

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Hogarth's Hidden Parts: Satiric Allusion, Erotic Wit, Blasphemous Bawdiness and Dark Humour in Eighteenth-Century English Art by Bernd W. Krysmanski

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grotto-nymphaeum under a neoclassical vault. Martin maintains that the glorification of Amalthea represents a visceral erasure of Marie-Antoinette so that the dairy embodies “a male fantasy of a regenerated monarchy, a patrimonial image for the nation of health and wholeness to stave off fears of division and collapse” (253). But when the real queen visited the site in 1787, the pastoral mode could no longer effectuate a regenerated monarchy.

In a dynamic epilogue to the book, Martin traces the evolution of milk culture from the French Revolution until the very recent past, illuminating how the milk cure still resonates in contemporary society and politics. The book is well illustrated, not only documenting the dairies, but also including interpretations of thematically related paintings and decorative arts. Readers may regret that the book does not include a wider analysis of the garden programs surrounding the dairies, as these garden projects surely would have benefited from Martin’s exemplary scholarship.

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**Bernd W. Krysmanski, *Hogarth’s Hidden Parts: Satiric Allusion, Erotic Wit, Blasphemous Bawdiness and Dark Humour in Eighteenth-Century English Art* (Hildesheim, Ger.: Georg Olms Verlag, 2010). Pp. 514.**

In *Hogarth’s Hidden Parts*, Bernd Krysmanski aims to turn the idea of the “good” Hogarth on its head. The author questions Hogarth’s moralizing agendas, his socially engaged and reformist identities, and argues instead that he was a “bawdy hedonist,” a malicious blasphemer, possibly even a pedophile. The book, which is intended as a compendium of all that is “smutty, lecherous and blasphemous” (9) in Hogarth’s art, is nearly four hundred pages long. The tone is brisk and the author covers a large amount of material with efficacy. The first two chapters question the “traditional view” (12) of Hogarth as a simple moralist. The “bawdy facts” of the art are laid out in chapter three, while chapter four, which accounts for nearly half the book, aims to reach a deeper understanding of the artist’s motivations. Krysmanski’s claim is that Hogarth included shocking, irreverent, and sexually allusive motifs in publicly circulated images. The reasons for this would be threefold: first, because he was playing to contemporary taste; second, because the visual interest of an allusion is amplified when it is stumbled upon by the viewer. The third reason would be provocation, in that the motifs were placed as subtle bait to irritate the artist’s enemies, and notably the connoisseurs of the polite.

What are these “bawdy facts”? Mostly obscure or suggestive actions, incidental details, and occasionally highly visible or crude actions (for example, fumbling hands, exposed breasts, masturbation, urination). There are some sexual puns and scatological allusions, and many readings into the imagery of Hogarth’s possible use of blasphemy, sarcasm, and dark humor. Typically, though, we are talking about visual fragments that have been lifted from densely allusive imagery or from unpublished works and abandoned sketches. Images are never grasped in their totality or analyzed for their unity. Instead, incidental details are lifted and

combined with others of an apparently similar nature, so that gradually, through conflation and repetition, bawdy detail is turned into a bawdy nature.

Methodologically, the image is understood to function as “a mirror of the mind of the artist” (9) who was acting in conformity with contemporary society. The author’s argument rests on the assurance that there is a discernible symmetry between an artist’s intention and a visual symbol, and indeed that personal intentions can be recovered many centuries later. As recovering a contemporary *mentalité* means immersing the reader in great rafts of scholarship, it inevitably entails long digressions—back into history or sideways into society, or into other cultural materials. At work within Krysmanski’s text we also find two intertwined, mutually reinforcing myths: one repeats an established and maybe cherished or nostalgic view of the eighteenth century as “lustful and phallic” (182); the other works with the idea of the artist as a straightforward moralist, as if this concept, which dates from John Trusler’s *Hogarth Moralised* (1768), still had purchase in contemporary scholarship.

Overall, one is left with the impression that we are being told not to like Hogarth because of the subjects he chose to depict; that he was lewd and had an advanced taste for vice and smut. Aside from several claims that are impossible to substantiate (notably, that Hogarth was abusing the Foundling children rather than saving them) essentially the author recenters the use of bawdy allusion in order to recycle an earlier argument about “anti-iconography” (367) or Hogarth’s use of art-historical quotation for polemical pictorial ends. In conclusion, *Hogarth’s Hidden Parts* is a tour de force in Hogarthian bibliography, but only because its most useful contribution would be as a work of reference rather than as an art historical study. Scholars with an interest in the “everything and anything” of Hogarthian scholarship may well find the publication useful.

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ELISABETH SOULIER-DÉTIS, “*Guess at the Rest*”: *Cracking the Hogarthian Code* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2010). Pp. 232. £28.00.

In “*Guess at the Rest*” Elisabeth Soulier-Détis focuses on the serial prints that Hogarth published between 1732 and 1747, finding them full of Masonic symbols. These are “too numerous to be discarded as mere coincidence” (19). Furthermore, they are “not just scattered at random” (21) but are intertwined with the biblical and mythological iconographies that are a feature of each narrative sequence. Thus, the presence of paintings on a back wall; or the symbols placed around the borders of prints; or even more obliquely, the ways in which a secular narrative could function as a parody of a biblical source, gain “coherence and unity” (200) when read in relation to Masonic materials. According to Soulier-Détis, Freemasonry provided Hogarth with a means of topically recycling biblical and classical subjects. The main thrust of her argument, however, is concerned with demonstrating how the prints can be understood as Masonic documents that record history and ritual.