

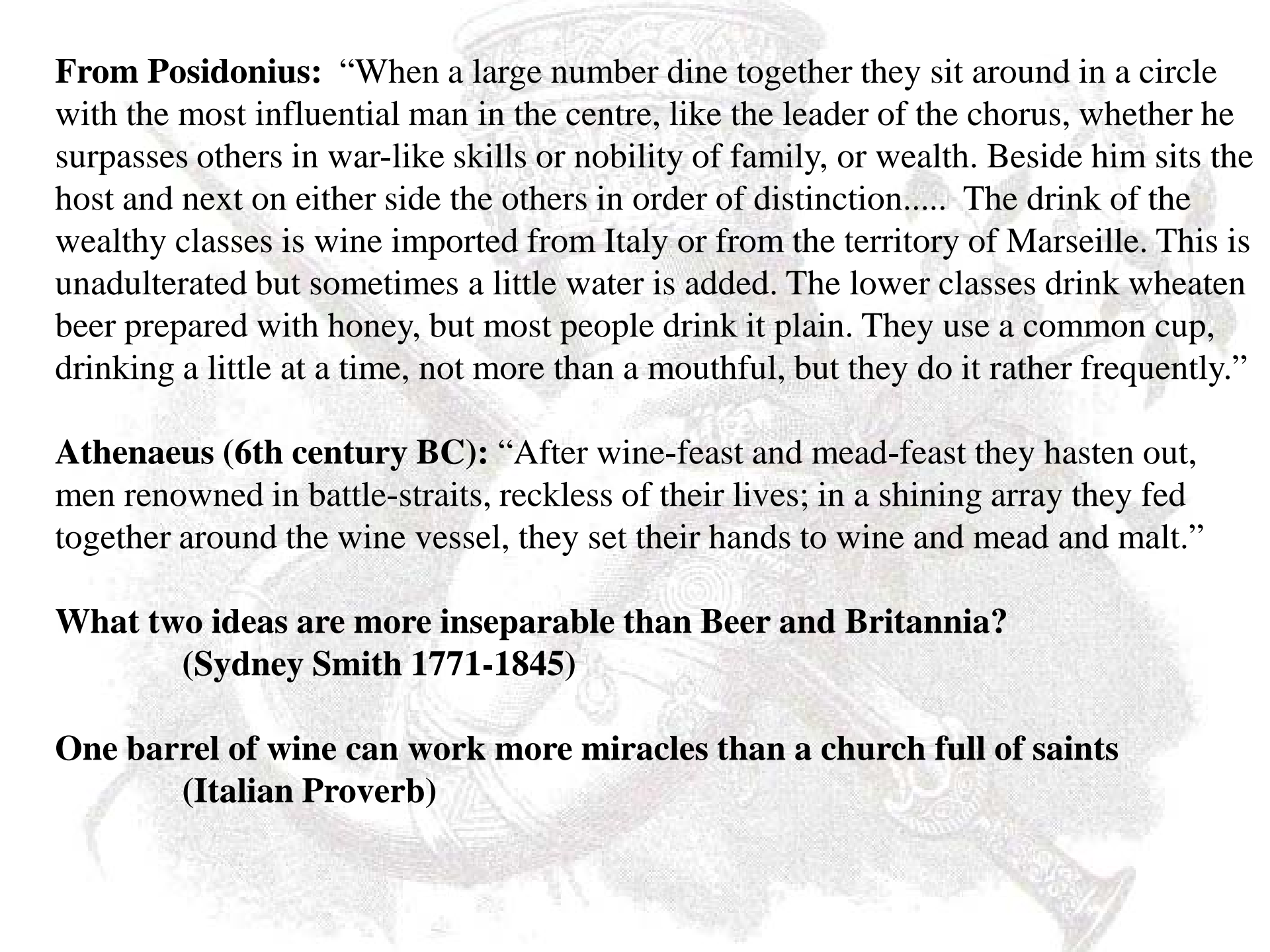


ALCOHOL

Social Drinking in Cultural Context

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Chapter Three: Barbarians and Beerpots



From Posidonius: “When a large number dine together they sit around in a circle with the most influential man in the centre, like the leader of the chorus, whether he surpasses others in war-like skills or nobility of family, or wealth. Beside him sits the host and next on either side the others in order of distinction.... The drink of the wealthy classes is wine imported from Italy or from the territory of Marseille. This is unadulterated but sometimes a little water is added. The lower classes drink wheaten beer prepared with honey, but most people drink it plain. They use a common cup, drinking a little at a time, not more than a mouthful, but they do it rather frequently.”

Athenaeus (6th century BC): “After wine-feast and mead-feast they hasten out, men renowned in battle-straits, reckless of their lives; in a shining array they fed together around the wine vessel, they set their hands to wine and mead and malt.”

What two ideas are more inseparable than Beer and Britannia?
(Sydney Smith 1771-1845)

One barrel of wine can work more miracles than a church full of saints
(Italian Proverb)

To understand alcohol use and how it fits into a culture, describe how alcohol use is embedded in different fields of social action:

What are the social functions of alcohol use? Does alcohol play a role in social life, and if so how? Is it for special occasions or used everyday? What are the conventions ruling its exchange? Are there status gradations accorded to types of alcohol or ways of using? Are different age groups expected to drink together and does doing so help to form cross-cohort alliances?

What are the political functions of alcohol use? Does alcohol function in political power? Is the control of production, distribution or consumption tied to the wielding of power within the culture? Do high-status and powerful individuals use alcohol, and is their intake marked by attendant use of high-cost items with symbolic importance, such as gold goblets or special drinking rooms, or special forms of liquor that reflect their political and temporal power?

What are the economic functions of alcohol use? How is alcohol produced, distributed and consumed? Do production and exchange have economic consequences, either directly (commodity exchange for money) or indirectly (exchange within the social and moral economy of status display and alliance-building?). Are sectors of the economy dependant on the exchange of alcohol?

To understand alcohol use and how it fits into a culture, describe how alcohol use is embedded in different fields of social action:

What is the ideology of alcohol? What do people believe about alcohol use? What are the understandings about the morality of use, and do social conventions determine who should use and why, if at all? What are the beliefs about health consequences of alcohol intake, and are there culturally-defined differences in accepted patterns of use for social, religious, or medical reasons?

What are the gendered use patterns? Is it appropriate for both genders use alcohol? Can both genders use publically? Do public social spaces allow both males and females to drink, or are drinking establishments mostly male? Are there differences in what each gender is expected to drink, if drinking is acceptable? Is it believed that males and females react differently to the effects of alcohol, and if so, are men and women expected to drink to gender, or might each adopt the drinking styles of the other without moral or social consequences? Are there gender differences in how transgressions in alcohol use are determined, judged, and responded to? Are transgressions punished the same, or is one gender held to a higher standard (and thus punished more quickly or harshly) than the other gender?

Reasons for intoxicant use, according to Mary Douglas

(Douglas , Mary, 1987. Constructive Drinking: Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology; Cambridge, Cambridge University Press)

- **To generate altered states of mind**
- **As a ritual means of achieving access to the supernatural**
- **As a means of ritual purification**
- **As entertainment to increase sociality within groups**
- **As food**

Note: Often these reasons seem to be related and might be difficult to separate

Social Functions of Alcohol

- **Feasting and drinking help maintain group solidarity, especially of warriors, or help to define a warrior caste**
- **Gifts of alcohol highlight the power of chieftains because generosity often equals power**
- **Feasts and parties bring people together for alliances between groups**
- **Social in-group is often defined by whom one drinks with**
- **Drinking alcohol can help to relieve stress, and provides times of social release that can help to bond people together**

What is the evidence that suggests early European drinking patterns?

Hallstatt Cultures: Large numbers of ceremonial vessels, fewer amphorae

Chiefs control access (who gets to drink) according to relationship to charismatic warrior leader. Drinking is a male bonding activity, occurs outside of homes and is reward for services rendered. Chief controls the allegiance and labor of his vassals and bases his power on control of regions via war-making capacity.

Beer, mead and wine are drinks of choice. Chief controls distribution, which represents his power. Wine is traded in, and beer and mead are made for the festival; neither can be saved, in general. Feasting and drinking episodic and dependant on crop excess availability; hospitality is a symbol of hegemony. Elaborate and precious serving vessels are used to demonstrate chief's economic and social power. Drink is probably thought of as a drug.

What is the evidence that suggests early European drinking patterns?

Southern Cultures (Greek and Roman influenced area): Large numbers of amphorae, fewer ceremonial vessels

Chiefs tend to control trade routes and land use; vines grown as an export crop. Drinking seems to be a daily activity, occurs in homes to accompany food and is available to all. Chief taxes production output to support government tasks and to pay for troops to protect trade routes and naval vessels.

Wine is the drink of choice. Farmers/vintners control access, which represents individual and community economic power. Wine is traded throughout Gaul and the Mediterranean, and can be saved in amphorae, guaranteeing some income regardless of agricultural cycles. Feasting and drinking are family and community based; hospitality is a symbol of family and group solidarity. Little evidence of elaborate serving vessel usage. Drink is usually considered a food.

Economic Functions of Alcohol

- **Production**
- **Patterns of work that relate to alcohol production, distribution or intake**
- **Patterns of exchange in the monetary and/or moral (gift) economy that allow actors to gain or lose status and manipulate social and economic power**
- **Alcohol distribution**
- **Alcohol consumption (bars, restaurants, service etc.)**
- **Changes in use over time and their related economic effects**
- **Material culture of alcohol (production and use of serving vessels, storage facilities, and other accouterments)**
- **Status changes over time that create new forms of exchange and display vis-à-vis alcohol consumption**

Alcohol Production and Consumption

- **What are the social processes of alcohol production that relate to the economics of use? How does alcohol production interact with other social functions?**
- **What are the social processes of alcohol consumption that relate to the economics of use? How does drinking together work within or contribute to other social institutions, such as business, religion, and family and social life?**
- **How does production and consumption change over time? Is alcohol use consistent over the centuries or do new types of alcohol and new forms of drinking behavior cause alterations in how people use and think about alcohol?**
- **Is alcohol exchanged over multiple spheres of economic and social action, as a commodity and as a gift? And are the rules of behavior for each sphere the same or different?**
- **How is the manipulation of personal status tied to commodity consumption? Do cultural actors receive 'status points' for use of certain types of commodities, in this case alcohol? Is status also manipulated through the giving of commodities in the gift economy?**
- **If the commodity is something that provides status, how is the perception of status represented in advertising and other forms of commodity display for purchase?**
- **Is use of the commodity connected to the creation of a sense of self? Does the commodity play a role in identity?**

Commodity and Gift Economies

Spheres of exchange include commodity and gift. A commodity can usually become a gift, but a gift can rarely – if ever – legitimately become a commodity. Commodities are not simply things with real or presumed price tags; they are material things and/or services that can be exchanged in a multitude of settings, all of which are determined, shaped, and controlled – and indeed imbued with meaning – by cultural processes, practices, and values.

Food and alcohol function both as commodities AND as gifts. They transform from one sphere to the other naturally, always according to cultural rules and practices. The actions that use each in each arena of social action are tightly controlled by cultural concepts of appropriate behavior.

Examples of non-commodity places of exchange of alcohol and food:

- Hospitality in general

- Toasting, sharing, celebrations, drinking ‘healths’, sharing a cup

- Weddings, dinners, parties

- Drinking or offering of drink as a symbol of connections (relationship)

- Work parties – drink stands for reciprocity and continuation of the relationship, not as payment

How do beliefs about alcohol and alcohol use change over time in Europe?

- **Beliefs about the substance: does the type of drink change?**
- **Beliefs about how to use appropriately: does the expected or acceptable response change?**
- **Does production change in response to a change in belief systems?**
- **Does amount ingested change, and in what direction?**
- **Do the culturally acceptable patterns of use change?**
 - **Who, when, where, how, how much**
- **Do the cultural fields of action change in use of alcohol (social, religious, economic, etc.)?**
- **How are these changes represented in contemporary public discourse?**

Carmina Burana is a series of rather bawdy songs written by German students and clergy during the Middle Ages. They contain a number of songs about drinking, wenching, and other clerical pursuits and provide a window into Medieval ideas about alcohol use and drunkenness. The drinking songs provide insights into how the people of the day thought about alcohol use (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carmina_Burana) . Here is one example of a drinking song:

**When we are in the tavern, we do not think how we will go to dust,
but we hurry to gamble, which always makes us sweat.
What happens in the tavern, where money is host,
you may well ask, and hear what I say.
Some gamble, some drink, some behave loosely.
But of those who gamble, some are stripped bare,
some win their clothes here, some are dressed in sacks.
Here no-one fears death, but they throw the dice in the name of Bacchus.
First of all it is to the wine-merchant
the libertines drink, one for the prisoners, three for the living,
four for all Christians, five for the faithful dead, six for the loose sisters,
seven for the footpads in the wood, Eight for the errant brethren,
nine for the dispersed monks, ten for the seamen,
eleven for the squabblers, twelve for the penitent,
thirteen for the wayfarers.**

Carmina Burana Continued:

To the Pope as to the king they all drink without restraint.

**The mistress drinks, the master drinks, the soldier drinks, the priest drinks,
the man drinks, the woman drinks, the servant drinks with the maid,
the swift man drinks, the lazy man drinks, the white man drinks,
the black man drinks, the settled man drinks, the wanderer drinks,
the stupid man drinks, the wise man drinks, The poor man drinks,
the sick man drinks, the exile drinks, and the stranger, the boy drinks,
the old man drinks, the bishop drinks, and the deacon, the sister drinks,
the brother drinks, the old lady drinks, the mother drinks, this man drinks, that man
drinks, a hundred drink, a thousand drink.**

**Six hundred pennies would hardly suffice, if everyone drinks immoderately and
immeasurably. However much they cheerfully drink we are the ones whom everyone
scolds, and thus we are destitute.**

May those who slander us be cursed

and may their names not be written in the book of the righteous.

I am the abbot of Cockaigne and my assembly is one of drinkers,

**and I wish to be in the order of Decius, and whoever searches me out at the
tavern in the morning, after Vespers he will leave naked and thus stripped of his clothes
he will call out: Woe! Woe!**

what have you done, vilest Fate? the joys of my life you have taken all away!

John Barleycorn Must Die is an ancient folksong from the British Isles; similar songs can be found in Scotland and England. The song celebrates the production of barley for ale and reminds everyone that in the cycle of birth and death are necessary in order to produce food. The song also reminds us of how important grain and ale were to the British economy.

**There was three men came out of the west, Their fortunes for to try,
And these three men made a solemn vow, John Barleycorn should die.
They ploughed, they sowed, they harrowed him in, Threwed clods upon his head,
And these three man made a solemn vow, John Barleycorn was dead.
Then they let him lie for a very long time Till the rain from heaven did fall,
Then little Sir John sprung up his head, And soon amazed them all.
They let him stand till midsummer Till he looked both pale and wan,
And little Sir John he growed a long beard, And so became a man.
They hired men with the scythes so sharp To cut him off at the knee,
They rolled him and tied him by the waist, And served him most barbarously.
They hired men with the sharp pitchforks Who pricked him to the heart,
And the loader he served him worse than that, For he bound him to the cart.
They wheeled him round and round the field Till they came unto a barn,
And there they made a solemn mow of poor John Barleycorn.
They hired men with the crab-tree sticks To cut him skin from bone,
And the miller he served him worse than that, For he ground him between two stones.
Here's little Sir John in a nut-brown bowl, And brandy in a glass;
And little Sir John in the nut-brown bowl Proved the stronger man at last.
And the huntsman he can't hunt the fox, Nor so loudly blow his horn,
And the tinker he can't mend kettles or pots without a little of Barleycorn.**

William Hogarth

William Hogarth is best known for a series of much-reproduced prints from his paintings, originally designed as moral tales about everyday life during the eighteenth century. His paintings are an early form of cartoon that provided a sequential tale about a particular topic or person. These paintings were copied as prints and disseminated widely; at a time when many people may not have been fully literate such prints were an excellent and easy way to use imagery to spread moral lessons or social ideals to a large population.

In 1732 William Hogarth created a series of eight paintings illustrating the story of “The Rake’s Progress”, a sad tale about a young man who wastes his inheritance, drinks, gambles, ‘consorts with paid female companions’ and whose excesses finally land him in the madhouse. The story has since been adapted into a book, an opera, a ballet, a stage production and a film. In this cautionary tale the use of alcohol is part of an overall adoption of dissolution and is portrayed as an essential element in the downfall of the young heir.

The slides that follow reproduce one of the many editions of the popular prints; the original paintings are owned by the Soane Museum in London (<http://www.soane.org/>)

Hogarth is best known for the images ‘Gin Lane’ and ‘Beer Street’, which portrayed gin as a source of social and personal problems and beer as a core element of British economic prosperity. At the time that he painted the scenes the Gin Craze was in full foment, causing profound problems in London and other urban areas. Prints of Gin Lane and Beer Street are reproduced in this powerpoint after the ‘Rake’s Progress’ prints.

William Hogarth - A Rake's Progress - The Young Heir Takes Possession Of The Miser's Effects



*"Kindly of, he, unknown,
Lies sleeping, ever found;
Why then? Better, & Madder than,
Against suspicious, goddess, prone."*

*"Why, thy vulgar, luxury, see,
Lies in an idle, flow;
Hope, alone with Time is given,
He must then reap of wild, not true."*

*"Hark! Then, a low, in Time, to see,
He views thy, but with other, eyes;
Heeds not thy hand, paternal love,
Look in thy, he, but there."*

*"Hark! Then, a low, in Time, to see,
He views thy, but with other, eyes;
Heeds not thy hand, paternal love,
Look in thy, he, but there."*

*"Hark! Then, a low, in Time, to see,
He views thy, but with other, eyes;
Heeds not thy hand, paternal love,
Look in thy, he, but there."*

William Hogarth - A Rake's Progress - The Young Heir is influenced by Artists and Professors



*Prosperity, (with Herold's smile,
Most pleasing when she most beguiles)
How soon, Sweet foe, can all thy Train
Of false, gay, frantic, loud & vain.*

*Enter the unprovided Mind,
And Memory in fetters bound;
Lead faith and Love with golden chain,
And praisable Lethes is the Brain.*

*Pleasure on her silver Throne
Trailing comes, nor comes alone;
Venus moves with her along,
And smooth, & young, ever young.*

*And in their Train, to fill the Prize,
Come quick, Dance, and swollen Envy,
Mechanic, Rouse, various Taste,
And fashion in her changing Vest.*

William Hogarth - A Rake's Progress - The Tavern Scene



*O Vanity of Youthful Blood,
 So by Mistake to passion led;
 Woman, be mid thy Social Love,
 Forget thyself of Powers above.*

*Give of every Household Blessing,
 All charming Manners possessing,
 But must to me, all Pleases give,
 Give to thy Being, See to Love.*

*Spill Drums to celebrate Feasting,
 After Muster of Joins;
 And then, no less of soft devotion,
 Sweet Poisons of Misused Wine.*

*With Freedom led to every Part,
 And secret Chamber of the Heart,
 Soft then thy friendly Soft betray,
 And then thy native home of day.*

*So enter in with secret Passion,
 Perceive the downy grandeur blown,
 So pursue the abstruse Pleasure,
 But rest there with wild Love.*

Revised, Printed, King row'd, &c. Published by W. H. Smith June 27. 1725. according to Act of Parliament.

William Hogarth - A Rake's Progress - Arrested For Debt



*Standards of Youthful Blood,
 & by Manners to perge good:
 Brought forth to view and heard
 the world's eyes to watch and guard.*

*Approaching near the Happy Lane
 And Poverty with a Pain*

*Ready to seize the poor Rake's last Possession, down the Street, fell back his sister's Pleasure and
 That the last left of all his gains. With Tears, Disgrace, & never thought, when he had himself to sell.*

Plate 4

William Hogarth - A Rake's Progress - Married To An Old Maid



*Now to y^e School of hard Misery, What Rouse will Rouse out of him; 'Till now the Charms of youth but vain; 'Till now an art of y^e Arts of Shame. (An ample Youth with beauty, Art,
Driven from y^e Light of Reason's eye, Pursues his Shame of hard Detraction; but must Defend with them, In Wretches, Amuse with a Shame, And make, but pathos engage.
Invented Painted Figures, Light Hogarth's Satire, by the author, to, let y^e Parliament. — Page 3.*

William Hogarth - A Rake's Progress - Scene In A Gaming House



William Hogarth - A Rake's Progress - The Prison Scene



Happy the Man who's virtuous thought
 Tho' in the School of Hardship taught,
 Can send his wandering back to fetch
 Treasures from his earliest Breach.

Who left, approving can review
 Scenes of pain, & learn that thus they
 The glory of his, & with a Ray
 To guide the Evening of his Day.

Not so the guilty Rake's content
 As Pleasures meet his wrongs attend,
 No Pleasures rich'd from, only Woe
 But look'd on with a wretched Eye.

Sublime all, & unmov'd,
 And every part of Heaven above,
 The man of sad Reflection left,
 No more, no more, but to be wretched.

Begin the Angel's voice to rise,
 And gives the Prison to most Pious,
 No more, no more, but to be wretched,
 No more, no more, but to be wretched.

William Hogarth – Gin Lane



XXIX. GIN LANE. 1751. Engraving. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 14 in.

William Hogarth – Beer Street

BEER STREET.



*Beer, happy Produce of our Isle
Can energy Strength impart,
And wearied with Fatigue and toil
Can cheer each manly Heart.*

*Labour and Art upheld by Thee
Successfully advance,
We quaff thy balmy Juice with Glee
And Walter leave to France.*

*Genius of Health, thy grateful Taste
Rivale the Cup of Joy,
And warm each English generous Breast
With Liberty and Love.*