

HOGARTH, FRANCE AND BRITISH ART

The rise of the arts in 18th-century Britain

ROBIN SIMON

HOGARTH ARTS

2007

FOR JO
BENET, ALICE, POPPY
DAN
SAMSON
AND IN MEMORY OF MY PARENTS

By the same author
The Portrait in Britain and America (1987)
The Art of Cricket (with Alastair Smart) (1983)

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CHAPTER 15

The Beggar's Opera and A Rake's Progress

*What brought Sir Visto's ill got wealth to waste?
Some Daemon whisper'd, 'Visto, have a taste.'*

[Alexander Pope, *Moral Essays*, IV ('To Burlington'), 1731]

The Beggar's Opera

The Beggar's Opera, which was first performed on 29 January 1728, was a satirical entertainment aimed at Italian opera, and the title pointedly distinguishes it as the very opposite of that unpopular indulgence of the rich. *The Beggar's Opera* announces itself as the production of a beggar, rather than a maecenas, and it is not really an opera, but a play with songs. Since 1720, Italian opera had been supported by subscribers to the 'Royal Academy of Musick', itself a title directly imitating the *Académie royale de musique* which ran the Opéra in Paris, where no other opera company was allowed to perform. Initially encouraged by the crown, if never officially established to remotely the same degree as that in France, the British imitation none the less performed at the 'King's Theatre' in the Haymarket. There were no fewer than three resident composers at the opera, Handel, Giovanni Bononcini and Attilio Ariosti; a poet and librettist ('Italian Secretary'), Paolo Rolli; an orchestra and chorus; and star singers hired chiefly from Italy, for vast sums; and, of course, performances were in Italian.¹

Italian opera in London was of its very nature an exclusive entertainment. It was so expensive to produce that it had to be sponsored. For all those reasons it presented a sitting duck for satire. And *The Beggar's Opera*, although written by John Gay, emerged from within the immediate circle of two of the most formidable minds – and satirists – in English letters, Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope. Several members of this coterie had been involved in the production of 'all-sung, all-English' dramatic entertainments: in addition to *Acis and Galatea*, for example, Pope and Gay had assisted Dr Arbuthnot with his libretto for Handel's oratorio *Esther* (1718). But it was Italian opera that made the news. In 1722 Gay was telling Swift:

... folks, that could not distinguish one tune from another, now daily dispute about the different styles of Handel, Bononcini and Attilio. Senesino is daily voted to the greatest man that ever lived.²

Nor have many of the problems identified early on by *The Spectator* ever gone away. Addison's remarks on the difficulties and absurdities of setting translations to the original music, for instance, could be safely applied today without alteration. When attempts were made to sing in English, or in a combination of Italian and English:

... the soft Notes that were adapted to Pity in the Italian, fell upon the word Rage in the English; and the angry Sounds that were turn'd to Rage in the Original, were made to express Pity in the Translation. It oftentimes happen'd likewise, that the finest Notes in the Air fell upon the most insignificant Words in the Sentence. [*The Spectator*, No. 18, 21 March 1711]

In contrast, *The Beggar's Opera*, with its 'anti-hero' highwayman, was performed by English actors, singing in English; and the tunes were familiar ballads and traditional airs that were known to all the audience. Above all there were none of those recitatives, a notorious sticking-point, which Addison had joked about in *The Spectator*:

Our Countrymen could not forbear laughing when they heard a Lover chanting out a Billet-doux, and even the Superscription of Letter set to a tune. [*The Spectator*, 3 April, 1711]

As the Beggar satirically announced at the start of his 'opera':

I hope I may be forgiven that I have not made my opera throughout unnatural, like those in vogue, for I have no recitative.



235 *The Beggar's Opera*, 1728
Oil on canvas, 53.4 x 50.8 cm
Anstruther-Gough-Calthorpe Collection

236 *The Beggar's Opera*, c.1728
Oil on canvas, 48.9 x 56.5 cm
Birmingham City Art Gallery

The abbé Le Blanc wrote:

Is it surprising that the English are grown tired of the Italian opera? Three-quarters of the spectators did not comprehend what was sung, and it was natural for Farinelli himself to set them yawning when he passed from air to recitative.³

The plot of *The Beggar's Opera* specifically resembles that of Handel's *Alessandro*, first performed on 5 May 1726.⁴ That plot was contrived to provide equal parts to Handel's two leading ladies, who were also deadly rivals, Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni, each of whom was given a duet with the hero, sung by Senesino. Hence the presence of all three in Carey's scurrilous song (quoted at the close of the last chapter), which could hardly have been more topical, since it ends with a warning to the 'Polly' of *The Beggar's Opera* (i.e. the actress who played Polly, Lavinia Fenton) to be careful about being taken up by the Duke of Bolton ('Star and Garter'):

Ah, tuneful Fair! Beware! Beware!
Nor toy with Star and Garter;
Fine clothes may hide a foul inside
And you may catch a Tartar:
If powder'd fop blow up your shop,
'Twill make you melancholy;
Then left to rot, you'll die forgot,
Alas! Alas! Poor Polly.⁵



The last line echoes words in Polly's most famous song, 'When my hero in court appears', which includes the phrase 'And alas, Poor Polly'. On 14 June Lavinia Fenton gave her last performance – it was the sixty-first – and retired from the stage to be kept by the Duke, as Gay reported to Swift on 6 July:

The d- of - I hear hath run away with Polly Peachum, having settled £400 upon her during pleasure, and upon disagreement £200.⁶

Her disappearance into keeping was abrupt, as *The Craftsman* recorded on 22 June 1728 of 'positively the last performance' of 19 June:

To the great Surprise of the Audience, the part of Polly Peachum was performed by Miss Warren, who was very much applauded, the first Performer being retired, it is reported, from the Stage.

Cuzzoni and Faustina frankly hated each other, reflected by Handel in *Alessandro* in such vituperative arias as Lisaura's 'No, più soffrir non voglio', which is provoked by Alessandro's making up to her after he has first turned to her rival, Rossane (Roxana). Handel pushed his luck further in giving the female singers a duet of their own, 'Placa l'alma': Alessandro has managed to declare his love for each of the two rivals for his heart, both of whom overhear him doing so. Macheath of course gets into a similar tangle with Lucy and Polly, who naturally fight. When the two briefly make up, they sing a duet, 'A curse attends that woman's love' which reflects the fleeting collaboration of Lisaura and Rossane in 'Placa l'alma'. In his introductory remarks, the 'Beggar' made quite sure that the comparison with *Alessandro* would be made:

As to the parts, I have observ'd such a nice impartiality to our two ladies, that it is impossible for *either* of them to take offence.

While *The Beggar's Opera* was germinating in John Gay's brain, on 6 June 1727 Cuzzoni and Faustina came to blows on stage in the middle of Bononcini's *Astianatte*, and a riot broke out in the theatre. Dr Arbuthnot's pamphlet, *The Devil to Pay at St James's* is sub-titled (in part) 'OR A full and true ACCOUNT of a most horrid and bloody BATTLE between Madam FAUSTINA and Madam CUZZONI', and reported:

Which of the two is the Aggressor, I dare not determine, lest I lose the friendship of many Great Noble Personages, who espouse the one, some the other Party... are you for *Faustina* or *Cuzzoni*, *Handel* or *Bononcini*, there's the Question... I shall not determine who is the Aggressor, but to take the surer Side, and widely pronounce them both in Fault; for it is certainly an apparent Shame that two such well bred Ladies should call Bitch and Whore, should scold and fight like Billingsgates. We have had Singers, nay, *Italian* Singers, here before now, but never such Doings.⁷

The Rival Queens, one of Nathaniel Lee's plays of 1677, then still in the repertory, told a similar story about Alexander the Great's love for two women. One of the satires about Handel's sopranos, *The Contre Temps; or, the Rival Queens*, echoed Lee's title, and is set in the 'Temple of Discord' with Handel standing by while the women get on with their battle:

I think 'tis best – to let 'em fight it out.⁸

The final plan of *The Beggar's Opera* seems to have been formed before Swift left for Ireland in August 1726, and therefore shortly after *Alessandro* had appeared. That same autumn of 1726 saw John Rich, who was to produce *The Beggar's Opera*, reviving one of the earlier Italian operas that had always been sung in English, *Camilla*,⁹ at Lincoln's Inn Fields, in direct competition with the Italian opera. Rich's new Prologue hammered the point home, and showed that everyone knew trouble was on the way for the Royal Academy of Music, with a telling reference to the 'Rival Queens':

Ye British fair, vouchsafe us your Applause,
And smile, propitious, on our English cause;
While Senesino you expect in vain,
And see your Favour treated with disdain:
While, 'twixt his rival Queens, such mutual Hate
Threats hourly Ruin to yon tuneful State.
Permit your Country's Voices to repair,
In some degree, your Disappointment there:
Here, may that charming Circle Nightly shine;
'Til Time, when That deserts us, to resign.¹⁰

By late October 1727 the writing of *The Beggar's Opera* was finished¹¹ and it opened on 29 January 1728. The contemporary perception was that *The Beggar's Opera* killed off Italian opera, and again Carey's verses (from the poem quoted earlier) make the point:

Of all the toasts that Britain boasts,
The gin, the gent, the jolly,
The brown, the fair, the debonnaire,
There's none cry'd up like Polly.
She's fir'd the town, has quite cut down
The Opera of Rolli:
Go where you will, the subject still,
Is pretty, pretty, Polly.

Similarly, the rival sopranos, Polly, and *The Beggar's Opera* were seen in conjunction in the *Daily Journal* of 10 April 1728, which carried verses entitled 'The Competition: Or, Rival Opera's. To the Tune of *A Soldier and a Sailor*':

Two Nymphs, the most renown'd, Sir
For voice and Skill profound, Sir,
Late fought with Rival Pains, Sir,

And most melodious Strains, Sir,...
 The God incens'd to Fury,
 At such a rabble Jury,
 Swore Britain's St-rs and G-ters,
 Not fit to judge 'tween Carters...
 Dispatch'd an Imp in Haste, Sir,
 Who dress'd up Mimick Folly,
 Calling his Phantom POLLY,
 And set the Minx to sing...
 While each enamour'd Ninny,
 Declar'd with Buss and Guinea,
 She'd win the Rival Stake.

In fact, the Italian opera had been in serious trouble by the time *The Beggar's Opera* appeared and, in its successive incarnations throughout the century, remained so. Lockman reckoned ('Enquiry', p. 1) that, while *The Beggar's Opera* 'dissolved the musical Charm' that had maintained the hold of Italian opera, the fundamental reasons for its failure were 'the Satiety of the Town and the too great weight of the Expence'. Towards the end of 1727 Mary Delaney was writing:

I doubt operas will not survive longer than this winter, they are now at their last gasp.¹²

In fact, operas tottered on until the last performance by the Royal Academy of Music, of Handel's *Admeto*, on 1 June 1728. But by then, *The Beggar's Opera* was perceived to have won, and Hogarth, as so often in his career, was making the most of the opportunity offered by its overwhelming success.

Hogarth's paintings of *The Beggar's Opera*

Hogarth's immersion in the contemporary theatre was reflected in his oft-quoted remark about making the figures in his picture like players upon the stage. Although we have seen how that is best understood in the context of contemporary and especially French theories about painting, in one, more literal, respect it makes perfect sense: because Hogarth's characters are so often shown in the very act of speaking, which of course is another element of implied sound in Hogarth's pictures. His paintings of *The Beggar's Opera* are intelligible in careful reference to the plot, and it is possible to establish not only who is speaking but also who is singing, or has just done so. Hogarth initially drew the *Beggar's Opera* directly from the stage in 1728 (Pl XII) and subsequently produced several paintings, said to be five in number. It is usual to distinguish them as three earlier versions (Pls 235, 236, 237) and two slightly later versions (Pls LXXXIV, LXXXV).¹³ The first painting (Anstruther-Gough-Calthorpe collection) is signed and dated 1728, and the style of the second (Birmingham City Art Gallery) shows that it must be very close in date to the first. The third, apparently unfinished (National Gallery of Art, Washington), canvas may be a little later but it is in fact rather difficult to fit into the sequence if one accepts it as a work by Hogarth. The three paintings of this first group are all closer to the original drawing (Pl LXXXIV) than the last two. In one detail, however, they all differ from the sketch, where Peachum's left hand is upon his sword hilt, while in the paintings it is employed in an expressive gesture.

The fourth painting (Pl LXXXV, Yale Center for British Art) was commissioned by John Rich in 1729 and is signed and dated that year. As one might have expected, the accuracy of the portrayal of the actors was of significance to Rich, a fact recorded in the posthumous sale of his pictures:

Mr. Hogarth 79 *A Scene in the Beggar's Opera, with the Portraits of those who play'd in it originally.*
 [A Catalogue of the Genuine and Entire Collection of Italian and other Pictures of John Rich, Esq;
 Deceased, Late Patentee of *Covent Garden Theatre*... which will be sold by Auction, by Mr. Langford, At his
 House in the Great Piazza, Covent Garden, on Friday the 2d of April 1762]

The fifth and last version (Pl LXXXV, Tate) was commissioned by Sir Archibald Grant in 1729 but was still unfinished on 1 January 1731 when Hogarth drew up his list of 'Pictures that Remain unfinished':

the Comitty of the house of Commons	Sir Archibald Grant Grant	half Payment Rec'd Novbr the 5th
the Beggars Opera	D ^o	1729. ¹⁴

This painting was ultimately completed, but it was never collected by Grant who, like his fellow-MP John Thomson, embezzled the funds of the 'Charitable Corporation for the Relief of the Industrious Poor'. Unlike Thomson, however, he did not escape to France in October 1731 but was declared bankrupt that same month, and expelled from the Commons in May 1732. Both this version of *The Beggar's Opera* and the *Committee of the House of Commons* (National Portrait Gallery, London) were acquired by Hogarth's friend William Huggins, presumably about this time: the two men were members of the Academy of Ancient Music by this date, and Hogarth was etching *A Chorus of Singers* featuring Huggins's *Judith*.

The two last versions of *The Beggar's Opera* look different from the others, not only because they are later in style, but also because they portray a different moment in the play from the others. At first sight, the compositions all look similar, of course: Macheath is centre stage right; Polly and her father Peachum are stage left; Lucy and her father Lockett stage right. But even the generally accepted identification of the moment (assumed to be the same in all the paintings) is not quite accurate.¹⁵ The scene is usually referred to as being keyed to Polly's song 'When my hero in court appears' which she sings after asking her father to let Macheath go:

... (*She kneels.*) Polly upon her knees begs it of you.

In fact, in every version the scene must be a little later in the action than this, because both women only kneel – as Hogarth shows them – when Lucy addresses her father too, at the end of Polly's song. Lucy speaks:

Lucy (Kneeling) If Peachum's heart is harden'd, sure you, sir, will have more compassion on a daughter.

Lucy then sings, 'When he holds up his hand'. In the first two paintings, Polly's left hand is upon her heart, as it ought to be if she is pleading, and, since we cannot see Lucy's left hand, hers is probably on her heart too. Not only are the women kneeling, but Lucy is addressing her father and pointing towards Macheath, while Lockett is reeling back from Lucy's plea, his left hand raised; Polly has held her position, having pleaded to Peachum (hand on heart) and also gestured to Macheath; Peachum has also held his position; and so a 'set piece' is created. The drawing and first two paintings must be of this moment.

In the final two paintings, however, the action has moved on. Now Lockett's two hands are visible, in a gesture of refusal and rejection. Lucy no longer points to Macheath, although she has otherwise held her position. Polly has moved, and is now clutching the hem of her father's coat with the left hand that formerly held the kerchief (while it was pressed to her heart); and the kerchief is now clutched in her right. He, Peachum, is turned to address Polly – his feet are now pointing towards her – and is also making an intriguing gesture over his shoulder with his right hand. This is also the first time that Lavinia Fenton's lover and immediate future protector, the Duke of Bolton, has made an appearance among the audience, some members of which in those days were allowed to sit on the stage: he is shown wearing the garter star, downstage left. Polly can be understood to be kneeling in the direction of Bolton, as well as to her father, and Peachum's words fit the visual double entendre:

Set your heart at rest, Polly. Your husband is to die today. Therefore, if you are not already provided, 'tis high time to look about for another.

Peachum's discreet gesture indicates that ' 'tis high time to look about for another', and that the Duke of Bolton might provide the answer.

This interpretation of the scenes through the gestures of the actors would have been second nature in Hogarth's time, both to the audience at *The Beggar's Opera* and to the viewers of his paintings, as contemporary prescriptions reveal. Lockett, for instance, is an excellent example of 'aversion' or 'refusal'. In the first two paintings, only his left hand is visible, but there is no mistaking that the gestures and movements of the actor, John Hall, are in conformity with current methods:

For those [things] which we detest... it is necessary to push those things away with the hand and turn the head a little towards the other side.¹⁶

The fact that he is employing his left hand to do so is in itself significant. There was a powerful distinction made between the hands, and the use of the left was understood as a peculiarly forceful gesture, indicating disparagement:

If it [the left hand] is used alone, it is only to express scorn, refusal, aversion, while turning the head to the opposite side.¹⁷

In the last two versions of the composition, when both Locket's hands are visible, the actions fit the following description by John Walker (1732-1807):

Hatred or aversion draws back the body as to avoid the hated object; the hands at the same time thrown out spread, as if to keep it off. The face is turned away from that side towards which the hands are thrown out; the eyes look angrily and obliquely the same way the hands are directed; the eyebrows are contracted, the upper lip disdainfully drawn up, and the teeth set.¹⁸

Hogarth is careful even to distinguish the direction of Locket's gaze: in the first two paintings his eyes are directed towards Lucy; in the last two they are averted.

The interplay between the play and the audience, between the roles the actors play and real life, that Hogarth introduced in the two later versions, is especially brilliant in that it further exploits the dramaturgical structure, the 'rehearsal' formula, of *The Beggar's Opera* itself. As we have seen, Gay deliberately reminds his audience that the play is a play and not 'reality', both at the beginning and at the very end. This interruption of the 'willing suspension of disbelief', the emphasis upon the very artifice of the play, and the way in which actors move in and out of character, is an age-old device: Shakespeare's 'prologues', some of them running through the performance of a play, are a case in point. The reminder often comically introduced:

If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction. [*Twelfth Night*, III, iv, 140]

Leslie Bethell identified this ploy as crucial to many of Shakespeare's effects and, pointing out that it has never died, drew attention to *The Marx Brothers Go West*, where we are told as the engine-driver is being gagged, 'This is the best gag in the whole movie.'¹⁹ Hogarth's visual play upon the relationship between Polly/Lavinia Fenton and the Duke of Bolton is of this order. First, the character Polly is addressing her father in the play; but, secondly, she can also be viewed as kneeling towards the Duke. In addition, the character, Peachum, is speaking not only to Polly within the play but also to the actress Lavinia Fenton, 'outside' the play; and Peachum is gesturing to the Duke, who is present in the audience on the stage, and invoking the world beyond the theatre.

Copying Hogarth's *Beggar's Opera*

I have deliberately excluded the third painting (Pl 237)²⁰ from the above discussion. It appears to be another idea again, showing another, very slightly different, point in the action. The artist was sensitive to the precision of gesture that the contemporary theatre demanded; although there must be a doubt as to whether that artist was Hogarth.²¹ Although this 'third' painting resembles the first two more than the last two, it is by no means identical: the position of Polly's head is quite different, and is no longer seen in profile. More significantly, the actress is no longer identifiable as Lavinia Fenton, whose distinctive features are recognizable in the first two paintings and also in the original sketch. Further differences include: Lucy is no longer seen in *profil perdu* but nearly in profile; both women hold kerchiefs; there is no royal coat of arms visible, although it exists underneath the curtain that was painted over it;²² the floor is of stone flags, uniquely; and there is a small black page near Peachum. And yet the precision of gesture is present. For example, Lucy's left hand is now spread out beyond the silhouette of her body and so she has finished pleading. This is now a gesture of reaction to whatever her father Locket has been, or is, saying or singing. Polly's hand is no longer pressed to her heart, and her fingers have dropped away. Another important point is that the gesture of Peachum's left hand has also been changed. It is now one not of attention to Polly (as in the first two paintings) but of refusal, and the text offers a likely moment. After Lucy's song 'When he holds up his hand', Locket announces:

Macheath's time is come, Lucy. We know our own affairs, therefore let us have no more whimpering or whining.

Locket then sings 'Our selves, like the great, to secure a retreat', but then Peachum chimes in with that confirmation quoted above of their joint refusal to spare Macheath's life:

Set your heart at rest, Polly. Your husband is to die today.

Peachum's gesture with his left hand, which, as we have seen, is itself significant, and indicates a degree of disparagement, and this painting therefore seems to take its cue from these words. There are, however, other



major differences that appear to separate this painting from Hogarth's, although it is based upon the same composition as the first two pictures, both in terms of the characters and the audience, indeed the whole *mise-en-scène*. The most striking change is that, in addition to the alteration in the features of Polly Peachum, the face of Peachum himself is manifestly not that of John Hippiusley (or Hippersley), the actor who is visible in the first two and the last two pictures: this one is fuller-faced and blunter-featured. The oddity of Hogarth's representation of the actor in the first two paintings reflects the fact that Hippiusley had a face damaged by fire which, in that marvellously 'incorrect' way of the time, made people fall about laughing before he had even uttered a word.²³ His features, like everything else, are refined by Hogarth in the last two paintings; but those in this picture are quite different. Hogarth knew Hippiusley personally (he joined the Sublime Society of Beef Steaks in 1739)²⁴ and others in the cast, and so this kind of fudging is odder still in the painting under discussion. Hippiusley was the author of successful plays, including a ballad opera, *Flora*, described on publication as '... an opera. As it is now acting at the Theatre Royal in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. Being the farce of the Country Wake [by Thomas Dogget] alter'd after the manner of the Beggar's Opera... Written by a Gentleman [i.e. John Hippiusley]' [London, 1729]. Other facts indicate that Hogarth knew him. Hippiusley later published *The Polite Arts, or, a Dissertation on Poetry, Painting, Musick, Architecture and Eloquence* (London, 1749) which bears a dedication to Hogarth's old associate from Vanderbank and Chéron's academy, and lasting friend, the surgeon William Cheselden. And he performed his famous 'turn' as 'the drunken man' at Covent Garden in 1742 while the farce based on Hogarth's *Midnight Modern Conversation* was staged.

Many more curious changes to the depiction of the individuals can be observed in this 'third' version of the painting. At the back of the scene, stage left, can be seen a figure holding one of the chains hanging on the wall. In the first two paintings he has been clearly identified as John Rich, and the same man appears in the last two versions of the scene, but now with his face turned in the opposite direction and standing next to Christopher Cock, the auctioneer, while John Gay is in the background, partially obscured by Rich.



237 (left) *The Beggar's Opera* perhaps by Joseph Nickolls (fl.1726–55) after Hogarth, c.1728,
Oil on canvas, 48.2 x 57.1 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington

238 (above) *The Rake's Rendez-vous* by George Bickham (c.1706–71), c.1735
Etching
British Museum

There seems to be no reason, if this 'third' picture is also by Hogarth, why the figure of Rich should no longer resemble the distinctive profile that is to be seen in the first two (or even the last two) paintings: but it is nothing like. Similarly, the distinctive face of Tom Walker, the original Macheath, although clear in the first two and last two paintings, cannot be made out in this picture, and again the features are far coarser. It is surely not the case here, and elsewhere on the surface, that the painting is unfinished (as has been said) but that it is characterized by a lack of finish, deliberately so, it would seem.

There are differences from Hogarth's style as well. For example, Macheath's stance and the weight of his figure are also altogether heavier and dumpier than in the other four paintings, which does not fit in with the tendency towards greater elegance in the forms that can be discerned quite consistently from the first pair of Hogarth's versions to the last. In similar fashion, Peachum's legs are no longer positioned with the weight obviously more upon the one foot than the other, as is the case in the first two paintings; they are both firmly on the ground. And again, although Lockett's expression and gesture resemble those of the actor John Hall in the first two paintings, the features are not so obviously individualized and are indistinct in comparison. Very much the same can be said of the alterations to the three figures in the audience beside Rich in the first two paintings, and especially the clearly characterized 'molly' in the centre.²⁵ Perhaps, by the way, this latter figure indicates the section of the fashionable audience on stage that Olivia refers to in Wycherley's *The Plain Dealer* as 'pop corner':

An eternal babler; and makes no more use of his ears, than a man that sits at a play by his mistress, or in Pop-corner. [*The Plain Dealer*, Act II, Scene i]

The gesture with the cane was evidently a 'signifier' of a homosexual male: it appears in George Bickham's 'spin-off' from Hogarth's *Rake's Progress* (the third scene), *The Rake's Rendez-vous* (Pl 238).²⁶ The actual person that Hogarth shows in *The Beggar's Opera* can be seen, at full length, together with a self-portrait by 'Mossir' [i.e.

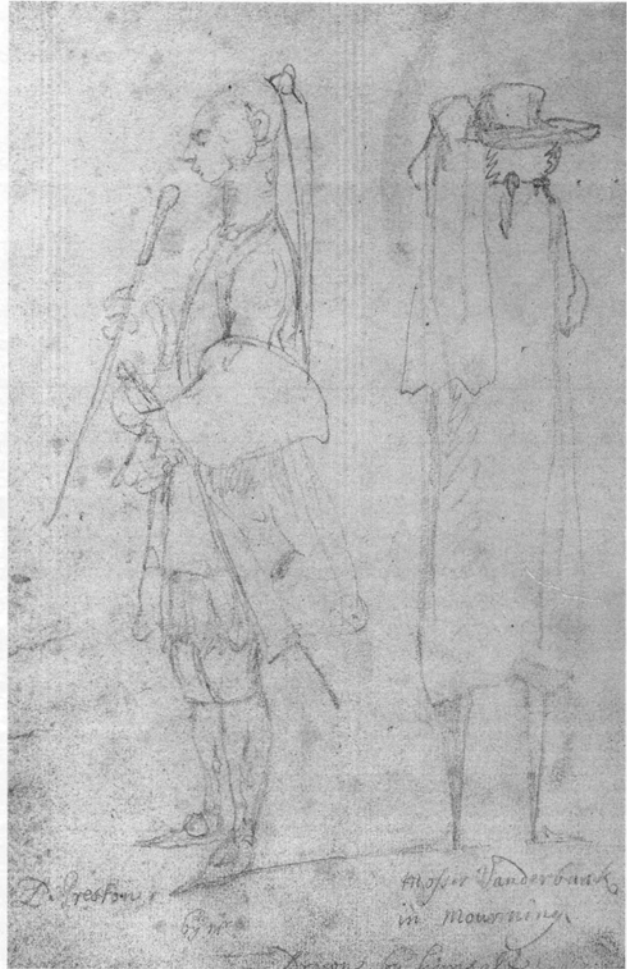


239 *A Rake's Progress*, II, 1735
Engraving
British Museum

'Monsieur' John] Vanderbank 'in mourning' (Pl 240).²⁷ The inscription on the drawing identifies him as Lord Preston, that is, Charles Graham, 3rd Viscount Preston (1706-39), who was married to Anne Cox of London, childless, but not known to history as having been homosexual. Next to him in Hogarth's picture, the stouter figure was noted by Walpole (on the copy at Farmington) as representing Sir Robert Fagg, 3rd Bt. (1673-1736), a devotee of racing (he is carrying a crop) who was involved in the breeding of the modern thoroughbred. Although the outline is similar to that in the other *Beggar's Opera* paintings, these features too are obscured in this 'third' (Washington) version, even though, facing in the opposite direction, Fagg was again identified in the last two paintings (Tate, Yale).²⁸ In these latter canvases, he is next to the Duke of Bolton, but now not so much because of his love of the turf, but as a womanizer who had also fallen for 'Polly'. One of several scurrilous verses of the time is entitled 'The case of a famous Sussex Baronet (as remarkable for this memorable achievements among the Female part of the creation as for the many races he won at Newmarket) and Miss Sally'.²⁹ In Hogarth's later two paintings, he is seen lusting after Lavinia Fenton; while in the two early paintings he had provided a contrasting complement to the 'molly' figure of Lord Preston. Another contemporary verse runs:

I sing of a battered old knight,
Who in hunting and c—g's grown old,
Brought into a disastrous plight,
As quick to you I'll unfold.
His honour and conscience he'll sell
For a pretty young girl or a nag,
His name it is needless to tell—
By the marks you will know it is Fagg.³⁰

240 Lord Preston [left] and Mossir [i.e. 'Monsieur' John]
 Vanderbank in mourning [right] by John Vanderbank (1694-
 1739), c.1728
 Drawing
 Lord Methuen



Another ballad enumerated the purported lovers of Polly Peachum (Lavinia Fenton), where Fagg occupies the fourth and fifth verses out of the nine of this 'new Ballad inscribed to Polly Peachum to the tune of Pretty Parrot say'.³¹ And the *Daily Journal* of 26 April 1728 ran eight scurrilous verses, 'The Old Baronet; behind the Scenes, at the *Beggar's Opera*'. The opening lines might even suggest a sight of Hogarth's composition:

When first Sir Bob, that rusty Knight
 Appear'd upon the Stage,
 All star'd at so Grotesque a Sight
 Not seen since Alfred's Age.

Returning to the Washington painting, it also displays a marked difference in colour compared with the others, and the unusual blue of Lucy's dress is without a parallel in Hogarth's work. The handling of the paint is also very different from Hogarth's, and so, all in all, it seems that this picture must be an early derivation from Hogarth's first two paintings of this scene, although painted by an artist with a good understanding of the theatre.³²

These oddities about the painting suggest several possibilities. It closely follows Hogarth's composition, and appears to show the same set and presumably stage as that in Hogarth's, at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Yet the floor is stone-flagged where the other versions show boards. The identities of the actors and other characters are either obviously made to seem different (Peachum) or are obscured (Lockit, Macheath, Polly). And, as mentioned above, the royal coat of arms over the proscenium arch, a prominent feature of Hogarth's paintings, was painted out after its initial inclusion. This therefore hid the fact that the scene was taken from one of the two royal patent theatres, namely, Rich's New Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. In contrast, this identification was important to Hogarth, the presence of the coat-of-arms in his paintings indicating that his pictures were 'official' representations of the original production. Might not Rich's portrait therefore have been obscured in the 'rogue' version, the coat-of-arms hidden, and the others details deliberately 'fudged', to obscure the piracy, since Rich was the proud owner of the theatre and the producer of *The*

Beggar's Opera, and notoriously litigious and jealous of his rights? This tenderness towards copyright is, it must be said, unusual at this date, unless the artist involved – and the person who commissioned it – were known to Rich, or Hogarth, or both. Hogarth was as determined as Rich to protect his own interests – and his copyright law was not far in the future. Indeed, he delayed publication of his *Rake's Progress* until 'Hogarth's Act' passage into law in June 1735.

Creating *A Rake's Progress*

Although by the summer of 1728 Italian opera was down, it was not out. Subsequent developments were key factors in the development of what remains Hogarth's most notorious 'modern moral subject', *A Rake's Progress*, and of the second scene in particular (Pls LXXVII, 239). By December 1729 Italian opera was back in production, and Handel alone wrote half a dozen operas before his contract expired in the summer of 1734. By that stage, there had already been an initiative towards another new opera company, which has become known as the 'Opera of the Nobility', the directors of which included Lord Burlington, Handel's early patron, and others who had been involved in the Royal Academy of Music. Moves were afoot to establish this organization in early 1733, and the company's first public performance, Porpora's *Arianna in Nasso*, with libretto by Paolo Rolli, followed on 29 December at Lincoln's Inn Fields. On 12 February 1734, Dr Arbuthnot's pamphlet, *Harmony in an Uproar*, pointed out the ludicrousness of the situation:

... if one Opera was thought so very burthensome, and gave such Room for just Complaints; no Way so proper to make us sensible of its Weight, and our Mistake, as setting up two.³³

The two ultimately doomed enterprises ran rapidly downhill alongside each other, the Opera of the Nobility giving up before Handel, with its last season finishing on 11 June 1737, in which season alone it was reckoned to have lost £12,000.

On 2 November 1734 Hogarth apologized for his delay in publishing the engravings of *A Rake's Progress*, on the grounds that he had found it 'necessary to introduce several additional Characters in his Paintings', but stated that they were now finished and could be inspected by potential subscribers to the engraved set:

MR. HOGARTH hereby gives Notice, that having found it necessary to introduce several additional characters in the Paintings of the Rake's Progress, he could not get the Prints ready to deliver to his Subscribers at Michaelmas [29 September] last (as he proposed.) But all the Pictures now being entirely finished, may be seen at his house, the Golden-Head in Leicester-Fields, where subscriptions are taken; and the Prints being in great forwardness, will be finished, with all possible Speed, and the Time of Delivery advertised.³⁴

The paintings did not, however, include the lengthy scroll of paper that is such a feature of the final engraving of the second scene (Pl 239), 'The Levee', which lists the lavish presents showered upon the latest Italian singing sensation of October 1734, Farinelli.³⁵ This addition to the engraving must be one of the reasons for the subsequent delay in publication, in addition to the passage of the Copyright Act. But the series must in any event have been differently composed at first (although Hogarth did announce at the very beginning that he intended to have eight scenes instead of the six of *A Harlot's Progress*), as well as being subject to the introduction of 'additional characters'. There exists, for example, at least one painting of identical dimensions to those in the final series, *The marriage contract* (Pl 241) (much repainted), which has long been associated with the series and is usually identified as having been intended to occupy the position now taken by 'The Levee'. The explanation may not, however, be even that straightforward.³⁶

Hogarth's subscription had been launched in late 1733, probably at the beginning of December, with an advertisement proper appearing on 22 December 1733.³⁷ Hogarth did not state at this stage when he would deliver the engravings, only that they would be finished 'with all convenient speed, and the Time publicly advertised'. The engraving of *Southwark Fair*, which formed part of the initial subscription (with an offer of a discount), was ready, and could be delivered from 1 January 1734. But it was a full eleven months before the apology announcing a further delay appeared, on 2 November 1734. At this point Hogarth announced that he had actually finished the paintings, so that engraving could continue to completion; but the implication of the earlier publicity is that he had begun the paintings in 1733. *The Marriage Contract* is unlikely to have been positioned as the second scene in the series as it was initially conceived, and another sequence is implied, beginning: I, 'The Heir'; II, 'The Orgy'; III, 'The Arrest'; IV, 'The Marriage Contract'. Thus inheritance (I) is followed by immediate dissipation in 'The Orgy' (II). The striking scene of 'The



241 *The marriage contract*, c.1733

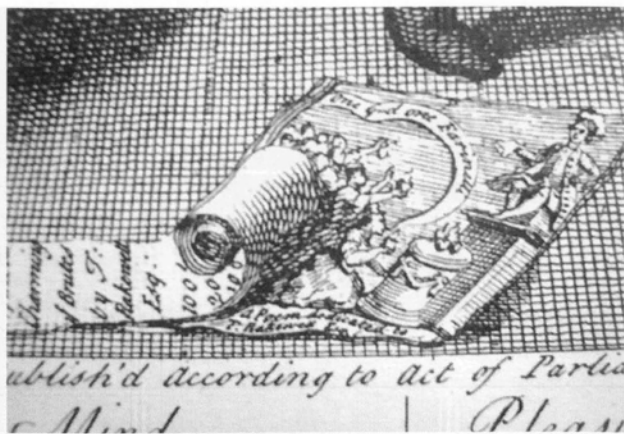
Oil on canvas, 62 x 75 cm

The Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

Orgy' is followed (as was indeed the case in the final sequence) by a scene of arrest for debt (III) of the more 'fashionable' kind associated with lack of ready money. In 'The Arrest' the Rake has hired a chair, and is well dressed, and in St James's, heading for a royal levee on St David's Day (1 March) the birthday of Queen Caroline; and one reason for his shortness of cash is gambling at White's, which is visible nearby. The 'Marriage Contract' (IV) would then have occupied the same relative position within the narrative as ultimately taken by 'The Marriage', which is Plate V in the final series.

The marriage contract, as the relic of an earlier narrative scheme, contains elements that indicate how the Rake might have found himself with money problems, consequent upon, or subsequent to, those implied by 'The Arrest'. The further problem implied, in addition to that of mere problems of 'cash-flow', was the purchase of expensive and overvalued works of art, and an indulgence in lavish pursuits such as racing. In re-thinking the sequence, and having sketched out this scene of *The marriage contract*, Hogarth clearly decided to develop this 'sub-text' of over-expenditure and bad taste,³⁸ making it the theme of a new and separate painting in the series, 'The Levee', which he then placed earlier on in the narrative, as Plate II. Some of the hangers-on in 'The Levee' are nicely calculated to fit with the Rake's 'nouveau riche' character: there are, for example, the social graces that might be imparted by the dancing-master and the fencing-master. One of Dr Arbuthnot's targets in *The Devil to Pay at St James's* is a puritan who is the supposed object of affection of 'a certain great Lady' who hopes to transform him 'to the Pink of the Mode':

She proposes to have him taught to Dance, to Sing, to speak French, to Fence and to ride the great Horse. In short, she proposes to make quite another Creature of him.³⁹

242 Detail of initials 'FH' in *A Rake's Progress*, II (see Pl xxvii)243 Detail of engraving of *A Rake's Progress*, II (see Pl 239)

Other details in 'The Levee' suggest the Rake's aping of his superiors: in racing horses; the employment of a landscape gardener; and, in what is one of the most telling touches, the patronage of opera.

When Hogarth had his change of mind about the narrative, the new scene of 'The Marriage', in addition to that of 'The Levee', would now have been contrived, both of them compositionally similar to *The marriage contract*, while 'The Levee' develops several of its themes. The style of these two paintings too suggests a higher technical level of execution than almost all the others in the series, with the notable exception of 'The Orgy'. These three scenes, 'Levee', 'Marriage' and 'Orgy', are superior in quality to the other five, reflecting the greater mastery that Hogarth had acquired over even the brief period implied for the execution of the series, which began in 1733 and extended over repainting and reorganizing in the latter part of 1734. To take this unfashionable analysis further, if one were assessing solely the mastery of painting involved, one would have to conclude that 'The Levee' is by some distance the most advanced of the paintings; that 'The Marriage' is close in date to it; and that 'The Orgy' cannot be far removed from them; and logic suggests that this last must have been executed before the other two. Equally, however, 'The Orgy' must post-date the publication of the engraving by Lépicié after Watteau's *Antoine de la Roque* (Pl 18), since the figure of the Rake derives from that. Lépicié's print was not published until 1734, and indeed was presented by Lépicié on 26 June that year to the Académie Royale when he was *agrée* on that date,⁴⁰ at which point the print was newly published. And so for this reason too, the painting of this scene at least of *A Rake's Progress* must be dated to the latter half of 1734, but before Hogarth's announcement of the completion of the series on 2 November. I would therefore judge the sequence of execution of the painted series as we now have it to have been as follows: I, IV, VI, VII, VIII, III, V, II; with I, IV, VI, VII and VIII forming an 'early' group, while III, V and II followed.

No sooner had he finally finished the paintings, however, than Hogarth began to add material to the engraved versions, and to a striking degree more in 'The Levee' than any of the others. This was the canvas, on my argument, that was one of the last, perhaps the very last, to be painted. It also happens to be the only painting that is not reversed in the engraving. Another feature distinguishes it from the others, and that is the number of identifiable contemporaries depicted. First of all, it is almost certainly George Frederick Handel at the keyboard: the score entitled 'The Rape of the Sabines' carries the prominent initials 'FH' (Pl 242), which are not later additions.⁴¹ Also present are Bridgeman, the landscape gardener; James Figg, the prize-fighter, swordsman and quarter-staff expert, who died in December 1734; and Dubois, a famous fencing-master, who had been killed in a duel on 10 May 1734.⁴² Clearly, several of these must be the 'additional characters' to the painted series that Hogarth was referring to on 2 November 1734; while in the engraving even the maker of the harpsichord is identified ('Joseph Mahoon', harpsichord-maker to the King), and the elaborate satire on Farinelli was also added.

Italian opera and *A Rake's Progress*

The particular developments in the field of opera that took place both in the middle of 1734 and in the autumn explain several things: the depiction of Handel in the painting, which was certainly finished by 2 November; the addition of the satire upon Farinelli in the engraving; and the pointed removal at the same time of any overt identification in the engraving of the composer as Handel. The early state of the engraving shows a blank where the initials 'FH' appear in the painting, and nothing was ever placed there. Handel, having parted company with Heidegger in the early summer of 1734, quickly came to an arrangement independently to lease from John Rich at the Covent Garden Theatre: he reported as much on 27 August.⁴³ By 24 October he had completed his new opera *Ariodante*.⁴⁴ By now, Heidegger, as manager of the King's Theatre, Haymarket, had decided to let it to the rival opera company, the 'Opera of the Nobility'. In a remarkable coup, this new company managed to attract the most famous singer of them all, Carlo Broschi, called Farinelli. His debut came on 29 October 1734 in *Artaserse* with music by Johann Hasse and Farinelli's brother Riccardo Broschi, and was an overwhelming success. The English habit was to load favoured performers with gifts, which were then published, with the value of each gift noted, and the extravagant scroll that Hogarth added to the engraved version of *A Rake's Progress*, II, is a list of such presents. It begins:

A List of the rich Presents Signor Farinelli the Italian Singer Condescended to Accept of the English Nobility & Gentry for one Nights Performance in the Opera Artaxerxes...

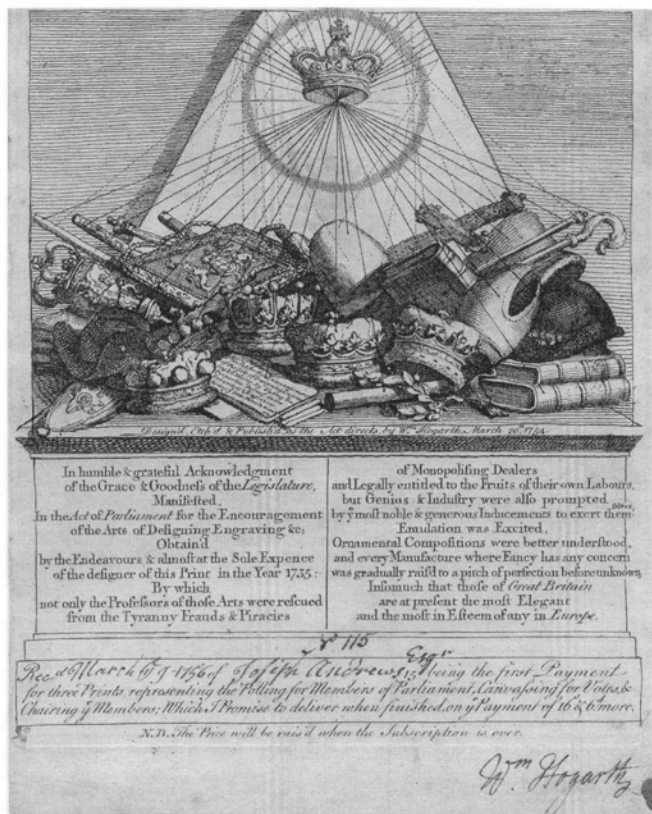
Tellingly, one of the gifts listed is '*A Gold Snuff box Chac'd with the Story of Orpheus charming the Brutes*' given by '*T. Rakewell Esq.*', value £100 (Pl 243). The Rake has therefore placed himself in the company of his aristocratic betters in patronizing the Opera of the Nobility, and, like them, will lose his money doing so. All previous experience showed as much: the earlier attempt at a subscription opera, the Royal Academy of Music, had ended in bankruptcy in 1728, and had never been in a position to live up to its enticing promises of profitability.⁴⁵ Handel's attempts single-handedly to keep opera going at the King's Theatre had led to an immense strain, endless financial worry, ill health and a damaged reputation as a result of what the 'nobility' involved were apt to term (as in January 1733) 'the dominion of Mr. Handel'.⁴⁶ The first article of the Opera of the Nobility was:

Point d'accommodement à jamais avec le S^r Handel.⁴⁷

The end of the scroll listing the gifts sits over an engraved portrait of Farinelli enthroned upon a pedestal (Pl 243), and the pose of Farinelli that Hogarth used appears in a contemporary portrait: *Farinelli crowned by Euterpe and attended by Fame*.⁴⁸ Significantly, it was painted by Amigoni, who was a close friend of Farinelli, and the portrait, one of several, was engraved by his regular print-maker Joseph Wagner. Hogarth's satirical addition to this Wagner print shows a group of fans, with one woman keeling and shouting, 'One God! One Farinelli!' (Pl 243), words that are supposed to have been uttered by Mrs Fox-Lane (later Lady Bingley). She was the Hon. Harriet Benson, and married George Fox-Lane on 12 July 1731. He was created Lord Bingley on 13 May 1762, taking the same style and title as his wife's father, whose heiress she was, with large estates in Yorkshire which she brought in marriage. Her father, Robert Benson, Lord Bingley, was effectively in charge of the Opera of the Nobility. She reappears in scene IV of *Marriage à-la-Mode* (Pls IV, 231) as the woman swooning in raptures over the castrato, and it seems probable that the early identification of her in this scene is correct,⁴⁹ although there is a ms note by Walpole in his copy of Nichols's *Biographical Anecdotes* (Lewis Collection, Farmington) stating that she was Lady Rich, née Elizabeth Griffith (c.1692-1773), who was married to (Field-Marshal) Sir Robert Rich, who had been a friend of her step-father Lord Mohun (killed in a notorious duel with the Duke of Hamilton in 1712).⁵⁰ Lady Rich was noted among those who were giving Farinelli money on his benefit night, in *Artaserse*, at the King's Theatre on 15 March 1735:

'Tis expected that Signor Farinelli will have the greatest Appearance on Saturday that has been known. We hear that a Contrivance will be made to accommodate 2000 People. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has been pleas'd to give him 200 Guineas, the Spanish Ambassador 100, the Emperor's Ambassador 50, his Grace the Duke of Leeds 50, the Countess of Portmore 50, Lord Burlington 50, his Grace the Duke of Richmond 50, the Hon. Col. Paget 30, Lady Rich 20, and most of the Nobility 50, 30 or 20 Guineas each; so that 'tis believ'd his Benefit will be worth to him upwards of 2000l.⁵¹

The famous phrase, 'One God! One Farinelli!' re-appeared at the beginning of a sonnet, *On a Raptur'd Lady*, that is full of double entendres,⁵² in *The Daily Journal* of Friday 6 June 1735, shortly before Hogarth's



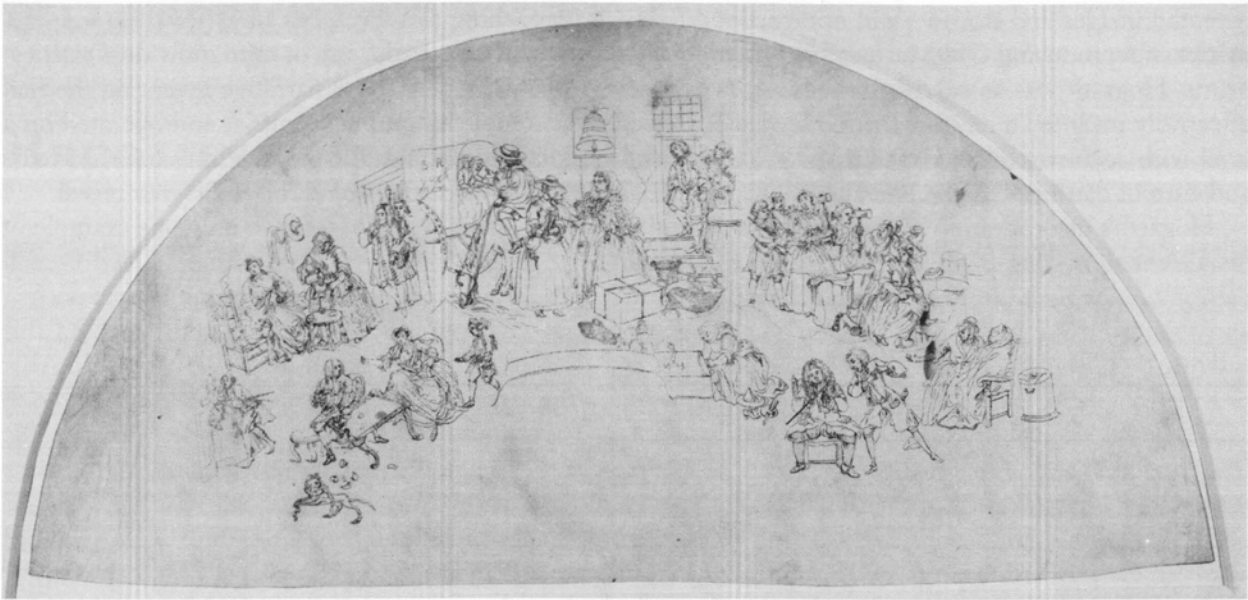
244 Subscription ticket for *An Election*, 1755
Etching
British Museum

engravings were published (25 June). If we could track down the scandal hinted at concerning 'hoarser John' we could make a firm identification of the woman Hogarth intended:

ONE GOD! One FARINELLI! Febria cries!
And yet no Light'ning blasts her from the Skies!
Shou'd wrath Divine at all her Crew be hurl'd,
'Twou'd half destroy the fashionable World.
His thrilling, soft, emasculated Song,
Kindled that Fire, which burst upon her Tongue;
Yet not for him the fair *Blasphemer* raves,
No! – Farinelli's not the man she craves:
And *hoarser John* can quench the am'rous Flame,⁵³
Without a warbling Throat, or tuneful Name.
So half-learn'd Novices the Devil may raise;
But the deep Magus only— calms, and lays.
Which most you love – say, Febria, if you can?
Th'ALL-PERFECT SPIRIT! Or th'imperfect Man!

As it happens, Elizabeth Griffith, Lady Rich, friend both of Pope and Lady Mary Wortley Montague, was, at least at this point in her life, rather more interested in lesbian affairs than heterosexual,⁵⁴ and on balance (since the only assertion that it was she that Hogarth referred to comes from Horace Walpole) the woman meant in these verses is more likely to be Mrs Fox-Lane. That identification is at least consistent with Hogarth's allusions to the Opera of the Nobility.

The emphasis on Farinelli in the engraving, and on the Rake's involvement with the Opera of the Nobility, explains why Hogarth removed from the engraving the explicit reference to Handel that had appeared in the painting. Farinelli was the star of the new opera company, and so it was important not to diminish the topicality of these references by identifying the 'wrong' composer, Handel, who ran the opera company in opposition to that adorned by Farinelli. By featuring Farinelli so prominently, Hogarth was able to implicate the Rake in the newest and most fashionable operatic venture, and one, moreover, run by the same 'nobility' who had lost so much money in its earlier manifestation.



245 Design for a fan, with images from *A Harlot's Progress*
 Drawing
 British Museum

The fact that Hogarth only refers to Farinelli's *succès fou* in his engraving suggests that the painting was completed before 29 October 1734 (to repeat, the advertisement of 2 November describes the paintings as finished by that date). The phrase in the scroll, 'one Nights Performance in the Opera Artaxerxes', also strongly suggests that it is Farinelli's benefit night that Hogarth is referring to, and that it was the reports of this event that decided him to make this addition to the engraving. The print must therefore date from after 13 March (the announcement of the promised benefit) or 15 March (the benefit itself) 1735. Wagner's print after Amigoni's portrait of his friend Farinelli did not appear until 1735,⁵⁵ and the fact that the painting itself is known to have been on view in June–July 1735 in Amigoni's house in London also points to the Farinelli material as having been a very late addition to Hogarth's engraving, which was published on 29 June.

Hogarth's Act

As so often with Hogarth's engravings, publication of *A Rake's Progress* was late. But this time he had a reason almost as good as the outbreak of war that affected his plans for *Marriage A-la-Mode*. Hogarth had suffered from pirated copies of his first 'modern moral subject', *A Harlot's Progress*, even before it had been published, which was in April 1732. Being Hogarth, and since he made most of his money through the sale of engravings rather than original paintings, he did something about it, and agitated for a change in the copyright laws. On 15 May 1735 Royal Assent was given to an 'Act for the Encouragement of the Arts of designing, Engraving, Etching etc...', always known as Hogarth's Act, which reserved the rights in an image to its 'inventor'. As usual, he placed an advertisement in the paper apologizing for the delay on 3 May (and on 5, 7, 8 and 9 May), adding:

Mr Hogarth was and is obliged to defer the publication and delivery of the above said prints till the 25th of June next, in order to secure his property, pursuant to an act lately passed by both houses of parliament, now waiting for the Royal Assent, to secure all new invented prints that shall be published after the 24th of June next, from being copied without Consent of the Proprietor, and thereby preventing a scandalous and unjust custom hitherto practised with impunity of making and vending Copies of original prints, to the manifest injury of the author and the great discouragement of the arts of Painting and engraving.

Hogarth therefore issued his prints on 29 June. The point is, however, that until Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress* became so wildly popular, being pirated for every kind of product from the theatre to prints, to handkerchiefs to fans (Pl 245), there had been little need for a copyright act, since original engravings –

invented images and stories – did not exist at anything approaching this level. But now it was no longer a matter of reproducing Old Masters, or contemporary portraits in engraved form, or even individual satirical prints. Hogarth was so successful because, as he knew, with his huge gift for narrative invention, he had effectively invented a new art form. He also possessed the sure touch of a major satirist and operated on a level with such writers as Pope or Swift; and he had the knack simultaneously of touching topical events and current concerns, as the late alterations to the paintings and engravings of *A Rake's Progress* reveal.

Hogarth's incorporation of the details about contemporary opera into that series is only one example of his all-encompassing imagination. Other similar sources of inspiration, as we have seen, included French painting, drawing and prints; French theory and criticism; Old Masters; theatre; sculpture; music; poetry; and the novel. We have merely touched upon his revolution in copyright law; and, in addition to all this activity, there was his involvement in the academy and training of artists; his philanthropic activities that provided publicity for his own career while also assisting the larger cause of British art; his 'modern moral subjects'; his conversation pieces, 'histories', and larger portraits. Hogarth's art, in other words, like Shakespeare's, seems to touch every aspect of contemporary life; and Hogarth was driving all the time towards the establishment of a national cultural self-confidence within which Shakespeare's art itself, to take only one vastly significant instance, might properly be appreciated for the first time. His sense of achievement in these respects, and specifically in raising the arts in Britain to a level that might emulate or surpass those of Europe, is reflected in the legend on the subscription ticket for the engravings of *An Election*. It was first issued in 1754 and subsequently in slightly differing states (Pl 244), but the proud words, partially quoted in the introduction to this part of the book, remained unchanged:

... Emulation was Excited,
Ornamental Compositions were better understood,
and every Manufacture where Fancy has any concern
was gradually rais'd to a pitch of perfection before unknown,
Insomuch that those of *Great Britain*
are at present the most Elegant
and the most in Esteem of any in *Europe*.

CHAPTER 16

BECOMING BRITISH... AND EUROPEAN



246, 247 *A Rake's Progress*, I, and *A Harlot's Progress*, VI (details) by Edgar Degas (1834-1917) after Hogarth, c.1859-60
Degas Carnet 4, Bibliothèque nationale de France

It may seem perverse to have reached the end of this book with a detailed look at one of Hogarth's earlier successes, *A Rake's Progress*. But, as I indicated at the start, Hogarth is one of the few artists of whatever kind who have formed the imaginative consciousness of a nation. Indeed, he shares that distinction only with Shakespeare and Dickens. Together, they remain the three British artists who have made a comparable impact world wide. It was with the 'progresses' that Hogarth did so; and *A Rake's Progress* remains the work by which, universally, he is best known.

There are major differences between these three prolific, and extravagantly gifted, 'British' geniuses. Shakespeare's impression upon the national culture was, as has been suggested within these pages, slowly and eccentrically formed, although it was to prove indelible; and his international reputation was only established after more painful deliberation, despite his evident attractions. Dickens's success, within Britain, was to be far more rapid, and was made possible by a combination of widespread literacy and vastly improved printing methods, with consequent publishing at reduced cost. In Hogarth's time, a rise in national literacy, right through the classes, fed both the 'rise of the novel' and an astonishing increase in the production of journals and newspapers (aided by the removal of certain legal restrictions), which was remarked upon by foreign visitors as a phenomenon. One of the reasons for Hogarth's swift rise to success was the way in which his innovatory series were picked up in print media; but a key factor was his own exploitation of this new marketing opportunity, through carefully placed 'puffs' and advertisements, accompanying a careful refinement and control of the existing practice of issuing subscriptions for limited editions.

The impact of Hogarth's 'progresses', assisted by such means, was immediate and enduring; and his fame, both in Britain and Europe, has rested upon those engraved series ever since. Artists in France, in particular, were susceptible to their influence, if only because Hogarth had taken such pains to have his work recognized and collected there. The remarkable domestic moralizing dramas of Greuze, which include such images as *The village betrothal* of 1761 (Louvre), could not have been conceived without the precedent of Hogarth's 'modern moral subjects', especially *A Harlot's Progress* and *A Rake's Progress*. And there is a particular pleasure to be gained from examining Degas's Watteauesque drawings of 1859-60 after these same two series (Pls 246, 247),¹ and also after *Marriage A-la-Mode* and *Four Times of the Day*, not least because Degas re-endows the images with a peculiarly French refinement of line that evokes those sources in French art that were themselves fundamental to Hogarth's inventiveness. It was evidently Hogarth's powerful characterizations, acuity of observation, and his avowed practice of recording the rapidly passing incidents of 'modern life', that so appealed to Degas. And, talking of 'modern life', could such a picture as Manet's *Luncheon in the studio* (1868, Neue Pinakothek, Munich), in terms of the narrative relationship between the figures and the referential nature of the militaristic still-life on the chair, have been possible without Hogarth's development of just these elements in a composition? And can it be that, inspired by Hogarth's habit of encouraging visual cross-references in order to increase the connotative, emotive, elements of his narratives, Manet was similarly moved to base the figure of his barmaid in *The bar at the Folies-Bergères* (Courtauld Gallery) upon Flemish images of the Man of Sorrows? Such speculations as to how artists such as Manet might seek to integrate greater 'meaning' into paintings of 'modern life' may indicate how deep the influence of Hogarth upon European art really is; and they may turn out to be more interesting than the straightforward recording of the legion copies and adaptations of Hogarth art that litter European art, useful though that would be, were it ever accomplished. Although such speculations suggest that we have moved a long way from Hogarth's beginnings, he had died only in 1764, and editions of his works were appearing throughout the nineteenth century, in Britain and on the Continent.

When they first appeared, Hogarth's progresses were not welcomed by contemporary French theorists of the old school, such as the abbé Le Blanc. But then Le Blanc also despised Shakespeare, and the attitude towards Shakespeare, as I have suggested, reflected many of the difficulties that Hogarth encountered, both in France and within Britain. Hogarth's achievement, like the gradual acceptance of Shakespeare as a supreme dramatist, needs to be understood within the context of a pan-European culture that accepted certain constricting preconceptions about the ways in which the arts ought to be conducted, and the rules by which they should abide. Voltaire, as we have seen, later wavered in the admiration for Shakespeare that he had felt while under the influence of performances in London in the late 1720s. His volte-face was the result of his renewed immersion in a literary world where the very dynamic of criticism was the assessment of how correctly, or not, a work conformed to the classical rules. At the same time, British writers who might have been expected to maintain the desirability of the imposition of the 'rules' were equally liable to contradict themselves. Hogarth's distinctly non-conformist creations, therefore, can be understood within a more general process, hesitant and often painful, of artistic reconsideration.

As so often, Voltaire can be taken as an admittedly volatile indicator. By 1750, in a letter written in English to Lord Lyttelton, he had despaired of improvements to the English stage; but he had also come round to thinking that French theatre had 'too much of words', while the English had 'too much of action', and concluded that 'perhaps the perfection of the Art should consist in a due mixture of the French taste and English energy'. This was in fact no more than he had said when he first wrote upon these topics, in the *Essay on Epick Poetry*... of 1727, in a piece of advice which, if adhered to, could have spared a vast amount of ink and paper on both sides of the Channel:

Would each Nation attend a little more than they do, to the Taste and Manners of their respective Neighbours, perhaps a general good Taste might diffuse itself through all *Europe* from such an Intercourse of Learning, and from that useful Exchange of Observation. The *English* Stage, for Example, might be clear'd of mangled Carcasses and the Style of their tragick Authors, come down from their forced Metaphorical Bombast to a nearer Imitation of Nature. The *French* would learn from the *English* to animate their Tragedies with more Action, and would contract now and then their long Speeches into shorter and warmer Sentiments.²

There had, in fact, been many earlier English attempts to imitate the high seriousness of French drama, including the 1680 'improvement' of *Romeo and Juliet* by Thomas Otway. He dressed it up in borrowed classical robes as *The Rise and Fall of Caius Marius*, a play which includes the unforgettable line:

Marius, Marius. Wherefore art thou Marius?

Such efforts could not be relied upon to succeed, since the obstinate fact remained that the British public was never sufficiently interested in attending classically devised plays, as William Popple reported at some length in *The Prompter*, when William Duncombe's adaptation of Voltaire's *Brutus* opened on 25 November 1734:

I looked in, a few days since, at a new tragedy, the first adventure of good sense this season upon our ocean of impertinence! I have never seen this play, but had been told the French bestowed original approbation on it, tho' a serious piece. I therefore... went in comfortable dependence on a triumph of six nights suspension from grimaces and obscenity.³

Alás, there was nobody there. A 'correspondent' of *The Prompter* wrote in to explain that this was not because of a lack of taste, but that it was:

... occasioned by... just indignation to think that an English theatre and an English audience should be beholding for a night's entertainment to an indifferent translation from no wonderful French original.⁴

Finally, on 18 February 1735, *The Prompter* dismissed the plays both of Duncombe and Voltaire, the first because he translated from the second, and Voltaire because he had plagiarized his own play from Nathaniel Lee's much earlier *Lucius Junius Brutus, Father of his Country* (1681):

I forbear to say what ideas of old Rome the bi-translated *Brutus* gives me. The fate it met seemed to me a sort of a poetical punishment, inflicted by the Town on an author who wanted to invigorate the Roman eagle's wings with French instead of British fire.⁵

The odd metaphor about invigorating eagle's wings with 'British fire' reveals the one consistent theme amid the seemingly endless criticisms of *The Prompter* of Aaron Hill and William Popple: the need to rely upon 'British' creativity. And there was a growing readiness to return the fire from France, in manner that within the sphere of the fine arts came more instinctively to Hogarth. George Jeffreys, whose *Merope* was first performed on 27 February 1731, and had been attacked by Voltaire, later accused Voltaire of plagiarizing his text for his own play of the same title. James Miller in his 1744 adaptation of Voltaire's *Mahomet, ou le Fanatisme* drew attention to Voltaire's (unacknowledged) debt to Shakespeare:

Britons, these numbers to yourselves you owe;
Voltaire hath strength to shoot in Shakespeare's bow.⁶

Samuel Foote also described Voltaire (1747) as a hypocritical plagiarist:

... that insolent French panegyrist who first denies Shakespeare almost every dramatic excellence, and then, in his next play, pilfers from him almost every capital scene,

and called him a 'carping, superficial critic and... low, paltry thief'.⁷

The biographical account of Hogarth by the classically minded George Steevens reflects a profound impatience with his chosen subject, to put it no more strongly. Steevens was also an editor of Shakespeare, as it happens, and was equally liable to find fault with him. His comments to Garrick about Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, for example, are coloured by the same note of contempt that he often strikes in his account of Hogarth. Steevens reveals the intense dislike for Shakespeare's 'irregularity' that could obtain, in Britain as much as in France, and accompanied by sensitivity about what a 'foreigner' might think:

I expect great pleasure from the perusal of your altered 'Hamlet.' It is a circumstance in favour of the poet which I have long been wishing for. Dr. Johnson allots to this tragedy the praise of variety; but in my humble opinion, that variety is often impertinent, and always languishing on the stage. In spite of all he has said on the subject, I shall never be thoroughly reconciled to tragi-comedy; for if the farce of theatrical deceptions is but short-lived at best, their slightest success ought not to be interrupted. This play of Shakespeare, in particular, resembles a looking-glass exposed for sale, which reflects alternately the funeral and the puppet-show, the venerable beggar soliciting charity, and the blackguard rascal picking a pocket... I cannot answer for our good friends in the gallery. You had better throw what remains of the piece into a farce, to appear immediately afterwards. No foreigner who should happen to be present at the exhibition, would ever believe it was formed out of the loppings and excrescences of the tragedy itself. You may entitle it, 'The Grave Diggers; with the pleasant Humours of Osrick, the Danish Macaroni.'

Much the same criticisms that were levelled by Le Blanc against Hogarth and Shakespeare were aimed too, and for a surprisingly long time, against Chardin and Watteau within the French establishment. None the

less, the manifest quality of their production led to their patronage by some of the most influential and powerful individuals with the Académie, including the head of the arts in France, Marigny, closely supported by Charles-Nicolas Cochin. As a result, Le Blanc found himself having to be quite jesuitical about the merits of Chardin, for example. But then, Marigny also collected the engravings of Hogarth, not least because he admired Hogarth's apologist Rouquet; while at the same time an *immortel* such as Belle-Isle was one of the very first comprehensive collectors of Hogarth's works in France.

And so Hogarth's career, oddly for one usually identified as the most intransigent opponent of all things French, demands to be understood within this context of the elaborate cultural relationship that existed during his lifetime between Britain and France, one in which the 'junior' partner, Britain, was increasingly determined to assert its maturity and even superiority. Hogarth's success in this context, it is not too much to say, was unique. I have quoted Pope's telling couplet on this relationship in the introductions to both Parts I and II:

We conquer'd France, but felt our captive's charms;
Her Arts victorious triumph'd o'er our Arms.'
[Pope, *Imitations of Horace*: Ep. II, i, ll. 263-4].

Characteristically, this was a deliberate allusion to the relationship between Augustan Rome and Greece, and indicates once again the way in which Hogarth and his contemporaries were acutely conscious of sharing in the process of creating an authentic national culture. That culture was, equally self-consciously, born of imitation and emulation not only of the classical past but of contemporary France in particular. Hogarth's contemporaries really did feel that they were Augustans, but that was a parallel that the French were often fond of drawing about themselves, and the passage that Pope so elegantly 'imitates' was, of course, from his favourite Augustan poet, Horace:

Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes
Intulit agresti Latio.
(‘Conquered Greece captivated her wild conqueror
And bore the arts to rude Rome.’) [*Ep.* II, I, ll. 157-8]⁸

I hope, however, that this book has also shown that Hogarth was one of the most spectacular painters – perhaps the very finest – that Britain has produced, and that in this respect alone he demands to be understood within a European, as well as a national, context. Surveying what he achieved for British art, with a friendly nod in the direction of his foreign colleagues Rysbrack and Roubiliac, Hogarth might himself have quoted Horace, that equally embattled Augustan:

Exegi monumentum aere perennius.
(‘I have raised up a monument more lasting than bronze.’)



Tailpiece
Trump, second half of 18th century
Copy after original by ?Louis-François Roubiliac (1702-62)
Marble, length 14 cm
The Hogarth Group (on deposit at the Foundling Museum)

CHAPTER 14

- 1 After the material concerning music in this book was written, Jeremy Barlow's study appeared, *The Enraged Musician, Hogarth's Musical Imagery*, London, 2005 (=Barlow). I was fortunate enough to have had discussions with him while we were both at work. We were heading in rather different directions, as we discovered, but producing, I hope, complementary observations.
- 2 Quoted Christopher Hogwood, *Handel*, London, 1996 (=Hogwood), p. 90.
- 3 This was the preface to the second edition of the 'word book' of his opera *Rosalinda* (music by John Christopher Smith) that was a notable success in the first part of 1740. John Lockman, *Rosalinda, a musical drama. As it is performed at Hickford's Great Room, in Brewer's Street. By Mr Lockman set to Music by Mr. John Christopher Smith. To which is prefixed, An Enquiry into the Rise and Progress of Operas and Oratorios, with some Reflections on Lyric Poetry*, London, 1740. A confusing point is that the title on the first page is 'Some Reflexions concerning Operas, Lyric Poetry, Music, &c.'.
- 4 For example, the walls of the Temple of Venus (containing the 'pleasuring sofa', see Chapter 12 above) were decorated with sexually explicit scenes by Francesco Sletter from the story of Malbecco, octogenarian husband of the seventeen-year-old Hellinore. The 'cave' that Malbecco subsequently retired to is represented at Stowe by the nearby Hermitage, itself built to a design by William Kent that acts as an illustration to Birch's edition: *The Faerie Queene by Edmund Spenser, with an exact Collation of the two Original Editions [by Thomas Birch, DD], published by himself at London in quarto, the former containing the first three books printed in 1590, and the latter the six books in 1596; to which are now added a new life of the author and also a glossary adorn'd with thirty-two copper plates from the original drawings of the late W. Kent*. 3 vols., London, 1751.
- 5 Thomas Morell, ed., *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer, in the original, from the most authentic manuscripts; and as they are turn'd into modern language by Mr. Dryden, Mr. Pope, and other eminent hands. With references to authors, ancient and modern; various readings, and explanatory notes*, London, 1737.
- 6 Linda Colley, *Britons, Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, London (1992), 2003, pp. 30ff.
- 7 Quoted Hogwood, p. 208.
- 8 Quoted Hogwood, p. 208.
- 9 See George E. Dorris, *Paolo Rolli and the Italian Circle in London 1715-1744*, The Hague and Paris, 1967, pp. 168ff (=Dorris).
- 10 Greene had left as a result of Bononcini's imposition upon the Academy of Ancient Music of a madrigal by Lotti as his own. He took the choir of St Paul's with him. Jokes and parodies were compulsive habits of the time and need not spell the end of friendship or association: Bonnell Thornton collaborated with Hogarth in the 'Grand exhibition of the Society of Sign-Painters' of 22 April 1762. In 1749 he had written *An Ode on Saint Caecilia's Day, adapted to the Ancient British Musick*, a parody of the annual 11 November effusions (such as that by Boyce and Lockman) designed for 'hurdy-gurdy, Jew's harp, Saltbox and marrow bone and cleaver' (Paul Baines, *Oxford DNB*, 2004). He also parodied Henry Fielding.
- 11 The 'cantata' and *Phoebe*, as well as such *jeux d'esprit* as an 'Ode to St Cloacine', are Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS. Eng. d. 3626. Cf. Also MSS. Eng. d. 3623-5.
- 12 I first explored this idea in a lecture commissioned by the Atterbury Society, 27 November 1998, at the Foundling Hospital, with musical illustrations performed by Alison Pearce and Paul Wynne-Griffiths. I developed the theme in other lectures and entertainments, including 'Hogarth versus Handel' commissioned by the Coram Family and performed at Middle Temple, with Emma Kirkby, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, the Tallis Chamber Choir and the Academy of St Martins-in-the-Fields Chamber Ensemble on 13 November 2000; and 'Hogarth and the Sound of Music' for Sir John Soane's Museum, 10 June 2003.
- 13 Burke, p. 35, Chapter II, 'Of variety'.
- 14 Burke, p. 110, Chapter XII, 'Of light and shade'.
- 15 Or 'kit', called a pochette because it could be slipped into the pocket in the tails of a tail coat (information kindly given by Jeremy Barlow). Cf. Barlow p. 267.
- 16 Giacomo Casanova, *History of My Life* [F.A. Brockhaus, ed. 1960], Willard, R. Trask, trans., 12 vols., Baltimore and London, 1997, IX, ch. 12, p. 323.
- 17 Barlow, p. 243.
- 18 See Barlow, *passim*.
- 19 Llio Rhydderch kindly tells me that the Revd Professor Dr Dafydd Wyn William of Bodedern has gone through the court lists of the period and can find no evidence of this.
- 20 I am most grateful to Llio Rhydderch for these points.
- 21 Elizabeth Einberg tells me that she is of the opinion that the head may have been earlier and by another artist: I think the handling is Hogarth's throughout, as does Dr. Martin Postle with whom I studied the painting when it was on loan to Tate Britain, and the paint seems coherent.
- 22 For canvas sizes, see Robin Simon, *Portrait*, pp. 111-2.
- 23 There appear to be a surprising number of sitters to Hogarth who had Welsh connections and there must be a suspicion that Mary Lewis had something to do with this: the James and Lloyd families; perhaps Thomas Cooke of Mamlhalad, although he died in 1739 and the relevant portrait appears to date from c.1745 (*Gentleman in blue*, Christie's, 20 November 1981), but with a provenance from Twiston-Davies of Llangibby; Jones of Fonmon; and, although he seems not to have sat to Hogarth, Robert Price was a friend. Hogarth also knew Mrs Thrale (née Salusbury, another old Welsh family).

- 24 Barlow, p. 244.
- 25 The harpist is asked for a French tune and plays 'Cotillon'. This similarity also noted in more detail (published after the above was written) by Barlow, p. 175.
- 26 Paulson, *Graphic Works*, no. 224.
- 27 The perception of Jeremy Barlow. We were able to perform the fragment restored by him during 'Hogarth versus Handel' at Middle Temple Hall in 2000 (referred to in n. 12 above).
- 28 John Hawkins, *An Account of the Institution and Progress of the Academy of Ancient Music*, London, 1770; reprinted with an introduction by Christopher Hogwood, London, 1998.
- 29 Paulson, II, pp. 62ff. The subscription lists are BL Add. MS. 11732.
- 30 *The Miscellaneous Works Of the Late Dr. Arbuthnot*, 2 vols., Glasgow, 1751 (=Arbuthnot), II, p. 35.
- 31 Arbuthnot, II, pp. 34-5.
- 32 Nichols, 1782, p. 172; Ireland 1793, II, p. 280.
- 33 Ireland 1793, II, p. 279.
- 34 Paulson, *Graphic Works*, pp. 188-9 (no. 224): the frontispiece is tipped in to some of the surviving copies.
- 35 *London Stage*, III (1), p. 272. It is referred to as an 'opera' presumably because it was staged with 'scenes and decorations'.
- 36 These identifications are all re-examined by Barlow.
- 37 Henry Fielding, *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, ed. Tom Keymer, London, 1996, p. 24.
- 38 Calhoun Winton, *John Gay and the London Theatre*, Lexington, KY, 1993, p. 113.
- 39 Nichols, 1782, p. 214. Rouquet, *Lettres*, p. 44.
- 40 The interest in notation of street cries was referred to in *The Spectator* many years before (No. 251, 11 December 1711): 'Milk is generally sold in a note above *Ela*, and in a Note so exceeding shrill, that it often sets our teeth on edge.'
- 41 Hogwood, p. 144.
- 42 Hogwood, p. 144. *London Stage*, III (2), p. 672.
- 43 *London Stage*, III (2), p. 672.
- 44 Quoted Hogwood, p. 144.
- 45 After the fiasco of *Scerse* in 1738 Handel staged little Italian opera: *Giove in Argo*, which was a *pasticcio* made up of earlier fragments, in 1739; *Imeneo* (two nights, late in 1740); and the ill-fated *Deidamia*, a 'last-ditch attempt to lift the seriousness from *opera seria*' (Hogwood, p. 165) which opened and closed between 10 January and 10 February 1741.
- 46 Much quoted. The source is John Mainwaring, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel*, London, 1760.
- 47 Quoted Rosenfeld, p. 19.
- 48 Hogwood, p. 63. The awkwardness is characteristic of Hill's language.
- 49 Hill, *Works*, I, pp. 174-5 (5 December 1732). Quoted Nash, p. 39.
- 50 'In 1703 his Ode on Music was performed at Stationers' Hall; and he wrote afterwards six cantatas, which were set to music by the greatest master of that time, and seemed intended to oppose or exclude the Italian opera, an exotic and irrational entertainment, which has been always combated, and always has prevailed.' *Lives of the English Poets*, John Hughes'. Hughes also translated Molière's *L'Avare*.
- 51 Quoted Hogwood, p. 66.
- 52 Edward Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour. Anglo-Italian relations since the Renaissance*, London and Portland, OR, 1998.
- 53 Ingamells.
- 54 John Ingamells, 'Discovering Italy: British Travellers in the Eighteenth Century', in Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini, ed., *Grand Tour. The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, exh. cat., London, 1996, pp. 20-30, p. 25.
- 55 Quoted Rosenfeld, *Garrick*, p. 107 (M. d'Archenholz, *A Picture of England*, 2 vols., London, 1789).
- 56 Printed in Lewis Melville, *Stage Favourites of the Eighteenth Century*, London, n.d., pp. 46-7. Henry Carey, *Poems on Several Occasions*, 3rd edn., London, 1729.

CHAPTER 15

- 1 See, for example, Dorris, esp. ch. 2, 'The Italian opera in England'.
- 2 Quoted Hogwood, p. 83.
- 3 Quoted Rosenfeld, *Garrick*, p. 106.
- 4 This was noticed by Bertrand H. Bronson, 'The Beggar's Opera', *Facets of the Enlightenment*, Berkeley, CA, 1968, pp. 69ff., but the significance of the comparison has not always been appreciated.
- 5 Similar sentiments were voiced in the less skilful 'Advice to Polly' that appeared in the *Daily Journal* for 19 April 1728: 'When first wild Humour takes a Freak...'. Like other verses on the subject, it is extremely rude about Lavinia Fenton's looks and abilities: 'So coarse a Voice, so stiff a Mien, / A Face so poor in Charms / Cou'd ne'er demand a just Applause, / Or lure us to thy Arms.'
- 6 For this much-quoted variation on a 'pre-nuptial agreement' see Pearce, p. 223.
- 7 *The Devil to Pay at St. James's*, in Arbuthnot, I, pp. 213-23, p. 214.
- 8 Hogwood, p. 87.
- 9 Music by Giovanni Bononcini adapted by Nicola Haym, with an English text translated by Owen Swiney, a hit from its first performance in March 1706.
- 10 Quoted Hogwood, p. 86.
- 11 Winton, p. 87.
- 12 Hogwood, p. 88.
- 13 Christopher Swan, 'Hogarth's Paintings of "The Beggar's Opera"', *Among the Whores and Thieves. William Hogarth and The Beggar's Opera*, David Bindman

- and Scott Wilcox, ed., exh. cat., New Haven, 1997, pp. 17-24, disposes of the strange, apparently early, copy at the Lewis Walpole Library as non-autograph. The canvas sizes of this and also the first three listed here are small and eccentric. The last two are standard sizes. I am most grateful to John Harris for bringing to my attention the sale of John Rich's picture collection referred to below, and for kindly sending me a photocopy of it.
- 14 BL Add. MS. 27995, fol. 1; cf. Einberg and Egerton, p. 76. Reprinted in Ireland 1804, p. 21.
- 15 Swan (p. 19) follows the usual assumption that 'the scene depicted is the same in all versions'. I have explored the ideas put forward here in a number of lectures and entertainments, at various locations, including the Tate Gallery and Soane Museum.
- 16 See Barnett (an illustrated anthology and commentary). This quotation is from Michel Le Faucheur, *Traité de l'action de l'orateur ou de la Prononciation et du geste*, Paris, 1657, pp. 199-200 (Barnett, p. 233).
- 17 From a French commentary of 1753: Barnett, p. 63.
- 18 John Walker, *Elements of Elocution. Being the Substance of a Course of Lectures on the Art of Reading; Delivered at several Colleges in the University of Oxford*, 2 vols., London, 1781, II, p. 314 (Barnett, p. 62).
- 19 S.L. Bethell, *Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition*, London, 1944, p. 38.
- 20 R.B. Beckett, Hogarth, London, 1949, p. 39 (as no. 2).
- 21 Elizabeth Einberg had independently arrived at a similar conclusion (21 February 2005, verbal communication).
- 22 See X-ray in John Hayes, *British Paintings of the Sixteenth through Nineteenth Centuries. The Collections of the National Gallery of Art Systematic Catalogue*, Washington and Cambridge, 1992, p. 124, fig. 1.
- 23 See Pearce, p. 109.
- 24 Walter Arnold, *The Life and Death of the Sublime Society of Beef Steaks*, London, 1871, p. xvii.
- 25 'Molly' was contemporary slang for homosexual. Elizabeth Einberg has drawn my attention to this feature and to the drawing by Vanderbank mentioned below.
- 26 Bindman, *Comedy*, no. 76.
- 27 The figure at the right is not meant, however, for Moses Vanderbank: rather John Vanderbank who, of course, fled for some time to Paris in 1724, hence 'Monsieur'.
- 28 Key in Ireland 1793, II, facing p. 322, the key made c.1790, after one or other of the last two versions, but probably Rich's.
- 29 Pearce, p. 129. 'Miss Sally' is the notorious courtesan Sally Salisbury. One of Fagg's best horses was called Fanny, although she lost him 300 guineas in a match at Newmarket in April 1729.
- 30 Pearce, pp. 129-30.
- 31 Ibid., p. 145. The tune is Polly's duet with Macheath referred to above.
- 32 Elizabeth Einberg has suggested Joseph Nickolls (fl.1726-55), painter of, for example, *St James's Park and the Mall*, c.1745 (Royal Collection).
- 33 Arbuthnot, II, pp. 18-42, pp. 33-4.
- 34 Paulson, *Graphic Works*, p. 92.
- 35 Farinelli's fortunes have recently been subjected to scrutiny; Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume, 'Construing and Misconstruing Farinelli in London. His finances and those of the Opera of Nobility', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 28, 3 (2005), pp. 361-85.
- 36 I disagree on some of these details with Christopher Woodward: cf. Christopher Woodward, 'Hogarth's *Marriage Contract*', Robin Simon and Christopher Woodward, ed., *A Rake's Progress. From Hogarth to Hockney*, exh. cat. (Sir John Soane's Museum), London, 1997, pp. 13-14. Elizabeth Einberg has proposed that what has sometimes been called 'Palmystry' (private collection) was an initial composition for what became *A Rake's Progress*, showing 'The Rake at Oxford'. The argument put forward here, of the elaboration of the second scene, 'The Levée', is not affected by the precise nature of this sketch, which obviously formed part of Hogarth's earlier thinking (see Chapter 12 above).
- 37 For these details see Paulson, *Graphic Works*, pp. 86ff.
- 38 Partly, at least, under the influence of James Bramston's *The Man of Taste, occasion'd by an Epistle of Mr. Pope's On that Subject*, which appeared in 1733.
- 39 Arbuthnot, I, p. 218. Cp. John Evelyn in Paris on 12 April 1644: 'Here [the Palais Cardinal] I also frequently went to see them ride and exercise the greater Horse, especially at the Academy of Monsieur du Plessis, and de Veau, whose scholes of that art are frequented by the Nobility; and here also young gentlemen are taught to fence, daunce, play on musiq, and something of fortification & the mathematics. The designe is admirable, some keeping neere an hundred brave horses, all managed to the great saddle.' *The Diary of John Evelyn, Esq., F.R.S. from 1641 to 1705-6, with Memoir*, ed. William Bray, London, 1890, p. 60. 'Great horse' was the term for the traditional heavy warhorse. The future marquis de Marigny was groomed in a similar way in c.1746 at the academy of M. François Robichon de la Guéinière: see Gordon, p. 5.
- 40 *Mercur de France*, 1734, p. 1403. Tantalizingly, there is a possibility that Lépicié's print was only circulated to a very limited degree at this time, which makes Hogarth's knowledge of it more interesting still (Lépicié had been working in London in the 1720s). The *Mercur de France* announced the print the following year (January 1735, p. 122) among 'nouvelles estampes', quoting the verses underneath, and announcing it as for sale chez Surugue in the rue des Noyers.
- 41 As suggested by Paulson, *Graphic Works*, p. 92. The 'F', for example, carefully follows the perspective of the page as does the 'O' of 'Opera' above it; the paint is coherent; and the arguments adduced below support this identification.
- 42 The characters are noted, with details, in Nichols and Steevens, II, pp. 116-8. See also Alan Borg, 'The Monarch of Marylebone Plains; James Figg's place in 18th-century British art', *The British Art Journal*, V, 3 (Winter 2004), pp. 35-6, p. 35, citing Captain John Godfrey (as do Nichols and Steevens), *Treatise on the Useful Science of Defence*, London, 1747, who described Dubois as 'one of the most charming Figures on the Floor I ever beheld'.
- 43 In a letter to Sir Wyndham Knatchbull: Hogwood, p. 284.
- 44 The presentation of this completed-score to the King and Queen secured a subscription of £1000 for his new opera season on 31 October: *The London Daily Post, and General Advertiser*, 4 November.
- 45 Hogwood, pp. 76-7; '... from the minutes and estimates of the Academy recently discovered in the Duke of Portland's paper (now in Nottingham University), it is clear that the scheme was known to be financially untenable from the start. Promises of a 25 per cent return on capital were, if not downright dishonest, at least wild figments of an opera-besotted imagination.' Citing Judith Milhous and Robert Hume, 'New Light on Handel'.
- 46 Hogwood, p. 103, quoting from a letter of the Earl of Delawar to the Duke of Richmond.
- 47 Hogwood, p. 119.
- 48 Jeremy Howard, 'Hogarth, Amigoni and "The Rake's Levee": new light on *A Rake's Progress*', *Apollo*, November 1997, pp. 31-7. Farinelli's fate was odd, curiously akin to that of Tony Last in *Vile Bodies* who is doomed to read Dickens endlessly to a madman in the Amazon jungle. Farinelli's latter career – he left England in 1737 – was more comfortable and on an immense salary, but he had to sing the same three songs from Hasse's *Artaserse* every night every night of his life to the King of Spain, who by this time had entered upon the state of comatose idiocy that had long threatened.
- 49 Paulson, *Graphic Works*, p. 93.
- 50 Her mother, also Elizabeth Griffith, née Lawrence, had been a friend of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, until the inevitable falling-out 1713-14, and died in 1725. Having been Mohun's mistress while married to Colonel Griffith, she married him as his second wife in 1711. Mohun is pronounced 'moon', and his first, unfaithful, wife Charlotte was famous for having bared her arse to him in Hyde Park at the window of her carriage, rather than reveal the names of the men in it with her, an incident immortalized by Pope [*Imitations of Horace*, Serm. I, ii, ll. 124-5]. It seems likely that she is the origin of the term for that recurring craze, 'mooning', which is therefore correct when performed (as is usual) at the window of a charabanc. Genealogical details, an account of the duel, the 'mooning', and a mention of the verse (although the connection with the modern word is not made) are to be found in Victor Slater, *High Life, Low Morals, The duel that shook Stuart Society*, London, 2000 (see esp. p. 165).
- 51 *London Stage*, III (1), p. 469. See also Hogwood, p. 126.
- 52 For example, 'burst upon her tongue', and the quenching of the amorous flame. The metaphor of 'raising the devil' was familiar slang for getting an erection, and 'lays' had the same meaning then as now.
- 53 I have corrected the printed 'th'am'rous Flame' to restore the scansion.
- 54 She seems to have seduced Diana Spencer, later Duchess of Bedford, or at least to have got far enough to make Diana's grandmother, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, insist on their breaking off: Field, p. 409.
- 55 See Gladys Wilson, "One God! One Farinelli!" Amigoni's portraits of a famous castrato', *Apollo*, September 1994, pp. 45-51. Leslie Griffin Hennessey, 'Friends serving itinerant muses' in Shearer West, ed., *Italian Culture in Northern Europe in the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 20-45.

CHAPTER 16

- 1 I am grateful to my friend Richard Kendall for drawing my attention to these sketches. See Theodore Reff, *The Notebooks of Edgar Degas*, 2 vols., Oxford, 1976, Notebook 4, II, pp. 25-33; and see I, pp. 47-8.
- 2 *An Essay upon the Civil Wars of France...and upon the Epick Poetry of the European Nations from Homer down to Milton by Mr. de Voltaire*, London, 1727, pp. 109-10.
- 3 *The Prompter*, no. 10.
- 4 *The Prompter*, no. 12.
- 5 *The Prompter*, no. 29.
- 6 Hogarth drew the frontispiece for Miller's *Humours of Oxford* in 1730.
- 7 Quoted in *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, 18 vols., 1907-21, V, pp. 298ff.
- 8 My translation. My thanks are due to Paul Holberton for a convivial reminder.