

6. *Tour of a German Artist*, 201–204. Because the wings of the original had been dispersed, this copy, as Passavant observed, alone gave the effect of the whole.
7. See National Gallery Catalogue by Martin David, *Early Netherlandish School* (2nd ed., 1955), nos. 943, 1078, 1079. Other former Aders pictures in the National Gallery include nos. 1081, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1087, and 1939.
8. The prints and drawings were sold at Fosters on 22 May 1833. There was an exhibition of Aders paintings at the Suffolk Street Gallery in 1832, but this was a prelude to their sale at Fosters on 1 August 1835. The third sale, at Christie's on 26 April 1839, was conducted for the Aders Trust under the aegis of Henry Crabb Robinson.
9. One of many possibly significant details is that Blake's most important paintings on wood date from the mid-1820s and that many of the Aders' Northern primitive paintings, such as the three named above, were painted on wood. In the advertisement for his exhibition of 1809 Blake had offered to paint "portable Fresco" on "Canvas or Wood, or any other portable thing" (p. 527), but the chief works of the exhibition itself were on canvas. Richmond's early paintings were also on wood.

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Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England: The Comedy of the English School of Painting

by Morris Eaves

The disturbance and surprise always just under the serenely consolidated skin of twentieth-century Blake studies originate in our awareness of the very extraordinary maneuvers required to get Blake into the literary canon: there are skeletons in the closet and loose ends untied. Since the single most profound maneuver in the history of Blake's reputation was to turn him into a poet, chiefly through editing his illuminated books by literary standards of legibility, most of the omissions, suppressions, and distortions involve the Blake who lived and died an artist in a circle of artists. The editing project adjusted his practice to the needs of a literary canon, but it left his theories untouched and unexplained. Blake's literary placement encouraged literary critics to look for the literary theorist in him. Most, like W. K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks, gave it up as a bad deal and declared that Blake was anything but a literary theorist.¹ The most promising development came through Northrop Frye, who has repeatedly credited Blake for teaching him literary theory, but no one would mistake Frye's theories for Blake's. What really cranked Frye's engine was the intellectual exertion required to transform a stratum of Blake's thought—here I would avoid saying theory—into the basis of a literary theory.

But, curiously, the process of stabilizing the institutional definition of Blake as one of the six major English romantic poets seems to have lib-

erated the academic energies necessary to retrieve Blake and artist, including Blake the art theorist. Hence the most recent efforts to understand Blake's theories have indeed been inspired by the thought that they are primarily about visual art not poetry, and that they derive from an eighteenth-century discourse in the visual arts not poetry. (Of course I am omitting important qualifications.) But because the historians of English art have shown little inclination to come to a broad and sophisticated understanding of that discourse, a lot of groundwork still needs to be done.

In *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt*, one of the very few able studies of this group of writings, John Barrell has shown how the so-called discourse of civic humanism, or "republican" theory, as derived from the work of historian J. G. A. Pocock, organizes the politics of eighteenth-century art theory at one level. While I revere Barrell's analysis of the political stratum of these writings, I would also want to remind us of the plain fact that these eighteenth-century writers about art do not present their theories as theories of republican government. That is, Barrell successfully extracts civic-humanist discourse from Jonathan Richardson, Joshua Reynolds, James Barry, and Henry Fuseli—less successfully from Blake²—as if he were mining gold. But as geologists, we want to understand not just the gold but the formations it comes from. To put it another way, any "one" discourse is always and necessarily many discourses intersecting in a complex hierarchical arrangement. Barrell helps us see a major intersection, but the narrow angle of civic humanism does not permit the panoramic view we need of the traffic pattern.

I name the traffic pattern English-school discourse, after the lingering crisis that occasioned one of these theoretical forays after another. Confronting the conspicuous failure to establish an English school of painting that could compete successfully with the Continental schools, writers groped for explanations and solutions. They created narratives about the past to explain both the present crisis in England and the successes of other schools elsewhere, and about the future to envision a prosperous English school. We can examine these narratives from various angles by relabeling the crisis: in a political crisis the critical factors may emerge in the narratives of civic humanism; in a technical or a commercial crisis, the key narratives are likely to be different. And all of these, as well as others, offer a view of the whole, by which painting can be narrated as an integral episode in political discourse, an educational or commercial or philosophical discourse, each of which also intersects with the others.

But there is another way of achieving a panoramic view. Because syntax and narrative are achieved simultaneously, there is a literary element in

all discourse. Perhaps this is merely analogous to what we hear about other cultural categories: as every discourse has a politics or an economics, so every discourse has a literature. Without jumping to the claim that literary discourse is metadiscourse, I would want to suggest that it is an interdiscursive discourse, one that readily structures other discourses by providing a dynamic narrative pattern capable not only of accommodating many smaller patterns but also of limiting the forms those intersecting patterns can take and the levels of importance they can assume. Accepting help freely from mythminded literary theorists and historians like Northrop Frye and Hayden White, I want to profile the literary discourse that I suppose organizes the body of writings on the English school of painting in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. I apologize in advance for having severely curtailed the documentation for fear that frequent quoting from primary sources in so short a piece might only overshadow the bare outlines I want to trace.

An English School for Scandal

The typical argument for the English school is broadly economic in motivation, historical in form, and prospective or open in vantage. The object of the argument is to construct a diagnostic and prognostic narrative that grants English art an honorable place in European art history. The most influential versions of that narrative have four leading features, the first pair of which give meaning to the second. In the first pair, an argument by analogy is driven by a principle of improvement that is transferable across historical periods and across cultures. In the second, a list of obstructions is supplemented by a list of counter-measures. The two pairs dovetail in a single prospective history: when the obstructions are removed and the counter-measures implemented, the principle of improvement will be able to operate freely, and the heretofore partial analogies will emerge in increasingly comprehensive forms.

Although, as the decades pass, stakes deepen, issues complicate, and implications multiply, the favorite arguments continue to be analogical. As X, so England, with X usually being ancient Greece, whose grace is often extended sequentially to ancient Rome and Renaissance Italy: "that the present age may vie in Arts with that of Leo the Tenth; and that the *dignity of the dying Art* (to make use of an expression of Pliny) may be revived under the Reign of GEORGE THE THIRD."³ That historical sequence is the product rather than the origin of a more profound idea, that all past artistic success had manifested a fundamental evolutionary pattern. The pattern, a gradual development based on the cumulative acquisition of concepts and skills, arrives in many alternative and overlapping forms: institutional (the spread of academic education), historical (the

Vasari canon as narrated in the *Lives*),⁴ theoretical (De Piles's *balance de la peinture*), practical (the program of technical eclecticism identified with the Carracci),⁵ and far too many more to represent fully here. Most solutions to the problems of the English fine arts proposed before and during Blake's lifetime depend fundamentally on the cyclical analogy and the principle of improvement. The founding of the Royal Academy in the 1760s is exemplary. On the whole it was promoted as the modern institutionalized recreation of a system of progressive acquisition that had existed in some sense in Athens, Rome, Florence, or Venice. As Reynolds says, "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."⁶ The R.A. would attempt to increase the efficiency of development by institutionalizing the very principle of development deduced from the art history of earlier periods.

These were, however, only the uplifting forms of unrealized hope and possibility, while the debate was conducted in the ominous rhetoric of national disaster: "The present moment is considered by artists as teeming with the crisis . . . of the destiny of their Art in England."⁷ A string of highly visible practical failures in the present made it easy to spot the ironies, not to say mockeries, in the theoretical optimism about the future. Knowledge of patterns of development, after all, can be either cheering or depressing depending on one's position. At a conference on the prospects of economic development in the Third World, insiders, those who feel that the pattern already applies to them, may emphasize preconditions that outsiders cannot meet; outsiders may emphasize the transferability of the pattern itself. In arguments about the development of art history, eighteenth-century Continental writers tend to behave as insiders. Consolidating and defending, they assure themselves that they are correct by rediscovering the pattern of artistic improvement in classical art and in their own. Negatively, they discover that wherever great art is missing, as in England, the pattern of improvement has been blocked. In this respect, the English artists end up in the position of Montesquieu's Indians: "It has been discovered that the savages of America are immune to discipline, incorrigible, and incapable of any enlightenment or instruction. Indeed, trying to teach them something, trying to bend their brain fibres, is like trying to make totally crippled people walk."⁸

But still, the pattern of improvement itself makes the underlying bias toward nurture over nature compelling enough to encourage English writers, behaving as outsiders at the periphery of an inner circle, to transfer it to their own situation. In this respect, Montesquieu's vast devotion to the efficacy of "education. . . . We find it among civilized peoples"⁹ becomes the solution to the problem posed by his own *raisons naturelles*. English writers do not deny that England's artistic development has been obstructed, but they give themselves grounds for optimism by insisting

that the development, the progress, is natural and the obstruction unnatural. Once the real *Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts*, as Barry significantly put it,¹⁰ are removed, the stream of progress will begin to flow.

In Valentine Green's happy interpretation of artistic cycles, English painting becomes "the last offspring of a parent that had filled the world with the renown of all her other progeny."¹¹ Green's apparently incidental resort to the social metaphors of parent and progeny is in fact a clue to the mythical form of English-school discourse, which is primarily comic throughout the period.¹² This comedy is seldom pure or exclusive. Whenever a promising savior comes along to focus the action, the comedy opens itself for a time to elements of romance. When failure mocks even the best efforts of the best actors, darker ironic elements emerge. But the mood of comic optimism prevails, and the forwardlooking action always returns to it for the motivation to nourish new strategies conceived in hope.

The action of comedy focuses on two areas of relationship, the relation of the hero and heroine to one another and the relation of the hero/heroine pair to some more extensive social organization. Each relationship indexes the other: the relation of hero to heroine tells us something about the larger society, and the nature of the society predicts the relationship between hero and heroine. Green's metaphor is characteristic of the plot in which it is embedded insofar as the comedy of the English school is typically a comedy of inheritance that moves (prospectively) from a state of social alienation to one of integration. English art awaits the day when the truth about its family connections will be discovered and it will be restored to its rightful place among the acknowledged true heirs of European art. When the social dimension is at its most explicit, English art may seek openly to prove that it belongs in the ruling class. With this class-based orientation, the action seeks to install the polite arts in the polite classes. Before their liberation, the arts may be figured as ladies and gentlemen forced to consort with their rough-and-tumble inferiors while enduring the rigors of the marketplace: "It is a mistake unworthy of an enlightened government," says Martin Archer Shee, "to conceive that the arts, left to the influence of ordinary events, . . . to fight and scramble in the rude and revolting contest of coarser occupations, can ever arrive at the perfection which contributes so materially to the permanent glory of a state."¹³ Whatever form it takes, the moment of discovery characteristic of comedy will occur when England recognizes its painters for who they are. The expected movement in comedy from one society, or state of society, to another appears in the prospect of an English society rising to a plane level with the great European cultures of the past after it has finally incorporated its artists into the social fabric.

Foreign writers who gave reasons for believing that a successful English school of painting would be an unnatural development, especially

the "pious priests" Montesquieu, Dubos, and Winckelmann, often focus the adversarial side of the plot. They become the stock villains who have spread "the monstrous doctrines of 'British incapacity for arts',"¹⁴ the nasty rumor that England does not and cannot lie in the true line of artistic genius. Since their malevolent voices are seldom distinguished from each other with any rigor, they may be regarded as a kind of composite blocking figure, the comic character whose role is to obstruct the union of hero and heroine. The hero and heroine are, of course, English painters and the muse of painting, and, on the larger scale, the painters and their public. In a related double movement the plot operates to unite painters with their muse and their public. Among the painters themselves, where the question is which kind of painting will produce the desired union with the public, there is competition for the role of hero. During years of fierce sibling rivalry, Reynolds successfully countered Barry's fierce aggression by playing the well-established part of the successful and condescending older brother, while to Barry fell the more difficult underdog role of angry youth.

On the other side of the plot, among the blocking figures, the obstacle that the slanderous Continental critics create is quite the ordinary one of an erroneous family connection for the hero. England is thus mischaracterized as a commercial nation, a nation of shopkeepers too cold and calculating—and on a social scale, too low—for a warm, equitable relationship with painting, causing the English public to turn its attentions to foreign suitors. The set of principles with which Continental critics bar English painters from the family of artistic nations serves as the severe, absurd law that often lends spurious legitimacy to the efforts of the blocking figures to keep the hero and heroine apart. The pious priests, whose association with religious taboos is not incidental to their comic role, present their principles as immutable laws of nature. English writers characterize them as nothing more than shallow rationalizations that will finally be exposed as illusion when faced with the reality of English painting. As in comedy generally, illusion is aligned with the paternal older set, the rulemaking Montesquieus, and reality with the younger characters, the upstart English painters from a "new nation." For their part, the painters and their allies actively oppose the blocking figures, launching the inventive counterstratagems that will bring England and painting together and, by extension, reestablish the broken family line.

Comedy, thus construed, provided the structure within which reformulations, answerable to the shifting fortunes of English painters over several decades, occurred. Let us see how a few significant variations fit into the more extensive comic pattern. Before the 1790s England and painting are regarded as a potentially good match that has, for various reasons (foreign competition, religious reformation, civil war), kept the

couple ignorant of one another's best qualities. The problem of the English school is often seen by English writers during this period, then, not as natural incompetence but as social backwardness, and the solution as a matter of catching up to one's natural peers through education—nature supplemented by nurture. The education is to come from a range of sources, most of them recommended on analogy with Continental practice, as the Royal Academy is founded on the promise that it would do for English artists what the well-established Continental academies were doing for artists in other countries. It is entirely coherent with the comic premise that guidance should come from the Continent, that is, from the social group in which membership is sought. Detractors characterize the Academy as an institutional barrier to progress, at worst a front, a whited sepulcher erected by the opposition under the name but only the name of encouragement. It is within such a narrative that Robert Strange blames the Academy for having "given a fatal check to the progress . . . of engraving."¹⁵

This development comes as no surprise, the role of disguise and hypocrisy in comedy being well known. For Blake after a point, for Barry at times, and for many other writers on the subject now and then, this counterplot of hypocrisy—the enemy within—became especially important. In terms of the comic structure we may regard it as the form that the blocking forces assume as they approach maximum coherence. To put it another way, the more coherent the activity of the blocking characters is thought to be, the more prominent the conspiratorial element in the plot becomes. And it is considerably more pervasive, in any case, than is generally allowed by those who regard it as a special paranoia reserved for the likes of Barry and Blake, who are in fact only two of many who see something more than coincidence in the misfortunes of English art.

Though the conspiracy plot is a longlived element of the discourse, its form changes. The earliest variation with which I am acquainted appears as a development of the foreign-artist theme. Hogarth is not the first but certainly the most influential exponent of the view that foreign art and artists were a key to the English artist's dilemma. If they are regarded as simple competitors for the attentions of the public, then they are relatively weak blocking characters who can be eliminated by educating the English audience out of its ignorance and fickleness. They are more formidable, however, when they appear, as they usually do, in joint conspiratorial ventures with English agents. After 1800 the importance of foreign artists to the conspiracy theme decreases sharply, but the theme itself remains strong, as we can hear in the frequent references of later writers to cliques, cabals, cunning men, and secret machinations.

The later writers are at least as likely as the earlier to locate the roots of neglect—"various talents inadequately exerted, and genius stooping

its powers to custom"—in corruption and "persecution."¹⁶ Conspiracy becomes a standard part of the explanation for England's slow development. In 1828 J. T. Smith blames the "unprecedented depression" of art sales on "the most glaring misconduct of several speculators" who undermine the "respectable publishers."¹⁷ In 1830 Allan Cunningham writes that, while naturally "fame is still the free gift of the people;—it was so in Hogarth's time, and it will continue to be so," "false instructors" and "mock patrons"¹⁸ concoct an artificial economy of supply and demand, respectively, that keeps self-taught native genius out of the market and out of the historical record. Looking back and down from the relatively serene heights of English assurance in 1841, W. B. Sarsfield Taylor sees a turbulent history "not merely of unkindness and neglect, but of oppression and wrong" and hazards a conjecture: "It would almost seem as if some systematic plan for that purpose had been laid down, and acted upon by successive governments in England, to discourage the rising talents of the nation in works of art. . . ." He draws the foreign-artist problem into this plot: "Continental charlatans and sycophants were continually imported, to insult the native artists, and deprive them of both character and subsistence. This is the true cause why the arts have been so backward in Britain."¹⁹

Variation in the discourse is perhaps most intense in the area of action where enabling mediation takes place. My emphasis on mediation, rather than onesided heroic action of the romantic sort, acknowledges the tendency of comedy toward inclusiveness and integration, even compromise. It is true that the mediators, Frye's *eirons*, come from the hero and heroine's side of the plot. If the *eirons* are defeated, so are the hero and heroine. While Frye compares the comic victory of youth over age to the mythical victory of summer over winter, it is important to note that victory in comedy can be as different from victory in romance as *winning over* is from *winning out*. In definitive cases, both the form and spirit of comic victories are distinguishable from romantic. The generally tolerant spirit of comedy may derive partly from the recognition that heroes and villains are, to use Blake's language, states, not identities, and that, as surely as summer will grow into winter and sons into fathers, today's hero is tomorrow's villain.

In the comedy of the English school, mediation comes through a range of characters. Although we are unlikely to exhaust the possibilities, we can sample them through the figure of the patron, the father-figure who has the power to block or open the way to the anticipated union between the painters and the significant public. Patrons are imaged either as leading representatives of that public or as go-betweens. Of the former, conventional or great-man patronage is the obvious instance. As far as the comic structure goes, painters looking for such patrons are in the position of heroes trying to get help from what would seem to be the wrong side

of the plot. In this case the patron begins life as a blocking figure (Frye's *alazon*), but if the real obstruction is not the patron but the patron's ignorance of art, the blocking figure can function as a mediator when the ignorance is eliminated. Presumably the rest of the public will then fall like dominoes. Under great-man patronage, the greatest man is of course the king, and he is regularly called upon to provide the missing encouragement to the painters: to acknowledge them as real sons, as it were, and thus to establish their legitimacy through his. Though painters never cease appealing to this symbolic representative of the legitimate public, the English monarch is pretty consistently disappointing, if more representative of the public in that respect than painters sometimes wanted to think. The disappointment, in any event, produces innovation, as when the painters as a social group make organized appeals to potential institutional patrons such as the church, instead of the more respectable and traditional appeal, at least as eighteenth-century painters preferred to think, in the other direction.

The failure of traditional patronage moves English hopes to a second kind of patron who promises to open what Josiah Wedgwood (another variation on the type) called the merchant's "*lines, channels & connections*"²⁰ between artists and public. In romantic transactions the matchmaker, in commercial transactions the middleman, the type of the go-between is well exemplified by "Alderman" John Boydell, the speculator—engraver, printseller, publisher—who launched the vastly ambitious Shakespeare Gallery project in the mid-1780s. In literary structure the Boydell era is an inverted comedy that begins with a feast and ends with a lottery. The feast is a Royal Academy dinner in 1789 where the Prince, reading a toast authored by Edmund Burke and approved by Joshua Reynolds, labels Boydell "the commercial Maecenas," a particularly English sort of patron, Burke said, "who patronizes the art better than the Grand Monarque of France."²¹ Boydell offered patronage from a new source, commerce. His clever way around the potent anti-commercial themes in the old discourse was to translate his private project into the old public terms, by which the Shakespeare Gallery becomes not a commercial speculation but an institutional supplement to the Royal Academy. As a patron Boydell construes himself, and others often construe him, not as a private entrepreneur but as a public benefactor opening a public channel of communication. According to Boydell and later mythologizers, the death of the Shakespeare Gallery was thus a national public humiliation brought on by the "Vandalic [French] Revolution."²²

After Boydell died and the stock and the premises were sold off in 1805 by lottery, a parody of commerce, commentators reverted to an earlier anti-commercial language—by which painting and engraving produced for the market were identified, to their detriment, with manufactured

commodities—and renewed the appeal for state intervention, often by analogy with Italian or French patronage, Leo X or Louis XIV. The analogy had become more compelling because England had recently proved that it was the true heir of great world empires. John Opie's proposal for an imperial naval monument modeled on the Roman Pantheon, the Gallery of British Honour, described in a letter to the *True Briton* in 1800—"In the midst, British valour triumphantly bearing down all opposition, accompanied by humanity, . . . ready to succour the vanquished foe!"²³—and revived by Prince Hoare in 1806, belongs here, as does the far more significant founding of the British Institution in 1805, which in the year of Trafalgar promised (and delivered) institutional reinforcement for the program of the Royal Academy with a noticeably stronger emphasis on British nationalism.²⁴ Rhetoric associated with the supposed analogy between imperial and artistic pretensions tends to develop some variation of the we-put-men-on-the-moon argument. Another branch of the new nationalism was the revisionist history of art being written (in different ways) by Hazlitt and Cunningham, with the effect of demoting Reynolds and promoting Hogarth. While these developments narrow the social scope of the discourse from international to national, we may notice a certain expansion insofar as various, perhaps desperate, attempts are being made to integrate the polite arts with more successful social and artistic institutions—earlier the church and the poets, later the military—in search of a workable match. In the comedy of inheritance, innovations in the discourse after the Boydell failure revise the lineage through which the inheritance will come. The historical analogies of the older tradition—Greece, Rome, Renaissance Italy—are treated more strictly *as* analogies: as the genius of Greek art was to the Greeks, so the genius of English art should be to the English. Leaning on the arboreal metaphor, we can say that the English are no longer treated as a branch of a larger European family but as a separate but equal tree whose roots are in its own history.

The strongest negative form of the patron is envisioned by Barry when he tries to communicate the insight that patronage had actually shaped the history of art: "this business of patronage is so big with delusion, and delusion of the most mischievous and treacherous kind, that I do most ardently wish that some man . . . would, for the public benefit, handle this subject in its full extent . . . He would meet with matter of the most invidious, malignant kind, and yet so artfully concealed, confounded, and so politically enveloped, with the very reverse and most amiable appearances, as would require the utmost effort of his discriminating skill and penetration, before he could strip and drag it into the light in all its native deformity."²⁵ Barry personifies patronage in its conspiratorial form as a comic hypocrite to be unmasked and expelled.

Finally, at the opposite extreme from all attempts to find effective go-betweens are the attempts to eliminate the structures of patronage alto-

gether by making artists their own eirons. The arguments against patronage are of course already available in the arguments against excessive dependence upon bad patrons, which in form are much like the equally available arguments against commerce. In painting and printmaking, where the traditions and the patterns of self-employment are strong, independence—self-publication and self-promotion—was always an available remedy, represented in the discourse by the voices of Hogarth, Barry, and Blake, at least.

The major difference between most stage comedy and the "comedy" of English-school discourse is in the purpose, as revealed in the proportion of, say, entertainment to edification. We often hear about the social nature of comedy, and the tradition of taking advantage of the opportunities that comedy offers for social criticism must go back at least to Aristophanes. Social criticism may even have special affinities with comedy, or, if that seems too broad, then with the kind of comedy that presents alternative views of society for adjudication—Frye describes the resemblance between the rhetoric of jurisprudence and the rhetoric of comedy²⁶—while favoring change and ridiculing the status quo. English-school discourse is not literary comedy, however, and, though it may be highly edifying, it is entertaining only in rare moments of high scurrility.

From the literary point of view it is, rather, comedy turned inside out: pragmatic social criticism that is historical in subject and comic in architecture. While in stage comedy the nature of the reformed society may be only vaguely hinted at in a final scene, the historico-comic bias of the English-school discourse allows it to be considerably more explicit than most stage comedies about the nature of the reformed society that the comic action makes possible. Thus a discourse as extensive and as public in its purposes as the one we have been studying is more likely to approach what Frye calls "the total *mythos* of comedy, only a small part of which is ordinarily presented."²⁷ The ABA' form of the *mythos* emerges naturally from the system of historical analogy that is fundamental to the discourse. What will English society look like once an English school of painting has established itself? Like ancient Greece, Renaissance Italy, and so on, the discourse answers. In the ternary structure, A is thus some model society drawn from the historical analogy, B the sterile English counter-society that cannot generate a school of painting, and A' the new society, or new form of an old society, that England promises to become. As for the latter, I should repeat that a salient feature of the discourse is its orientation to the future. The plot is thus less open than prospective, forever projecting but never experiencing its own resolution.

Postscript: Blake

Blake's ideas about art, and many of his ideas about literature as well, are profoundly indebted to this discourse. The ideas are not, as they have

often been supposed to be, private. They have an internal coherence, but they also share the coherence of the discourse on the English school of painting as it had evolved over the course of the eighteenth century. To put it simply, Blake can annotate Reynolds's *Discourses* because both the discourses and his annotations belong to the larger English-school discourse.

While these generalizations account for the norm, they leave out of account the question of Blake's difference from the norm. I would propose that much of the difference can be attributed to Blake's introduction of a secondary discourse, Christian, into the primary one. The resulting change is registered clearly in such key components of the discourse as the history of art that it reports. For more than a century the challenge had been to narrate a history of art in general capable of accommodating the history of English art in particular—at least as a coherent episode, perhaps even as the climactic phase, of the history of art. Blake's retelling of the more extensive history incorporates Christian elements, drawn, for example, from biblical narrative, in such a way as to reformulate the conditions under which English art had failed to thrive (and almost all writers agreed that it had indeed failed) and the conditions under which it could expect future success. Blake's Christian history of art offers new critiques of the old topoi in the English-school discourse including, among others, the training of artists, the role of patrons, the history of England, the obligations of the audience. But that is unfortunately another story.

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NOTES

1. W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (New York, 1957), 424.
2. In my review (forthcoming in *Studies in Romanticism*) of Barrell's *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: "The Body of the Public"* (New Haven, 1986) I criticize the attempt to construct a civic-humanist Blake.
3. Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. Robert R. Wark (San Marino, CA, 1959), 25.
4. Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared* (London, 1982), 110–115 and in passing, discusses the Vasari canon and the associated idea of art history as a "progression, consisting of a long series of triumphant solutions of technical problems" (111). Alsop, whose interest is mainly in the influence of Vasarian art history on collecting, is also able to show how the canon was extended into the past to include the "primitives" Cimabue and Giotto as well as forward to include, among others, Veronese, Tintoretto, Rubens, and Poussin.

5. As a sample of the uses to which the Carracci model was put, see Opie and Fuseli in Ralph N. Wornum, *Lectures on Painting, by the Royal Academicians: Barry, Opie, and Fuseli* (London, 1848), 259 and 381. See also "Formulas of Augmentation" in Eaves, *William Blake's Theory of Art* (Princeton, 1982), 138–145. See also, however, Fuseli's criticism of Vasari and of Carracci eclecticism (Wornum, *Lectures*, 342–343, 394–398, 548–549) for the lowest-common-denominator mediocrity they encourage. But Fuseli restricts his criticism to theory only: "Separate the precept from the practice, the artist from the teacher; and the Carracci are in possession of my submissive homage" (Wornum, *Lectures*, 396).
6. *Discourses on Art*, 20.
7. Prince Hoare, *An Inquiry into the Requisite Cultivation and Present State of the Arts of Design in England* (London, 1806), 211.
8. Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws by Montesquieu: A Compendium of the First English Edition*, ed. David Wallace Carrithers (Berkeley, 1977), 435. [An abridgement based on the 1750 translation by Thomas Nugent.]
9. Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws*, 435.
10. James Barry, *An Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England* (London, 1775).
11. Valentine Green, *A Review of the Polite Arts in France, at the Time of Their Establishment under Louis the XIVth, Compared with Their Present State in England: . . . in a Letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds . . .* (London, 1782), 37.
12. My analysis of the comic structure of English-school discourse relies heavily on mythic or pregeneric accounts of comedy such as Northrop Frye's in "The Mythos of Spring: Comedy," *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, 1957), 163–186, and, to a lesser extent, C. L. Barber's, in *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton, 1959).
13. Martin Archer Shee, *Rhymes on Art; or, The Remonstrance of a Painter: . . . including Strictures on the State of the Arts, Criticism, Patronage and Public Taste* (3rd ed. London, 1806) from 1st ed. pref., xviii.
14. W. B. Sarsfield Taylor, *The Origin, Progress, and Present Condition of the Fine Arts in Great Britain and Ireland* (2 vols., London, 1841), 2:132.
15. Robert Strange, *An Inquiry into the Rise and Establishment of the Royal Academy of Arts. To Which Is Prefixed, A Letter to the Earl of Bute* (London, 1775), 139. Strange's narrative of "the progress of the art of engraving" begins on 131; England comes into the story beginning on 137.
16. Hoare, *Arts of Design in England*, 241 and 267.
17. John Thomas Smith, *Nollekens and His Times: Comprehending a Life of that Celebrated Sculptor; and Memoirs of Several Contemporary Artists, from the Time of Roubillac, Hogarth, and Reynolds, to that of Fuseli, Flaxman, and Blake* (2 vols., London, 1828), 2:253.
18. Allan Cunningham, *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (2nd ed., 6 vols. in 3, London, 1830–1846 [Vols. 1–3, 1830; vol. 4, 1831; vol. 5, 1833; vol. 6, 1846]), 1:92 and 1:193.
19. Taylor, *Origin, Progress, and Present Condition*, 1:xiv–xv.

20. Quoted in Neil McKendrick, "Josiah Wedgwood: An Eighteenth-Century Entrepreneur in Salesmanship and Marketing Techniques," *Economic History Review* 12 (1960): 410.
21. "Maecenas" is Gaius Maecenas, Roman statesman, patron of Horace and Virgil. Details of the occasion differ considerably—on whether the dinner was the Lord Mayor's or the Royal Academy's, whether the toast was delivered by Reynolds or the Prince, whether the toast did or did not include the phrase "commercial Maecenas." "W. T. Whitley, who does not give his source, has the Prince proposing the toast at the R. A. dinner but omitting reference to Boydell as Maecenas (*Artists and Their Friends in England 1700–1799* [2 vols., London, 1928] 2:112). The most reliable report is very likely the one in the *London Chronicle* of 25–28 Apr. 1789; see Burke, *Correspondence*, ed. Holden Furber (10 vols., Cambridge and Chicago, 1958–1978, vol. 5, 1965), 5: 465. Two years later, in 1791, Boydell made himself the first Lord Mayor to have the Academy to dinner.
22. Quoted in Sven H. A. Bruntjen, *John Boydell, 1719–1804: A Study of Art Patronage and Publishing in Georgian London* (Diss. Stanford U, 1974, pub. New York, 1985), 149 n.101.
23. Quoted in Hoare, *Arts of Design in England*, 50–51.
24. Taylor gives an appropriately patriotic account of the founding and early years of the British Institution (*Origin, Progress, and Present Condition*, 2:214–244).
25. James Barry, *A Letter to the Dilettanti Society, Respecting the Obtention of Certain Matters Essentially Necessary for the Improvement of Public Taste, and for Accomplishing the Original Views of the Royal Academy of Great Britain* (London, 1798), 41–42.
26. *Anatomy of Criticism*, 166.
27. *Anatomy of Criticism*, 171.

Book Review

An Island in the Moon

by William Blake.

A Facsimile of the Manuscript Introduced, Transcribed, and Annotated by Michael Phillips, with a Preface by Haven O'More.

Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press in Association with the Institute of Traditional Science, 1987. 118 pages. Illus. £75 (about \$135). ISBN: 0 521 258529.

During the last thirty-five years, the William Blake Trust and a few other institutions and individuals sharing its interests have produced a number of fine facsimiles of Blake's beautiful illuminated books. More recently, scholars and publishers have turned to reproducing Blake's few extant manuscripts and even his book annotations, such as those in the copies of J. C. Lavater's *Aphorisms* (1788) and R. Watson's *Apology for the Bible* (1797) now in the Huntington Library. In 1979, Brombergs of Uppsala published a Swedish translation of Blake's *An Island in the Moon* containing a much-reduced, but reasonably legible, reproduction of the manuscript in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. The present volume has as its *raison d'être* a full-size facsimile of this same work.

Blake wrote his brief comic drama, a combination of Haymarket farce and Lucianic satire, in about 1785 when he was twenty-seven years old and only six years after his release from apprenticeship to the engraver James Basire. *An Island in the Moon* takes its comedic and social milieu from the London *conversaciones* in which Blake participated. The theatrical fragment—the manuscript lacks at least two leaves in the middle—has long been read as a *roman à clef*, with such important contemporaries as John Flaxman, Joseph Priestley, and Thomas Taylor providing the models for Blake's ridiculously named characters who talk at cross-purposes about everything from syncretic mythology to ladies' fashions. For the historian and biographer, *An Island* offers valuable insights into Blake's