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978-1-108-07502-2 - The Genuine Works of William Hogarth: Illustrated with Biographical Anecdotes, a Chronological Catalogue, and Commentary: Volume 3

John Nichols and George Steevens

Excerpt

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ILLUSTRATIONS OF HOGARTH.

i. e.

HOGARTH ILLUSTRATED

FROM PASSAGES IN AUTHORS HE NEVER READ,
AND COULD NOT UNDERSTAND.

B

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INTRODUCTION.

UNDERNEATH the Print in Hogarth's Works called "The Discovery," is this Motto,

"Qui color albus erat, nunc est contrarius albo¹."

The pursuit of this idea has produced the following collection.

Dr. Jortin tells us, "Dr. Thirlby was once resolved to publish Shakespear, and persuaded him. Jortin, to read over that Poet with a view to mark the passages where he had either imitated Greek and Latin writers, or at least fallen into the same thoughts and expressions. Many of these allusions or coincidences," continues Jortin, "appeared; but Thirlby dropped his design, and I mine²."

It is much to be lamented that such a design came to nothing when it had got into hands so able. It appears as if Dr. Jortin had a higher opinion of the learning of Shakespear than has been entertained subsequently to the year 1766, when Dr. Farmer published his first Essay on the subject.

On the learning of Hogarth, or, more properly speaking, on his want of it, there never has been more than one opinion: it may be seen throughout Nichols's "Biographical Anecdotes of Hogarth³."

Dr. Johnson, in his Life of Prior, says, it is not always easy to determine whether similitudes proceed from accident or imitation.

¹ Ovid. Metam. II. 541.

² Jortin's Tracts, vol. II. p. 526.

³ Svo, pp. 55-56, 86, 361, 374; 4to, vol. I. pp. 234, 363. vol. II. 206, 244.

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In the present case the difficulty is at an end; and the employment is not unpleasing, thus to remark the coincidences of thoughts written at such distant periods¹ by persons who *could* not possibly imitate each other.

Swift, in his “Rhapsody on Poetry,” says,

“ Commentators view

In Homer, more than Homer knew.”

The same that has thus been said of Poets, may be said of Painters—*ut Pictura Poesis*,—and for the same reason: both draw from Nature. Without this clue, the coincidences already mentioned would be inexplicable—coincidences of thought, written at periods so distant from each other as those of Aristotle and Hogarth; especially when we know it was wholly impossible that the latter *could* imitate the former.

The education of Hogarth was so confined, that it left him deficient in common orthography; in other words, he could not spell. In his Prints we have *parti-tool* for *party-tool*, *Milicia*, *Prusia*, *volumns*, *advertisment*, *baso*, &c. &c.

Notwithstanding this, the powers of his mind dictated the “Analysis of Beauty,” which was “*worded*”² sometimes by himself, as appears by *Syclamen* for *Cyclamen* in the preface, and *Calcedonian* for *Chalcedonian*, *nuckles* for *knuckles*, and *Irish* for *Iris-stitch*, &c.

¹ The period here spoken of, exceeds 2000 years. Aristotle lived 300 years before Christ, and Hogarth died in 1764.

² Chiefly by his friends, Dr. Benjamin Hoadly, Mr. Ralph, Mr. Townley, and Dr. Morell. Nichols's 8vo, p. 51-53; 4to, vol. 1. pp. 222-225.

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Under disadvantages thus obvious, such was the fire, such the native genius of Hogarth, that he has delineated, clothed, and embodied the ideas of almost every Roman Poet, before, after, and at the Augustan age.

He has done more: as Dr. Warton says¹ in the first volume of his “*Essay on Pope*,” The works of Hogarth have more of what the Ancients called the ΗΘΟΣ in them, the *Mores*, the *Morum proprietates*, than the composition of any other Modern whatsoever.

These his Ethics are arranged with the accuracy of Aristotle, though probably he did not know such a man had ever existed. For instance, Aristotle divides Tragedy into six parts,

Μυθος, Ηθη, Λεξις, Διανοια, Οψις, (Μελαποια.)

Of these six, five may be traced in every series of Hogarth’s works, Style, Moral, Story, Sentiment, and Scene.

We find them in his *Harlot’s*, his *Rake’s Progress*; his *Marriage à la mode*, his *Industry and Idleness*, his *Stages of Cruelty*, &c. &c. “*Præcipuus ad notandos mores*,” are the words of Quintilian on Horace: they are not more applicable to him than they are to Hogarth. To him we are indebted, as Swift and Cicero say of Homer, for more than he did or *could perceive*: “*Qui locus, quæ species formæ, qui motus Hominum, qui Mulierum non ita expictus est, ut, quæ Ipse non viderit, nos ut videremus effecerit*.” The objects are before the spectator’s eyes; the ideas, many times his own,

¹ See Vol. I. page 122, 123. And see Nichols’s *8vo*, p. 65; 4to, vol. I. p. 209.

² Quint. à Rollin, Lib. X. cap. I. § VI. 1. p. 379.

³ Cicero de Homero *cæco*. V. Tusc. Quæst. 5, p. 4579. Edit. Lutetiæ, Dupuis, 1573.

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— “Sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ
*Ipsæ sibi tradit spectator*¹.”

The pictures, “Narrationes credibiles; nec historico, sed quotidiano sermone explicatæ dilucide².”

In tracing these ideas through Hogarth’s works, the Reader cannot but be struck with the falsity of the assertion that Mankind are worse now than they formerly were. On this mistake (for a mistake it is) speculative Ill-nature is apt to fall: here it loves to dwell. Declamation on the degeneracy of the age in which we live, has been the theme of every selfish writer since the use of a pen was given to Man—his prescriptive contemplation, before he knew how to delineate his ideas.

On this subject, and its examples drawn from Hogarth, Mr. Nichols says³, with equal truth and good sense, “That we are less sensual than our predecessors, I do not affirm; but, I may with truth observe, we are more delicate in pursuit of our gratifications.

— “Est quædam hîc quoque virtus⁴.”

To the case in point—

“*Ecce Pudicitia veteris vestigia nostræ*⁵!”

1. The Harlot’s Progress appeared in	-	-	1733.
2. The Rake’s Progress in	-	-	1735.
3. The Strollers dressing	-	-	1738.
4. Marriage à la Mode in	-	-	1738.

¹ Hor. Ars Poet. 131.

² Cicero. V. Prescott on Horace, Cambridge, 1773, p. 222.

³ Svo, page 214; 4to, vol. II. 121.

⁴ Horace 1 Sat. X. 8.

⁵ Juvenal VI. 14.

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If the specimens of delicacy, or of the want of delicacy, in any, indeed in all of these, are insufficient to prove what I have asserted, stronger proofs might too soon be adduced from Hogarth; and even these are, in some instances, too glaring to bear every additional light that could be thrown upon them.

“ Cætera de genere hoc, adeo sunt multa, loquacem
Delassare valent Fabium¹.”

“ Dicenda tacenda loqui”²—haud opus est.

“ Adeo muttito : placet non fieri hoc itidem, ut in Comœdiis,
Omnia omnes ubi resciscunt : hîc, quos par fuerat resciscere,
Sciunt : quos non autem scire æquom ’st, neque resciscent, neque
scient³.”

P O S T S C R I P T.

The Illustrations are in general exact quotations from the respective Authors : where they are not so, the deviations or interpolations are noticed. For these, if ever they should see the light, some apology will be necessary. The learned Reader will be puzzled, perhaps disgusted, the candid Reader annoyed, and the *gentle* Reader surprised, to find the liberties Interpolation has sometimes taken—Verses *long or short*, mutilated or barbarously extended, like victims on the bed of Procrustes, or at least like the truckle-bed of Mr. Burke⁴,

¹ Hor. 1 Sat. I. 13.

² Hor. 1 Ep. VII. 72.

³ Terent. Hecyra, A. 5. S. 4. The speech of Pamphilus to Bacchis. p. 750. Var. ed.

⁴ See his Speech on American Taxation, April 19, 1774, 4to. p. 45.

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“pigging together, heads and points,” hitched into rhyme without reason, and, as Pope says,

“Wondering how the devil they got there.”

For such licences, it is at least more modest, perhaps better in every point of view, to take shelter behind Veterans, to be covered with their shields. Three of them meet the eye; from Shakespear, Ducange, and Mr. Pennant.

“I did dislike the cut of a certain Courtier’s beard:—he sent me word he cut it to please himself.” *As You Like It.*

“This,” says Touchstone, “is called the Quip *modest*,” and it is thus paraphrased by Ducange:

“C’est pour mon plaisir, disoit Ducange, que j’étudie, et non pour être à charge à moi-meme, ou aux autres.”

Mr. Pennant’s *apology* is,

“I have condensed into it all I could, omitted nothing that suggested itself, nor amplified any thing to make it a guinea book. In a word, it is done in my own manner, from which I am grown too old to depart.”

Nov. 13, 1815.

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Clavis Hogarthiana;

OR,

ILLUSTRATIONS OF HOGARTH.

. In the arrangement of the numbers in each Plate, Fig. 1. is always opposite to the *left* hand of the Spectator. Example: In *The Rake's Progress*, Plate IV. where the Rake is arrested, Fig. 1. is the Welshman with the leek in his hat; Fig. 6. the Lamplighter; and the last Figure is the Chairman *behind* the chair, half of whom only is seen.

The references to Nichols's *Biographical Anecdotes of Hogarth*, correspond with the Third Edition, 8vo, 1785; and also with the Fourth edition, 4to, 1809.

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Reddere Personæ scit convenientia cuique¹.

Humani generis mores, tibi nôsse volenti
Sufficit².

Αἴτια δὲ τῶν πράξεων εἶναι, Διάνοια, καὶ ἦθος³.

Narrationes credibiles ; nec historico, sed prope quotidiano sermone explicatæ dilucide⁴.

¹ Hor. Ars Poet. 316.

² Juvenal VIII. 159.

³ Aristot. Poet. Κεφ. 1. (περὶ τῶν τῆς Τραγωδίας μερῶν.)

⁴ Cicero. V. Prescott's Horace, 222.