HOGARTH'S A RAKE'S PROGRESS : An "Anti-Passion" in Disguise

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In eighteenth-century England most "connoisseurs" admitted only a classicizing taste in art.¹ Their enthusiasm extended only as far as the works of foreign Old Masters, not to the genre work of contemporary English painters. The trade in paintings at that time promoted the predilection for Old Masters—a typical auction would offer predominantly pictures dating from the Renaissance or "Italians" of the seventeenth century.²

¹ I am very much indebted to Friedrich Wilms for translating most parts of the present paper. Thanks also to Heather Eastes and Stephen Reader who translated the last sections and read the whole text. I am likewise grateful to Stephen Cone Weeks, Philip New and the late Dr. Karl-Hermann Bode for their helpful suggestions concerning the finer points of the English language. A shorter version of this essay was given as a lecture at the Paul Mellon Centre, London, in September 1993, on the occasion of a colloquium on English eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art in recent German scholarship. Many thanks to Dr. Brian Allen for his help during and after my talk. I also thank the participants at the London colloquium, among others, Professor David Bindman, Professor Werner Busch, and Professor David H. Solkin, as well as Professor Ronald Paulson, who read the manuscript, for their critical remarks on my paper.

² For contemporary public sales and auctions of pictures see André Rouquet, The Present State of the Arts in England (London, 1755), 121–26; John Pye, Patronage of
It is no surprise, therefore, to find Hogarth in 1737 venting his anger about the “connoisseurs” in a letter to the editors of a daily newspaper and lampooning the “Ship Loads of dead Christs, Holy Families, Madona’s” being imported by profit-crazed art dealers and which had already swamped all England. Such attacks on art dealers sound like those of a painter defending his share of the art market. And these attacks were not limited to verbal complaints, they could also be expressed by pictorial allusion.

Hogarth understood his own genre, the “modern moral subjects,” as a counterpart to the “beaten subjects” of traditional history painting. On the one hand he created a new kind of art which reflected current social problems and depicted all the vices and follies of the city of London, on the other hand—and often overlooked by superficial viewers—he sarcastically pitted his weaponry of brush and burin against the admirers of sublime Old Masters. For that purpose he deliberately desecrated subjects central to Christian art by placing them in the context of low, highly immoral pictures. His well-known series, *A Rake’s Progress*, for instance, deals with the reckless life of a rake and at the same time ironically alludes to the life of

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5 In the etching *The Battle of the Pictures* (1745), Hogarth’s “modern moral subjects” are still engaged in a battle against the might of the imported “Old Masters.”
Before we look at the plates in detail, let me briefly summarize the story.

After Thomas Rakewell has got Sarah, a naive country girl, pregnant and then jilts her, he comes into the inheritance of his father, a notorious miser (scene 1). He keeps his own private "retinue" (scene 2), begins a life of drinking and whoring (scene 3), and consequently quickly wastes his inherited fortune. He narrowly escapes being sent to the debtors' prison, because his faithful Sarah pays for his release (scene 4). To get back on his feet again, he marries an extremely ugly but rich old spinster (scene 5), whose money he blows in a gambling den (scene 6). Poor again, he ends up in Fleet Prison, the notorious London debtors' prison (scene 7), where he despairs of his life and, ultimately, goes mad. A mentally deranged man, he dies in Bedlam (scene 8).

The early critics restricted themselves to the primary level of meaning when interpreting the many details. It was not until the twentieth century that the hidden, secondary meaning of some of the plates was discovered. As a result of these studies the main motif in the madhouse scene [Fig. 13], for instance, has been seen as a play on the Lamentation of Christ. But


even the most prominent scholars forgot to ask an important question: if Hogarth uses Christian subject-matter in at least some of the scenes of his *Rake’s Progress*, might not the same apply to the whole series? In other words: can we find patterns of Christian iconography, especially of the Life of Christ, in each of the eight scenes? This is the question this study sets out to examine. My working hypothesis is: Hogarth planned the whole series quite deliberately—and subtly—as an “Anti-Passion.” For this reason, in each of his profane scenes, he arranged in a very confusing manner more than one sacred motif mostly borrowed from the Life of Christ and especially from a traditional Passion cycle. I shall try to substantiate my assumption in detail.

In the very first picture the allusions to Christian iconography are not as clear as in the scenes that follow. Nevertheless, to my mind, Hogarth begins his cycle with a play on a Crucifixion scene, either a Raising of the Cross or a Nailing to the Cross. In one hand the servant standing on the ladder holds a piece of ceiling moulding which could be interpreted as an allusion to the horizontal beam of the Cross. His other hand swings a hammer as if he were hammering the nails into the beam. Right behind the rake’s head we see a window with a cross-bar whose form is obviously reminiscent of the Christian symbol. Even the funeral crepe significantly covering the top part of the cross-bars of the window reminds us of the titulus fixed to the head of the cross Christ was nailed to. Only the inscription “INRI” is missing. For that matter, could the central scene with the tailor show the rake being measured up

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for the Cross he is to bear as much as for his new clothes? The women of the Lamentation are already at the door.9

Plate 2, the rake's morning levee [Fig. 1], which also reminds us of the Gentleman and his Retainers from the Book of St. Albans [Fig. 2],10 may, to my mind, be compared with the Scourging or Mocking of Christ or The Crowning with Thorns (see Matthew 27: 27 ff.; Mark 15: 16 ff.). The rake's morning gown, which is pink with a touch of orange or reddish brown in the oil painting, would correspond to Christ's purple mantle, the cap (a headscarf whose points are tied together and which is adorned with a flower) would correspond to Christ's Crown of Thorns. The rich rake, who acts like Molière's bourgeois gentilhomme, is standing between flatterers and teachers who are carrying "weapons": the French dancing master to the left of him is brandishing the bow of his violin, the fencing master behind him has drawn his épée. James Figg, a well-known prize-fighter of the day, is holding up two sticks and is about to deal blows. To the right of the rake a captain has drawn his sword as if he wanted to challenge the rake to a duel. The man behind him, with his scornful expression, is blowing his hunting horn in mockery. He looks as if he has been borrowed from an early German Flagellation scene where the gestures of the tormentors usually were highly expressive. Finally, the small jockey in front of the rake, holding a whip in his hand, is bowing before the "King of Jews" (see Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:19). In addition, the captain's letter of recommendation, which our rake holds in his hands, is promising nothing but cuts: "Sr. the Capt is a Man of Honour, his Sword may Serve you[,] yrs. Wm: Stab." On the casting list for a new opera, a

9 These women seen in connection with the rake's gesture may also allude to Christ Taking Leave of His Mother. See, for instance, Dürer's representations of the theme in his Life of the Virgin or in his Small Passion (both published in 1511). See Karl-Adolf Knappe, Dürer: Das graphische Werk (Vienna and Munich: Anton Schroll, 1964), ##242 and 261.

score of which is on the spinet-stand on the left, we can read the word “ravisher” written three times [Fig. 3], which is certainly not a coincidence.\textsuperscript{11}

In addition to the central motif of plate 2, the two small pictures of fighting cocks on the wall flanking a Judgment of Paris (i.e. a motif of standing before a choice between three [!] beautiful goddesses) may recall the crowing of the cock, which Peter heard after his denial and which brings back to his mind the words of his Master: “This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice” (Matthew 26: 34).

The Scourging of Christ has often been painted as part of a Passion cycle or on its own, usually stressing the extremely brutal torment, with the tormentors raising their arms, enjoying the pleasure of inflicting pain and grinning maliciously [Fig. 4],\textsuperscript{12} sometimes to the accompaniment of music.\textsuperscript{13} But our rake does not suffer torture. He plays the role of the man about town, indulging in the fashions and pleasures of his time. The “torturers” are the rake’s supporters. The old Christian meaning is turned upside down. Is this true of the other pictures as well?

\textsuperscript{11} The soldiers who administer Christ’s punishment are frequently two or three [!] in number. Hogarth had already alluded to a Flagellation in his emblematical print of the South Sea Scheme (1721), and that in a highly profane context, as Antal pointed out. See Frederick Antal, Hogarth and His Place in European Art (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 81.

\textsuperscript{12} For the theme in general see Paul D. Running, The Flagellation of Christ: A Study in Iconography (Ph.D. thesis, University of Iowa, 1951). Hogarth’s arrangement of the figures bears some resemblance to that in the painting Christ Crowned with Thorns by Hans Holbein the Elder from his Grey Passion (c. 1495/1498; Donaueschingen, Fürstlich Fürstenbergische Sammlungen) [Fig. 4]. See Bruno Bushart, Hans Holbein der Ältere (Augsburg: Hoffman, 1987), 74.

\textsuperscript{13} See the boy blowing his horn in Dürer’s Flagellation of Christ from his Large Passion (c. 1496/97) or the drummer and flute-player in Grünewald’s Mocking of Christ (1508; Munich, Alte Pinakothek). See Knappe, Dürer: Das graphische Werk, #187; Giovanni Testori and Piero Bianconi, L’opera completa di Grünewald (Milan: Rizzoli Editore, 1972), tavola I. Hogarth’s trumpeter seems to be in the same vein.
As research has proved, plate 3, the tavern scene, quite clearly refers to Dutch scenes at inns and motifs of the Prodigal Son (see Luke 15: 11 ff.). What strikes us is that there are exactly twelve people grouped round a table. Even the woman who has turned her back on us and who is trying to set fire to the map on the wall by means of a candle is present at the table, because the folds of her dress at the rear seem to form a face. I think the other rake at the table, whose wig is slipping from his head, while his female companion is embracing him, can be compared to Christ celebrating the Last Supper at the very centre among his “disciples.” John, traditionally leaning his youthful head on his Master’s bosom (see John 13: 23), however, has been replaced in Hogarth’s picture by a prostitute.

A servant is carrying a large platter into the room, a harlot is drinking from the cup in her hands as from a chalice. The “posture-girl” in the foreground is taking off her shoes, a large goblet or chamber pot has tipped over and its contents are spilling over the floor and the remains of a meal lying there: all these details may remind us of an imminent Footwashing.

15 This hypothesis is based on the fact that the rake has placed one of his legs on the lap of a whore, a pose not uncommon to Dutch versions of brothel scenes of the Prodigal Son. The theft of the watch is also an equivalent of the iconography of the Prodigal Son in a brothel. See Werner Busch, Nachahmung als bürgerliches Kunstprinzip, 7, 251n22; Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, “‘Uhrzeit’ und ‘Zeitordnung’, Ein Nachtrag zu Lichtenbergs Erklärungen der Hogarthschen Kupferstiche und ein Beitrag zur Ikonographie der Uhren,” Ästhetik und Kommunikation 12 (1981): 60–61 and figs. 9 and 10. In an exegetic context it is interesting to point out here, that the returning Prodigal Son could be compared with the suffering Christ of the Passion. See Konrad Renger, Lockere Gesellschaft: Zur Ikonographie des Verlorenen Sohnes und von Wirtshausszenen in der niederländischen Malerei (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1970), 66.
16 See, for example, Dürer’s Last Supper from his Small Passion (1511; Knappe, Dürer: Das graphische Werk, #262).
17 See, for example, Dürer’s Footwashing from his Small Passion (1511; Knappe, Dürer: Das graphische Werk, #263).
Christ’s disciples would have to be present (see John 13)—and at least one sinner (see Luke 7: 36-50). In Hogarth’s picture the apostles would then have become whores and their clients, who only indulge in vice and not in virtue. Even the rake’s stocking on his right leg has been rolled down almost completely so that the “Washing of the Feet” might soon start. Of course, we cannot with certainty maintain that Hogarth really had all these allusions in mind when he executed his plates. What is certain is that the small figurehead on the musician’s harp represents King David hovering (as it were) over the last trumpet and playing his harp. Since the sixteenth century King David, as we know, had been the patron saint of singers and musicians. In the eighteenth century he became the patron saint of music in general. Furthermore, King David announced the coming of the Messiah, he was one of Jesus’s ancestors in the Tree of Jesse, and he was the Lord’s assistant in the Last Judgement. In Eastern art King David was also present at the Last Supper. It is certainly no coincidence that Hogarth’s King David is entertaining the whoring crowd with his songs. Although plate 4 of the series, the rake’s arrest [Fig. 5], may remind us of Claude Gillot’s painting, Scènes des deux Carrosses (c. 1707; Paris, Louvre), it contains several motifs from the Passion. The rake is getting out of his sedan chair as from a tomb: might this not be a faint and profane echo of Christ’s Resurrection? The bailiff, taking the hero by the frock coat, may then represent the incredulous Thomas examining Christ’s wound. The faithful Sarah, whom Tom Rakewell meets, refers to a Noli me tangere, i.e., to Christ appearing to the Magdalen, who at first thought he was a gardener (see John 20:14 ff.).

19 See Antal, Hogarth and His Place in European Art, 105–06 and pl. 52 b.
Figure 1: Hogarth, *The Rake's Progress*, Plate 2. Courtesy The Academy of Fine Arts, Düsseldorf.
This present boke shewyth the manere of haukyng Thuntyng: and alsof diuysyng of Cote armours: It shewyth also a good matere belongyng to horses: wyth other comendable treatyses. And ferdemore of the blasyng of armys: as here after it maye appere.

Figure 2: Woodcut from The Book of St. Albans.
The British Library.
Figure 3: Hogarth, *The Rake's Progress*, Plate 2, detail. Courtesy The Academy of Fine Arts, Düsseldorf.
Figure 4: Hans Holbein, *Christ Crowned with Thorns*. Courtesy Fürstlich Fürstenbergische Sammlungen, Donaueschingen.
Figure 5: Hogarth, *The Rake's Progress*, Plate 4. Courtesy The Academy of Fine Arts, Düsseldorf.
1650–1850

Figure 8: Hogarth, *The Rake's Progress, Plate 5*. Courtesy The Academy of Fine Arts, Düsseldorf.
Figure 9: Raphael, *Sposalizio*
Courtesy Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.
Figure 10: Giovanni di Milano, Sposalizio. Courtesy the Opera di Santa Croce, Florence.
The direct model here must surely be Hans Holbein's *Noli me tangere* (after 1532, Hampton Court Palace) [Fig. 6], as the direction of the figures and their gestures of astonishment are very similar. Holbein's painting rated highly with the English connoisseurs. When, in 1680, John Evelyn had viewed the King's pictures in Whitehall—among them paintings by Raphael and Titian—he was full of enthusiasm, mentioning in his diary,

Above all the Noli me tangere of our Saviour to M:Magdalen, after the Resurrection, of Hans Holbeins than which, in my life, I never saw so much reverence & Kind of Heavenly astonishment, expressed in Picture.

The lamplighter, standing at the top of the ladder and pouring oil on the lamps, may remind us of the soldier who offers Jesus a sponge soaked with vinegar (see Matthew 27: 34; Mark 15: 36; John 19:28-30). The shoeblacks playing dice in the foreground [Fig. 7] are the soldiers that divided Jesus's clothes among them by casting lots (see Matthew 27: 35; Mark 15: 24; John 19: 23). It is obviously no coincidence that one of the boys is “appraising” the handkerchief hanging out of the pocket of the rake’s coat. Moreover, the star adorning the chest of another boy refers to Jesus' wound in his side. And in the dark and stormy sky the bolt of lightning might also be flashing the message of a great, supernatural, divine event, which would be in tune with descriptions such as Matthew’s version of the death of Christ (Matthew 27: 45-52).

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22 These shoeblacks, however, only appear in the second and subsequent states of the engraved version of pl. 4.
23 Even the clergymen on the left in Hogarth’s *South Sea Scheme* (1721) are recalling the casting for Christ’s robe, as Antal had already noticed. See Frederick Antal, *Hogarth and His Place in European Art*, 81.
Matters do not end there. In scene 5 [Fig. 8] Hogarth depicts how the rake, who has wasted all his money, as a last resort marries an old but rich spinster. The secondary “hidden” meaning is far above the primary one: the wedding ceremony, which takes place in the derelict provincial church of St. Mary le Bone, even in minute details refers to an Italian Sposalizio, i.e. Joseph’s marriage to the Virgin, a ceremony traditionally carried out by a high priest [Figs. 9, 10]. This aspect has been totally overlooked by researchers so far.²⁴


According to medieval sources, such as the Golden Legend, the Sposalizio story runs like this: young Mary, who was reared in the temple together with other virgin priestesses, is now to be married. The high priest is told by an angel to call together all the marriageable men of David’s tribe. Everyone is to bring a rod with him and deliver it to the priest. The man whose rod is miraculously transformed will then marry the Virgin. Joseph also follows the call, but is ashamed because of his age and therefore hides his staff. The miracle does not happen until Joseph is told to take out his inconspicuous rod which suddenly begins to sprout. In addition, a dove flies down from above and alights on the tip of the staff. Joseph first refuses to marry the young girl, but then says, “I will obey God’s will. I only wonder which of my sons is to be her husband. Let some virgins accompany her.” The high priest answers, “Some virgin companions may be together with her to console her, until you marry her; the bridegroom will be nobody else but you.” As commanded, Joseph takes Mary and some other virgins into his home. Mary obeys God’s will, but wants to remain a virgin even after the wedding.

This is what the medieval sources tell us. In some cases embellishments have been added, for example Mary spurns the son of the high priest, or Joseph puts a golden ring on her finger when they marry.

Everybody who knows the iconographic tradition will realize that Hogarth is alluding to the Marriage of the Virgin. To underline his borrowing from Christian iconography, Hogarth used another biblical motif in a minor scene of his plate.
Since Giotto's *Sposalizio* from his cycle of the *Life of the Virgin* (c. 1305; Arena chapel, Padua) a certain arrangement was very common with Italian artists: a bearded high priest, standing in the centre or in front of a temple, holds Mary and Joseph, who are standing on either side of him, by their arms and leads them towards each other, so that Joseph can put the wedding ring on his bride's finger. This group is surrounded by men and women, who are strictly separated: behind Mary there are the temple virgins, often clothed in contemporary costume. Behind Joseph we can see the disgruntled young suitors. They, too, usually wear costumes of the times. Some threaten Joseph with their fists, one or more of them, in their rage, break their rod that would not sprout. The disappointed son of the high priest, who is among Mary's suitors, may deal Joseph a blow with his fist. Especially the Florentine painters did not refrain from being coarse or even vulgar. Heinrich Wölfflin wrote:

The scene is filled with bustling figures,...and instead of the gently resigned suitors there is a band of hefty youths who are setting about the bridegroom. Indeed, a free-for-all seems to be in progress and one wonders how Joseph can keep so calm. What does it all mean? The motive occurs as early as the fourteenth century and has

The carrying-on of two dogs corresponds to Abimelech observing Isaac and Rebecca (see Genesis 26: 8), a motif signifying "marriage" in artistic representations from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. Significantly the bitch, who is fiercely wooed by the male dog, has, like the bride, but one eye. We may also think of the young man watching from above the dogs carrying on. In a similar way the School of Raphael had depicted Abimelech looking down at Isaac and Rebecca in the Vatican Logge. See Nicole Dacos, *Le Logge di Raffaello: Maestro e bottega di fronte all'antico* (Rome: Instituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1977), tavola XXIIIa. Engraved versions are reproduced in Busch, *Nachahmung als bürgerliches Kunstprinzip*, pl. 21, and in Renate Prochno, *Joshua Reynolds* (Weinheim: VCH Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990), pl. 89. Of course, the central scene of Hogarth's plate 5 of *A Rake's Progress* points to a Florentine *Sposalizio*.

a legal significance—the blows are supposed to impress upon him the significance of the marriage-vows.²⁶

It is usually a rather old Joseph who slips the wedding-ring on his very young bride's finger. In Hogarth's picture things have completely changed: to be sure, the wedding takes place in a church dedicated to Mary, but it is a young rake who takes the hand of an ugly old woman—and not of an ideal beauty. That Hogarth's bride indeed corresponds to the future Mother of God is backed up by the encircled "IHS" more hovering right above her head than embellishing the pulpit in the background.²⁷ In iconographic terms, however, the groom stands in the central place of the high priest. After all, he himself has arranged this wedding.

Behind the bride we can see four women: a bridesmaid and, in the background, three women in a fierce brawl—an allusion to the angry suitors of Florentine iconography, who were spurned by Mary and are setting about Joseph. The only difference is that in Hogarth's picture quarrelsome women have taken the place of sullen men. Next to the rake there are two elderly men—a priest and his clerk—and a young boy, who is pushing a hassock for the bride to kneel on. This boy may represent the disgruntled stickbreaker of the Italian Sposalizio, who breaks his rod over his knee.²⁸ The wooden post, which,

²⁷ This familiar circular form of the halo is generally placed round the head of a holy person only and is a particular attribute of the Virgin Mary. Could it even be that the small picture or relief hanging on the wall under the round-arched window in Hogarth's print and traditionally interpreted as a representation of the "mural monument" of the Taylor family (see John Nichols and George Steevens et al., The Genuine Works of William Hogarth, 2 vols [London: Longman, 1808-10], II: 123), actually depicts the kneeling figures of an Adoration of the Magi? Thus this picture in the picture would offer another anticipation of the nativity of Christ.
²⁸ See the staffbreakers in the representations of the theme by Taddeo Gaddi (c. 1328-1337; Santa Croce, Florence, Rinuccini chapel), Giovanni da Milano (c.
according to William Gilpin, “seems to have no use” and “divides the picture very disagreeably,” is an ironic allusion to the slender pillars of the open canopy architecture surrounding the wedding scene of an early Florentine Sposalizio. In Giovanni da Milano’s [Fig. 10] and Niccolò di Buonaccorso’s representations of the Marriage of the Virgin one of these pillars could even dissect the whole composition in a likewise “disagreeable” way, parting the main scene from the bystanders. Furthermore, in Hogarth’s scene, there is a luxuriant growth of evergreens on the choir stalls. As these evergreens are shown growing directly from the inanimate wood, they may be interpreted as an ironic allusion to Joseph’s green staff, that, in Hogarth’s picture, has wondrously multiplied. But the rake’s “greening,” i.e., his “second spring,” will be of short duration.

Scene 6 of Hogarth’s series shows the rake in a gaming house in Covent Garden (and not, as many still believe, at White’s) [Fig. 11]. The viewer can see how the gambling madness can ruin a man. But if we look more closely, we can again detect the rich treasure of Christian iconography: although at first
160–1850


Raphael’s painting comprises two different events related in the Bible: a) Christ’s Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, testified by Peter, James and John; Christ’s face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light; Moses and Elias appeared and God’s voice could be heard out of a bright cloud (see Matthew 17: 1–6; Mark 9: 1–7; Luke 9: 28–35); b) the healing of the possessed, moonstruck boy, which only Christ was capable of doing, but not his helpless disciples, who were first consulted by the boy’s father to exorcise the evil spirit but failed because their faith was not strong enough (see Matthew 17: 14–21; Mark 9: 14–29; Luke 9: 37–42). Critics very early on noticed a discrepancy between the upper and the lower half of the painting. While the Transfiguration scene, in which the figures are arranged in axial-symmetrical order in the shape of a pyramid and in a circle, reflects the ideal of classical art, the lower part gives an impression of mannerism, especially because of the sloping compositional axis, the dramatically impressive gestures of the figures and the wild expressions on their faces.

While the early biographers, for example Vasari, praised Raphael’s *Transfiguration* highly, calling it the most glorious, the most beautiful, the most divine work the master had ever created, critics of the eighteenth century—apart from the usual laudatory comments—criticized that academic rules, e.g. the unity of time, place and action had been offended (see Lütgens, *Rafaels Transfiguration*, 22–25). In the enlarged edition of his *Account of Some of the Statues, Bas-reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy, &c.*, which was published in French in 1728, Jonathan Richardson on the one hand highly praises the Transfiguration scene, on the other hand he criticizes that the other story does not relate to it at all. The viewer’s attention, he says, is diverted from the main subject, which is detrimental to the effect of the painting.

After all, the sublimity and magnificence of the Transfiguration is of such a kind that another inferior story, however excellent it might be, cannot enrich the composition; unless a woollen thread would enrich a brocaded habit [‘mais aussi la Sublimité & la Magnificence de la Transfiguration est d’une telle nature, que quelque excellente que cette Histoire inférieure puisse être en elle-même, elle ne sauroit enrichir la Composition, si ce n’est...']
Although the Transfiguration would normally have no place in a traditional Passion scheme, it is an important event in the Life of Christ and manifests His divine nature. Hogarth might, therefore, have integrated this Raphaelesque borrowing in his

de la manière qu'une Frange d'Estame enrichiroit un Habit de Brocard'].

(Jonathan Richardson, Traité de la Peinture et de la Sculpture, II, iii: Description de divers fameux Tableaux, Desseins, Statues, Bustes, Bas-reliefs &c. qui se trouvent en Italie avec des remarques [Amsterdam: Uytwerf, 1728], 613-14.)

Even if the two actions had occurred simultaneously, they would still be completely apart.

Therefore these are two absolutely different subjects: the one is God's Declaration of the Divine Nature and the Mission of His Son, the other the Failure of the Disciples and their Testimony to their Master's Power ['Ce sont donc ici deux Sujets absolument différents: l'un est la Déclaration que Dieu le Père fait de la Divinité & de la Mission de son Fils; l'autre est l'Impuissance des Disciples, & le témoignage qu'ils rendent du pouvoir de leur Maître']. (615)

If only Raphael had left out the story of the possessed boy and painted it separately in all its exquisite beauty, if he had represented the Transfiguration on its own, it would be the most excellent work of art of the most excellent painter of the world. The French sculptor, Falconet (1716-1791) criticizes that in Raphael's Transfiguration Mount Tabor is much too low (only 6 to 7 ft. high and almost as wide). He especially sneers at the fact that none of the people in the lower part of the painting looks at the Transfiguration, although Christ hovers right above their heads. See Étienne Maurice Falconet, Notes sur le XXXVe livre de Pline (1775), in Œuvres diverses concernant les arts (Paris: Didot, 1787), I: 391. The majority of critics, however, agree that Raphael did the best he was capable of concerning drawing, colouring and composing of both halves. See Ludwig Schudt, Italienreisen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert (Vienna and Munich: Anton Schroll, 1959), 349.

As Raphael's Transfiguration was so highly esteemed in those days, it is not surprising that numerous copies and engravings circulated all over Europe. Such prints seem to have influenced even Hogarth's Ascension, the central panel of his Bristol Altar-piece (1756; St. Nicholas Church Museum, Bristol) and his Paul before Felix (1748; Lincoln's Inn), in which Paul "resembles the well-known figure, raising his arm high above his head on the left of Raphael's Transfiguration." See Frederick Antal, "Hogarth and His Borrowings," The Art Bulletin 29 (1947): 45. Thus we can be sure that Hogarth already chose Raphael's famous painting as his Christian model for scene 6 of his Rake's Progress series.
“Anti-Passion” cycle, especially since his source was so highly esteemed by contemporaries.

In Hogarth’s version, the rake, full of wrath and defying heaven, corresponds to the boy (to the right in Raphael’s painting) who is possessed by an evil spirit, as we can see from the expression on his face and the posture of his head and hands. In Hogarth’s picture the rake’s general posture also resembles that of the woman in Raphael’s painting, who was so highly appreciated by connoisseurs of “sublime” art. In the Transfiguration she is kneeling in the foreground in a mannered way, pointing at the mad boy with both her hands. The rake is kneeling in a similar position, but, unlike the woman in Raphael’s picture who has turned her back on us, he is facing the viewer. Hogarth has thus blended two different figures of his Italian model into one—his own rake.

The number of disciples has been drastically reduced: instead of the apostles to the left staring at the boy there is only a cur, on whose collar we can read the inscription “Covent Gar[den]” and which is barking at the furious rake. Nevertheless the various gestures of the gamblers echo the disciples in Raphael’s picture, who are frightened of the evil spirit that has taken possession of the boy.

The back of the chair which has been tipped over and the dog props his front paws on is supposed to mark the border which, in Raphael’s picture is the dark area that runs diagonally between the disciples on the left and the common people on the right who are taking care of the boy. In formal terms there is one line, one long sweep from the chair right in the foreground along the bright hem of the rake’s coat and his arm lifted threateningly and across the edge of the table up to the candlestick, which has taken the place of Christ. In Raphael’s Transfiguration there is a similar long sweep from the kneeling woman in the foreground along the outstretched arm of the boy and the lifted right hand of the man on the right up to the plateau over which the transfigured Christ is hovering surrounded by a bright aureole of clouds.
Figure 11: Hogarth, The Rake's Progress, Plate 6, detail.
Courtesy The Academy of Fine Arts, Düsseldorf.
Figure 12: Raphael, *Transfiguration*. Courtesy The Vatican Museum.
Figure 13: Hogarth, *The Rake’s Progress*, Plate 8, detail. Courtesy The Academy of Fine Arts, Düsseldorf.
Figure 14: Donatello, *Lamentation*. Courtesy The Victoria and Albert Museum.
Whereas Raphael leads the eye upward to the figure of Christ over several unconnected straight lines, notably the three arms of the figures on the right, Hogarth connects the back and the back leg of the chair, the bright border of the rake's coat and his upraised arm into a rounded right angle seen in oblique perspective. At the rake's fist this compositional line divides into two. One line leads along the croupier's money rake (or is it a candle snuffer in a servant's hand?), crosses the candle stand and, missing the real "target," only touches the aura of the two candles. The other line forms a steep S through the uplifted hands of the figure with his back to us next to the croupier or servant. It continues up and [looking at the engraving] to the right of the same aura, taking in the lone cloud and ending in the fire breaking out above the ceiling moulding. The detours around the two candles and their aura are not without reason, for, in Hogarth's picture there is no longer a Christ. He has literally gone up in smoke. What is

Obviously the flames suggested above come shimmering from the adjacent room through the ceiling. At any rate, Hogarth was more interested in the clouds of smoke than the fire itself. As a fire broke out in White's Chocolate House on April 28, 1733 (for the correct date, mixed up even by recent scholars, see The Gentleman's Magazine 3 [1733]: 213-14), many critics assumed that Hogarth had represented the fire of this coffeehouse in his picture. An argument against this assumption is that members of the nobility almost exclusively patronized this establishment, where the rake would be out of place. In plate 4 of the Rake series we can see the aristocrats driving up to White's in their own coaches or being carried there in sedan chairs, whereas Hogarth's rake is arrested by a bailiff when he arrives in his hired sedan chair. The shoeblack boys squatting in the foreground playing cards and dice show us which social class the rake really belongs to. It is certainly no coincidence that already in the second state of this plate we can see White's struck by lightning, which causes the fire. In other words, the sixth scene takes place at a time when the Chocolate House had been destroyed. Furthermore, in scene 6 we can see a dog on whose collar we can read the inscription "Covent Gar[den]" (and not "White's"). This quarter was the haunt of lower-class people and crooks and just the place for the wild life of our anti-hero. Therefore we can detect a highwayman sitting idly behind the rake. We can recognize him as such, because his mask and pistol are protruding from his coat-pocket. He has already gambled away his loot. Even James Hulett's large Covent Garden gaming table was as round as the table in Hogarth's engraving. See Hugh Phillips,
left as the central axis in the upper part of the picture is only the long candlestick with its weak gloriole.  

The servant holding the candlestick and the two men standing next to him are the only people in the room to have noticed the fire. These three men stand for Peter, James and John, who, according to the Scriptures, were the only witnesses of the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor. The looks and the gestures of the three figures speak for themselves. The bowed man at the far edge of the table, who is looking at the door, reminds us of Raphael’s James, who, to the left on Mount Tabor, is bending down to the ground. The head of the man holding the chandelier may be a far reminiscence of the head of Peter looking up. The mountain’s plateau becomes the gambling table in Hogarth’s picture, but much lower than in Raphael’s painting, as the possessed rake towers high above the edge of the table.

Hogarth has taken pains to connect formally the various parts of his model and to make them one close-knit unit. Since

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Mid-Georgian London: A Topographical and Social Survey of Central and Western London about 1750 (London: Collins, 1964), fig. 195. We have just shown that the smoke has a different meaning than “fire in the coffeehouse.” And there is one more fact that corroborates our assumption: the plagiarist left out the flames altogether. See Kunzle, “Plagiaries-by-memory,” fig. 60 b; Scull, The Soane Hogarths, fig. 20.

34 Flanking the gloriole, the hilt of the bald-headed gambler’s sword and the hand of the man pointing to the fire are allusions to Raphael’s Moses and Elijah hovering in the sky to the right and left of the transfigured Christ.

35 The watchman is an exception. He is just entering the room and pointing at the fire with his stick and his lantern, but he is not one of the clients or the staff of the gambling house. In Raphael’s painting, too, two strange witnesses of the Transfiguration are kneeling in front of a bush or tree on the left edge of the picture. They may be Justus and Pastor, the patron saints of the church, or the deacons Felicissimus and Agapetus, who have nothing to do with the biblical story at all. The face of the one youth is brightly illuminated, as that of Hogarth’s watchman, the other one is kneeling in semi-darkness. In Hogarth’s picture, apart from the watchman, only the croupier (or servant) and two gamblers react to the fire, as we can clearly see from their gestures.

36 In the pirated copy of Hogarth’s scene no-one looks up as there is no fire. See Kunzle, “Plagiaries-by-memory,” fig. 60 b; Scull, The Soane Hogarths, fig. 20.
he changed the upright format of Raphael's picture to a horizontal format he could place the figures round the table rather than at the foot of the mountain. The rake's arm and its clenched fist lifted towards heaven seem to connect the sphere of human vice with the sphere of the divine. But Hogarth's sphere of heaven differs greatly from that of Raphael: in the upper part of the picture Hogarth has reduced the symmetrical harmony to a minimum, as Christ offering mankind salvation has no place in the chaos of an all too worldly gambling den. Christ's presence has been replaced by a gaping void or burning flames (signifying hell). The spheres of heaven and earth, which, according to contemporary critics, were separated too wide in Raphael's painting, have been united by Hogarth in a remarkable way: he has completely eliminated everything divine.

The other parts of the picture also clearly show the viewer what it is that counts in a gambling hall: money. It is Christ himself who is being sold here, for the groups standing to the right and left of the gambling table may refer to the Betrayal of Judas and the Capture of Christ. Thus, the picture would contain a motley collection of Christian motifs, which represent the vanity of religious values and the predominance of the diabolical powers on earth.

Plate 7 of the series, which may have been influenced by the popular sheet Debtors' Wives and Daughters Attempted to be

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37 Our interpretation is confirmed by the money changing hands, an allusion to the thirty pieces of silver Judas received from the high priests for betraying Jesus, as well as by the two men embracing each other. One of them, who is signalling to the watchman with his hand, is well-clad, the other one looks poor; he has lost all his money and is threatened by the watchman wielding his stick and lantern, who is one of the vanguard of that "great multitude with swords and staves" threatening to seize Jesus (see Matthew 26: 47 ff.; Mark 14: 43 ff.). Moreover the stick and the épee form a compositional triangle framing "Judas' treason," which emphasizes the unity of the group. See, for instance, Caravaggio's Taking of Christ, in which the heads of Jesus and Judas are framed by the curves of a billowing robe. On this picture, see Sergio Benedetti, "Caravaggio's 'Taking of Christ,' a Masterpiece Rediscovered," The Burlington Magazine 135 (1993): 731-46.
Ravished by Goalers (1691),\textsuperscript{38} could contain allusions to a Mocking of Christ,\textsuperscript{39} to Christ’s Descent into Hell, or rather to a Christ in Misery sitting mournfully on his Cross surrounded by mockers and taking a last rest on his Way to Calvary.\textsuperscript{40} Alternatively Hogarth may have had in mind a Christ in Prison – a lesser known scene of a traditional Passion depicting the imprisonment\textsuperscript{41} and mocking of Christ during the night after the trial held before the high priest Caiaphas (see Matthew 26: 57 ff.) and prior to the “counsel” against him next morning before Pilate (see Matthew 27: 1 ff.).\textsuperscript{42} Christ chained to a pillar and standing in a barred niche was the most popular image. Outside the bars soldiers might join the scene guarding the imprisoned Christ and inside angels sometimes console him. Occasionally Christ could even be represented sitting in his niche, examples of which can be found in Ignaz of Pfürdt’s (d. 1726) epitaph for the Eichstätt cathedral cloister or at the Ruhe-Christi Chapel near Buchau/Federsee. In a like manner we can see the rake sitting in the debtor’s prison in a situation beyond all hope. This scene would thus correspond neatly to a station on Christ’s march of destiny:

\textsuperscript{38} See Celina Fox, Londoners (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 208.
\textsuperscript{39} See, for instance, Wolf Huber’s Crowning with Thorns (1525; St. Florian near Linz, Augustinian Chorherrenstift; see Kindlers Malerei Lexikon im dtv, 15 vols [Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1976], 6: 252) or David Teniers’ prison setting of the same theme (see Margret Klinge, David Teniers de Jonge: Schilderijen, Tekeningen [Antwerp: Koninklijk Museum voor Schoone Kunsten, 11 May–1 September 1991], #22). For further examples see Schiller, Ikonographie, 2: figs. 248, 252–54.
\textsuperscript{40} Therefore this scene is also called “The Repose of Christ.” See the Preparation of the Cross by Hans Holbein the Elder, (c. 1500; Donaueschingen). For this picture and other examples see Gert von der Osten, “Christus im Elend [Christus in der Rast] und Herrgottsruhbild,” in Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte, III (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1954), 644-58 and fig. 3; Schiller, Ikonographie 2: 95-6 and figs. 306-309. We may also mention Dürrer’s frontispiece of his Small Passion (1511). See Knappe, Dürrer: Das graphische Werk, #254.
\textsuperscript{41} An event not described in the Bible.
But still another interpretation is possible: perhaps the group with the rake could also refer to one popular scene from the Temptations of St. Anthony, represented, for instance, in Martin Schongauer’s famous print of about 1470, in which the old hermit is threatened and tormented by hideous monsters, as Hogarth’s rake is assaulted in his debtor’s cell. To be sure: some motifs in plate 7 could be connected with an earthly hell: Hogarth’s rake is being scolded by his new wife, when he is in the debtor’s prison, which can be seen as a kind of hell; she is even dealing him blows for having wasted all her money. Other people standing around him are demanding money from him, which is certainly a form of torture for a person in debt. The “wings of Icarus” on top of the baldachino may remind us of the fact that our “holy man” is tortured by monsters that can fly. Even the “fire of hell” blazing in the background - an alchemist is fanning it—as well as the gridiron lying on top of the “bundle of misery” tied up in the foreground (and representing Satan bound in irons?) are waiting for the rake.

The eighth scene showing us the rake in Bedlam [Fig. 13] is a parody of The Lamentation over the Dead Christ. Werner Busch was the first to decode the scene in every respect. He writes:

43 See Max Dvorak, *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte* (Munich: R. Piper, 1924), 173 ff.; Lilli Fischel, “Zu Schongauers ‘Heiligem Antonius’,” *Studien zur Kunst des Oberrheins, Festschrift für Werner Noack* (Konstanz: Thorbecke, and Freiburg: Rombach, 1959), 92–98. For the life of St Anthony and further examples of the theme see Jean Seznec, *Nouvelles études sur la tentation de Saint Antoine* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1952); Charles David Cuttler, *The Temptations of Saint Anthony in Art from Earliest Times to the First Quarter of the Sixteenth Century* (Ph.D. thesis: New York University, 1952). It may be no coincidence that the melancholic figure in the right foreground of David Teniers’ *Temptations of St Anthony* (Madrid, Prado) is distantly reminiscent of Hogarth’s rake (see Klinge, *David Teniers de Jonge, #90*). The devil, however, also tempted Jesus when he was still alive (see Matthew 4: 1-11; Luke 4: 1-13); and later on Christ descended into hell.
The group with the rake at its centre no doubt imitates all the details of a Lamentation of Christ. The rake is in the position of the dead Christ: not even the wound in his side is missing; his lover is the mourning Mary; the priest looking after her has taken over the role of John consoling Mary; the attendant taking the shackles from the rake’s feet has taken over the role of Mary Magdalen caressing Christ’s feet. Not even the jar of ointment is missing: a large pot can be seen completing to the left the triangular arrangement of the central group. But the borrowings from the most important theme of Christian art go much further: the religious and political fanatics inside the cells on either side of the group with the dying rake represent the penitent and impenitent thief being crucified on either side of Christ. Even more, Hogarth uses the most minute iconographical details to characterize the two madmen as thieves; for in the artistic tradition of the Crucifixion the sun is assigned to the good thief on the right and the moon to the bad thief on the left. Similarly, the religious fanatic’s cell is illuminated by bright daylight, whereas the madman, who thinks himself to be a king, is almost in semi-darkness. The madhouse is thus an allusion to an entire Calvary.  

That the dying rake really corresponds to a dead Christ can be seen from the fact that in Hogarth’s painted version the rake wears a white shroud round his loins. This is a more direct allusion to Christ than in the print, which Hogarth engraved later and in which he weakened this impression by covering the

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lower part of the rake's body with dark clothes. Perhaps Hogarth modelled the rake squatting distraught on the ground directly on Donatello's small relief of the *Lamentation* (c. 1457-1459; Victoria and Albert Museum, London) [Fig. 14], as Christ's half-erect posture resembles that of the rake.

The viewer is taken aback: in his *Rake's Progress* series Hogarth has denigrated central acts in the Christian iconography in that he has antithetically confronted significant themes in the Passion with what were thoroughly profane and highly "vulgar" workaday themes. One only has to think of such worldly pleasures as dancing, prize-fighting, gambling, whoring and drinking (which figure large in the scenes) to realize that there is a discrepancy between these amusements and associations of the Saviour's Passion. Not enough: even the chronology of the Passion is thoroughly jumbled in the profane variation and mixed with some other motifs borrowed from Christian iconography. According to my reading, in Hogarth's order of events, the first is the Raising of the Cross (scene 1), then a Flagellation (scene 2), followed by a Washing of the Feet at a rather "obscene" Last Supper (plate 3). Next come a *Noli me tangere* and the Soldiers drawing Lots for Jesus' Cloak (scene 4). In the interim we encounter a Marriage of the Virgin (plate 5), that is, a scene which would normally precede the Nativity. This is followed by a mock Transfiguration (plate 6), an event which would have no place in a traditional Passion scheme but may take the place of the Ascension. The seventh scene alludes to the Repose of Christ or Christ's Imprisonment. The pictorial drama closes with the Lamentation of scene 8. The normal sequence of Christ's Way of the Cross is quite different. Typical Stations of the Passion are Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, Christ washing His Disciples' Feet, The Last Supper,

The Agony in the Garden, The Betrayal of Judas, The Capture of Christ, Peter's Denial, Christ before Pilate, Christ before Herod, The Flagellation and The Crowning with Thorns, Christ Bearing the Cross, The Crucifixion, The Deposition from the Cross, The Entombment, The Appearance of the Resurrected Christ to the Holy Women and The Descent of Christ into Hell. But other scenes might also accompany the Lord's Passion, some drawn from the Life of the Virgin, others again being typological motifs. It would be a task in vain to transpose all these scenes in form as well as content, meaningfully and in the cited order of appearance, as "the life of a rake," and it is evident that Hogarth did not even try. But the number of Passion motifs the artist did manage to include in the *Rake* sequences is remarkable.

Did he do this only for his own amusement, for the fun of playing with time-honoured pictorial motifs? Or was he

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47 In addition to the traditional scenes, Dürer's *Small Passion* (1511) shows, for instance, Adam and Eve in Paradise, the Expulsion from Paradise, the Annunciation and the Nativity. For the whole series, see Knappe, *Dürer: Das graphische Werk*, #254-90.

48 "Quotation" as a display of "wit" in painting, as Joshua Reynolds practiced it, was regarded in those days as a criterion of quality. See Busch, *Nachahmung als bürgerliches Kunstprinzip*, 30 ff.; Prochno, *Joshua Reynolds*, 42 ff.; Busch, *Das sentimentalische Bild*, 394-418, especially 404 ff.

Horace Walpole wrote in 1771 that "a quotation from a great author, with a novel application of the sense, has always been allowed to be an instance of parts and taste; and may have more merit than the original" (Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, ed. James Dallaway and Ralph Wornum, 3 vols., London: Bickers and Son, 1888, I: XVII, n.2 on Reynolds). Especially the striving middle classes appreciated such quotations, primarily in portraiture, since it gave them scope to demonstrate their erudition.

Further research should examine other possible influences on Hogarth's method of borrowing, for example, the alternating play between claritas and obscuritas which gave much pleasure to the friends of emblematics (see Albrecht Schöne, *Emblemik und Drama im Zeitalter des Barock*, [Munich: C. H. Beck, 1968], 38-39; Ronald Paulson, *Emblem and Expression: Meaning in English Art of the Eighteenth Century* [London: Thames and Hudson, 1975], 48-57), or, again, the popular predilection for pictorial enigmas (see Eva-Maria Schenck, *Das Bilderrätsel* [Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1973], 49 ff.). Hogarth himself wrote, in his *Analysis of Beauty* (1753), "It is a pleasing labour of the mind to solve
simply too lazy to think up new motifs, so taking recourse (as many other artists did) to the enormous stock of forms and devices of High Art, for instance, by borrowing typical compositions of groups of figures or exemplary poses of the arms and head, which he forged in his own work into "new entities"?

It is obvious that Hogarth's intentions must have been quite different at the outset. As several other pictures prove, he consciously sought out old types from Christian iconography and transposed them into utterly profane contexts. Ronald Paulson has shown that the first print in the Harlot series (1732) resembles the iconographic plan of a Visitation, while the third scene in the same series draws from the tradition of an Annunciation. Peter Wagner has drawn attention to the fact the most difficult problems; allegories and riddles, trifling as they are, afford the mind amusement" (Joseph Burke [ed.], William Hogarth, The Analysis of Beauty [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955], 42).


The innocent country girl "Mary Hackabout" took over the role of Mary, the notorious bawd "Mother Needham" that of Elizabeth. See Ronald Paulson, Hogarth: His Life, Art, and Times, I:270; Paulson, Hogarth, Volume 1: The "Modern Moral Subject," (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 273; Busch, Nachahmung als bürgerliches Kunstprinzip, 8.

The chamber where the angel Gabriel announced Christ's nativity to the Virgin is degraded to a shabby room in Drury Lane the whore had moved into. Hogarth's models, above all, were fifteenth-century Dutch representations of the Annunciation. See Ronald Paulson, Hogarth: His Life, Art, and Times, I: pl. 102; Busch, Nachahmung als bürgerliches Kunstprinzip, 8. It is important to note here a distinction between the Harlot and Rake series, pointed out to me by Professor Paulson after reading my text: whereas the allusions in any given scene of the Rake are drawn from multiple sources, "as if a Picasso had gone at it," those of plates 1, 3 and 6 of the Harlot were, according to Paulson, parodies of intact compositions. If Paulson's assumption is true, this change of Hogarth's tactic might be worth further research. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that, for example, plate 6 of the Harlot series could be interpreted as a) an allusion to the Last Supper (see Jack Lindsay, Hogarth: His Art and His World [London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1977], 61-62), b) a satire on the Assumption or c) a tilt at the Descent of the Holy Ghost (see Busch, Nachahmung als bürgerliches Kunstprinzip,
that *Royalty, Episcopacy, and Law* (1724) is a parody of the heavenly group constituting the centre of Raphael’s famous fresco of the *Disputa* (c. 1510; Vatican, Stanza della Segnatura).\(^5^2\) It struck both Paulson and Werner Busch that there are formal allusions to an Entombment or a Deposition in the fifth scene of *Marriage à-la-Mode* (painting, 1744; engraving after it, 1745), the night-time duel in the bedchamber of a bagnio, where the Earl is stabbed by his rival. The pose of the dying Earl mimics that of the dead Christ taken from the Cross and about to be entombed.\(^5^3\) Busch has also pointed out that the extremely brutal third scene of Hogarth’s *Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751), where Tom Nero is arrested, having murdered his


In Hogarth’s print, the “three Principal Inhabitants of ye Moon” are seated on a platform just like Mary, Christ and St John the Baptist enthroned in front of a heavenly aureole at the top of which God the Father can be seen in benediction. Hogarth has degraded the holy persons of Raphael’s fresco into the figures of a king, a bishop (filling the place of God the Father?), and a judge, all composed of parts of human bodies and every-day objects in Giuseppe Arcimboldi’s manner. These hybrids are arranged round a pump which is constructed like a church tower and seems to replace Raphael’s seated figure of Christ. But instead of God’s Outpouring of the Holy Ghost this pump is pouring out money. In this connexion it may be no coincidence that in Raphael’s *Disputa* “the Holy Ghost is not, as is usual, located above Christ, but below,” as Boehner pointed out (“Raphael’s *Disputa,*” 47).

Hogarth’s print of *The Lottery* (1724) had already alluded not only to the *Disputa,* but also to the other frescoes of the *Stanza della Segnatura,* for example Raphael’s *Parnassus* (c. 1509) and his *School of Athens* (c. 1511). See Fischel, *Raphael,* figs. 97, 99, 109.

mistress with a knife, follows the pattern of a Capture of Christ. These are unlikely to be the last borrowings to be discovered by attentive art historians looking at Hogarth's engravings. Much still awaits critical investigation. It cannot

54 According to Busch, the scene refers to an arrest as represented in Dutch prints of the second half of the sixteenth century. See Busch, *Nachahmung als bürgerliches Kunstprinzip*, 11-12 and figs. 14-15; Busch, *Das sentimentalische Bild*, 259-63 and figs. 81-2. It may also, to my mind, have been influenced by van Dyck's *Capture of Christ*. See the early painting in the Prado, Madrid (c. 1621; *reproduced in Emil Schaeffer, Van Dyck: Des Meisters Gemälde in 537 Abbildungen* [Stuttgart and Leipzig: Klassiker der Kunst: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1909], 37) or the altered repetition of the subject in the Methuen Collection at Corsham Court (c. 1629; Bristol Museum and Art Gallery; see Schaeffer, *Van Dyck*, 38; Gervase Jackson-Stops, ed., *The Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting*, Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1985 [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986], #264). The latter version was acquired by Paul Methuen in 1747, so Hogarth may have known the painting. Compare, in addition, Matthew Stomer's *Capture of Christ*, reproduced in Homan Potterton, *Dutch Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland* (Dublin: The National Gallery of Ireland, 1986), #425.

Even the riot at Tom King's Coffee House represented in Hogarth's *Morning* (1738) from his series *The Four Times of the Day* may allude to the Capture of Christ; the couple kissing in the doorway could mimic Judas betraying Jesus with a kiss.

Also, *The Second Stage of Cruelty* (1751) may contain a reference to a well-known biblical motif represented in the 1620s by Pieter Lastman and Rembrandt van Rijn: *The Prophet Balaam Smiting the Ass* (see Numbers 22: 21 ff.). See Busch, *Nachahmung als bürgerliches Kunstprinzip*, 12-13 and fig. 17; Busch, *Das sentimentalische Bild*, 258-59 and figs. 79-80.

55 Several other works of the artist particularly satirize Italian religious art. Hogarth's etching *Cunicularii, Or The Wise Men of Godliman in Consultation* (1726) is a "gross, wholly physical parody" of the Adoration of the Magi. See Dennis Todd, "Three Characters in Hogarth's *Cunicularii*—and Some Implications," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 16 (1982/83): 42-43. Even the gestures of the doctors "A" and "C" in Hogarth's print, I think, echo those of some of the shepherds adoring the newborn Child in Rembrandt's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (1646; London, National Gallery). What is more, *Cunicularii* and *The Punishment Inflicted on Lemuel Gulliver* (1726) "are twin scatological demystifications of the 'mysteries' of the Christian religion. In these two prints...Hogarth reduces the Virgin Birth to a hoax concerning rabbits and the church itself to a huge bottom." See Ronald Paulson, "Putting out the Fire in Her Imperial Majesty's Apartment: Opposition Politics, Anticlericalism, and Aesthetics," *English Literary History* 63 (1996): 94.
be a matter of chance that Hogarth used pictorial motifs from older sources in a disrespectful, even desecrating way, though he himself never wasted a word on them. At any rate, in his manuscript notes he confessed that he "sometimes objected to the Devinity of even Raphael Urbin Corregio and Michael Angelo for which I have been severly treated," and as in his pictures "the life so far surpassed the utmost efforts of imitation," he admitted that by drawing "the comparison in my mind I could not help uttering Blasphemous expression that I fear I fear persecution."^{56}

Leonardo’s famous Last Supper seems to be the starting point of a number of Hogarth’s later compositions, e.g. Columbus breaking the Egg (1752), An Election Entertainment (1754/55), and The Cockpit (1759). Representations of The Last Supper may have been models for A Harlot’s Progress, pl. 6 (1732; see Lindsay, Hogarth: His Art and His World, 61-62), for A Midnight Modern Conversation (1733; see Frédéric Ogée, “L’action extrême: une lecture de A Midnight Modern Conversation [1733] de William Hogarth,” Études Anglaises 45 [1992]: 63-64) and for The Commitee from Hogarth’s Twelve Large Illustrations for Samuel Butler’s "Hudibras" (1726). For the latter assumption see Werner Busch, “Die Akademie zwischen autonomer Zeichnung und Handwerksdesign—Zur Auffassung der Linie und der Zeichen im 18. Jahrhundert," in Herbert Beck, Peter C. Bol, and Eva Maek-Gérard, eds., Ideal und Wirklichkeit in der bildenden Kunst im späten 18. Jahrhundert (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1984), 185n18. See, in addition, the engraved version by Marcantonio Raimondi, reproduced in Wölflin, Classic Art, 28. Finally, Beer Street and Gin Lane (1751) are depicted in the manner of the wings of a traditional altar-piece representing the Last Judgement, e.g., as Paradise and Hell. For a more detailed examination see Busch, Das sentimentalische Bild, 281-4, 288-93.

It is important to note here that Hogarth’s pictures are not always aimed at the tradition of Christian iconography, but in some cases are satires of mythological allegory, as, for instance, can be seen in his Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn (1738) or in his series The Four Times of the Day (oil-paintings, c. 1736/37; National Trust, Upton House; and private collection; engravings, 1738), in which ordinary city dwellers are given the roles of pagan deities. See Sean Shesgreen, Hogarth and the Times-of-the-Day Tradition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 108 ff.

The same notes prove that Hogarth possessed a kind of mnemonics which enabled him to retain in his mind lineally such objects as fitted his purpose best.\(^{57}\) He wrote:

I therefore endeavoured a habit of retaining what ever I saw in such a manner as by the repeating in my mind the parts of which objects were composed I could by degrees put them down with my pencil so that when I was about my Pleasure or amusement I was at the same [time] upon my studies.\(^{58}\)

He added that

The most striking incidents that presented themselves to my view ever made the strongest impressions on my memory in their whole for Subjects and in there [sic] parts for Execution

Whether they were comical or tragical....Which Ideas occasionally were to be call’d to mind when and [sic] composition was required.\(^{59}\)

Thus we can be quite sure that Hogarth kept in his mind an enormous store not only of contemporary incidents which he had seen, but also of traditional pictorial motifs which could easily be recalled when the artist was inventing a picture of his own. Beyond his mnemonics the artist’s contacts to Bishop Benjamin Hoadly (1676–1761) and other latitudinarian churchmen may have been responsible for his unusually detailed knowledge of Christian iconography.


In my opinion, Hogarth found in this knowledge an effective weapon in what he called his "war" against the connoisseurs: he deliberately concealed the borrowed iconographic motifs in his works, so that a self-styled critic might occasionally stumble across the hidden layers of meaning (at best the "connoisseur," but not the average observer, for whom only the primary level counts; only the former might decipher the secondary level of meaning conveyed through the art-historical references). Since Biblical visual references are not appropriate to profane workaday subjects, and in view of the fact that Hogarth almost unfailingly turns the religious content of his pictorial universe into its opposite, borrowing becomes a profanation of the high ideal of religious art. In other words: Hogarth adopted the method used by contemporary satirists to ridicule false opinions and made it his own artistic weapon to expose the erroneous understanding his "connoisseurs" had of art. Doing

"The connoisseurs and I are at war you know," he told Mrs. Piozzi, "and because I hate them, they think I hate Titian - and let them!" See Hester Lynch Piozzi, Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D, during the Last Twenty Years of his Life (London, 1786), 137.


Professor Paulson has drawn my attention to the fact that Hogarth's rather blasphemous references to New Testament stories and his "demystification" of Christ should be regarded in the historical context of critical deism. See, for instance, Ronald Paulson, Hogarth, Volume 1: The "Modern Moral Subject," 253, 288-92, 293 ff.; Paulson, Hogarth, Volume 2: High Art and Low, 87 ff., 103, 112. This is certainly one important point of view to be taken into account regarding Hogarth's borrowing practice. In this context it might be true that for Hogarth as well as for English deists such as Thomas Woolston (1669-1731), traditional biblical stories were "proper Subjects of Ridicule" to pave the way for "the Abolition of an hired and establish'd Priesthood" (Woolston), since Hogarth distrusted the authority of any scripture as much as he disdained the orthodox
so also gave him the opportunity to show his detractors that he possessed all the culture of an artist worthy of the name. It was to the initiate alone that Hogarth would have wished to demonstrate what their wanted stereotype ideals were worth in modern-day England. At best, the modern artist could use them as a weak compositional framework in the utterly vulgar, dissolute scenes with which he might reflect the true spirit of the times.

To conclude: Hogarth’s “anti-iconography,” as I would define the impudent allusions to familiar iconographic motifs, was a judicious send-up of the Rules of High Art propagated elsewhere by academic authorities. The purpose of the borrowings was therefore to shock the “connoisseur” into reexamining his own attitudes. On the other hand Hogarth’s quotations also proved that the old stereotypes so beloved of the “connoisseurs” could be used for current subjects, poor consolation though that will have been for the dyed-in-the-wool “connoisseur.”

The borrowings in *A Rake’s Progress* which have been the central subject of this study are only exemplary for the “anti-iconographic” strategy employed by Hogarth in many instances elsewhere. Future research should give increased Anglican clergy for ignoring the social problems of the time. See also chapters 1 and 2 in Paulson’s *The Beautiful, Novel, and Strange: Aesthetics and Heterodoxy* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), which pursue the matter much further. Another approach connected with Hogarth’s deistic attitude is the English Protestant iconoclastic tradition which has also been discussed by Paulson in his *Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700–1820* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 149-54. But I prefer to believe that Hogarth is arguing as much from the painfully personal standpoint of an artist held in contempt by English connoisseurs as from his more theoretical involvement in the general debates on deism and freethinking.

Characteristically, in *The Battle of the Pictures* Hogarth’s *Tavern Scene* from *The Rake’s Progress* is attacking from behind a classical Feast of the Gods.

attention to the likely “hidden” borrowings in the artist’s other works. Such a search should bring rewards not least in terms of understanding what must surely have been unique in its time as the negative borrowing principle of a “rebels artist” set on challenging with art the prevalent laws of the art market of his day.