

**Ronald Paulson. *The Art of Hogarth*, London, Phaidon, 1975.  
204 pp., 172 illus., \$33.00**

**Joseph Burke**

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Correggio, and Pellegrino Tibaldi, Carracci developed landscape painting which importantly led to the masterly works of Claude, Poussin, and Domenichino; likewise, his return to the study of the live model and his interest in caricature were important.

The terse discussion of Caravaggio by Waterhouse has neither an analysis of the importance of the artist nor a treatment of Caravaggism as such. These problems have been admirably pursued by Richard Spear in his superlative work, *Caravaggio and his Followers* (Cleveland, 1971), not cited in the bibliography of *Roman Baroque Painters*. As it has been noted, Waterhouse did not intend to present an in-depth study of Caravaggio, nor, for that matter, of other Roman Baroque painters.

Waterhouse's generalization that the Roman Baroque style "owes its origin in general to a new conception of the function of art introduced by the Jesuit Order, and in particular to the interpretation and fulfillment of that conception by Urban VIII and his family" (p. 15) would seem to call for explication and examples. His assertion that El Greco produced the first Baroque pictures in Europe (p. 16) omits discussion of supporting evidence. Is Waterhouse suggesting that they are Baroque simply because they were done between 1600 and 1614? If so, then this would seem to contradict his earlier view that the Baroque style owes its origin particularly to Urban VIII, whose importance as a patron does not begin until nine years after the death of El Greco. Perhaps El Greco is considered Baroque because of the extreme emotionalism of his art. We simply do not know from Waterhouse's text.

The bibliographical notes are basic and useful, but do not provide new sources. Discussion of archival material is extremely scant, and references are omitted to the many publications of the Archivio di Stato di Roma — among which is the *Pietro da Cortona Mostra: Documentaria* with its innumerable citations to artists, inventories, wills, and testaments. Nor does he cite the *Diaries of Carlo Catari*, which contain invaluable information on seventeenth-century artists and patrons. Waterhouse's lists provide an indispensable reference tool which makes the book a welcomed addition to a scholar's library. The eighty-one black-and-white photographs present an extremely important body of visual material which otherwise might be quite difficult to find. However, one regrets that the reproductions, which could be of higher quality, are squeezed into thirty-two pages, and that there are no colour plates.

This newly revised text is not on that very high level to which Waterhouse has accustomed the readers of his many publications. All in all, the limitations observed by the reviewer underscore art historians' need — notwithstanding the classic *Die Malerei des Barock in Rom* (Berlin, 1924), written by Hermann Voss over half a century ago — for a definitive text on Roman Baroque painting.

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RONALD PAULSON. *The Art of Hogarth*, London, Phaidon, 1975. 204 pp., 172 illus., \$33.00.

This is the latest of a long series of publications which have established the author as the leading authority on Hogarth. Ronald Paulson is a Professor of English, now at Yale, who first made his name by monographs and articles on English satirists and comic novelists from Swift to Smollett, an admirable introduction to Hogarth studies. His writings show a deep and lasting interest in the visual arts.

Professor Paulson has eclipsed all his recent predecessors in making massive additions to Hogarth fact. The aim of the late Frederick Antal is explicit in his title, *Hogarth and his Place in European Art* (London, 1962). Antal, a highly professional art historian, brought to his task an unusually extensive knowledge of European engravings, including reproductive prints; his account of Hogarth's use of pictorial sources is likely to stand the test of time as far as one can see into the future, although Paulson and others are constantly producing new examples from the inexhaustible mine.

Antal, as a liberal Marxist, also pioneered ground by rigorously relating Hogarth's development at every stage to his economic and social background, but such was his caution and habit of qualifying his generalizations that the reader has sometimes to wrestle with a number of separated passages before ascertaining the meaning, and then not always to complete satisfaction.

Paulson is admirably clear. His greatest contribution to Hogarth studies is his critical catalogue *Hogarth's Graphic Works* (2 vols., New Haven and London, 1965; rev. ed., 1970), the indispensable reference for all future studies. His two-volume *Hogarth: His Life, Art and Times* (2 vols., New Haven and London, 1971) is not merely an interpreta-



FIGURE 1. Hogarth, *The Shrimp Girl*. Paulson, Pl. 124.

tion of the materials he had amassed; it also contains much new evidence, the discovery of which is his forte.

The latest study is not a simple summary or popularization. Paulson might justifiably have borrowed a sub-title from Kenneth Clark and called the book *Hogarth: a Personal Point of View*. A major purpose is to guide the student to see Hogarth as a painter, just as Charles Lamb (*On the Genius and Character of Hogarth*, 1811) had stressed the alternative way in which his prints could be read. Thus *The Shrimp Girl* (Fig. 1) is held up not as a flash in the pan, a freak example of impressionism in advance of its time, but as the logical climax of a study which dwells with insight on the painterliness of the simplest portraits, the oil sketches, and "the unfinished (usually background) areas of his paintings." Perceptively he compares their appeal to posterity with that of Gainsborough's landscape sketches and paintings.

What I have described as the personal point of view comes out forcibly in the opening section of the introduction, "The Prison Cell." Paulson had discovered that from Hogarth's eleventh to his sixteenth year the family was legally confined to the Liberties of the Fleet Prison because his father, who "may" have spent his first months in a cell, was unable to pay his debts. Hogarth very naturally did not refer to the family disgrace in his autobiographical notes, but Paulson claims that "the problem of confinement, originating in childhood [*sic*] trauma, is discernible in almost every aspect of Hogarth's life and career." On this he builds an elaborate analysis of Hogarth's art, in which many of the features he stresses can be paralleled in Zoffany, and for the same reason: namely that both artists were addicts of the theatre, and frequently depicted the spectacle of life as taking place on an enclosed or confined stage.

This makes for stimulating reading, and the real significance of Paulson as an interpreter is precisely this stimulating power. He is always throwing out new ideas, and he is as concerned to detect resemblances to other favourite artists as he is to find profound psychological depths in Hogarth's funniest pictures.

Some of his points are highly subtle. Thus he sees a deliberate irony in Hogarth's title *A Modern Midnight Conversation* because none of the persons shown is



FIGURE 2. Hogarth, *The Visit to the Quack Doctor*.

conversing. Hogarth is here using the word "conversation" in its pictorial meaning, that is, a painting of a party: a family party, a tea party, a fishing party, a music party, a party of friends, here a drinking party. Incidentally, I find the attribution of the version reproduced in Plate 16 very doubtful. But Paulson's description of what he calls the "non-conversation" is very apt, because Hogarth has brilliantly depicted that stage of intoxication in which every man, whether shouting or maudlin, is in a world of his own. The party goes on, but conversation in the sense of communication or exchange of ideas is now impossible. Hogarth may or may not have been playing on the two meanings of the word, but the idea is attractive.

In some other instances, Paulson is surprisingly conservative. In his catalogue account of Plate 3 of *Marriage à la Mode*, "The Visit to the Quack Doctor" (Fig. 2), he assembles in a masterly and concise summary the different interpretations handed down by the commentators. In *The Art of Hogarth* he unequivocally supports André Rouquet's contemporaneous identification of the older woman as a procuress:

Presumably the state of the child-mistress's health is at stake, and (if we are to believe Rouquet's description, which had Hogarth's authority behind it) the Earl gestures with pillbox and raised cane at the bawd *who sold him this faulty piece of merchandise* [my italics].

Why, then, we may ask, the searching expression of the Earl and the amusement of the quack doctor?

The costume alone shows that the angry woman is a practising prostitute. Hogarth invariably follows the contemporary practice of distinguishing between Madams and harlots by dressing the former soberly and with dignity, as if matrons on their way to church, and the latter in their service uniform of lace and a brightly coloured apron. Rouquet's mistake is understandable, because the English word "bawd," which Hogarth may have used, is capable of both meanings. Hogarth did not understand French, and although he allowed Rouquet to interview him he could not correct the other's text.

Once the identification with harlot is accepted, and I believe it must be, the meaning becomes clear. The subject is not the health of the young girl, but that of the Earl himself. He has summoned the two to the doctor to find which has infected him. Like Solomon, he discovers the truth by an ingenious trick, worked out in advance with the doctor, who polishes his glasses as if preparing to conduct an examination. In fact the syphilitic Earl and the elderly doctor, even together, are no match for the tall and magnificently developed harlot in a trial of force. She falls, however, into the trap and furiously opens a clasp-knife to prevent examination, while the innocent girl continues to weep. The doctor grins and the Earl, who displays the medicine he has been forced to take and presumably share with his younger mistress, and at the same time raises his cane in a threatening gesture, looks searchingly at the enraged harlot.

Perhaps because Mrs. Hogarth disliked the print, the "authorized" commentary by the Reverend John Trusler is discreet to the point of obscurity. But he expressly states that the two women had been brought together by the Earl so that the doctor might determine to which of the two he might attribute his disorder.

Meanwhile the learned commentators after Trusler stuck to Rouquet, because his evidence was first-hand. It was, but

he was a Frenchman faced with an obvious linguistic problem. Luke Sullivan, who worked for Hogarth and also had the explanation at first hand from the author, supported Trusler when he informed Charles Rogers.

One of the most exciting of Dr. Paulson's many discoveries is the evidence of Hogarth himself. In the sale list for the 1745 auction of his paintings he called the scene "The Inspection." This is a very funny title once the meaning of this "Judgment of Solomon" picture has been grasped. For an inspection was no more practicable nor intended than the cutting of the infant into two halves.

I have chosen this example because on occasions where disagreement with Paulson is possible, he has been scrupulously fair both in presenting the evidence in his magnum opus, the catalogue, and in adding to or correcting it in his later publications.

Paulson's magnificent achievement has been to open up innumerable new paths of enquiry to others, both by fresh evidence and stimulating speculation. It is therefore with an unsolved problem that I close a review which is also intended as a tribute. Paulson has surprisingly little to say about the tailpiece to the Society of Artists' Catalogue of 1761. The frontispiece of the same catalogue, showing Britannia watering from a can the healthy saplings of Architecture, Painting, and Sculpture, identifies the three stumps in the tailpiece, now withered by the attentions of the connoisseurs, who are represented by a monkey in court dress. But why the dates 1502, 1600, and 1604? It is most unlikely that Hogarth would have specified dates for the demise of architecture, painting, and sculpture at random. Unfortunately, he offers no clue as to which of the three stumps the specific sister art belongs, thus complicating the task for the curious investigator.

Paulson rightly stresses Hogarth's love of mystification, and in the second volume of *Hogarth: His Life, Art and Times* he quotes appreciatively from *The Analysis of Beauty*:

It is a pleasing labour of the mind to solve the most difficult problems: allegories and riddles, trifling as they are, afford the mind amusement.

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RONALD PAULSON. *Emblem and Expression: Meaning in English Art of the Eighteenth Century*. London, Thames and Hudson, 1975. 256 pp., 163 illus., \$39.95.

Ronald Paulson uses this volume to develop ideas touched upon in his separate studies of Hogarth and his St. Martin's Lane Academy. Paulson identifies the existence of a movement to "break away from the old tradition of art as a sister to poetry or to moral philosophy." That phrase occurs in a passage about Thomas Gainsborough, the last of a group of artists beginning with Hogarth and including Zoffany, Stubbs, and Wright, who, he contends, reacted against the conventional view of art best propagated by Reynolds. He proposes that these artists were searching for

new modes of expression by re-interpreting traditional iconography and developing the lesser genres, and that their paintings reflected innovations in English literature and aesthetic philosophy.

Paulson assigns the initiation of this movement to the subjective use of emblems and forms found in the landscape gardens laid out in the first half of the eighteenth century, notably those at Castle Howard, Stourhead, and at Stowe, where Cobham created an ensemble critical of the contemporary political situation as well as a less formal composition. The theme is continued in his analysis of Hogarth's earliest series of engravings, *The Harlot's Progress* (1732), in which, Paulson asserts, Hogarth satirized current society by ironic references to preceding moral and biblical iconography (such as *The Choice of Hercules* and *The Visitation* in the first plate). The use of visual puns and the peculiarities of the spatial settings were further evidence of Hogarth's desire to increase the range and immediacy of expression in his art. His engravings were a pictorial parallel to the novel, through which Richardson and Sterne sought to articulate individual experience by recourse to novelties in content and style. Paulson considers that Hogarth advanced further in undermining didactic meaning, citing, in particular, the ambiguities in the *Industry and Idleness* series (1747), and suggests that the success of his pictorial and literary meaning led to an emphasis upon visual expression by artists of the next generation.

To establish the wider context, Paulson contrasts Hogarth's radicalism with Reynolds's academicism and subsequently compares it with the work of a number of continental artists. Watteau is described as a highly idiosyncratic painter, querying the illusions of high art as of high society, Chardin as the first painter of objectivity, while Longhi is said to have been concerned primarily with the depiction of psychological relationships and Canaletto with those of three-dimensional form in space. Piranesi also appears as an innovator (though too briefly for the clarity of the argument) who wished to analyze Classical structure rather than to copy its artistic legacy.

Returning to England, Paulson defines the emergence of a number of other reactions against history painting and humanist ideals. First he equates the genre of the conversation piece with contemporary literature, asserting that both explored the subtleties of social intercourse. He elaborates at greatest length on Zoffany's group portraits, especially the motives that might have determined his choice and arrangement of the works of art in *The Tribuna of the Uffizi* (1772-78). Then he interprets the intentions of Stubbs, Wright, and Gainsborough. "What Stubbs demonstrates," he states, ". . . is that there is no necessary correlation, as Reynolds still believed, between the subject matter or style and the importance of the painting. Most crucial of the St. Martin's Lane Academy ideas for him was the play with genres that broke them up, either subverting or fragmenting them." He claims that Stubbs exposed the rupture between the old academic categories and those of the Beautiful and the Sublime which "originate (or at least so the artist could tell himself) in nature rather than art." Enlarging upon Fuseli's complaint that Stubbs's figures were usually subordinated to animals, Paulson postulates that man is no longer the centre of Stubbs's universe, but dominated by the horse and the landscape. Man is merely another participant in the great cyclical patterns of nature and even potentially ridiculous, if Paulson's ironic interpretation of the *Soldiers*