CHAPTER 5

“An Emblem of Hell”:
Exploring the Chronotope of the Underworld

The changing society of eighteenth-century England entailed the development of multiple cultural niches across its centre and the periphery, catering to the elites and the populace alike. The cultural debates were located not only in the pleasure sites; rather it was generated even within the sites of struggle, exploitation, dishonour and defamation. In the course of the century, certain interactive zones were highlighted that foregrounded socio-cultural debates regarding the nature of criminality, crime and punishment; madness and its cure; sin and repentance, which attained their aesthetic articulation in the chronotopes of eighteenth-century novels, plays and narrative painting. Among these chronotopes, certain space-times denoted actual topographical sites of eighteenth-century London, such as Newgate prison, the Fleet Ditch, the Tyburn Tree or Bedlam, whereas Grub Street and Gin Lane were largely ideological constructs.

The notions of the underworld and subculture were ideological constructs of the eighteenth century, developed through the peripheral zones of urban society that initiated the discourse between the centre and the periphery, between the dingy garrets and the green squares of London. The chronotope of the underworld is therefore concerned with the peripheral zones of the city as well as with the fringes of social behavioural norms, and in doing so, serves as a cultural documentary with metaphoric purport. The rise of capitalism and urbanity in the eighteenth century triggered both poverty-induced and organized crimes among the thriving and unregulated multitude of the city, unleashing a spectacle of lawlessness that was countered by a desire to
control it, to serve that very capitalist interest. This chapter will thus focus on the chronotopic formations of these cultural zones and will attempt to trace the roles played by Defoe, Fielding, Gay and Hogarth in encapsulating this tension between the spectacle of misrule and a desire to control it, through satirical and philanthropic stances in their respective works. This study will focus on *Jonathan Wild*, *Moll Flanders* and *The Beggar’s Opera*, the prison episodes of *Tom Jones* and *Amelia* to substantiate the negotiation between the manifestation of misrule and its containment by the state authority. In this context, Hogarth’s depiction of Newgate prison in his artistic rendition of the last scene of *The Beggar’s Opera*, the Fleet prison and Bedlam in *A Rake’s Progress* and the Bridewell prison in *A Harlot’s Progress* provide ocular counterparts of these novelistic depictions. His other two important cycles, *Industry and Idleness* and *The Four Stages of Cruelty* along with *Gin Lane*, also harp back to the tradition of black and white monochromatic graphic satire and thereby setting absolute moralistic binaries in response to the contemporary English history of Gin Riots and participate in a gradual late-century movement toward sympathy and philanthropy.

The population of eighteenth-century London was transient and disorderly, as there was consumerist opulence on the one hand and stark poverty on the other. The seedy underbelly of the metropolis, with its thieves and burglars, highwaymen and pickpockets, vagabonds and destitute, madmen and prostitutes formed a rich heterogeneous subculture as well that has been exhaustively represented in eighteenth-century novels and the narrative paintings of William Hogarth. The idea of ‘subculture’ presupposes a culture-conflict, existing as a part of the dominant culture and yet marking a point of tension, while surfacing through “violence or some infraction of social norms” (Rogers 280). That is why the chronotopes of eighteenth-century novels, and painting concentrated on peripheral spaces of slums and garrets, brothels and taverns, prisons and madhouses, to represent society’s stance on these purportedly subversive ways of life. Subculture, that usually evolves through people’s response to the socio-economic problems of their age found its hotbed in eighteenth-century London’s Grub Street, Smithfield, St Pauls’, St Giles’, Moorfields, Fleet Ditch, Holborn, Newgate prison and Bedlam— all that provided topographic details of the Augustan satire while indicating moral landmarks. Hogarth’s own remark on *Industry and Idleness* similarly highlights his intention to represent the subculture of
eighteenth-century London—“Suppose the whole story was made into a kind of tale, describing in episode the nature of a night-cellar, a marrow-bone concert, a Lord Mayor’s show, & c.” (Nichols 62). Their historical and sociological reputations served to underpin the satire in Dryden’s *MacFlecknoe* (1682) where Dryden builds up the lampoon on Shadwell’s poetic mediocrity by positing him among the shabby hack writers of Grub Street and in the ambience of Bunhill Fields, Walting Street, Pissing Alley, Aston Hall and the sewage-carrying Fleet Ditch. In a dystopic vision within the poem, ‘Fair Augusta’ (old name of London) is imagined as an old dilapidated city:

From its old Ruins Brothel houses rise,
Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys . . . (Dryden 10)

The topographical map of *MacFlecknoe* encompasses all suburban areas of London, implying that subculture developed in the ‘liberties’ of the city— the twilight zone surrounding the rich and powerful centre, administered by the ancient corporation. The Fleet Ditch that was smelly, unsightly, opaque with dirt, a carrier of disease, infested with hogs’ and human carcasses, became “a synonym for social, as well as physical, malady” (Rogers 146).

The dingy underbelly of the city is perceived through physical gestures recorded in Hogarth’s painting that invites observation from J. Paul Hunter:

the held nose, the hand over the eye, the regurgitation of food and drink, the hand withdrawn or stopped short of touch . . . the invasive sights, smells and noises— not to mention jostling and physical crowding hint at the violence and brutality that were regularly the lot of one passing through the streets. (Hunter 123-24)

In eighteenth-century literature and art, for instance, in Hogarth’s *Noon* and *Night*, in *Beer Street; Gin Lane*, the overcrowded spaces, congested streets and alleys, upturned banners, barrels and billboards suggest the narrowness of the spaces and the physical closeness of the buildings and people. They testify for the cramped existence of the urbanites and give a sense of confinement, impingement and crowding: “Hogarth’s prints, like the works of many another urban satirist visual or verbal, record the clutter
and the sense of things tumbling indiscriminately together that mirror a psychological state as much as a physical situation” (Hunter 124). The dirty and claustrophobic ambience of city-life and its pressure on the individual self made the eighteenth-century writer’s and artist’s perception of the world almost paranoid, inciting the satire and the novel into the representation of uncomfortable human existence. Though Foucault’s survey on the discourse of the Enlightenment provokes arguments regarding eighteenth century’s thrust on civic discipline and docility of the citizen, its ironical contrast is visible through Hogarth’s *Gin Lane*, where he not only comments on the evil effects of Gin on society, but also plays with the potential power of misrule to threaten the status quo of society.

A similar atmosphere of misrule dominates the festive scenario of *The Southwark Fair* (1733) and *March to Finchley* (1750), both scenes located at Smithfield that had a tradition of fairs and boisterous shows (Figure 33).

![Figure 33: Hogarth, The Southwark Fair (1733)](image)

The interplay of white, red, brown and yellow-ochre in these paintings generates a sense of warmth and boisterousness that is an essential aspect of the carnival. The British Union Jack on the top of the bell tower in *The Southwark Fair* and its presence
among the crowd in *March to Finchley* underline Hogarth’s patriotic sentiments. The artificial and almost theatrical treatment of light and the arrangement of the crowd in both paintings are reminiscent of Rembrandt’s (1606-69) *The Night Watch* (1642). The revelling soldiers in red uniforms, the grotesque sausage-seller and the shouting ballad-seller in *March to Finchley* give an ironic sense of disorder among the regulators of law and order. In both these paintings, the winding road in the backdrop, the open sky and foamy clouds span the perspective, while the suggestion of highlands and foliage in the background convey provincial scenery that is stylistically quite similar to Hogarth’s portrayal of English countryside in *The Humours of an Election* (1755), displaying a remarkable freshness of tones. In *March to Finchley*, the beating drums, the collapsing drunken soldier at the right-hand corner and the prostitutes in red gowns and white caps, waving from the windows of the brothel, pose a contrast with the serenity of the flute-playing boy at the left-hand corner of the painting. The positioning of the pregnant whore, pleading to the inebriated soldier at the centre of the scene and the other soldier, kissing another whore beside the Union Jack, generate a sense of fruition and amour that form the positive aspects of the carnival (Figure 34).

Figure 34: Hogarth, *The March to Finchley* (1750)
The crowd depicted in *The Southwark Fair* likewise produces cacophony through the female drummer in white and the dark flute player in red, whose twisted gesture is a marker of dance and merriment, unlike the fair lady in white who stands straight and almost aloof from the whole scene. The artist’s positioning of the tilted wooden pole and a thronging crowd in the right-hand corner creates an off-centred dynamism within the scene that is a marker of festive atmosphere. The playful crowd in its joyous musical excess under the luminous sky in *The Southwark Fair* thus upholds the positive regenerative spirit of Bakhtinian Carnival, which starkly contrasts with the crowd in *Gin Lane* and thereby accentuates the sinister pandemonium-like dystopia of the latter scene. The narrow lanes, basement stairs, garrets, shadowy alleys and dilapidated buildings of *Gin Lane* constitute a new map of hell. In this way the actual topographical components of the city were charged with a moral allegorical import: “its markets, theatres, prisons, hospitals and ditches make up a gazetteer of folly and iniquity” (Rogers 2). The overcrowded, stinking and noisy London-life was conveyed through the eventful plot of *Moll Flanders*; the rowdy feel of *The Beggar’s Opera* and the pulsating canvas of Hogarth, indicating a constant threat of disorder underlying these chronotopes. Hence was the necessity to instil a moral sense within the plots of these novels and paintings along with a satirical stance on this spectacle of chaos, where the writers echo the aesthetic debate between the Serpentina and the Pyramid.

The centre-periphery dialogue of the eighteenth-century culture is carried on through two contrasting chronotopes in Hogarth’s *Industry and Idleness* that offers cultural binaries in its stylistic approach through black and white graphic satire. *Industry and Idleness*, along with *The Four Stages of Cruelty, Beer Street; Gin Lane* is a part of Hogarth’s engagement with the print market both in commercial and moral terms. Due to commercial reasons he kept these engravings simple and their prices low, so that even the lower classes of people could buy them. For instance, when Hogarth published *Beer Street; Gin Lane* along with *The Four Stages of Cruelty*, in its advertisement in the *London Evening Post* of 14-16 February he announced:
This Day are publish’d, Prices 1s. each.

Two large Prints, design’d and ech’d by Mr. Hogarth called

BEER STREET and GIN LANE

A Number will be printed in a better Manner for the Curious, at 1s. 6d. each.

And on Thursday following will be publish’d four Prints on the Subject of
Cruelty, Price and Size the same.

N. B. As the Subjects of these Prints are calculate d to reform some reigning
Vices peculiar to the lower Class of People, in hopes to render them of more
extensive Use, the Author has published them in the cheapest Manner possible.
To be had at the Golden Head in Leicester-Fields, Where may be had all his
other Works.

(quoted in Paulson, Art and Politics 17)

Hence, in the catalogue of Hogarth’s prints Cunningham records how these
prints faced a warm reception by the ‘thrifty citizens of London’, because “they are
plain, natural, and impressive scenes, and fulfil the purpose of the moral painter”
(Nichols 222). The artist’s own remark underlines the moral implication of the prints,
for he says: “as these prints were intended more for use than ornament, they were
done in a way that might bring them within the purchase of those whom they might
most concern” (Nichols 61). He expressed a similar sentiment behind the cheap
production of The Four Stages of Cruelty, because fine engravings would make them
too expensive for the ‘lowest rank’, to those “they were intended to be useful”
(Nichols 65). Incidentally, the publication of these prints coincided with the
publication of Henry Fielding’s An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of
Robbers in mid-January of 1751. This dual intention of morality and market invites an
observation that,

These sets of engravings, with their simple subject matters, their treatment
of contemporary social issues, their straight polarization and their cheap
price suggests their easy accessibility to the general public and thereby
ensures their dissemination to the lower strata of the society. Hogarth’s
aim thus seems to be a democratic use of the print media or to
democratize his modern moral subjects. (Bindman 167)
The prints of *Industry and Idleness* (1747) were a great financial success and were received by a wide public, who admired its explicit social criticism and the polarization of chronotopes in terms of contradictory values.

It is a set of twelve engravings that represent Georgian London as a city polarized between virtues and vices; between the East and the West Ends (Figure 35). The fissures also exist between the portrayal of Goodchild indoors, suggesting safety and success, and the portrayal of Tom Idle outdoors, suggesting not only freedom, but “failure as license in an unprotected state of nature” (Paulson 62). This is how Hogarth interprets the possibility of misrule in open spaces. Both *March to Finchley* and *Gin Lane* contain this idea of riot and chaos, but in the case of *Gin Lane*, the message of the deterioration of humanity is more harrowing. In this work the English capital is split up into separate social and cultural spheres: one belonging to the criminal and the delinquent, the other, to the virtuous and the hardworking. Thus, Hogarth attempts to depict the ideals and anxieties of a modern urban middle class, by providing instructions to London Apprentices on their respective roads to success and failure.

![Figure 35: Hogarth, Industry and Idleness, Plate 1 (1747)](image)
The narrative of *Industry and Idleness* begins with two orphan boys—Francis Goodchild, who later becomes the Industrious Apprentice and Tom Idle, who is the Idle Apprentice. The moral thrust of the series is evident in the allegorical naming of these figures that alludes to the tradition of Medieval Moralities. In the first plate, these two apprentices are portrayed in a single frame in their weaver’s workshop, where Goodchild works as Tom Idle sleeps. From the first plate onwards, their conduct is constantly compared and contrasted to highlight the Protestant work ethic. In Plate two, the Industrious one sings hymn inside the church whereas the Idle one gambles, sitting on a gravestone outside the church. The subsequent plates show the gradual social climbing of Goodchild, who marries his master’s daughter and becomes the Sheriff of London, whereas Tom Idle finds his way to social and moral demotion, as he is turned out of the workshop, seeks his fortune at the sea, becomes a highwayman, gets betrayed by a prostitute and ultimately, is hanged on the Tyburn Tree.

Since these engravings were meant for the populace, its utilitarian purpose overpowers its artistic craftsmanship. He acquired this populist approach from his contemporary culture and carried forth the Dutch legacy of broadsides, pamphlets and chapbooks that dealt with exaggerated gestures and facial expressions, through woodcuts of rough engravings and political caricatures. Ronald Paulson very appropriately interprets these monochromatic latter works of Hogarth as “directed toward reading and verbalization” (Paulson 40). He also observes that, “the engravings are so readable partly because their focus is multiple, their emphases weak, their tonal contrasts not sharp, and their lines distinct—as on a page of printed text” (Paulson 41). George Lillo’s popular play, *The London Merchant* (1731) served as a literary stimulus to Hogarth’s series, featuring the seventeenth-century fable of George Barnell, the popular tale of Dick Whittington’s rise from apprenticeship to the Lord Mayor of London through a Jacobean City Comedy and thematically echoing Dekker’s *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* (1599). These boldly drawn moral alternatives give the series the character of a morality play or a broadside ballad. Incidentally, a broadside on Moll Flanders dangles from the door of Tom Idle’s workshop, introducing the interplay of the verbal and the visual media to convey the cautionary tone of the narrative. Bindman’s argument substantiates this point by mentioning how
Hogarth applied proverbs and quotations from the Scriptures beneath the engravings and thereby gave them the characteristic of another popular art form—the sermon (Bindman 175).

The series is largely interpreted as a graphic satire, as ‘A tale of two cities in black and white’ by Mark Hallett, which highlights the social, cultural and moral binaries associated with the central and peripheral areas of London. He interprets it as “a pictorial narrative that manipulated powerful stereotypes of commercial virtues and masculine fecklessness, and that clearly mediated the hopes and worries of an emergent bourgeoisie in the city” (Hallett 217). Hogarth’s series validates the representational arrangement of urban culture, where Goodchild’s progress served as an emblem of civic masculinity and of the modern bourgeois myth of social and commercial advancement. The portrayal of Goodchild within the enclosed spaces, isolated from the chaos, bribery and corruption of outside, suggests his existence within the normative set up of the Pyramid, whereas the movement of Tom Idle, through the lanes, by-lanes and garrets of London is reminiscent of the movement of the Serpentina. Thus the co-existence of the two apprentices bearing contrasting value-world reveals the struggle between moral subversion and its containment. But Hogarth’s portrait of Tom Idle not necessarily offers a stigmatized character of criminality, rather indicates the dissident nature of the socially misfit and the economically deprived, who operates outside the regulated realm of urban capital and business. *Industry and Idleness* thus projects the artist’s double-intention of offering a threat of revolt to the constrained civil society of the English Enlightenment, while implying the necessity to discipline the potential chaos.

In the eighteenth century, disciplining of the delinquent and appropriation of the misfit within the social system of norms took place primarily through three spaces: the prison, the madhouse and toward the end of the century, through the penitentiary. Defoe’s *Moll Flanders*, Fielding’s *Jonathan Wild* and *Amelia*, Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* and Hogarth’s interpretation of its concluding scene record chronotopic documentaries of these peripheral zones and provide evaluative commentaries on them. Eighteenth-century novels represented the city with its penal system as a potential threat to individual existence, depicted in *Amelia* where Captain Booth is thrown into Newgate prison because of his debts, and in *Tom Jones*, as Tom gets
involved in a scuffle with Mr. Fitzpatrick and is put into the Gate-House: “Whether it was that Fortune was apprehensive lest Jones should sink under the Weight of his Adversity, and that she might thus lose any future Opportunity of tormenting him . . . she seemed a little to relax her Persecution, by sending him the company of two such faithful friends” (TJ 581). The presence of the prison and the threat of the bloody code hanged like a foreboding over Tom and threatened his loyal servant Partridge as well, who went to meet Tom within the prison with a trembling terrified heart.

The corruption inherent within the legal system encouraged criminal activities more than reforming them. The debtor’s prison too emerged as one of the most important \textit{topos} of London’s underworld that combined the capitalist drive of fortune-hunting with stark poverty. The 1770s records prove that, almost half of the entire prison population consisted of debtors and they carried on their trades from the prison (Porter 139). Fielding, in Section iii of his \textit{Enquiry} defines gaming as one of the chief causes of poverty and crime among the poor (\textit{Enquiry} 35). Captain Booth, husband of Amelia, was put into prison because of the heavy debts due to his addiction to gambling that became his folly, causing misery. Hogarth’s father, who was a failure in his commercial enterprise, was quite unsuccessful with his Latin-speaking coffee-house, often got into the debtor’s prison in Hogarth’s childhood. This misfortune was recorded by the artist in his anecdote, “I saw the difficulties under which my father laboured, and the many inconveniences he endured, from his dependence being chiefly on his pen, and the cruel treatment he met with from booksellers and printers” (Nichols 2). Perhaps this real-life familiarity with the ambience of the debtor’s prison caused such a vivid portrayal of the Rake in Fleet prison in Plate 7 of \textit{A Rake’s Progress}. The inmates of the Fleet prison were so frequent visitors there, that they often had their families and children living with them as the viewer will see the Rake is visited and being consoled by his wife Sarah Young.

Ronald Paulson’s objective was to explore Hogarth’s perception of eighteenth-century prison with reference to his childhood trauma involving his father inside the debtor’s prison. The feeling of claustrophobia is associated with Hogarth’s concept of the prison cell. The artist conceived the prison not necessarily within the topography of the actual prison cell, rather imagined it within the society, in the dingy slums and garrets and he metaphorically interpreted the social condition of all classes of people.
as claustrophobic (Paulson 9). In Hogarth’s paintings and engravings, the working class is trapped within the net of poverty and alcoholism, the clergy is trapped within dogmas and hypocrisy, the middle class is bound by the reigns of greed and social climbing and the aristocrats are trapped within opulence-induced vices, class pride and diseases. It is as if Hogarth saw, “at the bottom of this sort of confinement the pretence at being, or the attempt to be, something one is not, the leap beyond one’s true identity into a kind of confidence game played on others and oneself” (Paulson 11). The country girl’s pursuit of being a lady of fashion ends up in Bridewell (A Harlot’s Progress), while the young man’s imitation of the aristocratic way of life lands him into Fleet Prison and ultimately to Bedlam (A Rake’s Progress).

A Harlot’s Progress and A Rake’s Progress also project a recurrent sense of enclosure: “a room which appears to be a drawing-room or a boudoir but is a prison” (Paulson 11). The problem of confinement troubled Hogarth since his childhood, when he had to live with his family in the areas adjacent to Fleet Prison. His concern with institutions like St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, the establishment of the Foundling Hospital and the reform of prisons and madhouses explain his philanthropic attitude, induced by childhood memories. He wanted to break the monopoly of print-sellers on the distribution of the engraver’s product, as Paulson observes, “It can certainly be related to his inbred hatred of confinement by rules, precepts, academic assumptions, or whatever constricts the individual” (Paulson 13). Yet, he abided by the set of ethical rules endorsed by society and developed his cautionary pictorial tales. Hence, the struggle between the Serpentina and the Pyramid could be traced in his personality too.

By portraying his protagonists in prisons, Hogarth provided a cautionary denouement to the tales of their gradual demotion and subversion in their paths to folly. Macheath, in the last scene of The Beggar’s Opera, is positioned against the gloomy and fearful backdrop of Newgate prison; the ‘Harlot’ is portrayed beating the hemp in Bridewell prison in Plate 4 of A Harlot’s Progress; and Sarah of Sarah Malcolm in Prison (1732) is portrayed in a contemplative mood inside her prison cell (Figure 36).
Hogarth’s portrait of Sarah, a murderess from his contemporary history, who was executed in Fleet Street, catered to the popular demand for documentary portrayal of famous criminals. Hogarth’s father-in-law James Thornhill accompanied him to Newgate prison to paint this picture. The light dress of gloomily-seated Sarah becomes the focus of the painting, about whose figure the darkness of the prison’s cell gathers like Hell. But the rosary on the table and the bright rays of light touching the figure of the convict imply her act of penance and thereby incorporating a moral message within the entire scene. Moll Flanders too presents Newgate as dark: “for indeed no Colours can represent the Place to the life” (MF 214). Defoe’s novel records a detailed depiction of Moll’s experience in Newgate prison. Moll was the daughter of a convict who ‘pleaded her belly’ (became pregnant while in custody and hence, was exempted from execution by hanging and was transported to America). Born at Newgate and having details of her birth recorded at the court of Old Bailey, Moll Flanders was supposed to be well accustomed to the dealings of the place. In her
final adventure of stealing brocades, Moll was caught by two housemaids and was

carried to Newgate prison. Through her emotional distress, Newgate prison emerges

like Hell: “the hellish Noise, the Roaring, Swearing and Clamour, the Stench and

Nastiness and all the dreadful crowd of Afflicting things” she says, resembled “an

Emblem of Hell itself, and a kind of an Entrance into it” (MF 212). She also observes

“to conclude, the Place that had so long expected me, and which with so much Art

and Success I had so long avoided” (MF 212). The tolling of the great bell at St.

Sepulchres, ushering in the day of execution and the dismal crying from the

condemned hole, left Moll “overwhelmed with Melancholy and Despair” (MF 212).

The despair made her soul lethargic, and though she was initially stupefied by the

harrowing experience of her Newgate days, she soon accustomed herself to the spirit

of the place and turned a ‘Newgate-Bird’, as she recounts: “I turn’d first Stupid and

Senseless, then Brutish and thoughtless, and at last raving Mad as any of them were;

and in short, I became as naturally pleas’d and easie with the Place, as if indeed I had

been Born there” (MF 215). She was heartily welcomed by the inmates of Newgate

who called for brandy and drank to her health with her money, a custom, known as

‘the garnishing’ mentioned in Amelia as well. In Amelia inside Newgate, the prisoners

asked Captain Booth to pay for a drink for them. As he had no money, he was

stripped of his clothes and was stolen of his belongings including the snuff box

(Amelia 1: 11). Judicial records of the age, including the criminals’ confessions and

trial reports recorded in Newgate Calendar, gave rise to the narrative subgenre of

Newgate Fiction that contributed to a large extent in the creation of Moll Flanders and

Fielding’s Jonathan Wild.

This clamorous, savage, often brutal world of Newgate resembled the

Hobbesian ‘state of nature’. Though Newgate prison is defined by historians as “the

epicentre of crime and punishment” and “the setting for that drama of guilt and

retribution” (Rogers 248), the rigidity of law and the exercise of legal terror also had

its loopholes that induced parodic comments in writers and artists. In A Harlot’s

Progress, Hogarth hints at the corruption of the place and the whole penal system, as

he shows the people in supervision of the delinquents are themselves corrupt: “while

the stern gaoler orders Moll to work harder, his ill-visaged wife has designed on the

harlot’s fine clothes and is clearly planning to rob her” (Cruickshank n. pag.).
Fielding’s expression in *Jonathan Wild* records the same state of anarchy: “and all Newgate was a complete collection of prigs, every man behind desirous to pick his neighbour’s pocket, and every one was as sensible that his neighbour was as ready to pick his: so that (which is almost incredible) as great rogery was daily committed within the walls of Newgate as without” (*JW* 203). Though volunteer citizens came forward as thief-takers at the time of lawlessness, some of them worked as double agents. The famous character of Jonathan Wild thus proves to be both a ‘thief-taker’ and ‘a keeper of stolen goods’, who was satirized by Gay in *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728) and by Fielding in *Jonathan Wild* (1743). Defoe in his real-life account of Jonathan Wild highlights his role as a double agent:

> It is true, he had an inimitable boldness in his behaviour and by detecting some criminals, he assumed a kind of power to protect others, only the difference lay here, namely that he did the first publicly, and the last privately. So that in a word, he served the public in the first, and abused the public in the second, and was only deceived in this, that he thought his being useful in the first, would protect him in being criminal in the last. (*Account of the Life* 226)

Thus in eighteenth-century subculture, informers and law-enforcers often lived in a symbiotic relationship through the exchange of information and benefit. The parallel between the underworld-don Jonathan Wild and Prime Minister Robert Walpole in *The Beggar’s Opera* underlines the writer’s critique of his contemporary political double-dealings that equated the dissimulating attitude of gangster-warfare with the hypocrisy of political realm. The use of force, violence and bribery in politics to attain the coveted goal made it look like the world of criminality. In *The Beggar’s Opera*, Gay’s romanticized portrayal of the highwaymen as ‘the gentlemen of the road’ satirizes ‘the fine gentleman’ or the politicians (*BO* 2652). The expression finds its counterpart in Fielding’s *Jonathan Wild*, as the Count, a fellow thief of Wild maintains: “it is needless to particularize every instance; in all we shall find that there is a nearer connexion between high and low life than is generally imagined” (*JW* 53).

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‡‡ Henceforth referred to as *JW* in parenthetical references throughout the entire dissertation.

§§ Henceforth referred to as *Account of the Life* in parenthetical references throughout the entire dissertation.
Recurrent unrest troubled the realm of English politics through Jacobite Rebellion (1715) and the South Sea Bubble (1720), which resembled the disorder of London’s underworld at that time. Jonathan Wild elevated criminality to a branch of politics, by instructing his thieves what to steal, receiving the stolen goods from them, and then returning the goods to the persons robbed, for a fee. Thieves, who refused to cooperate with the scheme, were caught and ‘framed’ by Wild, who sent them to the gallows. Soon after Wild’s trial in May, 1725, the Tory paper Mist’s Weekly Journal published two long mock-serious articles on the life and opinions of “that celebrated Statesman and Politician Jonathan Wild” and this thief-statesman parallel soon became a stock element in opposition attacks on Robert Walpole. The statesman-rogue parallel is prominent in the arguments of Fielding’s rogue-hero, whose voice throws a challenge to the very concept of gentlemanliness in the eighteenth century:

In civil life, doubtless, the same genius, the same endowments, have often composed the statesman and the prig, for so we call what the vulgar name a thief. The same parts, the same actions, often promote men to the head of superior societies, which raise them to the head of the lower; and where is the essential difference if the one ends on Tower Hill and the other at Tyburn? (JW 52)

Even Wild’s lamentation contains this subtle satire on Walpole: “. . . ’tis the inward glory, the secret consciousness of doing great and wonderful actions, which can alone support the truly Great man, whether he be a Conqueror, a Tyrant, a Statesman, or a Prig” (JW 96). Sometimes the author’s own voice strengthens this connection: “Now, suppose a prig had as many tools as any prime minister ever had, would he not be as great as any prime minister whatsoever?” (JW 79)

In The Beggar’s Opera, levels of satire and parody on the penal system work through Gay’s fusion of genres. Ballad opera was a hybrid genre, characterized by its popular street ballads, sung in the elevated mannerism of Italian opera and by the satirical edge of its dialogues. The tunes of the operatic genre being juxtaposed with contemporary popular allusions and lyrics, bred an overall sense of satire, that was aimed both at the genteel strata of society as well as at their modes of entertainment, the Italian opera. The Beggar’s Opera, first performed at Lincoln’s Inn Fields Theatre

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in 1728, combined a realistic observation of contemporary London’s underworld with a satire at the ruling authority. Its patriotic note was evident through the ridiculing of Italian operas of Drury Lane and was praised by Swift, Pope and Voltaire. The idea of the play originated with Gay’s close friend Jonathan Swift, who suggested “a Newgate Pastoral among the whores and thieves there” (James n. pag.). Jamie James in “The Ballad of John Gay” (Opera News, July 1992) records, how Gay teamed up with German organist Johann Christoph Pepusch to bring out the masterpiece (James n. pag.). In this play, the parallel between Peachum and Jonathan Wild, Macheath and the legendary highwayman Jack Sheppard (who escaped from Newgate prison many times), suggests an ongoing struggle between the authority and its defiant. Contemporary political world of England unleashed a furore over the implicit parallel Gay established between Peachum, Jonathan Wild and the Prime Minister Robert Walpole. Ronald Paulson interpreted the last scene of The Beggar’s Opera as “partly Hogarth’s way of gilding or transforming a deeply unpleasant subject” that involved politics, criminality and confinement (Paulson 11). The Beggar’s Opera, along with Hogarth’s engravings and political cartoons became so popular precisely because they generated multi-layered meanings to the public. In modern times, they claimed the scholar’s critical engagement that, though the eighteenth century produced much praises for its legal system, it also produced “a large popular literature marked by cynicism and disrespect for the law. And there were many more forceful demonstrations of incredulity, including riots at executions, and rogues who mocked their judges” (Hay 54).

Macheath’s attainment of freedom through a reprieve and the wild dance at the closure of the opera glorify the spirit of social rebellion, conveying the carnivalesque mood of the reversal of power. The film version of The Beggar’s Opera, directed by Peter Brooks communicates a similar message of subversive reversal, with Macheath escaping on horseback through the chaos of a jailbreak and the whole torturing system of the prison collapsing. It relates to the real-life incident of Jack Sheppard’s repeated escapes from his condemned cell in Newgate, and the final escape— during his procession to Tyburn— when he was prevented. Jack Sheppard escaped from custody four times between February and October 1724 and this daring attitude made him a celebrity of the underworld and ballads were composed upon him. In his last
imprisonment at Newgate prison he was visited by hundreds of society tourists, missionary vicars and by the fashionable portrait painter James Thornhill, who painted him in oils. Thus Peter Brooks, through his interpretation of Macheath’s ultimate emancipation, instils a message of subversion within his film that resembles the agit-prop undertone of the play itself, which again represents the popular sentiments of the age regarding these gangsters.

In Plate 3 of *A Harlot’s Progress*, the posters in Moll’s garret-bedroom-wall shows heroic characters, both fictional and real, who chose to challenge society and stood for liberty (Figure 37). They include the poster of Captain Macheath, and that of Dr. Henry Sacheverell, who in 1709 had delivered a series of sermons attacking the Whig Government and later became a hero in the age of Whig corruption. Thus, Hogarth associates certain redeeming characteristics with the so-called criminals and prostitutes, an aspect that draws Cruickshank’s critical attention, “It seems that Hogarth wants us—the viewer—to identify Moll with these anti-establishment victims rather than with degraded common harlots” (Cruickshank n. pag.).
In Hogarth’s painting of the last scene of *The Beggar’s Opera* colours become moral signifiers, as Macheath’s red coat symbolizes amour and passion, Lucy’s green gown represents envy, while Polly, in her white gown upholds the emotional and moral centre of the play as opposed to Macheath’s passionate intensity (*Figure 38*). The positioning of a standing Macheath, and the stooping Lucy and Polly together form a perfect triangle within the picture frame, symbolizing the Pyramid, while the emotional drama between the fathers and the daughters pleading for the life of Macheath, incorporates in the painting the diagram of Serpentina within the Pyramid. The theatricality of the scene is expressed through the gloomy high windows of the Newgate-cell, glowing in the golden light of the lamp, through the focused stage-light on the characters and by the presence of the audience in the box.

![Figure 38: Hogarth, *The Beggar’s Opera* (1729 version)](image)

In this context, Fielding’s comparison between the world and the stage in Book 7, Chapter 1 of *Tom Jones* becomes quite significant as both the novel and the theatre are forms of artistic representation (*TJ* 211). Hogarth, in his 1729 version of the same scene attached two Latin quotations to the lavish theatrical curtains. The quotations,
taken from Horace’s *Ars Poetica* are *utile dulci* (‘utility with pleasure’) and *veluti in speculum* (‘as in a mirror’). The latter quotation highlights Hogarth’s tendency for reportage that establishes him as a social realist and at the same time, as a theatrical painter like his continental predecessor, Jean Antoine Watteau. Both the drama and the painting thus hold a mirror to the age, while formulating a critique of the system of pervading corruption.

The severity of capital punishment continued into the eighteenth century, as the accumulation of property and its safe preservation/protection were the greatest interest of the emergent middling sort of people. The punishment for harming private property was severe and it was projected as a spectacle of deterrence. Right to property and its protection were prevailing concepts of the early capitalist enterprise, endorsed by major social thinkers and philosophers of the age. Locke, in the *Second Treatise of Government* suggested the importance of property in eighteenth-century English psyche: “Government has no other end but the preservation of property” that measured human life by the parameters of wealth and status (quoted in Hay 18-19). Consequently, common property-related crimes, like petty theft, cattle-theft, wood-theft, shoplifting, smuggling and poaching met with capital punishment or transportation as tools of deterrence. Motivated by this accumulative interest, the eighteenth-century gentry and the trading people wanted to control these social-disparity-induced crimes and hence introduced the bloodiest code of the century, which invited an ironical comment from Gay in *Trivia*: “Happy Augusta! Law-defended Town!” (*Trivia* 198)

However, throughout the eighteenth century, the number of execution for offences against property remained relatively stable in relation to the continual modification of the capital law and the increasing number of conviction for theft. The increasing use of royal pardons that substituted transportation for hanging became the cause for this leniency in legal approach (Hay 22). This shift in the nature of punishment also indicates the century’s changing perspective towards criminality, from brutish physical punishment of the body to moral disciplining of the mind. With the progress of the eighteenth century, the philanthropists became vocal against this ‘bloody code’ and their continuous campaigns made certain modifications and transformations in this penal system and gave it a more humanitarian approach. In
rural parishes people often settled for a pardon against a bond not to offend again and this was an alternative to rigorous persecution, as Parson Adams acquired it in *Joseph Andrews*. In book 2, chapter 11 of the novel, Fielding makes a parody of contemporary judicial system through the trial of Parson Adams at the Assizes. A comic confusion occurs in this episode as a copy of Aeschylus’s play is retrieved from Adams’s Pocket and the Justice says: “Make Mr. Aeschylus his Mittimus. I will teach you to banter me with a false name” (*JA* 116). The Justice also cracks jokes on Fanny, saying if she wants to ‘plead her belly’, he is at her service. This legal paraphernalia highlights the casualness of the assizes and the loopholes of the system. The legal terminologies of ‘pleading the belly’, ‘Benefit of the clergy’ and ‘Mittimus’ (a writ committing a suspect to jail) justify the writer’s satirical stance on them. The severity of capital punishment in the eighteenth century provoked Foucault’s argument that, “the Enlightenment, which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines” (*Foucault Reader* 211). In the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, discipline became a general formula of domination and by its utilitarian aims, the human body was made more obedient and more useful. In Foucault’s opinion, “The prison with all the corrective technology at its disposal is to be resituated at the point where the codified power to punish turns into a disciplinary power to observe” (*Foucault Reader* 212). In the age of the Enlightenment, the codes of discipline were also reflected through the moral codes or the moral edge of artistic representations, as in Hogarth’s narrative paintings.

The other important space of the underworld, the Tyburn Tree is related to the chronotope of the prison. It stood at the locus of the eighteenth-century penal system and it was ‘Albion’s fatal tree’, as William Blake described it, or, ‘the fatal tree’, as Moll Flanders dubs it in awe (*MF* 212). The procession, paraphernalia and festive gathering of the area surrounding the Tyburn Tree got the character of popular celebration (Hay 13). Though the gallows was the chief instrument of terror, terror alone could not have impacts on the public psyche. It was the raw material of authority driven by commercial interests of the middle class, as Fielding explains it in *Enquiry*: “It is not the Essence of the Thing itself, but the Dress and Apparatus of it, which make an Impression on the Mind” (*Enquiry* 194). In the sixteenth century, execution was viewed as a public spectacle and this trend continued into the eighteenth century, a representation of that was seen in the concluding plate of
Hogarth’s *Industry and Idleness*, where the Idle Apprentice is taken to the gallows through a huge procession that creates a fair-like atmosphere of merrymaking surrounding the gallows (Figure 39).

The chronotope of the Tyburn Tree most vividly appears in the last scene of *The Beggar’s Opera*, as Macheath is elaborately taken to the gallows singing: “At the tree I shall suffer with pleasure” (*BO* 2627). A culture of violence and public spectacle prevailed in eighteenth-century England, as people took pleasure in inflicting pain on each other. Most of the eighteenth-century criminal codes were concerned with offences against property and in this scenario, the gallows stood as a terrifying and rectifying object before common people. From this perspective, the death sentence “was the climactic emotional point of the criminal law— the moment of terror around which the system revolved” and these “secular sermons of the criminal law” became more important than the sermons of the church (Hay 28-29). Following this observation, *The Four Stages of Cruelty* and *Industry and Idleness* could be interpreted as serving the function of secular sermons in visual medium.

![Figure 39: Hogarth, Industry and Idleness, Plate 11 (1747)](image-url)
Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* traces the history of human civilization since the time of corporal punishment to the time of ‘corrective detention’ system. In his view, the bodily punishment not only worked as a tool of deterrence, but also catered to the public’s voyeuristic pleasure in seeing that spectacle. In the carceral system “the least act of disobedience is punished and the best way of avoiding serious offences is to punish the most minor offences very severely” (Foucault, “Carceral” 1637). A similar method was followed in eighteenth-century England when the commonest crimes received harsh penal blows and the intention of the judicial system was to threaten the potential criminals with a message of deterrence. Thus the ‘social contract’ theory of the Enlightenment, promoted by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau explained States’ power over individuals by positing an original contract in which individuals give power to the State in return for protection. Foucault interpreted it as a mechanism of social discipline where the state machinery turned human individual into ‘subjects’.

The chronotope of the Tyburn Tree developed in eighteenth-century literature and painting with the help of contemporary Newgate calendar that recorded how the execution of death sentence was made known to every part of the metropolis and surrounding villages. On the morning of the hanging day, the bells of the churches of London rang; the hawkers sold ballads and ‘last dying speeches’ of the condemned, as in the concluding plate of Hogarth’s *Industry and Idleness*, where the ballad seller is an integral part of the large gathering occasioned by the hanging of the Idle Apprentice. Even foreign visitors noticed this paraphernalia around executions, which became the chief attraction as well as disturbance of the town. People who gathered to see the executions were thieves and prostitutes and their anarchic potentialities posed a threat and a challenge to the genteel and enlightened civil society of the eighteenth century, who adopted this disciplinary measure.

The chronotope of the Tyburn tree thus developed a dual-identity—firstly, as a symbol of violence, chaos and brutality in eighteenth-century England, starkly opposed to the Palladian architecture, the picturesque gardens, refined taste, music and literature of the Hanoverian era; secondly, it emerged as a tool of constant vigilance and control to maintain the status quo of that very same enlightened society through the application of exemplary punishment for the commonest acts of delinquency:
It was a society with a bloody penal code, an astute ruling class who manipulated it to their advantage, and a people schooled in the lessons of Justice, Terror and Mercy. The benevolence of rich men to the poor, and all the ramifications of patronage were upheld by the sanction of the gallows and the rhetoric of the death sentences. (Hay 62-63)

The violent political scenario and social hypocrisy of the century urged the writers and artists to see London’s underworld as a metaphor for the “equally corrupt and immoral worlds of politics and exploitative business” (Cruickshank n. pag). Among these writers was John Gay who commented in *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728) through the voice of the Beggar-persona that, “the lower sort of people have their vices in a degree as well as the rich, and that they are punished for them” unlike the rich (*BO* 2652). Macheath’s mournful ballad in his condemned cell expresses the agony that the socially deprived class suffered at the hand of law:

> Since laws were made for every degree,  
> To curb vice in others, as well as me,  
> I wonder we han’t better company,  
> Upon Tyburn Tree!  
> But gold from law can take out the sting;  
> And if rich men like us were to swing,  
> ‘Twould thin the land, such numbers to string  
> Upon Tyburn Tree! (*BO* 2650)

In eighteenth-century England the ways of dressing, eating and living, were determined by the social standing of that person, while “the poor, in turn, were taken for insubordination, drunkenness, criminality, ignorance, improvidence, self-indulgence, and laziness” (Olsen 13). Poverty was often seen by the writers and artists as the basis of criminality in an urban industrial society and within the urban space, great disparities of living standards could be detected. The fate of Hogarth’s Idle Apprentice could be taken as the common fate of the unemployed in the eighteenth century and Jonathan Wild’s gang provided shelter and means of living to such “undone gamesters, ruined bailiffs, broken tradesmen, idle apprentices, attorneys’ clerks, and loose and disorderly youths, who, being born to no fortune, nor bred to
any trade or profession, were willing to live luxuriously without labour” (JW 102). Defoe in The True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild (1725) also records how Wild made thieves out of little destitute children, pretending to do it out of compassion to their poverty, “to bring them to be hanged, to keep them from misery, and to make Newgate birds of them” (Account of the Life 252).

Poverty, unemployment, pursued innocence, cunning and the struggle against the powerful created together the condition for disobeying the law. The causes that led to the debunking of legal system and the thriving of organized crime were interrelated and made eighteenth-century subculture the domain of adventure for such outlaws who were rogue heroes of folk culture (Foucault, “Carceral” 1641). Foucault’s reference to Jack Sheppard (1702-24) highlights the thinker’s concern for the socio-economic edge of criminality that created the condition of ‘crime’ in eighteenth-century England. Although the death sentence was a deterrent, the dying speech of the labouring class often looked at hanging with irreverence, humour and defiance. Since poverty often generated criminal potentials, the sympathy of the crowd remained with the condemned and there was great cooperation between working class people who shared a fraternity. Hangings were therefore threatened by disruptions, disorders, brawls and riots that necessitated the removal of the site of hanging from the Tyburn to the confines of the prison walls of Newgate in 1783. In Section xi of Enquiry, Fielding argues that the disorder at the site of execution is one of the causes of increasing robbery in the mid-century and considers that hangings should be removed from public view because, if unseen, it would create a greater impact on people’s psyche just the way in a drama, a murder behind the scenes affects the audience with a greater terror than if it is acted before their eyes. What Fielding suggests, is the segregation of the site of execution within an enclosure (Enquiry 193-96). In this way the chronotope of the Tyburn Tree suffered relocation in the course of eighteenth century.

The proper and respectful treatment of the body of the condemned, which was a serious concern for the Tyburn crowd, got active cooperation from the laboring stratum of the society that led riots against the body-snatchers, who provided the surgeons with corpses for dissection. Empirical teaching method necessitated the act
of dissection to learn anatomy. Since providing bodies were monetarily expensive, the bodies of the condemned were often snatched by the agents of the surgeons. These were supplied to them in exchange of money and were dissected for the learning of anatomy: “The corpse becomes a commodity with all the attributes of a property. It could be owned privately. It could be bought and sold” (Hay 72). Many of the convicts were afraid of the posthumous dissection and desired a decent and proper Christian burial. The eighteenth-century chronotope of the underworld thus witnessed an interesting departure from the spectacle of violence to the culture of learning, as “the history of the London poor and the history of the English science intersect” (Hay 68).

Hogarth’s *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751) marks a shift from the grotesque display of violence to a moral and pedagogic thrust. With its emphasis on the topic of murder, crime and punishment, this series coincides with one of Fielding’s popular pamphlet, “Examples of the Interposition of Providence in the Detection and Punishment of Murder” (1752). Physical suffering—pain, urban mob violence and disorder are staples of this series. Tom Nero, the representative figure of cruelty, gets sadistic pleasure in his childhood by torturing cats and dogs (Plate 1); by beating his horse as a coachman in his youth (Plate 2); by murdering his mistress and mutilating her with a dagger in a graveyard (Plate 3). In the concluding plate (Plate 4), a group of surgeons brutally dissect the body of Tom Nero after his execution by hanging and the public throng to see it. The body parts are treated with cruelty and the heart is eaten up by a dog (ref. Figure 41). The title of the plate, *The Reward of Cruelty* gives a moral implication of Heaven’s justice, which intersects the scientific repercussion of the scene. The last stage shows the criminal under the control of the authority. The chief surgeon sits like a judge and the dissecting theatre echoes a similar situation in the courtroom. The first plate of this series was produced in woodcut to keep engravings cheap and available to people. By the display of macabre violence, Hogarth’s deterrent intention was to disseminate the moralistic overtone of this philanthropic message to all strata of the society “through demonizing a proletarian underside of popular culture, and invoking the threat of an urban invasion from inside—but also satirized the representations and values of the community itself” (Hallett 234). Years later, Hogarth remarked that he thought the publication of them
had helped to check the diabolical spirit of barbarity to animals (Nichols 65), which triggered Lawrence Stone’s interpretation of this series as Hogarth’s philanthropic move to prevent the maltreatment of animals and human beings (Stone 163). The black and white halftones of the woodcuts and the engravings helped to highlight the binary oppositions within the narrative (Figure 40).

Contemporary writings and treatises like The Newtonian System of Philosophy Adapted to the Capacities of Young Gentlemen and Ladies . . . by Tom Telescope (1761) or The Liberties of the Massachusetts Colony (1641)—all intended to ask young people to abstain from inflicting pain upon animals, slaves and thereby ultimately achieving kindness to mankind. Barbara Jaffe in her essay, “William Hogarth and Eighteenth Century English Law Relating to Capital Punishment” (2003)
draws the reader’s attention to the same sociological shift away from execution as a public spectacle and the adoption of a more humanitarian and reformative stance (Jaffe 276). The demand for bodies by the surgeons and the refusal of the mob to leave it to the snatchers indicates the duality within the discourse of the Enlightenment. The dominant discourse of the Enlightenment represented order, and the study of science promoted this orderliness, whereas the very foundation of medical science, the study of human anatomy was threatened by the unruly mob of London’s underbelly. The graphic horror of The Four Stages of Cruelty does not merely represent the excess of cruelty, but through the debate between science and the underworld, it accommodates the spirit of the Serpentina within the Pyramid (Figure 41).

In the eighteenth-century novel and painting the chronotope of the underworld accommodated another vital space that originated through a nexus between London’s sex industry and its world of crime. Like the criminals, the prostitutes also lived in the fringes of the city and moreover, they acted as the common link between the high
living and fashion and low life and crime (Cruickshank n. pag.). In Plate 3 of *A Harlot’s Progress* the presence of the wig-box of James Dalton, the notorious criminal of the eighteenth century at the top of the harlot’s bed, strengthens the Harlot’s association with criminality. On the one hand, the viewer finds the child prostitute exploited by Lord Squanderfield who contacted her with venereal disease and has taken her to an apothecary in Plate 3 of *Marriage à la Mode*, on the other hand, in Plate 9 of *Industry and Idleness*, an ugly-looking prostitute talks to the policeman to betray the Idle Apprentice who has become a highwayman and divides his booty with fellow robbers (Figure 42).

Thus the nexus between the police and the prostitute, who serves as an informer to the law, underlines the ambiguous location of the prostitute in society. At the corner of the same painting (Plate 9) a murder has been committed by the Idle Apprentice and his friends and the body is being dumped through a trap door inside the dingy garret of the harlot’s room, which suggests how ambiguously the prostitute both endorses crime and participates in its control. In Pat Rogers’ view the burgeoning night-cellars and gaming establishments promoted crime and “it is interesting to note that Jack
Sheppard began life as a carpenter’s apprentice in Wych Street, off Drury Lane” (Rogers 72). In *Industry and Idleness*, Tom Idle is betrayed in Blood Bowl Alley in Alsatia, an area near Grub Street, notorious for street brawls.

A similar role is played by prostitutes Mrs. Coaxer, Dolly, Mrs. Vixen, Betty, Jenny, Slammekin, Suky and Molly, who betrays Macheath to the police as he visits them. Macheath’s boisterous comment “I love the sex. And a man who loves money might as well be contented with one guinea, as I with one woman” (*BO* 2623) accentuates his amorous promiscuity against Polly’s loyal devotion for him. The way Jenny and Suky Towdry divert Macheath thorough songs, drinks and merrymaking to disarm him and inform Peachum and the constables rush upon him, suggests the accomplishment of these women in the craft of acting as double-agents. As Macheath leaves the scene guarded, the other prostitutes demand that, though Mr. Peachum may have made a private bargain with Jenny and Suky, they ought to have equal share in it as all of them assisted to catch Macheath (*BO* 2626-27). Through this informal chatting of the prostitutes, their fluid and ambiguous relationship with law is represented in contemporary literature. London’s sex industry intrigued Defoe, Gay, Swift, Fielding and Blake, many of whom realized and portrayed the exploitative aspect of London’s sex industry in relation to the world of criminality and law. Cruickshank’s observation was that, “it was a sophisticated and well-organized enterprise that crossed class boundaries, overlapped with most aspects of daily life, and enjoyed a highly ambiguous relationship with the law” (Cruickshank n. pag.). The figure of the prostitute in eighteenth-century literature and painting uses her body as a weapon of seduction and through the free circulation of sexual energy in her trade she contributes to the commercial culture of the age. Moreover, by working as a double agent, she projects the metaphor of exchange and her body becomes an unruly site of desire and fascination. The chronotope of the brothel thus becomes an integral aspect of the chronotope of the underworld.

Along with prisons and brothels, madhouses formed an essential trope for studying human nature outside the normative constraints of society. The chronotope of the madhouse, explored in Hogarth’s paintings, had been one of the crucial components of potential anarchy in London’s underworld and its subculture, because like the criminal and the sex-worker, the insane too lived at the borderlines of the
society and society attempted to appropriate the madman within its own corpus through discipline. Madness and madhouses appeared in Hogarth’s painting through the portrayal of the Rake in Bedlam, where the Rake in chains is surrounded by crazy musicians, astronomers, a would-be king, a religious maniac (Figure 43). This scene could be interpreted both as a mode of nature’s punishment of the Rake’s licentious way of life and also as Hogarth’s socio-realistic comment on contemporary treatment of madness in society as a repercussion of the emergent ideas of Sentimentalism and philanthropy in the mid-century. Jane E. Kromm in the article, “Hogarth’s Madmen” (1985) highlights Hogarth’s interest in philanthropic endeavours in his portrayal of the Rake in Bedlam, and in the details from the scene from *The Beggar’s Opera* (Kromm 241-42). By referring to parallel texts and engravings from the age on similar representations of madness, the article portrays the growing importance of ‘madness’ in eighteenth-century England as an issue of social concern.

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 43**: Hogarth, *A Rake’s Progress*, Plate 8 (1732-33)

Catharine Arnold in the introduction to her study *Bedlam: London and its Mad* gives a brief history of Bedlam mental hospital. According to her, Bethlehem Hospital, or ‘Bethlem’, as it was popularly known in cockney vernacular, was
founded in Bishopsgate in 1247, by Simon FitzMary. In the course of time, the place became associated with thieving, degeneracy and corruption. The mad first came to Bethlem in the 1370s after Richard II closed down the Stone House, a small hospital in Charing Cross (Arnold 2). During Gordon Riots (1780), a group of anti-Papist threatened to liberate Bethlem and torched Newgate prison house. These pieces of information represent society itself as a potent site of misrule, with the potentials of insanity brewing not in the periphery but within the society. Thus, “Bethlem, became, for the nation’s satirists, a mirror of madness” (Arnold 4), reflecting the city’s disordered psyche, designed by the city fathers as an asylum for their own impending insanity. By the eighteenth century, it did seem as if London was going mad. The witty Jonathan Swift suggested that politicians and generals be recruited from Bethlem, as they could not be any more insane than the ones currently in charge. The establishment itself was riddled with insanity. Arnold also explains Bethlem’s transformation into ‘Bedlam’ by the mid-sixteenth century, which she defines as a ‘social construct’ and a byword for pandemonium.

The madhouse scene of A Rake’s Progress (1732-33) is a portrayal of the lunatic asylum at Moorfields. A similar scene was represented by Francisco de Goya (1746-1828) in The Madhouse (1812-19) (Figure 44).
The dark gloomy chamber, streaks of light streaming through a window and the semi
naked bodies of the inmates are common elements in both of these paintings. Even the
reclining gesture of the Rake is echoed in the figure of the crowned madman at the
right-hand corner of Goya’s painting. But in Hogarth’s painting, the light that
illuminates the figure of the rake seems to be artificial and the way it emphasizes the
protagonist of the tale out of darkness, makes the picture look like a scene from a
drama, where the atmosphere is not actually realistic but is ‘made to seem to be so’
(ref. Figure 43). This artificial theatrical quality is present in Hogarth’s other
paintings as well, which has been already pointed out in Chapter 3, in the context of
The Four Times of Day. This particular use of light thus underlines the narrative thrust
that Hogarth gave in his paintings perhaps more importantly, than looking at their
technical accuracy. Incidentally, the paperback edition (2008) of Catharine Arnold’s
book uses the last scene from A Rake’s Progress on its cover, where Tom Rakewell,
driven insane by drink and debt, is left perishing in ‘Bedlam’, which suggests the
iconic significance of this image in the history of madness in the English context.
Charles Lamb draws the viewer’s attention to the mood of pathos generated in the two
concluding plates of A Rake’s Progress and he compares the Rake’s madness to
Hamlet’s madness and King Lear’s insanity, which echoes and at the same time
contradicts the view sustained by Horace Walpole: “Sometimes he rose to tragedy,
not in the catastrophe of kings and heroes, but in marking how vice conducts
insensibly and incidentally to misery and shame” (Nichols 69). In Lamb’s view, this
juxtaposition of the ludicrous and the terrible threatened the rational mindset of the
Enlightenment (Nichols 93).

Foucault traced the development of the houses of confinement in the
seventeenth century and during this time madmen were confined along with the poor,
the unemployed and the prisoners. In the seventeenth and the eighteenth-century
Europe, madness was looked upon from utilitarian perspective and was perceived
“through a condemnation of idleness and in a social immanence guaranteed by the
community of labour” (Foucault Reader 136). The community of labour rejected all
kinds of ‘social uselessness’ (Foucault Reader 136). The madmen thus alienated
themselves from the bourgeois work ethic. From Foucault’s viewpoint, the birth of
asylum and the birth of prison thus signify the emergence of social sites of constraint,
whereby morality was enforced through administration. Institutions of morality thus
combined moral obligation and civil law: “Morality permitted itself to be administered like trade or economy” (Foucault Reader 138). He also maintained that “the frontiers between confinement, judicial punishment and institutions of discipline, which were already blurred in the classical age, tended to disappear and to constitute a great carceral continuum that diffused penitentiary techniques into the most innocent disciplines” (Foucault, “Carceral” 1639).

In modern penal justice, the prison transformed the “punitive procedure into a penitentiary technique” (Foucault, “Carceral” 1640). Gradually, in the course of the eighteenth century, the departure from the norm and the anomaly was treated with sympathy and a philanthropic attitude. The sense of randomness inside the old prison boundaries were restructured into a new penal order between 1719 and 1779. As John Bender argues, “the new penitentiaries, whose geometric disposition of individual cells and rigid daily routines we often take as inevitable, sprang suddenly into being” (Bender 1-2). During this time, the attitudes toward prison were formulated in art and prose fiction, a fallout of that was Hogarth’s A Rake’s Progress. In England the rise of the penitentiary went in accordance with the reformist movement. Alongside the prison, the emergent concept of the penitentiary posed as an important topos in eighteenth-century novels and narrative paintings. In Bender’s view, “eighteenth-century prison reform found its form in the sphere of novelistic discourse where, through the material of language, an emergent structure of feeling took shape and, like an image floating into focus, became subject to conscious experience” (Bender 1). In amatory fiction as early as Eliza Haywood’s Fantomina, the heroine, after her tempestuous amorous adventures, was sent to a French monastery as a marker of reformative containment, and Moll Flander’s exile to Virginia also bear early evidences of the novel’s negotiation with the idea of the penitentiary. The chronotope of the underworld was thus provided with a philanthropic angle through the emergent topos of the penitentiary.

The problem of poverty-induced criminality raised philanthropic concerns in Adam Smith, Horace Walpole and Henry Fielding. The latter, out of his sympathy for the poor, argued that, “the sufferings of the poor are indeed less observed than their misdeeds. . . .They starve and freeze and rot among themselves, but they beg and steal and rob among their betters” (Fielding, quoted by Porter 87). Driven by continuing
anxiety of the struggle for existence and troubled by drudgery, the labouring class took solace in ales and gin, which increased the problem of drunkenness among the poor in the eighteenth century. Seasonal and causal workers were free moving people, who temporarily dwelt in the fringes of the cities and villages and earned money by committing petty crimes, sheep stealing, poaching, coining and shoplifting. These beggars, small-time thieves, gypsies, vagrant and cheats were underground people of Georgian England. In Roy Porter’s words, they were ‘proletarianized paupers’ (Porter 95)—‘proletarianized’, as they lived by their labour and wits and they had no land, nor roots; ‘paupers’, for they had no definite work. They put on a ‘P’ badge on their clothes in receipt of relief.

*Moll Flanders* gives a graphic account of the transformation of a woman into a criminal. Her account gives many instances of poverty-induced crimes that incited children and abandoned girls into criminality and prostitution. In Gay’s imagination, the pickpocket appears in a comic light:

High on the Shoulder, in the Basket born,
Lurks the sly Boy; whose Hand to Rapine bred,
Plucks off the curling Honours of the Head.
Here dives the skulking Thief, with practis’d slight,
And unfelt Fingers make thy Pocket light.
Where’s now thy Watch, with all its Trinkets flown?
And thy late Snuff-Box is no more thy own. (*Trivia* 195)

The ballad singer too works as an accomplice in this organized crime circle by diverting the attention of the passer-by and thus making it easy for the pickpocket to steal:

Let not the Ballad-Singer’s shrilling Strain
Amid the Swarm thy list’ning Ear detain:
Guard well thy Pocket; for these Syrens stand,
To aid the Labours of the diving Hand. (*Trivia* 196)

The ruling group, alert to the problems of the labouring force, wanted to maintain an order, by intensifying the deterrent capital punishment and at the same time realizing
that they had to continue with the capitalist ideology, without displeasing the workers. Hence, they attempted to win over the sympathy and support of the workers by providing the labourers welfare services and philanthropic advices. This negotiation between punitive constraints and humane leniency corroborates the Hogarthian debate between the Serpentina and the Pyramid.

Since the late seventeenth century onwards, London was emerging as an urban capitalist hub that fostered the connection between economic disparity and crime and had an uneven influence on the standard of living. The lower-middling people and slum dwellers suffered from lack of food and other health services and were given to gin drinking that initiated the concept of ‘a criminal class’ in eighteen-century sociological thoughts. P. L. Garside thus viewed the nature of London’s lawlessness and criminality in consonance with the Gin Age (1720-51) (Thompson 485). However, the scenario of potential anarchy changed with the disciplining of the poor through the establishment of agencies such as, Henry Fielding’s Bow Street Runners and the Horse Patrol. Hogarth, through his pair of contrasting prints, *Beer Street; Gin Lane* (1751) recorded his social commentary and critique on the ill-effects of cheap gin on society. Thus ‘Gin Lane’ too, like ‘Grub Street’, emerges as an abstract cultural construct, signified through a fictitious spatial marker that serves as a moral and social indicator. The engraving also upholds Hogarth’s xenophobic bias against gin and beef being French commodities, as opposed to the pure and robust English nationalistic flavours of fish and beer, an issue already discussed in the context of urban prosperity in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. The happy, plump and prosperous people in *Beer Street* promote the refreshing effects of beer drinking, as opposed to the ruining effect of gin on the health of underfed poor multitude. The contrasting atmospheres of *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane* seem to follow the legacy of moral binaries popularized by Pieter Brueghel, in his portrayal of ‘Carnival’ and ‘Lent’ (ref. Figure 7 in Chapter 2), in the conflict between “repression and Saturnalia, probity and drunkenness” (Paulson 12). *Beer Street; Gin Lane* is thus, a cautionary print in the perspective of Gin riots of the 1750s.

*Gin Lane* represents the notorious parish of St. Giles. The whole scene is filled with overtones of despair, decay, death and madness, generated by gin-drinking, as Hogarth depicts it, “in *Gin Lane*, every circumstance of its horrid effects is brought to
view *in terrorem*. Idleness, poverty, misery and distress, which drives even to madness and death, are the only objects that are to be seen” (Nichols 64). A half-naked diseased woman lies on the stairs of a subterranean gin shop and her infant is falling from her breast. Her sinister smile is indicative of her apathy towards life and it upholds the prevailing cynic mindset of the hopelessly struggling and deprived urban poor (*Figure 45*).

![Hogarth, Beer Street; Gin Lane](image)

*Figure 45: Hogarth, Beer Street; Gin Lane*

At this point, Hogarth’s painting echoes Fielding’s morbid observations regarding gin-drinking in his *Enquiry*: “What must become of the Infant who is conceived in Gin? with the poisonous Distillations of which it is nourished both in the Womb and at the Breast” (*Enquiry* 30). This representation of a decadent society was issued from the novelist’s and the artist’s philanthropic concerns. The woman symbolizes real life figures from contemporary society, where in 1734 Judith Dufour killed her child so that she could sell her clothes to buy gin (George 41). In another incident Mary Estwick, an elderly woman let a toddler burn to death in a gin-induced stupor (Warner 69). The gin cellar, ‘Gin Royal’ advertises its wares through a slogan: “Drunk for a penny / Dead drunk for twopence / clean straw for nothing” (*Figure 45*), which suggests the cheap availability of gin to the poor. An ample portrayal of eighteenth-
century urban slum is presented through this particular engraving where chaos is let loose everywhere and grotesque facial expressions generate a gin-induced sense of excess and the macabre. Thumbnail depiction of murder, infanticide and suicide of a poor barber inside his shop provide ample evidences of the state of the London poor in the eighteenth century. The tumbling structures seem drunk and the use of randomly displayed diagonal lines heightens the sense of frenzy within the pictorial space. These random lines in *Gin Lane* are contrasted with the ordered straight and curvy lines of *Beer Street* where the posture of the sign painter, admiring his own work, resembles the position of Serpentina within the Pyramid that was a symbol of balance for Hogarth, suggesting both aesthetic and social orderliness.

This work of Hogarth draws close parallel to Fielding’s *Enquiry* (1751), where the writer expresses his anxiety about being “assaulted and pillaged and plundered” as he says, “I can neither Sleep in my own house, nor walk the Streets, nor travel in Safety” (*Enquiry* 3). Historians recount, how the prisons, hospitals, turnpikes, docks and schools were seen as instruments to control the unruly, whereas the delinquents became less physically violent but more organized and attacked unoccupied shops, warehouses and unprotected houses (Thompson 484-85). Fielding’s voice sounds concerned as he discovers, “there is at this Time a great Gang of Rogues whose Number falls little short of a Hundred, who are incorporated in one Body, have Officers and a Treasury; and have reduced Theft and Robbery into a regular System” (*Enquiry* 3-4). These criminals evaded the law by bribing or deterring the prosecutor. Fielding’s interaction with them as a magistrate led him into writing *Jonathan Wild*. In this way, the increase of organized crimes led to the rise of multiple chronotopes of subculture (the debtor’s prison, the gallows, the brothel, the tavern, and the Grub Street), which necessitated the strengthening of equally organized repressive state apparatuses of discipline and control, and thereby demonstrating the struggle between the Serpentina and the Pyramid through its greater sociological repercussions.

Fielding’s reformative stance was later analysed by Malvin R. Zirker, Jr., who takes the novelist’s two pamphlets, *An Enquiry Into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers & C. with Some Proposals for Remedying this Growing Evil* (1751) and *A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor, for Amending the Morals for Rendering them Useful Members of the Society* (1753) to argue about “a renewed
interest in the possibilities of reform” (Zirker 454). Fielding’s *Enquiry* and *Proposal* therefore seemed to be provoked by the chaotic social condition of the age which in turn motivated certain social reforms. In *Enquiry* Fielding proposes laws for making provision and arranging livelihood for the poor. His philanthropic stance is clear as he suggests how the state authority, by imposing a tax on the upper strata of the society, can arrange stocks of flax, hemp, wool, thread and iron to engage the poor into work. He adds that the state should also provide necessary relief to the lame, impotent, old, blind and poor people of the parishes (*Enquiry* 74). He observes: “Not only Care for the Public Safety, but common Humanity, exacts our Concern on this Occasion; for that many Cart-loads of our Fellow creatures are once in Six Weeks carried to Slaughter, is a dreadful Consideration” (*Enquiry* 199). Besides, Fielding’s depiction of the underworld in *Amelia* is a projection of the volatile and uncertain state of the London poor and the chaotic nature of the mob. To emphasize the spectacle of lawlessness among the eighteenth-century London poor, Zirker analyses Hogarth’s *Gin lane* in relation to the contemporary municipal reforms that these pamphlets had initiated. By suggesting a constructive welfare for the poor, Fielding’s *Enquiry* also probes into the paradoxes underlying the idea of ‘progress’ in British Enlightenment: “For what can be more shocking than to see an industrious poor Creature, who is able and willing to labour, forced by mere Want into Dishonesty, and that in a Nation of such Trade and Opulence” (*Enquiry* 198).

The symbiotic relationship between poverty and criminality in the chronotope of the underworld is well expressed in *Moll Flanders*, through Moll’s own course of life as her lament suggests, “Vice came in always at the Door of Necessity, not at the Door of Inclination” (*MF* 100). Her observation, that a criminal is not born but led into a criminality by circumstances, explains Defoe’s own opinion regarding the social basis of criminality. After the death of Moll’s fifth husband, the bank-clerk, she is no longer young and attractive to be kept as a mistress by somebody and she is left “perfectly Friendless and Helpless” (*MF* 147). The problem of survival troubles her and she undergoes extreme poverty: “I fancied every Sixpence that I paid but for a Loaf of Bread, was the last that I had in the World, and that Tomorrow I was to fast, and be starv’d to Death”, and she prays: “Give me not Poverty lest I Steal” (*MF* 148). Thus Defoe, through Moll’s voice and conscience, combines Christian teachings and the question of survival in the age of nascent capitalism, because “a time of Distress is
a time of dreadful Temptation. . . .Poverty presses, the Soul is made Desperate by Distress” (MF 148). Fielding’s Amelia raises a similar point where a noble lord, in his conversation with Doctor Harrison, asks: “let me ask you one simple question: do you really believe any man upon earth was ever a rogue out of choice?” (Amelia 2: 231). This rhetorical question explains again the writer’s view as poverty being an incentive to criminality, which he argues in his famous Enquiry. Fielding, during his tenure as the Bow Street Magistrate, took initiative to look into the issue of street-robbery from a humanitarian ground that too had a formative influence on Enquiry.

In the ‘Preface’ to Enquiry, Fielding addresses the deteriorating condition of the working class multitude in England through history. However, he notices a drastic change in the manners, customs and value structure of the social classes with the introduction of industry and trade in England. He detects poverty as the source of criminality and the legal proposals he offers as the measures to control crime, contain moral ethical overtones, which is symptomatic of his Augustan sensibilities. Blaming material affluence as the cause of moral lapse that leads into crime, Fielding comments, “the vast Torrent of Luxury which of late Years hath poured itself into this Nation, hath greatly contributed to produce, among many others, the Mischief I here complain of” (Enquiry 6). Since aspirations of social climbing lead men into accumulating more wealth by unfair means, Fielding suggests, “the gentlest Method which I know, and at the same Time perhaps one of the most effectual, of stopping the Progress of Vice, is by removing the Temptation” (Enquiry 9). Considering gin, as the cause of transgression he explains: “Drunkenness is almost inseparably annexed to the Pleasures of such People. A Vice by no means to be constructed as a Spiritual Offence alone, since so many temporal Mischiefs arise from it; amongst which are very frequently Robbery and Murder itself” (Enquiry 20). Regarding economic deprivation as the cause of gin drinking, he defines gin as a poison:

The Drunkenness I here intend, is that acquired by the strongest intoxicating Liquors, and particularly by that Poison called Gin, which I have great Reason to think, is the principal Sustenance (if it may be so called) of more than an hundred thousand People in this Metropolis. (Enquiry 28)
Beer Street; Gin Lane, along with the Four Stages of Cruelty and Industry and Idleness thus project a more cutting satire on poverty and crime of the society and therefore they are based on a gloomier mood than Hogarth’s earlier series (A Rake’s Progress or Marriage à la Mode) that provide mitigated laughter on the foibles of society. In Beer Street, Hogarth highlights the positive aspect of drinking native English ale as opposed to the destruction caused by the foreign spirit of gin. The parliament introduced Gin Act in 1736 that imposed high taxes on sales of gin, forbade the sale of the spirit in quantities of less than two gallons, and required an annual payment of £50 for a retail licence. But the act was not at all effective and it increased the smuggling and distilling of the trade underground that resulted in untimely deaths caused by the consumption of spurious liquor. In this context, the argument of Richard M. Baum becomes quite relevant in identifying the common socio-satirical mission in the works of Hogarth and Fielding, who were vocal against the extravaganza of the nobility and the gin-oriented anarchy of the poor: “The similarity in social sentiment of writer and artist affords an adequate explanation of the basis for their intimacy” (Baum 30). Baum holds realism and naturalism as the staple of both Hogarth’s and Fielding’s styles and thereby relating their works to the basic philosophical doctrine of their age that is, empiricism.

In Moll Flanders, through the stealing spree of Moll, the topography of London is deftly sketched within the text. Defoe’s language pulsates with emotion and activity, communicating the urgency of Moll Flanders’ poverty that makes her survival a necessary enterprise. That Moll is a self-conscious thief becomes evident from her repeated apologetic comments: “The Prospect of my own starving, which grew every Day more frightful to me, harden’d my Heart by degrees . . . but now I should be driven by the dreadful Necessity of my Circumstances to the Gates of Destruction” (MF 150). The stealing craft of hers unfolds the rich and opulent material culture of eighteenth-century London bourgeoisie that is already explored in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. She steals their property— silver plates, gold beads, silver spoons and mugs, black silk and velvet, gold and diamond rings. In an amorous adventure as a prostitute with a drunken Gentleman in a coach, she steals his gold watch, his silk purse of gold, his full-bottom periwig, his silver-fringed gloves, sword and fine snuff-box. Her booty unravels the riches of the eighteenth-century London bourgeoisie. Very soon she becomes a well-trained pickpocket and has ‘One and
Twenty Gold watches” in her hand, (MF 156) which will remind the reader of *The Theft of a Watch* (1731) by Hogarth where three prostitutes skilfully combine to steal a watch from a drunkard, while the fourth raises the alarm on the watchman’s entry (Figure 46).

The dramatic night scene, with golden light flashing on the faces and the dresses of the characters, highlighting the red gown of the woman who raises the alarm and the spontaneous gestures of the prostitutes, seems to be teeming with tension, energy, chaos and action. The use of warm tones like red, golden yellow, burnt sienna and dark brown adds to the cosy yet chaotic warmth of the room in the picture. The frenzied mood of the painting reminds the viewer of Jan Steen’s *Nocturnal Serenade* (1675). A similar application of red, brown and black in Plate 3 of his *Rake’s Progress* plays vital part to bring out the seedy and tantalizing nightlife of the metropolis, where one of the prostitutes of the Rose Tavern steals the gold pocket-watch from intoxicated Tom Rakewell and supplies it to her maid (ref. Figure 14 in Chapter 3).

![Figure 46: Hogarth, *The Theft of a Watch* (1731)](image-url)
In this way the topography of London marks the route of criminality and subculture through the alleys of Covent Garden and the garrets of Drury Lane. The city emerges as a seat of corruption. Incidentally, London’s East end was the industrial hub and fostered outrageous activities, whereas the West end was posh and elegant with gardens and green squares. The chronotope of the underworld, with its subculture and pulsating life-force of thieves, destitute and prostitutes, challenged the stable hierarchy of society and highlighted the debate between subversion and containment.

Whatever the means of control might have been, in the course of the century, the judicial and penal system underwent a gradual shift away from execution as a public spectacle to the abolishment of capital punishment and the establishment of reformative punishment. During this time, the rise of the sentimental mode generated a philanthropic tendency among people which was promoted through contemporary literature and art. In *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book 3 (1739-40), Hume interpreted how tender emotions like sympathy can play a formative role in society: “Sympathy interests us in the good of mankind; and if sympathy were the source of our esteem for virtue, that sentiment of approbation could only take place, where the virtue actually attained its end, and was beneficial to mankind” (Hume 303-04). In 1771, Henry Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling* emphasized the open outburst of emotion in the novelistic zone and thereby introducing the cult of the ‘Man of Sentiment’ or the ‘Man of Feeling’ that served as the prototype of the late eighteenth-century Romantic poet persona. In the social space, Sentimentalism expressed emotional anguish concerning cruelty that made way for reformative punishment. As Stone records, a woman convicted of murdering her husband was to be burnt alive at Tyburn as late as 1725, but this penalty was gradually disappearing in the course of the eighteenth century (Stone 222). With the emergence of the philanthropic trend, the pardons mitigated the severity of the criminal law that made the number of death penalty in London lower, by the mid-eighteenth century (Hay 57). Though the application of pardon was arbitrary, it was a useful tool for moderation until the reform of the capital punishment in the nineteenth century. It was the propertied gentry that passed one of the bloodiest codes in Europe of that time and ironically, it was the same group that boasted of their humanity through the use of pardons. This duplicity within the character of the middling sort also highlighted the paradox of the bloody code.
This antipathy to cruelty was a broad, philosophical movement that gathered strength throughout the mid and late eighteenth century and was carried out through Evangelistic thoughts of mercy, pamphlets, sermons, novels, cartoons and prints. These were circulated by the reformers, who realized that, the occasional terror of the gallows were less effective than the sure detection of crime and moderate punishments. These movements, involving the upsurge of emotion, were at first operative among the reformers and the English elites, in whose domestic space improvements in the treatment of wives and children suggested the development of ‘affective individualism’. It was generated by significant social repercussions of the philosophical doctrine of Sentimentalism— “in its effect on family life, the connection between hostility, while both slaves and women were ultimately beneficiaries, along with felons and madmen, of the drive for legal protection for the helpless” (Stone 163). In this light, the conception of Industry and Idleness can be interpreted as an example of Hogarth’s charitable activities as a philanthropic enthusiast. In the age of Sentimentalism, he was concerned with the fate and future of young orphan boys, most of them were trained as apprentices. These engravings privilege work over faith and locate it in the place of worship to bring out the ethos of Puritan work ethic.

Apart from his artistic expression on public welfare and reform, Hogarth was associated with the activities of the Foundling Hospital and supported the philanthropic works of his friend, Captain Thomas Corum. The philanthropic scheme of reform of the prisons and hospitals and the establishment of orphanages in eighteenth-century England not only had a humanitarian ground, but also, as Foucault suggested in his Discipline and Punish, a utilitarian objective. The closure of Fielding’s Enquiry bears a similarly purposive tone, as he concludes, “with proper Care and proper Regulations, much the greater Part of these Wretches might have been made not only happy in themselves, but very useful Members of the Society” (Enquiry 199). The dissemination of such philanthropic messages was made possible by the print culture that democratized art and literature by their mechanical reproduction and reached out to the mass.

Hogarth realized that, to reach at the mass people and the greater market of graphic prints, one has to articulate the popular psyche that was searching for a vent to
unleash its dissatisfaction at the social hypocrisy. The sadistic legal trials were represented through some of the single paintings by Hogarth: *A Prisoner of the Fleet Being Examined* (1729) and *The Committee of the House of Commons on the Fleet Prison* (1729). The emotional release of the mass was felt through all kinds of social aberrations, such as free sex, gin drinking, and through an overall social chaos. Thus the carnivalesque and boisterous edge of Hogarth’s crowded canvases and prints obliquely portray the popular consciousness of the laboring multitude of eighteenth-century England and their subculture. This was perhaps the baseline of his representative theory that attempted to accommodate misrule within civic discipline, projected through the famous diagram of Serpentina within the Pyramid. The concept of crime and punishment underwent a transformation from a property-interest-driven deterrent system to a more humanitarian, emotive and to some extent, vigilant correctional mechanism. As for the writers and artists, they both celebrated the subversive energy of the underworld of the metropolis and survived on the forbidden pleasure that their outrageous stances incited among the reading public/viewers. At the same time, as members of the civil society, these creative people took formative roles in evoking civic discipline and ethical awareness among the populace, as Fielding views it in Book 1, Chapter 1 of *Jonathan Wild*: “In these, when delivered to us by the sensible writers, we are not only most agreeably entertained, but most usefully instructed” (*JW* 39). Thus their craft contained elements of both subversion and control.

The representational strategy of Fielding calls for our attention at this point. Fielding did not always follow empirical documentary accounts to portray the character of Jonathan Wild. Unlike Defoe, who takes a journalist’s interest in reproducing the authentic account of Wild’s life, Fielding paints his rogue-hero in a mock heroic manner. The narrative is manipulated by the writer himself, who employs the tropes of episodic adventures and chance encounters, to represent the real-life thief-taker and underworld racketeer. In Book 3, Chapter 11, of the novel, Fielding applies the metaphor of a puppet-show to explain his hero’s secretive method of operation as well as his own representational strategy:

To say the truth, a puppet-show will illustrate our meaning better, where it is the master of the show (the great man) who dances and moves
everything . . . but he himself keeps wisely out of sight. . . . Not that any one is ignorant of his being there, or supposes that the puppets are not mere sticks of wood, and he himself the sole mover . . . no one is ashamed of consenting to be imposed upon; of helping on the drama, by calling the several sticks or puppets by the names which the master hath allotted to them, and by assigning to each the character which the great man is pleased they shall move in, or rather in which he himself is pleased to move them. (JW 154)

Like Fielding’s other heroes Tom and Joseph, here also, the narrator pulls the strings behind Wild, just as Wild himself pulled the strings that made other prigs and his dependants dance and thus constantly balancing between utility and pleasure in this narrative. The satirical portrayal of Wild in this novel is highlighted through the word ‘Greatness’.

Satire, which is comprised of laughter and moral critique, becomes the major tool of representation for Fielding. His ‘Preface’ to Jonathan Wild clearly explains his purpose: “as it is not a very faithful portrait of Jonathan Wild himself, so neither is it intended to represent the features of any other person. Roguery, and not a rogue, is my subject” (JW 29). Thus the narrator elevates the narrative from a personal topical satire to a general humanistic critique of the abuse of human values and goodwill. Through Fielding’s critical evaluative stance, the disorderly underworld of London is ultimately contained within the limits of civic discipline. This idea most appropriately matches with Hogarth’s insight, as expressed in his narrative paintings: “everything is structured; every thought or gesture has its own invisible stereotype” (Paulson 60). He was aware of the paradox of freedom and discipline in his own creations and theory of Art.

The chronotope of the underworld, reflected in popular plays, novels and engravings of the period, is marked by chaos, multiplicity and confusion that indicated the entangled network of politics, law and crime, epitomized by the Serpentina. The recurrent chronotopes of Newgate prison and the Tyburn tree intruded the domestic sphere and places of urban entertainment. The terror of the gallows that loomed large behind the hearty English way of life became the object of
ridicule by the rebel heroes of popular imagination. However, the increasing anarchy within Newgate, Bridewell and Fleet prisons and surrounding the site of hanging triggered off a desire for moderation, leading to subsequent reforms in the 1770s. In 1779, the British Parliament passed the Penitentiary Act, which recommended imprisonment as an alternative sentence to hanging or transportation. It also proposed the establishment of state prisons and cells for solitary confinement. The eighteenth-century prison reformer John Howard played a very important role in the development of late-century prison reforms. The rise of the penitentiary gave the eighteenth-century penal system a scope to think beyond deterrence, into a reformatory procedure. The chaotic and eventful underworld of eighteenth-century England was manifested through the chronotopic expressions of certain topographic and metaphorical sites within the novelistic, visual and theatrical works of the milieu. They offered a critical stance on the debate between civic discipline and its rebellious deviation, besides capturing the thriving diversity of popular life and the psyche of that era.

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