The “Englishness” of English Art

Theory

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This article examines the intertwining of art theory, national identity, and art in England from the early eighteenth century to the present. We are used to the conjunction of art and nationality because generations of artists, art historians, and the public have typically defined art by its national origin. Students study French and Italian and Dutch art; museums habitually display works by national school or have the mandate to exhibit the art of their nation. While art historians commonly think of art production in terms of national schools, art theory is usually held to transcend accidental particulars. To address the “Englishness of English Art” seems odd because the philosophical bent of art theory (aesthetics) urges us to abjure the specifics of place, gender, race, and nation. A central argument in this essay is that art theory and art practice are not so different. To assume that art is connected to place while theory remains unmoored is to deny the palpable interconnectedness of theory and practice in the English tradition. The discipline of art history, the practices of art theory and criticism, and public museums evolved in Britain and Europe in the late eighteenth century together and in concert with discourses of nationhood, nationalism, and patriotism. Habituated to this rubric, however, today we easily forget that thinking through the frame of nations is more than an innocent expedient. Characterization by nationality can perpetuate stereotypes about the supposed basis of artistic production. Thus English art is expected to be more than art made and displayed in England. It is supposed to include a defining measure of “Englishness” or perhaps “Britishness,” as at Tate Britain. Is there a self-consciously English type of art theory? The 300th anniversary in 2007 of the Acts of Union that included Scotland in a United Kingdom of Great Britain, with its concomitant assertions of English and other regional nationalisms, is a timely occasion for an assessment of the Englishness of English art theory.
The categories of nation and nationality may seem natural. Portraits of monarchs seek to display the might and virtues of their country through the ruler. Landscape views published by Constable and Turner reflect and demarcate English scenery. Henry Moore’s representations of life in the London underground during the Second World War are memorable because they convey the Churchillian will of a people under siege. Nikolaus Pevsner’s famous study *The Englishness of English Art* (1956) is the central example in the history of English art of the widespread urge to deploy nationality as an explanation for the proclivities of artists. Pevsner wrote in the aftermath of the Second World War. As a German émigré, he relied on (while seeking to dispel) German models of national style and race. His positive view of English art as determined largely by climate and geography demonstrates that discourses of aesthetic nationality are often prompted by concerns beyond the realms of art. These discourses are common but by no means inevitable. The same is paradigmatically the case with art theory, but because this category normally seeks to transcend specifics in search of the general rule, we must think of theory more pragmatically to measure its embeddedness in the specificities of history and culture. In offering a way to think about the place of art theory in England – whether geographically, in relation to the history of art, or in terms of nationality – we should not assume, however, that there is something called “Englishness” or any other national essence of an immutable, Platonic sort awaiting discovery. The definition of “nation” changes, and England is no different from many other countries in its preoccupation with self-definition in these terms. On the other hand, for centuries and in many different guises, people continue to believe in just this sort of essence. The history of its attractions should not be dismissed without examination.

What difference might it make for a particular speculative view on the visual arts to be deemed “English”? Received opinion suggests that this is an unpromising line of inquiry on a number of counts. First, it is notoriously difficult to disentangle the competing claims to national identity in the United Kingdom today, let alone over the 300 years during which English art theory can be said to exist. To speak of art theory written and having an effect in England is unproblematic. But when we modify art theory with the adjective “English” and imply a specific quality, “Englishness,” what do we say about Edmund Burke (Irish), David Hume (a Scot), James McNeill Whistler (American), or Wyndham Lewis (who was born in Canada)? Englishness tends to mask other British identities, which is in itself a problem. Second, art theory – paradigmatically an intellectual category – is not supposed to sit well in Britain thanks to a purportedly innate aversion to speculation. George Orwell wrote “the English are not intellectual. They have a horror of abstract thought, they feel no need for any philosophy or systematic ‘world view’.” We find self-fulfilling versions of this claim across the considerable range of studies of Englishness, from Kate Fox’s penetrating and hilarious *Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour* (2004) to the more scholarly study by Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain*
For the most part, what Fox calls “The Importance of Not Being Ernest Rule” is regarded as a positive quality of Englishness, as is a supposedly anti-rationalist (and anti-theoretical) emphasis on empiricism as the systematic application of innate common sense. Acclaimed biographer and novelist Peter Ackroyd asserts approvingly in *Albion: the Origins of the English Imagination* that the “native aptitude has ... led to a disaffection from, or dissatisfaction with, all abstract speculation.” Illustrating David Simpson’s claim that in England, “the vigilance against theory has hardly let up since at least the 1650s,” the group Art & Language provided a more colorful, if hyperbolic, instance of the myth in 1976 with the claim that “the French Pox [semiotics] stands in opposition to Anglo-Saxon Empiricism.” If one were to credit such stereotypes, in England and Britain, artwriting of a theoretical sort would not exist, appear only as something imported, foreign, and thus suspect, or it would be found under another description.

In England, theory is usually seen as what other people misguidedly do, especially the French and the Germans. Such stereotypes exaggerate accurate observations. If we are to test what Collini labels the “absence” thesis – in this context, that the English do not favor or produce art theory because of its intellectualism – we must attend to at least three paradoxes. First, as noted, art theory is typically held to strive for the universal, to be above the vagaries of nationality. Second, the English are construed as a practical lot, not prone to theory in art or any other realm. Most paradoxically of all, there is an abundance of English art theory that is self-characterized by qualities of “Englishness.” To relieve these conundrums, it is important to ask in general whether English traditions of artwriting (in ways analogous to English art) have inappropriately been judged according to “imported” criteria, whether of German idealist aesthetics or French pictorial modernism. Not surprisingly, then, when a non-systematic or common-sensical approach is found in the art historical writing of a German national, for example, it is the occasion for praise. Michael Kitson praised Pevsner’s *Englishness of English Art* in such terms, concluding his lengthy review of the book in 1956 as follows:

happily, [Pevsner] is not consistent in his approach, and when he is off his guard, so to speak, he does in fact look first at works of art and seems only to dash in his theme as an afterthought ... when he gave the Reith Lectures, art history, like cheerfulness, would keep breaking in.

Just as an historically nuanced understanding of English modernism in the visual arts must augment the paradigms of Continental modernism brought so forcefully to bear by Roger Fry in the early twentieth century to find English art wanting, for example, so too we must recast the category of art theory and abandon the restrictive paradigms of pure thinkers such as Kant. Instead of a survey of the English corpus, what follows provides an account of the claims and tangles of nationality, an examination of issues that are presented as the “Englishness” of this
strain of art theory and which are integral to its various accents. Canvassing such
an extensive chronology tempts one to find continuity where there is little, to
seem to inscribe a stable “Englishness” merely by discussing attempts to find it.
While this quality remains elusive, attempts to promote one or another version of
a national identity have nonetheless motivated English art theory from its
inception to the present.

It is often claimed – usually with derogatory overtones – that art in England has
a particularly language-oriented and literary bent.22 Ronald Paulson has argued
that the pervasive English iconoclasm that began in the late seventeenth century
is nothing less than the substitution of words for images.23 John Barrell has vividly
described the ostensible difficulty stemming from the propinquity of the visual
arts and text in England: for Roger Fry in the early twentieth century, Barrell
reports for example, “the English national character was … defined by that very
preoccupation with painting as narrative, as rhetorical, the lack of which had
defined it 200 years before.” Barrell elaborates: “The Englishness of English art
was characterized … as a quality distinctive only by its inadequacy.”24 A corollary
argument would find English art theory wanting because of its pollution by visual
practice. Inverting the commonplace notion that English art is too literary,
supplies us with a positive insight about English theory and visual production: in
each category, we must see the other pole, that is, read the theory in the pictures
and see the images in the text. As I will show, this doubleness has been a feature
of English art and artwriting for centuries. Importantly, it continues to figure in
contemporary art and perhaps now finds more favor in our less formal, less
modernist times. Most of the speculation on the visual arts in England has indeed
come from painters: early on, from Jonathan Richardson, William Hogarth,
Joshua Reynolds, William Blake, and Henry Fuseli. In the nineteenth and
twentieth, we can also think of John Ruskin, Roger Fry, and Herbert Read,
though they were amateur artists. As we will see, Wyndham Lewis was a prolific
theorist and novelist as well as the founder of Vorticism. In our own time, we can
point to Victor Burgin as well as to Art & Language, whose very name connects
elements that should not be held apart artificially when we discuss the Englishness
of English art theory.

Can we move so easily between art and art theory? Yes, because while there are
distinctions to be made, there is no fundamental transition to accomplish: to
proceed as if there is an ontological divide is to overestimate the visuality of the
visual arts and to assume that theory must be exclusively textual. We can most
fruitfully understand the necessary interconnectedness of English art theory and
practice by using two categories that underline the impossibility of adequately
maintaining separation, autonomy, or purity in disciplinary protocols: W. J. T.
Mitchell’s terms “metapicture” and “imagetext.” As David Carrier did by com-
pressing two independent terms in his coinage “artwriting,” Mitchell’s terms
refuse to mind the gap conventionally held open between art and its theories.
“The power of the metapicture,” he argues, “is to make visible the impossibility
of separating theory from practice, to give theory a body and visible shape that it
often wants to deny, to reveal theory as representation. The power of the imagetext is to reveal the inescapable heterogeneity of representation...”.

Because pictures can be theoretical in terms that are neither exclusively visual nor textual but a hybrid of these modes, and because in England especially, artwriters have frequently also been visual artists, we may best explore the Englishness of English art theory with reference to metapictures and their associated imagetexts. Of the four images I have selected, only two literally make words visible: Sir Joshua Reynolds’ personification of “Theory” in the London Royal Academy of 1780 and William Hogarth’s *The Painter and his Pug*, 1745 (Fig. 1.1). The other two imply the textual while articulating their art theories: Gilbert & George’s *The Nature of Our Looking*, 1970 and Yinka Shonibare’s *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews without their Heads* from 1998 (Fig. 1.2).

Art theory is the apperception of what one does and should do as an artist, historian of art, or viewer. It requires critical distance but not necessarily the disinterestedness sought by Lord Shaftesbury, Immanuel Kant, or Roger Fry.
With etymological roots in the Greek verb *theorin*, to contemplate, and the noun *theoria*, which describes a group of authoritative judges in a civic arena, art theory can be both an internalized set of principles or judgments of taste and an external perspective marked in texts, images, and institutional protocols. Visitors to the Courtauld Galleries in London, for instance – now housed in Sir William Chambers’ (1723–1796) magnificent Somerset House (1780) on the Strand, and in which the Royal Academy of Arts found an appropriately grand home in 1780 – typically marvel at the architecture, the site, and at the rich painting collection on display. They can be forgiven for not looking up at the ceilings. But doing so in the first room – the former library of the Royal Academy – they will see that “Theory” is a young woman in vaguely ancient dress floating in the clouds. As she was for the students and academicians of Reynolds’ time, theory is a beacon here, yet her intent gaze does not engage with mere mortals. A loosely held scroll proclaims the lesson we are to learn: “Theory is the knowledge of

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**Fig. 1.2** Yinka Shonibare, MBE, *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews without their Heads*, 1998. Wax-print cotton costumes on mannequins, dog mannequin, painted metal bench, rifle 165 × 635 × 254 cm with plinth.  
*Source:* © Yinka Shonibare, MBE. Courtesy the artist and National Gallery of Canada, photo © National Gallery of Canada.
what is truly Nature.” This embodiment of Theory was originally painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), the first president of the Royal Academy and one of Europe’s most influential artists and art theorists. His vision of theory’s role purposefully framed the approach to art making that he so vividly expounded in one of the pivotal theoretical tracts in the history of art theory, his 15 lectures to graduating students, delivered from 1769 until 1790, the Discourses. “What is truly nature,” we gather from our guide’s purposeful looking, is a truth elevated like Theory herself. Yet we also learn from Reynolds that such theoretical reference points are more down to earth in ways that he and others saw as properly English. His approach was empirical and practical. What he famously called the “great style” or “grand manner” in art was:

not to be sought in the heavens, but upon the earth … the power of discovering what is deformed in nature … what is particular and uncommon, can be acquired only by experience; and the whole beauty and grandeur of the art consists … in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind.

In this way, he believed, “the honorable distinction of an English School” could be achieved.

Following the lead of his close friend the politician and, in his youth, art theorist Edmund Burke, Reynolds increasingly opposed what he construed as the typically French pattern of beginning with first principles, with Reason. In an argument that is motivated by political beliefs more than by those strictly pertaining to the art world, Burke and Reynolds in effect blamed the degeneration of the French Revolution into social chaos on the over-application of theory proceeding from the first principles of reason. To be against theory in the abstract, a priori sense was at this time to be anti-French, pro-English. As Burke mused:

What is the use of discussing a man’s abstract right to food or to medicine? The question is upon the method of procuring and administering them. In that deliberation I shall always advise to call in the aid of the farmer and the physician, rather than the professor of metaphysics.

Perry Anderson claims that Burke’s arguments took and lasted so well because they were amenable to the preservation of the British class system: “The British bourgeoisie had learnt to fear the meaning of ‘general ideas’ during the French Revolution: after Burke, it never forgot the lesson.” The British novelist Julian Barnes demonstrates that a light take on this view of theory endures: “A British Euro-joke tells of a meeting of officials from various countries who listen to a British proposal, nodding sagely at its numerous benefits; the French delegate stays silent until the end, then taps his pencil and remarks, ‘I can see that it will work in practice. But will it work in theory?’” What is also clear from this moment of levity is that theory is usually construed as foreign by the English, as
an import and a useless or deleterious supplement. This was true for Hogarth and
became so to some extent for the more urbane Reynolds.

It may appear from Reynolds’ pronouncements that the English should simply
abjure general speculation about art as in affairs of state – the unwritten British
constitution was a constant reference point for Burke and remains so in this
context for writers today.35 Ironically, too, it was in part the British constitution
that led to the positive view of the English held by Voltaire and Montesquieu in
particular, views that in turn led to a reactionary form of French nationalism
against which English nationalism came to be defined in the period of the French
Revolution.36 What he and others posit, however, is in fact a different sort of
speculation about art, a small “t” theory based on empirical observation and
pragmatism. Extending the position of Jonathan Richardson that painters must
be highly educated and articulate, not only does Reynolds insist on the artist’s
expertise over that of the philosopher, “that one short essay written by a Painter,
will contribute more to advance the theory of our art, than a thousand volumes
such as we sometimes see” (Discourse XIV, 320). He also held that it “has been
much the object of these Discourses” to prevent any young artist from being
“seduced from the right path, by following, what … he may think [is] the light of
Reason” (Discourse XV, 323). Again, reason was supposed by Reynolds and Burke
to contrast sharply with English tradition and empiricism, the latter based on
John Locke (1632–1704) especially. The English agronomist Arthur Young
(1741–1820) linked theory and nationality as bluntly as anyone:

We know that English practice is good – we know that French Theory is bad. What
inducement have we, therefore, to listen to your speculations, that condemn what
all England feels to be good and approve what all France experiences to be
mischievous?37

Like Shaftesbury, Richardson, and most of the artwriters in England before him,
Reynolds’ theories were fundamentally cosmopolitan or universalist in the sense
that they looked to a transcendent form of what Barrell calls “civic humanism” to
ground the moral and political importance of the arts. Typically, however, this
rubric was modeled on the perceived uniqueness of the English polity. Structured
by class to mirror this society, the doors of taste were open only to those with
breeding if not an aristocratic birthright. In his earlier Discourses, Reynolds was
more patriotic than nationalistic.38 His institutional art theory, his mandate to
establish a noteworthy English School through the auspices of the Royal Academy,
however, ultimately goes beyond the expected international comparisons and
competitions to posit a theory of distinctly English art practice. Burke sketched
the English nature of Reynolds’ art theory, claiming in his obituary of the painter
that “he possessed the Theory as perfectly as the Practice of his Art. To be such a
painter, he was [also] a profound and penetrating Philosopher.”39

The earliest writings on the visual arts in England were compendia of practicing
artists, lists and brief commentaries modeled explicitly on French and Italian
templates. Bainbrigge Buckeridge’s *An Essay Towards an English School of Painting*, 1706, is appended to a translation of Roger de Piles’s *Art of Painting*, which was itself written in the Vasarian mold of artists’ lives. National score keeping was a prime motivation for this and similar publications. To keep up with the European nations in painting, Buckeridge claimed Anthony Van Dyke, for example, as native: what counted as Englishness was the place of employment. Hogarth insisted on a more genealogically laden English patrimony for his work as an author and artist. In his famous *The Painter and his Pug*, 1745 (Fig. 1.1), the artist’s self-portrait is a picture within a picture, one literally supported by the texts of Shakespeare, Milton, and Swift. Hogarth’s chosen patrimony is textual and to him, English, but in this portrait, he is careful to make the formal principle of all his work – the serpentine line of beauty that he featured in his 1753 treatise *The Analysis of Beauty* – both visible and remarkably tactile. As palpable as the paints it replaces on Hogarth’s prominent palette and like the painter’s dog, Trump, the line of beauty even casts a shadow. Constant in Hogarth’s prolific career as a painter, engraver, and writer was the aim to provide a vernacular art theory that was inseparable from the genre of its presentation. *The Analysis of Beauty* was published after he was well established as a printmaker and painter of modern moral scenes. But it was not a belated justification of practice or in this sense an attempt to rival the intellectualism of the Continent. Hogarth composed the text over a long period; more importantly, he aimed to be “systematical, but at the same time familiar.” His 1745 self-portrait, as an imagetext in Mitchell’s sense, is familiar yet systematical.

Both the 1745 self-portrait and the *Analysis* envision a practical theory of Englishness. Hogarth makes the indigenousness of English genius a virtue. Neither is jingoistic in the overt manner of his *O the Roast Beef of Old England* (“*The Gate of Calais*”) of 1748, where the artist, shown sketching the gate in the left middle ground, unleashes a string of nationalistic clichés about the envy of England’s main exports, beef and liberty, on the part of the underfed French Papists and even their Scots ally in the foreground. It appears that England should not require the panoply of fashionable French imports mocked, for example, in Louis Philippe Boitard’s 1757 etching *The Imports of Great Britain from France*, which the French artist dedicated to the Anti-Gallacian Society in Britain. Unseemly dependence on the Continent in art and art theory was a steady theme at this time. Nathaniel Hone scandalized the Royal Academy in 1775 with his Sketch for “The Conjurer”, now at Tate Britain, which shows Reynolds making “new” works appear from old master drawings with the help of a mahlstick wielded as a magic wand. Reynolds and the Royal Academy are again the target in James Gillray’s mordant print *Titianus Redivivus; – or – the Seven-Wise-Men Consulting the New Venetian Oracle* of 1797, which shows among myriad other details the deceased Reynolds rising from the grave to ponder what was purportedly a manual containing the lost secret of Titian’s painting techniques. As a follower of Locke’s epistemology, Hogarth insists instead on the precedence of the senses, especially the eye, and on the elaboration of this data by the mind in imagination. “The line of
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grace,” as he also calls his female serpentine line, “by its twisting so many ways, may be said to inclose [sic] … varied contents; and therefore all its variety cannot be expressed on paper … without the assistance of the imagination” (Hogarth, [1753] 1997: 42). That Locke’s resonantly English name is invoked regularly in art contexts from his lifetime to Terry Atkinson of Art & Language in our own suggests both that there is indeed art theory in England and that its nationality is a point of pride. Hogarth’s method is to look at and picture what is around him, vulgar and unsanctioned by proper taste as such details may be. For him, to see in a properly English way is to be empirical and pragmatic. He derides the supposed “disinterestedness” recommended by his compatriot and prolific artwriter Shaftesbury, a patrician virtue that accrues from class privilege and European travel, neither of which Hogarth enjoyed. Text and image are interwoven in The Painter and his Pug into that potent hybrid, the imagetext. If the authors paraded here through their books are exemplars of literary vision, so too both the quotidian and more lofty aspirations of seeing are evident in what is ultimately an exchange of glances between the artist and his beloved pet.

As we look at this work casually, the artist’s eyes engage us while Trump’s look across and below our line of sight. But if we notice a detail such as the absence of the artist’s hands, a suggestion perhaps that imagination or ideation must augment our senses, and therefore think of this as a picture about representation, we can envision how Hogarth made the painting by looking at himself in a mirror that occupied the place where the oval self-portrait sits on its supporting, English texts. Whether his dog was posed at the same time or another, Trump would have been looking at Hogarth. The image of the artist seeing his dog acknowledges and denies the untheorized looking that we attribute to Trump, who sees without the benefits of human imagination. For Hogarth, such details – observed and rendered practically – coalesce into a theory of art.

Landscape and nature are the most consistently theorized subjects in British writing on the visual arts. From Burke’s text on the sublime in 1757, through debates over the garden theory of Capability Brown (1716–1783), the picturesque as conceived by William Gilpin (1724–1804), Richard Payne Knight (1751–1824), and Uvedale Price (1747–1829), to John Ruskin’s championing of Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites as well as his famously litigated accusations about James McNeill Whistler’s (1834–1903) supposed technical inadequacies, it is the human accounting for nature that most animates reflection. Another metapicture – The Nature of Our Looking by Gilbert & George (b.1943, 1942; 1970) – reveals the importance of the discourses of nation in this context. This and related works by Gilbert & George underline the contemporary relevance of nature, landscape, and the English Garden tradition to national identity and remind us that Englishness and its material instantiations are in part the products of memory, of a habitual return to themes and places associated with identity. We can only project history from our places in the present, which is exactly what we watch the “living sculptors” do. They show that there is no more mediated concept in the human repertoire than that of “nature.” In their video and charcoal on paper
“sculpture” with the same provocative title, Gilbert & George use the double entendre on the concept of nature to direct attention both to the object and manner of our vision. Dressed in suits that mark them as country gents, those with the property and leisure to contemplate nature in a class-based, gendered, “picturesque” way prescribed for English gentlemen for centuries. Gilbert and George sit or stand motionless in a well-tended “natural” setting. The caption to one of the charcoal works reads: “Here in the country’s heart, where the grass is green, we stand very still and quiet.” They are surrogate watchers. “Our” looking in the title initially refers to the two artists but then embraces the national collective. We watch them waiting to catch a glimpse of beauty, the picturesque – even Englishness – exactly where the station in life and national proclivities that they perform suggest that they will find it, in nature. These works underline the centrality of thinking about nature and executing landscapes, whether as an amateur or professional, in whatever medium comes to hand. Gilbert & George more or less traced their charcoal drawing from photographic negatives and then distressed the paper to make it look older. The results struck a chord with the public: “We stopped making them because people liked them too much,” they report with feigned bemusement. As crucial as making landscapes is, they acknowledge that human psychological response is the key to landscape. From Burke’s sublime to Gilpin’s tours of England’s scenery to the disappointment Gilbert & George register here when nothing happens, we learn that landscape – like talk of the weather – is part of us, not nature.

Gilpin sought the uniquely English characteristics of his native landscape and elaborated his discoveries into a theory of looking. While national comparisons and rankings are an intellectual habit from the eighteenth century to the present, and while there is a practical dimension to his recommendation of English picturesque scenery, given the ongoing military conflicts between Britain and France that frequently made continental travel difficult, Gilpin’s theory of appreciating and composing landscapes was motivated by his sense of Englishness. After a conventional nod to the qualities of various European trees for the composition of landscapes, for example, he extols the English oak: “The chestnut of Calabria is consecrated by adorning the foregrounds of Salvator Rosa. The elm, the ash, and the beech, have their respective beauties: but no tree in the forest is adapted to all the purposes of landscape, like the English oak.” In general, he continues, “we find species of landscape, which no country, but England, can display in such perfection.”

“Why should not subjects purely English be made the vehicle of General Landscape? – and when embodied by its highest principles … become legitimate, and at the same time original and consequently classic art.” While this forceful statement dovetails with Gilpin’s ideas, it was expressed by John Constable (1776–1837), a painter of great reputation usually construed as typically English in his empiricism. Constable was much more of an art theorist than is generally recognized. Akin to that in Gilbert & George’s The Nature of our Looking, though more positive, his sedulous gathering of visual details in his studies of clouds and
trees, for example, was purposeful, even theoretical. His scientific study of nature’s components in their specifically English manifestations provided the elements of what he called a “Grand Theory” of landscape painting, a form that revealed the general and characteristic of England through the particular.\textsuperscript{51} As Ray Lambert has established in a revisionist study of the artist, Constable was familiar with the central strands of eighteenth-century British art theory – drawing from Archibald Alison (1757–1839) and Reynolds especially – and purposefully married the psychological and ultimately religious response to nature found in Alison’s associationism with Reynolds’ neoclassical pedagogy and aspirations for an English school.\textsuperscript{52} Paradoxically, a commitment to the Englishness of nature’s characteristic phenomena allowed Constable to forge what he felt was a universal landscape art that achieved moral and institutional parity with history painting. Writing about Constable shortly after his death, C. R. Leslie underscored the painter’s Englishness with a positive comparison to Hogarth:

They were both genuine Englishmen; warmly attached to the character and institutions of their country; alike quick in detecting cant and quackery, not only in religion and politics, but in taste and in the arts; and though they sometimes may have carried their John Bullism too far, they each deserved well of their country, as steady opponents to the influence of foreign vice, folly, and bad taste.\textsuperscript{53}

The ideology of Englishness is also strong and morally purposeful in the work of the most prolific English art theorist, John Ruskin (1819–1900). His art theory both supports and refutes the stereotype that English art theory is aberrant or somehow lacking in comparison with its Continental comparators. Stating the obvious without irony, Ruskin plays the “no theory please” card: on the “grand style” he writes in \textit{Modern Painters}, “I do not intend … to pursue the inquiry in a method … laboriously systematic.”\textsuperscript{54} Yet the tome as a whole is organized by endless subdivision and begins with a section titled “Of General Principles.” For Ruskin too, “Theoria” or the “Theoretic Faculty” stands in contrast to and above mere “aesthetics” because it can and must, through art such as Turner’s, address general, theoretical issues: “Power,” “Imitation,” “Truth,” “Beauty,” and “Relation.”\textsuperscript{55} Herbert Read was not exaggerating when he claimed that “\textit{Modern Painters} … is a whole system of aesthetics arising out of and justifying the work of Turner.”\textsuperscript{56} While Ruskin by no means confined his speculations to English art or to nature and landscape, one of his fundamental arguments was that the explicitly national geography of an artist’s birthplace rightly determined his visuality: “Whatever is to be truly great and affecting must have on it the strong stamp of the native land.” He applied this dictum to his most favored painter, Turner. Recognizing that much of Turner’s best work in landscape featured French, Swiss, or Italian scenery, Ruskin emphasized that the preponderance of his art depicts Britain. He then argues that “Turner’s nationality” is the source of his “power”: “no artist who has not this hold upon his own [landscapes] will ever get good out of any other.”\textsuperscript{57} Ruskin was motivated not only by patriotism – though he did
hold that Gainsborough was “the greatest colourist since Rubens” – but by what he called in the same context the purity of “English feeling.” Whether he is discussing the merits of Turner or defending the Pre-Raphaelites’ knowledge of nature, then, Ruskin believed in the palpability of Englishness. For him, the nature of our looking was always English.

Ruskin’s assertion of an Englishness grounded in locale was nostalgic during the years of the geographical expansion of the Empire under Queen Victoria. For him, modernism and its international reach was a nightmare to be resisted through the traditions of Englishness. The most visually radical of English art movements – Vorticism – would appear to be typically avant-garde in its internationalism and its reflex to dismiss the past, especially the Victorian past. Yet even Vorticism featured the English landscape and set its speculative agenda in terms of the rhetoric of Englishness, whose qualities would now be seen to be quintessentially modern. The radical periodical Blast – edited by the writer and painter Wyndham Lewis (1882–1957) and appearing only in June, 1914 and July, 1915 – is a central document in the history of English art theory as well as in the contested relationship between modernism and modernity in the UK. The manifesto format of Blast is a familiar early twentieth-century vehicle in which to present normative propositions. Lewis uses the purported inferiority of the English in theoretical exploits as a foil; the extent to which his theories are motivated by an angry search for Englishness deserves emphasis. Writing in the ultra-nationalistic context of the First World War, he holds out hope that the Germans and other foreigners will “no longer be able to call [the English] ‘The unphilosophic race’.” “We hear from America and the Continent all sorts of disagreeable things about England: ‘the unmusical, anti-artistic, unphilosophical country’,” he wrote in Blast 1, adding “We quite agree.” Lewis believed in qualities and circumstances that are “fundamentally English,” citing the sea as the main influence. For him, England’s relative geographical and cultural isolation led to a Victorian backwardness that was a strength in his quest for renewal, because for him change could only come from the peripheries, from the artist as an “enemy,” as he dubbed himself and a subsequent periodical. Vorticism – the term coined by Lewis’ collaborator Ezra Pound – was the plastic manifestation of coming to terms with modern life in England. Lewis, forever embroiled in the rhetoric of nation, tried to show “the way in which the English VORTICISTS differ from the French, German or Italian painters of kindred groups.” So too his limited success as an avant-gardist – recognition garnered more as a matter of novelty than of profound public understanding – was measured in nationalist terms and those of the supposedly indigenous resistance to theory. Reviewing a show in 1915 in which Lewis’ painting The Crowd (1914–1915) hung, a critic complained that these “pictures are not pictures so much as theories in paint. In fact … we can only call them Prussian in their spirit. These [English] painters seem to execute a kind of goose step, where other painters are content to walk more or less naturally.”

In 1931, Herbert Read published The Meaning of Art, a book expansive in its categories and sympathies that sought to counter the predominantly Francophile,
formalist reading of art and its goals promoted in England by Roger Fry and Clive Bell especially. Many of Read’s writings from the 1930s mark an early point in his lifelong attempt to articulate the virtues of a specifically English art and art theory. Given his extensive knowledge of world art and his European sympathies, one could be forgiven for taking Read’s subsequent disclaimer about essential Englishness at face value. Speaking about the success of British sculptors in the 1950s – Chadwick, Butler, Moore – he asked “can we say they possess some common quality – something that is distinctively English? … I do not think so. One must realize that art is now essentially international.” While Read was rarely parochial in his promotion of English artists such as Henry Moore, he clearly did work with a sense of Englishness typical of his time and place. Not unlike Pevsner, his belief system and aesthetic was at root inflected by determinants both of race and environment. “The mind has its milieu,” he wrote in the catalogue for Fifty Years of British Art, seen in Oslo and Copenhagen in 1956. In a telling, if unusual, combination of native, Lockean empiricism and environmental determinism, he elaborated: “which in this case is English; and nothing is in the mind that was not first in the senses.” In “English Art,” first published in 1933 and reprinted as a chapter in The Philosophy of Modern Art in 1952, he relates his long search for works of art that “speak … English to us.” Here and throughout what Kevin Davey calls “the story of Englishness Read told for half a century,” his nationalist identity theory builds on Wilhelm Worringer’s – with whom Read maintained a close friendship and extensive correspondence – famous delineation of southern and northern peoples’ aesthetic proclivities in Abstraction and Empathy (1908), and John Ruskin’s machinations on English exceptionalism. From the time he developed an art theory independent from the Francophilia of Fry, through his management of the essentializing national displays of the 1951 Festival of Britain and English representation at the Venice Biennale in 1952 and including his last pronouncements on art in 1968, Read’s accent in the intra-national art world was unapologetically English.

Is English art theory still motivated by the search for national identity and by this species of nationalism? In the register of nostalgia – critic and publisher Peter Fuller’s conservative rehabilitation of Ruskin in Theoria: Art, and the Absence of Grace (1988), for example - the answer is yes, as it is again in the realm of cliche such as the yBa’s (Young British Artists) posed anti-intellectualism in the 1990s. More significant, however, is the ongoing redefinition of English and British identity and national belonging in art theory that engages with the conditions of post-coloniality, race, and urbanism. A concluding look at the work of two contemporary British figures, Yinka Shonibare (b. 1962) and Rasheed Araeen (b. 1935) – the first more an artist than a writer, the latter more a writer than an artist, but both developing a significant body of theory through all their work – serves as a guide to this territory.

With an insistence on the complexities of place and wicked humor, Yinka Shonibare’s work resists the worn notion that the visual is a universal language. Shonibare turns cultural stereotypes to the business of critique. In Reverend on Ice
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(2005) and Mr. and Mrs. Andrews without their Heads (1998, Fig. 1.2), he recalls icons of cosmopolitan enlightenment and “Britishness”: The Reverend Robert Walker Skating on Doddingston Loch of c. 1795, usually attributed to the Scot Sir Henry Raeburn (1756–1823), and Thomas Gainsborough’s equally famous conversation piece Mr. and Mrs. Andrews of 1750. The signature headlessness of Shonibare’s sculptural allusions makes us question the existence of Africanness, Britishness, or any other reductive national or racial essence. Where Raeburn’s protagonist playfully performs the inscription of form and reason in a manner calculated to flatter the Scottish (such elegant maneuvers are not easy), Shonibare’s sculpture has no conventionally recognizable identity. Because reason and sight are lodged in the head, we ask who these faceless, exotically dressed brown people are who usurp the station of Gainsborough’s imperious landowners? Where Gainsborough’s Mr. and Mrs. Andrews commanded their property with a proprietary gaze, Shonibare demands that we, the contemporary spectators, constitute all meanings by looking at them.

Born in London, raised in Nigeria, and living since his student days in the UK, Shonibare claims to be a citizen of the world. But the batik he buys for his sculptures in London’s street markets only has the look of exotic authenticity. These fabrics, originally Indonesian, have since the nineteenth century been simulated in the Netherlands and England, then exported to West Africa, where in the 1970s, “progressive Afrocentric political movements” made these bold textiles their own. As the artist says about these materials but with wider implication, “at the shop in Brixton Market, they are never quite sure of the origins.” Like batik, Shonibare is, in his own words, a “post-colonial hybrid.” In his usual, ironic way, he elaborates: “I watch the same news as everybody else … I’m a citizen of the world.” Yet his work insists on the irreducible complexities of place and on his nuanced sense of cultural translation. If one doubts that Shonibare’s design is to theorize visually the cosmopolitanism identity of his city, London, Global Underground Map of 2006, should be convincing. He has cleverly applied the famous colors of the London underground lines to the 1974 Peters projection of the world, suggesting the flow of peoples to and from the metropolis.

Shonibare’s self-descriptions are multiple. He sees himself as working out of art history and also taking a place in it by forging an identifiable style. He comments on being English or British but steps back, too, claiming that his work is about the politics of representation. In London art school in the 1980s, he was encouraged to make work about his African heritage. His response: why would he know any more about that than a typical white English student would know about the clichés of Englishness, such as Morris dancing? “I’ve never been to an African village,” he reports. His point is about race, authenticity, and perceived belonging: these students would never be pushed to explore an essentialist heritage. Shonibare’s photo series Diary of a Victorian Dandy (1998) analyzes the representation of race and identity through the history of art. Casting himself as the dandy in this sequence, he and a group of actors constructed a series of Tableaux vivante in a rented English stately home. Each of the five scenes presents...
a fantasy of opulence and indulgence for the central character. The dandy rises late, attended by a fawning staff. By afternoon, he is the impeccably dressed center of attention in his library. The dandy seems to dictate a letter, encouraged and supported not only by his many friends, advisors, and servants, but by his impeccable heritage, underwritten by the worthies looking on in the form of art objects.

It is in this the second photo from the *Diary* that Shonibare comes closest to his acknowledged art historical inspiration for this series, Hogarth’s *The Rake’s Progress* from 1735. What is most significant about this affiliation is not to be read in detailed parallels or discrepancies between the two series. A dandy is not exactly a rake, and Shonibare substitutes a Victorian setting and allusions for Hogarth’s mid-eighteenth-century London. Nonetheless, both offer moral tales. Hogarth’s protagonist, “Rakewell,” is similarly surrounded by those who would help him spend his fortune: a gardener, musician, dancing master, and jockey. The painting over his shoulder – depicting the Judgement of Paris – announces the theme of life choices, in this case between pleasure (Venus) and wisdom (Minerva/Diana). The flanking portraits of roosters may buttress the classical allusion with a vernacular reference to cock fighting, whose main purpose is gambling. We can find other analogies and differences internal to both images. Most important, however, is Shonibare’s grand genuflection to Hogarth, that most outspokenly and stereotypically English of artists. Demonstrating the cumulative nature of Englishness in art and speculation over three centuries, Shonibare recalls Hogarth from the perspective of a simulacrum of the nineteenth century constructed in the present.

In Hogarth’s art as in his time and place, racial “others” were stock figures, usually servants, exotics, or miscreants. Shonibare updates these stereotypes. He knows that when blacks are rich and famous in the UK these days, they are often sports stars who not infrequently flaunt their wealth in ways that are not seen as aristocratic. In *Diary of a Victorian Dandy*, Shonibare steps back to the apex of empire and dares us not to see him as typically English (or British). He challenges us to see him as out of place, as somehow an “extra” in the excess he presents. In the final image, for example, set at 3 a.m., the dandy has chosen Venus and pleasure over his learned pursuits, a lifestyle out of keeping with the clichéd moral rectitude of Victorian Britain. The mid-eighteenth-century French morality picture over the bed acts as a commentary to the scene. In part, Shonibare is simply playing the sybarite, a role not unknown to artists, dandies, and even sports heroes. But the purposefully Victorian setting in this series has a more local set of meanings and references, ones that can lead to a further understanding of his placement in contemporary British society and his reflections on empire.

It is hard not to notice the letters that Shonibare records in his biography and in the form of his name he uses as standard: MBE, or Member of the British Empire, an honor that he received in 2004. As a self-proclaimed post-colonial hybrid, this designation is deliciously ironic. The British Government’s official website explains that the MBE is “Awarded for achievement or service in and to the community of a responsible kind which is outstanding in its field; or very local
‘hands-on’ service which stands out as an example to others. In both cases awards illuminate areas of dedicated service which merit public recognition.” Shonibare, the exception among a long list of mostly military and sports figures, was cited for “services to art.”74 In significant measure, then, Shonibare’s Diary records his ironical but later actual placement at the centre of contemporary British society.

Shonibare phrases issues of identity and belonging in jocular terms. “If you are a black artist who chooses not to make work about being black, that’s cool, that’s fine,” he asserts, “you will be described as the black artist who doesn’t make work about being black.”75 Rasheed Araeen elaborates this logic of difference: an artist or thinker who is racially and culturally “other” and who has moved to or was born in the UK, is “not defined or recognized by what [s/he] does in art, one’s position as an artist is predetermined by these differences.”76 Araeen systematically examines the theoretical dimensions of racism and postcoloniality in Britain, issues that have been as central to art theoretical concerns in Britain and elsewhere since the 1980s as the feminist movement that began decades earlier was in the “new art history.”77 In both cases, too, fundamental questions and priorities in these domains remain unresolved and thus act as motivators for speculation, art education, production, and institutional display. Araeen provided a compelling manifesto for change in the way we think about art in the context of a review in 2000 of the accomplishments of Third Text, the academic journal that he founded in 1987 “to explore, expose and analyse what has been excluded and repressed by institutional power in the art world.”78 In company with Salman Rushdie and others, Araeen sees institutional racism in Britain as a consequence and festering symptom of “The New Empire in Britain,”79 that is, the fact that the practices of Britain’s colonial “past” were never abandoned or corrected but simply brought back to the mother land. Calling for solutions specific to the visual arts, Araeen is especially critical of what he sees as the misapplication of postcolonial theory based in literary and cultural studies by prominent figures such as Edward Said, Stuart Hall, and Homi Bhabha and of official multiculturalism in the UK since the 1980s. “The struggle [for equality and access] has been hijacked,” Araeen writes. “With the success of the young non-white artists, writers, and curators, from the metropolis as well as from the Third World, legitimized with the use of postcolonial cultural theory, the system has now built a thick wall of multiculturalism around itself.” Multiculturalism in this view “is based on a separation of the dominant majority culture from the cultures of the minority population,” forcing the minority perpetually to identify itself as “other” and therefore as a mere “subcategory or supplement to the dominant culture.”80 Araeen’s art theory projects nothing less than a complete overhaul of art production, display, and reception, one that moves away from exclusionary definitions of identity based on race and culture. “Is it possible,” he asks in a further discussion of these issues published in 2008, “for art to move forward and offer a model, or metaphor, for the organisation of society which aspires to human equality but within a falsified framework which in fact denies all humanity its equality?”81 In company with Shonibare’s art, which avoids the logic of multiculturalism by refusing to be an
“otherness machine,” Araeen nonetheless engages with the politics of Englishness and Britishness as part of his ambitious project to “interrogate the whole history of ideas – theoretical and art historical – which has built the edifice of Eurocentric discourse … to develop an alternative radical scholarship.”

“Englishness” is a moving target, not only because of the historical complexity and renewed topicality of any such national category, but also because of the temporal span during which its articulation has been central to art theory. One consistency over 300 years, regrettably, is the habit of using hackneyed national stereotypes as a shorthand for the praise or, more often, the condemnation of art and artists. Albert Einstein perfectly encapsulated the pattern: “If my theory of relativity is proven correct, Germany will claim me as a German and France will declare that I am a citizen of the world. Should my theory prove untrue, France will say that I am a German and Germany will declare that I am a Jew.” Collini has written insightfully that “cultures, like individuals, can become imprisoned in images of themselves.” Collini refers to the longstanding English self-characterization as anti-intellectual, but his comment applies equally to the intellectual activities of art theory. A similar caveat is registered by Gerald Newman regarding the tendency to ignore the existence of English and British nationalism: as historians we have largely missed these important phenomena, he argues, because “England’s past cultural interpreters … were so influenced by national myths [about the absence of nationalism] that we ourselves, inheriting their concepts, have not quite yet gotten so far above these myths as to be able to understand their multifarious workings.” Substitute “art theory” for “nationalism” and we see the pattern of occlusion that is the focus of this chapter. Put positively, such a repositioning or remapping reveals the extent and importance of the English art theory that is supposed not to exist.

Can and should we move away from the discourses of nation in art theory? Given that theory is as much a part of its temporal, cultural, and geographical coordinates as anything else – despite its recurring fantasy of transcendence – and that nations seem fundamental still to the dialectic of globalization, talk of national schools and the national identity of artists is likely to continue. The focus on the Englishness of art theory is itself value neutral. Emphasizing the vernacular can be good or bad: Hogarth’s plea that collectors patronize native artists, for example, was more than self-serving. It tried to overthrow the automatic priority lent to European sources in both the art market and artwriting. Wyndham Lewis saw English parochialism around the visual arts as a lack that could be turned to a gain for the avant-garde. Einstein offered an alternative to nationalism in his telling quip: the panacea of cosmopolitanism, of becoming a citizen of the world instead of merely one country. An ideal with an ancient pedigree and contemporary import, cosmopolitanism as much as nationalism has its more and less positive incarnations. It can promote a nuanced recognition of otherness – proclaimed for example by Araeen and Shonibare – or it can be nothing more than a superficial, touristic response to the pleasures of globalization. Thus the Englishness of English art theory is neither a positive nor a negative manifestation. It is typically an impure and sometimes genial concoction, more often than not created by
artist-theorists than by philosophers. Recognizing its long history is a step towards assessing its value for the present and the future. Is there a unique Englishness of English art theory? No, because the discourse of nation is fundamental to the modernity in which many global societies have lived since the Renaissance. Is English art and art theory measurably different? Yes, inevitably, because its histories, institutions, and protagonists are individual.

A significant challenge to artists and artwriters alike is to maintain national and individual specificity in the face of a contemporary global art world defined, at least superficially, by movement and cosmopolitanism. While there is tacit agreement that members of the art world are cosmopolites and that this is a good thing, the pull of national categories remains irresistible in the organization of the major international art biennials, whose pavilions and displays are grouped by nation. A final example of the ongoing complexities and ironies of the discourse of nation in contemporary art is Turner Prize winner Simon Starling’s Island for Weeds (Prototype), 2003. A metawork, though typically for our times, not a metapicture, this island-like garden animates the eighteenth-century importation to Scotland of rhododendrons as well as the plants’ subsequent takeover of local flora and re-categorization as weeds. Mirroring the plants’ original migration from Spain, Starling’s island “transported” them to the Venice Biennale, where he represented Scotland in 2003, though he was born in England. There are analogies to be made with Robert Smithson’s Floating Island to Travel around Manhattan Island (envisioned in 1970; realized posthumously in 2007), and perhaps more significantly, with earlier practices of species migration. The naturalist Joseph Banks, who accompanied James Cook to the South Seas in 1768–1771, for example, sought to improve the lot of indigenous peoples by giving them domesticated animals previously unknown in their ecosystems. The ecological impact was horrendous. With happier overtones, Starling’s Island raises issues of indigeneity, immigration, and hybridity that are directly analogous to the concerns of national self-definition in the present.

Notes

1 Some time after the completion of this essay I came across the same title, used by Harry Mount in a book review Oxford Art Journal, 25, 1, 2002, 102–106. I trust that the addition of “Theory” to Nikolaus Pevsner’s famous book title has enough applicability to be performed twice.

2 The categorization of art and artists into national schools was commonplace by the end of the eighteenth century. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann provides an extensive reading of this habit in Toward a Geography of Art, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

3 Such “disinterestedness,” aesthetic distance, or exclusionary aloofness is an essential ingredient in mainstream European philosophical aesthetics since the time of Shaftesbury in the early eighteenth century and Kant at its end. For critiques of this position, see Elizabeth A. Bohls (1993) “Disinterestedness and the denial of the


6 Nation-based identity terminology in the UK is of course complex. It is impossible to choose one inclusive descriptor, such as “British,” that will accurately and without offense include the whole population. People in England make up about 85% of the total population of the UK, but many of these would not describe themselves as “English.” While it is potentially offensive to other nations within the UK to presume that “English” describes the whole, that assumption is often made, especially in the discourses of art and art theory. For an historical account of English/British terminological usage, see Mandler, P. (2006) *The English National Character: the History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.


10 Orwell, G. (1941) “The lion and the unicorn: socialism and the English genius,” in Orwell, G. (2001) P. Davison (ed.) *Orwell’s England*, London: Penguin, 253. For a full history and analysis of the stereotype, see Collini, S. (2006) *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain*, New York: Oxford University Press. There is a long Marxist tradition in Britain of doubting the existence of a native intelligentsia. In a famous essay, Perry Anderson ends up defining British theory in ways directly relevant to my study: “The hegemonic ideology of this society was a much more aristocratic combination of ‘traditionalism’ and ‘empiricism,’ intensely hierarchical in its emphasis, which accurately reiterated the history of the dominant agrarian class. The British bourgeoisie by and large assented to this archaic legitimation of the status quo, and sedulously mimicked it. After its own amalgamation with the aristocracy in the later
nineteenth century, it became second nature to the collective propertied class.”
12 Collini (2006).
13 Fox (2004), 179.
16 Art and Language (1976) “The French disease,” Art-Language, 3, 4, 25. The Art-Language group was not necessarily anti-theoretical in its interests but did favor indigenous theory. Terry Atkinson’s notes in an article on “Art Teaching,” for example, that the “evolution of (particularly) the Lockean influence upon British education can be seen to have fastened in the central ‘desiderata:’ ‘liberality,’ ‘choice,’ etc.” Atkinson, T. (1971) “Art teaching,” Art-Language, 1, 4, 25. Empiricism is of course a philosophical position or theory that has and can be applied to art making.
17 The term “artwriting” is purposefully broad and includes art theory, art history, and aesthetics as well as art criticism in a few cases. While it is often important to acknowledge a distinction in classification between, say, aesthetics and art criticism, that distinction must be historicized. My aim in using this inclusive term “artwriting” is to avoid pre-judging what counts as a “theoretical” approach.
20 Kant legislated “disinterestedness” in aesthetics, but as I argue (Cheetham, M. A. (2001) Kant, Art, and Art History: Moments of Discipline, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.), this paradigm was itself built on nationalistic and disciplinary interests.
23 Paulson, R. (1989) Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700–1820, New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press. While I have drawn much from Paulson’s ever-insightful writings, I will dispute the dichotomy suggested by his notion of substitution and develop here a modified version of the “metapicture” as a category that inevitably combines the textual and visual.

Why is theory female if not as a form of praise? The explanation is modeled on theory’s habitual description as foreign – often French – and the two characterizations can be linked. The French were endlessly parodied for their effeminacy by eighteenth-century English writers and caricaturists. Theory must be foreign so that its alternative can be English. When theory is cast as female as well as foreign, it is doubly excluded from what can then be, by contrast, “natural,” “customary,” and therefore English in a superior sense. For a related argument, see Readings, B. (1990) “Why is theory foreign?” in M. Kreiswirth and M. Cheetham (eds) *Theory Between the Disciples: Authority/Vision/Politics*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 84. As in Hogarth’s *The Painter and his Pug* (1745, Fig. 1.1), which was created in part in response to this song, effeminacy, foreignness, and national comportment were starkly if humorously contrasted with manly Englishness and independent invention. What has been called the identification of Englishness by exclusion has here a theoretical as well as a sociological dimension. See Wolff, J. (2001) “The ‘Jewish Mark’ in English painting: cultural identity and modern art,” in D. Peters Corbett and L. Perry (eds) *English Art 1860–1914: Modern Artists and Identity*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 180, and Colls, R. and Dodd, P. (1986) *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880–1920*, London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul.


Burke, E. (1757) *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, first published in 1757 and highly influential, is one of the classic statements of the theory of the sublime. For a comparison of Burke’s theories with those of Immanuel Kant published in 1790, see Cheetham, M. A. (2001) *Kant, Art, and Art History: Moments of Discipline*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


Anderson (1968), 47.


Young, A. (1793) *The Example of France a Warning to Britain*, Third edition, Bury St. Edmund’s, 85.

Barrell (1990), 159.
43 An important reading of Locke’s influence is Gibson-Wood, C. (2000) *Jonathan Richardson: Art Theorist of the English Enlightenment*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. While it is not Gibson-Wood’s purpose to trace Locke’s legacy in art theory in detail, she does underline that it was he, not Lord Shaftesbury or the concept of “civic humanism” elaborated by Barrell (1986), “that most powerfully shaped Richardson’s thought” (p. 8). Tacitly acknowledging the patrimonial politics at play in art theory, she also claims that “the negative reception on the continent of Richardson’s writings was probably rooted in a more general disdain for his English empiricist art-theoretical programme” (p. 89).
48 Gilpin, W. (1792) *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772, on Several Parts of England; Particularly the Mountains*, London, 9, 10.
62 Blast 1, 35.
63 Blast 2, 33.
65 Herbert Read, lecture for BBC General Overseas Service, 1956. Herbert Read Fonds, University of Victoria (HR 35-51).
71 Artist’s talk, Tate Britain, November 3, 2004.
72 Shonibare’s London Underground project is described on the official Transport for London website: http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tube/arts/platform-for-art/artists/shonibare.asp,
75 Artist’s talk, Tate Britain, November 3, 2004.
80 Araeen (2000), 18; 16.


85 Collini (2006), 69.