

David H. Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1993, 312 pp., ill.

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representation of women, mean that we know more about women? Does yet another book on the shelves about Degas mean that we "read" him differently and thereby assist the cause of women? Now, we have Lipton's new book which, while it sometimes annoys (this reader), also lavishes caring and careful searching on the difficult-to-find female worker. Nevertheless, too often I read "conspiracy" into Lipton's work, and too often I feel an unwillingness to seek beyond oppression toward a more theoretical and more practical searching for a subject: the woman working as an artist and as a model, surviving in a world that gave her small spaces in which to negotiate her claims for existence. In Lipton's book Meurent speaks with Lipton's voice: Lipton speaks *for* her, not *about* her. Thus, the twentieth-century art historian erases again, from her powerful position as "holder" of knowledge and information, the unobtrusive, almost disappearing voice of Victorine Meurent.

When it came to writing this review, I wondered how many art historians have fantasized themselves as writers of fictions; after all, Anita Brookner succeeded in the realms of both fiction and fact. How many of us have gazed intensely into the eyes of a painted portrait, longing to read the most intimate thoughts of the sitter and commit those thoughts to paper. Desire became printed matter for Eunice Lipton as she took her yearning to enter the mind of Victorine Meurent out of fantasy into the decidedly vulnerable world of scrutinizing readers. Thus, Lipton brings together her most poignant and personal anxieties with her most intense intellectual endeavours to make a different kind of history, but one which is honestly subjective if sometimes overly indulgent. Certainly, fictional accounts of lives can be written as well-researched reconstructions, but few have dared to combine fiction with what is lovingly referred

to as empirical evidence. Frances Sherwood's eloquently written *Vindication* (1993) accurately as well as fictionally brings Mary Wollstonecraft to life for the late twentieth-century reader, while Jane Miller's *Seductions* (1990) joins together the author's coming to feminism with a personal story of her great-aunt and a critique of the theorists many feminists read and emulate: Raymond Williams, Edward Said, Frantz Fanon. Similarly, Catherine Hall, in her introduction to *White, Male and Middle-Class* (1992) treats us to her personal interaction with marxism and feminism in the early 1970s, and the coinciding of her own directions with those of *History Workshop*. Lipton's history is more visceral. Written from the analyst's couch, so to speak, its passion is more raw, its directions less contained. Confronting such palpable desire emanating from the mind of an academic is unusual. Lipton has "gone off the boil." She has abandoned the serious and become frivolous, but with the frivolity come issues of desire, particularly female desire: how does desire co-exist with art history or, more to the point, *can* desire co-exist with art history? Certainly, if a book can raise such questions, it is an important book (even though its short sentences are annoying), and more certainly it is a book that will be loved and hated, perhaps at the same time.

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- 1 Griselda Pollock in Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985* (London, 1987), 246.
- 2 Gen Doy, *Seeing and Consciousness: Women, Class and Representation* (Oxford, 1995), 64.

DAVID H. SOLKIN, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1993, 312 pp., ill.

Some days I think that the primary function of certain recent writing on eighteenth-century British art is to demonstrate that the artistic milieu of the period was singularly influenced by the writings of the prominent aesthetic and moral philosopher, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury. Both Paul Monod in "Painters and Party Politics in England, 1714-1760" and Stephen Copley in "The Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Polite Culture" ground their arguments in the persuasive framework of the Shaftesburian discourse.¹ These two authors employ the terms of John Barrell, whose 1986 book, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to*

Hazlitt. "The Body of the Public," begins with an account of Shaftesbury as the spokesman of the theory of civic humanism. Barrell borrowed this term from J.G.A. Pocock's highly influential work of 1975, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Republican Thought and the Atlantic Tradition*. David Solkin's most recent book, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England*, explicitly refers to and takes up the terms of Barrell's model of civic humanism to explore the socio-political significance of specific cultural phenomena.

In short, civic humanism is a theory of government wherein a citizen's private interests are allied with those of the public body and achieved through an active public life. For Shaftesbury and other eighteenth-century theorists, such as Jonathan Richardson and George Turnbull, art clearly

had a social agenda since it functioned to inculcate public virtue. They believed that there was a close connection between the public's morality and its aesthetic taste. The goal of the most serious art, history painting, was to manifest this public virtue for the good of the whole body politic. When ranking the genres, therefore, Shaftesbury placed history painting at the summit because it depicted heroic, public actions designed to indoctrinate its viewers with a set of noble and virtuous ideals. As George Turnbull put it, the contemplation of "Pleasure, Beauty, and Truth [promotes] a generous Love of the publick Good."²

By the 1720s, however, Shaftesbury's seemingly sacrosanct, innate right to decide the criteria for virtue was being challenged. Barrell traces the ways in which the theory of civic humanism was criticized as incompatible with the practical interests of the growing operation of commerce in the formation of taste and the market for art in Britain. On the other hand, Barrell also points out that civic humanism underwent changes in response to the rise of new social classes.

Solkin's book forms an apt companion piece to John Barrell's earlier work since both scholars treat their subjects as a sign of a changing political discourse in eighteenth-century Britain, and in particular, both begin with Shaftesbury's example of civic virtue. Fortunately, Solkin's account of how a visual culture came to be shaped by and for the purposes of commerce attempts a good deal more than the mere application of Shaftesbury's lofty ideas to eighteenth-century British art. While Barrell concentrates almost exclusively on eighteenth-century writing on art rather than on the paintings themselves, Solkin is more interested in investigating how ideological and social principles are conveyed in visual images. Solkin finds "actual achievements of greater interest than unattainable ideals" and thus concentrates "on those artists and writers about art who embraced the realities of a burgeoning market economy" (1). Solkin traces the formation of a new type of "polite" art, which corresponds to the sociable and sentimental values of a commercial society and was distinct in both subject and style. Solkin's historical data ranges from Godfrey Kneller's Kit-Cat portraits through Hogarth's conversation pieces to the popular scenes of everyday life at Vauxhall Gardens by Francis Hayman. Paintings of modern history by Francis Hayman, Edward Penny and Benjamin West, and the candlelight pictures of Joseph Wright of Derby chart the rising prominence of the newly enfranchised bourgeoisie in the realm of the visual arts.

Solkin's book can be divided into two main sections. The first three chapters deal primarily with portraiture from around 1700 to the early 1730s, examining these paintings

to assess how a society undergoing rapid commercial expansion reconciled its new-found wealth with the dictates of Christian and classical morality (2). In his introductory chapter, "On Painting, Commerce, and the 'Public'," Solkin deftly compares Shaftesbury's series of ethical treatises, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), with Bernard Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* (1723). These works present two fundamentally opposed views on the function of the relative roles of virtue and commerce. In opposition to Shaftesbury, Mandeville contended that naked self-interest, rather than social or moral virtues, drove human affairs in eighteenth-century England. Solkin, however, adopts a rosier view of the times. In idealized images of refined conversation, such as John Closterman's life-size painting of Shaftesbury and his younger brother, the Hon. Maurice Ashley Cooper, Solkin locates the source of a burgeoning ideology, a "commercial humanism." In this development Solkin finds an implicit but significant parallel between the civilizing effects of polite discussion and the social components of commercial exchange:

Defined as a forum in which individuals learned to refine their behaviour in response to the needs of others, and to create a community based on sympathy and mutual understanding, conversation provided eighteenth-century commercial ideologies with the perfect vehicle for constructing an idealized representation of the social relations that existed at the heart of the marketplace (26).

Although Solkin's comparison between commerce and conversation is intriguing, he fails to provide any concrete evidence for the "idealized representation of the social relations that existed at the heart of the marketplace," in which conversation played such a pivotal role in eighteenth-century commercial ideologies. The Covent Garden depictions of both Pieter Angellis and Joseph Van Aken, for example, show actual commercial transactions taking place.

Solkin's eschewal of the more gritty aspects of art historical research has even greater ramifications when he capitulates to what might be called the "low ebb" school of thought towards early eighteenth-century British art. In his opening section Solkin states that from around 1700 to the early 1730s the visual arts in England had little prominence. As a result, the pictorial evidence cited in the opening chapters might be of rather limited and parochial interest compared with the wealth of literature being written at the time. In 1765 Horace Walpole had also written disparagingly on the painters in the reign of George I (1714-27) in the *Anecdotes of Painting in England*: "We are now arrived at the period in which arts sunk to the lowest ebb in Britain." In

the subsequent reign of George II (1727-60) Walpole felt that painting had similarly “made but feeble efforts towards advancement.” Although portraiture was active during this period, Walpole viewed the practice as a turgid outflow of the dry, late Baroque style of Godfrey Kneller. Walpole’s dire pronouncements on the state of early eighteenth-century art have prejudiced writers on English painting from Edward Edwards and John Pye in the nineteenth century to Joseph Burke in the twentieth. Scholars of English art have typically regarded this period as a lacuna between the beneficence of the early Stuart court and the advent of an efficient commercial art market that came with the founding of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1768. Even though one of Solkin’s stated aims in *Painting for Money* involves making a persuasive case for the modernity of eighteenth-century British art (2), he remains reluctant to challenge traditional art-historical scholarship on the period. Yet, just as G. N. Clark describes European art as an “unschooled energy of swarming life,” painting in early eighteenth-century England was also energetic, spurred by the desire to establish a home-grown school. Ellis Waterhouse’s *Dictionary of British 18th Century Painters* lists an impressive number of accomplished and successful artists working in this period.

Solkin notes that in the late seventeenth century the Glorious Revolution, the *de facto* establishment of a free press, and the “Financial Revolution” brought into being an expanding constituency of private English citizens comprised of a mixture of aristocrats, landed gentry, financiers, military officers and writers. Rather than aspiring to Shaftesbury’s dispassionate view of the world and a life of stoic independence, however, this group met in popular centres such as the Kit-Cat Club where the politics of Whiggery, the pursuit of commerce and the culture of politeness merged into a single, indivisible force (28). Their literary culture was most effectively deployed by Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele, editors and, for the most part, writers of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Yet, the concept that characterized the culture of this group—the concept of politeness—was one that emanated ultimately from Shaftesbury: “All politeness,” Shaftesbury averred, “is owing to liberty. We polish one another, and rub off our corners and rough sides by a sort of amicable collision.”³ Solkin replaces Shaftesbury’s notion of civic humanism with the politeness advanced by Addison’s *Spectator*, asserting that *The Spectator* updated Shaftesbury’s aristocratic doctrine into a bourgeois discourse of ideal sociable behaviour that only commercial men and women could hope to achieve. Nevertheless, while Solkin believes that *The Spectator*’s paradigm of politeness stands far from Shaftesbury’s original

formulation, in actual fact “politeness” is ultimately nothing more than a watered-down form of civic humanism.

According to Solkin, it is but a short step from Richard Steele’s language of good company, civility and conversation to the language of portraiture (31). The well-known series of portraits by Kneller of the members of the Kit-Cat Club is, consequently, the first example in art of the concept of politeness. Previous scholars on Kneller have been content to identify and catalogue the artist’s works, trace his artistic development, and evaluate his success with respect to his forerunners, peers and followers.⁴ In contrast, Solkin analyzes the paintings’ curious blend of self-conscious pose and gesture to demonstrate the way in which Kneller’s seemingly straightforward portraits celebrate the politeness and camaraderie of equal and familiar acquaintances—that mixture of self-made men, aristocrats and politicians who made up the club’s membership. The hallmarks of polite social intercourse, in the words of one of Steele’s contemporaries, were easiness and familiarity, an air of freedom and unconstraint, and a genteel and accomplished manner of expression.⁵ This informality or appearance of sociable intimacy, however, had to be performed and so resulted in a “theatrical display of good manners” (36). According to Solkin, Kneller, the Kit-Cat’s resident painter, must have grasped this paradox and responded to it by pushing the conventions of court portraiture in two apparently contradictory directions. Solkin also points out that Kneller not only enhanced the Kit-Cats’ theatrical character but also placed both subject and spectator in a more confined space to suggest an informal interaction. Solkin, however, fails to appreciate that Kneller, as “Principal Painter to the King,” worked consistently within the established conventions of his time. For the most part, eighteenth-century British court portraiture was determined by the Renaissance portrait type that had been introduced into England by Sir Anthony Van Dyck in the early seventeenth century. Thus Solkin’s attempt to forge a new interpretation of Kneller as a cultural agent blithely assumes a knowledge of authorial intent that cannot be historically substantiated.

Elizabeth Einberg in *Manners and Morals: Hogarth and English Painting 1700-1760* notes that the combined effect of the individual portraits must have given the entire set of Kit-Cats “something of the air of a vast conversation piece.”⁶ Thus, the conversational manner of the Kit-Cats leads Solkin to present an original account of the evolution of the polite conversation piece, in which he sees a gradual solution to painters’ attempts to establish a suitable mode for the portrayal of proper sociable behaviour. The genre’s development in England is traced from the “merry company” genre paintings imported from the Netherlands

through Marcellus Lauron (or Laroon) and Egbert van Heemskerk II, Pieter Angellis and Joseph van Aken, and the *fête galante*, imported from France by Philip Mercier. In a subtly argued reading of the iconography of paired genre scenes by Pieter Angellis and Joseph Van Aken, Solkin illustrates, for example, the manner in which the seemingly unambiguous *A Sportsman and a Man of Fashion in a Park* of the mid-1720s by Van Aken deliberately appropriates a host of features from one of early eighteenth-century Britain's most celebrated moral emblems: the *Judgment of Hercules* that Paolo de Mattheis had rendered from Shaftesbury's instructions set down in "A Notion of the Historical Draught or Tablature of the Judgment of Hercules" of 1712 (63).⁷ The context of Van Aken's painting also suggests a close relationship with moral and philosophical dialogues such as Shaftesbury's *The Moralists* from 1709, which were staple fare in British philosophy in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Solkin's overemphasis on Shaftesbury as a seminal force in eighteenth-century British philosophy, however, ignores the significant role that other influential thinkers, such as John Locke, played in this period.

The problem of finding a major artist in the first half of the eighteenth century who actually set about the "task of legitimising the elegant pleasures enabled by commercial wealth," of "cleansing luxury of its long-standing associations with human vice and folly" and removing "polite enjoyment as far as possible from any stink of sensual vulgarity" is evidenced by Solkin's decision to make Hogarth the hero of his story. Solkin observes how the problem of material wealth and virtue was justified in the philosophical writings of Francis Hutcheson (an adherent of Shaftesbury) in *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* of 1725 and celebrated by pictorial means in refined conversation pieces such as Hogarth's *The Wollaston Family*. Although Solkin correctly avoids any direct connection between the two, he explains that in Hutcheson and Hogarth, for the first time in British writing and painting, the world of commerce becomes reconciled with the ethical terminology of civic humanism (84). Hutcheson based the delight men take in acquiring wealth and fine possessions on the central assumption that men are naturally concerned for the good of society. In high living, Hutcheson believed that "there is such a Mixture of *moral Ideas*, of *Benevolence*, of *Abilities* kindly employed; so many Dependents *supported*, so many Friends entertain'd, assisted, protected; such a *Capacity* imagin'd for *great* and *amiable Actions*, that we are never asham'd, but rather boast of such things."⁸ The same spirit of lively agreeableness, Solkin points out, is introduced into painting by Hogarth in a se-

ries of conversation pieces that date from approximately 1730. In *The Wollaston Family* London's financial and professional elite participate in a harmonious interchange of engaging conversation, tea drinking and card playing. Less convincing, however, is Solkin's contention that Hogarth consciously fashioned the Wollastons and their setting as a reflection of some larger social and political universe (86). Perhaps the painting simply mirrors the artist's own professional aspirations and desire for social respectability in a profession that held a long-standing reputation for venality and "mechanick" vulgarity. As a professional artist, still with his own way to make in the London art world, Hogarth perhaps grasped "refinement" as the crucial aesthetic and commercial issue for his career.

An inherent weakness in Solkin's approach is his propensity to embed his analysis in the familiar texts of canonical artists. The inordinate emphasis placed on Hogarth's life and work in the art-historical bibliography to the present day has adversely influenced honest appraisals of this period. Walpole's influence on later histories of British art continues to persist: "Having despatched the herd of painters in oil," in a twenty-page chapter on painters in the reign of George II, Walpole reserves "to a class by himself that great and original genius, Hogarth."⁹ Modern scholars have blindly adopted this bias in the organization and structure of their own histories. By devoting a lengthy chapter to "Hogarth's Refinement," Solkin, albeit unwittingly, joins the ranks of Walpole, Waterhouse and Burke whose prejudices continue to fuel the "low ebb" view of this period. Indeed, these scholars seem reluctant to move beyond "great man" art history.

The elevation of the conversation piece into a respectable vehicle for the expression of polite society was only one manifestation of that "will to refinement" among the middle and upper-middle classes in eighteenth-century England. The "will to refinement" was similarly expressed in the actual physical spaces of the public sphere, which form the setting for the subject matter in the second half of the book, beginning with chapters on Vauxhall Gardens and on "Exhibitions of Sympathy." Jonathan Tyers' transformation of Vauxhall Gardens from a haunt of prostitutes and muggers into privately owned pleasure grounds, in 1732, created a "politics of pleasure," which enabled the middle and upper ranks of society to enjoy their newly acquired wealth in a morally acceptable manner. In his commercial enterprise of Spectatorial improvement, Tyers sought to tame passion into refinement through an array of ornamental buildings, key monuments, historical painting and musical entertainments.

Yet, Tyers' efforts to encourage proper, social etiquette

through the introduction of such attractions formed only one part of the picture. If Vauxhall's most important political function was to confirm the polite character of its public, it did so by defining that character over and against representations of the "negative" popular (135). Relying on Brian Allen's research on Francis Hayman,¹⁰ Solkin concentrates on Vauxhall Gardens as a "political space" in his analysis of Hayman's popular supper-box scenes and his morality paintings from Shakespearean literature. Virtually all of the diversions shown in the supper-box pictures were either derived from, or in many cases still formed part of, a popular cultural tradition. Names of games such as "Leap Frog," "Blindman's Buff" and "See-Saw" clearly bespeak their folk origins, and the same roots underpin such pastimes as kite flying, fortune telling, cricket, fishing and cards. As reminders of the vulgar festive practices inherited and refined by Vauxhall, other pictures depict the themes of rustic love, fiddling and drinking, and the pleasures of carnival time at May Day. This subject matter prompts Solkin to ask why popular amusements were so enthusiastically adopted by the polite, and why they figured as such a powerful symbolic presence at Vauxhall (139). To this end, Solkin proposes an interpretation of Vauxhall imagery that adopts the thesis of Peter Stallybrass and Allon White. In *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (1986) they argue that the "will to refinement" involved the avoidance of the carnivalesque, which nevertheless included a parallel note of ambivalence. The carnivalesque's removal from its low and dangerous origins into the polite sphere, as a safely controlled "negative example," allowed Vauxhall's genteel patrons from the newly rich banking and mercantile groups to define themselves as a different class of polite individuals.

Today a Bakhtinian analysis of the carnival elements at Vauxhall seems apt. On the other hand, it also highlights the most disappointing aspect of this book, namely the author's frequent tendency to rely on ideas drawn not only from John Barrell, but from Jurgen Habermas, Lawrence Klein, Howard Caygill, Terry Eagleton and Mikhail Bakhtin as interpreted by Stallybrass and White. Still, Solkin's attempt at a truly interdisciplinarian approach to his subject is admirable. Solkin's primary literary sources are similarly diverse, ranging from the Grub Street puffs of John Lockman to the bawdy satire of Hercules Mac-Sturdy, and from Henry Fielding's "Of the Luxury of the English" to Addison's *Spectator*, and tracts from eighteenth-century art criticism. A danger, however, arises from considering excerpts from so many diverse texts as constituent parts of a uniform discourse on "politeness." In his pursuit of "politeness" Solkin tends to overlook the fact that the writers

of these texts possibly had quite different motives and audiences in mind. The task of drawing together all the relevant literary sources ultimately undermines an otherwise illuminating and cogent argument.

In the final chapters of *Painting for Money*, Solkin broadens his account of the rise of public art as a statement of private virtue into the actual physical spaces of polite English society. Nevertheless, Solkin's choice of subject matter, in contrast to the freshness of his argument, reveals an entirely orthodox and rather old-fashioned view of the evolution of the institutionalization of the arts in England: the growing public role of painting exemplified by the Foundling Hospital and Vauxhall Gardens, the constant reorganizing activities of the first exhibiting societies, and finally the establishment of the Royal Academy under Sir Joshua Reynolds. Just as Vauxhall Gardens was transformed into a place of instruction for the pleasures of a polite and commercial clientele, by providing serious works of art for a wide range of consumers, in much the same way, the Foundling Hospital and other institutions formed the setting for a new culture of sentiment and benevolence. At the Foundling Hospital Hayman, Hogarth, Highmore and Wills donated four suitably moralistic history paintings of the merciful treatment of children that would appeal to the sympathies of the viewer. According to Solkin, George Turnbull's text, *A Treatise on Ancient Painting, Containing Observations on the Rise, Progress, and Decline of that Art Amongst the Greeks and Romans* of 1740, informed the rationale for the iconography of these paintings. Turnbull claimed that the noblest mission of the visual arts was to cultivate the "social" virtues through the exercise of the "amiable" passions and supported his view by citing the works of Poussin. The moral impact of Poussin's paintings was largely seen to depend on their emotive qualities. The problem with Solkin's overall methodological approach here and throughout the book lies in his attempt to link a series of artistic performances to a series of art-theoretical texts to imply direct influences from theory to practice. In comparison to a solid historicist approach, with its attention to political, social or commercial realities, Solkin fails to provide even the briefest of historical contextualization of the images. In this respect Solkin's work prompts more questions than it provides satisfactory answers.

Other thinkers, such as Alexander Gerard, David Hume and Adam Smith, lay similar theoretical groundwork for Solkin's view that art served as the instrument for the cultivation of those refined and sympathetic virtues identified as the crowning glory of a prosperous and commercial state (188). In 1759 Adam Smith commented on the new "culture of sentiment" in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*:

Generosity, humanity, kindness, compassion, mutual friendship and esteem, all the social and benevolent affections, when expressed in the countenance or behaviour, even towards those who are not peculiarly connected to ourselves, please the indifferent spectator upon almost every occasion. His sympathy with the person who feels these passions exactly coincides with his concern for the person who is the object of them.¹¹

Francis Hayman's paintings, exhibited in the rotunda annexe at Vauxhall Gardens, afforded the viewer precisely the opportunity to exercise that moral judgment which resulted in an "exhibition" of sympathy. Moreover, these paintings of military conquest, *Lord Clive Receiving the Homage of the Nabob* (ca.1761-62) and *The Surrender of Montreal to General Amhurst* (1760-61), effectively reconciled the benevolent moral role defined for art by the Foundling project with the economic demands imposed by the circumstances of the public sphere (191). Yet, to promote the arts in and of themselves as a vehicle for charitable benevolence was quite a different matter from promoting them as a cause of public importance (176). As Solkin rightly notes, art itself "was not a charity" as the Society of Artists realized in the early 1760s when it appropriated the concept of charity to serve its own commercial and philosophical ends. According to Solkin, the conflation of a dignified historical art and the desire to engender sympathy eventually mediated the cultural consensualism of the public sphere (212). Solkin thus traces the developing community of compassionate feeling from the "domesticated" history paintings of Hayman and Edward Penny to West's brilliant mediation of grand-style history painting. While West's *Death of General Wolfe* depicts an epic character of heroic fate, the painting remains accessible through the use of modern subject matter, the wealth of contemporary detail, and the portrayal of human emotion. Still, the idea of an English "culture of sentiment" as the single isolating factor in the period's taste in art is problematic because it ignores the role of continental developments, especially French and Italian, as a source of inspiration in England. How could the English art world remain impervious to outside influence especially with the rapid rise of neoclassicism fostered by the writings of Winckelmann and the discoveries at Herculaneum and Pompeii? And what of the Grand Tour as an important source of ideas on the artistic level? Solkin's insular viewpoint prevents him from giving the rest of Europe its due role in moulding English attitudes toward art during this period.

Solkin appears most comfortable when he talks about the art object. In "Joseph Wright of Derby and the Power of the Aesthetic" Solkin discusses examples of a new kind of polite painting in his detailed analyses of Wright's nocturnes,

Three Persons Viewing the Gladiator by Candlelight, *A Philosopher giving that Lecture on the Orrery* and *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump*. Drawing on a wide range of contemporary theoretical texts, Solkin assesses Wright's *Air Pump* as the model of a new domestic, scientific and didactic heroism of an increasingly commercial society against the waning civic humanist ideal of martial valour. A new dimension to the analysis of Wright's works is made by Solkin's examination of *An Academy by Lamplight* within the political context of the London art world of the 1760s. In the *Treatise of Ancient Painting* by George Turnbull, Solkin locates a post-Shaftesburian writer who develops the philosopher's ideas in ways which would accommodate the subject matter of Wright's paintings. The general problem with Solkin's book is well exemplified in his methodological approach here. His constant invocation of contemporary philosophical quotations from Hume, Turnbull, Gerard, Kames, *et al.*, while interesting, contributes little to the argument. In addition, Solkin's juxtaposition of Wright's paintings with snippets of theory from Terry Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990) merely serves to obscure a richly textured and innovative speculation on Wright's works.

In his final chapter, Solkin charts the passionate confrontation in England's artistic community of the 1760s between the Academy and the monarchy on the one side, and the Society of Artists and the "people" on the other (263). Among the parallels suggested between contemporary political controversy and disputes in the London art world is the government's attack on the libertarian John Wilkes and the Royal Academy's identification with the Crown as a means to enhance the status of the new institution. By the 1760s Solkin contends that "no longer could it be easily believed that artists and critics spoke on behalf of a public, which expressed its voice through their work [since] cultural producers driven by venal motives could not be presumed to speak for any constituency larger than themselves, or for the amoral mechanisms of commerce" (274). A mezzotint after Charles Brandoin that depicts a crowd of people pursuing their own disparate interests in the modern urban Royal Academy exhibition of 1771 now merely invokes the fictive ideal of a unitary public. In contrast to the earlier part of the century, commercial growth by 1770 had militated against any unified development of the public sphere, and as such, there can be no comfort of an easy resolution.

In many respects, *Painting for Money* holds out the prospect for an exciting period of vigorous intellectual activity in the field of eighteenth-century British art as initiated by the author's earlier work, *Richard Wilson: The Landscape of Reaction* (1982). In spite of certain problems, *Painting for Money* is an admirable piece of art-historical writing. The

work confirms the importance of contemporary philosophical thought in relation to British eighteenth-century painting, provides a worthy reassessment of much eighteenth-century British art and, most importantly, challenges traditional assumptions of the moribund style-history approach of previous studies. In *Painting for Money. The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* David Solkin advances the potential for lively intellectual debate in an area which has, at long last, come of age.

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- 1 Paul Monod, "Painters and Party Politics in England, 1714-1760," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 26 (1993), 367-98; Stephen Copley, "The Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Polite Culture," in *Paintings and the Politics of Culture. New Essays on British Art 1700-1850*, ed. John Barrell (Oxford and New York, 1992), 13-37.
- 2 George Turnbull, *A Treatise on Ancient Painting, containing Observations on the Rise, Progress, and Decline of that Art amongst the Greeks and Romans* (London, 1740), 15, 134-37.
- 3 Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711), 2 vols. in 1, ed.

John M. Robertson (Indianapolis and New York, 1964), I, 46.

- 4 For example, J. Douglas Stewart, *Sir Godfrey Kneller and the English Baroque Portrait* (Oxford, 1983).
- 5 Henry Felton, *A Dissertation on Reading the Classics, and Forming a Just Style. Written in the Year 1709, and Addressed to the Right Honourable John Lord Roos, the Present Marquis of Granby*, 2nd edn (London, 1715), 66.
- 6 Elizabeth Einberg, "Introduction," *Manners and Morals. Hogarth and English Painting 1700-1760*, exhibition catalogue (London, 1987), 13.
- 7 The "Notion" was first printed in French in the *Journal des Scavans* in November of 1712 and appeared in English separately in 1713, but was also included in the second edition of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* in 1714.
- 8 Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, 4th edn (London, 1725), 235.
- 9 Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, II, 316-36; III, 1-26.
- 10 Brian Allen, *Francis Hayman* (New Haven and London, 1987); *idem* "Francis Hayman and the Supper-Box Paintings in Vauxhall Gardens," in *The Rococo in England: A Symposium*, ed. Charles Hind (London, 1986), 111-33.
- 11 Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), eds. D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie (Oxford, 1976), 38-39.

ERWIN PANOFSKY, *Three Essays on Style*, edited by Irving Lavin with a memoir by William S. Heckscher. Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1995, 245 pp.

Style has long ceased to be a central concept in the study of art, and the work of Erwin Panofsky holds little more than passing interest for most contemporary art historians. The attraction that these essays will possess then for most readers will be simply historical, which of course is not to say that they are inconsequential; after all, art history has become much more preoccupied with its status and foundations as a form of inquiry, and what could be more germane to those with an interest in such questions than a set of posthumous essays, by one of this century's most influential art historians, on a notion that has had a hold on art history since its inception as an academic discipline? Since Panofsky's principal themes are no longer topical and his essays add no new factual information to the issues he considers, my concern will be with more general questions that this collection raises about Panofsky's approach and its place within the history of art history. This is a good opportunity to track the *Theoriawollen* in the first half of the twentieth century.

The first of the three essays, "What is Baroque?," was originally composed around 1934-5, when in the Anglo-

Saxon countries "the term Baroque was not as yet employed in the sense of a definite or at least definable period of art history but merely in a derogatory sense" (endnote 12, p. 202). Panofsky's intention was to change "Baroque" from a term of opprobrium to a inoffensive period designation and to provide an account of what gives this art its perceivable unity as a style. Like the other essays in this volume, "What is Baroque?" came into existence as a lecture for non-specialists. Correspondingly, Panofsky's tone is more informal than usual, and the text lacks the customary ballast of learned footnotes that readers familiar with Panofsky's writings have come to expect. Because this more relaxed approach precludes detailed arguments, the general themes and, more importantly, the assumptions that Panofsky brings to his study are more immediately available for scrutiny. Panofsky's central thesis is that "in Italy . . . Baroque means indeed a revolt against mannerism rather than against the 'classic' Renaissance. It means, in fact, a deliberate reinstatement of classic principles and, at the same time, a reversion to nature, both stylistically and emotionally" (p. 36). The "Baroque is not the decline, let alone the end of what we call the Renaissance era. It is in reality the second great climax of this period and, at the same time, the beginning of a fourth era, which may be called 'Modern' with a capital M" (p. 88).