

Annotations to *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*,[†]

edited by Edmond Malone. London, 1798

TITLE PAGE

This Man was Hired to Depress Art This is the opinion of Will Blake my Proofs of this Opinion are given in the following Notes

<Advice of the Popes who succeeded the Age of Rafael>

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.

[Begin Page 636](#)

[BACK OF TITLE PAGE]

Having spent the Vigour of my Youth & Genius under the Opression 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 except by his own Energy> Mortimer was [*despised & Mocked*] <call'd a Madman> [*I now despise & Mock in turn although Suffring 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> hid[†] [CONTENTS PAGES]

The Arts & Sciences are the Destruction of Tyrannies or Bad Governments Why should A Good Government endeavour to Depress What is its Chief & only Support

The advantages proceeding from the Institution of a Royal Academy.

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 suppose

On peut dire que la Pape Leon Xme en encourageant les Etudes donna les armes contre lui-meme. J'ai oui dire a un Seigneur Anglais qu'il avait vu une Lettre du Seigneur Polus, ou de La Pole, depuis Cardinal, a ce Pape; dans laquelle, en le

felicitant sur ce qu'il etendait le progres de Science en Europe, il l'avertissait *qu'il etait dangereux de rendre les hommes trop Savans*--VOLTAIRE *Moeurs de[s] Nation[s]*,
Tome4

O Englishmen! why are you still of this foolish Cardinals opinion?

Much copying discountenanced

To learn the Language of Art Copy for Ever. is My Rule[BLANK PAGE FACING DEDICATION]

Who will Dare to Say that [*Fine*]<Polite>Art is Encouraged, or Either Wished or Tolerated in a Nation where The Society for the Encouragement of Art. Sufferd Barry to Give them, his Labour for Nothing A Society Composed of the Flower of the English Nobility & Gentry--[*A Society*]Suffering 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[P i]

O Society for Encouragement of Art--O King & Nobility of England! Where have you hid Fuseli's Milton Is Satan troubled at his Exposure

Begin Page 637

TO THE KING.

The regular progress of cultivated life is from necessaries to accommodations, from accommodations to ornaments.

The Bible says That Cultivated Life. Existed First-- Uncultivated Life. comes afterwards from Satans Hirelings[.] Necessaries Accomodations & Ornaments [*are Lifes Wants*] <are the whole of Life>[*First were Created Wine & Happiness ?Good ?Looks & Fortune*]Satan took away Ornament First. <Next he took away Accomodations & Then he became Lord & Master of>Necessaries [*last*]

[P ii] To give advice to those who are contending for royal liberality, . .

Liberality! We want not Liberality We want a Fair Price & Proportionate Value <& a General Demand for Art>

<Let not that Nation where Less than Nobility is the Reward. Pretend that Art is Encouraged by that Nation: Art is the First in Intellectuals & Ought to be First in Nations>[P iii]

<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>

[P viii, Malone on Reynolds' boyhood:] . . . 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 . . .

Why <then>did he not follow Rafaels Track

[P ix, note 7, quoting Walpole on Thomas Hudson, Reynolds' first master] The better taste introduced by Sir Joshua Reynolds, put an end to Hudson's reign, . . .

Hudson Drew Correctly

[P xiv: the keeper of the Vatican informed Reynolds that "the works of Raffaele" frequently made "little impression" on visitors.]

Men who have been Educated with Works of Venetian Artists. under their Eyes Cannot see Rafael unless they are born with Determinate Organs

[Reynolds quoted:] . . . I remember very well my own disappointment, when I first visited the Vatican; . . .

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[p xv]

<Some look. to see the sweet Outlines
And beauteous Forms that Love does wear
Some look. to find out Patches. Paint.
Bracelets & Stays & Powderd Hair>

[Reynolds:] . . . 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,

[Begin Page 638](#)

and those admirable paintings in particular, owed their reputation to the ignorance and prejudice of mankind; . . .

Here are Mocks on those who Saw Rafael [*But not Sir Joshua*]

. . . I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed.

A Liar he never was Abashed in his Life & never felt his Ignorance

[P xvi] . . . I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of art, . . .

All this Concession is to prove that Genius is Acquired as follows in the Next page

[P xvii] . . . 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 . . .

[*Fool*]

. . . as if . . . our minds, like tinder, should instantly catch fire from the divine spark of Raffaele's genius.

A Mock

. . . the excellence of his style . . . lies deep; and at the first view is seen but mistily.

A Mock

It is the florid style, which strikes at once, and captivates the eye for a time, . . .

A Lie The Florid Style such as the Venetian & the Flemish. Never Struck Me at Once nor At-All.[P xviii]

[*to good Artists*]The Style that Strikes the Eye is the True Style But A Fools Eye is Not to be. a Criterion

I consider *general copying*(he adds) *as a delusive kind of industry*: . . .

Here he Condemns Generalizing which he almost always Approves& Recommends

[P xix] How incapable of producing any thing of their own, those are, who have spent most of their time in making finished copies, . . .

Finishd. What does he Mean Niggling Without the Correct & Definite Outline If he means That Copying Correctly is a hindrance he is a Liar. for that is the only School to the Language of Art

[P xxix] It is the thoughts expressed in the works of Michael Angelo, Correggio, Raffaele, Parmegiano, and perhaps some of the old Gothick masters, . . . which we seek after with avidity.

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]?

[P xxxi] Thus Bacon became a great thinker, by first entering into and making himself master of the thoughts of other men.

[*This is the Character of a Knave*]

Begin Page 639

[Pp xxxiii-xxxiv, Burke on Reynolds] . . . He . . . owed his first disposition to generalize . . . to old Mr. Mudge . . . a learned and venerable old man . . . much conversant in the Platonick Philosophy,. . . originally a dissenting minister; . . .

Slang Villainy

[To call generalizing "the Platonick Philosophy" was Slang; for a dissenting minister to preach it was Villainy.--D.V.E.]

[P xxxviii footnotes 24 and 25] [On the painters' having obtained a royal charter; Reynolds is not named among the eight "principal artists" active in "this scheme"; William Chambers is credited with helpful "access" to the King.]

[*Reynolds . . . thought . . . but Painters ?attention without xxx Reynolds Sir Wm Chambers . . . ?through*]

[Pp xli-xlv, note 28: Malone scotching rumors that the Discourses were written by Johnson or Burke.]

The Contradictions in Reynolds's Discourses are Strong Presumptions that they are the Work of Several Hands But this is no Proof that Reynolds did not Write them The Man Either Painter or Philosopher who Learns or Acquires all he Knows from Others. Must be full of Contradictions

[P xlvi, Reynolds' eulogy of George Moser as "the FATHER of the present race of Artists".]

I was once looking over the Prints from Rafael & Michael Angelo. in the Library of the Royal Academy Moser came to me & said You should not Study these old Hard Stiff & Dry Unfinishd Works of Art, Stay a little & I will shew you what you should

Study. He then went & took down Le Bruns & Rubens's Galleries How I did secretly
Rage. I also spoke my Mind [line cut away]

I said to Moser, These things that you call Finishd are not Even Begun how can they
then, be Finishd? The Man who does not know The Beginning, never can know the
End of Art

[P xlix, Reynolds on his own "merits and defects"] I consoled myself.... by remarking that these
ready inventors, are extremely apt to acquiesce *in imperfection*; . . .

Villainy a Lie

[P l] . . . Metastasio . . . complained of the great difficulty he found in attaining correctness, in
consequence of having been in his youth an IMPROVVISATORE.

I do not believe this Anecdote

[P liii, from Reynolds' 11th Discourse] . . . the general effect of the whole. . . . requires the
painter's entire mind; whereas the PARTS may be finishing by nice touches, while his mind is
engaged on other matters: . . . indolence. . . .

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 Rembrandts & Rubenss &
Reynolds's Effect.--For Real Effect. is Making out the Parts & it is Nothing Else but
That

[P lvii, note 34, Malone on Reynolds' efforts to recover the secrets of the Venetian colourists]
Our great painter . . . had undoubtedly attained a part of the ancient process used in the

[Begin Page 640](#)

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^t

[P lx, note 36] A notion prevails . . . that in the MAJORITY of his works the colours have
entirely faded . . . ; but [most] have preserved their original hue. . . .

I do not think that the Change is so much in the Pictures as in the Opinions of the
Public

[P lxx, note 38, quoting Dr Johnson in 1761] Reynolds is without a rival, and continues to add thousands to thousands.

How much did Barry Get

[P lxxii, Malone, on the French plundering] . . . of the most celebrated works of the Flemish School in the Netherlands (for I will not gratify our English republicans by calling it BELGIUM). . . .

[*why then gratify Flemish, Knaves & Fools*]

[P lxxii] . . . he . . . devoted several days to contemplating the productions of that great painter [Rubens].

If Reynolds had Really admired Mich Angelo he never would have followd Rubens

[P lxxxiii, note 48 on the Literary Club] The original members were, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Langton, Mr. Antony Chamier, Sir John Hawkins, the Hon. Topham Beauclerk, and Dr. Goldsmith.

[*Oliver Goldsmith ?never should have known such knaves*]

[P lxxxvi, Malone on Reynolds' sincerity] His ardent love of truth. . . his strong antipathy to all false pretensions. . . .

[*O Shame False*]

[P lxxxvii, note 49] He had painted, as he once observed to me, TWO GENERATIONS of the beauties of England.

[*God blasts Them As Though ?he ?were lost ?Eurydice*]

[P lxxxix, note 51, on Reynolds' deafness] When in company with only one person, he heard very well, . . .

A Sly Dog So can Every body; but bring Two People & the Hearing is Stopped

[P xc, note 53 quoting Goldsmith's epitaph on Reynolds]

Such Men as Goldsmith ought not to have been Acquainted with such Men as Reynold

[P xci; Malone comparing Reynolds to Laelius]

[*Why should Laelius be considered Sir Joshuas Counterpart*]

[*Who dares ?worship ?a ?man Whod have Driven you long Ago Insane*]

[P xcvi, summing up: If Reynolds had been an orator, he would have resembled Laelius rather than Galba]

He certainly would have been more like a Fool Than a Wise Man

Begin Page 641

[PP xcvii-xcviii, note 54, Burke on Reynolds] But this disposition to abstractions, to generalizing and classification, is the great glory of the human mind, . . .

To Generalize is to be an Idiot To Particularize is the Alone Distinction of Merit--
General Knowledges are those Knowledges that Idiots possess [*As do Fools that
adore Things & ?ideas x x x of General Knowledge*]

[PP xcvi-xcvii] . . . during the greater part of his life, laboured as hard with his pencil, as any
mechanick

The Man who does not Labour more than the Hireling must be a poor Devil.

[P ciii] [Malone, praising Reynolds' endorsement of Burke's anti-revolutionary sagacity, applies
Dryden--"They led their wild desires to woods and caves, / And thought that all but SAVAGES
were slaves"--to those who would assimilate England "to the model of the FEROCIOUS and
ENSLAVED Republick of France!"]

When France got free Europe 'twixt Fools & Knaves
Were Savage first to France, & after; Slaves

[P civ, Malone on Reynolds' good fortune to have escaped the present era of sedition] . . .
England is at present in an unparalleled state of wealth and prosperity. . . . These FACTS ought
to be sounded from one end of England to the other, . . . a complete answer to all the
SEDITIONOUS DECLAMATIONS. . . .

This Whole Book was Written to Serve Political Purposes [*?First to Serve Nobility &
Fashionable Taste & Sr. Joshua*]

[P cix, on Reynolds' death Feb 23 1792, from "the inordinate growth"of his liver]

When S^rJoshua Reynolds died
All Nature was degraded;
The King dropd a tear into the Queens Ear;

And all his Pictures Faded.

[P cxi, the Dukes, Marquisses, and other noblemen at Reynolds' funeral]

A Mock

[P cxv] To each of the gentlemen who attended . . . was presented a print engraved by Bartolozzi.
...

[Funeral granted to Sir Joshua for having destroyed Art However the (?gentlemen were rewarded) for standing Near]

[P cxvi, note 65: Reynolds' wish to have St Paul's decorated by paintings prevented by the Bishop of London]

[The Rascals who ?See Painting want to Destroy Art & Learning]

[P cxx, Burke on Reynolds] . . . one of the most memorable men of this time. <>

<>Is not this a Manifest Lie

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 & if any one would give [line cut away] Such was Burkes Patronage of
Art & Science

[Begin Page 642](#)

DISCOURSE I

[P2, back of title]

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; & 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 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]

[P 3, beginning Reynolds' foreword "To The Members of The Royal Academy"]

The Neglect of Fuselis Milton in a Country pretending to the Encouragement of Art is a Sufficient Apology for My Vigorous Indignation if indeed the Neglect of My own Powers had not been Ought not the <?Patrons >Employers [*Imbecility*] of Fools to be Execrated in future Ages. They Will & Shall

Foolish Men Your own real Greatness depends on your Encouragement of the Arts & your Fall will depend on [*your*] <their> Neglect & Depression

What you Fear is your true Interest Leo X was advised not to Encourage the Arts he was too Wise to take this Advice

⁴[P 4, misnumbered "[iv]", at end of foreword]

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. [*Are there Artists who live upon Assassinations of other Men*]

<When Nations grow 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>

[P 5]

Reynoldss 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 the Muses Daughters of Memory

An Academy, in which the Polite Arts may be regularly cultivated, . . .

<The Enquiry in England is not whether a Man has Talents. & Genius? But whether he is Passive & Polite & a Virtuous Ass: & obedient to Noblemens Opinions in Art & Science. If he is; he is a Good Man: If Not he must be Starved>

Begin Page 643

⁴[P 7] There are, at this time, a greater number of excellent artists than were ever known before at one period in this nation. . . .

[Artists . . . ?Heavens ?Fool the hxxx Pxxxx as xxxxm]

[P 7] . . . the wisdom and generosity of the Institution: . . .

3 Farthings [xxxxx]

[P 9] Raffaele . . . 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.

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

. . . the minute accidental discriminations of particular . . .objects, . . .

Minute Discrimination is Not Accidental All Sublimity is founded on Minute Discrimination

[P 11] . . . models . . . for their imitation, not their criticism.

<Imitation is Criticism>

[P 13] 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.

<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 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 & Determinate>^f

[P 14] Whilst boys . . . they have taken the shadow for the substance; and make the mechanical felicity the chief excellence of the art, . . .^f

<Mechanical Excellence is the Only Vehicle of Genius>

. . . pleased with this premature dexterity in their pupils, . . . praised their dispatch at the expence of their correctness.

<This is all False & Self-Contradictory

. . . frivolous ambition of being thought masters of execution, . . .

<Execution is the Chariot of Genius>

[P 15] . . . youth . . . disgusted at the slow approaches. . . labour is the only price of solid fame, . . . whatever their force of genius may be, . . .

<This is All Self-Contradictory! Truth & Falshood 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.

The Lives of Painters say that Rafael died of Dissipation Idleness is one Thing & Dissipation Another He who has Nothing to Dissipate Cannot Dissipate

[Begin Page 644](#)

the Weak Man may be Virtuous Enough but will Never be an Artist [*?What painters have only been dissipated without wildness*]<Painters are noted for being Dissipated & Wild.>

[P 16] . . . they then painted the picture, *and after all re-touched it from the life.*

<This is False>

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; . . .

<Excellent>

[P 17] . . . a habit of drawing correctly what we see, will . . . give a proportionable power of drawing correctly what we imagine.

<This is Admirably Said. Why does he not always allow as much>

[P 18] [Nice copying teaches] exactness and precision, . . .

<Excellent>

DISCOURSE II

[P 22, back of title]

<The Labourd Works of Journeymen employed by Correggio. Titian Veronese & all the Venetians ought not to be shewn to the Young Artist as the Works of original

Conception any more than the Engravings of Strange Bartolozzi or Woollett. They are Works of Manual Labour>

[P 23] MUCH COPYING DISCOURAGED . . . ARTISTS . . . SHOULD BE EMPLOYED IN LAYING UP MATERIALS. . . .

<What is Laying up materials but Copying>

[P 25] . . . once enabled to express himself . . . he must . . . amass a stock of ideas . . . he is now to consider the Art itself as his master.

After having been a Fool a Student is to amass a Stock of Ideas & [*then to be insolent in his Foolery*] <knowing himself to be a Fool he is to assume the Right to put other Mens Ideas into his Foolery>

[P 26]. . . 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

[P 28] A Student unacquainted with the attempts [P 29] of former adventurers, is always apt to over-rate his own abilities; to mistake . . . every coast new to him, for a new-found country.

<Contemptible Mocks>

[P 29] The productions of such minds . . . differ . . . from their predecessors . . . only in irregular sallies, and trifling conceits.

<Thus Reynolds Depreciates the Efforts of Inventive Genius Trifling Conceits are better than Colouring without any meaning at all>

[P 30] On whom then can [the student] rely . . . ? . . . those great masters who have travelled the same road with success. . . .

[*This is Encouragement for Artists . . . (about 4 illegible words) . . . to those who are born for it*]

Begin Page 645

[P 32] How incapable those . . . who have spent much of their time in making finished copies. . . .

This is most False <for no one can ever Design till he has learnd the Language of Art by making many Finishd Copies both 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>

[P 33] The great use in copying, if it be at all useful, should seem to be in learning to colour; . . .

<Contemptible>

. . . yet even colouring will never be perfectly attained by servilely copying the model before you.

<Servile Copying is the Great Merit of Copying>

[P 34] . . . you cannot do better than have recourse to nature herself, who is always at hand

<Nonsense--Every Eye Sees differently As the Eye--Such the Object>

[P 35] Labour to invent on their general principles. . . .how a Michael Angelo or a Raffaele would have treated this subject: . . .

<General Principle[s] Again! Unless. You Consult. Particulars. You Cannot. even Know or See Mich: Ang. or Rafael or any Thing Else>

But as mere enthusiasm will carry you but a little way. . .

[*Damn The Fool*]

Meer Enthusiasm is the All in All!-- Bacons Philosophy has Ruind England <Bacon is only Epicurus over again>

[P 36] . . . enter into a kind of competition, by . . . making a companion to any picture that you consider as a model. . . . and compare them

[*What but a Puppy will dare to do this*]

. . . a severe and mortifying task, . . .

[*?Why, should ?comparing[or ?copying] Great Masters[be done] Painfully*]

[P 37] [To compare one's work with a Great Master's] requires not only great resolution, but great humility.

[Who will or Can ?endure ?such Humiliation (?either ?he ?is) dishonest ?or he is ?Insane]

Few have been taught to any purpose, who have not been their own teachers.

True!

[P 38] . . . to choose . . . models, . . . take the world's opinion rather than your own.

[Fools opinions & Endeavours destroy Invention!]

[P 40] A facility of drawing . . . cannot be acquired but by an infinite number of acts.

True

[P 41] . . . endeavour to draw the figure by memory. [And persevere] in this custom,

Good Advice

Begin Page 646

. . . remember, that the pencil [i.e. paint brush] is the instrument by which . . . to obtain eminence

<Nonsense>

[P 42] The Venetian and Flemish schools, which owe much of their fame to colouring, . . .

<because they could not Draw>

[P 43] [Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoret, the Bassans] Their sketches on paper are as rude as their pictures are excellent in . . .harmony of colouring.

<All the Pictures said to be by these Men are the Laboured fabrication of journey-work>

. . . finished drawings . . . sold under [their] names . . . are [copies]

<They could not Draw>

[P 47] . . . 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.

A Stroke at Mortimer

[P 48] [The well-grounded painter] is contented that all shall be as great as himself, who have undergone the same fatigue; . . .

The Man who asserts that there is no Such Thing as Softness in Art & that every thing in Art is Definite & Determinate has not been told this by Practise but by Inspiration & Vision because 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 Con or Innate Science

DISCOURSE III

[P 50, back of title]

<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 & sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his Altar to touch & purify the lips of whom he pleases." Milton

<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>

[P 52] . . . the genuine painter . . . instead of endeavouring to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations, must endeavour to improve [P 53] them by the grandeur of his ideas; . . .

Without Minute Neatness of Execution. The. Sublime cannot Exist! Grandeur of Ideas is founded on Precision of Ideas

[P 54] The Moderns are not less convinced than the Ancients of this superior power [i.e. something beyond mere imitation] existing in the art; nor less sensible of its effects.

<I wish that this was True>

[Begin Page 647](#)

[P 55, an introductory remark by Blake:]

Now he begins to Degrade [&] to Deny [destroy] & <to>Mock

Such is the warmth with which both the Ancients and Moderns speak of this divine principle of the art; . . .

And such is the Coldness with which Reynolds speaks! And such is his Enmity
. . . enthusiastick admiration seldom promotes knowledge.

Enthusiastic Admiration is the first Principle of Knowledge & its last

He examines his own mind, and perceives there nothing of . . . divine inspiration, . . .

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

[P 56] [He never] travelled to heaven to gather new ideas; . . .

The Man who never in his Mind & Thoughts travel'd to Heaven Is No Artist

. . . no other qualifications than what . . . a plain understanding can confer.

Artists who are above a plain Understanding are Mock'd & Destroy'd by this President of Fools

. . . figurative declamation [makes art seem] out of the reach of human industry. But . . . we ought to distinguish how much is to be given to enthusiasm, and how much to reason . . . not . . . vague admiration, . . .

It is Evident that Reynolds Wish'd none but Fools 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?>

[P 57] Could we teach taste or genius by rules, they would be no longer taste and genius.

[This must be how Liars Reason]

. . . most people err . . . from not knowing what object to pursue.

The Man who does not know what Object to Pursue is an Idiot

This great ideal perfection and beauty are not to be sought in the heavens, but upon the earth.

A Lie

They are about us, and upon every side of us.

A Lie

But the power of discovering . . . can be acquired only by experience; . . .

A Lie

[P 58] . . . art [must] get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind.

A Folly

Singular & Particular Detail is the Foundation of the Sublime

The most beautiful forms have something about them like weakness, minuteness, or imperfection.

Minuteness is their whole Beauty

[Begin Page 648](#)

[P 59] This idea [acquired by habit of observing] . . . which the Artist calls the Ideal Beauty, is the great leading principle. . . .

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>

[P 60] . . . an artist becomes possessed of the idea of that central form . . . from which every deviation is deformity.

One Central Form Composed of all other Forms being Granted it does not therefore follow that all other Forms are Deformity

. . . the ancient sculptors . . . being indefatigable in the school of nature, have left models of that perfect form. . . .

All Forms are Perfect in the Poets Mind. but these are not Abstracted nor Compounded from Nature <but are from Imagination>

[P 61] [Even the] great Bacon treats with ridicule the idea of confining proportion to rules, or of producing beauty by selection.

The Great Bacon he is Calld I call him the Little Bacon says that Every Thing must be done by Experiment his first princip[le] is Unbelief And Yet here he says that Art must be produc'd Without such Method. He is Like Sr Joshu[a] full of Self-Contradiction & Knavery^t

There is a rule, obtained out of general nature. . . .

What is General Nature is there Such a Thing

what is General Knowledge is there such a Thing [*Strictly Speaking*] All Knowledge is Particular

[P 62] . . . it may be objected, that in every particular species there are various central forms

Here he loses sight of A Central Form. & Gets into Many Central Forms

[P 63] . . . still none of them is the representation of an individual, but of a class.

Every Class is Individual

. . . . in each of these classes. . . . childhood and age. . . there is a common form. . . .

There is no End to the Follies of this Man Childhood & Age are Equally, belonging to Every Class

. . . 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. . . .

Here he comes again to his Central Form

[P 64] There is . . . a kind of symmetry, or proportion, which may properly be said to belong to deformity. A figure lean or corpulent . . . though deviating from beauty. . . .

The Symmetry of Deformity is a Pretty Foolery

Can any Man who Thinks. [*argue*] <Talk> so? Leanness or Fatness is not Deformity. but Reynolds thought Character Itself Extravagance & Deformity

Age & Youth are not Classes but [*Accidents*] [<Situations>] <Properties> of Each Class so are Leanness & Fatness

[P 65] . . . when [the Artist] has reduced the variety of nature to the abstract idea;

What Folly

his next task will be to become acquainted with the genuine habits of nature, as distinguished from those of fashion.

*[Is Fashion the concern of Artists The Knave Calls any thing found in Nature <t>fit for Art]*⁴

[P 67] . . . [the painter] must divest himself of all prejudices . . . disregard all local and temporary ornaments, and look only on those general habits. . . .

Generalizing in Every thing the Man would soon be a Fool but a Cunning Fool

[P 71] . . . a wrong direction . . . without ever knowing there was a nobler to pursue. Albert Durer, as Vasari has justly remarked,

[Albert Durer would never have got his Manners from the Nobility]

would, probably, have been one of the first painters of his age, (and he lived in all era of great artists,) had he been initiated into those great principles. . . .

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 is Always Above The Age

[P 74] I [do not mean] to countenance a careless or indetermined manner of painting. For though the painter is to overlook the accidental discriminations of nature,

Here he is for Determinate & yet for Indeterminate

he is to exhibit [general forms] distinctly, and with precision, . . .

Distinct General Form Cannot Exist Distinctness is Particular Not General

[P 75] A firm and determined outline is one of the characteristics of the great style in painting; and . . . 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

. . . I have endeavoured to reduce the idea of beauty to general principles: . . . the only means of advancing science; of clearing the mind . . .

[*Sir Joshua Proves that*]Bacon's Philosophy makes both Statesmen & Artists Fools & Knaves

DISCOURSE IV

[P 78, back of title]

The <Two>Following Discourse<s>[is]<are> Particularly Calculated for the Setting Ignorant & 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

[P 79] The value and rank of every art is in proportion to the mental labour employed in it, or the mental pleasure produced by it.

Why does he not always allow This

[Begin Page 650](#)

[P 80] [The principle of] leaving out particularities, and retaining only general ideas . . . extends itself to every part of the Art. . . .

General Ideas <again>

Invention in Painting does not imply the invention of the subject; for that is commonly supplied by the Poet or Historian.

All but Names of Persons & Places is Invention both in Poetry & Painting

[P 82] . . . the . . . most dangerous error is on the side of minuteness; . . .

<Here is Nonsense!>

[P 83] All smaller things, however perfect in their way, are to be sacrificed without mercy to the greater.

<Sacrifice the Parts. What becomes of the Whole>

Even in portraits, the grace, and . . . the likeness, consists more in taking the general air, than in observing the exact similitude of every feature.

How Ignorant

[P 86] A painter of portraits retains the individual likeness; a painter of history shews the man by shewing his actions.

<If he does not shew the Man as well as the Action he is a poor Artist>

[P 87] . . . be well studied in the analysis of those circumstances, which constitute dignity of appearance in real life.

<Here he allows an Analysis of Circumstances>

Those expressions alone should be given to the figures which their respective situations generally produce.

[*Nonsense*]

[P 89] . . . the distinct blue, red, and yellow . . . in the draperies of the Roman and Florentine schools . . . effect of grandeur. . . Perhaps these distinct colours strike the mind more forcibly, from there not being any great union between them; . . .

These are Fine & just Notions Why does he not always allow as much

[P 90] . . . the historical Painter never enters into the detail of colours [nor] does he debase his conceptions with minute attention to the discriminations of Drapery.

Excellent Remarks

Carlo Maratti [thought] that the disposition of drapery was a more difficult art than even that of drawing the human figure; . . .

I do not believe that Carlo Maratti thought so or that any body can think so. the Drapery is formed alone by the Shape of the Naked [next word cut away in binding]

[P 92] . . . the Venetians . . . accomplished perfectly tile thing they attempted. But as mere elegance is their principal object, . . .

They accomplishd Nothing <As to Elegance they have not a Spark>

[P 93] To this question [why Veronese had put his principal figure in shade-Reynolds answers that he was] an ornamental Painter [whose] intention was solely to produce an effect of light and shadow; . . .

This is not a Satisfactory Answer

To produce an Effect of True Light & Shadow [*Nothing must be sacrificed for*

Light & Shadow depends on Distinctness of Form] <is Necessary to the Ornamental Style-- which altogether depends on Distinctness of Form. The Venetian ought not to be calld the Ornamental Style>

[P 94] The language of Painting must indeed be allowed these masters [the Venetians]; . . .

The Language of Painters cannot be allowd them if Reynolds says right at p. 97 he there says that the Venetian Will Not Correspond with the Great Style

<The Greek Gems are in the Same Style as the Greek Statues>

[P 95] 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.

What can be better Said, on this Subject? but Reynolds contradicts what he says Continually He makes little Concessions, that he may take Great Advantages

[P 97] And though in [colouring] the Venetians must be allowed extraordinary skill, yet even that skill, as they have employed it, will but ill correspond with the great style.

<Somebody Else wrote this page for Reynolds I think that Barry or Fuseli wrote it or [said] <dictated>it>

[P 98] . . . Michael Angelo [thought] that the principal attention of the Venetian painters [was to] the study of colours, to the neglect of the IDEAL BEAUTY OF FORM,. . . .

Venetian Attention is to a Contempt & Neglect of Form Itself & to the Destruction of all Form or Outline <Purposely & Intentionally>

But if general censure was given to that school from the sight of a picture of Titian. . . .

As if Mich. Ang^o. had seen but One Picture of Titians

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.>

[P 99]

<If the Venetians Outline was Right his Shadows would destroy it & deform its appearance

A Pair of Stays to mend the Shape
Of crooked Humpy Woman:
Put on O Venus! now thou art,
Quite a Venetian Roman.>

[P 100] . . . there is a sort of senatorial dignity about [Titian] . . .

<Titian as well as the other Venetians so far from Senatorial Dignity appears to me to give always the Characters of Vulgar Stupidity>

Why should Titian & The Venetians be Named in a discourse on Art

Such Idiots are not Artists

<Venetian; all thy Colouring is no more
Than Boulsterd Plasters on a Crooked Whore.>

[Begin Page 652](#)

[P 101] The Venetian is indeed the most splendid of the schools of elegance; . . .

<Vulgarity & not Elegance--The Word Elegance ought to be applied to Forms. not to Colours>

[P 102] . . . elaborate harmony Of colouring, a brilliancy of tints, a soft and gradual transition from one to another, . . .

<Broken Colours & Broken Lines & Broken Masses are Equally Subversive of the Sublime>

Such excellence . . . is weak . . . when the work aspires to grandeur and sublimity.

Well Said <Enough>

[P 103] But it must be allowed in favour of the Venetians, that [Rubens] was more gross than they. . . .

<How can that be called the Ornamental Style of which Gross Vulgarly forms the Principal Excellence>

[P 104] Some inferior dexterity, some extraordinary mechanical power is apparently that from which [the Dutch school] seek distinction.

<The Words Mechanical Power should not be thus Prostituted>

[P 106] An History-painter paints man in general; a Portrait- painter, a particular man,

A History Painter Paints The Hero, & not Man in General. but most minutely in Particular

[P 109] Thus . . . a portrait-painter leaves out all the minute breaks and peculiarities in the face. . . .

Folly! Of what consequence is it to the Arts what a Portrait Painter does

[P 110] . . . the composite style, . . . Correggio. . . . modern grace and elegance, . . .

There is No Such <a>Thing as A Composite Style

[P 111] The errors of genius, however, are pardonable. . . .

<Genius has no Error it is Ignorance that is Error>

[P 112] On the whole . . . one presiding principle. . . . The works . . . built upon general nature, live for ever; . . .

<All Equivocation & Self-Contradiction>

DISCOURSE V

[114, back of title]

Gainsborough told a Gentleman of Rank & Fortune that the Worst Painters always chose the Grandest Subjects. I desired the Gentleman to Set Gainsborough about one of Rafaels Grandest Subjects Namely Christ delivering the Keys to St Peter. & he would find that in Gainsboroughs 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

[P 116] That which is most worthy of esteem in its allotted sphere, becomes an object . . . of derision, when it is forced into a higher, to which it is not suited; . . .

Concessions to Truth for the sake of Oversetting Truth

Begin Page 653

. . . keep your principal attention fixed upon the higher excellencies. . . . you may be very imperfect; but still, you are an imperfect artist of the highest order.

[*Caesar said hed rather be the(first in) a Village(than) second in Rome was not Caesar(a) Dutch Painter*]¹

[P 117-118] . . . to preserve the most perfect beauty IN ITS MOST PERFECT STATE, you cannot express the passions, all of which produce distortion and deformity, more or less, in the most beautiful faces.

What Nonsense

Passion & Expression is Beauty Itself--The Face that is Incapable of Passion & Expression is Deformity Itself Let it be Painted & Patchd & Praised & Advertised for Ever <it will only be admired by Fools>

[P 119] . . . pictures of Raffaele, where the Criticks have described their own imaginations;

If Reynolds could not see. variety of Character in Rafael Others Can

We can easily . . . suppose a Jupiter to be possessed of all . . . powers and perfections. Yet [in art the ancients] confined his character to majesty alone.

False

The Ancients were chiefly attentive to Complicated & Minute Discrimination of Character it is the Whole of Art

Pliny . . . wrong when he speaks of . . . [P 120] three different characters [in one statue].

Reynolds cannot bear Expression

A statue in which you endeavour to unite . . . dignity . . . elegance . . . valour, must surely possess none of these. . . .

Why not? <O Poverty!>

The summit of excellence seems to be an assemblage of contrary qualities, . . . such . . . that no one part is found to counteract the other.

A Fine Jumble

[P 121] If any man shall be master of . . . highest . . . lowest, flights of art, . . . he is fitter to give example than to receive instruction.

<Mocks>

[P 123] . . . FRESCO, a mode of painting which excludes attention to minute elegancies: . . .

This is False

Fresco Painting is the Most Minute

<Fresco Painting is Like Miniature Painting; a Wall is a Large Ivory>

[P 124] Raffaelle . . . foremost [for] his excellence in the higher parts. . . . His easel-works . . . lower . . . never arrived at . . . perfection. . . .

Folly & Falshood. The Man who can say that Rafael knew not the smaller beauties of the Art ought to be Contemnd & I accordingly hold Reynolds in Contempt for this Sentence in particular

[P 125] When he painted in oil, his hand seemed to be so cramped and confined, . . .

Rafael did as he Pleased. He who does not admire Rafaels Execution does not Even See Rafael

[Begin Page 654](#)

I have no desire to degrade Raffaelle from the high rank. . .

A Lie

[P 126] . . . Michael Angelo . . . did not possess so many excellencies as Raffaelle, but. . . .

According to Reynolds Mich Angelo was worse still & Knew Nothing at all about Art as an object of Imitation

Can any Man be such a fool as to believe that Rafael & Michael Angelo were Incapable of the meer Language of Art & That Such Idiots as Rubens. Correggio & Titian Knew how to Execute what they could not Think or Invent

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.

Damnd Fool ¹

If any man had a right to look down . . . it was certainly Michael Angelo; . . .

O. Yes!

[P 127] . . . together with these [graces and embellishments], which we wish he had more attended to, he has rejected all the false . . . ornaments, . . .

Here is another Contradiction If. Mich Ang. Neglected any thing. that <Titian or>Veronese did: He Rejected it. for Good Reasons. Sr Joshua in other Places owns that 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

[P 128] . . . Raffaele had more Taste and Fancy, Michael Angelo more Genius and imagination.

<What Nonsense>

[P 129] [Michael Angelo] never needed . . . help. [Raffaele had] propriety, beauty, and majesty . . . judicious contrivance . . . correctness of Drawing, purity of Taste, . . .

If all this is True Why does not Reynolds recommend The Study of Rafael & Mich: Angelos Execution at page 97 he allows that the Venetian Style will Ill correspond with the Great Style

[P 131] Such is the great style, . . . [in it] search after novelty . . . has no place.

<The Great Style is always Novel or New in all its Operations>

But there is another style . . . inferior. . . . the original or characteristical style, . . .

<Original & Characteristical are the Two Grand Merits of the Great Style Why should these words be applied to such a Wretch as Salvator Rosa>

[P 132] . . . Salvator Rosa. . . . a peculiar cast of nature . . . though void of all grace, . . .

Salvator Rosa was precisely what he Pretended Not to be. His Pictures. are high Labourd pretensions to Expeditious Workmanship. He was the Quack Doctor of Painting His Roughnesses & Smoothnesses. are the Production of Labour & Trick. As to Imagination he was totally without Any.

[P 133] . . . yet . . . that sort of dignity which belongs to savage and uncultivated nature: . . .

Savages are [*Fribbles & Fops*]<Fops & Fribbles> more than any other Men

Begin Page 655

Every thing is of a piece: his Rocks, Trees, Sky, even to his *handling*, . . .

Handling is All that he has. & we all know this

Handling is Labour & Trick <Salvator Rosa employd Journeymen>

[P 134] . . . Rubens . . . 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, . . .

All Rubens's Pictures are Painted by journeymen & so far from being all of a Piece. are The most wretched Bungles

[P 135] His Colouring, in which he is eminently skilled, is . . . too much . . . tinted.

<To My Eye Rubens's Colouring is most Contemptible His Shadows are of a Filthy Brown somewhat of the Colour of Excrement these are filld with tints & messes of yellow & red His lights are all the Colours of the Rainbow laid on Indiscriminately & broken one into another. Altogether his Colouring is Contrary to The Colouring. of Real Art & Science>

Opposed to this . . . [is the] correct style of Poussin. . . .

<Opposed to Rubens's Colouring Sr Joshua has placd Poussin but he ought to put All Men of Genius who ever Painted. Rubens & the Venetians are Opposite in every thing to True Art & they Meant to be so they were hired for this Purpose>

[P 137] [Poussin's later pictures] softer and richer, . . . [but not] at all comparable to many in his [early] dry manner which we have in England.

<True>

The favourite subjects of Poussin were Ancient Fables; and no painter was ever better qualified

<True>

[P 138] Poussin seemed to think that the style and the language [should preserve] some relish of the old way of painting, . . .

<True>

[P 139] . . . if the Figures . . . had a modern air . . . how ridiculous would Apollo appear instead of the Sun; . . .

<These remarks on Poussin are Excellent>

[P 141] . . . the lowest style will be the most popular . . . ignorance . . .

<Well said>

[P 142] . . . our Exhibitions . . . a mischievous tendency, . . . seducing the Painter to an ambition of pleasing indiscriminately the mixed multitude. . . .

<Why then does he talk in other places of pleasing Every body>

DISCOURSE VI

[P 144, back of title

When a Man talks of Acquiring Invention & of learning how to produce Original Conception he must expect to be calld a Fool <by Men of Understanding but such a Hired Knave cares not for the Few. His Eye is on the Many. or rather on the Money>

[Begin Page 656](#)

[P 147] Those who have [written of art as inspiration are better receive] than he who attempts to examine, coldly, whether there are any means by which this art may be acquired. . . .

<Bacons Philosophy has Destroyd all Art & Science>The Man who that the Genius is not Born. but Taught.--Is a Knave

It is very natural for those. . . . who have never observed the gradation by which art is acquired . . . to conclude . . . that it is not only inaccessible to themselves.

<O Reader behold the Philosophers Grave.

He was born quite a Fool: but he died quite a Knave>

[P 149] It would be no wonder if a student . . . should . . . 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 Endeavouring to walk like the Dog, or the Ox striving to trot like the Horse just as Ridiculous it is see One Man Striving to

Imitate Another Man varies from Man more than Animal from Animal of Different Species>

[P 152] . . . DEGREE Of excellence [of] GENIUS is different, in different times and different places

<Never!>

and what shews it to be so is, that mankind have often changed their opinion upon this matter.

Never!

[P 153] . . . if genius is not taken for inspiration, but as the effect of close observation experience.

<Damnd Fool>

[P 154] . . . as . . . art shall advance, its powers will be still more and more fixed by rules.

<If Art was Progressive We should have had Mich Angelo's & Rafaels to Succeed & to Improve upon each other But it is not so. Genius dies Possessor & comes not again till Another is Born with It>

[155] . . . even works of Genius, like every other effect, . . . must have their cause, . . .

<Identities or Things are Neither Cause nor Effect They are Eternal>

[P 157] . . . our minds should . . . continue a settled intercourse with all the true examples of grandeur.

<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 & Sown This World is too poor to produce one Seed>

The mind is but a barren soil; a soil which is soon exhausted, and will produce no crop, . . .

<The Mind that could have produced this Sentence must have been Pitiful a Pitiable Imbecillity. I always thought that the Human Mind was the most Prolific of All Things & Inexhaustible <I certainly do Thank God that I am not like Reynolds>>

[P 158] . . . or only one, unless it be continually fertilized and enriched with foreign matter.

Nonsense

[P 159] Nothing can come of nothing.

<Is the Mind Nothing?>

. . . Michael Angelo, and Raffaele, were . . . possessed of all the knowledge in the art . . . of their predecessors.

If so. they knew all that Titian & Correggio knew Correggio was two Years older than Mich. Angelo

Correggio born <1472>Mich Angelo [*on*]<born 1474>

[P 161] . . . any endeavour to copy the exact peculiar colour . . . of another man's mind . . . must always be . . . ridiculous. . . .

<Why then Imitate at all?>

[P 163] Art in its perfection is not ostentatious; it lies hid, and works its effect, itself unseen.

<This is a Very Clever Sentence who wrote it God knows>

[P 165] Peculiar marks . . . generally . . . defects; . . .

Peculiar Marks. are the Only Merit

Peculiarities . . . so many blemishes; which, however, both in real life, and in painting, cease to appear deformities, . . .

Infernal Falshood

[P 166] Even the great name of Michael Angelo may be used, to keep in countenance a deficiency . . . of colouring, and every [other ornamental part]

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 [*perquisite*]<Thing>of Both [*O what Wisdom & Learning ?adorn his Superiority--*]

[P 167] . . . these defects . . . have a right to our pardon, but not to our admiration.

He who Admires Rafael Must admire Rafaels Execution

He who does not admire Rafaels Execution Cannot Admire Rafael

[P 172] . . . a want which cannot be completely supplied; that is, want of strength of parts.

A Confession

[P 176] . . . very finished artists in the inferior branches. . . .

This Sentence is to Introduce another in Condemnation & Contempt of Alb. Durer

The works of Albert Durer . . . afford a rich mass of genuine materials, which wrought up and polished, . . .

A Polishd Villain <who Robs & Murders>

[P 177] Though Coypel wanted a simplicity of taste, . . .

[*O Yes Coypel indeed*]

[P 178] The greatest style . . . would receive "an additional grace by . . . precision of pencil. . . .

What does Precision of Pencil mean? If it does not mean Outline it means Nothing

[Begin Page 658](#)

[P 179] [Jan Steen if taught by Michael Angelo and Raffaele] would have ranged with the great. . . .

Jan Stein was a Boor & neither Rafael nor Mich Ang. could have made him any better

[P 180] Men who although . . . bound down by . . . early habits, have still exerted. . . .

He who Can be bound down is No Genius Genius cannot be Bound it may be Renderd Indignant & Outrageous^t

"Opression makes the Wise Man Mad"

Solomon

DISCOURSE VII

[P 188, back of title]

<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 Considerd as Weak headed Fanatics

The obligations Reynolds has laid on Bad Artists of all Classes will 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>

[P 194] . . . obscurity . . . is one source of the sublime.

<Obscurity is Neither the Source of the Sublime nor of Any Thing Else>

[That] liberty of imagination is cramped by . . . rules; . . . smothered . . . by too much judgment; . . . [are] notions not only groundless, but pernicious.

<The Ancients & the wisest of the Moderns were of the opinion that Reynolds Condemns & laughs at>

[P 195] . . . scarce a poet is to be found, . . . whose latter works are not as replete with . . . imagination, as those [of] his more youthful days.

<As Replete but Not More Replete>

To understand literally these metaphors . . . seems . . . absurd. . . .

<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 & Truly & not as Reynolds pretends

[P 196] [idea absurd that a winged genius] did really inform him in a whisper what he was to write; . . .

How very Anxious Reynolds is to Disprove & Contemn Spiritual Perception

[P 197] It is supposed that . . . under the name of genius great works are produced. . . . without our being under the least obligation to reason, precept, or experience.

<Who Ever said this>

. . . scarce state these opinions without exposing their absurdity; yet . . . constantly in the mouths of . . . artists.

<He states Absurdities in Company with Truths & calls both Absurd>

[Begin Page 659](#)

[P 198] . . . prevalent opinion . . . considers the principles of taste . . . as having less solid foundations, than . . . they really have. . . . [and imagines taste of too high origin] to submit to the authority of all earthly tribunal.

<The Artifice of the Epicurean Philosophers is to Call all other Opinions Unsolid & Unsubstantial than those which are Derived from Earth>

We often appear to differ in sentiments . . . merely from the inaccuracy of terms, . . .

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

[P 199] . . . take words as we find them; . . . distinguish the THINGS to which they are applied.

<This is False the Fault is not in Words. but in Things Lockes Opinions of Words & their Fallaciousness are Artful Opinions & Fallacious also>

[P 200] 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 are Objects of Reasoning Invention Identity & Melody are Objects of Intuition>

[P 201] . . . as true as mathematical demonstration; . . .

<God forbid that Truth should be Confined to Mathematical Demonstration >

But beside real, there is also apparent truth, . . .

<He who does not Know Truth at Sight is unworthy of Her Notice>

. . . taste . . . approaches . . . a sort of resemblance to real science, even where opinions are . . . no better than prejudices.

<Here is a great deal to do to Prove that All Truth is Prejudice for All that is Valuable in Knowledge[s]is Superior to Demonstrative Science such as is Weighed or Measured>

[P 202] As these prejudices become more narrow, . . . this secondary taste becomes more and more fantastical; . . .

<And so he thinks he has proved that Genius & Inspiration are All a Hum>

. . . I shall [now] proceed with less method, . . .

<He calls the Above proceeding with Method>

We will take it for granted, that reason is something invariable . . .

<Reason or A Ratio of All We have Known is not the Same it shall be when we know More. <t>he therefore takes a Falshood for granted to set out with>^t

[P 203] [Whatever of taste we can] fairly bring under the dominion of reason, must be considered as equally exempt from change.

<Now this is Supreme Fooling>

The arts would lie open for ever to caprice . . . if those who . . . judge had no settled principles. . .

<He may as well say that if Man does not. lay down settled Principles. The Sun will not rise in a Morning>

Begin Page 660

[P 204] My notion of nature comprehends . . . also the . . . human mind and imagination.

<Here is a Plain Confession that he Thinks Mind & Imagination not to be above the Mortal & Perishing Nature. Such is the End of Epicurean or Newtonian Philosophy it is Atheism>

[P 208] [Poussin's Perseus and Medusa's head] . . . I remember turning from it with disgust, . . .

<Reynolds's Eye. could not bear Characteristic Colouring or Light & Shade>

A picture should please at first sight, . . .

Please! Whom? Some Men Cannot See a Picture except in a Dark Corner

[P 209] No one can deny, that violent passions will naturally emit harsh and disagreeable tones: . . .

Violent Passions Emit the Real Good & Perfect Tones

[P 214] . . . Rubens . . . thinking it necessary to make his work so very ornamental, . . .

<Here it is calld Ornamental that the Roman & Bolognian Schools may be Insinuated not to be Ornamental>

[P 215] Nobody will dispute but some of the best of the Roman or Bolognian schools would have produced a more learned and more noble work [than that of Rubens].

<Learned & Noble is Ornamental>

. . . weighing the value of the different classes of the art, . . .

<A Fools Balance is no Criterion because tho it goes down on the heaviest side we ought to look what he puts into it. >

[P 228] Thus it is the ornaments, rather than the proportions of architecture, which at the first glance distinguish the different orders from each other; the Dorick is known by its triglyphs, the Ionick by its volutes, and the Corinthian by its acanthus.

[He could not tell Ionick from the Corinthian or Dorick or one column from another].

[P 232] [European meeting Cherokee Indian . . . which ever first feels himself provoked to laugh, is the barbarian.

<Excellent>

[P 242] [In the highest] flights of . . . imagination, reason ought to preside from first to last, . . .

<If this is True it is a Devilish Foolish Thing to be An Artist>

DISCOURSE VIII

[P 244, back of title]

<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 Burkes Treatise when very Young at the same time 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. They mock Inspiration & Vision Inspiration & Vision was then & now is & I hope will

[Begin Page 661](#)

always Remain my Element my Eternal Dwelling place. how can I then hear it Contemnd without returning Scorn for Scorn-->

[P 245] THE PRINCIPLES OF ART . . . IN THEIR EXCESS BECOME DEFECTS. . . .

<Principles according to S^tJoshua become Defects>

. . . form an idea of perfection from the . . . various schools. . . .

In another Discourse he says that we cannot Mix the Florentine & Venetian

[P 251] [Rembrandt] often . . . exhibits little more than one spot of light in the midst of a large quantity of shadow: . . . Poussin . . . has scarce any principal mass of light. . . .

Rembrandt was a Generalizer Poussin was a Particularizer

Poussin knew better tha[n] to make all his Pictures have the same light & shadow any fool may concentrate a light in the Middle

[P 256] . . . Titian, where dignity . . . has the appearance of an unalienable adjunct; . . .

Dignity an Adjunct

[P 260] [Young artist made vain by] certain animating words, of Spirit, Dignity, Energy, Grace, greatness of Style, and brilliancy of Tints, . . .

Mocks

[P 262] But this kind of barbarous simplicity, would be better named Penury, . . .

Mocks

[The ancients'] simplicity was the offspring, not of choice, but necessity.

A Lie

[Painters who] ran into the contrary extreme [should] deal out their abundance with a more sparing hand, . . .

Abundance of Stupidity

[P 264] . . . the painter must add grace to strength, if he desires to secure the first impression in his favour.

If you Endeavour to Please the Worst you will never Please the Best To please All Is Impossible

[P 266] [Raffaelle's St Paul preaching at Athens] . . . add contrast, and the whole energy and unaffected grace of the figure is destroyed.

Well Said

[P 267] It is given as a rule by Fresnoy, That the principle figure . . . must appear . . . under the principal light, . . .

What a Devil of a Rule

[P 272] . . . bad pictures will instruct as well as good.

Bad Pictures are always S^rJoshuas Friends

[Rules of colouring of the] Venetian painters, . . .

Colouring formed upon these Principles is destructive of All Art because it takes away the possibility of Variety & only promotes Harmony or Blending of Colours one into another

[Begin Page 662](#)

[P 274] . . . harmony of colouring was not [attended to by Poussin]

Such Harmony of Colouring is destructive of Art One Species of General Hue over all is the Cursed Thing calld Harmony it is like the Smile of a Fool

[P 275] The illuminated parts of objects are in nature of a warmer tint than those that are in the shade: . . .

Shade is always Cold & never as in Rubens & the Colourists Hot & Yellowy Brown

[P 277] . . . fulness of manner . . . Correggio . . . Rembrandt. . . by melting and losing the shadows in a ground still darker. . . .

All This is Destructive of Art

[P 279] . . . must depart from nature for a greater advantage. [Cannot paint moon as relatively bright as in nature.]

<These are Excellent Remarks on Proportional Colour>

[P 281] [Rembrandt made head too dark to preserve contrast with bright armour, but] it is necessary that the work should be seen, not only without difficulty . . . but with pleasure. . . .

If the Picture ought to be seen with Ease surely The Nobler parts of the Picture such as the Heads ought to be Principal but this Never is the Case except in the Roman & Florentine Schools

Note I Include the Germans in the Florentine School

[P 284] From a slight undetermined drawing . . . the imagination supplies more than the painter himself, probably, could produce; . . .

What Falshood

[P 285] . . . indispensable rule . . . that everything shall be carefully and distinctly expressed. . . . This is what with us is called Science, and Learning; . . .

Excellent & Contrary to his usual Opinions

[P 286] Falconet . . . thinks meanly of this trick of concealing, . . .

<I am of Falconets opinion>