Haggarty and Jon Mee (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). I am grateful to Palgrave Macmillan for permitting me to reproduce a revised version of the material here.

I would feel foolish listing the people who've encouraged me to write (and to finish) this book, especially as they might not be aware of the importance to me of their comments or of their own work. Perversely, I also find myself wanting to acknowledge the people or institutions who've resisted my work along the way, although in this case I'm definitely not going to name them. More positively, numerous speakers have given papers that have set light to my ideas. The "History of the Book" graduate seminar at Cambridge University, convened by Kate Bennett and Anne Henry, and my panels and audiences at the 2007 York "Blake at 250" and Maryland "Romantic Objects" conferences in particular, made me think I had something to say worth listening to. Interviewing for a Junior Research Fellowship at University College, Oxford, Ros Ballaster and Jo McDonagh called upon me to explain my thesis with a rigor I'm fond of thinking all doctoral students would like. Two anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press, and then the Studies in Romanticism series editor, James Chandler, responded to my

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This book is dedicated to my family

To Linda, Rod, and Daniel Haggarty

And to Nazeer Chowdhury: *omphalos*

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Abbreviations

Unless otherwise indicated, all citations of Blake's writings are from *The Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake*, ed. by David V. Erdman, com. by Harold Bloom, rev. edn. (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1988). The letter 'E' signifies Erdman's page numbers; I also give plate and line numbers. Erdman uses the following codings: italics within square brackets indicate text deleted or written over; angle brackets enclose text added or written to replace deletions.

Abbreviations of Blake's works:

AL	Annotations to Lavater
<i>AllR</i>	<i>All Religions Are One</i>
AR	Annotations to Reynolds
AT	Annotations to Thornton
AW	Annotations to Watson
<i>DC</i>	<i>Descriptive Catalogue</i>
<i>EG</i>	<i>The Everlasting Gospel</i>
<i>FZ</i>	<i>The Four Zoas</i>
<i>J</i>	<i>Jerusalem</i>
<i>M</i>	<i>Milton</i>
<i>MHH</i>	<i>The Marriage of Heaven and Hell</i>
PA	Public Address
<i>SE</i>	<i>Songs of Experience</i>
<i>SI</i>	<i>Songs of Innocence</i>
<i>U</i>	<i>The [First] Book of Urizen</i>
<i>VDA</i>	<i>Visions of the Daughters of Albion</i>
<i>VLJ</i>	<i>A Vision of the Last Judgment</i>

Other abbreviations:

<i>BR</i>	G. E. Bentley, Jr., <i>Blake Records</i> , 2nd edn. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004)
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List of abbreviations

<i>Stranger</i>	G. E. Bentley, Jr., <i>The Stranger from Paradise: A Biography of William Blake</i> (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001)
Gilchrist	Alexander Gilchrist, <i>The Life of William Blake</i> , ed. by W. Graham Robertson, 2nd edn. (London: John Lane, 1907; repr. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1998)