Drawing from Fancy: The Intersection of Art and Design in Mid-Eighteenth-Century London[*]

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Abstract

This paper attempts to bring the world of mid-eighteenth-century British design into fruitful conversation with contemporary art theory and practice. Taking the neighbourhood and *milieu* of the St Martin's Lane area in London as a starting point, I investigate connections between British "rococo" design and William Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty* in terms of shared formal values and contemporary implications of "modernity". I argue for a mutual indebtedness rather than "art" directing "design".

Contents

British Art History and the Early Modern Decorative Arts

[1] Art history's "contempt" for the decorative arts is rooted in distinctions that were first articulated in the Renaissance and became enshrined in subsequent academic theory and curatorial practice.[1] Locating "fine" and "minor" arts and their perceived characteristics on opposite sides of a number of sharp divides – public/private; masculine/feminine; mind/hand; symbolic value/use value – denied the historic reality of significant connections between art and design in theory and practice. The division made by Britain's new Royal Academy between the "high" arts and the "inferior" application of design to manufactures, for instance, was evidently rhetorical and intended to cement the institution's position at the top of the artistic heap.[2] This is clear from many lucrative collaborations between its students, associates, and even leading academicians with

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[*] I would like to thank Glenn Adamson, Diana Donald and Kate Grandjouan for their constructive comments on an earlier draft of the text, and Karin Kyburz for obtaining the illustrations and image permissions.

[1] Katie Scott, "Introduction: image – object – space," in: Katie Scott and Deborah Cherry, eds., *Between luxury and the everyday: decorative arts in eighteenth-century France*, Oxford 2005, 1.

[2] On this distinction as official Academy policy, see Joshua Reynolds in the first of his *Discourses*, ed. R. Wark, New Haven and London, 1975, 13.

Wedgwood, Boulton, Tassie and other "art manufacturers".[3] Indeed, as Celina Fox has recently demonstrated, many contemporaries defined the "arts" in much more comprehensive ways and yet it seems that in the context of British art and design a categorical "dulce *aut* utile", as expressed by Reynolds, has been the only model for the art historian researching the long eighteenth century.[4]

[2]   British art history has recently developed several new directions to enrich, or challenge the dominance of the persuasive "civic humanist" reading of British art established in the 1980s. None, however, has really embraced the decorative arts. In his succinct analysis of these developments, Douglas Fordham outlines three related methodologies concentrating on questions of gender, space, and Empire to help move beyond the usual male, metropolitan, and "middling" persona of the artist or art consumer.[5] But while recognition of the historical importance of female art production, for instance, has started to undermine old medium- and genre-based evaluative hierarchies, the field of professional design and the decorative arts is still largely excluded from consideration. In spite of her subtitle, Ann Bermingham for instance considers the concept of "design" and the cultural practice of drawing solely with regard to "fine art" and amateur activities.[6] Yet the notion of "design" (as mental conception) relating to the crafts and manufactures and its realisation through drawing lie at the very heart of the burgeoning British art world of the early eighteenth century. The debate surrounding them provided the impetus for the long-drawn-out campaign for the institutionalisation of British art and art training.[7]

[3]   In the following pages I'd like to place "useful" drawing at centre-stage, in the form of "design prints" published in London by and for carvers, furniture makers and silversmiths in the 1740s and 1750s – the highpoint of British "rococo".[8] In Britain such works are usually the preserve of the specialist historian of one of the decorative arts, or they have walk-on parts in the writings of print scholars or cultural geographers. I would here like to consider whether they can be brought into conversation with more mainstream art-

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[3] For William Chambers' designs for wares in *ormolu*, ceramics and silver for instance, see John Harris and Michael Snodin, eds., *Sir William Chambers: Architect to George III*, New Haven and London 1996, 159, 149.

[4] Celina Fox, *The Arts of Industry in the Age of Enlightenment*, New Haven and London 2009.

[5] Douglas Fordham, "New Directions in British Art History of the Eighteenth Century," in: *Literature Compass* 5/5 (2008), 906-917, here 908-914.

[6] Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the History of a Polite and Useful Art*, New Haven and London 2000.

[7] See my article "Design Instruction for Artisans in Eighteenth-Century Britain," in: *Journal of Design History* 12/3 (1999), 217-239, here 219.

[8] I use this style label, "rococo", throughout as convenient, if problematic, shorthand for contemporary terms like "*genre pittoresque*", "*goût moderne*", "modern taste" and "French taste". – Design prints were the principal means by which ideas about the general appearance and ornamentation of consumer goods were transmitted before photography. "Design print" is Snodin and Howard's preferred alternative to the nineteenth-century "ornament print". Michael Snodin and Maurice Howard, *Ornament: A Social History Since 1450*, London 1996, 18, note 3.

historical concerns, notably the art theory and practice of the towering artistic figure in these years, William Hogarth, whose *Analysis of Beauty* was published in 1753.

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The *Analysis of Beauty* and the British Rococo

[4] Of course, the *Analysis* has long been linked to the rococo, and it is now customary to regard Hogarth's treatise as "the nearest the rococo ever came to a theoretical justification."[9] As Paulson noted, it is exactly this perceived link between the *Analysis* and the rococo that renders the treatise baffling or inconsequential in older texts on British art: as style period terms go, the rococo had been particularly ill defined and/or negatively charged. In Wallace Jackson's account, for instance, Hogarth's *dulce*, that which gives true mental and visual pleasure, and is "best served by variety and intricacy", implies

> the rococo values of *intimacy* and *informality*, and the beautiful is frequently associated with the terms "*graceful*", "*elegant*", and "*genteel*".[10]

[5] These values appear to describe the rococo in terms of the supposed qualities of mid-century group portraiture, landscape painting and the *fête galante*, rather than interior decoration and design, where the style originated and found its precisely definable expression. This is more indicative of traditional hierarchies of genres, and of mid-twentieth-century attempts to define the rococo as an all-embracing "Enlightenment" style, than it is of an attempt to recover original contexts of use and meaning.[11] By contrast, when the rococo is understood more accurately as a style of decoration and design in this period, it is for that very reason marginalised as "minor", as is its "rationalization" in form of Hogarth's treatise, "a strangely eccentric document, a peculiar product of eighteenth-century empirical aesthetics."[12]

[6] In either case what is lost is the vital connection of the rococo to the "modernity" that was its perceived signature feature, evident in the eighteenth-century term by which the style was most commonly known to contemporaries: the "modern taste", a direct translation of the French "goût moderne".[13] By focusing on aspects of "modernity", more recent scholarship has rescued the rococo and the *Analysis* from the accusation

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[9] Michael Snodin and John Styles, eds., *Design and the Decorative Arts: Britain 1500-1900*, London 2001, 192.

[10] Wallace Jackson, "Hogarth's Analysis: The Fate of a Late Rococo Document," in: *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 6/3 (summer 1966), 543-550, here 548, quoted by Ronald Paulson, ed., *William Hogarth. The Analysis of Beauty (1753)*, New Haven and London 1997, xi.

[11] See for instance Patrick Brady, "The Present State of Studies on the Rococo," in: *Comparative Literature* 27/1 (winter 1975).

[12] Jackson, "Hogarth's Analysis," 550; see also Ellis Waterhouse, *The Pelican History of Art: Painting in Britain*, *1530-1790*, Baltimore 1953, 127; both quoted by Paulson, *The Analysis of Beauty*, xi.

[13] For rococo's "modernity," see for instance Patricia Crown, "British Rococo as Social and Political Style," in: *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23/3 (spring 1990), 269-282.

respectively of triviality (a frilly "overloading of ornament") and of insignificance in the context of eighteenth-century art theory.[14] For Paulson, as earlier in the twentieth century for Burke, Hogarth's modernity, that which unleashes the "subversive energies of the *Analysis*", consists in an aesthetics based on the observation of the "everyday world of human choice and contingency."[15] This approach Paulson characteristically roots in contemporary texts, in a comprehensive array of eighteenth-century philosophical and scientific writings, exemplifying modern empiricist tendencies of thought.[16] Interestingly, what is absent in Paulson is a reference to the more down-to-earth connection of Hogarth's aesthetics to the world of contemporary design engraving, a reference, *inter alia* to Chippendale, that had been made, if somewhat disapprovingly, by earlier scholars like Waterhouse and Sypher.[17]

[7]   For other writers from the 1990s onwards, eighteenth-century "modernity" has been understood above all in relation to a burgeoning commercial society and its associated socio-political developments. Studies of consumption are an important framework not only for the productions of contemporary design and manufactures, but also for Hogarth's *Analysis,* with its emphatic references to luxury and everyday manufactured goods, and to polite behaviour, as well as for the material culture so crucial to his "Modern Moral Subjects".

[8]   While the idea of an eighteenth-century "mass" production and consumption proposed in the 1980s has long been refuted, there is general scholarly agreement that the emergence of a moneyed and leisured "middling" sector of society greatly increased the consumer base for the products of "culture". In matters of style, the related trio of "modern"/rococo, "Chinese" and "gothic", while attracting a fair number of elite supporters, has nonetheless been regarded as particularly associated with these new audiences. This is especially the case in negative accounts of style and audience, where the rococo was perceived to be strongly linked with "new money", and where the "modern" styles were condemned by critics as the creation of jumped-up artisans, displacing the nobler productions of true artists and architects in decorative schemes appropriate to these new audiences and their shaky foundations in taste.[18]

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[14] Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, 27, quoted by Jackson, "Hogarth's Analysis," 1966, 548.

[15] Paulson, *The Analysis of Beauty*, xi.

[16] Paulson, *The Analysis of Beauty*, xii. For the association of modernity and empiricism, see also Harry Mount, "Morality, microscopy and the moderns: the meaning of minuteness in Shaftesbury's theory of painting," in: *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 21 (1998), 125-141.

[17] Wylie Sypher, *Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature*, New York 1960, 52; Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, 127, both quoted by Jackson, "Hogarth's Analysis," 548-549.

[18] See for instance the staunch Palladianist Robert Morris's attacks on the "Modern Follies" in an advertisement for *The Architectural Remembrancer …*, London, 1751. See also his spoof advertisement for "Chinese" designs, quoted in full by Elizabeth White, *Pictorial Dictionary of British 18th-century Furniture Design*, Woodbridge 1990, 41. French rococo criticism is discussed by Katie Scott, "Hierarchy, Liberty and Order: Languages of Art and Institutional Conflict in Paris (1766-1776)," in: *The Oxford Art Journal* 12/2 (1989); 59-70, here 65-66.

[9]   Seen in a positive light, however, this large, often anonymous public and its consumption enabled contemporary artists, designers and manufacturers partially to disengage from the traditional, unreliable patronage by individuals, the church or court, and it was deliberately courted by them, often via the medium of the print. From this process of emancipation at the core of the artist-patron relationship, Patricia Crown has made connections to other perceived acts of liberation linked to the "modern taste", associating the stylistic freedom of the rococo (from the authority of "classical" antique and Renaissance models) with the alleged *political* independence of "the new social class", which included also the top tier of the very craftsmen and designers who made and sold objects in the "modern taste".[19] While the precise political beliefs of mid eighteenth-century artists and craftsmen designers are impossible to reconstruct, the broader political charge of their productions has convincingly featured in recent scholarship.[20] In relation to Hogarth's theory and practice, for instance, Diana Donald has made a persuasive case for the political nature of the artist's violation of academic rules, discussing his emphasis on the "real" and the "modern", his scattered focus and displays of "variety", with which I engage in more detail below, in relation to a wider critique of fixed standards of taste.[21] She describes such critiques, expressed in texts from Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees* (1714) to Allan Ramsay's *A Dialogue on Taste* (1755), as belonging to a developing nexus of ideas that linked naturalism in art with a peculiarly "British" freedom, including the freedom from aristocratic leadership in art *and* society.[22] My PhD thesis broadly argued for the printed and published designs in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Britain as a mouthpiece for the expression of their authors' participation in debates of national importance – on "taste", on a national cultural identity, on the economic implications of design, and on the semantics of style – and Peter Nelson Lindfield has recently made a similar point about British "Gothic" furniture design as an integral part of a connection between "key intellectual, artistic and architectural debates" in the period from 1740 to 1840.[23]

[10]   In my view one of the most interesting accounts of the *Analysis* has been provided by Annie Richardson, who reads the thesis in the context of the contemporary luxury

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[19] Crown, "British Rococo," 276.

[20] Based on an understanding of the "political" as discursive, as defined by scholars like Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England*, *1715-1785*, Cambridge 1995.

[21] Diana Donald, "'This truly natural and faithful painter': Hogarth's depiction of modern life," in: D. Bindman, F. Ogée and P. Wagner, eds., *Hogarth. Representing Nature's Machines*, Manchester and New York 2001, 163-191. On "modernity" in 1720s and 30s Britain as a "synonym" for "Britishness" see also Frédéric Ogée and Olivier Meslay, "William Hogarth and Modernity," in: Mark Hallett and Christine Riding, eds., *Hogarth*, London 2006, 23-29, here 23-24.

[22] Donald, "'This truly natural and faithful painter'," particularly 174-176.

[23] Anne Puetz, *The Emergence of a Print Genre: The Production and Dissemination of the British Design Print, 1730s-1830s*, unpublished PhD thesis, Manchester Metropolitan University 2007. Peter Nelson Lindfield, "Furnishing Britain: Gothic as a national aesthetic 1740-1840," PhD thesis, University of St Andrews 2012.

debates.[24] According to Richardson, Hogarth's sympathies with the materialist, "modern" tendency within these debates explain his uniqueness among eighteenth-century writers on philosophical aesthetics: his revolutionary, amoral grounding of beauty in the "substances of the human body" and, crucially, in forms echoing these substances, i.e. in contemporary fashion, design and polite ritual (dance). Richardson's reading suggests that Hogarth's thesis makes full sense only if seen in close connection to the material pursuits, "appetites" and fashions of "modern" life – precisely those aspects that Jackson and Sypher had dismissed as the text's mistaken emphasis, its catching "life at its minor tensions, its minor exchanges".[25]

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"A Shell of Lines, Closely Connected Together"

[11]   Here, I propose to reinvestigate the connections, formal and philosophical, between Hogarth's ground-breaking treatise and the "modern taste" in contemporary design prints. Such prints, and their authors, have not been the focus of art-historical scholarship, even where there is a general acknowledgement of Hogarth's association with rococo design.[26] In the process, I hope to recover something of the overlooked conceptual distinction and symbolic value of published design. Such prints, traditionally huddling under the nineteenth-century umbrella term "engraved ornament", appear to sit in the art-historical blind spot due to their perceived utilitarianism, to the sense that they belong exclusively to the processes of object-making in other media and therefore have no artistic integrity of their own.[27] Yet, while the precise role of design prints in workshop and manufacturing processes remains to be determined, and at any rate differed from industry to industry, available data suggests that we should consider such material as *sources of inspiration* rather than as *models* for the wholesale transposition of a design into another material, which was rare.[28] More importantly, the fact of *publication*, and the expense of time and money that this involved, makes clear that their makers did not regard such works as akin to the utilitarian working drawing. Rather they saw them as vehicles for the display of inventiveness and stylistic sophistication, just as subsequent designers expressed their claim to the rank of "artist" in visual and written form,

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[24] Annie Richardson, "From the Moral Mound to the Material Maze: Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty*," in: Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, eds., *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, Basingstoke and New York 2003, 119-134.

[25] Jackson, "Hogarth's Analysis," 549. The latter phrase is Sypher's.

[26] Michael Baridon's discussion of Hogarth's *Analysis* is illustrated by one of Thomas Johnson's key designs as an example of "structural irregularity of rococo decoration", but this prompts no further analysis of the link between Hogarth's theory and contemporary published design. "Hogarth's living machines of nature and the theorisation of aesthetics," in: Bindman, Ogée and Wagner, eds., *Hogarth*, 87. Earlier, Snodin stressed the connection between (general) "rococo forms" and the "Line of Beauty" in his quote on the "ornamental" pelvis illustrated in *The Analysis*, in: *Rococo: Art and Design in Hogarth's England*, ed. Michael Snodin, London 1984, 67, cat. E6.

[27] On terminology, see note 8 above.

[28] For a brief discussion of this aspect of the function of design prints, see my PhD thesis, *The Emergence of a Print Genre*, Introduction, 20-25.

emphasising an appropriate set of skills, qualities and knowledge.[29] An "undecidable" graphic genre, in Derrida's sense, the British design print deserves to be studied in depth. In this respect, my paper and thesis benefit from interesting perspectives on the treatment of interior decoration, design and "ornament" over the past two decades. The cultural significance, and symbolic value of designed objects and spaces have been examined, alongside more conventional questions of style and technical processes, in writings by Katie Scott, Mimi Hellmann, Carolyn Sargentson, Marta Ajmar-Wollheim, Viccy Coltman, Martina Droth, Michael Snodin, John Styles, Evelyn Welch, and Amanda Vickery, among others. The domestic interior, once marginalised as a "private" and "feminine" realm apart from the "public" arena, where developments of real political, social and artistic consequence take place, is now widely recognized as a site in which important cultural practices originate and are enacted, and where people define and represent themselves through the operations of "taste".[30]

[12] The recent, interdisciplinary focus on the subjectivity and agency of "things" by material culture scholars has in fact significantly undone old divisions of objects into "works of art" and "artefacts", possessing *either* "symbolic" *or* "use" value. For a recent research project at The Courtauld, it is the question of the "cleverness" of an object, and the nature and degree of this agency that unites the study of such disparate "art" and "non-art" things as a rococo folding screen, a Morris tapestry, a fourteenth-century drinking glass, a paper model, and a colonial Mexican painting on cloth.[31]

[13] In what is still more relevant to my argument, two significant published studies have recently addressed themselves precisely to the intersection between so-called "fine" and "decorative arts": the exhibition *Taking Shape: Finding Sculpture in the Decorative Arts* (2008) and Caroline Arscott's book *William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones: Interlacings* (2008).[32] *Taking Shape* blurs the line between the "fine" and the "decorative" by making plain the absurdity of allocating objects *either* "aesthetic/symbolic" *or* "use" value: it makes, of course, perfect sense to say that we can engage with a finely carved chair other than by sitting on it, that it may be "viewed" like sculpture rather than merely consumed in everyday usage. *Interlacings*, along with Arscott's recently published contribution to the "Clever Object" project, and her paper in this special issue, go further, persuasively arguing for the ability of certain decorative arts not only to affect the viewer

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[29] See my thesis, *The Emergence of a Print Genre*, chapter 5.

[30] See a major recent research project, the AHRC Centre for the Study of the Domestic interior, and its results: a database The Domestic Interiors Database (DIDB), the exhibition "At Home in Renaissance Italy" (Victoria and Albert Museum, October 2006-January 2007) and a number of associated publications. For an introduction to the subject of the Renaissance interior, see Marta Ajmar-Wollheim, Flora Dennis and Ann Matchette, eds., *Approaching the Italian Renaissance Interior. Sources, Methodologies, Debates*, Malden MA, Oxford, Victoria (AU) 2007.

[31] Published as *The Clever Object*, ed. Matthew C. Hunter and Francesco Lucchini, special issue of *Art History* 36/3 (June 2013).

[32] *Taking Shape* was jointly organised in 2008 by the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds and the J. Paul Getty Museum, with a publication edited by Martina Droth and Penelope Curtis.

aesthetically, but to articulate the kind of themes normally associated with "high" art, or to engage with significant contemporary debates.[33] This approach radically alters our understanding of the expressive and conceptual potential of "ornament" and design. Both studies reveal a complex picture in which continuities and overlaps between different historic art practices outweigh perceived distinctions, and they set a useful model for more sophisticated analysis of historical periods, whose productions are often seen in terms of rigid divisions between "fine" and "decorative" arts.

[14] As far as my case study is concerned, the most obvious area of overlap is that of a shared neighbourhood: Hogarth lived, worked and taught cheek-by-jowl with some of the most enterprising craftsmen and designers of the period. In the vicinity of the house in Leicester Fields he inhabited from the 1730s operated more than a dozen leading carvers, gilders, designers, cabinet-makers and 'upholders'.[34] Up-market St Martin's Lane, in particular, represented a veritable microcosm of interconnected activities in the fashionable "modern" taste, with its numerous prestigious cabinet-making firms, with Slaughter's Coffee House as the hub of the rococo *milieu* and with the important meeting and training ground of "Hogarth's" St Martin's Lane Academy. Nearby, at Lebeck's Head in the Strand, the patriotic Anti-Gallican Association had been meeting since 1745, and a year after the publication of the *Analysis*, the Society of Arts, another "improvement" society with Britain's economic competitiveness very much at heart, was founded at Rawthmells Coffee House in Henrietta Street.[35]

[15] To my mind, the physical proximity of people operating in the St Martin's Lane area and its environs suggests that one should think of mid eighteenth-century art production in terms of *place* and *milieu* rather than of vertical distinctions by medium or genre.[36] Enlisting Hogarth's own image of "a thin shell, […] made up of very fine threads, closely connected together" to describe the "inner and outer surface" of a body, we might imagine a network linking eighteenth-century cultural practitioners of all kinds through shared spaces: neighbourhoods, memberships in "improvement", charitable and patriotic societies, training grounds and workshops, political, religious and masonic affiliations.[37] A more comprehensive image of the "inside" of the London art world in the mid eighteenth

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[33] Caroline Arscott, "William Morris's Tapestry: Metamorphosis and Prophecy in *The Woodpecker*," in: Hunter and Lucchini, *The Clever Object*, 608-625.

[34] For a summary, see appendix.

[35] D.G.C. Allan, "The Laudable Association of Antigallicans," in: *RSA Journal* 137/5398 (September 1989), 623-628. For a discussion of the Society of Arts' efforts in the field of eighteenth-century art and design, see my article "The Society and the 'Polite Arts' 1754-1778: 'best drawings,' 'high' art and designs for the manufactures," in: Susan Bennett, ed., *Cultivating the Human Faculties: James Barry (1741-1806) and the Society of Arts*, Bethlehem 2008, 26-49.

[36] See Douglas Fordham on "space" as a focus of art-historical analysis. "New Directions," 910. To his notion of a "history of protean internationalism" countering "civic humanism" as the dominant "methodological key to analysing eighteenth-century culture", I would add a seemingly opposed (but often related) "protean localism". Fordham, "New Directions," 913. The significance particularly of Huguenot immigration and activities in specific London areas to the development of British design is, of course, well known.

century might thereby emerge.[38] This is because such relations are generally more than the accidents of shared space. Hence I propose to discuss the contemporaneous blossoming of the design publication in London and the germination of Hogarth's radical art-theoretical thinking as related, rather than merely parallel developments.

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A Paper Culture

[16] At a basic level, what these projects have in common is the print medium – in the case of Hogarth's *Analysis*, of course, in the form of a symbiotic combination of text and image – and, more generally, the fact of publication. It is evident that from the 1720s onwards, in a drive for emancipation from the domination by foreign imports and practitioners, British artists and architects used publication as a means of demonstrating native abilities, to establish themselves socially and professionally, and to reposition themselves vis-à-vis patronage at home. By the 1740s, men like James Gibbs and William Hogarth – not to mention Alexander Pope – had successfully demonstrated the advantages of replacing or supplementing unreliable one-to-one patronage by an appeal to the wider public via the printed product.[39] With the encouragement of the copyright acts respectively of 1709 and 1735 ("Hogarth's Act"), authorship became an increasingly viable activity.[40] In the context of the print market, the self-publishing engraver had emerged as a distinct artistic personality in opposition to the jobbing engraver, slavishly dependent on a printseller.[41] The book and print trades also benefited greatly from important improvements in the country's infrastructure and communication networks.[42]

[17] It is this very "paper culture", (John Feather speaks of an "explosion" of the book trade following 1710) that I wish to highlight, together with the "design debate" discussed below, as the main driving force behind the sharp increase in British design publications from the 1740s.[43] This is not just an argument about the circular or reciprocal nature of the book and print trade, in which an obviously profitable trade gave incentive to ever

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[37] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 21, quoted from Ronald Paulson's 1997 edition (see note 10 above). Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent references to Hogarth's *Analysis* are to this edition. – With several other scholars, I am discussing the possibility of a Covent Garden "neighbourhood" project, to which contributors bring their specialist knowledge on aspects of mid eighteenth-century British art and design history to produce a network of new links.

[38] An image contributing to Fordham's aim for a "more inclusive notion of artistic agency and reception" although the contribution of craftsmen-designers is not one he envisages. Fordham, "New Directions," 908.

[39] For Gibbs, see for instance Dora Wiebenson, "Documents of Social Change: Publications about the Small House," in: Ralph Cohen, ed., *Studies in Eighteenth-century British Art* and *Aesthetics*, Berkeley 1985, 82-106, here 83, 91.

[40] John Feather, "The Publishers and the Pirates: British Copyright Law in Theory and Practice, 1710-1775," in: *Publishing History* 22 (1987), 5-32.

[41] Timothy Clayton, *The English Print 1688-1802*, New Haven and London 1997, 16.

[42] Clayton, *The English Print*, 119-121.

[43] David Bindman's translation of the term "*papiernes Alte*" by the German physicist and writer Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, quoted by Ogée in Bindman, Ogée and Wagner, *Hogarth*, 3.

further publications. Rather, taking up Ogée's notion of British society as writing "itself up profusely in order to represent itself as it wished […] to be", I regard the production of design prints as part of that self-defining activity: the formation of a British cultural identity.[44] The impetus to publish on matters of design, which, I would argue, exceeded motives of financial gain, arose from a process of emancipation among certain crafts- and tradesmen, which mirrored that of artists and architects. I see these crafts- and tradesmen emerging as part of a cultural marketplace, which is usually discussed in relation to "high" or at least representational art in Britain. If, as Maxine Berg has pointed out, the "middling ranks" expressed their cultural and social aspirations through the acquisition of particular commodities, it is surely true that the producers and mediators of designed goods could lay claim to these aspirations, to "culture, taste and style", too.[45]

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Drawing From Fancy

[18]   Printed designs, as Gibbs had already suggested in 1728, functioned as a kind of public "exhibition" of the individual's inventive powers and professional abilities.[46] The publication of native design prints by craftsmen, which took off properly in the 1740s, was, I argue, the equivalent of contemporary artists' drive towards public exhibitions, a drive in which Hogarth was, of course, one of the main agents. What artists, architects and designers wanted to demonstrate above all was their ability to "draw from fancy", as Hogarth put it, rather than merely to execute.[47] This aspiration needs to be seen against the background of a long-standing view, at home and abroad, that British artists were "dull" at invention; plodding copyists of the concepts of others at best and certainly inferior to the artists of Britain's old rival, France.[48] This was not just a matter of national prestige, but of real material concern: the relationship between design and profit loomed large in contemporary discourse. In Robert Campbell's popular careers guide, *The London Tradesman*, for instance, the economic imperative of the invention of ever new patterns is reiterated again and again: Campbell paints a rather sardonic portrait of the successful tailor ("[…] his Wit not a Wool-gathering, but a Fashion-hunting […] he must be a perfect *Proteus*, change shapes as often as the Moon […]"[49]), while of the cabinet-maker he wrote:

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[44] Bindman, Ogée and Wagner, Hogarth, 3.

[45] Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, eds., *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850*, Manchester and New York 1999, 8.

[46] James Gibbs, dedication of his *Book of Architecture* to the Duke of Argyll and Greenwich, 1728, n.p.

[47] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 22.

[48] See for instance Christopher Wren in a letter to the school treasurer of Christ's Hospital, quoted by R. Carline, *Draw They Must: A History of the Teaching and Examining of Art,* London 1968, 36. See also the Abbé Le Blanc in *Letters on the English and French* Nations, London 1747, 50. Hogarth's rage at what he perceived to be British patrons' kneejerk preference for French painters, such as Jean-Baptiste Van Loo, is well known.

[49] Robert Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, London 1747, 192.

> A Youth who designs to make a Figure in this Branch must learn to draw; for upon this depends the Invention of new Fashions, and on that the Success of his Business: He who first hits upon any new Whim is sure to make by the Invention before it becomes common in the Trade; but he that must always wait for a new Fashion till it comes from *Paris*, or is hit upon by his Neighbour, is never likely to grow rich or eminent in his Way.[50]

[19] An ability to come up with ever new designs was crucial to help the craftsman compete with the French, whose superiority in design was based on the widespread, institutionalized teaching of draughtsmanship in France:

> Drawing, or Designing is another Branch of Education that ought to be acquired early, and is of general Use in the lowest mechanic Arts. This is but little practised in *England;* and I take this Neglect to be the chief, if not the only Reason, why *English* Workmen are so much inferior to Foreigners, especially the *French*. This is the best Reason can be assigned why *English* Men are better at improving than finding out new Inventions. The *French* King is so sensible of the great Advantage of Drawing, that he has, at the public Expence [sic], erected Academies for teaching it in all the great Cities in his Dominions; […].[51]

[20] Here are the key concerns of a debate on design that had been in the making since the seventeenth century, and was at its height at the time of Campbell's writing: the need to compete with France in the production of luxury goods, the importance of "design" to the success of these goods, and the inability of the English to design because of the lack of a widespread instruction in draughtsmanship.[52]

[21] In spite of a somewhat prosaic focus on the nexus of design and profit, notions of an "enliven'd fancy", and protean inventiveness echoed an older and more venerable understanding of design: bringing into play the Renaissance definition of "disegno" as the visible expression of the artist's first thoughts on paper, embodiment of his intellectual, rather than manual, labour.[53] In Britain, this idea had been appropriated by theorists and practitioners such as Jonathan Richardson in support of indigenous painters' claim to professional status.[54] The further dissemination of this idea in more accessible form, including numerous semi-academic drawing books published from the early decades of the eighteenth century onwards, also brought it within reach of the ambitious craftsman. In Campbell's *London Tradesman*, for instance, the most "genteel" occupations are inevitably those with the greatest requirement of "design".[55] Carving in particular was regarded as "a genteel Profession, and […] properly a Part of Sculpture", as well as a

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[50] Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, 171.

[51] Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, 20-21.

[52] On the development of the design debate, see for instance Charles Saumarez Smith, *The Rise of Design: Design and the Domestic Interior in Eighteenth-Century England*, London 2000, 118-124.

[53] On drawing "enlivening the fancy" see for instance the Society of Arts' offer of premiums for drawings, quoted in my article "Design Instructions for Artisans ", 232.

[54] *The Works of Mr Jonathan Richardson…*, corrected and prepared for the Press by his Son Mr. J. Richardson, London 1773, 77, 181.

[55] See his remarks, among others, on the goldsmith, *The London Tradesman*, 1747, 142; the architect, 157; the mason, 159; the carver, 160; the cabinet-maker, 171.

highly profitable one, and one that demanded a "natural genius" for, and early application to, drawing.[56] It is therefore not surprising that, among craftsmen, the ambitious project of native architects of publishing their own designs, that had begun with Gibbs's *Book of Architecture* (1728) should have first been emulated by a carver, Matthias Lock.[57] Wildly fluttering, spikily excrescent and frothing forms of ornament – such as we find them in works by Lock and Johnson discussed below – have repeatedly been described, without much explanation, as a characteristic expression of the *English*, as opposed to the *French*, rococo.[58] I regard the development of this unprecedented stylistic elaboration – the outward marker of an untrammelled imagination – as the craftsman-designer's rejoinder to the traditional notion that the British were "dull" at design by comparison to the French, and as a simultaneous claim to "artistic" status in the context of the mind and hand divide at home.[59]

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Displays Of "Disegno": Matthias Lock

[22]   *Six Sconces*, the earliest of a series of sets of engraved designs appeared in 1744, when Lock was in his thirties and at the height of his career: as an unusually talented representative of a highly regarded trade, Lock, as Heckscher suggested, initiated his programme of published designs out of dissatisfaction with the low status and anonymity of the craftsman.[60] Lock literally stamped his name on the fashionable "modern taste", marking nearly every one of his prints with his authorship (M. Lock "fecit" or "inv.") and initially also his execution ("del.", "Sculp."). His audience probably consisted of a relatively small circle of specialists, of "upholders", cabinet-makers, fellow carvers and ambitious apprentices, clustered around his neighbourhood in the Covent Garden area.[61]

[23]   While small in printrun and restricted in its distribution, Lock's publication venture was nonetheless aspirational as well as inspirational.[62] In terms of style, the set of 1744,

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[56] Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, 160.

[57] See Morrison Heckscher's comprehensive account of the bibliography of Lock's – and his some-time partner Henry Copland's – published designs, "Lock and Copland: A Catalogue of the Engraved Designs," in: *Furniture History* 15 (1979), 1-23. My own thoughts on Lock's printed sets are much indebted to Heckscher's research which I set into the context of artisanal ambition relevant to this paper.

[58] Michael Snodin, "Trade Cards and English Rococo," in: Charles Hind, ed., *The Rococo in England: A Symposium*, London 1984, 82-103, here 88. Also Snodin, *Rococo*, 1984, 31-32.

[59] A view shared by Matthew Craske in "Plan and Control: Design and the Competitive Spirit in Early and Mid-Eighteenth-Century England," in: *Journal of Design History* 12/3 (1999), 187-216, here 199-200.

[60] Heckscher, "Lock and Copland," 2. On the Lock family see Helena Hayward, "A Unique Rococo Chair by Matthew Lock," in: *Apollo* (October 1973), 291.

[61] However, he is known to have sold impressions at least of *A Book of Ornaments* (1745) through the map and printseller Peter Griffin at the Three Crowns & Dial in Fleet Street. Clayton, *The English Print*, 110, fig. 124.

[62] See Lock's influence on Thomas Johnson in James Whittle's workshop, where they were both employed. Jacob Simon, "Thomas Johnson's 'The Life of the Author'," in: *Furniture History* 39 (2003), 1-64, here 3-4.

consisting of six numbered plates of designs for sconces, admittedly reveals a still somewhat impersonal treatment of the fashionable rococo, with a standard repertoire of scrolls, *rocaille*, foliage, dragons, masks and the like, applied rather regularly to solid, mainly symmetrical shapes. Nonetheless, the ambitiousness of Lock's display of his inventive abilities – *Six Sconces* was the first patternbook for carvers' work in the "modern taste" to be published in Britain – is evident in the comparatively large size of the plates, in the high price of three shillings for only six designs, and in the employment of a skilled writing engraver for the title, which, although terse, included a flamboyant rendering of the author's name. By the time he published the large, identically priced designs for *Six Tables* in 1746, Lock's handling of the "modern" idiom was more assured, and more intricate: seemingly effortless in the way it burst forth from the overall furniture shapes. It displayed, in elaborate form, the "flame-like energy and movement" of the ornamentation of his mature work to 1752.[63] (fig. 1) This body of work, which was also characterised by a fashionable asymmetry, included the small *Book of Ornaments* of 1745 (cartouche motifs); a single, large cartouche of 1746; several tradecards, and two undated sets of about 1746: *A New Drawing Book of Ornaments, Shields… &c.*, (a compendium of fashionable ornamentation shown in detailed close-up) (fig. 2), and the foliage primer, *The Principles of Ornament, or the Youth's Guide to Drawing of Foliage*. (fig. 4a)
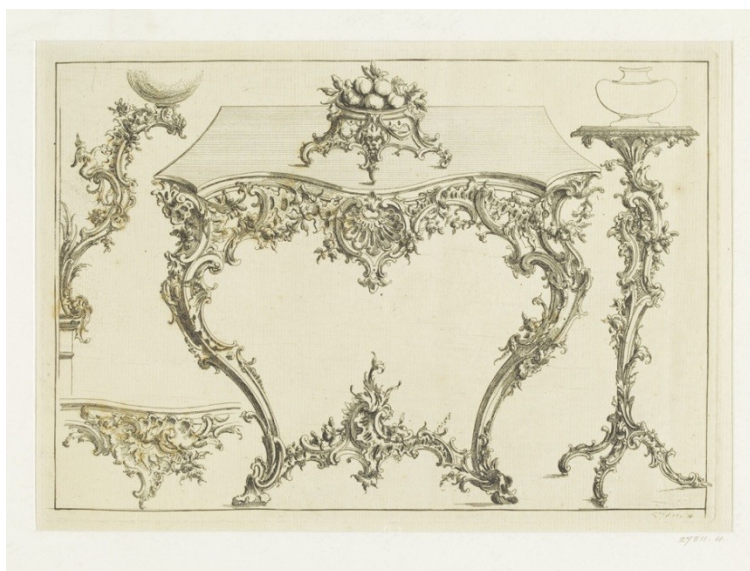
1 Matthias Lock, unnumbered plate from *Six Tables*, 1746, etching.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London museum number 27811:4.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

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[63] Heckscher, "Lock and Copland," 2.

2 Matthias Lock, unnumbered plate from *A new Drawing Book of Ornaments*, c. 1746, here shown as plate 3 of a reissue by John Weale 1858-1859, etching. Victoria and Albert Museum, London museum number E3875-1907. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

[24]   In the trajectory of Lock's published designs, these works of the 1740s are best described as the carver's exhibition of "disegno", as an embodiment of his claim to artistic status and to inventive genius in the "modern taste".[64] Rather than "useful" pieces of furniture (such as the sconces and tables of 1744 and 1746), the majority of the works produced by Lock in the 1740s represent a virtuoso display of the characteristic, and complex, elements of the new style – the asymmetric cartouches, *rocaille*, scrolls, and raffle foliage – in his own interpretation of vigorous, flame-like shapes, and rendered in a particularly free and loose etching technique.[65] The employment of the latter was not just a fast and cost-effective way for Lock to put his designs into the public domain. More importantly, etching had for some time been considered "a kind of drawing", as Jonathan Richardson had put it in *An Essay on the Art of Criticism*, and came increasingly to be viewed, like drawing, as the visual expression of the artist's conceptual processes.[66] The

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[64] Lock's last two publications, of the 1750s, continued to proclaim his superior abilities as a designer and craftsman, yet are of a distinctly different character. More polished, less personal, professionally engraved rather than etched, presenting "real" pieces of furniture and ultra-fashionable *chinoiseries*, they are printed commodities proper. Crucial to this development, I believe, was the mutual influence and the friendly competition between Lock and the engraver Henry Copland.

[65] The exception is the undated tradecard of Thomas Harper, copper plate printer and stationer, which Heckscher dates to the 1740s on stylistic grounds, but which was professionally engraved by J. Evans.

[66] Richardson, *An Essay on the Art of Criticism*, 234. By the time of William Gilpin's influential *Essay upon Prints* of 1768, etching was widely regarded as an art characterized by "unlimited freedom", as opposed to the workmanlike qualities of engraving. See William Gilpin, *Essay upon Prints*, London 1768, 50, 53, 54. As usual, such notions were derived from French art theory: compare the editions of 1645 and 1745 of Abraham Bosse's *Traicté des Manières de graver en taille Douce sur L'Airin* for a radical re-evaluation of the respective qualities of etching and engraving. The alleged correspondence between the aesthetic properties of drawings and etchings (and related techniques) was exploited in the puffs of commercial printmakers like John Baptist

freer and less laboured the drawing (and by extension the etching), the more evident was the "living image" of the artist's spirit, as the influential writer Dézallier d'Argenville intimated in his remarks on the "true" connoisseur:

> [il] voit dans *un croquis*, *la manière de penser d'un grand maître*, pour characteriser chaque objet avec peu de traits; son imagination animée par le beau feu qui règne dans le dessin, perce à travers ce que y manque; […].[67]

[25]   In this context it is tempting to see in Lock's "inimitable etched hand", resulting in an appearance "more free-hand sketch than finished drawing", an aesthetic significance beyond the commercial advantage of cutting out the professional printmaker: an avoidance, rather, of the mechanic intermediary, and a means of imposing his creative personality on the new style in the most immediate way possible.[68]

[26]   We have evidence to suggest that Lock succeeded in being recognized as an "artist" by peers and potential employers. In his autobiography, the carver Thomas Johnson makes much of the inspiration given to him by Lock, whom he describes, in characteristically chauvinistic manner, as "the famous Matthias Lock, a most excellent Carver, and reputed to be the best Ornament draughts-man *in Europe*."[69] This praise was echoed shortly after Lock's death by the leading upholder James Cullen. Then working on an interior decorative project in the neoclassical style, Cullen asked an unknown correspondent to treat the drawings he enclosed as "valuable being designed and drawn by the famous Mr Matt Lock recently deceased who was reputed the best Draftsman in that way that had ever been in England."[70]

[27]   It is, however, worth remembering that it is via his prints that Lock's gifts as a draughtsman and his vivid interpretation of the "modern" taste circulated most widely, and lastingly. That these prints were much sought-after, even a couple of decades after rococo's heyday, is suggested by the avid collection and re-issue of Lock plates by the leading "design" printseller Robert Sayer in the 1760s, by the production of piracies and imitations, and by the repeated publication of unrelated designs under a Lock title-plate.[71]

Jackson, indicating the extent to which such views were prevalent among trade and craftsmen. See Jackson's *An Essay on the Invention of Engraving and Printing in Chiaro Oscuro, As Practised by Albert Durer, Hugo di Carpi &c…*, London 1754, 6.

[67] The notion of the drawing as the "living image" of the artist's spirit is Roger de Piles's. *Idée du Peintre Parfait*, Paris 1699, quoted by Carol Gibson-Wood, *Studies in the Theory of Connoisseurship from Vasari to Morelli*, New York and London 1988, 69. De Piles's work was translated into English as early as 1706 by Banbrigg Buckeridge as *The Art of Painting.* Antoine Joseph Dézallier d'Argenville, *Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres…*, 3 vols, Paris 1745-52, I, lxi-lxii, quoted by Gibson-Wood, *Studies,* 1988, 80.

[68] Heckscher's description of Lock's hand, "Lock and Copland", 2.

[69] Simon, "Thomas Johnson," 3, emphasis added.

[70] Heckscher, "Lock and Copland," 5.

[71] For details see my thesis, *The Emergence of a Print Genre*, chapter 4, "'*Of Each a Great Variety*': The Printseller's contribution to the development of the British design print, 1750s - 1760s and beyond".
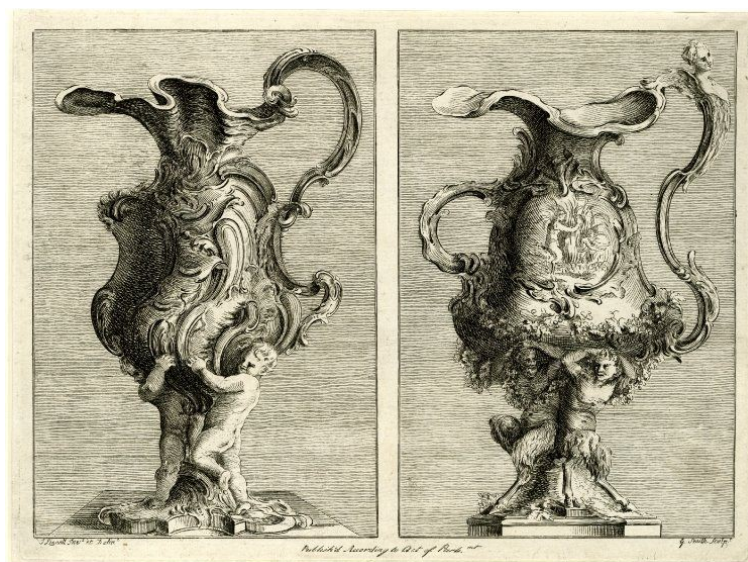
3 Gabriel Smith after John Linnell, two of five (?) unnumbered plates
from *A new Book of Ornaments useful for Silversmiths, &c.*, c. 1755,
etching, 22.1 x 22.9cm. British Museum, London, museum number
1913, 1216.28. © Trustees of the British Museum

[28]   The desire to display "disegno" may also explain the oddity that is John Linnell's *A New Book of Ornaments*.[72] (fig. 3) Linnell did not generally publish his own designs, at least not in his main field of activity, cabinet-making. Moreover, if Linnell intended to take advantage of the scarcity of native design prints for silversmiths, – a field dominated by French publications and foreign practitioners – the eccentricity of his designs, which Snodin describes as an exercise in "extreme Rococo", would appear to be counterproductive.[73] They certainly had very little influence on contemporary British silver production; a single condiment set was made by the London silversmith Arthur Annesley from Linnell's book in the designer's lifetime.[74] The uniqueness of *A New Book* has been attributed to the combination of unusual sources consulted by the designer.[75] Certainly, Linnell was somewhat out on a limb as a designer in a field outside his main activity of cabinet-making; however, the fact remains that he selected his sources deliberately and must have been aware of their unusual nature in the context of contemporary silver production.[76] Rather than being an aberration, Linnell's vibrant interpretation of the rococo – with its freely swirling forms, its *rocaille* and foliage seemingly melting into the body and its sculptural quality, reminiscent of Meissonnier – indicates that the set was a

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[72] The set consists of a title and at least five plates, it is undated; Snodin believes it to be of c. 1755 and notes an edition dated 1760 recorded by Ward-Jackson. Snodin, *Rococo*, 122, cat. G41. The prints were made after Linnell's designs by Gabriel Smith.

[73] Snodin, *Rococo*, 122, cat. G41.

[74] British Galleries, Victoria and Albert Museum, Museum no. M.26A-19. A century later, Robert Garrard II made a rococo-revival coffee pot inspired by Linnell's designs.

[75] Only prints by Meissonnier relate directly to the silversmith's profession; others included *morceaux de fantaisie*, prints by Jean Le Pautre, grotesque vases by Stefano della Bella, and even a furniture design by William Ince. Snodin, *Rococo*, 22, cat. G41.

[76] He was associated with a working goldsmith, Richard Triquet. See Christopher Gilbert: *The Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale*, 2 vols, London 1978, vol. I, 73.

vanity project in the best sense: a demonstration that this English designer was capable of unbounded imagination, the very quality usually denied to his countrymen. The fact that designs were sometimes produced as autonomous works, without a view either to practical applications or to commercial viability, points to their ability to serve a purely symbolic and rhetorical purpose.

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Abstraction: Hogarth's "Visual Mnemonics" and the Principles of Ornament

[29] There is a close correspondence between Lock's set of drawing exercises utilising the "raffle" leaf and Hogarth's ideas about the "parsley leaf", illustrated in fig. 37, plate I of the *Analysis* (top right).[77] The artist's remarks on the parsley leaf "from whence a beautiful foliage in ornament was originally taken" (i.e. the raffle leaf) mirror the thinking behind Matthias Lock's *The Principles of Ornament, or the Youth's Guide to Drawing of Foliage* of c. 1746. Published at the time when Hogarth was developing his art-theoretical concepts it seems that the idea originates with Lock rather than with the artist. Compare Hogarth's passage

> The parsley-leaf […] is divided into three distinct passages; which are again divided into other odd numbers; and this method is observ'd, for the generality, in the leaves of all plants and flowers, the most simple of which are the trefoil and the cinquefoil.

[30] to Lock's caption

> Upon this simple Principle all kind of Foliage is form'd & upon the well understanding these first eight Pages depends the knowledge of Foliage.[78] (figs. 4ab)

4a Matthias Lock, plate 2 of *The Principles of Ornament, or the Youth's Guide to the Drawing of Foliage*, c. 1746, here shown in a reissue of c. 1765 by Robert Sayer, etching, 13.4 x 20cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1934, accession number 34,90.2. © 2013. Image copyright The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource/Scala, Florence

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[77] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 44.

[78] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 44. Lock's text is the caption to plate II of his exercises.
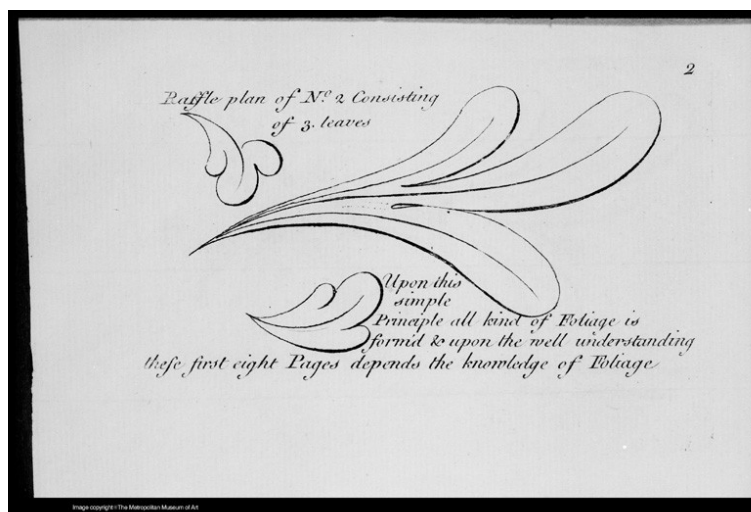
4b Matthias Lock, plate 1 (title) of *The Principles of Ornament, or the Youth's Guide to the Drawing of Foliage*, c. 1746, here shown in a reissue of c. 1765 by Robert Sayer, etching. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, museum number 16366:1. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

[31]   The only difference is that Lock demonstrates the "Principle" in question, the progressive subdivision of each of the raffle leaf's "three distinct passages" in visual rather than written form over eight plates. The designer's progressive development of the raffle leaf ornament, from a simple to a very complex shape, brings to my mind the step-by-step construction of body parts in academic drawing books like Odoardo Fialeti's *Il vero modo per dissegnar tutte le parti, et membra del corpo humano* (Venice, 1608).[79] The very ability to perceive a shape as simple as the raffle leaf in nature's complex foliages implies an analytical skill on the part of the designer or artist, and whether complex forms are created, or reduced to their barest essential – such as Hogarth's "serpentine line of beauty and grace" – the exercise is mental before it is manual.

[32]   The emphasis on "principle" or "system" in Hogarth's *Analysis* as well as in contemporary ornamental drawing exercises is striking. The cabinet-making partnership of William Ince and John Mayhew, for instance, issued a collection of their designs in 1759, entitled *The Universal System Of Household Furniture* with a preface that included three pages of essential "Specimens of Ornament for Young Practitioners in Drawing". The second of these plates contains a large and complex foliage that is shaped like an inverted "S" – quite clearly the epitome of Hogarth's "serpentine line" – and bears a caption that explicitly connects the plates (and the book more widely) with Hogarth's ideas: "A Systimatical [sic] Raffle Leaf from the Line of Beauty".[80]

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[79] See my "Design Instruction for Artisans," 226.

[80] Illustrated in "Design Instruction for Artisans," 226; also in Glenn Adamson, *The Invention of Craft,* London, New York 2013, 17, where the emphasis on a "process of dissection" for craft "description and management" is discussed.

[33] The very purpose of Hogarth's text was to uncover "what the principles are in nature, by which we are directed to call the forms of some bodies beautiful" and to do so in an *analytical* manner. [81]

[34] The implication of this focus on "principle" and "system" is clear: if something is not understood in terms of its underlying principles, it can never be properly known at all, and the artist or designer remains an accomplished copyist at best. By contrast, the process of reduction to "principle", – what Paulson described as Hogarth's "visual mnemonics" – is what allows the artist not only to recreate from memory what is not before his eyes but also to "invent" altogether.[82]

> He who will thus take the pains of acquiring perfect ideas of the distances, bearings, and oppositions of several material points and lines in the surfaces of even the most irregular forms, will gradually arrive at the knack of recalling them into his mind when the objects are not before him […] and [they] will be of infinite service to those who *invent and draw from fancy*, as well as enable those to be more correct who draw from the life.[83]

[35] In the *Analysis,* empirically observed and analysable principle is expressly opposed to mindless learning by rote: in his preface, Hogarth writes that "unless it were known systematically, the whole business of grace could not be understood."[84] And again in the introduction,

> […] they [readers] are in a much fairer way […] of gaining a perfect knowledge of the elegant and beautiful in artificial, as well as natural forms, by considering them in *a systematical, but at the same time familiar way, than those who have been prepossess'd by dogmatic rules, taken from the perfomances of art only*; […].[85]

[36] "Dogmatic rules" here clearly refer to the traditional principles of "high" art as codified by French seventeenth-century art theorists and more recently, and closer to home, expressed by the Earl of Shaftesbury.[86] By implication therefore, design on the basis of "principle" is accessible to all observant and intelligent men (and women), whereas design relying on "dogma" requires admittance to elite and necessarily exclusive institutions, such as art academies on the French model.[87] The appeal of Hogarth's

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[81] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 17.

[82] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 22.

[83] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 22, emphasis added.

[84] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 3.

[85] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 18, emphasis added.

[86] For Hogarth's much-mentioned opposition to an academy on the French model, see for instance Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth, vol. II: High Art and Low, 1732-1750*, New Brunswick 1992, 13-15. Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftsbury, *A notion of the historical draught or tablature of the judgment of Hercules*, London 1713.

[87] At stake here was the question of who could legitimately lay claim to "good" taste, on which the production and perception of "good design" depended. Whether this quality was innate to all, to some, or pertained in particular to those with a classical education and independence of means was the crucial point of discussion in eighteenth-century debates on taste. Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting: The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England 1680-1768*, New Haven and London 1988, 27-50.

political aesthetics to ambitious artisanal audiences is plausible and appears to be borne out by Ince and Mayhew's reference to the "Line of Beauty" and by the mixed membership of artists, designers and craftsmen at the St Martin's Lane Academy in these years.[88]

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Formal Beauty: Hogarth's *Analysis* and the Design Print in the "Modern Taste"

[37]   In spite of what appears to be the borrowing of Lock's raffle leaf concept, rococo ornament as such plays a minor role in the illustrations to Hogarth's *Analysis*, nor is there a reference to Lock – or indeed, to any other contemporary artist or designer. But this is entirely in keeping with Hogarth's need to be seen as the originator of new trends. Having pulled himself up from a lowly artisanal *milieu* by his own superior powers (above all of invention), he jealously guarded the hard-won epithet of artist and was evidently uninterested in spreading artistic knowledge down the ranks of trade- and craftsmen.[89]

[38]   However, it is impossible that he should have been unaware of the exciting developments in contemporary design, the unparalleled creative freedom in the published works of Lock and later of Thomas Johnson and Thomas Chippendale which were produced within his own St Martin's Lane neighbourhood. The original, French, rococo idiom as such was, of course, familiar to him, having been popularised in the London art world by some of his own fellow St Martin's Lane Academicians, above all the French illustrator, designer and drawing master Hubert-Francois Gravelot and the Swiss-born chaser George Michael Moser.[90]

[39]   It is indisputable that the *Analysis* was first thought of in the mid-1740s around the time that designs by Lock and Copland were originally published.[91] And it is unlikely that contemporary craft designers in turn should have been unaware of Hogarth's apparently much discussed evolving theory.[92] Hogarth's theory would have been of particular appeal to contemporary designers on two counts: firstly, as Joseph Burke stated long ago, it was

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[88] Craftsmen's membership In St Martin's Lane Academy is still a focus of research; the silversmith Nicholas Sprimont, and the chaser and enameller George Michael Moser taught at the Academy, Chippendale may have been a student there, while John Linnell more certainly was. On Linnell see Christopher Christie, *The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century*, Manchester 2000, 236. For a succinct summary of our knowledge about the Academy, see Snodin, Rococo, 30. For subscribers, see Ilaria Bignamini, *The Accompaniment to Patronage. A study of the origins, rise and development of an institutional system for the arts in Britain 1692-1768*, unpublished PhD thesis, The Courtauld Institute of Art, 1988, 624-631.

[89] See his resentment of the efforts made in respect of artisanal design instruction by the Society of Arts, to which he briefly belonged. John Ireland, *A Supplement to Hogarth illustrated; compiled from his original manuscripts, in the possession of John Ireland, …*, London 1798, 93.

[90] Snodin, "English Rococo and its Continental origins," in: Snodin, *Rococo*, 27-33.

[91] Hogarth refers to the engraving of his *Self-portrait with Pug*, "[…] in the year 1745, [… as] a frontispiece to my engraved works, in which I drew a serpentine line lying on a painter's pallet, with these words under it, THE LINE OF BEAUTY." Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 6; cf. ibid., note 14.

[92] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 6. As far as the published *Analysis* is concerned, we do not have a subscription list and therefore no precise idea who owned a copy. However, an abridged version also appeared in *The London Chronicle* for 1761, May 21-23, 491-493. This may well have been seen by designers of later publications, including Chippendale's 3rd ed. of the *Director* (1762).

"the first work in European literature to make formal values both the starting-point *and* basis of a whole aesthetic theory."[93] Where form ("the line of beauty") – rather than elevating narrative – was centre-stage, conventional academic hierarchies of genre and medium were irrelevant. In addition, by relating his principles explicitly to "compositions of all kinds *whatever*; […]", natural and man-made, and by drawing his examples from every-day experience and objects at least as much as from "fine" art, Hogarth provided the "modern taste" in design and interior decoration with a *theoretical* and thereby implicitly ennobling basis.[94]

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The Line of Beauty and Grace

[40]   Hogarth's fundamental aesthetic component, the "bending" and "twisting" "serpentine" line undoubtedly evokes the essential rococo S-shape, occasionally inverted and usually plastic, presenting the viewer with an intimation of winding three-dimensional form. (fig. 5)

5 Henry Copland, title plate from *A new Book of Ornaments, Very Necessary for the Instruction of those Unacquainted with the useful Part of Drawing, published by Robert Sayer*, before 1754, etching, 31.2 x 20.5cm. Metropolitan Museum, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1934, accession no. 34.90.12. © Metropolitan Museum, New York. http://www.metmuseum.org

[41]   The artist's detailed description of how to compose with the "serpentine line" plausibly corresponds to the design of a rococo object: his principle of utilising constant variations in distance between individual parts of the design perfectly describing rococo asymmetry – figures irreducible to mathematical formulae:

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[93] Quoted by Paulson in his edition of Hogarth's *Analysis*, xii.

[94] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 23, emphasis added.

> When you would compose an object of a great variety of parts, let several of those parts be distinguish'd by themselves, by their remarkable difference from the next adjoining, so as to make each of them, as it were, one well-shap'd quantity or part, […].[95]

[42]   Not surprisingly, for Hogarth, the ambitious chronicler of human behaviour, the "serpentine" line is considered to be most relevant to the representation of the human body. However, he also establishes analogies between "ornamental" body parts, such as the "ossa innominata" (*Analysis,* plate II, fig. 60) and then current rococo ornament. Indeed, the latter is seen to be inspired by the natural forms of the human physiology, such as the "twisting" of muscles around bones.

> How ornamental these bones appear, […] by adding a little foliage to them, may be seen in fig. [61, *Analysis*, plate II, bottom] – such shell-like [*rocaille*] winding forms, mixt with foliage, twisting about them, are made use of in all ornaments; a kind of composition calculated merely to please the eye.[96]

[43]   This suggestion of the natural origins of rococo ornament, in something so fundamental and essentially universal as the construction of human bone and muscle, is noteworthy at a time when the style's growing band of critics, in France and also in Britain, alleged its bizarre and absurd, as well as unclassical character.[97] When parts of the human body are naturally composed of "serpentine" lines, the construction of man-made objects in the same way must be legitimate and just.[98]

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Infinite Variety

[44]   The key characteristic of the "serpentine line" is its inherent capacity, in combination with other serpentine, and "waving" lines to "raise in the mind the ideas of all *the variety of forms* imaginable."[99] As a concept, "variety" does not originate with Hogarth, but dates back to the Renaissance when "varietà" denoted formal abundance and was opposed to monotonous sameness. "Agreeable variety" is a very important quality in influential treatises by such writers on art as Charles Alphonse du Fresnoy and Gerard de Lairesse, the English translations of whose books popularised Continental art theory in England from the latter part of the seventeenth century.[100] Particularly in the form of excerpts published in the myriad popular drawing books of the period, such ideas easily circulated among London's artists and craftsmen.[101]

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[95] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 44.

[96] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 52.

[97] Katie Scott, *The Rococo Interior*: *Decoration and Social Spaces in Early Eighteenth-Century France*, New Haven and London 1995, 252-265 and note 18 above.
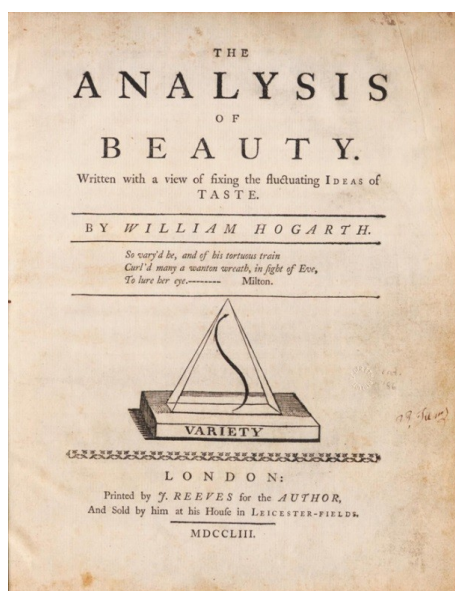
[98] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 53.

[99] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 17, emphasis added.

[100] See for instance John Dryden's translation of Du Fresnoy, *De Arte Graphica. The Art of Painting*, London 1695, 19 where "variety in the figures" is a prerequisite of beauty in art.

[101] See for instance Carington Bowles's *New Preceptor in Drawing; … very necessary and useful for all Drawing, Boarding Schools, &c. &c. [with] an Introduction to Drawing*; …, translated from the

[45]   The ability to produce "variety" – in figures, poses, expressions and detail – was regarded as an index of the artist's imagination and ability to "invent". To the viewer it was above all a matter of pleasure, an "agreeable" engagement of eyes and mind, the desire for which Hogarth, drawing on then current Lockean philosophy, interpreted as a fundamental trait of human psychology.[102]

6 William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 1753,
title page. ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Rar 265,
http://www.e-rara.ch/doi/10.3931/e-rara-9946

[46]   It is fair to say that Hogarth made "variety" his trademark (fig. 6) and that quality is emphatically implied in his much (self-)publicised production of work in most of the sought-after and respected contemporary art genres, from graphic satire and conversation to history painting and (grand manner) portraiture.[103]

[47]   More importantly, "variety" describes the dominant formal characteristics in much of Hogarth's output, from the early graphic satires and conversation pieces to the serial paintings and prints of the 1730s-1750s. The abandonment of a unity of action, the explicit focus on the local, particular and divergent – "the customs, manners, fasheons [sic], characters and humours of the present age" – the profusion of characters, incidents, details and viewpoints in a single image, and across the serial canvasses and prints, all violate the classical notions of artistic composition that were to be re-iterated in the late 1750s by Joshua Reynolds.[104] In these transgressions, scholars like Ogée and

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French of Monsieur Gerard de Lairesse, … improved with Extracts from C.A. Du Fresnoy, Salmon, &c., London, n.d. [1760s].

[102] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 32: "Of Intricacy".

[103] This is not unlike Chippendale's emphasis on the comprehensive nature of his furniture production, see below. On Hogarth's variety, see Mark Hallett's eponymous chapter, in Hallett and Riding, *Hogarth*, 13-21.

[104] The excerpt from Hogarth's "Autobiographical Notes" is quoted on the title page of Ronald Paulson's *Hogarth*, vol. I: *The "modern moral subject" 1697-1732*, Cambridge 1992. On Reynolds'

Meslay have seen a formal vocabulary appropriate to the fragmentation and diversity of contemporary society.[105]

7 Francis Vivares, engraver, one of a set (?) of undated cartouches in landscapes, etching, 1750s. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, museum number 13697:24. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

[48] The "immediate illegibility" of Hogarth's polycentric scenes, described as his "boldest artistic originality", has a distinct parallel in the disjointed, multiple composition of design in the "modern taste".[106] Like Hogarth's teeming scenes, rococo design, too, as Katie Scott's essay in this special issue suggests, invites beholders "to play an active part in the realisation of the work and devise their own course within it."[107] As over Hogarth's "turning smokejack", the eye keeps moving "to and fro with great celerity" over an image like the plate from Lock's *New Drawing Book*, in which there is no centre or periphery but different points of interest which lead "the eye a wanton kind of chace".[108] (fig. 2) Even a more conventionally composed and representational image like the large cartouche in a landscape etched by Vivares confounds the expectation of central object/focus and ornamental frame/detail. (fig.7) The eye, guided by the *repoussoir* devices of obelisk and ruin on left and right wants to be drawn to the background landscape, but is arrested in its progress at every point: in the foreground by an interesting huddle of treetrunk, broken column, tablet, capital, and foliage, while the cartouche itself presents the

Idler essays, see for instance Shawn Loewen, *Contested Structures: Nature and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Writing*, McMaster University 2004, Open Access Dissertations and Theses, Paper 1584, http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2109&context=opendissertations, 29-46

[105] Ogée and Meslay, "William Hogarth and Modernity," 2006, 25.

[106] Ogée and Meslay, "William Hogarth and Modernity," 2006, 27.

[107] Ogée and Meslay, "William Hogarth and Modernity," 2006, 29.

[108] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty,* 33.

distractions of a vase, *rocaille* and a waterfall, and vibrant contrapuntal foliage and swirls. Displaying "irregularity" and "intricacy", asymmetry and "oddness in number", images like the Vivares cartouche embody the linked formal characteristics that Hogarth ascribed to "variety".[109]

[49] The concept of "infinite variety" appears with significant frequency in patternbook *texts*, too – in subscription proposals, prefaces and notes on plates – by mid-eighteenth-century authors like Thomas Chippendale and Ince and Mayhew. Chippendale was the first craftsman-designer in Britain explicitly (i.e. in writing) to express his ambitions for social and professional recognition. His *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director* contains such apparently gratuitous tropes as Latin tags, references to architectural discourse and to the academic distinction between the Roman and Venetian "schools".[110] What made his designs worthy of being disseminated was, as Chippendale emphasized, their qualities of variety and extensive usefulness. "Variety" is expressed first of all in the style plurality signalled in the subtitle – i.e. in the book's inclusion of designs representing the popular trio of contemporary connected styles: "the modern", the "Chinese" and the "Gothic" tastes.[111] Secondly, the concept of "variety" relates to the comprehensiveness of his provision of "Household Furniture", listed in the title page. It far exceeded the mere carvers' pieces previously offered by Lock or Copland and gave his clients a convenient, one-stop location for every item of furniture that they could possibly want. More importantly, however, Chippendale emphasized the kind of variety that springs from a richly fertile imagination – the prerequisite of the internationally competitive craftsman-artist, who was not obliged to draw on stock models or slavishly copy the inventions of others.

[50] Whereas Lock had implied an inventiveness and a mastery of *disegno* that allowed him to claim artistic status by pictorial means, Chippendale's ambition was more explicit, stating that the published designs were but a faint translation, by the hand and pencil, of his "inexhaustible fancy".[112] Moreover, he suggested that the result on the page was itself capable of providing infinite possibilities of combination and re-adjustment and endowing the patron himself, or his workman, with creative inspiration: "[The designs] are so contrived, that if no one drawing should singly answer the Gentleman's taste, there will yet be found a variety of hints sufficient to construct a new one."[113]

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[109] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty,* 29, 30.

[110] Gilbert, *The Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale*, vol. 1, chapter 4, 65-92.

[111] Thomas Chippendale, *The gentleman and cabinet-maker's director: being a large collection of the most elegant and useful designs of household furniture in the Gothic, Chinese and modern taste*, London 1754.

[112] Chippendale, *Director*, 1754, iv.

[113] Chippendale, *Director*, 1754, iii.

[51]   "A variety of hints" – in Chippendale's *Director* and elsewhere – describes the characteristic way in which rococo design is presented on the plate: not only elaborate in individual forms, but typically showing more than one design and often giving numerous details or alternative versions on the same page. Mid-century printed designs particularly brimful of ornament have sometimes been described not only as impossible to execute but also as tastelessly over-elaborate.[114] The *New Book of Ornaments, for Glasses, Tables, Chairs, Sconces &c.* attributed to Pierre Edmé Babel is a good example, including designs such as that in plate 3 that are positively barnacled with ornament.[115] (fig. 8)
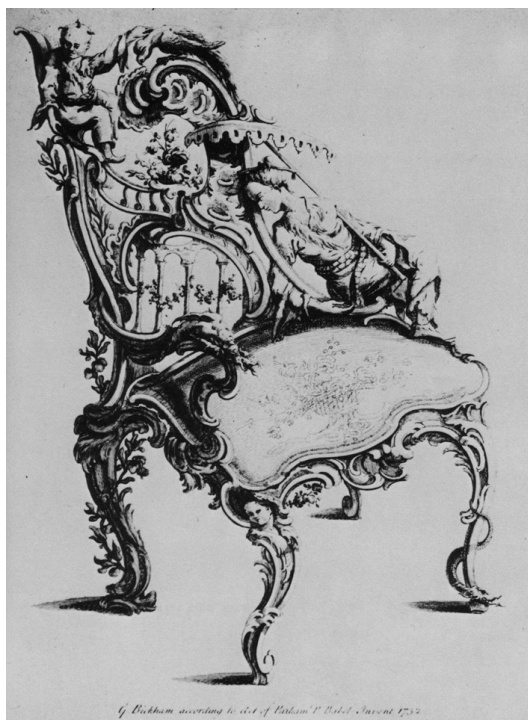
8 "By Babel of Paris" [George Bickham after Pierre Edmé Babel?],
plate 3 of *A new Book of Ornaments, for Glasses, Tables, Chairs,
Sconces, &c with Trophies in ye Chinese Way, Drawn for ye Use of
Artificers in General*, 1752, etching. Figure taken from Geoffrey Beard,
"Babel's 'A New Book of Ornaments' (1752)," in: *Furniture History* 11
(1975), fig. 62. © Dr Geoffrey Beard

[52]   But, of course, these were not intended as single, executable designs, but are constructs of many, *alternative,* components. Such designs advertised the designer's imaginative capacities but also made the most of expensive copperplates and appealed to the customers who would have appreciated getting so much "design" for their money. As *the* aesthetics of "choice", – various, intricate, asymmetrical – the "modern style" would appear to bestow on the designer considerable economic advantages in the context of the public's alleged insatiable desire for "novelty". This perceived socio-psychological

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[114] Quoted, and refuted, by Helena Hayward, *Thomas Johnson and English rococo*, London 1964, 5.

[115] The unique extant copy of this set is discussed and illustrated by Geoffrey Beard, "Babel's 'A New Book of Ornaments' (1752)," in: *Furniture History* 11 (1975), 31-32. I am grateful to Dr Beard for his kind permission to use a scan of his figure 62 to illustrate this article.

feature, especially in women, is a *topos* throughout the design and luxury debates.[116] The market certainly responded with product innovation, technological advances and stylistic variations on an unprecedented scale, and as the discussion of "luxury" increasingly lost its disapproving moral framework, the perception and proper appreciation of "novelty" could be recommended as a mark of refinement.[117]

[53]　Nonetheless, some British designers evidently became aware of the increasingly frequent characterisation of the "modern taste" as a lawless and literally artless taste, an uneducated, artisanal style without foundation either in nature or in classical art.[118] It prompted them to emphasize what Hogarth described as the ideal of "*composed* variety", by which a laudable abundance of imagination was tempered by *thought* and "design", so as not to bring forth "confusion and deformity".[119] The notion of "system" and "principle" underlying and controlling expressions of "variety" we have already discussed in relation to Lock and Ince and Mayhew above.

[54]　In Britain, the "modern taste" presented its proponents with a further challenge: its undeniable French origin meant that in the increasingly bellicose atmosphere of the mid 1740s to later 1750s, the artist or designer adopting the rococo was effectively working in an enemy style.[120]

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Modern, British and Anti-Gallican: Working in the French Taste

[55]　In her discussion of this problem, Linda Colley emphasizes the necessary pragmatism of contemporary craftsmen, who, however "Anti-Gallican" themselves, accepted the enduring preference for all things French on the part of their elite clientele, and embraced the commercial benefits of working in such a labour-intensive style. We should not forget that this preference was also very much in Hogarth's mind when he travelled to France in 1743 to engage what he publicly advertised as "the best Masters in Paris" to engrave the *Marriage-a-la-Mode* paintings.[121] This project David Bindman describes as the artist's "conscious appeal to an elevated public familiar with and desiring the latest 'French elegance'."[122] In other words, Hogarth was presented with the self-inflicted and richly

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[116] See for instance Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, eds., *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, Basingstoke and New York, 2003, 13-19.

[117] On product innovation, see Maxine Berg in Berg and Clifford, *Consumers and Luxury*, 65-69 and in the same book see Clifford on David Hume, 165.

[118] Both in England and in France. See notes 18 and 97 above.

[119] Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 7, emphasis added.

[120] Hostilities ranged from the second Jacobite Rebellion in 1745, to the colonial conflicts during the uneasy truce from 1748-1756, and to the outbreak of the Seven Years War in 1756.

[121] Bindman, *Hogarth and his Times*, 31. The engravers were Simon François Ravenet, Bernard Baron and Gérard Jean-Baptiste Scotin.

[122] Bindman, *Hogarth and his Times*, 31, quoting from Hogarth's advertisement of 2 April 1743 in the *Daily Post & General Advertiser*.

ironical challenge of creating a polished, "French" luxury product that satirised the deleterious effects of exactly such things on British society!

[56]   Colley claims that prior to the 1750s, it was indeed "very much in their [craftsmen's] interest to deny any […] conflict" between a patriotic agenda on one hand, and working in a foreign style on the other.[123]

[57]   Pragmatism and economic self-interest certainly played a major role in the adoption of the rococo by British craftsmen and craftsmen-designers. Beyond that, however, it is significant that British design prints in the "modern" (French) style first emerge at precisely the moment in which traditional rivalry with France unites with a wider patriotic agenda, arising from, and periodically sharpened by, the enduring threat of French, or French-assisted aggression, invasion and revolt.[124] It is surely no accident that is was in this hostile context that native artists for the first time countered entrenched views of their inferiority as designers by producing accomplished prints in a style based on that of the leading contemporary French designers themselves. Moreover, as we shall see, they thoroughly appropriated this style, in part by marrying it to current patriotic discourse and loading it with symbols of "Britishness". These actions, in my view, should be seen in the context of what Linda Colley has described as an "intensely creative period in terms of patriotic initiatives and discussions of national identities" in Britain, and elsewhere in Europe in the years from 1745-1765.[125]

[58]   With specific reference to the development of British art, Fordham has recently proposed the political and military events bracketing the Seven Years' War as a catalysing force.[126] We might compare his trajectory of British art from "charity case" [Foundling Hospital beginnings] to "cherished royal monopoly" [establishment of the Royal Academy] to the not much less rapid transformation of a nation considered deficient in design in the 1730s to a leading manufacturer and exporter of high-design goods by the end of the century.[127] Not only artists, but designers, too, "capitalized on the public's mercantile competitiveness and imperial fervor."[128] The years of "the anxious mercantile period, roughly 1748 to 1759", but specifically a direct engagement with enemy style during the Seven Years' War brought British design to its first significant flowering, albeit one that, like Hogarth's theory and practice of art, did not survive the classicising impulse of a triumphant, newly imperial post-war nation.[129]

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[123] Linda Colley in: Snodin, *Rococo*, 16.

[124] See note 119 above.

[125] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1701-1837*, New Haven and London 1992, 85.

[126] Douglas Fordham, *British Art and the Seven Years' War. Allegiance and Autonomy*, Philadelphia 2010.

[127] Fordham, *British Art*, 1.

[128] Fordham, *British Art*, 3.

[129] Fordham, *British Art*, 15.

[59]   The adoption of the rococo, as I suggested in relation to Lock and Linnell above, served British craftsmen designers as a vehicle for the ostentatious display of creative inventiveness, countering age-old notions of the "dullness" of British design. This adoption and its timing suggested a sense of defiance which intensified in the 1750s, when elite taste for French luxuries came increasingly under attack and when it appeared to become necessary at least to acknowledge the problem of working in the enemy's style, and ideally also offer some justification.[130] One of the most stupendous examples of mid-century British design in the "modern taste" is Thomas Johnson's large untitled series of characteristically vivid designs for carvers' pieces, which were first issued in parts to subscribers in 1756 and the early months of 1757.[131] What single-handedly transformed these designs into a "patriotic" project when they re-appeared in "book" form in 1758, was the new dedication plate to Lord Blakeney, "Grand President of the Laudable Association of Antigallicans" and to his "Brethren", as the production of "an Englishman […] who possesses a truly Antigallic Spirit." (fig. 9)

9 Thomas Johnson, dedication plate to untitled collection of
designs for carvers, 1758, etching, 37 x 25cm paper. Victoria
and Albert Museum, London, museum number E3780-1903.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

[60]   Johnson himself was a member of the Anti-Gallican Association, a society founded during the second Jacobite invasion of 1745 with the intention

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[130] The economic benefits of import substitution of French luxuries were often stressed in these years. Colley in: Snodin, *Rococo*, 16.

[131] Helena Hayward, "Newly Discovered Designs by Thomas Johnson," in: *Furniture History* 11 (1975), 40-43, here 40.

> to discourage by precept and example, the importation and consumption of French produce and manufactures, and to encourage, on the contrary, the produce and manufactures of Great Britain.[132]

[61] Artisanal Anti-Gallicanism was certainly based in part on commercial self-interest, but the involvement of trades- and craftsmen in such societies has persuasively been discussed as a means of providing men of Johnson's background with an opportunity for involvement in a (frequently oppositional) and predominantly discursive political culture, if not in parliamentary decision-making itself.[133]

[62] Design prints were, of course, not specifically dedicated to the dissemination of political discourse in the way that pamphlets or engraved satires were, and they are now generally discussed in terms of the seemingly neutral concept of style and in the context of their relationship with the manufactures and decorative arts.[134]

[63] However, it is legitimate to argue that craftsmen-designers and their works operated within, and not apart from, the vibrant political culture of the time. Patriotism and more immediate commercial interests were not mutually exclusive. For many contemporaries a support for trade and industry was in itself a patriotic act, and conversely, it was in the trades- or craftsman's interest to gain a degree of civic significance within and outside his community by giving visible form to his patriotism and concern for the public good.[135]

[64] Johnson's dedication plate unites francophobic symbolic imagery with an unashamedly "French" style: a figure of Britannia sits atop an asymmetrical rococo cartouche and holds a shield with the Anti-Gallican arms: St George piercing the French fleur-de-lys, supported by the British lion and the Austrian double-headed eagle.[136] Above, a putto labelled "Genius" torches a bundle of scrolls representative of "French Paper Machée" and on the left, a figure of Envy peers angrily around a symbolically ruined wall, holding a document embellished with the French fleur-de-lys in her clenched fist. In its aggressive appropriation of the French style, the plate taps into an aspect of contemporary franco-phobic discourse, which exhorts the British to beat the French at their own game. A passage from a novel published in 1757 and appropriately entitled *The Anti-Gallican* perfectly expresses that sentiment:

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[132] Quoted by Colley, *Britons*, *1*992, 89.

[133] In Johnson's case, commercial self-interest relates to the threat posed by the immigrant *papier mâché* industry, symbolically set on fire in his dedication plate. Hayward mentions two makers of the popular French substitute for carved work in Johnson's close neighbourhood, one "Duffour" and one Peter Babel. Hayward, *Thomas Johnson*, 1964, 24. For the political significance of Anti-Gallicanism, see Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, 11-12.

[134] Notable exceptions are Matthew Craske and Jules Lubbock who both engage with the politics of design. Jules Lubbock, *The Tyranny of Taste: The Politics of Architecture and Design in Britain*, *1550-1960*, New Haven and London 1995.

[135] Colley, *Britons*, 55-100 on the many and varied "profits" of middling "investment in patriotism".

[136] For more detail on the Anti-Gallican arms, see Sheila O'Connell, *London 1753*, London 2003, 117, 2.21.

> Far be it from me to condemn my Countrymen for adopting any Invention in Arts or Sciences, which owes its Birth to the fertile Genius of our bitterest Enemies. – No – let us endeavour at raising ourselves to an equal, if not superior Pitch of Excellence, in every Science and Profession, to all the Nations of the Globe.[137]

[65] I would like to suggest that the aggressive tenor of such texts and images such as Johnson's dedication may be seen in the context of a contemporary culture of the unashamed seizure and display of enemy property in war. Is it far-fetched to suggest a connection to the extensive practice of "prize-taking" by British privateers? It is significant that this essentially piratical activity was officially sanctioned by being licensed through so-called "letters of marque" and by the division of spoils between the Crown and the owners of privateers.[138] Important instances of prize-taking were proudly displayed before the public, both literally, in triumphant street processions of the captured cargoes, and metaphorically, in the form of a number of celebratory print series.[139]

[66] When seen in this context, I suggest that there is something of the proud display of a captured prize in the brazen adoption of the rococo on the part of some British designers of the 1740s to late 1750s. An earlier example of the basic compositional scheme of Johnson's title-plate – an irregular cartouche surmounted by a figure of Britannia with a "patriotic" shield – can be found in the dedication plate "To the King and the Nobility, and Gentry of Great Britain" of George Bickham Sr.'s *The Universal Penman* engraved in 1741, (and thus at the start of the War of the Austrian Succession). There are, in fact, as yet undiscussed formal similarities between the two dedication plates and it is very likely that Johnson used the earlier image as a direct inspiration.[140] Both plates are manifestly symbolical in the way the imagery of Britishness and of British power presides over (indeed subordinates) the cartouche in the French style.

[67] At the very least, the ubiquitous figure of Britannia and other symbols of a mighty and victorious Britain serve to distance the rococo from its French origins. A young pupil of Thomas Vivares, William Hebert, for instance united a triumphant image of Britannia presiding over the arms of defeated France and a jubilant message "Quebeck Taken 1759", with rococo scrolls and asymmetry in an award-winning design for a clock case

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[137] Cited by Colley in: Snodin, *Rococo*, 16.

[138] On prize-taking and privateering, see for instance Peter Kemp, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*, Oxford 1988, 670-671. On the extensive practice of eighteenth-century British privateering, see N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy*, London 1986, 185-186.

[139] I am grateful to Sarah Monks for drawing my attention to the practice of prize-taking. See her article "Our man in Havana: representation and reputation in Lieutenant Philip Orsbridge's *Britannia's Triumph* (1765)," in: Geoff Quilley and John Bonehill, eds., *Conflicting Visions: War and Visual Culture 1600-1850*, London 2005, 85-114.

[140] An illustration can be found online on the web forum "Typophile", http://typophile.com/node/53112. The general disposition of Bickham's plate owes something to the title plate *Quatrième Livre de Formes,* engraved by Aveline after Mondon fils, Paris 1736.

submitted to the Society of Arts.[141] In another example, Thomas Chippendale designed a new headpiece with the figure of a seated Britannia – replacing the earlier figure of Mercury – to stamp a patriotic character on the preface to the third edition of his *Director* in 1763, the year the Seven Years War ended.[142]

[68] I would like to end with a look at an image closely associated with Hogarth's *Analysis,* the artist's *Self-portrait with Pug* of 1745, in which the "line of beauty" features prominently. As suggested above, the complexity of the artist's relationship to the "modern taste" as *French* mirrors that of many of his contemporaries among craftsmen-designers. The foreign, above all French nature of elite material culture is presented in all its ruinous effect in the "Modern Moral subjects", yet the prints not only depend on the fascination of this culture for their appeal, but are themselves part of the contemporary world of luxury commodities in the fashionable French style.

[69] A recognisably material world is likewise sketched in the illustrative examples to the *Analysis*: references to interiors, carving and ornament abound, yet are here presented in a more positive light, stressing the "agreeableness" of, and the pleasure to be derived from objects "composed" in the "waving" or "serpentine" lines.[143]

[70] In recent years, a much more complex picture of the artist's indebtedness to French art practice and theory, over and above his personal friendships and collaborations with Roubiliac and Gravelot, has replaced the popular image of the inherently francophobic John Bull figure of old.[144] The influence of "the new 'Patriot' ideology" only emerges in some works of the 1740s, when a notion of the French as hostile "other" crystallises more widely in English society.[145] Bindman correlates the precise threat of Scottish invasion in 1745 with "defiant displays of patriotism" in the artist's work, including in these also Hogarth's *The Painter and His Pug* of the same year.[146] (fig. 10) The artist's portrait rests on volumes by Shakespeare, Milton and Swift, as a patriotic claim to an "exclusively English literary ancestry" of Hogarth's "comic history".[147] Elsewhere, Tate Britain's writer suggests Hogarth's *ut pictura poesis* claim to equal status with these authors and their respective registers; a punning reference to his "notoriously pugnacious nature" in the inclusion of one of his dogs, and the balancing of abstract theory and

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[141] Reproduced in Snodin, *Rococo*, 151, cat. K4. The capture of Quebec was a key victory in the Seven Years War, winning Canada for Britain.

[142] Britannia also appeared as a tailpiece in the place of the earlier Mercury. In addition, Chippendale delayed the publication of the French edition of the *Director* until after the end of the war, as a concession to patriotic feeling. *The Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale*, 87.

[143] See for instance chapter IX "Of Composition with the Waving-Line". Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 48.

[144] See especially Robin Simon, *Hogarth, France and British art: the rise of the arts in 18th-century Britain*, London 2007.

[145] Bindman, *Hogarth and his Times*, 46.

[146] Bindman, *Hogarth and his Times*, 48.

[147] Bindman, *Hogarth and his Times*, 48.

observable reality in the juxtaposition of his pug and the palette inscribed with "the line of beauty".[148] Yet already in 1745, even before the publication of the *Analysis,* the apparently much-discussed "line of beauty" can also be related to the "serpentine" lines so characteristic of contemporary design and interior decoration in the "modern taste". The French origin of this taste could not be in doubt, but it is here neutralised, and domesticated by the framing devices of blunt Hogarth and even blunter pug on the one hand and the trio of English literary greats on the other. As a strategy, this is remarkably similar to the one employed by mid-century British designers, by which the French "goût moderne" is appropriated and subjugated by means of ostentatiously patriotic framing devices.[149]

10 William Hogarth, *The Painter and his Pug*, 1745, oil on canvas,
900 x 690cm. Tate, purchased 1824. © Tate, London 2013

[71]   My aim here was to bring back into view some of those who gave expression to "modernity" in the field of design and to give a reading of their productions in relation to what I hold to be shared concerns in Hogarth's *Analysis* and in his art practice. My discussion of named designers operating in Hogarth's Covent Garden neighbourhood was intended to re-personalise the rococo and make visible the part played by the authors of design prints in developing and shaping what has come to be regarded as *Hogarth's* aesthetics of modernity. I am not particularly concerned with questions of origin and influence, in the manner of Waterhouse claiming that overloaded rococo ornament

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[148] See Tate's online catalogue entry for this painting at
http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hogarth-the-painter-and-his-pug-n00112/text-catalogue-entryTate (accessed 28 January 2014).

[149] See Craske's discussion of "dominion through possession," enacted in the field of design through the appropriation of materials and styles from around the globe. "Plan and Control," 195-196.

"encouraged" Hogarth's "naturally flamboyant fancy" or Sypher locating Hogarth's "serpentine line of beauty" in Chippendale's *Director* designs.[150] Rather, I wanted to investigate what the shared dedication to formal characteristics of "variety" and "intricacy" meant to artist and designers alike. Hogarth was alone in mid century to contribute to philosophical aesthetics from the perspective of the artist practitioner, part and parcel of the same aspiration to intellectual status and social emancipation that compelled contemporary artisan-designers to go public with their "inventions". The inextricable link between rococo and "modernity" presented both Hogarth and his designer contemporaries with a whole host of possibilities and challenging associations: "invention" and "fancy"; "infinite variety" and its embodiments in the world of consumer culture; "luxury" and its ancient concomitant, foreignness. All of those placed the purveyors of "modernity" at the heart of the often dissonant intersection of contemporary economic and moral-philosophical debates, on "art", commerce and what it meant to be British.

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Appendix

[72] A short listing of some of the principal cavers, gilders, designers, cabinet-makers and upholsterers in the Covent Garden area, 1730s-50s:[151]

[73] The carver and gilder James WHITTLE in Great St Andrews Street, Soho (from before 1744); the carver and designer Matthias LOCK in Castle Street near Long Acre (by 1746) and with a workshop in Tottenham Court Road; the carver, gilder and designer Thomas JOHNSON, apprenticed to his relative Robert Johnson, Frith Street, Soho (1737), and to James Whittle (1744-1746); independently in Queen Street, Seven Dials (1755-1756/7) and The Golden Boy, Grafton Street, Soho (1757-1763); the carver, gilder, cabinet-maker and upholsterer William LINNELL and his designer son John at Long Acre (1729-1754) and at 28 Berkeley Square (1754-1763); the cabinet-maker and upholsterer Thomas CHIPPENDALE in St Martin's Lane, across the road from Slaughter's Coffee House (from 1754); the designer, engraver, print publisher and drawing master Matthias DARLY, opposite Slaughter's (in 1748) and in Chippendale's former premises in Northumberland Court, Strand (from 1753); the cabinet-makers and upholsterers William INCE and John MAYHEW, opposite Broad Street, Carnaby Market (from 1759); the cabinet-makers William VILE and John COBB, at No 72, the corner of St Martin's Lane and Long Acre

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[150] Sypher, *Rococo to Cubism*, 52; Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, 127, both quoted by Jackson, "Hogarth's *Analysis*," 548.

[151] Sources: Gilbert, *The Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale*; Heckscher, "Lock and Copland"; *British picture framemakers, 1610-1950*, 3rd edition December 2012, researched and written by Jacob Simon (1st edition 2007, 2nd edition 2009), with additional entries by Lynn Roberts and Edward Town, selectively updated September 2013, http://www.npg.org.uk/research/conservation/directory-of-british-framemakers; Simon, "Thomas Johnson".

(from 1750); and the cabinet-maker William HALLETT Sr. in Great Newport Street (1732-1752).