

*Popular and Polite Art in the Age of Hogarth and Fielding.* By RONALD PAULSON. (University of Notre Dame Ward-Philips Lectures in English Language and Literature, 10) Notre Dame, Indiana, and London: University of Notre Dame Press. 1981. xvi + 285 pp. £15.00.

This book is devoted to the burning problem of modern culturology. Nowadays the interactions between high culture and pop culture are of importance and interest for literary and art scholars as well as for philosophers and sociologists. But the problem did not appear today or even yesterday. Professor Paulson demonstrates its topicality for 'the age of Hogarth and Fielding'. The chronological span of the investigation is 1728–51. Sometimes Professor Paulson breaks these bounds, but most of the cultural events analysed in the book took place between the first performance of Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and the appearance of Hogarth's engravings, 'Beer Street' and 'Gin Lane'. No doubt 'there is no easy line separating the subculture from the culture' (p. ix); even the high culture of the eighteenth century contains some elements of subculture. Professor Paulson has thoroughly investigated the sources of such elements, trying to systematize subculture types and the ways in which features of mass culture infiltrate literature and art. Seven subculture types are discussed: the criminal, the apprentice, crowd rituals, the signboard, the English dog, jokes and popular books of jests, and card games. The list of types is empirically distinguished and lacks one general logical principle of division. Nevertheless, it represents a wide circle of phenomena that served as primitive sources for English art and literature.

One of the most interesting chapters in the first part of the book, to my mind, is entitled 'Card Games and Hoyle's Whist', though I cannot agree with the statement that the nature of whist and its difference from earlier games 'may be as much a matter of interest as the nature of Richardson's novels' (p. 85). For literary scholars, Richardson's novels are still more important and interesting objects for analysis than any card game. But it is beyond doubt that whist as 'a phenomenon of social and literary transition' reflects some important aspects of subculture in the age of Fielding and Hogarth. It was not only a way to pass the time but a form of communication and a source of allegorical imagery. Besides, its popularity in

upper-class circles contradicts the distinction of 'high culture' and 'subculture' according to social stratifications.

Analysing the modes of interaction between polite culture and subculture, Professor Paulson pays special attention to some types of 'metaphors, models, and paradigms'. The list is heterogeneous ('bifocal series' and 'instruction and the family', 'the Good Samaritan' and 'the 45 and Bonnie Prince Charlie'), but each is precisely characterized and well illustrated by examples.

In this part of the monograph the best chapter is on 'Life as Pilgrimage and as Theater'. Although laconic in style, it is based on the analysis of a great variety of literary and art material (*The Spectator* and *The Beggar's Opera*, Hogarth's pictures and engravings, and the novels of Defoe, Fielding, Goldsmith, and Mackenzie); at the same time it is marked by strict logic. The author has proved convincingly that 'the journey metaphor remains associated with the subject, who sees himself as a pilgrim (as both writer and protagonist), while the theatrical metaphor emerges when it is necessary to explain something about these figures in relation to the world — that is, in terms of custom, roles and disguises' (p. 129).

On the whole Professor Paulson's work impresses by the richness of the investigated material. His exhaustive knowledge of Hogarth's works and the fiction of the period is evident. The book is well written, and brilliantly designed and illustrated. Among many interesting statements and reasonings on different concrete points are judgements about *The Spectator* as 'the great mediator between two cultures' and some original thoughts on Hogarth's literary relationships and 'the paradigmatic plot of *Joseph Andrews*'.

My reservations concern some theoretical aspects of the subject. The preface to the book lacks strict definitions of the key categories, 'culture' and 'subculture'. The sense of the first category is evidently narrowed in the second part of the book, where 'culture' is reduced to literature and art. Given his inclination to typological analysis, Professor Paulson ought, I think, to have defined the term 'typology' more distinctly than he does (for example, on page 156) and to have adhered more consistently to the so-called 'type approach' in his investigation. But perhaps such matters will have been taken care of by the time we welcome a reissue of the book.