

MANUSCRIPT MANIFESTATIONS: REASSESSING
WILLIAM BLAKE'S MARGINALIA IN *THE WORKS
OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS* (1798)

Elizabeth Marie Potter

PhD

University of York
English and Related Literature
March 2022

Abstract

Inside William Blake's copy of *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1798) are extensive annotations; some agreeing, others objecting, some poetic, others simply dismissive. Despite the fading manuscript notes, the impact of the marginalia has been widely used in studies of both Blake and Reynolds, often as evidence of Blake's aesthetics and philosophy and sometimes to historicize or criticize the Royal Academy. The marginalia have been misunderstood and misapplied in previous scholarship because the manner in which the annotations work alongside Reynolds' text has not been seriously taken into account. The manuscript notes have been abstracted from their original source and the later development of the marginalia has been neglected. This thesis examines Blake's marginalia on their material and conceptual levels alongside the centre text (*The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, Volume I) to better understand Blake's writing in the margins. It suggests that Blake used the margins of books as a kind of laboratory in which he voiced his ideas in relation to Reynolds. The thesis begins by looking at the nature of marginalia at the time and Blake's marginalia in this book in particular. The second part considers the difficult artistic relationship between Reynolds, the cultural authority of British art and Blake, part of a newer generation of artists, although a very distinctive one. The third part examines the threads of ideas in the margins of *Works* that were later developed in Blake's own writing: the Notebook, his ideas on Art in the *Descriptive Catalogue* and 1809 Exhibition, the illuminated books, and one of his final works, the *Laocoön*.

List of Contents

Abstract	2
List of Contents	3
List of Figures	4
List of Accompanying Material	9
Acknowledgments	10
Author's Declaration	11
Introduction and Aims of Thesis	12
Part One: William Blake's Marginalia Practices	14
1.1 Book Culture and Marginalia in the late Georgian Period	14
1.2 Theoretical Implications of Marginalia	20
1.3 Four Types of Annotations	40
Part Two: Sir Joshua Reynolds' Influence on Blake	59
2.1 Sir Joshua Reynolds' Cultural and Artistic Authority	61
2.2 Analysis of Reynolds' Most Contentious Perspectives to Blake	80
Part Three: Blake's Development of His Annotations to Reynolds	120
3.1 William Blake's Notebook	122
3.2 <i>The Descriptive Catalogue</i> (1809) and <i>A Vision of the Last Judgment</i> (1810)	148
3.3 The Illuminated Books, <i>Milton</i> and <i>Jerusalem</i>	176
3.4 <i>The Laocoön</i>	221
Conclusion	238
Bibliography	240
Appendix	250

List of Figures

- Figure 1 William Blake, pencil manuscript annotation (*Works*, I:iii), British Library, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 2 William Blake, black ink manuscript annotation (*Works*, I:xviii), British Library, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 3 William Blake, pencil manuscript annotation (*Works*, I:cxi), British Library, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 4 William Blake, black ink manuscript annotation (*Works*, I: title page), British Library, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 5 William Blake, black ink manuscript annotation (*Works*, I: title page), British Library, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 6 William Blake, black ink manuscript annotation (*Works*, I:xlvi), British Library, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 7 Johan Joseph Zoffany, *The Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1771-1772, oil on canvas, 40 x 58" (101.1 x 147.5 cm), Royal Collection Trust, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.rct.uk/collection/400747/the-academicians-of-the-royal-academy>.
- Figure 8 Johan Joseph Zoffany, detail of *The Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1771-1772, oil on canvas, 40 x 58" (101.1 x 147.5 cm), Royal Collection Trust, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.rct.uk/collection/400747/the-academicians-of-the-royal-academy>.
- Figure 9 Joshua Reynolds, *Charles Churchill*, 1755, oil on canvas, 47.6 x 38" (120.7 x 96.5 cm), National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada, <https://www.gallery.ca/collection/artwork/charles-churchill>.
- Figure 10 Joshua Reynolds, *Miss Jane Bowles*, 1775-1776, oil on canvas, 36 x 28" (91 x 70.9 cm), Wallace Collection, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 11 Écorché figure, 1771, plaster cast, 5'6 x 2' x 1.6' (171.5 x 61 x 47.5 cm), 143.3 lbs (65 kg), Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 12 Attributed to Pergamene school and Follower of Lysippus, *The Wrestlers*, ca. 370-300 BCE, plaster sculpture cast, 3'3 x 2'4 x 3'9 (102 x 73 x 119 cm), Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/the-wrestlers>.

- Figure 13 After Athenodorus of Rhodes (fl. ca. AD 10-20) and After Hagesandrus (c.100BC - c.20BC) and After Polydoros (c.50BC - c.0BC), cast of *Laocoön and his Sons* (Roman version of a lost Greek original), 19th century, plaster cast, 7'9 x 5'3 x 2'6 (242 x 163 x 80 cm), Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 14 Nicolas Poussin, *Extreme Unction from The Seven Sacraments*, 1638-1640, oil on canvas, 3 x 4' (96 x 121 cm), Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- Figure 15 Workshop of Titian, *Venus and Adonis*, 1554, oil on canvas, 5'8 x 6'2 (177.9 x 188.9 cm), The National Gallery, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/workshop-of-titian-venus-and-adonis>.
- Figure 16 Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, *The Deposition*, 1507, oil on wood panel, 5'9 x 5'7 (179 x 174 cm), Borghese Gallery, Rome, Italy.
- Figure 17 Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Holy Family*, known as *Doni Tondo*, 1505-1506, tempera grassa on wood, 3'9 feet in diameter (120 cm in diameter), Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.
- Figure 18 Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *The Flagellation of Christ*, 1607-1610, oil on canvas, 9'4 x 7' (286 x 213 cm), National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples, Italy.
- Figure 19 Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Flagellation of Christ*, 1516, red chalk over stylus, The British Museum, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 20 Sebastiano Piombo, *The Flagellation of Christ*, 1516-1524, mural painting in oil, San Pietro in Montorio, Rome.
- Figure 21 Benjamin West, *The Death of General James Wolfe*, 1770, oil on canvas, 5' x 7' (152.6 x 214.5 cm), National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada, <https://www.gallery.ca/collection/artwork/the-death-of-general-wolfe-0>.
- Figure 22 Benjamin West, *King Lear Weeping Over the Dead Body of Cordelia*, 1786-1788, oil on canvas, 8'9' x 12' (269.2 x 367 cm), Tate Britain, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 23 Joshua Reynolds, *Infant Hercules Strangling Serpents*, 1786, oil on canvas, 10' x 9'7 (303 x 297 cm), State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia, <https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/01.+paintings/38698>.

- Figure 24 John Constable, *Cenotaph to the Memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds, erected in the grounds of Coleorton Hall, Leicestershire by the late Sir George Beaumont, Bt.*, 1833-1836, oil on canvas, 4'3 x 3'6 (132 x 108.5 cm), The National Gallery, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/john-constable-cenotaph-to-the-memory-of-sir-joshua-reynolds>.
- Figure 25 Nathaniel Hone, *The Pictorial Conjurer, displaying the Whole Art of Optical Deception*, 1775, oil sketch on wood panel, 1'9 x 2'7 (57.5 x 81.9 cm), Tate Britain, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 26 William Blake, page 26 of William Blake's Notebook, British Library, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-notebook-of-william-blake>.
- Figure 27 William Blake, "Alas!" in *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*, 1793, intaglio etching/engraving, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., United States of America, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/gates-child.d?descId=gates-child.d.illbk.09>.
- Figure 28 Samuel Wale, "Vain Pursuits" in *Choice Emblems*, 1772, etched woodcut.
- Figure 29 William Blake, page 26 of William Blake's Notebook, British Library, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-notebook-of-william-blake>.
- Figure 30 William Blake, page 24 of William Blake's Notebook, British Library, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-notebook-of-william-blake>.
- Figure 31 William Blake, page 22 of William Blake's Notebook, British Library, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-notebook-of-william-blake>.
- Figure 32 William Blake, page 23 of William Blake's Notebook, British Library, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-notebook-of-william-blake>.
- Figure 33 Henry Fuseli, *Odysseus facing the choice between Scylla and Charybdis*, 1796, oil on canvas, private collection.
- Figure 34 Henry Fuseli, Detail of *Odysseus facing the choice between Scylla and Charybdis*, 1796, oil on canvas, private collection.
- Figure 35 Thomas Rowlandson, *Exhibition Room, Somerset House*, 1808, etching and aquatint, hand coloured, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City,

New York, United States of America,
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/636776>.

- Figure 36 *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy, MDCCCIX*. Published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title, organized by and presented at the Royal Academy of Arts, Summer 1809.
- Figure 37 William Blake, “Miscellany – Gem Engraving” page from Volume III of *The Cyclopædia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, 1819, Abraham Rees, Designs by John Farey, Sr. and engraved by William Blake and Wilson Lowry, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, United States of America.
- Figure 38 William Blake, *The Bard, from Gray*, 1809, water-based tempera with a glue and/or gum binder and with pen and ink outlining and shell gold or gold leaf on canvas, 2 x 1’5 (60 x 44.1 cm), Tate Collection, London, United Kingdom, <http://www.blakearchive.org/preview/but655?descId=but655.1.pt.01>
- Figure 39 William Blake, *Milton*, plate 42, copy A, 1811, relief and white-line etching, hand coloured, 5.6 x 4.2” (14.3 x 10.7 cm), The British Museum, London, United Kingdom, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/milton.a?descId=milton.a.illbk.42>.
- Figure 40 William Blake, *Milton*, plate 15, copy A, 1811, relief and white-line etching, hand coloured, 15.9 x 11 cm (6.3” x 4.3” inches), The British Museum, London, United Kingdom, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/milton.a?descId=milton.a.illbk.15>.
- Figure 41 William Blake, *Jerusalem the Emanation of the Giant Albion*, plate 6, copy E, 1820, relief and white-line etching, hand coloured, 8.9 x 6.5” (22.5 x 16.4 cm), Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut, United States of America, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/jerusalem.e?descId=jerusalem.e.illbk.06>.
- Figure 42 John Hamilton Mortimer, *St Paul Preaching to the Ancient Britons*, 1764, oil on canvas, 158 x 197” (400 x 500 cm), The Wycombe Museum, High Wycombe, United Kingdom, <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/st-paul-preaching-to-the-ancient-britons-26914>.
- Figure 43 John Hamilton Mortimer, *Man Attacking a Monster*, 1770-1780, oil on canvas, 11 3/4 x 14 inches (29.8 x 35.6 cm), The Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut, United States of America, <https://collections.britishart.yale.edu/catalog/tms:943>.

- Figure 44 Henry Fuseli, *Ugolino and His Sons Starving to Death in the Tower*, 1806, Pen and black ink and brush and black, grey, and red wash, over traces of graphite, on greyish-ivory laid paper, 25.2 x 20.5” (63.9 x 52.2 cm), The Art Institute of Chicago. Chicago, Illinois, United States of America, <https://api.artic.edu/api/v1/artworks/7566/manifest.json>.
- Figure 45 Joshua Reynolds, *Count Ugolino and his Children in the Dungeon*, 1770-1773, oil on canvas, 21 x 28” (52 x 72 cm), National Trust Collections, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/129934>.
- Figure 46 William Blake, *The Graphic Muse*, frontispiece for *An Inquiry into The Requisite Cultivation and Present State of The Arts of Design in England* by Prince Hoare, 1806, line engraving with stipple, 3.5 x 3.3” (8.8 x 8.5 cm), Royal Academy of the Arts, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/the-graphic-muse>.
- Figure 47 Joshua Reynolds, *Theory*, 1779-1780, oil on canvas, 5’8 x 5’9 (178 x 179 cm), Royal Academy of the Arts, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/theory>.
- Figure 48 William Blake, “Sculpture” for *The Cyclopædia, or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature* by Abraham Rees, volume 43, plate 6, 1820, line engraving with stipple, British Library, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 49 William Blake, *Laocoön*, 1815, 1826-1827, intaglio etching/engraving with dry point lettering and handcoloring, 28.1 x 24.4 cm, collection of Robert N. Essick, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/laocoon.b?descId=laocoon.b.illbk.01>.
- Figure 50 William Blake, pencil manuscript annotation (*Works*, I:13), British Library, London, United Kingdom.
- Figure 51 *Laocoön and His Sons*, ca. 180-160 BCE, marble sculpture, 6’10 x 5’4 x 3’8 (208 x 163 x 112 cm), Vatican Museums, Vatican City, Italy, <https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-pio-clementino/Cortile-Ottagono/Laocoönte.html>.
- Figure 52 Henry Singleton, *The Royal Academicians in General Assembly*, 1795, oil on canvas, 6’5 x 8’5 (198.1 x 259 cm), Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/the-royal-academicians-in-general-assembly-1>.
- Figure 53 William Blake, detail of *Laocoön*, ca. 1815, 1826-1827, intaglio etching/engraving with dry point lettering and hand colouring, image 26.6 x 21.6 cm.; platemark 27.6 x 22.9 cm, private collection of Robert N. Essick, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/Laocoön.b?descId=Laocoön.b.illbk.01>.

List of Accompanying Material

Appendix: Photographs of Blake's Marginalia
in the first volume of *The Works of Sir
Joshua Reynolds* (1798)

250

Acknowledgments

I have been fortunate to flourish under the support of so many individuals while undertaking this thesis. First, I would like to thank Jon Mee, my supervisor. His insight, patience, and continuous support these past few years has been invaluable to this thesis and my own personal and professional development. Secondly, Sibylle Erle has been, undoubtedly, one of my biggest believers during this process. She has been a light in my life and research, and I cannot begin to explain my gratitude towards her. Jason Whittaker, who I was lucky enough to meet at a conference, has been such a boon to my development as an individual and as an academic. His guidance and mentorship are undeniably important to me.

During the Summer of 2018, I was selected to complete a PhD Student Research Placement at the British Library with Felicity Myrone. My time there was spent examining William Blake's commercial engravings and other endeavours held at the British Library. This opportunity was an incredible experience and Felicity made it all the much more worthwhile with her kindness and strength as a supervisor. I am so thankful for this time of research and development at such an impressive institution.

I want to thank Tali Kot-Ofek, Rosamund Portus, Jonah Hebron, and Madeline Salzman-McIntire for their advice and support. Finally, I want to thank Michael for sharing his brilliance and supporting me throughout this research. Without him, this would not have been possible, and I am eternally loving and grateful.

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work, and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Introduction

For Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie [sic] of life in them to be as active as that soule [sic] was whose progeny they are; nay they do preserve as in a viol [sic] the purest efficacie [sic] and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragons teeth; and being sown [sic] up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand unlesse [sic] warinesse [sic] be us'd [sic], as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee [sic] who destroyes [sic] a good Booke [sic], kills reason it selfe [sic], kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Booke [sic] is the pretious [sic] life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd [sic] and treasur'd [sic] up on purpose to a life beyond life

John Milton, *Areopagitica*, 4.¹

If books are not absolutely dead things, as Milton suggested, it is partly because they are given life by readers. The life presented by readers can sometimes be given a physical form in the shape of marginalia or annotations. This study considers the marginalia left by William Blake in his copy of *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1798). The foundation of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1769 was modelled after the continental European academies that preceded it by centuries. The institution would boast gifted artists like John Hamilton Mortimer, George Romney, Thomas Gainsborough, and many others. Led by Sir Joshua Reynolds, the first president of the Royal Academy, these artists were hopeful to elevate the status of the visual arts in Great Britain. Appointed to the Royal Academy in 1770, William Blake began to study as an engraver. Sir Joshua Reynolds, having heard of Blake's distaste for the curriculum, said to him: "Well, Mr. Blake, I hear you despise our art of oil painting." Blake responded, "No, Sir Joshua, I don't despise it; but I like fresco better."² This was just the beginning of Blake's formation of his

¹ John Milton, *Areopagitica; a Speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicens'd Printing, to the Parliament of England* (London, 1644), <https://www.proquest.com/books/areopagitica-speech-mr-john-milton-liberty/docview/2240955001/se-2?accountid=15181>.

² Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1880). I:82-83.

artistic theories in conversation with Reynolds. Many years later, Blake began writing his thoughts to Reynolds' *Discourses on Art*. These annotations have been used and abused over the years to study Blake, Reynolds, and British Art of the eighteenth century. In this thesis, I will examine the life that Blake has given to this work in three parts. In Part One, I consider the cultural and theoretical implications of book culture and annotations during the period. After that, I analyse the four different types of annotations of Blake's in *Works*. Part Two is where I join the cultural and authoritative force that was Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Royal Academy to better understand why Blake selected this work to use as his laboratory for developing his ideas on art. In Part 3, the most substantial of the parts of this thesis, the manifestations or ghosts of the annotations found in *Works* in Blake's later productions. There are multitudes of these manifestations and there are simply far too many to consider in the length of this thesis. There is much more work to be done on these influences. In this third part, I consider Blake's Notebook, *The Descriptive Catalogue*, *Milton*, *Jerusalem*, and the *Laocoön*. Again, I want to clarify that this is not exhaustive, and I am not trying to provide an in-depth analysis of these works; rather, I am trying to show how the marginalia resurfaces throughout Blake's life in his works. I believe this provides nuance to how we can approach Blake's artistic theories and literary pursuits, as he continues to develop, amend, revisit, and display his process.

Part One: William Blake's Marginalia Practices

1.1 Book Culture and Marginalia in the Late Georgian Period

Books have been identified with a higher faculty of mind for centuries: determining morality, ordaining religion, and law, shaping identity, defining the world, exploring systems of belief, administering advice, and so on.³ When approaching eighteenth-century book culture, important questions of how books were produced, distributed, and used is critical. Books, like other manmade items, are subject to the economic, social, political, and culture factors of the time. It is important to address questions about literacy and book production boom in the eighteenth century regarding changes in the population in England. In 1696, the population of England was approximately 5,118,000; in 1756, it had risen to 6,149,000. In 1781, England boasted 7,206,000 inhabitants, a rise of 15 percent in an extremely limited time frame of 25 years. Despite this staggering growth, the population would continue to accelerate even more rapidly. In 1801, there were 8,671,000 residents; in 1816, 10,628,000; and 13,254,000 residents in 1831.⁴ England's population increased rapidly but that does not mean that the desire for books and other publications increased automatically with it. Literacy in England was "sufficiently high" in that the portion of the population in employment considered literacy "to have been of considerable functional value," extending this consideration to the future generations.⁵ Children from various socioeconomic classes were either taught at home by parents or private tutors but the majority of

³ For more on the book as a mystical, sacred, and holy symbol, see Brian Cumming's essay "The Book as a Symbol" in *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (2010).

⁴ Edward A. Wrigley, *People, Cities and Wealth: The Transformation of Traditional Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), table A9.1, 614-615.

⁵ S. Nenadic, "The Rise of the Urban Middle Classes" in *People and Society in Scotland, 1760-1830*, ed. T.M. Devine and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1988), 111.

middle class youth were educated in single-teacher schools.⁶ Lawrence Stone estimates that, outside of London, for the period 1754–62, the rate of adult male literacy was 74% in Oxford and Northampton, 66% in Bristol, and 64% in the rural East Riding of Yorkshire.⁷ The literacy boom of the eighteenth century was influential in the formation and consolidation of education of the masses that was to come. The availability of political treatises, philosophical texts, poetical essays, and radical pamphlets engaged a wider population than ever before. The satirist, T.J. Mathias claimed:

We are no longer in an age of ignorance; and information is not partially distributed according to the ranks, and orders, and functions, and dignities of social life...I am scarcely able to name any man whom I consider as wholly ignorant. We no longer look for learned authors in the usual places, in the retreats of academic erudition, and in the seats of religion. Our peasantry now read the *Rights of Man* [by Thomas Paine] on mountains, and on moors, and by the wayside.⁸

As described by Mathias, books were becoming increasingly more available than in previous centuries thanks to economic and technological changes. Education and recreation activities were dominated by print culture by the late eighteenth-century – newspapers, subscription journals, pamphlets, and books were crucial to navigating the rapidly changing world.⁹ The book trade grew steadily during the seventeenth and early eighteenth-century but by the 1770s, production and collection saw a massive spike.¹⁰ Previous to 1700, around 1,800 titles were printed per year

⁶ Nenadic, “The Rise of the Urban Middle Classes,” 109-126.

⁷ Lawrence Stone, “Literacy and Education in England,” *Past & Present* 42, (February 1969): 69-139.

⁸ Thomas James Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature: A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues with Notes* (London: Pall Mall, 1799), 238.

⁹ H.J. Jackson, *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 9-14.

¹⁰ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, 210.

whereas by 1800, it was nearly 6,000 titles per year.¹¹ James Raven points out that despite these impressive and illuminated numbers, there are “many blanks” when analysing the national bibliographical history of England.¹² Complicating factors like private libraries, book clubs, subscription schemes, and other shared texts make it difficult to determine the accuracy of readership.

The relative access to books was expanding but the demand overwhelmed means of production and ultimately, owning books was expensive, meaning that it was still difficult for the everyday person to access literature. Recently, the topic of the accessibility of literary texts during the eighteenth century has been controversial. For example, Thomas F. Bonnell, has suggested that scholars should recognize the extraordinary expense of books at the time and that they remained a luxury item.¹³ Sharing books was one way to gain access to expensive texts: public reading, reading rooms, and book clubs all provided avenues through which books could be accessed. Reading aloud was common in a variety of environments, similar to satellite radio playing in the background today: at artisanal shops, over the home hearth, dinner parties, walks in nature, and even on the battlefield.¹⁴ While reading aloud passed time, provided entertainment, and fostered intimacy, it also stretched the book’s mileage farther.¹⁵ Additionally, the vogue of reading was beginning to take root and reading rooms were an excellent location to display

¹¹ James Raven, “The Book as a Commodity,” in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner, 6 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 92.

¹² James Raven, “New Reading Histories, Print Culture and the Identification of Change: The Case of Eighteenth-Century England,” *Social History* 23, no. 3 (October 1998): 268–87. 275.

¹³ Thomas F. Bonnell, “When Book History Neglects Bibliography: Trouble with the ‘Old Canon’ In the Reading Nation,” *Studies in Bibliography* 57 (2005): 243–61.

¹⁴ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, 54-56.

¹⁵ For more information on elocution and reading aloud in the eighteenth century, see Abigail Williams’ *the Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth-Century Home* (Yale University Press, 2017), 11-35.

bookishness – a much lauded trait. Charles Lamb described public reading rooms as “the best mode of educating young men. Solitary reading is apt to give the headach [sic]. Besides who knows that you *do* read?”¹⁶ The fashion of reading was combined with the communal act of sharing not only space but also notions about reading. One of the essential elements of fashion, after all, is that it must be witnessed.¹⁷ Abigail Williams reminds scholars that

Once we relocate the book in the parlour, garden, or carriage, we can start to see how the history of reading in its social context is inseparable from other areas of eighteenth-century life: concerns about public sociability, idleness, loneliness, the virtues of conversation, the cementing of intimate relationships.¹⁸

Williams’ concern is with the sociability of reading but does not draw upon marginalia or annotations. By including marginalia into the sociability of reading culture of the eighteenth century, we can see those concerns she listed as continuing to develop in other ways. Reading does not need to be so internal, and passive as evidenced by annotations inside of books.

While relocating the social life of the material object that is the book itself is crucial, we must also consider the interior of the book. Conversations about books occurred not only around them, but also inside them, in their margins – annotations left behind so that the next reader could know where and how the previous borrower responded to the text. These physical additions to the book are referred to as marginalia, a term coined by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1819 to refer to the commentary, notes or other written material in the margins of a book or

¹⁶ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, 47.

¹⁷ To better understand the fashion of reading and all of the accoutrements it entailed at the time, see Abigail William’s chapter, “Reading and Sociability” in *The Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth-Century Home* (Yale University Press, 2017), 36-63.

¹⁸ Abigail Williams, *The Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth-Century Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 63.

manuscript.¹⁹ Coleridge wrote to Charles Lamb (in Lamb's own book): "I will not be long here, Charles! – and sure you will not mind my having spoiled a book to leave a relic."²⁰ The playful comment is charming and reveals the ambivalent attitude towards writing in books, even today; modern bibliophiles often lament the desecration of a book when a reader writes in the margins.²¹ Emma Chastain, a contributing writer for popular American bookselling chain Barnes & Noble, asserts: "highlighting, scribbling, underlining—it's too easy. It's not engagement; it's *graffiti*. Leave your books untouched, unsullied, like a series of pristine pools you can dive into over and over again as you get older."²² But during the late eighteenth-century, marginalia was often a cherished addition to the book and people like Henry Crabb Robinson even inked over his friends' commentaries to preserve them for future reference.²³ Annotations produced from shared books are the visible results of synthesizing reading, writing, and conversing. While typical uses of the marginalia were to aid the reader's memory, to understand and engage with the text (as seen with primer school texts and law books), it also functions as a "mediator" between the text, the current reader, and future readers (real and imagined).²⁴ The discourses occurring in the margins could help better articulate criticism which, in turn, fosters environments of self-identification. In a sense, the annotator makes their personal, physical mark against the text which they are reading – fashioning a distinct identity to share with future readers of the book.

¹⁹ Michael Suarez and H.R. Woudhuysen, *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 915.

²⁰ H.J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (Yale University Press, 2001), 16.

²¹ For more on the various opinions on annotations inside of books, see H.J. Jackson's chapter, "Book Use or Book Abuse?" in *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books*, pg. 234-258.

²² Emma Chastain, "Is it Okay to Write in Books? Two Readers Debate," *Barnes & Noble Reads*, July 7, 2014, accessed January 15, 2019, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/blog/is-it-okay-to-write-in-books-two-writers-debate/>.

²³ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, 57.

²⁴ Jackson, *Marginalia*, 35.

Publishing is often regarded as a formalized process of editing and reviewing managed by formal institutions, but it was not so in the eighteenth century.²⁵ According to Samuel Johnson's sixth edition of *A Dictionary of the English Language* in 1785, the infinitive "to publish" means "to discover to mankind; to make generally and openly known; to proclaim; to divulge."²⁶ H.J. Jackson argues that Blake wrote inside books to make his ideas "an integral part of the book and thus to *publish* his quarrel with the author as the book circulated."²⁷ I agree with Jackson's assertion that Blake was seeking to "publish" his quarrel but also to develop his own views, while referencing the current influences at the time.

²⁵ The changing relationship of reading and publication is examined in depth in Elspeth Jajdelska's *Speech, Print, and Decorum in Britain, 1600-1750* (Routledge, 2016).

²⁶ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1755), <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/index.php>. 421.

²⁷ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, 169.

1.2 Theoretical Implications of Marginalia

Reading, unlike conversation, consists for each of us in receiving the communication of another thought while remaining alone, or in other words, while continuing to bring into play the mental powers we have in solitude and which conversation immediately puts to flight; while remaining open to inspiration, the soul still hard at its fruitful labours upon itself.

*Marcel Proust, On Reading.*²⁸

The experience of reading has long been considered a mental exchange or even combat between the reader and the author. For theorists like Roland Barthes, there is a power struggle between the two parties in that the reader must ‘listen’ to the author.²⁹ When a reader takes a step past the initial ‘listening’ stage of reading and moves towards creating their own voice, there the annotation appears. A book with annotations in the margins, responding to the centre text (the printed text, in the case of Blake’s annotations to Reynolds), “traces the development of the reader’s self-determination” around that text.³⁰ Jackson discusses the difference between those who comment and those who do not, “perhaps all readers experience this process;” the discovery of the voice of the reader, but “annotators keep a log.”³¹ While keeping a notebook or diary of one’s own thoughts might provide a suitable alternative to marginalia, writing directly on the page is a conscious effort to maintain focus and a direct result of the centre text’s influence. Writing in the margins of highly regarded texts allows for readers to interrupt and integrate their opinions with a significant history of such responses. As John Hollander explains, when we write in books, it is “the dead whom we are shouting at.”³² This invasive act of opinion complicates

²⁸ Marcel Proust, *On Reading*, eds. Jean Autret and William Burford (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1971).

²⁹ Another excellent monograph from Elspeth Jajdelska on the act of internal listening is very useful in understanding Barthes’ assertion. See *Silent Reading and the Birth of the Narrator* (University of Toronto Press, 2007).

³⁰ Jackson, *Marginalia*, 96.

³¹ Jackson, *Marginalia*, 96.

³² John Hollander, "The Widener Burying Ground," *University of Toronto Quarterly* (1992): 91.

how readers approach books and thus, book history. While marginal notes were found in previous centuries, annotated margins surged in popularity during the late 1700s in Britain. Individuals like Coleridge, Leigh Hunt, Charles Burney, Horace Walpole, and John Keats were keen annotators of a variety of texts. The period was, as Jackson states, “a particularly rich record of readers’ engagement with their books.”³³ She considers well over 600 books, 400 of which are Coleridge’s alone. The massive corpus of marginalia at the time is comprised of not only “gifted writers,” as she describes them, like John Thelwall, John Keats, and William Blake, but also includes the “anonymous” and the “minor” annotators.³⁴ Regardless of the status of the annotators covered in Jackson’s study, it is important to consider how reading is subject to the structure determined and set out by the original text. For Barthes, the process of reading needs and respects this influence but it also attempts to pervert it.³⁵ In his essay, “The Pleasure of the Text,” Barthes used eroticism as a means to explain the intrigues of reading and interaction with the text: “the pleasure of the text is that moment when my body pursues its own ideas – for my body does not have the same ideas as I do.”³⁶ The private interaction between an author and a reader is much like voyeurism: observing the writer’s display of their interiority and taking it in and having the nerve to comment on it is a strange and pleasurable “bliss” for Barthes.³⁷ Circling back to Blake’s marginalia, this voyeurism of reading Reynolds’ centre printed text, Blake’s interjections on the page, and trying to understand the later developments of the annotations is, for us as well, an entangled mess of communication. To situate the marginalia, we must consider other theoretical implications at stake.

³³ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, xii.

³⁴ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, xiii.

³⁵ Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel: Lecture Courses and Seminars at the Collège de France (1978-1979 and 1979-1980)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

³⁶ Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), 17.

³⁷ Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, 22.

In *Romantic Marginality: Nations and Empire on the Borders of the Page*, Alex Watson examines the printed footnotes by authors and contributors of the book. While distinct from manuscript commentary like Blake's, Watson develops interesting claims about paratextual elements that are useful when considering annotations.³⁸ The margins of the printed page act as marginalized spaces of interrogation, according to Watson, contesting details of the controlling centre text, utilizing different perspectives, literally and figuratively. He recognizes that "annotation comprised a social form of textual practice. The margins acted as an extension of the literary conversation of an editor's social circle."³⁹ If his analysis is limited to printed footnotes, one might say that the editor's social circle broadens to the greater reading public when manuscript marginalia is taken into account – or at least those who had access to the text. Watson also discussed eighteenth and nineteenth-century literary creators who viewed the practice of authorial annotations as "parasitic"; quoting William Hazlitt, who finds that a "beautiful thought is sure to be lost in an endless commentary upon it," and Keats' position that poetry "should do without any comment."⁴⁰ However, these critical assertions are primarily related to printed amendments to and commentary on the centre text. For Watson book margins – their paratexts - function as an "ambiguous borderland," a phrase, doubtlessly, inspired by postcolonial theorist Gloria E. Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). She explains that the "Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other."⁴¹ According to Anzaldúa, these spaces can be economic, sexual, psychological, spiritual, artistic,

³⁸ Much has been completed in recent years of scholarship on paratextual elements. Of course, Gerard Genette's seminal work *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) is perhaps the best source to reference.

³⁹ Alex Watson, *Romantic Marginality: Nation and Empire on the Borders of the Page* (London: Routledge, 2012), 21.

⁴⁰ Watson, *Romantic Marginality*, 29.

⁴¹ Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera*. 1. ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1991. Preface.

and linguistic. Watson's use of Anzaldúa's term describes a (physical or abstract) territory where, "the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy."⁴² He argues that the margins act as a locus where authors contribute to the centre text in a new collaborative creation.⁴³ These conflict-ridden borderlands are "liminal location[s], neither text nor non-text," but perhaps more like a new composition or conversation – a place that has been shrunken down by the edge of the printed words.⁴⁴ This creative opportunity allows for the author/reader to forge an identity on the page that counters the centre text by crossing several types of borders in the margins.

Decreasing the space between two individuals and the nurturing of collaborative creation is also considered by Mikhail Bakhtin. This sense of identity formation is a bit more obscure in his work, but Bakhtin's discussions of 'dialogism' includes an important term for thinking about the marginalia: 'heteroglossia,' or what he sometimes calls "double voiced." This presence of two or more voices occurs often in novels where works "give voice to every class of people by incorporating their style into the text itself."⁴⁵ Typically, it can be best witnessed when reading a conversation between two characters in a novel that have different backgrounds. Two individuals have different experiences and motivations always present, but they are figments of the author's imagination and execution on the page. Bakhtin continued that using another's speech serves "to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way."⁴⁶ While he is concentrating on the literary device of two speakers at the same time, voicing their two separate identities, meanings, and expressions, Bakhtin maintains that is not limited to works of fiction. This transmission of communication is a conscious process as the artistic imagery and devices are practiced and

⁴² Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, preface.

⁴³ Watson, *Romantic Marginality*, 35.

⁴⁴ Watson, *Romantic Marginality*, 35.

⁴⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin and Michael Holquist, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, University of Texas Press Slavic Series, no. 1 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 324.

⁴⁶ Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 324.

completed.⁴⁷ This concept, while difficult to grasp in the context of annotations in a book, suggests that it would be the most authentic heteroglossia possible; two genuinely separate identities, expressing their meanings and intentions in separate methods. Bakhtin believes heteroglossia to be an effective discourse model in novels, but this may render it more effective when it is genuinely two different voices. Reynolds's *Discourses* were written with the consideration of public lecturing in mind, whereas Blake's annotations on the same page as the printed lecture are intended to be read silently and alone.

Naturally, the nature of Reynolds' *Discourses on Art*, lectures presented at the Royal Academy were later edited, published, and dispersed among more people than the annotations in Blake's personal copy of the *Works of Sir Joshua*. Despite the status and circulation of Reynolds at the time, Blake has quickly surpassed Reynolds in importance, certainly in literary history and arguably in the History of Art. In Robert R. Wark's edition of Reynolds' *Discourses on Art*, he concedes that no copy of *Discourses* would be complete without Blake's marginalia. This interesting reversal of importance should be examined alongside Michel Foucault's ideas in "What is an Author?" (1969) widely considered to be a response to Roland Barthes' "Death of the Author" (1961). While Barthes argued that criticism relied too heavily upon the author's identity to understand the work, Foucault went further. For Foucault, killing the author in our minds is not enough and can never disentangle his or her identity from our criticism. Like Barthes, Foucault recognizes the author as a fiction but asks what kind of ideological power they may embody. The "author function" is that the author of a published text becomes the beacon of their particular discourse. In the *Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, Reynolds becomes not just the

⁴⁷ Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 359.

man and author but rather the representative of the cultural institution of the Royal Academy and perhaps, even an extension of the cultural power of Great Britain itself.

Foucault lists four elements of the author function: first, that it is based in law, partly for punitive reasons; second, it does not affect all texts in the same ways; third, attribution to an author is difficult to decide upon; and finally, that the author does not have to be a real person, and often, is not. The most intriguing element of Foucault's essay for the marginalia lies in the interrogation of the author as a beacon of intellectual power. Blake recognizes the physical and intellectual "space left empty by the author's disappearance" and sniffs out "the openings this disappearance uncovers."⁴⁸ The act of writing in a manner that forces the reader to physically shift the book or tilt their head, a factor discussed in more detail below, the annotation has "co-opt[ed] the book's (and implicitly the author's) own strategy for controlling the experience of reading through otherwise commonplace bibliographic codes."⁴⁹ Blake's dismissal of traditional codes of reading, textual articulation, and his invasion of the authority of the author (of Reynolds, Edmond Malone, and Samuel Johnson) corrodes institutional authority and opens up a space for debate. To return to Foucault:

We are accustomed to saying that the author is the genial creator of a work in which he deposits, with infinite wealth and generosity, an inexhaustible world of significations. We are used to thinking that the author is so different from all other men, and so transcendent with regard to all languages, that as soon as he speaks, meaning begins to proliferate, to proliferate indefinitely.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Michel Foucault, "What is an Author" in *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow, New Edition, Penguin Social Sciences (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 209.

⁴⁹ Jason Allen Snart, *The Torn Book: Unreading William Blake's Marginalia* (Selinsgrove: Cranbury, NJ: Susquehanna University Press; Associated University Press, 2006). 22.

⁵⁰ Foucault, "What is an Author?", 221.

Naturally, the printed text is significant, with its inherent ability to proliferate meaning, but a book with annotations reorients the power scheme. Additionally, these power relations are further altered when the annotations take different formats, types, and positions. The annotator confronts the unique author that is “so different from all other men,” and argues as a reader/writer for their own authority. Jackson has elaborated on this idea in relation to Blake,

we find a reader disposed to find fault, finding fault, and in the process, articulating a strong position of his own, partly for his own satisfaction, partly for the correction of error in others, and partly for the enlightenment of a friendly audience.⁵¹

The margins are a place where Blake can display his expertise, question commonplace viewpoints of the period, and experiment with his own aesthetic theories. While I mostly agree with Jackson above, I am less convinced that Blake only wanted to enlighten a “friendly audience,” or even emphasize to his potential readers that there was more than one side to these issues. When Reynolds moves diplomatically in the Seventh Discourse, stating that artists may “appear to differ in sentiments...merely from the inaccuracy of terms,” Blake fires back:

It is not in Terms that Reynolds & I disagree Two Contrary Opinions can never by any Language be made alike. I say Taste & Genius are not Teachable or Acquirable but are born with us Reynolds says the Contrary[.]”⁵²

Blake fractures the superiority Reynolds holds as the author by inserting the above annotation to complicate the centre text, and thus the power of the author function as described by Foucault.

Further still, Blake galvanizes his annotations with acerbic criticism, poetry, changing

⁵¹ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, 169.

⁵² William Blake, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, newly rev. ed (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1982). 659. All references to *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* will hereafter be abbreviated as E, followed by the page number.

penmanship, and other bibliographic codes to “rouze [sic] the faculties to act[.]”⁵³ By reorienting the hermeneutics process, Blake is encouraging the reader to become an active participant in the dismantling of the text, as he has been – complicating Reynolds’ authority from the page.

Although Blake’s suggestion that the notes are “proofs of his opinion,” it may seem to insist on authorial consistency, it actually draws attention to the division, galvanizes the disruption, and forces the reader to pursue the comment.⁵⁴ Blake counters the hegemony imposed by Reynolds’ lectures and invites the reader to explore different viewpoints. As he says on the title page verso, the institution commanded by Reynolds and his hirelings has “[d]ivided all the English World between them Fuseli Indignant hid himself – I am hid[.]”⁵⁵ And in a sense, many of Blake’s annotations are themselves hidden – either by unintentionally trimmed words, obfuscated inside the spine, or compressed into small margins – but they encourage a disruptive reading practice that engages the reader (or readers) in the aesthetic reconfiguration of the time. Further still, the annotations are written in a singular and specific copy of the book, that few other people – if any – may have read afterwards.

The act of writing in a book is the act of responding to the author’s initiation of a conversation that may or may not be read by another, whether real or implied. Reader-response theorist Wolfgang Iser coined the term “implied reader” to describe a figurative ideal reader to whom the text is oriented, but annotations as well as the centre text may have their implied readers. The individual that is “sympathetic and receptive” to the rhetorical strategies is the implied reader, whereas readers are not necessarily inclined to receive these strategies on their own. Additionally, the implied reader carries no biographic, linguistic, or “ideological ‘baggage’

⁵³ E702.

⁵⁴ E635.

⁵⁵ E636.

that might interfere with the text's themes."⁵⁶ The implied reader is the stuff of artistic dreams: an unwavering fan that understands precisely what the creator means to do. For the annotator, the implied reader could be either real or implied. Jackson writes on Coleridge's marginalia that there was always an "Other Reader, whether the donor of the volume...or the unknown owner of a future generation."⁵⁷ This "Other Reader" can be a person in the present or even hundreds of years down the road. Frederick Burwick argues that all annotators considered this possibility:

Although few readers writing in books can have foreseen print publication, none of them imagined that they were alone with their books and that no other eyes would ever read them. Books are durable; they circulate; sooner or later they will be passed on to someone else. Not only was there no prospect of privacy, then, but all marginalia involved an element of performance and display. De Quincey complained that Wordsworth's marginalia were pedestrian — 'such as might have been made by anybody'—as though Wordsworth owed it to his admirers to do better.⁵⁸

The annotations in Blake's copy of *Works* functions in this kind of doubled way: he appears to be writing to concrete readers, perhaps friends like Fuseli, but also to an implied reader, possibly a concrete future reader that he may or may not be familiar with. Because of the uncertainty of who may read his annotations, Blake proclaimed his authorship of his notes inside, he signed it, "this is the opinion of Will Blake my Proofs of this Opinion are given in the following Notes[.]"⁵⁹ If his book was picked up by someone who was not familiar with him, Blake's

⁵⁶ Ian Buchanan, "implied reader," in *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://www-oxfordreference-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780198794790.001.0001/acref-9780198794790-e-351>.

⁵⁷ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Coleridge as Reader: *Marginalia*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Frederick Burwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 279.

⁵⁸ Burwick, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 279.

⁵⁹ E635.

signing of his opinions on the Title Page ensures that his commentary does not go unnamed or worse, unrecognized.

The earliest example of William Blake's annotations comes from 1788, in Johann Kaspar Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man*, and the last surviving annotations are from 1827, shortly before his passing. Blake annotated for almost forty years of his life, indicating a strong impulse to communicate inside of books and with others reading them. There are eleven extant books annotated by Blake, and two recorded sets of annotations thanks to Edwin John Ellis and William Butler Yeats - to Spurzheim's *Observations* (1817) and conjectured annotations to Cellini - printed in *The Works of William Blake: Poetic, Symbolic, and Critical* (1893). The books Blake annotated range from Swedenborg's mystic texts, like *Heaven and its Wonders and Hell from Things Heard and Seen* (commonly known as *Heaven and Hell* 1784, although Blake's annotations were not made until 1787), to Francis Bacon's *Essays, Moral, Economical, and Political* (1798). Perhaps due to the range of subjects covered in these books, Blake's annotations vary greatly between them in his responses, possible rereading sessions, and the number of notes. For example, he left only two notes in Johann Spurzheim's *Observations on the Deranged Manifestations of the Mind, Or Insanity* while there are aphorisms left in the margins of Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Divine Wisdom*:

Study Sciences till you are blind
Study intellectuals till you are cold
Yet Science cannot teach intellect
Much less can intellect teach Affection[.]⁶⁰

⁶⁰ E605.

Blake scholarship, perhaps due to his reputation as a visionary genius, has focused on the illuminated books, like *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, and the individual works of art. The marginalia have been mainly studied less on its own terms but when it is taken up it is often used as a quarry for biographical purposes, or to support interpretations of the illuminated books. Scholars like Mona Wilson, Northrop Frye, Harold Bloom, and Peter Ackroyd co-opt the annotations to support their analyses of Blake's mentality or system understood in general terms. Annotations certainly provide insight for the reader and can "recapture the mental processes by which readers appropriated texts," as Jackson has suggested, as well as sometimes providing specific references to historical events occluded in the illuminated books.⁶¹ When the annotations are removed from the fuller context of the work to which they respond, though, can risk distorting their meaning to shoehorn them into some larger sense of Blake's "system."

Writing, at its most basic, is intended for communication; the transfer of information or content between other literate and learned individuals. Writing in books is no different. Though it is unclear and nearly impossible to determine who exactly Blake was writing for, there are several possible readers in his circle who may have provided a more substantive form to his implied reader. At this point, it is worth considering who some of these intended or potential readers may have been. The most likely intended, concrete readers for Blake's annotations were William Hayley, Henry Crabb Robinson, and Henry Fuseli.

William Hayley (1745-1820), a poet, essayist, and biographer, was best known for his poem *Triumphs of Temper* (1781). The long, didactic poem was one of the most popular works of the late eighteenth century. This allegorical work was intended to "reform the entire feminine mind

⁶¹ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, xi.

of England by the advice.”⁶² It was in an impressive fourteen editions. In 1800, Hayley became patron to Blake and employed him to illustrate the new edition of *Triumphs of Temper* for 60 guineas total.⁶³ A few other works were commissioned from Blake, including a series of portraits of influential poets for Hayley’s personal library and a portrait of Hayley’s illegitimate son, Tom, who had recently passed away.⁶⁴ Several extant letters exist between Blake and Hayley from February 18, 1800, through December 11, 1805. Blake had probably been annotating *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* and drafting his *Descriptive Catalogue* (1809) around this time to prepare for his upcoming solo exhibition. Because of some of the ideas about art they held in common, not to mention their frequent communication in this period, it is possible Hayley may have been invited to read some of Blake’s annotations. Blake’s employment was supplemented greatly by Hayley’s commissions, and it is reasonable to expect Hayley to be interested in the artistic philosophies and engagement with the arts community to be important.

The diarist and journalist Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867) was personally acquainted with some of the most influential intellectuals of the period including Charles Lamb, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, as well as with Blake. He played a crucial role in the development of University College London as a shareholder and by making several gracious donations for maintenance. There is a possibility that Blake shared his annotations with Robinson because of the close bond they developed over discussions of topics like politics, religion, art, and inspiration. Robinson felt comfortable coming over to Blake’s home, for example, he described his dropping in on the 17th of December in 1825:

⁶² Evelyn Morchard Bishop, *Blake’s Hayley: The Life, Works, and Friendships of William Hayley* (London: Gollancz, 1951), 53.

⁶³ Bishop, *Blake’s Hayley*, 286.

⁶⁴ Bishop, *Blake’s Hayley*, 286.

He dwells in Fountain Court in the Strand. I found him in a small room, which seems to be both a working-room and a bedroom. Nothing could exceed the squalid air both of the apartment and his dress, but in spite of dirt—I might say filth—an air of natural gentility is diffused over him. And his wife, notwithstanding the same offensive character of her dress and appearance, has a good expression of countenance, so that I shall have a pleasure in calling on and conversing with these worthy people.⁶⁵

Robinson would later write that he did not feel comfortable trying to understand or summarize Blake's "opinions and feelings" because he did not believe that Blake harboured a "system or connection in his mind," as "all his future conversation will be but varieties of wildness and incongruity."⁶⁶ Despite the fact that Robinson could see no system in Blake's thought, he was fascinated with Blake upon this visit. He described Blake's sharing his work with him:

I found [sic] at work on Dante. The book and his sketches both before him. He shewed me his designs, of which I have nothing to say but that they evince a power of grouping and of throwing grace and interest over conceptions most monstrous and disgusting, which I should not have anticipated.⁶⁷

Blake's interest in showing Robinson the "behind-the-scenes" action of his artwork might have extended to the marginalia in the *Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. Although he doesn't mention the marginalia, Robinson provides an extensive list of the topics they discussed together, including books that we know Blake had annotated. Since these conversations were happening at Blake's residence, it is feasible that Blake would have pulled one of his books down to aid the

⁶⁵ Arthur Symons, *William Blake* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1907), 261.

⁶⁶ Symons, *William Blake*, 261-262.

⁶⁷ Symons, *William Blake*, 262.

conversation and provide evidence of his engagement with the texts. On the same day when Robinson witnessed Blake's sketches to Dante, the topic shifted to Vision:

Of the faculty of Vision, he spoke as one he has had from early infancy. He thinks all men partake of it, but it is lost by not being cultivated. And he eagerly assented to a remark I made, that all men have all faculties to a greater or less degree.⁶⁸

The topic was one, as we shall see, which loomed large in Blake's annotations to Reynolds. On Malone's anecdote about Reynolds failing to recognize Raphael at the Sistine Chapel, Blake wrote in the margin: "Men who have been Educated with Works of Venetian Artists. under their Eyes Cannot see Rafael unless they are born with Determinate Organs[.]"⁶⁹ Robinson's understanding that Blake viewed Vision as something generally available but liable to be lost if not cultivated, seems to stem from this much earlier annotation in *Works*, where Blake suggested that Reynolds' visionary capabilities has contracted because of his poor focus and education, especially through the influence of what he thought of the inferior Venetian artists.

Another individual who may have encountered Blake's marginalia to *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* is Henry Fuseli (1741-1825). Their relationship is difficult to disentangle, partly because most of Blake's comments on Fuseli are indirect in one way or another:

The only Man that eer [sic] I knew
Who did not make me almost spew [sic]
Was Fuseli he was both Turk & Jew
And so dear Christian Friends how do you do[.]⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Symons, *William Blake*, 264.

⁶⁹ E637.

⁷⁰ E507. It should be noted that although he does at least comment on his relationship with Fuseli, unlike his relationship Robinson. These comments are not that different in kind – albeit more positive – from some of the comments Blake wrote regarding Hayley.

Second-hand reports suggest that their relationship had a lot of irreverent playfulness about it. For example, Blake is supposed to have told him that “the Virgin Mary had appeared to him and praised” his painting, Fuseli retorted that “her ladyship has not an immaculate taste.”⁷¹ Frederick Tatham’s account of Blake’s visit to the Royal Academy to study the Laocoön in 1815 claimed that Fuseli burst into the room and cried: “What! You here, Meesther [sic] Blake? We ought to come and learn of you, not you of us!”⁷² As indicated by this anecdote, despite their occasional disagreements, they remained respectful of each other’s artistic vision. In Blake’s Notebook, he drafted the *Public Address* around 1809-1810, a previously untitled essay, given this title by Geoffrey Keynes.⁷³ In it, he places Fuseli among the creative geniuses he so admired:

No Man Can Improve An [sic] Original Invention. [Since Hogarths [sic] time we have had very few Efforts of Originality] <Nor can an Original Invention Exist without Execution Organized & minutely Delineated & Articulated Either by God or Man [.] I do not mean smoothd [sic] up & Niggled & Poco Piud [sic] [but] <and all the beauties pickd [sic] out [but]& blurrd [sic] & blotted but>Drawn with a firm <and decided> hand at once [with all its Spots & Blemishes which t are beauties & not faults]like Fuseli & Michael Angelo Shakespeare & Milton[.]⁷⁴

Many of the phrases used in this quotation appear in the marginalia to Reynolds’ *Works*. For example, the concentration on “Original Invention” often occurred in the annotations. For example, Blake wrote:

⁷¹ Allan Cunningham, *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters and Sculptors* (New York: J & J Harper, 1833), Volume 2, 264.

⁷² Gilchrist, *The Life of William Blake*, 297.

⁷³ For more information on the Public Address and how it has been pieced together from scattered pages in the Notebook, see *The Complete Writings of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1966).

⁷⁴ E576.

Invention depends Altogether upon Execution or Organization. as that is right or wrong so is the Invention perfect or imperfect. Whoever is set to Undermine the Execution of Art is set to Destroy Art Michael Angelos Art Depends on Michael Angelos Execution Altogether[.]⁷⁵

Here, we can see that the concepts of Execution and Organization are intertwined with the idea of Invention for Blake. In the Public Address, Blake added Fuseli to this list of artists to admire for their invention and execution. Further, the “Spots & Blemishes” could be hearkening back to a phrase written by Reynolds, “Peculiarities...so many blemishes; which, however, both in real life and in painting, cease to appear deformities.”⁷⁶ To which Blake responded to Reynolds in the margin with, “Infernal Falshood [sic][.]”⁷⁷ Although this passage from the *Public Address* is far from explicit, Blake was clearer about his admiration of Fuseli when he wrote to the editor of *The Monthly Magazine* in 1806 defending his painting *Ugolino and His Sons in the Tower*. After Fuseli’s painting received a lacklustre notice from *Bell’s Weekly Messenger*, Blake’s letter to the editor begins:

My indignation was exceedingly moved at reading a criticism in Bell's Weekly Messenger (25th May) on the picture of Count Ugolino, by Mr. Fuseli...I take the advantageous opportunity to counteract the widely-diffused malice which has for many years, under the pretence of admiration of the arts, been assiduously sown and planted among the English public against true art, such as it existed in the days of Michael Angelo [sic] and Raphael. Under pretence of fair criticism and candour, the most

⁷⁵ E637.

⁷⁶ Joshua Reynolds, *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knight; Late President of the Royal Academy: Containing His Discourses, Idlers, A Journey to Flanders and Holland, and His Commentary on Du Fresnoy's Art of Painting*, ed. Edmond Malone, 2nd edition corrected, 3 volumes (London: T. Cadell, Jun., and W. Davies, in the Strand, 1798), I:165.

⁷⁷ E657.

wretched taste ever produced has been upheld for many, very many years: but now, I say, now its end is come.⁷⁸

He then follows up with his own favourable account of the painting whose subject – if not Fuseli’s version of it – had been discussed in Reynolds’ *Works*, a matter I will return to in Part Two. Fuseli and Blake’s personal and professional relationship most likely began around 1787 yet appeared to have been closest in the 1790s, the period when Blake began annotating *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. In his *Life of William Blake*, Alexander Gilchrist tells a story about Blake’s marginalia being read by Fuseli, “who said one could assuredly read their writer’s character in them.”⁷⁹ Fuseli would have been naturally inclined to read the notes Blake made on *Aphorisms on Man*, as he was the editor and translator of the English edition of Lavater’s collection, but – for obvious reasons - it is also likely he would be interested in marginalia on *Discourses on Art*. Given Fuseli’s position as Royal Academician, Professor of Painting, and Keeper, the *Discourses* were not only topical but of special professional interest to him. As the Professor of Painting from 1799-1805 and again from 1810-1825, Fuseli delivered lectures at the Royal Academy. In March 1801, Fuseli’s *Lectures on Painting* was embellished with a frontispiece engraving and a tailpiece engraving completed by Blake. Fuseli was also known to annotate his opinions in books as revealed in a letter from Joseph Farington in 1801. Farington, a fellow Royal Academician, wrote to Fuseli asking for evaluative and didactic commentary on his assessment of Salvator Rosa and Poussin, and prompted him to “return the paper as soon as you can immediately.”⁸⁰ Fuseli’s propensity to receive texts and return them annotated and his interest in seeing Blake’s marginalia previously, alongside their similar and respectful positions

⁷⁸ E768.

⁷⁹ Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake*, 62.

⁸⁰ London, Royal Academy of Arts Collection and Archive, 491, FU 1-10.

towards each other as artists would suggest that Fuseli would have been a desired reader for Blake's marginalia in *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*.

Now that I have laid out the historical groundwork, this section proceeds into a discussion of how other scholars have approached Blake's marginalia. There are a few monographs that focus entirely on the annotations but not any that have paid any particular attention to *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. Jason Snart's *The Torn Book: UnReading William Blake's Marginalia* (2006) eschews biographical analysis and takes as its focus the disruptive nature of Blake's writing in books. It is effectively the first full-length critical work specifically interested in Blake's marginalia. Snart argues that the annotations impose upon the printed page, asserting their authority by "co-opt[ing] the book's (and implicitly the author's) own strategy for controlling the experience of reading through otherwise commonplace bibliographic codes."⁸¹ I agree with Snart's declaration that Blake, like other contemporaries, viewed books as a site for both asserting and contesting authority.⁸² Snart is not concerned with interpreting, applying, or criticizing the content of Blake's annotations, but instead he practices an "unreading" that explores the way annotations function.⁸³ He describes himself as 'less interested in *what* Blake writes in the margins than by the fact that he writes there at all.'⁸⁴ This approach was not followed in the next full-length study of the annotations. Hazard Adams' *Blake's Margins: An Interpretive Study of the Annotations* (2009) provides concise insight into the thirteen surviving annotated books and theories about other annotations. The straightforward approach is undertaken to provide meaningful analysis of the text Blake annotated and the

⁸¹ Snart, Jason, *The Torn Book: UnReading William Blake's Marginalia* (Susquehanna University, 2010), 22.

⁸² Snart, *Torn Book*, 156.

⁸³ Snart, *Torn Book*, 22.

⁸⁴ Snart, *Torn Book*, 11.

content of the annotations – in direct opposition of Snart’s purposes. Adams provides the intertextual and interdisciplinary analysis that Snart so pointedly avoids. Highly critical of “unreadings,” Adams insists that analysis of the page cannot be rendered by dismissing the content of the notes and their relationship to the content of the printed text.

Despite their distinctive differences, both Snart and Adams engage with H.J. Jackson’s *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia* (2005), a book which synthesizes the economic and social contexts of reading analysing the “availability of books, developments in publishing and marketing, and attitudes towards books and reading.”⁸⁵ Perhaps one of the most intriguing moves on her part is the juxtaposition of the “mundane marginalia,” for example, the scrawls of early education students learning Latin, to examples of specialized annotation, like botanist James Edward Smith’s dedicated cross-referencing and personal additions. Jackson maintains an interested ambivalence towards annotations and their authors, regardless of social status; remarking that recognized figures as well as other people with access to their own (or friends’) books were annotators. She interrogates but never fully engages with an arresting point:

Of all British writers of all kinds of writing who flourished in the period that we call Romantic, only three have so far come to have their marginalia included among the collected works: Blake, Coleridge, and Keats. Why only three? Why even three? Why *these* three?⁸⁶

She later clarifies that compared to other eighteenth-century British readers, “Blake is hardly eccentric at all: he talked back to his books, and like certain other readers, he took steps to disseminate his opinions in a form of manuscript publication.”⁸⁷ This is an important point for

⁸⁵ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, xiv.

⁸⁶ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, 153.

⁸⁷ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, 170.

further investigation into the marginalia to Reynolds. It is always tempting to radicalize, modernize, and apply the charged reactions in the margins to suit the myth of Blake but the recognition of other inflammatory annotators like the politician John Horne Tooke helps place his work in a wider context of textual interventions.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ John Horne Tooke, an English clergyman, philologist, and politician associated with radical parliamentary reform was perhaps best known for having stood trial for treason in 1794. After receiving a copy of *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit* (1777) from the author, Joseph Priestly, he annotated the copy intensively. For more on this, see H.J. Jackson's *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* from Yale University Press, 2001.

1.3 Four Types of Annotations

Blake owned the second edition of *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, corrected, published in 1798. He annotated only the first volume which contains a dedication to the King, written by Reynolds' friend, author and lexicographer Samuel Johnson; "Some Account of the Life and Writings of Sr. Joshua Reynolds," by Malone; and then "Address to the Members of the Royal Academy," and Discourses I through VIII, written by Reynolds. Even though Blake only annotated the first volume, the content of his notes indicate that he read the book in its entirety. There is scholarly debate about the date that Blake began his annotation of *Works*. Mona Wilson believes he began in 1808, Frederic Will supposes 1820, while David V. Erdman suggests between 1798 and 1809. Regardless of the debate over the timeline, scholars typically concur that Blake's responses are contrarian: Edgar Wind describes his annotations as the "jealous ravings of a bitter man;" Hazard Adams says Blake "lost sight of charity;" and Robert R. Wark laments "the spiteful marginalia with which he belaboured his copy of *Discourses*." Wark thinks the annotations reveal "a complete lack of sympathy with the rationalist component of Reynolds' thinking about art."⁸⁹ This rather neglects the fact that Blake's comments on Reynolds are quite often positive. For example, Blake concurred with Reynolds's approbation of Nicolas Poussin. Reynolds waxes poetic about his selection of figure symbolism and sense of time:

If the Figures which people his pictures had a modern air or countenance, if they appeared like our countrymen, if the draperies were like cloth or silk of our manufactures, if the landskip[sic] had the appearance of a modern view, how ridiculous would Apollo

⁸⁹ Edgar Wind, *1960 Reith Lectures*, 879; Hazard Adams, *Blake's Margins: An Interpretive Study of the Annotations*, 144; Robert R. Wark, *Discourses on Art by Sir Joshua Reynolds*, xxvi.

appear instead of the Sun; an old Man, or a nymph with an urn, to represent a River or a Lake?”⁹⁰

Blake comments to the side of this paragraph, “these remarks on Poussin are Excellent[.]”⁹¹

The utensils used in the writing of Blake’s annotations vary. They range from pencil inscriptions, pencil with pen written over the top the original, and direct pen markings. This evidence, in conjunction with the publication of the *Descriptive Catalogue* in 1809, suggests that he most likely began reading and annotating in 1798, and revisited the notes on several occasions until at least 1810. Blake’s Notebook contains an untitled essay, which Erdman refers to as “Public Address,” in which there is what seems to be a draft oration to the Chalcographic Society (the society dedicated to copperplate engravers) about *Canterbury Pilgrims*. He indicates and reuses language from his annotations of *Works* which leads me to believe he revisited the commentary when he was drafting his speech. Blake invited the reader into some insight on his annotation rereading habits in *Works*:

I read Locke on Human Understanding & Bacons Advancement of Learning on Every one of these Books I wrote my Opinions & on looking them over find that my Notes on Reynolds in this Book are exactly Similar. I felt the Same Contempt & Abhorrence then; that I do now.⁹²

He intimates to the reader that he keeps his annotated copies as a reference guide for himself and suggests that he re-evaluates his previous positions against his current viewpoint. During the late eighteenth and early-nineteenth century, re-reading was widely practiced as intensive reading was regarded as conducive to evaluating the text. Further yet, a deep and well-considered

⁹⁰ Reynolds, *Works*, I:135.

⁹¹ E655.

⁹² E660.

understanding of a work was essential, but memorization of a text was also admired.⁹³ While Blake did not commit Reynolds' lectures to memory, he certainly engaged with the book on repeated occasions across an extended period.

Physically, Blake's copy of *Works* is royal octavo-sized and bound in raw sienna dyed calf leather. The exterior of the books is in good condition despite being 220 years old. Inside, there are four main types of Blake's notes in *Works*: pencil-only, ink only damaged by the book-binding process, pencil with black ink over it, and ink only post-book binding. The pencil annotations appear to be initial reactions to the text and perhaps sometimes writer-oriented, that is, for Blake's personal reference or amusement, in that they are not as explanatory in nature compared to the ink annotations. These comments are typically in a larger hand, often with a dull pencil, and not as neat compared to the later marginal notes in pen. As of 2018, when I first examined the volume, many of the annotations David V. Erdman reported are no longer visible. The first instance of pencil only annotations is next to a footnote concerning the English portrait painter Thomas Hudson (1701-1779). Malone was critical of Hudson's "reign" as a painter, including his overuse of blue velvet coats and white shirts as clothing for his figures, but Blake responds: "Hudson Drew Correctly" in large, looped script (see figure 1).

⁹³ William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 395.

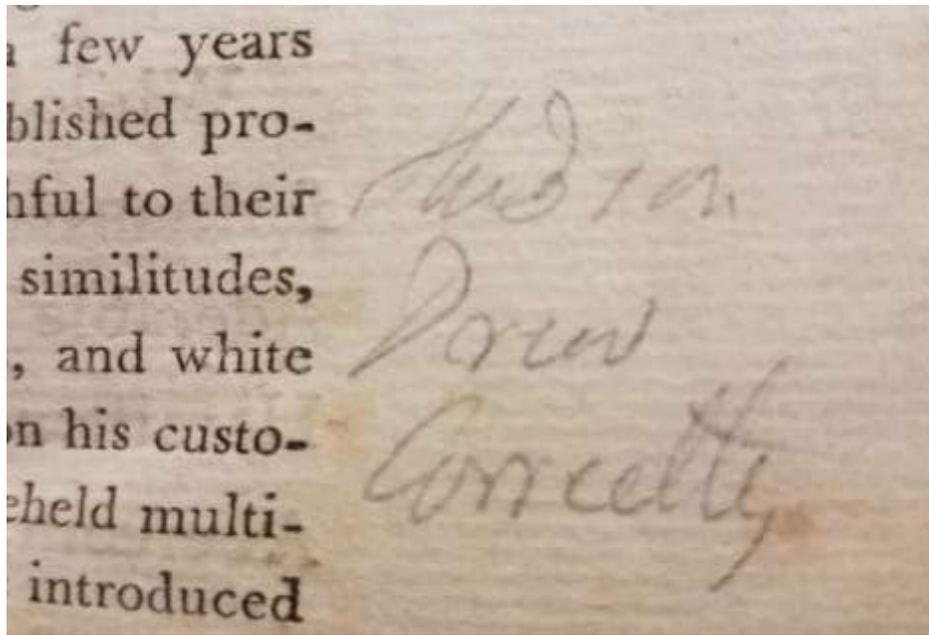


Figure 1. William Blake, pencil manuscript annotation (*Works*, I:iii), British Library, London, United Kingdom.

He does not respond to the criticism but counters with what he deemed, more important concerns: the basis of design. The character of the comment seems rash and reactive and perhaps can also be recognized in the appearance of the handwriting. The cursive letters are not carefully constructed, suggesting a quickly written note. The pencil annotations that are left without ink could either have been missed by Blake or notes to revisit for a later date or perhaps, not regarded as important enough to revisit. The annotations in pencil are typically derisive or theories in flux -- to be found amusing or reconsidered by Blake.

The black-ink-only annotations damaged by the book binding process appear to be opinions that Blake did not expect to change. These are often longer notes, lasting for several lines. Another annotated book of Blake's, *Aphorisms on Man*, provides evidence of commentary completed before the book was cut and bound.⁹⁴ The lines that are cut away and edges of letters missing from Blake's annotations are indicative of the binding process that cut the pages down to

⁹⁴ E583.

fit the brown leather selected for his copy of *Works*. The content of these annotations is often reactive, as in the case of the lengthy note responding to Malone's praise of educating students with examples from "Michael Angelo, Correggio, Raffaello, Parmegiano, and perhaps some of the old Gothick [sic] masters."⁹⁵ Blake responds with incredulity; writing quickly and in a slapdash way. Instead of the calligraphic penmanship we recognize from Blake's illuminated books, this annotation is angular, varied, and slanted, utilizing most of the free space on the page. The personal and unrefined penmanship includes the reader into a private conversation where he inquires:

Here is an Acknowledgment of all that I could wish But if it is True. Why are we to be told that Masters who Could Think had not the judgment to Perform the Inferior Parts of Art as Reynolds artfully calls them. But that we are to Learn to Think from Great Masters & to Learn to Perform from Underlings? Learn to Design from Rafael & to Execute from Rubens [line cut away] ?⁹⁶

The question mark after the cut away line is visible in the shape of a large, squiggly hook at the end of indecipherable phantom letters (see figure 2). Blake's annotation reads as exasperated by the hypocrisy of the content and demands the reader investigate and disbelieve the printed text. Unfortunately, the book binding process was not kind to this annotation and Blake did not attempt to rectify it by writing above or on the next page.

⁹⁵ Malone, ed., *Works*, I:xxix.

⁹⁶ E638.

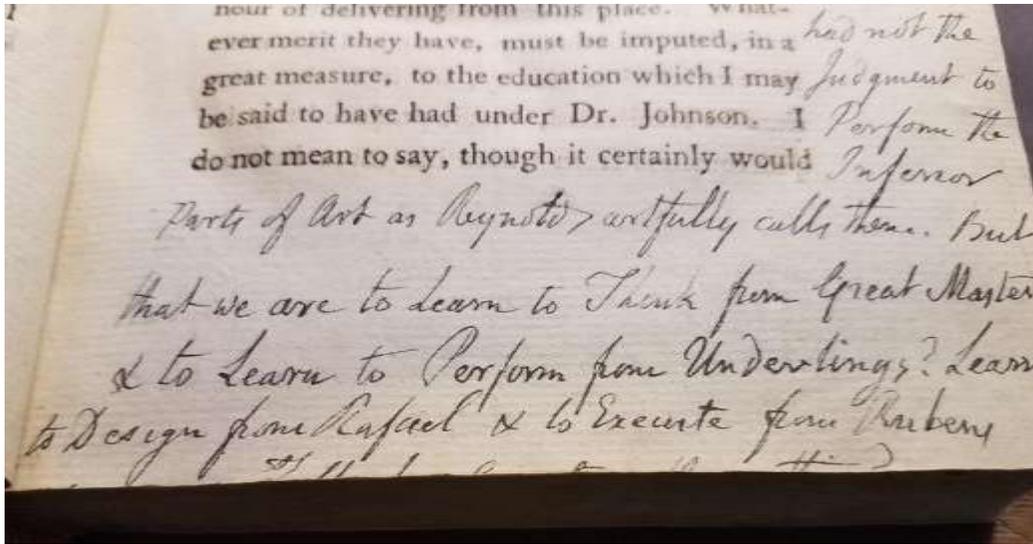


Figure 2. William Blake, black ink manuscript annotation (*Works*, I:xviii), British Library, London, United Kingdom.

A better-preserved black ink comment appears when Malone recounts a list of Reynolds' prices for paintings like *The Infant Hercules* (1792) and *Mrs. Siddons, in the character of the Tragick Muse* (1827). Malone gives further information about Reynolds' earning potential with a footnote reference to Samuel Johnson's letters to Giuseppe Marc'Antonio Baretti (Joseph Baretti) in which he says, "Reynolds is without a rival, and continues to add thousands to thousands" continuing later, "Mr. Reynolds gets six thousand a year."⁹⁷ Blake's slightly damaged annotation asks in messy handwriting: "How much did Barry Get[?]"⁹⁸ This comment relates to his other black inked annotation on the title page verso, "Barry was Poor Unemployd [sic] except by his own Energy"⁹⁹, and to the blank page facing the Dedication to the King, "Barry told me that while he Did that Work – he Lived on Bread & Apples[.]"¹⁰⁰ The opinions presented in these annotations appear to be morally charged reactions to the main text. The previous examples

⁹⁷ Malone, ed., *Works*, I:lxx, note 38, quoting Samuel Johnson in 1761.

⁹⁸ E640.

⁹⁹ E636.

¹⁰⁰ E636.

represent issues of ignored genius, and even the deleterious acts by the state of patronage in England – topics that Blake would rail against his entire adult life.

Apart from the original inked annotations, there are also pencil annotations with overlaid ink. These appear to be pencil notes that Blake reread and still found to be an accurate reflection of his position on the subject at hand. Possibly, he elected to not erase the underlying pencil because it revealed his consistency of thought and understanding and mastery of the text.

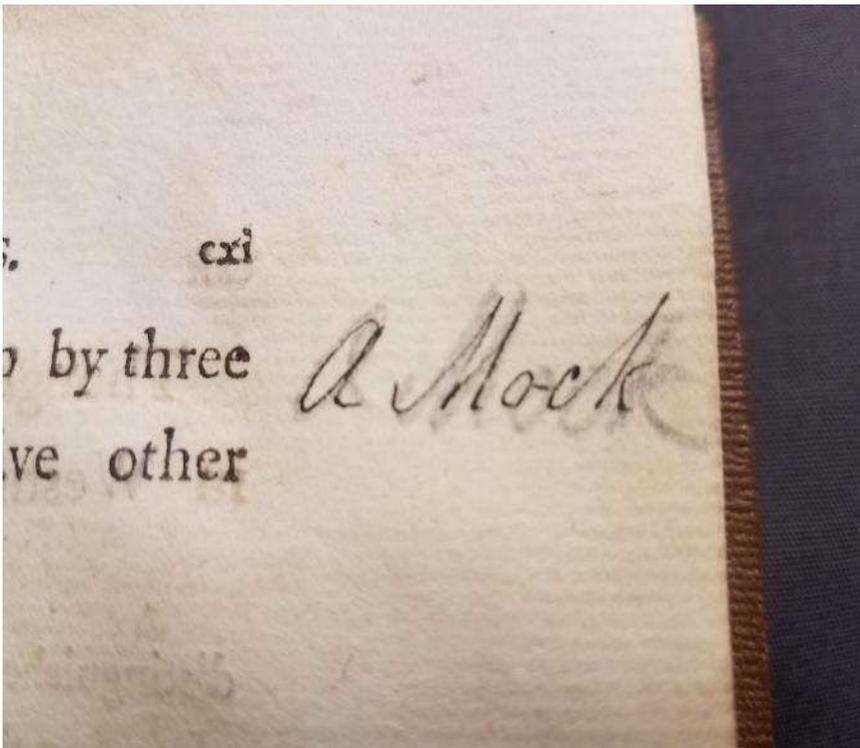


Figure 3. William Blake, pencil manuscript annotation (*Works*, I:cxi), British Library, London, United Kingdom.

Jackson agrees in relation to Blake's annotations of Lavater: "what is interesting is the firm conviction that consistency of opinion over time is a good thing, a sign of personal integrity – and that marginalia could be used to test that integrity."¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, 158.

This demonstration of confidence, whether real or projected, encourages the reader to admire the steadfastness of the annotator. Blake's Notebook shows that he was, indeed, a meticulous drafter and editor. Morris Eaves explains that for Blake "making a line expressed identity, and the result is identical form, activating the image with inward life. Ultimately, making a line signals readiness for relation, and the result is the opening of a line of communication."¹⁰² Eaves is discussing Blake's reactions to Reynolds' discussion of lineaments in art but the same applies to the annotations more generally; the line underneath could also indicate the adamant and consistent opinion of the content.

Finally, the ink only, post book-binding comments are probably the latest of the annotations. These marginal notes are typically written in a much smaller and neater hand than the earlier notes. The letters and lines are carefully positioned in the margins and show no signs of clipped characters or lines cut away. This means they were written after the book was fully bound. The content is usually introductory or explanatory; for example, the title page is all black ink with no signs of cut away lines or letter markings. Blake seems to have felt no need to draft the thoughts placed on this page, written after reading the book several times previously. As with any title page, Blake included the most important information for a reader to approach his following annotations, like his name and motivations.

¹⁰² Morris Eaves, *William Blake's Theory of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 43-44.

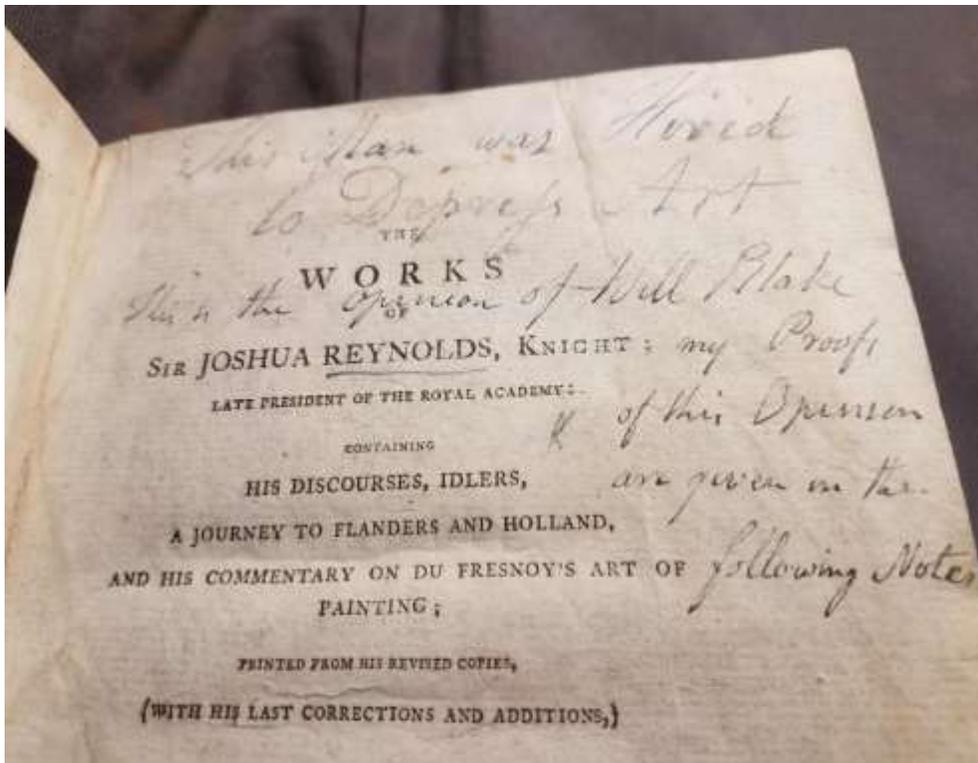


Figure 4. William Blake, black ink manuscript annotation (*Works*, I: title page), British Library, London, United Kingdom.

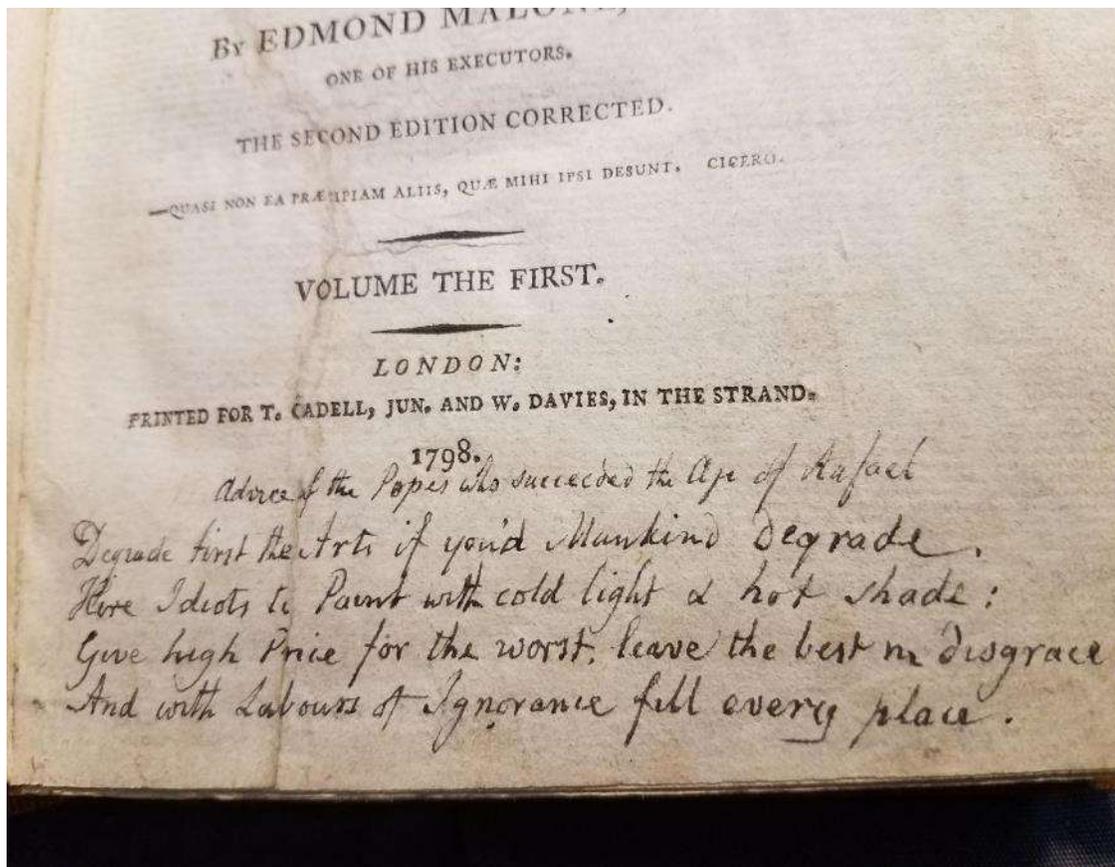
The word “depress” in relation to art appears not only in his annotations to *Discourses on Art* but also in an 1803 letter to Thomas Butts, and in an 1805 letter to Thomas Hayley.¹⁰³ I believe this suggests that he was revisiting his annotations to *Works* while drafting the *Descriptive Catalogue* and then wrote the introductory material on the titlepage. The annotations on the verso pages of the *Discourses* are written in black ink only with no book binding mangling with the exception of the Fourth Discourse (pencil with ink overlaid). Despite acting as introductions for the discourses, they are not always neatly written. For example, on the back of the introductory page for Discourse III, Blake wrote his own introduction for the lecture, featuring a quotation from John Milton followed by the word “discourse,” which was written erroneously and subsequently

¹⁰³ E636, annotation; E730, letter to Butts; E767, letter to Hayley.

marked through with ink dabs, obfuscating the error, and rewritten above in a heavily inked black pen.

Blake's marginalia oscillate between prose, poetry, and aphorisms in form, but it is important to note that when he uses poetry, it is always written in black ink and after the book was bound. The first instance of poetry as marginalia is the footer annotation (figure 5) on the title page of *Works*:

Degrade first the Arts if you'd Mankind degrade,
Hire Idiots to Paint with cold light & hot shade:
Give high Price for the worst, leave the best in disgrace,
And with Labours of Ignorance fill every place.¹⁰⁴



¹⁰⁴ E635.

Figure 5. William Blake, black ink manuscript annotation (*Works*, I: title page), British Library, London, United Kingdom.

These poem annotations appear to be written after later re-readings of the book, revealing more about the potential date of the black ink with no damaged writing. Later, Blake condemns the Flemish painter's choice of colour palette: "Shade is always Cold & never as in Rubens & the Colourists Hot & Yellowy Brown[.]"¹⁰⁵ The "hot" brown used for shading informs Blake's writing of the "hot shade" on the title page, which was most likely added afterwards. Further still, in an 1802 letter to Thomas Butts, Blake lambasts Reynolds' opinions on colour:

I have now given two years to the intense study of those parts of the art which relate to light & shade & colour & am Convinced [sic] that either my understanding is incapable of comprehending the beauties of Colouring or the Pictures which I painted for You Are Equal in Every part of the Art & superior in One to any thing that has been done since the age of Rafael. — All Sr J Reynolds's discourses will shew. that the Venetian finesse in Art can never be united with the Majesty of Colouring necessary to Historical beauty.¹⁰⁶

Blake's two years of intensive study of chiaroscuro has, to him, vindicated his claims written in *Works*. He mentions the *Discourses* and Sir Joshua Reynolds by name, indicating that he has re-examined his marginalia. The letter continues to Mr. Butts:

But I do not pretend to be Perfect. but if my Works have faults Caracche Corregios & Rafaels have faults also. let me observe that the yellow leather flesh of old men the ill drawn & ugly young women & above all the dawbed [sic] black

¹⁰⁵ E662.

¹⁰⁶ E718.

& *yellow shadows* that are found in most fine ay & the finest pictures. I altogether reject as ruinous to Effect tho [sic] Connoisseurs may think otherwise.¹⁰⁷

Once again, Blake referenced the “yellow shadows” of Rubens and other Flemish painters. I believe this is evidence to suggest that he was using his earlier notes and borrowing from his marginalia to process and refine his aesthetic theories.

Some pages have a combination of different types of annotation. For example, the introduction page of the First Discourse includes a header note written in pencil only and the bottom annotation written in black ink only. For the reader, the shift in medium from the top half of the page to the lower half suggests Blake revisited the text. If the annotations had both been written in black ink, they might appear at first glance to have been written at the same time. However, Blake abstains from inking over the pencil, perhaps to avoid creating any impression that they are addressed to the same situation. The two annotations are concerned with Genius but differ in that the first comment (in pencil) is general to all nations, whereas the footer note (ink only) is concerned with the English art market. Any reader encountering these annotations might well conclude that prospects had grown dimmer for English artists. Blake wanted the reader to recognize the declining integrity of English art, ushered by Reynolds: reaffirming his introductory statement that Reynolds was “Hired to Depress Art[.]”¹⁰⁸

Most of Blake’s marginalia read in traditional English-speaking bibliographic pattern: top-down, left to right. However, there are moments when the page seems to have been too small for his entire commentary to fit. Perhaps to remedy this, Blake shifted the page while he was writing by 90 degrees and wrote accordingly. The first instance of differently oriented annotations (as in, a note written left to right horizontally) is in response to a footnote concerning

¹⁰⁷ E719.

¹⁰⁸ E635.

the “private character” of George Moser, Keeper of the Royal Academy.¹⁰⁹ Blake reacts strongly and writes in black ink only, indicating a sense that his viewpoint on this will not change over time. He writes largely, clearly, and takes up most of the page. The last line at the footer of the page is cut away, indicating that this note was written before the book was bound. There are several smudges, for example “Lebruns” and “Rubens” are clumsily written. This might be an error of hand but may reflect Blake’s judgement on these artists as careless in that they were not committed to this view. Perhaps dissatisfied with the previous notes, Blake shifted to writing along the spine-side of the margin, as no more room was left at the footer or outer margin. To read this commentary, one must carefully spread the book open farther with their fingers.

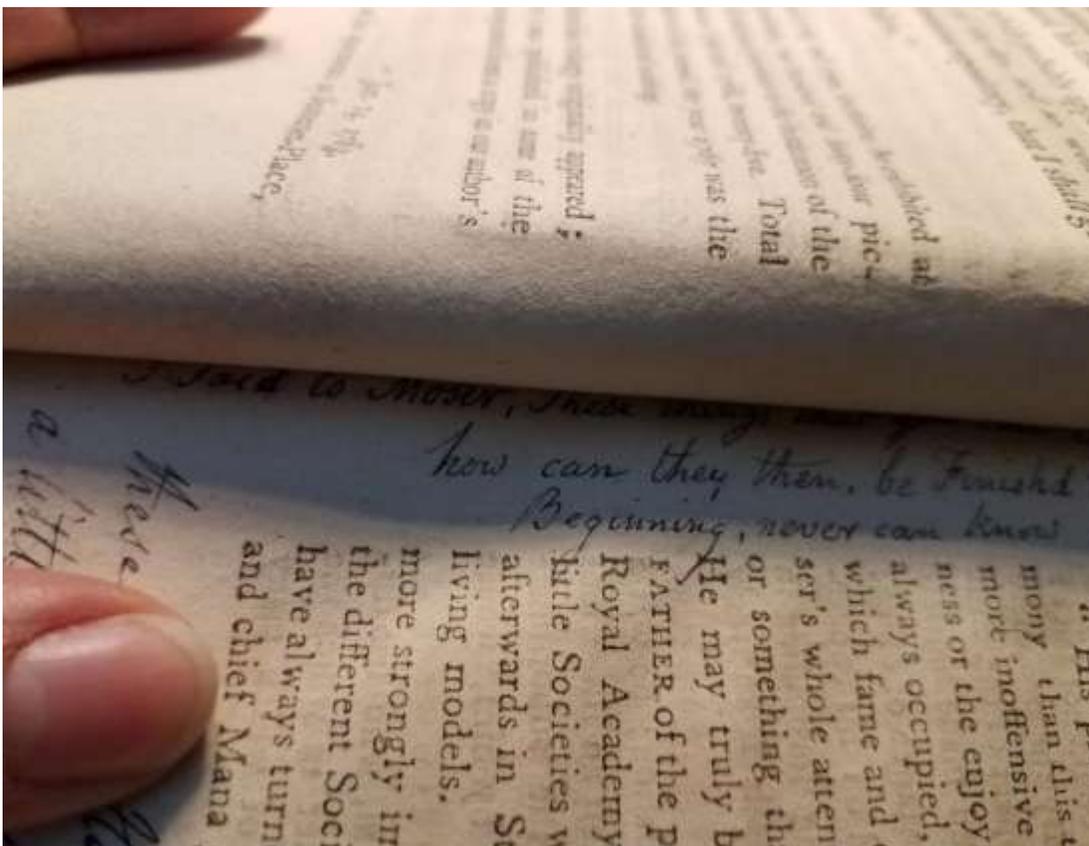


Figure 6. William Blake, black ink manuscript annotation (*Works*, I:xlvi), British Library, London, United Kingdom.

¹⁰⁹ E639.

Even after doing this, it is difficult to make out the innermost comment. There is no evidence of ink transfer onto the other page (xlv), providing further evidence that this annotation was written while the book was still in loose paper format. This writing behaviour is recorded in Blake's Notebook, for example on page 61: he begins to edit a line, but there is no longer room parallel to the stanza. Instead of writing below or on the next page, he moves the Notebook 90 degrees to the right and continues the thought.¹¹⁰ The writing in the spine of *Works* is small, dark, clear, and precise in the spine, indicating his attentiveness to the needs of any putative reader. Readership can be passive, but he disorients reading patterns and traditional bibliographic codes by requiring the reader to physically turn the book or their head to read his note. Finally, Blake uses a caret to insert the term "Unfinishd" between "Dry" and "Works of Art" in the traditionally written first comment on the page.¹¹¹ The addition of "Unfinishd" clarifies the spine margin annotation concerning "The Man who does not know The Beginning [of Art], never can know the End of Art[.]"¹¹²

Marginalia is inherently responsive, in that the annotator pauses the act of reading and switches intellectual functions, responding by writing directly on the page making for a synthesized reading process. When Blake decides to write in a method different from traditional top-down, left to right reading patterns, he forces the assumed reader to stop, and reorient themselves. This complicates ideas of the passively receptive reader, and might suggest, as Evelyn B. Tribble asserts, that marginalia is a "struggle for control of a position" between the

¹¹⁰ William Blake, *The Notebook of William Blake: A Photographic and Typographic Facsimile*, ed. David V. Erdman (Readex Books, 1977), 61.

¹¹¹ E639.

¹¹² E639.

text and annotation as well as between print author and annotative author.¹¹³ Michel de Certeau calls the centre text the “island of the page” where “concrete activity that consists in construction, on its own, blank space – the page – a text that has the power over exteriority from which it has first been isolated...the blank page...is a place where the ambiguities of the world have been exorcised.”¹¹⁴ The blank page is the safest place away from ambiguities. But with the addition of printed, central text, ambiguities are added, and to complicate the page, the subsequent addition of marginal commentary, dissent and discourse takes place once again, remixing all these ambiguities, and engaging with Watson’s concept of the marginal(ized) borderlands.

Jackson states that “we owe important marginalia by Coleridge and Blake” to Henry Crabb Robinson who “carefully over traced or transcribed in ink” their commentary written originally in pencil.¹¹⁵ This is accurate for a few of the annotated books, but *Works* is not one of these texts. For example, the occasions when ink is applied over pencil, it is never directly on top of the graphite. Often, it is positioned just forwards to the pencil markings. The letters are shaped characteristically to Blake’s hand. An example comes from the front matter in which Blake laconically responds: “A Mock[.]”¹¹⁶ The pencil underneath is thick and shadowy, suggestive of writing with a dull pencil. The black ink layered on top is smaller in character size and shifted towards the upper left. The letters do not synchronize in size, position, or intensity, indicating that Blake himself wrote on top of his original commentary. As mentioned previously, there are

¹¹³ Evelyn B. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), 10.

¹¹⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 10.

¹¹⁵ Jackson, *Romantic Readers*, 57.

¹¹⁶ E641.

several types of notes that Blake made using various writing utensils. The annotations that have been damaged and in black ink only are instances that prove it could not be Robinson's work.

Blake is remarkably steadfast in his opinions, as evidenced by his revisiting and affirmation of earlier annotations, but he did not fully develop and expand on many of them until 1809 in his *Descriptive Catalogue*. Blake proclaims in an 1809 letter to Ozias Humphry, RA and Portrait Painter in Crayons to the King, that he “not only detest[s] False Art,” but has the “Courage to say so Publicly [sic].”¹¹⁷ Blake enclosed an admission ticket to the self-run exhibition to Mr. Humphry and included the Catalogue Index.¹¹⁸ The ticket given to Mr. Humphry may have come with the *Descriptive Catalogue* to further encourage his interest in the exhibition, but even if not included in the package, Blake told him he was ready to give him the publication if he attended. I believe *The Descriptive Catalogue* is a more finalized publication of his “quarrel,” as Jackson describes the marginalia, with Reynolds and the art establishment. The significance of the annotations to *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* are that they reveal Blake's drafting and prefiguring his aesthetic theories, perhaps even considering any help and approval from his circle.

One of many examples of Blake's comments in *Works* appearing later more fully conceptualized in the *Descriptive Catalogue* comes in Malone's “Account.”¹¹⁹ Malone's footnote praises Reynolds' astuteness as a colourist, claiming he came close to unearthing the oil paint secrets of the Renaissance Venetian school. Blake writes first on the outside margin, “Oil Colours will not do,” followed by a footer annotation: “Why are we told that Reynolds is a Great

¹¹⁷ E770.

¹¹⁸ E528.

¹¹⁹ Malone, ed., *Works of Sir Joshua*, I:vii.

Colourist & yet inferior to the Venetians[?]"¹²⁰ Later, in the *Advertisement of the Exhibition* (1809), Blake expanded:

Oil will not drink or absorb Colour enough to stand the test of very little Time and of the Air; it grows yellow, and at length brown. It was never generally used till after VANDYKE'S time. All the little old Pictures, called cabinet Pictures, are in Fresco, and not in Oil. Fresco Painting is properly Miniature, or Enamel Painting; every thing [sic] in Fresco is as high finished as Miniature or Enamel, although in Works larger than Life. *The Art has been lost: I have recovered it.* How this was done, will be told, together with the whole Process, in a Work on Art, now in the Press. The ignorant Insults of Individuals will not hinder me from doing my duty to my Art. Fresco Painting, as it is now practised, is like most other things, the contrary of what it pretends to be.¹²¹

He goes on to claim in the *Advertisement* that he was cast out of the Royal Academy because of his use of watercolour, or what he renames 'fresco;' the reason he resorted to managing and putting on his own exhibition. The declaration that he has recovered this lost art directly correlates to Malone's assertion that Reynolds had nearly recovered the brilliance of Venetian oil paint mixtures and methods; while Reynolds was close, Blake proclaims only he has truly completed the task of finding the lost method of true art. The annotations show that Blake was developing this idea in earlier years.

Blake's access to his own commentary is important to his consistency and clarity of thought. One of his annotations to *Works* hints at the way his rereading of his commentary worked:

I read Locke on Human Understanding & Bacons Advancement of Learning on Every

¹²⁰ E640.

¹²¹ E527. Original emphasis.

one of these Books I wrote my Opinions & on looking them over find that my Notes on Reynolds in this Book are exactly Similar. I felt the Same Contempt & Abhorrence then; that I do now.¹²²

Blake seems to have kept his annotated books near him to allow him to revisit and analyse his opinions and comparing them with related works. This constant process of revision and editing, which he sometimes attempts to veil from the public, was central to the process of writing the *Descriptive Catalogue*. Much of the diction included in *Descriptive Catalogue* cannot be found in the Notebook (despite several poems decrying the supposed genius of Reynolds) or in other incarnations – however, there are clear links between it and the annotations to *Works*. In efforts to be seen by the public, Blake made his annotations and therefore, opinions, even more public by creating the *Descriptive Catalogue* to go alongside the exhibition. As Jackson argues, Blake certainly meant to publish his views by writing in the margins of *Works*, but after years of increasingly hostile feelings towards the English art world, he ultimately chose to publish for (hopefully) a larger audience than his friends who borrowed his books.

The relationship with books was changing rapidly in the late eighteenth century and it is essential that we consider the materiality of the book as an object. Other scholars have expertly begun this course of action by resituating the book into sociability and influence. I believe that annotations should be treated similarly. Blake's marginalia in the Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds have been often cited and used for historicizing the Royal Academy, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Blake himself. I believe that by considering the various writing utensils he used, the possibility of other readers encountering his annotations, and the revisiting of his marginalia will be

¹²² E660.

invaluable to Blake scholarship. His choice to develop his ideas on art in this work was a deliberate choice. In the next part of the thesis, I will examine this choice of text.

Part Two: Sir Joshua Reynolds' Influence on Blake

William Blake's marginalia in *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1798) are scattered disproportionately across the first volume. Out of three volumes, only the first is annotated. Most of the marginalia in fact occurs in Edmond Malone's "Some Account of the Life and Writings of Sir Joshua Reynolds," the first substantial section of the book located directly after the Contents and Letter to the King. Blake may have elected to write the majority of his commentary in the beginning section, recognizing that not all readers would be willing to endure three volumes of Reynolds' literary oeuvre in order to engage Blake's annotated reactions. The nearly complete publication of all of Reynolds' writing, includes his recollections of trips to Flanders and Holland, and his *Idler* essays, which may not have appealed to readers that were friends of Blake's. Regardless of the clustering of his annotations, Blake had certainly read all the work. Several early annotations show a synthesis of comments on ideas from the second and third volumes into his commentary in the first. A reader would not miss Blake's aesthetic and political declarations, although they would miss Reynolds' if they didn't move forward after the first volume, or even after the first section.

Alternatively, the locus of the marginalia may point to something more individual. Blake could be declaring that as consumers and connoisseurs in art, we are obligated to recognize the artist as the individual – especially if their words and actions are deleterious to the state of art. Blake often condemns Reynolds as the figurehead of the British art world, most likely because of his prestigious institutional duty as the first president of the Royal Academy. While there were other societies and circles intended to promote British art, none were so clearly identified and promoted as the key institution for British art as the Royal Academy. At this point, I will attempt to lay out something of Reynolds's role at the pinnacle of what British Art represented to the

world. Next, I will examine and explore popular reactions to Reynolds and his *Discourses* from the likes of William Hazlitt, John Constable, James Barry, and Catherine the Great. Finally, I will attempt to summarize and clarify the elements and critical points of the lectures contemporaneous to Blake's annotations (meaning, I will not factor in the so-called *Ironical Discourse*, which went unpublished in this edition). In doing so, I hope to make clear the points of contention between Reynolds and Blake.

2.1 Sir Joshua Reynolds' Cultural and Artistic Authority

Born in Plympton, Devonshire to a clergyman schoolmaster, Joshua Reynolds received a slightly lacking education, yet appears to have been an independently focused reader. He copied quotations of interest in his commonplace book from authors like Pliny, Seneca, Ben Jonson, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Bacon, and his personal favourite, Alexander Pope.¹²³ James Northcote, Reynolds' biographer and student, recognizes his master's lack of a sophisticated early education: "the mass of general knowledge by which he was distinguished was the result of much studious application in his riper years."¹²⁴ At age 17, he convinced his father to apprentice him to the portrait painter Thomas Hudson, a prolific artist who completed at least 400 portraits, about eighty of which were engraved. Hudson's studio was a busy one, where other students like Joseph Wright of Derby and John Hamilton Mortimer would begin their careers. Hudson also employed the skilled drapery painter Joseph van Aken. A letter from Samuel Reynolds, Joshua's father, is evidence of the young artist's rapid improvement:

Joshua goes on very well...Dr. Huxham, who saw a Laocoön [sic], a drawing of his, said that *he who drew that would be the first hand in England*. Mr. Tucker, a painter in Plymouth, who saw that and three or four more, admired them exceedingly, as I had it from Mr. Cranch; yet when he saw drawings of Joshua's, in his second year (of his apprenticeship), he still saw an improvement.¹²⁵

¹²³ Frederick Whiley Hilles, *The Literary Career of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 201-216.

¹²⁴ James Northcote, *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Late President of the Royal Academy.*, 2 vols (London: Henry Colburn, Conduit Street, 1819), I:10.

¹²⁵ Joshua Reynolds, *The Letters of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, ed. John Ingamells and John Edgcumbe (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 106.

Another letter from Samuel reports that “as for Joshua, nobody, by his letter to me, was ever better pleased in his employment in his master, in everything – ‘While I am doing this I am the happiest creature alive,’ was the way Reynolds described his position.”¹²⁶ The happiness dissipated as Hudson and Reynolds severed the apprenticeship earlier than anticipated. There is debate about the events leading up to the split: James Northcote asserts that Hudson was jealous of Reynolds’ abilities and style; Joseph Farington recounts an anecdote over a delayed canvas delivery to have been completed by Reynolds; Nicholas Penny suggested that it may have been that Hudson offered nothing more to learn; and Reynolds’ father shares to Mr. Cutcliffe that the separation was mutual and amicable.

In 1749, Reynolds embarked on a Grand Tour visiting Lisbon, Cadiz, Gibraltar, Minorca, and Rome. In Port Mahón, on Minorca, Reynolds was disfigured by a horse-riding accident. The horse unexpectedly reared and bolted, causing Reynolds to suffer a severely lacerated lip, which resulted in an operation to have a portion of it removed.¹²⁷ During his recovery in Minorca, he was taken in by British soldiers stationed there, and painted portraits of all the officers. In an ongoing theme of misfortune, Reynolds fell ill in Rome, which he blamed on a chill he experienced while painting in the Vatican, although some sources consider this a hereditary affliction.¹²⁸ Regardless of the cause, he would use a silver ear trumpet the rest of his life. This tool would later become a signifier for him in various interpretations: drawing attention to his

¹²⁶ Ian McIntyre, *Joshua Reynolds: The Life and Times of the First President of the Royal Academy* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), 28.

¹²⁷ Northcote, *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 108.

¹²⁸ Martin Postle, *Reynolds, Sir Joshua (1723–1792), Portrait and History Painter and Art Theorist* (Oxford University Press, 2015), accessed <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23429>.

figure and as commentary on his social behaviour at the Royal Academy (see figures 7 and 8) and as a metaphor in Blake's scorn.



Figure 7. Johan Joseph Zoffany, *The Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1771-1772, oil on canvas, 40 x 58" (101.1 x 147.5 cm), Royal Collection Trust, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.rct.uk/collection/400747/the-academicians-of-the-royal-academy>.



Figure 8. Johan Joseph Zoffany, detail of *The Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1771-1772, oil on canvas, 40 x 58” (101.1 x 147.5 cm), Royal Collection Trust, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.rct.uk/collection/400747/the-academicians-of-the-royal-academy>.

Upon the recommendation of an early patron, Lord George Edgcumben, Reynolds set up a studio in London in October 1752. He quickly established himself as a favoured portrait painter, and soon found himself proudly sharing the name of some of his more illustrious sitters: “I find I have but a little room left so must tell you as fast I can who of the principal people that I have drawn and leave you to conclude the rest” which included the likes of lords, ladies, and Commodore Keppel.¹²⁹ His early success gave him a prime opportunity to forge long-lasting and meaningful relationships with important figures of the time like Edmund Burke and Dr. Samuel Johnson. Johnson and Reynolds were introduced to each other by James Boswell in 1754.

¹²⁹ McIntyre, *Joshua Reynolds: The Life and Times*, 80.

Although Johnson was ignorant of the arts, Reynolds was inspired by his friend: “the observations he made on poetry, on life, and on everything about us, I applied to our art, with what success others must judge.”¹³⁰ The admiration for intellect was mutual, as Johnson expressed, “when Reynolds tells me something, I consider myself as possessed of an idea the more.”¹³¹ The relationship was particularly beneficial to Reynolds, however, as his first published writings appeared in Johnson’s *Idler*.

In 1764, Reynolds and Johnson established The Club or the Literary Club. It boasted renowned members like Oliver Goldsmith, Edmund Burke, and Adam Smith. Charles Burney described the group as:

composed of the heads of every liberal and literary profession, that we might not talk nonsense on any subject that might be started but have somebody to refer to in our doubts and discussions, by whose Science we might be enlightened.¹³²

As Mark Hallett describes it, The Club was a unique assembly “devoted to the pursuit of learned and witty conversation,” centred around Johnson, who was very much an intellectual celebrity at the time.¹³³ The benefits of these conversations found their way into *Discourses* as Reynolds affectionately related that,

¹³⁰ John Timbs, *Anecdote Biography: William Hogarth, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, Henry Fuseli, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and J.M.W. Turner* (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1860), 108.

¹³¹ Northcote, *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, I:82.

¹³² James Boswell, *The Correspondence and Other Papers of James Boswell Relating to the Making of the Life of Johnson*, ed. Marshall Waingrow (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 2:331.

¹³³ Mark Hallett, *Reynolds: Portraiture in Action* (London; New Haven: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art; Yale University Press, 2014), 242.

our hearts, frequently warmed in this manner by the contact of those whom we wish to resemble, will undoubtedly catch something of their way of thinking; and we shall receive in our own bosoms some radiation at least of their fire and splendor.¹³⁴

The Club granted Reynolds substantial access to influential circles on a broad front, and he was also involved in the development of a new institutional landscape for the visual arts. Another group that Reynolds was part of was London's Society of Artists (active 1759-1791): a collective interested in sharing other intellectual and cultural pursuits of the time.¹³⁵ The society included painters, sculptors, architects, and engravers interested in showcasing their art to the public. Looking towards the continental societies, they agreed to premiere artists' works by establishing an annual exhibition of which the first took place on April 21, 1760. The showcase was successful but planning for the next exhibition proved to be a tumultuous process, eventually resulting in several schisms. In 1755, *An Essay in Two Parts, On the Necessity and Form of a Royal Academy for Painting, Sculpture and Architecture* was published in London, perhaps written by John Nesbit or John Gwynn. The author explains that English art seekers spend fortunes on paintings completed by foreign hands and travel to experience art elsewhere "as if the air and soil that gave birth to a Shakespeare and a Bacon, a Milton and a Newton" could not foster art.¹³⁶ The author continues:

If the national character ought to be consistent, the present wild and neglected state of the arts [in England], and of painting in particular, is worthy of attention and concern...to

¹³⁴ Hallett, *Reynolds: Portraiture*, 156.

¹³⁵ For more information on The Society of Artists and other visual arts groups at the time, see Matthew Hargrave's book, *Candidates for Fame: The Society of Artists of Great Britain, 1760-1791* (2006).

¹³⁶ *An Essay in Two Parts, On the Necessity and Form of a Royal Academy for Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture* (London: J. Robinson at the Golden Lion in Ludgate Street, 1755).

bring about this desirable end, it has been thought expedient to solicit the establishment of a Royal Academy.¹³⁷

The author included a listing of like-minded artists to the end of the essay where Reynolds' name appears, revealing his collaboration. Despite this coalition pushing for a site to encourage British art, the artists, again, found it difficult to compromise on their values. Eventually, in 1768, an improved petition initiated the founding of an academy. The objectives were to promote academic British art and showcase the results in an annual exhibition. William Chambers, Benjamin West, George Moser, and Francis Cotes prepared an agenda for a royal academy which led to the Royal Academy's inauguration on December 10, 1768, signed off by King George III. Shortly after the petition was approved, Reynolds was unanimously elected President of the Royal Academy and knighted.

Between 1769 and 1790, Reynolds set out his academic agenda for the Royal Academy in a series of lectures during prize ceremonies. He delivered two lectures in the founding year; annually, the next three years; and afterwards only every other year, apart from moving to Somerset Place in 1779. Edmond Malone points out that "it was no part of the prescribed duty of his office to read lectures", but he "voluntarily imposed this task upon himself" to inspire students and dispense aesthetic observations.¹³⁸ Reynolds' final lecture to the Academy in December of 1790, was a momentous gathering with eminent artists, intellectual celebrities, and highly admired dignitaries in the audience when suddenly a gigantic crash and rupture happened – the floor gave way. The attendees panicked and rushed for the doors and sides of the walls but fortunately, the floor did not fall through, and the lecture continued. After the ceremony, the floor was inspected and "one of the beams for its support had actually given way from the great

¹³⁷ *An Essay in Two Parts*, 1755.

¹³⁸ Malone, ed., *Works*, I:xl.

weight of the assembly.”¹³⁹ In this moment, Reynolds told Northcote that had the floor and ceiling collapsed, most of the listeners would have died instantly, “and if so, the arts, in this country would have been thrown two hundred years back.”¹⁴⁰

Reynolds’ approach to art would continue to be important in the coming years, certainly in the realm of colour. In 2010, the Wallace Collection and the Paul Mellon Centre co-sponsored a campaign called the Reynolds Research Project to analyse the technicalities of his technique and conserve the paintings as many of the pictures have suffered even during the artist’s lifetime due to his extensive experimentation. Using x-ray technology, conservators and art historians alike have examined the paintings to better understand his goals to generate new effects of colour, tone, and depth using various pigments, varnishes, glazes, and oils. Some of these concoctions included beeswax, spermaceti, copaiba balsam, bitumen, and lake pigments. Lake pigments are created by the act of precipitation: where a liquid is suspended in a binding agent creating solid matter. Reynolds commonly used red lake pigment which is responsible for the fading flesh tones in several of his paintings. He confided in Northcote that vermilion did not appear to lend a realistic flush to skin and found that red lake, made from the crushed husks of cochineal insects, gave an earthy vivacity.¹⁴¹ Unfortunately, with exposure to light, the reddish tint flattened to a ghostly pallor as seen in his 1755 portrait of Charles Churchill (see figure 9).

¹³⁹ James Northcote, *Memoirs of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knight*, (London: Henry Colburn, 1813), 363.

¹⁴⁰ Northcote, *Memoirs*, 363.

¹⁴¹ Northcote, *Life*, 18.



Figure 9. Joshua Reynolds, *Charles Churchill*, 1755, oil on canvas, 47.6 x 38" (120.7 x 96.5 cm), National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada, <https://www.gallery.ca/collection/artwork/charles-churchill>.

According to Alexandra Gent, Thomas Hudson's studio followed Thomas Bardwell's prescriptive method from *The Practice of Painting and Perspective* (1756) to completing a painting in the most efficient method: building up a picture in many layers, including the practice of dead-coloring.¹⁴² Dead-coloring is the technique of applying monochromatic tones previous to the application of final colors, intended to eliminate flat or dull appearances in the final result. This technique remained in Reynolds' toolbelt, as evidenced by his reluctance to remove paint

¹⁴² Lucy Davis, Mark Hallet, Alexandra Gent, *Joshua Reynolds: Experiments in Paint* (London: Holberton, 2015), 43.

and election to persist with more layers of paint, covering mistakes or changes of heart.¹⁴³

Reynolds' innovations lay in the use and misuse of various chemicals to the pictures. He kept ledgers that he called "technical notes," written in several languages, chronicling the success or failure of his concoctions. For example, he recognized and soon abandoned the cracking, "alligator skin" effect caused by bitumen.¹⁴⁴ Bitumen, often found in asphalt and road surfacing, is a natural, sticky substance intended to enhance deep, dark tones. Due to the tarry nature of the substance, it never dries and with the addition of wet oils on top of it, creates air pockets which result in cracks and flaking paint. Despite becoming widely-known for his rapidly deteriorating pictures, Sir George Beaumont wrote to Oldfield Bowles of North Aston, father of Miss Jane Bowles (see figure 10): "take the chance; even a faded picture from Reynolds will be the finest thing you have."¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Davis, *Joshua Reynolds: Experiments*, 47.

¹⁴⁴ Davis, *Joshua Reynolds: Experiments*, 49.

¹⁴⁵ Charles Leslie, *Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds: With Notices of Some of His Contemporaries* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1865), 2:134.



Figure 10. Joshua Reynolds, *Miss Jane Bowles*, 1775-1776, oil on canvas, 36 x 28" (91 x 70.9 cm), Wallace Collection, London, United Kingdom.

Perhaps due to his broad social network and celebrity as the foremost English painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds' death in 1792 was a grandiose funerary event. Malone recounted:

The spectators, both in the church and in the street were innumerable. The shops were shut, the windows of every house filled, and the people in the streets, who seemed to share in the general sorrow, beheld the whole with respect and silence.¹⁴⁶

The noble company of mourners made up of several Dukes, Marquises, Earls, Knights, and Lords travelled in 42 coaches and an additional 49 arrived empty, signifying the presence of those who could not travel.¹⁴⁷ Perhaps Reynolds' closest friend, Edmund Burke, wrote a heartfelt eulogy that expounded on his amiable personality but also his aptitude as an artist:

¹⁴⁶ Malone, ed., *Works*, I:cxiii.

¹⁴⁷ Malone, ed., *Works*, I:cxv.

He was the first Englishman, who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country...He had too much merit not to excite some jealousy, too much innocence to provoke any enmity. The loss of no man of his time can be felt with more sincere, general, and unmixed sorrow.¹⁴⁸

While Reynolds' influence was monumental, it is important to consider the influences upon Reynolds' artistic approaches as it rapidly becomes clear that inspiration came from all springs. As Scott J. Juengel expressed, Blake was "a notoriously quarrelsome figure," as his "letters, notebooks, annotations, and other commonplace writings often read like an extensive catalogue of specific and petty grievances."¹⁴⁹ While I do not subscribe to this "jaundiced perspective" of Blake, I do agree with Juengel that Blake tended to display "envious disputation, insecurity, and professional resentment" in regards to the eighteenth century art world.¹⁵⁰ Because of Reynolds' affable personality, he was often the part of wide and varied social circles. Described as a man of conversation and interest, he became one of the first celebrities. It is certainly true that he gleaned much of his worldview by sharing with his friends – in fact, he often recommended it.¹⁵¹ Because of this breadth of social interaction, Reynolds' influences (social and otherwise) may have influenced Blake to pick up *Works* to work through his artistic theories and observations.¹⁵² The echoes of Burke and Johnson throughout Reynolds' literary works have been expertly traced by other scholars, yet virtually everyone agrees that there was no plagiarism or ghost-writing that

¹⁴⁸ Malone, ed., *Works*, I:cxx-cxxiv.

¹⁴⁹ Scott J. Juengel, "William Blake's Enemies," *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 58, no. 3 (2018): 703–29, doi:10.1353/sel.2018.0028. 704.

¹⁵⁰ Juengel, "William Blake's Enemies," 704.

¹⁵¹ Northcote, *Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 194-195.

¹⁵² For example, Malone listed the original members of The Club on page lxxxvi as Reynolds, Samuel Johnson, Edmund Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Langton, Mr. Antony Chamier, Sir John Hawkins, Topham Beauclerk, and Oliver Goldsmith. Blake responded to this note with: "Oliver Goldsmith? never should have known such knaves[.]" For this annotation and context, see E640.

occurred despite rumours abounding at the time.¹⁵³ Johnson would have had encountered significant issues writing *Discourses* as he was largely unfamiliar with art. Northcote described a dinner at Reynolds' home with the majority of guests being artists and Dr. Johnson. Upon the conversation of Richardson's essays on the arts and criticism, Johnson remembered that he read it once and "did not think it possible to say so much upon the art."¹⁵⁴ Reynolds' poor hearing affected his reception of Johnson's comment and he asked someone to repeat it to him. The guest who echoed Johnson's comment spoke very loudly, and Johnson, embarrassed, "but I did not wish, Sir, that Sir Joshua should have been told what I then said."¹⁵⁵ This interaction, among others, shows the lack of will on Johnson's part to write the *Discourses* for Reynolds. The rumour that Burke wrote *Discourses* circulated after the Johnson as ghost-writer theory occurred. Malone confirmed that Burke had confidently told him that he did not write any of the essays.¹⁵⁶ In 1790, Burke wrote to Malone praising *Discourses* and the author: "He is always the same man; the same philosophical observer, with the same minuteness, without the smallest degree of trifling."¹⁵⁷ Northcote expanded on his position that Burke would not have been able to have "written the foregoing criticism on art without the powerful assistance of Reynolds," suggesting that if one influenced the other, then it was Reynolds who influenced Burke.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Blake referenced these rumours in the annotations to *Works*. Reynolds conceded that while the Venetian painters had "extraordinary skill," their approach to colour would be detrimental to history painting and the grand style. In the margin, Blake wrote, "<Somebody Else wrote this page for Reynolds I think that Barry or Fuseli wrote it[.]" For more on this, see E651.

¹⁵⁴ Northcote, *Memoirs of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 236.

¹⁵⁵ Northcote, *Memoirs*, 236.

¹⁵⁶ Malone, ed., *Works*, I:xliv.

¹⁵⁷ Northcote, *Life*, 317.

¹⁵⁸ James Northcote, *Supplement to the Memoirs of the Life, Writings, Discourses, and Professional Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knt. Comprising Additional Anecdotes of His Distinguished Contemporaries* (London: Henry Colburn, 1815), cxxiv.

Reynolds demonstrated his wide range of earlier influences in his writing, but he was also familiar with and deeply indebted to the critical art theorists of the period. In 1783, William Mason published an edited translation of Charles Alphonse du Fresnoy featuring annotations by Reynolds. The additions to the text are typically a summary or translation of what du Fresnoy described. For example, Fresnoy wrote “Fair in the front in all the blaze of light, / The Hero of thy piece should meet the sight,” and Reynolds laconically sums up: “the principal Figure.”¹⁵⁹ His commentary is not intended to encourage discussion or cast shadows of doubt or pleasure over the theory, but rather acts as a middleman between the lofty verse and the reader’s understanding. Nevertheless, Reynolds shaped du Fresnoy’s writing into what he believed it should mean to any young artist.

Regarding other continental artistic theorists, Reynolds was also familiar with Roger de Piles. Throughout *Works* it is not Reynolds that cited him but mostly Malone in the footnotes. In “Discourse Eight,” the lecture in which Reynolds reminded the students that novelty, variety, and contrast “in their excess become defects” would be distracting and detrimental to their art and that simplicity is the key to successful art.¹⁶⁰ Malone directed attention to de Piles’ recommendations to portrait painters that artists, like Hyacinthe Rigaud, “a painter of great merit in many respects,” can be diminished by his “total absence of simplicity in every sense.”¹⁶¹ In Reynolds’ final lecture to the Academy, he reminisced about his experience in Rome, where he found exquisite and overwhelmingly excellent art but bemoaned that “Nature which is so admirable in the inferior schools [still life]” was sacrificed due to the suggestion of Du [sic] Piles.¹⁶² He continued that his opinions were awry as a young man and now that he had “taken

¹⁵⁹ Reynolds, *Works*, II:16.

¹⁶⁰ Reynolds, *Works*, II:16.

¹⁶¹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:256.

¹⁶² Reynolds, *Works*, II:191-192.

every opportunity of recommending a rational method of study” he can assert that “Reason in part, but not in the whole, has been much the object of these Discourses.”¹⁶³ De Piles’ approach to art was certainly different from Reynolds’ in that he believed that colour, not line, was of the utmost importance. Additionally, he lauded the notion that genius, imagination, and expression cannot be taught or learned. This subject would appear in Reynolds’ many lectures during his time as the President of the Royal Academy.

In Malone’s opening statements about Reynolds’ life and writing, one name is mentioned consistently in the early development of his aesthetic rationale: Jonathan Richardson. Richardson is regarded as “more influential as a writer” than a painter as he produced one of the first works of artistic theory in England, entitled *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715), which he would later develop into *An Essay on the Whole Art of Criticism as it Relates to Painting and an Argument on Behalf of the Science of a Connoisseur* (1719). Richardson argued that for painting to take its (rightful) place alongside the sister arts of drama and poetry, it would be required to either perfectly match or ideally outweigh the qualities of the other genres. The elements of proper painting consist of: Invention, “to make himself Master of it as delivered by Historians, or otherwise; and then to consider how to Improve it, keeping within the Bounds of Probability;” Expression, “whatever the general Character of the Story is;” Composition, “putting together for the advantage of the whole...determination of the painter as to certain Attitudes, and Colours;” Colouring, referring simply to the choices; Handling, “the manner of using the Pen, Chalk, or Pencil;” Grace, and Greatness, “A Painter’s Own Mind Should have Grace, and Greatness; That should be Beautifully, and Nobly form’d [sic].”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Reynolds, *Works*, I:192.

¹⁶⁴ Reynolds, *Works*, I:41; Reynolds, *Works*, I:87; Reynolds, *Works*, I:117-118; Reynolds, *Works*, I:164; Reynolds, *Works*, I:209.

Richardson's belief that "Grace, and Greatness" of mind were just as important to a painter as the measured ability to paint properly were an important influence on Reynolds. The application of painting to the promotion of civic virtues is found in *Discourses* time and time again. John Barrell's *The Political Theory of Painting* grapples with the idea of civic virtue as it influenced the artists of the period, Reynolds chief among them. History painting was associated with a quality of 'mind' that was able to grasp civic virtue and communicate its values to the public. Portrait painting, a potentially lucrative business, pandering to individual vanity, was not readily associated with these higher values. Richardson, unlike Lord Shaftesbury, who dismissed portraits as 'mere mechanics' thought portrait painting could aspire to the same public values as history painting. He also pointed out that Richardson's circumstances would affect the impact of Reynolds' reception as well – the unique position of income generated largely as a portrait painter rather than a history painter. It seems nearly impossible for a chiefly commercial artist to demand ethical and aesthetic requirements while focusing on more lucrative options. Lord Shaftesbury dismissed portraitists as "mere mechanics," a phrase that Reynolds would appropriate to describe capable Royal Academy students that rise "beyond that of mere mechanicks [sic]."¹⁶⁵ Richardson claimed that unlike the other arts, painting (including portraiture) alone can accurately express the ideas and virtues of the painter to the public:

And this is a Language Universal; Men of all Nations hear the Poet, Moralist, Historian, Divine, or whatever other Character the Painter assumes, Speaking to them in their own Mother Tongue. Painting has another advantage over Words, and that is, it Pours Ideas into our Minds, Words only Drop them.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Reynolds, *Works*, I:55.

¹⁶⁶ Jonathan Richardson, the Elder, *The Works of Jonathan Richardson. Containing I. The Theory of Painting. II. Essay on The Art of Criticism, (So Far as It Relates to Painting). III. The Science of a Connoisseur. A New Edition, Corrected, with the Additions of An Essay on the Knowledge of Prints, and*

This universal language of imagery, told by the skilful and mindful painter, would be an invaluable asset to any nation. This would particularly apply to Great Britain which had not had the luxury of long established academies of art (unlike the continent). In 1792, the editor of *The Works of Jonathan Richardson*, in the opening dedication letter to Reynolds stated that if Richardson were still alive, he would have “congratulated his Country on the Prospect” of an Academy that could rival European schools of painting. He rested his praise with “at the same Time he would have confessed that our admirable *Discourses* would have rendered his own Writings less necessary.”¹⁶⁷

From this perspective, Reynolds lectures, published as *Discourses on Art*, crowned the success of British painting, confirming its status as an intellectual enterprise with genuine public benefits. They were translated into several European languages (French, German, and Italian) during his lifetime and well over thirty English language editions came out after his death. The lectures are largely theoretical and intended to not only guide thought but to stimulate the hearts and minds of the students. Reynolds was cautious to present his perspectives as an art theorist, instead, he preferred to state that his lectures were drawn from years of observation as a practicing and working artist. Perhaps one of the most revealing statements of Reynolds’ approach to art and the lectures would be his declaration that “the great end of the art is to strike the imagination.”¹⁶⁸ In his thirteenth discourse he insisted that “the true test of all the arts is not solely whether the production is a true copy of nature, but whether it answers the end of art, which is to produce a pleasing effect upon the mind.”¹⁶⁹

Cautions to Collectors. Ornamented with Portraits by Worlidge, &c. of the Most Eminent Painters Mentioned. Dedicated, by Permission, to Sir Joshua Reynolds. The Whole Intended as a Supplement to the Anecdotes of Painters and Engravers (Strawberry Hill, London: B. White and Son, 1792), 4.

¹⁶⁷ Richardson, *The Works of Jonathan Richardson*, vi.

¹⁶⁸ Reynolds, *Works*, I:84.

¹⁶⁹ Reynolds, *Works*, II:136.

Like Richardson, Reynolds encouraged students at the Academy to practice and develop their mechanical mastery of the arts. In the early stages of becoming a successful artist, the importance of dexterity and mastery of the tools of art is the main source of labour. Northcote related that Reynolds “used to say that for many years he laboured harder with his pencil than any mechanic had ever worked at his trade for bread.”¹⁷⁰ Reynolds does grant in the lectures, however, that after the initial mastery, the practice and discipline of painting will become a mental, inventive labour instead of the baser, craft task. He also admitted the flexibility and fragility of artistic rules for more advanced artists, when contemplating Roger de Piles’ view that the main character should be centre stage, Reynolds said that the artist “would encumber himself with needless difficulties...other considerations of greater consequence often stand in the way.”¹⁷¹ This is one of the many instances of Reynolds’ contradictions would arise. In Discourse Two, he asserted that “nothing is denied to well directed labour: nothing is to be obtained without it,” and that persistence and practice with mechanical abilities “will produce effects similar to those which some call the results of natural powers.”¹⁷² However, in the twelfth discourse, he stated that it is futile to teach methodology to the untalented and “those who have talents will find methods for themselves, methods dictated to them by their own particular dispositions, and by the experience of their own particular necessities.”¹⁷³ Perhaps Reynolds saw a shred of his own situation in this statement, as Northcote once casually reported to James Ward:

¹⁷⁰ William Hazlitt, *Conversations of James Northcote, Esq., R.A.* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1830), 219.

¹⁷¹ Reynolds, *Works*, II:268.

¹⁷² Reynolds, *Works*, I:326.

¹⁷³ Reynolds, *Works*, II:59.

He [Reynolds] was unquestionably a genius but as a teacher he was the worst master possible. He had no regular education himself, and could not even draw a hand, except as an object of sight. What he did was entirely from the force of his genius alone, and genius, you know, cannot be communicated.¹⁷⁴

Scholars like Robert B. Wark have suggested that the contradictions here are actually a question of address. The earlier comments are directed to the needs of students at the beginning of their studies, whereas the latter discourse is for an audience of nearly professional artists.¹⁷⁵ These contradictions would agitate the likes of William Hazlitt who titled his essay “On certain Inconsistencies in Sir Joshua Reynolds’s Discourses.”¹⁷⁶ In the manner of inconsistency however, Benjamin Haydon would later state that thanks to Reynolds’ *Discourses*, he felt compelled to become a painter; after all, Reynolds, “expressed so strong a conviction that all men were equal and that application made the difference.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Northcote, William Hazlitt, ed., *Conversations*, 71.

¹⁷⁵ Wark, ed., *Discourses on Art*, xx.

¹⁷⁶ For more on Hazlitt’s reaction to Reynolds’ *Discourses on Art*, see “Reynolds and Hazlitt” by Eugene Clinton Elliott in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 21, Issue 1, 73-79, 1962 and “General and Invariable Ideas of Nature: Joshua Reynolds and his Critical Descendants” by Sarah Howe in *The English Association*, Vol. 54, 1-13, 2005.

¹⁷⁷ Benjamin Robert Haydon, *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon, Historical Painter*, ed. Tom Taylor, 2 vols (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1853), 2:14.

2.2 Analysis of Reynolds' Most Contentious Perspectives to Blake

Reynolds placed diligent study of the Old Masters at the centre of his idea of an education in Fine Art. They were the key to the development of original invention and even Genius. He explained in Discourse VI: “the mind is but a barren soil; a soil which is soon exhausted, and will produce no crop, or only one, unless it be continuously fertilized and enriched with foreign matter.”¹⁷⁸ For Reynolds it was important that students sought some form of inspiration in previous achievements beyond their own natural resources. He does not specifically mean that the inspirational artists should be foreign or explore foreign lands, but rather they should be of a different time, place, etc. to be truly considered an Old Master worth studying. It is important to keep in mind that he was speaking to an audience largely comprised of students at the Academy, it was clear that his motivation was to continue their academic engagement. It was a position that he repeated again and again: “I know but of one method of shortening the road; this is, by a careful study of the works of the ancient sculptors[;]” “the great use of studying our predecessors is, to open the mind, to shorten our labour, and to give us the result of the selection made by those great minds of what is grand or beautiful in nature...it is an art of long dedication and great experience to know how to find it[;]”and “the daily food and nourishment of the mind of an Artist is found in the great works of his predecessors. There is no other way for him to become great himself.”¹⁷⁹ In other words, Reynolds argued that not only have previous artists encountered the same obstacles as the amateur artists before him but that the student can only achieve success through careful study of those who came before them. He expands on this when speaking of Michelangelo in his final discourse, that painters like Francis Floris and Jerom [sic]

¹⁷⁸ Reynolds, *Works*, I:157-158.

¹⁷⁹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:60; Reynolds, *Works*, I:162-163; Reynolds, *Works*, II:92.

Cock gazed upon Michelangelo's works but when they returned to Flanders, "like seeds falling on a soil not prepared or adapted to their nature, the manner of Michael Angelo thrived but little with them."¹⁸⁰ However, this is not the fault of the Flemish artists, after all, "we are born with this taste, though we are with the seeds of it, which, by the heat and kindly influence of his [Michelangelo's] genius, may be ripened in us."¹⁸¹ When Floris and Cock observed and studied him, they had yet to develop or cultivate a sense of taste at least from Reynolds' perspective, that could be ripened by encountering Michelangelo.

Blake and Reynolds agreed more than is sometimes imagined when it came to the importance of studying the Old Masters, but they did disagree as to whose example was the most worthwhile. Debates about the canon of the Old Masters continues, but generally the roster includes Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni, Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, Sir Anthony van Dyck, Alessandro di Mariano di Vanni Filipepi Botticelli, among others.¹⁸² Christie's, the British auction house, and company, has an entire department of sales devoted to the Old Masters. They boast that in recent auctions, the sale of Leonardo da Vinci's *Salvator Mundi* amounted to a record \$450 million in 2017, overwhelming the previous year's sale of Rubens' *Lot and his Daughters* for £45 million.¹⁸³ These two examples provide some insight into what British institutions consider Old Masters now: works from European artists that exhibit excellencies of the movements they originate

¹⁸⁰ Reynolds, *Works*, II:202.

¹⁸¹ Reynolds, *Works*, II:207.

¹⁸² Note that the names of these artists have been written in many different formats over the centuries. For example, Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni is simply known as Michelangelo currently. However, Reynolds would sometimes segment his name into "Michael" followed by "Angelo." Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, now known simply as Raphael, has also changed. Blake would sometimes write "Rafael" and at other times, "Raphael." I have not changed the spelling or presentation of these artists in Reynolds' or Blake's writing.

¹⁸³ Christie's, "Old Masters and Early British Paintings," Christie's Auctions & Private Sales, n.d., <https://www.christies.com/departments/old-master-and-early-british-paintings-70-1.aspx>.

from.¹⁸⁴ This interpretation is best summed up by their assurance to future buyers: “Not every old master costs tens of millions of pounds. The specialness, rarity, depth, craft and value of 500 years of art history can be collected for as little as £10,000.”¹⁸⁵ Ian Chilvers surely must have recognized the prevalence of these canonical debates when writing the entry for “Old Master” in the *Oxford Dictionary of Art* as, “an imprecise but useful term employed as a blanket phrase to cover European artists (particularly painters) from the Renaissance up to about 1800; the term is applied also to their works, so an Old Master can be a picture as well as a person.”¹⁸⁶

Before analysing the views on the Old Masters entertained by Reynolds and Blake, it is useful to think about the different ways in which the two men encountered them. For example, what did it mean for them ‘to study’ the Old Masters? To study could mean several things in the context of *Discourses on Art*. Samuel Johnson defined it in two significant ways: “to think with very close application; to muse” and “to endeavour diligently.”¹⁸⁷ In art, a study has come to mean a sketch, painting, or any other medium prepared prior to a more finished piece. In these definitions, the act of meditating and drawing from other artists has an end goal in mind: a finalized understanding or work. As mentioned previously, Reynolds had been on the Grand Tour and spent much of his time in Italy, primarily in Rome. The Sistine Chapel is where he claimed to have lost his hearing because of his extended periods of study in the buildings of the

¹⁸⁴ For an interesting conversation on the current importance of Old Masters, see “Not just for ‘nerds’: vivid stories from the Old Masters,” a conversational essay featuring Keith Christiansen, the John Pope-Hennessy Chairman of the Department of European Paintings at New York’s Metropolitan Museum. <https://the-easel.com/essays/vivid-stories-from-the-old-painting-masters/>.

¹⁸⁵ Christie’s, “Old Masters.”

¹⁸⁶ *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, “Old Master,” accessed March 18, 2022, <http://www.oxfordreference.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604761.001.0001/acref-9780198604761-e-2562>.

¹⁸⁷ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language: A Digital Edition of the 1755 Classic* by Samuel Johnson. Edited by Brandi Besalke. Last modified: December 6, 2012. <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/page-view/&i=1964>.

Vatican. Blake, however, never left England in his entire life. The farthest he ventured from London was to Sussex, and he was only there for but a brief time, from 1800 to 1803. This does not mean that Blake was incapable of fully comprehending the works of these Old Masters, as he explained in an annotation to Reynolds, “the Man who never in his Mind & Thoughts travelld [sic] to Heaven is No Artist[.]”¹⁸⁸ Roger Murray explains that this comment shows that Blake believed that the essential elements of important art do not have to be experienced in the actual art object. On the contrary, as Murray explains it, “they are evident to him alone who has travelled in his mind, not just to the local gallery or to Rome, but to Heaven.”¹⁸⁹ One could understand this idea as Blake’s belief that he was blessed with an innate and discerning sense of vision, which I will analyse further in a later chapter. For Reynolds, it was important to visit the Old Master works, to copy and contemplate them. His lengthy journey to Flanders, Holland, Italy, and other countries was essential to his training as an artist.

Blake and Reynolds both greatly admired the Old Masters, but there were other important differences beyond the matter of who they included in the category, or how they encountered them. Both men have immense admiration for Raphael and Michelangelo, although Blake questions if Reynolds did fully understand or appreciated them. In Malone’s account of Reynolds’ life, he shared an anecdote of when Reynolds had his first experience of Raphael in Italy. Reynolds admitted that “I remember very well my own disappointment, when I first visited the Vatican,”¹⁹⁰ because he had overlooked the Old Master’s works. He asked one of the attendants at the Vatican for the location of Raphael’s frescoes and was dismayed that he passed

¹⁸⁸ E646; Reynolds, *Works*, I:56. In 1784, John Hawkins attempted to raise enough money to secure Blake a trip to Italy to study. Ultimately, it failed.

¹⁸⁹ Roger Murray, “Working Sir Joshua: Blake’s Marginalia in Reynolds,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 7 (1977), 86.

¹⁹⁰ Malone, ed., *Works*. I:xiv.

by them without recognizing or experiencing, “the effect which he expected.”¹⁹¹ Blake, in an attempt to prove the point that a real artist can see Genius without education, says: “I am happy I cannot say that Rafael Ever was from my Earliest Childhood hidden from Me. I saw & I Knew immediately the difference between Rafael & Rubens[.]”¹⁹² With this annotation, Blake provided early evidence for the reader of the marginalia that he – not Reynolds - was the superior artist in taste and in the ability to recognize genius. “Men who have been Educated with Works of Venetian Artists. under their Eyes,” Blake explains, “Cannot see Rafael unless they are born with Determinate Organs.”¹⁹³ Not being able to see Raphael means two different things to Reynolds and Blake: for Reynolds, he did not see the works as great at his first glance. For Blake, he could see the greatness of Raphael because he was born with and cultivated his abilities – abilities that are most likely something more than vision or the visible.

Admiring Raphael was not only an excellent aesthetic choice in taste but also carried patriotic overtones for art critics in this period. The Cartoons, when displayed at Hampton Court, ignited conversations and pride among the English. John Shearman explained that it was then “that the first steps were taken towards the installation...of Raphael as an honorary Englishman.”¹⁹⁴ The gigantic works were wildly popular and became national beacons of pride and taste.¹⁹⁵ Acting as the Lord Mayor of London in 1777, John Wilkes opined that the Cartoons and their favourable reception were indicative that the English people would benefit from

¹⁹¹ Malone, ed., *Works*. I:xiv.

¹⁹² Malone, ed., *Works*, I:xiv.

¹⁹³ Malone, ed., *Works*, I:xiv.

¹⁹⁴ John Sherman, *Raphael's Cartoons in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen, and the Tapestries for the Sistine Chapel* (London: Phaidon, 1972), 151.

¹⁹⁵ For more on the English cultural pride in Raphael's Cartoons, see Iain Pears, *The discovery of painting: the growth of interest in the arts in England, 1680–1768* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1988) and John Brewer's *The pleasures of the imagination: the emergence of English culture in the eighteenth century* (London, 1997).

increased efforts to purchase books, paintings, and other cultural works by the Royal court. He recalled the history of King Charles who paid for the Hampton Court to receive visitors for Raphael's Cartoons and "English nation were then admitted to the rapturous enjoyment of their beauties."¹⁹⁶ After King Charles' execution, the works were removed from view, and Wilkes described the national treasures as "perishing in a late baronet's smoky house at the end of a great smoky town."¹⁹⁷ The house Wilkes is referring to is Buckingham Palace where the English public could not access the Cartoons. The removal to Buckingham Palace may have inspired Blake's later writing in the *Advertisement* for his exhibition for his "invention of the portable fresco," a point I will develop in Part Three about *The Descriptive Catalogue*.¹⁹⁸

Over the years, Reynolds recommended studying the Old Masters to the students of the Royal Academy. Addressing the age-old question for students of all subjects – if there are any shortcuts to success – he explained: "I know but of one method of shortening the road; this is, by a careful study of the works of the ancient sculptors."¹⁹⁹ This is a rare moment in *Discourses* where instead of recommending painters to the students, he engaged with the unique approach taken by the Royal Academy's pedagogy. In other art academies, students began drawing from engraved prints, outlines, and drawings by advanced artists; at the Royal Academy, they began their scholarship drawing from casts.²⁰⁰ The rationale for this approach, Reynolds suggested, was because the Old Master sculptors have created perfect renditions of nature and models that an

¹⁹⁶ As quoted from Sharon Fermor and Victoria and Albert Museum, *The Raphael Tapestry Cartoons: Narrative, Decoration, Design* (London: Scala Books in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1996).

¹⁹⁷ Quotations taken from Sharon Fermor and Victoria and Albert Museum, *The Raphael Tapestry Cartoons: Narrative, Decoration, Design* (London: Scala Books in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1996).

¹⁹⁸ E528. This will be expanded on in a later chapter.

¹⁹⁹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:60.

²⁰⁰ Holger Hoock, *The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture, 1760-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 55.

artist could search their entire lives for.²⁰¹ He asked rhetorically, “if industry carried them thus far, may not you also hope for the same reward from the same labour?”²⁰² In Discourse III, where these points are made, more arrangements had been made for more plaster casts to be procured to grace the halls of the Royal Academy. The cast of *Venus de Medici* was gifted to the school by the antiquarian Thomas Jenkins in 1769. Joseph Baretto described his understanding of the acquisition in his pamphlet *Guide Through the Royal Academy* in 1781:

I have been told, that the Original of it was bought at Rome [by Thomas Jenkins]...for the enormous sum of three thousand pounds. If the fact is true, this ought to be the Venus of all Venuses...it would be a hard matter to make Foreigners believe that such Works of Art fetch such prices in England, though the idea of English opulence, of English liberality, and of English taste is great every where [sic].²⁰³

Baretto consciously described the power of English commerce and taste in his description of the *Venus de Medici*, instead of the artistic excellencies that students could gain from it being in the collection for study. Instead, Reynolds has already made these points in his lectures; here, Baretto is acting within his position as the Secretary for Foreign Correspondence for the Royal Academy. However, not all of the sculptures Royal Academy students contemplated were incarnations of the pantheon members of the Ancients. For example, the *Écorché* (French for ‘flayed’ or ‘skinned’) figure was most likely finished in 1771; these props were and are still used as learning aids for medical students and artists alike. William Hunter was the first Professor of Anatomy (appointed in 1768) and assisted with the creation and design of this cast; a grotesque

²⁰¹ Hoock, *Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics*, 55.

²⁰² Hoock, *Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics*, 55.

²⁰³ Joseph Baretto, *A Guide Through the Royal Academy* (London: T. Cadell, 1781), 29-30.

sculpture possibly made from the corpse of a criminal.²⁰⁴ Once the body had been stripped of the skin, they were often put in classical poses for the students to study. The Royal Academy's *Écorché* is set with one arm raised and bent, with the lower body in a *contrapposto* position, which may correspond with illustrations in seminal anatomical treatises like the *Fabrica of Vesalius*.²⁰⁵



Figure 11. *Écorché* figure, 1771, plaster cast, 5'6 x 2' x 1.6' (171.5 x 61 x 47.5 cm), 143.3 lbs. (65 kg), Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom.

In Discourse X, Reynolds spoke at great length about the different plaster casts held by the Royal Academy and their rightful place in a school of artistic cultivation. All the sculptures that were in the Royal Academy during this period could be called Old Masters, even when the artists were unknown. For example, when Reynolds lectured on the representation of expressions and

²⁰⁴ Unidentified maker, *Écorché* Figure, 1771, plaster cast, 171.5 x 61 x 47.5 cm (5.6' x 2' x 1.6' feet), 65 kg (143.3 lbs.), Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom.

²⁰⁵ *Écorché* Figure.

character in sculpture, he argued that the “ancient Sculptors neglected to animate the features, even with the general expression of the passions,” with exception to what he calls the “Boxers,” what is now entitled *The Wrestlers*.²⁰⁶ He referred to the work as a “remarkable instance” but assured the students that he does not recommend imitating this facet of the piece.²⁰⁷ Although it appears that Reynolds appreciated the effect of the passion on their faces, he eventually conceded that this is a “frequent deficiency” of sculptors of the past, or merely, “a habit of inattention.”²⁰⁸ In other words, Reynolds found the value of *The Wrestlers* in the fluidity and movement of the bodies represented, not the sculptor’s talents himself.²⁰⁹ He extends a similar criticism to the *Laocoön and his Sons*, which Pliny the Elder described as “of all paintings and sculptures, the most worthy of admiration.”²¹⁰ Reynolds regarded the most effective sculptures are those in which the emotional range is subtle and in “a very general manner,” but conceded that *Laocoön and his Sons* “have more expression in the countenance than perhaps any other antique statues,” but dismissed it as a “general expression” of pain, “more strongly expressed by the writ[h]ing and contortion of the body than by the features.”²¹¹ He continued, referencing a publication that was released shortly before this lecture took place, that the sculptor missed the opportunity to rouse a greater intrigue for the spectator by neglecting Laocoön’s distress for his children.²¹² Reynolds commended the author of this sentiment, as someone highly decorated in

²⁰⁶ Reynolds, *Works*, II:7.

²⁰⁷ Reynolds, *Works*, II:7.

²⁰⁸ Reynolds, *Works*, II:7.

²⁰⁹ It is important to remember that the term “Old Master” can refer to an individual work and not necessarily an individual artist.

²¹⁰ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, ed. E.H. Warmington, 10 vols., (London: William Heinemann Limited, 1938), 6:37.

²¹¹ Reynolds, *Works*, II:22.

²¹² Reynolds, *Works*, II:22. The author that Reynolds referenced here is still unknown. According to Robert R. Wark: “Winckelmann in 1764 says just the opposite: his own suffering seems to distress him less than that of his children (*The History of Ancient Art*, Bk. X, Ch. I, Sec. 16). Lessing in 1766 does not deal directly with the point in *Laokoon* [sic]. Hazlitt, in his marginalia to the *Discourses*, says ‘Locke,’

the art world, but believed that if the sculptor had indulged in portraying the anxiety of the father for his sons, the artist would “run great risk of enfeebling the expression, and making it less intelligible to the spectator.”²¹³ This sculpture is a significant part of the eighteenth-century discourse on expressing the passions in art. Blake would also take up this point of inspiration with his own representation of *The Laocoön*, which will be analysed in further detail in Part Three of this thesis. Again, like his reception of *The Wrestlers*, Reynolds identified these works as important to study because they are qualifying as Old Masters, but not necessarily made by Old Master artists.



Figure 12. Attributed to Pergamene school and Follower of Lysippus, *The Wrestlers*, ca. 370-300 BCE, sculpture cast (plaster), 3'3 x 2'4 x 3'9 (102 x 73 x 119 cm), Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/the-wrestlers>.

presumably William Locke Sr. of Norbury Park, but this cannot be verified.” See Wark’s footnote on pg. 180 of his edition of *Discourses on Art*.

²¹³ Reynolds, *Works*, II:22.



Figure 13. After Athenodorus of Rhodes (fl. ca. AD 10-20) and After Hagesandrus (c.100BC - c.20BC) and After Polydoros (c.50BC - c.0BC), cast of *Laocoön and his Sons* (Roman version of a lost Greek original), 19th century, plaster cast, 7'9 x 5'3 x 2'6 (242 x 163 x 80 cm), Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom.

Reynolds continued to answer the questions of students anxious to find success earlier in their careers by studying Old Masters, but with the variation that it may help alleviate some mental labour. He stated:

The great use of studying our predecessors is, to open the mind, to shorten our labour, and to give us the result of the selection made by those great minds of what is grand or

beautiful in nature...it is an art of long dedication and great experience to know how to find it.²¹⁴

Here, he reiterated the importance of the intensive consideration that is undertaken when practicing as an artist, as it is an art of long dedication. However, the Old Masters have encountered and succeeded against the same obstacles that the amateur artists are beginning to face. By studying the correct artists and finding the brilliance in them or their works, the student/artist can minimize their time and effort spent, allowing them to move forward with their craft. Using a nature metaphor, Reynolds reminded them that “the daily food and nourishment of the mind of an Artist is found in the great works of his predecessors. There is no other way for him to become great himself.”²¹⁵ The all-or-nothing attitude adopted by Reynolds is a rare affect in *Discourses* but in this instance reveals the emphasis he wished to place on the examination demanded of the Old Masters. In Discourse II, a lecture given to still fairly amateur artists, Reynolds recommended:

Consider with yourself how a MICHAEL ANGELO or a RAFFAELLE would have treated this subject: and work yourself into a belief that your picture is to be seen and criticised by them when completed. Even an attempt of this kind will rouse your powers.²¹⁶

In his final lecture to the Royal Academy, Reynolds described Michelangelo as the “exalted Founder and Father of Modern Art, of which he was not only the inventor, but which, by the divine energy of his own mind, he carried at once to its highest point of possible perfection.”²¹⁷

Michelangelo Buonarroti was a painter, sculptor, and architect during the high Italian

²¹⁴ Reynolds, *Works*, I:162-163.

²¹⁵ Reynolds, *Works*, II:92.

²¹⁶ Reynolds, *Works*, I:35. Original emphasis and spelling.

²¹⁷ Reynolds, *Works*, II:196.

Renaissance, and considered by just about everyone's standards as a quintessential Old Master. His works are lauded for several reasons, one of the foremost is as the absolute model artist working with human anatomy. Henry Fuseli in one of his addresses to the students of the Royal Academy, in *Lectures on Painting*, said that Michelangelo's "mighty style" provided excellent opportunities to study "sublimity of conception, grandeur of form, and breadth of manner," but is complicated by some forms "indiscriminately stamped with grandeur."²¹⁸ Fuseli believed that, mistakenly, in many of Michelangelo's designs, "the hump of his dwarf is impressed with dignity; his women are moulds of generation; his infants teem with the man; his men are a race of giants."²¹⁹ None of Fuseli's concerns bother Reynolds or Blake and both men commend Michelangelo as one of the foremost important artists among the Ancients.²²⁰

W.E. Suida apotheosized Raphael as, "Raphael the prophet, who foresees new artistic possibilities beyond his time, and points the way to the future."²²¹ He then moves to a litany of artists that have found inspiration in his works: "Titian and Correggio, El Greco, Rubens, Poussin and Rembrandt, Ingres, the Neoclassicists, and the Romanticists, even the Moderns, made use of Raphael's inexhaustible wealth."²²² Suida brings forward important information concerning the longevity of Raphael's career as an Old Master. Artists that have nearly oppositional aesthetic theories find solidarity in the work of Raphael.²²³ This point becomes

²¹⁸ Henry Fuseli, *Lectures on Painting, Delivered at the Royal Academy* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, in the Strand, 1801), 59.

²¹⁹ Fuseli, *Lectures on Painting*, 60.

²²⁰ The frontispiece for *Aphorisms on Art* was going to be completed by Blake. However, Fuseli was not able to finish the work and the book was never completed. For more on this, see Sibylle Erle's "Leaving Their Mark: Lavater, Fuseli, and Blake's Imprint on *Aphorisms on Man* in *Comparative Critical Studies*, vol. 3, issue 3, 2006, 347-369, 2006.

²²¹ W.E. Suida, *Raphael* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2015), 46.

²²² Suida, *Raphael*, 47.

²²³ Perhaps because Raphael's work over his short life were incredibly varied, as noted and further expanded on in *Raphael: from Urbino to Rome*, by Hugo Chapman, Tom Henry, Carol Plazzotta, Arnold Nesselrath, and Nicholas Penny (London: National Gallery, 2004).

evident when analysing Reynolds' and Blake's celebrations and interpretations of the Old Master.

Reynolds admired Raphael but Blake felt that neither he nor his friends or institution could see or appreciate the Old Master. Edmund Burke, a close friend of Reynolds as previously mentioned, wrote that he was, "the first Englishman, who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country, in taste, in grace, in facility, in happy invention, and in the richness and harmony of his colouring, he was equal to the great masters of the renowned ages."²²⁴ James Barry, who was appointed Professor of Painting in 1782 to the Royal Academy, had numerous disagreements during his career with both Reynolds and his early patron, Edmund Burke. Barry was one of the few contemporary artists that Blake admired, and rebuffed Burke's praise of Reynolds:

Barry Painted a Picture for Burke equal to Rafael or Mich Ang or any of the Italians
Burke used to shew this Picture to his friends & to say I gave Twenty Guineas for this
horrible Dawb [sic] & if any one [sic] would give [line cut away] Such was Burkes
Patronage of Art & Science²²⁵

I will analyse the feuds between members of the Royal Academy later but importantly, Blake stated that Barry possessed equal talents to Raphael and Michelangelo – but the efforts were wasted on patrons like Burke. Had Burke harboured the sense to appreciate the works of these Old Masters, he would have also had the sense to understand the brilliance of Barry. However, the feuds between Barry and Reynolds were largely known and discussed in the late eighteenth-century art world in Great Britain, and Blake sided with Michelangelo, Raphael, and Barry instead of Reynolds, Burke, and the Flemish artists.

²²⁴ Malone, ed., *Works*, I:cxx.

²²⁵ Reynolds, *Works*, I:cxx.

Another artist Northcote recalled that Reynolds “always spoke with high respect” of was Nicolas Poussin.²²⁶ In a letter to the Duke of Rutland in 1785, Reynolds explained that, “Poussin certainly ranks amongst the first of the first rank of painters, and to have such a set of pictures of such an artist will really and truly enrich the nation.”²²⁷ His patriotic approach was not just polite in urging the Duke to purchase Poussin’s *Seven Sacraments* and offers, “I don’t wish to take them out of your Grace’s hands, but I certainly would be glad to be the purchaser myself.”²²⁸



Figure 14. Nicolas Poussin, *Extreme Unction from The Seven Sacraments*, 1638-1640, oil on canvas, 3 x 4' (96 x 121 cm), Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Reynolds’ admiration is found most extensively in Discourse V, as an example of consistency as an artist. The affection glows from his lecture; for example, on the subject of Poussin’s copy of

²²⁶ James Northcote, *Supplement to the Memoirs of the Life, Writings, Discourses, and Professional Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knight, Late President of the Royal Academy* (London: Henry Colburn, 1815), CXLVII.

²²⁷ Joshua Reynolds, *The Letters of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 142.

²²⁸ Reynolds, *Letters of Sir Joshua*, 142.

Marriage in the Aldobrandini Palace at Rome, Reynolds confirmed that “no works of any modern [artist] has so much of the air of Antique Painting as those of Poussin.”²²⁹ Reynolds continued, to which Blake would later write, “True”:

No painter was ever better qualified to paint such subjects, not only from his being eminently skilled in the knowledge of ceremonies, customs, and habits of the Ancients, but from his being so well acquainted with the different characters which those who invented gave to their allegorical figures...Certainly when such subjects of antiquity are represented, nothing in the picture ought to remind us of modern times. The mind is thrown back into antiquity that may tend to awaken it from illusion.²³⁰

Over four pages of analysis of Poussin in Discourse V, Blake wrote, “True”, three times in the margins, concluding with, “These remarks on Poussin are Excellent[.]”²³¹ However, not all of Reynolds’ remarks on Poussin so pleased Blake. Later in Discourse VIII, Reynolds pointed out that Poussin’s attention to harmonious colour choice was lacking, in particular, to the bluish hues found in his drapery.²³² Blake responded, incensed: “Such Harmony of Colouring is destructive of Art One Species of General Hue over all is the Cursed Thing calld [sic] Harmony it is like the Smile of a Fool[.]”²³³ Blake’s reference to a “General Hue” refers to the red, blue, or yellow tones to a paint. While Blake tried to make it clear that colour is not the dominant concern when it comes to art, Reynolds’ suggestion that Poussin is less talented than Titian is damning to the whole of art. On the next page, Blake made a comment referring to Rubens’ hue choices for shadows: “Shade is always Cold & never as in Rubens & the Colourists Hot & Yellowy

²²⁹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:136.

²³⁰ Reynolds, *Works*, I:137-138.

²³¹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:135-139.

²³² Reynolds, *Works*, I:273-274.

²³³ Reynolds, *Works*, I:274.

Brown[.]”²³⁴ This is an excellent example of Blake using one Old Master against the other to define the artists worth studying and appreciating. This point seems to be a particular thorn in Blake’s side as he puts it in the first two stanzas of marginal poetry on the title page of the volume: “Degrade first the Arts if you'd Mankind degrade, / Hire Idiots to Paint with cold light & hot shade.”²³⁵ In a more intimate twist, a letter about repairing Old Master paintings, from Reynolds to John, the 2nd Earl of Upper Ossory on July 10, 1786, reads: “The Picture is a copy by Titian himself from that in the Colonna palace, I am confident I see the true Titian tint through the yellow dirty paint and varnish with which the picture is covered.”²³⁶ Reynolds is referring to one of the several iterations of *Venus and Adonis* completed by Titian, and it does have a yellowy and brownish appearance. Blake views this yellowish colouring [?] as a shortcoming in a painter, something to be rectified. However, Reynolds advised the Earl of Upper Ossory that, “if it was mine, I should try to get this off, or ruin the picture in the attempt. It is the colour alone that can make it valuable.”²³⁷ The colour choice and unique tones are what Reynolds found alluring in Titian’s works, but Blake rejected the oil paintings, and really, oil painting altogether. In the *Descriptive Catalogue*, he explained that he does not use the medium because it fails to “stand the test of very little time and of the air.”²³⁸ Besides not being able to persist eternally in the same state as other mediums, he added that oil paint, “deadens every colour it is mixed with, at its first mixture, and in a little time becomes a yellow mask over all that it touches.”²³⁹

²³⁴ Reynolds, *Works*, I:275.

²³⁵ Reynolds, *Works*, I: Title page.

²³⁶ Reynolds, *The Letters of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 162.

²³⁷ Reynolds, *The Letters of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 162.

²³⁸ E530.

²³⁹ E530.



Figure 15. Workshop of Titian, *Venus and Adonis*, 1554, oil on canvas, 5'8 x 6'2 (177.9 x 188.9 cm), The National Gallery, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/workshop-of-titian-venus-and-adonis>.

The foundation of the Royal Academy was created by looking towards the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture and similarly, arguments about the Old Masters had broken out there. In 1671, the *Querelle du coloris* ('Dispute on colour') began when Philippe de Champagne gave a lecture at the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1671. In it, he dismissed the style of Titian, but praised Nicolas Poussin. He argued that they should value the balanced, intellectually rigorous art of Poussin as opposed to the more sensual manner of artists like Titian and Rubens. This created two schools of thought within the academy: Poussinistes and those who opposed it, following Rubénisme.²⁴⁰ The Poussinistes also took up

²⁴⁰ For more on this debate, see Honour, H., and J. Fleming, (2009) *A World History of Art*. 7th edn. London: Laurence King Publishing, p. 609. An interesting argument about the colour and form debates over the centuries was posited by David Batchelor in his recent book, *Chromophobia* (Reaktion Books, 2000).

Raphael to their inspiration, citing the excellent design, decorum, and the correct expression of the passions. The Director of the Academy, at the time, Charles le Brun sided with the Poussinistes. To these academicians, colour was simply ornamental to the more important element of form. On the other side, the Rubénistes followed the Flemish Peter Paul Rubens approach citing other artists like Titian and Correggio as their inspirations. They claimed that in order to attain a true *trompe l'oeil* (deceives the eye) effect, colour is crucial to imitating nature. The dispute was political from the beginning as Poussin was a native French artist and Rubens had been suspected to have engaged in espionage for the Netherlands. Wark calls attention to Reynolds' sensitivities for both sides of this argument, as those conversations were still percolating around eighteenth-century London.²⁴¹ His analysis and diplomatic handling of the two schools of thought, Wark argues, is evidence of his even-temperament and emblematic of the appropriateness of his place as president of a Royal Academy. Further, this is how Wark introduces (what he calls) Blake's "spiteful marginalia," as evidence of his unsympathetic reading of not only *Discourses* but also Reynolds as an individual.²⁴² Wark's approach towards Blake and his annotations should be mediated with the fact that Wark is selecting to edit Reynolds and is, as discussed previously in Part One, forced to include Blake in the volume.

The importance of diligent study of precursors was not just a matter for the students of the Royal Academy. The Old Masters themselves, Reynolds argued, had studied just as diligently of the others that came before them. The first Discourse acknowledged that Raphael had not studied at an institution like a Royal Academy but claimed that he benefited from living in Rome and having experienced the "works of Michael Angelo in particular."²⁴³ He suggested

²⁴¹ Wark, ed. *Discourses*, xxv.

²⁴² Wark, ed. *Discourses*, xxv-xxvi.

²⁴³ Reynolds, *Works*. I:9.

that Raphael had an artistic conversion or epiphany when he viewed the Sistine Chapel. W.E. Suida and other scholars have certainly found phantoms of Michelangelo's figures in Raphael's works. Suida likens Raphael's kneeling woman on the right side of *Entombment* to Michelangelo's *Doni Tondo*; claims the *Caritas* panel "could hardly have been conceived without a knowledge of Michelangelo's marble *Pitti Tondo*."²⁴⁴



Figure 16. Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, *The Deposition*, 1507, oil on wood panel, 5'9 x 5'7 (179 x 174 cm), Borghese Gallery, Rome, Italy.

²⁴⁴ Suida, *Raphael*.



Figure 17. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Holy Family*, known as *Doni Tondo*, 1505-1506, tempera grassa on wood, 3'9 feet in diameter (120 cm in diameter), Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.

Michelangelo wrote an embittered letter to an unknown recipient in late 1542 about his contracts and commissions from popes. He began the letter dramatically, exclaiming that the completion of the latest work would be late and, in turn, this tardiness will complicate his current commission, “I get stoned every day as if I’d crucified Christ,” lamenting his supposed punishments.²⁴⁵ He continued to commiserate about the state of commissions and complained that he felt he was owed more money for his efforts to the Italian city-states. This reads as a typical letter of an artist who would like to receive higher payment but these demonstrations are intended to build to his conclusion that comes with a request to recognize that whatever Pope Julius “speaks ill” of him, it is because of the “envy of Bramante and Raphael of Urbino.”²⁴⁶ He

²⁴⁵ Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Michelangelo: Poems and Letters*, trans. Anthony Mortimer, (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 119.

²⁴⁶ Buonarroti, *Poems and Letters*, 121.

believed that Raphael not only “meant to ruin me” and that Raphael was resentful of him because, “whatever art he had, he had it from me.”²⁴⁷ Certainly, there was inspiration between the two, as pointed out in the previous example but Suida provides nuance to Michelangelo’s irritation: he believes that Raphael’s “reaction” to Michelangelo enabled him to create art that is “entirely original,” but not until he “found the confirmation, the touchstone, for his own artistic desire in the achievements of others as great as himself.”²⁴⁸ This concluding sentence is striking because of the similarity of Blake’s reaction to Reynolds’ assertion that Raphael had studied Michelangelo’s works:

I do not believe that Rafael taught Mich. Angelo or that Mich. Ang: taught Rafel., any more than I believe that the Rose teaches the Lilly how to grow or the Apple tree teaches the Pear tree how to bear Fruit. I do not believe the tales of Anecdote writers when they militate against Individual Character.²⁴⁹

To Blake, Raphael already possessed an inner flame of genius and inspiration that studying and experiencing another great artist cultivated but could not implant. This is greatly dissimilar to Reynolds’ assertion that Raphael ascended to greatness because of his experience of Michelangelo’s works. The above annotation bears a striking resemblance to another marginal comment of Blake’s from Lavater’s *Aphorisms on Man* (1788). Aphorism 532 instructed the reader to take qualities from Raphael, like “his dryness and nearly hard precision; and from RUBENS his supernatural luxury of colours: -- deduct this oppressive EXUBERANCE from each,” combine the result, and revel in “your own correct, pretty, flat, useful--for me, to be sure, quite convenient vulgarity.”²⁵⁰ Like the previous annotation, Blake answered with metaphor:

²⁴⁷ Buonarroti, *Poems and Letters*, 121.

²⁴⁸ Buonarroti, *Poems and Letters*, 121.

²⁴⁹ E643.

²⁵⁰ E595. Original emphasis.

Deduct from a rose its redness. from a lilly its whiteness from a diamond its hardness
from a sponge its softness from an oak its heighth from a daisy its lowness & [chaos]
rectify every thing in Nature as the Philosophers do. & then we shall return to Chaos&
God will be compelld to be Excentric if he Creates O happy Philosopher
Variety does not necessarily suppose deformity, for a rose &a lilly. are various. & both
beautiful

Beauty is exuberant but not of ugliness but of beauty & if ugliness is adjoined to beauty it
is not the exuberance of beauty. so if Rafael is hard & dry it is not his genius but an
accident acquired for how can Substance & Accident be predicated of the same Essence!
I cannot conceive[.]²⁵¹

Reynolds believed that the inspiration received from great artists can help develop new artists
whereas Blake's sentiments suggest that they can only help the artist grow into themselves. To
Blake, Raphael and Michelangelo exhibit distinctly different styles and even preferred mediums
– they could have not taught each other anything about their respective craft and art.

Other differences between Reynolds and Blake occur in the acknowledgment and
application of artists that excelled in *chiaroscuro*. Tate Britain offers a brief and effectively
vague definition of chiaroscuro as an “Italian term which translates as light-dark, and refers to
the balance and pattern of light and shade in a painting or drawing.”²⁵² The definition continues
with a nuanced recognition of the common application of the term, which is “generally only
remarked upon when it is a particularly prominent feature of the work, usually when the artist is

²⁵¹ E595-596.

²⁵² Tate Britain, *In Art Terms*, “Chiaroscuro,” accessed March 20, 2022, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/chiaroscuro>.

using extreme contrasts of light and shade.”²⁵³ The nuance is suggestive of the overwhelming feature that the style embodies. Artists, like Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, are typified and haunted by discussions of their bold dichotomy of light and dark in their paintings.



Figure 18. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *The Flagellation of Christ*, 1607-1610, oil on canvas, 9'4 x 7' (286 x 213 cm), National Museum of Capodimonte, Naples, Italy.

In *The Flagellation of Christ* (1607), the description of the painting provided by the Tate Britain begins:

We approach unannounced amidst a scene of immense brutality. Three assailants lurking in the shadows circle about the central figure of Christ who is emblazoned within a brilliant vertical shaft of light. Christ, with his hands bound behind him, shines forth from the abyss like a pale moon in the dark night sky.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ Tate Britain, *In Art Terms*, “Chiaroscuro,” accessed March 20, 2022, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/chiaroscuro>.

²⁵⁴ Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, “The Flagellation of Christ,” accessed March 20, 2022, <https://artsandculture.google.com/>. Emphasis mine.

When chiaroscuro is a substantial element of the work, discussion of its effects tends to overwhelm the rest of the criticism, as evident in the Tate definition. The attention to anatomy and the passions of the characters are wholly present and various but the discourse surrounds the light and colour. In an interesting cross-examination, Michelangelo's red chalk design of Sebastiano's fresco of *The Flagellation of Christ* evokes different responses despite striking similarities.



Figure 19. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Flagellation of Christ*, 1516, red chalk over stylus, The British Museum, London, United Kingdom.

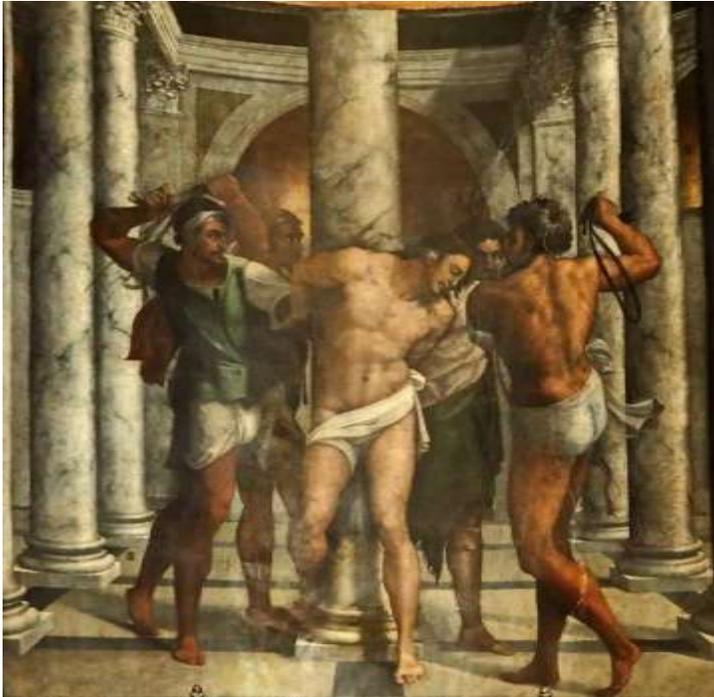


Figure 20. Sebastiano del Piombo, *The Flagellation of Christ*, 1516-1524, mural painting in oil, San Pietro in Montorio, Rome.

The same preoccupation with light and colour use are found both in Reynolds' lectures and Blake's marginalia and his later writing. It is true that Caravaggio is not listed as one of the masters the students of the Royal Academy should admire, but it is clear that Reynolds did have an awareness of the artist. Reynolds had amassed an incredible collection of art from the various and influential European schools of painting.²⁵⁵ Lucy Davis believes that he amassed one of the greatest collections of art from the Old Masters in eighteenth-century Great Britain."²⁵⁶ Upon his death, Reynolds' executors held a massive auction of his collection, and a painting now entitled *Salome receives the Head of John the Baptist* (1609) by Caravaggio was sold to a Mr.

²⁵⁵ For more information on Reynolds' impressive collection of Old Master works, see Martin Royalton-Kisch's chapter, "Reynolds as a Collector" in *Gainsborough and Reynolds in the British Museum: the drawings of Gainsborough and Reynolds with a survey of mezzotints after their paintings and a study of Reynolds' collection of Old Master drawings: catalogue of an exhibition at the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* (1978).

²⁵⁶ Lucy Davis, "Painter's Paintings: From Freud to Van Dyck," online video, August 18, 2016.

Wilson with the description in the auction catalogue that says: “the various characters are strongly expressed and painted in a stile [sic] of excellence peculiar to this master.”²⁵⁷

Instead of the peculiar talents of Caravaggio, Reynolds listed the more prominently recognized masters of chiaroscuro at the time – Titian, Rembrandt, and Correggio – as the artists to examine. These artists, time and again, are certainly applauded and suggested for emulation in *Discourses*. On the subject of Titian, Reynolds remarked that “there is a sort of senatorial dignity about him” and “the nobleness and simplicity of character which he always gave them, will entitle him to the greatest respect, as he undoubtedly stands in the first rank in this branch of the art.”²⁵⁸ Blake highly disputed this statement, questioning Titian’s ‘dignity,’ suggesting instead that he “give[s] always the Characters of Vulgar Stupidity.”²⁵⁹ Even the inclusion of Titian in Reynolds’ list of masters was questioned by Blake: “Why should Titian & The Venetians be Named in a discourse on Art Such Idiots are not Artists.”²⁶⁰ Blake concluded this page of annotations with a couplet: “Venetian; all thy Colouring is no more / Than Boulsterd [sic] Plasters on a Crooked Whore.”²⁶¹ Blake indirectly referenced Reynolds’s judgment on these matters in *The Descriptive Catalogue* preface:

THE eye that can prefer the Colouring of Titian and Rubens to that of Michael Angelo and Rafael, ought to be modest and to doubt its own powers. Connoisseurs talk as if Rafael and Michael Angelo had never seen the colouring of Titian or Correggio: They ought to know that Correggio was born two years before Michael Angelo, and Titian but four years after. Both Rafael and Michael Angelo knew the Venetian, and contemned and

²⁵⁷ “Sir Joshua Reynolds’ Collection of Pictures-II,” *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Volume 87, no. 510 (September 1945): 210–17. 215.

²⁵⁸ Reynolds, *Works*, I:100.

²⁵⁹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:100.

²⁶⁰ Reynolds, *Works*, I:100.

²⁶¹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:100.

rejected all he did with the utmost disdain, as that which is fabricated for the purpose to destroy art.²⁶²

The ending phrase of “to destroy art” reverts to the annotation on the title page of Blake’s copy of *Works*, where he presented his overall reaction to the volumes: “This Man was Hired to Depress Art”.²⁶³ The reference to the relative ages of the artists seems to have been important to Blake while he read Discourse VI: in response to Reynolds’ acknowledgment that Michelangelo and Raphael were aware of the “all the knowledge in the art which had been discovered in the works of their predecessors[,]” Blake argued in the margins: “If so. they knew all that Titian & Correggio knew Correggio was two Years older than Mich. Angelo Correggio born 1472 Mich Angelo born 1474.”²⁶⁴ In the *Descriptive Catalogue*, Blake again applied the same information on birth dates to adjust the reader’s sense of the timeline of these Masters. This statement echoes an earlier marginal comment, referring to Raphael and Michelangelo’s familiarity with Titian: “As if Mich. Ang o . had seen but One Picture of Titians Mich. Ang. Knew & Despised all that Titian could do[.]”²⁶⁵ Reynolds related a moment taken from Giorgio Vasari’s *Lives*. After Titian shared his painting of Danaë, Michelangelo and Vasari “praised it much, as one does in the painter’s presence.”²⁶⁶ Once the two men left, they spoke honestly between themselves. Michelangelo related that he “commended it not a little” explaining the general demeanour of Titian’s artistry and colour was pleasing, “but that it was a pity that in Venice men did not learn

²⁶² E529.

²⁶³ Reynolds, *Works*, I: Title page.

²⁶⁴ Reynolds, *Works*, I:159.

²⁶⁵ Reynolds, *Works*, I:98.

²⁶⁶ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, ed. Gaston du C. De Vere, vol. 9, 10 vols. (London: Philip Lee Warner, 1912).

to draw well from the beginning.”²⁶⁷ These artists that did not learn the importance of good drawing were particularly contemptuous to Blake who declared that,

The unorganized Blots & Blurs of Rubens & Titian are not Art nor can their Method ever express Ideas or Imaginations any more than Popes Metaphysical jargon of Rhyming [.] Unappropriate [sic] Execution is the Most nauseous <of all> affectation & foppery He who copies does not Execute he only Imitates what is already Executed Execution is only the result of Invention.²⁶⁸

Another strong conviction found in *Discourses on Art* is Reynolds’ assertion that only through diligent study of the Old Masters can an artist develop original invention processes, and even Genius. He explained in Discourse VI: “the mind is but a barren soil; a soil which is soon exhausted, and will produce no crop, or only one, unless it be continuously fertilized and enriched with foreign matter.”²⁶⁹ He does not specifically mean that the inspirational artists should be foreign but rather they should be of a different time, place, etc. to be truly considered worth studying. It is important to keep in mind that he is speaking to an audience largely comprised of students at the Academy, so the motivations are reasonable as to why he would encourage them to remain engaged in the academic process put in place at the Royal Academy. For Reynolds, the successful painter is a Man of Taste. The tastemakers recognize that there are universal styles and approved elements of good taste. From this perspective, Beauty, and Truth function as stable, independent entities, mediated by neither historical nor popular cultural developments. As Barrell explains, the man of taste “will always prefer the antique to the modern, the grand style to the ornamental, and will never be tempted to question the place of

²⁶⁷ Vasari, *Lives*.

²⁶⁸ E573.

²⁶⁹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:157-158.

history-painting as the most elevated genres of art.”²⁷⁰ This citizen of his republic of taste recognizes that the foundations of what is good in taste is Nature, God, Reason, or Science – never something borne of fashion. Even men of taste can begin to doubt their inventories of likes and dislikes which is why they must defer to the tastemakers around them – other citizens of like-minded and similar status – rendering the need to establish a Royal Academy to cultivate British artists and the public for its works. For Reynolds, the artist should seek to perfect what is found in nature by eliminating the particulars – weaknesses, blemishes, defects, abnormalities. These particulars are distracting for the spectator but also hinder the artist’s progress into a confident painter.²⁷¹ Wark clarifies this by embracing this traditional line of thinking, inspired by classical philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, that “by generalizing from the particular, by eliminating what is specific and individual, we proceed to a ‘higher’ more universal truth.”²⁷² Barrell claims that Reynolds finds “painting no longer seeks to persuade, but to display the world in such a way as to make it an instructive metaphor for the world as perceived by an ideal citizen.”²⁷³ The ideal citizen instructing the masses is the artist – meaning that Richardson’s idea of the Grace and Greatness needed from the painter, remains in Reynolds’ forefront of guiding factors for ambitious artists.

Recognizing the difference between the grand and the ornamental was of chief importance if the artist wished to distinguish themselves as the highest form of painter. In Discourse IV, Reynolds maintained that both the grand style and the ornamental have purpose and pleasurable quality, however they can never be combined. He recommended the artists to

²⁷⁰ John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: “The Body of the Public”* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). 81.

²⁷¹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:86.

²⁷² Wark, ed., *Discourses*, xvii.

²⁷³ Barrell, *Political Theory*, 71.

practice restraint and “sometimes deviate from vulgar and strict historical truth, in pursuing the grandeur of the design.”²⁷⁴ Using one of his most often referenced examples, Raphael’s Cartoons, he reminded his students that the men featured in these designs “had no such respectable appearance;” St. Paul was a weak man physically, Alexander was short, Agesilaus was physically disabled.²⁷⁵ Raphael sacrificed the particulars of their physical states of nature, using the license of creative liberty, to magnify the dynamic figures. The artist must omit these deficiencies of nature because unlike the poet, the painter only has the single moment to represent a noble figure, after all, he cannot, “make his hero talk like a great man; he must make him look like one.”²⁷⁶

The term ‘Invention’ in art theory generally refers to the process the artist takes when creating a composition or a narrative. Invention is the artist’s individual, genetic idea as opposed to imitation, which is developed from observing nature, other art, etc. For Reynolds, it was not always as simple as the definition I have provided; Invention is attained by becoming familiar with the genius and inventions of others. In Discourse VI, he explains that “if we consult experience, we shall find, that it is by being conversant with the inventions of others, that we learn to invent; as by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think.”²⁷⁷ He divulges his personal opinion that in the earliest stages of becoming an artist, imitation is an “absolute necessity,” moreover, the diligent study of old and current masters should be “extended throughout our whole lives.”²⁷⁸ Here, he departs and makes a more radical stance: “I am on the contrary persuaded, that by imitation only, variety, and even originality of invention, is

²⁷⁴ Reynolds, *Works*, I:59.

²⁷⁵ Reynolds, *Works*, I:60.

²⁷⁶ Reynolds, *Works*, I:60.

²⁷⁷ Reynolds, *Works*, I:156.

²⁷⁸ Reynolds, *Works*, I:151.

produced. I will go further; even genius, at least what generally is so called, is the child of imitation.”²⁷⁹ Proceeding forward, he confesses the need to explain his rebellious viewpoint and admits that Genius and Invention have laws by which they abide. While he tries to administer these rules, “difficult as they may be to convey them in writing, they are still seen and felt in the mind of the artist.”²⁸⁰ In summary, Genius includes first and foremost an ability which has been the major preoccupation of the empirical sciences: the ability to observe; Genius consists principally in the comprehension of the whole not particulars; Genius consists in the apprehension or imaginative construction of a general nature.

Perhaps the most broadly influential contribution appears in Discourse III and Discourse IV, which outline his understanding of the “Grand Manner” of painting. Grand Manner or Grand Style refers to an elevated approach to history painting. The required elements for a work in the Grand Style can be summarised in two parts. First, a noble subject, either from a pivotal moment in history, classical mythology, or the Bible. Two noteworthy examples are *The Death of General James Wolfe* (figure 21) by Benjamin West and James Barry’s *King Lear Weeping over the Dead Body of Cordelia* (figure 22). Secondly, the subjects depicted are generalized and idealized. Representing the idealized version of an object or subject is critical to Reynolds’ aesthetic theory. Instead of reproducing the imperfections of something in nature, the artist should improve upon it by eradicating particulars and deviations, allowing for the rendering to exist eternally causing the same impact as when first created in all ages, locations, and generations. Richardson – an important source for Reynolds, as we have seen -- explains, “we see the Persons and Faces of Famous Men, the originals of which are out our reach as being gone

²⁷⁹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:151.

²⁸⁰ Reynolds, *Works*, I:155.

down with the stream of Time...In Picture we never die, never decay, or grow older.”²⁸¹ Ann Uhry Abrams asserts there are three reasons that Grand Style was so important to eighteenth-century tastes: first, the painting appears as a thrilling narrative; secondly, it reveals truths about contemporary issues and not only its historical subject, lending itself to interpretation as a political and social allegorical composition; and finally, it serves to conceal the artist’s personal concerns, motivations, artistic goals, professional and academic interests, and perhaps even romantic or sexual tendencies.²⁸²



Figure 21. Benjamin West, *The Death of General James Wolfe*, 1770, oil on canvas, 5' x 7' (152.6 x 214.5 cm), National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada, <https://www.gallery.ca/collection/artwork/the-death-of-general-wolfe-0>.

²⁸¹ Reynolds, *Works*, II:7.

²⁸² Ann Uhry Abrams, *The Valiant Hero: Benjamin West and Grand-Style History Painting*, *New Directions in American Art* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985), 9-15.



Figure 22. Benjamin West, *King Lear Weeping Over the Dead Body of Cordelia*, 1786-1788, oil on canvas, 8'9" x 12" (269.2 x 367 cm), Tate Britain, London, United Kingdom.

Reynolds' account of the Grand Style had a lot to do with the admiration his lectures won, not least among those who wished to use culture as a celebration of their public virtues.

Malone recounts that Catherine the Great, for instance, held Reynolds in high regard:

Some years after the publication of the first seven of Discourses, the Author [Reynolds] had the honour to receive from the late Empress of Russia, a gold box with a *basso relievo* of her Imperial Majesty in the lid, set round with diamonds; accompanied with a note within, written in her own hand, containing these words: "*Pour le Chevalier Reynolds, en temoignage du contentment que j'ai ressentie á [sic] la lecture de ses excellens Discours sur la peinture.*"²⁸³

Before this luxurious gift and compliment, she commissioned *The Infant Hercules Strangling the Serpents* (see figure 23) which remains in St. Petersburg today. In Reynolds' quest for vibrant

²⁸³ Malone, ed., *Works*, I:xliv.

and unique effects, this is one of the paintings that has deteriorated swiftly. Regardless of its current state, it is one of the paintings he spent the most time on and includes several portraits of his friends. The Hermitage description suggests that “the soothsayer Tiresias has a close likeness to the writer and philosopher Samuel Johnson...while in the features of Hera we see a portrait of the great tragic actress Sarah Siddons.”



Figure 23. Joshua Reynolds, *Infant Hercules Strangling Serpents*, 1786, oil on canvas, 10' x 9'7 (303 x 297 cm), State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia, <https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/01.+paintings/38698>.

Although he easily impressed the Empress of Russia, King George III did not share her admiration. Sir William Beechey, another leading portraitist at the time, shared a tense conversation he had with the King about Reynolds to James Ward. Beechey was speaking about his adoration of the artist when the King cut him off: “I don’t like that Reynolds! I don’t like

Reynolds!” When Beechey asked why, the King responded: “because he paints *red* trees! Paints *red* trees!”²⁸⁴ He was shocked by this statement and reminded the King that some trees do change to shades of red during the Autumn months and retrieved a “branch that was almost as red as vermilion” to show to the monarch. Beechey reports that King George III was highly displeased with the “red branch lying there on the table.”²⁸⁵

Others less concerned with public grandeur than Catherine the Great or George III still greatly respected Reynolds, including the landscapist, John Constable. In the 1836 Annual Exhibition at the Royal Academy, he debuted *Cenotaph to the Memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Erected in the Grounds of Coleorton Hall* (figure 24); a dramatic oil painting with Reynolds’ empty monument surrounded by towering trees in Fall, and a large stag looking back towards the spectator, interrupted on his ambling through nature.

²⁸⁴ Northcote, *Conversations*, 152. Original emphasis.

²⁸⁵ Northcote, *Conversations*, 152.



Figure 24. John Constable, *Cenotaph to the Memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds, erected in the grounds of Coleorton Hall, Leicestershire by the late Sir George Beaumont, Bt.*, 1833-1836, oil on canvas, 4'3 x 3'6 (132 x 108.5 cm), The National Gallery, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/john-constable-cenotaph-to-the-memory-of-sir-joshua-reynolds>.

The memorial stone bears Reynolds' name and is flanked by busts of Raphael and Michelangelo, the artists that Reynolds most venerated. The sympathetic and grand essence of the painting complements Constable's understanding of Reynolds as a public artist and suggests the influence on his own attitude towards painting. In a letter to his wife, Maria Bicknell, Constable wrote of his experience at an elegant and exclusive tribute exhibition to Reynolds:

on no occasion was there ever assembled a more magnificent party – so many of the nobility and so any men of the talents. It was a moment of exaltation and joy to me to see

this honour and homage to my own beloved pursuit – it was indeed the triumph of genius and painting...here is no vulgarity or rawness and yet not want of life or vigour – it is certainly the finest feeling of art that ever existed.²⁸⁶

While Reynolds' style and theories were generally well-received, there were dissenters. Nathaniel Hone, a fellow Royal Academician, submitted a satirical painting entitled *The Pictorial Conjuror, displaying the Whole Art of Optical Deception* for the annual exhibition in 1775 (figure 25). The painting depicts a bearded magician with a young girl resting affectionately on his knee. Surrounding the two figures are a gallery of old-master prints giving way to an oil painting, magically summoned by the old man wielding a wand. The conjuror represents Reynolds, and the young, contented girl is meant to be Angelica Kauffman, another founding member of the Academy. The painting was rejected due to the offensive content to members of the RA. Hone's scathing painting commented on two parts of Reynolds' personality and aesthetics he found offensive: the rumoured affair between the much older Reynolds and Kauffman (he was 18 years her senior) and his over-reliance on previously invented compositions to create his own designs.

²⁸⁶ John Constable, *John Constable's Correspondence*, ed. Ronald Brymer Beckett, 6 vols. (Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1962), 2:106.



Figure 25. Nathaniel Hone, *The Pictorial Conjuror, displaying the Whole Art of Optical Deception*, 1775, oil sketch on wood panel, 1'9 x 2'7 (57.5 x 81.9 cm), Tate Britain, London, United Kingdom.

Another Irishman, James Barry, professor of painting for the Royal Academy from 1782 to 1799, famously disagreed with Reynolds. Barry's account of his expulsion came from Joseph Wilton's testimony that he deliberately acted out of bounds "from the line of his duty, by making digressions, in which he abused some members of the Academy, both living and dead, and taught the students and encouraged them to a licentious disorderly behaviour." The abuse he dispensed is most likely in reference to his own lectures where he directly undermined many of Reynolds' suggestions, theories, and positions in *Discourses*. Barry insisted that portraiture could not reach the poignancy or impact found in history painting – a blow to the very successful president of the Royal Academy.²⁸⁷ Northcote recounted that Barry would become enraged and act offensively to

²⁸⁷ For more on Barry's lectures, see W.L. Pressly, *The Life and Art of James Barry* published by Paul Mellon Centre (1981). For the lectures, see *William Burke's The Works Of James Barry, Esq. Historical Painter; Formerly Professor Of Painting At The Royal-Academy; Member Of The Clementine Academy*

Reynolds' sensibilities, at which Reynolds would pretend to be asleep or leave the room when Barry's outbursts became too much to handle. A widely shared anecdote of Reynolds and Barry's conflict was when Barry neglected to deliver one of the lectures he was required to give at the Royal Academy. Reynolds asked about Barry's delayed lecture, Barry clenched his fist, and shouted, "If I had only in composing my lectures to produce such poor mistake stuff as your *Discourses*, I should have my work done, and ready to read."²⁸⁸ According to accounts of the incident, Reynolds did not respond but later related that "many of Barry's discoveries were new to himself, so he thought they were new to everybody else."²⁸⁹

Sir Joshua Reynolds' legacy as an artist and as the President of the Royal Academy is impressive. Reynolds' aesthetic theories set the standard for academic artistic practice in England and the Royal Academy through the nineteenth century. His ideas on education were critiqued by many other artists, although his aesthetic perspectives remained steadfast. The most sustained criticism is the marginalia of William Blake. Although Blake preferred to be viewed as someone who conceptualized and executed in a fell swoop, there is so much evidence to the contrary. In the following part of this thesis, I will analyse examples from Blake's writing that show this long process of development.

At Bologna, &c. Containing, His Correspondence From France And Italy With Mr. Burke - His Lectures On Painting Delivered At The Royal-Academy - Observations On Different Works Of Art In Italy And France - Critical Remarks On The Principal Paintings Of The Orleans Gallery - Essay On The Subject Of Pandora; (Now First Published From Manuscripts, And Illustrated By Engravings From Sketches, Left By The Author.) And His Inquiry into The Causes Which Have Obstructed the Progress of The Fine Arts in England - His Account of The Paintings at The Adelphi - And Letter to The Dilettanti Society, available [online](#).

²⁸⁸ Northcote, *Supplement*, cxvi.

²⁸⁹ Northcote, *Supplement*, cxvi.

Part Three: Blake's Development of His Annotations to Reynolds

In the first part of this thesis, I positioned Blake's marginalia in *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* with the larger book culture of the period and analysed his unique interactions with the next book. In the second part, I integrated a recent history surrounding the influence of Reynolds, the Royal Academy, and the late eighteenth-century art world occurring around the same time as Blake's annotations. In this final and most substantial section of the thesis, I will follow the implications of the annotations into their reworkings in Blake's Notebook, *The Descriptive Catalogue*, *The Vision of the Last Judgment*, and *Laocoön*. The Notebook is particularly interesting as, like the annotations, it is an easily neglected unpublished form of writing. After discussing the Notebook, I will turn to the *Descriptive Catalogue* and the *Vision of the Last Judgment*. Both used the annotations from the *Works of Sir Joshua* and the drafts and satiric verses from the Notebook to develop ideas on painting that Blake put before the public. These ideas also made their way into the illuminated books. The next section focuses on examples drawn from *Milton, A Poem* (1804-1811) and *Jerusalem The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (1804-1820) to look at the use made of the annotations there. I end this final part of the thesis with the discussion of *The Laocoön* (1815, 1826-1827) a distinctive form of engraving that both returns to the ideas expressed in the marginalia and – in its use of a central image surrounded by a paratext – has certain formal qualities in common with them.

The manuscripts, as Mark Crosby argues in recent special edition of the *Huntington Library Quarterly* devoted to the topic, are a “significant yet understudied facet of Blake scholarship.”²⁹⁰ He explains that these handwritten records can inform us about Blake's

²⁹⁰ Mark Crosby, "Introduction," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 80, no. 3 (2017): 361-364.

personality, philosophical views, relationships with contemporaries, composition processes and practices. I agree that the value of the manuscript writing can allow for these insights and want to add that tracing the content of the annotations is crucial. For example, the Notebook is an excellent fount of knowledge for researchers on Blake, as it reveals aspects of the artist and poet that may not be discernible in other areas of his creative output. Like Crosby, Morton D. Paley recognizes that materials like the Notebook are often neglected in favour of other works. He suggests that these forms tend to be overlooked because of their “free-and-easy manner, doggerel rhyming, and frequently outrageous humour,” most obvious in the various satiric poems.²⁹¹ I agree with Paley but must also add that access to this resource has been very restricted, at least until recently. Thanks to scans from the British Library and the Blake Archive there are now full-colour and higher-definition images available for close-reading. This is where my inspection of the Notebook differs from Paley’s: while he uses the *Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake* collection by David Erdman, I am looking at scans of the Notebook. The benefit of my approach is that I can examine the materiality of the work, including the glue marks, *aqua fortis* spills, and erasures that contribute to their meaning. The inspection of the Notebook on material and conceptual levels alongside the annotations allows for a better understanding of them both. The first volume of *Works of Sir Joshua*, the Notebook, the *Descriptive Catalogue*, the Illuminated Books, and *The Laocoon* all function as a space for creation, conception, and execution for Blake.

²⁹¹ Sarah Haggarty and Jon Mee, *Blake and Conflict* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). 210.

3.1 William Blake's Notebook

Although we refer to this as Blake's Notebook, he inherited it in February 1787, after his brother Robert's death. A few of the pages have designs attributed to Robert that have not been edited by Blake. For forty years, Blake would fill the journal with "emblems and portraits, with sketches large and small, with lyrics and epigrams, and drafts of essays on the state of art and artists, on his own exhibitions," and drafts to essays and instructional guides.²⁹² This resource is invaluable because of the consistent use through Blake's lifetime. Artists' notebooks are often dissected and analysed to better understand the creator as an individual and as a producer of texts and images. For example, Leonardo da Vinci's numerous notebooks have informed the public about his mechanical designs for unique inventions like deep-sea diving suits, engineered to withstand the pressure of the ocean and his preference for pink hosiery to emphasize his legs.²⁹³ While not as revealing as Leonardo's, Blake's Notebook provides the best source for his more private thoughts, drawings, and practice. Over this length of time, Blake sketched and played with ideas and images on these pages. As I attempt to disentangle the annotations and the works he created, this may be the best reference point. While many sketches and lines are erased (to free up room on the page) years of practice, thought, drafting, etc. are best represented in the Notebook. To illustrate why I believe that the Notebook is a fruitful place to begin contextualizing the annotations to *The Works of Sir Joshua*, I will examine a single page from the journal that showcases many of the elements that are shared with the annotations.

²⁹² David V. Erdman, ed. *The Notebook of William Blake: A Photographic and Typographic Facsimile* (Naples, FL: Readex Books, 1977), 1.

²⁹³ Leonardo da Vinci, *Notebooks*, ed. Irma A. Richter, Thereza Wells, and Martin Kemp (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

First, we should start with understanding the *mise-en-page*, or the physical arrangement of the entire page, as I did when discussing the annotations in my first part.²⁹⁴ Considering the general layout of the page will be beneficial when moving forward with the analysis of the Notebook because it considers features like the columns, spaces between paragraphs, illustrations, margins, amendments, style of script, decorative features, and orientation, features that all helps to generate the meaning of what appear there.²⁹⁵ While this concept of *mise-en-page* is useful, it does not focus on the content of the words or the designs beyond face value, as this is more in the realm of *mise-en-texte*. It does not exhaust the meaning of what Blake has written but it does allow us to consider the meaningful ways that Blake used layout when constructing meaning and developing ideas. For example, we will see that Blake gave preference to sketches, devoting the middle of the page to them first, whereas text often took a secondary, arguably, lesser position. The page I have chosen to examine now is typical in this regard. We can see that it is anchored by a pencil sketch in the middle. Surrounding the boxed-in sketch are a variety of multi-coloured manuscript writings with various orientations. Some of the text is marked through with lines and some is scribbled around the central image. The size and neatness of the lettering varies in the added manuscript to the page. There is a small side portrait in ink in the upper-left corner with slight linear scratching with pen. As a whole, this page reads like a drafting page because of the use of different writing utensils, across different media, amendments, orientations, and interlinear gloss. The textual articulation is difficult, as the elements of colour, style, and regulation are ignored by Blake. But we can go further still and

²⁹⁴ If the reader is fluent, a very useful guide to better understanding *mise-en-page* and *mise-en-texte* is *Mise en page et mise en texte du livre manuscrit* by H. J. Martin and J. Vezin (1990).

²⁹⁵ For more on how the page can be used as an innovative, collaborative, and evolutionary space for art and word, read E. Hage's "Mise-en-page to Mise-en-scène: Intersecting Display Strategies in Dada Art Journals and Exhibitions" (2017).

elucidate more from the mise-en-page reading by focusing on smaller parts of this page. I will use Erdman and Moore's categorization of these different aspects as 'text' and 'emblem' for consistency and lucidity, as well as their numbering system found in their edition of the Notebook.²⁹⁶ The manuscript writing is in three different media: a greyish-brown ink, black ink, and pencil. Erdman and Moore claim that PA 56 and 57 were written directly after PA 55 on the previous page.²⁹⁷ PA 54 was inserted later, where some space had been left because of the central drawing. The range of writing utensils is comparable to the annotations. The most striking difference from the annotations is that there does not seem to be any manuscript that is written on top of another. As mentioned earlier, the pencil manuscript notes with a layer of black ink over the top offers an interesting, curated experience of Blake's revision process. Both the revision and curation aspects of the annotations convey the edited reality of the note versus the spontaneity of it.

This suggests a consistency in Blake's curation of the Notebook. If Blake was open to sharing his book with others, as seems to have been the case with the *Works of Reynolds*, he used the ink to confirm what may have originally been a tentative opinion. Erdman claims that the productions inside the Notebook are purely for Blake's own use.²⁹⁸ His rationale is that the nature of this item, a drafting notebook formerly owned by his deceased brother, would not encourage circulation between friends.²⁹⁹ While I believe that Blake certainly kept it near to him,

²⁹⁶ In this set of examples, I am analysing the "Public Address" draft in the Notebook. Thus, Erdman and Moore have given the manuscript indicator "PA" followed by segment number. For example, PA 54 refers to the 54th segment of the Public Address found in the Notebook.

²⁹⁷ Erdman, David V., and Donald K. Moore, eds. *The Notebook of William Blake: A Photographic and Typographic Facsimile*. Readex Books, 1977. N19n.

²⁹⁸ Erdman, *Notebook*, "Introduction," 1.

²⁹⁹ Additionally, the skewed continuity throughout the Notebook is used to affirm their position that it was a highly private item. The textual articulation is incredibly difficult, for example, the main body of text begins from the centre-right at the top of the page and trails the breadth of the page before the centre image until it continues down to the bottom. However, as seen in Part One, this was also found in the

much like *The Works of Sir Joshua*, it cannot be certain that it was kept entirely private. Referring to the first part of this thesis, Henry Crabb Robinson described visiting Blake and witnessing his sketches in the Notebook. Regardless of this moment, the continuous development throughout the years suggests that Blake found this to be an invaluable source for his own creation, and perhaps not so readily passed to others.

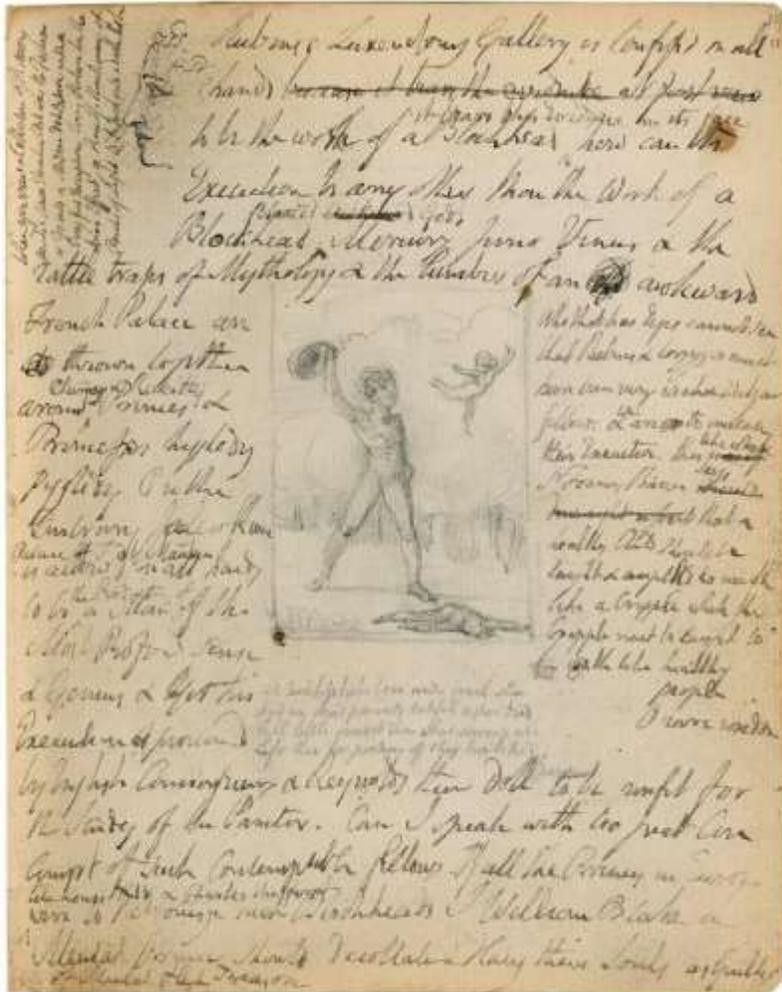


Figure 26. William Blake, page 26 of William Blake's Notebook, British Library, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-notebook-of-william-blake>.

marginalia to *Works*. Much of the written orientation is traditional: top to down, left to right. Blake repositioned the Notebook to fit text onto this page, suggesting that he believed it to belong with the rest of this commentary found on the page. Perhaps, further still, if a note is squeezed into a corner, facing a different direction, it may signal a new thought or a variance of opinion to the other statements on the page.

At the centre of this page (see figure 26) is a portrait-oriented pencil sketch of a boy with his right arm raised, holding a brimmed hat in pursuit of a nude child-like figure flying away from him. At the boy's feet is another nude figure lying face down. This image is also used in *For Children: The Gates of Paradise* as the "Alas!" print.



Figure 27. William Blake, "Alas!" in *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*, 1793, intaglio etching/engraving, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., United States of America, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/gates-child.d?descId=gates-child.d.illbk.09>.

Erdman believes that Blake's design was inspired by John Wynne's *Choice Emblems* (1772).³⁰⁰

Wynne's book is a collection of allegorical emblems with charming and/or pedagogical prose and verse paired together. The Wynne woodcut that Erdman believes Blake used was called "Vain Pursuits" (see figure 28). Wynne described this design as "the impetuosity of youth, which with a blind precipitancy pursues vain pleasures that never can afford any solid enjoyment."³⁰¹

³⁰⁰ Erdman, *Notebook*, 92.

³⁰¹ John Wynne, *Choice Emblems: Natural, Historical, Fabulous, Moral and Divine, for the Improvement and Pastime of Youth* (London: George Riley, 1772), 107.



Figure 28. Samuel Wale, “Vain Pursuits” in *Choice Emblems*, 1772, etched woodcut.

If the boy manages to capture the beautiful butterfly, he will dismantle his own curiosity, because in grasping the creature he “crushes the insect to pieces.”³⁰² And in a similar tone to the pursuit of beauty and taste, “his own eagerness loses the fruit of his toil, and destroys that beauty which he coveted to possess.”³⁰³ Joseph H. Salemi considered Blake’s emblem as very different in its significance from Wynne’s: “Blake was interested in depicting futility and frustration as inner states of the soul, and not in moralizing about vanity.”³⁰⁴ Continuing with the claims of this thesis, we should look for any ghosts of Reynolds, the *Discourses*, and Blake’s marginalia. Blake is moralizing about how Reynolds, despite his efforts to see and capture beauty, he is incapable of witnessing it without crushing it. His lack of vision and ability means that he (and the institutions he maintains) may destroy it. It is possible that, to Blake, Reynolds is like the boy after the elusive butterfly, pursuing Beauty in vain. By cultivating taste in flawed pictures, imitating Rubens, and Titian, and by teaching this folly to the young artists of England, Reynolds will set up the infrastructure to destroy the path to a glorious nation of art. And in this

³⁰² Wynne, *Choice Emblems*, 106-107.

³⁰³ Wynne, *Choice Emblems*, 107.

³⁰⁴ Joseph Salemi, “Emblematic Tradition in Blake’s *The Gates of Paradise*,” *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (Winter 1982, 108–124), 113.

treacherous path, some creative, imaginative beings of beauty will be trampled upon and left to die like the figure at the boy's feet.

In the following few pages, I will examine the specific parts of this page using Erdman and Moore's guidance. The page can be difficult to decipher but once it is disaggregated, I hope it will be easier to follow.

B (emblem motto):

The manuscript written in pencil directly below the centre image has lead Erdman and Moore to call this the “motto” of the emblem. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines this sort of motto as: “a word, sentence, or phrase attached to an impresa or emblematical design to explain or emphasize its significance.”³⁰⁵ The quotation is from Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*:

Ah luckless babe born under cruel star
And in dead parents baleful ashes bred
That little weenest [sic] now what sorrows are
Left thee for portion of thy livelihood [sic][.]”

This quotation from the *Faerie Queene* in Book 2, Canto 2, v. 2 occurs Mordant and Amavia’s death, and Guyon laments the poor fate of the infant child. A water flows from a nearby spring in the enchanted forest, and a nymph emerges before they continue their journey.

PA 54:

Surrounded by text, in the upper left quadrant is a profile of an unnamed man drawn in ink. There are no textual clues as to his identity, but Erdman suggests that it may be Blake’s brother, Robert.³⁰⁶ Robert’s eyes are fixed on a segment of manuscript, written neatly, but scrunched and small:

When you view a Collection of Pictures painted since Venetian Art was the Fashion or
Go into a Modern Exhibition with a Very few Exceptions Every Picture has the same
Effect. a Piece of Machinery [of] <or>Points of Light to be put into a dark hole[.]³⁰⁷

³⁰⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “motto, n.,” accessed March 20, 2022, <https://www-oed-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/Entry/122777?rskey=9sYbIf&result=1&isAdvanced=false>.

³⁰⁶ For more information on how Erdman arrived at this conclusion, see *Notebook*, “Introduction,” 10*n*.

³⁰⁷ E579.

This commentary on viewing and seeing a collection of pictures is being viewed by Robert across the page [?]. There is a sense of play to this juxtaposition which is interesting to the tone of the overall page. PA 54 in the Notebook could be related to an annotation Blake made in relation to Discourse VII; a lecture concerned with standards of Taste and Beauty for artists. To illustrate his point that the work of the painter is ultimately to please the audience, Reynolds recounts his experience of Nicolas Poussin's *Perseus and Medusa's Head*: "I remember turning from it with disgust and should not have looked a second time."³⁰⁸ The repulsion that Reynolds felt was based on the fact that "every principle of composition is violated;" as Poussin draws no principal figures, lights, subjects, or groups. The action is disjointed and diffused across the composition, and "the eye finds no repose any where [sic]."³⁰⁹ Eventually Reynolds discovered that this chaotic composition does bear the hallmarks of Poussin which he characterized as "correct drawing, forcible expression, and just character."³¹⁰ There is no reference to this picture that can be found and even at the time of publication, Malone adds in a footnote that this can be found in Sir Peter Burrell's collection.³¹¹ It seems very improbable that Blake would have ever seen this picture but regardless, he has read enough of the *Discourses* to know that, "Reynolds's Eye. could not bear Characteristic Colouring or Light & Shade[.]"³¹² This comment is written in black ink and fits within the margins on the page nicely suggesting it is one of the later comments added to the book.

Although Reynolds admits that "all the excellencies" that make Poussin a "learned painter" are present in this picture it is also the very example of why students should not follow

³⁰⁸ Reynolds, *Works*, I:208.

³⁰⁹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:208.

³¹⁰ Reynolds, *Works*, I:208.

³¹¹ Malone, ed. *Works*, I:207.

³¹² E660.

his example. “This conduct of Poussin I hold to be entirely improper to imitate. A picture should please at first sight, and appear to invite the spectator’s attention,” Reynolds explained.³¹³ Blake banished the thought: “Please! Whom? Some Men Cannot See a Picture except in a Dark Corner[.]”³¹⁴ This manuscript is the peculiar sort where Blake’s pencil writing is below and stretches beyond the corners of the black ink on top of it. He does not trace it minutely to conceal the phantom pencil manuscript below but allows it to remain. As I’ve discussed at length earlier, and in confirmation with Erdman’s position, this type of writing is Blake’s way of confirming his earlier pencilled text.

Like the earlier mentioned profile portrait of Robert, looking at this manuscript, the position of the comment is important. Blake talks about the dark corner of a gallery space, but this segment itself is pushed into the corner of the page. To engage with it, you must shift the Notebook to the side and nearly squint to make out the lettering. There is an active participation required even for his own Notebook – something like an exhibition.³¹⁵ Blake criticized the annual Summer Exhibitions at the Royal Academy as having only pictures with “the same Effect. a Piece of Machinery [of] <or>Points of Light to be put into a dark hole[.]”³¹⁶ His comments on the Poussin anecdote in the annotations criticize the same values: Reynolds’ limited and misjudged taste. In the second comment in the annotations, Blake criticized Reynolds’ inability to see – again – unless the picture is in a dark corner. This could mean that he only sees the pictures that are accepted into the Royal Academy exhibitions – the ones that make it through on these ideals of Taste and Beauty set down in Discourse VII.

³¹³ Reynolds, *Works*, I:208.

³¹⁴ E660.

³¹⁵ This will be expanded in the next section of the thesis.

³¹⁶ Erdman, *Notebook*, 19.

A Spirit and a Vision are not, as the modern philosophy supposes, a cloudy vapour or a nothing: they are organized and minutely articulated beyond all that the mortal and perishing nature can produce. He who does not imagine in stronger and better lineaments, and in stronger and better light than his perishing mortal eye can see does not imagine at all. The painter of this work asserts that all his imaginations appear to him infinitely more perfect and more minutely organized than any thing [sic] seen by his mortal eye. Spirits are organized men: Moderns wish to draw figures without lines, and with great and heavy shadows; are not shadows more unmeaning than lines, and more heavy? O who can doubt this!³¹⁷

These lines about seeing and vision organs carry into the *Laocoön*.

It manifests itself in his Works of Art (In Eternity All is Vision)

All that we See is VISION from Generated Organs gone as soon as come

Permanent in The Imagination; considered as Nothing by the NATURAL MAN³¹⁸

This section of the plate curves around the central image, annotating the rise of the principal figure of *Laocoön*, which will be analysed in further detail later in the thesis.

PA 56:

This section is a part of the draft for the *Public Address*. After analysing the scattered drafts and mentions throughout the Notebook, Erdman recognised that Blake was most likely anticipating the publication of this essay which he intended to work up from the raw materials of these Notebook paragraphs.³¹⁹ The most probable date for the publication would have been in 1810, so

³¹⁷ E541-542.

³¹⁸ E273.

³¹⁹ Erdman, *Notebook*, N19 Transcript.

this manuscript drafting would have been around 1809, as noted by the announcement on page 56.³²⁰

At this point in the draft, Blake compares Rubens' Luxembourg Gallery to Julio Romano's frescoes in the Mantua palace. He is ruthlessly critical of Rubens' work, calling it "the work of a blockhead" full of "bloated gods" that are "thrown together" with portraits of royalty in a "higgledy piggedly" fashion.³²¹ In spite of this, to Blake's gall, Romano is discredited by Reynolds and other "English connoisseurs" as an unfit model to study – for his execution was lacking. In a play on art terminology and vernacular, Blake elevates himself to the status of a "Mental Prince" with the ability to execute, as he should: "decollate & hang their souls as Guilty of Mental High Treason."³²²

Blake, of course, owned all three volumes of the book *Works* and seems to have read all the content. This page from the Notebook provides excellent evidence of this interaction with Reynolds. In his annotations to Fresnoy's *The Art of Painting*, Reynolds asks, "who knows that Julio Romano, if he had possessed the art and practice of colouring like Rubens, would not have given to it some taste of poetical grandeur not yet attained to?"³²³ This question is asked in relation to Romano's *The Chariot of the Sun* (1527). Reynolds admits that Romano's beasts "strike the imagination more forcibly," but with the colour application of "the pencil of Rubens" may have elevated the art. Later in this account, Reynolds continues that Romano

³²⁰ Erdman, *Notebook*, N19 Transcript.

³²¹ E580.

³²² E580.

³²³ Reynolds, *Works*, III:174.

did not exactly understand either light and shadow, or colouring. He is frequently harsh and ungraceful; the folds of his draperies are neither beautiful nor great, easy nor natural, but all of them imaginary, and too like the habits of fantastical comedians.³²⁴

This second volume is full of even more examples of unlikely comparisons between Old Masters. Comparing Romano to Rubens is done in extensive detail and often in the second volume which is perhaps, where Blake drew this correlation from. The brilliance of Romano's genius is boiled down to "his Master's [Raphael's] excellencies."³²⁵ Every artist has his own eye which means that he cannot have the same excellencies as another artist. This outright rejection of Romano's distinct identity as an artist would be objectionable to Blake.

PA 57:

To the right of the centre image, PA 57, is written in a greyish-brown ink. This section does not directly interact with the main body of text but carries similar themes. This manuscript segment reads almost as a conversational explanation. Frustrated by the lack of judging vision of his peers, Blake states that Rubens and Correggio are poor models to judge on Execution. To illustrate his viewpoint, Blake references Sir Francis Bacon, an often-cited example in Reynolds' *Discourses* and Blake's marginalia. The dismissal is explained as, "a healthy child should be taught & compelled to walk like a cripple, while the Cripple must be taught to walk like healthy people. O rare wisdom." This consideration may be drawn from a satiric verse found elsewhere in the Notebook:

The Cripple every Step Drudges & labours

And says come learn to walk of me Good Neighbours

Sir Joshua in astonishment cries out

³²⁴ Reynolds, *Works*, III:203.

³²⁵ Reynolds, *Works*, III:298.

See what Great Labour Pain him & Modest Doubt

Newton & Bacon cry being badly Nurst [sic].

He is all Experiments from last to first

He walks & stumbles as if he crep [sic]

And how high labourd [sic] is every step

The themes of labour in artistry and craftsmanship are at play in both the right-hand segment of this page, but also in the satiric verse – all founded upon earlier inscriptions from the pages of the *Works*. From this single page taken out of context, we can see that the Notebook is an often-overlooked rich source of information about Blake's aesthetic theories. If the annotations to *Works* are the evidence of early contemplations of Blake's, then the Notebook is where Blake continued to experiment and extend the initial thoughts. First, the annotations were responsive to the texts of Reynolds, using them to articulate his own artistic theories and philosophies. Secondly, building on the evidence of the use of marginalia in book culture of the time, it is likely that Blake would have loaned this book to friends; encouraging them to respond to his ideas. It would be a mistake to suggest that the annotations to the book came first and the Notebook was the drafting middle stage between the later published works like *The Descriptive Catalogue*. As previously acknowledged, the variety of writing utensil media and the re-writing over the top of pencil means that Blake interacted with the marginalia throughout the drafting process in the book. We can imagine that Blake used the *Works* from 1798 to around 1810, from Erdman's estimation.³²⁶ Blake added to the Notebook over a much longer period. He probably moved backwards and forwards between the Notebook and the annotations over the latter period. In a sense, the method in which Blake's annotations to *Works* have been used to render Blake's

³²⁶ E635n.

aesthetics and artistic theories is something he may have wanted. However, the complete erasure of Reynolds' central text which invited the annotation ruins our ability to understand Blake's comment. Further, the removal of the revisited commentary element also complicates the interpretation. The comments left in the tentative pencil should not carry the same sense of clarity and conviction as the neatly written black ink and less still with the published works like *Descriptive Catalogue*.

In the Notebook, there are many examples where Blake seems to be responding to Reynolds and developing his thoughts as expressed in the annotations. Beyond the Notebook, he further developed his theories on art in his other writing. PA 57, the righthand section of this page next to the central image, reads as follows:

Who that has Eyes cannot see that Rubens & Correggio must have been very weak & Vulgar fellows & <we> are [we]to imitate their Execution. This is [as if] <like what>Sr Francis Bacon [should downright assert] <says>that a healthy Child should be taught & compell'd to walk like a Cripple while the Cripple must be taught to walk like healthy people O rare wisdom³²⁷

In Discourse I, Reynolds stated that, "A facility in composing, -- a lively, and what is called a masterly, handling of the chalk or pencil, are, it must be confessed, captivating qualities to young minds, and become of course the objects of their ambition."³²⁸

<I consider>The Following sentence is Supremely Insolent <for the following Reasons Why this Sentence should be begun by the Words A Facility in Composing I cannot tell unless it was to cast [an Eye] <a stigma>upon Real facility in Composition by Assimilating it with a Pretence to & Imitation of Facility in Execution or are we to

³²⁷ E580.

³²⁸ Reynolds, *Works*, I:13.

understand him to mean that Facility in Composing. is a Frivolous pursuit. A Facility in Composing is the Greatest Power of Art & Belongs to None but the Greatest Artists i.e., the Most Minutely Discriminating & Determinate³²⁹

Now that I have demonstrated the method in which, I believe, is the best to understand a page from the Notebook, I will shift attention to pages that seem to be connected within a larger theme and feature manifestations from the marginalia.



Figure 30. William Blake, page 24 of William Blake's Notebook, British Library, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-notebook-of-william-blake>.

³²⁹ E643.

At first glance of page 24, we see that there are three pencil sketches: two in the upper left quadrant and one in the centre. The lower third of the page has manuscript in black ink that trails up the right side of the page, ending at about the centre of the edge. Above the black ink manuscript is a fainter, pencil comment. On the upper right of the page, there are a few spots of what appear to be aqua fortis, or nitric acid used for engraving. Despite these ornaments (intentional and accidental) on the page, the negative space, or unused area, is the most substantial part. The larger *mise-en-page* suggests that this sheet was used for working through ideas and refining the clarity of them. It also shows that Blake considered the entire layout of the paper but gave preference to images.

Shifting to the content on the page, the upper left sketches reveal Blake used multiple spaces to trial designs. The two pencil drawings depict a male body held in the mouth of a giant humanoid creature with a flowing moustache and beard. The closest to the top sketch is smaller in size with focused detail work on the devouring mouth and moustache, whereas the larger sketch, located farther down and towards the left, is close-up yet larger in scale, and present more detail work on the body caught within the teeth. The two previous pages in the Notebook also depict a similar image and design. On page 22, there are three iterations of a “soaring human vulture.”³³⁰ All three sketches have a body caught in the mouth. The top two illustrations look as though Blake was experimenting with the sense of movement in the design. The top illustration appears more static, which probably accounts for the multitude of lines that make up the body extending almost past the page. The second sketch moved the body to a higher angle and reinforced the angular arm position to create a jolting effect to the creature’s movements. The

³³⁰ Erdman, *Notebook*, N15.

final illustration on this page is a closer, detailed sketch for the design of mouth and the body caught within its grasp.



Figure 31: William Blake, page 22 of William Blake's Notebook, British Library, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-notebook-of-william-blake>.



Figure 32: William Blake, page 23 of William Blake's Notebook, British Library, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-notebook-of-william-blake>.

The next page has two sketches of the soaring monster with relatively little detail but thoughtful anatomical consideration. As seen on the previous page (figure 31), Blake is still working through the movement of the creature, as indicated by the hair being flung behind the monster as it flies and the symmetry of the arms despite the diving motion. Erdman laments that Blake probably sketched these designs for something that is now lost.³³¹ However, we cannot say that it has entirely been lost as it is still available in the Notebook.

³³¹ Erdman, *Notebook*, N16.

The attention to the monstrous visage and the victim's body caught in the maw occurs on the page we've been focusing on, page 22. Over the course of three pages, Blake developed this soaring creature. As seen in figure 30, the soaring creature is conceptualized as an entire image; the second page, he focuses on the anatomy and propulsion of the creature; and finally, the details of the most horrific part of the image – the details. These three pages illuminate Blake's creative process with multiple pages of edits, revisions, and mistakes. All these study drawings suggest that Blake worked through one element of a design on each sketch on each page. This means that Blake found it necessary to separate the sketches to better understand the whole, later composite image.

Further, these drawings show Blake interacting with other artists' designs. According to Erdman (as informed by Keynes), these illustrations are Blake's interpretation of Henry Fuseli's *Ulysses Between Scylla and Charabydis* (1796).³³² Fuseli's work was created as an epic piece to be included in the Milton Gallery, following the successes of Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery.³³³

³³² Erdman, *Notebook*, N17.

³³³ For more on the Milton Gallery, see the in-depth monograph by Luisa Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery: Turning Readers into Spectators*, published in 2006.



Figure 33. Henry Fuseli, *Odysseus facing the choice between Scylla and Charybdis*, 1796, oil on canvas, private collection.



Figure 34. Henry Fuseli, Detail of *Odysseus facing the choice between Scylla and Charybdis*, 1796, oil on canvas, private collection.

The integration of another artist's design and the re-imagination of it is an interesting point to consider. As a commercial engraver, Blake often worked from other artist's designs to create new renditions. Out of all the artists that Blake would create engravings from, Fuseli is perhaps the most recognizable and most repeated artist.³³⁴ Erdman suggests that Blake sketched a sort of "Blake's Milton Gallery" in response to the work completed by Fuseli.³³⁵ While Fuseli would be the painter of the exhibition, Blake sketched several scenes in a similar fashion. Erdman believes that the sketches are attempts at creating conversation with Fuseli's works. This appropriation of his one-time friend's art within his personal Notebook, suggests that he found the images to be compelling enough to attempt reinvention. The cache of images and designs that Blake would often revisit, not only Fuseli's but from other sources beyond himself, are stored in the Notebook. For example, the centre image is a repeated emblem in Blake's designs, *The Traveller*.³³⁶ As discussed in Part Two, Reynolds attempted to impress on the students at the Royal Academy that having a bank of images from worthy sources is an excellent practice. It seems that Blake agreed with this, even if only silently and in his personal practice.

Another element that suggests that these pages were intended to be a locus for testing out ideas, is that the manuscript at the bottom is written in pencil, black ink, and does not follow a coherent or typical reading orientation. The manuscript comment written in pencil floats above the black ink argument and appears as a second thought or as another consideration to amend

³³⁴ For comparisons of Blake's Notebook entries and Fuseli's works, see Erdman, *Notebook*, N17, N77, N100, N112, and N114.

³³⁵ E578-579.

³³⁶ For more about The Traveller image, see Frank M. Parisi's "'Emblems of Morality': *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*." *Interpreting Blake*. Ed. Michael Phillips. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978. 70-110.

what was written in the ink. In a way, the pencil is another sort of annotation – commenting on Blake’s own words this time. This pattern of commenting and annotating highlights a critical difference between the Notebook and marginalia as opposed to other works in Blake’s oeuvre. While the illuminated books require intensive interaction in their conception and execution, each individual copy eventually is determined as finished. Then it would be sold or given away as a singular product, out of Blake’s control. The Notebook and the annotated books were items that he would be able to pick up and interact with in a very different manner. The illuminated books, typographic works, and paintings are standalone works that can reach a finalized status; however, the nature of the Notebook is an example of an interactive object for Blake. This interactive object functioned as a space for thought, conception, execution, and experimentation. The object’s proximity in his daily life allowed for opportunities to revisit previous designs and drafts. The interactive status means that what is put into the Notebook can be viewed as non-committal – as it can be erased, scratched through, or blurred. Further, the reveal of what is contained in the journal to an external eye would be entirely Blake’s choice that he could revoke at any time. This intimate reveal is a luxury that cannot occur in his completed works.

A textual example of this revisiting process is a fragmentary note concerned with legacy at the bottom of page 19 (of the British Library’s pagination). In pen, Blake wrote:

I wonder who can say Speak no Ill of the dead when it is asserted in the Bible that the name of the Wicked shall Rot It is Deistical Virtue I suppose but as I have none of this I will pour Aqua fortis on the Name of the Wicked & turn it into an Ornament & an Example to be Avoided by Some & Imitated by Others if they Please[.]³³⁷

³³⁷ E579.

As examined earlier in the thesis, black ink pen script for Blake usually means that this is a thought through and determined accurate stance. However, there is still a drafting element to this inked comment. The first line of, “I wonder who can say Speak no Ill of the Dead” bears a pencil addition, floating above, that reads, “Are glad when they can find the grave[.]” The dual voices and dual mediums suggest that Blake revisited the sentiment inked at the bottom of the page and decided to add to it. However, it is pencil, perhaps the same pencil that drew the sketches on the page. This is not something I can determine, as access to the Notebook is denied to (just about) everyone. Nevertheless, the pencil annotation is written at a different time than the pen manuscript. Like the annotations to the *Works of Sir Joshua*, there is an element of revisiting previous thoughts written in the margins of a page. This time, Blake is annotating his own words. Continuing in pen at the bottom of this thought, “Columbus discovered [sic] America Vesputius finishd [sic] & smoothd [sic]” and then the text then moves along the right-hand edge of the page following the corner: “it over like an English Engraver or Correggio &/or Titian[.]” This thread appears to be concerned with another issue separate from the first about speaking ill of the dead. First, he states that Columbus discovered America, but that Amerigo Vespucci refined the understanding of the continent. Certainly, as history shows, Columbus was confused with his discovery, but Vespucci recognized the continent as the *Mundus Novus*, or the New World.³³⁸ He continued the simile: “like an English Engraver or Correggio &/or Titian,” which is a peculiar setup. Blake pairs Correggio with Titian often, for example, in the annotations to Discourse V: “Correggio & Titian Knew how to Execute what they could not Think or Invent[.]”³³⁹ The sentiment is very similar, suggesting that Correggio and Titian could not create original works

³³⁸ There seems to be a resurgence of interest in Vespucci in the late 18th century because of previously undiscovered letters allegedly written by the navigator. However, most scholars now agree that they are fakes.

³³⁹ E654.

but could finish another artist's work. This comment that follows the right side of the page is like the drawings at the top: it also shows that Blake is considering other artists within his Notebook.

Blake's Notebook, like the marginalia to *Works*, shows Blake wrestling with ideas for future works, both image and word. The methods and processes are difficult to deduce at times, especially in the Notebook, but we can see that it is a place in which Blake can revisit ideas. Here, we see that Blake does employ a process of working through and developing his ideas inspired from external sources, like Fuseli, Reynolds, and other interactions. The nature of the Notebook, whether highly private or not, is nearly impossible to say. However, in the next section, I will analyse the very public development of his artistic theories in the *Descriptive Catalogue*.

3.2 *The Descriptive Catalogue* (1809) and *A Vision of The Last Judgment* (1810)

In 1809, William Blake organized an independent exhibition featuring sixteen of his paintings.³⁴⁰ To accompany the event, he wrote *The Descriptive Catalogue*, which included explanatory statements about the pictures presented and explored his artistic philosophy and aesthetic theories. These are often difficult to decipher, as writing about art often is, but especially so when Blake, as always, tends towards Romantic mythos. Morris Eaves argues that Blake's critical language, found in the *Descriptive Catalogue* and *A Vision of the Last Judgment* are best described as "conservative Enlightenment" discourse whereas his sentiments actually lie with those of a "radical romantic" nature.³⁴¹ I argue that Blake did not have a singular theory of art; he was constantly drafting, editing, and extending his perspective on art. Eaves tends to suggest that there is a clearer and particular way to read Blake's artistic philosophies and practices, heavily dependent, contra John Barrell, on an implied teleology from Enlightenment to Romantic, but I suggest that is exactly why he finds Blake's prose to be challenging to track. Without considering the previous writing in the Notebook and the marginalia in the *Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, it is difficult trace the development or perhaps more appropriately changes in his

³⁴⁰ The paintings were as follows: *The Spiritual Form of Nelson Guiding Leviathan*; *The Spiritual Form of Pitt Guiding Behemoth*; *The Canterbury Pilgrims, from Chaucer*; *The Bard, from Gray*; *The Ancient Britons*; *A Subject from Shakspeare [sic]*; *The Goats*; *The Spiritual Protector*; *Satan Calling up His Legions, from Milton*; *The Bramins [sic], a Drawing*; "Cain Fleeing from the Wrath of God," or "The Body of Abel found by Adam and Eve, Cain fleeing away," *A Drawing*; *Soldiers Casting Lots for Christ's Garment, A Drawing*; *Jacob's Ladder, A Drawing*; *Angels Hovering over the Body of Jesus in the Sepulcher, a Drawing*; *Ruth, A Drawing*; *The Penance of Jane Shore, A Drawing*. The phrase "a drawing" added to the titles of a few of these pieces is not indicative of pen or pencil illustration as we would expect today. Instead, it refers to a mixed media format typically of watercolour and pen. For more information on the individual pieces in the exhibition, see Martin Myrone's edited version of Blake's *Descriptive Catalogue, Seen in My Visions: A Descriptive Catalogue of Pictures* (London: Tate Publishing, 2009).

³⁴¹ Morris Eaves, *William Blake's Theory of Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 130.

thought. Nevertheless, I want to make it clear that my primary purpose is not to offer new interpretations of the *Descriptive Catalogue* or *A Vision of the Last Judgment*. My intention with this thesis is to present what I believe is a better way to approach Blake's artistic theories and philosophies using the various manifestations of the marginalia. At the beginning of this section, I will discuss the possible motivations behind Blake organizing an independent exhibition. Next, I will analyse the unique format he chose for his exhibition catalogue. This ambitious venture had many potential benefits for Blake: a chance for self-branding, promotional value, increasing commercial interest, and the amplification of his perspectives on art. These goals are indeed very similar to the desired outcomes of the marginalia found in *The Works of Sir Joshua* by Blake, if with a more public orientation. Ultimately, I argue that the *Descriptive Catalogue* can be understood as marginalia to the paintings in the gallery.

The only exhibition of Blake's work during his lifetime was in 1809 and held his brother's store on Broad Street in London. There were many reasons why Blake might have wanted to stage an independent exhibition. Northrop Frye theorized that there are six reasons as to why Blake would have decided to run his own exhibition. First, the *Descriptive Catalogue* and the pictures in the exhibition would work together to "set forth his new idea [the portable fresco]...and illustrate what the processes would do and how durable it was."³⁴² In Blake's advertisement for the exhibition, he wrote that his invention of a "portable fresco" would be "worthy [of] the consideration of the Rich and those who have the direction of public Works."³⁴³ Because of the small size of the pictures, it would be simpler to install and remove "at pleasure."³⁴⁴ As explored in part two of this thesis, frescoes are a medium associated with Old

³⁴² Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 409.

³⁴³ E527.

³⁴⁴ E527.

Masters such as Raphael and Michelangelo. Blake continued in his advertisement that the portable fresco he was exhibiting would enrich the nation just like the works of Raphael and Michelangelo did for Italy. And for Blake, he believed that this invention and his sharing of the medium was “the greatest of Duties to my country.”³⁴⁵ The second reason Frye listed for the independent exhibition was that by writing the catalogue, he would be able to justify the “majestic frescoes of startling brilliance and freshness of colour” that his invention would bring to the English public. This feeds into the third reason, that the proliferation of oil painting on the market was a disadvantage to the nation because of the smudged effects and “how unsuitable it is as a medium for heroic painting.”³⁴⁶ As previously explored in the second part of this thesis, the Grand Style of painting, or academic history painting, was of premier importance to both Blake and Reynolds. If this was to be the method in which Great Britain positioned itself as a glorious nation of art and empire, excelling at this style of painting was critical. The fourth reason, Frye suggested, was to “indicate how a man of vision looks at his time, and how political events and figures are evolved by the artist into imperishable forms,” the most obvious examples being the pictures of William Pitt and Lord George Nelson.³⁴⁷ Fifth, Frye gives, was that by bringing to the forefront British myths of “Albion, Arthur, Druids, ancient Bards, and the island of Atlantis,” Blake could set out a unique path to uplift the British nation at a time of crisis.³⁴⁸ Lastly, Blake’s rationale for a solo independent exhibition with a descriptive catalogue accompanying it would be to “show the British public what immense storehouses of genius they have in their own poets” if viewed with the correct vision and finished with proper execution.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ E528.

³⁴⁶ Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 409.

³⁴⁷ Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 409.

³⁴⁸ Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 409.

³⁴⁹ Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 410.

Building on Frye's important account, I would draw particular attention to Blake's feelings of neglect by the Royal Academy and the primary reason why he decided to exhibit his works independently and support them with a statement of his theories on art in the *Descriptive Catalogue*. What too Blake-centred an approach risks ignoring, though, is that plenty of other painters felt similar tensions in this period and decided to stage their own exhibitions. Blake certainly felt that his use of watercolour instead of oil paint caused his works to be "regularly refused to be exhibited by the *Royal Academy* and the *British Institution*."³⁵⁰ The hierarchical about the different media for the visual played an important role in the selection of artists chosen to exhibit. Blake's work was selected to be exhibited at the Royal Academy Annual Exhibition on six different occasions, the last time in 1808, not long before his personal exhibition, it ought to be noted that the arrangement of the pictures was a source of massive friction in the artistic community during the time and a source of resentment for Blake. The decisions made by members of the Hanging Committee at the Royal Academy amplified the struggle for recognition and status for watercolour artists upon the move to Somerset House in 1780.³⁵¹ The upper floors were well-appointed and sophisticated public galleries of oil paintings (see figure 35), whereas the ground floor was reserved for watercolours and other lower-ranking mediums.

³⁵⁰ E527, original emphasis.

³⁵¹ Blake exhibited paintings at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 1780, 1784, 1785, 1799, 1800, and 1808. For more information on what was presented at the Royal Academy Exhibition in those years, see www.chronicle250.com.



Figure 35. Thomas Rowlandson, *Exhibition Room, Somerset House*, 1808, etching and aquatint, hand coloured, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, New York, United States of America, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/636776>.

This poor appointment, a reporter for the *St. James Chronicle* suggested, meant that less talented artists would not contribute to the exhibition as genuine “Artists will not be so imprudent as to lend good Drawings to be disadvantageously viewed in such a Place.”³⁵² Blake contributed to the first Royal Academy first exhibition at Somerset Place: a pen and ink drawing called *The Death of Earl Godwin*. If the viewing conditions were as the reviewer claimed, it may have been a disappointing experience for young Blake. After many public complaints, the Council Room was designated as a space for watercolours and drawings to be hung from 1795 until 1809, the same year as Blake’s independent exhibition, in the hope that it would alleviate the criticism.

However, it seems that the problem merely mutated into another issue. A writer for *The Literary Panorama* noted that pictures in the Council Room were overwhelmed by side lighting and “too

³⁵² *St. James’s Chronicle*, 22-24 May 1788. 54.

often a vicious glare [came] dazzling upon them, whereby their true effect is injured.”³⁵³ Greg Smith generously writes that, “it is debatable whether works in watercolours were placed at a greater disadvantage” than oil paintings, “but the artists themselves felt that the exhibitions did not allow their talents either collectively or individually to be ‘fairly evinced...nor could the public justly appreciate the merits of such a separate department of art.’”³⁵⁴

Blake and other artists felt disenfranchised by either the exclusion or relative neglect of the Royal Academy. This sentiment reverberates throughout the *Descriptive Catalogue* as Blake describes his gallery as open “For Public Inspection,” the supposed goal of the Royal Academy exhibition.³⁵⁵ Perhaps referencing the poor exhibition conditions for watercolours, the *Descriptive Catalogue* opens with: “Mr. B. appeals to the Public, from the judgment of those narrow blinking eyes, that have too long governed art in a dark corner.”³⁵⁶ Instead of the dark corners in the gloomy downstairs or the searing light which would make a viewer squint at a painting in the Council Room, Blake’s exhibition and *Descriptive Catalogue* invited closer inspection from the public. This intimation between Blake and the reader/spectator sets up his gallery as an answer to the segregation of the Royal Academy’s annual exhibitions.

In the scholarship on the 1809 exhibition, the physicality of Blake’s showroom space has been a recent focus.³⁵⁷ Blake’s exhibition was held on the upper floor of the family hosiery

³⁵³ *Literary Panorama*, vol. 2, pp. 621, 1807.

³⁵⁴ Smith, Greg. “Watercolourists and Watercolours at the Royal Academy, 1780-1836.” Solkin, David H., ed. *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836*. New Haven, CT: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Courtauld Institute Gallery by Yale University Press, 2001. (pp. 195). As Barrell contends, the “public” for Blake is a thorny issue: “It seems that for Blake, the English audience is only a public when it exhibits (as it rarely does) the qualities necessary to appreciate his work...the ‘public’ is for Blake as for his immediate predecessors [like Reynolds] best understood as a concept rather than an identifiable body of people.” For more on the idea of the public for Blake, see *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt*, pp. 253-257.

³⁵⁵ E527, E529.

³⁵⁶ E529.

³⁵⁷ Tate Britain’s 2019 retrospective William Blake exhibition recreated the physical space of the original 1809 showroom. Like a diorama, the Tate built up walls and a wooden floor for visitors to step into the

business run by his brother in Soho. Morris Eaves believes that the staging of this showroom outside of an institutional space, like the Royal Academy or Boydell Gallery, was significant to Blake's "romantic individualism."³⁵⁸ Indeed, Eaves admits to using Blake and Reynolds as "shorthand expressions" for Romanticism and Enlightenment, respectively.³⁵⁹ His binary opposition of the two artists is underpinned by the idea that Blake was uninterested in gaining access to the group Reynolds symbolized. Instead, Eaves argues, the independent exhibition was intended to "generate a group with his own imagination at the centre."³⁶⁰ However, this analysis neglects the fact that several artists, including J.M.W. Turner, attempted to declare their independence by maintaining private, residential galleries.³⁶¹ In spite of this independent streak on the part of the artists, Eaves attempts to dissuade us from viewing Blake's independent exhibition as an Enlightenment influenced "maverick mentality."³⁶² This "maverick mentality" that Eaves refers to arises from Wylie Sypher's assertion that the romantics are linked by a feeling not "any agreement about execution."³⁶³ Eaves takes this a step further that "Blake and the institutions that represent artistic consensus are sadly at odds...Blake wants to be accepted, of course, but he does not want agreement. He wants inclusion on his own terms."³⁶⁴ Other artists were similar in this regard; for example, Gainsborough's increasingly strained relationship with Reynolds compelled him to remove his works from all Royal Academy events in 1784. As a founding member of the Royal Academy and a well-represented painter in the exhibitions,

1809 exhibition. For more information on this, see the William Blake Exhibition Catalogue (London: Tate Publishing), 2019.

³⁵⁸ Eaves, *William Blake's Theory of Art*, 76.

³⁵⁹ Eaves, *Blake's Theory of Art*, 6.

³⁶⁰ Eaves, *Blake's Theory of Art*, 76.

³⁶¹ Giles Walkley, *Artists' Houses in London, 1764-1914* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Scholar Press, 1994). 17-23.

³⁶² Eaves, *Blake's Theory of Art*, 76.

³⁶³ Wylie Sypher, *Literature and Technology - The Alien Vision* (New York: Random House, 1971). 41.

³⁶⁴ Eaves, *Blake's Theory on Art*, 76.

Gainsborough's withdrawal caused a public scandal. The day before the exhibition opened, *The Gazetteer* reported:

The celebrated Mr. Gainsborough, whose labours have so much contributed to enrich the Royal Academy for several seasons past, has been under the necessity of withdrawing his performances from this year's exhibition!—The occasion of this step, it is said, was a refusal on the part of the Academical Council, to hang one particular picture in a situation capable of shewing its effect.³⁶⁵

As with the previously mentioned struggles between the watercolour artists and the hanging committee, Gainsborough also dealt with a similar situation.³⁶⁶ For him, the separation from the Royal Academy and introduction of his independently organized exhibition, had nothing to do with being excluded but rather, it afforded him a greater amount of personal freedom. Blake, however, had relatively little to do with Gainsborough and less admiration for his art. So, to say that Gainsborough and Blake saw eye to eye on this issue would be a mistake, although the similarities exist in their respective situations.

An artist with much more influence on Blake, George Romney, also organized independent exhibitions of his work hosted from home. I believe that Romney is perhaps the biggest influence behind Blake's organization of an independent exhibition. Romney proved himself to be particularly astute at marketing and branding in the commercialized, highly competitive London art world.³⁶⁷ He set his prices considerably lower than Reynolds and

³⁶⁵ *The Gazetteer*, 23 April 1784. For more information on the rift between Reynolds, Gainsborough, and their financial affairs, see Michael Rosenthal's *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough: "A Little Business for the Eye,"* published 1999.

³⁶⁶ Although, it must be noted that Gainsborough received very favourable conditions compared to other artists.

³⁶⁷ Heather McPherson, "Reconsidering Romney," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 3 (Spring 2003): 411–22.

Gainsborough and promised a faster turn-around for portraits, thanks to his technique of painting directly on primed canvas.³⁶⁸ As Heather McPherson points out, Romney's lack of engagement with the art world is often framed negatively, for example, "he was not a member of the Royal Academy, did not exhibit his works publicly after 1772, and was moody, unsociable, and reclusive."³⁶⁹ These criticisms centre primarily around the "maverick mentality" that Eaves resists in his analysis of Blake. Romney and Blake met in the 1790s, most likely bonding over their similar political beliefs and similar approaches to art.³⁷⁰ Richard Cumberland, a friend of Romney admitted he was a difficult man to befriend, as Romney was "shy, private, studious and contemplative; conscious of all the disadvantages and privations of a very stunted education."³⁷¹ It was observed that Romney, "seemed always to avoid associating with Gentlemen of his Profession."³⁷² Three exceptions to this observation were: Jeremiah Meyer, Ozias Humphry, and John Flaxman. Of course, Blake and Flaxman's relationship has been well-documented. G.E. Bentley, Jr. explained that "for half a lifetime Flaxman found praise and patrons for his fiery friend." Romney was also admired by Blake.³⁷³ According to a letter by Flaxman, Romney admired Blake's work from as early as 1784, evidenced by the compliment that Blake's historical drawings "rank with those of Ml. Angelo."³⁷⁴ As we have seen from Blake's annotations, a comparison to Michelangelo's drawings would be an intensely satisfying compliment (as they would have been to anyone). Further still, Romney was the original buyer

³⁶⁸ McPherson, "Reconsidering Romney," 415.

³⁶⁹ McPherson, "Reconsidering Romney," 415.

³⁷⁰ Morton D. Paley, "William Blake, George Romney, and The Life of George Romney, Esq.," *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 50–65.

³⁷¹ Richard Cumberland, *Memoirs of Richard Cumberland*, ed. Henry Flanders (Philadelphia, PA: Parry and McMillan, 1856). 211.

³⁷² Cumberland, *Cumberland*, 211.

³⁷³ G.E. Bentley, Jr., "Blake's Engravings and His Friendship with Flaxman," *Studies in Bibliography* 12 (1959). 161–88.

³⁷⁴ Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, United Kingdom, ms., letter, John Romney.

of several of Blake's illuminated books: *America, A Prophecy* (copy A), *The [First] Book of Urizen* (copy B), *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (copy F), and *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (copy A).³⁷⁵ Already befriended by Flaxman and one of Romney's artistic friends, I believe that Blake decided to reach out to Ozias Humphry to broaden his social and artistic circle. Around May 1809, Blake wrote to Humphry:

You will see in this little work the cause of difference between you & me. You demand of me to Mix two things that Reynolds has confesd [sic] cannot be mixed. You will percieve [sic] that I not only detest False Art but have the Courage to say so Publickly [sic]. & to dare. all the Power on Earth to oppose— Florentine & Venetian Art cannot exist together Till the Venetian & Flemish are destroyd [sic] the Florentine & Roman cannot Exist, This will be shortly accomplishd [sic]. till then I remain Your Grateful although [sic] seemingly otherwise I say Your Grateful & Sincere [line break] WILLIAM BLAKE I inclose [sic] a ticket of admission if you should honour my Exhibition with a Visit[.]³⁷⁶

Containing a ticket to the 1809 exhibition and possibly a copy of the *Descriptive Catalogue*, the letter seems to be working from Romney's playbook. By not participating in the institutional exhibition culture, Romney and Blake are depicted as being Romantic loner artists.³⁷⁷ This may be true in some senses but what is more important to note is that independent exhibitions shift the power balance and allow for greater public image control. By withdrawing from the

³⁷⁵ Joseph Viscomi, "The Myth of Commissioned Illuminated Books: George Romney, Isaac D'Israeli, and 'ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY designs ... of Blake's,'" *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, 23.2 (Fall 1989): 48-74.

³⁷⁶ E770.

³⁷⁷ For more on the relationship between George Romney and William Blake, see Morton D. Paley's article, "William Blake, George Romney, and *The Life of George Romney, Esq.*" in *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, volume 45, issue 2 of Fall 2011. <https://bq.blakearchive.org/45.2.paley>.

institution when it no longer serves the artist, they are in control of their reputation and sharing their artistic theories with more people.

For all the freedoms it might have given, Blake's exhibition in 1809 proved to be a commercial and critical failure. The only known review, Robert Hunt's in *The Examiner*, went so far as to describe Blake as, "an unfortunate lunatic, whose personal inoffensiveness secures him from confinement."³⁷⁸ Hunt judged the *Descriptive Catalogue* to be a "farrago of nonsense, unintelligibility, and egregious vanity." the entries were "wild effusions of a distempered brain."³⁷⁹ Another contemporary of Blake, Henry Crabb Robinson, called the *Descriptive Catalogue* a "veritable folio of fragmentary utterances on art and religion, without plan or arrangement," but nevertheless found much more value in the work than Hunt.³⁸⁰ After listing a litany of explosive phrases from the *Descriptive Catalogue*, Robinson explains, "these are the wildest and most extravagant passages of the book, which lead to the consideration with which we begin this account. No one can deny that, as even amid these aberrations gleams of reason and intelligence shine out[.]"³⁸¹ Current scholars tread somewhere between Hunt and Robinson's analysis. Eric Loy characterizes the *Descriptive Catalogue* as a "high decibel, cacophonous, aggressive amalgam of painting by painting descriptions," with argumentative positions on artistic practices and principles "coloured by enthusiasm, resentment, blame, and defensiveness, sharpened by hints of conspiracy, technical description, and assorted other forays, often within a

³⁷⁸ Leigh Hunt, *The Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt*, edited by Robert Morrison and Michael Eberle-Sinatra (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003), 606.

³⁷⁹ Hunt, *Selected Writings*, 605.

³⁸⁰ Henry Crabb Robinson, *William Blake: The Critical Heritage*, ed. G.E. Bentley, Jr., The Critical Heritage Series (London; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1975), 159.

³⁸¹ Robinson, *William Blake: The Critical Heritage*, 161.

single entry.”³⁸² This characterization is also found on the Blake Archive page introducing the *Descriptive Catalogue* directly before the user accesses the material. This account of the *Descriptive Catalogue* is certainly a legitimate enough, but the litany rather obscures the question of the literary genre of art catalogues in the period, which tended to privilege the description of individual paintings over any coherent account of theoretical principles. Every entry in Blake’s catalogue invokes principles, theories, opinions, and critiques of other artists based on the specificities of each of the paintings they describe. Instead of viewing the entries as a kaleidoscopic foray into his theories of art in general, it is important to recognize that Blake is approaching each picture from a set of issues explored from different angles.

This leads to the next point about the format of the *Descriptive Catalogue*. At this time, exhibition catalogues were brief and functioned primarily to list basic information about what was in the showroom. For example, see figure 36, a page from the Royal Academy Annual Exhibition of 1809.

³⁸² Eric Loy, “Publication: A Descriptive Catalogue,” *Hell’s Printing Press: The Blog of the Blake Archive and Blake Quarterly*, 30 April 2018, accessed 3 March 2022 <https://blog.blakearchive.org/2018/04/30/publication-a-descriptive-catalogue/>.

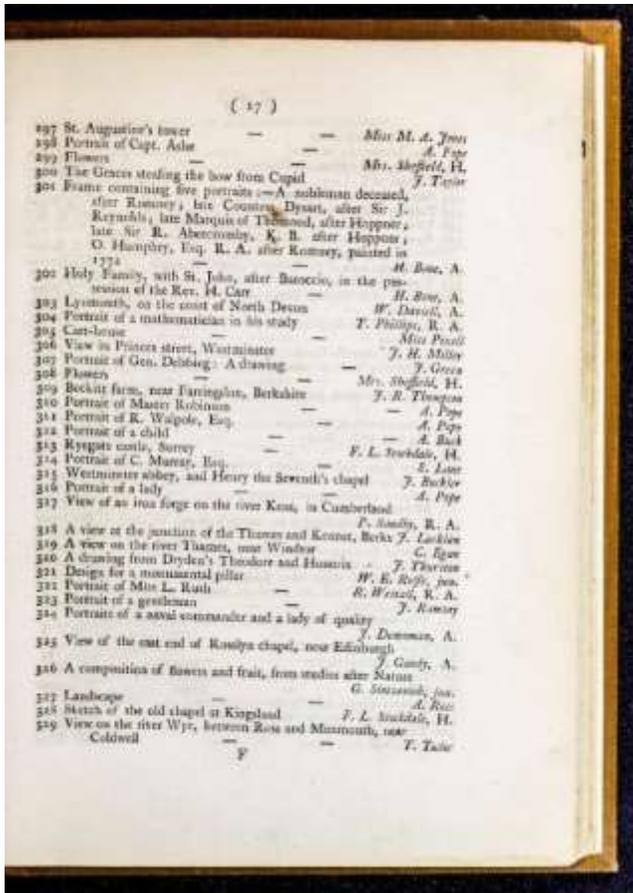


Figure 36. *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy, MDCCCIX*. Published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title, organized by and presented at the Royal Academy of Arts, Summer 1809.

Optimized for functionality, the exhibition catalogue is clear about the title of the work, the artist, and the number corresponds to the position it occupied in the area of the gallery. Blake's *Descriptive Catalogue*, however, did not have the same necessity for optimized space or clarity about which pictures are which. Blake's approach and the resultant styling of the *Descriptive Catalogue* were unique at the time for British gallery and exhibition catalogues, however much they shared some of their basic features. Konstantinos Stefanis argues that the *Descriptive Catalogue* stems from the French tradition of *catalogue raisonnés*: a completed, published, and

analytical catalogue of one artist's work.³⁸³ He argues that the connection between descriptive catalogues and catalogues raisonnés in England was introduced with the bilingual publication of James Tassie's *A Descriptive Catalogue of a General Collection of Ancient and Modern Engraved Gems* (1791). This catalogue lists over 15,000 examples of engraved gems and "was both a reference work and an advertising catalogue of Tassie's practice."³⁸⁴ It should be added that Blake most likely encountered this same text when he was commissioned for engraving work for *The Cyclopædia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature* (1802-1819) by Abraham Rees. I suspect that his research led to the encounter of Tassie's catalogue for his own plates on gem engraving (see figure 37).³⁸⁵

³⁸³ Konstantinos Stefanis, "Reasoned Exhibitions: Blake in 1809 and Reynolds in 1813," *Tate Papers* 14 (Autumn 2010).

³⁸⁴ Stefanis, "Reasoned Exhibitions."

³⁸⁵ There is evidence that this plate was one of the first commissions for this book. Blake would later contribute engraved plates for the sculpture section of the *Cyclopædia* which included the first iteration of the Laocoön group. For more on this, see Frank Kafker's *Notable Encyclopedias of the Late Eighteenth Century: Eleven Successors of the Encyclopédie* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation at the Taylor Institution, 1994).

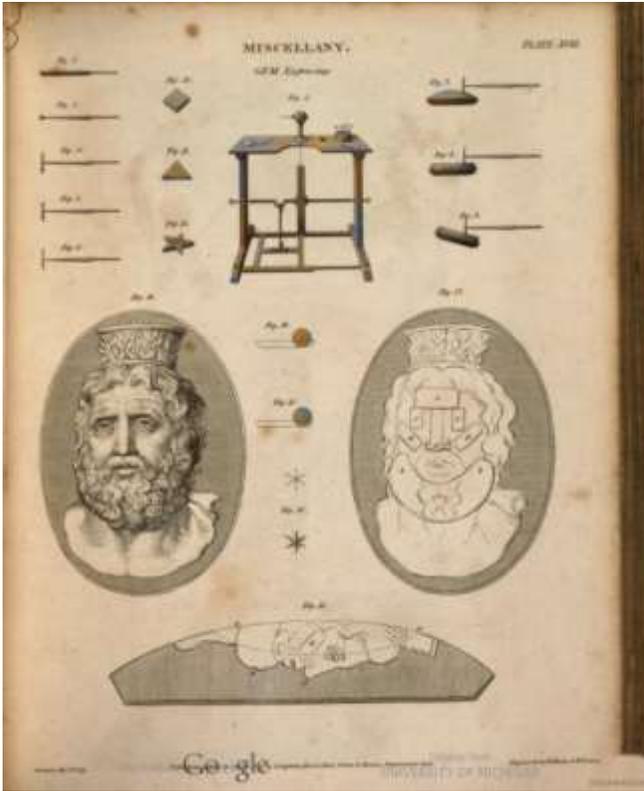


Figure 37. William Blake, “Miscellany – Gem Engraving” page from Volume III of *The Cyclopædia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, 1819, Abraham Rees, Designs by John Farey, Sr. and engraved by William Blake and Wilson Lowry, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, United States of America.

The *catalogue raisonnés* format is an interesting conflation of commercial and scholarly pursuits. Another source of the *catalogue raisonnés* style around the time was *The bee; or, a companion to the Shakespeare Gallery: containing a catalogue raisonné of all the pictures; with comments, illustrations, and remarks* by Humphry Repton in 1789. Repton introduced his work as a “necessary consequence” to explain the brilliance of the Shakespeare Gallery.³⁸⁶ Because of this new style of exhibition related literature, he continued in his introduction to explain his format:

³⁸⁶ Humphry Repton, *The Bee; or a Companion to the Shakespeare Gallery: Containing a Catalogue Raisonné of All the Pictures; with Comments, Illustrations, and Remarks* (London: T. Cadell, in the Strand, 1789), 2.

Through Shakespeare's soul, the Genius, of British Poetry poured forth the most wondrous efforts of the Pen; and, by the same channel, the Genius of British Painting now displays the choicest Productions of the *Pencil*. Impressed by these considerations, the Bee was induced to remove his labours hither, and to quit his original design of commenting on the Pictures of the Royal Academy, where the multitude of portraits and less interesting objects, rendered it impossible to take notice of every Picture; while here, each subject will call forth some occasion for remark.³⁸⁷

Repton directly stated that the pictures presented by the Royal Academy were not as interesting as those in the Shakespeare Gallery. The Royal Academy exhibitions were too immense to create the strong response as the Shakespeare Gallery, meaning that he felt able to dwell and delve deeper into his individual responses to each painting. Since it was his own independent solo exhibition, Blake would naturally feel similarly towards his own works. By using a descriptive catalogue format, he would be able to "call forth" any meaningful remarks he would wish to express to the public. As we have seen from the first part of this thesis, this feeling of needing to "call forth" any statements were typical for Blake – whether on the page of someone else or on his own.

Another reason for selecting the more descriptive format of an exhibition catalogue is that it created the space for him to expand on a justification of his practice and offer his paintings for sale. While I wish to make it clear that Blake was certainly intending to make money and seek future patrons out from the crowd, the publication of the *Descriptive Catalogue* allowed for Blake to create the appropriate setting for approaching his pictures.³⁸⁸ The catalogues like those

³⁸⁷ Repton, *The Bee*, 6.

³⁸⁸ In fact, the commercial element is crucial to remember about the exhibition. Placed directly before the preface in the *Descriptive Catalogue*, Blake provided purchasing conditions:

of the Royal Academy do not allow for analysis or commentary but the descriptive format does just that. Because Blake wrote his own exhibition catalogue, it was another extension of his personal curation. First, there are lucid explanations of how payment would be processed for completed pictures and the timeline for their delivery indicates that all the paintings were for sale. Although the exhibition was relatively small, the choice to offer every painting means that this was not just intended to show his artistic capability. Secondly, his inclusion of the forthcoming *Canterbury Pilgrims* engraving was to solicit for future work and patrons who may be longer-term purchasers. But the *Descriptive Catalogue* is much more than a statement of the conditions of sale and a listing of what hung in the gallery. In it, he provided critical and analytical discussion of the works on view, referenced other artists, and essays into Blake's aesthetics. The *Descriptive Catalogue* was an opportunity to set out his opinions on art on a grander scale to a wider (if still limited) public. Similar to the annotations in the *Works of Sir Joshua*, the central focus (Reynolds' text, the paintings) is commented on and explored by Blake (marginalia, the *Descriptive Catalogue*).

The Tate Britain Blake show of 2019-2020 aimed to recreate his 1809 exhibition, but many of the paintings that Blake exhibited have gone missing.³⁸⁹ Perhaps because of the missing pictures and the fact there relatively few responses from spectators at the time have survived, the fact that the *Descriptive Catalogue* tends to become the centre of scholarly attention when

I. One third of the price to be paid at the time of Purchase and remainder on Delivery.

II. The Pictures and Drawings to remain in the Exhibition till its close, which will be the 29th of September 1809; and the Picture of the Canterbury Pilgrims, which is to be engraved, will be Sold only on condition of its remaining in the Artist's hands twelve months, when it will be delivered to the Buyer.

³⁸⁹ These missing pictures are *The Ancient Britons*, *The Goats*, *The Spiritual Protector*, and *The Bramins* [sic].

discussing the exhibition.³⁹⁰ Like the marginalia, this removal from the original context of the physical space of the showroom with the paintings complicates our understanding of *Descriptive Catalogue*'s essential functions. The interconnections and humour become clearer when examining the *Descriptive Catalogue* and the paintings are presented together as they originally were, in that small exhibition room. Of course, for Blake, the extensive work done on the *Descriptive Catalogue* and the setup and layout of the exhibition was evidence of the importance of this moment in his career. It is not difficult to imagine that Blake saw this as an opportunity to share with the wider public his points of view towards art. However, Troy R.C. Patenaude points out that the admission price for the exhibition was the standard price of the time, which was "set to exclude the lower classes," and with added expense for connoisseurs was a copy of the *Descriptive Catalogue* at two shillings and six-pence suggests he wanted a more noble, higher-spending audience to read his essays.³⁹¹ Patenaude contends that this extortionate price was set to appeal to, in Blake's words, "those who best understand such things."³⁹² While I believe this could be an oversimplification of Blake's intentions, Patenaude's argument is important to consider. While the exhibition may have outpriced some of the lower or middling classes, it may have been to elevate his own status as an artist. If Blake were to make the exhibition free or the *Descriptive Catalogue* available at a much lower price, it may have suggested that his work was not worth as much (fiscally or culturally) as other competing artists at the time.

³⁹⁰ As noted earlier, the Tate Britain Exhibition, "William Blake," featured an immersive recreation of the small domestic room in which Blake showed his art in 1809. Intended for the spectator to experience how the works were shown in such a space. For more information on the Tate exhibition in 2019-2020, see <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/william-blake/exhibition-guide>.

³⁹¹ Troy R.C. Patenaude, "The Glory of a Nation": Recovering William Blake's 1809 Exhibition," *British Art Journal* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 52–63.

³⁹² E528.

Having explained something of the context for the *Descriptive Catalogue* in Blake's 1809 exhibition, I want now to return to its content, and the relationship between the opinions Blake expressed there, and his annotations to the *Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. I have been suggesting throughout this thesis that the annotations functioned as a kind of laboratory of ideas for Blake. *The Descriptive Catalogue* allows us to see some of the results of his experiments in the margins. In Blake's entry for *The Bard, from Gray*, the fourth work described in the catalogue, Blake begins with lines taken from the poem that inspired the picture:

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frown'd o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
Robed in the sable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the Poet stood,
Loose his beard, and hoary hair
Stream'd like a meteor to the troubled air.
Weave the warp, and weave the woof
The winding sheet of Edward's race.³⁹³

Thomas Gray's *The Bard, A Pindaric Ode* (1757) is about Edward I's army and their encounter with a Welsh bard who curses the king and predicts the return of Welsh rule through the Tudors. The Poet, or the Bard, stands above the men, looming ominously (see figure 38).

³⁹³ E541.

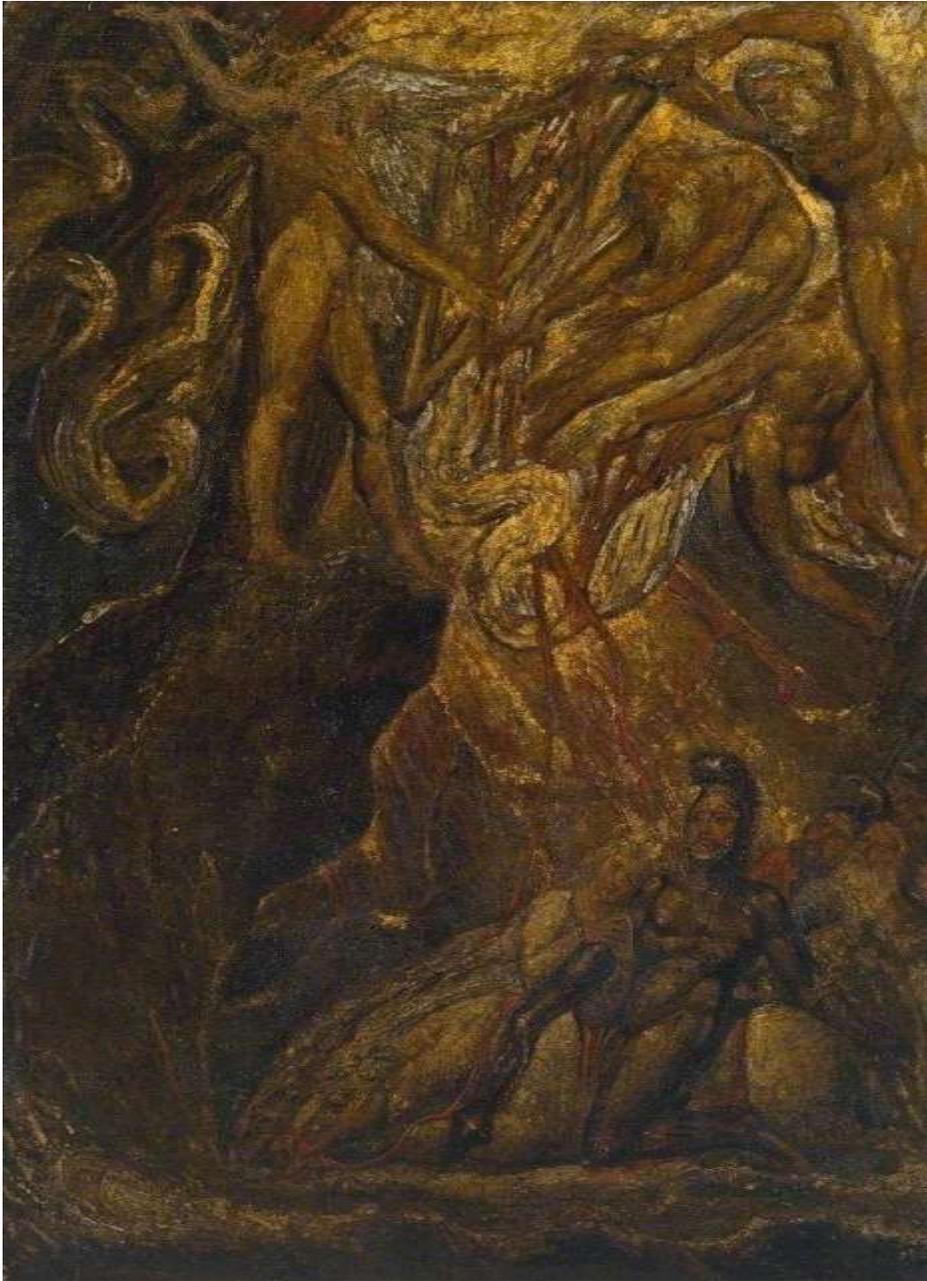


Figure 38. William Blake, *The Bard, from Gray*, 1809, water-based tempera with a glue and/or gum binder and with pen and ink outlining and shell gold or gold leaf on canvas, 2' x 1'5 (60 x 44.1 cm), Tate Collection, London, United Kingdom, <http://www.blakearchive.org/preview/but655?descId=but655.1.pt.01>.

After quoting from Gray's poem, Blake began his own remarks on his painting: "weaving the winding sheet of Edward's race by means of sounds of spiritual music and its accompanying expressions of articulate speech is a bold, and daring, and most masterly conception, that the

public have embraced and approved with avidity.”³⁹⁴ The shroud for a corpse, before burial being woven by music and the poetic genius of the people from the land is a narrative for Blake that would certainly elevate the myths of the British Isles. As explored earlier in this section, Frye believed that Blake was keen to resurrect these national stories to create history paintings unique to Great Britain. He continued:

Poetry consists in these conceptions; and shall Painting be confined to the sordid drudgery of facsimile representations of merely mortal and perishing substances, and not be as poetry and music are, elevated into its own proper sphere of invention and visionary conception? No, it shall not be so! Painting, as well as poetry and music, exists and exults in immortal thoughts.³⁹⁵

These “immortal thoughts” do not necessarily ring true to any sentiment’s marginalia in their exact phrasing. However, they can be linked to the perspectives Blake has brought up time and again in the marginalia and elsewhere about “visionary conception,” especially when he claims that had he “any other power than that of a poetic visionary,” his art “would have been as dull as his adversary’s.”³⁹⁶ The specific adversary is Thomas Stothard’s oil painting version of *The Pilgrimage to Canterbury* which was commissioned by Robert Cromek. Blake claimed that Cromek had first approached him for a Canterbury Pilgrims piece but decided on Stothard. However, the contrarian rhetoric and the specific content of what Blake says summons the annotations for anyone who has read them. By 1809, Reynolds had been dead for 17 years, but his presence was still naturally felt in the English world of art. Certainly Blake’s defence of the Canterbury Pilgrims painting takes up the terrain of his struggle with Reynolds:

³⁹⁴ E541.

³⁹⁵ E541.

³⁹⁶ E541.

the connoisseurs and artists who have made objections to Mr. B.'s mode of representing spirits with real bodies, would do well to consider that the Venus, the Minerva, the Jupiter, the Apollo, which they admire in Greek statues, are all of them representations of spiritual existences of God's immortal, to the mortal perishing organ of sight; and yet they are embodied and organized in solid marble.

Those who find it jarring that Blake would represent spirits with corporeal bodies are called upon to remember the pleasure they find in the solid forms of Greek sculpture. In Discourse V, Reynolds examines Poussin's execution of the historical and mythological subjects: "the style and the language in which such stories are told, is not the worse for preserving some relish of the old way of painting ... the mind was thrown back into antiquity not only by the subject but the execution."³⁹⁷ To the side of this paragraph, Blake wrote a simple but large note: "True[.]"³⁹⁸ In the next paragraph, Reynolds provided an explanation of his previous point:

If Poussin in imitation of the Ancients represents Apollo driving his chariot out of the sea by way of representing the Sun rising, if he personifies Lakes and Rivers, it is no-wise offensive in him; but seems perfectly of a piece with the general air of the picture. On the contrary, if the Figures which people his pictures had a modern air of countenance, if they appeared like our countrymen, if the draperies were like cloth or silk of our manufacture, if the landskip [sic] had the appearance of a modern view, how ridiculous would Apollo appear instead of the Sun; an Old Man, or a Nymph with an urn, to represent a River or a Lake?³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ Reynolds, *Works*, I:134.

³⁹⁸ E655.

³⁹⁹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:134-135.

Next to this text of Reynolds, Blake wrote: “These remarks on Poussin are Excellent[.]”⁴⁰⁰ Reynolds and Blake agree about Poussin’s treatment of the Greek spirits being represented as real figures that are not within the artist’s current time and appearance. Both artists align in this moment, and it could be said that this was influential in Blake’s drafting of the *Descriptive Catalogue* entry. Apollo was one of the focal points of this explanation and Blake also mentioned Apollo. But this point goes farther still: Blake writes that he “requires the same latitude” that has been given to the sculptors of the Greek gods, after all, this is the manner in which all things should be represented.⁴⁰¹ “The Prophets describe what they saw in Vision as real and existing[.]” Blake continued, and that “men whom they saw with their imaginative and immortal organs; the Apostles the same; the clearer the organ the more distinct the object.”⁴⁰² The phrasing of “imaginative and immortal organs” bears a close resemblance to Blake’s annotation, “Men who have been Educated with Works of Venetian Artists. under their Eyes Cannot see Rafael unless they are born with Determinate Organs[.]”⁴⁰³ At first, the description of *The Bard, From Gray* in the *Descriptive Catalogue* seems to align Reynolds and Blake on their treatment of the subject matter, but the element of the “Determinate Organs” is where they seem to diverge. The importance of representing those entities viewed through “imaginative and immortal organs” as corporeal is something that both Reynolds and Blake admired in Poussin’s paintings. However, as Blake continued,

He who does not imagine in stronger and better lineaments, and in stronger and better light than his perishing mortal eye can see does not imagine at all. The painter of this

⁴⁰⁰ E655.

⁴⁰¹ E541.

⁴⁰² E541.

⁴⁰³ E637.

work asserts that all his imaginations appear to him infinitely more perfect and more minutely organized than any thing [sic] seen by his mortal eye.⁴⁰⁴

Again, this harkens back to Blake's annotation about "Vision" deteriorating under improper practice and education. Those "who have been Educated" with emphasis on artists like Titian will find their innate Vision will diminish over time – unless "they are born with Determinate Organs[.]" The above quotation from the *Descriptive Catalogue* seems to be a developed version of the annotation. Not only will poor education and focus on lacklustre artists affect the artist but not persisting with "stronger and better lineaments" will as well. Eaves understands Blake's emphasis on "stronger and better lineaments" to be a question of "strength of artistic intellect" understood in terms of the power of imagination rather than reason.⁴⁰⁵ Eaves focuses on the "metaphors for internal and external" processes in formulation of his argument, but the binary rather flattens Blake's development of his artistic thought over time. Instead, we may consider that Blake found that he agreed with Reynolds on the display of imaginative beings as fleshed out characters. However, he may have realized he disagreed in how well it can be executed depending on the artist's practices.

The sixth entry in in the *Descriptive Catalogue* is also concerned with the practices of the artist, in this instance in relation to a painting called *A Spirit vaulting from a cloud to turn and wind a fiery Pegasus—Shakspeare* [sic]. *The horse of Intellect is leaping from the cliffs of Memory and Reasoning; it is a barren Rock: it is also called the Barren Waste of Locke and Newton.* Although the title is extensive, the commentary on the picture is not:

THIS Picture was done many years ago, and was one of the first Mr. B. ever did in

Fresco; fortunately or rather providentially he left it unblotted and unblurred, although

⁴⁰⁴ E541-542.

⁴⁰⁵ Eaves, *William Blake's Theory of Art*, 26.

molested continually by blotting and blurring demons; but he was also compelled to leave it unfinished for reasons that will be shewn [sic] in the following.⁴⁰⁶

As described by Blake, this is an unfinished work he has included in the exhibition for reasons explained by the next *The Goats, an experiment Picture*. This painting has been lost, but the *Descriptive Catalogue* takes up the issue:

THE subject is taken from the Missionary Voyage and varied from the literal fact, for the sake of picturesque scenery. The savage girls had dressed themselves with vine leaves, and some goats on board the missionary ship stripped them off presently. This Picture was painted at intervals, for experiment, with the colours, and is laboured to a superabundant blackness; it has however that about it, which may be worthy the attention of the Artist and Connoisseur for reasons that follow.⁴⁰⁷

Although he leaves another cliff-hanger at the end of this description as well, this is a good place to begin the analysis. In the sixth painting, he declared that he “left it unblotted and unblurred” despite being “molested continually by blotting and blurring demons[.]”⁴⁰⁸ On the back of the title page of the *Works of Reynolds*, Blake wrote about the “opression [sic] of Sr Joshua & his Gang of Cunning Hired Knaves” and their detrimental influence on other artists like James Barry, John Hamilton Mortimer, and Henry Fuseli.⁴⁰⁹ Towards the bottom of the same page he represents Gainsborough with Reynolds as competitors in blotting and blurring: “Reynolds & Gainsborough Blotted & Blurred one against the other & Divided all the English World between them Fuseli Indignant <almost> hid himself--I [was] <am>hid[.]”⁴¹⁰ The repetition of “blot”

⁴⁰⁶ E546. Original emphasis.

⁴⁰⁷ E546.

⁴⁰⁸ E546.

⁴⁰⁹ E636.

⁴¹⁰ E636.

and “blur” in the same order should not be viewed as a coincidence, especially when this page is written in black ink only, without any damage from the book binding process. As discussed earlier in this thesis, these were most likely some of the latest annotations Blake wrote in the book. In Blake’s advertisement for the exhibition, he began with a similar “blot and blur” reference, clearly emphasizing the importance of abstaining from the practice:

THE grand style of Art restored; in FRESCO, or Water-colour Painting, and England protected from the too just imputation of being the Seat and Protectress of bad (that is blotting and blurring) Art.

In this Exhibition will be seen real Art, as it was left us by Raphael and Albert Durer, Michael Angelo, and Julio Romano ; stripped from the Ignorances of Rubens and Rembrandt , Titian and Correggio ;

BY WILLIAM BLAKE.⁴¹¹

The importance of promoting his take on the fresco medium was not only to boast of his suggested techniques but to reveal the issues of the other styles. Calling England, the “Seat and Protectress of bad (that is blotting and blurring Art)” pulls together many of the reasons Frye suggested for Blake’s independent exhibition. By pulling back the curtain on the art inspired from “the ignorances of Rubens and Rembrandt, Titian, and Correggio,” he would be compelling a higher sense of taste to develop in England. Referring back to *A Spirit vaulting from a cloud to turn and wind a fiery Pegasus—Shakspeare [sic], the horse of Intellect is leaping from the cliffs of Memory and Reasoning*; it is a “barren Rock”: it is also called the “Barren Waste of Locke and Newton,” Blake comes across as relieved that he was able to stave off the “blotting and blurring demons,” of the fashionable tastes inspired by Reynolds and Gainsborough, because the integrity

⁴¹¹ E528. Original emphasis and spelling.

of the picture remained intact, unlike the following painting, *The Goats*. While this painting is lost, Blake described the “superabundant blackness” about the picture that would be a result of the “experiment” he conducted.⁴¹² Instead of operating from his own Vision, he allowed the external influences of those like Reynolds, Gainsborough, Rubens, Rembrandt, and Titian to infiltrate his creative process and destroy the execution.

Blake continued this thread throughout the account of the pictures in *The Descriptive Catalogue*, ending at the ninth, *Satan calling up his Legions, from Milton's Paradise Lost; a composition for a more perfect Picture, afterward executed for a Lady of high rank. An experiment Picture*. In the description of this painting, he made the final case against those who would counter his artistic vision for the future of England. Blake summarized the rationale for displaying these four, experimental paintings:

These Pictures, among numerous others painted for experiment, were the result of temptations and perturbations, labouring to destroy Imaginative power, by means of that infernal machine, called Chiaro Oscuro [sic], in the hands of Venetian and Flemish Demons; whose enmity to the Painter himself, and to all Artists who study in the Florentine and Roman Schools, may be removed by an exhibition and exposure of their vile tricks.⁴¹³

In the *Descriptive Catalogue*, Blake has continued to develop the notion that the ‘blotting and burring taught by institutions like the Royal Academy have corrupted the values of Art in England. While there are many more examples of the annotations in the *Descriptive Catalogue*, an entire study could be devoted to this. Nevertheless, I am not only attempting to show that it is critical to understand but also that Reynolds’ writing, Blake’s marginalia in reaction to it, and his

⁴¹² E546.

⁴¹³ E547.

approaches to art as shown by his developing ideas in the Notebook and elsewhere. Blake's choice to use descriptive format for the catalogue allowed him to use the entries as marginalia to his own works – by showing experimental pictures that were not up to his satisfaction, leaving it without full description would make the exhibition confusing and unprofitable. The *Descriptive Catalogue* is a place in which Blake could publicly show his genius in his invention and execution of his art and his theories on art.

3.3 The Illuminated Books, *Milton* and *Jerusalem*

So far in this thesis, I have argued that William Blake's annotated interactions with his copy of *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* reveals his developing views on the British art world, taste, and other aesthetic theories. Their roles in the Notebook and the *Descriptive Catalogue* are relatively obvious, in their different ways, both are used to set out his view on British art, in the case of the illuminated books the presence of the annotations is more diffused. What I mean is that the glimmers of the annotations in these epic poems are more fully woven into their specific narrative forms and brought into contact with other concepts nurtured by Blake. Nevertheless, in their transformed and compressed forms, his writing on art resurfaced in the prophetic books. This section develops this point by focusing on a several passages from *Milton* and *Jerusalem* that are particularly rich in its incorporation of the annotations into the universe of the prophetic books.⁴¹⁴

William Blake inserted himself in his epic *Milton, A Poem in Two Books*. The narrative follows the poet John Milton's mission of self-discovery and inspiration as he descends from heaven to the mortal world after hearing a song about how evil attempts to conquer good. Once on Earth, Milton and William Blake venture out to reshape art and creativity. Later in the narrative Milton merges with his feminine half, Ololon, progressing toward the apocalyptic overcoming of divisions between the sexes, the living and the dead, and human consciousness and its alienated projections into the external world. This plot is integrated with expansive references and allusions that range from the Bible to Blake's own life, particularly the difficult

⁴¹⁴ It is also important to analyse *Milton* and *Jerusalem* together, because as Northrop Frye argues, they are "inseparable" and ultimately, "constitute a double epic, a prelude and fugue on the same subject... The lyric 'And did those feet in ancient time,' which opens *Milton*, is connected even more closely with the theme of *Jerusalem*, and our hymnbooks have rechristened it accordingly." For more on *Milton* and *Jerusalem* as connected works, see Frye's *Fearful Symmetry*, pg. 313-325.

relationship with his patron William Hayley. Portions of *The Four Zoas*, Blake's long manuscript poem, are repeated (often with little revision) in *Milton*. There are four known copies, but not one contains all 51 plates. Blake completed 45 plates for *Milton* in relief, with some full-page designs in white-line etching, between c. 1804 and c. 1811. Six additional plates (a-f) were probably etched in subsequent years up to 1818. The prose "Preface" (Plate 2) appears only in Copies A and B. Plates a-e appear only in Copies C and D, Plate f only in Copy D. The first printing, late in 1810 or early in 1811, produced Copies A-C. Blake retained Copy C and added new plates and rearranged others at least twice; the volume was not finished until c. 1821. Copy D was printed in 1818. As a partly masked white-line inscription on the title page suggests, Blake may have originally planned to write twelve "Books" for Milton.

Ololon, Milton's female counterpart, has been corrupted by the unimaginative, limiting world of self-doubt and the despair that soon follows. In exasperation, she laments her inability to comprehend Milton's persistent struggle against the influence of others. She tells Milton that she witnessed his struggle to preserve his innate inspiration despite the influence of the "Newtonian Phantasm," and the philosophies of "Voltaire & Rousseau: this Hume & Gibbon & Bolingbroke."⁴¹⁵ She wonders if she was the cause of their negative influence: "Is Ololon the cause of this? O where shall I hide my face / These tears fall for the little-ones: the Children of Jerusalem / Lest they be annihilated in thy annihilation."⁴¹⁶ Milton attempts to clarify what is at stake in the continuous process of protecting his distinctive artistic vision from these external influences. In an exhortation to Ololon, he explains the crucial difference between Negation and Contrary:

There is a Negation, & there is a Contrary

⁴¹⁵ E141, lines 10-11.

⁴¹⁶ E141, lines 14-16

The Negation must be destroyd to redeem the Contraries
The Negation is the Spectre; the Reasoning Power in Man
This is a false Body: an Incrustation over my Immortal
Spirit; a Selfhood, which must be put off & annihilated always
To cleanse the Face of my Spirit by Self-examination.⁴¹⁷

The necessity of contraries to creative development can be tracked throughout Blake's earlier works. For example, in the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake established those oppositional energies are necessary not only to the idea of progress but to life itself: "[w]ithout Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence."⁴¹⁸ The "human existence" is wholly dependent on the interaction between varying contrary moods, viewpoints, and approaches. Unlike the Contrary, the Negation is detrimental to life: it is a "false Body" that grows over the "Immortal Spirit" of an individual, retarding any sense of progress, and contracting back to a limited sense of self, closed to the outside world. Like a snail housed in a too small and solid shell, this external compartment can diminish the potential growth of the snail. By limiting itself in a constantly calcifying and restricting shell, the snail is impeded from healthy development. By defending what it has, it is prevented from developing towards a different form of self. For Frye, "Blake and Locke are contraries: both feel that imagination liberty and life are in their systems, and they must clash, or we shall never know who is right."⁴¹⁹ This necessary friction is essential to understanding what the truth may actually be. However, "Hobbes is a negation: he cares too little for imagination or liberty to clash with any defender of it."⁴²⁰ This distinction between a contrary and a negation

⁴¹⁷ E142, lines 32-38.

⁴¹⁸ E34.

⁴¹⁹ Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 188.

⁴²⁰ Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 188.

aligns with other ideas in Blake's worldview: "all real things have qualities in them, and qualities always have opposites."⁴²¹

S. Foster Damon set out to define the Spectre in Blake's work and generalized it as the "rational power of the divided man," but this definition seems too simplified given the complex role of the Spectre across Blake's illuminated books. For Blake, an individual that is divided has fallen away from their potential; a form that is fully realized in body and mind and uncorrupted by doubt, deception, or false notions of humility. Damon's understanding of the Spectre is far too depersonalized, setting aside the need for the individual requirement to examine their own negation. In *Jerusalem*, Los declared his perpetual mental fight against his negation:

O thou Negation, I will continually compel [sic]
Thee to be invisible to any but whom I please, & when
And where & how I please, and never! never! shalt thou be Organized
But as a distorted & reversed Reflexion [sic] in the Darkness
And in the Non Entity: nor shall that which is above
Ever descend into thee: but thou shalt be a Non Entity for ever
And if any enter into thee, thou shalt be an Unquenchable Fire
And he shall be a never dying Worm, mutually tormented by
Those that thou tormentest [sic], a Hell & Despair for ever & ever.⁴²²

Los' command of the Negation does not eliminate it but allows for its transformation and even for his dominion over it. By refusing to "descend into thee," Los is capable of traversing around the tortuous and perverse entity. Los alone must set the terms and conditions of his Negation's presence, influence, and abilities and he does so by continuously resisting it.

⁴²¹ Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, 189.

⁴²² E162, lines 39-47.

I believe that Northrop Frye's application of Jungian psychoanalytical concepts to analyse Blake's poetry is a useful way to approach the Spectre, especially in relation to Blake's marginalia to Reynolds. The marginalia were a means to inspect and examine outside viewpoints and to develop Blake's own perspectives on art in relation to those other viewpoints. Jung's concept of "individuation" shares some features with this method: it is a process of self-realization that involves the continual discovery of one's drives, desires, and fears that constitute who they really are and can be. The experimentation with opposites like personal and collective, mind and body, conscious and unconscious assists the individual's discovery of their fuller and more authentic version of the self. Blake's marginalia in *The Works of Sir Joshua* represent just such an inspection of this kind. His annotations attempt to respond to Reynolds as a contrary, as opposed to a Negation. Essential to the process of individuation as explained by Jung was that the individual must stage an encounter with Shadow, an unpleasant and sometimes immoral side of their own personality. "The shadow," Jung explained, "is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality."⁴²³ The arrival of the shadow requires "considerable moral effort" because to become aware of it "involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule, meets with considerable resistance."⁴²⁴ The repression or denial of the existence of the shadow after its arrival does not deter its persistent action on our psyche. By denying the shadow, it can result in excruciating troubles with paranoia, addiction, negative affective tendencies, and a general inability to co-exist with others. The self-knowledge and recognition of the shadow for an individual, Jung, clarified, "frequently requires much

⁴²³ Carl Jung, *Aion: Research into the Phenomenology of the Self*, trans. R.F.C. Hull, Bollingen Series (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 4.

⁴²⁴ Jung, *Aion*, 4.

painstaking work extending over a long period.” As he revisited the marginalia in *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* over the years and carried them over into Blake’s other works Blake carried on just such a painstaking process. While Jung’s Shadow is very much a personal part of the mind, this Shadow could be applied to external pressures that have been situated in the individual. This is not a core belief that has been imprinted without any exterior influence, instead it is cemented by the influence of peers, media, etc. that has impacted the individual’s shadow behaviours and perspectives. For Blake, the external influence of Reynolds could be resonating within his own mind, just as Ololon feared Voltaire had for Milton. In order to continue striving against internalizing the nefarious philosophies and practices of Reynolds, Blake used annotations directly on the page to counteract them. Jung’s shadow work is a process of self-fulfilment and self-knowledge and Blake’s annotations work similarly. Reynolds, of course, is not Blake’s interior, hidden self but because of his influence on art, Blake may have set him as a shadow presence against his own theories and approaches.

In order to strive against this internalization of doubt, Blake’s use of annotations directly on the page recentres his own voice. While Jung’s process is about self-fulfilment and self-knowledge, Blake’s annotations may be more akin to internalization and the process of reflection, set against a negation identity. However, it must be noted that Reynolds himself is not a negation or a contrary on his own. Blake’s choice to engage with Reynolds’ work emphasizes a role that Blake has placed onto Reynolds to explore his own artistic theories and approaches.

This scrutinizing method of Blake’s interactions with Reynolds’ *Discourses* can be likened again to Jung’s emphasis on the importance of shadow work. Jung’s reminder that the recognition of the shadow is a “painstaking work” that extends over a long period of time also mirrors Los’ continuous mental fight, as mentioned above, and also the character Milton’s

acknowledgement of his Spectre's persistence that "which must be put off & annihilated always / To cleanse the Face of my Spirit by Self-examination." On the plate where this passage appears, there is a design at the bottom of the page (see figure 39): situated in a forest of gnarled and barren trees, Milton, portrayed in profile and nude, pushes away from him a beast with a serpent's head and tail and an adjoined dog head. The background is painted densely black, perhaps a reference to the shadowy nature of the Spectre, or even the previous "superabundant blackness" that developed when Blake allowed the "blotting and blurring demons" to interrupt his artistic process while painting *The Goats*.⁴²⁵ This dual-headed beast could very well be the negation that Milton explained must be wrestled against consistently. The creature looks nothing like the character because it is not a contrary version of Milton. Instead, it is something monstrous and of the fantasy realm, a predatory and abstracted threat for Milton's progress as a poet.

⁴²⁵ E546.

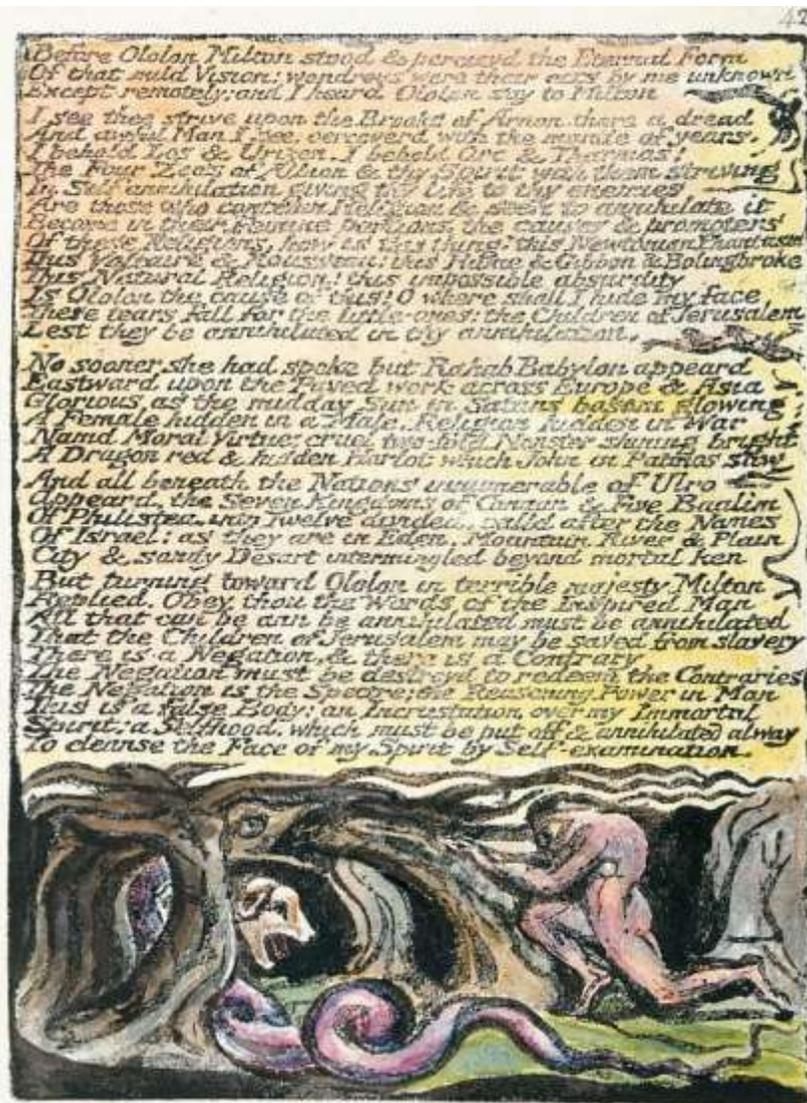


Figure 39. William Blake, *Milton*, plate 42, copy A, 1811, relief and white-line etching, hand coloured, 5.6 x 4.2" (14.3 x 10.7 cm), The British Museum, London, United Kingdom, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/milton.a?descId=milton.a.illbk.42>.

An earlier full-page plate in the illuminated book depicts a psychic and transcendental struggle focused on the nefarious forces ranged against the poet artist (see figure 40). In the foreground is Milton, portrayed as a young, nude male with short blonde hair, viewed from behind. His left leg is bent forward, and the right is extended back in a lunging position. His right foot breaks the word "Self-hood" in the text bubble at the bottom of the page. Milton's arms are raised and grasping the neck and head of an old, gowned figure that resembles Urizen. This figure, we shall

call him Urizen for these purposes, does not fight back and instead rests his palms on what look like tablets with Hebrew letters etched onto the face of the stone. In the background, on a distant hill, a band of five figures play various musical instruments.⁴²⁶ The text bubble at the bottom of the page reads: "To annihilate the Self-hood of Deceit & False Forgiveness." Again, the cancerous part of the self must be annihilated to move forward without deception. If Milton can clear the path of Urizen's limiting tendencies, then he can journey towards the figures playing music on the hill. By eliminating the poisonous ideas and behaviours that are influenced by others or ourselves, we can continue developing the potential for becoming differently.

⁴²⁶ These figures could be interpreted as personifications of the liberated senses, but they also might be the "sons & daughters" of Rahab and Tirzah who "In all their beauty...entice Milton across the river" E113, lines 31-32.

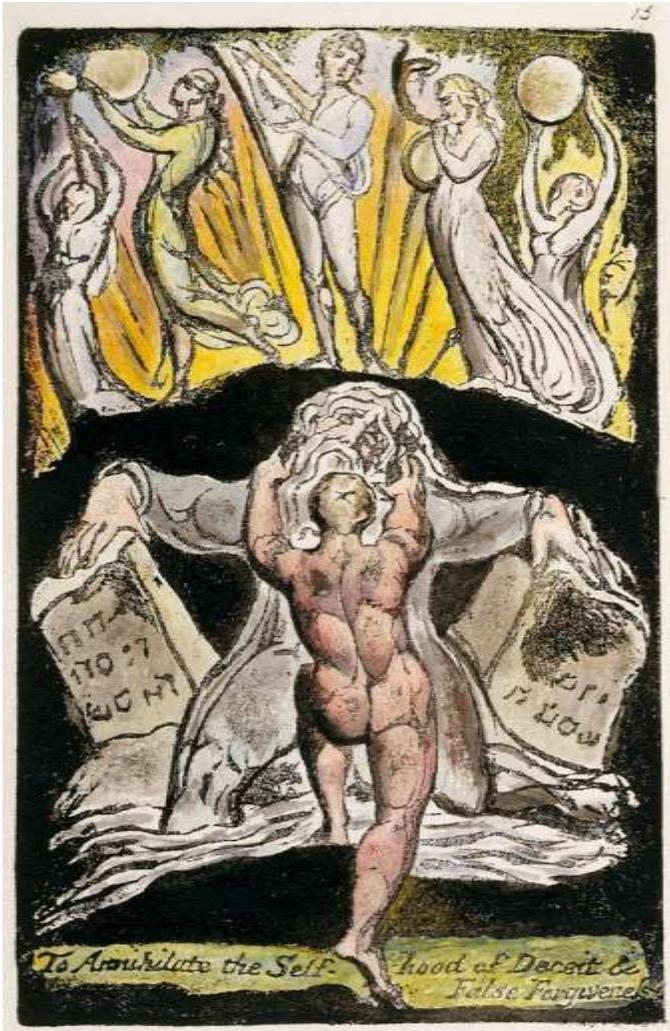


Figure 40. William Blake, *Milton*, plate 15, copy A, 1811, relief and white-line etching, hand coloured, 15.9 x 11 cm (6.3" x 4.3" inches), The British Museum, London, United Kingdom, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/milton.a?descId=milton.a.illbk.15>.

For both Blake and Jung, the Spectre and Shadow are to be continuously worked on and fought against, respectively. The Spectre and Shadow's powers can arise from unregulated processes or reliance on only one side of the contrary but could also be introduced to the individual causing doubt, a form of self-deceit. The struggle against this oppressive force seems to involve never-ending self-examination. Blake's persistent efforts to present the elevated nature of his work and for it to be recognised by the public seems to surpass those of other artists at the time.

Consistently, throughout his lifetime, there is an anxiety about Blake and his reception. By

electing to showcase his self-examination through manuscript annotations to *Works* and weaving the threads of the marginalia throughout the rest of his works, he indicates a deliberate and everlasting betterment of himself as an artist with clear philosophies.

In an annotation in Discourse VII, Blake makes clear this separation:

It is not in Terms that Reynolds & I disagree Two Contrary Opinions can never by any Language be made alike. I say Taste & Genius are Not Teachable or Acquirable but are born with us Reynolds says the Contrary[.]⁴²⁷

Blake use of the word “contrary” twice emphasizes the disparity between their opinions. There is a permanent sense to their positions on Taste and Genius as they “can never by any Language be made alike.” As with Los’ declaration of eternal war against his negation or Spectre, the relationship can shift, change, and morph in intensity and reach for the individual. However, the contrary cannot find balance with the other.

Despite the possibility of mastering the Spectre, it is a grim foe. In *Jerusalem*, Blake explains, in one sentence, that “the Spectre is, in Giant Man; insane, and most deform'd.”⁴²⁸ This brief yet powerful description of a spectre affirms the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of the term as “an apparition, phantom, or ghost, esp. one of a terrifying nature or aspect.”⁴²⁹ In Blake’s art, he portrayed this frightening, life-draining abstract concept as a vampire-like creature with bat wings (see figure 41).

⁴²⁷ E659.

⁴²⁸ E179.

⁴²⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “spectre, n.,” accessed March 20, 2022, <https://www-oed-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/Entry/186082?rskey=59zAoI&result=1> (accessed March 05, 2022).



Figure 41. William Blake, *Jerusalem the Emanation of the Giant Albion*, plate 6, copy E, 1820, relief and white-line etching, hand coloured, 8.9 x 6.5" (22.5 x 16.4 cm), Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut, United States of America, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/jerusalem.e?descId=jerusalem.e.illbk.06>.

In this image from *Jerusalem*, the Spectre imposes itself over Los, the complicated figure associated with the expression and manifestation of imagination for Blake. Petrified and posed like a statue on two blocks of stone, Los gazes upwards toward the phantom. Los' stalled creative force is a necessary moment of self-examination in order for him to move forward with his creations. This locked gaze is an unproductive, psychical reality that must be broken but also acknowledged if there is to be progression. Had he not gazed into the Spectre, it would still hang

over him, affecting his creativity and invention. For Jung, that hidden and repressed personality was considered “the source of evil” that can impact our “normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights,” and most relevant to this image and Blake’s relationship with Reynolds, our “creative impulses.” Had Los not interrupted his creative labour to acknowledge and look at his Spectre directly, the work that would have commenced would have been negatively impacted by the presence of the shadow. In the Shadow part of our self, there are qualities that can take

An arid, unsatisfactory area and turn it into a paradise. The shadow, when it is realized, is the source of renewal; the new and productive impulse cannot come from established values of the ego. When there is an impasse, a sterile time in our lives – despite an adequate ego development – we must look to the dark, hitherto unacceptable side which has not been at our conscious disposal.⁴³⁰

For Jungians, the integration of the Shadow is absolutely necessary for creative power and self-reliance. While not a direct example of this process, it can be used to better understand Blake’s expression of this self-mastery. In a sense, work must be done continuously on the Shadow to form it into a productive contrary. Los’ confirmation of the presence and effect of the Spectre will make his future creations that much better and inspired because it means venturing into the thorny, complicated, and troubling parts of our mind for inspiration and motivation. Considering Blake’s assertion that an artist “hired to depress art” and engaging with their discourses may be tormenting oneself. However, the artist that stops his labours to engage with another who threatens his own understanding and development of his purpose is similar to Los’ engagement with his winged Spectre.

⁴³⁰ Edward C. Whitmont, *The Symbolic Quest: Basic Concepts of Analytical Psychology*, expanded edition, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 164.

Blake used Milton to wrestle and develop his thoughts as an artist with Reynolds in the annotations. Sir Joshua Reynolds' Discourse III was perhaps the most important of all the lectures as it set the groundwork for his idea of the Grand Style. Taking advantage of the blank page on the back of the title page for Discourse III, Blake deployed a quotation from John Milton as an epigraph for the lecture:

A Work of Genius is a Work "Not to be obtaind [sic] by the Invocation of Memory & her Syren [sic] Daughters. but by Devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit. who can enrich with all utterance & knowledge & sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his Altar to touch & purify the lips of whom he pleases." Milton⁴³¹

In his *Life of John Milton*, William Hayley transcribed the lengthy passage containing the quotation from *The Reason of Church-Government Urged against Prelaty*, originally published in 1642. Blake was probably already familiar with the text, but Hayley's integration of the quotation into the biography may have refocused Blake's interest. In the tract, Milton emphasized the visible form of truth and "divine things," the necessity of free enquiry in religious ideas, and the influence of these concepts on literature and art. Blake clipped the passage but what followed is relevant to understanding his point of view:

To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs; till which in some measure be compassed at mine own peril and cost I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loth to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges I can give them. Although it nothing content me to have disclosed thus much beforehand; but that I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes

⁴³¹ E646.

than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with chearful [sic] and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noise and hoarse disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth, in the quiet and still air of “delightful studies.”⁴³²

Thomas Warton, an early editor and critic of Milton, believed the last sentence to be proof that Milton wasted his artistic powers on politics and religion: “the vigorous portion of his life, that those years in which imagination is on the wing, were unworthily and unprofitably wasted on temporary topics.”⁴³³ In this tract, Milton was arguing against the royal prerogative and for the rights of individuals to judge questions of conscience, unmediated by established forms of worship or church governance. For eighteenth-century conservatives like Warton, Milton’s political leanings diluted his epic legacy. However, for readers like Blake, this broader engagement is not so obviously extrinsic to artistic vision. Blake’s engagement with Reynolds certainly crosses political and aesthetic terrains. Directly after he used the quotation from Milton’s *Reason of Church Government*, commented on his approach towards the lecture that would follow:

The following Discourse is particularly Interesting to Blockheads. as it Endeavours to prove That there is No such thing as Inspiration & that any Man of a plain Understanding may by Thieving from Others. become a Mich Angelo⁴³⁴

If Milton was seeking to include the public to be inspired by the “eternal spirit” and resist the overreaching governance of the day, Reynolds was seeking to facilitate the art world for “blockheads,” according to Blake. If the artist forsakes inspiration and instead builds a cache of

⁴³² William Hayley, *The Life of Milton* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, in the Strand, 1796), 83.

⁴³³ Hayley, *The Life of Milton*, 84.

⁴³⁴ E646.

images and techniques lifted from other artists, then turning to Discourse III would be a suitable education. For Blake and Milton, however, the individual must be willing to become inspired and act on his own terms upon it, in spite of the risks involved when it came to public reputation. In this resistance to conformity, Blake aligns himself with Milton against the destructive force of Reynolds and the Royal Academy. This redemption is completed by interacting with the Spectre/shadow of the time and responding back to it and seeking higher forms of inspiration. The annotations on this page are positioned before the printed text of the discourse appear in the book, establishing his opinion as the first to be encountered by the reader. The reader will be influenced by Blake's perspective with the assurance from John Milton before continuing with the reading and hopefully resisting of Reynolds' theories. They become a gateway that mitigates the ill-effects of what they will find in Reynolds. Milton affirms that he has returned to assist in the deliverance of Ololon from the draining Spectre:

I come in Self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration

To cast off Rational Demonstration by Faith in the Saviour

To cast off the rotten rags of Memory by Inspiration

Again, the annihilation of the egoistic Spectre can only be conquered by "self-examination" as seen earlier in the passage. Milton has now progressed to "self-annihilation." The OED defines self-annihilation as "the action or fact of annihilating or destroying oneself or one's own life, spec. suicide; annihilation which something brings upon itself. Also: the process or fact of annihilating or eliminating one's sense of self or individual identity, esp. in pursuit of spiritual perfection or mystical enlightenment."⁴³⁵ The second half of the definition seems closest to what

⁴³⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*, "self-annihilation, n.," accessed March 20, 2022, <https://www-oed-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/Entry/175110?redirectedFrom=self-annihilation>.

we can assume Blake intended. John Jones offers a useful account of the situation in *Milton*: “When Milton hears the Bard’s song, he realizes the imposition” he has perpetuated and begins the process of annihilating “his Selfhood by relinquishing his monologic authorial position and allowing other voices to participate in the creative process.”⁴³⁶ There is, though, a risk in hazarding the self in this way. One might simply dissolve into the other with which one engages: a result that seems like “Eternal Death” to fearful onlookers among the Sons of Albion and to Milton himself.⁴³⁷

The exposition of the process as it takes place in the text is useful, but it ignores Blake’s designs. Milton strangles Urizen for intermingling with his thoughts and inventions and flourishes when he can create without restrictions imposed upon him. The images and the text complicate each other, underscoring the difficulties involved in the necessity of self-annihilation and defeating the shadow/Spectre. The processes of “self-examination” and “self-annihilation” will allow Milton to dismantle both “Rational Demonstration” and “the rotten rags of Memory,” to replace them with “Faith in the Saviour” and “Inspiration,” respectively. First, I would like to pause over the phrase “rational demonstration.” Reynolds’ Discourse VII is primarily concerned with proving that there are standards of Taste and Beauty. He called this an “immutable truth” for any artist to understand.⁴³⁸ This approach towards the lecture reflects the definition of demonstration from Johnson’s Dictionary in 1755: “the highest degree of deducible or argumental evidence; the strongest degree of proof; such proof as not only evinces the position

⁴³⁶ John H. Jones, *Blake on Language, Power, and Self-Annihilation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). 137.

⁴³⁷ Jones, *Blake on Language, Power, and Self-Annihilation*, 137.

⁴³⁸ Reynolds, *Works*, I:7.

proved to be true, but shews the contrary position to be absurd and impossible.”⁴³⁹ This quest for the most convincing examples of proof is a natural drive, Reynolds argued, in that “the natural appetite or taste of the human mind is for truth,” and this same drive for truth is “the very same taste which relishes a demonstration in geometry.”⁴⁴⁰ The satisfaction received from viewing an accurate geometrical shape is the same as viewing a beautiful landscape for Reynolds – emerging from the same part of the mind. Next to this paragraph, Blake wrote: “Demonstration Similitude & Harmony are Objects of Reasoning Invention Identity & Melody are Objects of Intuition[.]”⁴⁴¹ To Blake, the information derived from Demonstration, Similitude and Harmony are derived from Reason, a state of developed knowledge whereas sensations evoked by Invention, Identity, and Melody are from a place of immediate knowledge, like intuition. The “Objects of Reasoning” are those that are filtered through social means to be appreciated but the “Objects of Intuition” come naturally to the individual, requiring no external efforts.

Blake continued to develop his approach in relation to and against Reynolds’ claims that the standard of beauty in Nature is “as true as mathematical demonstration” but can “be true only to those who study these things.”⁴⁴² Without previous study of what is beautiful in nature or what others have considered to be beautiful, the viewer cannot truly take in how or what makes the scene or object genuinely beautiful. Blake, opposing Reynolds’ position, inked in the margin, “God forbid that Truth should be Confined to Mathematical Demonstration[.]”⁴⁴³ If what is truly beautiful in nature can only be seen through the same methods of study and rational

⁴³⁹ Johnson, Samuel. *A Dictionary of the English Language: A Digital Edition of the 1755 Classic* by Samuel Johnson. Edited by Brandi Besalke. Last modified: December 6, 2012. <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/page-view/&i=563>.

⁴⁴⁰ Reynolds, *Works*, I:200.

⁴⁴¹ E659.

⁴⁴² Reynolds, *Works*, I:201.

⁴⁴³ E659.

demonstration, then it would be limited to those with the access to those educational opportunities.⁴⁴⁴ This does not necessarily mean a Royal Academy art education or even traditional learning experiences but rather the development of Reason favoured over the intuitive response.

I will now consider the need to “cast off the rotten rags of Memory by Inspiration” from the above passage. On the back of the title page for Discourse III, Blake quoted John Milton:

A Work of Genius is a Work “Not to be obtaind [sic] by the Invocation of Memory & her Syren [sic] Daughters. but by Devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit. who can enrich with all utterance & knowledge & sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his Altar to touch & purify the lips of whom he pleases.” Milton[.]⁴⁴⁵

The “Invocation of Memory & her Syren Daughters” are the objects of reason (despite their allusion and allegorical figuring) because they require the prior study and consideration of other works. The “Devout prayer” to an “Eternal Spirit” with the ability to “touch & purify the lips of whom he pleases” is a process of inspiration with no prerequisite education but rather the desire and drive to be enriched by the divine. These “Syren Daughters” of Memory surface in other areas of Blake’s writing on art, like the *Descriptive Catalogue*, to criticize the dependence on classical and external works of art to create new works.⁴⁴⁶ This quotation from Milton underlines the same sentiment that Blake has given his version of Milton for the illuminated book of the same name. The divide between Memory and Divine Inspiration rages on in the creative world of Milton, complete with the poet character of William Blake spiritually/physically entering the left

⁴⁴⁴ Blake’s faith in genius may seem exclusive, but it needs to be weighed against the fact that the course of study Reynolds’s pathway requires is exclusive and expensive. The range of genius at this time was varied and challenging to discuss succinctly. For an excellent study on this, see David Higgins’ *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine: Celebrity, Politics* (Routledge, 2005).

⁴⁴⁵ E646.

⁴⁴⁶ E531, E555.

foot of a poet, heavenly bards, and shapeshifting skylarks. Underneath Blake's application of Milton's quotation on the back of title page of Discourse III, he summarized Reynolds' lecture:

The following [Lecture] > <Discourse> is particularly Interesting to Blockheads. as it Endeavours to prove That there is No such thing as Inspiration & that any Man of a plain Understanding may by Thieving from Others. become a Mich Angelo [sic][.]⁴⁴⁷

Discourse III is often considered one of the most important of all the discourses delivered by Reynolds. In this lecture, he outlined the "great leading principles of the Grand Style."⁴⁴⁸ As discussed at length earlier in the thesis, the Grand Style, a description of a particular sort of History Painting, was the most heralded genre of painting at the time. If the "great leading principles" are outlined in this lecture, and Blake finds it to be "particularly Interesting to Blockheads" then that would ensure that the discourse is a "dummies guide" to painting success. Blake believed that Reynolds suggested that if a man with typical faculties can adopt methods, concepts, compositions, and styles from others then he too can become a great artist. Of course, this would be an alluring lecture for a beginning artist, but the danger is far too great for Blake. Not only would the budding artist become disappointed and disillusioned with the art of painting if they are unsuccessful, but the grandeur of artists, like Michelangelo, would become lacklustre.

The denigration of art was not the only threat that Reynolds represented to Blake. Not only is the notion that anyone could succeed as a painter, but those who refused to play by such rules would be cast aside as mad. Continuing his speech, Milton says:

To cast aside from Poetry, all that is not Inspiration

That it no longer shall dare to mock with the aspersion of Madness

Cast on the Inspired, by the tame high finisher of paltry Blots,

⁴⁴⁷ E646.

⁴⁴⁸ Reynolds, *Works*, I:5.

Indefinite, or paltry Rhymes; or paltry Harmonies.⁴⁴⁹

The act of “aspersion” in a religious context is the ritual of sprinkling holy water. In a more conventional sense, the “aspersion of Madness” would likely mean a flippant attack on the reputation or integrity of another. The careless scattering of murmurs of madness on creators by those who disperse useless “blots,” “rhymes,” or “harmonies,” all things that Reynolds condoned, objects of reason, would be harmful to the intuitively inspired. In the marginalia to Discourse I, Blake wrote in the header:

Reynoldss [sic] Opinion was that Genius May be Taught & that all Pretence to Inspiration is a Lie & a Deceit to say the least of it [If the Inspiration is Great why Call it Madness] <For if it is a Deceit the Whole Bible is Madness>This Opinion originates in the Greeks Caling [sic] the Muses Daughters of Memory⁴⁵⁰

For Blake, Reynolds cares little about Inspiration, believing it to be a misguided method of learning how to create art, at worst nothing more than madness. As mentioned, Reynolds’ emphasis on the studied comprehension of beauty would likely render the apprehension of beauty through intuitive means to be delusional or at best misguided. The “Daughters of Memory” resurface again, guiding the reader back to the earlier mentioned “Syren [sic] Daughters” of Memory quoted from John Milton by Blake in the marginalia.

Later in *Works*, madness, inspiration, and the Bible come up again, this time in Discourse VI. This lecture by Reynolds was an incendiary topic for Blake: concerned with imitation and invention being “acquired by being conversant with the inventions of others” and how there is “something to be gathered from every School” of painting.⁴⁵¹ The president of the Royal

⁴⁴⁹ E124.

⁴⁵⁰ E642.

⁴⁵¹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:6.

Academy suggests that the Venetian, French, and Dutch schools will all display something worthy of attention and perhaps even of imitation by an artist. The hope is that the artist will incite “his own imagination” to “rise and take flight” by examining and recognizing desirable results or effects from others. However, if the artist is lacking in education early in their career, their early powers of invention, composition, and execution can limit their potential influence. Regardless, there is something to be learned from these artists, Reynolds lectured:

Men who although thus bound down by the almost invincible powers of early habits, have still exerted extraordinary abilities within their narrow and confined circle; and have, from the natural vigour of their mind, given a very interesting expression and great force and energy to their works; though they cannot be recommend to be exactly imitated, may yet invite an artist to endeavour to transfer, by a kind of parody, their excellencies to his own performance.⁴⁵²

Although this advice can be interpreted as positive towards those who have been successful despite their educational and professional circumstances, Blake found this to be misguided. In the margin, Blake answered: “He who Can be bound down is No Genius[.] Genius cannot be Bound it may be Renderd [sic] Indignant & Outrageous” and a line break down from this, he concludes his annotation with biblical quotation, “‘Opression [sic] makes the Wise Man Mad’ [-] Solomon[.]”⁴⁵³ Blake’s form of Genius is not the same as Reynolds: for Blake, Genius is a force that comes with its own desires, compulsions, and force; for Reynolds, genius is simply the spirit that an individual can possess. This fundamental difference between the forms of Genius can give insight into the complicated differences of Blake and Reynolds. Blake’s Genius can be made “Indignant & Outrageous” if tampered with too indelicately. The quotation from Solomon

⁴⁵² Reynolds, *Works*, I:180.

⁴⁵³ E658.

is reduced from Ecclesiastes 7:7, which reads as, “Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.” The book Ecclesiastes is like other parts of the Bible that Blake took much inspiration from like the Book of Job and Proverbs. This wisdom literature genre in the Bible is reflective, contemplative, instructive, and complicated. Indeed, Ecclesiastes is a highly ambiguous book as the messages fluctuate between optimism and pessimism, belief and doubt, enlightenment, and confusion. The contradictory nature of the book would be appealing to Blake’s requirement for contrary existence. If oppression can make a wise man mad, then that would mean that the negative influence of their surroundings can make the man with the most genius seem unreasonable to follow. Further still, the ending of the Ecclesiastes 7:7 would extend towards Reynolds. The individual that accepts a bribe has his heart affected – Reynolds’ bribe was to be given the prestige of presidency of the Royal Academy of Art. In exchange, he lost the integrity of his intuitions. However, the reader of the marginalia would need to know this verse from the Bible or be keen to search for it. Blake knows the reference, as shown by his quotation of the line as by Solomon and not from using a chapter and verse citation.

To Blake, artists not keeping in time with Reynolds and Gainsborough’s proscribed art methods were dismissed entirely or as not mentally suitable. One of these mentioned in the marginalia to *Works* was John Hamilton Mortimer (1740-1779). A painter and etcher, Mortimer enjoyed early success with his history painting, winning the first prize for his painting *St Paul Preaching to the Ancient Britons* in 1764 (see figure 42).



Figure 42. John Hamilton Mortimer, *St Paul Preaching to the Ancient Britons*, 1764, oil on canvas, 158 x 197” (400 x 500 cm), The Wycombe Museum, High Wycombe, United Kingdom, <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/st-paul-preaching-to-the-ancient-britons-26914>.

Mortimer regularly exhibited at the Society of Artists every year from 1762 until 1777 and not with the Royal Academy. In the early 1770s, Mortimer began experimenting with less grandiose subjects of painting like *banditti* scenes, dark magic, and monstrous figures (see figure 43). His shift in subject and extreme depictions of passion connected him to artists like Henry Fuseli and James Barry, two other artists that Blake venerated in the marginalia to *Works*.



Figure 43. John Hamilton Mortimer, *Man Attacking a Monster*, 1770-1780, oil on canvas, 11 3/4 x 14 inches (29.8 x 35.6 cm), The Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut, United States of America, <https://collections.britishart.yale.edu/catalog/tms:943>.

In Blake's lengthy note on the back of the title page to *Works*: "Mortimer was [despised & Mocked] <call'd [sic] a Madman>[.]"⁴⁵⁴ While there is little to find on the reputation of Mortimer, his allegiance to the Society of Artists and aversion to the Royal Academy would surely make him somewhat of an outsider to the British art market. The established institution of the Royal Academy would solidify an artist's standing as a professional and Mortimer's increasingly bizarre and experimental works moved away from the revered history painting and into fantasy.

⁴⁵⁴ E636.

Blake uses the word “paltry” three times in this excerpt from *Milton*, yet very rarely in his collected writings. Perhaps the most significant example would be from Blake’s 1806 letter to the editor of the *Monthly Magazine*. Blake began his letter with a confession that, his “indignation was exceedingly moved at reading a criticism” of Henry Fuseli’s *Count Ugolino and His Sons Starving to Death in the Tower* (1806). While this may seem like a departure from the Illuminated Books, it is important to remember that Fuseli is one of the few artists mentioned by name in the marginalia to *Works*.



Figure 44. Henry Fuseli, *Ugolino and His Sons Starving to Death in the Tower*, 1806, Pen and black ink and brush and black, grey, and red wash, over traces of graphite, on greyish-ivory laid paper, 25.2 x 20.5” (63.9 × 52.2 cm), The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, United States of America, <https://api.artic.edu/api/v1/artworks/7566/manifest.json>.



Figure 45. Joshua Reynolds, *Count Ugolino and his Children in the Dungeon*, 1770-1773, oil on canvas, 21 x 28" (52 x 72 cm), National Trust Collections, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/129934>.

In 1773, Sir Joshua Reynolds completed a painting of the same scene of Count Ugolino's punishment. The Count, a treacherous nobleman, was sentenced to be locked away in a dungeon with his male heirs and abandoned. To stress the poignancy of the situation, Reynolds selected a moving passage from Dante's account of the medieval nobleman to print in the exhibition catalogue – in the original Italian, translated here:

I did not weep, I turned to stone inside;
they wept and my little Anselmuccio spoke:
"What is it, father? Why do you look that way?"
for them I held my tears back, saying nothing,
all of that day, and then all of that night.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵⁵ Translation from Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: The Subject Pictures*, 141.

Since the founding of the Royal Academy, this was the first time that Reynolds presented a history painting of this nature. His fame arose from his unique ability to create portraits in a grand manner, but this grim subject matter was a major turn in his career and for the Royal Academy's reputation. The president of the Royal Academy that so vociferously espoused the grand style of historical painting but executed fanciful portraits could not compete with the continental academies. *The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* harshly reviewed Reynolds' efforts, insisting that anyone in France or Italy would,

at first glance, judge [the picture] to be the rude disorderly abortions of an unstudied man, of a portrait painter, who, quitting the confined track where he was calculated to move in safety, had ridiculously bewildered himself in unknown regions, unfurnished with either chart or compass.⁴⁵⁶

The assigning of Reynolds' role as a portrait painter overwhelmed by the difficulties of history painting would certainly be a blow to the credibility and authority of his status. However, not all reviews were as eviscerating as this. For example, in a section concerning the persuasive pathos of literature and specifically Dante's *Inferno*, Warton's *On the Genius and Writings of Alexander Pope*, Warton added a footnote about Reynolds' picture:

Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose mind is stored with great and exalted ideas, has lately shewn, by a picture on this subject, how qualified he is to preside at the Royal Academy, and that he has talents that ought not to be confined to portrait-painting.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁶ *The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 30 April 1773.

⁴⁵⁷ Joseph Warton, *An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, 4th ed. corrected, 2 vols., (London: J. Dodsley, 1782), 264.

Both the negative and positive review of the painting are done with Reynolds' execution in mind. However, in *The Public Advertiser*, the failure of the painting to launch comes back to the public. The reviewer admitted that "the Expression is very strong, and amazingly fine; the Chiaro'Scuro [sic] bold and the Colours harmonized in a supreme Degree," yet the talent was wasted on such a grotesque subject: "if the same Excellence had been employed on a pleasing Subject, it would have enchanted, as it may now terrify, the Public."⁴⁵⁸ The subject itself is terrifying to the impressionable public and can potentially overwhelm their ability to appreciate the excellence of the composition.

Blake believed that there had been "widely-diffused malice" that was propagated by the likes of those at the Royal Academy and the sceptical reviewer, which was "assiduously sown and planted among the English public against true art."⁴⁵⁹ Thanks to this deleterious influence, frank and clear criticism was undermined by poor art education. He argued that the natural "taste of English amateurs" has been distorted by Flemish influence, and coddling by English artists, no doubt brought on by Reynolds. As a result, the public:

are easily brow-beat on the subject of painting; and hence it is so common to hear a man say, "I am no judge of pictures:" but, O Englishmen! know that every man ought to be a judge of pictures, and every man is so who has not been connoisseured [sic] out of his senses.⁴⁶⁰

An often-repeated theme, the natural ability to see and recognize great art is something that an individual is born within themselves. Through pervasive and negative influence, this natural sense can be obfuscated. Reynolds' mixed reviews of his first history painting presented at the

⁴⁵⁸ *The Public Advertiser*, 28 April 1773.

⁴⁵⁹ E768.

⁴⁶⁰ E768.

annual exhibition may have affected Fuseli's interpretation of the scene which he would present in 1806. Quick to defend the painting from a negative review, Blake wrote the *Monthly Magazine*, stating that:

Mr. Fuseli's *Count Ugolino* is the father of sons of feeling and dignity, who would not sit looking in their parent's face in the moment of his agony, but would rather retire and die in secret, while they suffer him to indulge his passionate and innocent grief, his innocent and venerable madness, and insanity, and fury, and whatever paltry cold hearted critics cannot, because they dare not, look upon.⁴⁶¹

Blake declared the painting to be "truly sublime," despite the critic's dismissal of the dense black paint. Blake elaborated that the current trend of burnt bone paint tones "has possessed the eye of certain connoisseurs," so intensely that "they cannot see appropriate colouring and are blind to the gloom of a real terror."⁴⁶² Again, the effect of the external world can cloud those who do not have the determinate organs capable of envisioning great art. The "cold hearted critics" are unable to judge Fuseli's painting because of the paltry works that they have been subjugated to in the past. Fuseli over his career received a mixed reception from reviewers but the choice for Blake to interject in this case may have to do with the previously reviewed painting of the same subject by Reynolds.

In Milton's speech, ? [who demands?]demands:

That it no longer shall dare to mock with the aspersion of Madness

Cast on the Inspired, by the tame high finisher of paltry Blots,

Indefinite, or paltry Rhymes; or paltry Harmonies.

⁴⁶¹ E768.

⁴⁶² E768.

The use of the word “paltry” here and in the letter to the editor of the Monthly Magazine signals a connection. While there are no known accounts of Blake’s opinion on Reynolds’ Count Ugolino, I believe it can be inferred that Blake finds Fuseli’s painting to be overshadowed by it. The grandeur of Fuseli’s intense rendering of the miserable scene is more palpable than Reynolds’ version. If the public could not handle Reynolds than they surely could not endure Fuseli’s.

When considering the connection between this passage from *Milton* and Blake’s irate response to a reviewer and Fuseli, it should be understood that Fuseli is mentioned twice by name in the marginalia to the *Works of Sir Joshua*. The first reference is on the back of the title page. A blank page, Blake uses the space to introduce his thoughts on the rest of the volume.

Using black ink post-bookbinding, Blake’s large manuscript reads:

Having spent the Vigour of my Youth & Genius under the Opression [sic] of Sr Joshua & his Gang of Cunning Hired Knaves Without Employment & as much as could possibly be Without Bread, The Reader must Expect to Read in all my Remarks on these Books Nothing but Indignation & Resentment While Sr Joshua was rolling in Riches Barry was Poor & [independent] <Unemployd [sic] except by his own Energy>Mortimer was [despised & Mocked] <calld [sic] a Madman> [I now despise & Mock in turn although Suffring [sic] Neglect] <& only Portrait Painting applauded & rewarded by the Rich & Great.>Reynolds & Gainsborough Blotted & Blurred one against the other & Divided all the English World between them Fuseli Indignant <almost> hid himself--I [was]
<am>hid⁴⁶³

⁴⁶³ E636.

This introduction asserts the impact of Reynolds on other English artists. Reynolds and Gainsborough stand against the rest of the artists who have been made poor, unemployed, and hidden from the public. Blake claimed that Fuseli was “indignant” and almost hidden away from the world. For Fuseli to be provoked to wrath, inflamed by disdain by “something regarded as unworthy, unjust, or ungrateful,” further connects this to the lines in *Milton*. If the paltry blots, rhymes, and harmonies are excluded from the world then Fuseli can return to create, free from the restraints of the critics and reviewers, and no longer tempered by the undeserving artists like Reynolds.

After clarifying between the true artist and the one who can only complete “paltry blots,” Milton’s speech resumes:

Who creeps into State Government like a caterpillar [sic] to destroy
To cast off the idiot Questioner who is always questioning,
But never capable of answering; who sits with a sly grin
Silent plotting when to question, like a thief in a cave;
Who publishes doubt & calls it knowledge⁴⁶⁴

While these lines do not indicate a specific person, I believe it can be interpreted as Reynolds. Because of his role as the first president of the Royal Academy, his position was inherently political. Early in the marginalia of the volume, Blake wrote that “This Whole Book was Written to Serve Political Purposes [First to Serve Nobility & Fashionable Taste & Sr. Joshua]”⁴⁶⁵ Reynolds, Nobility, Fashionable Taste, and the government are being served by the publication of the *Discourses*. The caterpillar, a reoccurring symbol in Blake’s works is a complicated creature. The caterpillar, while in a larvae state, is a destructive creature: eating away the leaves

⁴⁶⁴ E142.

⁴⁶⁵ E641.

of growing plants. In the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, one of the Proverbs of Hell tells us: “[a]s the caterpillar chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs on, so the priest lays his curse on the fairest joys.”⁴⁶⁶ The caterpillar can stand for a person in power, able to change and destroy the natural beauty of the leaf and of human joy. However, the caterpillar can grow and change into something of magnificent beauty. But if it remains in its early state, it will only be a destroying force. Like the art students at the Royal Academy and the English public, if they are impacted by only the eggs of the caterpillar and do not remove the incrustation, they will only suffer. Perhaps this critique of Reynolds as the creature of state corruption feeds into the idea of the caterpillar developed in this passage. Blake also likens Reynolds to a dog in the marginalia. In Malone’s “Some Account of the Life of Reynolds,” he described Reynolds’ hearing difficulties. In an explanatory footnote, Malone wrote “when in company with only one person, he heard very well, without the aid of a trumpet.”⁴⁶⁷ Blake responded to the footnote harshly, “A Sly Dog So can Every body [sic]; but bring Two People & the Hearing is Stopped[.]”⁴⁶⁸ While calling someone a “sly dog” does not seem like a credible link at first glance, if we look at the Milton passage, this sentiment is echoed. Milton hopes to encourage the casting off of “the idiot Questioner who is always questioning, / But never capable of answering; who sits with a sly grin[.]” If Reynolds feigned his hearing difficulties to aid him in avoiding discourse, then the sly dog and the one with the sly grin could very well be cut from the same cloth.

Further still, the descriptions of this destroying force are of smiling and grinning. Reynolds was known for a generally pleasing disposition. On the back of the title page of Discourse I, Blake wrote: “I consider Reynolds's Discourses to the Royal Academy as the

⁴⁶⁶ E37.

⁴⁶⁷ Malone, ed. *Works*, I:lxxxix, note 51.

⁴⁶⁸ E640.

Simulations of the Hypocrite who Smiles particularly where he means to Betray. His Praise of Rafael is like the Hysteric Smile of Revenge His Softness & Candour.”⁴⁶⁹ Reynolds’ smile is a weapon; one that is full of deception and vengeance, masquerading as “softness & candour.” Compare this to the speech by Milton wherein “He smiles with condescension; he talks of Benevolence & Virtue / And those who act with Benevolence & Virtue, they murder time on time / These are the destroyers of Jerusalem[.]” Again, this destruction masks his true intentions with “benevolence & virtue[.]” very similar to “softness & candour[.]” I do not believe that this passage can only be about Reynolds but the similarities to the marginalia are undeniable.⁴⁷⁰

Reynolds’ peculiar reliance on the literary world to explain art could also reveal the intended target of the line “Who pretend to Poetry that they may destroy Imagination[.]” In Discourse II, Reynolds extended the language of poetry to painting. Metaphorically, he described the process of learning language to learning the visual art of painting. Young artists like young children must learn the grammar of art, “the power of drawing, modelling, and using colours is very properly called the Language of the art[.]”⁴⁷¹ Again, in Discourse XI, when considering the subjective defects found in Titian’s works, Reynolds said

in painting, what language is in poetry; we are all sensible how differently the imagination is affected by the same sentiment expressed in different words, and how mean or how grand the same object appears when presented to us by different Painters.⁴⁷²

In Discourse VII, Reynolds extends the sister arts to the painter again:

⁴⁶⁹ E642.

⁴⁷⁰ The phrase from “By imitation of Natures Images drawn from Remembrance” also seems to be a reference to Reynolds’ pedagogy at the Royal Academy. Reynolds’ concept of creating a cache of images to create and improve from underscore the importance of rectifying Nature.

⁴⁷¹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:25.

⁴⁷² Reynolds, *Works*, II:53.

The poet and actor, as well as the painter of genius who is well acquainted with all the variety and sources of pleasure in the mind and imagination, has little regard or attention to common nature, or creeping after common sense. By overleaping those narrow bounds, he more effectually seises [sic] the whole mind, and more powerfully accomplishes his purpose.⁴⁷³

There are numerous extensions made to poetry in Reynolds' lectures at the Royal Academy. For Blake, the line from *Milton*, "Who pretend to Poetry that they may destroy Imagination[.]" may guide the reader back to finding Reynolds culpable for the destruction. The destructive impulse of Reynolds is also a fixation in Blake's marginalia to *Works*.

In Malone's account of Reynolds' funeral proceedings, Blake wrote: "Funeral granted to Sir Joshua for having destroyd [sic] Art[.]" he continued and lambasted the attendees, "The Rascals who See Painting want to Destroy Art & Learning[.]"⁴⁷⁴ The criticism of Reynolds' destruction of art continues in the marginalia with the lectures as well: on the back of the title page for Discourse I, Blake went into longer detail:

I consider Reynolds's Discourses to the Royal Academy as the Simulations of the Hypocrite who Smiles particularly where he means to Betray. His Praise of Rafael is like the Hysteric Smile of Revenge His Softness & Candour. the hidden trap. & the poisoned feast, He praises Michael Angelo for Qualities which Michael Angelo Abhorrd [sic]; & He blames Rafael for the only Qualities which Rafael Valued, Whether Reynolds. knew what he was doing. is nothing to me; the Mischief is just the same, whether a Man does it Ignorantly or Knowingly: I always consider'd True Art & True Artists to be particularly Insulted & Degraded by the Reputation of these Discourses As much as they were

⁴⁷³ Reynolds, *Works*, I:210.

⁴⁷⁴ E641.

Degraded by the Reputation of Reynolds's Paintings. & that Such Artists as Reynolds, are at all times Hired by the Satan's. for the Depression of Art A Pretence of Art: To Destroy Art [3 or 4 erased lines follow]⁴⁷⁵

There are more examples of the sabotage perpetuated by Reynolds in Blake's annotations.⁴⁷⁶

The complicated and changing positions and opinions in *Discourses* have been pointed out during their time and for years after. Perhaps this wavering opinion is what inspired the line "Who publishes doubt & calls it knowledge" in this speech of Milton's. If these lectures are truly to be remembered and taken seriously for young artists, then surely, they should remain consistent. While Blake favoured the contrary, he did not favour contradiction in itself. In the marginalia, his intentional inking over pencil, demonstrated his own desire for consistency of his own thoughts.

Between the years 1804 and 1820, Blake was using his annotations to build his mythopoetic universe. Blake's *Jerusalem, The Emanation of The Giant Albion* was his final and longest epic poem. Difficult to explain and even more difficult to understand, the dream-plot of Jerusalem tells of the fall and the post-lapsarian scenario of man and England. The following quotation is what I will provide examples of the annotations from:

Let the Human Organs be kept in their perfect Integrity

At will Contracting into Worms, or Expanding into Gods

⁴⁷⁵ E642.

⁴⁷⁶ "Fools opinions & Endeavours destroy Invention!", E645; "He never travelled to heaven to gather new ideas; . . .The Man who never in his Mind & Thoughts traveld [sic] to Heaven Is No Artist. . . no other qualifications than what . . . a plain understanding can confer.", E647; "Artists who are above a plain Understanding are Mockd [sic] & Destroyd [sic] by this President of Fools; If the Venetians Outline was Right his Shadows would destroy it & deform its appearance[.]" E651.

And then behold! what are these Ulro Visions of Chastity
Then as the moss upon the tree: or dust upon the plow:
Or as the sweat upon the labouring shoulder: or as the chaff
Of the wheat-floor or as the dregs of the sweet wine-press
Such are these Ulro Visions, for tho we sit down within
The plowed furrow, listning [sic] to the weeping clods till we
Contract or Expand Space at will: or if we raise ourselves
Upon the chariots of the morning. Contracting or Expanding Time!
Every one knows, we are One Family! One Man blessed for ever
Silence remaind [sic] & every one resumd [sic] his Human Majesty
And many conversed on these things as they labourd [sic] at the furrow
Saying: It is better to prevent misery, than to release from misery
It is better to prevent error, than to forgive the criminal:
Labour well the Minute Particulars, attend to the Little-ones:
And those who are in misery cannot remain so long
If we do but our duty: labour well the teeming Earth.
They Plow'd in tears, the trumpets sounded before the golden Plow
And the voices of the Living Creatures were heard in the clouds of heaven
Crying: Compell [sic] the Reasoner to Demonstrate with unhewn
Demonstrations
Let the Indefinite be explored. and let every Man be judged
By his own Works, Let all Indefinites be thrown into Demonstrations
To be pounded to dust & melted in the Furnaces of Affliction

He who would do good to another, must do it in Minute Particulars
General Good is the plea of the scoundrel hypocrite & flatterer:
For Art & Science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars
And not in generalizing Demonstrations of the Rational Power.
The Infinite alone resides in Definite & Determinate Identity
Establishment of Truth depends on destruction of Falshood [sic] continually
On Circumcision: not on Virginity, O Reasoners of Albion.⁴⁷⁷

Identity is not lost in either the contraction or the expanding of the infinite senses. The true culmination of Blake's apocalypse, as it appears in *Jerusalem*, is the restoration of total identity to the entire creation, and this is accomplished by the final reunion of identity as inner form with the outer form or "lineaments of Man," "rejoicing in Unity/ In the Four Senses, in the outline, the Circumference & Form."⁴⁷⁸ The narrative voice of the epic poem issues an imperative statement to the inhabitants of the material world who have allowed their creativity and labour to become squandered into misguided reason: "Let the Human Organs be kept in their perfect Integrity / At will Contracting into Worms, or Expanding into Gods."⁴⁷⁹ This brief sentiment is an excellent example of the mutability of Blake's perspective on sight and vision that could possibly be traced back to the annotation found in *Works of Sir Joshua*. If man can "Let the Human Organs be Kept in their perfect Integrity[.]," then they will not be dependent solely on the sensory information made available in the material world.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁷ E205, lines 36-67.

⁴⁷⁸ Daniel Stempel, "Blake's Monadology: The Universe of Perspectives," *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 8, no. 2 (1975), accessed March 20, 2022, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24776978>. E257, line 22.

⁴⁷⁹ E205, lines 36-37.

⁴⁸⁰ E205, line 36.

Blake responded to Reynolds' blindness to Raphael's frescoes in the Vatican with: "Men who have been Educated with Works of Venetian Artists. under their Eyes Cannot see Rafael unless they are born with Determinate Organs[.]" In *Jerusalem*, he provides an elaboration of the idea of "determinate organs that suggests each individual has an innate ability to perceive or sense that is not dependent upon education or experience. In this example from *Jerusalem*, if we can "[l]et the Human Organs be kept in their perfect Integrity[.]" then the individual will be able to see as things truly are. If the "Human Organs" are maintained in this "perfect Integrity" that would mean they are truly determinate, unclouded by false teachings like Reynolds' or the experiences that have misled him. To Blake, Reynolds' miseducation in Venetian artistry has obscured his vision to the point that he cannot perceive Raphael at all. Reynolds' ignorance and general lack of perception has allowed his organs to deteriorate away from the "perfect Integrity" that is so critical to truly seeing and perceiving.⁴⁸¹ This is even more dangerous and alarming to Blake because Reynolds was at the forefront of art education in England.

The imperative statement, "Let the Human Organs be kept in their perfect Integrity / At will Contracting into Worms, or Expanding into Gods[.]"⁴⁸² that begins this passage is an excellent example of the mutability of Blake's perspective on sight and vision.⁴⁸³ The word "organ" appears often in Blake's work in relation to spiritual and artistic vision. Perhaps the earliest example is in *There is No Natural Religion*, composed in 1788. One of Blake's earliest works, *There is No Natural Religion* is a brief exploration of his initial aesthetic theories. Presented like an emblem book with aphoristic statements on perception, desire, and knowledge, the work concentrates on the organs of sight. The concept of the physical process and

⁴⁸¹ E205, line 36.

⁴⁸² E205, lines 36-37.

⁴⁸³ E205, lines 36-37.

interpretation of vision, reason, and the limits of experience are developed in numbered aphorisms. He begins by analysing the “natural or bodily organs” that allow for an individual to “perceive.”⁴⁸⁴ The information and experiences that man perceives inform his desires and perceptions but, “Mans [sic] perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception. he perceives [sic] more than sense (tho' ever so acute) can discover.”⁴⁸⁵ The ability to observe independently from the physical organs or any sense means that man can perceive past these earthly sensations. Going back to *Jerusalem*, a work that was completed 16 years after *There Is No Natural Religion*, we can see the development of this idea. If man can “Let the Human Organs be Kept in their perfect Integrity[.]” then they will not be dependent on the sensory information made available in the material world. After all, if man can “At will” contract their sensory processing “into worms” or the physical world or expand “into Gods,” this means that both the visual and spiritual world can be accessed by the “Human Organs[.]”⁴⁸⁶

Of course, this trajectory of change in Blake’s aesthetic theories is not limited to these two examples. In his annotations to *The Works of Sir Joshua*, Blake responded to Reynolds’ blindness to Raphael’s frescoes in the Vatican with: “Men who have been Educated with Works of Venetian Artists. under their Eyes Cannot see Rafael unless they are born with Determinate Organs[.]”⁴⁸⁷ This re-emergence of perceiving organs and sensing ability from 1788 to 1793 is not fundamentally different: in *There is No Natural Religion*, Blake emphasizes the ability to see beyond the physical organs we have and, in the annotation, he emphasizes the individual’s ability to sense. The organs have become more nuanced in that they are now ‘determinate’, which would seem to imply that are bound or limited, in time, space, extent, position, character or

⁴⁸⁴ E2.

⁴⁸⁵ E2.

⁴⁸⁶ E205, lines 36-37.

⁴⁸⁷ E637

nature. This means that each individual has an innate ability to perceive that is not dependent upon education or experience, rather it comes naturally to the individual. In this example from *Jerusalem*, if we can “[l]et the Human Organs be kept in their perfect Integrity[,]” then the individual will be able to see as things truly are.⁴⁸⁸ If the “Human Organs” are maintained at “perfect Integrity” that would mean they are truly determinate as they have not been rendered unclear by limited perceptive ability due to bad habits or false education. To Blake, Reynolds’ miseducation due to Venetian artistry has obscured his vision and because of his lack of innate vision, he cannot perceive Raphael at all. Reynolds’ ignorance and general lack of perception has allowed his organs to deteriorate away from the “perfect Integrity” that is so critical to truly seeing and perceiving.⁴⁸⁹

In Discourse III, Reynolds emphasized the ability to idealize and create perfect forms from the intensive contemplation, comparison, and study of nature. The artist, by “long laborious comparison” will acquire a “just idea of beautiful forms; he corrects nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect. His eye being enabled to distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things from their general figures[.]”⁴⁹⁰ He admits

⁴⁸⁸ E2, line 36.

⁴⁸⁹ As always, the Vision and Organs thing is playing out nicely to show the trajectory across Blake’s works. There is another thing that I could add to this, but I was unsure if it would fit here. Essentially, there are some places in which Blake argues that animals also have eyes, but they don’t have the ability to sense or perceive the same way in which humans can which means that there must be something beyond the regular organs. In *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*: “With what sense is it that the chicken shuns the ravenous hawk? / With what sense does the tame pigeon measure out the expanse? / With what sense does the bee form cells? have not the mouse & frog / Eyes and ears and sense of touch? yet are their habitations” (E47). This reminded me of Blake’s annotations in response to Reynolds’ assertion that Raphael learned from living in Rome around the great artists: “I do not believe that Rafael taught Mich. Angelo or that Mich. Ang: taught Rafael., any more than I believe that the Rose teaches the Lilly how to grow or the Apple tree teaches the [Pine tree to bear Fruit] <Pear tree how to bear Fruit.>I do not believe the tales of Anecdote writers when they militate against Individual Character” (E643). And later still, Blake writes “Man varies from Man more than Animal from Animal of Different Species” (E656) in response to Reynolds’ suggesting that heavenly inspiration is ridiculous in comparison to learning from the Old Masters.

⁴⁹⁰ Reynolds, *Works*, I:58.

that it may seem paradoxical to study the form in nature and abstract away the imperfections but insists that “this idea of the perfect state of nature, which the Artist calls the Ideal Beauty, is the great leading principle by which works of genius are conducted.”⁴⁹¹ While Blake does not use the word “organ” in his response, it should be clear that he is referencing the ability to perceive the true form of things in his annotation:

Knowledge of Ideal Beauty. is Not to be Acquired It is Born with us Innate Ideas. are in
Every Man Born with him. they are <truly> Himself. The Man who says that we have No
Innate Ideas must be a Fool & Knave. Having No Con-Science <or Innate Science>⁴⁹²

As explained above, the ability to see and perceive is not housed solely in the mundane organs of the eye. The inherent ability to see is something that is “born with us” and those who do not have this ability have been looked over, misled, or obscured by education or experience. The human actions of sensing and perceiving are an essential characteristic of the “Human Organs” that have been “kept in their perfect Integrity.”⁴⁹³

Despite the innate nature of the vision and perception, the ability to see as things truly are is impacted by environment and experience, not least by false teaching. The “Ulro Visions of Chastity” that Blake calls attention to in this passage from *Jerusalem* underscore the vulnerability of creative vision and process to moral and aesthetic miseducation.⁴⁹⁴ Ulro, featured in Blake’s *Four Zoas*, *Milton*, and *Jerusalem* is the material world which we all inhabit. S. Foster Damon points out that ‘Ulro’ and ‘the World of Generation’ have been used as the same plane of existence until *Jerusalem*, in which Ulro becomes the embodiment of the South direction.⁴⁹⁵ The

⁴⁹¹ Reynolds, *Works*, I:59.

⁴⁹² E648.

⁴⁹³ E205, lines 36-37.

⁴⁹⁴ E205, line 38.

⁴⁹⁵ S. Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake*, Updated ed (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2013). 416-417.

cardinal directions in Blake's works are loaded with the symbolism and the South is governed by Urizen, who guides the real and material world by reason. These "Ulro Visions of Chastity" are described by their extraneous elements or by-products of the physical world, in the view of Damon. For example, the "dregs of the sweet wine-press" describe the undesirable sediments that are filtered from the end-product of wine.⁴⁹⁶ Instead of sensing the wine as what it becomes and exists as, the focus is on the excess material. The "sweat upon the labouring shoulder" is the by-product of the human creative process of physical labour, ignoring the resulting product of said labour.⁴⁹⁷ In these two examples, the external material waste as key and the creative, the visionary result is ignored. Towards the end of this passage, the Living Creatures in Ulro cried out that, they desire to "Compell [sic] the Reasoner to Demonstrate Unhewn Demonstrations[.]"⁴⁹⁸ The Reasoner, or Urizen, is the governor of the realm they inhabit, and speaking in his language, they want him to "demonstrate" the reality of creation. For the empiricist and materialist, the act of demonstration is the best way to represent what is created and made real.

However, the request for the demonstration to be "unhewn," meaning not cut into shape or moderated by tools, leads us into the circumcision symbolism in *Jerusalem*. Edward J. Rose argues that it is the "dramatization of his ideas about art and the function of the artist."⁴⁹⁹ Truly inspired art is that which is revealed rather than obscured, and with the correct vision and action it can be a "kind of secret mystery open only to the initiate."⁵⁰⁰ As with "determinate organs," the individual either possesses or does not possess the ability to reveal the obfuscated by seeing

⁴⁹⁶ E205, line 41.

⁴⁹⁷ E205, line 40.

⁴⁹⁸ E205, lines 56-57.

⁴⁹⁹ Edward J. Rose, "Circumcision Symbolism in Blake's *Jerusalem*," *Studies in Romanticism* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1968): 16-25, 16.

⁵⁰⁰ Rose, "Circumcision Symbolism," 16.

in different senses: the material and the visionary. The “Establishment of Truth depends on destruction of Falsehood continually, / On Circumcision, not on Virginity,” perhaps references the ability to remove the fetters of education, experience, and materialism as a means to reveal the outline of form.⁵⁰¹ For Blake, “the imagination cuts the vegetative away by etching a spiritual outline which defines the difference between the non-human and the human,” according to Rose.⁵⁰² I agree but believe that this extends past the non-human and human and can be related to any material or visionary object. By removing the ordinary and excess material of education and experience, the true outline of the form can be revealed. Like the earlier lines that focused on the sediments in the wine and the sweat on the labouring shoulder, the unadorned and stripped away vision is one that is able to display the fullness of the object.

The complete nature of the object is not the generalized form sought by Reynolds but rather the determinate form. The focus on the “minute” and the “minute particulars” of objects is central to Blake’s idea of artistic vision. The narration in *Jerusalem* delivers aphoristic advice: “Labour well the Minute Particulars, attend to the Little-ones.”⁵⁰³ Speaking to those of the material world, the narrative voice knows precisely the materiality of labour and its results. In Reynolds’ first lecture at the Royal Academy, he warned the young artists against becoming distracted by “the minute accidental discriminations of particular . . . objects,” to which Blake responded in the margin: “Minute Discrimination is Not Accidental All Sublimity is founded on Minute Discrimination.”⁵⁰⁴ The narrator of *Jerusalem* and Blake’s voice in the margins maintain a similar position on the importance of the particular. The narrator’s advice comes from a place of wisdom, guiding the Ulro inhabitants on how to live in artistic and creative prosperity.

⁵⁰¹ E205, lines 66-67.

⁵⁰² Rose, “Circumcision Symbolism,” 19-20.

⁵⁰³ E205, line 51.

⁵⁰⁴ E643.

There are many monographs, articles, and other scholarship on *Milton* and *Jerusalem* that examine these quotations. However, there seem to be very few that draw the connection between the marginalia found in the *Works of Sir Joshua* and these parts of the illuminated books. While I am not suggesting that the annotations will provide brand new perspectives of these works by Blake, I am suggesting that they provide nuance to his development process. Blake continues to draw upon his annotations he first started in 1798 until his final years. In the next section, I will analyse the single page print of *The Laocoön*, another dizzying example of Blake's results of experimenting, developing, and processing his artistic theories.

3.4 *The Laocoön*

Laocoön was one of the final works of William Blake. Completed in 1826-1827, the work draws on the full range of Blake's artistic and literary influences; ranging from the formative years of studying classical works at the Pars' Drawing School and the brief stint at the Royal Academy, engraving techniques learned from his apprenticeship to James Basire, and the creative expression of aphorisms like those found in his illuminated books. Nevertheless, it is atypical in the *mis-en-page*, with the swirling text organized around a fairly faithful rendering of another artist's work. I believe that Blake's *Laocoön* endeavours to provoke the viewer/reader to witness the confusing expectations placed on the artist and to risk their own selfhood by venturing into their perspective. The engraved manuscript text in *Laocoön* is like Blake's commentary in *Works* both in seeming to take the form of annotations and in its subject matter, echoing its concern with the relationship between art, money, and empire, and – most obviously – taking a dialogic form.

In an inscription beneath his detailed reproduction of the Laocoön, Blake reinterprets the famous Greek sculpture as a copy of an original Hebraic work representing Jehovah and his two sons, Satan, and Adam. Other inscriptions surrounding the central design set forth Blake's interrelated opinions on money, empire, morality, Christianity, and the arts. Robert N. Essick believes that Blake may have completed a detailed reproduction of the statue in 1815 as part of his work on illustrations for Abraham Rees, *The Cyclopaedia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, which was eventually published in 1820. The text surrounding the images, he claims, was almost certainly added at a much later date, probably c. 1826-27. Both

extant impressions (A and B) of the single plate, etched and engraved in intaglio, were printed in 1826 or 1827.”⁵⁰⁵

In the preface to *The Cyclopaedia*, Rees told readers that “a dictionary is intended for communicating knowledge in an easy and expeditious manner; and it is desirable that the several articles should be so full and comprehensive.” To complete the work, it had been necessary to “procure every kind of assistance,” including employing artists “of the first reputation in their respective departments, whose performance have given a peculiar character to this work.”⁵⁰⁶ Thanks to John Flaxman, Blake was among the artists commissioned to provide commercial engravings to accompany the entries on armour, bas-relief, gem-engraving, and sculpture.⁵⁰⁷

According to the preface, the entry on sculpture was co-written between Flaxman, Prince Hoare, and John Bacon.⁵⁰⁸ In G. E. Bentley’s *Blake Books*, we are referred back to several sources in which this article is attributed to Flaxman (no. 489): the *Annual Biography and Obituary for the Year 1828* (issue no. 997); a note on Blake’s sketch of the *Laocoön* sculpture (in Frederick Tatham’s hand); and W. Bent’s *List of New Publications* for April 1803. Subsequent Blake scholars have accepted, apparently without investigation, this attribution (e.g., Tayler 72, James 226). Rosamund Paice also thinks it wrong to think of the entry as “a straightforward collaboration,” not least because Flaxman’s *Lectures on Sculpture*, delivered to the Royal Academy over roughly the same period as the *Cyclopaedia* was being produced, frequently

⁵⁰⁵ “Laocoön,” Robert N. Essick, *William Blake Archive*, updated 2021, <http://www.blakearchive.org/work/Laocoön>.

⁵⁰⁶ Abraham Rees, *The Cyclopaedia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, vol. I, 39 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1820), accessed 3 February 2022. <https://archive.org/details/cyclopaediaoruni01rees/page/n13/mode/1up>. Iii-iv.

⁵⁰⁷ G. E. Bentley, Jr., “Blake’s Engravings and His Friendship with Flaxman,” *Studies in Bibliography* 12 (1959): 161–88.

⁵⁰⁸ Rees, *The Cyclopaedia*, v.

contain passages identical to sections of the *Cyclopædia* article.”⁵⁰⁹ She believes that Hoare soon left the project after “the printing of the Preface.”⁵¹⁰ The other collaborator mentioned by Rees, John Bacon, died while the essay was in preparation.⁵¹¹ Most scholars recognize that Flaxman and Hoare were the main writers for the dictionary entry and they would have had the choice to commission any commercial engraver of their choosing. Both had worked with Blake before. Prince Hoare, for instance, had already worked with Blake on his publication, *An Inquiry into The Requisite Cultivation and Present State of The Arts of Design in England* that featured a frontispiece by Blake of Sir Joshua Reynolds’ *The Graphic Muse* (see figures 46 and 47).⁵¹²



Figure 46. William Blake, *The Graphic Muse*, frontispiece for *An Inquiry into The Requisite Cultivation and Present State of The Arts Of Design In England* by Prince Hoare, 1806, line engraving with stipple, 3.5 x 3.3” (8.8 x 8.5 cm), Royal Academy of the Arts, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/the-graphic-muse>.

⁵⁰⁹ Rosamund A. Paice, “Encyclopaedic Resistance: Blake, Rees’s *Cyclopædia*, and the Laocoön Separate Plate,” *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 44–62. 48.

⁵¹⁰ Paice, *Encyclopaedic Resistance*, 48.

⁵¹¹ This, however, is not the case with John Bacon. Bacon died during the drafting of the dictionary entry for Sculpture but still contributed to entry.

⁵¹² Robert Essick, *William Blake's Commercial Book Illustrations: A Catalogue and Study of the Plates Engraved by Blake after Designs by Other Artists* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 214.



Figure 47. Joshua Reynolds, *Theory*, 1779-1780, oil on canvas, 5'8 x 5'9 (178 x 179 cm), Royal Academy of the Arts, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/theory>.

While Flaxman and Hoare's entry in the *Cyclopedia* is expansive in both scope and content, Blake's makes the *Laocoön* a substantial presence on the page displaying his engravings, as shown by the attention to finer detailing in the image as compared to the two figures above on the same page (see figure 48).



Figure 48. William Blake, “Sculpture” for *The Cyclopædia, or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature* by Abraham Rees, volume 43, plate 6, 1820, line engraving with stipple, British Library, London, United Kingdom.

Blake’s sense of the importance of the L group in the history of sculpture presumably played its part in Blake’s decision to produce his own plate centred on the sculpture. This engraving would later be used in his own print, *Laocoön* (figure 49).



Figure 49. William Blake, *Laocoön*, 1815, 1826-1827, intaglio etching/engraving with dry point lettering and handcoloring, 28.1 x 24.4 cm, collection of Robert N. Essick, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/laocoon.b?descId=laocoon.b.illbk.01>.

Anchored by the central image of the Laocoön group, the plate is a complicated web of aphorisms and opinions, laden with cryptic meanings. Some of the text is in Greek, some in Hebrew, but most is in English. The text is not linear or organized in any clearly discernible fashion. Instead, the text is grouped mostly by the size of the lettering, with just enough space left between other groups of text to be distinguishable. For the reader, approaching this work is a challenge because the orientation does not fit the standardized, homogenous print patterns that readers have grown accustomed to since the invention of the printing press. The design of words into paragraphs, the use of standardized typeface, and linear arrangement made mass-produced texts simpler and clearer for readers. Julia Wright argues that the design of *Laocoön* “recalls a jigsaw puzzle more than a page from an emblem book, graffiti more than a design, and a set of doodles more than a sheet of aphorisms.”⁵¹³ This transgression of the conventions of linear text gives shape, variation, and movement to his opinions, loosing them from the conventional restraints of print and textual articulation.

At a glance, though, the *mise-en-page* reads as chaotic. The text appears randomized and variable, placed around a darkly etched representation of the Laocoön group sculpture. Even the solid heaviness of the central image is complicated by the twisting of the serpents, the contortions made by the writhing bodies, and the various eyelines of the agonized figures. There is an amorphous sense of movement, causing the reader’s attention to fluctuate in various directions over the page. The veering sight lines stimulate the reader/viewer to dart their eyes around the page, to focus or defocus where they wish at the time. Perhaps, one reader will be drawn to the Hebrew characters, but another may be inclined to shift the page to the side, using their hand or tilting their head, to better read the text alongside one of the young men’s torsos.

⁵¹³ Julia M. Wright, “The Medium, the Message and the Line in William Blake’s *Laocoön*,” *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 33, no. 2 (June 2000): 101–24. 104.

Blake has emphasized the natural curiosity of the viewer despite having been taught by centuries of routine, can and will venture to follow their own desires.

In his annotations to the *Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, Blake grouped his reactions, turned into manuscript comments in various directions, to make them fit around the centre-printed text of the book. In the marginalia, the centre text determined the presence, shape, and length of each comment, as seen in figure 50.

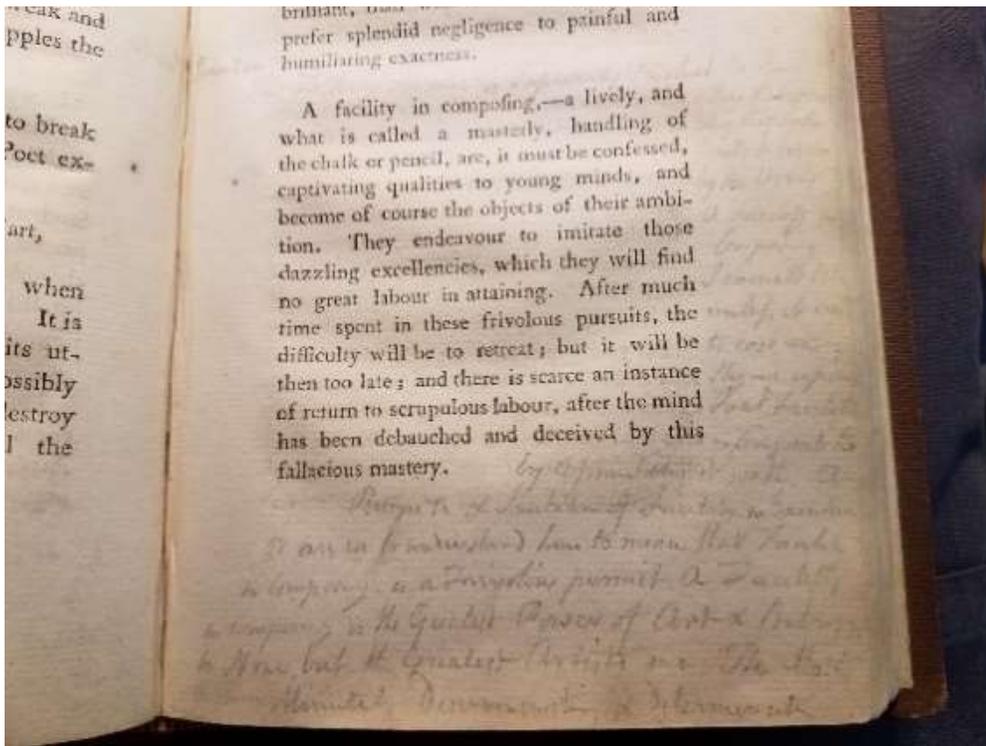


Figure 50. William Blake, pencil manuscript annotation (*Works*, I:13), British Library, London, United Kingdom.

Next to the printed line, “humiliating exactness[,]” Blake wrote, “I consider[,]” in the left margin. He continues the sentence in the space of the paragraph break, “The Following sentence is Supremely Insolent[,]” followed up by the completion of his thought in the right margin of the page.⁵¹⁴ Starting his comment in the left margin, using the paragraph space break to introduce his

⁵¹⁴ E643.

thought, and completing it by fulfilling the space in the right margin and the bottom footer of the page shows the flexibility of the marginalia around the central text. In *Laocoön*, the centre text (which in this case, is the image of the sculpture) also does not define the presence, shape, or length of the commentary. While it twists around the centre image and does not interrupt the image or intermingle itself with the picture, just as in the marginalia, there is plenty of space for the manuscript aphorisms. In both the marginalia and the *Laocoön*, Blake added manuscript notes around the centre text, therefore changing it and altering the perception of the ancient sculpture.

In the first section of this thesis, I have argued that Blake's marginalia to Reynolds' writings have changed the reception of *Discourses* through time. Whilst Blake was writing the commentary, his influence was insignificant in comparison to Reynolds as an artist; however, the situation has substantially shifted. Blake is, arguably, much better known as a writer and as a visual artist. This dynamic is all the more interesting and notable in the case of *Laocoön*. Although commonly understood in the context of late-twentieth century and contemporary art, the notion of artistic appropriation is key: the conscious and deliberate use and inclusion of material that derives from a source outside the work is a way to incorporate an external piece of art into one's own art. This practice highlights the use of previous art and notions of beauty that placed into a different context can change its meaning. Foucault explained that "discourses are objects of appropriation," and because of this fluctuating textuality, we should consider the engagement of new authors or artists as a new composition or new iteration of the previous idea.⁵¹⁵ These meaningful re-contextualisation's are made even more powerful with Blake's additional text surrounding the Laocoön group. In the tradition of appropriation in art, the older

⁵¹⁵ Foucault, "What is an Author?", 107-110.

work becomes foundational by becoming the focus of the new work, but it is also changed in meaning and influence. For Blake's *Laocoön*, this certainly seems to be true to the point that the figures in the statue are not of Laocoön and his sons (as suggested by the given title of the work) but God, and his sons, Satan and Adam. Found underneath the base of the sculpture on the page, Blake inscribed, like a title on a painting, "יה [Yah]& his two Sons Satan & Adam[.]" In changing the identities of the subjects, Blake modified the context from classical to Biblical, suggesting an alternative understanding of the original work. In Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, they argue that such changes must attend to the medium:

We will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge. A book only exists through the outside and on the outside.⁵¹⁶

These countless interactions with other things make the use of particular media important to consider. For Deleuze and Guattari, it is not enough to read a book and contemplate the meaning, the critic must also examine the function of the medium, how it passes through society, how people interact with it, and how it can affect those who come near it. In Mike Goode's book *Romantic Capabilities: Blake, Scott, Austen, and the New Messages of Old Media*, he builds upon this notion looking towards the Romantics. Concerned with a text's "medial afterlife," Goode argues that Blake's "so-called 'composite art,'" a term connected to W.J.T. Mitchell, is

⁵¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 4.

not an “integration of art forms,” but a “generative multi-medium.”⁵¹⁷ Instead of reading the composition holistically, Mitchell suggests the alternative of viewing it as something completely new. While Goode focuses primarily on the proverbs and aphorisms of Blake’s works, we can see that the short phrases that surround the centre image of the *Laocoön* may function similarly to those found in the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and perhaps, *Auguries of Innocence*.⁵¹⁸

The pervasive influence and status of the classical period in the eighteenth-century need not be expanded on too much in this section, as it is the focus of so many of his annotations to Reynolds, but it is critical to observe the importance of the Laocoön sculpture in eighteenth-century aesthetics. As I hope to explain, Blake, like Laocoön, also fears Greeks bearing gifts: in that, Blake often dismisses the use of classical influence for British art.

⁵¹⁷ Mike Goode, *Romantic Capabilities: Blake, Scott, Austen, and the New Messages of Old Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 11.

⁵¹⁸ For more on the reception studies, media studies, and new historicist approach towards Blake, see Goode’s chapters, “Blakespotting” and “The Joy of Looking” in *Romantic Capabilities: Blake, Scott, Austen, and the New Messages of Old Media*.



Figure 51. *Laocoön and His Sons*, ca. 180-160 BCE, marble sculpture, 6'10 x 5'4 x 3'8 (208 x 163 x 112 cm), Vatican Museums, Vatican City, Italy, <https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-pio-clementino/Cortile-Ottagono/laocoonte.html>.

The *Laocoön* group is an ancient marble sculpture depicting the Trojan priest Laocoön with his sons, writhing in physical agony and emotional anguish, as they are attacked by serpents, sent as punishment for warning against the wooden horse at the battle of Troy. In 1506, Pope Julius II housed the sculpture at the Belvedere and the sculpture was influential on the likes of Michelangelo and Raphael, and other renaissance Old Masters. Often considered one of the best examples of the depth and extremity of mortal pain, the *Laocoön* remained an important work in artistic training through the eighteenth century and beyond. In 1816, the Royal Academy was given an excellent cast of the statue by the prince Regent. Previously, the Royal Academy

possessed another cast, shown in Henry Singleton's 1795 painting *The Royal Academicians in General Assembly* (see figure 52).



Figure 52. Henry Singleton, *The Royal Academicians in General Assembly*, 1795, oil on canvas, 6'5 × 8'5 (198.1 x 259 cm), Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/the-royal-academicians-in-general-assembly-1>.

The importance of the *Laocoön* in training was mirrored by its prominent place in the period's writing on art theory. Translated by Henry Fuseli in 1765, Johann Winckelmann's *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks* took an approach to art theory similar to Reynolds' *Discourses*, especially in terms of his veneration of the ancients. Winckelmann stated, "there is but one way for the moderns to become great, and perhaps unequalled; I mean, by imitating the antients [sic]," a claim that Reynolds expressed time and again to the Royal Academy.⁵¹⁹ The *Laocoön* sculpture was used as a prime example of the standard of classical and contemporary art by Winckelmann throughout the essay. On the artist's attempts to express "much in little," he shows that when looking at the *Laocoön*, "you see bodily pains, and indignation at undeserved

⁵¹⁹ Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks: With Instructions for the Connoisseur, and an Essay on Grace in Works of Art*, trans. Henry Fuseli (London: A. Millar, 1765), 2.

sufferings, twist the nose, and paternal sympathy dim the eyeballs.”⁵²⁰ The artist has rendered a work that evokes an emotional and physical response in the viewer, an affect that modern painters seem incapable of, he argued, who instead “hang out all their wares at once.” Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* was written in response to W. Winckelmann. Noting that both Homer and Milton were blind, Lessing suggested that

If the sphere of my bodily eyes, so long as I enjoy them, must needs also be that of my inner eye, great indeed would be the value I should put upon their loss, since it freed me from this confinement.⁵²¹

Here his implication is that sight can actually constrain the imagination, while non-visual media—in other words, poetry—free the imagination for a wider play with both ideas and emotions. As these brief examples show, The *Laocoön* provided an excellent point of reference for aesthetic debates on cultural, spiritual, and physical divisions of the kind that, as we have seen, are central to Blake’s annotations to Reynolds. From the perspective Blake elaborates on in his annotations to Reynolds, artists must be capable of looking upon previous, magnificent works of art with their spiritual and imaginative vision – something that was believed to be offered by the *Laocoön* at the time. In 1798, Johann Wolfgang van Goethe writing of the *Laocoön*, stated that:

⁵²⁰ Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting*, 255.

⁵²¹ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, trans. E.C. Beasley (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1853), 96.

a true work of art, like a work of nature, never ceases to open boundlessly before the mind. We examine, – we are impressed with it, – it produces its effect; but it can never be all comprehended, still less can its essence, its value, be expressed in words.⁵²²

As explored in the first section of this thesis, the relationship between painting, sculpture, and poetry held unique potential for visual artists, engravers, and artisans. These cultural and artistic tensions for historians, writers, and artists provided a fertile ground for aesthetic debates. *The Laocoön*'s status as a key text for approaching and understanding these discourses is certainly why Blake chose it to restate his principles of the art he so often traversed.

To show the manifestations of the marginalia appearing in this work, we must look much closer. Arching between Laocoön and his son on the right (figure 53), Blake engraved:

All that we See is Vision
from Generated Organs gone as soon as come
Permanent in The Imagination; considered
as Nothing by the
Natural Man[.]⁵²³



⁵²²Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Essays on Art by Goethe*, trans. Samuel Gray Ward (New York: James Miller, 1862), 26.

⁵²³ E273.

Figure 53. William Blake, detail of *Laocoön*, ca. 1815, 1826-1827, intaglio etching/engraving with dry point lettering and hand colouring, image 26.6 x 21.6 cm.; platemark 27.6 x 22.9 cm, private collection of Robert N. Essick, <http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/Laocoön.b?descId=Laocoön.b.illbk.01>.

The line of vision for the son appears to look up at this segment of commentary whereas Laocoön's eye line moves up, grazing the section but ultimately looking past the comment. This is suggestive of the two approaches to vision: Laocoön does not consider the statement, but the son views it and lingers on it, despite two obstructing comments. The statement itself, "*All that we See is Vision from Generated Organs gone as soon as come Permanent in The Imagination; Considerd as Nothing by the Natural Man[,]*" must be broken down to be better understood. The Vision that comes from "Generated Organs" could mean the impression that is stamped on the eyes by external. The eyes would become productive – generative rather than generated - if are able to create an image held in "The Imagination." However, only particular individuals are capable of this process because it can be looked over "as nothing" by those who do not possess correct organs for this productive vision. Terence Dawson, writing in the *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche*, analysed Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* as confessional writing but pointed to the development of his notion of vision by quoting this part of Laocoön. He argues that "Blake has withdrawn the projection by which certain key responsibilities belong to 'God' and has assumed full responsibility for himself. The parallel with Kant's definition of 'enlightenment' is self-evident, as it is with Jung's theory of individuation."⁵²⁴ I argued in this thesis, Jung's theory of individuation, the continuous struggle to know oneself fully, is an intriguing way to consider the marginalia. Earlier, I made the position that Blake's reactions to Reynolds' central text are an exercise of individuation: a method to publish the resistance from

⁵²⁴ Terence Dawson, "Here I Stand: Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* as Confessional Writing," *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche* 6, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 43–67. 60.

outside influences and to remain true to his own ideas. If we consider the meaning of this Laocoön quotation above to be as I have suggested, it is very much related to the manuscript comment found in *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, analysed in depth throughout this thesis. The sizable black ink note: “Men who have been educated with Works of Venetian Artists under their Eyes Cannot See Rafael unless they are born with Determinate Organs[.]” Those who cannot recognize the greatness of Raphael’s work (like Reynolds) are not only corrupted by the miseducation of artists but also lack the inherent ability of greater artistic vision. As previously explored, the annotation was damaged in the book binding process, with several of the letters against the left clipped but still legible. One of four varieties of annotation styles found in this book, these types appear to be opinions that Blake did not expect to change, and we can see that twenty-eight years later, Blake is still using this comment as an inspiration and springboard for his artistic theories. Unlike the reference in the *Descriptive Catalogue*, the prose manifesto of Blake’s artistic philosophies, and unlike the mythopoetic statement from *Jerusalem*, this reference comes back full circle into an annotation.

Conclusion

Previously, scholars hoping to unearth Blake's inspirations have looked to collected volumes to peruse his letters, his personal notebook, and the marginalia. Inspired by this, I have attempted to show some of the intricacies and nuances that we must account for when analysing marginalia. First, I have endeavoured to prove that the main text that annotations relate to must be evaluated. The content of the main text inspires the reader to interact and write their thoughts down in the borderlands of the page. We consider the origins of other works of art or literature; marginalia should not differ. Secondly, I recommend examining the materiality of the marginalia. It can help unearth more about the use and reuse of the manuscript or book. I analyse the paratextual positioning of the annotations. Blake's notes comment directly on specific sections of the text, functioning disruptively, constantly repositioning the reader's awareness of the page and its inherent control. Blake's marginalia counteract the control imposed by the print and Reynolds' lectures. Blake's interjections refocus the reader into a discourse between Reynolds, Blake, and his or her own thoughts. Blake introduces this disruptive reading practice to guide the reader to engage in the dialogue. Next, I analysed the various writing utensils used in writing the marginalia which allow us to better understand how he used annotations to develop his own ideas. Taking up the synthesis of analysing the main text and the materiality to better understand the influence marginalia may have on a lifetime of work could very well be a lifetime of work for a scholar. I do not believe that Blake was an acrimonious reader ranting and scribbling in the margins – instead, he was working to develop his own system of thought. After

all, this comes from the man who wrote: “I must Create a system or be enslav’d by another Man’s. / I will not Reason & Compare: my business is to Create.”⁵²⁵

Finally, I would like to return to the earlier mentioned Emma Chastain from Barnes and Noble. She criticized readers who litter their books with written commentary stating, “it’s graffiti.” For her, the graffiti stops the reader from engaging with the book “over and over again.” After examining Blake’s engagement with this book, it is clear that his annotations provided the pools that he could dive into over and over. Like street art, the marginalia provided a creative space to practice, engage, and disrupt the more-established text. 28 years later, Blake was still considering his annotation from the *Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. I hope that researching Reynolds’ lectures alongside Blake’s marginalia and social/aesthetic dissent of hegemonic systems will provide an important scholarly resource for future students in fields other than English literature. Scholars will also be able to develop shifting viewpoints on the dialogue between Blake and Reynolds. The conversation provides evidence of Blake’s experience as a reader, writer, artist, and bookmaker. Beyond the fascinating critique of commercialized and generic art, scholars will find insight into Blake’s personal interaction with print culture and paratextual conversation. Moreover, Blake’s marginalia offer a crucial insight into the development of his aesthetic theory. As the scholarly community continues to focus on the holistic view of Blake’s oeuvre, it is imperative to consider the genesis of his fluctuating aesthetic positions beyond expressivity theorization.

⁵²⁵ E153, lines 20-21.

Bibliography

- Abrams, Ann Uhry. *The Valiant Hero: Benjamin West and Grand-Style History Painting*. New Directions in American Art. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985.
- Adams, Hazard. "The Blakean Aesthetic." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 13, no. 2 (December 1954): 233. doi:[10.2307/425916](https://doi.org/10.2307/425916).
- An Essay in Two Parts, On The Necessity and Form of A Royal Academy For Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture*. London: J. Robinson at the Golden Lion in Ludgate Street, 1755.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera*. 1. ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1991.
- Bakhtin, M. M., and Michael Holquist. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. University of Texas Press Slavic Series, no. 1. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981.
- Baretti, Joseph. *A Guide Through the Royal Academy*. London: T. Cadell, 1781.
- Barrell, John. "Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Political Theory of Painting." *Oxford Art Journal* 9, no. 2 (1986): 36–41.
- . *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: "The Body of the Public."* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Barry, James, John Opie, and Henry Fuseli. *Lectures on Painting by the Royal Academicians. Barry, Opie, and Fuseli*. Edited by Ralph N. Wornum. London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden., 1848.
- Barthes, Roland. *The Pleasure of the Text*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.
- . *The Preparation of the Novel: Lecture Courses and Seminars at the Collège de France (1978-1979 and 1979-1980)*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, n.d.
- Beer, John B. *William Blake: A Literary Life*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Bentley, Jr., G. E. *Blake Records: Documents (1714-1841) Concerning the Life of William Blake (1757-1827) and His Family, Incorporating Blake Records (1969), Blake Records Supplement (1988), and Extensive Discoveries since 1988*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2004.
- . "Blake's Engravings and His Friendship with Flaxman." *Studies in Bibliography* 12 (1959): 161–88.
- , ed. *William Blake: The Critical Heritage*. The Critical Heritage Series. London; Boston, MA: Routledge & K. Paul, 1975.

- Bentley, Jr., G.E. "Blake's Chronology." In *A Blake Bibliography: Annotated Lists of Works, Studies, and Blakeana*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1964.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.cttts60d.6>.
- . *William Blake: The Critical Heritage*. London; Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.
- Berger, John, Michael Dibb, Richard Hollis, Sven Blomberg, and Chris Fox. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin Books, 2008.
- Bindman, David. *Blake as an Artist*. New York, NY; Oxford: Phaidon; E. P. Dutton, 1977.
- . "The Dating of Blake's Marginalia to Reynolds." *The Burlington Magazine* 108, no. 763 (1966): 522.
- Bishop, Evelyn Morchard. *Blake's Hayley: The Life, Works, and Friendships of William Hayley*. London: Gollancz, 1951.
- Blake, William. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. Edited by David V. Erdman. Newly rev. ed. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1982.
- . *The Notebook of William Blake: A Photographic and Typographic Facsimile*. Edited by David V. Erdman. Readex Books, 1977.
- Bonnell, Thomas F. "When Book History Neglects Bibliography: Trouble with the 'Old Canon' 'In the Reading Nation.'" *Studies in Bibliography* 57 (2005): 243–61.
- Bowman, Marcia Brown. "William Blake: A Study of His Doctrine of Art." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 10, no. 1 (September 1951): 53. doi:[10.2307/426788](https://doi.org/10.2307/426788).
- Brylowe, Thora. *Romantic Art in Practice: Cultural Work and the Sister Arts, 1760–1820*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Buchanan, Ian. "Implied Reader." In *A Dictionary of Critical Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. <https://www.oxfordreference-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780198794790.001.0001/acref-9780198794790-e-351>.
- Buonarroti, Michelangelo. *Michelangelo: Poems and Letters*. Translated by Anthony Mortimer. London: Penguin Group, 2007.
- Calè, Luisa. *Fuseli's Milton Gallery: "Turning Readers into Spectators."* Oxford English Monographs. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Published in the United States by Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Campbell, Gordon. *Sistine Chapel*, 2005.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198601753.001.0001/acref-9780198601753-e-3295>.
- Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life. 1: ...* Berkeley, Calif.: Univ. of California Press, 2013.

- Chastain, Emma. "Is It Okay to Write in Books? Two Readers Debate." *Barnes & Noble Reads*, July 7, 2014. <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/blog/is-it-okay-to-write-in-books-two-writers-debate>.
- Chilvers, Ian. *Old Master*, 2004.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604761.001.0001/acref-9780198604761-e-2562>.
- Christie's. "Old Masters and Early British Paintings." *Christie's Auctions & Private Sales*, n.d.
<https://www.christies.com/departments/old-master-and-early-british-paintings-70-1.aspx>.
- Clifford, Timothy, Antony Griffiths, and Martin Royalton-Kisch. *Gainsborough and Reynolds in the British Museum: The Drawings of Gainsborough and Reynolds with a Survey of Mezzotints after Their Paintings and a Study of Reynolds' Collection of Old Master Drawings: Catalogue of an Exhibition at the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, 1978*. London: British Museum Publications for the Trustees of the British Museum, 1978.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Edited by Frederick Burwick. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012.
- Collins, Lauren. "Comments." *The New Yorker*. n.d.
- Constable, John. *John Constable's Correspondence*. Edited by Ronald Brymer Beckett. 6 vols. Ipswich: Suffolk Records Society, 1962.
- Corrigan, Matthew. "Metaphor in William Blake: A Negative View." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 28, no. 2 (1969): 187. doi:[10.2307/428568](https://doi.org/10.2307/428568).
- Crosby, Mark. "Introduction." *Huntington Library Quarterly* 80, no. 3 (2017): 361–64.
- Cumberland, Richard. *Memoirs of Richard Cumberland*. Edited by Henry Flanders. Philadelphia, PA: Parry and McMillan, 1856.
- Cunningham, Allan. *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters and Sculptors*. 2 vols. New York, NY: J & J Harper, 1833.
- Damon, S. Foster. *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake*. Updated ed. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2013.
- Davis, Lucy. Painter's Paintings: From Freud to Van Dyck. Video, August 18, 2016.
- Davis, Lucy, Mark Hallett, Wallace Collection, and Exhibition Joshua Reynolds: Experiments in Paint, eds. *Joshua Reynolds: Experiments in Paint*. London: Holberton, 2015.
- Dawson, Terence. "Here I Stand: Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell as Confessional Writing." *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche* 6, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 43–67.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

- Duffy, Michael H. "Michelangelo and the Sublime in Romantic Art Criticism." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56, no. 2 (April 1995): 217. doi:[10.2307/2709836](https://doi.org/10.2307/2709836).
- Eaves, Morris. "A Descriptive Catalogue (Composed in 1809) Introduction." *William Blake Archive*, n.d. <http://www.blakearchive.org/work/bb32>.
- . *William Blake's Theory of Art*. Princeton Essays on the Arts. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982.
- Essick, Robert N. "Laocoön." In *The William Blake Archive*, n.d.
- . *William Blake's Commercial Book Illustrations: A Catalogue and Study of the Plates Engraved by Blake after Designs by Other Artists*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- Essick, Robert N., and Donald Pearce, eds. *Blake in His Time*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.
- Fermor, Sharon and Victoria and Albert Museum. *The Raphael Tapestry Cartoons: Narrative, Decoration, Design*. London: Scala Books in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1996.
- Ferris, Ina. *Book-Men, Book Clubs, and the Romantic Literary Sphere*. Palgrave Studies in the Enlightenment, Romanticism and the Cultures of Print. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. New Edition. Penguin Social Sciences. Penguin, 1991.
- Frye, Northrop. *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, n.d.
- Fuseli, Henry. *Lectures on Painting, Delivered at the Royal Academy*. London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, in the Strand, 1801.
- Genette, Gerard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Gilchrist, Alexander. *Life of William Blake*. 2nd ed. 2 vols. London: Macmillan and Co., 1880.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. *Essays on Art by Goethe*. Translated by Samuel Gray Ward. New York: James Miller, 1862.
- Goode, Mike. *Romantic Capabilities: Blake, Scott, Austen, and the New Messages of Old Media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Hage, E. "Mise-En-Page to Mise-En-Scène: Intersecting Display Strategies in Dada Art Journals and Exhibitions." *Dada/Surrealism* 21, no. 1 (2017): 1–24.
- Haggarty, Sarah, and Jon Mee. *Blake and Conflict*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

- Hallett, Mark. *Reynolds: Portraiture in Action*. London; New Haven, CT: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art; Yale University Press, 2014.
- Haydon, Benjamin Robert. *Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon, Historical Painter*. Edited by Tom Taylor. 2 vols. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1853.
- Hayley, William. *The Life of Milton*. London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, in the Strand, 1796.
- Hazlitt, William. *Conversations of James Northcote*. London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830.
- . *Conversations Of James Northcote, Esq., R.A.* London: Henry Colburn And Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1830.
- Hilles, Frederick Whaley. *The Literary Career of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. Cambridge University Press, 1936.
- Hollander, John. “The Widener Burying Ground.” *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 1992.
- Hook, Holger. *The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture, 1760-1840*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Jackson, H. J. *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- . *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
- James Boswell. *The Correspondence and Other Papers of James Boswell Relating to the Making of the Life of Johnson*. Edited by Marshall Waingrow. 2 vols. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001.
- Johnson, Samuel. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. 2 vols. London: W. Strahan, 1755.
<https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/index.php>.
- Jones, John H. *Blake on Language, Power, and Self-Annihilation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Juengel, Scott J. “William Blake’s Enemies.” *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 58, no. 3 (2018): 703–29. doi:[10.1353/sel.2018.0028](https://doi.org/10.1353/sel.2018.0028).
- Jung, Carl. *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*. Translated by R.F.C. Hull. 2nd ed. Bollingen Series. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1953.
- Kelly, Michael, ed. *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*. Second edition. 6 vols. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Klonk, Charlotte. “Mounting Vision: Charles Eastlake and the National Gallery of London.” *The Art Bulletin* 82, no. 2 (June 2000): 331. doi:[10.2307/3051380](https://doi.org/10.2307/3051380).
- Lavallée, J. *Poëme Sur Les Tableaux Dont l’armée d’Italie a Enrichi Le Muséum (Paris, 1798); Fêtes de La Liberté et Entrée Triomphale Des Objets de Sciences et d’arts Recueillis En Italie: Programme*. Paris, 1798.

- Leigh Hunt, Robert. *The Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt*. Edited by Robert Morrison and Michael Eberle-Sinatra. Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003.
<http://public.eblib.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=6192127>.
- Leonardo da Vinci. *Notebooks*. Edited by Irma A. Richter and Thereza Wells. New ed. Oxford World's Classics. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Leslie, Charles. *Life And Times Of Sir Joshua Reynolds: With Notices Of Some Of His Contemporaries*. 2 vols. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1865.
- Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*. Translated by E.C. Beasley. London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1853.
- Lipking, Lawrence. "The Art of Reynolds' Discourses." In *Ordering of the Arts in Eighteenth-Century England*. Princeton University Press, 1970. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt13x0wfv.14>.
- . "The Marginal Gloss." *Critical Inquiry* 3, no. 4 (1977): 609–55.
- Loy, Eric. "Publication: A Descriptive Catalogue." *Hell's Printing Press: The Blog of the Blake Archive and Blake Quarterly*, April 30, 2018.
<https://blog.blakearchive.org/2018/04/30/publication-a-descriptive-catalogue/>.
- Mathias, Thomas James. *The Pursuits of Literature: A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues with Notes*. London: Pall Mall, 1799.
- McIntyre, Ian. *Joshua Reynolds: The Life and Times of the First President of the Royal Academy*. London: Allen Lane, 2003.
- McPherson, Heather. "Reconsidering Romney." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36, no. 3 (n.d.): 411–22.
- Milton, John. *Areopagitica; a Speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicens'd Printing, to the Parliament of England*. London, 1644. <https://www.proquest.com/books/areopagitica-speech-mr-john-milton-liberty/docview/2240955001/se-2?accountid=15181>.
- Mitchell, Charles. "Three Phases of Reynolds's Method." *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 80, no. 467, (1942): 35–40.
- Morgan, H. Cliff. "The Schools of the Royal Academy." *British Journal of Educational Studies* 21, no. 1 (February 1973): 88–103.
- "Motto," n.d.
- Murray, Roger. "Working Sir Joshua: Blake's Marginalia in Reynolds." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 7 (1977).
- Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte. "The Flagellation of Christ," n.d.
<https://artsandculture.google.com/>.
- Nenadic, S. "The Rise of the Urban Middle Classes." In *People and Society in Scotland, 1760-1830*, Vol. 1. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd., 1988.

- Northcote, James. *Memoirs of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knight*. London: Henry Colburn, 1813.
- . *Supplement to the Memoirs of the Life, Writings, Discourses, and Professional Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knt. Comprising Additional Anecdotes of His Distinguished Contemporaries*. London: Henry Colburn, 1815.
- . *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Late President of the Royal Academy*. 2 vols. London: Henry Colburn, Conduit Street, 1819.
- Paice, Rosamund. “William Blake and the Napoleon Factor: Rethinking Empire and the Laocoön Separate Plate.” *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*, no. 65 (2014): 1–22.
- Paice, Rosamund A. “Encyclopaedic Resistance: Blake, Rees’s Cyclopædia, and the Laocoön Separate Plate.” *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 44–62.
- Paley, Morton D. “William Blake, George Romney, and The Life of George Romney, Esq.” *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 50–65.
- Park, Roy. “The Painter as Critic: Hazlitt’s Theory of Abstraction.” *PMLA* 85, no. 5 (October 1970): 1072. doi:[10.2307/1261548](https://doi.org/10.2307/1261548).
- Patenaude, Troy R.C. “‘The Glory of a Nation’: Recovering William Blake’s 1809 Exhibition.” *British Art Journal* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 52–63.
- Perini, Giovanna. “Sir Joshua Reynolds and Italian Art and Art Literature. A Study of the Sketchbooks in the British Museum and in Sir John Soane’s Museum.” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 51 (1988): 141. doi:[10.2307/751267](https://doi.org/10.2307/751267).
- Phillips, H. *Unique Collection of Drawings & Prints. A Catalogue of All the Great and Valuable Collection Ancient Drawings, Scarce Prints, and Books of Prints, Which Belonged to Sir Joshua Reynolds, Deceased, Late President of the Royal Academy*. London: Lloyd, 1798.
<https://archive.org/details/b13830867>.
- Pliny the Elder. *Natural History*. Edited by E.H. Warmington. 10 vols. London: William Heinemann Limited, 1938.
- Postle, Martin. *Reynolds, Sir Joshua (1723–1792), Portrait and History Painter and Art Theorist*. Oxford University Press, 2015.
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23429>.
- . *Sir Joshua Reynolds: The Subject Pictures*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995.
- Postle, Martin, Mark Hallett, Tim Clayton, and S. K. Tillyard. *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity*. London : New York: Tate Pub. ; Distributed in the United States and Canada by Harry N. Abrams, 2005.
- Proust, Marcel. *On Reading*. Edited by Jean Autret and William Burford. New York, NY: Macmillan, 1971.

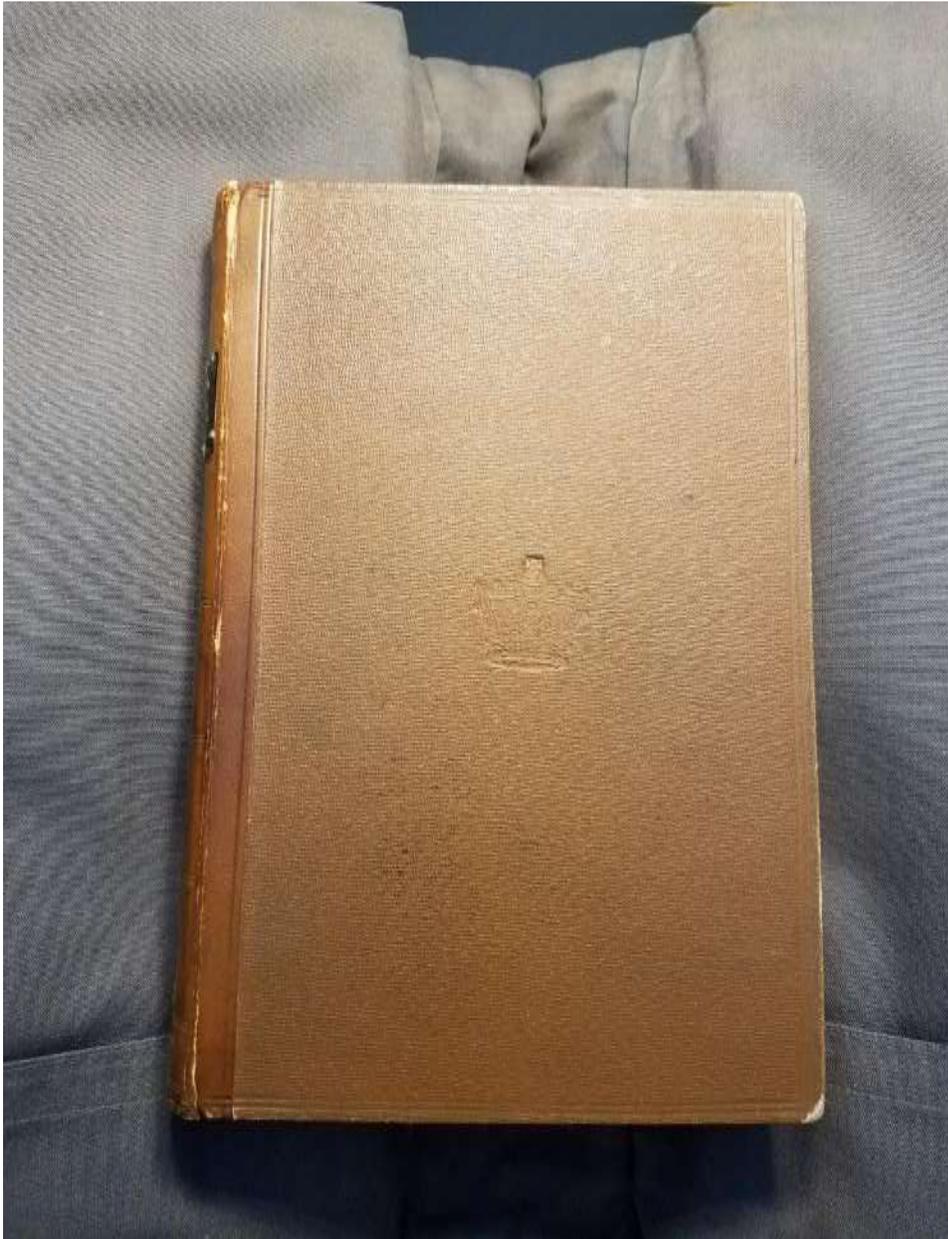
- Raven, James. "New Reading Histories, Print Culture and the Identification of Change: The Case of Eighteenth-Century England." *Social History* 23, no. 3 (October 1998): 268–87.
- . "The Book as a Commodity." In *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, edited by Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Rees, Abraham. *The Cyclopædia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*. Vol. I. 39 vols. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1820.
<https://archive.org/details/cyclopaediaoruni01rees/page/n13/mode/1up>.
- Repton, Humphry. *The Bee; or, a Companion to the Shakespeare Gallery: Containing a Catalogue Raisonné of All the Pictures; with Comments, Illustrations, and Remarks*. London: T. Cadell, in the Strand, 1789.
- Reynolds, Joshua. "Notes on Art." Rome, 1752 1750. Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library.
- . *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. Edited by Edmond Malone. Second Edition Corrected. 3 vols. London: T. Cadell, Jun. and W. Davies, 1798.
- Reynolds, Joshua, John Ingamells, and John Edgcumbe. *The Letters of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Richardson, the Elder, Jonathan. *The Works Of Jonathan Richardson. Containing I. The Theory Of Painting. II. Essay On The Art Of Criticism, (So Far as It Relates to Painting). III. The Science Of A Connoisseur. A New Edition, Corrected, with the Additions of An Essay on the Knowledge Of Prints, and Cautions to Collectors. Ornamented with Portraits by Worlidge, &c. of the Most Eminent Painters Mentioned. Dedicated, by Permission, to Sir Joshua Reynolds. The Whole Intended as a Supplement to the Anecdotes of Painters and Engravers*. Strawberry Hill, London: B. White and Son, 1792.
- Richey, William. *Blake's Altering Aesthetic*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996.
- Ronald Sutherland Gower. *Sir Joshua Reynolds, His Life and Art*. The British Artists' Series. London: George Bell and Sons, 1902.
- Rose, Edward J. "Circumcision Symbolism in Blake's 'Jerusalem.'" *Studies in Romanticism* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1968): 16–25.
- Rosenthal, Michael. *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough: "A Little Business for the Eye."* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999.
- Rounce, Adam. *Authorship in the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford University Press, 2015.
 doi:[10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.38](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.38).
- Royal Academy of Arts. "Écorché Figure." *Écorché Figure*, n.d.
https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/ecorche-figure?all_fields=&artist_name=&artist_role=&commit=Search&date=18th+century&form=objects&index=14&object_type=Sculpture&title=&total_entries=18&utf8=%E2%9C%93.
- Ruskin, John. *Modern Painters*. Popular Edition. Vol. III. V vols. London: George Allen, 1906.

- Salemi, Joseph. "Emblematic Tradition in Blake's The Gates of Paradise." *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (Winter -1982 1981): 108–24.
- "Self-Annihilation, n." In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Accessed March 20, 2022. <https://www-oed-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/Entry/175110?redirectedFrom=self-annihilation>.
- Sherman, John. *Raphael's Cartoons in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen, and the Tapestries for the Sistine Chapel*. London: Phaidon, 1972.
- "Sir Joshua Reynolds' Collection of Pictures-II." *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 87, no. 510 (September 1945): 210–17.
- Snart, Jason Allen. *The Torn Book: Unreading William Blake's Marginalia*. Selinsgrove: Cranbury, NJ: Susquehanna University Press ; Associated University Press, 2006.
- Solkin, David H., ed. *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836*. New Haven, Conn: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Courtauld Institute Gallery by Yale University Press, 2001.
- "Spectre." In *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, n.d. <https://www-oed-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/Entry/186082?rskey=59zAoI&result=1#eid>.
- St. Clair, William. *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*. 1st pbk. ed. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Stefanis, Konstantinos. "Reasoned Exhibitions: Blake in 1809 and Reynolds in 1813." *Tate Papers* 14 (Autumn 2010). <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/14/reasoned-exhibitions-blake-in-1809-and-reynolds-in-1813>.
- Stempel, Daniel. "Blake's Monadology: The Universe of Perspectives." *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 8, no. 2 (1975). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24776978>.
- Stone, Lawrence. "Literacy and Education in England." *Past & Present* 42 (February 1969): 69–139.
- Suida, Wilhelm, and Bette Talvacchia. *Raphael*. Phaidon Classics. London: New York, NY : Phaidon Press Limited, 2015.
- Symons, Arthur. *William Blake*. New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1907.
- Sypher, Wylie. *Literature and Technology - The Alien Vision*. New York: Random House, 1971.
- Tate Britain. "Chiaroscuro." In *Art Terms*, n.d. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/chiaroscuro>.
- Timbs, John. *Anecdote Biography: William Hogarth, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, Henry Fuseli, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and J.M.W. Turner*. London: Richard Betley, New Burlington Street, 1860.
- Tribble, Evelyn B. *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993.

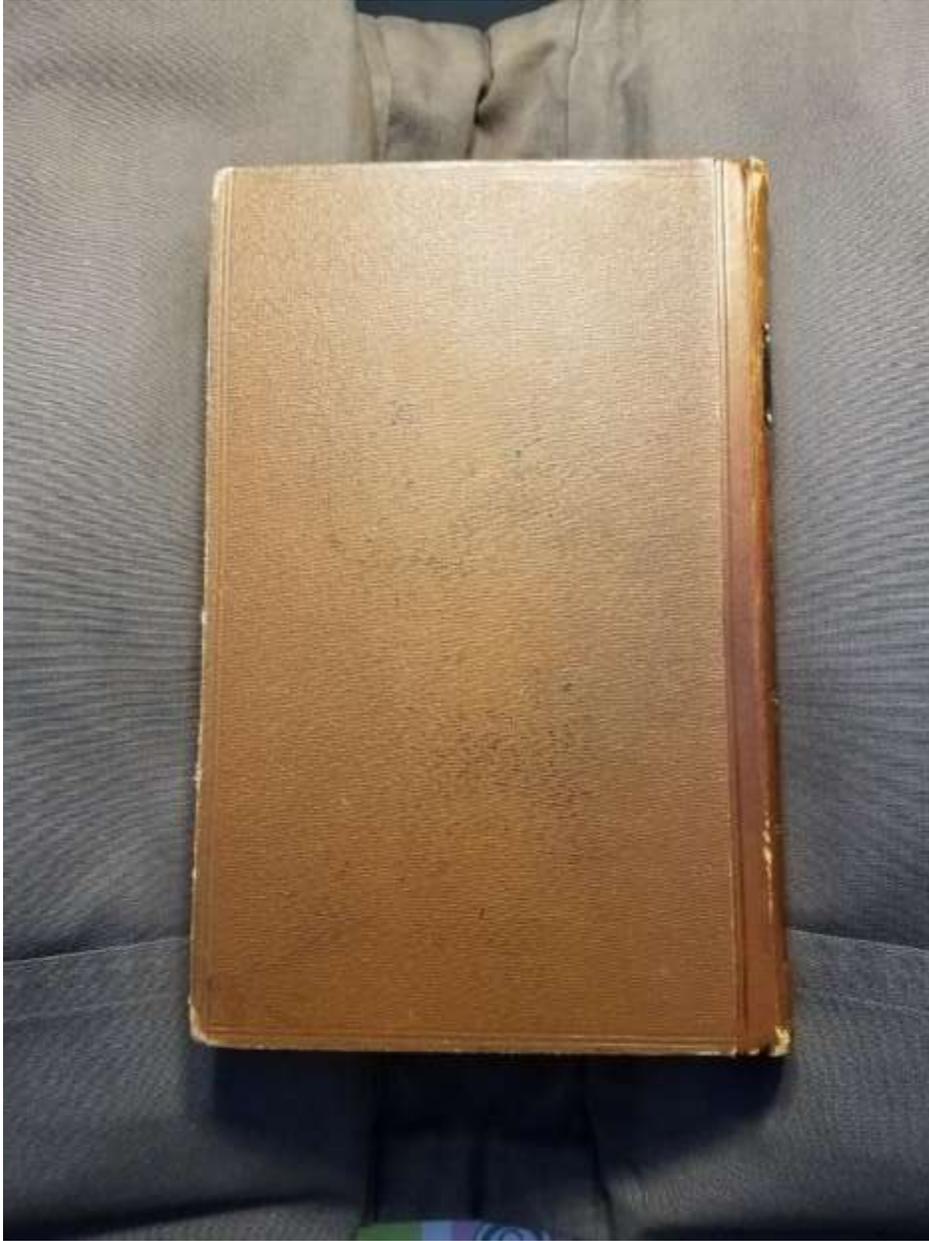
- Vasari, Giorgio. *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. Edited by Gaston du C. De Vere. Vol. IX. X vols. London: Philip Lee Warner, 1912.
- Viscomi, Joseph. "The Myth of Commissioned Illuminated Books: George Romney, Isaac D'Israeli, and 'ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY Designs . . . of Blake's.'" *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (Fall 1989): 48–74.
- Walkley, Giles. *Artists' Houses in London, 1764-1914*. Aldershot, Hants, England: Scholar Press, 1994.
- Warner, Janet A. *Blake and the Language of Art*. Kingston: McGill's-Queen's Univ. Press [u.a.], 1984.
- Warton, Joseph. *An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*. 4th ed., Corrected. Vol. I. II vols. London: J. Dodsley, 1782.
- Watson, Alex. *Romantic Marginality: Nation and Empire on the Borders of the Page*. The History of the Book, no. 9. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012.
- Wendorf, Richard. *Sir Joshua Reynolds: The Painter in Society*, 1998.
- Whitmont, Edward C. *The Symbolic Quest: Basic Concepts of Analytical Psychology*. Expanded Edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020.
- Will, Frederic. "Blake's Quarrel with Reynolds." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 15, no. 3 (March 1957): 340. doi:[10.2307/427298](https://doi.org/10.2307/427298).
- Williams, Abigail. *The Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth-Century Home*, 2018.
- Winckelmann, Johann Joachim. *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks: With Instructions for the Connoisseur, and an Essay on Grace in Works of Art*. Translated by Henry Fuseli. London: A. Millar, 1765.
- Wright, Julia M. "The Medium, the Message and the Line in William Blake's Laocoon." *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 33, no. 2 (June 2000): 101–24.
- Wrigley, Edward A. *People, Cities and Wealth: The Transformation of Traditional Society*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992.
- Wynne, John. *Choice Emblems: Natural, Historical, Fabulous, Moral and Divine, for the Improvement and Pastime of Youth*. London: George Riley, 1772.

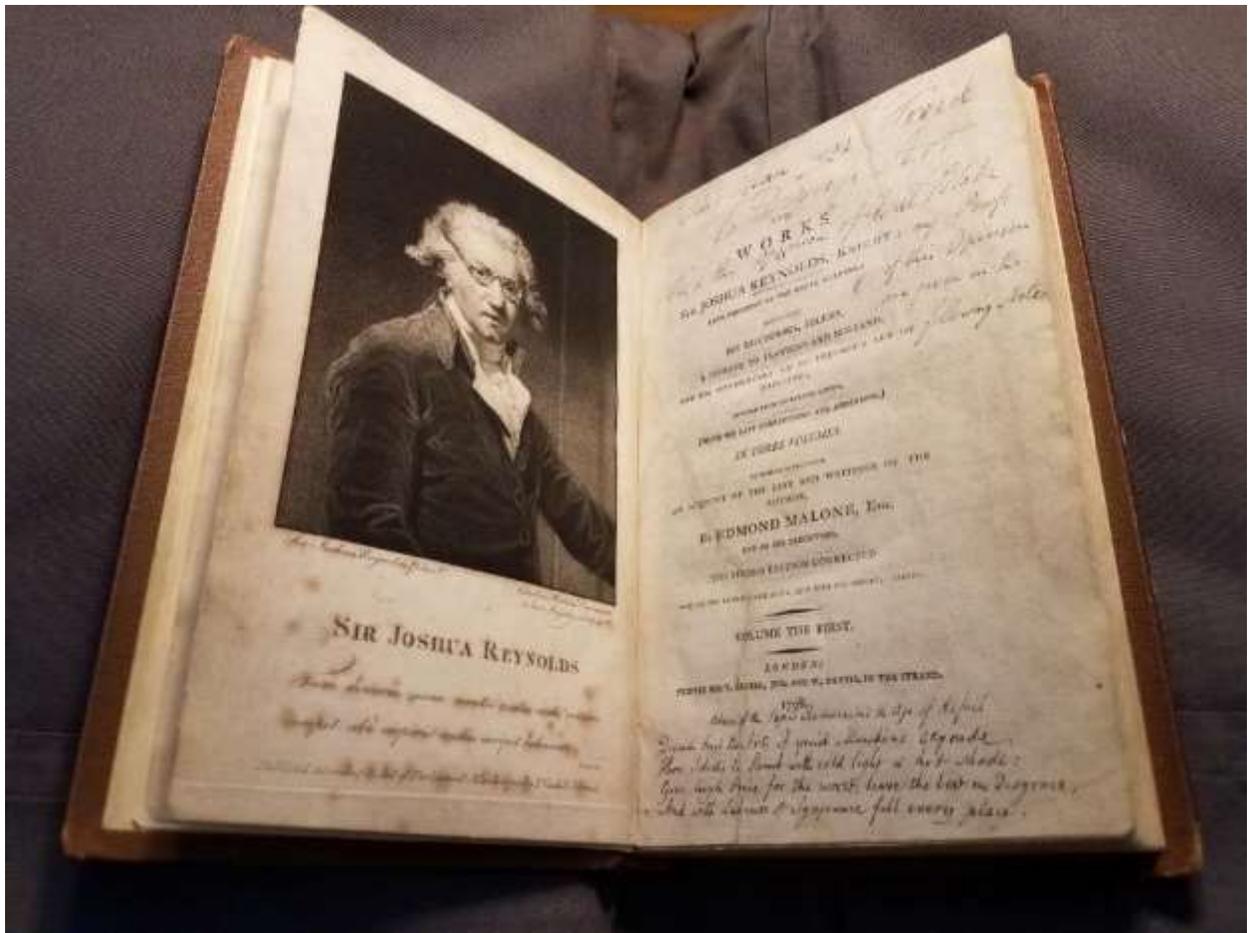
Appendix 1

The following images are photographs I have taken of the first volume of *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds* owned by William Blake. It is currently held by the British Library in London, United Kingdom. The photographs are all my own. They are not taken to be all the same size, focus, or composition; rather, they are intended to display the manuscript annotations written by Blake.









*This Man was Nixed
to Depress Art*

THE
WORKS
This is the Opinion of Will Blake

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, KNIGHT; my Proof
LATE PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY:

CONTAINING
HIS DISCOURSES, IDLERS, *of this Opinion*
A JOURNEY TO FLANDERS AND HOLLAND, *are given in the*
AND HIS COMMENTARY ON DU FRESNOY'S ART OF *following Notes*
PAINTING;

PRINTED FROM HIS REVISED COPIES,
(WITH HIS LAST CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS,)

BY EDMOND MALCOLM,
ONE OF HIS EXECUTORS.

THE SECOND EDITION CORRECTED.

— QUASI NON EA FRUSTRAM ALIIS, QUAE MIHI IPSI DEBUNT. CICERO.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, JUN. AND W. DAVIES, IN THE STRAND.

1798.

*Advice of the Popes who succeeded the Age of Raphael
Degrade first the Arts if you'd Mankind degrade.
Here Idiots to Paint with cold light & hot shade:
Give high Price for the worst, leave the best in disgrace
And with Labours of Ignorance fill every place.*

Having spent the Vigour of my Youth
& Genius under the Oppression of J^r Joshua
& his Gang of Cunning Rascals Thomas
Without Employment & as much as could
possibly be without Bread. The Reader
must expect to Read in all my
Remarks on these Books Nothing
but Indignation & Resentment
While J^r Joshua was rolling in
Riches Barry was Poor &
Unemploy'd except by his own Industry
Mortimer was call'd a Whoremonger &
only Postward Painter applauded &
rewarded by the Rich & Great. Rewards
& Grants bought Blotter & Banned one
against the other & Durden all the
English Words between them Fuschli
Indignant almost his himself I am

my Youth
of the
Korea leaves
much as
The Reader
all my
Nothing
entirement
ling in
or I
owa merge
man &
hands &
eat. Regard
loved the
all the
Fuseli
I am his

The Arts & Sciences are the Destruction of
Tyranies or Bad Government. Why should
the Good Government endeavour to Depress
what is its Chief & only Support

CONTENTS
OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

DISCOURSE I.

The advantages proceeding from the Institution of a
Royal Academy.—Hints offered to the consideration
of the Professors and Visitors.—That an implicit
obedience to the rules of Art be exacted from the
young Students.—That a premature disposition to a
masterly dexterity be repressed.—That diligence be
constantly recommended, and (that it may be effec-
tual) directed to its proper object. page 1.

DISCOURSE II.

The course and order of study.—The different stages of
Art.—Much copying discountenanced.—The Artist
at all times and in all places should be employed in
laying up materials for the exercise of his art. p. 23.

DISCOURSE III.

The great leading principles of the Grand Style.—Of
Beauty.—The genuine habits of nature to be distin-
guished from those of fashion. p. 51.

To learn the
Language
of Art
Copy for
Ever is
My Rule

The Foundation of Empire is Art & Science
Remove them or Degrade them & the Empire
is No More - Empire follows Art
& Not Vice Versa as Englishmen

which regulates
ion, Colouring.
History-Paint-
The Schools
opposite style,
habits, or a
P. 79

vide con-
a mixed
of those
Michael
compared
e.—Sal-
r style;
be cha-
ainters
selves,
t.
115

con-
con-
er-
er-
45

CONTENTS.
DISCOURSE VII.

The reality of a standard of Taste, as well as of corporal Beauty. Beside this immutable truth, there are secondary truths, which are variable, both requiring the attention of the Artist, in proportion to their stability or their influence. p. 119

DISCOURSE VIII.

The Principles of Art, whether Poetry or Painting, have their foundation in the mind; such as Novelty, Variety, and Contrast; those in their excess become defects.—Simplicity. Its excess disagreeable.—Rules not to be always observed in their literal sense: sufficient to preserve the spirit of the law.—Observations on the Prize-Pictures. p. 245

1746

On peut dire que le Pape Léon X. en encourageant les études donna des armes contre lui-même. J'ai oüi dire à un Seigneur Anglois qu'il avoit vu une Lettre du Seigneur Colus, ou de La Pole, depuis Cardinal, à ce Pape; dans laquelle, en le félicitant sur ce qu'il étendoit le progrès de Science en Europe, il l'avertissoit qu'il étoit dangereux de rendre les hommes trop Savans

Voltaire
Monsieur de Nancé
Tome 4
O Englishmen! why are you still of this foolish
Cardinals opinion?

le which regulates
version, Colouring,
in History-Paint-
ing. The Schools
composite style,
and habits, &c.
P. 79

to unite con-
of a mixed
cles of those
le, Michael
en compared
style.—Sal-
that style;
f the cha-
o Painters
hemselves,
Art.
P. 115

—Inven-
—inven-
—Bar-
—ather-
P. 145

CONTENTS.
DISCOURSE VII.

The reality of a standard of Taste, as well as of corporal Beauty. Beside this immutable truth, there are secondary truths, which are variable, both requiring the attention of the Artist, in proportion to their stability or their influence. p. 139

DISCOURSE VIII.

The Principles of Art, whether Poetry or Painting, have their foundation in the mind; such as Novelty, Variety, and Contrast, these in their excess become defects.—Simplicity, its excess disagreeable.—Rules not to be always observed in their literal sense: sufficient to preserve the spirit of the law.—Observations on the Prizes-Pictures. p. 245

77 AP 68
On peut dire que le Pape Léon X. en encourageant les études donna des armes contre lui-même. J'ai ouï dire à un Seigneur Anglais qu'il avait vu une Lettre du Seigneur Polus, ou de La Pole, depuis Cardinal, à ce Pape; dans laquelle, en le félicitant sur ce qu'il étendait le progrès de Science en Europe, il l'avertissait qu'il était dangereux de rendre les hommes trop Savans.

A Englishman why are you still of this foolish Cardinal's opinion?
Voltaire
Monsieur de Nabis
Lettre A

Who will Dare to say that Public
Art is Encouraged or better treated
or Favored in a Nation where
The Society for the Encouragement
of Art, Suffered Barry to give
them his Labour for Nothing
A Society Composed of the
Flower of the English Nobility
& Gentry ——— Suffered
an Artist to Starve while he
Supported Really what they
under Pretence of Encouraging were
Endeavouring to Depress. — Barry
told me that while he did that
Work. he lived on Bread & Apples

Society
King &
have you
St. John

THE reg
from nece
accommod
illustrious
Mans for
science; b
arts by wh
and science
was reserv

Had su
there had
had, by s
obstructed
improvement
vol. 1.

Satan
he took
became

that. Pleas
rather wishes
time where
encouragement
ry to give
Nothing
of the
ed Nobility
Suffering
while he
They
raging work
Barry
Did that
& Apples

Society for Encouragement of Art
King & Nobility of England. Where
have you had Jacobus Milton
So Satan troubled at his Exposure

THE KING.

THE regular progress of cultivated life is
from necessities to accommodations, from
accommodations to ornaments. By your
illustrious predecessors were established
Marts for manufactures, and Colleges for
science; but for the arts of elegance, those
arts by which manufactures are embellished,
and science is refined, to found an Academy
was reserved for Your Majesty.

Had such patronage been without effect,
there had been reason to believe that Nature
had, by some insurmountable impediment,
obstructed our proficiency; but the annual
improvement of the Exhibitions which Your

VOL. I.

Satan took away Ornament First. Next
he took away Accomodations & then he
became Lord & Master of Necessaries

The Bible says
That Cultivated
Life is waste
First -
Uncultivated
Life comes
afterwards
from Satan
Humbling
Necessaries
Accomodation
& Ornament
are the whole
of life

DEDICATION.

Majesty has been pleased to encourage, shews that only encouragement had been wanting.

Liberality
we want
not Liberality
We want a
Fair Price
Proportionate
Value & a
General Demand
for Art

To give advice to those who are contending for royal liberality, has been for some years the duty of my station in the Academy; and these Discourses hope for Your Majesty's acceptance, as well-intended endeavours to incite that emulation which your notice has kindled, and direct those studies which your bounty has rewarded.

May it please Your MAJESTY.

Your MAJESTY'S

Most dutiful servant,

and most faithful subject,

[1778.]

JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

*Let not that Nation where less than Nobility is the
Reward. Pretend that Art is Encouraged by the
Nation: Art is First in Intellectuals &
ought to be First in Nations*

ON.
d to encourage
ement had been

ho are contend.
been for some
on in the Acad.
hope for Your
well-intended
ulation which
direct those
rewarded.

ESTY.

bject,

NOLDS.

*believe is the
aged by the
truly &*

*Invention depends Altogether upon Recollection
or Organization at hand in right or wrong so is
the Invention perfect or imperfect. However
it is left to Posterity the Execution of Art is left
to Posterity. ^{SOME ACCOUNT OF}
Michael Angelo's Art Depend
on Michael Angelo's Recollection Altogether*

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

THE Author of the following admirable works, having, for near half a century, been well known to almost every person in this country who had any pretensions to taste or literature, to the present age an account of him, however brief, may seem wholly unnecessary; nor should the reader be detained, even for a few minutes, from the pleasure which awaits him, but that Posterity, while they contemplate with delight and admiration those productions of his pencil which place him on a level with Titian and Vandyck, will naturally wish to know something of the man, as well as of the painter.

ge,
een

d-
ne
a-
ur
ed

Invention depends Altogether upon Execution
or Organization. as that is right or wrong so is
the Invention perfect [iii] or imperfect. Whoever
is set to Undervalue the Execution of Art is set
to Destroy Art Michael Angelo. Art Depends
on Michael Angelo's Execution Altogether

SOME ACCOUNT OF
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

27 AP 65

THE Author of the following admirable

the rules laid down in his book, a man may do wonders; for this is wonderful.¹⁰⁶ From these attempts he proceeded to draw likenesses of the friends and relations of his family, with tolerable success. But what most strongly confirmed him in his love of the art, was Richardson's Treatise on Painting; the perusal of which so delighted and inflamed his mind, that Raffaele appeared to him superior to the most illustrious names of ancient or modern time; a notion which he loved to indulge all the rest of his life.

*Why then
did he not
follow
Raffaels
Track*

His propensity for this fascinating art growing daily more manifest, his father thought fit to gratify his inclination; and when he was not much more than seventeen years of age, on St. Luke's day, Oct. the 18th, 1740, he was placed as a pupil under his countryman Mr. Hudson,¹⁰⁷ who though

¹⁰⁶ From the late James Boswell, Esq. to whom this little circumstance was communicated by our author.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Hudson, who was the scholar and son-in-law

but an ordinary painter, was the most distinguished artist of that time. After spending a few years in London, which he employed in acquiring the rudiments of his art, on a disagreement with his master about a very slight matter, he in 1743 removed to Devonshire, where, as he told me, he passed about three years in company from whom little improvement could be got: when he recol-

of Richardson the Painter, was born in 1701. "He enjoyed" (says Lord Orford, *ANECDOTES OF PAINTING*, iv. 122, 8vo.) "for many years the chief business of portrait-painting in the capital, after the favourite artists, his master and Jervas, were gone off the stage; though Vanloo first, and Liotard afterwards, for a few years diverted the torrent of fashion from the established professor. Still the country gentlemen were faithful to their compatriot, and were content with his honest similitudes, and with the fair tied wigs, blue velvet coats, and white satin waistcoats, which he bestowed liberally on his customers, and which, with complacency, they beheld multiplied in Faber's mezzotintos. The better taste introduced by Sir Joshua Reynolds, put an end to Hudson's reign, who had the good sense to resign the throne soon after finishing his capital work, the family-piece of Charles Duke of Marlborough." [About 1756.] He died, Jan. 26, 1779, aged 78.

Hudson
Pew
Concally

Men who have
been educated
with works
of Venetian
Artists under
their eyes
cannot see
Raphael
unless they
are born
with
determinate
Organs

"It has frequently happened, (says this
great painter,) as I was informed by the
keeper of the Vatican, that many of those
whom he had conducted through the vari-
ous apartments of that edifice, when about
to be dismissed, have asked for the works of
Raffaello, and would not believe that they
had already passed through the rooms where
they are preserved; so little impression
had those performances made on them.
One of the first painters now in France
once told me, that this circumstance hap-
pened to himself; though he now looks on
Raffaello with that veneration which he de-
serves from all painters and lovers of the
art. I remember very well my own disap-
pointment, when I first visited the Vati-
can; but on confessing my feelings to a
brother-student, of whose ingenuousness I
had a high opinion, he acknowledged that
the works of Raffaello had the same effect
on him, or rather that they did not pro-
duce the effect which he expected. This
was from my earliest Childhood hidden
from Me. I saw & I know immediately
the difference between Raphael & Rubens

d, (says this
med by the
ny of those
h the vari-
when about
he works of
e that they
oms where
mpression
on them.
in France
nce hap-
looks on
h he de-
s of the
n disap-
ie Vati-
gs to a
isness I
ed that
e effect
t pro-
This
udden
edately
bens

Some look to see in great numbers
And thousands more that love to see
Some look to find out Raphael's Paint
Brought to a Bay at Portland Head

was a great relief to my mind; and on inquiring further of other students, I found that those persons only who from natural imbecility appeared to be incapable of ever relishing those divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them.—In justice to myself, however, I must add, that though disappointed and mortified at not finding myself enraptured with the works of this great master, I did not for a moment conceive or suppose that the name of Raffaele, and those admirable paintings in particular, owed their reputation to the ignorance and prejudice of mankind; on the contrary, my not relishing them as I was conscious I ought to have done, was one of the most humiliating circumstances that ever happened to me. I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted: I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed. All the indigested notions of painting which I had

Here are
Mocke
on those
who saw
Raphael

A Lear
he never

was Abashed in his life & never
felt his Ignorance

ed, (says this
rmed by the
any of those
gh the vari-
when about
he works of
re that they
oms where
impression
on them.
in France
ance hap-
looks on
h he de-
rs of the
n disap-
he Vati-
gs to a
usness I
ed that
e effect
t pro-
This
udden
edately
bene

*Some look at the art as a mere business
And banterous terms that show they know
Some look to find out Raphael's Power
Bravely & thus to hinder his*

was a great relief to my mind; and on inquiring further of other students, I found that those persons only who from natural imbecility appeared to be incapable of ever relishing those divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them.—In justice to myself, however, I must add, that though disappointed and mortified at not finding myself enraptured with the works of this great master, I did not for a moment conceive or suppose that the name of Raffaele, and those admirable paintings in particular, owed their reputation to the ignorance and prejudice of mankind; on the contrary, my not relishing them as I was conscious I ought to have done, was one of the most humiliating circumstances that ever happened to me. I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted: I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed. All the indigested notions of painting which I had

*Here are
Mocha
on those
who saw
Raphael*

*A Lion
he never*

*was Abashed in his life & never
felt his Ignorance*

brought with me from England, where the art was in the lowest state it had ever been in, (it could not indeed be lower,) were to be totally done away, and eradicated from my mind. It was necessary, as it is expressed on a very solemn occasion, that I should become as a *little child*.—Notwithstanding my disappointment, I proceeded to copy some of those excellent works. I viewed them again and again; I even affected to feel their merit, and to admire them, more than I really did. In a short time a new taste and new perceptions began to dawn upon me; and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of art, and that this great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the estimation of the world. The truth is, that if these works had really been what I expected, they would have contained beauties superficial and alluring, but by no means such as would have entitled them to the

*All this
Conception
is to prove
that Genius
is Acquired
as follows in the Next page*

where the
had ever
be lower,)
and eradi-
necessary, as
n occasion,
bild.—Not-
t, I pro-
excellent
again; I
t, and to
did. In
v percep-
nd I was
formed a
art, and
titled to
the esti-
, that if
t I ex-
beauties
means
to the

great reputation which they have so long and so justly obtained.

“ Having since that period frequently revolved this subject in my mind, I am now clearly of opinion, that a relish for the higher excellencies of art is an acquired-taste, which no man ever possessed without long cultivation, and great labour and attention. On such occasions as that which I have mentioned, we are often ashamed of our apparent dulness; as if it were to be expected that our minds, like tinder, should instantly catch fire from the divine spark of Raffaele’s genius. I flatter myself that now it would be so, and that I have a just and lively perception of his great powers: but let it be always remembered, that the excellence of his style is not on the surface, but lies deep; and at the first view is seen but mistily. It is the florid style, which strikes at once, and captivates the eye for a time, without

A Mock

A Mock

A Lie

VOL. I. b

The Florid Style such as the Venetian & the Flemish. Never Struck Me at Once nor at-All.

ever satisfying the judgment. Nor does painting in this respect differ from other arts. A just poetical taste, and the acquisition of a nice discriminative musical ear, are equally the work of time. Even the eye, however perfect in itself, is often unable to distinguish between the brilliancy of two diamonds; though the experienced jeweller will be amazed at its blindness; not considering that there was a time when he himself could not have been able to pronounce which of the two was the most perfect, and that his own power of discrimination was acquired by slow and imperceptible degrees.

“ The man of true genius, instead of spending all his hours, as many artists do while they are at Rome, in measuring statues and copying pictures, soon begins to think for himself, and endeavours to do something like what he sees.—I consider general copying (he adds) as a delusive kind of industry:

*The Style
that Strikes
the Eye
is the True
Style
But
A Fool's
Eye
is Not
to be a
Criterion*

*Here he condemns Generalizing
which he almost always Approve Lear.
& Recommends*

the stud
ance of
dangere
and of
object:
he slee
inventi
ticular
lie tor
exerci
thing
spent
copie
who:
be as
did n
did n
the g
the fir
Rome
chiqu

*at Copy
Lange*

the student satisfies himself with the appearance of doing something; he falls into the dangerous habit of imitating without selecting, and of labouring without any determinate object: as it requires no effort of the mind, he sleeps over his work, and those powers of invention and disposition which ought particularly to be called out and put in action, lie torpid, and lose their energy for want of exercise. How incapable of producing any thing of their own, those are, who have spent most of their time in making finished copies; is an observation well known to all who are conversant with our art.²¹ We may be assured, therefore, that this great painter did not fall into the error here pointed out;— did not long continue the practice of copying the great works²² which were at this period

²¹ This observation occurs nearly in the same words in the first Discourse.

²² Of the few copies which he made while he was at Rome, two are now in the possession of the Earl of Inchiquin, who married his niece, Miss Palmer; St. Mi-

b 2

That Copying Correctly is a hindrance he is a Lear. for that is the only School to the Language of Art

Finished.

What does

he mean

Niggling

Without the

Correct &

Definite

Outline

If he means

tues

ink

ing

y-

7:

ves

11 This obser
the first Discou

12 Of the fev
Rome, two are
chiquin, who r

That Copying Co
Liar. for th
Language

their excellence and their value consisted in being the observations of a strong mind operating upon life; and in consequence you find there what you seldom find in other books.'—It is this kind of excellence which gives a value to the performances of artists also. It is the thoughts expressed in the works of Michael Angelo, Correggio, Raffaello, Parmegiano, and perhaps some of the old Gothick masters, and not the inventions of Pietro da Cortona, Carlo Maratti, Luca Giordano, and others that I might mention, which we seek after with avidity. From the former we learn to think originally. May I presume to introduce myself on this occasion, and even to mention as an instance of the truth of what I have remarked, the very Discourses which I have had the honour of delivering from this place. Whatever merit they have, must be imputed, in a great measure, to the education which I may be said to have had under Dr. Johnson. I do not mean to say, though it certainly would

*Here is an
a beautiful
of all that I
could wish
But if it is
True. When
are we to be
told that
Masters who
could think
had not the
Judgment to
Perform the
Inferior
Parts of Art as Reynolds artfully calls them. But
that we are to learn to Think from Great Masters
& to learn to Perform from Underlings? Learn
to Design from Raphael & to Execute from Barbers*

able old man; and as I thought, very much conversant in the Platonick Philosophy, and very fond of that method of philosophizing. He had been originally a dissenting minister; a description which at that time bred very considerable men, both among those who adhered to it, and those who left it. He had entirely cured himself of the unpleasant narrowness which in the early part of his life had distinguished those gentlemen, and was perfectly free from the ten times more dangerous enlargement which has been since then their general characteristick. Sir Joshua Reynolds had always a great love for the whole of that family, and took a great interest in whatever related to them. His acquaintance with the Mudges ought to be reckoned among the earliest of his literary connexions. It was from him that I first got a view of the few that have been published of Mr. Mudge's Sermons; and on conversing afterwards with Mr. Mudge, I found great traces of Sir Joshua Reynolds in

ixxiv

*Samuel
Bellamy*

able old
conversant
very fond
He had b
a descript
considerab
adhered t
had entire

contains such a body of just criticism on an extremely difficult subject, clothed in such

enveloped. I took no notice of it; leaving those who were weak enough to give credit to such an opinion, to reconcile it with the account given by our author himself in a former page, in which, while he acknowledges how much he had profited by the conversation and instruction of that extraordinary man, who "had qualified his mind to think justly," he at the same time informs us, that Johnson had not contributed even a single sentiment to his Discourses.

A new hypothesis, however, has been lately suggested; and among many other statements concerning the late Mr. Burke, which I know to be erroneous, we have been confidently told that they were written by that gentleman.

The readers of poetry are not to learn, that a similar tale has been told of some of our celebrated English poets, according to some, Denham did not write his admired COOPER'S HILL; and with a certain species of critics, our great moral poet tells us,

" — most authors steal their works, or buy;
" Garth did not write his own DISPENSARY.

Such insinuations, however agreeable to the envious and malignant, who may give them a temporary currency, can have but little weight with the judicious and ingenuous part of mankind, and therefore in general merit only silent contempt. But that Mr. Burke was the author of all such parts of these Discourses as do not relate to painting

The Contradictions in Reynolds's Discourses are Strong Presumptions that they are the Work of several Hands But there is no Proof that Reynolds wrote them The Man either Painter or Philosopher who Learns or Acquires all he Knows from Others Must be full of Contradictions

perspic
that it

and and
tended
percept
been m
my du
should
contr
with
able t
than
conc

Te
anno
in t
usua
Dis
or o
not
the
Sir
I a
no
jud
at
th
ra
se
d

NT OF
 lemy the President
 tributed not a lit-
 ar a considerable
 formances;" and
 Moser, to whose
 received this ex-
 degree owed in
 th in 1783, he
 ublick testimo-
 in some news-
 ll deserves a
 I shall give it

he exhibited at
 forty-four pic-
 titution of the
 y-five. Total
 1767 was the

ly appeared;
 some of the
 our author's

1783.
 eriset-Place,

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. 216.
 What were the methods by which this
 great painter attained to such consummate

George Michael Moser, Keeper of the Royal Academy; aged seventy-eight years. He was a native of Switzerland, but came to England very young, to follow the profession of a Chaser in gold, in which art he has been always considered as holding the first rank. But his skill was not confined to this alone; he possessed a universal knowledge in all the branches of painting and sculpture, which perfectly qualified him for the place that he held in the Academy, the business of which principally consists in superintending and instructing the Students, who draw or model from the antique figures.

His private character deserves a more ample testimony than this transient memorial. Few have passed a more inoffensive or perhaps a more happy life; if happiness or the enjoyment of life consists in having the mind always occupied, always intent upon some useful art, by which fame and distinction may be acquired. Mr. Moser's whole attention was absorbed either in the practice, or something that related to the advancement, of art. He may truly be said in every sense to have been the FATHER of the present race of Artists; for long before the Royal Academy was established, he presided over the little Societies which met first in Salisbury-Court, and afterwards in St. Martin's Lane, where they drew from living models. Perhaps nothing that can be said, will more strongly imply his amiable disposition, than that all the different Societies with which he has been connected, have always turned their eyes upon him for their Treasurer and chief Manager; when perhaps they would not have

I was once
 looking over
 the Prints from
 Raphael & Michel
 Angelo in the
 Library of
 the Royal Academy
 Moser came
 to me & said
 Your Sons
 not Study

these old Hard Stiff & Dry Works of Art. Stay
 a little & I will show you what you should Study
 He then went & took down Le Brun's & Adam's Gallons
 How I did secretly Rage. I also poke my Nose

...the reputation of his country in having the most
 always designed, always done upon every occasion, by
 which these and Dissertations may be acquired. His Ma-
 jesty's whole attention was directed either to the practice,
 or teaching that related to the advancement of art.
 He was truly to be said in every sense to have been the
 patron of the present race of Artists; for long before the
 Royal Academy was established, he presided over the
 Public Schools which was first in Salisbury Court, and
 afterwards in St. Martin's Lane, where they drew from
 living models. Perhaps nothing that can be said, will
 more strongly imply his amiable disposition, than that all
 the different Societies with which he has been connected,
 have always turned their eyes upon him for their Treasurer
 and chief Manager; when perhaps they would not have
 these old Hard Stiff & Dry ^{Unfinished} Works of Art. I stay
 a little & I will show you what you should Study
 He then went & took down Letters, & Pictures, Galleries
 How I did secretly Rage. I also spoke my Mind

which they drew from
Martin's Lane, where they drew from
perhaps nothing that can be said, will
by his amiable disposition, than that all
es with which he has been connected,
their eyes upon him for their Treasurer
when perhaps they would not have

Moser can
to me &
You sh
not I

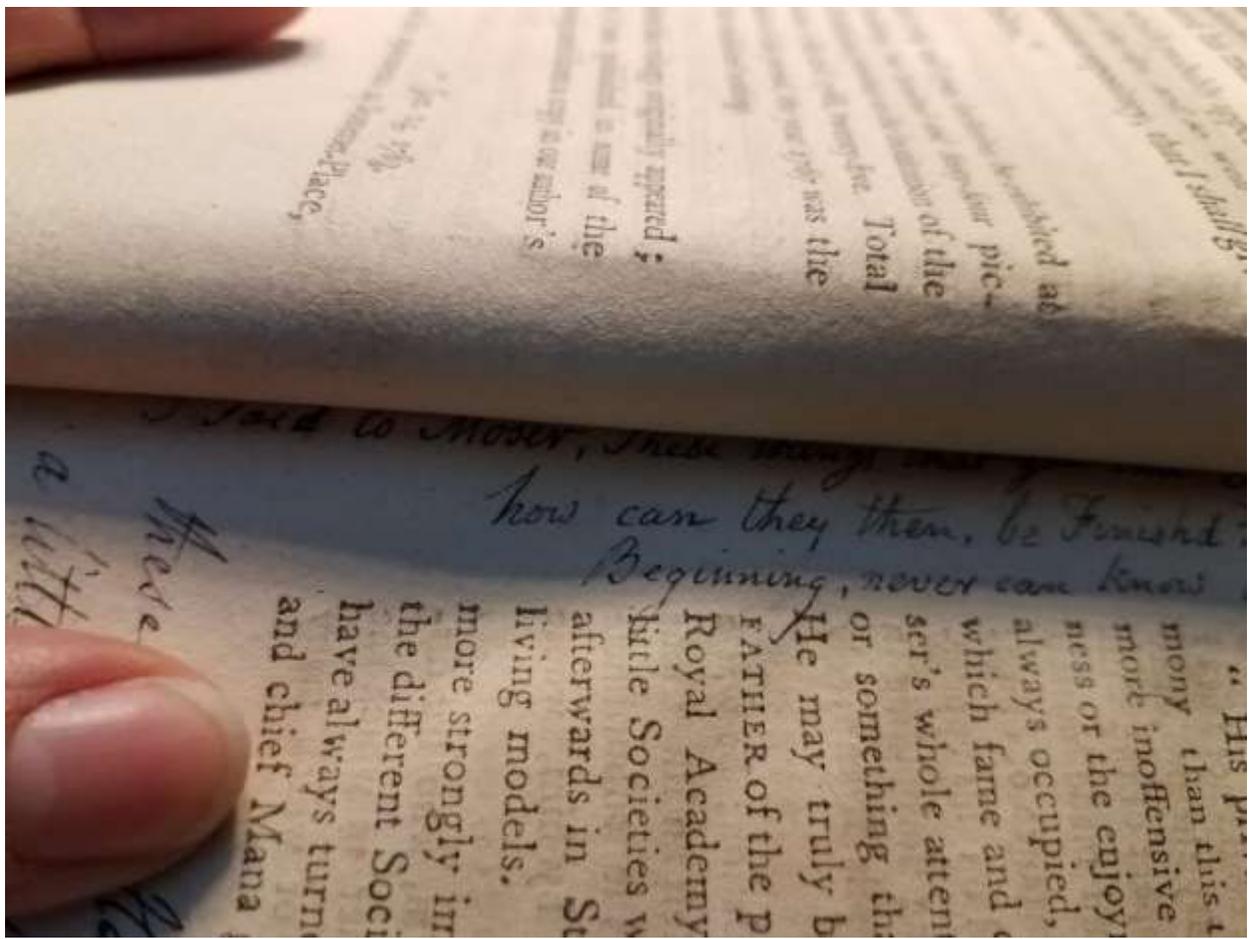
l. ^{Unfinished} ~~Stiff & Dry~~ Works of Art,
show you what you should
down Lettrens & Rubens
P I

ACCOUNT OF
the Academy the President
tion contributed not a lit-
every year a considerable
performances; and
Mr. Moser, to whose
he conceived this ex-
a great degree owed its
in 1783, he
by a publick testimo-
My appeared in some news-
and so well deserves a
pository, that I shall give it

and 1796 inclusive, he exhibited at
two hundred and forty-four pic-
no previous to the institution of the
the end 1788, twenty-five. Total
this period, the year 1767 was the
highest ranking.

This engraving originally appeared in
was published in some of the
papers from a copy in our author's
" Jan. 24, 1789.
his apartments in Somerset-Place,

What were attained to
great Painter Moser, Keeper of the F
George Michael Moser. He was a native
aged seventy-eight years. to follo
but came to England very young, he has
of a Classer in gold, in which art he has
considered as holding the first rank. But his
finer to this alone; he possessed a uni
in all the branches of painting and scul
terly qualified him for the place that he
denry, the business of which principally
intending and instructing the Student
model from the antique figures.
" His private character deserves a
more than this transient memorial. I
ness or the enjoyment of life consists i
always occupied, always intent upon so
which fame and distinction may be ac
ter's whole attention was absorbed eit
or something that related to the adv
He may truly be said in every sense
further of the present race of Artists
Royal Academy was established, he
little Societies which met first in Sa
shorthand, in St. Martin's Lane, wh
living models. Perhaps nothing that
more strongly imply his amiable dispos
the different Societies with which
and chief v



SOME ACCOUNT OF
his profession, it is now, I
to inquire; yet, as I shall

to any other authority. His name
of men whose names are well
such as Hogarth, Ryaback, Row-
landson, &c.
lived all the companions of his
has boasted of a succession
all that knew him, were in-

ted Keeper of the Royal Academy,
exemplary, and worthy to be
succeed him in that office. As
of teaching, he could not fail of
diligence. By the propriety
love and respect of the Society
Academy, and made himself
trity or importance of office,
tially ceased on his appren-
re was nothing forbidding in
train the pupils from freely
assistance.

a firm foundation; he was a
y, and has left an illustration
in which the subordinate
discharged by him, who

behind him, who has dis-
ble manner in which she
flowers, of which many

among his papers a few slight hints upon
this subject, in which he speaks of his merits
and defects with that candour which strongly
marked his character, though they are only
detached thoughts, and did not receive his
final revision and correction, I am unwilling
to suppress them:

“ Not having the advantage of an early
academical education, I never had the faci-
lity of drawing the naked figure, which an
artist ought to have. It appeared to me too
late, when I went to Italy and began to feel
my own deficiencies, to endeavour to acquire
that readiness of invention which I observed
others to possess. I consoled myself, how-
ever, by remarking that these ready inventors,
are extremely apt to acquiesce in imperfection;
and that if I had not their facility, I should

*William
a. r.*

simples have been seen in the Exhibitions. She has had
the honour of being much employed in this way by their
Majesties, and for her extraordinary merit has been re-
ceived into the Royal Academy.”

o have. It appeared to me too
went to Italy and began to feel
ncies, to endeavour to acquire
of invention which I observed

I consoled myself, how-
ing that these ready inventors,
o acquiesce in imperfection;
ot their facility, I should

Villainy
a Lie

the Exhibitions. She has had
employed in this way by their

for this very reason be more likely to avoid the defect which too often accompanies it, a trite and common-place mode of invention. How difficult it is for the artist who possesses this facility, to guard against carelessness and common-place invention, is well known, and in a kindred art Metastasio is an eminent instance; who always complained of the great difficulty he found in attaining correctness, in consequence of having been in his youth an *Improvisatore*.--- Having this defect constantly in my mind, I never was contented with common-place attitudes²³ or inventions of any kind.---

²³ Our great artist's excellence in this respect has been highly extolled by the late Lord Orford:

"How painting has reclaimed from its embers, (says that lively and ingenious writer,) the works of many living artists demonstrate. The prints after the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds have spread his fame to Italy, where they have not at present [1780] a single painter that can pretend to rival an imagination so fertile, that the attitudes of his portraits are as various as those of history. In what age were paternal despair and the hor-

NT OF
s. Study indeed
nature, and may
er men's minds,
ion and exercise
their way, and
llence. Thus,
en any of the
never perhaps
he expression
s; or if I had
ought it too
be executed.

Improvement
hat expres-
measure to
commend
honesty;
ances, is,
certainly
oured to
subjects
t repre-

resentation of which, or even by the endeavour
to give such a representation, the painter
cannot but improve in his art. ---

" My principal labour was employed on
the whole together ;" and I was never weary
of changing, and trying different modes and
different effects. I had always some scheme

" This also, if I recollect right, is said to have been the
principal object of Correggio; and, however false,
is in various places strongly recommended by our author.
" A steady attention to the general effect, (as he has ob-
served in his fourteenth Discourse.) takes up more time,
and is much more laborious to the mind, than any mode
of high finishing, or smoothness, without such attention."

Again in the eleventh Discourse :

" There is nothing in our art which enforces such con-
tinued exertion and circumspection, as an attention to the
general effect of the whole. It requires much study and
much practice; it requires the painter's entire mind;
whereas the parts may be finishing by nice touches,
while his mind is engaged on other matters: he may even
hear a play or a novel read, without much disturbance.
The Artist who flatters his own indolence, will continu-
ally find himself evading this active exertion, and applying
his thoughts to the ease and laziness of highly finishing
the parts: producing at last what Cowley calls—"labo-
rious effects of idleness."

*Real
Working up
Effect is
more an*

*operation of violence than the
Making out of the Parts: as far as
greatest is more than least
Speak here of Rembrandt & Rubens & Reynolds
Effect. For Real Effect is Making out
the Parts & it is Nothing Else but that*

pres-
sure to
mend
esty;
is,
inly
to
cts
e-

and is much more laborious to the mind, than any mode
of high finishing, or smoothness, without such attention."
Again in the eleventh Discourse:
"There is nothing in our art which enforces such con-
tinued exertion and circumspection, as an attention to the
general effect of the whole. It requires much study and
much practice; it requires the painter's entire mind;
whereas the parts may be finishing by nice touches,
while his mind is engaged on other matters: he may even
hear a play or a novel read, without much disturbance.
The Artist who flatters his own indolence, will continu-
ally find himself evading this active exertion, and applying
his thoughts to the ease and laziness of highly finishing
the parts; producing at last what Cowley calls—"labo-
rious effects of idleness,"

A Lie
Working up
Effect is
more an

operation of Indolence than the
Making out of the Parts: as far as
greatest is more than Least
I speak here of Rembrandt, & Rubens, & Reynolds's
Effect. For Real Effect is Making out
the Parts & it is Nothing Else but that

eration of Indolence than the
out of the Parts: as far as
than Least
strand, a Rubens & Reynolds's
Effect. is Making out
Nothing Else but that

OF
le of colouring
in the highest
merit I can
induct in that

ver the method
destroyed some
e various layers
tain it.
orks was pub.
t the process
times had been
minent artis
t it had been
s of Captain
beginning of
d to contain
Bassans, and
appeared to
rs so likely
these paper
they con-
r an obliga-
has hitherto
iswered the
ncerning it.
r practised
of forged
the fabri-

Thus ingeniously and modestly has this
great painter spoken of himself in the few

eration of which, *though detected*, found a puny, but perfectly homogeneous, champion, whose unadorned vanity prompted him to abet and countenance that silly fiction, by confident and groundless assertions, false quotations, and arguments still more flimsy and absurd than the imposture itself; after such a deception, it was not at all surprising that the cautious inquirer should have been slow in giving credit to any new discovery of *ancient manuscripts*; but the cases were extremely different; for whether the process of colouring said to be discovered was the genuine method of the Venetian School, or at least one similar in its effects, was a matter of experiment, and easily ascertained. Some experiments have accordingly been made, and it seems, with no great success. However ancient therefore these documents may be, they hitherto appear to be of little value.

It is highly probable that the great colourists of former times used certain methods in mixing and laying on their colours, which they did not communicate to others, or at least did not set down in writing; their scholars contenting themselves with adopting as much of the practice of their masters as inspection and close observation would give them; and that by being thus confined to oral tradition, the mode which they followed, has been lost. Our great painter, however, had undoubtedly attained a part of the ancient process used in the Venetian School; and by various methods of his own invention produced a similar, though perhaps not quite so brilliant an effect of colour.

*Why are we told that Reynolds is a Great Colourist
& yet inferior to the Venetians*

*Oil
Colours
will not
do -*

and
l to
ely
rs
.
been made, and it seems, with no great success. How-
ever ancient therefore these documents may be, they
hitherto appear to be of little value.

It is highly probable that the great colourists of former
times used certain methods in mixing and laying on
their colours, which they did not communicate to others,
or at least did not set down in writing; their scholars con-
tending themselves with adopting as much of the practice
of their masters as inspection and close observation would
give them; and that by being thus confined to oral tradi-
tion, the mode which they followed, has been lost. Our
great painter, however, had undoubtedly attained a part of
the ancient process used in the Venetian School; and by
various methods of his own invention produced a similar,
though perhaps not quite so brilliant an effect of colour.

Oil
Colours
will not
do -

Why are we told that Reynolds is a Great Colourist
& yet inferior to the Venetians

... was pre-
sented to us materials so well adapted to our purpose,
that if we had the whole window of our own invention
and contrivance, we should not probably have succeeded
better."-----

The original Picture of the Nativity, a copy of which
occupies the middle compartment of this window, is in
the collection of the Duke of Rutland.

¹⁶ A notion prevails concerning this great painter,
that in the majority of his works the colours have entirely
faded and perished; but this is by no means the case;
far the greater part of his pictures have preserved their
original hue, and are in perfect preservation. Those
which have failed, have been mentioned again and again,
and thus have been multiplied in the imaginations of

Do not
think that
the change
is so much on the Pictures as on the Spirit
of the People

...
... to us materials so well adapted to our purpose,
that if we had the whole window of our own invention
and contrivance, we should not probably have succeeded
better."....

The original Picture of the Nativity, a copy of which
occupies the middle compartment of this window, is in
the collection of the Duke of Rutland.

³⁶ A notion prevails concerning this great painter,
that in the majority of his works the colours have entirely
faded and perished; but this is by no means the case:
far the greater part of his pictures have preserved their
original hue, and are in perfect preservation. Those
which have failed, have been mentioned again and again,
and thus have been multiplied in the imaginations of

*Do not
think that
the change
is so much on the Pictures as in the Spirit
of the People*

Schools, in company with his friend Mr. Metcalfe, he made a tour to the Netherlands

SUBJECTS.	PRICES.	PURCHASERS.
Venus, and a boy piping	250 Gs.	J. J. Angerstein, Esq.
Mrs. Siddons, in the character of the Tragic Muse.	700	N. Descamps, Esq.
The Infant Hercules in the Cradle. [A single figure, painted before the large picture.]	150	Earl Fitzwilliam.
Hercules, wrangling the serpents.	1500	Empress of Russia.
Cupid and Psyche	250	Charles Long, Esq.
Cymon and Iphigenia. [This was the last fancy-picture painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.]	—	In the collection of Lord Inchiquin.

*How much
did Barry get*

" In a Letter to Mr. Barenti, June 10, 1764. Dr. Johnson says— " Reynolds is without a rival, and continues to add thousands to thousands." Writing a few months afterwards to the same person, he says " Mr. Reynolds gets six thousand a year."

" In 1762 he spent some weeks in his native county, Devonshire, accompanied by Dr. Johnson. Of this visit, during which they were entertained at the seats of

which are now for the first time given to the world, have since his death acquired an additional value; for by the baleful success and ravages of the French plunderers, who since that period have desolated Europe, many of the most celebrated works of the Flemish School in the Netherlands (for I will not gratify our English republicans by calling it *Belgium*) have been either destroyed or carried away to that "OPPROBRIOUS DEN OF SHAME," which it is to be hoped no polished Englishman will ever visit.—Many of the pictures of Rubens being to be sold in 1783, in consequence of certain religious houses being suppressed by the Emperor, he again in that year visited Antwerp and Brussels, and devoted several days to contemplating the productions of that great painter.* On his return from his first tour,

* On viewing the pictures of Rubens a second time, they appeared much less brilliant than they had done on the former inspection. He could not for some time account for this circumstance; but when he recollected,

*Following
as he did
reminded
with Angelo
he never
could have
followed
Rubens*

ACCOUNT OF
 found among his pupils
 though unfinished, the
 ners and habits of
 his acquaintance. In
 marking the dawn
 of young persons, it
 probably enabled him
 such exquisite taste
 as one of his fa-
 ll the gestures of
 l that the reign
 titude commence
 e dancing-masters
 of his return
 " he contriv
 I may produce
 to Mr. Borwell,
 had passed thro'g
 Joshua Reynolds
 assigned by a coll
 ining for a boy

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. 133.

by the aid of an ear-trumpet * to partake of
 the conversation of his friends with great
 facility and address: and such was the se-
 renity of his temper, that what he did not
 hear, he never troubled those with whom he
 conversed, to repeat. To this gentle com-
 posture of mind, Goldsmith alluded, when
 in describing Sir Joshua Reynolds he employ-
 ed the epithet *blind*, a word eminently happy,
 and characteristick of his easy and placid
 manners; † but taking into our consideration

time near a stove, by which the damp vapours of that edi-
 fice were attracted, and affected his head. When in com-
 pany with only one person, he heard very well, without
 the aid of a trumpet.

* Le Sage, the celebrated author of *GILBLAS*, (as Mr.
 Spence mentions in his *ANECDOTES*.) though very deaf,
 enjoyed the conversation of his friends by the same means,
 (the aid of a *cornette*.) and was a very pleasing companion.

† See *REYALIATION*, a poem by Dr. Goldsmith, in
 which he has drawn the characters of several of his friends,
 in the form of epitaphs to be placed on their tombs:

* * * * *
 " Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
 " He has not left a wiser or better behind:

*A My Day
 To see down
 body, but
 bring his Pen
 & the Heaven
 as stopped*

s; and such was the
per, that what he did not
bled those with whom he
at. To this gentle com-
oldsmith alluded, when
shua Reynolds he employ-
a word eminently happy,
of his easy and placid
ing into our consideration

th the damp vapours of that edi-
ected his head. When in com-
s, he heard very well, without

ed author of GILBLAS, (as Mr.
NECDOTES,) though very deaf,
of his friends by the same means,
was a very pleasing companion.

a poem by Dr. Goldsmith, in
aracters of several of his friends,
be placed on their tombs :

*A My Dog
So can Every
body; but
bring Two Peo
& the Hearin
is Stopped*

at once the soundness of his understanding, and the mildness and suavity of his deportment, perhaps Horace's description of the amiable friend of the younger Scipio,—the *mitis sapientia Laeli*,²⁸ may convey to posterity

*which has
to Goldsmith
ought not to
have been de-
scribed
to such a
man.*

- " His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand ;
- " His manners were gentle, complying, and bland ;
- " Still keen to improve us in every part,
- " His pencil our faces, his manners our heart :
- " To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,—
- " When they judg'd without skill, he was still hard
of hearing ;
- " When they talk'd of their Raffaelles, Correggios,
and stuff,
- " He shifted his trumpet, and only took snuff."

These were the last lines the author wrote. He had written half a line more of this character, when he was seized with the nervous fever which carried him in a few days to the grave. He intended to have concluded with his own character.

²⁸ Even the classical reader may not perhaps immediately recollect in how many points these two celebrated persons resemble each other. Each of them certainly had some qualifications, to which the other had no pretensions; as Laelius knew nothing of painting, so our author had no claim either to the character of a military commander, or a distinguished orator. But the qualities which they possessed in common, are so numerous, as fully to justify the present juxtaposition.

Such Men
as Goldsmith
ought not to
have been Acquainted
tho' such Men
as Reynolds

... Florace's descri
amiable friend of the young
mitis sapientia Læli," may con

- " His pencil was striking, resist
- " His manners were gentle, cor
- " Still born to improve us in e
- " His pencil our faces, his ma
- " To coxcombs averse, yet n
- " When they judg'd without
of hearing ;
- " When they talk'd of their
and stuff,
- " He shifted his trumpet, a
- * * * *

These were the last lines th
... half a line more of thi

that he did not convert into something that bordered on a virtue, instead of pushing it to the confines of a vice.***

If our author was not much inclined to exchange the animated scenes of the metropolis, for the quiet and retirement of the country, yet when he was there, (and indeed in other situations, when not engaged in grave employments,) he was as playful as either Lælius or his illustrious friend, and would as readily have gathered pebbles on the sea-shore; and though he was not an orator, if his studies and pursuits had originally led him to a popular profession, and he had been obliged to address a public assembly, it is clear from his manners and his writings, that in the character of his eloquence he would have resembled the perspicuous and elegant Lælius, rather than the severe and vehement Galba. For the rest, the conformity is greater than at the first view may be supposed. As Lælius was the disciple and protector of Panætius, and the patron and companion of Lucilius, Sir Joshua Reynolds was the scholar and friend of Johnson, and the friend and benefactor of Goldsmith. What the illustrious Scipio was to Lælius, the all-knowing and all-accomplished Burke was to Reynolds. For the pleadings and *anecdota orationum* of the amiable Roman, we have the luminous, I had almost said, the *golden* Discourses of our author. As Lælius, admired and respected as he was, was repulsed from the consulate, Sir Joshua Reynolds, in consequence of an unhappy misunderstanding was forced for a short time to relinquish the Presidency of the Aca-

ments, he was
ous friend, and
the sea-shore;
studies and pu
profession, and
assembly, it is
that in in the
resembled the
the severe and
formity is great
As Lælius was
the patron and
nolds was the
friend and bene
Scipio was to
plished Burke
aureola orationis
minous, I had
author. As La
was repulsed fro
consequence of
for a short time

*It certainly
was here
ever more
like a god
than a
man
man*

will, I am confident, at a future period not be unacceptable. He usually rose about eight o'clock, breakfasted at nine, and was in his painting-room before ten. Here he generally employed an hour on some study, or on the subordinate parts of whatever portrait happened to be in hand; and from eleven the following five hours were devoted to those who sat for their pictures: with occasionally short intervals, during which he sometimes admitted the visit of a friend. Such was his love of his art, and such his ardour to excel, that he often declared he had, during the greater part of his life, laboured

to Generalize
to be an
Artist
to Particularize
is the Alone
Distinction
of Merit. General knowledge are those knowledge
that Artists possess

liberalization, is the great glory of the human mind, that indeed which most distinguishes man from other animals; and is the source of every thing that can be called science. I believe, his early acquaintance with Mr. Mudge of Exeter, a very learned and thinking man, and much inclined to philosophize in the spirit of the Platonists, disposed him to this habit. He certainly by that means liberalized in a high degree the theory of his own art; and if he had been more methodically instructed in the early part of life, and had possessed more leisure for study and reflection, he would in my opinion have pursued this method with great success.

OF
future period for
ally rose above
t nine, and was
ten. Here he
on some study,
s of whatever
nd; and from
s were devoted
ictures: with
luring which
t of a friend,
and such his
lared he had
fe, labourer
nd, that indeed
r animals; and
led science. I
dge of Essex,
ch inclined to
disposed his
beralized in
f he had been
e of life, and
reflection, he
ed with great

knowing

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

as hard with his pencil, as any mechanic working at his trade for bread." About two days in the week, during the winter, he dined abroad; once, and sometimes oftener, he had company at home by invitation; and during the remainder of the week he dined with his family, frequently with the addition of two or three friends. It must not be understood that the days of every week were thus regularly distributed by a fixed plan; but this was the general course. In the evenings, when not engaged by the Academy, or in some publick or private assembly, or at the theatre, he was fond of collecting a few friends at home, and joining in a party at whist, which was his favourite game.

²¹ An observation made by Dr. Johnson on Pope, is extremely applicable to our author, when employed in his painting-room. "He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure: he was never elevated into negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault uncorrected by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works, first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it." LIVES OF THE POETS, iv. 163.

*This is the same
not as before
has in the history
must be a good
Doubt.*

DS.

xcix

ny mechanick
is About two
e winter, he
times oftener,
vitation; and
week he dined
n the addition
ust not be un-
y week were

*The Man who does
not labour more
than the Hereling
must be a poor
Devil.*

cherished and enforced by those turbulent and unruly spirits among us, whom *no King could govern, nor no God could please*," and long before that book was written, frequently avowed his contempt of those "Adam-wits," who set at nought the accumulated wisdom of ages, and on all occasions are desirous of beginning the world anew. He did not live to see the accomplishment of almost every one of the predictions of the prophetick and philosophical work alluded to: happily for himself he did not live to partici-

* How justly may we apply the immediately following lines of the same great Poet, to these demagogues among us, who since the era above mentioned, have not only on all occasions gratuitously pleaded the cause of the enemies of their country with the zeal of fee'd advocates, but by every other mode incessantly endeavoured to debase and assimilate this *free and happy* country to the model of the *ferocious and enslaved* Republick of France!

- " These Adam-wits, too fortunately free,
- " Began to dream they wanted liberty;
- " And when no rule, no precedent was found
- " Of MEN, by laws less circumscrib'd and bound,
- " They led their wild desires to woods and caves,
- " And thought that all but SAVAGES were slaves."

*When France got free Europe twist folly & Anarchy
Were Savage folk to France & after Slaves.*

only on all occasions by
enemies of their country with the zeal of see'd advocates,
but by every other mode incessantly endeavoured to
debate and assimilate this *free and happy* country to the
model of the *ferocious and enslaved* Republick of France!

- “ These Adam-wits, too fortunately free,
- “ Began to dream they wanted liberty ;
- “ And when no rule, no precedent was found
- “ Of MEN, by laws less circumscribed and bound,
- “ They led their wild desires to woods and caves,
- “ And thought that all but SAVAGES were slaves.”

*When France got free Europe twist fools & knaves,
Were Savage first to France & after; Slaves,*

pate of the gloom which now saddens every virtuous bosom, in consequence of all the civilized States of Europe being shaken to their foundations by those "troublers of the poor world's peace," whom Divine Providence has been pleased to make the scourge of human kind. Gloomy as our prospect is, (on this account alone,*) and great as is the danger with which we are threatened, (I mean internally, for as to external violence, we are fully equal to any force which our

This whole
Book was
Written
to serve
Political
Purposes

* I say, on this account alone; because in all other respects England is at present in an unparalleled state of wealth and prosperity, though there is a temporary distress occasioned by the want of the ordinary circulating medium of commerce. It appears from authentick and indisputable documents, that the trade of England from 1784 to the present time, has doubled; and that our Exports in the year 1796 amounted to THIRTY MILLIONS; and it is well known that the rate of the purchase of land, contrary to the experience of all former wars, continues nearly as high as it was in the time of the most profound peace. These FACTS ought to be sounded from one end of England to the other, and furnish a complete answer to all the SEDITIOUS DECLARATIONS that have been, or shall be, made on this subject.

(on this a
danger w
mean *inte*
we are fu

*This Whole
Book was
Written
to Serve
Political
Purposes*

⁵⁹ I say, o
respects Eng
wealth and p
tress occasion
medium of co
indisputable d
1784 to the p
ports in the
LIONS; and i
chase of land
mer wars, con
of the most p
sounded from
nish a complete
TIONS that have

sicians the nature or seat of his disorder. During this period of great affliction to all his friends, his malady was by many supposed to be imaginary; and it was conceived, that, if he would but exert himself, he could shake it off. This instance, however, may serve to shew, that the patient best knows what he suffers, and that few long complain of bodily ailments without an adequate cause; for at length (but not till about a fortnight before his death) the seat of his disorder was found to be in his liver, of which the inordinate growth, as it afterwards appeared,⁴⁹ had incommoded all the functions of life; and of this disease, which he bore with the greatest fortitude and patience, he died, after a confinement of near three months, at his house in Leicester-Fields, on Thursday evening, Feb. 23, 1792.

⁴⁹ On his body being opened, his liver, which ought to have weighed about five pounds, was found to have increased to an extraordinary size, weighing nearly eleven pounds. It was also somewhat schirrous.

*When Sir Joshua Reynolds died
All Nature was degraded:
The King drop'd a Tear into the Queen's Bar:
And all his Pictures Faded.*

the greatest fortitude and patience, he died,
after a confinement of near three months, at
his house in Leicester-Fields, on Thursday
evening, Feb. 23, 1792.

On his body being opened, his liver, which ought to
have weighed about five pounds, was found to have in-
creased to an extraordinary size, weighing nearly eleven
pounds. It was also somewhat schirrous.

*When St Joshua Reynolds died
All Nature was degraded:
The King drop'd a Tear into the Queens Par:
And all his Pictures Faded.*

mony, and his pall being borne up by three Dukes, two Marquesses, and five other noblemen.⁴⁴

A. Hook

⁴⁴ The following account of the ceremonial was written by a friend the day after the funeral, and published in several of the News-papers.

⁴⁵ On Saturday last, at half an hour after three o'clock, was interred the body of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knt. Doctor of Laws in the Universities of Oxford and Dublin, Principal Painter to his Majesty, President of the Royal Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, Fellow of the Royal Society, and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

⁴⁶ He was interred in the vast crypt of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, next to the body of Dr. Newton, late Bishop of Bristol, himself an eminent crick in Poetry and Painting, and close by the tomb of the famous Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of that great edifice.

⁴⁷ The body was conveyed on the preceding night to the Royal Academy, according to the express orders of his Majesty, by a condescension highly honourable to the memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and gratifying to the wishes of that Society of eminent Artists. It lay that night, and until the beginning of the funeral procession, in state, in the Model-Room of the Academy.

⁴⁸ The company who attended the funeral, assembled in the Library and Council-Chamber; the Royal Academy in the Exhibition-Room.

⁴⁹ The company consisted of a great number of the most

cxii

by three
ve other

A Mock

"Had success at any thing, made,
 "quarrels, especially to the point and
 "free reason of his whole life. He had
 "been the beginning of his nobility and
 "the view of his dissoluteness, and he con-
 "templated it with the same contempt,
 "which looking over the same, impurity,
 "and trifles of his life, and in one respect
 "adherence to the will of Providence,
 "could become. In this situation he had
 "every consideration from family inclinations,
 "which his own husband had indeed well
 "observed."

"Sir John Keppel was, an very many
 "accounts, one of the most memorable men
 "of his time. He was the first English-
 "man, who added the prize of the August
 "arts to the other graces of his country.
 "In taste, in genius, in faculty, in happy
 "invention, and in the richness and harmony
 "of expressing, he was equal to the great
 "masters of the immortal age. In the

"then he went beyond them, for he com-
 "menced in the description of the art,
 "in which English artists are the most suc-
 "cessful, a variety, a fancy, and a dignity
 "derived from the higher faculties, which
 "even those who professed them as a sci-
 "ence, did not always preserve, when
 "they descended to the practice of the
 "art. His portraits earned the applause of the
 "historians of Italy, and the anxiety of
 "landscapes. His painting portraits, he ap-
 "peared not to be satisfied upon that point,
 "but to descend to a more a higher sphere.
 "His paintings illustrate his lessons, and
 "his lessons seem to be derived from his
 "paintings."

"He possessed the theory as perfectly as
 "the practice of his art. To be such a
 "painter, he was a profound and penetrating
 "philosopher.
 "Is full affluence of foreign and domestic

received.

“ Sir Joshua Reynolds was, on very many
“ accounts, one of the most memorable men
“ of his time. He was the first English-
“ man, who added the praise of the elegant
“ arts to the other glories of his country.
“ In taste, in grace, in facility, in happy
“ invention, and in the richness and harmony
“ of colouring, he was equal to the great
“ masters of the renowned ages. In Por-

Handwritten notes in cursive script, including the number '3' and various phrases.

th that entire composure,
ut the innocence, integrity,
his life, and an unaffected
ie will of Providence,
n this situation he had
from family tenderness,
ndness had indeed well

olds was, on very many
e most memorable men
was the first English-
e praise of the elegant
ries of his country,
n facility, in happy
richness and harmony
s equal to the great
ned ages. In Por-

love for 3 Bunker
Ay or any of the
New York Peckham
re Family Quorum
any one would just

“ even those
“ perior manner, did
“ when they delineat
“ His Portraits remin
“ invention of histor
“ landscape. In pai
“ peared not to be rais
“ but to descend to i
“ His paintings illu
“ his lessons seem
“ paintings.

He possessed the
“ the practice of h
“ painter, he was a
“ philosopher.

“ In full affluence

from the
direct view of his disson
emplated it with that entire com
which nothing but the innocence, integrity,
fidelity of his life, and an unaffected
mission to the will of Providence,
ld bestow. In this situation he had
consolation from family tenderness,
h his own kindness had indeed well
ved.

Joshua Reynolds was, on very many
nts, one of the most memorable men
time. He was the first English-
ho added the praise of the elegant
the other glories of his country,
in grace, in facility, in happy
n, and in the richness and harmony
ring, he was equal to the great
of the renowned ages. In Por-

3
of a picture for 15 weeks
or check any or any of the
used to show the picture
of J. J. Family Guernsey
with a list of any one word

Book was Purchased by Mrs. J. J. Guernsey

“ His Po
“ invention
“ landscape.
“ peared not
“ but to des
“ His painti
“ his lesson
“ paintings.

He posse
“ the pract
“ painter, h
“ philosoph

“ In full :

ected
Providence,
tion he had
tenderness,
indeed well

very many
orable men
t English-
the elegant
s country,
in happy
d harmony
the great
In Por-

3 *Some*
any of the
is Puck
only four
word

even those who professed them in
perior manner, did not always pre
when they delineated individual r
His Portraits remind the spectator
invention of history, and the ame
landscape. In painting portraits,
peared not to be raised upon that pl
but to descend to it from a higher
His paintings illustrate his less
his lessons seem to be derived
paintings.

He possessed the theory as p
the practice of his art. To
painter, he was a profound and
philosopher.

In full affluence of foreign an

Consider Reynolds's Discourses to the Royal Academy
as the Simulations of the Opposite side
particularly where he means to Betray. His Praise
of Raphael is like the Historic Emile of Revenge
by Softness & Candour, the hidden trap. &
the poisoned feast. He praises Michael Angelo
for Qualities which Michael Angelo Abhorred. &
He blames Raphael for the only Qualities which
Raphael Valued. Whether Reynolds knew what
he was doing, is nothing to me; the Mischief is
not the same, whether a Man does it knowingly
or knowingly. I always considered True Art
& True Artists to be particularly Insulted &
Degraded by the Reputation of these Discourses
as much as they were Degraded by the Reputation
of Reynolds's Paintings. & that such Artists
as Reynolds, are at all times Moved by the
Satanic, for the Deprepression of Art
A Prelerence of Art. To Destroy Art

Academy
to
Praise
age
&
clo
&
think
what
is
rantly
st
&
res
tion
the
t
t

The following is a copy
of the original of the
Discourse of the
Royal Academy of
Paris, which has not been
before published in
any Language.

TO
THE MEMBERS

of the
Academy of the Arts in
Paris.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

GENTLEMEN,

THAT you have ordered the publi-
cation of this discourse, is not only very
flattering to me, as it implies your approba-
tion of the method of study which I have
recommended; but likewise, as this method
receives from that act such an additional
weight and authority, as demands from the
Students that deference and respect, which

B 2

to give the Advice

of the
Academy
of the
Arts
in
Paris
to
publish
this
Discourse
in
French
&
Latin
in
1704

*The History of the Royal Academy of Arts is a sufficient
testimony for the Successors of the
the Right of the same which has not been
Ought, not the History of the Academy to be
in future Ages. They will & shall*

TO

THE MEMBERS

*To which when your own seal is stamped depend,
on your Preservation of the Arts & your*

OF

THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

Fall will depend on your ^{their} Neglect & Dependence

GENTLEMEN, *What your Fear is your own*

GENTLEMEN,

THAT you have ordered the publication of this discourse, is not only very flattering to me, as it implies your approbation of the method of study which I have recommended; but likewise, as this method receives from that act such an additional weight and authority, as demands from the Students that deference and respect, which

B 2

too wise to take this Advice

OF
ROYAL ACADEMY.
MEN,
AT you have ordered the publi

[10]

can be due only to the united sense of so considerable a BODY of ARTISTS.

I am,

With the greatest esteem and respect,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most humble,

and obedient Servant,

JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

*The Rich Men of England form themselves into a
Society to Sell & Not to Buy Pictures
The Artist who does not throw his contempt on
such Trading Exhibitions. does not know either
his own Interest or his Duty.*

*When Nature grows Old. The Arts grow Cold
And Commerce settles on every Tree
And the Poor & the Old can live upon Gold
For all are Born Poor. Aged Sixty three*

so con-

espect,

OLDS,

at m
ceter

old

old

ze

Handwritten notes at the top of the page, including the word 'Discourse' and other illegible text.

DISCOURSE I.

THE ADVANTAGES PROCEEDING FROM THE INSTITUTION OF A ROYAL ACADEMY.—HINTS OFFERED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE PROFESSORS AND VISITORS;—THAT AN IMPLICIT OBEEDIENCE TO THE RULES OF ART BE EXACTED FROM THE YOUNG STUDENTS;—THAT A PREMATURE DISPOSITION TO A MASTERLY DEERTRITY BE REPRISED;—THAT DILIGENCE BE CONSTANTLY RECOMMENDED, AND (THAT IT MAY BE EFFECTUAL) DIRECTED TO ITS PROPER OBJECT.

GENTLEMEN,

AN Academy, in which the Polite Arts may be regularly cultivated, is at last opened among us by Royal Munificence. This must appear an event in the highest degree interesting, not only to the Artists, but to the whole nation.

It is indeed difficult to give any other reason, why an empire like that of BRITAIN should so long have wanted an ornament so suitable to its greatness, than that slow progression of things, which naturally

The Inquiry in England is not whether a Man has Talents, & Genius; But whether he is Polite & Polite & a Virtuous Arts, & obedient to Noblemen's Opinions in Art & Science. If he is; he is a Good Man; If Not he must be Starved

effect

en re-
mer-
such
row
no
res;
hese

who
on,
tes
a
w
n-

l-
s
s
f
e

THE FIRST DISCOURSE.

7

perhaps, been times, when even the influence of MAJESTY would have been ineffectual; and it is pleasing to reflect, that we are thus embodied, when every circumstance seems to concur from which honour and prosperity can probably arise.

There are, at this time, a greater number of excellent artists than were ever known before at one period in this nation; there is a general desire among our Nobility to be distinguished as lovers and judges of the Arts; there is a greater superfluity of wealth among the people to reward the professors; and, above all, we are patronized by a Monarch, who, knowing the value of science and of elegance, thinks every art worthy of his notice, that tends to soften and humanise the mind.

After so much has been done by His MAJESTY, it will be wholly our fault, if our progress is not in some degree correspondent to the wisdom and generosity of the Institution: let us shew our gratitude in our diligence, that, though our merit may not

3 Farthings

east, our

ortion of
that the
tribute to
rts, and
t, which
emplate

cademy
o direct
for the
tre the
k, and
may be

By
t idea
accu-
be at
ucted
ch us
udent
which
es in

ascertaining; and, satisfied with their effect, is spared the painful investigation by which they came to be known and fixed. How many men of great natural abilities have been lost to this nation, for want of these advantages! They never had an opportunity of seeing those masterly efforts of genius, which at once kindle the whole soul, and force it into sudden and irresistible approbation.

Raffaello, it is true, had not the advantage of studying in an Academy; but all Rome, and the works of Michael Angelo in particular, were to him an Academy. On the sight of the Capella Sistina, he immediately from a dry, Gothick, and even insipid manner, which attends to the minute accidental discriminations of particular and individual objects, assumed that grand style of painting, which improves partial representation by the general and invariable ideas of nature.

Every seminary of learning may be said to be surrounded with an atmosphere of floating knowledge, where every mind may

I do not believe that Raphael taught Michelangelo what he taught. Raphael's style is more than I believe that the Pope teaches the artist how to draw. I do not believe the tales of ancient wisdom when they imitate as usual.

Individual Character

s, and
which
mplate

ademy
direct
for the
re the
c, and
may be
By
at idea
e accu-
be at
ted

lost to the nature
tages! They n
seeing those mas
at once kindle t
into sudden and

Raffaelle, it
vantage of stu
all Rome, and th
in particular,
On the sight
immediately fro
insipid manner,
accidental discrim
individual object
of painting, wh
sentation by the s
of nature. tree

*Minute
Discrimination
is Not Accidental
All Sublimity
is founded on
Minute
Discrimination*

lake at

soul, and force it
: approbation.

had not the ad- I do not believe
an Academy; but that Raphael taught
f Michael Angelo Mich. Angelo or that
in an Academy. Mich. Ang. taught
pella Sistina, he Raphael., and
thick, and even more than I
nds to the minute believe that the
of particular and Rose teaches the
that grand style Lilly how to grow
res partial repre- or the Apple tree
l invariable ideas teaches the Pear
or Fruit. I do not believe the
nders when they militate against
ing may be said Individual
a atmosphere of Character
every mind may

ad not the ad- I do not believe
n Academy; but that Rafael taught
Michael Angelo Mich. Angelo or that
n an Academy. Mich. Ang: taught
ella Sistina, he Rafael., any
thick, and even more than I
ls to the minute believe that the
particular and Rose teaches the
hat grand style Lilly how to grow

at once kindle the whole soul, and force it into sudden and irresistible approbation.

Raffaële, it is true, had not the advantage of studying in an Academy; but all Rome, and the works of Michael Angelo in particular, were to him an Academy. On the sight of the Capella Sistina, he immediately from a dry, Gothick, and even insipid manner, which attends to the minute accidental discriminations of particular and individual objects, assumed that grand style of painting, which improves partial representation by the general and invariable ideas of nature.

*Minute
Discrimination
of particular
objects in
the
Manner
of Representation*

*I do not believe
that Raphael taught
Mich. Angelo or that
Mich. Ang. taught
Raphael. Any
more than I
believe that the
Rose teaches the
Lilly how to grow
or the Apple tree
teaches the Pear
tree how to bear
Fruit.*

Every seminary of learning may be said to be surrounded with an atmosphere of floating knowledge, where every mind may

*I do not believe the
Individual
Character*

such a favourable opinion of my associates in this undertaking, it would ill become me to dictate to any of them. But as these Institutions have so often failed in other nations; and as it is natural to think with regret, how much might have been done, I must take leave to offer a few hints, by which those errors may be rectified, and those defects supplied. These the Professors and Visitors may reject or adopt as they shall think proper.

I would chiefly recommend, that an implicit obedience to the *Rules of Art*, as established by the practice of the great MASTERS, should be exacted from the young Students. That those models, which have passed through the approbation of ages, should be considered by them as perfect and infallible guides; as subjects for their imitation, not their criticism.

*Imitation
is Criticism*

I am confident, that this is the only efficacious method of making a progress in the Arts; and that he who sets out with doubting, will find life finished before he becomes

chiefly recommend, and
obedience to the *Rules of Art*, as
by the practice of the great Masters
should be exacted from the young
that those models, which have
through the approbation of ages,
been considered by them as perfect and
inimitable; as subjects for their imita-
tion and criticism.

Imitation
is Criticism

It is evident, that this is the only efficacy
of making a progress in the
art, that he who sets out with doubt-
ful life finished before he becomes

The Directors ought more particularly to watch over the genius of those Students, who, being more advanced, are arrived at that critical period of study, on the nice management of which their future turn of taste depends. At that age it is natural for them to be more captivated with what is brilliant, than with what is solid, and to prefer splendid negligence to painful and humiliating exactness.

A facility in composing,—a lively, and what is called a masterly, handling of the chalk or pencil, are, it must be confessed, captivating qualities to young minds, and become of course the objects of their ambition. They endeavour to imitate those dazzling excellencies, which they will find no great labour in attaining. After much time spent in these frivolous pursuits, the difficulty will be to retreat; but it will be then too late; and there is scarce an instance of return to scrupulous labour, after the mind has been debauched and deceived by this fallacious mastery.

weak and
pples the

to break
Poet ex-

art,

when
It is
its ut-
possibly
destroy
the

brilliant, than
prefer splendid negligence to painful and
humiliating exactness.

A facility in composing,—a lively, and
what is called a masterly, handling of
the chalk or pencil, are, it must be confessed,
captivating qualities to young minds, and
become of course the objects of their ambi-
tion. They endeavour to imitate those
dazzling excellencies, which they will find
no great labour in attaining. After much
time spent in these frivolous pursuits, the
difficulty will be to retreat; but it will be
then too late; and there is scarce an instance
of return to scrupulous labour, after the mind
has been debauched and deceived by this
fallacious mastery.

*by the present day is with the
to an in to understand him to mean that Fault
is copying, is a dangerous pursuit a Fault
is copying, is the Greatest Power of Art & Nature
to None but the Greatest Artists in a The Most
Abundant, Determination in Determinate*

By this useless industry they are excluded from all power of advancing in real excellence. Whilst boys, they are arrived at their utmost perfection; they have taken the shadow for the substance; and make the mechanical felicity the chief excellence of the art, which is only an ornament, and of the merit of which few but painters themselves are judges.

*Mechanical
Excellence
is the Only
Vehicle
of Genius*

This seems to me to be one of the most dangerous sources of corruption; and I speak of it from experience, not as an error which may possibly happen, but which has actually infected all foreign Academies. The directors were probably pleased with this premature dexterity in their pupils, and praised their dispatch at the expence of their correctness.

*This is
all
False
& Self-
Contradictory*

But young men have not only this frivolous ambition of being thought masters of execution, inciting them on one hand, but also their natural sloth tempting them on the other. They are terrified at the prospect before them, of the toil required to attain

*Execution
is the
Chariot
of Genius*

exactness. The impetuosity of youth is disgusted at the slow approaches of a regular siege, and desires, from mere impatience of labour, to take the citadel by storm. They wish to find some shorter path to excellence, and hope to obtain the reward of eminence by other means than those, which the indispensable rules of art have prescribed. They must therefore be told again and again, that labour is the only price of solid fame, and that whatever their force of genius may be, there is no easy method of becoming a good Painter.

*Long is all
Laziness
destruction
Truth &
Labour
jumbled
together*

When we read the lives of the most eminent Painters, every page informs us, that no part of their time was spent in dissipation. Even an increase of fame served only to augment their industry. To be convinced with what persevering assiduity they pursued their studies, we need only reflect on their method of proceeding in their most celebrated works. When they conceived a subject, they first made a variety of sketches, then a finished drawing of the whole; after that a more correct drawing of every separate part,

*Richard
Painters say
that Raphael
died of
Dissipation
Alonzo
is one
thing &
Dissipation
Another*

*He who has Nothing to Dissipate Cannot Dissipate
The Weak Man may be Virtuous enough but will
Never be an Artist
Painters are noted for being Dissipated & Wile.*

impetuosity of youth is
now approaches of a regular
from mere impatience of
citadel by storm. They
order path to excellence,
the reward of eminence
those, which the indis-
have prescribed. They
d again and again, that
vice of solid fame, and
orce of genius may be.

*This is all
Self-Contradictory!
Truth &
Falshood
jumbled
together*

This is False
 —heads, hands, feet, and pieces of drapery; they then painted the picture, and after all re-touched it from the life. The pictures, thus wrought with such pains, now appear like the effect of enchantment, and as if some mighty Genius had struck them off at a blow.

Excellent
 But, whilst diligence is thus recommended to the Students, the Visitors will take care that their diligence be effectual; that it be well directed, and employed on the proper object. A Student is not always advancing because he is employed; he must apply his strength to that part of the art where the real difficulties lie; to that part which distinguishes it as a liberal art; and not by mistaken industry lose his time in that which is merely ornamental. The Students, instead of vying with each other which shall have the readiest hand, should be taught to contend who shall have the purest and most correct out-line; instead of striving which shall produce the brightest tint, or, curiously trifling, shall give the gloss of stuffs, so as to appear real, let their ambition be directed to contend, which shall dispose his drapery in the most

This is False

—heads, hands, feet, and pieces of drapery; they then painted the picture, and after all re-touched it from the life. The pictures, thus wrought with such pains, now appear like the effect of enchantment, and as if some mighty Genius had struck them off at a blow.

But, whilst diligence is thus recommended to the Students, the Visitors will take care that their diligence be effectual; that it be well directed, and employed on the proper

pery
er all
ures,
pear
some
low.
ded
care
be
per
ing
his
real
in-
by
ch
ad
ve
id
ct
-
-
r
.

graceful folds, which shall give the most grace and dignity to the human figure.

I must beg leave to submit one thing more to the consideration of the Visitors, which appears to me a matter of very great consequence, and the omission of which I think a principal defect in the method of education pursued in all the Academies I have ever visited. The error I mean is, that the students never draw exactly from the living models which they have before them. It is not indeed their intention; nor are they directed to do it. Their drawings resemble the model only in the attitude. They change the form according to their vague and uncertain ideas of beauty, and make a drawing rather of what they think the figure ought to be, than of what it appears. I have thought this the obstacle that has stopped the progress of many young men of real genius; and I very much doubt, whether a habit of drawing correctly what we see, will not give a proportionable power of drawing correctly what we imagine. He who endeavours to copy nicely the figure

VOL. I.

c

*This is
Admirable
said. Who
does he not
always allow
as much*

Excellent

before him, not only acquires a habit of exactness and precision, but is continually advancing in his knowledge of the human figure; and though he seems to superficial observers to make a slower progress, he will be found at last capable of adding (without running into capricious wildness) that grace and beauty, which is necessary to be given to his more finished works, and which cannot be got by the moderns, as it was not acquired by the ancients, but by an attentive and well compared study of the human form.

What I think ought to enforce this method is, that it has been the practice (as may be seen by their drawings) of the great Masters in the Art. I will mention a drawing of Raffaele, *The Dispute of the Sacrament*, the print of which, by Count Cailus, is in every hand. It appears, that he made his sketch from one model; and the habit he had of drawing exactly from the form before him appears by his making all the figures with the same cap, such as his model then happened to wear; so servile a

Excellent

before him, not only acquires a habit of exactness and precision, but is continually advancing in his knowledge of the human figure; and though he seems to superficial observers to make a slower progress, he will be found at last capable of adding (without running into capricious wildness) that grace and beauty, which is necessary to be given to his more finished works, and which cannot be got by the moderns, as it was not acquired by the ancients, but by an attentive and well compared study of the human form.

What I think ought to enforce this method is, that it has been the practice (as may be seen by their drawings) of the great Masters in the Art. I will mention a drawing of Raffaele, *The Dispute of the Sacrament*, the print of which, by Count Cailus, is in every hand. It appears, that he made his sketch from one model; and the habit he had of drawing exactly from the form before him appears by his making all the figures with the same cap, such as his model then happened to wear; so servile a

The Labours Works of Journey men
employed by Correggio. Titian Veronesi
& all the Venetians ought not to be
shewn to the Young Artist as the Works
of Original Conception any more
than the Engravings of Stramp
Bartolozzi or Woodlett. They
are Works of Manual Labour



DISCOURSE II.

THE COURSE AND ORDER OF STUDY.—THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF ART.—MUCH COPYING DISCOURTANANCED.—THE ARTIST AT ALL TIMES AND IN ALL PLACES SHOULD BE EMPLOYD IN LAYING UP MATERIALS FOR THE EXERCISE OF HIS ART.

*What is Layn
up materials
but Copying*

GENTLEMEN,

I Congratulate you on the honour which you have just received. I have the highest opinion of your merits, and could wish to show my sense of them in something which possibly may be more useful to you than barren praise. I could wish to lead you into such a course of study as may render your future progress answerable to your past improvement; and, whilst I applaud you for what has been done, remind you how much yet remains to attain perfection.

I flatter myself, that from the long experience I have had, and the unceasing assiduity with which I have pursued those

general preparation for whatever species of the art the student may afterwards choose for his more particular application. The power of drawing, modelling, and using colours, is very properly called the Language of the art; and in this language, the honours you have just received prove you to have made no inconsiderable progress.

When the Artist is once enabled to express himself with some degree of correctness, he must then endeavour to collect subjects for expression; to amass a stock of ideas, to be combined and varied as occasion may require. He is now in the second period of study, in which his business is to learn all that has been known and done before his own time. Having hitherto received instructions from a particular master, he is now to consider the Art itself as his master. He must extend his capacity to more sublime and general instructions. Those perfections which lie scattered among various masters, are now united in one general idea, which is henceforth to regulate his taste, and enlarge his imagination. With a variety of

After having been a Fool a Student is to amass a Stock of Ideas & knowing himself to be a Fool he is to assume the right to put other Mens Ideas into his Possessory

models thus before him, he will avoid that narrowness and poverty of conception which attends a bigotted admiration of a single master, and will cease to follow any favourite where he ceases to excel. This period is, however, still a time of subjection and discipline. Though the Student will not resign himself blindly to any single authority, when he may have the advantage of consulting many, he must still be afraid of trusting his own judgment, and of deviating into any track where he cannot find the footsteps of some former master.

*Instead of
Following
One Great
Master
he is to
follow a
Great Many
Fools*

The third and last period emancipates the Student from subjection to any authority, but what he shall himself judge to be supported by reason. Confiding now in his own judgment, he will consider and separate those different principles to which different modes of beauty owe their original. In the former period he sought only to know and combine excellence, wherever it was to be found, into one idea of perfection: in this, he learns, what requires the most attentive survey and the most subtle disquisi-

tion,
com

H
as he
whol
as ex
rule
Cor
ance
the
corre
is s
wha
have
ing
stor
fear
min
indi
veni
extr
long
imp
atte
str

of former adventurers, is always apt to over-rate his own abilities; to mistake the most trifling excursions for discoveries of moment, and every coast new to him, for a new-found country. If by chance he passes beyond his usual limits, he congratulates his own arrival at those regions which they who have steered a better course have long left behind them.

*Contemptible
Mocks*

The productions of such minds are seldom distinguished by an air of originality: they are anticipated in their happiest efforts; and if they are found to differ in any thing from their predecessors, it is only in irregular sallies, and trifling conceits. The more extensive therefore your acquaintance is with the works of those who have excelled, the more extensive will be your powers of invention; and what may appear still more like a paradox, the more original will be your conceptions. But the difficulty on this occasion is to determine what ought to be proposed as models of excellence, and who ought to be considered as the properest guides.

*Thus Reynolds
Depreciates
the Efforts
of Inventive
Genius
Infling Conceits
are better
than Colours
without any
meaning
at all*

I consider general copying as a delusive kind of industry; the Student satisfies himself with the appearance of doing something; he falls into the dangerous habit of imitating without selecting, and of labouring without any determinate object; as it requires no effort of the mind, he sleeps over his work; and those powers of invention and composition which ought particularly to be called out, and put in action, lie torpid, and lose their energy for want of exercise.

*This is
most False
for no one
can ever
Design till
he has learn'd
the Language
of Art by
making
many
Finished
Copies both*

How incapable those are of producing any thing of their own, who have spent much of their time in making finished copies, is well known to all who are conversant with our art.

*of Nature & Art & of whatever comes in his way
from Earliest Childhood*

*The difference between a bad Artist & a Good one is
The Bad Artist Seems to Copy a great deal. The
Good one Really Does Copy a great deal*

to himself
appearance
passions

The g
useful,
colour;
fectly at
before y
be form
tures wi
tion, an
discover,
the artifi
expedient
raised the
nature ha

I mus
pictures
louring,
varnish,
they do
tion in th
or young
ment is

VOL.

to himself sufficient knowledge of the appearances of nature, the operations of the passions, and the incidents of life.

The great use in copying, if it be at all useful, should seem to be in learning to colour; yet even colouring will never be perfectly attained by servilely copying the model before you. An eye critically nice can only be formed by observing well-coloured pictures with attention: and by close inspection, and minute examination, you will discover, at last, the manner of handling, the artifices of contrast, glazing, and other expedients, by which good colourists have raised the value of their tints, and by which nature has been so happily imitated.

I must inform you, however, that old pictures deservedly celebrated for their colouring, are often so changed by dirt and varnish, that we ought not to wonder if they do not appear equal to their reputation in the eyes of unexperienced painters, or young students. An artist whose judgment is matured by long observation, con-

Contemptible

Servile

Copying is

the Great

Moment of

Copying

siders rather what the picture once was, than what it is at present. He has by habit acquired a power of seeing the brilliancy of tints through the cloud by which it is obscured. An exact imitation, therefore, of those pictures, is likely to fill the student's mind with false opinions; and to send him back a colourist of his own formation, with ideas equally remote from nature and from art, from the genuine practice of the masters, and the real appearances of things.

Following these rules, and using these precautions, when you have clearly and distinctly learned in what good colouring consists, you cannot do better than have recourse to nature herself, who is always at hand, and in comparison of whose true splendour the best coloured pictures are but faint and feeble.

*Consensus -
Every Eye
sees differently* *As the Eye - such the Object*

However, as the practice of copying is not entirely to be excluded, since the mechanical practice of painting is learned in some measure by it, let those choice parts only be selected which have recommended the

work to notice. If its excellence consists in its general effect, it would be proper to make slight sketches of the machinery and general management of the picture. Those sketches should be kept always by you for the regulation of your stile. Instead of copying the touches of those great masters, copy only their conceptions. Instead of treading in their footsteps, endeavour only to keep the same road. Labour to invent on their general principles and way of thinking. Possess yourself with their spirit. Consider with yourself how a Michael Angelo or a Raffaele would have treated this subject: and work yourself into a belief that your picture is to be seen and criticised by them when completed. Even an attempt of this kind will rouse your powers.

But as mere enthusiasm will carry you but a little way, let me recommend a practice that may be equivalent to and will perhaps more efficaciously contribute to your advancement, than even the verbal corrections of those masters themselves, could they be obtained. What I would propose is, that you should

*General Principle
Again:
Unless You
Consult Particulars, You
Cannot even
know or see
Mich. Ang. or Raphael
or any Thing Else*

*Meer Enthusiasm is the All in All!
Bacons Philosophy has Ruind England
Bacon is only Epicurus over again*

tarily to a tribunal where he knows his vanity must be humbled, and all self-approbation must vanish, requires not only great resolution, but great humility. To him, however, who has the ambition to be a real master, the solid satisfaction which proceeds from a consciousness of his advancement, (of which seeing his own faults is the first step,) will very abundantly compensate for the mortification of present disappointment. There is, besides, this alleviating circumstance. Every discovery he makes, every acquisition of knowledge he attains, seems to proceed from his own sagacity; and thus he acquires a confidence in himself sufficient to keep up the resolution of perseverance.

We all must have experienced how lazily, and consequently how ineffectually, instruction is received when forced upon the mind by others. Few have been taught to any purpose, who have not been their own teachers. We prefer those instructions which we have given ourselves, from our affection to the instructor; and they are more effectual, from being received into the mind at the very

True

attention of the student. And I think those who travel would do well to allot a much greater portion of their time to that city, than it has been hitherto the custom to bestow.

In this art, as in others, there are many teachers who profess to shew the nearest way to excellence; and many expedients have been invented by which the toil of study might be saved. But let no man be seduced to idleness by specious promises. Excellence is never granted to man, but as the reward of labour. It argues indeed no small strength of mind to persevere in habits of industry, without the pleasure of perceiving those advances; which, like the hand of a clock, whilst they make hourly approaches to their point, yet proceed so slowly as to escape observation. A facility of drawing, like that of playing upon a musical instrument, cannot be acquired but by an infinite number of acts. I need not, therefore, enforce by many words the necessity of continual application; nor tell you that the port-crayon ought to be for ever in your hands. Various methods will occur to you by which this

True

attention of the student. And I think those who travel would do well to allot a much greater portion of their time to that city, than it has been hitherto the custom to bestow.

In this art, as in others, there are many teachers who profess to shew the nearest way to excellence; and many expedients have been invented by which the toil of study might be saved. But let no man be seduced to idleness by specious promises. Excellence is never granted to man, but as the reward of labour. It argues indeed no small strength of mind to persevere in habits of industry, without the pleasure of perceiving those advances; which, like the hand of a clock, whilst they make hourly approaches to their point, yet proceed so slowly as to escape observation. A facility of drawing, like that of playing upon a musical instrument, cannot be acquired but by an infinite number of acts. I need not, therefore, enforce by many words the necessity of continual application; nor tell you that the port-crayon ought to be for ever in your hands. Various methods will occur to you by which this

True

power may be acquired. I would particularly recommend, that after your return from the Academy, (where I suppose your attendance to be constant,) you would endeavour to draw the figure by memory. I will even venture to add, that by perseverance in this custom, you will become able to draw the human figure tolerably correct, with as little effort of the mind as is required to trace with a pen the letters of the alphabet.

*Good
Advice*

That this facility is not unattainable, some members in this Academy give a sufficient proof. And be assured, that if this power is not acquired whilst you are young, there will be no time for it afterwards: at least the attempt will be attended with as much difficulty as those experience, who learn to read or write after they have arrived to the age of maturity.

But while I mention the port-crayon as the student's constant companion, he must still remember, that the pencil is the instrument by which he must hope to obtain eminence. What, therefore, I wish to impress upon you

Nonsense

power may be acquired. I would particularly recommend, that after your return from the Academy, (where I suppose your attendance to be constant,) you would endeavour to draw the figure by memory. I will even venture to add, that by perseverance in this custom, you will become able to draw the human figure tolerably correct, with as little effort of the mind as is required to trace with a pen the letters of the alphabet.

*Good
Advice*

That this facility is not unattainable, some members in this Academy give a sufficient proof. And be assured, that if this power is not acquired whilst you are young, there will be no time for it afterwards: at least the attempt will be attended with as much difficulty as those experience, who learn to read or write after they have arrived to the age of maturity.

But while I mention the port-crayon as the student's constant companion, he must still remember, that the pencil is the instrument by which he must hope to obtain eminence. What, therefore, I wish to impress upon you

Nonsense

is, that whenever an opportunity offers, you paint your studies instead of drawing them. This will give you such a facility in using colours, that in time they will arrange themselves under the pencil, even without the attention of the hand that conducts it. If one act excluded the other, this advice could not with any propriety be given. But if Painting comprises both drawing and colouring, and if by a short struggle of resolute industry, the same expedition is attainable in painting as in drawing on paper, I cannot see what objection can justly be made to the practice; or why that should be done by parts, which may be done all together.

If we turn our eyes to the several Schools of Painting, and consider their respective excellencies, we shall find that those who excel most in colouring, pursued this method. The Venetian and Flemish schools, which owe much of their fame to colouring, have enriched the cabinets of the collectors of drawings, with very few examples. Those of Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoret, and the Bassans, are in general slight and undeter-

*because
they could
not draw*

mined. Their sketches on paper are as rude as their pictures are excellent in regard to harmony of colouring. Correggio and Baroccio have left few, if any finished drawings behind them. And in the Flemish school, Rubens and Vandyck made their designs for the most part either in colours, or in chiaro oscuro. It is as common to find studies of the Venetian and Flemish Painters on canvass, as of the schools of Rome and Florence on paper. Not but that many finished drawings are sold under the names of those masters. Those, however, are undoubtedly the productions either of engravers or of their scholars, who copied their works.

These instructions I have ventured to offer from my own experience; but as they deviate widely from received opinions, I offer them with diffidence; and when better are suggested, shall retract them without regret.

There is one precept, however, in which I shall only be opposed by the vain, the ignorant, and the idle. I am not afraid that I shall repeat it too often. You must have no

*All the Pictures
said to be by
these Men
are the
Labour and
fabrication
of Journey-
work*

*They could
not draw*

and often catches the most pleasing hints from subjects of turbulence or deformity. Even bad pictures themselves supply him with useful documents; and, as Lionardo da Vinci has observed, he improves upon the fanciful images that are sometimes seen in the fire, or are accidentally sketched upon a discoloured wall.

The Artist who has his mind thus filled with ideas, and his hand made expert by practice, works with ease and readiness; whilst he who would have you believe that he is waiting for the inspirations of Genius, is in reality at a loss how to begin; and is at last delivered of his monsters, with difficulty and pain.

The well-grounded painter, on the contrary, has only maturely to consider his subject, and all the mechanical parts of his art follow without his exertion. Conscious of the difficulty of obtaining what he possesses, he makes no pretensions to secrets, except those of closer application. Without conceiving the smallest jealousy against

*a Stroke
at
Mortimer*

others, he is contented that all shall be as great as himself, who have undergone the same fatigue; and as his pre-eminence depends not upon a trick, he is free from the painful suspicions of a juggler, who lives in perpetual fear lest his trick should be discovered.

The Man who expects that there is no such
 Thing as *Submits* in Arts & that every Thing
 which is *Indivisible* & *Determinate* has not
 been told this by Practice but by *Experiment*
 & *Vision* because *Reason* is *Indivisible* &
Perfect & he *Opines* that without *Experience*
 Every Thing being *Definite* & *Determinate*
 is *Principled* alone by *Comparative*
Strength & *Weakness* in the *Making*
 out of the *Form*. I say these
 Principles could never be found
 out by the Study of *Nature*
 without *Con* or *Small* *Success*

A work of Genius is a Work "Not to"
"be obtained by the Invocation of Memory"
" & her Syren Daughters. but by Devout"
" Prayer to that Eternal-Spirit. who can"
" enrich with all utterance & knowledge "
" & send out his Seraphim with the hallow'd"
" fire of his Altar to touch & purify the "
" lips of Whom he pleases." Milton

The following ^{Discourse} ~~Discourse~~ is particularly interesting
to Blockheads. as it endeavours to prove
That there is No such thing as Inspiration
& that any Man of a plain Understanding
may by Theiving from Others. become
a Much Argued

them, when I recommended the diligent study of the works of our great predecessors; but I at the same time endeavoured to guard them against an implicit submission to the authority of any one master however excellent: or by a strict imitation of his manner, precluding themselves from the abundance and variety of Nature. I will now add that Nature herself is not to be too closely copied. There are excellencies in the art of painting beyond what is commonly called the imitation of nature: and these excellencies I wish to point out. The students who, having passed through the initiatory exercises, are more advanced in the art, and who, sure of their hand, have leisure to exert their understanding, must now be told, that a mere copier of nature can never produce any thing great; can never raise and enlarge the conceptions, or warm the heart of the spectator.

The wish of the genuine painter must be more extensive: instead of endeavouring to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations, he must endeavour to im-

*Without Minute Neatness of Execution. The
Sublime cannot exist: Grandeur of Ideas
is founded on Precision of Ideas*

“ He,” says Proclus*, “ who takes for his
 “ model such forms as nature produces, and
 “ confines himself to an exact imitation of
 “ them, will never attain to what is perfectly
 “ beautiful. For the works of nature are full
 “ of disproportion, and fall very short of the
 “ true standard of beauty. So that Phidias,
 “ when he formed his Jupiter, did not copy
 “ any object ever presented to his sight ; but
 “ contemplated only that image which he
 “ had conceived in his mind from Homer’s
 “ description.” And thus Cicero, speaking
 of the same Phidias : “ Neither did this
 “ artist,” says he, “ when he carved the
 “ image of Jupiter or Minerva, set before
 “ him any one human figure, as a pattern,
 “ which he was to copy ; but having a
 “ more perfect idea of beauty fixed in his
 “ mind, this he steadily contemplated, and
 “ to the imitation of this all his skill and
 “ labour were directed.”

The Moderns are not less convinced than
 the Ancients of this superior power existing
 in the art ; nor less sensible of its effects.

* Lib. 2. in Timæum Platonis, as cited by Junius de
 Pictura Veterum. R.

*I wish
 that this
 was True*

*And such
 is the
 Colours
 with which
 Raphael
 speaks.
 And such is
 his industry
 —
 Invention
 Admiration
 is the first
 Principle
 of Knowledge
 & its Last*

Every language has adopted terms expressive of this excellence. The *gusto grande* of the Italians, the *beau ideal* of the French, and the *great style, genius, and taste* among the English, are but different appellations of the same thing. It is this intellectual dignity, they say, that ennobles the painter's art; that lays the line between him and the mere mechanick; and produces those great effects in an instant, which eloquence and poetry, by slow and repeated efforts, are scarcely able to attain.

And such is the warmth with which both the Ancients and Moderns speak of this divine principle of the art; but, as I have formerly observed, enthusastick admiration seldom promotes knowledge. Though a student by such praise may have his attention roused, and a desire excited, of running in this great career; yet it is possible that what has been said to excite, may only serve to deter him. He examines his own mind, and perceives there nothing of that divine inspiration, with which, he is told, so many others have been favoured. He never tra-

And such is the Colours with which Reynolds speaks!

And such is his Innocency

Enthusiastic Admiration is the first Principle of Knowledge & its last

Now he begins to Degrade to Deny & to Mock

The Man who on Examining his own Mind

finds nothing of Inspiration ought not to dare to be an Artist he is a Fool. & a cunning Knave suited to the Purpose of Evil Demons

others, he is contented that all shall be as great as himself, who have undergone the same fatigue; and as his pre-eminence depends not upon a trick, he is free from the painful suspicions of a juggler, who lives in perpetual fear lest his trick should be discovered.

The Man who is perswaded that there is no such
 Thing as softness in Arts & that every Thing
 which is Definite & Determinate has not
 been lost this by Practice but by Separation
 & Vision knows Vision is Determinate &
 Perfect & he Copies that without Fatigue
 every Thing being Definite & Determinate
 softness is Produced alone by Comparative
 Strength & Weakness in the Marking
 out of the Forms. I say These
 Principles could never be found
 out by the Study of Nature
 without Care or Inmate Success

Every language has adopted terms expressive of this excellence. The *gusto grande* of the Italians, the *beau ideal* of the French, and the *great style, genius, and taste* among the English, are but different appellations of the same thing. It is this intellectual dignity, they say, that ennobles the painter's art; that lays the line between him and the mere mechanick; and produces those great effects in an instant, which eloquence and poetry, by slow and repeated efforts, are scarcely able to attain.

And such is the Colours with which Reynolds speaks!

And such is his Invention

Invention
Admiration
is the first Principle of Knowledge & its Last

Such is the warmth with which both the Ancients and Moderns speak of this divine principle of the art; but, as I have formerly observed, enthusastick admiration seldom promotes knowledge. Though a student by such praise may have his attention roused, and a desire excited, of running in this great career; yet it is possible that what has been said to excite, may only serve to deter him. He examines his own mind, and perceives there nothing of that divine inspiration, with which, he is told, so many others have been favoured. He never tra-

Now he begins to Degrade to Demy to Mock

The Man who on Examining his own Mind

finds nothing of Inspiration ought not to dare to be an Artist he is a Fool. & a cunning Knave suited to the Purposes of Evil Demons

The man who
never in his
ideas & thoughts
travels to

Heaven

is the Artist

It is indeed
that Reynolds

is not none but

is to be

in the Arts

in order to

this, he calls

all others

Vague

Enthusiasts

or Madmen

What has

Reasoning

to do with

the Art
of Painting?

56
velled to heaven to gather new ideas; and he finds himself possessed of no other qualifications than what mere common observation and a plain understanding can confer. Thus he becomes gloomy amidst the splendour of figurative declamation, and thinks it hopeless, to pursue an object which he supposes out of the reach of human industry.

Artists who
are above
a plain
understanding
are those
who
are the
Providence
of the
World

But on this, as upon many other occasions, we ought to distinguish how much is to be given to enthusiasm, and how much to reason. We ought to allow for, and we ought to commend, that strength of vivid expression, which is necessary to convey, in its full force, the highest sense of the most complete effect of art; taking care at the same time, not to lose in terms of vague admiration, that solidity and truth of principle, upon which alone we can reason, and may be enabled to practise.

It is not easy to define in what this great style consists; nor to describe, by words, the proper means of acquiring it, if the mind of the student should be at all capable

of su
taste
long
neith
ble r
of d
say
to c
nat
car
ring
bea
lie
ma
Ex
wh
en
fir
w
pe
th
at
t
r
a
i

of such an acquisition. Could we teach taste or genius by rules, they would be no longer taste and genius. But though there neither are, nor can be, any precise invariable rules for the exercise, or the acquisition, of these great qualities, yet we may truly say, that they always operate in proportion to our attention in observing the works of nature, to our skill in selecting, and to our care in digesting, methodizing, and comparing our observations. There are many beauties in our art, that seem, at first, to lie without the reach of precept, and yet may easily be reduced to practical principles. Experience is all in all; but it is not every one who profits by experience; and most people err, not so much from want of capacity to find their object, as from not knowing what object to pursue. This great ideal perfection and beauty are not to be sought in the heavens, but upon the earth. They are about us, and upon every side of us. But the power of discovering what is deformed in nature, or in other words, what is particular and uncommon, can be acquired only by experience; and the whole beauty and grandeur

*The Man who
Does not know
what Object
to Pursue
is an Idiot*

A Lie

A Lie

A Lie

A Folly

of the art consists, in my opinion, in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind.

Singular & Particular Detail is the Foundation of the

All the objects which are exhibited to our *Sublime* view by nature, upon close examination will be found to have their blemishes and defects.

Knowledge

The most beautiful forms have something about them like weakness, minuteness, or imperfection. But it is not every eye that perceives these blemishes. It must be an eye long used to the contemplation and com- *Minuteness is their*

of

parison of these forms; and which by a long habit of observing what any set of objects of the same kind have in common, has ac- *Whole Beauty*

Ideal

quired the power of discerning what each wants in particular. This long laborious comparison should be the first study of the painter, who aims at the greatest style. By

Beauty. is

this means, he acquires a just idea of beautiful forms; he corrects nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect.

Not to be

His eye being enabled to distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things, from their general figures, he makes out an abstract idea of their forms

Acquired

Born with him. they are *truly* himself. The

It is Born

Man who says that we have No Innate

with us

Ideas must be a Fool & Knave. Having

Innate

No Con-Science or Innate Science

Ideas are

in Every

Man

Born with him

they are

Himself

The

Man who says

that we have

No Innate

Ideas must be

a Fool & Knave. Having

A Folly

of the art consists, in my opinion, in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind.

Singular & Particular Detail is the Foundation of the

All the objects which are exhibited to our *Sublime* view by nature, upon close examination will be found to have their blemishes and defects.

Knowledge

of

Ideal

Beauty. is

Not to be

Acquired

It is Born

with us

Innate

Ideas. are

in Every

Man

The most beautiful forms have something about them like weakness, minuteness, or *Minuteness* imperfection. But it is not every eye that *is true* perceives these blemishes. It must be an *Whole Beauty* eye long used to the contemplation and comparison of these forms; and which by a long habit of observing what any set of objects of the same kind have in common, has acquired the power of discerning what each wants in particular. This long laborious comparison should be the first study of the painter, who aims at the greatest style. By this means, he acquires a just idea of beautiful forms; he corrects nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect. His eye being enabled to distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things, from their general figures, he makes out an abstract idea of their forms

Born with him they are truly Himself The
Man who says that we have No Innate
Ideas must be a Fool or Knave. Having
No Con-Science or Innate Science

more
 wha
 sign
 to a
 sect
 the
 duct
 He
 has
 worl
 cour
 equa

Th
 which
 the
 side,
 prodi
 sesse
 ator,
 living
 this ic
 but th
 it hin
 every

*One Central
Form
Composed of
all other
Forms
being granted
it does not
herefore
follow that
all other
Forms are
Deformity*

*All Forms
are Perfect
in the Poets
Mind. but
they are not
Abstracted nor
Compoundd
from Nature
but are from
Imagination*

Thus it is from a reiterated experience, and a close comparison of the objects in nature, that an artist becomes possessed of the idea of that central form, if I may so express it, from which every deviation is deformity. But the investigation of this form, I grant, is painful, and I know but of one method of shortening the road; this is, by a careful study of the works of the ancient sculptors; who, being indefatigable in the school of nature, have left models of that perfect form behind them, which an artist would prefer as supremely beautiful, who had spent his whole life in that single contemplation. But if industry carried them thus far, may not you also hope for the same reward from the same labour? we have the same school opened to us, that was opened to them; for nature denies her instructions to none, who desire to become her pupils.

This laborious investigation, I am aware, must appear superfluous to those who think every thing is to be done by felicity, and the powers of native genius. Even the

great Bacon treats with ridicule the idea of confining proportion to rules, or of producing beauty by selection. "A man cannot tell, (says he,) whether Apelles or Albert Durer were the more trifler: whereof the one would make a personage by geometrical proportions; the other, by taking the best parts out of divers faces, to make one excellent. . . . The painter, (he adds,) must do it by a kind of felicity, . . . and not by rule*."

It is not safe to question any opinion of so great a writer, and so profound a thinker, as undoubtedly Bacon was. But he studies brevity to excess; and therefore his meaning is sometimes doubtful. If he means that beauty has nothing to do with rule, he is mistaken. There is a rule, obtained out of general nature, to contradict which is to fall into deformity. Whenever any thing is done beyond this rule, it is in virtue of some other rule which

* ESSAYS, p. 252, edit. 1625.

What is General Nature is then such a thing what is General knowledge then such a thing. All knowledge is Particular

*The good painter
has called I
call him the
little painter
says that
every thing
must be done
by Experiment
his first journey
is without such
Method. The
is like a
full of
ambiguity
a knowledge*

is followed along with it, but which does not contradict it. Every thing which is wrought with certainty, is wrought upon some principle. If it is not, it cannot be repeated. If by felicity is meant any thing of chance or hazard, or something born with a man, and not earned, I cannot agree with this great philosopher. Every object which pleases must give us pleasure upon some certain principles: but as the objects of pleasure are almost infinite, so their principles vary without end, and every man finds them out, not by felicity or successful hazard, but by care and sagacity.

To the principle I have laid down, that the idea of beauty in each species of beings is an invariable one, it may be objected, that in every particular species there are various central forms, which are separate and distinct from each other, and yet are undeniably beautiful; that in the human figure, for instance, the beauty of Hercules is one, of the Gladiator another, of the Apollo another; which makes so many different ideas of beauty.

Here he
loves soft
of a Central
Form & it
gets into
Many
Central
Forms

It is true, indeed, that these figures are each perfect in their kind, though of different characters and proportions; but still none of them is the representation of an individual, but of a class. And as there is one general form, which, as I have said, belongs to the human kind at large, so in each of these classes there is one common idea and central form, which is the abstract of the various individual forms belonging to that class. Thus, though the forms of childhood and age differ exceedingly, there is a common form in childhood, and a common form in age, which is the more perfect, as it is more remote from all peculiarities. But I must add further, that though the most perfect forms of each of the general divisions of the human figure are ideal, and superior to any individual form of that class; yet the highest perfection of the human figure is not to be found in any one of them. It is not in the Hercules, nor in the Gladiator, nor in the Apollo; but in that form which is taken from them all, and which partakes equally of the activity of the Gladiator, of the delicacy of the Apollo, and of the

Every
Class is
Individual

There is no
End to the
Follies of
this Man
Childhood

& Age are
Equally
belonging
to Every
Class

Here he
comes again
to his
Central Form

It is true, indeed, that these figures are each perfect in their kind, though of different characters and proportions; but still none of them is the representation of an individual, but of a class. And as there is one general form, which, as I have said, belongs to the human kind at large, so in each of these classes there is one common idea and central form, which is the abstract of the various individual forms belonging to that class. Thus, though the forms of childhood and age differ exceedingly, there is a common form in childhood, and a common form in age, which is the more perfect, as it is more remote from all peculiarities. But I must add further, that though the most perfect forms of each of the general divisions of the human figure are ideal, and superior to any individual form of that class; yet the highest perfection of the human figure is not to be found in any one of them. It is not in the Hercules, nor in the Gladiator, nor in the Apollo; but in that form which is taken from them all, and which partakes equally of the activity of the Gladiator, of the delicacy of the Apollo, and of the

Every
Class is
Individual

There is no
End to the
Follies of
this Man
Childhood

& Age are
Equally
belonging
to Every
Class

Here he
comes again
to his

Central Form

muscular strength of the Hercules. For perfect beauty in any species must combine all the characters which are beautiful in that species. It cannot consist in any one to the exclusion of the rest: no one, therefore, must be predominant, that no one may be deficient.

The knowledge of these different characters, and the power of separating and distinguishing them, is undoubtedly necessary to the painter, who is to vary his compositions with figures of various forms and proportions, though he is never to lose sight of the general idea of perfection in each kind.

There is, likewise, a kind of symmetry, or proportion, which may properly be said to belong to deformity. A figure lean or corpulent, tall or short, though deviating from beauty, may still have a certain union of the various parts, which may contribute to make them on the whole not displeasing.

When the Artist has by diligent attention

*The Symmetry
of Deformity
is a Pretty
Follery
Can any
Man who*

*Thinks. Talk so? Learning or Fatness is not
Deformity but Reynolds's thought & Character
is itself Extravagance & Deformity
Age & Youth are not Clashes but Distinctions
Each Clashes are Learning & Fatness*

acquired a clear and distinct idea of beauty and symmetry; when he has reduced the variety of nature to the abstract idea; his next task will be to become acquainted with the genuine habits of nature, as distinguished from those of fashion. For in the same manner, and on the same principles, as he has acquired the knowledge of the real forms of nature, distinct from accidental deformity, he must endeavour to separate simple chaste nature, from those adventitious, those affected and forced airs or actions, with which she is loaded by modern education.

Perhaps I cannot better explain what I mean, than by reminding you of what was taught us by the Professor of Anatomy, in respect to the natural position and movement of the feet. He observed, that the fashion of turning them outwards was contrary to the intent of nature, as might be seen from the structure of the bones, and from the weakness that proceeded from that manner of standing. To this we may add the erect position of the head, the projection of the chest, the walking with straight knees, and

*Mad
Folly*

nature; he must divest himself of all prejudices in favour of his age or country; he must disregard all local and temporary ornaments, and look only on those general habits which are every where and always the same, he addresses his works to the people of every country and every age, he calls upon posterity to be his spectators, and says with Zeuxis, *in æternitatem pingo.*

The neglect of separating modern fashions from the habits of nature, leads to that ridiculous style which has been practised by some painters, who have given to Grecian Heroes the airs and graces practised in the court of Lewis the Fourteenth; an absurdity almost as great as it would have been to have dressed them after the fashion of that court.

To avoid this error, however, and to retain the true simplicity of nature, is a task more difficult than at first sight it may appear. The prejudices in favour of the fashions and customs that we have been used to, and which are justly called a second

Generations
in every
the Man
look to a
Fool to
a Country
Fool

the sense, to divide the attention, and to counteract his great design of speaking to the heart.

This is the ambition which I wish to excite in your minds; and the object I have had in my view, throughout this discourse, is that one great idea, which gives to painting its true dignity, which entitles it to the name of a Liberal Art, and ranks it as a sister of poetry.

It may possibly have happened to many young students, whose application was sufficient to overcome all difficulties, and whose minds were capable of embracing the most extensive views, that they have, by a wrong direction originally given, spent their lives in the meaner walks of painting, without ever knowing there was a nobler to pursue. Albert Durer, as Vasari has justly remarked, would, probably, have been one of the first painters of his age, (and he lived in an era of great artists,) had he been initiated into those great principles of the art, which were so well understood and practised by his contem-

What does this mean "Would have been" one of the first painters of his age? Albert Durer is not would have been: Besides, let them look at Gothic Figures & Gothic Buildings. & not talk of Dark Ages, or of any Age: Ages are All Equal. But Genius

the sense, to divide the attention, and to counteract his great design of speaking to the heart.

This is the ambition which I wish to excite in your minds; and the object I have had in my view, throughout this discourse, is that one great idea, which gives to painting its true dignity, which entitles it to the name of a Liberal Art, and ranks it as a sister of poetry.

It may possibly have happened to many young students, whose application was sufficient to overcome all difficulties, and whose minds were capable of embracing the most extensive views, that they have, by a wrong direction originally given, spent their lives in the meaner walks of painting, without ever knowing there was a nobler to pursue. Albert Durer, as Vasari has justly remarked, would, probably, have been one of the first painters of his age, (and he lived in an era of great artists,) had he been initiated into those great principles of the art, which were so well understood and practised by his contem-

What does this mean "Would have been" one of the first painters of his age? Albert Durer is! Not would have been: Besides, let them look at Gothic Figures & Gothic Buildings, & not talk of Dark Ages or of any age: Ages are all Equal. But Genius

the general forms of things. A firm and determined outline is one of the characteristics of the great style in painting; and let me add, that he who possesses the knowledge of the exact form which every part of nature ought to have, will be fond of expressing that knowledge with correctness and precision in all his works.

a Noble Sentence

Here is a Sentence which overthrows all his Book

To conclude; I have endeavoured to reduce the idea of beauty to general principles: and I had the pleasure to observe that the Professor of Painting proceeded in the same method, when he shewed you that the artifice of contrast was founded but on one principle. I am convinced that this is the only means of advancing science; of clearing the mind from a confused heap of contradictory observations, that do but perplex and puzzle the student, when he compares them, or misguide him if he gives himself up to their authority: bringing them under one general head, can alone give rest and satisfaction to an inquisitive mind.

in Bacon's Philosophy makes both States all sorts of Truth & Knowledge

The Two Following Discourses ^{are} Paraphras'd
Calculated for the Settling Ignorance
& Vulgar Artists, as Models of
Execution in Art. Let him
who will follow such advice
I will not. I know that The
Mans Execution is as his Conception
& No better

General
Ideas
again

This exertion of mind, which is the only circumstance that truly ennobles our Art, makes the great distinction between the Roman and Venetian schools. I have formerly observed that perfect form is produced by leaving out particularities, and retaining only general ideas: I shall now endeavour to shew that this principle, which I have proved to be metaphysically just, extends itself to every part of the Art; that it gives what is called the *grand style*, to Invention, to composition, to Expression, and even to Colouring and Drapery.

All but
Names
of Persons
& Places
is Invention
both in
Poetry
& Painting

Invention in Painting does not imply the invention of the subject; for that is commonly supplied by the Poet or Historian. With respect to the choice, no subject can be proper that is not generally interesting. It ought to be either some eminent instance of heroick action, or heroick suffering. There must be something either in the action, or in the object, in which men are universally concerned, and which powerfully strikes upon the publick sympathy.

Strictly speaking, indeed, no subject can

as in the conception of this ideal picture, the mind does not enter into the minute peculiarities of the dress, furniture, or scene of action ; so when the Painter comes to represent it, he contrives those little necessary concomitant circumstances in such a manner, that they shall strike the spectator no more than they did himself in his first conception of the story.

I am very ready to allow, that some circumstances of minuteness and particularity frequently tend to give an air of truth to a piece, and to interest the spectator in an extraordinary manner. Such circumstances therefore cannot wholly be rejected : but if there be any thing in the Art which requires peculiar nicety of discernment, it is the disposition of these minute circumstantial parts ; which, according to the judgement employed in the choice, become so useful to truth, or so injurious to grandeur.

*Here is
Nonsense!*

However, the usual and most dangerous error is on the side of minuteness ; and therefore I think caution most necessary where most have failed. The general idea consti-

tutes real excellence. All smaller things, however perfect in their way, are to be sacrificed without mercy to the greater. The Painter will not enquire what things may be admitted without much censure: he will not think it enough to shew that they may be there; he will shew that they must be there; that their absence would render his picture maimed and defective.

*Sacrifice the
Part. What
becomes of
the Whole*

Thus, though to the principal group a second or third be added, and a second and third mass of light, care must be yet taken that these subordinate actions and lights, neither each in particular, nor all together, come into any degree of competition with the principal; they should merely make a part of that whole which would be imperfect without them. To every kind of painting this rule may be applied. Even in portraits, the grace, and, we may add, the likeness, consists more in taking the general air, than in observing the exact similitude of every feature.

*How
Ignorant
is this man*

Thus figures must have a ground

to have been of a low stature : a Painter ought not so to represent him. Agesilaus was low, lame, and of a mean appearance: none of these defects ought to appear in a piece of which he is the hero. In conformity to custom, I call this part of the art History Painting; it ought to be called Poetical, as in reality it is.

All this is not falsifying any fact; it is taking an allowed poetical licence. A painter of portraits retains the individual likeness; a painter of history shews the man by shewing his actions. A painter must compensate the natural deficiencies of his art. He has but one sentence to utter, but one moment to exhibit. He cannot, like the poet or historian, expatiate, and impress the mind with great veneration for the character of the hero or saint he represents, though he lets us know at the same time, that the saint was deformed, or the hero lame. The Painter has no other means of giving an idea of the dignity of the mind, but by that external appearance which grandeur of thought does generally, though not always, impress on the countenance; and

*If he does
not shew the
Man as well
as the Action
he is a poor
Artist*

by that correspondence of figure to sentiment and situation, which all men wish, but cannot command. The Painter, who may in this one particular attain with ease what others desire in vain, ought to give all that he possibly can, since there are so many circumstances of true greatness that he cannot give at all. He cannot make his hero talk like a great man; he must make him look like one. For which reason, he ought to be well studied in the analysis of those circumstances, which constitute dignity of appearance in real life.

*Here he
allows an
Analysis
of Circumstances*

As in Invention, so likewise in Expression, care must be taken not to run into particularities. Those expressions alone should be given to the figures which their respective situations generally produce. Nor is this enough; each person should also have that expression which men of his rank generally exhibit. The joy, or the grief of a character of dignity, is not to be expressed in the same manner as a similar passion in a vulgar face. Upon this principle, Bernini, perhaps, may be subject to censure. This

tribute. Grandeur of effect is produced by two different ways, which seem entirely opposed to each other. One is, by reducing the colours to little more than chiara oscuro, which was often the practice of the Bolognian schools; and the other, by making the colours very distinct and forcible, such as we see in those of Rome and Florence; but still, the presiding principle of both those manners is simplicity. Certainly, nothing can be more simple than monotony; and the distinct blue, red, and yellow colours which are seen in the draperies of the Roman and Florentine schools, though they have not that kind of harmony which is produced by a variety of broken and transparent colours, have that effect of grandeur which was intended. Perhaps these distinct colours strike the mind more forcibly, from there not being any great union between them; as martial musick, which is intended to rouse the nobler passions, has its effect from the sudden and strongly marked transitions from one note to another, which that style of musick requires; whilst in that which is intended to move the softer passions, the notes imperceptibly melt into one another.

*There are
Fine
& Just
Notions
Why does
he not
always allow
as much*

*Excellent
Remarks*

In the same manner as the historical Painter never enters into the detail of colours, so neither does he debase his conceptions with minute attention to the discriminations of Drapery. It is the inferior style that marks the variety of stuffs. With him, the cloathing is neither woollen, nor linen, nor silk, sattin, or velvet: it is drapery; it is nothing more. The art of disposing the foldings of the drapery makes a very considerable part of the painter's study. To make it merely natural, is a mechanical operation, to which neither genius or taste are required; whereas, it requires the nicest judgement to dispose the drapery, so that the folds shall have an easy communication, and gracefully follow each other, with such natural negligence as to look like the effect of chance, and at the same time shew the figure under it to the utmost advantage.

*I do not
believe
that
Carlo*

Carlo Maratti was of opinion, that the disposition of drapery was a more difficult art than even that of drawing the human figure; that a Student might be more easily taught the latter than the former; as the rules of

*Maratti thought so or that anybody
can think so. The Drapery is formed
alone by the Shape of the Naked*

all professing to depart from the great purposes of painting, and catching at applause by inferior qualities.

I am not ignorant that some will censure me for placing the Venetians in this inferior class, and many of the warmest admirers of painting will think them unjustly degraded; but I wish not to be misunderstood. Though I can by no means allow them to hold any rank with the nobler schools of painting, they accomplished perfectly the thing they attempted. But as mere elegance is their principal object, as they seem more willing to dazzle than to effect, it can be no injury to them to suppose that their practice is useful only to its proper end. But what may heighten the elegant may degrade the sublime. There is a simplicity, and I may add, severity, in the great manner, which is, I am afraid, almost incompatible with this comparatively sensual style.

Tintoret, Paul Veronese, and others of the Venetian school, seem to have painted with no other purpose than to be admired for

*They accomplish
nothing
is to Elegance
they have
not a
spark*

their skill and expertness in the mechanism of painting, and to make a parade of that art, which, as I before observed, the higher style requires its followers to conceal.

In a conference of the French Academy, at which were present Le Brun, Sebastian Bourdon, and all the eminent Artists of that age, one of the academicians desired to have their opinion on the conduct of Paul Veronese, who, though a Painter of great consideration, had, contrary to the strict rules of art, in his picture of Perseus and Andromeda, represented the principal figure in shade. To this question no satisfactory answer was then given. But I will venture to say, that if they had considered the class of the Artist, and ranked him as an ornamental Painter, there would have been no difficulty in answering
 “ —It was unreasonable to expect what was
 “ never intended. His intention was solely
 “ to produce an effect of light and shadow;
 “ every thing was to be sacrificed to that
 “ intent, and the capricious composition of
 “ that picture suited very well with the
 “ style which he professed.”

*This is not
 a Satisfactory
 Answer.
 To produce
 an Effect*

*of True Light & Shadow is necessary to
 the Ornamental Style for which altogether depends
 on the Independence of Form. The Venetian
 ought not to be called the Ornamental Style*

Young minds are indeed too apt to be captivated by this splendour of style; and that of the Venetians is particularly pleasing; for by them, all those parts of the Art that gave pleasure to the eye or sense, have been cultivated with care, and carried to the degree nearest to perfection. The powers exerted in the mechanical part of the Art have been called *the language of Painters*; but we may say, that it is but poor eloquence which only shews that the orator can talk. Words should be employed as the means, not as the end: language is the instrument, conviction is the work.

The Language
of Painters
cannot be
allowed them
if Reynolds
says right
at p. 97
he here
says that

The language of Painting must indeed be allowed these masters; but even in that, they have shewn more copiousness than choice, and more luxuriancy than judgement. If we consider the uninteresting subjects of their invention, or at least the uninteresting manner in which they are treated; if we attend to their capricious composition, their violent and affected contrasts, whether of figures or of light and shadow, the richness of their drapery, and at the same time, the

The Venetian will not correspond with the Great Style
The Greek Genes are in the same Style as the
Greek Statues.

mean effect which the discrimination of stuffs gives to their pictures; if to these we add their total inattention to expression; and then reflect on the conceptions and the learning of Michael Angelo, or the simplicity of Raffaele, we can no longer dwell on the comparison. Even in colouring, if we compare the quietness and chastity of the Bolognese pencil to the bustle and tumult that fills every part of a Venetian picture, without the least attempt to interest the passions, their boasted art will appear a mere struggle without effect; *a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.*

Such as suppose that the great style might happily be blended with the ornamental, that the simple, grave and majestick dignity of Raffaele could unite with the glow and bustle of a Paolo, or Tintoret, are totally mistaken. The principles by which each is attained are so contrary to each other, that they seem, in my opinion, incompatible, and as impossible to exist together, as that in the mind the most sublime ideas and the lowest sensuality should at the same time be united.

*What can
be better
said on
this Subject.
but Reynolds
contradicts
what he
says
continually.*

*He makes little conceivom. that he may
take great Advantages*

bly necessary to grandeur, that of one complete whole. However contradictory it may be in geometry, it is true in taste, that many little things will not make a great one. The Sublime impresses the mind at once with one great idea ; it is a single blow : the Elegant indeed may be produced by repetition ; by an accumulation of many minute circumstances.

However great the difference is between the composition of the Venetian, and the rest of the Italian schools, there is full as great a disparity in the effect of their pictures as produced by colours. And though in this respect the Venetians must be allowed extraordinary skill, yet even that skill, as they have employed it, will but ill correspond with the great style. Their colouring is not only too brilliant, but, I will venture to say, too harmonious, to produce that solidity, steadiness, and simplicity of effect, which heroick subjects require, and which simple or grave colours only can give to a work. That they are to be cautiously studied by those who are ambitious

*Somebody else
wrote this page
for Reynolds
I think to
Barry or
Lucchi
wrote it
or dictated it*

of treading the great walk of history, is confirmed, if it wants confirmation, by the greatest of all authorities, Michael Angelo. This wonderful man, after having seen a picture by Titian, told Vasari who accompanied him *, " that he liked much his " colouring and manner;" but then he added, " that it was a pity the Venetian " painters did not learn to draw correctly in " their early youth, and adopt a better man- " ner of study."

inattention
attention is
to a Contempt
& Neglect
of Form
Itself
& to the
Destruction
of all Form
or Outline
Purposely &
Intentionally

By this it appears, that the principal attention of the Venetian painters, in the opinion of Michael Angelo, seemed to be engrossed by the study of colours, to the neglect of the ideal beauty of form, or propriety of expression. But if general censure was given to that school from the sight of a picture of Titian, how much more heavily and more justly, would the censure fall on

as if
Mich. Ang.
had seen
but one
Picture
of Titian

* Dicendo, che molto gli piaceva il colorito suo, e la maniera; ma che era un peccato, che a Venezia non s'imparasse da principio a disegnare bene, e che non avevano que' pittori miglior modo nello studio. Vas. tom. iii. p. 226. Vita di Tiziano.

Mich. Ang. knew & despised
all that Titian could do

on the Venetian Painter

He makes the lame to walk, we all agree
But then he strives to blind those who can see.

Paolo Veronese, and more especially on Tintoret? And here I cannot avoid citing Vasari's opinion of the style and manner of Tintoret. "Of all the extraordinary geni-
 "uses *," says he, "that have practised the
 "art of painting, for wild, capricious, ex-
 "travagant and fantastical inventions, for
 "furious impetuosity and boldness in the
 "execution of his work, there is none like
 "Tintoret; his strange whimsies are even
 "beyond extravagance, and his works seem
 "to be produced rather by chance, than in
 "consequence of any previous design,
 "as if he wanted to convince the world that
 "the art was a trifle, and of the most easy
 "attainment."

For my own part, when I speak of the

* Nelle cose della pittura, stravagante, capriccioso, presto, e risoluto, et il più terribile cervello, che habbia havuto mai la pittura, come si può vedere in tutte le sue opere; e ne' componimenti delle storie, fantastiche, e fatte da lui diversamente, e fuori dell' uso degli altri pittori: anzi hà superato la stravaganza, con le nuove, e capricciose inventioni, e strani ghiribizzi del suo intelletto, che ha lavorato a caso, e senza disegno, quasi monstrando che quest' arte è una baia.

H 2

*A Pair of Stays to mend the Shape
 Of crooked Humpy Woman:
 Put on O Venus! now thou art
 Quite a Venetian Roman.*

*If the Venetian
 Outlines were kept
 his Shadows
 would distort
 it & deform
 its appearance*

Titian as well as the other Venetian is far from that rational spirit which always is the character of vulgar simplicity

Venetian painters, I wish to be understood to mean Paolo Veronese and Tintoret, to the exclusion of Titian; for though his style is not so pure as that of many other of the Italian schools, yet there is a sort of senatorial dignity about him, which, however awkward in his imitators, seems to become him exceedingly. His portraits alone, from the nobleness and simplicity of character which he always gave them, will entitle him to the greatest respect, as he undoubtedly stands in the first rank in this branch of the art.

Why should Titian & the Venetians be named in a discourse on Art such Idiots are not Artists

It is not with Titian, but with the seducing qualities of the two former, that I could wish to caution you against being too much captivated. These are the persons who may be said to have exhausted all the powers of florid eloquence, to debauch the young and unexperienced; and have, without doubt, been the cause of turning off the attention of the connoisseur and of the patron of art, as well as that of the painter, from those higher excellencies of which the art is capable, and which ought to be re-

Venetians; all thy colouring is no more than Bouldered Plasters on a Crooked Whore.

quired in every considerable production. By them, and their imitators, a style merely ornamental has been disseminated throughout all Europe. Rubens carried it to Flanders; Voet to France; and Lucca Giordano, to Spain and Naples.

The Venetian is indeed the most splendid of the schools of elegance; and it is not without reason, that the best performances in this lower school are valued higher than the second rate performances of those above them: for every picture has value when it has a decided character, and is excellent in its kind. But the student must take care not to be so much dazzled with this splendour, as to be tempted to imitate what must ultimately lead from perfection. Poussin, whose eye was always steadily fixed on the Sublime, has been often heard to say, "That a particular attention to colouring was an obstacle to the Student, in his progress to the great end and design of the art; and that he who attaches himself to this principal end, will acquire by

*Vulgarity of
not Elegance
the Word
Elegance
ought to be
applied to
forms, not
to colours*

“ practice a reasonable good method of
“ colouring.*”

*Broken Lines
Broken Lines
Broken Lines
are Equally
subversive of
the Sublime*

*Well
Said
Enough*

Though it be allowed that elaborate har-
mony of colouring, a brilliancy of tints, a
soft and gradual transition from one to an-
other, present to the eye, what an harmo-
nious concert of musick does to the ear, it
must be remembered, that painting is not
merely a gratification of the sight. Such
excellence, though properly cultivated,
where nothing higher than elegance is in-
tended, is weak and unworthy of regard,
when the work aspires to grandeur and
sublimity.

The same reasons that have been urged to
shew that a mixture of the Venetian style
cannot improve the great style, will hold
good in regard to the Flemish and Dutch
schools. Indeed the Flemish school, of

* Que cette application singuliere n'etoit qu'un obsta-
cle pour empêcher de parvenir au veritable but de la
peinture, & celui qui s'attache au principal, acquiert
par la pratique une assez belle maniere de peindre.
Conference de l'Acad. Franc.

which Rubens is the head, was formed upon that of the Venetian; like them, he took his figures too much from the people before him. But it must be allowed in favour of the Venetians, that he was more gross than they, and carried all their mistaken methods to a far greater excess. In the Venetian school itself, where they all err from the same cause, there is a difference in the effect. The difference between Paolo and Bassano seems to be only, that one introduced Venetian gentlemen into his pictures, and the other the boors of the district of Bassano, and called them patriarchs and prophets.

The painters of the Dutch school have still more locality. With them, a history-piece is properly a portrait of themselves; whether they describe the inside or outside of their houses, we have their own people engaged in their own peculiar occupations; working, or drinking, playing, or fighting. The circumstances that enter into a picture of this kind, are so far from giving a general view of human life, that they ex-

*How can that
be called the
Ornamental
Style of
which Gross
Vulgarity
forms the
Principal
Excellence*

hibit all the minute particularities of a nation differing in several respects from the rest of mankind. Yet, let them have their share of more humble praise. The painters of this school are excellent in their own way; they are only ridiculous when they attempt general history on their own narrow principles, and debase great events by the meanness of their characters.

*The Words
Mechanical
Power
would not
be thus
Produced*

Some inferior dexterity, some extraordinary mechanical power is apparently that from which they seek distinction. Thus, we see, that school alone has the custom of representing candle-light not as it really appears to us by night, but red, as it would illuminate objects to a spectator by day. Such tricks, however pardonable in the little style, where petty effects are the sole end, are inexcusable in the greater, where the attention should never be drawn aside by trifles, but should be entirely occupied by the subject itself.

The same local principles which characterize the Dutch school extend even to their

to aspire so far as to reject what the painters call Accidents of Nature, is not easy to determine. It is certain Claude Lorrain seldom, if ever, availed himself of those accidents; either he thought that such peculiarities were contrary to that style of general nature which he professed, or that it would catch the attention too strongly, and destroy that quietness and repose which he thought necessary to that kind of painting.

A Portrait-painter likewise, when he attempts history, unless he is upon his guard, is likely to enter too much into the detail. He too frequently makes his historical heads look like portraits; and this was once the custom amongst those old painters, who revived the art before general ideas were practised or understood. An History-painter paints man in general; a Portrait-painter, a particular man, and consequently a defective model.

*A History
Painter
Paints The
Hero, &*

not Man in general, but most minutely in Particular

Thus an habitual practice in the lower exercises of the art will prevent many from at-

first place being already occupied by the great artists in each department, some of those who followed thought there was less room for them, and feeling the impulse of ambition and the desire of novelty, and being at the same time perhaps willing to take the shortest way, endeavoured to make for themselves a place between both. This they have effected by forming an union of the different orders. But as the grave and majestick style would suffer by an union with the florid and gay, so also has the Venetian ornament in some respect been injured by attempting an alliance with simplicity.

It may be asserted, that the great style is always more or less contaminated by any meaner mixture. But it happens in a few instances, that the lower may be improved by borrowing from the grand. Thus if a portrait-painter is desirous to raise and improve his subject, he has no other means than by approaching it to a general idea. He leaves out all the minute breaks and peculiarities in the face, and changes the dress from a temporary fashion to one more permanent,

Folly!
If what
consequence it is to the Art, what a Portrait
Painter does,

which has annexed to it no ideas of mean-
ness from its being familiar to us. But if an
exact resemblance of an individual be consi-
dered as the sole object to be aimed at, the
portrait-painter will be apt to lose more than
he gains by the acquired dignity taken from
general nature. It is very difficult to ennoble
the character of a countenance but at the ex-
pense of the likeness, which is what is
most generally required by such as sit to the
painter.

*There is
No Such
a Thing as
A Composite
Style*

Of those who have practised the compo-
site style, and have succeeded in this perilous
attempt, perhaps the foremost is Correggio.
His style is founded upon modern grace and
elegance, to which is superadded something
of the simplicity of the grand style. A
breadth of light and colour, the general ideas
of the drapery, an uninterrupted flow of out-
line, all conspire to this effect. Next to
him (perhaps equal to him) Parmegiano has
dignified the genteelness of modern effemi-
nacy, by uniting it with the simplicity of the
ancients and the grandeur and severity of
Michael Angelo. It must be confessed,

however, that these two extraordinary men, by endeavouring to give the utmost degree of grace, have sometimes perhaps exceeded its boundaries, and have fallen into the most hateful of all hateful qualities, affectation. Indeed, it is the peculiar characteristick of men of genius to be afraid of coldness and insipidity, from which they think they never can be too far removed. It particularly happens to these great masters of grace and elegance. They often boldly drive on to the very verge of ridicule; the spectator is alarmed, but at the same time admires their vigour and intrepidity:

Strange graces still, and stranger flights they had,

 Yet ne'er so sure our passion to create,
 As when they touch'd the brink of all we hate.

The errors of genius, however, are pardonable, and none even of the more exalted painters are wholly free from them; but they have taught us, by the rectitude of their general practice, to correct their own affected or accidental deviation. The very first have not been always upon their guard, and per-

*Genius
 has no Error
 It is Ignorance
 that is Error*

haps there is not a fault, but what may take shelter under the most venerable authorities; yet that style only is perfect, in which the noblest principles are uniformly pursued; and those masters only are entitled to the first rank in our estimation, who have enlarged the boundaries of their art, and have raised it to its highest dignity, by exhibiting the general ideas of nature.

*all
Equivocation
& Self-
-Contradiction*

On the whole, it seems to me that there is but one presiding principle, which regulates, and gives stability to every art. The works, whether of poets, painters, moralists, or historians, which are built upon general nature, live for ever; while those which depend for their existence on particular customs and habits, a partial view of nature, or the fluctuation of fashion, can only be coeval with that which first raised them from obscurity. Present time and future may be considered as rivals, and he who solicits the one must expect to be discountenanced by the other.

Gainsborough told a Gentleman of Rank
& Fortune that the Worst Painters always chose
the grandest Subjects. I desired the Gentleman
to let Gainsborough about one of Raphael's
grandest Subjects Namely Christ delivering
the Keys to St Peter. & he would find that
in Gainsborough's hands it would be a vulgar
Subject of Poor Fishermen & a Journeyman Carpenter
The following Discourse is written with the
same End in View. That Gainsborough had in
making the above assertion Namely To
Represent vulgar Artists as the
Models of Executive Merit

*Conceptions
to Truth
for the
sake of
Overruling
Truth*

terly disgraced. This is a very great mistake: nothing has its proper lustre but in its proper place. That which is most worthy of esteem in its allotted sphere, becomes an object, not of respect, but of derision, when it is forced into a higher, to which it is not suited; and there it becomes doubly a source of disorder, by occupying a situation which is not natural to it, and by putting down from the first place what is in reality of too much magnitude to become with grace and proportion that subordinate station, to which something of less value would be much better suited.

My advice in a word is this: keep your principal attention fixed upon the higher excellencies. If you compass them, and compass nothing more, you are still in the first class. We may regret the innumerable beauties which you may want; you may be very imperfect; but still, you are an imperfect artist of the highest order.

If, when you have got thus far, you can add any, or all, of the subordinate qualifi-

cations, it is my wish and advice that you should not neglect them. But this is as much a matter of circumspection and caution at least, as of eagerness and pursuit.

The mind is apt to be distracted by a multiplicity of objects; and that scale of perfection, which I wish always to be preserved, is in the greatest danger of being totally disordered, and even inverted.

Some excellencies bear to be united, and are improved by union; others are of a discordant nature; and the attempt to join them, only produces a harsh jarring of incongruent principles. The attempt to unite contrary excellencies (of form, for instance) in a single figure, can never escape degenerating into the monstrous, but by sinking into the insipid; by taking away its marked character, and weakening its expression.

This remark is true to a certain degree with regard to the passions. If you mean to preserve the most perfect beauty *in its most perfect state*, you cannot express the passions, all of which produce distortion and defor-

What
Nonsense

Passion &
Expression
is Beauty
Itself -
The Face
that is
incapable
of Passion
& Expression
is deformity
Itself
Let it be
Painted &
Paled &
Pained &
Admired
for ever
It will
only be
admired
by Fools

mity, more or less, in the most beautiful faces.

Guido, from want of choice in adapting his subject to his ideas and his powers, or from attempting to preserve beauty where it could not be preserved, has in this respect succeeded very ill. His figures are often engaged in subjects that required great expression; yet his Judith and Holofernes, the daughter of Herodias with the Baptist's head, the Andromeda, and some even of the Mothers of the Innocents, have little more expression than his Venus attired by the Graces.

Obvious as these remarks appear, there are many writers on our art, who, not being of the profession, and consequently not knowing what can or cannot be done, have been very liberal of absurd praises in their descriptions of favourite works. They always find in them what they are resolved to find. They praise excellencies that can hardly exist together; and above all things are fond of describing with great exactness the expression of a mixed passion, which more particularly appears to me out of the reach of our art.

Such are many disquisitions which I have read on some of the Cartoons and other pictures of Raffaello, where the Criticks have described their own imaginations; or indeed where the excellent master himself may have attempted this expression of passions above the powers of the art; and has, therefore, by an indistinct and imperfect marking, left room for every imagination, with equal probability, to find a passion of his own. What has been, and what can be done in the art, is sufficiently difficult; we need not be mortified or discouraged at not being able to execute the conceptions of a romantick imagination. Art has its boundaries, though imagination has none. We can easily, like the ancients, suppose a Jupiter to be possessed of all those powers and perfections which the subordinate Deities were endowed with separately. Yet, when they employed their art to represent him, they confined his character to majesty alone. Pliny, therefore, though we are under great obligations to him for the information he has given us in relation to the works of the antient artists, is very frequently wrong when he speaks of them, which he

*If Reynolds
could not
see variety
of Character
in Raphael
Others can*

*False
The Ancients
were chiefly
attentive to
Complicated*

*A Minute Discrimination of Character
it is the whole of Art*

Reynolds
cannot
bear
Expression

Why not?
3 Powers

A Fine
Jumble

does very often in the style of many of our modern connoisseurs. He observes, that in a statue of Paris, by Euphranor, you might discover at the same time three different characters; the dignity of a Judge of the Goddesses, the Lover of Helen, and the Conqueror of Achilles. A statue in which you endeavour to unite stately dignity, youthful elegance, and stern valour, must surely possess none of these to any eminent degree.

From hence it appears, that there is much difficulty as well as danger, in an endeavour to concentrate in a single subject those various powers, which, rising from different points, naturally move in different directions.

The summit of excellence seems to be an assemblage of contrary qualities, but mixed, in such proportions, that no one part is found to counteract the other. How hard this is to be attained in every art, those only know, who have made the greatest progress in their respective professions.

To conclude what I have to say on this

part of the subject, which I think of great importance, I wish you to understand, that I do not discourage the younger Students from the noble attempt of uniting all the excellencies of art; but suggest to them, that, beside the difficulties which attend every arduous attempt, there is a peculiar difficulty in the choice of the excellencies which ought to be united. I wish you to attend to this, that you may try yourselves, whenever you are capable of that trial, what you can, and what you cannot do; and that, instead of dissipating your natural faculties over the immense field of possible excellence, you may choose some particular walk in which you may exercise all your powers; in order that each of you may become the first in his way. If any man shall be master of such a transcendant, commanding, and ductile genius, as to enable him to rise to the highest, and to stoop to the lowest, flights of art, and to sweep over all of them unobstructed and secure, he is fitter to give example than to receive instruction.

Mock,

Having said thus much on the *union* of

bellish, but not over-power, that manly strength and energy of style, which is his peculiar character.

Since I have already expatiated so largely in my former discourse, and in my present, upon the *styles* and *characters* of Painting, it will not be at all unsuitable to my subject if I mention to you some particulars relative to the leading principles, and capital works of those who excelled in the *great style*; that I may bring you from abstraction nearer to practice, and by exemplifying the positions which I have laid down, enable you to understand more clearly what I would enforce.

The principal works of modern art are in *Fresco*, a mode of painting which excludes attention to minute elegancies: yet these works in *Fresco*, are the productions on which the fame of the greatest masters depends: such are the pictures of Michael Angelo and Raffaele in the Vatican; to which we may add the *Cartoons*; which, though not strictly to be called *Fresco*, yet may be put under

This is
False
Fresco
Painting
is the
Most Minute

Fresco Painting is like Miniature
Painting; a Wall is a Large Ivory

that denomination; and such are the works of Giulio Romano at Mantua. If these performances were destroyed, with them would be lost the best part of the reputation of those illustrious painters; for these are justly considered as the greatest efforts of our art which the world can boast. To these, therefore, we should principally direct our attention for higher excellencies. As for the lower arts, as they have been once discovered, they may be easily attained by those possessed of the former.

Raffaelle, who stands in general foremost of the first painters, owes his reputation, as I have observed, to his excellence in the higher parts of the art: his works in *Fresco*, therefore, ought to be the first object of our study and attention. His easel-works stand in a lower degree of estimation: for though he continually, to the day of his death, embellished his performances more and more with the addition of those lower ornaments, which entirely make the merit of some painters, yet he never arrived at such perfection as to make him an

Folly
 Falshood. The Man who can say that
 Rafael knew not the smaller beauties of
 the Art ought to be contemned & I
 accordingly hold Reynolds in contempt
 in particular

object of imitation. He never was able to conquer perfectly that dryness, or even littleness of manner, which he inherited from his master. He never acquired that nicety of taste in colours, that breadth of light and shadow, that art and management of uniting light to light, and shadow to shadow, so as to make the object rise out of the ground with that plenitude of effect so much admired in the works of Correggio. When he painted in oil, his hand seemed to be so cramped and confined, that he not only lost that facility and spirit, but I think even that correctness of form, which is so perfect and admirable in his Fresco-works. I do not recollect any pictures of his of this kind, except perhaps the Transfiguration, in which there are not some parts that appear to be even feebly drawn. That this is not a necessary attendant on Oil-painting, we have abundant instances in more modern painters. Lodovico Caracci, for instance, preserved in his works in oil the same spirit, vigour, and correctness which he had in Fresco. I have no desire to degrade Raffaello from the high rank which he deservedly holds: but by comparing him

Raffael did
as he
pleas'd.

He who does
not admire

Raffael's
Execution

does not
even see

Raffael

A L L

According
to Reynolds
Mich Angelo
was worse
Still
& knew
Nothing
at all
about
Art as
an Object
of Imitation

with himself, he does not appear to me to be the same man in Oil as in Fresco.

From those who have ambition to tread in this great walk of the art, Michael Angelo claims the next attention. He did not possess so many excellencies as Raffaelle, but those which he had were of the highest kind. He considered the art as consisting of little more than what may be attained by sculpture; correctness of form, and energy of character. We ought not to expect more than an artist intends in his work. He never attempted those lesser elegancies and graces in the art. Vasari says, he never painted but one picture in oil, and resolved never to paint another, saying, it was an employment only fit for women and children.

Can any
Man be
Such a fool
as to believe
that Raphael

If any man had a right to look down upon the lower accomplishments as beneath his attention, it was certainly Michael Angelo; nor can it be thought strange, that such a mind should have slighted or have been withheld from paying due attention to all those graces and embellishments of art, which have

Michael Angelo were incapable of the meer Language of Art & That such Idots as Rubens, Correggio & Titian knew how to Execute what they could not Think or Invent

Damn
Fool

O. Yes

diff
pai

tog
me
the
the
an
hi
tiv
hi
in
be
th
it
tr
in
re
or
re
se
to
e
s
t
M
or
When
not u

diffused such lustre over the works of other painters.

It must be acknowledged, however, that together with these, which we wish he had more attended to, he has rejected all the false, though specious ornaments, which disgrace the works even of the most esteemed artists; and I will venture to say, that when those higher excellencies are more known and cultivated by the artists and the patrons of arts, his fame and credit will increase with our increasing knowledge. His name will then be held in the same veneration as it was in the enlightened age of Leo the Tenth: and it is remarkable that the reputation of this truly great man has been continually declining as the art itself has declined. For I must remark to you, that it has long been much on the decline, and that our only hope of its revival will consist in your being thoroughly sensible of its depravation and decay. It is to Michael Angelo, that we owe even the existence of Raffaelle: it is to him Raffaelle owes the grandeur of his style. He was taught by him to elevate his thoughts, and

The Venetian cannot Mix with the Roman or Florentine What then does he mean when he says that Mich. Ang. & Rafael were not worthy of Imitation in the lower parts of Art

Here is another Contradiction If Mich. Ang.

rejected any thing that Titian or Veronese did: He rejected it for good Reasons.

St. Joshua in other Places owns that

to conceive his subjects with dignity. His genius, however formed to blaze and to shine, might like fire in combustible matter, for ever have lain dormant, if it had not caught a spark by its contact with Michael Angelo: and though it never burst out with *his* extraordinary heat and vehemence, yet it must be acknowledged to be a more pure, regular, and chaste flame. Though our judgement must upon the whole decide in favour of Raffaelle, yet he never takes such a firm hold and entire possession of the mind as to make us desire nothing else, and to feel nothing wanting. The effect of the capital works of Michael Angelo perfectly corresponds to what Bouchardon said he felt from reading Homer; his whole frame appeared to himself to be enlarged, and all nature which surrounded him, diminished to atoms.

If we put these great artists in a light of comparison with each other, Raffaelle had more Taste and Fancy, Michael Angelo more Genius and imagination. The one excelled in beauty, the other in energy.

*What
Nonsense*

Michael Angelo has more of the Poetical Inspiration; his ideas are vast and sublime; his people are a superior order of beings; there is nothing about them, nothing in the air of their actions or their attitudes, or the style and cast of their limbs or features, that reminds us of their belonging to our own species. Raffaello's imagination is not so elevated; his figures are not so much disjoined from our own diminutive race of beings, though his ideas are chaste, noble, and of great conformity to their subjects. Michael Angelo's works have a strong, peculiar, and marked character: they seem to proceed from his own mind entirely, and that mind so rich and abundant, that he never needed, or seemed to disdain, to look abroad for foreign help. Raffaello's materials are generally borrowed, though the noble structure is his own. The excellency of this extraordinary man lay in the propriety, beauty, and majesty of his characters, the judicious contrivance of his Composition, his correctness of Drawing, purity of Taste, and skilful accommodation of other men's conceptions to his own

VOL. I.

K

of Raphael
& Mich: Anglos Execution
 at page 97 he allows that the Venetian style
 will all correspond with the great style

*If all this
 is True*

*Why does
 not Reynolds
 recommend*

*The Study
 of Raphael*

path, endeavouring to surprise and please by something uncommon or new. When this desire of novelty has proceeded from mere idleness or caprice, it is not worth the trouble of criticism; but when it has been the result of a busy mind of a peculiar complexion, it is always striking and interesting, never insipid.

Such is the great style, as it appears in those who possessed it at its height: in this, search after novelty, in conception or in treating the subject, has no place,

But there is another style, which, though inferior to the former, has still great merit, because it shews that those who cultivated it were men of lively and vigorous imagination. This, which may be called the original or characteristical style, being less referred to any true archetype existing either in general or particular nature, must be supported by the painter's consistency in the principles which he has assumed, and in the union and harmony of his whole design. The excellency of every style, but of

*The Great Style
is always
Novel or
New:
all its
Operations*

*Original &
Characteristical
are the Two
Grand Merits
of the Great
Style*

*Why should these words be applied to such a
Wretch as Salvador Rosa*

the subordinate styles more especially, will very much depend on preserving that union and harmony between all the component parts, that they may appear to hang well together, as if the whole proceeded from one mind. It is in the works of art, as in the characters of men. The faults or defects of some men seem to become them, when they appear to be the natural growth, and of a piece with the rest of their character. A faithful picture of a mind, though it be not of the most elevated kind, though it be irregular, wild, and incorrect, yet if it be marked with that spirit and firmness which characterises works of genius, will claim attention, and be more striking than a combination of excellencies that do not seem to unite well together; or we may say, than a work that possesses even all excellencies, but those in a moderate degree.

Salvator Rosa One of the strongest-marked characters of this kind, which must be allowed to be subordinate to the great style, is that of *Salvator Rosa*. He gives us a peculiar cast of nature, which, though void of all grace, *is precisely* *as he Pretended* *it to be.* His Pictures, are high labours pretensions to Capeditions Workmanship. He was the Quack Doctor of Painting the Roughness & Smoothness, on the Production of Labour & Trick. As to Imagination he was totally without Any.

elegance, and simplicity, though it has nothing of that elevation and dignity which belongs to the grand style, yet, has that sort of dignity which belongs to savage and uncultivated nature: but what is most to be admired in him, is, the perfect correspondence which he observed between the subjects which he chose and his manner of treating them. Every thing is of a piece: his Rocks, Trees, Sky, even to his handling, have the same rude and wild character which animates his figures.

With him we may contrast the character of Carlo Maratti, who, in my opinion, had no great vigour of mind or strength of original genius. He rarely seizes the imagination by exhibiting the higher excellencies, nor does he captivate us by that originality which attends the painter who thinks for himself. He knew and practised all the rules of art, and from a composition of Raffaëlle, Caracci, and Guido, made up a style, of which the only fault was, that it had no manifest defects and no striking beauties; and that the principles of

*Savages are
Tops & Fribbles
more than any
other Men*

*Handling is all
that he has &
we all know the
Handling of Rubens
& Trick*

*Sebastien Res
employe
Journemen*

his composition are never blended together, so as to form one uniform body, original in its kind, or excellent in any view.

I will mention two other painters, who, though entirely dissimilar, yet by being each consistent with himself and possessing a manner entirely his own, have both gained reputation, though for very opposite accomplishments. The painters I mean, are Rubens and Poussin. Rubens I mention in this place, as I think him a remarkable instance of the same mind being seen in all the various parts of the art. The whole is so much of a piece, that one can scarce be brought to believe but that if any one of the qualities he possessed had been more correct and perfect, his works would not have been so complete as they now appear. If we should allow him a greater purity and correctness of Drawing, his want of Simplicity in Composition, Colouring, and Drapery, would appear more gross.

In his Composition his art is too apparent. His figures have expression, and act with

All Rubens's
Pictures, are
Painted by
Journey-men
so far from
being all of a
Piece, are
The most
wretched
Bungles

to who could so abuse their own Pictures
generally must be either a fool or madman

energy, but without simplicity or dignity. His Colouring, in which he is eminently skilled, is notwithstanding too much of what we call tinted. Throughout the whole of his works, there is a proportionable want of that nicety of distinction and elegance of mind, which is required in the higher walks of painting; and to this want it may be in some degree ascribed, that those qualities which make the excellency of this subordinate style, appear in him with their greatest lustre. Indeed the facility with which he invented, the richness of his composition, the luxuriant harmony and brilliancy of his colouring, so dazzle the eye, that whilst his works continue before us, we cannot help thinking that all his deficiencies are fully supplied*.

Opposed to this florid, careless, loose, and inaccurate style, that of the simple, careful, pure, and correct style of Poussin seems to

* A more detailed character of Rubens may be found in the "Journey to Flanders and Holland," near the conclusion. M.

Opposed to Rubens's Colouring of Joshua's plaid Poussin
but he ought to put all Men of Genius who ever
Painted. Rubens & the Venetians were Opposites in
every thing to True Art & they Meant to be so
they were hired for this Purpose

To My Page
Rubens's Colouring
is most Contemptible
his Shadows are
of a Filthy
Brown somewhat
of the colour of
Excrement
these are filled
with tints & masses
of yellow & red
his lights are
all the colours of
the Rainbow
laid on
Indifferently
& broken one into
another. Altogether
his Colouring
Contrary to
the Colouring
of Real
Art & Science

a piece with the general air of the picture. On the contrary, if the Figures which people his pictures had a modern air or countenance, if they appeared like our countrymen, if the draperies were like cloth or silk of our manufacture, if the landskip had the appearance of a modern view, how ridiculous would Apollo appear instead of the Sun; an old Man, or a Nymph with an urn, to represent a River or a Lake?

*These remarks
on Poussin
are Excellent*

I cannot avoid mentioning here a circumstance in portrait-painting, which may help to confirm what has been said. When a portrait is painted in the Historical Style, as it is neither an exact minute representation of an individual, nor completely ideal, every circumstance ought to correspond to this mixture. The simplicity of the antique air and attitude, however much to be admired, is ridiculous when joined to a figure in a modern dress. It is not to my purpose to enter into the question at present, whether this mixed style ought to be adopted or not; yet if it is chosen, 'tis necessary it should be complete and all of a piece: the difference of

means to be recommended for imitation, yet seems perfectly correspondent to that ancient simplicity which distinguishes his style. Like Polidoro he studied the ancients so much, that he acquired a habit of thinking in their way, and seemed to know perfectly the actions and gestures they would use on every occasion.

Poussin in the latter part of his life changed from his dry manner to one much softer and richer, where there is a greater union between the figures and the ground; as in the Seven Sacraments in the Duke of Orleans's collection; but neither these, nor any of his other pictures in this manner, are at all comparable to many in his dry manner which we have in England.

True

The favourite subjects of Poussin were Ancient Fables; and no painter was ever better qualified to paint such subjects, not only from his being eminently skilled in the knowledge of the ceremonies, customs and habits of the Ancients, but from his being so well acquainted with the different characters

True

which those who invented them gave to their allegorical figures. Though Rubens has shewn great fancy in his Satyrs, Silenuses, and Fauns, yet they are not that distinct separate class of beings, which is carefully exhibited by the Ancients, and by Poussin. Certainly when such subjects of antiquity are represented, nothing in the picture ought to remind us of modern times. The mind is thrown back into antiquity, and nothing ought to be introduced that may tend to awaken it from the illusion.

True

Poussin seemed to think that the style and the language in which such stories are told, is not the worse for preserving some relish of the old way of painting, which seemed to give a general uniformity to the whole, so that the mind was thrown back into antiquity not only by the subject, but the execution.

If Poussin in imitation of the Ancients represents Apollo driving his chariot out of the sea by way of representing the Sun rising, if he personifies Lakes and Rivers, it is no wise offensive in him; but seems perfectly of

to the highest degree. But those who possess neither must be classed with them, who, as Shakspeare says, are *men of no mark or likelihoood*.

I inculcate as frequently as I can your forming yourselves upon great principles and great models. Your time will be much mis-spent in every other pursuit. Small excellencies should be viewed, not studied; they ought to be viewed, because nothing ought to escape a Painter's observation; but for no other reason.

There is another caution which I wish to give you. Be as select in those whom you endeavour to please, as in those whom you endeavour to imitate. Without the love of fame you can never do any thing excellent; but by an excessive and undistinguishing thirst after it, you will come to have vulgar views; you will degrade your style; and your taste will be entirely corrupted. It is certain that the lowest style will be the most popular, as it falls within the compass of ignorance itself; and the Vulgar will always be pleased with what is natural, in the confined and misunderstood sense of the word.

Well said

One would wish that such depravation of taste should be counteracted with that manly pride which actuated Euripides when he said to the Athenians who criticised his works, "I do not compose my works in order to be corrected by you, but to instruct you." It is true, to have a right to speak thus, a man must be an Euripides. However, thus much may be allowed, that when an Artist is sure that he is upon firm ground, supported by the authority and practice of his predecessors of the greatest reputation, he may then assume the boldness and intrepidity of genius; at any rate he must not be tempted out of the right path by any allurements of popularity, which always accompanies the lower styles of painting.

I mention this, because our Exhibitions, while they produce such admirable effects by nourishing emulation, and calling out genius, have also a mischievous tendency, by seducing the Painter to an ambition of pleasing indiscriminately the mixed multitude of people who resort to them.

*Why then
does he
talk in
other places
of pleasing
every body*

When a Man talks of Acquiring Invention
& of learning how to produce Original
Conception he must expect to be called
a Fool by Men of Understanding
but such a Shred Knave cares not
for the Few. His Eye is on
the Many. or rather on the Money

D
IMITATION.—
INVENTION
WITH THE
METHOD OF
ALLOWABLE
EVERY SCH

GENTL
WHEN I
ing you on t
I never prop
of the art.
several Pro
our institut
themselves,
to the Stud

My purpo
in the Acad
general posi
for the form
necessary to
VOL. I.

of other masters, and the advantage to be drawn from the study of their works.

Those who have undertaken to write on our art, and have represented it as a kind of *inspiration*, as a *gift* bestowed upon peculiar favourites at their birth, seem to insure a much more favourable disposition from their readers, and have a much more captivating and liberal air, than he who attempts to examine, coldly, whether there are any means by which this art may be acquired; how the mind may be strengthened and expanded, and what guides will shew the way to eminence.

Bacon, Philosopher
has Destroy'd
Art & Science
The Man who
says that the
Genius is
not Born. &
Taught.
Is a Knave.

It is very natural for those who are unacquainted with the *cause* of any thing extraordinary, to be astonished at the *effect*, and to consider it as a kind of magick. They, who have never observed the gradation by which art is acquired; who see only what is the full result of long labour and application of an infinite number and infinite variety of acts, are apt to conclude from their entire inability to do the same at once, that it is not only inaccessible to themselves, but can be

L 2

O Reader behold the Philosophers Grave.
He was born quite a Fool. but he died quite a Knave.

ters, indeed almost all imitation, which implies a more regular and progressive method of attaining the ends of painting, has ever been particularly inveighed against with great keenness, both by ancient and modern writers.

To derive all from native power, to owe nothing to another, is the praise which men, who do not much think on what they are saying, bestow sometimes upon others, and sometimes on themselves; and their imaginary dignity is naturally heightened by a supercilious censure of the low, the barren, the groveling, the servile imitator. It would be no wonder if a student, frightened by these terrific and disgraceful epithets, with which the poor imitators are so often loaded, should let fall his pencil in mere despair; (conscious as he must be, how much he has been indebted to the labours of others, how little, how very little of his art was born with him;) and, consider it as hopeless, to set about acquiring by the imitation of any human master, what he is taught to suppose is matter of inspiration from heaven.

*How ridiculous
it would be to see
the Sheep endeavour
to walk like the
Dog, or the Ox
striving to trot
like the Horse
just as ridiculous
it is to see One
Man Striving
to Imitate
Another
Man varies from
Man more than
Animal from Animal
of different species*

I must explain my position before I enforce it.

Genius is supposed to be a power of producing excellencies, which are out of the reach of the rules of art; a power which no precepts can teach, and which no industry can acquire.

This opinion of the impossibility of acquiring those beauties, which stamp the work with the character of genius, supposes that it is something more fixed than in reality it is; and that we always do, and ever did agree in opinion, with respect to what should be considered as the characteristic of genius. But the truth is, that the degree of excellence which proclaims *Genius* is different, in different times and different places; and what shews it to be so is, that mankind have often changed their opinion upon this matter.

Never!
Never!

When the Arts were in their infancy, the power of merely drawing the likeness of any object, was considered as one of its greatest efforts. The common people, ignorant of

the principles of art, talk the same language even to this day. But when it was found that every man could be taught to do this, and a great deal more, merely by the observance of certain precepts; the name of Genius then shifted its application, and was given only to him who added the peculiar character of the object he represented; to him who had invention, expression, grace, or dignity; in short, those qualities, or excellencies, the power of producing which, could not *then* be taught by any known and promulgated rules.

We are very sure that the beauty of form, the expression of the passions, the art of composition, even the power of giving a general air of grandeur to a work, is at present very much under the dominion of rules. These excellencies were, heretofore, considered merely as the effects of genius; and justly, if genius is not taken for inspiration, but as the effect of close observation and experience.

He who first made any of these observations, and digested them, so as to form an

*David
Fool*

*If Art was
Propriety
We should have
had Mich Angelo
& Rafaele to
Succeed & to
Improve upon
each other
But it is not
so, Genius
Dies with its
Preceptor &
comes not again
till another
is born with it*

154

THE SIXTH DISCOURSE.

invariable principle for himself to work by, had that merit, but probably no one went very far at once; and generally, the first who gave the hint, did not know how to pursue it steadily, and methodically; at least not in the beginning. He himself worked on it, and improved it; others worked more, and improved further; until the secret was discovered, and the practice made as general, as refined practice can be made. How many more principles may be fixed and ascertained, we cannot tell; but as criticism is likely to go hand in hand with the art which is its subject, we may venture to say, that as that art shall advance, its powers will be still more and more fixed by rules.

But by whatever strides criticism may gain ground, we need be under no apprehension, that invention will ever be annihilated, or subdued; or intellectual energy be brought entirely within the restraint of written law. Genius will still have room enough to ex-patiate, and keep always at the same distance from narrow comprehension and mechanical performance.

What we now call Genius, begins, not where rules, abstractedly taken, end; but where known vulgar and trite rules have no longer any place. It must of necessity be, that even works of Genius, like every other effect, as they must have their cause, must likewise have their rules; it cannot be by chance, that excellencies are produced with any constancy or any certainty, for this is not the nature of chance; but the rules by which men of extraordinary parts, and such as are called men of Genius, work, are either such as they discover by their own peculiar observations, or of such a nice texture as not easily to admit being expressed in words; especially as artists are not very frequently skilful in that mode of communicating ideas. Unsubstantial, however, as these rules may seem, and difficult as it may be to convey them in writing, they are still seen and felt in the mind of the artist; and he works from them with as much certainty, as if they were embodied, as I may say, upon paper. It is true, these refined principles cannot be always made palpable, like the more gross rules of art; yet it does not follow, but that the mind

*Identities
or Things
are Neither
Cause nor
Effect
They are
Eternal*

disposition, which is so strong in children, still continues with us, of catching involuntarily the general air and manner of those with whom we are most conversant; with this difference only, that a young mind is naturally pliable and imitative; but in a more advanced state it grows rigid, and must be warmed and softened, before it will receive a deep impression.

From these considerations, which a little of your own reflection will carry a great way further, it appears, of what great consequence it is, that our minds should be habituated to the contemplation of excellence; and that, far from being contented to make such habits the discipline of our youth only, we should, to the last moment of our lives, continue a settled intercourse with all the true examples of grandeur. Their inventions are not only the food of our infancy, but the substance which supplies the fullest maturity of our vigour.

The mind is but a barren soil; a soil which is soon exhausted, and will produce no crop.

Reynolds thinks that Man Learns all that he knows I say on the contrary that Man brings all that he has or can have into the world with him.
Man is Born like a Garden ready Planted & soon this world is to prove to produce one Seed
The Mind that could have produced this sentence must have been a pitiful a pitiable Imbecillity. I always thought that the Human Mind was the most Prolifer of all things & Inexhaustible I certainly do thank God that I am not like Reynolds

or only one, unless it be continually fertilized and enriched with foreign matter.

When we have had continually before us the great works of Art to impregnate our minds with kindred ideas, we are then, and not till then, fit to produce something of the same species. We behold all about us with the eyes of those penetrating observers whose works we contemplate; and our minds, accustomed to think the thoughts of the noblest and brightest intellects, are prepared for the discovery and selection of all that is great and noble in nature. The greatest natural genius cannot subsist on its own stock: he who resolves never to ransack any mind but his own, will be soon reduced, from mere barrenness, to the poorest of all imitations; he will be obliged to imitate himself, and to repeat what he has before often repeated. When we know the subject designed by such men, it will never be difficult to guess what kind of work is to be produced.

It is vain for painters or poets to endeavour to invent without materials on which

the mind may work, and from which invention must originate. Nothing can come of nothing.

*The Mind
Nothing?*

Homer is supposed to be possessed of all the learning of his time: and we are certain that Michael Angelo, and Raffaello, were equally possessed of all the knowledge in the art which had been discovered in the works of their predecessors.

*If so they
knew all that
Julian & Correggio knew
Correggio was two Years
Older than
Mich. Angelo
Correggio born
1472
Mich. Angelo
born
1474*

A mind enriched by an assemblage of all the treasures of ancient and modern art, will be more elevated and fruitful in resources, in proportion to the number of ideas which have been carefully collected and thoroughly digested. There can be no doubt but that he who has the most materials has the greatest means of invention; and if he has not the power of using them, it must proceed from a feebleness of intellect; or from the confused manner in which those collections have been laid up in his mind.

The addition of other men's judgement is so far from weakening our own, as is the

mind or genius of his own to be destroyed; so that not much harm will be done at worst.

We may oppose to Pliny the greater authority of Cicero, who is continually enforcing the necessity of this method of study. In his dialogue on Oratory, he makes Crassus say, that one of the first and most important precepts is, to choose a proper model for our imitation. *Hoc sit primum in præceptis meis, ut demonstremus quem imitemur.*

When I speak of the habitual imitation and continued study of masters, it is not to be understood, that I advise any endeavour to copy the exact peculiar colour and complexion of another man's mind; the success of such an attempt must always be like his, who imitates exactly the air, manner, and gestures, of him whom he admires. His model may be excellent, but the copy will be ridiculous; this ridicule does not arise from his having imitated, but from his not having chosen the right mode of imitation.

*Why then
imitate
at all?*

easy art, to know how or what to choose, and how to attain and secure the object of our choice. Thus the highest beauty of form must be taken from nature; but it is an art of long deduction, and great experience, to know how to find it. We must not content ourselves with merely admiring and relishing; we must enter into the principles on which the work is wrought: these do not swim on the superficies, and consequently are not open to superficial observers.

Art in its perfection is not ostentatious; it lies hid, and works its effect, itself unseen. It is the proper study and labour of an artist to uncover and find out the latent cause of conspicuous beauties, and from thence form principles of his own conduct: such an examination is a continual exertion of the mind; as great, perhaps, as that of the artist whose works he is thus studying.

The sagacious imitator does not content himself with merely remarking what distinguishes the different manner or genius of

*This is a
Very Cleve
Sentine
who wrote
God know*

models for imitation, it requires no less circumspection to separate and distinguish what in those models we ought to imitate.

I cannot avoid mentioning here, though it is not my intention at present to enter into the art and method of study, an error which students are too apt to fall into. He that is forming himself, must look with great caution and wariness on those peculiarities, or prominent parts, which at first force themselves upon view; and are the marks, or what is commonly called the manner, by which that individual artist is distinguished.

Peculiar marks, I hold to be, generally, if not always, defects; however difficult it may be wholly to escape them.

Peculiarities in the works of art, are like those in the human figure: it is by them that we are cognizable and distinguished one from another, but they are always so many blemishes; which, however, both in real life and in painting, cease to appear deformities, to those who have them continually before

*Peculiar
Marks
are the
Only Merit*

*Infernal
Falshood*

their eyes: In the works of art, even the most enlightened mind, when warmed by beauties of the highest kind, will by degrees find a repugnance within him to acknowledge any defects; nay, his enthusiasm will carry him so far, as to transform them into beauties, and objects of imitation.

It must be acknowledged, that a peculiarity of style, either from its novelty, or by seeming to proceed from a peculiar turn of mind, often escapes blame; on the contrary, it is sometimes striking and pleasing: but this it is a vain labour to endeavour to imitate; because novelty and peculiarity being its only merit, when it ceases to be new, it ceases to have value.

A manner therefore being a defect, and every painter, however excellent, having a manner, it seems to follow, that all kinds of faults, as well as beauties, may be learned under the sanction of the greatest authorities. Even the great name of Michael Angelo may be used, to keep in countenance a deficiency or rather neglect of colouring, and every

*No Man
who can
See Michael Angelo. Can say that he wants
either Colouring or Ornamental parts of Art. in the
highest degree for he has every thing of Both*

other ornamental part of the art. If the young student is dry and hard, Poussin is the same. If his work has a careless and unfinished air, he has most of the Venetian school to support him. If he makes no selection of objects, but takes individual nature just as he finds it, he is like Rembrandt. If he is incorrect in the proportions of his figures, Correggio was likewise incorrect. If his colours are not blended and united, Rubens was equally crude. In short, there is no defect that may not be excused, if it is a sufficient excuse that it can be imputed to considerable artists; but it must be remembered, that it was not by these defects they acquired their reputation; they have a right to our pardon, but not to our admiration.

However, to imitate peculiarities or mistake defects for beauties, that man will be most liable, who confines his imitation to one favourite master; and even though he chooses the best, and is capable of distinguishing the real excellencies of his model, it is not by such narrow practice, that a genius or

He who
Admire,
Rafael
Must admire
Rafael's
Execution
He who does
not admire
Rafael's
Execution
Cannot
Admire
Rafael

*a
Confession*

from a want which cannot be completely supplied; that is, want of strength of parts. In this certainly men are not equal; and a man can bring home wares only in proportion to the capital with which he goes to market. Carlo, by diligence, made the most of what he had; but there was undoubtedly a heaviness about him, which extended itself, uniformly, to his invention, expression, his drawing, colouring, and the general effect of his pictures. The truth is, he never equalled any of his patterns in any one thing, and he added little of his own.

But we must not rest contented even in this general study of the moderns; we must trace back the art to its fountain-head; to that source from whence they drew their principal excellencies, the monuments of pure antiquity. All the inventions and thoughts of the Antients, whether conveyed to us in statues, bas-reliefs, intaglios, cameos, or coins, are to be sought after and carefully studied: the genius that hovers over these venerable relicks, may be called the father of modern art.

to the same lenity as was used by the Lacedaemonians; who did not punish theft, but the want of artifice to conceal it.

This sentence is to introduce another in condemnation & contempt of Mr. Durer.

In order to encourage you to imitation, to the utmost extent, let me add, that very finished artists in the inferior branches of the art, will contribute to furnish the mind and give hints, of which a skilful painter, who is sensible of what he wants, and is in no danger of being infected by the contact of vicious models, will know how to avail himself. He will pick up from dung-hills what by a nice chymistry, passing through his own mind, shall be converted into pure gold; and under the rudeness of Gothick essays, he will find original, rational and even sublime inventions.

A Polished Villain who Robs & Murders

The works of Albert Durer, Lucas Van Leyden, the numerous inventions of Tobias Stimmer, and Jost Ammon, afford a rich mass of genuine materials, which wrought up and polished to elegance, will add copiousness to what, perhaps, without

power of expressing the passions. The modern affectation of grace in his works, as well as in those of Bosch and Watteau, may be said to be separated, by a very thin partition, from the more simple and pure grace of Correggio and Parmegiano.

Among the Dutch painters, the correct, firm, and determined pencil, which was employed by Bamboccio and Jean Miel, on vulgar and mean subjects, might, without any change, be employed on the highest; to which, indeed, it seems more properly to belong. The greatest style, if that style is confined to small figures, such as Poussin generally painted, would receive an additional grace by the elegance and precision of pencil so admirable in the works of Teniers; and though the school to which he belonged more particularly excelled in the mechanism of painting; yet it produced many, who have shewn great abilities in expressing what must be ranked above mechanical excellencies. In the works of Frank Hals, the portrait-painter may observe the composition of a face, the features well

*What does
Precision
of Pencil
mean?
If it does
not mean
Outline
it means
Nothing*

put together, as the painters express it; from whence proceeds that strong-marked character of individual nature, which is so remarkable in his portraits, and is not found in an equal degree in any other painter. If he had joined to this most difficult part of the art, a patience in finishing what he had so correctly planned, he might justly have claimed the place which Vandyck, all things considered, so justly holds as the first of portrait-painters.

Others of the same school have shewn great power in expressing the character and passions of those vulgar people, which were the subjects of their study and attention. Among those Jan Steen seems to be one of the most diligent and accurate observers of what passed in those scenes which he frequented, and which were to him an academy. I can easily imagine, that if this extraordinary man had had the good fortune to have been born in Italy, instead of Holland, had he lived in Rome instead of Leyden, and been blessed with Michael Angelo and Raffaele for his masters, in-

*Jan Steen was a ^{N^o} 2 Boor. & neither
Rafael nor Mich Ang. could have
made him any better*

stead of Brouwer and Van Goyen ; the same sagacity and penetration which distinguished so accurately the different characters and expression in his vulgar figures, would, when exerted in the selection and imitation of what was great and elevated in nature, have been equally successful ; and he now would have ranged with the great pillars and supporters of our Art.

Men who although thus bound down by the almost invincible powers of early habits, have still exerted extraordinary abilities within their narrow and confined circle ; and have, from the natural vigour of their mind, given a very interesting expression and great force and energy to their works ; though they cannot be recommended to be exactly imitated, may yet invite an artist to endeavour to transfer, by a kind of parody, their excellencies to his own performances. Whoever has acquired the power of making this use of the Flemish, Venetian, and French schools, is a real genius, and has sources of knowledge open to him which

He who
can be
bound
down
is
no genius
Genius
cannot
be bound
He may
be bound Independent or Contrivance,
Opportunity makes the Work Man what
he is

The Purpose of the following Discourse is to Prove
That Taste & Genius are not of
Heavenly Origin & that all who have
supposed that they are so. are to be
considered as Weak headed Fanatics

The obligations Reynolds has laid
on Bad Artists of all Clases well at
all times, make them his Admirers but
most especially for this Discourse in which
it is proved that the Stupid are born
with Faculties Equal to other Men Only
they have not Cultivated them because
they thought it not worth the trouble.

THE REA
OF CO
TRUTH
VARIA
THE J
OR TI

GE

IT ha
first ac
press y
wished
your a
indust
pally
the ba

As c
is it a
laid in
essenti

*Heavily in
Neither the
Source of
the Sublime
nor of any
Thing Else*

*The Ancients
& the wisest
of the Moderns
were of the
opinion
that they sold,
condemned
& laugh at*

ing, when his meaning is not well known to himself, with a certain degree of obscurity, as it is one source of the sublime. But when, in plain prose, we gravely talk of courting the muse in shady bowers; waiting the call and inspiration of Genius, finding out where he inhabits, and where he is to be invoked with the greatest success; of attending to times and seasons when the imagination shoots with the greatest vigour, whether at the summer solstice or the vernal equinox; sagaciously observing how much the wild freedom and liberty of imagination is cramped by attention to established rules; and how this same imagination begins to grow dim in advanced age, smothered and deadened by too much judgement; when we talk such language, or entertain such sentiments as these, we generally rest contented with mere words, or at best entertain notions not only groundless, but pernicious.

If all this means, what it is very possible was originally intended only to be meant, that in order to cultivate an art, a man secludes himself from the commerce of the

*The
aff
was
beh*

world, and retires into the country at particular seasons; or that at one time of the year his body is in better health, and consequently his mind fitter for the business of hard thinking than at another time; or that the mind may be fatigued and grow confused by long and unremitted application; this I can understand. I can likewise believe, that a man eminent when young for possessing poetical imagination, may, from having taken another road, so neglect its cultivation, as to shew less of its powers in his latter life. But I am persuaded, that scarce a poet is to be found, from Homer down to Dryden, who preserved a sound mind in a sound body, and continued practising his profession to the very last, whose latter works are not as replete with the fire of imagination, as those which were produced in his more youthful days.

*As Replete
but not
More Replete*

To understand literally these metaphors or ideas expressed in poetical language, seems to be equally absurd as to conclude, that because painters sometimes represent poets writing from the dictates of a little winged boy

The Ancients did not mean to impose when they affirmed their belief in Vision & Revelation Plato was in Earnest. Milton was in Earnest. They believed that God did visit Man Really &

*How very
Anacron
Reynolds is
to Improve
& Contemn
Spiritual
Perception*

or genius, that this same genius did really inform him in a whisper what he was to write; and that he is himself but a mere machine, unconscious of the operations of his own mind.

Opinions generally received and floating in the world, whether true or false, we naturally adopt and make our own; they may be considered as a kind of inheritance to which we succeed and are tenants for life, and which we leave to our posterity very nearly in the condition in which we received it; it not being much in any one man's power either to impair or improve it. The greatest part of these opinions, like current coin in its circulation, we are used to take without weighing or examining; but by this inevitable inattention many adulterated pieces are received, which, when we seriously estimate our wealth, we must throw away. So the collector of popular opinions, when he embodies his knowledge, and forms a system, must separate those which are true from those which are only plausible. But it becomes more peculiarly a duty to the professors of art not

to let
unexat
tion re
present

Gen
tation,
differ
supera
tion:
power
called
opinio
the re
their
name
and un
ment
and w
tion to

On
out e
const
cular
seriou

to let any opinions relating to *that* art pass unexamined. The caution and circumspection required in such examination we shall presently have an opportunity of explaining.

Genius and taste, in their common acceptation, appear to be very nearly related; the difference lies only in this, that genius has superadded to it a habit or power of execution: or we may say, that taste, when this power is added, changes its name, and is called genius. They both, in the popular opinion, pretend to an entire exemption from the restraint of rules. It is supposed that their powers are intuitive; that under the name of genius great works are produced, and under the name of taste an exact judgement is given, without our knowing why, and without our being under the least obligation to reason, precept, or experience.

One can scarce state these opinions without exposing their absurdity; yet they are constantly in the mouths of men, and particularly of artists. They who have thought seriously on this subject, do not carry the

Who ever said
this

The Italian
Absurdities
in Company
with French
a Call both Absurd

The Artifice
of the Epi-
curian Phi-
losophers is
to call all
their Opinions
Unsolid
& Unsubstantial

than those which are derived from Nature.

point so far; yet I am persuaded, that even among those few who may be called thinkers, the prevalent opinion allows less than it ought to the powers of reason; and considers the principles of taste, which give all their authority to the rules of art, as more fluctuating, and as having less solid foundations, than we shall find, upon examination, they really have.

The common saying, that *tastes are not to be disputed*, owes its influence, and its general reception, to the same error which leads us to imagine this faculty of too high an original to submit to the authority of an earthly tribunal. It likewise corresponds with the notions of those who consider it as a mere phantom of the imagination, so devoid of substance as to elude all criticism.

It is not
in Terms
that Reynolds
& I disagree

Two Contrary Opinions can never by any Language be made alike. I say Taste & Opinions are Not Teachable or Acquirable but are born with us Reynolds says the contrary

more nice discriminations which a deep investigation discovers. A great deal however of this difference vanishes, when each opinion is tolerably explained and understood by constancy and precision in the use of terms.

We apply the term TASTE to that act of the mind by which we like or dislike, whatever be the subject. Our judgement upon an airy nothing, a fancy which has no foundation, is called by the same name which we give to our determination concerning those truths which refer to the most general and most unalterable principles of human nature; to the works which are only to be produced by the greatest efforts of the human understanding, However inconvenient this may be, we are obliged to take words as we find them; all we can do is to distinguish the THINGS to which they are applied.

We may let pass those things which are at once subjects of taste and sense, and which having as much certainty as the senses themselves, give no occasion to enquiry or dis-

*This is
False
the Fault
is not in
Words, but
in Things*

*Lockes
Opinions
of Words*

*& their
fallacious
are Artful
Opinions*

& fallacious also

pute. The natural appetite or taste of the human mind is for TRUTH; whether that truth results from the real agreement or equality of original ideas among themselves; from the agreement of the representation of any object with the thing represented; or from the correspondence of the several parts of any arrangement with each other. It is the very same taste which relishes a demonstration in geometry, that is pleased with the resemblance of a picture to an original, and touched with the harmony of musick.

*Demonstration
Similitude
& Harmony
in Objects
of Reasoning
Invention
Identity
& Melody
are Objects
of Instruction*

All these have unalterable and fixed foundations in nature, and are therefore equally investigated by reason, and known by study; some with more, some with less clearness, but all exactly in the same way. A picture that is unlike, is false. Disproportionate ordonnance of parts is not right; because it cannot be true, until it ceases to be a contradiction to assert, that the parts have no relation to the whole. Colouring is true, when it is naturally adapted to the eye, from brightness, from softness, from harmony, from resemblance; because these agree with their

object, NATURE, and therefore are true; as true as mathematical demonstration; but known to be true only to those who study these things.

God forbid that

Truth should be confined to Mathematical demonstration

But beside real, there is also apparent truth, or opinion, or prejudice. With regard to real truth, when it is known, the taste which conforms to it, is, and must be, uniform. With regard to the second sort of truth, which may be called truth upon sufferance, or truth by courtesy, it is not fixed, but variable. However, whilst these opinions and prejudices, on which it is founded, continue, they operate as truth; and the art, whose office it is to please the mind, as well as instruct it, must direct itself according to opinion, or it will not attain its end.

He who does not know Truth at sight is unworthy of Her Notice

In proportion as these prejudices are known to be generally diffused, or long received, the taste which conforms to them approaches nearer to certainty, and to a sort of resemblance to real science, even where opinions are found to be no better than prejudices. And since they deserve, on account of their

There is a great deal to do to Prove that All Truth is Prejudice

for All that is Valuable in Knowledge is Superior to Demonstrative Science such as is Weighed or Measured

duration and extent, to be considered as really true, they become capable of no small degree of stability and determination, by their permanent and uniform nature.

*And to be
think he
has proved
that Genius
& Inspiration
are all
a Hum*

As these prejudices become more narrow, more local, more transitory, this secondary taste becomes more and more fantastical; recedes from real science; is less to be approved by reason, and less followed in practice; though in no case perhaps to be wholly neglected, where it does not stand, as it sometimes does, in direct defiance of the most respectable opinions received amongst mankind.

*He calls
the Above
proceeding
with Method*

Having laid down these positions, I shall proceed with less method, because less will serve to explain and apply them.

*Reason or
a Ratio*

of all We

have known

is not the same

it shall be when

we know more.

he therefore takes a Falshood

for granted to set out with

We will take it for granted, that reason is something invariable and fixed in the nature of things; and without endeavouring to go back to an account of first principles, which for ever will elude our search, we will conclude, that whatever goes under the name of

taste, which we can fairly bring under the dominion of reason, must be considered as equally exempt from change. If therefore, in the course of this enquiry, we can shew that there are rules for the conduct of the artist which are fixed and invariable, it follows of course, that the art of the connoisseur, or, in other words, taste has likewise invariable principles.

*Now this
is Supreme
Fooling*

Of the judgement which we make on the works of art, and the preference that we give to one class of art over another, if a reason be demanded, the question is perhaps evaded by answering, I judge from my taste; but it does not follow that a better answer cannot be given, though, for common gazers, this may be sufficient. Every man is not obliged to investigate the causes of his approbation or dislike.

The arts would lie open for ever to caprice and casualty, if those who are to judge of their excellencies had no settled principles by which they are to regulate their decisions, and the merit or defect of performances were

*He may as
well say
that if
Man does*

*not lay down settled Principles. The sun
will not rise in a Morning*

to be determined by unguided fancy. And indeed we may venture to assert, that whatever speculative knowledge is necessary to the artist, is equally and indispensably necessary to the connoisseur.

The first idea that occurs in the consideration of what is fixed in art, or in taste, is that presiding principle of which I have so frequently spoken in former discourses,—the general idea of nature. The beginning, the middle, and the end of every thing that is valuable in taste, is comprised in the knowledge of what is truly nature; for whatever notions are not conformable to those of nature, or universal opinion, must be considered as more or less capricious.

Here is a
Plan
Confession
that he
Thinks
Mind
& Imagination not to be above the Mortal & Porphyry
Nature. Such is the End of Epicurean or
Newtonian Philosophy it is Atheism

My notion of nature comprehends not only the forms which nature produces, but also the nature and internal fabrick and organization, as I may call it, of the human mind and imagination. The terms beauty, or nature, which are general ideas, are but different modes of expressing the same thing, whether we apply these terms to statues,

*Keynets;
Eye. coats
not bear
Characteristics
Colouring
or Light &
Shade*

This is undoubtedly a subject of great bustle and tumult, and that the first effect of the picture may correspond to the subject, every principle of composition is violated; there is no principal figure, no principal light, no groups; every thing is dispersed, and in such a state of confusion, that the eye finds no repose any where. In consequence of the forbidding appearance, I remember turning from it with disgust, and should not have looked a second time, if I had not been called back to a closer inspection. I then indeed found, what we may expect always to find in the works of Poussin, correct drawing, forcible expression, and just character; in short all the excellencies which so much distinguish the works of this learned painter

*Please:
Whom?
Some Men
Cannot*

This conduct of Poussin I hold to be entirely improper to imitate. A picture should please at first sight, and appear to invite the spectator's attention: if on the contrary the general effect offends the eye, a second view is not always sought, whatever more substantial and intrinsic merit it may possess.

See a Picture. except in a Dark Corner

*Keypoints;
Eye counts
not bear
Characteristic
Colouring
or Light &
shade.*

This is undoubtedly a subject of great bustle and tumult, and that the first effect of the picture may correspond to the subject, every principle of composition is violated; there is no principal figure, no principal light, no groups; every thing is dispersed, and in such a state of confusion, that the eye finds no repose any where. In consequence of the forbidding appearance, I remember turning from it with disgust, and should not have looked a second time, if I had not been called back to a closer inspection. I then indeed found, what we may expect always to find in the works of Poussin, correct drawing, forcible expression, and just character; in short all the excellencies which so much distinguish the works of this learned painter

*Please?
Whom?
Some Men
Cannot*

This conduct of Poussin I hold to be entirely improper to imitate. A picture should please at first sight, and appear to invite the spectator's attention: if on the contrary the general effect offends the eye, a second view is not always sought, whatever more substantial and intrinsic merit it may possess.

See a Picture, except in a Dark Corner

Perhaps no apology ought to be received for offences committed against the vehicle (whether it be the organ of seeing, or of hearing,) by which our pleasures are conveyed to the mind. We must take care that the eye be not perplexed and distracted by a confusion of equal parts, or equal lights, or offended by an unharmonious mixture of colours, as we should guard against offending the ear by unharmonious sounds. We may venture to be more confident of the truth of this observation, since we find that Shakspeare, on a parallel occasion, has made Hamlet recommend to the players a precept of the same kind,—never to offend the ear by harsh sounds: *In the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of your passion, says he, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.* And yet, at the same time, he very justly observes, *The end of playing, both at the first, and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirrour up to nature.* No one can deny, that violent passions will naturally emit harsh and disagreeable tones: yet this great poet and critick thought that this imitation of nature would cost too much, if purchased at the ex-

VOL. I.

P.

*Violent
Paper
Must
The Best Good
& Perfect Toney*

punctilio of reason, when that reason deprives the art in a manner of its very existence. It must always be remembered that the business of a great painter, is to produce a great picture; he must therefore take especial care not to be cajoled by specious arguments out of his materials.

What has been so often said to the disadvantage of allegorical poetry,—that it is tedious, and uninteresting,—cannot with the same propriety be applied to painting, where the interest is of a different kind. If allegorical painting produces a greater variety of ideal beauty, a richer, a more various and delightful composition, and gives to the artist a greater opportunity of exhibiting his skill, all the interest he wishes for is accomplished; such a picture not only attracts, but fixes the attention.

*Here it is
alto
Ornamental* If it be objected that Rubens judged ill at first in thinking it necessary to make his work so very ornamental, this puts the question upon new ground. It was his peculiar style; he could paint in no other; *that the Roman & Bolognian schools may be
Imputed not to be Ornamental*

and he was selected for that work, probably, because it was his style. Nobody will dispute but some of the best of the Roman or Bolognian schools would have produced a more learned and more noble work.

*Learned &
Noble is
Ornamental*

This leads us to another important province of taste, that of weighing the value of the different classes of the art, and of estimating them accordingly.

*A Faulty
Balance*

All arts have means within them of applying themselves with success both to the intellectual and sensitive part of our natures. It cannot be disputed, supposing both these means put in practice with equal abilities, to which we ought to give the preference; to him who represents the heroick arts and more dignified passions of man, or to him who, by the help of meretricious ornaments, however elegant and graceful, captivates the sensuality, as it may be called, of our taste. Thus the Roman and Bolognian schools are reasonably preferred to the Venetian, Flemish, or Dutch schools, as they address themselves to our best and noblest faculties.

*is no
Criterion
because
tho it goes
down on the
lightest side
we ought
to look
what he
puts into
it.*

Excellent

head or cheeks, as he judges most becoming; whoever of these two despises the other for this attention to the fashion of his country, which ever first feels himself provoked to laugh, is the barbarian.

All these fashions are very innocent; neither worth disquisition, nor any endeavour to alter them; as the change would, in all probability, be equally distant from nature. The only circumstance against which indignation may reasonably be moved, is, where the operation is painful or destructive of health; such as some of the practices at Otaheite, and the straight lacing of the English ladies; of the last of which practices, how destructive it must be to health and long life, the professor of anatomy took an opportunity of proving a few days since in this Academy.

It is in dress, as in things of greater consequence. Fashions originate from those only who have the high and powerful advantages of rank, birth, and fortune. Many of the ornaments of art, those at least for which no

*If this is True
it is a dreadful
Foolish Thing
to be an Artist*

flights of fancy or imagination, reason ought to preside from first to last, though I admit her more powerful operation is upon reflection.

Let me add, that some of the greatest names of antiquity, and those who have most distinguished themselves in works of genius and imagination, were equally eminent for their critical skill. Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Horace; and among the moderns, Boileau, Corneille, Pope, and Dryden, are at least instances of genius not being destroyed by attention or subjection to rules and science. I should hope therefore, that the natural consequence of what has been said, would be, to excite in you a desire of knowing the principles and conduct of the great masters of our art, and respect and veneration for them when known.

Burke's Treatise on the Sublime & Beautiful
is founded on the Opinions of Newton & Locke
on this Treatise Reynolds has grounded many
of his assertions. in all his Discourses
I read Burke's Treatise when very young
at the same time I read Locke on Human
Understanding & Bacon's Advancement of Learning
on every one of these Books I wrote my
Opinions & on looking them over find
that my Notes on Reynolds in this Book
are exactly similar. I felt the same
Contempt & Abhorrence then; that I do
now. They mock Inspiration & Vision
Inspiration & Vision was then & now is
& I hope will always remain my Element
my eternal Dwelling place how can
I then bear it Contemned without returning
Scorn for Scorn

DISCOURSE VIII.

THE PRINCIPLES OF ART, WHETHER POETRY OR PAINTING, HAVE THEIR FOUNDATION IN THE MIND; SUCH AS NOVELTY, VARIETY AND CONTRAST; THESE IN THEIR EXCESS BECOME DEFECTS. —SIMPLICITY. ITS EXCESS DISAGREEABLE.—RULES NOT TO BE ALWAYS OBSERVED IN THEIR LITERAL SENSE: SUFFICIENT TO PRESERVE THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW.—OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRIZE PICTURES.

Principles according to St. John become Defects

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE recommended in former discourses,* that Artists should learn their profession by endeavouring to form an idea of perfection from the different excellencies which lie dispersed in the various schools of painting. Some difficulty will still occur, to know what is beauty, and where it may be found: one would wish not to be obliged to take it entirely on the credit of

In another Discourse I say that we cannot see the Flawless or Veridical

* DISCOURSE II. and VI.

but in nothing more than in their mode of composition, and management of light and shadow. Rembrandt's manner is absolute unity; he often has but one group, and exhibits little more than one spot of light in the midst of a large quantity of shadow: if he has a second mass, that second bears no proportion to the principal. Poussin, on the contrary, has scarce any principal mass of light at all, and his figures are often too much dispersed, without sufficient attention to place them in groups.

The conduct of these two painters is entirely the reverse of what might be expected from their general style and character; the works of Poussin being as much distinguished for simplicity, as those of Rembrandt for combination. Even this conduct of Poussin might proceed from too great an affection to simplicity of *another kind*; too great a desire to avoid that ostentation of art, with regard to light and shadow, on which Rembrandt so much wished to draw the attention: however, each of them ran into contrary extremes, and it is difficult to determine which is the

Rembrandt. was
a Generalizer
Poussin was
a Particularizer

Poussin
was better
that to make
all be better
than the same
light & shadow
any fool
may come
a better
the middle

*Dignity
an
Adjunct*

loftiness with the natural unaffected air of the portraits of Titian, where dignity, seeming to be natural and inherent, draws spontaneous reverence, and instead of being thus vainly assumed, has the appearance of an unalienable adjunct; whereas such pompous and laboured insolence of grandeur is so far from creating respect, that it betrays vulgarity and meanness, and new-acquired consequence.

The painters, many of them at least, have not been backward in adopting the notions contained in these precepts. The portraits of Rigaud are perfect examples of an implicit observance of these rules of De Piles; so that though he was a painter of great merit in many respects, yet, that merit is entirely overpowered by a total absence of simplicity in every sense.

Not to multiply instances, which might be produced for this purpose, from the works of History-painters, I shall mention only one,—a picture which I have seen, of the Supreme being by Coypell.