

Now that Tom Paine is a better Christian than the
with attention & find that the Bishop has only hurt
has broken his head the Bishop has not answerd
actions

On Bacon's *Essays* (1798)*

False that the Wisdom of this World is Foolishness

at Bacon says Is True what Christ says Is False If
s Wrong both in Politics & Religion since they will

ns Kingdom [written on the title page]

at this is Epi[c]urus and Lucretius² & Yet Every
istian Philosophy how is this Possible Every Body
iever but Every Body does not do this But The
ourts who make themselves Every Body & Know-
d

h is one Thing and Truth the result of Reasoning is
Truth is not the Truth of Christ but of Pilate It is
lge of Good & Evil

ie devils arse [with a chain of excrement ending in]

lectual Arts Unmanly Poetry Painting Music are in
, they are for Kings & Wars & shall in the End Anni-

Bacon's Primum Mobile

yd's *Translation of the Inferno in
i Verse* (1785; notes c. 1800)*

etry is Immoral the Grandest characters Wicked.
Dhello a murderer. Prometheus. Jupiter. Jehovah,

, *Economical, and Political* (1798); Cambridge University, Keynes.

e Nature of Things"), the Latin poet Lucretius (c. 99–55 B.C.E.) cele-
er Epicurus' (341–270 B.C.E.) materialist theory of a cosmos consist-
ing in a void.
of Dante Alighieri in English Verse. Cambridge University, Keynes.

Cunning & Morality are not Poetry but Philosophy the Poet is Indepen-
dent & Wicked the Philosopher is Dependent & Good
Poetry is to excuse Vice & show its reason & necessary purgation

[E635] If it is thus¹ the extreme of black is white & of sweet sower & of good
Evil & of Nothing Something

From On Reynolds's *Works* (1798; notes c. 1798–1809)*

[E635] 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.

[E636] Having spent the Vigour of my Youth & Genius under the Oppression
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 & Resent-
ment While Sr Joshua was rolling in Riches Barry¹ was Poor & Unemployd
except by his own Energy Mortimer was calld a Madman & only Portrait
Painting applauded & rewarded by the Rich & Great. Reynolds & Gains-
borough Blotted & Blurred one against the other & Divided all the English
World between them Fuseli Indignant almost hid himself—I am hid

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

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 * * *

Who will Dare to Say that 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—Suffering an Artist to
Starve while he Supported Really what They under pretence of Encour-
aging were Endeavouring to Depress—Barry told me that while he Did
that Work—he Lived on Bread & Apples

1. That "there are certain bounds even to liberty."

* Reynolds, Sir Joshua. *Works*, 2nd ed. (1798). British Library C.45.e.18–20. Blake's annotations (c. 1798–1809) in volume 1, inked over pencil, are clearly visible in the page images of *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, document no. CW3303409251.

1. On the painters James Barry and John Hamilton Mortimer and the Society for the Encouragement of Art (founded 1805), see "Public Address."

[E637] The Bible says That Cultivated Life Existed First—Uncultivated Life comes afterwards from Satans Hirelings Necessarys Accomodations & Ornaments 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 Necessarys

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

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

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

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

[E639] 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

[E639] I was once looking over the Prints from Rafael & Michael Angelo in the Library of the Royal Academy Moser² 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 Galleries³ How I did secretly Rage. I also spoke my Mind . . .

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

[E641] To Generalize is to be an Idiot To Particularize is the Alone Distinction of Merit—General Knowledges are those Knowledges that Idiots possess

When Sr Joshua Reynolds died
All Nature was degraded;
The King dropd a tear into the Queens Ear;
And all his Pictures Faded.

[E642] 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 &

2. George Michael Moser (1704–1783), Swiss-born enamelist and metalworker, keeper at the Royal Academy from its founding in 1768, and deputy librarian after 1781.

3. Blake thought that neither Charles Le Bruns (1619–1690) nor Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) placed enough emphasis on outline.

Candour the hidden trap & the poisoned feast. He for Qualities which Michael Angelo Abhorrd; & He only Qualities which Rafael Valued, Whether Reynolds doing is nothing to me; the Mischief is just the same it Ignorantly or Knowingly: I always consider'd True particularly Insulted & Degraded by the Reputation: much as they were Degraded by the Reputation of that Such Artists as Reynolds, are at all times Hiring Depression of Art A Pretence of Art: To Destroy Art

The Neglect of Fuselis Milton⁴ in a Country pragement of Art is a Sufficient Apology for My indeed the Neglect of My own Powers had not be

The Rich Men of England form themselves into Buy Pictures The Artist who does not throw his ing Exhibitions does not know either his own Int

When Nations grow Old. The
And Commerce settles on eve
And the Poor & the Old can li
For all are Born Poor. Aged Si

Reynoldss Opinion was that Genius May be To to Inspiration is a Lie & a Deceit to say the least the Whole Bible is Madness This Opinion originates the Muses Daughters of Memory

The Enquiry in England is not whether a Man is whether he is Passive & Polite & a Virtuous Ass: Opinions in Art & Science. If he is; he is a Good Starved

[E643] I do not believe that Rafael taught Michelangelo, any more than I believe that the Pear tree to grow or the Apple tree teaches the Pear tree I believe the tales of Anecdote writers when they Character

Minute Discrimination is Not Accidental All Minute Discrimination

The Lives of Painters⁵ say that Rafael died of Thing & Dissipation Another He who has Nothing sipate Painters are noted for being Dissipated

4. Fuseli's exhibitions (1799, 1800) of more than forty painting commercial failures; the project grew out of an aborted illustration to have been among the engravers.

5. According to Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (trans. William Strickland), it happened, that [Raphael] secretly other amorous Delights, it happened, that [Raphael] way, that he came Home with a pritty high Feaver' (258), from

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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 * * *

The Neglect of Fuselis Milton⁴ in a Country pretending to the Encour-
agement of Art is a Sufficient Apology for My Vigorous Indignation if
indeed the Neglect of My own Powers had not been. * * *

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 Trad-
ing Exhibitions does not know either his own Interest or his Duty.

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

Reynoldss Opinion was that Genius May be Taught & that all Pretence
to Inspiration is a Lie & a Deceit to say the least of it For if it is a Deceit
the Whole Bible is Madness This Opinion originates in the Greeks Calling
the Muses Daughters of Memory

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
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^[E643]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 Pear tree how to bear Fruit. I do not
believe the tales of Anecdote writers when they militate against Individual
Character

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

The Lives of Painters⁵ say that Rafael died of Dissipation Idleness is one
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4. Fuseli's exhibitions (1799, 1800) of more than forty paintings of subjects from Milton were com-
mercial failures; the project grew out of an aborted illustrated edition of Milton, for which Blake
was to have been among the engravers.

5. According to Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (trans. William Aglionby, 1685; 1719), "following
secretly other amorous Delights, it happened, that [Raphael] committed once such an Excess that
way, that he came Home with a pritty high Feaver" (258), from which he soon died.

[E645]* * * no one can ever Design till he has learn'd the Language of Art by making many Finish'd 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

* * * Every Eye Sees differently As the Eye—Such the Object

[E646]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

A Work of Genius is a Work "Not to be obtain'd 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." Milton⁶

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

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

[E648]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

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

The Great Bacon he is Call'd I call him the Little Bacon says that Every Thing must be done by Experiment his first principle is Unbelief And Yet here he says that Art must be produc'd Without such Method. He is Like S^r Joshua full of Self-Contradiction & Knavery

What is General Nature is there Such a Thing
what is General Knowledge is there such a Thing All Knowledge is Particular

6. Quoting *The Reason of Church-government Urg'd against Prelaty* (1641) 41, with minor changes.

[E649]What does this mean "Would have been" of his Age" Albert Durer Is! Not would have been! Gothic Figures & Gothic Buildings, & not talk of Ages are All Equal. But Genius is Always Above T

[E652]Gainsborough told a Gentleman of Rank. Painters always chose the Grandest Subjects. I c Set Gainsborough about one of Rafaels Grandes delivering the Keys to St Peter, & he would fin hands it would be a Vulgar Subject of Poor Fis Carpenter

The following Discourse is written with the Gainsborough had in making the Above asserti Vulgar Artists as the Models of Executive Merit

[E655]To My Eye Rubens's Colouring is most Care of a Filthy Brown somewhat of the Colour of with tints & messes of yellow & red His lights Rainbow laid on Indiscriminately & broken one in Colouring is Contrary to The Colouring of Real

[E656]Reynolds Thinks that Man Learns all the Contrary That Man Brings All that he has or Can him. Man is Born Like a Garden ready Planted poor to produce one Seed

[E658]The Ancients did not mean to Impose belief in Vision & Revelation Plato was in Earn They believ'd that God did Visit Man Really & pretends

[E659]God forbid that Truth should be Confined stration

He who does not Know Truth at Sight is unw

Reason or A Ratio of All We have Known is no we know More. * * *

[E660]Burke's Treatise on the Sublime & Be Opinions of Newton & Locke on this Treati many of his assertions in all his Discourses I very Young at the same time I read Locke on Bacons Advancement of Learning on Every c my Opinions & on looking them over find tha this Book are exactly Similar. I felt the Sam then; that I do now. They mock Inspiration & was then & now is & I hope will always Rema Dwelling place. how can I then hear it Co Scorn for Scorn

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^[E649]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

^[E652]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

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Colouring is Contrary to The Colouring of Real Art & Science

^[E656]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
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poor to produce one Seed

^[E658]The Ancients did not mean to Impose when they affirmd their
belief in Vision & Revelation Plato was in Earnest. Milton was in Earnest.
They believd that God did Visit Man Really & Truly & not as Reynolds
pretends

^[E659]God forbid that Truth should be Confined to Mathematical Demon-
stration

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

Reason or A Ratio of All We have Known is not the Same it shall be when
we know More. * * *

^[E660]Burke's Treatise on the Sublime & Beautiful is founded on the
Opinions of Newton & Locke on this Treatise Reynolds has grounded
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very Young at the same time I read Locke on Human Understanding &
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this Book are exactly Similar. I felt the Same Contempt & Abhorrence
then; that I do now. They mock Inspiration & Vision Inspiration & Vision
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