

VISIONS OF CHARITY  
ENGLISH ART AND THE CREATION OF THE LONDON FOUNDLING  
HOSPITAL

by

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## VITA

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England in the eighteenth century was a country undergoing a radical, paradigm-altering shift within virtually all aspects of society. Starting in the late seventeenth century with the works of great intellectuals such as John Locke and Sir Isaac Newton, people began to question the very basic foundations on which their lives were based. Paramount to this new way of thinking were the ways in which people regarded humankind. Hate and discrimination were discouraged in order to create a more benevolent society that rewarded citizens through hard work, humility, patriotism and humanitarianism. The embodiment of the Enlightenment in England is, arguably, how society executed the last of these qualities. However, there was a strong sentiment among anti-Enlightenment thinkers, particularly religious officials, that the movement did nothing but promote immorality and caused people to question their faith in God and the spiritual.<sup>1</sup> For the majority of people not absorbed in the philosophical debates about what it was to be enlightened, promoting charitable works was a way to bridge the divide by both honoring their faith and creating a more tolerant community. The creation of a series of charitable institutions during the eighteenth century is a strong indication that the idea of helping the impoverished, the innocent and even the profligate was not only seen as a person's Christian duty, but was also considered a way to strengthen the nation through recuperation and redemption. The embodiment of this idea could be seen in the newly created London Foundling Hospital.

The idea of a hospital for abandoned children was nothing new. As we will see, many countries in mainland Europe had instituted hospitals for foundling infants dating back centuries. However, the Foundling Hospital's establishment stands out from these other

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<sup>1</sup> Dorinda Outram, *Panorama of the Enlightenment*, (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2006), 281-2. The philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was one of the Enlightenment's most vocal opponents, stating that the movement had failed to produce beliefs that could replace those of religion and left man with nothing to serve him but his own earthly experiences.



charities and, in fact, from other charities in England. While much attention has been paid to the history of the Foundling Hospital, due in large part both to the controversial nature of the campaign and the copious amount of primary documentation that attends it, relatively little study has been done on the images the Hospital has left behind.

The many prints and paintings depicting various aspects of the Hospital were vital to the institution's success; they promoted the idea of a shelter for abandoned children to a dubious public. In order to convey a positive message about the potential benefits a charity of this type could have, the images produced for the Hospital covered the entire spectrum of the artistic hierarchy. Counteracting the criticism that continually plagued the Governor's efforts, these images of abandoned infants would be placed in prominent areas both inside the Hospital and in myriad public places. These works not only influenced popular opinion towards the Foundling Hospital, but also enabled England's premier artists to establish their own, unique aesthetic that could compete with the current influx of foreign art so favored by society. This dual nationalist project was taken up by England's most prolific artist during this time, as well as one of the founding Governors of the Hospital, William Hogarth. To better understand the role these artists played, as well as why they felt that this charity was so important, we must look at various topics, including popular literature, economic and political matters, as well as issues related directly to the treatment of children. Many of these topics found their way into contemporary visual imagery. The art historian David Solkin, in his seminal work *Painting for Money*, discusses the Foundling Hospital and the images associated with it within the broader realm of the polite public sphere. The Hospital, he argues, served as a vehicle of public exposure for the visual arts which led to an increased awareness of the talents of the country's own artists in

the much vaunted genres of religious and historical painting.<sup>2</sup> What I intend to do is to expand on Solkin's argument to include the Hospital's influential print campaign and how these images also catered to an increasingly polite and benevolent audience. By creating visual constructions describing the benefits of the Foundling Hospital and the goals the Governors wished to achieve, I argue the prints served an equally important function within both the public sphere and the expanding art market in England.

### *Depictions of the Poor and the Rise of Charity in Early Eighteenth-Century London*

The eighteenth century saw a great burst of philanthropic activity occurring in London. Before this time, only a few institutions catered for the poor and the indigent: St. Bartholomew's Hospital, St. Thomas's Hospital and Christ's Hospital. Founded in the early sixteenth century, both St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's Hospitals functioned as a refuge for the sick poor.<sup>3</sup> Christ's Hospital was founded during the short reign of Henry VIII's only son, Edward VII. As the only charitable institution that focused solely on children of the country's poorest citizens, Christ's Hospital was charged with the maintenance and education of primarily boys, but also a small number of girls. After they received a thorough education, the children were apprenticed in a number of different trades. Some with exceptional intellectual qualities were even sent to university. In rare circumstances would Christ's Hospital accept abandoned children. However, these few incidences were phased out towards the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Supported by Parliament and, receiving, on occasion, benefactions from wealthy aristocrats, these charities could hardly support the

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<sup>2</sup> David Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Art and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 162-5.

<sup>3</sup> Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth*, vol. II, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 323.

<sup>4</sup> Alys Levene, *Childcare, Health and Mortality at the London Foundling Hospital, 1741-1800*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 3.

growing need presented by the ever-expanding population at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

With approximately 600,000 citizens, London had the largest population of any major European city, Paris included.<sup>5</sup> Advances in industry and technology provided a better, but still far from ideal, standard of living even for the poorest of families which led to a rise in the population.<sup>6</sup> With such a drastic increase in the number of poor and working-class people, the burden of support fell to the local parish officials who struggled to provide relief under the provision of the country's poor laws, which dated from the Elizabethan period. These laws were imposed by the local parishes and required an overseer who used the taxes gathered from local residents to provide for those who could not work.<sup>7</sup> Beginning in the eighteenth century these overseers could no longer keep track of those who were deserving and those who were taking advantage of the system, leading to the gradual ineffectiveness of the laws. Since the majority of abandoned children were the result of illicit unions, it was they who suffered the most. Officials did make provision for these abandoned and illegitimate children born in their parish in the form of a property tax levied on residents. This revenue would be used towards wet-nurses who would care for abandoned children until they were old enough to enter a workhouse or be apprenticed. However, to receive this relief, most parishes required the mother to publicize the reason she was giving up her child, which, in the case of premarital conception, could be potentially ruinous for her future prospects. Other parishes would not even go this far, rejecting outright children whose

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<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Einberg, ed., *Manners and Morals: Hogarth and British Painting, 1700-1760*, (London: The Tate Gallery, 1987), II.

<sup>6</sup> Derek Jarrett, *England in the Age of Hogarth*, (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon Ltd., 1974), 32.

<sup>7</sup> Gerald Newman, ed., *Britain in the Hanoverian Age, 1714-1837: An Encyclopedia*, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1997), 563.

mothers partook in what was considered immoral behavior. The child was entitled to relief from its parish of birth which led some mothers to give birth in the richer parishes to give the children a better chance of survival.<sup>8</sup> Whether the parish was rich or poor, benevolent or strict, they all had one common denominator: poor and abandoned infants were quickly becoming a burden that was too great to bear by any parish alone. With the need for relief far outweighing what little help that did exist, people were resorting to desperate means in order to rid themselves of mouths they simply could not feed.

Infanticide in early modern England was an issue that many people in society refused to address, but which managed to find its way into a handful of literary examples. Writing in 1699, the writer Laurence Echard published a translated version of the works of the Roman playwright Terence. Echard's introduction offers a telling account of just how pertinent the problem of infanticide was at this time. After expounding on the brilliance of his dramatic skills and how his plays should serve as a model for contemporary English writers, Echard then qualifies this statement in his preface by saying that there are some things that simply do not mesh with modern sentiments, the most notable of these being the exposure of infants. This plot device, Echard states, makes it "impossible to adapt their Plays to our Stages."<sup>9</sup> This is not, as he would make it seem, because the thought of leaving a newborn exposed to the elements was so foreign a concept to contemporary English society, but because it was all too familiar. Whether or not Echard was aware of his writings, the prominent philosopher and economist William Petty promoted a place for the

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<sup>8</sup> Levene, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Laurence Echard, *Terence's Comedies: Made English. With his life and some remarks at the end*, (London: Printed for Abel Swalle at the Unicorn in Pater-noster-Row, 1699), p. xii-xiii, accessed in Early English Books Online, 2-3-2012.

“Maintenance of Orphans, found and exposed Children” as early as 1662.<sup>10</sup> Petty may have been ahead of his time in trying to garner support for a hospital for foundlings, but this does suggest that the tragic realities that come with expansion and overpopulation were becoming a cause for concern as early as the mid-seventeenth century. Abandoning children may not have been appropriate subject matter for the English stage, but this was certainly not because it was something relevant only to ancient Rome.

There are a number of examples in English literature that include the exposure and abandonment of infants, suggesting that this type of plot device was not as uncommon as Echard would have his readers believe. In Shakespeare’s *Winter’s Tale*, King Leontes accuses his wife, Hermione, and his best friend King Polixenes of having an affair. Leontes, in his madness, believes that his pregnant wife is carrying Polixenes’s child as a result of the affair. When the child, Perdita, is born, Leontes orders Lord Antigonus to abandon her in the woods.<sup>11</sup> Twenty years before Echard’s comments, John Dryden adapted Sophocles’s *Oedipus the King*, which was performed with great acclaim on the English stage. In Dryden’s version, infant exposure is referred to with the reluctance of Phorbas to abandon the infant Oedipus, as well as child murder, with the strangulation of Oedipus and Jocasta’s children in the final scene.<sup>12</sup> Echard would have undoubtedly been familiar with Dryden’s work, which leads us to believe that his reluctance to admit to the familiarity of these acts in literature is indicative of more widespread attitudes towards child abandonment and murder.

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<sup>10</sup> William Petty, *A Treatise of Taxes and Contribution...*, (London: Printed for N. Brooke, 1662), p. 3, accessed in Early English Books Online, 2-4-2012.

<sup>11</sup> This moment occurs in act II, scene III. Leontes originally orders for the child to be cast into a fire, but at the pleading of Antigonus, is resolved to leave her in “some remote and desert place, quite out of our dominions.”

<sup>12</sup> John Dryden, Maximillian E. Novak and George R. Guffey, *The Works of John Dryden*, vol. XIII, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 453.

Child murder was hard to prevent and even harder to punish. The laws that were put in place to prevent it only encouraged mothers to hide their pregnancies and then secretly dispose of infants, instead of taking measures to inhibit conception in the first place. The government's idea of deterring infanticide consisted of either corporal punishment or public humiliation and ostracism for the mothers who were accused of murdering their children. Statutes enacted during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries stated that any mother charged with begetting an illegitimate child could be beaten and placed in a House of Correction for up to one year if the father could not take economic responsibility for the child.<sup>13</sup> The only law pertaining directly to infanticide was a statute created in 1624 that declared that any unwed mother who intentionally concealed the birth and subsequent death of her infant would automatically be charged with murder.<sup>14</sup> These laws were unyielding and also outdated; they were not equipped to handle the inevitable complications that were to arise from the expanding commercial and industrial population.

The majority of the urban population in London were poor, working-class citizens who could barely scrape enough together to feed themselves, let alone their, in most cases, many children. While infanticide may have been an abhorrent option for most mothers, disease and extreme negligence seems to have been the primary causes of death for these infants. Beginning in the first half of the eighteenth century we find a number of prints that depict the plight of poor children in London. These images were created to celebrate the creation of the Gin Act of 1736, enacted to strictly curtail the rise in gin drinking by imposing taxes on imported spirits and mandating license fees for those wishing to produce

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<sup>13</sup> Alan Macfarlane, "Illegitimacy and Illegitimates in English History," *Bastardy and Its Comparative History*, Peter Laslett, et al., eds., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 73.

<sup>14</sup> Lisa Zunshine, *Bastards and Foundlings: Illegitimacy in Eighteenth-Century England*, (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 2005), 42.

and sell their own.<sup>15</sup> These images also, incidentally, shed light on contemporary attitudes concerning the treatment of children by their mothers.

In *The Lamentable Fall of Madam Geneva* (fig. 1) chaos centers around a platform that contains Madam Geneva, represented as a female gin drinker who lies sprawled on the stage, semiconscious, with an empty glass in one hand and her skirt hiked above her hips.<sup>16</sup> The personification of the gin epidemic as a woman was a visual reminder that they were much more involved with not only drinking gin, but also distributing it.<sup>17</sup> On either side of her stand a man and a woman who hold up copies of the Gin Act; sadness is evident on their faces. Various portrayals of the stereotypical gin drinker are shown reacting to the scene in front of them. Among them are a crippled man, a Billingsgate fish-woman and a ballad-seller. To the left is pictured a vomiting woman being held up by two people. The man on her right holds a flask with a label on it that reads “A Cure for the Cholick.” Standing on either side of the platform, reveling in Madam Geneva’s downfall, are the men who drink respectable beverages. To the left the beer drinkers celebrate at a public house, hats in the air and tankards in hand. The sign above the building reads: “No more Gin by retail, Parson’s Entire Butt” - Entire Butt being the unappealing name of the recently invented type of beer known as porter.<sup>18</sup> On the right stand their wine-drinking counterparts, one of whom holds

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<sup>15</sup> Peter Clark, “The ‘Mother Gin’ Controversy in the Early Eighteenth Century,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 38 (1988), 73.

<sup>16</sup> The inscription at the bottom reads: “The Scene appears and Madam’s Crew/ In deep Despair Expos’d to View./ See Tinkers, Coblers and Cold Watchmen,/ With Bawds and Whores as drunk as Dutchmen./ All Mingling with the Common Throng,/ Resort to hear her Passing Song:/ Whilst Mirth Suppres’d by Parliament,/ In Sober Sadness all lament./ Pursu’d by J(e)k(y)l’s Indignation/ She’s brought to utter desolation./ With Oath’s they Storm their Monarch’s name/ And Curse the Hands that form’d the Scheme./ All Billingsgate their case Bemoan./ And Ragfair Change in Mourning’s hung./ Queen Gin for whom they’d Sacrifice/ Their Shirts or Smocks, nay both their eyes;/ Rather than Shewant Contribution,/ They’d trudge the Streets without their shoes on.

<sup>17</sup> Clark, 70. In 1735 25% of spirit sellers in London were women, this figure rose to 33% in 1751.

<sup>18</sup> Newman, 73.

aloft a standard made of flasks, grapes and a banner with the latin inscription, “Vivitur Baccho melius.” Unmistakably, this image is meant to mock the people most associated with gin drinking - poor women and disabled men - while celebrating the drink’s removal as the primary source of increased violence, disease and mortality. If we look closer, it becomes obvious that these problems go deeper than gin drinking alone. If it is violence that occurred as a result of the intoxicating effects of gin, then any type of alcohol could be culpable. The rowdy behavior of the beer and wine drinkers depicted in this image is a testament to that; the jovial celebration seen now could just as quickly turn into a drunken riot if the drinking continues. Similarly, it was gin’s relative inexpensiveness that caused the majority of people to drink it so liberally, but if intoxication was the only escape from a life of oppressive poverty and squalid conditions, could they be blamed? The sheets of paper being held by the man and woman on the platform describe a song written about the Gin Act; the lyrics read: “Good luck, good luck & Wellad / That Madam Gin should fall / Superior Powers she must obey / This Act will starve us all / the Afflicted she had cause to sing / the Cripple leap and dance / All those who die for love of gin / Go to heaven in a Trance.” The suggestion that the act would result in starvation for many of the suffering poor was probably not an exaggeration. While many did rely on cheap spirits as their primary sustenance, it was inadequate poor laws, low wages and frequent unemployment that was the root of the cause. To underscore this, in the middle foreground stands a woman holding her infant child and looking imploringly straight out at the viewer. She does not seem to be lamenting the fall of Madam Geneva, so much as the government’s refusal to address the real causes of the country’s rising poverty, choosing instead to lay the blame on



gin. And, as *The Lamentable Fall of Madam Geneva* shows, it is the children who are the real victims.

Like *Lamentable Fall*, another print stresses the conditions of the poor with a particular emphasis on children. In *To the Mortal Memory of Madam Geneva* (fig. 2) there is no throng of people surrounding the female embodiment of Madame Geneva; instead we see only a monument dedicated to her memory surrounded by her closest followers. The two men in the image are a distiller, standing on the right and leaning dejectedly on one of the tools of his trade; and the other a grenadier, who lounges at the top of the monument in full dress and points down at the epitaph which reads, “To the Mortal Memory of Madam Geneva. Who died Sep. 29 1736. Her Weeping Servants & loving Friends consecrate This Tomb.” Despite the fact that the people depicted in the image represent the “servants” of Madam Geneva, the men at least have gainful employ - the distiller can still produce if he can purchase the necessary permit. It is the women and children who are hopeless and destitute. Dressed in rags, the three young boys in the image look far more pitiable than the children in the previous prints. Their pain seems more acute because the viewer cannot misinterpret the distressful looks they give towards the women who can do nothing to help them. To make matters worse, the woman on the left, described as a rag-picker in the caption at the bottom, looks to be heavily pregnant.<sup>19</sup> This, no doubt, was a common scene on the streets of London.

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<sup>19</sup> The entire inscription reads: To thee, kind comfort of the starving poor! / To thee Geneva, that ar't now no more! / This sad but gratefull monument we raise: / Our Arms we yield, no more our Sun shall blaze. / Lo! Where Supine her mournful Genius lies, / And hollow barrels echo to her cries; / On casks, around her sad Attendants stand; / The Bunter weeps with basket in her hand. / His useless Worm the sad Distiller views; / The Boy with heavy heart for Succour Sues; / What gave her birth now helps her Tomb to build. / The Tub a Spire, A Globe the Can unfill'd. / High in the Air the still it's head doth rear / And on it's Top a Mournful Granadeer / The Clean White Apron as a label shown / The dreadful cause of all our Grief makes known. / Hither repair All ye that for her mourn. / And Drink a Requiem to her Peacefull Urn.

Many political tracts, ballads and sermons railed against gin drinking, claiming that everything including an increase in poverty, rising mortality rates, violence and disease could be attributed to the imbibing of gin.<sup>20</sup> However, what concerned most middle and upper-class people was the extent to which gin drinking was harming Britain's present and future workforce. Since men who were employed in very rigorous, active trades often used beer as their main form of sustenance, gin was considered the drink of choice for men in sedentary trades, the impoverished and, overwhelmingly, the drink for women. Unfortunately, this meant that children also suffered from the ill effects of this epidemic. In his treatise entitled, *Distilled Spiritous Liquors the Bane of the Nation*, Thomas Wilson states that gin "intails (sic) Misery upon their harmless Progeny as long as they live; and often cuts asunder the Thread of Life as soon as it is spun."<sup>21</sup> Written in 1736, this work coincided with the above mentioned Gin Act and just like any controversial legislation, the act was met with heated opinions, both for and against this severe measure. In various newspapers across the city there were reports of mock funerals, protests and crowds of people congregating outside the city's numerous gin shops, some of which had to be dispersed by military force. These groups were so fervently against this act that one newspaper reported that, "several persons were committed, some to prison, some to hard labour, for publicly and riotously proclaiming 'No Gin, No King'."<sup>22</sup> It was these types of public displays that prompted printmakers to create these graphic satires that ridiculed the lower-classes' dependence on spirits and the type of havoc this dependence had created.

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<sup>20</sup> Reginald Nichols and Francis Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 2-3.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Wilson, *Distilled Spiritous Liquors the Bane of the Nation*, (London, 1736), p. xii, accessed in Eighteenth Century Collection Online, 2-4-2012.

<sup>22</sup> *The Daily Journal*, 29 September 1739, quoted in Mark Hallett, *Spectacle of Difference: Graphic Satire in the Age of Hogarth*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 211.

*The Funeral Procession of Madam Geneva* (fig. 3) depicts one of these mock funerals.

This image plays on themes of chaos and mourning described in news articles such as this one taken from the *Daily Journal* from September 28, 1736 that stated: “Mother Gin lay in state yesterday at a Distiller’s shop in Swallow Street near St. James Church; but to prevent the ill-consequences of such a funeral, a neighboring Justice took the undertaker, his men and all the mourners into custody.”<sup>23</sup> The scene focuses on an exaggerated procession of distillers that stretches endlessly from the middle ground all the way into the distance who follow a shrouded coffin containing the symbolic remains of Madame Geneva. Leading the sullen group is an infamous local beggar named Loddy who, in his grief, wears nothing but a strategically placed length of black cloth.<sup>24</sup> On either side men and women weep on the balconies of their now-defunct businesses as they watch the procession pass. However, most of the action takes place in the foreground as London’s principal gin drinkers, women of the lower classes, mourn the loss of their primary sustenance. In this image, we see just what the loss of this drink is doing to these women, and by association, their children. Starting at the left is a woman on bended knee, weeping, with a rag held to her face, pleading with the two women standing next to her to let her share in their final toast. As one of the women pours,

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<sup>23</sup> Mark Hallett, *The Spectacle of Difference: Graphic Satire in the Age of Hogarth*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 211-12.

<sup>24</sup> Loddy is mentioned in the inscription at the bottom with a note that states that he is a well-known beggar in the St. Giles area. The entire inscription reads: Gins Fun’ral mourn, lo! near the Body,/ In ragged state moves rueful Loddy;/ Great Representative allow’d,/ Of all who to her Empire bow’d:/ Distillers next a gloomy Train/ Who vent their loud Complaints in vain,/ And from this Vanquish’d Sovereigns Fate,/ Their own Distress and Ruin date/ Each empty cask, instead of Bell/ Sounds forth a dolefull Fun’ral Knell./ Thy Punch houses oh! Wapping moan,/ And Redriff answers with a Groan./ Beneath their Burdens Porters droop,/ No Dram to lift their spirits up,/ Cheap Cordial for the Poors Relief!/ One half Penny cou’d chace their Grief:/ Two for a Penny might be Jolly,/ A Quartern Chear’d both John and Dolly./ But now, this Act, They cry will lurch us,/ For Beer, a Quart’s too great a purchase./ No, ‘tis resolved Divine Geneva!/ We’ll bravely perish e’er we’ll leave ye./ With that the brimming Glass they pity,/ And Poverty and Rags defy,/ Their Brains with fummy Vapours turn,/ They fall to grace their monarch’s Urn./ O Jekel how immense thy Merit!/ How vast those Patriots publick Spirit!/ To Strip the Poor of their chief Pleasure/ And Thousands leave to starve at Leasure.

her child also demands to be a part of this farewell as she reaches up to touch the glass her mother is holding. Below them another woman lies prostrate, her expression one of hopeless despair. The child that leans against her also seems to recognize the solemnity of the occasion. Opposite the friendly toast taking place on the left, two women on the middle right of the print are so desperate to partake of what gin remains that they are engaged in hand-to-hand combat. Both are so intent on winning that they do not notice either the dog tugging on one woman's dress or the child with them who, judging by his outstretched arms and startled expression, has been knocked violently aside. Just entering the scene from the right are three gentlemen absorbed in conversation that stand separate from the commotion taking place around them. *The Funeral Procession of Madam Geneva* strikingly captures the anxiety felt by the community as they watched the collapse of the nation's urban work force. Children are portrayed as helpless victims that suffer as a result of their mothers' dangerous addiction.

When these prints were reissued fifteen years later with the passing of yet another Gin Act, William Hogarth would provide his own interpretation on the themes of drunkenness and urban breakdown in *Gin Lane* (fig. 4). Not so much a satire as an illustration of the kind of power gin had over the nation's poorer workforce, Hogarth actively recycles imagery from *The Funeral Procession of Madam Geneva* and *The Lamentable Fall of Madam Geneva*, particularly in his depiction of children. Set in one of the poorest areas in London, St. Giles was notorious for excessive amounts of gin drinking; it is also an area from where the majority of foundlings came. The most striking aspect of the entire scene is the infant who has fallen from its mother's (or wet-nurse's) grasp and is now plummeting into the depths below. The outstretched arms, wide eyes and open mouth of the child looks

unmistakably similar to the child in the right foreground of *The Funeral Procession*. Representations of drunken women, quarreling invalids and the emaciated ballad-seller in the foreground are all taken from the previous images. However, one way in which *Gin Lane* differs is in its depiction of the consequences of gin drinking on children. Whereas in the earlier prints, excluding *To the Mortal Memory of Madam Geneva*, the children represented seemed nonessential with relation to the surrounding events, here Hogarth makes their presence immediately obvious. After the initial recognition of the tumbling baby, our eye leads us to the right where we see a woman forcing gin down an infant's throat and above them, two young charity girls drink a toast under the awning of the aptly named Kilman Distiller. In the middle ground a child weeps at the foot of its mother's coffin as she is being lowered into it while the man overseeing the burial stands indifferently to the side. Next to this group is perhaps the most disturbing vignette in the entire image: a crazed man runs down the street holding a bellows in his left hand and an impaled baby in his right with the mother chasing futilely behind them. By placing these young children and infants in so many different states of distress, Hogarth sends a clear message that transcends the urban issues of poverty and drunkenness: the suffering of these children can be avoided through the support of the Foundling Hospital and charities like it.

The Madame Geneva images were produced by three different printmakers out of the vast grid of publishers and print sellers operating throughout the city of London. *The Funeral Procession of Madam Geneva* was published by one of the city's biggest producers: The Bowles family. First set up by Thomas Bowles in 1703, by the 1720s his sons John and Thomas had taken over the enterprise and were selling thousands of prints through

catalogs.<sup>25</sup> For many smaller shops, however, the best way to advertise their products would be to either display them in their shop-front windows to attract passersby, or to advertise their most recent work in newspapers such as *The Daily Courant*, and *The London Daily Post and General Advertiser*. As consumerism grew, so too did the demand for graphic decoration and these satires, as well as the many other prints we will be looking at, are just a few examples of the rapidly expanding London print market. These works catered to an audience that the art historian Mark Hallett describes as, “resolutely metropolitan, relatively literate, moderately affluent, and eclectic in its tastes.”<sup>26</sup> This group of urban professionals would be made up of, “shopkeepers and lawyers, coffee house owners and journalists, painters and publishers, clerks and doctors.”<sup>27</sup> These were people that were not necessarily active in, but certainly aware of the events taking place in the city. It was this group more than any other that required the most convincing in order to support the creation of the Foundling Hospital, which was why a print campaign would be vital to its success.

Setting aside the reference to gin drinking, these early prints remain the best and probably most accurate representation of the treatment of poor children during the early eighteenth century. The odds of any of the children pictured in them surviving to adulthood were slim. However, it was exactly these children that the Foundling Hospital and its founder, Thomas Coram, wished to save.

### *Thomas Coram and the Founding of the Foundling Hospital*

On July 11, 1713, the politician and essayist Joseph Addison wrote in his magazine *The Guardian* about a sentiment that he shared with many of his fellow intellectuals. Remarking

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<sup>25</sup> Mark Hallett, *The Spectacle of Difference: Graphic Satire in the Age of Hogarth*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 25.

on the parade celebrating the end of war and the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht, Addison declares that no sight gave him more pride than watching the children from London's charity schools sing hymns as the procession containing both Houses of Parliament passed. "Such a numerous and innocent multitude," he states, "clothed in the charity of their benefactors, was a spectacle pleasing both to God and man, and a more beautiful expression of joy and thanksgiving than could have been exhibited by all the pomps of a Roman triumph."<sup>28</sup> These charity children must have touched many hearts, because two years later the scene was issued as a print commemorating the accession of King George I after the death of Queen Anne in 1714 and his own subsequent procession through the city. The print (fig. 5), which is quite large, measuring 15 x 50", depicts a sea of children indistinguishable from one another arranged in stands watching the procession pass by. The caption at the bottom states that the children, who numbered nearly four thousand, were gathered from the several charity schools in and around London and Westminster. Together they sang two hymns repeatedly for nearly three hours as the coaches progressed down the Strand on their way to St. Paul's Cathedral.

Addison does remark that the charity schools have done a great service for the community by educating and providing for these children and he makes a plea to the politicians who witnessed the assembly to "not regard them only as an empty spectacle, or the materials of a fine show, but contribute to their maintenance and increase."<sup>29</sup> However much the establishment of these institutions has helped to care for and educate the children of the deserving poor, Addison then gets to the crux of his essay, which is a petition for a

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<sup>28</sup> Joseph Addison, *The Papers of Joseph Addison, Esq. in the Tatler, Spectator, Guardian and Freeholder...*, (Edinburgh, 1790), p. 189, accessed in Eighteenth Century Collections Online, 1-22-2012.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 190.

similar type of charity, but one that is sorely needed nonetheless: a hospital for foundling children. Apart from arguing for the prevention of infanticide by desperate mothers who were unable to provide for their children, Addison's other argument for creating the hospital is that most of the countries in Europe had already provided places of refuge for such children. These countries already established places for abandoned children, a majority of them centuries earlier.

Spain, Portugal, Italy and France had all founded hospitals for abandoned children as early as the 1500s. In these Catholic countries the concerns over both the souls of fallen women and their unbaptized babies played a large role in their construction.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, these places derived their support from either the church or government, receiving only occasional benefactions from wealthy individual patrons. The Brothers of the Misericordia in Lisbon had started an institution for foundling children after King Sebastian I had entrusted the task to them in the sixteenth century. Called the House of the Wheel because of the platform on which the infants would be placed, the mothers would then rotate the device to place them inside the building. The wheel allowed the mother to leave without divulging her identity or reasons for leaving her infant to the care of the Brothers. In France, support for abandoned children had fallen to the Ordinance of Moulins beginning in 1586, which required the local justice to provide support for foundling children, but in many provinces the ordinance was simply ignored. Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, St. Vincent de Paul had asked a group of aristocratic women who called themselves the Daughters of Charity to rent a house to support a small number of abandoned children in Paris. He was inspired to do this after he had visited La Couche, the city's only place for the

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<sup>30</sup> Levene, 2-3.



care of these children. Run by the dean of Notre Dame Cathedral, La Couche received government support, but after a series of wars and following economic trouble, it was receiving little in the way of funding and the children were being neglected and exploited. Revived by the Daughters of Charity, but unable to survive solely on private funds, support eventually came from the French government and the charity was renamed L'Hôpital des Enfants-Trouvés in 1670.<sup>31</sup> It is in Italy, though, that we can find the longest-running and most widespread network of institutions for abandoned and illegitimate children.

The Conservatorio della Ruota in Rome had a similar turning device for the depositing of children, though, unlike the House of the Wheel, it had been founded much earlier by Pope Innocent III at the beginning of the thirteenth century. It was also quite large, with enough space to accommodate up to 600 children. Similar institutions were established later in Florence and Milan, with all three being run by the church. Venice also had a place for the care of foundling children. However, the Pio Spedale della Pietà, as it was called, was different than the other charities in that it was run by the Doge and forty members of the Venetian aristocracy, rather than members of the clergy.<sup>32</sup> Just as Italy provided the best examples of foundling charities, the imagery associated with them was also derived here. The idea of charity relating directly to mothers and nursing infants derives from Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, first published in Rome in 1593. In his text, Ripa describes the representation of Charity as being a woman wearing red with flames extending from her head while in her left hand she supports a nursing child with two others playing at her feet.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ruth McClure, *Coram's Children: The London Foundling Hospital in the Eighteenth Century*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 5-6.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>33</sup> Keith Christiansen, "Going for Baroque: Bringing 17th-Century Masters to the Met," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 62, no. 3 (Winter, 2005), 30.

Ripa's book was commonly used throughout Europe and one of the most admired representations of this subject is Guido Reni's c. 1630 painting *Charity* (fig. 6). In it Charity is shown as a beautiful woman wearing an elegantly draped red gown who supports two infants in her lap, one is nursing on her left side while the other sleeps peacefully on her right. She looks to her right at another infant who gestures at his nursing companion, perhaps to indicate that it is now his turn. This became the standard embodiment of Charity and one that would be used in later depictions of the Foundling Hospital. Although it is unlikely that many English artists and patrons were able to view this work, a number of similar engravings could have possibly served as examples for emulation (figs. 7-9).

Since infant mortality was already high due to disease and lack of medical treatment, creating foundling hospitals was one way the church or the government could prevent the loss of life by manipulating the forces they could hope to control. Providing a place for a desperate woman to leave her child when she could not take care of it would save both the child's life and the mother's soul. Not only would they save the child's life, but the homes would also provide a moderate education, as well as the skills needed to earn a decent living once they reached adulthood.<sup>34</sup> Using these institutions as a model more than three centuries later, the Foundling Hospital lacked the Catholic values which were a driving force behind the establishment of these institutions in southern Europe, yet still found a way to succeed in Protestant England. Despite calls for its creation from numerous intellectuals beginning as early as the mid-seventeenth century, it would take a monumental effort from the most unlikely of characters for the idea of a foundling hospital to become reality in England.

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<sup>34</sup> Nicholas Terpstra, "Making a Living, Making a Life: Work in the Orphanages of Florence and Bologna," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 31, no. 4, (Winter, 2000), 1065.

Thomas Coram can certainly be considered the embodiment of England's rising middle class. A retired sea-captain, he made a substantial sum of money as an agent for London merchants and spent ten years in the American colonies building ships and selling goods. When he came back to England in 1704, he decided to use his wealth to establish a number of charitable endeavors. His first attempt was a project to purchase land in America for returning soldiers and sailors.<sup>35</sup> When this failed to get off the ground, he set his sights on the hundreds of abandoned children left to die on the streets of London. Thoroughly determined to prevent the daily sight of his walks through the city of the bodies of exposed infants "sometimes alive, sometimes dead, sometimes dying," he then spent the better part of seventeen years campaigning for the creation of the Foundling Hospital.<sup>36</sup> After failing to obtain backing from King George I, it took numerous petitions and pledges of support from reluctant church officials and disinterested aristocrats to finally receive a Royal Charter from King George II in 1739. This process was so frustrating and time-consuming for Coram that he once candidly remarked that urging these people to offer their support on behalf of these innocent children was akin to asking them to expose their backsides at court.<sup>37</sup> Not only was Coram rewarded for all his efforts with the establishment of the hospital and the fruition of a cause that was truly dear to his heart, but he was also memorialized by one of England's greatest artists. This union would create a synthesis between art and charity that would revolutionize the visual arts in England.

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<sup>35</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 58-9.

<sup>36</sup> Anonymous, *Private virtue and publick spirit display'd. In a succinct essay on the character of Capt. Thomas Coram...*, (London, 1751), 12-13, accessed in Eighteenth Century Collections Online, 2-11-2012.

<sup>37</sup> Colley, 58-9.

Seven months after the Royal Charter was granted, William Hogarth painted his *Portrait of Captain Thomas Coram* (fig. 10), a life-size likeness that displays both the ambitions of the sitter and the artist.<sup>38</sup> If Coram can be seen as the epitome of England's hard-working merchants, then Hogarth's portrait of the retired sea captain can be interpreted as being the visual embodiment of the country's rising middle-class values. In the image, Coram is depicted as a practical, down-to-earth businessman. Hat casually tossed aside, his face flushed, holding his gloves in his left hand and his natural hair loose and disheveled, it looks as though he has just come in from outside, pausing long enough to sit for his portrait before rushing off to attend to another pressing task.<sup>39</sup> Sitting bolt upright, he looks out past the viewer with a determined expression, a man who is willing to roll up his sleeves, literally, in order to accomplish his goals. Surrounding him are pictured the elements of his success. The globe below his left hand is positioned so that the viewer sees the wide expanse of ocean that separates England from the Americas. This, coupled with the body of water that stretches out towards the horizon in the upper right, conveys to the viewer that Coram is a self-made man, earning his worth as a shipwright. On the table to his right lay several scrolls, the uppermost being the Royal Charter for the Foundling Hospital. It is possible that the other papers are some of the petitions he had worked so hard to fill during the seventeen years he lobbied for the Hospital's creation. In his right hand he holds the seal of the Hospital, signifying the fruition of all his efforts. The entire composition, including the swath of green drapery in the upper left and the large column directly behind Coram

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<sup>38</sup> Nichols, Wray, 249.

<sup>39</sup> Mark Hallett and Christine Riding, *Hogarth*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2006), 162.

bespeaks Hogarth's intent to simultaneously raise the level of his achievements to those of France's grand portrait painters and invite a comparison of their respective sitters.<sup>40</sup>

When we look at an engraving of the banker Samuel Bernard by Pierre-Imbert Drevet done after the portrait by Hyacinthe Rigaud in 1725 (fig. 11), the similarities are quite obvious, but it is the differences that are perhaps the most striking. The son of an artist, Bernard became a successful entrepreneur turned French aristocrat. By purposefully comparing this image with his own of Thomas Coram, Hogarth invites a stimulating comparison between the French and English mercantile classes. Hogarth would have worked exclusively from the print when painting Coram's image; he would not have seen the actual Rigaud painting until his trip to Paris eight years later. The general composition is much the same, with the full-length figure sitting in the middle surrounded by a large swath of drapery, similar attributes and a view of the ship-strewn ocean in the left background (the ships in the Coram portrait are now just barely visible). The column emerging from behind the figures is in the same place, while the globe has been moved from the table in the Drevet print to the floor next to Coram's feet. The way in which Hogarth transforms the extravagant clothing and interior space in the print into the austere decorations and functional clothing in this portrait is a deliberate departure designed to both elevate Coram's role as a virtuous middle-class citizen and to depict the pragmatic way he conducts his business. A single green swath placed discreetly in the back right has replaced the billowing drapery in the print. Similarly, the elaborately carved table and chair on which Bernard rests has been traded for a plain tripod table and studded leather clubfoot chair. However, the two figures themselves provide the most notable contrast. Samuel Bernard,

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<sup>40</sup> Mark Hallett, *Hogarth*, (London: Phaidon Press, Ltd., 2000), 150-2.

the Comte de Coubert and principal banker to Louis XV wears a massive coat made from yards of fabric with buttons trailing down to the floor, which, coupled with his lace cuffs, tasseled cravat and long curling wig portray a French aristocrat at the height of fashion.<sup>41</sup> Coram, as described above, is no leisured upperclassman and shows no reservations being portrayed as the active merchant and philanthropist that he is.

While the *Portrait of Captain Thomas Coram* is in the same style as works by his predecessors and his French counterparts, Hogarth's foray into life-size portraiture conveys a wholly different meaning. By replacing a member of the royal family, or someone from the upper echelons of society with a businessman who has no ties to either group, Hogarth makes a strong statement not only about the importance of gentlemen like Coram, but also about his own ability to transform traditional portraiture. In this work, he cleverly elevates Coram's status by placing him in an environment reserved exclusively for distinguished sitters, but by portraying him in such an informal and relaxed manner, the pretentiousness dissolves and we are left with a man whose identity is defined solely by his hard work and benevolence. As the historian Linda Colley states:

No country estate adorns the background of this picture, no sporting dog, or thoroughbred horse, or decorative agricultural implement. Emphatically a state portrait, in the sense that it is clearly intended to be viewed by an admiring public, its subject is neither royal nor patrician... Not inherited rank or broad acres, but commerce and enterprise are visibly the foundations of this man's civic virtue.<sup>42</sup>

As a man in a similar position as Coram's, Hogarth did intend this work to be an answer to grand portraiture and, as Colley states, he also intended for the portrait to be viewed by the public. Painted on the step below Coram's feet are the words 'Painted and given by Wm Hogarth 1740.' The work was given a prominent place in the Hospital's chapel, where,

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<sup>41</sup> Robin Simon, *Hogarth, France and British Art*, (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2007), 154.

<sup>42</sup> Colley, 58.

according to lore, the children's prayers would oftentimes be directed towards their benefactor, and not their Heavenly Father.<sup>43</sup> Apocryphal or not, the portrait more than adequately conveys the growing middle-class sentiments of benevolence, patriotism and commerce that were required to create the first privately sponsored, corporately run charitable institution "for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted young children."<sup>44</sup>

Already well-known for his charitable exploits, this portrait was a more than adequate tribute to Coram's status as a figure of national importance. Accordingly, a number of prints after the painting were created to adorn coffee houses, homes and schoolrooms for the majority of people who could not visit the portrait in situ at the Foundling Hospital's chapel.<sup>45</sup> One such print by James McArdell (fig. 12) depicts only a half-length view after the Hogarth portrait set against a solid black background. Originally made in 1749, the second state dates from 1794 when it was reissued by the printing firm Laurie & Whittle. From this we can surmise that the image of Coram was so pervasive in England that the extraneous items, such as the globe and seal of the Hospital, that were so crucial in determining his identity in 1739 would, in the last part of the century, hardly be necessary. Another image (fig. 13) after Hogarth's portrait appeared in the May 1749 issue of the popular monthly journal *London Magazine*. A little more elaborate than the solitary half-length figure, this print contains a bust-length copy from the portrait within an oval frame which is inscribed, "Captain Coram Projector of the Foundling Hospital." Below him is an illustration of the

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<sup>43</sup> McClure, 3.

<sup>44</sup> Anonymous, *A Copy of the Royal Charter, Establishing an Hospital for the Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children*, (London, 1739), p. 1, accessed in Eighteenth Century Collections Online, 2-12-2012.

<sup>45</sup> Sheila O'Connell, *London 1753*, (London: The British Museum Press, 2003), 156.

front view of the Hospital; its popularity is attested to by the numerous people walking up the path to visit it and, possibly, make donations. The Hospital's location on the outskirts of London is also hinted at with the large lawns and the pair of deer serenely grazing on the right, undisturbed by the group of visitors.

Clearly proud of the success of this portrait, Hogarth would remark later in life that:

The portrait which I painted with most pleasure, and in which I particularly wished to excel, was that of Captain Coram, for the Foundling Hospital; and if I am so wretched an artist as my enemies assert, it is somewhat strange that this, which was one of the first I painted the size of life, should stand the test of twenty years competition, and be generally thought the best portrait in the place, notwithstanding the first painters in the kingdom exerted all their talents to vie with it.<sup>46</sup>

Himself a founding governor, Hogarth's talents as one of England's most popular artists would prove to be extremely useful in the campaign to persuade English society about the merits of the newly established Foundling Hospital.

### *Criticism and the Foundling Hospital's Visual Campaign*

As we have seen, the eighteenth century in England saw a dramatic rise in the number of charitable institutions. While society was certainly willing to support honest and industrious poor people, the reputations of those needing a charity like the Foundling Hospital were of the type with which no decent person would want to associate themselves. This was the type of criticism the hospital had to contend with on a daily basis. For all the tracts and sermons calling for acts of benevolence, these newly-acquired Christian sympathies simply did not extend to a charity that appeared to promote fornication without consequence, overrunning the country with hordes of illegitimate children. Thus the question arises: in what ways did the Foundling Hospital counteract this criticism and become a model for all subsequent charitable institutions? Not only would the Hospital

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<sup>46</sup> William Hogarth, *Anecdotes of William Hogarth, Written by Himself*, (London: J.B. Nichols and Son, 1833), 21.



answer all the charges laid against it, but it would provide full disclosure of its operation in the form of prints and paintings intended to offset disapproval and persuade the public, if they would not support them, to at least tolerate what they were doing.

The first way the governors tried to combat these negative tides was simple and straightforward: an appeal to human decency. An image designed by Hogarth and engraved by F. Morellon la Cave accompanies a subscription roll for fundraising used to garner sympathy for the children the Foundling Hospital intended to help. *The Foundlings* (fig. 14) depicts a large group of children, the Hospital's charges, standing just outside a building with the King's arms over the doorway.<sup>47</sup> In the middle-right stands Coram, dressed in a ceremonial robe with the Royal Charter under his left arm and holding the Hospital's seal in the same hand - both attributes Hogarth would later include in his portrait. He looks down at a weeping woman on bended knee whose child he has just handed over to the beadle on his right, the knife at her feet a chilling reminder of the desperate lengths women resort to when there is no Foundling Hospital to take charge of these innocent infants. This woman's child will be saved, but the other two children on the extreme right side of the image are not so lucky. One baby in the foreground lies naked under a bridge, while in the background a mother tucks her offspring in a clump of hedges next to a gate in the hopes that someone will come along to claim it. Contrasted with these sad examples are the young children who have been raised and cared for by the Hospital. They are depicted with the tools of their future occupations. The boys hold scythes and rakes and traditional instruments for construction or farming. The boy to the left of the image who is being fondly embraced by his mother holds a brush for combing wool, while the group of boys at the side of the

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<sup>47</sup> Nichols and Wray, 249.

building are dressed in sailor's clothes; their future occupations are obvious as they stare out at the ships in the distance. Similarly, the three girls in the foreground hold a spinning wheel, a sampler and a broom - ready for work in either textiles or domestic service. The contrast between a society with no Foundling Hospital versus one that does could not be made plainer. This was the argument used most often as the Hospital's prerogative: without a place for these children, they would be left to die, with it, they would benefit society by becoming sailors, soldiers and respectable members of England's working-class. A bold statement like this is made all the more clearer with the placement of the church in the background. Distant and ineffectual, the church is either unequipped or unwilling to deal with the two abandoned children in the space they share on the right of the image.<sup>48</sup>

Realizing that it would take more than the sight of exposed infants to persuade the vast majority to support the Hospital - we know already from the words of Thomas Coram that this was an everyday sight in the streets of London - the inclusion of the young boys dressed as sailors looking out towards the ships in the background was a clever way to appeal to the public's sense of practicality. Fears of an invasion from the Jacobite leader Charles Edward Stuart with the French navy as backup, coupled with high mortality rates and a decline in population due to various other conflicts was enough, at least, for political leaders to give their support. Why should these children be left to die when they have the means to raise an indefinite number of sailors and soldiers for use in future wars? As cold and calculating as it sounds, the Hospital's Governors recognized this tactic as the best way to secure funding. Their roles in England's imagined future conflicts could not be determined with certainty, but for the present, they would have a chance to make it to

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<sup>48</sup> Hallett, *Hogarth*, 150.

adulthood. The idea of saving these children in order to raise them as useful members of society was not a new one. Many writers remarked on the rising levels of infanticide and its dangerous repercussions, including Bernard Mandeville and Jonathan Swift. In a pamphlet written in 1731, Daniel Defoe succinctly remarks that by letting these crimes go unpunished, “Thus is God robb’d of a Creature, in whom he had breath’d the Breath of Life, and on whom he had stamp’d his Image; the World of an Inhabitant, who might have been of use; the King of a Subject; and future Generations of an Issue not to be accounted for, had this Infant lived to have been a Parent.”<sup>49</sup> Defoe states that the primary cause of infanticide is debauched women who, afraid of being publicly humiliated because of their transgressions, resort to “pretended Midwives” to rid themselves of their illegitimate children.<sup>50</sup> Clearly, Defoe does support the formation of a house for these children (for no other reason than their perceived future usefulness), despite their mother’s sins. However, the concept of illegitimacy with relation to Christian values was an extremely contentious subject and would continue to plague the efforts of the Hospital.

An image dating from c.1745 is a visual realization of just what the Foundling Hospital would lead to, according to its critics. *A Satire of the Foundling Hospital* (figs. 15,16) depicts Original Sin in the form of Adam and Eve, who casually lean on either side of an emblem of a large stag that is framed by a serpent holding an apple in its mouth, topped with a pair of cuckold’s horns. To the right is a procession of men wearing similar cuckold’s horns being lead by a church official to a monument on the bank of the Thames. The men look dolefully at the representation in the foreground, knowing that the Foundling Hospital

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<sup>49</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Generous Projector; or a friendly proposal to prevent murder and other enormous abuses, by erecting an hospital for foundlings and bastard-children*, (London, 1731), p. 10, accessed in Eighteenth Century Collections Online, 2-15-2012.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

is the reason they have been cuckolded. They become objects of ridicule because their wives can now indulge in indecent behavior. The inclusion of the clergyman, who himself wears horns, indicates the powerlessness of the church to stop them; all because the Foundling Hospital will provide a place for these illegitimate children. This sentiment is underscored in a poem on the verso of the print, which reads: "Then since things are so; As you very well know, Resolve with your Wives to be quit; At your loss ne'er repine, But with Women and Wine, A race of young *Foundlings* beget; My brave Boys, A race of young *Foundlings* beget." The verse suggests that the Hospital will encourage drunk and licentious behavior from respectable, married gentlemen which will lead to a race of illegitimate children for whom they will then have to care. Pictured on the left is the Foundling Hospital itself, with a statue of the allegory of fortune in front. Balancing precariously on her wheel, she is naked, apart from a sash around her waist and her customary blindfold. The depiction of fortune in this image has a dual meaning. This could be a reference to the fortune bestowed on the illegitimate children who perhaps, when compared to the children of honest poor families, do not deserve it. Also, with a white ball in one hand and a black ball in the other, the statue alludes to the lottery that dictated which children were accepted.

This acceptance procedure was arduous for both the mothers and the Hospital officials present. However, due to the overwhelming demand that they faced, the Governors were unable to accept every infant that was brought to them, making the practice necessary. To solve this problem as fair and objectively as possible, the Governors had to devise of a way to accept children that would not lead to disorderly incidences of large groups of women jostling with their infants at the gates of the Hospital when the announcement came that spaces were available. To do this, they devised a lottery in which the women would be

offered a bag containing a number of colored balls, depending on the number of women present and the number of spaces available. If one of the women drew a white ball, her child would be accepted, pending inspection by a doctor. If she drew a black ball, her child would not be accepted. If the ball was red, the child would be placed in limbo and if any of the children who were lucky enough to receive a black ball failed their exam, due to any type of communicable or venereal disease, the child would take their place, pending their exam.<sup>51</sup> By placing the lottery balls in the hands of the statue of fortune, this satire makes light of the hundreds of children that were turned away from the Hospital. However, the satire was not aimed at the children, but their parents, and this image echoed a number of written criticisms and gossip concerning the Hospital.

One such piece was a pamphlet directed not just at Thomas Coram and the Foundling Hospital, but included scandalous and satirical rumors regarding many of London's elite. In *The Scandalizade*, an author going under the pseudonym Porcupinus Pelagious constructs an elaborate rhyming poem in which Coram appears on the twenty-second page, after the author's tirade questioning David Garrick's acting abilities. After ridiculing Coram's attempt at his first charitable venture - the colony for retired soldiers and sailors - he then remarks that, "But this is not all the Effect of thy Pains / *The Hospital Foundling* came out of thy Brains / To encourage the Progress of vulgar Amours / The breeding of Rogues and th' increasing of Whores / While the Children of honest good Husbands and Wives / Stand expos'd to Oppression and Want all their Lives."<sup>52</sup> He then accuses Coram of championing this cause solely for the purposes of depositing his own

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<sup>51</sup> McClure, 76-78.

<sup>52</sup> Morgan McNamara, *The Scandalizade, a Panegyri-Satiri-Serio-Comi-Dramatic Poem*, (London, 1750), p. 23, accessed in Eighteenth Century Collections Online, 2-15-2012.

illegitimate children.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, this was a rumor with which many of the Hospital's Governors and donors had to contend and which, unlike the many other charitable institutions arising in the wake of the Foundling Hospital, likely accounts for the absence of women patrons.<sup>54</sup> There are many theories as to why this is the case, but the general consensus is that the Hospital's reputation of promoting morally depraved behavior was just too strong a factor to allow any polite, respectable women to become involved.<sup>55</sup>

From this we can see that the Foundling Hospital had more than its fair share of criticism. To combat this, the Governors adopted a unique array of solutions. Using an image like *The Foundlings* to appeal to society's sympathies would only get them so far. Support from politicians had been forthcoming only after they realized that the male children would directly benefit the state by becoming servicemen. However, receiving patronage from the aristocracy and gentry would require much more effort and strategies were devised to bring in potential patrons so they could see just how the Foundling Hospital benefitted society.

A year before Hogarth painted the portrait of Coram, he designed the Hospital's official coat of arms, the best example of which can be seen in a ticket for a fundraising event (fig. 17). In a framed roundel reclines a new-born child with two stars and a crescent moon above it. Standing above the roundel is a lamb with a sprig of thyme in its mouth. The child is flanked by allegorical representations of Nature and Britannia. The figure of Nature, on the left, is represented by the many-breasted Diana of Ephesus, whose image Hogarth

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>54</sup> Solkin, 159.

<sup>55</sup> Both McClure and Zunshine offer alternative arguments for the lack of female involvement, for McClure, see *Coram's Children*, p. 174, for Zunshine, see *Bastards and Foundlings*, 115. See also Donna Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth-Century*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 63-4.

had engraved a few years earlier for a subscription ticket to two of his other engravings, titled *Boys Peeping at Nature* (fig. 18).<sup>56</sup> While on the right, Britannia holds a staff and a shield emblazoned with the Union Jack. The entire emblem is set against a country landscape, perhaps alluding to the Hospital's policy of sending the new-born infants to a country wet-nurse for the first four years of their lives before returning them to the Hospital for education and apprenticing. The logo at the bottom is straightforward and blunt: it simply reads HELP. The event that the ticket refers to is a concert conducted by Handel of his recently written oratorio, the *Messiah*, which was performed at the Hospital annually between 1750 and 1777. The first five concerts were conducted by Handel himself and accumulated large sums of money from the fashionable people who attended.<sup>57</sup> Drawing in potential donors by turning the Hospital into a popular place to visit, as well as a fully operating charity, was, the Governors realized, the best way to receive support and, with it, donations. Once the Hospital moved out of its temporary premises in Hatton Garden into its permanent home, which was finished in 1745, they finally had a place in which they could both care for the children and entertain their well-to-do visitors.<sup>58</sup>

The design and location of the Hospital was of the utmost importance to the Governors. Fortunately, one of them happened to be Theodore Jacobsen, a Danish-born architect who designed the building free of charge. Following the advice laid out by William Cadogan (who would later become the Hospital's physician) in his 1748 treatise entitled *An Essay upon Nursing and the Management of Children from Their Birth to Three Years of Age*, the building was placed outside the smoky confines of London, ensuring that the children would

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<sup>56</sup> Paulson, 340.

<sup>57</sup> McClure, 70-1.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 65.

get plenty of fresh, clean air.<sup>59</sup> Thus land was purchased just north of London in a place called Lamb's Conduit Fields which allowed for enough space to construct a building able to house, eventually, up to 400 children.

To spread the word about the new premises and the vision the Governors had of the Hospital becoming a fashionable hotspot, a number of prints were commissioned that illustrated this goal. Having an engraving made to commemorate the establishment of a charity was nothing new. Indeed, they were often used as an architectural record and as a sign of London's growing modernity and benevolence. Both the buildings of St. Bartholomew's and Christ's Hospitals were memorialized in this way. In these compositionally similar images (figs. 19, 20) a bird's eye view depicts the buildings, accompanied by an inscription underneath which gives a brief history of the hospitals, as well as information regarding their charitable exploits. Part of a collection of prints entitled *British Views*, these images are dedicated to the buildings only, not what takes place inside them. An engraving of St. Thomas's Hospital from 1739 (fig. 21) depicts the hospital in a similar bird's eye view, but in the courtyard are shown several groups of people talking and gesturing at the building surrounding them. To the left of the courtyard, somewhat difficult to see because he stands in shadow, is a man on crutches; an obscure reference to the hospital's role as a place for the care of London's poor. While these hospitals are some of the oldest charities in England, as mentioned above, there is one instance of a depiction of a newly-formed charity school. Much like the image of St. Thomas's, *A South East Prospect of the Charity School* (fig. 22), focuses primarily on the building itself, but also provides subtle clues as to what it houses. The first is the two statues set in the niches of the top story, right

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<sup>59</sup> William Cadogan, *An Essay upon Nursing and the Management of Children from Their Birth to Three Years of Age*, (London, 1748), p. 3-9, accessed in Eighteenth Century Collections Online, 2-17-2012.



below the clock, which depicts a young boy on the left and a young girl on the right. The second can be seen on the side of the building directly above the entryway. As if to blend in with the surrounding businesses, signs consisting of breeches and a jacket serve to inform the passerby that this is a place, “for the Educating and Clothing [of] 50 Boys and 40 Girls.” Dated c. 1710, this is just one of the many charity schools erected at the start of the eighteenth century and, most likely, one that participated in the thanksgiving parade mentioned by Addison in 1713. What makes the views of the Foundling Hospital unique is their variety - several prints were issued over the course of the building’s construction - and, most importantly, the artistic license given to the artists at the request of the Governors in order to realize their goal of making the Hospital simultaneously a place of charitable benevolence and a destination for fashionable society.

This artistic license is most evident in a pair of engravings made after designs by the artist Samuel Wale that depict two alternate views of the Foundling Hospital in an attempt to elucidate the Governors’ dual vision. *A Perspective View of the Foundling Hospital with Emblematic Figures (I)* (fig. 23) presents to the viewer the Hospital’s more fashionable persona. We are looking out onto an area just outside and to the left of the entrance to the courtyard. Happy children dance around a statue of Venus and Cupid, whose presence not-so-subtly refers to the hundreds of absent parents and the conjugal acts that resulted in conception, and the subsequent disposal of the child after birth. Playful, well-fed and finely dressed, these children stand in stark opposition to the ones depicted in the earlier Madam Geneva prints. To the left, an elegant couple stand with their backs to the viewer, gesturing towards the children, while on the right another man simply stands back and watches, clearly enjoying their merriment. Past the gate, another statue of a female figure is visible.

Classically draped and holding a staff with an open hand, she most likely represents Benevolence, a quality which these visitors would be heavily encouraged to show when considering a donation.<sup>60</sup> Not to downplay this great monument of British charity, three overly-dressed French gentleman stand in the lower-right corner discussing and comparing this institution with their own. The merits of this conversation is elaborated upon in the verse below: “Tho Frenchmen sneer, Their boasted first Design, Brittish [sic] Benevolence shall far outshine.” Capitalizing on universal anti-French sentiments, the image is also making a statement that, although England may have waited a couple of centuries before establishing a house for foundlings, running it privately and without interference from church or state will prove to be a far better model.

However, the refined joviality of this image is contrasted with its pendant piece. In the second *Perspective View* (fig. 24) the mood is a somber and pious one as women line up to deposit their children with the Hospital. The fashionable members of polite society have gone, replaced with lower-class women who wait patiently for the gatekeeper to escort them to the Hospital’s entrance. The women in this image, with their downcast eyes and plain dress, would have been recognized by the upper echelons of society as the deserving poor, who, as the result of simple misfortune, not immorality, have been led to this place.<sup>61</sup> The women standing at the end of the line on the far right is a particular sight of pathos as she tenderly peaks in on her sleeping infant who lies sheltered beneath her cloak. The statues in the former print have also been replaced to reflect the mothers’ situations. Where there was Love and Benevolence, there is now Fortune and Charity. Set against the sorrowful

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<sup>60</sup> Solkin, 160.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 161.

condition of the women, the statue of Fortune that was mocked so callously in the satire mentioned earlier now serves as a melancholy reminder of the fates of both the women and the children had not the Hospital existed to collect them. Benevolence has now been replaced with Charity, depicted here as a woman who holds one infant to her chest as two others clutch at her dress, invoking the images of Charity seen in the Italian representations. Finally, on the far left, a young charge has managed to scale the top of the wall and, looking over the side, uses a stick to gesture towards a sapling, suggesting the care these infants will receive while they are at the Hospital. Comparing these images to the ones of the charity hospitals we looked at earlier, we can see how the Governors used these constructed images as a vehicle to campaign for the Hospital's acceptance within polite society.

One last image combines both the fashionable giver and the humble receiver within the Hospital's interior and serves to underscore the Governor's dual undertakings.

*Admission of Children to the Foundling Hospital* (fig. 25) describes just one of the activities a visitor is likely to witness: the admission lottery that was described earlier. We, along with the cluster of richly attired visitors standing in the middle of the image, are viewing the process right as it is occurring. All possible outcomes and emotions are represented. On the left, a nurse and a mother commiserate together as the mother holds out the black ball that she has unfortunately drawn. Her child will have to wait until the next acceptance day. Next to this group, under the portrait of an unidentified man, we witness the anxiousness of another woman as she reaches into the bag, the fate of her child still to be determined. While on the right, a mother expresses relief, holding out a white ball to a man who gestures her to sit with the row of women who were lucky enough to have also won the Foundling

Hospital sweepstakes. Even though it seems somewhat voyeuristic and unkind of these visitors to view this process and the ultimate fate of these women's children as a fashionable outing, seeing these desperate mothers' emotions must surely have prompted many donations. Also, the co-mingling of people of different sexes and classes is an example of the rise of what modern historians call the "cult of sensibility" occurring during the eighteenth century. Most commonly associated with the middling classes, sensibility involved an increased emphasis on manners and the expression of feeling. Beginning with John Locke and his theories of the *tabula rasa*, the idea of both sexes beginning life with the same capacity for knowledge essentially offered women intellectual equality with their male counterparts.<sup>62</sup> This, in turn, led to the increased education and literacy of women, as well as involvement with issues and activities occurring in the public sphere. So, while polite women would still shun the outward promotion and support of the Foundling Hospital, they could still take part in fashionable activities such as the admission lottery as a way to display their refined sensibilities. Since the image draws attention to the upper-class women, instead of the men, who stand indifferently in the background, this occasion was aimed at garnering their support, which is emphasized by the coat of arms embellishing the top of the print. These women will more than likely be moved to pledge their support in the form of a generous donation. Would not any other benevolent woman do the same? These prints served to elicit people's emotions and draw them into the Hospital, but in order to entertain them properly, more than just a tour of the facilities accompanied by an occasional tearjerking scene from grief-stricken mothers would be needed if the Governors were to gain enough donations to supplement their work. Recognizing this, Hogarth saw a way to

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<sup>62</sup> G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), xvii-xix.

bolster the reputation of British art and, at the same time, support a cause that was truly dear to him by establishing the country's first public art gallery, stocked with works by its most eminent painters.

### *English Art and the Decoration of the Court Room.*

On December 31, 1746, the official minutes from the Court of Governors meeting states that:

The Treasurer acquainted this General Meeting, that the following Gentlemen, Artists, severally presented, and agreed to present, Performances in their different professions, for Ornamenting this Hospital, viz. Mr. Francis Hayman, Mr. James Wills, Mr. Joseph Highmore, Mr. Thomas Hudson, Mr. Allen Ramsay, Mr. George Lambert, Mr. Samuel Scott, Mr. Peter Monamy, Mr. Richard Wilson, Mr. Samuel Wale, Mr. Edward Hateley, Mr. Thomas Carter, Mr. George Moser, Mr. Robert Taylor, and Mr. John Pine.<sup>63</sup>

The minutes then go on to declare that a committee made up of the current artist-governors William Hogarth, Theodore Jacobsen and Michael Rysbrack, who had already made a significant artistic contribution to the Hospital (Rysbrack had sculpted an elaborate marble relief sculpture above the fireplace in the Court Room<sup>64</sup>), will meet annually every November 5 to discuss what other ornaments could be added to the collection, at no expense to the Hospital.<sup>65</sup>

It was not until April 1, 1747 that the four history paintings that were to adorn the sumptuously decorated Court Room were unveiled during a public dinner.<sup>66</sup> All centered around the theme of the rescue of abandoned children and all were taken from the bible. In *The Angel Appearing to Hagar and Ishmael* (fig. 26), Highmore depicts the moment when Hagar deserts her child. The angel appears to a guilt-ridden Ishmael to implore her to take her

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<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Nichols and Wray, 251-2.

<sup>64</sup> Solkin, 162-3.

<sup>65</sup> Nichols and Wray, 251-2.

<sup>66</sup> McClure, 67.

child, who lies asleep under a bush, and return to Abraham and Sarah. Wills's painting, *Little Children Brought unto Christ* (fig. 27), depicts the moment that Christ tells his disciples that the children may approach him. Arms benevolently outstretched, Christ is surrounded by children who simultaneously weep and clutch his robes, while bare-chested women on either side hold small infants. However, the narratives that Hayman and Hogarth chose, were from the Old Testament story of Moses. These last two canvases illustrate scenes from his childhood. Francis Hayman's choice was the scene in which Moses is found in the bullrushes. In *The Finding of the Infant Moses in the Bullrushes* (fig. 28) Hayman adheres closely to the story told in chapter two of the Book of Exodus.<sup>67</sup> As her servant carries Moses up from the left, Pharaoh's daughter languidly sits in the middle of the composition indifferently gesturing at the child as she glances in the opposite direction. Contrasted with her behavior is that of Moses's mother and daughter, who are both her servants. The mother kneels down on one knee as she reaches out to the sturdy three-month-old to receive him as her daughter excitedly looks on behind her. The painting's restrained classicism and authentic architectural details in the background, such as the obelisk and the stepped pyramid, reflects Egypt's popularity as a destination for the more adventurous of the Grand Tourists, such as Lord Sandwich and Dr. Richard Pococke, and adheres to the information they brought back with them.<sup>68</sup>

While these three paintings more than adequately serve their purpose as images that validate the tasks set before the Governors, as well as being an expression to the leisured visitors that benevolence is a most noble virtue, it is Hogarth's work that truly describes the

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<sup>67</sup> Paulson, 334-35.

<sup>68</sup> Brian Allen, *Francis Hayman*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 120.

role of the Hospital in a subtle, but striking way. At first glance, *Moses Brought to Pharaoh's Daughter* (fig. 29) is simply a progression of the life of Moses after Hayman's painting. However, there is a complexity in Hogarth's representation that parallels the lives of the children it is meant to promote.<sup>69</sup> The painting depicts the moment where Moses passes from the care of his nurse (his actual mother) to the Pharaoh's daughter (his adoptive mother). While Moses was never given the choice of who was to raise him, Hogarth, in his image, places him in an extremely vulnerable position. Clearly tentative and confused, he is poised between his nurse/mother, to whom he still clings, and the reclining figure of his new mother, who reaches out to him. Behind the daughter an African servant whispers into the maid's ear, revealing to her the truth behind what is now taking place. Unlike Hayman's painting, the Pharaoh's daughter does not gesture distractedly for the assistance of another servant to come and claim him, but kindly beckons him to come to her. In this image it is the mother who compromises herself as she is shown simultaneously glancing down despairingly at the son she is letting go while receiving a handful of money from the treasurer. Knowing that Moses will have a better life as a ward of the Pharaoh, his mother is reluctantly willing to give him up. The power and wealth of the Pharaoh, whom Moses has already thwarted by surviving his attack on all male Israelite children, is indicated through the grand architecture and pyramid in the background, but most directly in the large column swathed in red drapery rising behind his daughter.<sup>70</sup>

If this seems like a familiar tableau, it is not a coincidence. Beautiful and elegant, the figure of Pharaoh's daughter represents her eighteenth-century counterparts who viewed the

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<sup>69</sup> Paulson, 335-37.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 336.

Foundling Hospital's poor, innocent children with the same kindness and benevolence.<sup>71</sup> Moses's true mother, like the thousands of mothers in her position, must give her child away in order to make a better life for them both. The authority of the Pharaoh is now that of the Hospital and its wealthy male patrons who will clothe, feed, shelter and educate these children until they are ready to care for themselves. Among the many visitors to view the paintings after they were unveiled, it was generally agreed that Hogarth's was the best executed of the four.<sup>72</sup> This may explain why *Moses Brought to Pharaoh's Daughter* was the only one to be engraved five years later (fig. 30). It is also conceivable that, considering Hogarth's reputation of producing engraved works, coupled with the subject matter that Hogarth so deftly manipulated to capture the essence of the Foundling Hospital, the dispersion of the painting to a wider audience would do more to elicit support than would the others.

Viewed within the sumptuous confines of the Hospital's Court Room, these carefully constructed narratives were meant to elicit a strong charitable response from their fashionable visitors. When looking at the general experience a tour of the Foundling Hospital provided, it is safe to say that most did indeed give generously. However, considering the Governor's desire to decorate the Hospital with a series of artistically ambitious Biblical scenes, on top of the standard portraits of founders, indicates something more than simply using the works to garner patronage. Having to continually fight for public approval, these examples of God-sanctioned aid for abandoned children conveyed to visitors that there is no better support than that which is provided by the Bible. Also interesting to note is that in every painting except *Little Children Brought unto Christ*, women

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<sup>71</sup> Hallett, *Hogarth*, 155.

<sup>72</sup> George Vertue reports in his notes that 170 people attended the unveiling and that, "its Generally said and allowed that Hogarths peece [sic] gives most striking satisfaction - & approbation." Quoted in Paulson, 339.



are the primary protagonists. This could be a symbolic gesture to counteract the lack of actual female support given to the Hospital.<sup>73</sup>

It is important when looking at these works to remember that the artists presented them to the Hospital gratis. Commenting on the decoration of the Hospital's Court Room in his 1755 treatise *The Present State of the Arts in England*, member of the French Royal Academy and writer Jean André Rouquet summarized what the participating artists wished to achieve: "This exhibition of skill, equally commendable and new, has afforded the public an opportunity of judging whether the English are such indifferent artists, as foreigners, and even the English themselves pretend."<sup>74</sup> This also provided the artists with a unique opportunity: to display their own examples of history painting in the country's first public gallery. Similarly, as Governors the artists would continually be in contact with the Hospital's numerous patrons.<sup>75</sup> They were well aware that by providing examples of their work to a place that received a copious amount of upper-class traffic would go a long way towards raising their own reputations. Stocked with the finest examples of portraiture, landscape and history painting that English talent could produce, the Hospital's model of private charity served as inspiration to these artists as they developed their own independent corporate body, free from any dependence on church or state.<sup>76</sup>

As both a founding governor of the Hospital and one of England's leading artists, Hogarth is considered the primary protagonist of the formation of this group. Ambitious and patriotic, Hogarth was eager to promote this aesthetic and to defeat the current

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<sup>73</sup> Solkin, 165.

<sup>74</sup> Jean André Rouquet, *The Present State of the Arts in England*, (London, 1755), 27. Accessed in Eighteenth Century Collections Online, April 9, 2012.

<sup>75</sup> Solkin, 173.

<sup>76</sup> Paulson, 326.

popularity of foreign artists, particularly in the area of history painting. Consequently, this has led to some arguments that his motives were purely self-interested and exploitative.<sup>77</sup> Viewed in context of the entire scope of his relationship with the Hospital, this selfishness would seem very unlikely. Apart from all the works mentioned earlier, both the prints and the paintings, Hogarth also spent considerable time designing uniforms for the children, which can be seen in a drawing that included a written description of the outfits (fig. 31). However, the most telling aspect of his devotion to the cause of abandoned children is that he served as a supervisor of the wet-nurses in his own area of Chiswick, and even took some of these children into his own home.<sup>78</sup> While he was dedicated to the creation and promotion of British art, this hardly sounds as if he was using the Hospital solely as a vehicle for his own ambitions.

### *Conclusion*

Much has been said about the importance of the Foundling Hospital's collection and its role as the first public art gallery in England. Seeing as this is the seminal moment when British art developed its own unique characteristics, it is easy to overlook other important roles these works played in society. Both the paintings and the prints were engaging in a much larger social debate about charity, illegitimacy and infant mortality in London and across the country. But what about the children for whom this war of morality was waged? Were they the cast-off children of licentious and indifferent women, sent to the Foundling Hospital only to be raised as dispensable servants and war casualties? Whatever the reasons made by the Governors and illustrated in the numerous paintings and prints to advocate the

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<sup>77</sup> Paulson, 325; McClure, 66; Allen, 55.

<sup>78</sup> Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth*, (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1997), 338.

institution, the evidence suggests that the majority of mothers who used the Hospital, as well as the men who were the most proactive in the day to day operation of it, truly cared for these children. The Hospital encouraged mothers to leave with their infants any kind of token to be left attached to their entry billet in case she ever had the means and the desire to claim him/her in the future.<sup>79</sup> These tokens (fig. 32) ranged from scraps of fabric to fine jewelry and engraved shells and are a strong indication of the mother's love for their child and the pain they felt upon giving them up. One mother managed to put this pain into words in a small poem left with a boy on May 19, 1759: "Regardless he, Unable I, / To keep this Image of my Heart / 'Tis Vile to Murder! hard to Starve / And Death almost to me to part / If Fortune should her favours give / That I in Better plight may Live / I'd try to have my Boy again / And Train him up the best of Men."<sup>80</sup> It is unlikely that the feelings of sadness expressed in this verse came from a reckless and morally debauched woman.

Similarly, the Governors went great lengths to ensure the health and safety of their charges. The Governors constantly contended with the criticism that the children were kept in relative luxury while the poor children of honest parents continued to live in squalor. However, it was a criticism that they had to put up with because, when compared to the poor children outside of the Hospital, they were being spoiled. They had clean clothes, three meals a day and lodgings that, although not quite as elegant as the Court Room, were quite comfortable. They were taught to read and write and were exposed to some of the finest art and music that England could offer. Their health was overseen, at no charge, by

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<sup>79</sup> An in-depth survey of the tokens left with the Foundling Hospital is the focus of John Styles's book *Threads of Feeling: The London Foundling Hospital's Textile Tokens, 1740-1770*, (London: The Foundling Museum, 2010).

<sup>80</sup> McClure, 81-5.

some of the country's finest doctors, including Dr. Richard Mead and Dr. Robert Nesbitt.<sup>81</sup> Even after they left the Hospital and were apprenticed, their welfare was still a concern of the Hospital. Not many cases of misconduct by masters are recorded in the Hospital's minutes, but those that are state that they were quick to intervene on the apprentice's behalf in any way they could, which included transfer and even legal action if the mistreatment was violent. Lastly, and perhaps the most telling aspect of the Hospital's fondness for their wards, in the few cases that a child was found to have mental or physical handicaps they were not cast out or sent to an asylum, but remained at the Hospital for life, helping out in whatever way they could.<sup>82</sup>

The Foundling Hospital was a charity unlike any other in the whole of Europe. Privately run by successful, non-aristocratic businessmen, they were driven by Christian benevolence and patriotic spirit. Despite widespread criticism, the Hospital became a model that other charities would copy for decades. Just as the Hospital was unlike any other, so too, were the images created to support it. Never before had prints in England been used to campaign for a charity, or any other private interest. Works like the *Perspective Views* provide a unique insight into the visions of the Governors and their hopes of what the Hospital would become. Similarly, beginning with Hogarth's *Portrait of Captain Coram*, the entire foundation of British art shifted from an influx of foreign art, supplemented with the occasional British artist, to a public gallery containing the finest works of an entire class of the country's own artists, which would eventually lead to the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768. By using these images in a concentrated effort to change the prevailing

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 213.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 218.

attitude that an institution for abandoned children would 'be a promotion of wickedness', the Foundling Hospital not only changed the role of charity in society, but also the way in which visual culture was used as a means to convey a growing sense of morality that was benevolent, compassionate and uniquely English.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Thomas Coram, in a letter to Dr. Benjamin Colman dated 13 September, 1740. Quoted in McClure, 30.

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Fig. 2) Anonymous, *To the Mortal Memory of Madam Geneva*, 1736, engraving, 13.1 x 8 in., The British Museum, London.



Fig. 3) Anonymous, *The Funeral Procession of Madam Geneva*, 1736, etching and engraving, 10.4 x 14.3 in., The British Museum, London.



Fig. 4) William Hogarth, *Gin Lane*, 1751, etching and engraving, 15.2 x 12.6 in., The British Museum, London.

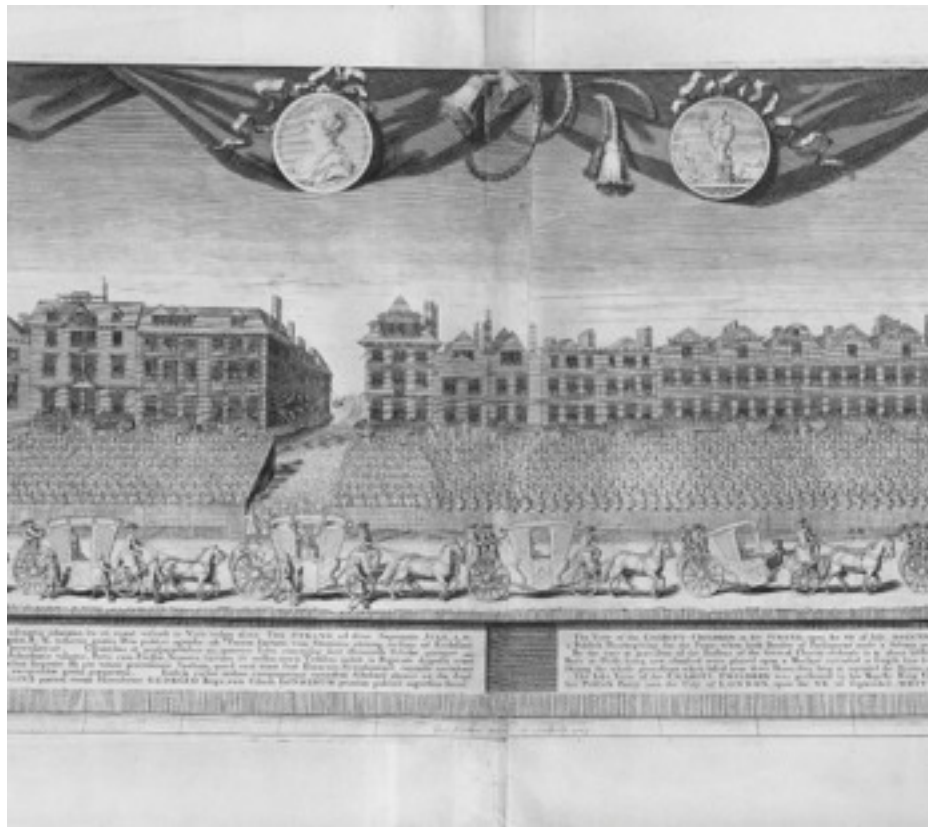


Fig. 5) George Vertue, *The View of the Charity-Children in the Strand, upon the VII of July, MDCCXIII*, 1715, engraving in three parts: middle (top), left and right; engraved from two plates, designed to be printed on two sheets and pasted together, 15 x 50 in., The British Museum, London.



Fig. 6) Guido Reni, *Charity*, c. 1630, oil on canvas, 54 x 41.7 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Fig. 7) Giacomo Francia, *Charity*, c. 1510-30, engraving, 8.5 x 6.8 in., The British Museum, London.





Fig. 8) Giuseppe Maria Rolli, after Lodovico Carracci, *Charity*, c. 1665-1700, etching, 13 x 8.2 in., The British Museum, London.



Fig. 9) Giovanni Battista Catenaro, *Charity*, c. 1691-1727, etching, 7.4 x 5.3 in., The British Museum, London.



Fig. 10) William Hogarth, *Portrait of Captain Coram*, 1740, oil on canvas, 94 x 58 in., Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, London.



Fig. 11) Pierre Imbert Drevet, after Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Samuel Bernard*, 1729, engraving, 24.4 x 17 in., The British Museum, London.



Fig. 12) James McArdell, *Captain Thomas Coram*, 1794, mezzotint, 14 x 10 in., The British Museum, London.



Fig. 13) Nathaniel Parr, *Captain Coram Projector of the Foundling Hospital*, 1749, etching and engraving, 7 x 4.4 in., The British Museum, London.



To all to whom these Presents shall come.

Whereas our Sovereign Lord the King hath been graciously pleased to take into His Princely and tender Consideration the deplorable Case of great Numbers of Newborn Children daily exposed to Destruction, by the cruelty or poverty of their Parents, and having by His **Royal Charter** bearing date the 17<sup>th</sup> day of October 1739, constituted a Body Politick and Corporate, by the Name of The Governors and Guardians of the Hospital for the Maintenance and Education of exposed and deserted young Children; which Corporation is fully impowred to receive & apply the Charities of all compassionate Persons who shall contribute towards erecting & establishing the same. And Whereas His Majesty for the better & more successful carrying on the said good Purposes, hath by His said Charter granted to the said Corporation and their Successors full & ample Power to authorize such Persons as they shall think fit to take Subscriptions, and to ask and receive of all or any of His Majesty's good Subjects, such Monies as shall by any Person or Persons, Bodies Politick and Corporate, Companies and other Societies be contributed and given for the Purposes aforesaid. Now know We that We the said Governors & Guardians being well assur'd of the great Charity & Integrity of  
 and that  
 greatly desire the Success & Accomplishment of so excellent a  
 Work Have by Virtue of the said Power granted to Us, authorized & appointed, and by these  
 Presents Do authorize & appoint the said  
 Subscriptions and to receive gather & collect such Monies as shall by any Person or Persons, Bodies Politick & Corporate, Companies & other Societies, be contributed & given for the Purposes aforesaid, and to transmit with all convenient speed, the Monies so Collected and Received, into the Bank of England for the use of this Corporation, And the Receipt for the same to our Treasurer for the time being, Together with the Names of the Contributors, except such as shall desire to be concealed, and in that Case to insert the Sums only, in order that We the said Governors & Guardians may be enabled from time to time to Publish perfect Accounts of such Benefactions. GIVEN under our Common Seal the  
 Day of  
 17

By Order of the said Governors & Guardians.

Fig. 14) François Morellon de la Cave, after William Hogarth, *The Foundlings*, with a Power of Attorney for the Foundling Hospital, 1739, etching and engraving, 14.2 x 8.5 in., The British Museum, London.



Fig. 15) Anonymous, *A Satire of the Foundling Hospital* (recto), c. 1745, etching and engraving, 4.6 x 6 in., The British Museum, London.

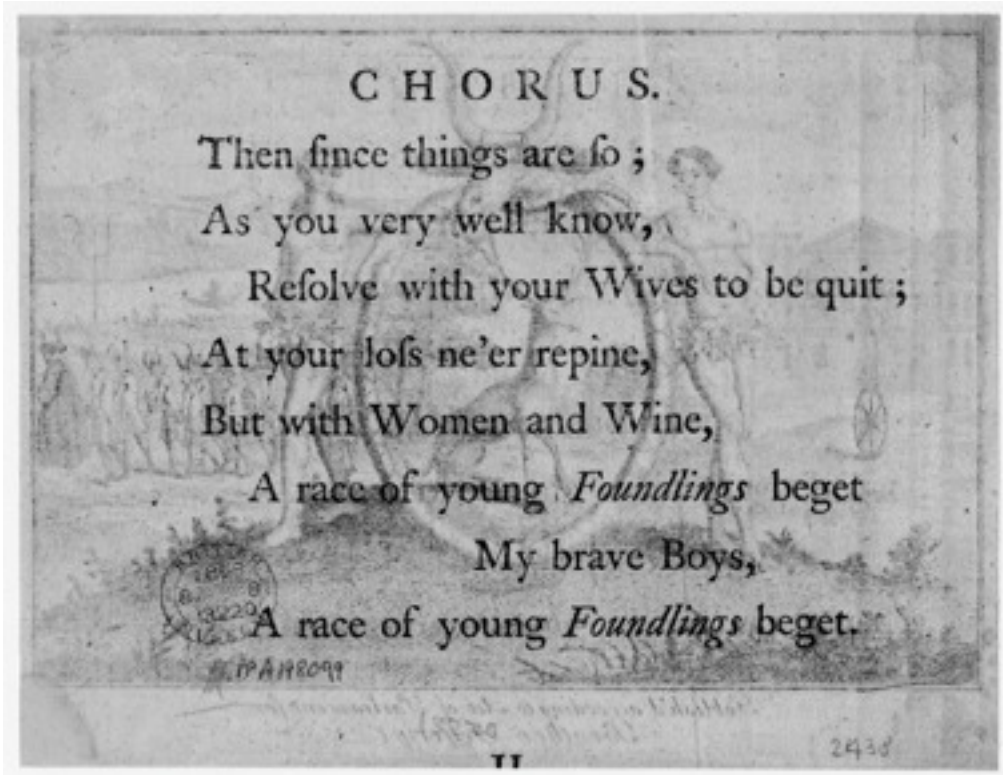
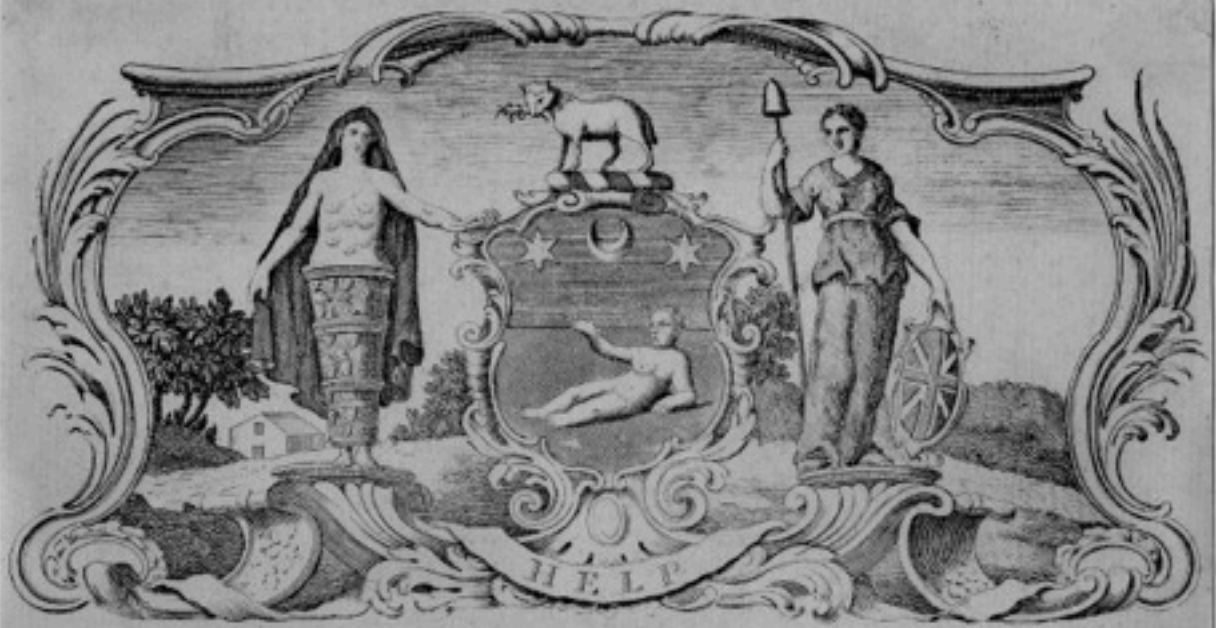


Fig. 16) Anonymous, *A Satire of the Foundling Hospital* (verso), c. 1745, etching and engraving, 4.5 x 6 in., The British Museum, London.





At the HOSPITAL

For the Maintenance and Education of exposed and deserted Young Children in Lambeth Conduit Fields.

On *5* day of *17* at *a* Clock *there will be*

Performed in the Chapel of the said Hospital, a Sacred Oratorio called

*Composed by George Frederick Handel Esq.*

*The Gentlemen are desired to come without Swords, and the Ladies without Stoops...*

*There will be no Collection. Tickets may be had of the Steward at the Hospital, at Richard Throckmorton's in St. James's Street, at Watson's Coffee House in Cornhill & at some Coffee House in St. Pancras Court at half a Guinea each.*

WILLIAM HOGARTH

Fig. 17) After William Hogarth, *Arms of the Foundling Hospital with an Admission Ticket*, 1750, etching and engraving, 7.7 x 8.4 in., The British Museum, London.



Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum,  
 dabiturque Licentia Sumpta pudenter. *Hor.* necesse est

*Rec<sup>d</sup> Monday 1737.*

*Half a Guinea being the First Payment for five Large Prints.  
 One representing a Strolling Company of Actresses Dressing them-  
 selves for the Play, in a Barn; and the other four Morning,  
 Noon, Evening and Night.*

*Which I promise to deliver on Lady day next on Receiving half  
 a Guinea more. N.B. they will be 25 Shilling<sup>s</sup> after y<sup>e</sup> Subscription  
 is over*

Fig. 18) William Hogarth, *Boys Peeping at Nature*, 1731, reworked 1737, etching, 5.7 x 4.8 in., The British Museum, London.

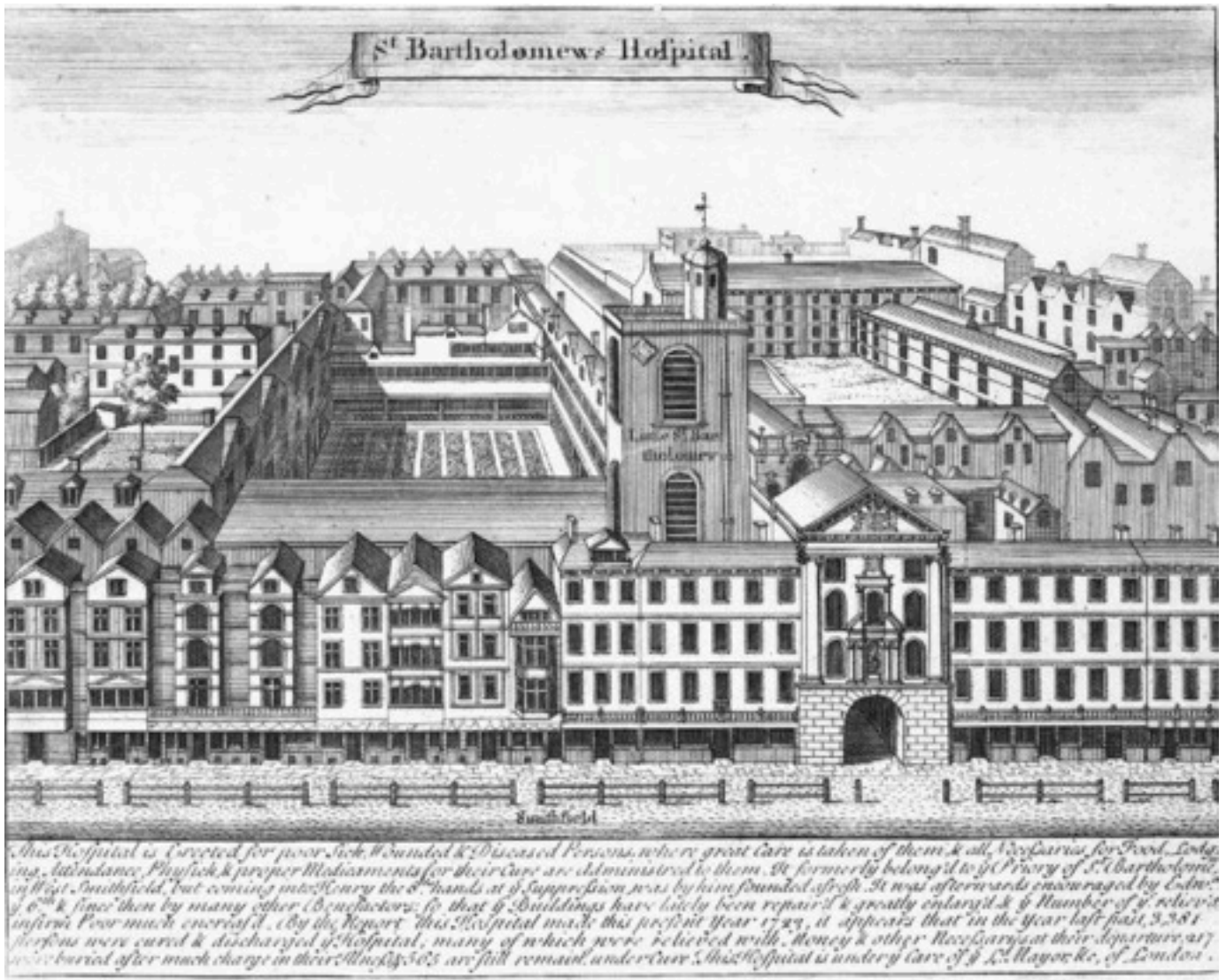


Fig. 19) John Bowles, *St. Bartholomew's Hospital*, 1724, etching and engraving, 6.8 x 8.5 in., The British Museum, London.

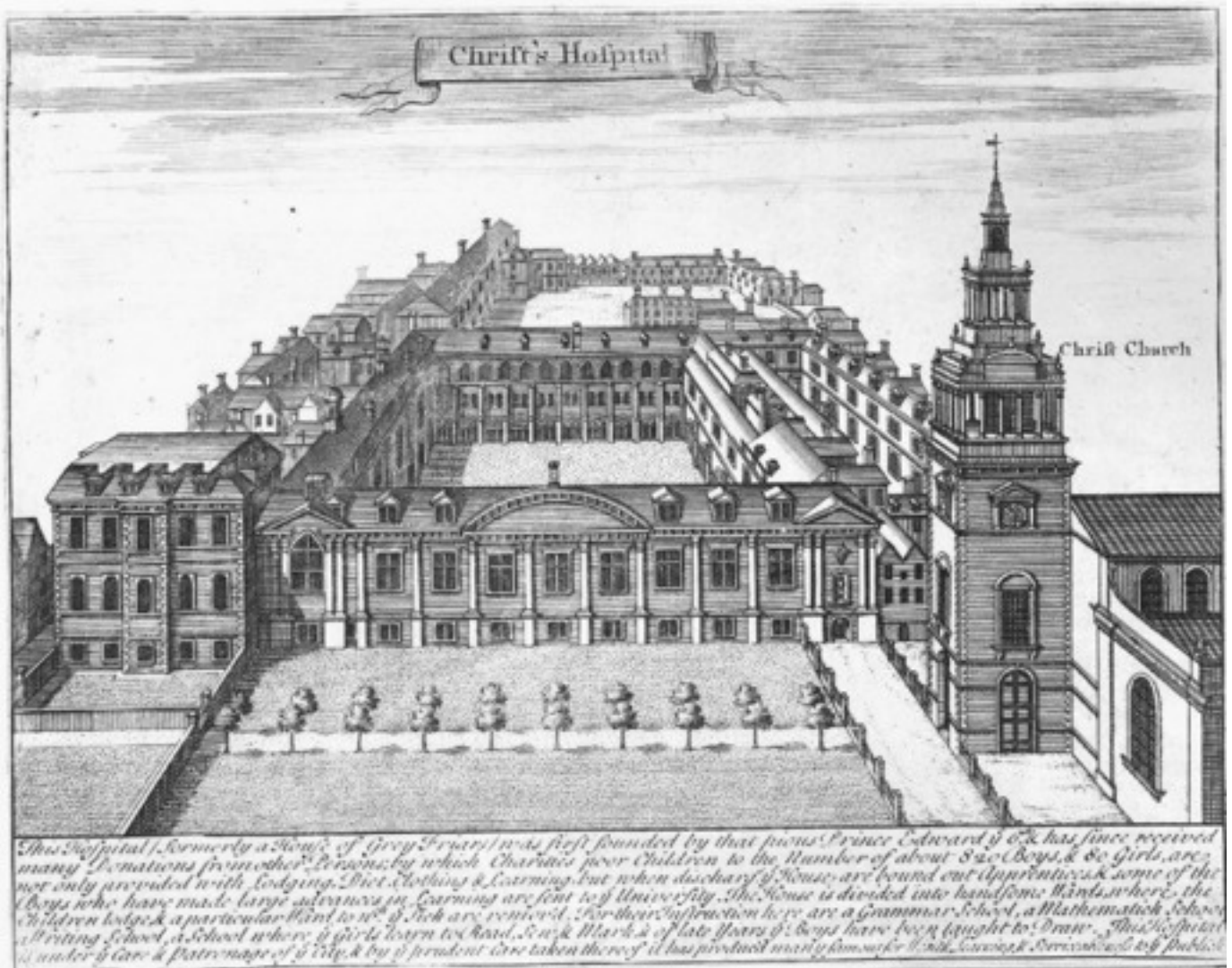


Fig. 20) John Bowles, *Christ's Hospital*, 1723-24, etching, 6.6 x 8.5 in., The British Museum, London.



Fig. 21) William Henry Toms, *St. Thomas's Hospital*, 1739, etching and engraving, 13 x 8.5 in., The British Museum, London.

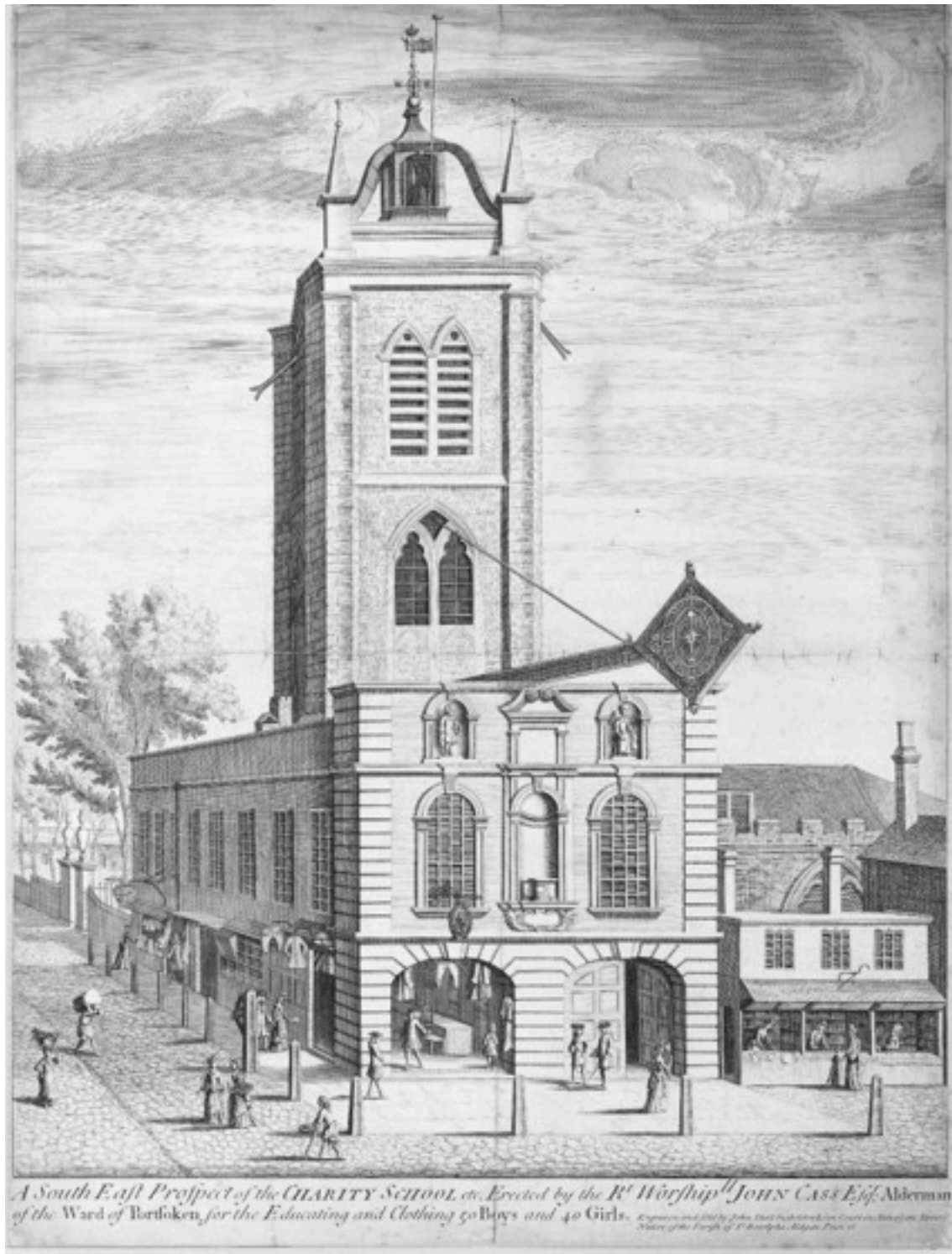


Fig. 22) John Sturt, *A South East Prospect of the Charity School*, c. 1710-20, etching and engraving, 22 x 16.6 in., The British Museum, London.

A PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, WITH EMBLEMATIC FIGURES.



Myriads of Prolettae, as soon as they come,  
Throng to thy Altar, and obey thy Law;  
From hence, four Fountains spring their sweet Supplies,  
To fill the Mansions which to thee are given.  
By his Grace John Duke of Bedford, This Plate is humbly presented



These Mansions raised by Patrons kind & great,  
Where Babes deserted find a safe Retreat;  
The Frenchman's care, their hands do not engage,  
British Generosity shall far outshine.  
By his Grace most Dutiful and Obedient servant Augustus Kneller

Fig. 23) Charles Grignion and Pierre Charles Canot, after Samuel Wale, *A Perspective View of the Foundling Hospital with Emblematic Figures (I)*, 1749, etching and engraving, 13.7 x 17.7 in., The British Museum, London.

A PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, WITH EMBLEMATIC FIGURES.



Here various Wills and bequests are lost  
I see where her riches, whilst Multitudes are lost  
All own her Power, the feeble and the great,  
But to conduct the slighted Orphan's fate?  
To his Grace John Duke of Bedford, this Plate is humbly presented



So where the Poor's Guardians publish Care  
Protect the Cuck and calm the Mother's Care  
Inspired by Bounty, since that Retreat,  
Which Fortune deems, but Charity compleats.  
By his Grace most Dutiful and Obedient Servant Augustus Goussell's

Fig. 24) Charles Grignion and Edward Rooker, after Samuel Wale, *A Perspective View of the Foundling Hospital with Emblematic Figures (II)*, 1749, etching and engraving, 13.7 x 17.7 in., The British Museum, London.





Fig. 25) Nathaniel Parr, after Samuel Wale, *Admission of Children to the Foundling Hospital*, 1749, engraving, 12 x 14 in., Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, London.



Fig. 26) Joseph Highmore, *The Angel Appearing to Hagar and Ishmael*, 1746, oil on canvas, 68 x 76 in., Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, London.



Fig. 27) James Wills, *Little Children Brought unto Christ*, 1746, oil on canvas, 68 x 82.5 in., Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, London.



Fig. 28) Francis Hayman, *The Finding of Moses in the Bullrushes*, 1746, oil on canvas, 68.2 x 80.5 in., Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, London.



Fig. 29) William Hogarth, *Moses Brought Before Pharaoh's Daughter*, 1746, oil on canvas, 68 x 82 in., Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, London.



Fig. 30) Luke Sullivan and William Hogarth, after William Hogarth, *Moses Brought Before Pharaoh's Daughter*, 1752, etching and engraving, 16.6 x 20.6 in., The British Museum, London.

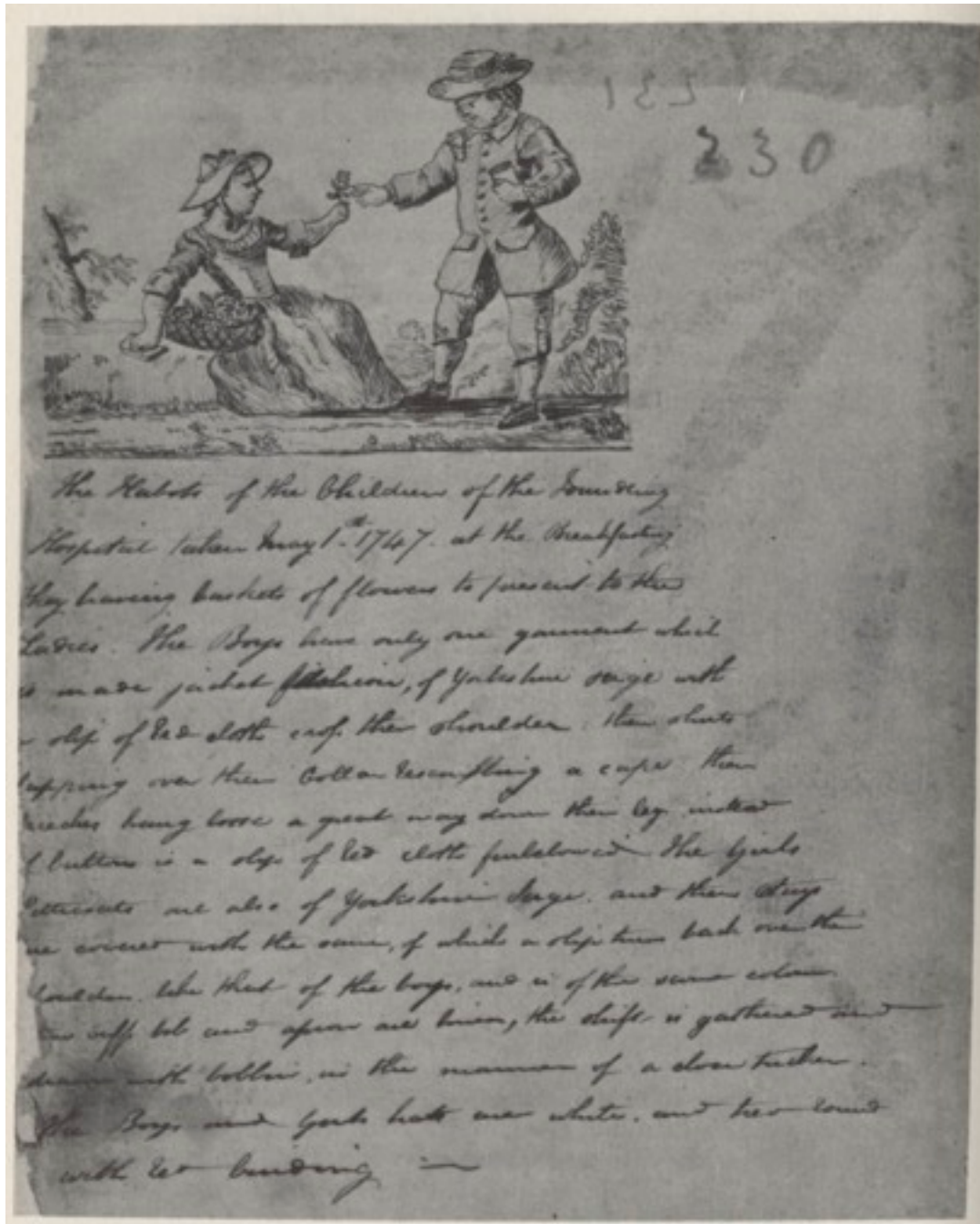


Fig. 31) Anonymous, *Sketch of a Foundling Boy and Girl*, 1747, Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, London.



Fig. 32) *Foundling Tokens*, Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, London.