

**William Vaughan, *German Romanticism and English Art*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press (for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art), 1979. 308 + xii pp., 173 illus., \$45.00**

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carefully examine the relevant iconographical traditions and literary sources. Unfortunately the allegorical tradition in Venetian Renaissance painting is virtually ignored and some of Titian's most important compositions of this genre are either given inadequate interpretations (e.g. the *Sacred and Profane Love* [Rome]), or omitted altogether (*The Allegory of the Marchese del Vasto* [Louvre] and *The Education of Cupid* [Rome]).

Hope again differs from a number of recently published studies in regarding Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as the sole source for the mythological paintings or *poesie* which were sent to Philip II. He points out that the artist could read this source only in Italian, but makes no mention of available translations. Even in the case of that glorious early evocation of pagan antiquity, *The Andrians* where the actual translation is known, it does not appear to have been used by Hope to provide the interpretation given.

The importance of such works as *The Andrians* in the history of Western painting is rightly emphasized in the author's conclusion, but it is not really clear in the reader's mind why the author believes this to be so. This is in marked contrast to his discussion of other aspects of the artist's work, especially the clear and convincing case for Titian's role in the establishment of the conventions of aristocratic portraiture which is made throughout the book and in the conclusion.

Charles Hope is well aware of the fact that he has written a controversial book, particularly in regard to the development of Titian's style and the iconography of his paintings. It is to be welcomed for it should provoke serious rethinking about some of the great masterpieces of European painting.

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WILLIAM VAUGHAN *German Romanticism and English Art*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press (for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art), 1979. 308 + xii pp., 173 illus., \$45.00.

In *German Romanticism and English Art* Dr. William Vaughan endeav-

ours to elucidate the significance for early Victorian British artists and patrons of C.L. Eastlake's celebrated declaration that the Germans possessed the 'mind of art.' The book is a revised version of his 1977 University of London Ph.D. thesis, 'The German Manner in English Art 1815-1855,' and joins his catalogue, *Caspar David Friedrich 1774-1840* (Tate Gallery, London, 1972), and broader histories, *Romantic Art* (New York, 1978) and *German Romantic Painting* (New Haven, 1980). However, it retains much of the dense, sometimes prolix prose and uneven structure of the thesis genus, and is more a series of essays than a cohesive, chronological study. The third chapter, for example, entitled 'The Depiction of German Subjects by British Artists,' contains an essentially statistical analysis of excessive length when compared with the more relevant issues addressed elsewhere. Nevertheless, within the confined boundaries Vaughan establishes in the Introduction, those issues are thoroughly researched and the author presents interesting material on early to mid-nineteenth-century English and German art and aesthetics. Chief among his contributions are the information about a number of secondary and tertiary English painters such as William Cave Thomas or Joseph Severn, British attitudes to History Painting and ecclesiastical art, and a useful review in English of the development of German aesthetic theory. In these respects the book is a welcome addition to the more specialized literature on the German Nazarenes and their influence, notably Keith Andrew's *The Nazarenes* (Oxford, 1964), and the catalogue of the 1977 Frankfurt Exhibition, *Die Nazarener*, and such studies of the English context as T.S.R. Boase's *English Art 1800-1870* (Oxford, 1959).

Some of the limitations of the book are immediately apparent in the Introduction, which, being a distillation of the succeeding chapters, is, incidentally, the most readable section. Having noted the indisputable influence of German art upon early Victorian British painting and decoration, Vaughan justly remarks that it is 'less easy to determine what precisely it implied, and what the English gained from their encounter with it.' But what follows

indicates that he will, essentially, concentrate his investigation upon artistic issues rather than fully considering the existence of deeper cultural or even sociological reasons for the British admiration of German art. Did, for instance, the hierarchical creative values of the major German painters and the authoritarian cast of their predominantly royal patrons appeal to the British dilettanti and artists who promoted the Germanic taste? Certainly, the religious revival sponsored by the Oxford and Cambridge Movements, and proselytized most enthusiastically by A.W.N. Pugin, an admirer of German art, while seeking social reform helped to counteract the radical forces which threatened the status quo in England both before and after the passage of the Reform Bill in 1832. Other phenomena relative to the prestige of German culture in Britain also receive too little attention, such as the pre-eminence of German Classical scholarship or the course of Anglo-German relations through the century. Even accepting the restriction to the artistic perspective, the 'crisis' in British History Painting, which Vaughan isolates as a primary factor, was apparent well before the 1830s and the onset of Germanism; indeed, the problem was considered to be endemic by some, James Fergusson writing to his friend, Sir A.H. Layard, on 24 September 1883 about the proposed decoration of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral: 'The fact is, I know no artist or architect in this country, who has the smallest conception of what is wanted ...' (British Library, B.M. ADD.MS 39036, no. 320). Similarly, the emergence of other artistic influences which might explain the demise of the German taste from the late 1850s - and its decline is but briefly charted - is not introduced into the preliminary discussion of the subject. One such is Japanese design, which also emphasized formal clarity, actually represented by a decorated lantern in the middle ground of J.E. Millais's 'Garden Scene,' 1849, that is, not altogether appropriately, reproduced on the dust jacket. Lastly, it is perhaps regrettable that reference was not made in the Introduction to the other side of the artistic intercourse between the two nations, as the architect K.F

Schinkel's appreciation of British Industrial Revolution design and the legacy of Hermann Muthesius's praise of the British Arts and Crafts Movement.

Nevertheless, it would be unjust to cast aside the approach outlined in the Introduction, even if, as will become evident, the result is episodic. Having identified the uncertainty in British art during the 1830s and the consequent attraction of the more assured Germans like Overbeck or Schnorr von Carolsfeld, Vaughan questions why the 'impact of German art produced a spirit more of emulation ... that of imitation.' In response he cites the contrast between the German stress on didactic content and form and the British preference for colour and visual appeal, and relative disinterest, John Flaxman and William Ottley notwithstanding, in primitivism. To those reasons he adds the naturalist tradition in British painting and the disinclination to import the authoritarian values of German society (which this reviewer interprets differently). The conflicting attitudes were most evident in the 1843-1846 competitions to select the artists who would decorate the Houses of Parliament under the direction of the Fine Arts Commission, which had been chaired by Prince Albert from 1841. The standards were Germanic, but the actual murals less so, partly due to the continuation of essentially Venetian traditions and the rise of new ideas in England as represented by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Members of this group had been inspired by the Nazarenes and the directness of German nineteenth-century prints in their student years, but subsequently espoused what might be termed the cause of modernism. For Vaughan then, the German influence, first nurtured by contacts between individual English artists and Nazarenes was mainly that of a catalyst.

Having incised this outline, if neither so precise nor so persuasive as the engravings of Alfred Rethel, the author proceeds to add hatchments to the picture of German art in Britain 1800-1850. He begins by recalling that German artists, mainly portrait painters, had worked successfully in England, but states that the existence of a German School of Art was not fully

appreciated until the 1840s, fostered by groups of British artists and connoisseurs rather than by the Saxe-Coburg court. The taste for German culture had developed on the basis of a succession of factors: the interchange resulting from the close commercial ties, exemplified by Charles Aders, the German merchant in whose London house Blake met Cornelius's pupil, Jacob Götzenburger (who was to paint murals in Bridgewater House and Alnwick Castle, 1850-1860); the trade in contemporary German literature and illustrated books, promoted by, among others, Rudolph Ackermann, whose 1817 edition of *Dürer's Prayer Book* entered the collections of Sir Thomas Lawrence and Richard Cosway; the friendships formed at Rome between the Nazarenes and English artists and publicists like John Scott, briefly to be editor of the *London Magazine*, and patrons like Lord Shrewsbury and Nicholas Wiseman, leaders respectively of the Roman Catholic laity and ecclesiastical hierarchy. Such links were reinforced by the writers who continued the work of Madame de Stäel, whose *De L'Allemagne* had been published in English in 1813. Mrs. Jameson's *Visits and Sketches at Home and Abroad*, 1834, provided English readers with lengthy descriptions of the major centres, Düsseldorf and Crown Prince Ludwig's remarkable 'art city,' Munich, and praise for the official encouragement of High Art, but an ambivalence towards German primitivism. More enthusiastic were the Frenchmen, Count Raczynski and Hippolyte Fortoul, the former regarding the modern Germans as the successors of the ancient Greeks and Renaissance Italians – a view, characteristically, tempered by dislike of German extremism in artistic expression as registered by Lady Eastlake in her review of Raczynski's *Histoire de l'Art moderne en Allemagne*, 1836-1841, printed in the 1846 *Quarterly Review*. That reservation, not shared by all English critics, as witness S.C. Hall's declaration as late as 1866 that German art was 'first in Europe', partially explains the relative lack of patronage of German artists. Another factor was the desire to patronize native artists which, nonetheless, led to the importation into England of a version of the Kunstvereine, or Art

Unions. And the most popular German artist in England was Wilhelm von Kaulbach who moderated the revivalist manner with more elaborate design and illusionism so that the majority of young English artists who travelled to Germany were attracted to his studio. Vaughan concludes this chapter by noticing that the larger commissions awarded to Germans were for stained glass windows and that their chief influence was transmitted through book illustrations, the 'emphasis on coherent composition' being 'coextensive with the elements of revivalist art that had pre-occupied English observers since they first encountered it.'

The second chapter, 'The Mind of Art,' explores English admiration for the intellectual superiority of German art. Vaughan prepares the reader by claiming that the austerity of the Nazarene style encouraged its explanation in non-pictorial terms, and that the style was linked to the development of the concept of aesthetics by German post-Kantian philosophers. This drawing together of German art and philosophy (Vaughan's use of the word 'elision' to explain this tendency is surely a slip in vocabulary) was recognized by Thomas Carlyle, who regarded German aesthetics as fundamental to 'spiritual regeneration in the arts.' German aesthetic theorists contributed profoundly to the Romantic view of art, Friedrich von Schiller, for one, in his *Aesthetic Letters*, associating the awareness of beauty with that of the self and with the concept of liberty, while denying the possibility of reviving past cultures. He also equated the content of form with the content of subject and stressed artistic freedom. As significant, estimates Vaughan, was the conclusion of the Schlegel brothers that art should express the age as well as aiding in the process of cultural generation. The complexities of their thought, coupled with the dominance of empiricism and utilitarianism in English philosophy and the pragmatism approach to art of even Eastlake (who yet drew upon German theory in his *Contributions to the Literature of the Fine Arts*, 1848) delayed and diluted the acceptance of German aesthetics.

The attempt to strike a balance between the twin themes of the book – the burgeoning of German

culture and its limited and episodic impact in England – is abandoned in the subsequent chapters. The third, 'The Depiction of German Subjects by British Artists,' is turgid by comparison with preceding material, despite the amusing account of Turner's vain attempt to win royal patronage through the choice of German sites during the 1840s. The categorized review of art works from topography to literary themes produces a repetitious rehearsal of chronologies, an impediment which also affects the succeeding chapters: iv, 'F.A.M. Retzsch and the Outline Style'; v, 'The Decorated Page and the Woodcut Style,' and vi, 'The German Manner and English History Painting.' However each contains useful information, the first two adding perceptive commentaries on the art of Retzsch and Rethel to the reconstruction of their influence on English artists, embracing Daniel Maclise, the young Millais and D.G. Rossetti. Rethel's *Nibelungen* illustrations of 1840 spawned British progeny like S.C. Hall's *Book of British Ballads*, 1842, comprising woodblocks designed by the new aspiring historical painters including William B. and David Scott, Dadd, Frith, O'Neil and John Franklin. The mode persisted into the late Victorian period as evinced by the combination of the decorative page with the woodcut style in William Morris's Kelmscott *Chaucer* of 1895.

Less straightforward was the inspiration of German art upon English History Painting, for all the prestige accorded to German qualities in the advertisement for the 1842 Parliament competition signed by Eastlake; the judges would be 'disposed to mark their approbation' of entries that displayed 'precision of drawing ... and a style of composition less dependent on chiaroscuro than an effective arrangement.' In Chapter vi Vaughan distinguishes between the few major artists, notably William Dyce, Maclise and Ford Maddox Brown, for whom the 'study of German art provided a fundamental change of aesthetic outlook,' and those more numerous, but short-lived, imitators like F.M. Ward and J.C. Horsley. Here he expands upon the fears of a German 'take over' and divergence of attitudes summed up by Severn in a letter

written to C.R. Leslie from Rome in 1821, 'The Germans here are certainly a great race of artists. Their manner is not to be tolerated, for they imitate Perugino and Giotto' and lack 'colour and effect.' Through an analysis of the painters who participated in the Parliament competitions and at greatest length the art of Dyce, the author further reveals the partial acceptance of German ideas of composition and style. If nine of the main contestants, among them G.F. Watts, had studied in Munich between 1838 and 1840, their submissions for the final stage of the competition in 1846 all exhibited an increased illusionism and richer colour than did their mentors; interestingly, the chief competitors, Dyce and Maclise, had travelled to Italy and France. An estimation of the counter influence of French academic painting would have been instructive at this point. Instead Vaughan ends by briefly discussing the transformation made by members of the P.R.B. to German religious pictorial themes and motifs in order to achieve the powerfully direct imagery present in, say, William Holman Hunt's 'Light of the World,' 1851.

The last chapter, 'Dyce and Ecclesiastical Art,' opens with consideration of the scant confidence in British artists displayed by the Anglican Church – Beresford Hope, patron of the celebrated All Saints, Margaret Street, London, was pleasantly surprised by the competence of Dyce and Horsley – and concludes with the rejection of Dyce's illusionist stained glass design. The author's account of the Germanism in Dyce's religious art, his abortive attempt to emulate the German woodcut in a series on the life of Christ, his move away from historicism to naturalism and his criticism of the opacity of German stained glass, is lengthy but confused. Since the German influence in this respect transpires to have been secondary, the reader might be forgiven for regretting that other issues, such as the concern for relevance in ecclesiastical art of the apparent German legacy in the work of Edward Burne Jones, do not receive further treatment. The first could explain the growing distaste for German revivalism, Cardinal Newman, for example, commenting after meeting A.W.N.

Pugin at Rome in 1847, 'In order that any style of architecture should exactly suit the living rationale of the nineteenth century, it should be the living architecture of the nineteenth century ...'

The imbalance consequent upon the author's constricted study of this variable theme affects the epilogue. We are told that the German influence lingered on but hardly informed as to the history of its demise or the other than stylistic reasons for that change in taste. Following a short and inconclusive tussle with subsequent interpretations of the phenomenon of the mid-nineteenth German style, the text peters out with one questionable generalization, that German art was only admired as a School during that period, ignoring the prestige of German Expressionism, and the truism that the appreciation of style is 'at all times a matter of conditioning.'

An echo of the unevenness of the argument mars the otherwise handsome production of the book, as the numbering of the plates, especially in the later chapters, is not infrequently incorrect. In other respects the author is well served. The printing is elegant and legible and the illustrations plentiful and well reproduced, most in sight of the relevant passages in the text. If the style of writing and organization of the material are deterrent, the contents, including the excellent bibliography and notes, will be an asset to the student of nineteenth-century British and German art.

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ELIZABETH GILMORE HOLT *The Triumph of Art for the Public: The Emerging Role of Exhibitions and Critics*. Garden City (NY), Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979. 530 + xxviii p., 48 illus., 7.50 \$ (broché).

WALTER CAHN *Masterpieces: Chapter on the History of an Idea*. Princeton, Princeton University Press (Princeton Essays on the Arts), 1979. 168 + xix p., 53 illus.

Parmi les publications d'Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, chaque chercheur connaissait jusqu'à ce jour l'excellente *Documentary History of Art* dont l'utilité n'est pas à démontrer. Voici qu'Elizabeth Gilmore Holt met à la