

# Conclusion

In the initial phase of Industrial Revolution, new spaces of commercial and social exchange opened up in eighteenth-century England. The growth of the metropolis and its connection with other port-towns and spa-towns created ample scopes for recreation and business for the eighteenth-century English urbanite. The ways of entertainment heightened the pleasure quotient of urban life, while their licentious ambience raised moral criticism. The existent value structure was thus undergoing a makeover at this dynamic historical juncture, which led to the restructuring of marital conditions and domestic relationships. The consumerist drive of property acquisition, that was ailing the marital alliances, was rejected in favour of affective conjugality. The urban way of life was not all vibrancy and prosperity, but had filth, corruption and pollution, difficult to hide at times beneath the underbelly of the metropolis. Material excess and accumulation of wealth by a segment of the society caused unequal distribution of resources, leading to poverty-induced and organized crimes. Initially, it necessitated the toughening of civic vigilance. However, in the course of the century, the flamboyantly chaotic underworld of the metropolis received philanthropic attention from the social reformers with the emergence of the Sentimental mode. These changing ideas were reflected in new forms of representation by writers and artists of the era. They accommodated the cultural debate of material excess and moral constraint within their artistic spaces. While representing the eighteenth-century milieu, the writers and artists of the period combined social-realistic mode with parody and caricature to offer a critique of the heterogeneous urban life. The double-edged representation of excess and satire, surfaced in the constant negotiation between the *Serpentina* and the *Pyramid* in painting, found its literary counterpart in the novel's tension between subversion and containment, manifested both in its plot and narrative strategies.

This creative exchange of ideas between writers and artists, on the basis of socio-cultural representation was carried on into the nineteenth century through the correspondence between Charles Dickens (1812-1870) and William Frith (1819-1909). Both of them portrayed the space-time of Victorian England in their respective works and like their eighteenth-century predecessors, they too combined the documentary and critical methods. Dickens's portrayal of the buzzing urbanity in the heydays of Industrial Revolution, in *Hard Times* (1854) and *The Great Expectations* (1861) or, his exploration of the nineteenth-century London's subculture in *Oliver Twist* (1838) or *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), resemble the unruly city mob of Hogarth's canvas. The theme of *Bildungsroman*, so exhaustively explored in *Tom Jones*, finds an appropriate continuity in the narrative of *David Copperfield* (1849). The anarchy of the city mob of French Revolution in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) resembles quite characteristically of Hogarth's *Gin Lane* or the world of *Moll Flanders* and *Jonathan Wild*. The portrayal of London with its commercial excess and a parallel criticism at the loss of human values, which was the staple of eighteenth-century novels and narrative paintings, was also echoed in the novels of Dickens and the paintings of William Frith.

William Powell Frith was a friend of Charles Dickens. He did illustrations for many of Dickens's novels. Apart from that, Frith painted some narrative cycles—*The Road to Ruin* (1878) and *The Race for Wealth* (1880)—like Hogarth and was a votary of Victorian moralistic painting. The protagonists in Frith's narrative cycles, like that of Hogarth, face sad consequences in just retribution of their evil deeds. In the same manner as Hogarth, he too combined social realism and social critique and was quite eclectic in his portrayal of the social classes. He dealt with large crowded subjects and thus explored the full range of Victorian social spectrum, while documenting it in anecdotal form. Many of his paintings, *The Derby Day* (1858) and *Life at a Railway Station* (1862) have narrative content and they capture contemporary life and manner, as Wilton observes: "It is their novelistic vitality that sustains these pictures, which, despite their lack of visual coherence, are wholly convincing on their own terms" (Wilton 168). The thriving commercial culture of London in post-Industrial Revolution years preoccupied both writers and artists, who expressed it through a

fusion of realism and allegory and thereby conveying their moral concerns regarding the age of capital and machine.

In the course of this study, a constant struggle is evident between empirical reality and its representation, the debate inherent in every art form in every age. In a representation, both the artist and the writer get the licence to decide their strategies. This is where the creator instils his/ her subjective voice and opinion into the empirical reality that surrounds us. Realistic art and literature thus transcend the realm of mere imitation and enter the realm of an evaluative zone. Likewise, the novels of Fielding and Defoe, the plays and poems of Gay, and the narrative paintings of Hogarth were born out of a negotiation between history (mimetic, empirical narrative) and satire (allegorical angle). Since every form of art is a selection of reality, both Hogarth and the literary artists were representing selected versions of their contemporary reality, highlighting the interactive moments of society and culture, with an argumentative purpose. Thus, mimetic realism and its evaluative selection go hand in hand in the eighteenth-century literature and painting. Bakhtin had quite appropriately suggested that, the chronotope (space-time represented in art/ literature) of an event is not the same as the space-time of the real event (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 256). Similarly, it can be argued that the representation of eighteenth-century space-time in Hogarth's paintings and in the works of Fielding, Defoe and Gay is not a mere verisimilitude, but a purposive one, that is expressive of their creative freedom.

### **Works Cited**

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