PALLADIANISM

Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington

No one at the time or since has challenged the earl's incalculable influence on eighteenth century culture. Indeed Pope's tribute is less flattery than a rehearsal of fact. George Vertue, who was to chronicle the arts of the early Georgian age, refers to Burlington as 'The noble Maecenas of the Arts' and, later in the century, that other notable trendsetter, Horace Walpole, was likewise to eulogise him: 'Never was protection and great wealth more generously and more judiciously diffused than by this great person, who had every quality of a genius and artist, except envy.' It would seem that in this single figure we have the fulfilment of the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury's call for 'Princes and Great Men' to lead people in the arts and sciences towards a new national culture. And as Burlington's tutor Lord Somers was familiar with Shaftesbury he could almost be said to have been reared with this role in view.

Nonetheless Burlington emerges as one of the most enigmatic and mysterious figures in the history of British civilisation. This was a man with a keen and perceptive mind and eyes, endowed also with remarkable taste and a relentless sense of direction. And yet he was cold, austere, ascetic, in short a loner who reveals little about himself. His letters are few, almost one senses deliberately, for he might give something away in putting pen to paper. And yet he was to be the pivotal figure in a revolution in the arts, which was to leave a mighty legacy affecting not only this country but Europe and the United States.

Burlington came from an old royalist family, succeeding his father at the age of ten in 1704 as third earl. His inheritance was a substantial one with estates in Ireland, Yorkshire (centred on the family seat at Londesborough), a magnificent town house in Piccadilly and a country villa at Chiswick along the Thames. The London estate was a particularly valuable one in an age when the city was rapidly expanding and much could be exploited by aristocratic developers. His mother was musical and music was to be his own earliest overriding passion; his first appearance in terms of the arts is as the dedicatee of the libretto for Handel's opera *Teseo* first performed on 10 January 1713 at the Queen's Theatre. Burlington was then nineteen. A year later he was to leave the family house in Piccadilly with two coaches and an immense retinue of outriders and liveried servants bound for the continent, seemingly on that quintessential element of any great aristocrat's education, the Grand Tour.

The earl travelled in the company of two painters, Charles Jervas and a Frenchman, Louis Goupy. The tour was far from the normal length, indeed it was almost cursory. Two months were spent visiting towns in Belgium and the Netherlands before the party headed south down through Germany and Switzerland reaching Rome on 31 September, having crossed the Alps via Chambéry and Modane. Burlington was then it appears unwell until Christmas, although he was already indulging in the purchase of pictures for his collection. On 5 February he left Rome travelling north to Venice and home via Paris, arriving in England on 2 May. Far from architecture being the prime purpose of the trip he arrived back with the cellist and composer, Filippo Amedei, and the violinist, Pietro Castrucci. Music still clearly dominated his thoughts, although while in Rome he met the person who was to be a major figure in his life, William Kent.

On his return nothing on the surface dispelled the illusion that here was a member of the prevailing Whig ascendancy, indeed he was referred to as such by his contemporaries. The new king expressed confidence by making him a Privy Councillor and Lord Treasurer of Ireland the year after his accession. Four years later Burlington made a second journey to Italy, this time in the company of Kent who wrote that his lordship was 'going towards Vicenza and Venice to get Architects to draw all the fine buildings of Palladio . . .', the purpose being to introduce into England a 'better gusto [i.e. taste] than the damn'd gusto that's been for this sixty years past.' So the aim of this expedition was clearly stated, to study the works of Palladio in order to inaugurate an architectural revolution in England. But, one should add, music was again to the fore. In 1719 a company had been established to introduce Italian opera to England and Burlington was one of the three major aristocratic sponsors who put up £1,000. And it was to be on this second Italian journey that the earl was to negotiate for the services of the famous composer, Giovanni Bononcini, who arrived in London the following year.

Shortly after his return Burlington married Lady Dorothy Savile, daughter of the 2nd Marquess of Halifax, by whom he was to have three daughters, one alone surviving as sole heiress. Lady Burlington shared her husband's taste for music and theatre and also for the visual arts. Kent gave her drawing lessons. On the accession of George II the couple continued to enjoy royal favour and Burlington was made a Knight of the Garter in 1730 and Captain of the Gentlemen Pensioners the year after. His wife became a lady-in-waiting to the queen. Then, in 1733, their relationship with the court collapsed. That seems to have related to the king's failure to appoint Burlington to the next vacant high office, but could also have been influenced by the fact that he joined a number of other aristocrats in opposing the Excise Bill, a customs tax on wine and tobacco. After this fissure little is heard of them, although the earl began to run into serious debt problems. He died on 3 December 1753 and was buried in the family vault at Londesborough on his Yorkshire estate.

Ostensibly Burlington was a Whig, albeit an independent one, a man seemingly at the heart of the new political establishment ushered in by George I and his chief minister, Sir Robert Walpole. But recent research has questioned that assumption, so much so that it has produced to replace it a man whose lifetime was in fact spent covertly working for a second Stuart Restoration. What this startling reinterpretation does emphasise is that the upper echelons of society remained as sharply divided after 1714 as they had been before. The Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, let alone other plots in the intervening years, were far more dangerous to the political status quo than it would seem. The Stuarts had returned in 1660 and many people continued to believe that there was no reason why this should not happen again. Burlington it seems was one of these, a clandestine Jacobite whose true loyalty was to James III across the water, but someone who at the same time always took good care to distance himself from anyone too transparently linked to the cause. The secret Jacobite cipher for Burlington was 'Mr. Buck' and his journeys abroad can also be explained as making more sense in connection with Stuart intrigues than as campaigns for the arts. The composition of the Burlington circle was riddled with Jacobite sympathisers with, for instance, a sister married into one of the oldest of recusant Roman Catholic families, the Bedingfields. In the aftermath of the 1715 rebellion, when attacks were made on Catholics, it was Burlington who took into his house Alexander Pope and his family. The earl's first architectural commission for the dor-

mitory of Westminster School also came from the official leader of the Jacobites in England, Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster. Then there were the earl's debts amounting by 1737 to £167,000, indicating perhaps that money was slipping across the Channel.

So we are confronted by a mystery man, a kind of double agent. To that we can add his role as a freemason, belonging to a line of descent of secret societies going back to the Rosicrucians at the beginning of the previous century. These societies were inextricably linked with the Stuart cause and in the post-Restoration period a new higher degree of membership emerged, the Royal Arch, to which it seems Burlington belonged. But in the mid-1720s Jacobite freemasonry went underground, adding to the mystery.

So what light do these revelations shed on one of the great revolutions in taste in the country's history, one for which Burlington was the self-appointed leader? The Palladian revival now emerges as being less the symbol of a political triumph than as an expression of a period of continuing religious and political debate. Those who rejected or criticised the new regime, of whom there were many, expressed their scorn for its shortcomings by a cult of Ancient Virtue, that is by a celebration of the moral example set by the Romans in antiquity. The revival of ancient architecture for them carried with it a wider ethical critique of a revival also of ancient virtue. For Burlington that may have included the restoration of the Stuarts whose martyr king, Charles I, had been a great patron of Inigo Jones, whose work the earl set about deliberately reviving, restoring, imitating and publishing.

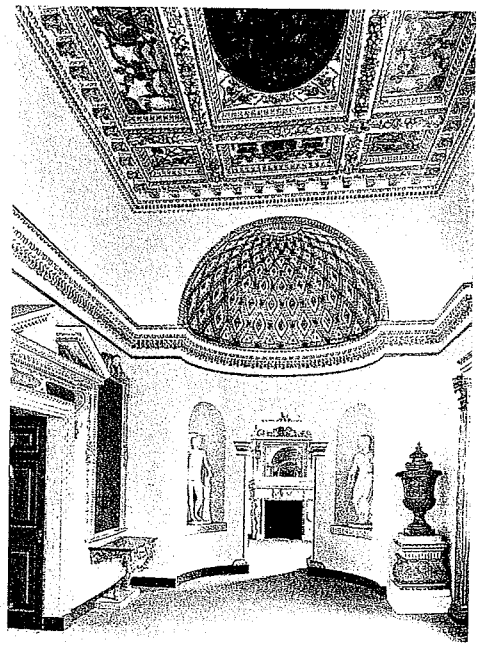
No one in 1714, when the Hanoverians succeeded, could have foreseen that the late sixteenth century architect, Andrea Palladio, and his English disciple, Inigo Jones, were to be the dominant influences on building through the century. That turning back to the Caroline court of the 1630s had already been underway earlier in Tory Oxford, as evidenced in the Peckwater Quadrangle of Christ Church dating from 1706. In fact the influence of Palladio and Jones can be traced through the work of the great baroque architects, but neither Burlington nor Kent would admit to it as it would have detracted from their 'revolution'. The need for change was also signalled by Pope's *Essay on Criticism* (1711) calling for a national reformation in taste and ideas and by Lord Shaftesbury's *Letter Concerning the Art and Science of Design* dedicated to Burlington's tutor, Lord Somers. So the way was already prepared for Burlington to assume the mantle in 1715 when Colen Campbell published *Vitruvius Britannicus*, as a manifesto launching a new style of 'the antique simplicity', and in the same year Nicholas Dubois published a translation into English of Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture*.

What set Burlington apart was both his position as an aristocrat and his unique understanding of both architects, for he realised that their work was deeply rooted in the architecture of classical antiquity. As a nobleman he could not be seen to soil his hands with any of the practicalities of the profession, although he belonged to a long and still flourishing line of gentlemen amateur practitioners. Not only did he comprehend the tradition that he was reviving, in a sense he almost owned it. In 1720 he purchased virtually the entire architectural drawings of Inigo Jones, those of his nephew and successor, John Webb (whose work was misattributed to Jones by then) and of Palladio himself. To these he added Palladio's drawings of Roman baths which were to have a seminal influence. In this way he assembled a paper museum which he was to use as a quarry in his role as an architect. But everything had to be achieved at a lordly remove in order to preserve caste, so he was to make use of various amanuenses to draw up his designs or to see through certain publications such as William Kent's *The Designs of Inigo Jones with some Additional Designs* (1727), which made available the architect's work.

paid for the restoration of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, and rescued the architect's gateway for Beaufort House, re-erecting it in the grounds of Chiswick.

Burlington's campaign for a reformed architectural style was at its height in the decades between 1720 and 1750. Vertue bracketed him with Lord Pembroke as not only 'great and true judges of those sciences [geometry and architecture], but real practitioners of it in a fine degree and taste, equal and above the professions . . .' The earl's earliest work was at his villa in Chiswick, the Bagnio, an elegant classical pavilion which closed a vista. But he went on to revive the architecture of Caroline England as typified by Wilton in Tottenham Park for his brother-in-law, Lord Bruce. He advised Thomas Coke on his vast house at Holkham, and in 1730-36 the extraordinary Assembly Rooms at York went up. As a result the style was to spread and we can see evidence of it everywhere in the use of Palladian Venetian windows, coffered vaults and semi-domes, of vaulted spaces and niches. Underlying it all was a strong feeling for Roman antique severity without concealing the gilded splendour within.

Under Burlington's aegis Palladianism was to become a national style, triumphing over the insular baroque of Wren and Hawksmoor. It was, it should be added, just as insular, but it was also unique, for it was a forerunner of the neo-classical style which was only to seize the rest of Europe much later in the century. Although Burlington was obsessed by Palladio and Jones he was even more obsessed by antiquity and any study of his buildings reveals this. That he was able single-handed to achieve this revolution, in which he established by the time he died what was in effect a national vernacular still admired today, was thanks to his ability to place his own nominees in the office of the Royal Works. It also owed much to his prestigious social position with influence over a wide circle of like-minded aristocrats and gentry, and to his own example in both Burlington House and his villa at Chiswick. But Burlington also profoundly realised that to achieve a Palladian revival called for moving beyond mere imitation and pastiche to originality of invention. In that lay his genius.



The Gallery at Chiswick House. William Kent's sumptuous interiors made use of contrasting room shapes and ceiling treatments, the latter here looking back to Inigo Jones's Whitehall Banqueting House. They were to be hugely influential.

It was in his own houses that he set the pace. In 1717 he brought in Colen Campbell to remodel Burlington House, transforming it into a *palazzo* lifted from Palladio's Vicenza. Its most striking feature was the graceful Doric colonnade which linked its courtyard. But it was to be Chiswick which was to be the most admired, visited and emulated. Here he inherited an old Jacobean family house which he only transformed after a fire in 1725 led him to build a small villa close to it, ultimately to be linked back to the old house by a corridor.

Nothing quite like Chiswick had ever been seen before. Lord Hervey, the memoir writer, remarked that 'the house was too small to inhabit, and too large to hang on one's watch.' It is only seventy feet square with each front conceived in isolation from the other (an English trait). Its inspiration was one of Palladio's villas along the Brenta, the Villa Rotonda, but transmuted into something quite other by dint of raiding his paper museum. So it is a unique synthesis of both antique and modern precedents, the first house whose actual ground-plan is based on Roman antiquity. But its

Palladian 5

most daring feature was its deployment of interior space, a combination of room shapes, square, circular, octagonal, as well as an abundant use of niches and apses, columns and screening. This was to be the villa's most influential legacy. And for those who could read its emblematics this was a shrine to the exiled imperial Stuart dynasty. The visitor entered under an archway topped by a bust of the Emperor Augustus to be confronted by that archetypal icon of loyalty, a copy of Van Dyck's vast canvas depicting Charles I with his family.

But a villa as it existed in classical antiquity was not only the building but even more the land around it. As early as the summer of 1716 the earl's friend, Alexander Pope, could write: 'His Gardens flourish, his Structures rise, his Pictures arrive.' For at Chiswick we are at the fount of another cultural revolution, this time a horticultural one. The new ideal was to create a domain modelled on that described by Pliny the Younger in his letters about his villas outside Rome and in Tuscany. In those there was an interplay between cultivated areas and ones which were left seemingly in a state of nature as meadow or woods. Even before Chiswick there had already been some breaking-down of the old formal style which stemmed from Versailles in the work of Charles Bridgeman, who introduced the ha-ha as a link between garden and landscape as well as deploying meandering serpentine walks. Alexander Pope's garden at nearby Twickenham, which Burlington certainly knew, developed this even further, the garden being conceived as a landscape painting, the terrain and its planting arranged in perspective, making calculated use of light and shade.

Pope was to be a major influence on the Chiswick garden. So too was William Kent. Work began in 1716 with three avenues converging on a single point, each one terminated by a different building. For over twenty years Burlington and Kent were to expand and develop this initial statement with additions drawn from what was known of Pliny's villas, like the exedra and a hippodrome and the placing of antique statuary. In this way Burlington presented a new aristocratic ideal, a garden which was a series of pictures made up of terrain, plants, water, architecture and sculpture arranged in emulation of Ancient Rome.

In Chiswick House Inigo Jones's translation of the villa style of Palladio along the Brenta to England is revived.

Alexander Pope

To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington

ARGUMENT TO EPISTLE IV

OF THE USE OF RICHES

The vanity of expense in people of wealth and quality. The abuse of the word taste, ver. 13. That the first principle and foundation in this, as in everything else, is good sense, ver. 39. The chief proof of it is to follow Nature, even in works of mere luxury and elegance. Instanced in architecture and gardening, where all must be adapted to the genius and use of the place, and the beauties not forced into it, but resulting from it, ver. 47. How men are disappointed in their most expensive undertakings for want of this true foundation, without which nothing can please long, if at all; and the best examples and rules will be but perverted into something burden-some or ridiculous, ver. 65, etc., to 98. A description of the false taste of magnificence; the first grand error of which is to imagine that greatness consists in the size and dimensions, instead of the proportion and harmony of the whole, ver. 99; and the second, either in joining together parts incoherent, or too minutely resembling, or in the repetition of the same too frequently, ver. 105, etc. A word or two of false taste in books, in music, in painting, even in preaching and prayer, and lastly in entertainments, ver. 133, etc. Yet Providence is justified in giving wealth to be squandered in this manner, since it is dispersed to the poor and laborious part of mankind, ver. 169 (recurring to what is laid down in the *Essay on Man*, Epistle II., and in the epistle preceding, ver. 159, etc.). What are the proper objects of magnificence, and a proper field for the expense of great men, ver. 177, etc.; and finally, the great and public works which become a prince, ver. 191 to the end.

EPISTLE IV

'Tis strange, the miser should his cares employ
To gain those riches he can ne'er enjoy:
Is it less strange, the prodigal should waste
His wealth to purchase what he ne'er can taste?
Not for himself he sees, or hears, or eats;
Artists must choose his pictures, music, meats:
He buys for Topham drawings and designs,
For Pembroke statues, dirty gods, and coins;
Rare monkish manuscripts for Hearne alone,
And books for Mead, and butterflies for Sloane.
Think we all these are for himself? no more
Than his fine wife, alas! or finer whore.

For what has Virro painted, built, and planted?
Only to show how many tastes he wanted.
What brought Sir Visto's ill-got wealth to waste?
Some demon whisper'd, 'Visto! have a taste.'
Heaven visits with a taste the wealthy fool,
And needs no rod but Ripley with a rule.
See! sportive Fate, to punish awkward pride,
Bids Bubo build, and sends him such a guide:
A standing sermon, at each year's expense,
That never coxcomb reach'd magnificence!

You show us Rome was glorious, not profuse,
And pompous buildings once were things of use.
Yet shall (my lord) your just, your noble rules
Fill half the land with imitating fools;
Who random drawings from your sheets shall take,
And of one beauty many blunders make;
Load some vain church with old theatric state,
Turn acts of triumph to a garden-gate;
Reverse your ornaments, and hang them all
On some patch'd dog-hole eked with ends of wall;
Then clap four slices of pilaster on't,
That, laced with bits of rustic, makes a front.
Shall call the winds through long arcades to roar,
Proud to catch cold at a Venetian door;
Conscious they act a true Palladian part,
And, if they starve, they starve by rules of art.

Oft have you hinted to your brother peer
A certain truth, which many buy too dear:
Something there is more needful than expense,
And something previous even to taste – 'tis sense:
Good sense, which only is the gift of Heaven,
And, though no science, fairly worth the seven:
A light, which in yourself you must perceive;
Jones and Le Nôtre have it not to give.

To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
To rear the column, or the arch to bend,
To swell the terrace, or to sink the grot,
In all, let Nature never be forgot,
But treat the goddess like a modest fair,
Nor over-dress, nor leave her wholly bare;
Let not each beauty everywhere be spied,
Where half the skill is decently to hide.
He gains all points, who pleasingly confounds,
Surprises, varies, and conceals the bounds.

Consult the genius of the place in all:
That tells the waters or to rise or fall;
Or helps the ambitious hill the heavens to scale,
Or scoops in circling theatres the vale;
Calls in the country, catches opening glades,
Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades;
Now breaks, or now directs, the intending lines;
Paints, as you plant, and, as you work, designs.
Still follow sense, of every art the soul,
Parts answering parts shall slide into a whole,
Spontaneous beauties all around advance,
Start ev'n from difficulty, strike from chance;
Nature shall join you; Time shall make it grow
A work to wonder at – perhaps a Stowe.

Without it, proud Versailles! thy glory falls;
And Nero's terraces desert their walls:
The vast parterres a thousand hands shall make,
Lo! Cobham comes, and floats them with a lake:
Or cut wide views through mountains to the plain,
You'll wish your hill or shelter'd seat again.
Even in an ornament its place remark,
Nor in an hermitage set Dr Clarke.
Behold Villario's ten years' toil complete;
His quincunx darkens, his espaliers meet;
The wood supports the plain, the parts unite,
And strength of shade contends with strength of light;
A waving glow the bloomy beds display,
Blushing in bright diversities of day,
With silver-quivering rills meander'd o'er –
Enjoy them, you! Villario can no more:
Tired of the scene parterres and fountains yield,

He finds at last he better likes a field.
Through his young woods how pleased Sabinus stray'd,
Or sate delighted in the thickening shade,
With annual joy the reddening shoots to greet,
Or see the stretching branches long to meet!
His son's fine taste an opener vista loves,
Foe to the Dryads of his father's groves;
One boundless green, or flourish'd carpet views,
With all the mournful family of yews:
The thriving plants, ignoble broomsticks made,
Now sweep those alleys they were born to shade.
At Timon's villa let us pass a day,
Where all cry out, 'What sums are thrown away!'
So proud, so grand: of that stupendous air,
Soft and agreeable come never there.
Greatness, with Timon, dwells in such a draught
As brings all Brobdignag before your thought.
To compass this, his building is a town,
His pond an ocean, his parterre a down:
Who but must laugh, the master when he sees,
A puny insect, shivering at a breeze!
Lo, what huge heaps of littleness around!
The whole, a labour'd quarry above ground,
Two cupids squirt before: a lake behind
Improves the keenness of the northern wind.
His gardens next your admiration call,
On every side you look, behold the wall!
No pleasing intricacies intervene,
No artful wildness to perplex the scene:
Grove nods at grove, each alley has a brother,
And half the platform just reflects the other.
The suffering eye inverted Nature sees,
Trees cut to statues, statues thick as trees;
With here a fountain, never to be play'd;
And there a summer-house, that knows no shade:
Here Amphitrite sails through myrtle bowers;
There gladiators fight, or die in flowers;
Unwater'd see the drooping sea-horse mourn,
And swallows roost in Nilus' dusty urn.

My Lord advances with majestic mien,
Smit with the mighty pleasure to be seen:
But soft – by regular approach – not yet –
First through the length of yon hot terrace sweat;
And when up ten steep slopes you've dragg'd your thighs,
Just at his study-door he'll bless your eyes.
His study! with what authors is it stored?
In books, not authors, curious is my Lord;
To all their dated backs he turns you round;
These Aldus printed, those Du Sueïl has bound.
Lo, some are vellum, and the rest as good
For all his Lordship knows, but they are wood.
For Locke or Milton 'tis in vain to look,
These shelves admit not any modern book.
And now the chapel's silver bell you hear,
That summons you to all the pride of prayer:
Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,
Make the soul dance upon a jig to Heaven.
On painted ceilings you devoutly stare,
Where sprawl the saints of Verrio or Laguerre,
Or gilded clouds in fair expansion lie,
And bring all Paradise before your eye.
To rest, the cushion and soft dean invite,
Who never mentions Hell to ears polite.

But hark! the chiming clocks to dinner call;
A hundred footsteps scrape the marble hall:
The rich buffet well-coloured serpents grace,
And gaping Tritons spew to wash your face.
Is this a dinner? this a genial room?
No, 'tis a temple, and a hecatomb.
A solemn sacrifice, perform'd in state,
You drink by measure, and to minutes eat.
So quick retires each flying course, you'd swear
Sancho's dread doctor and his wand were there.
Between each act the trembling salvers ring,
From soup to sweet-wine, and God bless the king.
In plenty starving, tantalised in state,
And complaisantly help'd to all I hate,
Treated, caress'd, and tired, I take my leave,

Sick of his civil pride from morn to eve;
I curse such lavish cost, and little skill,
And swear no day was ever pass'd so ill.
Yet hence the poor are clothed, the hungry fed;
Health to himself, and to his infants bread,
The labourer bears: what his hard heart denies,
His charitable vanity supplies.
Another age shall see the golden ear
Imbrown the slope, and nod on the parterre,
Deep harvest bury all his pride has plann'd,
And laughing Ceres reassume the land.
Who then shall grace, or who improve the soil? –
Who plants like Bathurst, or who builds like Boyle.
'Tis use alone that sanctifies expense,
And splendour borrows all her rays from sense.
His father's acres who enjoys in peace,
Or makes his neighbours glad, if he increase:
Whose cheerful tenants bless their yearly toil,
Yet to their lord owe more than to the soil;
Whose ample lawns are not ashamed to feed
The milky heifer and deserving steed;
Whose rising forests, not for pride or show,
But future buildings, future navies grow:
Let his plantations stretch from down to down,
First shade a country, and then raise a town.
You too proceed! make falling arts your care,
Erect new wonders, and the old repair;
Jones and Palladio to themselves restore,
And be whate'er Vitruvius was before:
'Till kings call forth the ideas of your mind
(Proud to accomplish what such hands design'd),
Bid harbours open, public ways extend,
Bid temples, worthier of the god, ascend;
Bid the broad arch the dangerous flood contain,
The mole projected break the roaring main;
Back to his bounds their subject sea command,
And roll obedient rivers through the land;
These honours Peace to happy Britain brings,
These are imperial works, and worthy kings.

Notes to Alexander Pope. *'To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington'*

Topham – a gentleman famous for his collection of drawings

8th Earl of Pembroke – a collector of statues and medals

Hearne – an antiquary and editor of valuable early English chronicles

Mead – a doctor who had a library of 10,000 volumes, plus medals and paintings

Sloane – a physician who had the largest collection of natural curiosities in Europe

Virro, Sir Visto – rich but misguided men

Ripley – a carpenter and architect of Sir Robert Walpole's country residence Houghton. He owed his success to marrying a servant of Walpole's.

Bubo – probably Bubb Dodington, Lord Melcombe, the builder of Eastbury

'You show us Rome was glorious...' – Burlington had just published *The Designs of Inigo Jones* and *The Antiquities of Rome* by Palladio

'Imitating fools' – For Burlington Palladianism meant a return to the architecture of antiquity and he avoided Palladio's Neo-classical and Mannerist features which his less discerning imitators did not know to avoid. Burlington's emphasis was on the rigorous following of the classical standards.

Jones – Inigo Jones

Le Nôtre – the French landscape gardener whose formal baroque gardens at Versailles had a tremendous influence on garden designs all over Europe

Stowe – one of the most influential gardens in English landscape garden history. From 1715 to 1749 **Viscount Cobham**, one of the Duke of Marlborough's generals, continuously improved his estate, calling in leading designers of the day to lay out his gardens, and commissioning several leading architects – Vanburgh, Gibbs, Kent and Leoni – to decorate them with garden temples. From 1750 to 1779 **Earl Temple**, his nephew and successor continued to expand and embellish both garden and house. The house is now a major public school. Around the mansion is one of Britain's most magnificen landscape gardens, now in the ownership of the National Trust, covering 325 acres and containing no fewer than 6 lakes and 32 garden temples. During the 1730s William Kent laid out the Elysian Fields at Stowe, one of the first 'natural' landscapes and inititated the style known as **'the English garden'**. **'Capability' Brown** worked here for 10 years as head gardener.

'Or cut wide views...' – Benjamin Styles did so at enormous expense, by cutting down his wood he opened his house to the north wind

Dr Clarke – a well-known philosopher then whose bust was put in a hermitage (a kind of garden temple) by Queen Anne while the man was still alive

Villario – 'Capability' Brown

'he better likes a field' – Brown in later life preferred to lay out wide expanses of grass instead of formal parterres

Sabinus – a brother of emperor Vespasian, a man of distinguished and unspoilt character. Here a wise patriarch?

Dryads – tree nymphs

Timon – a magnate who epitomises all that is wrong in the use of riches

Brobdignag – a fabulous country of giants in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*

'Trees cut to statues...' – topiary

Amphitrite – wife of Poseidon, goddess of the sea

Nilus – River Nile

Aldus, Du Sueïl – early printers of now rare books

Locke – an English philosopher

Verrio, Laguerre – Italian illusionist baroque painters who had extensive commissions in England (see 'The Baroque' handout)

Tritons – Poseidon's sons, half men half fish

hecatomb – a public sacrifice of 100 oxen in ancient Greece

Ceres – Roman goddess of agriculture

Bathurst – the Earl of Bathurst's vast landscape garden at Cirencester, laid out with Pope's help, produced a valuable crop of timber

Vitruvius – the only Roman architect whose writings have survived and thus his 10-volume *De Architectura* serves as the only authoritatvie source of Roman building principles

NEOCLASSICISM

The Battle of the Books

There was a very famous and very long-drawn-out dispute in the C17 and C18 which agitated not only the world of literature but the worlds of science, religion, philosophy, the fine arts, and even classical scholarship. It was never decided; it involved a number of comparatively trivial personal enmities, temporary feuds; the issues were not always clearly stated on either side; and there was far too much emotion involved, so that the entire dispute became a subject for laughter, and is now remembered under the satiric title of the Battle of the Books. It started in Italy but the real fighting took place in France and an interesting but secondary struggle went on in England. Other European countries remained spectators. It concerned literature and criticism but the main problem addressed was really the relationship between tradition and modernity, between originality and authority.

The chief issues were the following:

Ought modern writers to admire and imitate the great Greek and Latin writers of antiquity? or have the classical standards of taste now been excelled and superceded? Must we only follow along behind the ancients, trying to emulate them and hoping at most to equal them? or can we confidently expect to surpass them? Or more broadly, in the fine arts, in civilization generally, have we progressed beyond the Greeks and Romans? or have we gone ahead of them in some things, and fallen behind them in others? or are we inferior to them in every respect, half-taught barbarians using the arts of truly civilized men?

Since the Renaissance many admirers of classical literature, charmed by the skill, beauty and power of the best Greek and Roman writing, had assumed that it could never be really surpassed, and that modern men should be content to respect it without hope of producing anything better. After the rediscovery of Greco-Roman architecture this assumption was broadened to include other arts; and it took in law, political wisdom, science, all culture. It was now attacked by the moderns on many grounds. The most important of the arguments they used were:

1. *The ancients were pagans; we are Christians. Therefore our poetry is inspired by nobler emotions and deals with nobler subjects. Therefore it is better poetry.*

It is interesting to note that the three greatest modern poems are all blends of pagan and Christian thought, dominated by Christian ideals – Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Tasso's *The Liberation of Jerusalem* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In them all, the Christian religion is the essential moving factor. But in none of them could Christianity have been so well expressed without the pagan vehicle.

2. *Human knowledge is constantly advancing. We live in a later age than the Periclean Greeks and Augustan Romans: therefore we are wiser. Therefore anything we write, or make, is better than the things written and made by the ancient Greeks and Romans.*

The emotional pressure towards accepting this argument was strong in the Renaissance, when worlds which the ancients had never seen were being discovered every generation, every decade: worlds in the far west, in the antipodes, in the sky. But in the Renaissance the discovery of the great classical books was still too new to allow men to vaunt the achievement of thought and will above the other. All the discoveries were equally wonderful: the new world of unknown nations and strange animals, the new worlds revealed by science, the new world of subtle writing and glorious myths created by antiquity. In the baroque age, on the other hand, the classics were growing familiar, especially the Latin ones. Their thought had so long been

current that their majesty had become customary and their daring had been equalled. Meanwile the science of the ancients had been examined, equalled, surpassed and discarded; while the modern experimental science was asserting itself more emphatically every year.

3. *Nature does not change; therefore the works of men are as good today as they were in classical times.*
4. *As a reaction to the exaggerated admiration of the classics some modernists said that they were badly written and fundamentally illogical, either silly or vulgar, or sometimes both.*

(For an excellent survey of how the battle raged see Gilbert Highet. *The Classical Tradition. Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature.*)

Neoclassical/Augustan style

The literature between 1660 and 1785 in Britain can be divided into three periods:
1660-1700 (death of Dryden) – neoclassical literature comes into being and its principles are being formulated;
1700-1745 (death of Pope in 1744, of Swift in 1745) – the culmination of the movement;
1745-1785 (death of Johnson in 1784, the publication of Cowper's *The Task* in 1785) – the established ideas are confronted with new ideas which contain the elements of the later Romantic movement.

The term **"Augustan"** refers to the first Roman emperor Augustus Caesar whose peaceful reign witnessed a great flowering of the arts and the writings of Virgil, Horace and Ovid. To the English eyes the events of 1660 suggested a parallel between the glories of the Augustan age and what the restoration of Charles II seemed to presage. These hopes had evaporated by 1700 but the term persisted, as did the admiration for the great Roman predecessors.

Another overwhelming influence was the contemporary literature of France (Corneille, Rapin, Boileau), its simplicity and elegance was combined with the native classical tradition stretching back to Ben Jonson.

The new style aimed at **giving pleasure to the common reader, to write about passions that everyone could recognize, in a language that everyone could understand.** The poets were to affect the readers' senses so that, by exercising their own imagination, they would cooperate with the author in **creating pictures in the mind**. Horace's dictum "ut pictura poesis" (as in painting, so in poetry) was taken to mean that poetry ought to be a visual as well as a verbal art.

The poets strove to represent **"Nature"** in a number of its aspects. The most important of them was Nature as the universal, permanent, representative in human experience. External Nature served as a source of aesthetic pleasure and was an object of scientific enquiry. When Neoclassicists "follow Nature" they usually have human nature and human experience in mind. Nature stands for the enduring, general truths that have been, are, and will be true for everyone in all times, everywhere. If human nature was held to be uniform, human beings as such were recognized as being infinitely varied, so it befell to the artist to treat the particular in the manner that would rend it representative. Nature as a collection of eternal truths had been most perfectly expressed by the ancients, so to study Nature was also to study the ancient authors of Greece and Rome. One could also perfect one's skills by imitating the superior craft of ancient writers whose method could be summed up by a set of "rules" for every genre (epic, tragedy, comedy, pastoral, satire, ode) to facilitate the

adoption of the right language and rhetorical figures when writing in a particular genre.

"Wit" likewise had many meanings. It implied the quickness and liveliness of mind, inventiveness, a readiness to perceive resemblances between things apparently unlike and so to enliven literary discourse with appropriate images, similes and metaphors. It could also mean "fancy" or "imagination" which was thought to be notably irregular, extravagant and wayward and needed restraining. The sober faculty of **"judgment"** was called upon to perform the task of taming the wilfulness of wit to achieve a sense of **"decorum"** or appropriateness. The aim of a literary work was a well-balanced and harmonious union of wit and judgment. The desire to emulate the easy elegance of ancient writers brought into being a vogue to use a special poetic language or "diction" when speaking about lofty things to set them apart from the vulgarity of everyday life. When used with discretion it could produce magnificent results but when ill used it could deteriorate into stilted mannerisms of style.

The prevailing poetic form was **the "closed" heroic couplet** – i.e. a pentametre couplet which more often than not contains within itself a complete statement and so is closed by a semicolon, period, question mark, or exclamation point. Within these two lines it was possible to attain certain rhetorical or witty effects by the use of parallelism, balance, or antithesis within the couplet as a whole or the individual line. The second line of the couplet might be made closely parallel in structure and meaning to the first, or the two could be played off against each other in antithesis; taking advantage of the fact that normally a pentametre line of English verse contains at some point a slight pause called a "caesura", one part of a line so divided can be made parallel or antithetical to the other or even to one of the two parts of the following line. Alliteration and assonance could be used to strengthen this effect. Another option was to use **the Miltonic blank verse** which was deemed especially suitable for philosophical poems, descriptive poems, meditative poems and translated epics.

(For a more detailed account see *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*)

the integrity of the couplet and individual line seem to be destroyed (though in fact they are very much present). The poet-satirist is engaged in a dialogue with a friend who warns him that his satire is too personal, indeed mere libel. The poet is speaking:

Yé státesmen, | priests of one religion all!
Yé trádesmen vile || in army, court, or hall!
Yé réverend atheists. || F. Scandal! | name them, | Who?
P. Why that's the thing you bid me not to do.
Who stárved a sister, || who foreswore a debt,
I never named; || the town's inquiring yet.
The poisoning dame— | F. You mean— | P. I don't— | F. You do.
P. See, now I keep the secret, || and not you!
The bribing statesman— | F. Hold, || too high you go.
P. The bribed elector— || F. There you stoop too low.

In such a passage the language and rhythms of poetry merge with the language and rhythms of impassioned living speech.

A fine example of Pope's ability to derive the maximum of meaning from the most economic use of language and image is the description of the manor house in which lives old Cotta, the miser (*Epistle to Lord Bathurst*, lines 187–196):

> Like some lone Chartreuse stands the good old Hall,
> Silence without, and fasts within the wall;
> No raftered roofs with dance and tabor sound,
> No noontide bell invites the country round;
> Tenants with sighs the smokeless towers survey,
> And turn the unwilling steeds another way;
> Benighted wanderers, the forest o'er,
> Curse the saved candle and unopening door;
> While the gaunt mastiff growling at the gate,
> Affrights the beggar whom he longs to eat.

The first couplet of this passage, which associates the "Hall," symbol of English rural hospitality, with the Grande Chartreuse, the monastery in the French Alps, which, though a place of "silence" and "fasts" for the monks, afforded food and shelter to all travelers, clashes forcefully with the dismal details of Cotta's miserly dwelling; and the meaning of the scene is concentrated in the grotesque image of the last couplet: the half-starved watchdog and the frightened beggar confronting each other in mutual hunger.

But there is another sort of variety within Pope's work as a whole which derives from the poet's respect for the idea that the different kinds of literature have their different and appropriate styles. Thus the *Essay on Criticism*, an informal discussion of literary theory, is written, like Horace's *Ars Poetica*, a similarly didactic poem, in a plain style, relatively devoid of imagery and eloquence, and in the easy language of well-bred talk. *The Rape of the Lock*, being "a heroi-comical poem" (that is, a comic poem that treats trivial material in an epic style), employs the lofty heroic language that Dryden had perfected in his translation of Virgil, and introduces amusing parodies of passages in *Paradise Lost*; parodies raised to truly Miltonic sublimity and complexity by the conclusion of the *Dunciad*. *Eloisa to Abelard* renders the brooding, passionate voice of its heroine in a declamatory language, given to sudden outbursts and shifts of tone, that recalls the stage. The grave epistles that make up the *Essay on Man*, a philosophical discussion of such majestic themes as the Creator and his creation, the universe, and the nature of man, of human society, and of happiness, are written in a stately forensic language and tone and constantly employ the traditional rhetoric figures. The *Imitations of Horace*, and, above all, the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, his finest poem "in the Horatian way," reveal Pope's final mastery of the plain style of Horace's epistles and satires and justify his image of himself as the heir of the Roman poet. In short no other poet of the century can equal Pope in the range of his materials, the diversity of his poetic styles, and the sheer mastery of the poet's craft.

From An Essay on Criticism[1]

Part I

'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill
Appear in writing or in judging ill;
But of the two less dangerous is the offense
To tire our patience than mislead our sense.
Some few in that, but numbers err in this,
Ten censure[1a] wrong for one who writes amiss;

1. There is no pleasanter introduction to the canons of taste in the English Augustan age than Pope's *Essay on Criticism*. As Addison said in his review in *Spectator* 253, it assembles the "most known and most received observations on the subject of literature and criticism." Pope was attempting to do for his time what Horace, in his *Ars Poetica*, and what Nicolas Boileau (French poet of the age of Louis XIV), in his *L'Art Poëtique*, had done for theirs. Horace is not only one of Pope's instructors in the principles of criticism; he is also Pope's model in this poem, especially in the simple, conversational language, the tone of well-bred ease, and the deliberately plain style of the *Ars Poetica*—all of which qualities Pope reproduces.

In framing his critical creed, Pope did not try for novelty: he drew from the standard writings of classical antiquity, especially from the *Ars Poetica*, and the *Institutio Oratoria* of the Roman rhetorician Quintilian; from French critical theory of the preceding century; and from Ben Jonson's *Timber, or Discoveries* and the prefaces of John Dryden. He wished merely to give to generally accepted doctrines pleasing and memorable expression. Here one meets the key words of neoclassical criticism: *wit, Nature, ancients, rules, genius. Wit* in the poem is a word of many meanings—a clever remark, or the man who makes it; a conceit; liveliness of mind; inventiveness; fancy; genius; a genius; poetry itself, among others. *Nature* is an equally ambiguous word, meaning not "things out there," or "the outdoors," but most importantly that which is representative, universal, permanent in human experience as opposed to the idiosyncratic, the individual, the temporary. In line 21, the word comes close to meaning "intuitive knowledge." In line 52, it means that half-personified power manifested in the cosmic order, which in its modes of working is a model for art. The reverence felt by most Augustans for the works of the great writers of ancient Greece and Rome raised the question how far the authority of these *ancients* extended. Were their works to be received as models to be conscientiously imitated? Were the *rules* received from them or deducible from their works to be accepted as prescriptive laws or merely convenient guides? Was individual *genius* to be bound by what has been conventionally held to be *Nature*, by the authority of the *ancients*, and by the legalistic pedantry of *rules*? Or could it go its own way?

In Part I of the *Essay* Pope constructs a harmonious system in which he effects a compromise among all these conflicting forces—a compromise which is typically 18th century in spirit. Part II analyzes the causes of faulty criticism. Part III (not printed here) characterizes the good critic and praises the great critics of the past.

1a. Judge.

A fool might once himself alone expose,
Now one in verse makes many more in prose.
'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.
In poets as true genius is but rare,
True taste as seldom is the critic's share;
Both must alike from Heaven derive their light,
These born to judge, as well as those to write.
Let such teach others who themselves excel,
And censure freely who have written well.
Authors are partial to their wit, 'tis true,
But are not critics to their judgment too?
Yet if we look more closely, we shall find
Most have the seeds of judgment in their mind:
Nature affords at least a glimmering light;
The lines, though touched but faintly, are drawn right.
But as the slightest sketch, if justly traced,
Is by ill coloring but the more disgraced,
So by false learning is good sense defaced:
Some are bewildered in the maze of schools,
And some made coxcombs[2] Nature meant but fools.
In search of wit these lose their common sense,
And then turn critics in their own defense:
Each burns alike, who can, or cannot write,
Or with a rival's or an eunuch's spite.
All fools have still an itching to deride,
And fain would be upon the laughing side.
If Maevius[3] scribble in Apollo's spite,
There are who judge still worse than he can write.
Some have at first for wits, then poets passed,
Turned critics next, and proved plain fools at last.
Some neither can for wits nor critics pass,
As heavy mules are neither horse nor ass.
Those half-learn'd witlings, numerous in our isle,
As half-formed insects on the banks of Nile;[4]
Unfinished things, one knows not what to call,
Their generation's so equivocal:
To tell[5] them would a hundred tongues require,
Or one vain wit's, that might a hundred tire.
But you who seek to give and merit fame,
And justly bear a critic's noble name,
Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,
How far your genius, taste, and learning go;
Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet,
And mark that point where sense and dullness meet.
Nature to all things fixed the limits fit,
And wisely curbed proud man's pretending wit.
As on the land while here the ocean gains,

2. Superficial pretenders to learning.
3. A silly poet alluded to contemptuously by Virgil in *Eclogue III* and by Horace in *Epode X*.
4. The ancients believed that many forms of life were spontaneously generated in the fertile mud of the Nile.
5. Reckon, count.

In other parts it leaves wide sandy plains;
Thus in the soul while memory prevails,
The solid power of understanding fails;
Where beams of warm imagination play,
The memory's soft figures melt away.
One science[6] only will one genius fit,
So vast is art, so narrow human wit.
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,
But oft in those confined to single parts.
Like kings we lose the conquests gained before,
By vain ambition still to make them more;
Each might his several province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand.
First follow Nature, and your judgment frame
By her just standard, which is still the same;
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of art.
Art from that fund each just supply provides,
Works without show, and without pomp presides.
In some fair body thus the informing soul
With spirits feeds, with vigor fills the whole,
Each motion guides, and every nerve sustains;
Itself unseen, but in the effects remains.
Some, to whom Heaven in wit has been profuse,
Want as much more to turn it to its use;
For wit and judgment often are at strife,
Though meant each other's aid, like man and wife.
'Tis more to guide than spur the Muse's steed,
Restrain his fury than provoke his speed;
The wingéd courser,[7] like a generous horse,
Shows most true mettle when you check his course.
Those rules of old discovered, not devised,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodized;
Nature, like liberty, is but restrained
By the same laws which first herself ordained.
Hear how learn'd Greece her useful rules indites,
When to repress and when indulge our flights:
High on Parnassus' top her sons she showed,
And pointed out those arduous paths they trod;
Held from afar, aloft, the immortal prize,
And urged the rest by equal steps to rise.
Just precepts thus from great examples given,
She drew from them what they derived from Heaven.
The generous critic fanned the poet's fire,
And taught the world with reason to admire.
Then criticism the Muse's handmaid proved,

6. Branch of learning.
7. Pegasus, associated with the Muses and poetic inspiration; "generous": spirited, highly bred.

To dress her charms, and make her more beloved:
But following wits from that intention strayed,
Who could not win the mistress, wooed the maid;
Against the poets their own arms they turned,
Sure to hate most the men from whom they learned.
So modern 'pothecaries, taught the art
By doctors' bills[8] to play the doctor's part,
Bold in the practice of mistaken rules,
Prescribe, apply, and call their masters fools.
Some on the leaves of ancient authors prey,
Nor time nor moths e'er spoiled so much as they.
Some dryly plain, without invention's aid,
Write dull receipts[9] how poems may be made.
These leave the sense their learning to display,
And those explain the meaning quite away.
You then whose judgment the right course would steer,
Know well each ancient's proper character;
His fable,[1] subject, scope in every page;
Religion, country, genius of his age:
Without all these at once before your eyes,
Cavil you may, but never criticize.
Be Homer's works your study and delight,
Read them by day, and meditate by night;
Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,
And trace the Muses upward to their spring.
Still with itself compared, his text peruse;
And let your comment be the Mantuan Muse.[2]
When first young Maro in his boundless mind
A work to outlast immortal Rome designed,
Perhaps he seemed above the critic's law,
And but from Nature's fountains scorned to draw;
But when to examine every part he came,
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.
Convinced, amazed, he checks the bold design,
And rules as strict his labored work confine
As if the Stagirite[3] o'erlooked each line.
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
To copy Nature is to copy them.
Some beauties yet no precepts can declare,
For there's a happiness as well as care.[4]

8. Prescriptions.
9. Formulas for preparing a dish; recipes. Pope himself wrote an amusing burlesque *Receipt to Make an Epic Poem*, first published in the *Guardian* 78 (1713).
1. Plot or story of a play or poem.
2. Virgil, the "young Maro" of the following line, was born in a village adjacent to Mantua in Italy; hence "Mantuan Muse." His epic, the *Aeneid*, was modeled on Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and was considered to be a refinement on the Greek poems. Thus it could be thought of as a commentary ("comment") on Homer's poems.
3. Aristotle, native of Stagira, from whose *Poetics* later critics formulated strict rules for writing tragedy and the epic.
4. I.e., no rules ("precepts") can explain ("declare") some beautiful effects in a work of art which can be the result only of inspiration or good luck ("happiness"), not of painstaking labor ("care").

Music resembles poetry, in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master hand alone can reach.
If, where the rules not far enough extend
(Since rules were made but to promote their end)
Some lucky license answer to the full
The intent proposed, that license is a rule.
Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,
May boldly deviate from the common track.
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,
Which without passing through the judgment, gains
The heart, and all its end at once attains.
In prospects thus, some objects please our eyes,
Which out of Nature's common order rise,
The shapeless rock, or hanging precipice.
Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true critics dare not mend;
But though the ancients thus their rules invade
(As kings dispense with laws themselves have made)
Moderns, beware! or if you must offend
Against the precept, ne'er transgress its end;
Let it be seldom, and compelled by need;
And have at least their precedent to plead.
The critic else proceeds without remorse,
Seizes your fame, and puts his laws in force.
I know there are, to whose presumptuous thoughts
Those freer beauties, even in them, seem faults.[5]
Some figures monstrous and misshaped appear,
Considered singly, or beheld too near,
Which, but proportioned to their light or place,
Due distance reconciles to form and grace.
A prudent chief not always must display
His powers in equal ranks and fair array,
But with the occasion and the place comply,
Conceal his force, nay seem sometimes to fly.
Those oft are stratagems which errors seem,
Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream.
Still green with bays each ancient altar stands
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands,
Secure from flames, from envy's fiercer rage,
Destructive war, and all-involving age.
See, from each clime the learn'd their incense bring!
Here in all tongues consenting[6] paeans ring!
In praise so just let every voice be joined,[7]
And fill the general chorus of mankind.
Hail, bards triumphant! born in happier days,
Immortal heirs of universal praise!

5. Pronounced *fawts*.
6. Agreeing, concurring.
7. Pronounced *jined*.

Whose honors with increase of ages grow,
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow;
Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found!
Oh, may some spark of your celestial fire,
The last, the meanest of your sons inspire
(That on weak wings, from far, pursues your flights,
Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes)
To teach vain wits a science little known,
To admire superior sense, and doubt their own!

Part II

Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is pride, the never-failing vice of fools.
Whatever Nature has in worth denied,
She gives in large recruits[8] of needful pride;
For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find
What wants in blood and spirits swelled with wind:
Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defense,
And fills up all the mighty void of sense.
If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
Trust not yourself: but your defects to know,
Make use of every friend—and every foe.
A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.[9]
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt[1] the heights of arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
But more advanced, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So pleased at first the towering Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
The eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;
But, those attained, we tremble to survey
The growing labors of the lengthened way,
The increasing prospect tires our wandering eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!
A perfect judge will read each work of wit
With the same spirit that its author writ:
Survey the whole, nor seek slight faults to find
Where Nature moves, and rapture warms the mind;

8. Supplies.
9. The spring in Pieria on Mt. Olympus, sacred to the Muses.
1. Attempt.

Nor lose, for that malignant dull delight,
The generous pleasure to be charmed with wit.
But in such lays as neither ebb nor flow,
Correctly cold, and regularly low,
That, shunning faults, one quiet tenor keep,
We cannot blame indeed—but we may sleep.
In wit, as nature, what affects our hearts
Is not the exactness of peculiar parts;
'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.
Thus when we view some well-proportioned dome
(The world's just wonder, and even thine, O Rome![2]),
No single parts unequally surprise,
All comes united to the admiring eyes:
No monstrous height, or breadth, or length appear;
The whole at once is bold and regular.
Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.
In every work regard the writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend;
And if the means be just, the conduct true,
Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due.
As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit,
To avoid great errors must the less commit,
Neglect the rules each verbal critic lays,
For not to know some trifles is a praise.
Most critics, fond of some subservient art,
Still make the whole depend upon a part:
They talk of principles, but notions prize,
And all to one loved folly sacrifice.
Once on a time La Mancha's knight,[3] they say,
A certain bard encountering on the way,
Discoursed in terms as just, with looks as sage,
As e'er could Dennis,[4] of the Grecian stage;
Concluding all were desperate sots and fools
Who durst depart from Aristotle's rules.
Our author, happy in a judge so nice,
Produced his play, and begged the knight's advice;
Made him observe the subject and the plot,
The manners, passions, unities; what not?
All which exact to rule were brought about,
Were but a combat in the lists left out.
"What! leave the combat out?" exclaims the knight.
"Yes, or we must renounce the Stagirite."
"Not so, by Heaven!" he answers in a rage,

2. The dome of St. Peter's, designed by Michelangelo.
3. Don Quixote. The story comes not from Cervantes' novel, but from a spurious sequel to it by Don Alonzo Fernandez de Avellaneda.
4. John Dennis (1657–1734), though one of the leading critics of the time, was frequently ridiculed by the wits for his irascibility and his rather solemn pomposity. Pope apparently did not know Dennis personally, but his jibe at him in Part III of this poem incurred the critic's lasting animosity.

"Knights, squires, and steeds must enter on the stage."
"So vast a throng the stage can ne'er contain."
"Then build a new, or act it in a plain."
Thus critics of less judgment than caprice,
Curious,[5] not knowing, not exact, but nice,
Form short ideas, and offend in arts
(As most in manners), by a love to parts.
Some to conceit[6] alone their taste confine,
And glittering thoughts struck out at every line;
Pleased with a work where nothing's just or fit,
One glaring chaos and wild heap of wit.
Poets, like painters, thus unskilled to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover every part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art.
True wit is Nature to advantage dressed,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed;
Something whose truth convinced at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind.
As shades more sweetly recommend the light,
So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit;
For works may have more wit than does them good,
As bodies perish through excess of blood.
Others for language all their care express,
And value books, as women men, for dress.
Their praise is still—the style is excellent;
The sense they humbly take upon contént.[7]
Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.
False eloquence, like the prismatic glass,
Its gaudy colors spreads on every place;[8]
The face of Nature we no more survey,
All glares alike, without distinction gay.
But true expression, like the unchanging sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon;
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.
Expression is the dress of thought, and still
Appears more decent as more suitable.
A vile conceit in pompous words expressed
Is like a clown[9] in regal purple dressed:
For different styles with different subjects sort,
As several garbs with country, town, and court.
Some by old words to fame have made pretense,
Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense.
Such labored nothings, in so strange a style,
Amaze the unlearn'd, and make the learned smile;

5. Laboriously careful. "Nice": minutely accurate, over refined.
6. Pointed wit, ingenuity and extravagance, or affectation in the use of figures, especially similes and metaphors.
7. Mere acquiescence.
8. A very up-to-date scientific reference. Newton's *Optics*, which treated of the prism and the spectrum, had been published in 1704, though his theories had been known earlier.
9. Rustic, boor.

Unlucky as Fungoso[1] in the play,
These sparks with awkward vanity display
What the fine gentleman wore yesterday;
And but so mimic ancient wits at best,
As apes our grandsires in their doublets dressed.
In words as fashions the same rule will hold,
Alike fantastic if too new or old:
Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.
But most by numbers[2] judge a poet's song,
And smooth or rough with them is right or wrong.
In the bright Muse though thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire,
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds; as some to church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.
These equal syllables alone require,
Though oft the ear the open vowels tire,[3]
While expletives[4] their feeble aid do join,
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:
While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,
With sure returns of still expected rhymes;
Where'er you find "the cooling western breeze,"
In the next line, it "whispers through the trees";
If crystal streams "with pleasing murmurs creep,"
The reader's threatened (not in vain) with "sleep";
Then, at the last and only couplet fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,
A needless Alexandrine[5] ends the song
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.
Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know
What's roundly smooth or languishingly slow;
And praise the easy vigor of a line
Where Denham's strength and Waller's sweetness join.[6]
True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offense,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense.
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,

1. A character in Ben Jonson's comedy *Every Man out of His Humor* (1599).
2. Versification.
3. In lines 345–57 Pope cleverly contrives to make his own metrics or diction illustrate the faults that he is exposing.
4. Words used merely to achieve the necessary number of feet in a line of verse.
5. A line of verse containing six iambic feet; it is illustrated in the next line.
6. Dryden, whom Pope echoes here, considered Sir John Denham (1615–69) and Edmund Waller (1606–87) to have been the principal shapers of the closed pentameter couplet. He had distinguished the "strength" of the one and the "sweetness" of the other.

The line too labors, and the words move slow;
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.
Hear how Timotheus'[7] varied lays surprise,
And bid alternate passions fall and rise!
While at each change the son of Libyan Jove[8]
Now burns with glory, and then melts with love;
Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,
Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow:
Persians and Greeks like turns of nature[9] found
And the world's victor stood subdued by sound!
The power of music all our hearts allow,
And what Timotheus was is Dryden now.
Avoid extremes; and shun the fault of such
Who still are pleased too little or too much.
At every trifle scorn to take offense:
That always shows great pride, or little sense.
Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.
Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move;
For fools admire,[1] but men of sense approve:
As things seem large which we through mists descry,
Dullness is ever apt to magnify.
Some foreign writers, some our own despise;
The ancients only, or the moderns prize.
Thus wit, like faith, by each man is applied
To one small sect, and all are damned beside.
Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,
And force that sun but on a part to shine,
Which not alone the southern wit sublimes,
But ripens spirits in cold northern climes;
Which from the first has shone on ages past,
Enlights the present, and shall warm the last;
Though each may feel increases and decays,
And see now clearer and now darker days.
Regard not then if wit be old or new,
But blame the false and value still the true.
Some ne'er advance a judgment of their own,
But catch the spreading notion of the town;
They reason and conclude by precedent,
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.
Some judge of authors' names, not works, and then
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.
Of all this servile herd the worst is he
That in proud dullness joins with quality,
A constant critic at the great man's board,
To fetch and carry nonsense for my lord.

7. The musician in Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*. Pope retells the story of that poem in the following lines.
8. Alexander the Great.
9. Alternations of feelings.
1. Wonder. "Approve": judge favorably only after due deliberation.

What woeful stuff this madrigal would be
In some starved hackney sonneteer or me!
But let a lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!
Before his sacred name flies every fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought!
The vulgar thus through imitation err;
As oft the learn'd by being singular;
So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng
By chance go right, they purposely go wrong.
So schismatics[2] the plain believers quit,
And are but damned for having too much wit.
Some praise at morning what they blame at night,
But always think the last opinion right.
A Muse by these is like a mistress used,
This hour she's idolized, the next abused;
While their weak heads like towns unfortified,
'Twixt sense and nonsense daily change their side.
Ask them the cause; they're wiser still, they say;
And still tomorrow's wiser than today.
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow;
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.
Once school divines[3] this zealous isle o'erspread;
Who knew most sentences was deepest read.
Faith, Gospel, all seemed made to be disputed,
And none had sense enough to be confuted.
Scotists and Thomists now in peace remain
Amidst their kindred cobwebs in Duck Lane.[4]
If faith itself has different dresses worn,
What wonder modes in wit should take their turn?
Oft, leaving what is natural and fit,
The current folly proves the ready wit;
And authors think their reputation safe,
Which lives as long as fools are pleased to laugh.
Some valuing those of their own side or mind,
Still make themselves the measure of mankind:
Fondly[5] we think we honor merit then,
When we but praise ourselves in other men.
Parties in wit attend on those of state,
And public faction doubles private hate.
Pride, Malice, Folly against Dryden rose,
In various shapes of parsons, critics, beaux;
But sense survived, when merry jests were past;
For rising merit will buoy up at last.

2. Those who have divided the church on points of theology. Pope stressed the first syllable, the pronunciation approved by Johnson in his *Dictionary*.
3. The medieval theologians, such as the followers of Duns Scotus and St. Thomas Aquinas mentioned in line 444; "sentences" alludes to Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences*, a book esteemed by Scholastic philosophers.
4. Street where publishers' remainders and second-hand books were sold.
5. Foolishly.

Might he return and bless once more our eyes,
New Blackmores and new Milbourns must arise.[6]
Nay, should great Homer lift his awful head,
Zoïlus[7] again would start up from the dead.
Envy will merit, as its shade, pursue,
But like a shadow, proves the substance true;
For envied wit, like Sol eclipsed, makes known
The opposing body's grossness, not its own.
When first that sun too powerful beams displays,
It draws up vapors which obscure its rays;
But even those clouds at last adorn its way,
Reflect new glories, and augment the day.
Be thou the first true merit to befriend;
His praise is lost who stays till all commend.
Short is the date, alas! of modern rhymes,
And 'tis but just to let them live betimes.
No longer now that golden age appears,
When patriarch wits survived a thousand years:
Now length of fame (our second life) is lost,
And bare threescore is all even that can boast;
Our sons their fathers' failing language see,
And such as Chaucer is shall Dryden be.[8]
So when the faithful pencil has designed
Some bright idea of the master's mind,
Where a new world leaps out at his command,
And ready Nature waits upon his hand;
When the ripe colors soften and unite,
And sweetly melt into just shade and light;
When mellowing years their full perfection give,
And each bold figure just begins to live,
The treacherous colors the fair art betray,
And all the bright creation fades away!
Unhappy wit, like most mistaken things,
Atones not for that envy which it brings.
In youth alone its empty praise we boast,
But soon the short-lived vanity is lost;
Like some fair flower the early spring supplies,
That gaily blooms, but even in blooming dies,
What is this wit, which must our cares employ?
The owner's wife, that other men enjoy;
Then most our trouble still when most admired,
And still the more we give, the more required;
Whose fame with pains we guard, but lose with ease,
Sure some to vex, but never all to please;

6. Sir Richard Blackmore, physician and poet, had attacked Dryden for the immorality of his plays; the Rev. Luke Milbourn had attacked his translation of Virgil.
7. A Greek critic of the 4th century B.C., who wrote a book of carping criticism of Homer.
8. The radical changes that took place in the English language between the death of Chaucer in 1400 and the death of Dryden in 1700 suggested that in another 300 years Dryden would be unintelligible. Latin seemed the only means of attaining enduring fame.

'Tis what the vicious fear, the virtuous shun,
By fools 'tis hated, and by knaves undone!
If wit so much from ignorance undergo,
Ah, let not learning too commence its foe!
Of old those met rewards who could excel,
And such were praised who but endeavored well;
Though triumphs were to generals only due,
Crowns were reserved to grace the soldiers too.
Now they who reach Parnassus' lofty crown
Employ their pains to spurn some others down;
And while self-love each jealous writer rules,
Contending wits become the sport of fools;
But still the worst with most regret commend,
For each ill author is as bad a friend.
To what base ends, and by what abject ways,
Are morals urged through sacred[9] lust of praise!
Ah, ne'er so dire a thirst of glory boast,
Nor in the critic let the man be lost!
Good nature and good sense must ever join;
To err is human, to forgive divine.
But if in noble minds some dregs remain
Nor yet purged off, of spleen and sour disdain,
Discharge that rage on more provoking crimes,
Nor fear a dearth in these flagitious[1] times.
No pardon vile obscenity should find,
Though wit and art conspire to move your mind;
But dullness with obscenity must prove
As shameful sure as impotence in love.
In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease
Sprung the rank weed, and thrived with large increase:
When love was all an easy monarch's[2] care,
Seldom at council, never in a war;
Jilts ruled the state, and statesmen farces writ;
Nay, wits had pensions, and young lords had wit;
The fair sat panting at a courtier's play,
And not a mask[3] went unimproved away;
The modest fan was lifted up no more,
And virgins smiled at what they blushed before.
The following license of a foreign reign
Did all the dregs of bold Socinus drain;[4]
Then unbelieving priests reformed the nation,
And taught more pleasant methods of salvation;
Where Heaven's free subjects might their rights dispute,
Lest God himself should seem too absolute;
Pulpits their sacred satire learned to spare,

9. Accursed. The phrase imitates Virgil's "*auri sacra fames*," "accursed hunger for gold" (*Aeneid* III.57).
1. Scandalously wicked.
2. Charles II. The concluding lines of Part II discuss the corruption of wit and poetry under this monarch.
3. A woman wearing a mask.
4. The "foreign reign" refers to William III, a Dutchman. Socinus was the name of two Italian theologians of the 16th century who denied the divinity of Jesus.

And Vice admired to find a flatterer there!
Encouraged thus, wit's Titans braved the skies,
And the press groaned with licensed blasphemies.
These monsters, critics! with your darts engage,
Here point your thunder, and exhaust your rage!
Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice,
Will needs mistake an author into vice;
All seems infected that the infected spy,
As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.

1709 1711

The Rape of the Lock[1]

AN HEROI-COMICAL POEM

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos;
sed juvat hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis.
—MARTIAL

TO MRS. ARABELLA FERMOR

MADAM,

It will be in vain to deny that I have some regard for this piece, since I dedicate it to you. Yet you may bear me witness, it was intended only to divert a few young ladies, who have good sense and good humor enough to laugh not only at their sex's little unguarded follies, but at their own. But it was communicated with the air of a secret, it soon found its way into the world. An imperfect copy having been offered to a bookseller, you had the good nature for my sake to consent to the publication of one more correct; this I was forced to, before I had executed half my design, for the machinery was entirely wanting to complete it.

The machinery, Madam, is a term invented by the critics, to signify that part which the deities, angels, or demons are made to act in a poem; for the ancient poets are in one respect like many modern ladies: let an action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance. These machines I determined to raise on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian [1a] doctrine of spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard words before a lady; but 'tis so much the concern of a poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your sex, that you must give me leave to explain two or three difficult terms.

The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book called *Le Comte de Gabalis*,[1b] which both in its title and size is so like a novel, that many of the fair sex have read it for one by mistake. According to these gentlemen, the four elements are inhabited by spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, and Salamanders. The Gnomes or Demons of earth delight in mischief; but the Sylphs, whose habitation is in the air, are the best-conditioned creatures imaginable. For they say, any mortals may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true adepts, an inviolate preservation of chastity.

As to the following cantos, all the passages of them are as fabulous as the vision at the beginning, or the transformation at the end; (except the loss of your hair, which I always mention with reverence). The human persons are as fictitious as the airy ones; and the character of Belinda, as it is now managed, resembles you in nothing but in beauty.

If this poem had as many graces as there are in your person, or in your mind, yet I could never hope it should pass through the world half so uncensured as you have done. But let its fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this occasion of assuring you that I am, with the truest esteem,

MADAM,
Your most obedient, humble servant,
A. POPE

1. *The Rape of the Lock* is based upon an actual episode that provoked a quarrel between two prominent Catholic families. Pope's friend John Caryll, to whom the poem is addressed (line 3), suggested that Pope write it, in the hope that a little laughter might serve to soothe ruffled tempers. Lord Petre had cut off a lock of hair from the head of the lovely Arabella Fermor (often spelled "Farmer" and doubtless so pronounced), much to the indignation of the lady and her relatives. In its original version of two cantos and 334 lines, published in 1712, *The Rape of the Lock* was a great success. In 1713 a new version was undertaken against the advice of Addison, who considered the poem perfect as it was first written. Pope greatly expanded the earlier version, adding the delightful "machinery" (i.e., the supernatural agents in epic action) of the Sylphs, Belinda's toilet, the card game, and the visit to the Cave of Spleen in Canto IV. In 1717, with the addition of Clarissa's speech on good humor, the poem assumed its final form.

With supreme tact, delicate fancy, playful wit, and the gentlest satire, Pope elaborated the trivial episode which occasioned the poem into the semblance of an epic in miniature, the most nearly perfect "heroi-comical poem" in English. The poem abounds in parodies and echoes of the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, and *Paradise Lost*, thus constantly forcing the reader to compare small things with great. The familiar devices of epic are observed, but the incidents or characters are beautifully proportioned to the scale of mock epic. The *Rape* tells of war, but it is the drawing-room war between the sexes; it has its heroes and heroines, but they are beaux and belles; it has its supernatural characters ("machinery") but they are Sylphs (borrowed, as Pope tells us in his engaging dedicatory letter, from Rosicrucian lore)—creatures of the air, the souls of dead coquettes, with tasks appropriate to their nature—or the Gnome Umbriel, once a prude on earth; it has its epic game, played on the "velvet plain" of the card table, its feasting heroes, who sip coffee and gossip, its battle, fought with the clichés of compliment and conceits, with frowns and angry glances, with snuff and a bodkin; it has the traditional epic journey to the underworld—here the Cave of Spleen, emblematic of the peevish ill nature of spoiled and hypochondriacal women. And Pope creates a world in which these actions take place, a world that is dense with beautiful objects: brocades, ivory and tortoise shell, cosmetics and diamonds, lacquered furniture, silver teapot, delicate chinaware. It is a world that is constantly in motion and that sparkles and glitters with light, whether the light of the sun, or of Belinda's eyes, or that light into which the "fluid" bodies of the Sylphs seem to dissolve as they flutter in the shrouds and around the mast of Belinda's ship. Though Pope laughs at this world and its creatures—and remembers that a grimmer, darker world surrounds it (III.19–24 and V.145–48)—he makes us very much aware of its beauty and its charm.

The epigraph may be translated, "I was unwilling, Belinda, to ravish your locks; but I rejoice to have conceded this to your prayers" (Martial, *Epitrams* XII.lxxxiv.1–2). Pope substituted his heroine for Martial's Polytimus. The epigraph is intended to suggest that the poem was published at Miss Fermor's request.

1a. A system of arcane philosophy introduced into England from Germany in the 17th century.

1b. By the Abbé de Montfaucon de Villars, published in 1670.

AUGUSTAN REFLECTIVE POETRY

JOHN DENHAM (1615-69)
Apart from Milton, the poet the Augustans unequivocally admired and actively imitated.
Cooper's Hill (1642-88) – established **the exact standard of good writing, a due obedience to decorum and correctness of form, imagery and vocabulary, set a pattern for the English poetry of place** which combines the celebration of place with reflections on politics, history, morals with associations national and from classical mythology.

Denham's mode was much copied. It inspired **Pope's *Windsor Forest*** (1713) and **John Dyer's *Grongar Hill*** (1726).

The presentation of an idealized rural idyll as an aid to reflection, philosophical meditation and personal introspection in the Augustan period served as a counterbalance to the urban satire. Both the urban satire and rural meditation derive their inspiration from Horace, who excelled in both and is the predominant influence of the age.

HORACE (65-8 BC) was most admired for his **temper**, which is **balanced, mature** and **manly** and his **grave, generalized phrasing** which flows from it. He was pre-eminently a poet of **general themes**.
His **odes**, apart from those on political subjects, treat the pleasures of friendship and of rural solitude, the transcience of human happiness, the folly of ambition etc., i.e. the themes that have formed **the common stock of reflection for the ordinary man in every age.** These themes he treats with **a remarkable delicacy of language** and **clarity of definition,** giving the casual meditation the stamp of **permanence.** What the Augustans found most valuable for their own age was his **decorum – a delicate adjustment between language, metrical emphasis, thought and feeling,** which creates **a sense of harmony** between the poet and the reader.

Horace's poetry, and that of the Horatian tradition,is not dramatic, it is essentially **reflective** – it means that the experiences which he treats are not presented for their immediate impact but for the sake of **generalized reflections which flow from a balanced presentation of different emotional states.** The remoteness in them is thus calculated. The poet merges his own individuality in the general consciousness of his readers, pointing to what he has in common with the reader and ignoring what separates them. The reader, in his turn, looks for what he already knows rather than searches for unknown realms of experience. This kind of poetry demands from both the reader and the poet an understanding of how **much personal emotion a poem can bear without disturbing the desired balance.** Both parties are here to exercise their faculty of **'judgement'**. This insistence on **proportion** allows little scope for the presentation of the unique nature of emotional experience. But while the range of sensitivity is thus limited in one way, it is extended in another – the poet's emotion has been so framed that it implies **all situations in which such an emotion might arise**. This is coupled with **a strong awareness of tradition** and the relevance of past literature to contemporary experience. The newness of the poem consists in the subtle relationship which the poet establishes between the experience of the past and that of

his own day, creating thereby a sense of **timelessness**. (See **Countess of Winchilsea's** ***A Nocturnal Réverie*** – observation for the sake of general reflection)

Augustan poetry is always aware of its **social** context. While in the 17C tradition a retreat to nature meant retirement from practical business to ideal contemplation (see **Pope's** ***Ode to Solitude*****, Winchilsea's** ***The Petition for an Absolute Retreat*** **and Hughes's** ***A Thought in a Garden,*** all inspired by Horace's 2nd Epode), in the 18C a retreat came to mean **turning from ambition to usefulness** (on the Horatian model), asking thus for the best of both worlds – to have life's pleasures and immortality. This also resolves the old conflict between Nature and Art – Nature is still the antithesis of the artfulness of the courtier (like it was in the pastoral) but she is now "Nature methodized" (Pope), "Nature taught Art", Nature which has benefited from man's civilizing hand. (See **Pomfret's** ***The Choice*** advocating the Horatian 'golden mean')

Thomas Gray's ***Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*** (1751) represents the highest achievement of the Augustan reflective tradition. It intermixes the poetry of country retirement with self-reflective nocturnal reveries on the egalitarian nature of Death the Great Leveller (probably modelled on the 24th ode of Horace's 1st book of odes). Its influence persists until the end of the century. But from 1750 onwards there is a significant shift of emphasis – from moral and social issues to the cultivation of feeling for its own sake.

SIR JOHN DENHAM

from *Cooper's Hill*
[*The Thames*]

My eye, descending from the hill, surveys
Where Thames amongst the wanton valleys strays.
Thames, the most loved of all the Ocean's sons,
By his old sire to his embraces runs,
Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,
Like mortal life to meet eternity;
Though with those streams he no resemblance hold,
Whose foam is amber, and their gravel gold;
His genuine, and less guilty, wealth t'explore,
Search not his bottom, but survey his shore,
O'er which he kindly spreads his spacious wing,
And hatches plenty for the ensuing spring.
Nor then destroys it with too fond a stay,
Like mothers which their infants overlay;
Nor with a sudden and impetuous wave,
Like profuse kings, resumes the wealth he gave.
No unexpected inundations spoil
The mowers' hopes, nor mock the ploughman's toil;
But godlike his unwearied bounty flows:
First loves to do, then loves the good he does.
Nor are his blessings to his banks confined,
But free and common as the sea or wind,
When he to boast or to disperse his stores,
Full of the tributes of his grateful shores,
Visits the world, and in his flying towers
Brings home to us, and makes both Indies ours;
Finds wealth where 'tis, bestows it where it wants;
Cities in deserts, woods in cities plants;
So that to us no thing, no place is strange,
While his fair bosom is the world's exchange.
Rome only conquered half the world, but trade
One commonwealth of that and her hath made,
And, though the sun his beam extends to all,
Yet to his neighbour sheds most liberal:
Lest God and nature partial should appear,
Commerce makes everything grow everywhere.
Oh could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.

(1642–68)

from *Windsor Forest*

To the Right Honourable George Lord Lansdowne

THY forests, Windsor! and thy green retreats,
At once the Monarch's and the Muses' seats,
Invite my lays. Be present, sylvan maids!
Unlock your springs, and open all your shades.
Granville commands; your aid, O Muses, bring!
What Muse for Granville can refuse to sing?
The groves of Eden, vanished now so long,
Live in description, and look green in song:
These, were my breast inspired with equal flame,
Like them in beauty, should be like in fame.
Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,
Here earth and water seem to strive again;

Not chaos-like together crushed and bruised,
But, as the world, harmoniously confused:
Where order in variety we see,
And where, though all things differ, all agree.
Here waving groves a chequered scene display,
And part admit and part exclude the day;
As some coy nymph her lover's warm address
Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repress.
There, interspersed in lawns and opening glades,
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades.
Here in full light the russet plains extend:
There, wrapped in clouds the bluish hills ascend:
Ev'n the wild heath displays her purple dyes,
And midst the desert fruitful fields arise,
That crowned with tufted trees and springing corn,
Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn.
Let India boast her plants, nor envy we
The weeping amber or the balmy tree,
While by our oaks the precious loads are borne,
And realms commanded which those trees adorn.
Not proud Olympus yields a nobler sight,
Though gods assembled grace his tow'ring height,
Than what more humble mountains offer here,
Where, in their blessings, all those gods appear.
See Pan with flocks, with fruits Pomona crowned,
Here blushing Flora paints th' enamelled ground,
Here Ceres' gifts in waving prospect stand,
And nodding tempt the joyful reaper's hand;
Rich Industry sits smiling on the plains,
And peace and plenty tell, a Stuart reigns.

(1713)

JOHN DYER

Grongar Hill

SILENT Nymph, with curious eye!
Who, the purple ev'ning, lie
On the mountain's lonely van,
Beyond the noise of busy man,
Painting fair the form of things,
While the yellow linnet sings;
Or the tuneful nightingale
Charms the forest with her tale;
Come with all thy various hues,
Come, and aid thy sister Muse;
Now while Phoebus riding high
Gives lustre to the land and sky!
Grongar Hill invites my song,
Draw the landscape bright and strong;
Grongar, in whose mossy cells
Sweetly-musing Quiet dwells;
Grongar, in whose silent shade,
For the modest Muses made,
So oft I have, the evening still,
At the fountain of a rill,
Sat upon a flow'ry bed,
With my hand beneath my head;
While strayed my eyes o'er Towy's flood,
Over mead and over wood,
From house to house, from hill to hill,
Till Contemplation had her fill.

About his chequered sides I wind,
And leave his brooks and meads behind,
And groves and grottoes where I lay,
And vistoes shooting beams of day:
Wide and wider spreads the vale,
As circles on a smooth canal.
The mountains round, unhappy fate!
Sooner or later, of all height,
Withdraw their summits from the skies,
And lessen as the others rise:
Still the prospect wider spreads,
Adds a thousand woods and meads,
Still it widens, widens still,
And sinks the newly-risen hill.
Now I gain the mountain's brow,
What a landscape lies below!
No clouds, no vapours intervene,
But the gay, the open scene
Does the face of nature show,
In all the hues of heaven's bow!
And, swelling to embrace the light,
Spreads around beneath the sight.
Old castles on the cliffs arise,
Proudly tow'ring in the skies!
Rushing from the woods, the spires
Seem from hence ascending fires!
Half his beams Apollo sheds
On the yellow mountain-heads!
Gilds the fleeces of the flocks,
And glitters on the broken rocks!

Below me trees unnumbered rise,
Beautiful in various dyes:
The gloomy pine, the poplar blue,
The yellow beech, the sable yew,
The slender fir that taper grows,
The sturdy oak with broad-spread boughs.
And beyond the purple grove,
Haunt of Phillis, queen of love!
Gaudy as the op'ning dawn,
Lies a long and level lawn,
On which a dark hill, steep and high,
Holds and charms the wand'ring eye!
Deep are his feet in Towy's flood,
His sides are clothed with waving wood,
And ancient towers crown his brow,
That cast an awful look below;

Whose ragged walls the ivy creeps,
And with her arms from falling keeps;
So both a safety from the wind
On mutual dependence find.
'Tis now the raven's bleak abode;
'Tis now th' apartment of the toad;
And there the fox securely feeds;
And there the pois'nous adder breeds,
Concealed in ruins, moss and weeds;
While, ever and anon, there falls
Huge heaps of hoary mouldered walls.
Yet time has seen, that lifts the low,
And level lays the lofty brow,
Has seen this broken pile complete,
Big with the vanity of state;
But transient is the smile of fate!
A little rule, a little sway,
A sunbeam in a winter's day,
Is all the proud and mighty have
Between the cradle and the grave.
And see the rivers how they run,
Through woods and meads, in shade and sun;
Sometimes swift, sometimes slow,
Wave succeeding wave, they go
A various journey to the deep,
Like human life to endless sleep!
Thus is nature's vesture wrought
To instruct our wand'ring thought;
Thus she dresses green and gay,
To disperse our cares away.
Ever charming, ever new,
When will the landscape tire the view!
The fountain's fall, the river's flow,
The woody valleys, warm and low;
The windy summit, wild and high,
Roughly rushing on the sky!
The pleasant seat, the ruined tow'r,
The naked rock, the shady bow'r;
The town and village, dome and farm,
Each give each a double charm,
As pearls upon an Ethiop's arm.
See on the mountain's southern side,
Where the prospect opens wide,
Where the evening gilds the tide;
How close and small the hedges lie!
What streaks of meadows cross the eye!

Dyer's 'Grongar Hill' (cont.)

A step methinks may pass the stream,
So little distant dangers seem;
So we mistake the future's face,
Eyed through hope's deluding glass;
As yon summits soft and fair,
Clad in colours of the air,
Which to those who journey near,
Barren, brown and rough appear;
Still we tread the same coarse way,
The present's still a cloudy day.
O may I with myself agree,
And never covet what I see:
Content me with an humble shade,
My passions tamed, my wishes laid;
For while our wishes wildly roll,
We banish quiet from the soul:
'Tis thus the busy beat the air,
And misers gather wealth and care.
Now, ev'n now, my joys run high,
As on the mountain-turf I lie;
While the wanton Zephyr sings,
And in the vale perfumes his wings;
While the waters murmur deep;
While the shepherd charms his sheep;
While the birds unbounded fly,
And with music fill the sky,
Now, ev'n now, my joys run high.
Be full, ye courts, be great who will;
Search for Peace with all your skill:
Open wide the lofty door,
Seek her on the marble floor,
In vain you search, she is not there;
In vain ye search the domes of care!
Grass and flowers Quiet treads,
On the meads and mountain-heads,
Along with Pleasure, close allied,
Ever by each other's side:
And often, by the murm'ring rill,
Hears the thrush, while all is still,
Within the groves of Grongar Hill.

(1726)

ALEXANDER POPE
1688–1744

Ode on Solitude

HAPPY the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air,
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Blest! who can unconcernedly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night; study and ease
Together mixed; sweet recreation
And innocence, which most does please,
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown;
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

(1717)

A Thought in a Garden

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1704

Delightful mansion! blest retreat!
Where all is silent, all is sweet!
Here Contemplation prunes her wings,
The raptured Muse more tuneful sings,
While May leads on the cheerful hours,
And opens a new world of flowers.
Gay Pleasure here all dresses wears,
And in a thousand shapes appears.
Pursued by Fancy, how she roves
Through airy walks, and museful groves;
Springs in each plant and blossomed tree,

And charms in all I hear and see!
In this elysium while I stray,
And Nature's fairest face survey,
Earth seems new-born, and life more bright;
Time steals away, and smooths his flight;
And Thought's bewildered in delight.
Where are the crowds I saw of late?
What are those tales of Europe's fate?
Of Anjou, and the Spanish crown;
And leagues to pull usurpers down?
Of marching armies, distant wars;
Of factions, and domestic jars?
Sure these are last night's dreams, no more;
Or some romance, read lately o'er;
Like Homer's antique tale of Troy,
And powers confederate to destroy
Priam's proud house, the Dardan name,
With him that stole the ravished dame,
And, to possess another's right,
Durst the whole world to arms excite.
Come, gentle Sleep, my eyelids close,
These dull impressions help me lose:
Let Fancy take her wing, and find
Some better dreams to soothe my mind;
Or waking let me learn to live;
The prospect will instruction give.
For see, where beauteous Thames does glide
Serene, but with a fruitful tide;
Free from extremes of ebb and flow,
Not swelled too high, nor sunk too low:
Such let my life's smooth current be,
Till from Time's narrow shore set free,
It mingle with th'eternal sea;
And, there enlarged, shall be no more
That trifling thing it was before.

ANNE FINCH, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA

1661–1720

from *The Petition for an Absolute Retreat: Inscribed to the Right Honourable Catharine Countess of Thanet, Mentioned in the Poem under the Name of Arminda*

GIVE me, O indulgent fate,
Give me yet, before I die,
A sweet, but absolute retreat,
Mongst paths so lost and trees so high
That the world may ne'er invade,
Through such windings and such shade,
My unshaken liberty.
No intruders thither come!
Who visit but to be from home;
None who their vain moments pass,
Only studious of their glass:
News, that charm to listening ears;

That common theme for every fop,
From the statesman to the shop,
In those coverts ne'er be spread,
Of who's deceased or who's to wed;
Be no tidings thither brought,
But silent as a midnight thought,
Where the world may ne'er invade,
Be those windings, and that shade.
Courteous fate! afford me there
A table spread without my care,
With what the neighbouring fields impart,
Whose cleanliness be all its art:
When of old the calf was dressed
(Though to make an angel's feast)
In the plain, unstudied sauce
Nor truffle, nor morillia was;
Nor could the mighty patriarch's board
One far-fetched ortolan afford.
Courteous fate, then give me there
Only plain, and wholesome fare.
Fruits, indeed (would heaven bestow),
All that did in Eden grow,
All but the forbidden tree,
Would be coveted by me:
Grapes, with juice so crowded up,
As breaking through the native cup;
Figs, yet growing, candied o'er
By the sun's attracting power;
Cherries, with the downy peach,
All within my easy reach;
Whilst creeping near the humble ground
Should the strawberry be found
Springing wheresoe'er I strayed,
Through those windings and that shade.

morillia] morels patriarch's] Abraham's (Gen. 18: 7)

JOHN HUGHES

ANNE FINCH, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA

1661–1720

A Nocturnal Reverie

In such a night, when every louder wind
Is to its distant cavern safe confined;
And only gentle Zephyr fans his wings,
And lonely Philomel, still waking, sings;
Or from some tree, famed for the owl's delight,

She, hollowing clear, directs the wand'rer right;
In such a night, when passing clouds give place,
Or thinly veil the heaven's mysterious face;
When in some river overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen;
When freshened grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Whence springs the woodbind and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip sheltered grows;
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes;
When scattered glow-worms, but in twilight fine,
Show trivial beauties, watch their hour to shine;
Whilst Salisb'ry stands the test of every light,
In perfect charms and perfect virtue bright;
When odours, which declined repelling day,
Through temp'rate air uninterrupted stray;
When darkened groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear;
When through the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric, awful in repose,
While sunburnt hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling haycocks thicken up the vale;
When the loosed horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing through th' adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear;
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine rechew the cud;
When curlews cry beneath the village walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures whilst tyrant man does sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals,
But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something too high for syllables to speak;
Till the free soul to a compos'dness charmed,
Finding the elements of rage disarmed,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in th' inferior world and thinks it like her own:
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks, and all's confused again:
Our cares, our toils, our clamours are renewed,
Or pleasures, seldom reached, again pursued.

(1713)

JOHN POMFRET

1667–1702

The Choice

If heav'n the grateful liberty would give,
That I might choose my method how to live,
And all those hours propitious Fate should lend
In blissful ease and satisfaction spend:
  Near some fair town I'd have a private seat,
Built uniform, not little, nor too great:
Better, if on a rising ground it stood,
Fields on this side, on that a neighbouring wood.
It should within no other things contain
But what were useful, necessary, plain:
Methinks 'tis nauseous, and I'd ne'er endure
The needless pomp of gaudy furniture.
A little garden, grateful to the eye,
And a cool rivulet run murm'ring by,
On whose delicious banks a stately row
Of shady limes or sycamores should grow;
At th' end of which a silent study placed
Should be with all the noblest authors graced:
Horace and Virgil, in whose mighty lines
Immortal wit and solid learning shines;
Sharp Juvenal, and am'rous Ovid too,
Who all the turns of love's soft passion knew;
He that with judgement reads his charming lines,
In which strong art with stronger nature joins,
Must grant his fancy does the best excel,
His thoughts so tender, and expressed so well;
With all those moderns, men of steady sense,
Esteemed for learning and for eloquence.
In some of these, as fancy should advise,
I'd always take my morning exercise:
For sure no minutes bring us more content
Than those in pleasing, useful studies spent.
  I'd have a clear and competent estate,
That I might live genteelly, but not great:
As much as I could moderately spend;
A little more, sometimes t' oblige a friend.
Nor should the sons of poverty repine
Too much at fortune, they should taste of mine;
And all that objects of true pity were
Should be relieved with what my wants could spare:
For what our Maker has too largely giv'n
Should be returned in gratitude to heav'n.
A frugal plenty should my table spread,
With healthy, not luxurious, dishes fed:
Enough to satisfy, and something more
To feed the stranger, and the neighb'ring poor.

Pomfret's 'The Choice' (cont.)

Strong meat indulges vice, and pampering food
Creates diseases, and inflames the blood.
But what's sufficient to make nature strong,
And the bright lamp of life continue long,
I'd freely take; and, as I did possess,
The bounteous Author of my plenty bless.
  I'd have a little vault, but always stored
With the best wines each vintage could afford.
Wine whets the wit, improves its native force,
And gives a pleasant flavour to discourse;
By making all our spirits debonair,
Throws off the lees, the sediment of care.
But as the greatest blessing heaven lends
May be debauched, and serve ignoble ends;
So, but too oft, the grape's refreshing juice
Does many mischievous effects produce.
My house should no such rude disorders know,
As from high drinking consequently flow.
Nor would I use what was so kindly giv'n
To the dishonour of indulgent heav'n.
If any neighbour came, he should be free,
Used with respect, and not uneasy be
In my retreat, or to himself or me.
What freedom, prudence, and right reason give,
All men may with impunity receive:
But the least swerving from their rule's too much;
For what's forbidden us, 'tis death to touch.
  That life may be more comfortable yet,
And all my joys refined, sincere, and great,
I'd choose two friends, whose company would be
A great advance to my felicity:
Well-born, of humours suited to my own,
Discreet, and men as well as books have known;
Brave, gen'rous, witty, and exactly free
From loose behaviour, or formality;
Airy and prudent, merry, but not light,
Quick in discerning, and in judging right.
Secret they should be, faithful to their trust;
In reas'ning cool, strong, temperate, and just;
Obliging, open, without huffing brave,
Brisk in gay talking, and in sober, grave;
Close in dispute, but not tenacious; tried
By solid reason, and let that decide;
Not prone to lust, revenge, or envious hate,
Nor busy meddlers with intrigues of state;
Strangers to slander, and sworn foes to spite,
Not quarrelsome, but stout enough to fight;
Loyal, and pious, friends to Caesar; true,
As dying martyrs, to their Maker too.
In their society I could not miss
A permanent, sincere, substantial bliss.

Pomfret's "The Choice" (cont. 2)

Would bounteous heav'n once more indulge, I'd choose
(For who would so much satisfaction lose,
As witty nymphs, in conversation, give?)
Near some obliging, modest fair to live;
For there's that sweetness in a female mind,
Which in a man's we cannot hope to find;
That, by a secret but a pow'rful art,
Winds up the springs of life, and does impart
Fresh vital heat to the transported heart.
I'd have her reason all her passions sway:
Easy in company, in private gay;
Coy to a fop, to the deserving free,
Still constant to herself, and just to me.
A soul she should have for great actions fit;
Prudence and wisdom to direct her wit;
Courage to look bold danger in the face,
No fear, but only to be proud, or base;
Quick to advise, by an emergence pressed,
To give good counsel, or to take the best.
I'd have th' expression of her thoughts be such,
She might not seem reserved, nor talk too much:
That shows a want of judgement, and of sense;
More than enough is but impertinence.
Her conduct regular, her mirth refined,
Civil to strangers, to her neighbours kind;
Averse to vanity, revenge, and pride,
In all the methods of deceit untried;
So faithful to her friend, and good to all,
No censure might upon her actions fall:
Then would e'en envy be compelled to say,
She goes the least of womankind astray.
To this fair creature I'd sometimes retire;
Her conversation would new joys inspire,
Give life an edge so keen, no surly care
Would venture to assault my soul, or dare
Near my retreat to hide one secret snare.
But so divine, so noble a repast
I'd seldom, and with moderation, taste.
For highest cordials all their virtue lose
By a too frequent and too bold an use;
And what would cheer the spirits in distress,
Ruins our health when taken to excess.
I'd be concerned in no litigious jar;
Beloved by all, not vainly popular.
Whate'er assistance I had power to bring
T' oblige my country, or to serve my king,
Whene'er they called, I'd readily afford,
My tongue, my pen, my counsel, or my sword.
Law-suits I'd shun, with as much studious care,
As I would dens where hungry lions are;

Pomfret's The Choice (cont. 3)

And rather put up injuries than be
A plague to him, who'd be a plague to me.
I value quiet at a price too great
To give for my revenge so dear a rate:
For what do we by all our bustle gain,
But counterfeit delight for real pain?
If heav'n a date of many years would give,
Thus I'd in pleasure, ease, and plenty live.
And as I near approached the verge of life,
Some kind relation (for I'd have no wife)
Should take upon him all my worldly care,
While I did for a better state prepare.
Then I'd not be with any trouble vexed,
Nor have the ev'ning of my days perplexed;
But by a silent and a peaceful death,
Without a sigh, resign my aged breath:
And when committed to the dust, I'd have
Few tears, but friendly, dropped into my grave.
Then would my exit so propitious be,
All men would wish to live and die like me.

(1700)

Thomas Gray

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a moldering heap,

Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude[1] forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,[2]
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe[3] has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry,[4] the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies[5] raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted[6] vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn[7] or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke[8] the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden,[9] that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,[1]
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

9. John Hampden (1594–1643), who, both as a private citizen and as a Member of Parliament, zealously defended the rights of the people against the autocratic policies of Charles I. A gallant soldier, he was mortally wounded in a skirmish near Oxford.

1. Cf. "the storied urn or animated bust" dedicated inside the church to "the proud" (line 41).

Gray's "Elegy" (cont.)

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
  This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
  Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
  Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
  Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of the unhonored dead
  Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
  Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
  "Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
  To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
  That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
  And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
  Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
  Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
  Along the heath and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
  Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next with dirges due in sad array
  Slow through the churchway path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,
  Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
  A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science[2] *frowned not on his humble birth,*
  And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
  Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
  He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
  Or draw his frailties from their dread abode
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
  The bosom of his Father and his God.

ca. 1742–50 1751

2. Learning.

AUGUSTAN SATIRE

Satire was the only literary form invented by the Romans and the Romans gave the genre its modern sense and purpose.

In **Latin** there were two main groups of satirists:

1) the **satiric poets** who specialized in **the invective against clearly identifiable or thinly disguised personalities**. The inventor of this type of poetry was **Lucilius** (150-102 BC) whose works have not survived. His follower was **Horace** (65-8 BC) who began his career writing sour social criticism and, gradually mellowing, turned to philosophical and aesthetic questions; towards midlife he gave up satires for gentler epistles. After him came **Persius** (AD 34-62), an admirer of stoicism, who wrote remarkably realistic satires in a vivid and strange slangy style. The last and greatest of Roman satirists was **Juvenal** (Juvenalis) (c. AD 55-130) who produced the most bitter and eloquent social satires ever written. His best-known and most often imitated satires are Satire 3 (on the horrors of metropolitan life), Satire 6 (a vicious attack on women) and Satire 10 (a sombre meditation on the vanity of human hopes).
2) **Menippean satirists**, writing in **prose**, with short interludes of verse, often parodic. This style was invented by the Greek (or rather Syrian) Cynic philosopher **Menippus of Gadara** (3rd century BC) who used it to make fun of his political opponents. Cicero's friend **Varro** introduced the style in Latin literature, but his work is now lost.

In the Roman satire there are traces of certain **Greek influences**:

a) the **desire to improve society and purge its abuses by attacking notorious fools and villains** derives from **Athenian Old Comedy** whose only surviving representative is **Aristophanes**. Since the Romans had no equivalent to this kind of comedy, they used satire for the same purpose.
b) **Greek street-preachers**, usually Cynics and Sceptics, who gave ostensibly improvised sermons (called '**diatribes**') on themes drawn from their own doctrines – usually on paradoxes which would attract a crowd, and they would illustrate them using anecdotes, character-sketches, fables, dialogues against imaginary opponents, topical references, parodies of serious poetry, obscene jokes and slang phrases. However, the moral seriousness, the direct violence and the cruelty of satire are rather more Roman than Greek.
c) the prose of **Lucian** (Lukianos) (2nd century AD), who contributed a tone of **amused disillusionment**, displaying a kinder and more gentle temperament than is usual in Roman satirists. (His fabulous travel-tales served as models for Swift's *Gulliver's Travels.*)

Satire based on the Roman model is a continuous piece of verse, or of prose mingled with verse, of considerable size, with great variety of style and subject, but generally characterized by the free use of conversational language, the frequent intrusion of its author's personality, its predilection for wit, humour, and irony, great vividness and concreteness of description, shocking obscenity in theme and language, an improvisatory tone, topical subjects, and the general intention of improving society

by exposing its vices and follies. Its essence is summed up in words *ridentem dicere uerum* = joking in earnest.

Most modern satirical prose owes little directly to any classical satirist except Lucian. Indirectly the writers, though, gained additional force and variety of expression from the study of Greco-Roman satire in general, being stimulated by their immense moral energy, and encouraged to emulate their ironic amusement, their vigorous brevity and their surgical economy of effort.

Most modern verse satire, on the other hand, was directly inspired by the form, or the matter, or both the form and the matter, of the Roman verse-satirists.

Mock heroic episodes do occur in Roman satire, but they are only a few dozen lines long, with the exception of Juvenal's description of an imperial council held by Domitian on a ridiculously trivial subject, related in grandiose terms appropriate to Homeric or Virgilian heroes. But there is no mock epic on the scale of **DRYDEN's** (***Absalom and Achitophel, The Medal, MacFlecknoe***) in classical literature (Dryden claimed to have been influenced by Tassoni's *Ravished Bucket* and Boileau's mock heroic poem on an ecclesiastical dispute *The Lectern*). Juvenal had provided some character sketches, but none so independent and full as those in Dryden's satires. His satires are **good-tempered**, but capable at times of **devastating scorn**. He has a **genius for verse rhythm** and **an exceptional expressiveness of language**.
He is surpassed in range of interest amd vitality of expression by

POPE who is the greater poet in virtue not only of immediate accessbility but of his **crystallization of the Augustan world** in a style not less animatedly vernacular but more subtle in its complex of sense-and-feeling. He produced the prettiest of all mock heroic satires, and one of the earliest rococo poems, **in *The Rape of the Lock***. His best satires are his ***Moral Essays***, the ***Epistle to Augustus***, ***The Epilogue to the Satires***, parts of ***The Dunciad*** and, best of all, the ***Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot***. One obstacle to the modern reader is Pope's dependence on contemporary references which necessitates elaborate lists of explanatory notes. His greatness lies in his **deeply responsible concern for taste, intelligence and humanity, expressed with an artistic intensity and personal passion which fuse into vividness, and often into beauty, the raw material of contemporary life.** He shares with the finest writers of the time **an original force, a power and a daring of conception, a genius of expression and an exceptional richness of feeling.**

The term "**imitation**" was first given currency by Dryden when he distinguished among three kinds of translation: metaphrase, or word-by-word literal translation; paraphrase, or a translation that retains the meaning of the original but does so by departing from strict literalness; and finally imitation which departs freely from the original text to create a new poem in its spirit using the experience of the new age to take the place of earlier material. (**SWIFT's *A Description of a City Shower*** (an imitation of Virgil's *Georgics*, **JOHNSON's *London*** (an imitation of the 3rd Satire of Juvenal), ***The Vanity of Human Wishes*** (an imitation of the 10th Satire of Juvenal)

DRYDEN

Mac Flecknoe

This superb mock-heroic satire, which looks ahead to Pope's achievement in *The Dunciad,* found its title in the death of a notoriously bad Irish poet, Richard Flecknoe (d. 1678). Dryden has Flecknoe choose a successor in Thomas Shadwell (1640–92), who liked to think of himself as the true heir of the great Ben Jonson (1572–1637). Shadwell, in fact, gave Jonson's plays unstinting praise and imitated them with more zeal than success; he added broader effects of bawdry and slapstick, as Dryden recalls in his satire (ll. 42, 181, 212). But, whatever his deviations from Jonson's art, Shadwell was impatient with Dryden's less than complete admiration of his master, and over ten years engaged Dryden in critical dispute on such matters as the true nature of wit. In 1673 Dryden wrote, "I know I honour Ben Jonson more than my little critics, because without vanity I may own I understand him better." In general the dispute had involved little animosity on either side, and the occasion for this poem is not altogether clear. The likeliest explanation is that Dryden resented Shadwell's praise of Buckingham's *The Rehearsal,* in which Dryden was ridiculed.

Mac Flecknoe

All human things are subject to decay,
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey.
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus,° young
Was called to empire, and had governed long;
In prose and verse, was owned, without dispute,
Through all the realms of *Nonsense,* absolute.
This agèd prince, now flourishing in peace,
And blest with issue of a large increase;
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the state;
And, pondering which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
Cried: ''Tis resolved; for nature pleads, that he
Should only rule, who most resembles me.
Sh—— alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years:
Sh—— alone, of all my sons, is he
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Sh—— never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through, and make a lucid interval;
But Sh——'s genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric° fills the eye,
And seems designed for thoughtless° majesty;
Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley° were but types° of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology.°
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;°
And, coarsely clad in Norwich drugget,° came
To teach the nations in thy greater name.

fabric a term generally used for a building, as in l. 66 below; here a reference to Shadwell's corpulent body
thoughtless carefree; mindless
Heywood and Shirley Thomas Heywood (c. 1574–1641) and James Shirley (1596–1666), both popular and prolific dramatists (Heywood claiming a hand in 220 plays, Shirley the author of 36) before the closing of the theaters in 1642; held in low regard in Dryden's day
types prefigurations, as Old Testament patriarchs (Abraham, Noah), judges or kings (Samson, David, Solomon), and prophets were taken to prefigure Christ, who was their culmination (as he is the "last Adam")
tautology needless repetition in other words, here perhaps replacing "theology"
prepare thy way as John the Baptist does for Jesus (Matthew 3:3)
Norwich drugget a coarse fabric of wool and linen (like Shadwell, from Norfolk),

Dryden (cont.)

My warbling lute,° the lute I whilom° strung,
When to King John of Portugal° I sung,
Was but the prelude to that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames° didst cut thy way,
With well-timed oars before the royal barge,
Swelled with the pride of thy celestial charge;
And big with hymn, commander of a host,
The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets tossed.°
Methinks I see the new Arion° sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
At thy well-sharpened thumb from shore to shore
The treble squeaks for fear, the basses roar;
Echoes from Pissing Alley° Sh—— call,
And Sh—— they resound from Aston Hall.°
About thy boat the little fishes throng,
As at the morning toast° that floats along.
Sometimes, as prince of thy harmonious band,
Thou wieldst thy papers in thy threshing hand.
St. André's° feet ne'er kept more equal time,
Not even the feet of thy own *Psyche's* rhyme;
Though they in number° as in sense excel:
So just, so like tautology, they fell,
That, pale with envy, Singleton° forswore
The lute and sword, which he in triumph bore,
And vowed he ne'er would act Villerius° more.'
Here stopped the good old sire, and wept for joy
In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
All arguments, but most his plays, persuade,
That for anointed° dulness° he was made.

lute Shadwell was ridiculed, by Andrew Marve among others, for his musical pretensions
whilom formerly
King John of Portugal Flecknoe had visited Po tugal and claimed to have been patronized b the king.
silver Thames This phrase and many in succeec ing lines, as well as the allusion to Arion, ech a celebration of King Charles by Edmun Waller (1606–87).
in . . . tossed as was Sir Samuel Hearty, th self-styled wit in Shadwell's play *The Virtuos* (1676); with reference to *Epsom Wells*, a earlier Shadwell comedy (1672)
Arion the legendary Greek musician, save from drowning by dolphins that were charme by his music
Pissing Alley the actual name of five street one near the Thames
Aston Hall unidentified
morning toast sewage, feces
St. André's a French dancing master and chore- ographer for Shadwell's opera *Psyche* (1675), whose flat-footed verse is described in next line
number meter; quantity
Singleton John Singleton, one of the royal musi- cians
Villerius a character in Sir William Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes* (1656), often ridiculed for pre- senting battles in recitative (requiring both "lute and sword" of the actor) and thus sacrificing sense to sound
anointed i.e. looking forward to the coronation of a new king
dulness implying not simply the power to bore but sluggishness of mind, a relapse from effort, a substitution of the cheap and easy for the excellent (cf. Pope's goddess Dulness, the daughter of Chaos and Night, in *The Dunciad*)

POPE 'Epilogue to the Satires'

Ask you what provocation I have had?
The strong antipathy of good to bad.
When truth or virtue an affront endures,
The affront is mine, my friend, and should be yours.
Mine, as a foe professed to false pretence,
Who think a coxcomb's honour like his sense;
Mine, as a friend to every worthy mind;
And mine as man, who feel for all mankind.°
F. You're strangely proud.
P. So proud, I am no slave:
So impudent, I own myself no knave:
So odd, my country's ruin makes me grave.
Yes, I am proud; I must be proud to see
Men not afraid of God, afraid of me:
Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
Yet touched and shamed by ridicule alone.
O sacred weapon! left for truth's defence,
Sole dread of folly, vice, and insolence!
To all but heaven-directed hands denied,
The muse may give thee, but the gods must guide.
Reverent I touch thee! but with honest zeal;
To rouse the watchmen of the public weal,
To virtue's work provoke the tardy Hall,°
And goad the prelate slumbering in his stall.
Ye tinsel insects! whom a court maintains,
That counts your beauties only by your stains,
Spin all your cobwebs o'er the eye of day!
The muse's wing shall brush you all away:
All his Grace preaches, all his Lordship° sings,
All that makes saints of queens, and gods of kings,
All, all but truth, drops deadborn from the press,
Like the last gazette,° or the last address.°
When black ambition stains a public cause,
A monarch's sword when mad vainglory draws,
Not Waller's wreath° can hide the nation's scar,
Nor Boileau° turn the feather to a star.
Not so, when diademed with rays divine,
Touched with the flame that breaks from virtue's shrine,
Her priestess Muse forbids the good to die,
And opes the Temple of Eternity.
There, other trophies deck the truly brave,
Than such as Anstis° casts into the grave;
Far other stars° than * and * * wear,
And may descend to Mordington from Stair:°
(Such as on Hough's unsullied mitre shine,
Or beam, good Digby, from a heart like thine).°
Let Envy howl, while Heaven's whole chorus sings,
And bark at honour not conferred by kings;
Let Flattery sickening see the incense rise,
Sweet to the world, and grateful to the skies:
Truth guards the poet, sanctifies the line,
And makes immortal, verse as mean as mine.
Yes, the last pen for freedom let me draw,
When truth stands trembling on the edge of law;
Here, last of Britons! let your names be read;
Are none, none living? let me praise the dead,
And for that cause which made your fathers shine,
Fall by the votes of their degenerate line.
F. Alas! alas! pray end what you began,
And write next winter° more *Essays on Man*.

1738

staring reason cuckold's horns
And mine . . . mankind an adaptation of Terence: "I am a man, and I think nothing human indifferent to me"
Hall Westminster Hall, as the seat of justice
Grace . . . Lordship bishop and peer
gazette official government journal

address the formal reply of Parliament to the king's opening speech
Waller's wreath Edmund Waller's panegyrics to Oliver Cromwell
Boileau who, in celebration of Louis XIV's conquest of the Lowlands, suggested that the feather in Louis's hat would be a comet or star portending disaster to his enemies

Anstis John Anstis, chief herald at arms, who devised symbols of honors that were often cast into the graves of great peers
stars symbols of the Order of the Garter; supply the names of (King) George and (Prince) Frederick
descend to . . . Stair from the Earl of Stair, a distinguished soldier and envoy, to Lord Mordington, whose wife kept a gambling house
Such as . . . thine "The one [John Hough, Bishop of Worcester] an assertor of the Church of England in opposition to the false measures of King James II; the other [William, Lord Digby] as firmly attached to the cause of that king; both acting out of principle, and equally men of honour and virtue" (Pope)
write next winter "This was the last poem of the kind printed by our author, with a resolution to publish no more, but to enter thus, in the most plain and solemn manner he could, a sort of *protest* against that insuperable corruption and depravity of manners which he had been so unhappy as to live to see" (Pope).

A Description of a City Shower

CAREFUL observers may foretell the hour
(By sure prognostics) when to dread a show'r:
While rain depends, the pensive cat gives o'er
Her frolics, and pursues her tail no more.
Returning home at night, you'll find the sink
Strike your offended sense with double stink.
If you be wise, then go not far to dine,
You spend in coach-hire more than save in wine.
A coming show'r your shooting corns presage,
Old aches throb, your hollow tooth will rage.
Saunt'ring in coffee-house is Dulman seen;
He damns the climate, and complains of spleen.

Meanwhile the South, rising with dabbled wings,
A sable cloud athwart the welkin flings,
That swilled more liquor than it could contain,
And like a drunkard gives it up again.
Brisk Susan whips her linen from the rope,
While the first drizzling show'r is borne aslope;
Such is that sprinkling which some careless quean
Flirts on you from her mop, but not so clean.
You fly, invoke the gods; then turning, stop
To rail; she singing, still whirls on her mop.
Not yet the dust had shunned th' unequal strife,
But aided by the wind, fought still for life;
And wafted with its foe by violent gust,
'Twas doubtful which was rain, and which was dust.
Ah! where must needy poet seek for aid,
When dust and rain at once his coat invade?
Sole coat, where dust cemented by the rain
Erects the nap, and leaves a cloudy stain.

Now in contiguous drops the flood comes down,
Threat'ning with deluge this devoted town.
To shops in crowds the daggled females fly,
Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy.
The Templar spruce, while ev'ry spout's a-broach,
Stays till 'tis fair, yet seems to call a coach.
The tucked-up sempstress walks with hasty strides,
While streams run down her oiled umbrella's sides.
Here various kinds, by various fortunes led,
Commence acquaintance underneath a shed.
Triumphant Tories and desponding Whigs
Forget their feuds, and join to save their wigs.

Boxed in a chair the beau impatient sits,
While spouts run clatt'ring o'er the roof by fits;
And ever and anon with frightful din
The leather sounds, he trembles from within.
So when Troy chair-men bore the wooden steed,
Pregnant with Greeks impatient to be freed
(Those bully Greeks, who, as the moderns do,
Instead of paying chair-men, run them through),
Laocoön struck the outside with his spear,
And each imprisoned hero quaked for fear.

Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow,
And bear their trophies with them as they go:
Filth of all hues and odours seem to tell
What streets they sailed from, by the sight and smell.
They, as each torrent drives, with rapid force
From Smithfield or St. Pulchre's shape their course,
And in huge confluent join at Snow Hill ridge,
Fall from the Conduit prone to Holborn Bridge.
Sweepings from butchers' stalls, dung, guts, and blood,
Drowned puppies, stinking sprats, all drenched in mud,
Dead cats and turnip-tops come tumbling down the flood.

depends impends
sink sewer
aches pronounced "aitches"
spleen melancholy, "vapours"

South south wind
dabbled splashed, soiled with mud
athwart the welkin across the sky (deliberate use of archaic-pastoral diction)
quean wench
contiguous drops a deliberate latinate elevation of diction
devoted doomed (again heroic diction)
daggled mud-splashed

cheapen bargain for
templar law student
abroach gushing
chair closed sedan chair
leather the roof of the chair
Laocoon who questioned the value of the Trojan Horse and tested it (*Aeneid* II)

Smithfield the cattle market
St. Pulchre's the church of St. Sepulchre on Snow Hill
sprats small fish
Dead cats . . . flood The last three lines are Swift's parody of the triplet (which Dryden and others favored, especially in poetry of a high style) and the last line a parody of the extended (twelve-syllable) Alexandrine, with which the triplet often concluded.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

From London: A Poem

In Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal°

Prepare for death, if here at night you roam,
And sign your will before you sup from home.
Some fiery fop, with new commission vain,
Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man;
Some frolic drunkard, reeling from a feast,
Provokes a broil, and stabs you for a jest.
Yet even these heroes, mischievously gay,
Lords of the street, and terrors of the way;
Flushed as they are with folly, youth, and wine,
Their prudent insults to the poor confine;
Afar they mark the flambeau's bright approach,
And shun the shining train, and golden coach:

In vain, these dangers past, your doors you close,
And hope the balmy blessings of repose:
Cruel with guilt, and daring with despair,
The midnight murderer bursts the faithless bar;
Invades the sacred hour of silent rest,
And leaves, unseen, a dagger in your breast.

Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn die,
With hemp° the gallows and the fleet supply.
Propose your schemes, ye Senatorian band,
Whose Ways and Means support the sinking land;
Lest ropes be wanting in the tempting spring,
To rig another convoy for the k—g.

A single jail, in ALFRED'S golden reign,
Could half the nation's criminals contain;
Fair Justice then, without constraint adored,
Held high the steady scale, but deeped° the sword;
No spies were paid, no special juries known,
Blest age! but ah! how different from our own!

. . .

1738

Imitation . . . Juvenal For the meaning of "imitation" see the Headnote on Pope, Imitations of Horace. This passage in Johnson's version corresponds to the closer translation by Dryden; Johnson adapts Juvenal's satire more fully to a London setting.
hemp the material for the hangman's rope (used in the gallows at Tyburn) or for the ship's ropes necessary for the frequent journeys of George II to Hanover and his mistress there (ll. 246–47), an expense supported by the House of Commons, whose "Ways and Means" are methods of raising money
deeped turned down

The Vanity of Human Wishes. The Tenth Satire of Juvenal Imitated

LET observation with extensive view
Survey mankind from China to Peru;
Remark each anxious toil, each eager strife,
And watch the busy scenes of crowded life;
Then say how hope and fear, desire and hate,
O'erspread with snares the clouded maze of fate,
Where wav'ring man, betrayed by vent'rous pride
To tread the dreary paths without a guide,
As treach'rous phantoms in the mist delude,
Shuns fancied ills, or chases airy good.
How rarely reason guides the stubborn choice,
Rules the bold hand, or prompts the suppliant voice;
How nations sink, by darling schemes oppressed,
When vengeance listens to the fool's request.
Fate wings with ev'ry wish th' afflictive dart,
Each gift of nature, and each grace of art;
With fatal heat impetuous courage glows,
With fatal sweetness elocution flows,
Impeachment stops the speaker's pow'rful breath,
And restless fire precipitates on death.
  But scarce observed, the knowing and the bold
Fall in the gen'ral massacre of gold;
Wide-wasting pest! that rages unconfined,
And crowds with crimes the records of mankind;
For gold his sword the hireling ruffian draws,
For gold the hireling judge distorts the laws;
Wealth heaped on wealth nor truth nor safety buys,
The dangers gather as the treasures rise.
  Let hist'ry tell where rival kings command,
And dubious title shakes the madded land,
When statutes glean the refuse of the sword,
How much more safe the vassal than the lord;
Low skulks the hind beneath the rage of pow'r,
And leaves the wealthy traitor in the Tow'r,
Untouched his cottage, and his slumbers sound,
Though confiscation's vultures hover round.
  The needy traveller, serene and gay,
Walks the wild heath, and sings his toil away.
Does envy seize thee? crush th' upbraiding joy,
Increase his riches and his peace destroy;
Now fears in dire vicissitude invade,
The rustling brake alarms, and quiv'ring shade,
Nor light nor darkness bring his pain relief,
One shows the plunder, and one hides the thief.
  Yet still one gen'ral cry the skies assails,
And gain and grandeur load the tainted gales;
Few know the toiling statesman's fear or care,
Th' insidious rival and the gaping heir.
  Once more, Democritus, arise on earth,
With cheerful wisdom and instructive mirth,
See motley life in modern trappings dressed,
And feed with varied fools th' eternal jest:
Thou who couldst laugh where want enchained caprice,
Toil crushed conceit, and man was of a piece;
Where wealth unloved without a mourner died;
And scarce a sycophant was fed by pride;
Where ne'er was known the form of mock debate,
Or seen a new-made mayor's unwieldy state;

Johnson (cont.)

Where change of fav'rites made no change of laws,
And senates heard before they judged a cause;
How wouldst thou shake at Britain's modish tribe,
Dart the quick taunt, and edge the piercing gibe?
Attentive truth and nature to descry,
And pierce each scene with philosophic eye.

To thee were solemn toys or empty show,
The robes of pleasure and the veils of woe:
All aid the farce, and all thy mirth maintain,
Whose joys are causeless, or whose griefs are vain.
  Such was the scorn that filled the sage's mind,
Renewed at ev'ry glance on humankind;
How just that scorn ere yet thy voice declare,
Search every state, and canvass ev'ry pray'r.
  Unnumbered suppliants crowd preferment's gate,
Athirst for wealth, and burning to be great;
Delusive Fortune hears th' incessant call,
They mount, they shine, evaporate and fall.
On ev'ry stage the foes of peace attend,
Hate dogs their flight, and insult mocks their end.
Love ends with hope, the sinking statesman's door
Pours in the morning worshipper no more;
For growing names the weekly scribbler lies,
To growing wealth the dedicator flies,
From every room descends the painted face,
That hung the bright Palladium of the place,
And smoked in kitchens, or in auctions sold,
To better features yields the frame of gold;
For now no more we trace in ev'ry line
Heroic worth, benevolence divine:
The form distorted justifies the fall,
And detestation rids th' indignant wall.
  But will not Britain hear the last appeal,
Sign her foes' doom, or guard her fav'rites' zeal?
Through Freedom's sons no more remonstrance rings,
Degrading nobles and controlling kings;
Our supple tribes repress their patriot throats,
And ask no questions but the price of votes;
With weekly libels and septennial ale,
Their wish is full to riot and to rail.
  In full-blown dignity, see Wolsey stand,
Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand:
To him the church, the realm, their pow'rs consign,
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine,
Turned by his nod the stream of honour flows,
His smile alone security bestows;
Still to new heights his restless wishes tow'r,
Claim leads to claim, and pow'r advances pow'r;
Till conquest unresisted ceased to please,
And rights submitted left him none to seize.
At length his sov'reign frowns—the train of state
Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.

Where'er he turns he meets a stranger's eye,
His suppliants scorn him, and his followers fly;
At once is lost the pride of awful state,
The golden canopy, the glitt'ring plate,
The regal palace, the luxurious board,
The liv'ried army, and the menial lord.
With age, with cares, with maladies oppressed,
He seeks the refuge of monastic rest.

Johnson (cont. 2)

Grief aids disease, remembered folly stings,
And his last sighs reproach the faith of kings.
  Speak thou, whose thoughts at humble peace repine,
Shall Wolsey's wealth, with Wolsey's end be thine?
Or liv'st thou now, with safer pride content,
The wisest justice on the banks of Trent?
For why did Wolsey, near the steeps of fate,
On weak foundations raise th' enormous weight?
Why but to sink beneath misfortune's blow,
With louder ruin to the gulfs below?
  What gave great Villiers to th' assassin's knife,
And fixed disease on Harley's closing life?
What murdered Wentworth, and what exiled Hyde,
By kings protected and to kings allied?
What but their wish indulged in courts to shine,
And pow'r too great to keep, or to resign?
  When first the college rolls receive his name,
The young enthusiast quits his ease for fame;
Through all his veins the fever of renown
Burns from the strong contagion of the gown;
O'er Bodley's dome his future labours spread,
And Bacon's mansion trembles o'er his head.
Are these thy views? proceed, illustrious youth,
And virtue guard thee to the throne of truth!
Yet should thy soul indulge the gen'rous heat,
Till captive Science yields her last retreat;
Should Reason guide thee with her brightest ray,
And pour on misty doubt resistless day;
Should no false kindness lure to loose delight,
Nor praise relax, nor difficulty fright;
Should tempting Novelty thy cell refrain,
And Sloth effuse her opiate fumes in vain;
Should Beauty blunt on fops her fatal dart,
Nor claim the triumph of a lettered heart;
Should no disease thy torpid veins invade,
Nor Melancholy's phantoms haunt thy shade;
Yet hope not life from grief or danger free,
Nor think the doom of man reversed for thee:

Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
And pause awhile from letters to be wise;
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail.
See nations slowly wise, and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
If dreams yet flatter, once again attend,
Hear Lydiat's life, and Galileo's end.
  Nor deem, when Learning her last prize bestows,
The glitt'ring eminence exempt from foes;
See when the vulgar 'scape, despised or awed,
Rebellion's vengeful talons seize on Laud.
From meaner minds though smaller fines content,
The plundered palace or sequestered rent;
Marked out by dangerous parts he meets the shock,
And fatal Learning leads him to the block:
Around his tomb let Art and Genius weep,
But hear his death, ye blockheads, hear and sleep.
  The festal blazes, the triumphal show,
The ravished standard, and the captive foe,
The senate's thanks, the gazette's pompous tale,
With force resistless o'er the brave prevail.

Johnson (cont. 3)

Such bribes the rapid Greek o'er Asia whirled,
For such the steady Romans shook the world;
For such in distant lands the Britons shine,
And stain with blood the Danube or the Rhine;
This pow'r has praise, that virtue scarce can warm,
Till fame supplies the universal charm.
Yet Reason frowns on war's unequal game,
Where wasted nations raise a single name,
And mortgaged states their grandsires' wreaths regret,
From age to age in everlasting debt;
Wreaths which at last the dear-bought right convey
To rust on medals, or on stones decay.
  On what foundation stands the warrior's pride?
How just his hopes let Swedish Charles decide;
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labours tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquered lord of pleasure and of pain;
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;
Behold surrounding kings their pow'r combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign;
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain;
'Think nothing gained,' he cries, 'till naught remain,
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the polar sky.'
The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eye suspended wait;
Stern Famine guards the solitary coast,
And Winter barricades the realms of frost;
He comes, not want and cold his course delay;—
Hide, blushing Glory, hide Pultowa's day:
The vanquished hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands;
Condemned a needy supplicant to wait,
While ladies interpose, and slaves debate.
But did not Chance at length her error mend?
Did no subverted empire mark his end?
Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
His fall was destined to a barren strand,
A petty fortress, and a dubious hand;
He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale.
  All times their scenes of pompous woes afford,
From Persia's tyrant to Bavaria's lord.
In gay hostility, and barbarous pride,
With half mankind embattled at his side,
Great Xerxes comes to seize the certain prey,
And starves exhausted regions in his way;
Attendant Flatt'ry counts his myriads o'er,
Till counted myriads soothe his pride no more;
Fresh praise is tried till madness fires his mind,
The waves he lashes, and enchains the wind;
New pow'rs are claimed, new pow'rs are still bestowed,
Till rude resistance lops the spreading god;
The daring Greeks deride the martial show,
And heap their valleys with the gaudy foe;
Th' insulted sea with humbler thoughts he gains,
A single skiff to speed his flight remains;
Th' incumbered oar scarce leaves the dreaded coast
Through purple billows and a floating host.

Johnson (cont. 4)

The bold Bavarian, in a luckless hour,
Tries the dread summits of Caesarian power,
With unexpected legions bursts away,
And sees defenceless realms receive his sway;
Short sway! fair Austria spreads her mournful charms,
The queen, the beauty, sets the world in arms;
From hill to hill the beacon's rousing blaze
Spreads wide the hope of plunder and of praise;

The fierce Croatian, and the wild Hussar,
With all the sons of ravage crowd the war;
The baffled prince in honour's flatt'ring bloom
Of hasty greatness finds the fatal doom,
His foes' derision, and his subjects' blame,
And steals to death from anguish and from shame.
'Enlarge my life with multitude of days,
In health, in sickness,' thus the suppliant prays;
Hides from himself his state, and shuns to know
That life protracted is protracted woe.
Time hovers o'er, impatient to destroy,
And shuts up all the passages of joy:
In vain their gifts the bounteous seasons pour,
The fruit autumnal, and the vernal flow'r,
With listless eyes the dotard views the store,
He views, and wonders that they please no more;
Now pall the tasteless meats, and joyless wines,
And Luxury with sighs her slave resigns.
Approach, ye minstrels, try the soothing strain,
Diffuse the tuneful lenitives of pain:
No sounds, alas, would touch th' impervious ear,
Though dancing mountains witnessed Orpheus near;
Nor lute nor lyre his feeble pow'rs attend,
Nor sweeter music of a virtuous friend,
But everlasting dictates crowd his tongue,
Perversely grave, or positively wrong.
The still-returning tale, and ling'ring jest,
Perplex the fawning niece and pampered guest,
While growing hopes scarce awe the gath'ring sneer,
And scarce a legacy can bribe to hear;
The watchful guests still hint the last offence,
The daughter's petulance, the son's expense,
Improve his heady rage with treach'rous skill,
And mould his passions till they make his will.
Unnumbered maladies his joints invade,
Lay siege to life and press the dire blockade;
But unextinguished av'rice still remains,
And dreaded losses aggravate his pains;
He turns, with anxious heart and crippled hands,
His bonds of debt, and mortgages of lands;
Or views his coffers with suspicious eyes,
Unlocks his gold, and counts it till he dies.
But grant, the virtues of a temp'rate prime
Bless with an age exempt from scorn or crime;
An age that melts with unperceived decay,
And glides in modest innocence away;

Whose peaceful day benevolence endears,
Whose night congratulating conscience cheers;
The gen'ral fav'rite as the gen'ral friend:
Such age there is, and who shall wish its end?
Yet ev'n on this her load Misfortune flings,
To press the weary minutes' flagging wings:
New sorrow rises as the day returns,
A sister sickens, or a daughter mourns.

Johnson (cont. 5)

Now kindred merit fills the sable bier,
Now lacerated friendship claims a tear.
Year chases year, decay pursues decay,
Still drops some joy from with'ring life away;
New forms arise, and diff'rent views engage,
Superfluous lags the vet'ran on the stage,
Till pitying Nature signs the last release,
And bids afflicted worth retire to peace.
But few there are whom hours like these await,
Who set unclouded in the gulfs of fate.
From Lydia's monarch should the search descend,
By Solon cautioned to regard his end,
In life's last scene what prodigies surprise,
Fears of the brave, and follies of the wise?
From Marlb'rough's eyes the streams of dotage flow,
And Swift expires a driv'ler and a show.
The teeming mother, anxious for her race,
Begs for each birth the fortune of a face:
Yet Vane could tell what ills from beauty spring,
And Sedley cursed the form that pleased a king.
Ye nymphs of rosy lips and radiant eyes,
Whom pleasure keeps too busy to be wise,
Whom joys with soft varieties invite,
By day the frolic, and the dance by night,
Who frown with vanity, who smile with art,
And ask the latest fashion of the heart,
What care, what rules your heedless charms shall save,
Each nymph your rival, and each youth your slave?
Against your fame with fondness hate combines,
The rival batters, and the lover mines.
With distant voice neglected Virtue calls,
Less heard and less, the faint remonstrance falls;
Tired with contempt, she quits the slipp'ry reign,
And Pride and Prudence take her seat in vain.
In crowd at once, where none the pass defend,
The harmless freedom, and the private friend.
The guardians yield, by force superior plied;
By Int'rest, Prudence; and by Flatt'ry, Pride.

Now Beauty falls betrayed, despised, distressed,
And hissing Infamy proclaims the rest.
Where then shall hope and fear their objects find?
Must dull suspense corrupt the stagnant mind?
Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,
No cries attempt the mercies of the skies?
Enquirer, cease, petitions yet remain,
Which heav'n may hear, nor deem religion vain.
Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to heav'n the measure and the choice,
Safe in his pow'r, whose eyes discern afar
The secret ambush of a specious pray'r.
Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,
Secure whate'er he gives, he gives the best.
Yet when the sense of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions, and a will resigned;
For love, which scarce collective man can fill;
For patience sov'reign o'er transmuted ill;
For faith, that panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind Nature's signal of retreat:
These goods for man the laws of heav'n ordain,
These goods he grants, who grants the pow'r to gain;
With these celestial wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

(1749)

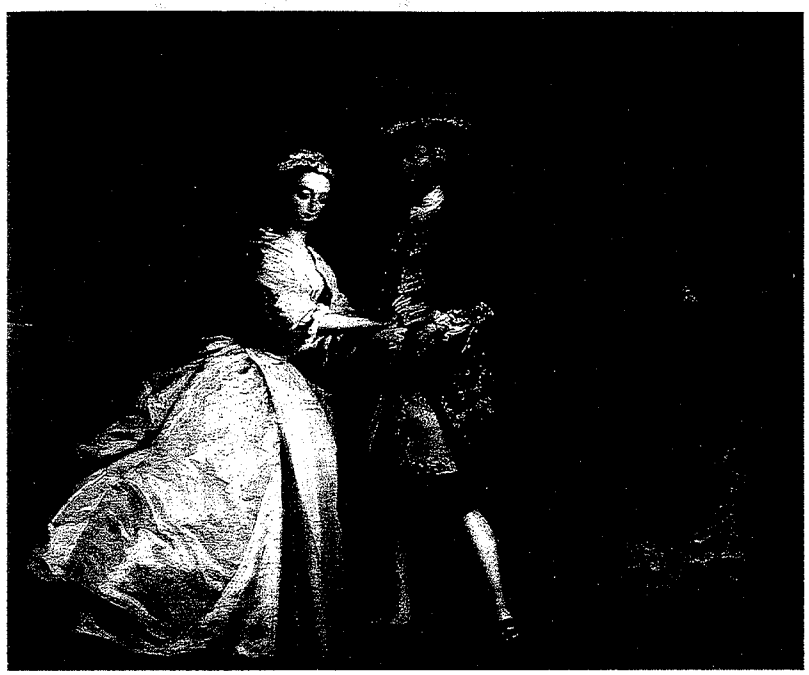
Chapter Twenty-Five

BABYLON

In *A Tour of the Whole Island of Britain* (1724-26) Daniel Defoe expresses his astonishment at the rapid expansion of what was to be the cultural mecca of the Augustan age, London: 'New squares, and new streets rising up every day to such a prodigy of buildings that nothing in the world does, or ever did equal it, except old Rome in Trajan's time.' The equation of the capital with the Rome of the emperors was not a new one, but it neatly pinpoints a mental association which, during an age in which the literate classes were nurtured on the Latin classics, moved naturally from the one to the other. By 1750 the population of London had reached some 675,000, 11% of the entire country, and that figure excluded those who were drawn to it from every region on account of sitting in Parliament, transacting business, or enjoying the delights of the capital's increasingly important social season.

No urban development on this scale had been seen before in Western Europe. London literally sprawled out in every direction and the approach to it, initially by way of villages and market gardens, quickly gave way to new streets and squares which were to continue to encroach across open land for the rest of the century. The main expansion was to the west and the north as the great urban landowners, like Lord Burlington, Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford, and Sir Richard Grosvenor, set in train Cavendish and Grosvenor Squares, Clifford Street and Savile Row. These, with their wide streets, pavements, and elegant symmetrical architecture were where the rich and fashionable resided on account of the cleaner air. To the east lay the rebuilt old city, its narrow streets huddled around the soaring splendour of Wren's St. Paul's, and the once smart Covent Garden area which was now given over to sleazy brothels, bagnios and gaming dens. Soho, St. Martin's Lane and the Strand acted as a bridge linking the old part of London with the new. Here congregated a teeming population of artisans, craftsmen and retailers, for London was the home of the luxury trades and the fount of every kind of conspicuous consumption.

Never before had there existed such a kaleidoscope of streets, houses, squares, churches, gardens, parks, theatres and markets, such a concentration of humanity thrown pell-mell together, rich and poor, idle and industrious, young and old, virtuous and depraved, grand and humble. For the first time there had come into exis-



A scene from a series painted by Joseph Highmore of incidents in Samuel Richardson's bestselling novel Pamela *(1740). Here the rake, Mr B., reveals his true colours in an unsuccessful attempt on the heroine's virtue.*

tence a whole society whose entire life could be nothing other than urban, for whom the world of nature and the cycle of the seasons was something only dimly apprehended as they struggled to live amidst the appalling pollution caused by the burning of coal fires, the filth which filled both the streets and the river Thames, not to mention the deafening noise caused by the creaking of the carriages, the clatter of horses' hooves and the shrill voices of the street criers plying their wares.

Early eighteenth century culture was about and for London and Londoners. The city was ten times larger than any other in the country and although it was awash with the impoverished it also had an unparalleled concentration of those with an increasing amount of disposable income, the aristocracy and gentry and the ever-expanding professional classes. Everywhere one looks London recurs as the *leitmotif* of the age. John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* is set in Newgate prison, Green Park was to provide the

setting for Handel's mighty *Music for the Royal Fireworks* while Henry Fielding's novel *Tom Jones* is the story of a young man who makes that classical progress from the country to seek his fortune in London. It is at the Bell Inn in Cheapside that William Hogarth's harlot begins her progress, while his rake is arrested where St. James's Street meets Piccadilly. Hardly surprising that visitors from abroad were stunned into wonder at the phenomenon. For them London was *the* city of the Enlightenment. Here uniquely freedom of the press, freedom of political debate, and freedom of religious observance reigned. Proud, Protestant and ever more prosperous, London was the lodestar of the age.

That prosperity stemmed from the city's heart, no longer its cathedral church of St. Paul's but the Royal Exchange and the burgeoning stock market. The wars with Louis XIV had brought huge commercial and colonial gains and London replaced Amsterdam as Europe's financial capital. The arrival of the House of Hanover in 1714 signalled an alliance of the Crown and the Whig party under the aegis of Sir Robert Walpole which was to last forty years. Its network of patronage endured even longer, until the accession of George III in 1760. Walpole's government presided over a period of unusual stability and prosperity, even though there were two Jacobite invasions in 1715 and 1745. For the opposition Tories and those with Jacobite sympathies Walpole embodied squalid mercantilism and materialism, the dethronement of the old landed aristocracy and gentry to whom power should naturally belong. To writers of their side of the political spectrum, like Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope, Walpole was the incarnation of the worst kind of corruption. The waters of Augustan England were far from tranquil ones, for this remained a society still deeply divided, not only in terms of wealth and opportunity but also in those of religious belief and party loyalty. Nonetheless not even these factors could conceal what was a new and overriding feeling of confidence and possibility.

The bulk of the population remained as it always had been, in want and poverty eking out a rural existence, lacking opportunity and often the victim of a callous system of justice. The gap between the haves and have-nots continued to widen giving birth to feelings of guilt in those more fortunate, leading to acts of benevolence. For the first time there was non-landed wealth on a huge scale, the result of the Commercial Revolution. Fortunes were made (and lost, as in the notorious South Sea Bubble) through the stock market, whose operations were now essential to the working of government. Society remained hierarchical, peppered with infinite gradations between the titled and the merely rich, but the way from the latter to the former was always open. City daughters married into the aristocracy and aristocratic younger sons entered the professions, the army, the church and the law. The cultural efflorescence

of the era is directly linked with this remarkable economic and financial boom whose effect filtered quite far down the social scale. Ordinary people were better off than in any other European country.

The monarchy had passed into cultural eclipse with Queen Anne whose only real sympathy lay with music, being a strong supporter of composers like John Blow, Jeremiah Clarke and the young George Frederick Handel. George I continued to patronise Handel, had indeed a taste for opera, but his son George II was a dedicated philistine. The traditional court ceremonial survived but was now rarely enacted, the Hanoverians retreating into a closed domestic existence. The old baroque alliance of art and power had gone for ever, and if the arts figured at all as part of the monarchical pantheon it was for their role as being commercially beneficial and morally uplifting for the nation. The Crown in fact was devoid of the resources whereby to play a dominant role even if it had wished to do so. In order, for example, to put on the great firework display in Green Park for the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1749 Jonathan Tyers, the man who ran the pleasure gardens at Vauxhall, had to be brought in. He exacted in recompense for his services a public rehearsal of Handel's music at Vauxhall which drew twelve thousand people and made him a small fortune. The actual royal event was a flop.

With the monarchy no longer the leader of taste and the fount of patronage, where did men look? Aristocratic patrons still existed. The writer and satirist John Gay had a whole series of them from the Duchess of Monmouth to the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry. So too did the poet Matthew Prior who was rescued by a group of his noble friends when he fell on hard times. But Prior had only sunk into poverty after the Tories fell from power in 1715, when he lost office and was sent to the Tower for two years. Up until then he had occupied a series of government posts. Such sinecures came of course at a price. Joseph Addison was enrolled for the Whig cause for a pension of £300 p.a. and became Secretary of State in 1717 with an income of £10,000 and payments from the secret service funds. Writers were literally bought and sold. Daniel Defoe changed political sides more than once merely to survive. In spite of this there emerged for the first time the professional writer, someone whose whole living was made by the pen. At the lower end of the scale came the hacks of Grub Street while at the upper presided the formidable figure of Alexander Pope, who was the first person successfully to make a career entirely out of writing with no other means of financial support.

That he could do so was because there was an audience for what he wrote as never before. In today's terms it was still narrow, reaching even by the 1780s no more than a quarter of the population. Culture did not come cheap. What a novel cost would

have fed a cottager's family for a week or a fortnight. The vast bulk of the new audience was made up of what was referred to at the time as the 'middling sort', the merchant and professional classes. The truth of that is captured in the shift in attitude towards them. Writers like Defoe began deliberately to cultivate the commercial classes while Joseph Addison bestowed on them the accolade of his contributions to the *Tatler*. By 1710 the sanctity of trade and the virtue of the merchant was an established fact.

The majority of this new cultural activity depended on paper. And it could never have happened without the role played by printers, publishers, engravers and print-sellers. The turning point which produced this proliferation was the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695. Although the laws against blasphemy, seditious libel and obscenity remained in place censorship effectively ceased and the Stationers' Company lost its monopoly. The effect of this was that a publishing industry, which had previously been confined to St. Paul's Churchyard and Pater Noster Row, had, by the middle of the 1720s, over seventy printing presses scattered through the city. The provincial press also expanded with twenty-six printers in towns outside the metropolis by the same period. It was these events which made possible the emergence of magazines like the *Tatler* (1709-11) and the *Spectator* (1711-12 and 1714), foundation stones of early Georgian cultural attitudes. In the 1730s they were followed by the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Monthly Magazine* and, in 1747, the *Universal Magazine*. By then journals like the *Connoisseur* and the *Critical Review* had also sprung into existence, catering for specialised sections of the reading public. Everywhere newspapers came into being. In 1724 London had sixteen, covering every shade of political opinion. As a result of the lapse of the Licensing Act copyright came under threat as unscrupulous booksellers cornered the market. In 1709 their power was to an extent curtailed by a Copyright Act, which conferred a period of twenty-one years on existing titles and fourteen on new ones.

A paper culture was not only about words but images. The publishing explosion released an extraordinary flood of prints, trade cards, and illustrated books. To them we must add the huge numbers of imported prints, particularly after works of art. As a consequence more and more people had seen a place or a work of art than ever before, even if their experience was at a remove. By the 1730s it was even possible for a minor artist like Arthur Pond to execute some seventy prints after Old Master drawings. Paper was the essential element which gave this emergent bourgeois culture its means of expression, one which was for the first time outside the constraints of the court.

The intellectual substructure upon which this new culture was built came directly

out of the Scientific Revolution of the previous century. Newton's *Principia* was accepted as its model, one which could explain the complex phenomena of the earth and sky in terms of a single, ordered mathematical system. Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733-34) states 'Order is Heaven's first law':

> The gen'ral Order, since the Whole began,
> Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man . . .

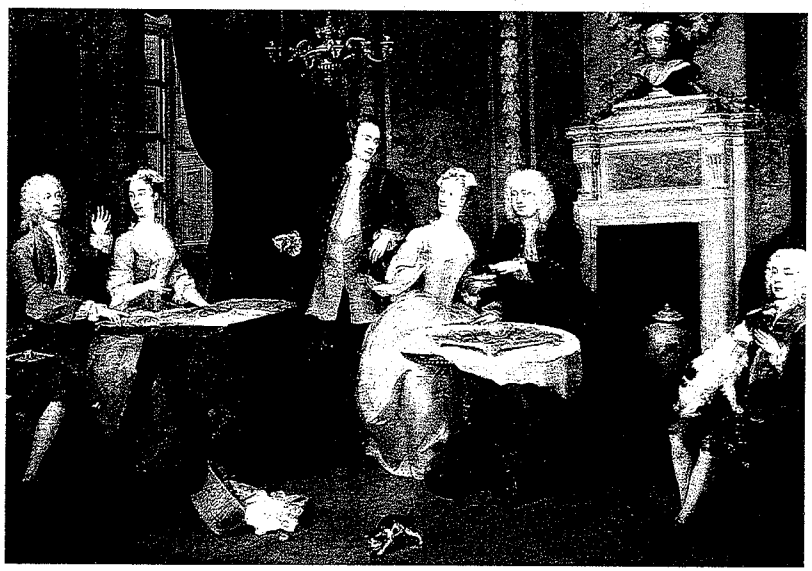
Such order validated an hierarchical society in which all creatures had their proper sphere, a scheme in which mankind, endowed with superior faculties, exercised legitimate control over Nature's lower orders. The old Aristotelian and occult traditions gave way to the Newtonian mechanistic one, thus setting the tone for the century, which was in general one of hope, energy, creativity and optimism for mankind.

Newton's belief in the immutable laws of science went hand-in-hand with the philosophy of John Locke, whose *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) was to change the direction of European thought. For him the ways in which we perceive the world depended on our sensory experience of it, and he was to fit the new physics into a less theological, more sense-based and naturalistic theory of knowledge. Locke's optimistic attitude to human nature led him to believe in mankind's essentially benign disposition. His view of the world was to be the century's credo, one of moderation, flexibility, reasonableness and toleration. In such a scheme of things the arts were destined to play a healing and uniting role in the new culture of what was called 'politeness'.

The agenda was set by the two magazines previously mentioned, Richard Steele's *Tatler* and Joseph Addison and Steele's *Spectator*. These publications were a mélange of short pieces, letters, essays and poems commenting on contemporary manners, morals and events. Their general thrust was that the religious bigotry and division of the previous century should be put aside and replaced by mutual tolerance and understanding. That new balance in society was to be achieved through a commitment to a new way of life, which aimed at understanding oneself and the world. Such a way of life could no longer focus on the venues which had embodied division, like the court, the church and the universities, but on new ones like the coffee house, the club, the theatre and the tavern, where this new interplay based on mutual conviviality could take place. The *Spectator* was to shape the views of men and women for its era and also those for the next generation. Its articles provided a short cut to 'polite' opinions and the world of taste. Its tone was comic, Whiggish and sceptical but its pages exuded an urban security. The subjects it dealt with cut across educated society, aristocracy, gentry, trade and the professions, thus producing a shifting

accord between them as they were gradually welded into 'polite society', albeit access to that world depended on birth, connection, money, patronage and talent. What might be described as the aesthetic side of politeness demanded a new physical grace and elegance of personal presentation in terms of movement and dress, as well as ease of social manner and wit and polish in conversation. Politeness was above all an art which should be exercised in company.

The role assigned to the arts in this new ideal was the one inherited from the theorists of the previous century. Art was seen to have a persuasive power which could



Delight in domestic conviviality and social encounter typical of the codes of the new polite society is reflected in the vogue for conversation pictures in which groups, such as this family, engage in conversation and dalliance. William Hogarth catches such an animated scene in a painting of c.1735 in which tea is taken and a young lady is at her embroidery frame.

set a person on the path to virtue. To understand oneself not only called for self-examination as demanded by the tenets of Christianity but for exercising what Steele categorised as 'The Commerce of Discourse'. Literature and the arts regulated and refined the passions thus fashioning a polite identity, one of whose prime purposes was to exercise these attributes. The result of this was an ever-proliferating raft of etiquette manuals as well as teachers of the 'polite' arts, dancing, music and

drawing. Knowledge and some skill in such spheres fitted a young lady or gentleman to make an entrance on to the new stage of polite society.

Taste in the arts became an essential sign of refinement and cultivation. It was an indispensable attribute of the new 'sociable man' as he was delineated by Steele and Addison. Taste came through the exercise of the senses but not of course the sensual or carnal ones. The senses called upon were passive and intellectual, the exercise of higher perceptions. Such a way of life assumed both the time and the financial resources. It called for buying works of art and antiquities, books and musical instruments, let alone attendance at performances in the theatre and concert hall. For those who could lead such a privileged existence it was the fulfilment of a Newtonian ordered ideal, which brought with it other lauded virtues, those of unity, harmony, balance, correctness and rationality and, therefore, beauty. Society, it was argued, should not only be humane, acts of philanthropy reflecting man's inborn benevolence, but also more cultured, taste revealing his true judgement. The programme of the *Spectator* and the *Tatler* was designed to bring about precisely such a union of art and morality. On launching the former, Steele and Addison had told Lord Somers that its aim was to endeavour 'to Cultivate and Polish Human Life, by promoting Virtue and Knowledge, and by recommending whatsoever may be either Useful or Ornamental to Society.' In their eyes the pursuit of what they categorised as 'The Pleasures of the Imagination' contributed to a person's moral obligation to lead a virtuous life.

One of the effects of this sudden elevation of cultural activity was to hive off what we now call the Fine Arts, painting, music, poetry, literature, sculpture and the dance, later described by Edmund Burke as the 'works of the imagination and the elegant arts.' Such arts were regarded as appealing to the imagination and the aim of their creators was seen to be that of producing emotions of taste in their audience. These were the arts which stimulated refined sensations away from the social and sexual pleasures of the passions. The rest were deemed the necessary or mechanical arts and relegated to a lower sphere.

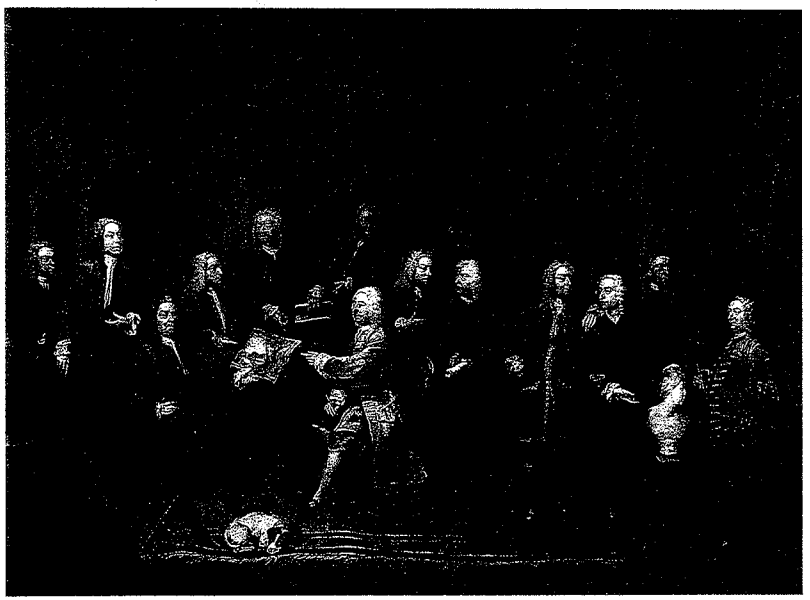
This was a fundamental turning point in the definition of what constituted cultural activity. Like most things in the eighteenth century it came out of the Scientific Revolution which for the first time divided the arts from the sciences. But as the century progressed a further striking division of another kind took place and this one was social. The consequence of the hiving off of the Fine Arts by the upper sections of society was to demote the old popular culture of seasonal festivities, folk songs and tales to the margins. Indeed it increasingly began to be dismissed as vulgar, particularly as the polite classes built up and explored their new cultural domain. By the

end of the century popular lower class culture had become so far removed that it began to be viewed as the survival of some earlier, more primitive phase in man's development, and as such worthy of study. But for those in the vanguard of polite society the sun shone and the new cultural dispensation was increasingly seen as something heaven bestowed on the island, along with its liberty and economic prosperity.

Whatever vicarious delights such pursuits brought they remained ones whose ostensible aim was to morally edify. And anywhere in which morality and social responsibility was part of the scheme of things involved sooner or later the State. Britain being a secular state had a role to play as the guardian of social values through the organ of a State church. The new polite arts were not only seen as an indictment of the licence and lewdness of their predecessors in Restoration England but their moral mission was viewed as an exaltation of the State. Not that this new cultural world was devoid of its detractors, clerics and others, who took the time-honoured view that such pursuits were vehicles for indulgence in vanity and lust, leading to a neglect of both work and duty. They were, however, to be on the losing side during an age which witnessed an unprecedented expansion in sociability.

The polite arts needed to be practised within society. In order to cater for this demand old venues were recast and new ones created. London had some two thousand taverns and coffee houses. The *Spectator* assigned to these the role of being centres for polite conversation. Rank was laid aside on entering and once inside newspapers could be read or letters written and received. Many attracted particular groups of people. Men of letters went to Will's and the Bedford coffee houses in Covent Garden, actors flocked to Wright's hard by, while Old Slaughter's Coffee House in St. Martin's Lane drew members of the artistic fraternity including Hogarth, Jonathan Richardson and Francis Hayman.

Then there were the clubs of which the most pre-eminent was the Kit-Kat Club which took its name from Christopher Cat, the keeper of the Cat and Fiddle tavern and later of the Fountain, where the club met. The club flourished between 1696 and 1720 with a membership of fifty-five including ten dukes but also the men of talent who fashioned the new polite world, Addison and Steele. Its politics were Whig but it also had a cultural agenda to shape the arts by creating a sympathetic climate of opinion for the writers it supported. To its members was owed the first theatre to move westwards, the Queen's (soon to be the King's) which opened in the Haymarket in 1705. The Kit-Kat Club helped publishers like Jacob Tonson, the most powerful bookseller of the day, the publisher of Milton, Dryden and Pope, as well as being the cradle and forcing house for the introduction of Italian opera to the country. The Tories had their club too, the Brothers, founded in 1711 to which belonged Bolingbroke, Swift, Gay and Pope. Specialising in pamphlets and political squibs it evolved into the Scriblerus Club whose focus was wholly literary.



Clubs were another aspect of the desire for social intercourse. This artists' club met at the King's Arms and included the architect James Gibbs, the landscape gardener Charles Bridgeman, the sculptor Michael Rysbrack, the architect and designer William Kent and the painter John Wootton. Painting by Gavin Hamilton, c.1734-35.

Clubs were exclusive, but other venues, such as the theatres, were accessible to any member of society who could pay the price of the entrance ticket. There were two concert halls in London in 1700, Hickford's Rooms in Panton Street and York Buildings off the Strand. In the 1720s and 30s Hickford's Rooms were enlarged to meet the demand for their subscription concerts. Later, in 1771, came the Pantheon in Oxford Street and four years later the Hanover Room which could accommodate nine hundred. Even more crucial for the city's musical life were to be the pleasure gardens. These had existed in the previous century but their nature changed in 1728 when Jonathan Tyers reopened Vauxhall as a place in which citizens could play the urban pastoral. Undesirable elements were purged and society was offered

Pleasure gardens brought people together to share each other's company as well as social delights. The great Venetian painter Antonio Canaletto catches Vauxhall Gardens in their heyday, about 1750, recording the view first encountered on entry. Vauxhall was a vehicle for the latest rococo style, a setting for everything which was considered avant-garde in the arts.

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genteel entertainment with elaborate décor and lighting. Music was an essential ingredient and there was a raised orchestra building and an organ. In 1738 the sculptor Roubiliac's famous statue of Handel in the guise of a latter day Apollo or Orpheus (now in the Victoria & Albert Museum) was installed as if to emphasise Vauxhall's musical commitment. Four years later the even more exclusive Ranelagh opened with its vast indoor rotunda, fifty-two supper boxes, orchestra and organist.

And so the stage was set, one, it should not be forgotten, which also embraced the home, where books and musical instruments, prints and pictures, began to proliferate. Polite culture calls for a certain kind of architecture and an elaboration of living space. Georgian houses not only had space for entertaining but increasing privacy achieved through more rooms, which in addition had doors with locks. The increase in letter writing indicated not only the time to indulge in such an activity but also the desire to develop personal relationships, which in a vast urban setting like London demanded private space. This was the age of the closet and the study to which a lady or a gentleman might retire in order to read and write. In 1714 probably 45% of the male population could read. That had risen to 60% by 1760. The corresponding figures for women were 25% and 40%. To be able to read did not necessarily bring with it the ability to write. Nonetheless this was a substantial section of the population and reading was by far the century's most important leisure activity.

This expansion in literacy explains the escalating demand for reading matter which resulted in the advent of magazines and newspapers and a growth in the numbers of full-time professional authors (aristocrats and gentry who wrote distanced themselves from the fact, as writing for money was viewed as tainted). Books were not only sold but could be borrowed for a fee. In 1742 the first subscription library opened and by 1800 there were some thousand of them. At the same time a library became an essential feature of any country house. There were many books published, more than ever before and on a far wider range of subjects, religious and theological, poetry and classics (often in translation) as well as imported books in French, a language universally read and spoken by the educated classes. Books had previously been few, usually the Bible and a handful of pious works, which were studied intensely. Now there were many, enabling reading to be far more extensive. Works on religion, especially sermons, were the most widely read of all. Books, like radio and television later, bound a family together in a shared intellectual and pleasurable experience offering both entertainment and instruction.

The Scientific Revolution also left its mark on how people wrote. The new mechanistic culture resulted in a dramatic change in prose style which now sought the virtues of concision and clarity of the kind found in the writings of John Locke.

The old traditional sources of language and imagery were invalidated and the analogy of the new literary style was seen to be mathematics. The former complexity of language typical of the wits and scholars of the Restoration gave way to the more factual prose characteristic of a society whose focus was on business transactions. The result was the simple positive style of the Augustan age, an exact reflection of the new scientific and rational outlook of the Enlightenment.

This is the period usually given the blanket label of Augustan. Although recent research has lifted the curtain revealing its raffish and deprived underworld the term still pertains, accurately describing certain of its identifying motifs. This was a vernacular literature whose roots lay in the schoolroom to which more people than ever before went. And these establishments were stocked with the same Greek and Roman authors, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Lucretius, Cicero, Martial, Homer, Pindar, Aesop, Juvenal and Persius. Along with them there were the classical historians like Tacitus, Plutarch and Livy. As a consequence of spreading education and through translations, more people than ever had a mind furnished with a classical frame of reference. Georgian writing works from that premise and much of it is an exercise in translating into the vernacular one or other classical precedent. Just as Lord Burlington's architectural programme transported Ancient Rome to Augustan Britain or Kent's new landscape gardens evoked classical arcady, so a poem like James Thomson's *The Seasons* recast the Latin pastoral idyll for those who lived in northern climes.

In the new scheme of things satire as a literary genre fitted in with Addison's wider objective of trying to avoid the extremes of either Puritan enthusiasm or Restoration libertinism. Satire could contribute to fashioning a new national temperament by using laughter as the prime vehicle against fanaticism and vice. In the view of the authors of the *Spectator* any satire which made use of personal or political invective or contributed to what was known as 'the spirit of party' was by definition 'impolite'. Politeness called for the satirist to use his weapons not against individuals as such but against vice in general. In practice this was largely ignored. For Addison that middle way was epitomised by the satires of Horace and Juvenal which were now reworked into the vernacular and transposed from Rome to London. Satire by its very nature was based on the events and personalities of the moment. Parody was central to its working and the satirist was to develop a whole battery of new devices for setting off one thing against the other: contrasting ideas, values, principles, attitudes, style and identities. Its vehicles were the mock-panegyric and the mock-heroic, the burlesque and travesty as well as simple imitation.

Jonathan Swift, who by turning Tory was to lead most of his life in exile as Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin, wrote the greatest of the satires, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726).

Cast in the fashionable guise of a travel book it recounts four journeys by a ship's surgeon to fantastic locations like the island of Lilliput where human beings are little bigger than ants. In it the rational Swift subjects the power of reason to merciless criticism. The result is a book in which moderation is equated with impotence and where the sane observer turns out by the end to be far madder than anyone else. Beneath what is a sober, placid text there lurks a desperation as human relations are revealed to be brutal and oppressive and men's institutions manipulable and corrupt. *The Battle of the Books* (1704) mimics the style of excitable journalism in a debate on the relative merits of the ancients as against the moderns in literature, while in *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) Swift personates a madman in the most alarming of all eighteenth century visits to Bedlam used for a satire on 'corruption in religion and learning'.

Alexander Pope was at heart a satirist, producing two great mock-heroic poems, a brilliant series of Horatian imitations and four verse epistles on moral themes. The greatest without doubt is *The Rape of the Lock* (1712 and 1714), a poem based on a piece of real-life gossip, the snipping off of a lock of a young girl's hair. This he used for a mock-epic in which so much waffle is apotheosised by him into high art but with a disturbing subtext lurking beneath its surface steely glitter. Strange areas of the subconscious are touched upon in this poem of magical transformations. Pope also parades a whole range of allusions to both the great writers of the classical heritage and also those, like Milton, within the native tradition. The *Aeneid* above all is parodied in this account of the severance of Arabella Fermor's hair by a young aristocrat:

> He takes the Gift with rev'rence, and extends
> The little Engine on his Fingers' Ends,
> This just behind *Belinda*'s Neck he spread,
> As o'er the fragrant Streams she bends her Head:
> Swift to the Lock a thousand Sprights repair,
> A thousand Wings, by turns, blow back the Hair,
> And thrice they twitch'd the Diamond in her Ear,
> Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the Foe drew near.
> The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring *Forlex* wide,
> T'inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.
> Ev'n then, before the fatal Engine clos'd,
> A Wretched *Sylph* too fondly interpos'd;
> Fate urg'd the Sheers, and cut the *Sylph* in twain,
> (But Airy Substance soon unites again)
> The meeting Points the sacred Hair dissever
> From the fair Head, for ever and for ever!

The Rape of the Lock remains Pope's most perfect achievement.

The Dunciad (1728 and 1743) is also a mock-heroic, this time a savage attack on hacks and booksellers, told in the form of a celebration of the progress of an empire, that of Dullness. Again this is a Virgilian epic, this time set in eighteenth century literary London with swipes at the Hanoverians, the corruption of Walpole's government and what Pope saw as the cultural malaise of the era. It remains vivid still with its misapplied lyricism and coruscating wit. No one could equal Pope's parody of Milton's *Paradise Lost* in presenting his arch-villain, the Poet Laureate, Colley Cibber:

> High on a gorgeous sea, that far out-shone
> Henley's gilt tub, or Fleckno's Irish throne . . .
> Great Cibber sate: the proud Parnassian sneer,
> The conscious simper, and the jealous leer,
> Mix on his look . . .
> Lift up your gates, ye Princes, see him come!
> Sound, sound ye Viols, be the Cat-call dumb!

William Kent's witty evocation of Alexander Pope in his mysterious grotto, c.1725-30.

Pope's *Epistles* form a sharp contrast. Addressed in the main to friends they delineate a world of men and events, telling stories, cracking jokes and pointing morals. That 'To a Lady', his life-long friend Martha Blount, has a brilliance which is at once relaxed and easy, witty and conversational.

Pope, however, took no part in what was to be the major literary innovation of the period, the novel. This emerges for the first time as a recognisable genre, albeit still at the fringes of literature. A quite exceptional convergence of circumstances gave birth to it. Like much else the novel could never have happened without John Locke. A novel works from the Lockeian view that truth can only be discovered by the individual through his own senses. For Locke the pursuit of truth is a matter for the individual independent of past thought. A novel's prime criterion is truth to a single person's experience, recognising the fact that each individual's experience is unique. Plots were no longer derived from previous literature, from history or classical mythology, but from that unique individual experience. Locke also defined human personal identity as an identity of consciousness through time. And the means whereby an individual remained in touch with his own identity was through

memory. Time as the agent of change was seen as the force shaping man's individual and collective history, which is in essence the substance of the novel.

The novel also comes out of an aspect of the Scientific Revolution with its emphasis on the role of individual human effort. It also owed much to the Puritan tradition with its preoccupation with self-scrutiny leading on to self-analysis. In addition the Puritan conception of the dignity of ordinary human labour led directly to the novelist's general belief that daily life was of sufficient interest to be worth writing about at all. The result was a unique form that brought life as lived through time and art together. But this could not have occurred without certain changes in society, which made it worth reading about the experiences of a single human being. That could only have come about in a milieu which was highly secularised, for the action of a novel depends not on divine intervention but on the exercise of choice by ordinary human beings. Personal relationships, which are integral to the form, could only move centre stage in a society which had enough time and security in which to indulge them.

Early eighteenth century England witnessed just such social change. Under the aegis of the Puritan ethic courtly love, which within the medieval and Renaissance tradition had always been adulterous, was transferred to marriage. For the first time women began to be able to exert a small degree of choice in their partner. Once married a new and separate family unit was created. All of this needed to be in place before a genre could develop which took as its pivot courtship leading to marriage. Female chastity which ended in a virtuous marriage, in which both a financial and property settlement were involved, was central to the Protestant ethic. It was to be the *leitmotif* of every novel into the twentieth century. But that is not to say that such sagas of virtue were not also a means whereby the sexual imagination could freely range in a way denied by the etiquette of life. And the novel had the advantage of exploring matter which could never be put on stage.

The earliest creators of the novel had all the exhilaration of starting with a clean slate. What is astonishing is that its three greatest exponents, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding, between them established every element of the genre within a few decades. Daniel Defoe created in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the story of a man cut adrift from civilisation, a masterpiece. In Crusoe he fashioned a new heroic archetype, one who could be read and re-read in many ways. Rugged economic individualism and the record of an inner life animate a secular and spiritual fable in which providence ensures both deliverance and survival. Survival is indeed the key theme which binds other Defoe novels together: *Moll Flanders* (1722), as Moll spirals both up and down driven by a desire for money and the maintenance of her genteel

status, and *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), which graphically reconstructs the terrible events of 1665.

Defoe was a journalist. Samuel Richardson was a successful bookseller. *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) transformed the role of women in fiction. Richardson not only got inside the heads of his characters but into their houses too. In *Pamela* he used the form of the letter in which to recount the tale of a maidservant whose defence of her sexual virtue was rewarded by a genteel marriage. In England the book ran into five editions and it also swept through the mainland of Europe. Richardson created a female prototype, the pale and delicate heroine who wilts at the least sign of a sexual advance and whose descendants in Victorian fiction pass out at even the hint of an indiscretion. *Clarissa* (1747-48), his greater masterpiece, has the dubious distinction of being the longest novel in the English language. This is the story of an innocent country girl who is corrupted by the city and ultimately dies a saintly death. If *Pamela* might be said to have represented one aspiration of the social scene, the ability for a woman to marry up, *Clarissa* opened out on its pages what passed through the subconscious mind, touching deep into the moral and social preoccupations of the age. Richardson's attempts to do the same for a virtuous hero in *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753-54) ended in failure, but his work overall had set in place the two directions which could be taken by future novelists, the first the exploration of an individual's psychological and moral awareness, the second to purvey vicarious sexual experience and thus fulfil adolescent fantasies.

Henry Fielding was a feckless spendthrift who started out as a brilliant writer of satirical plays until his stage career was cut short by Walpole's clamp-down on the theatre. As a result he turned to the novel and in doing so opened the highway to comedy, establishing thereby a pattern for the comic novel which was to lead directly to Dickens. Of his three novels, *Joseph Andrews* (1742), *Tom Jones* (1749) and *Amelia* (1751), it is the second which is regarded as his most enduring masterpiece. Divided into three parts it traces the eponymous hero's life from a childhood and youth spent in Somerset through an unstable period on the road, peopled by a motley cast of characters, ending in London. Fielding brought to his novels a vivid narrative technique and a wide knowledge of the ways of the world. As a consequence of this he paints a sweeping panorama of mid-Georgian society in what he conceived as an epic within the classical tradition.

These were the heroic decades of the novel to which Laurence Sterne was to make a very individual contribution. *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) is a fictionalised account of Sterne's travels in Italy and France but *Tristram Shandy* (1713-68) is something else, a gloriously chaotic yet great comic work with a mastery of the realistic presentation

of fleeting thoughts, feelings and gestures, and a flexible handling of time which prefigures the break with the tyranny of chronology which came in the twentieth century. In this way, within virtually a single generation, the novel had made an incredible journey from being a narrative of adventure to one exploring man's inner life.

It is important to remember that the novel lay on the fringes of literature. At its heart lay poetry. No successors of the stature of Dryden were to emerge before the second decade. The only poet of significance before that date was Matthew Prior, an impressive practitioner of a variety of verse forms and the author of two major poems: *Solomon on the Vanity of the World* (1718), an elevated Augustan exercise on a moral theme, and *Alma: or The Progress of the Mind* (1718), a mock treatise on the seat of the soul. But the century was to be dominated by the work of two other writers, James Thomson and Alexander Pope. Thomson's *The Seasons*, which came out in stages between 1728 and 1730, captures the way Newtonian optics led poets to appreciate colour within the universe. The poetry of the eighteenth century is indeed suffused with this emphasis on the varied hues of nature. *The Seasons* is at once scientific and descriptive, partly too an imitation of a Miltonic epic with Nature in the role of hero. This is a British countryside attuned to the ideals of a new urban bourgeoisie, patriotic, pastoral, classical and sentimental. In this way the post-Newtonian universe was incorporated into the poetic mode.

No single writer could, however, measure up to Pope. Pope is the first really successful writer who made a fortune from his powers and created and retained a reading public to support him. Only four feet five inches tall and suffering from tuberculosis of the spine, Pope was undoubtedly a genius. He was endowed with quite extraordinary powers of observation and he was hugely ambitious. He was, in addition, an outsider, a Catholic, whose faith excluded him from a university education as well as public office. As a consequence he was self-taught and self-created. This was a man with an agenda. The age was Augustan and he cast himself as its Virgil. His overriding aim was to introduce a new 'correctness' to English poetry. In his *Imitations of Horace* (1735) he places himself exactly:

> . . . Britain to soft refinements less a foe,
> Wit grew polite, and Numbers learn'd to flow.
> Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
> The varying verse, the full resounding line,
> The long majestic march, and energy divine.
> Tho' still some traces of our rustic vein
> And splay-foot verse, remain'd, and will remain.
> Late, very late, correctness grew our care . . .

Pope's summons was for a revolution casting off the country's literary insularity. For him that new ease, order and correctness was enshrined in his adoption of the heroic couplet. Symmetrical, stately, ordered and yet lyrical it worked for every poetic form and was an ideal machine for thinking in, being logical, sequential, clear as well as polite. Pope became the master of the heroic couplet which far from being an easy option called rather for immense skill in order to achieve a subtle and carefully modulated rhythm.

He made his living through translations. The *Iliad* (1720) was undertaken 'purely for want of money' but it was a translation done in the full Augustan spirit of transmitting a foundation stone of the western poetic tradition to this island. The *Odyssey* (1725-26), which he did in collaboration, was to fall short. These were his breadwinners which brought him not only fame but a fortune, enabling him to set himself up as a country gentleman on a mini-estate at Twickenham and create one of the first gardens in the new landscape style. Pope was an astute businessman and also a master of publicity maintained through endless portraits of himself and through his letters, in which he cast himself as a latter day Pliny or Cicero. Ironically his prosperity depended on what he most despised, the new mercantilism and urban culture. Pope may have been both Catholic and Tory but paradoxically for him his mind was urban.

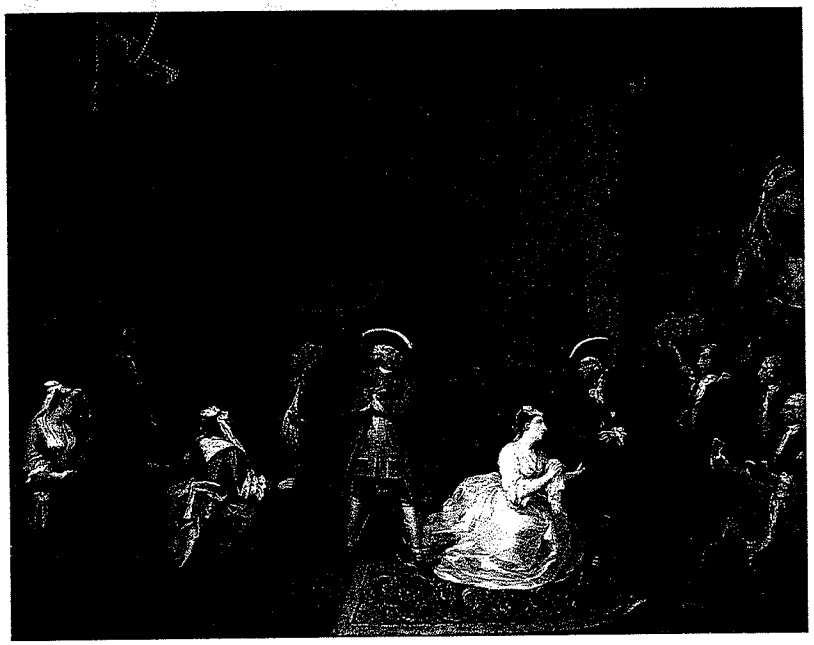
Through exploring the Greek, Roman and English classics (he edited Shakespeare to conform to Augustan ideals) he discovered both himself and his poetry. His output in the form of satire, already touched upon, was prolific. Pope was a prodigy who produced his first poems, the *Pastorals* (1709), before he was twenty and whose first collected works were already issued at twenty-nine. *The Rape of the Lock* and his *Essay on Criticism* (1711) established him overnight as a major figure with a total mastery of versification and form, a familiarity with tradition and an awareness of new combinations. *An Essay on Man* (1733-34), now looked upon as shallow, was at the time his most influential work. No other writer in the century made such an indelible impression on the age, his writings so perfectly crystallising its ideals, so much so that his works make up a complete archive of its culture, one so monumental that it had to be repudiated by the Romantics before poets could once again move on. Pope's achievement lay in harnessing the new rationality to the powers of the creative poetic imagination and in applying the perspective of Greek and Roman literature to modern manners. He stands unchallenged as *the* man of letters of the age.

Whereas in the case of literature the lapsing of the Licensing Act precipitated a renaissance, the passing of the Stage Licensing Act in 1737 was to stultify theatrical invention for a generation and more. Theatre entered the new century with all the

traditional legacies which made government and the city authorities chary of it. For them the stage was always a potential threat to public order, both what was acted on it and the often riotous behaviour of audiences, not to mention its ancient alliance with prostitution. It was, however, an age of great actors: Thomas Betterton, James Quin, Peg Woffington, Colley Cibber and Elizabeth Barry. Initially theatres multiplied. Betterton, gaining a temporary royal licence, set up in Lincoln's Inn Fields and the King's Theatre opened in the Haymarket. Richard Steele's attack on the decadent drama of the Stuarts reached its climax in his sentimental comedy *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), but by then the theatres were already suffering from the aristocratic mania for Italian opera. Theatre managers hit back with the pantomime, an afterpiece combining dance and mime, music and spectacle with the added attraction of the greatest harlequin of the century, John Rich. And then in the very year that Italian opera foundered, 1728, came John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. This broke every record in theatrical history by running sixty-two nights at the Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, then managed by John Rich. Nothing like it had ever been staged before and its appeal cut right across the social spectrum. It took satire on to the stage with an unparalleled brilliance attacking the depravity of the Walpole government, the absurdity of Italian opera, and the general venality of early Georgian society. The actors dressed in the mock finery of their rival, the opera, replaced its arias with parodies of Handel and Bononcini, intermingled with lyrics set to popular ballads and folksongs. The story of Macheath the highwayman's passion for Polly Peachum set in Newgate prison had zest, guts, sex and sentiment. The discrepancy between its words, which depicted the Whig oligarchy and the commercial classes as rogues, and the music came as delight to audiences who were utterly seduced by its charm. The production has gone down in history in the phrase that it made 'Gay rich and Rich gay.'

The effect of this was to unleash a decade of theatrical expansion culminating in a whole series of scathing political satires by Henry Fielding at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket. The old patent theatres responded too, with drama that was also politically charged. The result was that in 1737 Walpole got the Stage Licensing Act through Parliament whereby all plays had to be submitted to the Lord Chamberlain fourteen days before performance. The impact on the theatre was devastating. Drama was henceforth confined to the two historic patent theatres only. Worse, the Lord Chamberlain reserved the right even to ban a play which he had passed should he so wish. The spoken drama was to be the only art form subject to such rigorous government control, one which was not to be relinquished until the 1960s.

Fielding turned to the novel and he was not the only playwright to abandon the stage. As for the theatres themselves there was no choice but to opt either for bland



William Hogarth's rendering of the last act of John Gay's The Beggar's Opera *(1728) in which Lucy Lockit and Polly Peachum entreat their fathers, the gaoler and the informer, for the life of the highwayman, Macheath, whom each supposes to be her husband. Hogarth's painting includes a send-up of what he regarded as the pomposity of Italian opera.*

new plays which eschewed politics or to rummage through the inherited repertory of the past. One of the direct consequences of the Act was to be the cult of Shakespeare. But the damage to the spoken drama was to be immense and long lasting.

What was unaffected was the contribution theatre continued to make to musical life. In 1715 J.C. Pepusch, who had arranged the music for *The Beggar's Opera*, was appointed music director at Drury Lane, thus inaugurating a new era of musical spectacle. He revived the masque, and in the 1720s came the pantomime which contained airs, recitatives, ensembles and choruses interspersed with small orchestral pieces. A huge quantity of music was produced by William Boyce, Maurice Greene and Thomas Arne including the latter's setting for Milton's masque of *Comus* (1738). Arne was indeed the most wide-ranging and important composer of theatre music, but he was not to achieve his greatest successes until later, *Thomas and Sally* (1760),

an entertainment which combined the traditions of *opera buffa* with the English ballad opera, the first true English *opera seria*, *Artaxerxes* (1761) and a new form, the ballad opera, *Love in a Village* (1762), which mingled music from Italian opera with folk tunes and specially composed pieces.

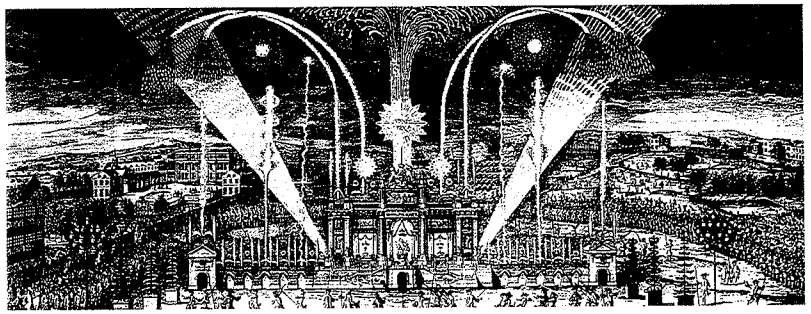
The abundance of theatre music by English composers is some indication that they were able to hold their own in this genre, but they equally held it in the composition of odes, songs and cantatas, concerti grossi and trio sonatas. There was a burgeoning as music-making moved away from the court and new societies were founded, festivals inaugurated and concert rooms and pleasure gardens opened. In 1710 the Academy of Ancient Music was set up at the Crown and Anchor tavern in the Strand with its aim 'the study and practice of vocal and instrumental harmony.' The Academy was devoted to the performance of the works of composers such as Byrd, Palestrina, Tallis and Purcell. In 1726 an Academy of Vocal Music followed, to perpetuate the tradition of English church music. Subscription concerts began at Hickford's Room in 1729 and ten years later they moved to Brewer Street where concerts were to continue for the next four decades. Such performances included orchestral pieces, vocal music and instrumental solos. From 1739 Vauxhall became a major centre for every kind of musical event and Ranelagh followed not long after. To these must be added St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey with their choirs as well as the music heard in other churches and in private houses, not to mention that sung and played in the streets. Everything was in place for London to become the musical capital of Europe, a position signalled by the arrival of the composer who was to dominate music in the same way that Pope dominated literature, George Frederick Handel.

Handel was born in Halle in Germany on 25 February 1685, in the same year as Bach. A musical prodigy virtually from birth, his first opera was staged in Hamburg in 1705 when he was just twenty. From there, under the patronage of a Medici, he went to Italy, seminal not only for opera but every aspect of musical education, being the home of all the various baroque forms both vocal and instrumental. There he learnt the art of opera and his first Italian opera *Rodrigo* was staged in Florence in 1709, followed a year later by the resounding success of *Agrippina* in Venice. Handel was offered a post at the Hanoverian court, with the freedom to travel, and in 1710, he arrived in a London hungry for opera and, what was more important, with the wealth to pay for it. In 1711 *Rinaldo* was performed to acclaim and he attracted the patronage of Queen Anne who gave him a pension and commissioned him to write the *Te Deum* on the occasion of the Peace of Utrecht (1713).

Handel settled permanently in England in 1712 and took out citizenship in 1726. He was to remain court composer for his entire life contributing, for example, music

for the coronation of George II in 1737 which is still used at coronations today. But the bulk of his work lay away from the court, for the theatre and the concert halls of London in the form of operas, instrumental music and oratorios. He began with the patronage of Lord Burlington followed by that of the Duke of Chandos (for whom he composed the *Chandos Anthems*), then came his appointment as composer for the Royal Academy of Music. By that date he had already achieved an unassailable position on the musical scene, one which continued to grow until, by the middle of the century, he took on the guise of a national monument. He died aged seventy-four on 14 April 1759, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Handel was an overwhelming personality, an impatient and excitable man, and there was to be no sphere of music-making into which he did not breathe new life. His orchestral music included the *Water Music* (1717), the *Music for the Royal Fireworks* (1749), and two sets of *Concerti Grossi*. They all remain as vivid today as at their first performance. The sense of occasion which any new work by Handel brought is beautifully caught in a contemporary account of the first performance of the famous *Water Music* on a July evening in 1717 when George I and the court went by water from Whitehall to Chelsea:



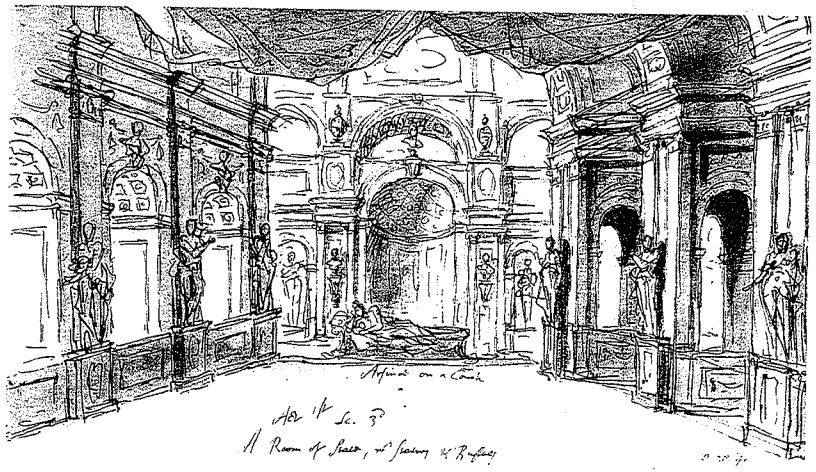
'A View of the Public Fire Works' to celebrate the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle staged in Green Park on 27 April 1749, for which Handel wrote one of his grandest scores.

'Many other Barges with Persons of Quality attended, and so great a Number of Boats, that the whole River in a manner was cover'd; a City Company's Barge was employ'd for the Musick, where were 50 Instruments of all Sorts, who play'd all the Way . . . the finest symphonies, compos'd express for this Occasion, by Mr Hendel; which his Majesty liked so well, that he caus'd it to be plaid over three times in going and returning.'

But his impact on the arrival of Italian opera was to be far greater. That was an

importation of an art form which had evolved in Italy during the previous century, one which had been seen by members of the English aristocracy on the Grand Tour. Italian baroque opera was largely a vehicle for beautiful melody and ravishing singing. The action was described in the recitatives while long *da capo* arias conveyed the general mood and emotions. Italian singers were of an unrivalled virtuosity, both those with a soprano voice and the famous *castrati*, men who had been castrated in childhood in order to prevent their voices from breaking. The result was an extraordinary quality of high voice which was deployed for emotional utterances in the masculine roles. This was what was known as *opera seria*. The plots dealt with the conflicting demands of love and duty among the aristocracy, utilising stories from classical mythology, history and medieval romance. Great singing was central to the experience but it was set within visual spectacles on the grand scale with elaborate transformation scenes and magical ascents and descents. It was very, very expensive.

The earliest attempt to import Italian opera to England was made by Thomas Clayton who returned from Italy with a libretto and songs for an opera entitled *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus* (1705): 'An opera, after the Italian manner: All sung.' A period followed with bilingual opera and then in 1710, Italian opera won with Francesco Mancini's *Idaspe* in which sang the great *castrato* Nicolini. Fashionable society was entranced, the Purcellian tradition of semi-opera promptly collapsed and London became the mecca for hundreds of immigrant singers and musicians. The 1712-13 opera season included Handel's *Teseo* which inaugurated the composer's long relationship with John James Heidegger who took care of the management side of the operation, an arrangement which was to last thirty years.



Design for 'A Room of State' by Sir James Thornhill for the earliest opera in the Italian style, Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus, *to be staged in England in 1705.*

The Royal Academy of Music, set up in 1719, was a joint-stock company to back the opera company financially in the absence of a court. Three of the leading singers of the day were recruited, Senesino, the celebrated *castrato*, Francesca Cuzzoni, one of the most splendid sopranos of the century, and, in 1726, Faustina Bordoni, another great singer but one whose attractions led to her exchanging blows on stage with her rival, contributing to the collapse of the Academy. The cost was huge: Senesino commanded a fee of 3,000 guineas for his first season. Besides Handel there were two other composers recruited, Giovanni Bononcini and Attilio Ariosti. The Academy opened at the Haymarket in April 1720 with Handel's *Radamisto*, the first of a long series of successes culminating in *Giulio Cesare* (1724), *Tamerlano* (1724) and *Rodelinda* (1725).

When the Academy collapsed in 1728, Handel and Heidegger leased the King's Theatre for five years and staged a whole new series of operas including *Ariodante* (1735) and *Alcina* (1735). Meanwhile the aristocracy, with whom Handel had fallen out, forced him out of the Haymarket to make way for their own new company, the Opera of the Nobility. Handel and Heidegger went to Covent Garden but London had simply not the resources to support two major opera companies and eventually both of them failed. It was not the end of Italian opera in England but opera never effectively recovered until the 1760s.

All of this led to Handel finally abandoning opera in 1741 for oratorio. The shift had begun earlier with a highly successful revival of an early work, *Esther*, at the Crown and Anchor tavern in the Strand in 1732. The

Caricatures of Italian opera singers, above, the soprano Faustina Bordoni with the castrato Senesino; below, the soprano Francesca Cuzzoni and the castrato Farinelli with, in the background, the impresario, Joseph Heidegger.

decision was taken to re-stage it in the King's Theatre. As the Dean of Westminster refused to allow the Abbey choristers to wear stage costume the performance took the form of a concert. Unlike his operas, which remained resolutely Italianate, in the case of the oratorio Handel evolved a musical format which was strikingly different from its European counterparts, so much so that it took on a character which remains resolutely insular. Such oratorios were usually staged during Lent, combining as they did both piety and entertainment. The subject matter made use of religious and patriotic themes from the Bible and the works of Spenser, Milton and Dryden. Appealing equally to both Anglicans and dissenters they crossed the religious divide. What they represented was a fusion of the drama of opera, the oratorios similarly being divided into three acts, with the native choral tradition. The role of the chorus in *opera seria* was minimal but in the oratorios Handel was able to develop its full potential. In addition, between the acts the orchestra played a concerto, Handel eventually composing special organ concertos which he performed himself.

Handel's oratorios, like *Saul* (1739), were as dramatic as his operas. But it was to be his *Messiah* (1742) which was to place him at the heart of the British musical inheritance. Its initial performance in Dublin was not auspicious and its ascent into cult status only began in the 1750s when it began to be staged annually for the benefit of the new Foundling Hospital. Written in twenty-four days it managed to be both theatrically colourful and also deeply conducive to spiritual meditation. But *Messiah* was only one of a whole series of oratorios which the composer wrote during the 1740s all of which were vivid, powerful, original and resourceful. Boyce, Greene and Arne all followed but never emulated him. His achievement was neatly summed up by his early biographer, Mainwaring: 'His Oratorios . . . being in our own language, have chiefly endeared him to the nation.'

That turn of phrase catches a mood which was increasingly to permeate the cultural scene by the middle of the century, patriotism. The Jacobite invasions of 1715 and 1745 fed it, so did the wars with France. In addition it was played upon by opposition parties to the long hegemony of the Walpole regime. English history was recast as a struggle of liberty against faction (Walpole), the former finding heroes in the Ancient Britons and the freemen of Saxon England. It was no coincidence that Thomas Arne's 'Rule Britannia', with words by the poet James Thomson, was first heard in the *Masque of Alfred* performed before the Prince of Wales in 1740. Augustan Rome began to lose ground to Elizabethan England as the yardstick whereby to measure the triumphs of contemporary culture. In no sphere of activity was that pull more powerfully registered than in the visual arts where for the first time there was a deliberate effort to create a British school of painting to rival the Italian and French schools.

Ever since the Reformation, outside of the court the visual arts had never quite lost the stigma of popery. That fear is caught in the extremely restricted range of subject matter open to artists; virtually all were portraits, of people, their houses, their estates and their animals. Art in the Great Tradition, that is art which took as its subject matter heroic, historical and mythological themes, was viewed as something foreign. In England that kind of painting was the province of immigrants to the country or something which could be purchased in what was the beginning of a market in old master paintings. By 1700 there was already in existence a network of highly professional dealers who organised the import of over a thousand pictures annually into England. As in the case of publishing this had meant sweeping away a monopoly, in this instance that of the Painter Stainers Company who had made it illegal to import foreign art. By the opening years of the eighteenth century all of this had been dismantled and by 1750 five to ten major picture sales were held each year in London. This was to be the collecting century.

In one sense this only aggravated the situation as far as it concerned native artists, who were not only up against foreign competition but also the increasing cult of old masters. Aristocrats who had been on the Grand Tour naturally looked down on English painters as somehow inferior, being neither genteel nor in possession of a classical training. The problem was how to raise the status of native artists and their work. The general consensus was that this had to be achieved by the artists essaying works within the Great Tradition. Shaftesbury had cast art, reflective as it was of the order, proportion and harmony of God's universe, into the role of being a pathway to virtue. The subjects which artists chose should be those which would instil thoughts of civic virtue into the onlooker, scenes of classical history and mythology, stirring patriotic moments and mythological allegories. In this he subscribed to what the continental academies recognised as the hierarchy of genres, in which history painting as it was designated was recognised as the summit of artistic achievement. Everything else occupied a lower niche. British artists therefore needed to graft their work on to the Great Tradition as enshrined in the works of the masters of the Renaissance and of classical antiquity, a theme which the *Spectator* echoed in its papers on 'The Pleasures of the Imagination'. It was a view also popularized by the writings of the influential theorist Jonathan Richardson who joined the chorus calling for an elevated native art in the Great Tradition. This did not depict what was actually seen but rather '. . . a painter must raise his eyes beyond what he sees, and form a model of perfection in his own mind which is not to be found in reality.' In a series of essays (1715-19) Richardson produced the standard works on art criticism which were to set the agenda for the century, leading to the triumph of those who advocated the adoption

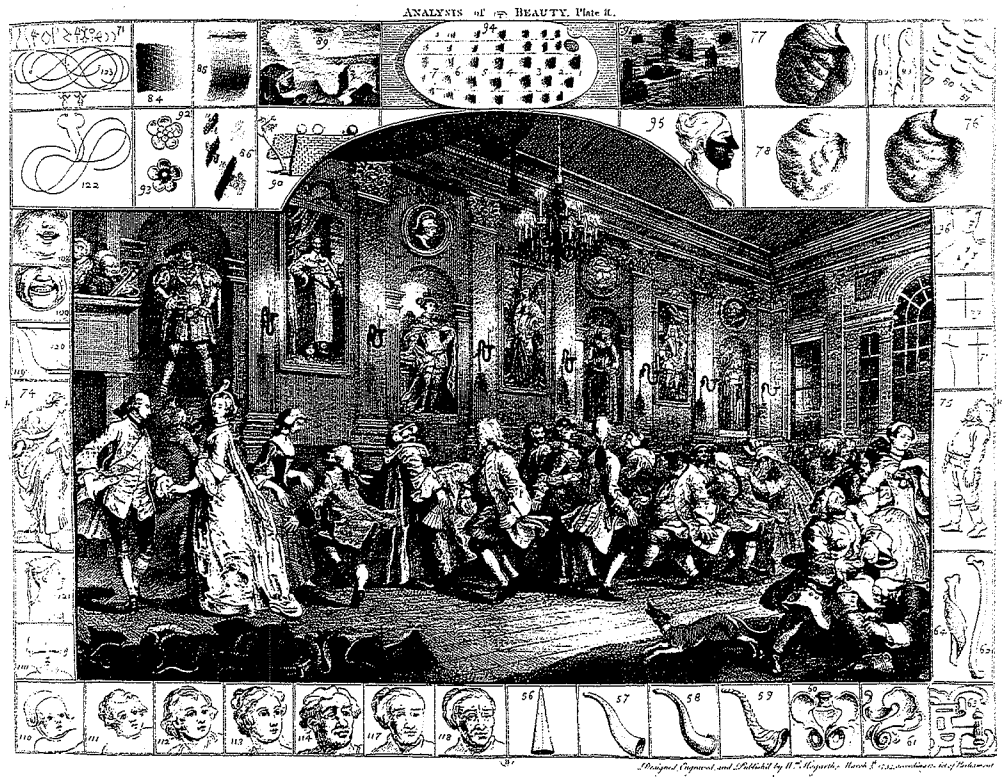
of the Great Tradition and to the founding of the Royal Academy.

Inspired by Richardson one group of painters, headed by Arthur Pond, came together and started the Roman Club to discuss and promote Italian art. Members of the club went to Italy in 1725 and that voyage henceforth was seen more and more to be indispensable for any painter with aspirations. Not everyone went along with this viewpoint and one painter in particular, William Hogarth, was to spend his entire career attacking everything he considered smacked of abroad. The Palladian style, the Italian opera and the worship of the old masters were all anathema to him. He was, of course, as any analysis of his work reveals, keenly aware of the heritage of the past, but his chief pride lay in being resolutely British. He drew around himself a contrary group of painters who met at Old Slaughter's Coffee House in St. Martin's Lane forming an imbalanced, anarchic, anti-academic off-beat group. Hogarth's programme for the future of British art was a very different one and he summed it up in *The Analysis of Beauty* (1753), in which he attacked the tyranny of academic rules and advocated a British school that did not look either to antiquity or Italy. Instead he directed the artist to look at what he saw in the streets of London. In this he was a pure disciple of John Locke, basing his arguments not on the authority of the past but on personal observation and on rational enquiry into the working of the human mind. Beauty for Hogarth was founded not on ideal but empirical principles, its perception part of the Lockeian realm of sensation. Sadly Hogarth compromised his dismissal of the world of academe by substituting for it a rule of his own, 'the serpentine line', something which was to make the young Joshua Reynolds's attack on Hogarth in *The Idler* (1759) all the easier. Later Reynolds dismissed the painter's work as not even worthy of a place in the academic hierarchy of genres since Hogarth was an artist, in his opinion, who had expended his powers 'on low and confined subjects.'

Hogarth is the great maverick of the age, radical and pugnacious, a man who had fought his way up from poverty and the social exclusion of dissent. In that sense he had much in common with the other native giant, Pope, with whom he also shared a hunger for status, money, the high life and social acceptance. Most of it he got, although not on Pope's exalted level, for Hogarth was touchy, envious and angry and most of his work was aimed at tearing into shreds the official vision of Augustan England. Beneath the patina of frothing lace, stiff brocade and rustling silks his eye spied not only the dirty linen but worse. His was an acutely literary turn of mind which revelled in meanings and double-meanings making him fit more naturally into the gallery of the novelists than in that of the painters of the day.

Hogarth was the son of an impoverished classics teacher. Brought up in the Smithfield area of London he was familiar from childhood with the popular culture

of the streets and with the seamier side of urban life. When he was seventeen he was apprenticed to an engraver and decided that his way up would be by learning copperplate engraving so that he could respond to the boom in prints. In 1720, when he was twenty-three, he joined the new artists' academy in St. Martin's Lane (the only place where artists could draw from the nude model and receive instruction) where he learned to draw and paint. His first major print appeared in 1724, *Masquerades and Operas* or *The Taste of the Town*, a scathing attack on the vogue for Italian opera, the fashion for fancy dress masquerades and pantomimes, as well as a swipe at William Kent and Lord



A country dance, a plate from William Hogarth's The Analysis of Beauty *(1753), the painter's treatise in which he argues in favour of the serpentine Line of Grace as the formal basis of aesthetic theory.*

Hogarth's satire Masquerades and Operas *(1724) attacks fashionable fads for both. To the left the opera impresario Heidegger leans out of a window welcoming those who flock to the Italian opera, a scene from which is on the billboard, while, to the right, another crowd presses to get into a masquerade while someone trundles away the works of Shakespeare and other playwrights as so much rubbish. In the background atop a Palladian arch Michelangelo and Raphael 'worship' another of Hogarth's* bêtes noires, *William Kent.*

Burlington's promotion of the Palladian style. His next eruption on to the scene came as the painter of no less than five versions of *The Beggar's Opera* which brought together everything which obsessed him most, from low life to another tilt at Lord Burlington.

The mainstream of his work during this period, however, was conversation pictures, a new form of group portrait which had its origins on the Continent but which mirrored exactly the new conviviality of polite society. Hogarth had a natural skill for catching a likeness but in the end he was to view these pictures as 'a kind of drudgery'. By that time he had hit upon the format which was to ensure him immortality. He decided, in his own words, 'to turn my thoughts to a still more new way of proceeding, viz painting and Engraving modern moral Subjects, a Field unbroke up in any Country or any age . . .' 'My picture,' he wrote, 'was my stage and men and women were my actors . . .'

A Harlot's Progress (1730) appeared in engraved form in 1732. It had attracted over twelve hundred subscribers and made the artist a small fortune. Hogarth was an astute businessman, executing and marketing the engravings himself, cutting out the middlemen. The idea of a series of pictures on a moral theme as a story sequence was absolutely innovative and in them Hogarth revealed himself to be both a storyteller and a satirist in the great tradition. He also had the rare judgement to be able to indulge in narrative social comedy of a kind which could also be enjoyed by its victims. And *A Harlot's Progress*, which told the story of a country girl's arrival in London and downward spiral into prostitution, had plenty of recognisable people in it. Resembling in a way a medieval morality play recast for Georgian London, these were ambivalent images which could be read many ways by the viewer. In them Hogarth was able to indulge in displays which were prurient but set within a framework which was unanswerably edifying.

A Rake's Progress (c.1733) repeats the formula. Hogarth's Tom Rakewell is a bourgeois who is seduced into a way of life he cannot possibly afford. Beneath it all he retains a sensibility so that in the end his mind snaps and he ends in the madhouse. With *Marriage à la Mode* (c.1743) these sequences reach their highest point in the story of the consequences of an arranged match between an alderman's daughter and the syphilitic son of a bankrupt earl. Others followed, but only in the form of engravings aimed at reforming the apprentice classes, among them *Industry and Idleness* (1747) and *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751). By that date Hogarth had become a survivor from an earlier age.

Hogarth was a mass of contradictions but he remains a genius, a great humanitarian, a man who cared about the fate of his fellow artists, of foundlings left on the London streets, and animals. It was Hogarth who was instrumental in persuading Jonathan Tyers to commission canvases by contemporary British painters for Vauxhall and who offered his services free to St. Bartholomew's Hospital to decorate its staircase, rather than see the commission go to an Italian. Although a failure as a history painter himself, he executed works as gifts for the new Foundling Hospital and set in motion its role of bringing together works by British painters in a venue which was visited and patronised by everyone of note of the day. His portrait of the hospital's founder, Thomas Coram, depicts a warm-hearted merchant endowed with the trappings of a baroque prince. It was Hogarth, too, who fought for a copyright act for artists which he got in 1735. Like Shakespeare his name has become an adjective evoking at once a whole world, one of telling details, from a cosmeticised face to a cat climbing up the back of a chair. Nothing escaped his unerring eye for the follies of this world and the sad reality of human weakness. From him was to stem the mighty stream of British caricature and cartoon but in the case of painting he was to

A scene from one of Hogarth's modern moralities, Marriage à la Mode *(c.1743), a series which attacks property marriages, a daughter of a wealthy businessman being sacrificed for a title. Here, the new countess is depicted at her toilette, with her lover suggesting a visit to a masquerade of the kind depicted on the screen. To the left an Italian castrato sings.*

be on the losing side against those who advocated the Great Tradition.

The opening decades of the eighteenth century make up some of the most complex and exhilarating in the country's cultural history. Everywhere one looks there is an extraordinary energy and drive, a feeling as to the possibility of things. At the same time the temptation to view the era solely through the eyes of hindsight has to be resisted. At its most misleading it presents a picture of a calm, united and triumphant Augustan age, the consequence of the Revolution of 1688 and the Hanoverian succession of 1714. The reality was that the country in the half century after 1688 was not only politically but culturally divided. Large swathes of the population would have welcomed a Stuart restoration which remained a possibility until the defeat of the Young Pretender in 1745. Up until then and beyond, above all in Scotland, there existed a vigorous Jacobite sub-culture expressed in a coming together of elements of Stuart high culture with folk elements such as songs and ballads.

In the case of the former we can trace Jacobitism in a range of symbols and references from Virgil's Aeneas, the exiled, wandering prince of the *Aeneid*, to allusions to that old Elizabethan myth of the return of Astraea and the golden age. Scholars argue as to how widespread that sentiment was, for it calls for an ability to read between the lines. Early Georgian government kept a firm lid on political dissent, so that those who opposed learned how to write in such a way as to be seemingly inoffensive and yet for those who recognised the signs and signals the meaning would be far different. In the higher cultural reaches Lord Burlington was not alone (there are other instances of 'Jacobite architecture'), for in the case of writers' works as diverse as Thomas

Otway's *Venice Preserved* and, later, Thomas Gray's 'The Bard' have been argued to be crypto-Jacobite. Pope's affinity, through his Catholicism, with the Stuart cause is at times only thinly concealed. In the case of England much of this must remain conjectural; in that of Scotland, Scottish nationalism and a cult of the Stuarts became inextricably linked.

In spite of this, as the decades of Hanoverian rule progressed there were accelerating moves towards creating a culture which was British, increasingly so after the Act of Union of 1707 which united England and Scotland. That consciousness was slow to develop but in 1750 the pace was beginning to quicken. Until the third quarter of the eighteenth century the cultural primacy of France was unchallenged. The court, the aristocracy and upper classes all read and spoke French as the *lingua franca* of European polite society. A period in France learning the language and a visit to Versailles were as important as a sojourn in Italy for those who made the Grand Tour. Figures of the stature of Voltaire and Rousseau enjoyed a European fame as representatives of the culture of the country which was the acknowledged home of the Enlightenment. In England it was only the middle classes who saw the French as the enemy and, worse, Roman Catholic, and who fostered a suspicion of all things foreign. Only with the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 were all the various elements to come together to create a coherent national cultural tradition, one to which all members of the educated classes could subscribe. Until then all cultural roads led first to Paris and then onwards to Rome.

Hogarth's own engraved trade card.

Chapter Twenty-Six

THE GRAND TOUR AND AFTER

In 1711 John Talman, the virtuoso son of the architect William Talman, suggested to Lord Cornbury, then in Rome on the Grand Tour, that he should commission a picture. The subject matter was to be as follows: 'Learning and Arts as the Chief accomplishments of a Nobleman in order to render himself an ornament to his Country, showing Queen Anne receiving a group of Grand Tourists returning from Italy, surrounded by works of art and led by Minerva.' In this way Talman was depicting in allegorical terms what was to be a recurring theme of eighteenth century English culture, the transference of the classical tradition from the seat of its Latin origins, Italy, to the island of Britain. The great Whig aristocracy, who were in the political ascendant for the first half of the century, saw themselves as grave Roman senators. Indeed, often in their portraits and on their tombs they chose to be depicted thus, clad in toga, cuirass and sandals, although still bewigged. It was Ancient Rome that they identified with, both republican and early imperial. In the case of the former it was as representatives of a free democratic system as against the absolutism which prevailed on the Continent; in that of the latter it was the reign of the Emperor Augustus, a cultural golden age of patronage and creativity. And just as the Romans then had voyaged to Greece to seek inspiration for their own cultural renaissance so now it was the turn of the British to travel to Italy to accomplish the same end for their own country. Britain was seen not only as inheriting this cultural mantle but also the one of empire, as her victories spread her colonies and her commercial dominance across the globe. This was an age which had a deep-seated belief in the role of individual creative genius, in man's ability to scale the heights through academic study, industry and rational discourse. As a consequence, for the first time, the classical world was there not only as a source of inspiration but to be emulated and hopefully surpassed.

'After the manner of the Ancients' is a phrase which reverberates through the era. Up until the eighteenth

The Italian artist Pompeo Batoni painted virtually everyone of note who made the Grand Tour. Colonel William Gordon of Fyvie was a younger son of the Earl of Aberdeen. He sat in Rome in 1766 for this portrait in which Batoni arranged the tartan drapery as though it were a toga, surrounding the sitter as usual with items to evoke antiquity, a seated figure of Roma and a panorama of the Colosseum.

century knowledge of the classical world was sparse, confined in the main to what could be garnered from texts and illustrated books. Those, like the great Earl of Arundel and John Evelyn, who had actually seen the ruined reality of Ancient Rome through travel were few. Now all of that was to change as continental travel became one aspect of the consumer revolution which swept through not only the social élite but also extended more and more to those designated 'the middling sort', men of the new professional classes. As a result what was called the Grand Tour became a common experience shared by a vast swathe of the British ruling classes, so much so that those who had not experienced it, like the painter William Hogarth, were to be bitterly resentful of those who had, and of what they imported and represented.

But what was the Grand Tour? It was an acknowledgement of what Dr. Johnson was to put so eloquently: 'All our religion, all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come from the shores of the Mediterranean.' Travelling abroad to view foreign countries in order to study their politics and customs was established as far back as the Elizabethan era. Indeed Francis Bacon in his essay *Of Travel* (1615) regarded it as an essential part of the education of any ambitious young man. But those who actually went were few because of wars, and more especially because of the theological divide which virtually closed Italy to Englishmen. The actual expression 'Grand Tour' was first used in the French translation of the *Voyage or Compleat Journey through Italy* written by a Catholic, Richard Lassels, published in 1670.

After the long wars against Louis XIV peace came at last, and although the first half of the century was not devoid of conflict travel became easier than ever before, and Enlightenment attitudes to religious belief began to thaw the religious divide. The golden decades were those following the Treaty of Paris in 1763. In that year Johann Winckelmann, the great German classical scholar, recorded that there were three hundred Englishmen in Rome simultaneously. This was the period when Brit-ain became the richest country, with an ever-expanding empire opening up new commercial opportunities around the globe. There was money to spend on an unprecedented scale, one which, in the past, had rarely passed beyond royalty or the richest members of the aristocracy. As a consequence over six hundred country houses were built between 1760 and 1800, virtually all of them in the classical style and the majority during the two decades after 1760. Britain's cultural status also began to ride high, lifted internationally by the unparalleled prestige of Newton within the intellectual circles of the European Enlightenment. The idyll was only shattered by the loss of the American colonies and the French Revolution. The latter effectively put an end to the Grand Tour.

Peace having come, the British set out to cross the Channel and view the home of

the classical heritage which, through their education, they had come to cherish. That they did so was also prompted by the poor education offered at both Oxford and Cambridge, then in a state of decline. After Eton or Westminster the universities were replaced or supplemented by a sojourn of up to five years on the Continent. In the case of Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester, it lasted as long as six. No other country matched Britain in the sheer numbers of people who went on the Grand Tour, so much so that it became in essence a British phenomenon. It also covered a remarkably wide spectrum of society including both aristocrats and commoners, patrons and collectors, artists and designers, and, in addition, many women. Taken together those who went made up what has been described as a 'virtual' or 'invisible' academy.

The serious side involved learning foreign languages, studying the history, politics and laws of each country. That also embraced looking at architecture, art and antiquities. A young man was expected to return endowed with all the attributes that would enable him to move with assurance in international courtly aristocratic society, being fluent in at least French, graceful in his deportment and polished in his manners. Such a young person did not of course embark on the tour ill-equipped, for he would have been reared on classical texts and could even have read the works of writers such as Dante, Boccaccio and Tasso. He would also have been familiar with Italian music and opera. Such young men travelled either singly or in groups, under the supervision of what was called a bear-leader. For great aristocrats who travelled alone there was a governor. In either instance, these people tended to be antiquarians, often fussy incompetent clergymen, pedagogues or place-seekers; they had great difficulty in controlling their charges who were not only their social superiors but more often than not were far more bent on savouring the women of a town than visiting its distinguished buildings.

The route that was taken became a more or less fixed one. Over the Channel to Calais it began in the Low Countries and France, passing south to cross into Italy either by mountain pass, over Mont Cenis, to Turin or by sea from Marseilles to Genoa or Livorno. Then followed the *giro d'Italia*: Florence, Rome, Naples, back to Rome and up over the Apennines to Venice. Then Vicenza, Verona, Milan and thence to Switzerland, Germany and back to Calais and home. Travelling was not easy and contemporary accounts, of which there are many, form an unending hymn of complaints about bad roads, poor inns, coaches devoid of springs, fear of plague, awful food and venal customs officials. French being the *lingua franca*, some months were usually passed at an academy in the Loire area learning the language as well as being instructed in social graces like dancing and fencing. To appear in Paris a man had to re-dress himself from head to toe. Visits to the great buildings, libraries and art col-

lections there were *de rigueur* but no one seemed to have much time for the city which was regarded as filthy. Versailles, the seat of the French court, was also deemed an essential experience but liked even less, pronounced by Smollett to be 'a dismal habitation' and by Horace Walpole a 'lumber of littleness.'

Italy, however, was something quite different. It was Parnassus, the Elysian Fields and the Garden of the Hesperides all wrapped into one. Travellers arrived with a preconceived notion of the country, a nexus of ideas, often vague and inaccurate, which, to the generation which came of age in the unique liberal political regime which emerged after 1688, made Italy a kind of paradise. But only in retrospect, for the country was now visited with minds and eyes firmly fixed on the past, on Ancient Rome and the Renaissance. The Italy of that time, a series of self-contained weakly governed states, was looked upon with a withering condescension. In vain will one look for references to many of the great living artists, an architect like Juvarra or a painter like Tiepolo. Nonetheless, as Joseph Addison wrote in his *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1750): 'There is certainly no place in the World where a Man may Travel with greater Pleasure and Advantage than in Italy.' That pleasurable vision was largely formulated by pictures, the harmonious classical landscapes of Claude with their idyllic calm and diffused golden sunlight or the soul-stirring grandeur of the sublime scenes of Salvator Rosa with their sinister mountains, jagged rocks and shattered trees. To that they were to add the architectural fantasies of the artists Pannini and Piranesi and the perpetual pageant of Venice as caught by Canaletto and Bellotto. And at the heart of it all lay the lure of actually seeing the reality of classical antiquity, known about virtually only from literary texts.

The time of the year to reach Italy was autumn, the visitor heading south for warmth during the winter months. Movement was also conditioned by the need to catch certain great festivities and spectacles, carnival in Rome, Venice or Naples, Holy Week in Rome and Ascension Day in Venice. Four cities were critical to every traveller: Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice. Even more than in the previous century Italy was seen to be the fount of art, literature, philosophy and music. This was therefore the Grand Tourist's cultural mecca.

These tours were greatly facilitated by diplomatic representatives and other British residents in Italy. Such people were able to open doors, arrange for licences to visit and excavate archaeological sites, and also introduce travellers to dealers in old master paintings and antiquities. Horace Mann, for example, was resident in Florence for half a century entertaining everyone who passed through the city to view its fabulous art collections, both old master paintings and legendary classical statues such as the 'Venus de'Medici', 'The Dancing Faun' and 'The Wrestlers.' This experience of the

British connoisseurs in Rome, c.1750, responding with animation to the relics of classical antiquity, the Colosseum and the Arch of Constantine.

classical world would reach its climax in Rome which was one long series of visits to historic sites as well as tours of the great sculpture collections in the Capitoline Museum and the Museo Pio-Clementino. Then there were excursions to Tivoli to view Hadrian's Villa and along the Appian Way to inspect the tombs of the Roman nobility as well as to Lakes Nemi and Albano. Direct contact with the Jacobite court had to be avoided and also with the papal court, although its art treasures, headed by the greatest works of Michelangelo and Raphael, had to be seen as the summit of painterly achievement. And of course many sat for their portraits, for it was cheap. Some two hundred sat for Pompeo Batoni, giving us a unique gallery of these young men endowed by his brush with a sensuous high glamour as they posed nonchalantly amidst the ruins of imperial Rome.

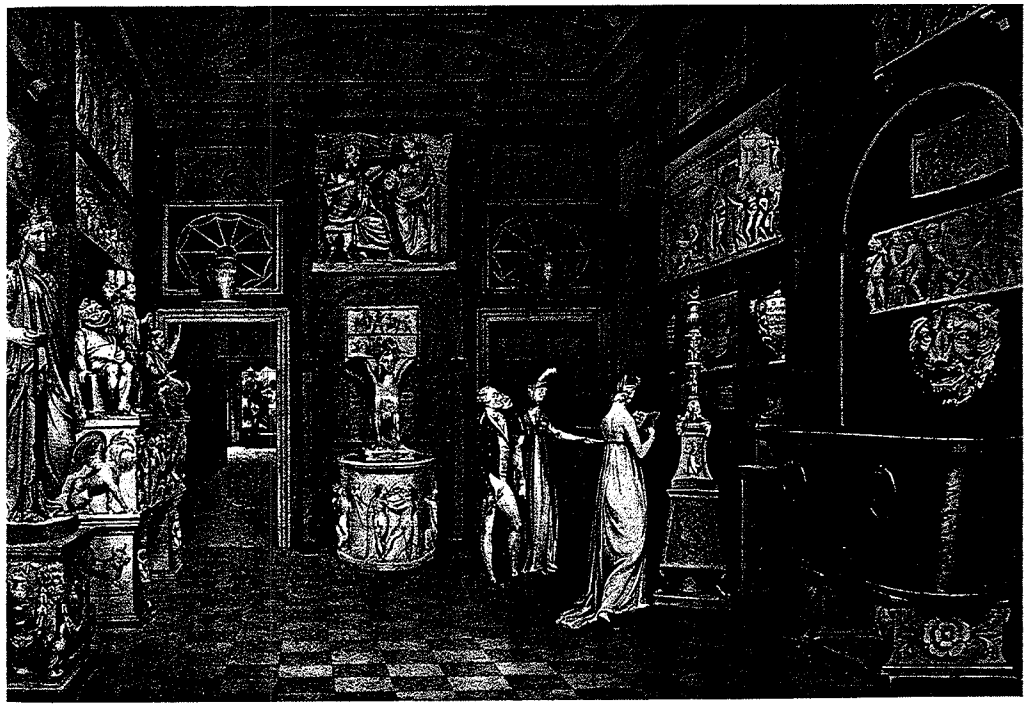
Travelling south the visitor entered the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies with its capital Naples. Naples at that date was the third most populous city in Western Europe. With its miraculous climate and its breathtaking bay, not to mention the threatening backcloth of Mount Vesuvius, Naples offered the traveller astonishing contrasts. And, in 1768, Sir William Hamilton arrived as ambassador. He was to remain for almost

thirty years, a presence rendered legendary by his liaison with Emma Hart whom he married in 1791. To him this stunningly beautiful young girl was a maiden from classical antiquity returned to earth, a living art object parallel to items in his fabled collection of antique vases. His first collection he sold to the British Museum in 1772 with the object of informing not only antiquaries but also artists. The great potter, Josiah Wedgwood, and his partner, Thomas Bentley, were to make a fortune manufacturing reproductions of them. For the serious visitor Naples was the home of the poet Virgil and it was possible to visit what was thought to be his tomb and grotto at Posillipo. They were also able to see the Temple of the Cumaean Sybil and Lake Avernus where Aeneas, the hero of the *Aeneid*, had made his descent to Hades. Later in the century they pushed further south to inspect the temples at Paestum. Earlier they had all the excitement of the excavations at Herculaneum (1731) and Pompeii (1748), seeing more of classical life than had ever been seen before. And there was always the terrifying ascent of Vesuvius to be made when soles of shoes were scorched by the heat of the lava.

Venice had maintained continuous relations with England for over a century. The republic was admired for its political stability and seeming prosperity. There the consul, John Smith, and others acted as dealers and brokers for works of a school of painting for which the English had long had a passion. In the great public buildings and churches they could drink their fill of Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese. Along the Brenta were dotted the villas of Palladio and in Vicenza they could savour the major concentration of his work including the Teatro Olimpico. Venice must always have been an extraordinary revelation, contradicting as it did everything that epitomised English upper class life, for there were no country houses as such, no horses and no outdoor field sports.

Italy was shopping. In spite of the consignments of old master paintings, works in *pietra dura* and *scagliola*, bales of rich textiles and Venetian glass, the greatest prize of all was the acquisition of classical antiquities: sculpture, vases, cameos, gems, coins and medals. Gavin Hamilton, the Scottish painter and dealer, wrote to the collector, Charles Townley, in 1779: 'Never forget that the most valuable acquisition a man of refined taste can make is a piece of fine Greek sculpture.' The purchase of antiquities obsessed the British. In Rome it was in the control of two men, Thomas Jenkins and James Byres, who saw to it that the flow, for example, of antique cameos never quite dried up nor that of antique busts and statues which were 'restored.' The papacy moreover was anxious, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Jacobite cause, to restore relations with Britain and so granted licences to excavate, always with the proviso that the pick of what was found went into the papal collections.

As a result the British took a leading part in what was a renaissance in archaeological scholarship. A whole series of grand publications appeared which provided measured drawings and views of what had been discovered. The consequence was to change people's perception of the classical past. Suddenly antiquity ceased to be part of a single stream flowing down to the present. It became instead another country as periods began to be compartmentalised one from the other: Antiquity, the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Books which came out from the 1750s onwards were to fuel a dramatic change in visual style, one which we associate with the word neo-classical. The earliest was Robert Wood's *Ruins of Palmyra* (1753) followed four years later by his *The Ruins of Baalbeck*. James 'Athenian' Stuart and Nicholas Revett went to Greece and in 1762 produced the first volume of their *The Antiquities of Athens*. Two years later followed Robert Adam's *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro* [Split] *in*

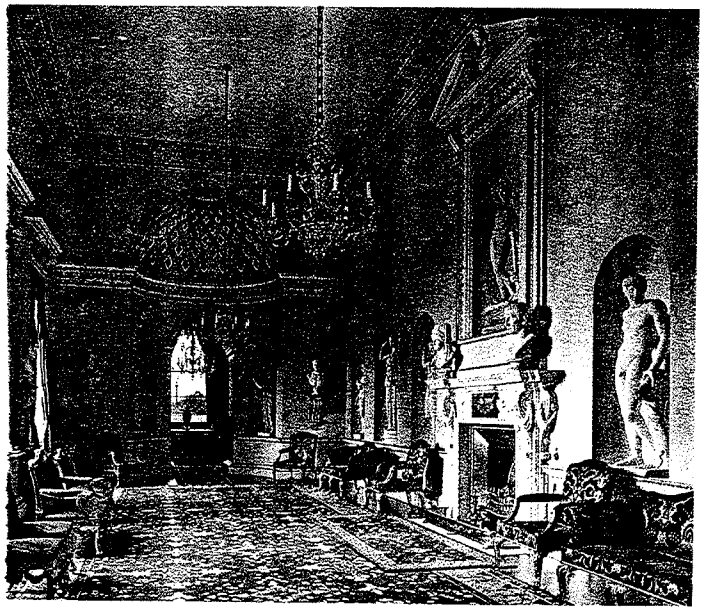


Classical antiquity transported. Charles Townley's house in Westminster was open to those who wished to inspect his collection of antiquities. It contributed greatly to the emergence of the neo-classical style.

Dalmatia. These and others by both English and foreign writers recorded not only the Roman world as it had manifested itself in places hitherto unrecorded but began to push back in time and begin the rediscovery of Greek civilisation.

Such a ferment could only have major repercussions at home. Many of course may have returned from the Grand Tour with only confused memories and a sigh of relief or, as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu tartly put it: 'The boys only remember where they met with the best Wine and the prettyest Women.' But a minority responded, returning with their minds enriched, bringing to English culture a cosmopolitan influence, a refinement of manner and an intellectual curiosity which in fact brought about a lasting change in English art, architecture, music and manners.

Although the greatest age of collecting had yet to come, the Grand Tour began to fill the country and town houses of Georgian Britain with works of art. In houses like Saltram (Devon), Corsham Court (Wiltshire), and Felbrigg Hall (Norfolk), special cabinet rooms were built to accommodate what their owners had brought back. An aristocrat like the 2nd Marquess of Annandale returned in 1720 with over three hundred pictures for his great house at Hopetoun. These often included copies of some of the most famous Italian works by Raphael, Titian, Guido Reni and Correggio which were far more valued than originals by lesser artists. Then there were the sculpture collections. Here interest focused less on fragments, whatever their quality, than on complete pieces. To purchasers the subject matter of a piece of classical sculpture



The Statue Gallery at Holkham Hall, Norfolk, built during the 1750s was designed to display the collection of Greek and Roman sculpture acquired by Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester.

was of far more importance than any claim to its authenticity. Restoration and general fakery in response to demand was rife. But now the sculpture galleries of Arundel and Burlington were to spawn their progeny in houses like Holkham (Norfolk), Petworth (Sussex), Chatsworth (Derbyshire), Woburn (Bedfordshire) and Newby Hall (Lincolnshire). In these cases special galleries were built for their display. In most houses the gesture made was to relegate the family portraits to back passages and transform the entrance hall into a classical pantheon.

Such collections were evidence of something else, the evolution of the virtuoso into the connoisseur. The virtuoso of the previous century had filled his cabinet with curiosities which could range from medals and gems to minerals and shells. A collection was viewed as assembling a compendium of God's miraculous creation of the natural world and its transmutation at the hands of art. The connoisseur in the eighteenth century was someone far different. His eye was able to differentiate the work of the master from the hand of his assistant or studio in the case, for instance, of a painter. Collections now became assemblies of the new fine arts, painting, sculpture, drawings, classical antiquities, prints, gems and medals. The prize exhibits of the virtuoso's cabinet, items like a unicorn's horn, were relegated, evidence of the old world picture which the Enlightenment had banished. To be a connoisseur moreover proclaimed that one had been on the Grand Tour, for only through that could such pronouncements of the discerning eye be cultivated.

In no area was that vision of Britain as Ancient Rome reborn more evident than in architecture and interior decoration. This was the classical century as houses were either built or rebuilt by owners who had been on the tour. Everywhere one looks the same neo-classical vocabulary occurs of anthemion and patera, winged griffin and tripod urn. The classical style and repertory of decoration swept its way through interior design embracing every artefact from door furniture to carpets, from plaster ceiling to the plates on the dinner table. Once taken up it was to change the living style of members of the 'middling class' who would never even have the chance of foreign travel.

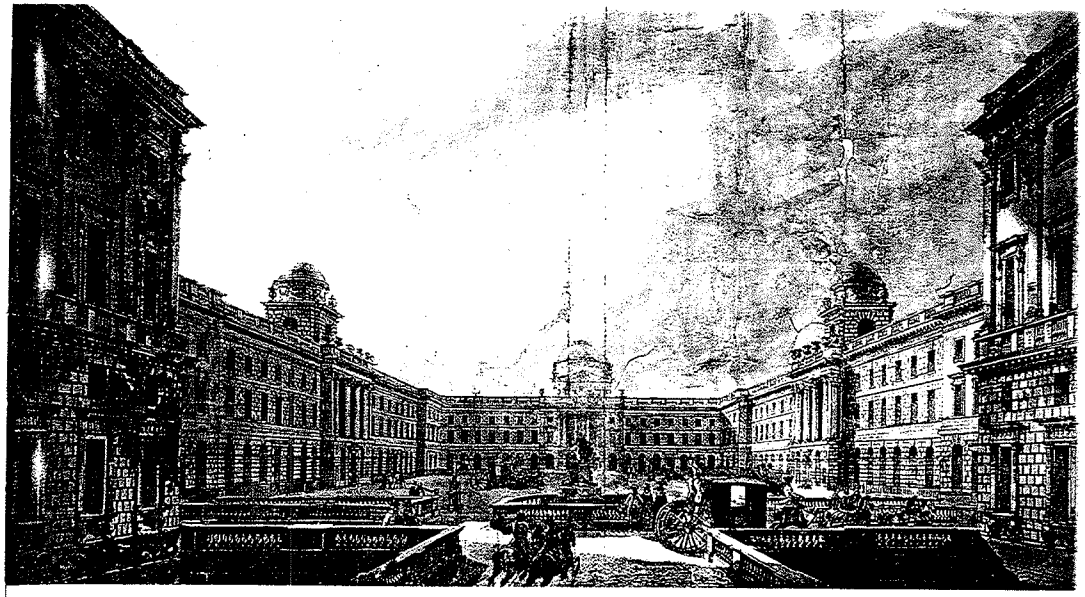
Rome in the 1750s was full of young British architects studying the remains of antiquity, among them the two men who were to dominate the architectural scene during the decades following the 1760s, Sir William Chambers and Robert Adam. Both were exponents of the emerging neo-classical style which had been initially pioneered by French and Italian architects in a quest to peel away the later accretions of the Renaissance and baroque periods in a search for first principles. The new attitude to the past brought about through the recent archaeological discoveries meant that architectural style ceased to be part of an historical continuum but instead

became a choice from one of a series of period compartments. Both Chambers and Adam in their separate ways were to wrestle with the consequences of this in their respective careers. Both were fundamentally classicists and their work, symptomatic of a vast array of new building which went on all over the country in the classical manner, seemed to stem from the assumption that a nation which was the focus of an empire exceeding in scale that of Ancient Rome called for a style which spoke of imperial grandeur.

Chambers studied in both Paris and Italy, where he spent five years. In 1755 he returned to England gaining an introduction to the future George III, thus securing royal favour. Throughout the 1760s and 1770s Chambers was responsible for a whole series of town and country houses, but he was unique in having the opportunity to design the only major public building of the century, Somerset House. That its predecessor was Greenwich Palace, begun in the 1660s, is some indication of the absence of royal initiatives. Elsewhere in absolutist Europe the palace was still the major vehicle. In Britain that role had been passed to the aristocratic country house. The Hanoverians never built a great palace, failed even to rehouse Parliament, although the schemes were many. In 1775, however, the idea of putting various government departments under a single roof was mooted. Old Somerset House was razed to the ground and the present building arose, magnificent in parts, monumental in scale but always somehow falling short. Perhaps the very multiplicity of functions that it was meant to fulfil (including housing the Royal Academy of Arts in its early stages) eroded its focus. It is nonetheless Chambers's masterpiece, thoughtful, sensitive, yet episodic. Its courtyard has been likened rightly to that of a Georgian town square.

Chambers ended a knight of the realm and that reflected the shift in status which was affecting the professions. In the past, in the case of architects, they had either been carpenters or masons or they had been gentlemen, like Lord Burlington, who practised architecture at a remove. But with the new polish and learning acquired by the Grand Tour the architect was seen gradually to take on the status of gentleman in his own right. On the tour these young hopefuls would have mingled with and met their future patrons on virtually equal terms. That the divide was only gradually eroded can be learnt from a letter written by Robert Adam while he was still studying: 'If I am known in Rome to be an Architect, if I am seen drawing or with a pencil in my hand, I cannot enter into genteel company . . .' Adam was to be one of the men who was to change all of that.

Adam has given his name to a style which conjures up a whole epoch. It is one which is instantly recognisable, a unique synthesis uniting columns and carpets,



The courtyard of Sir William Chambers's masterpiece, Somerset House in the Strand, built from 1775 onwards, epitomises the triumph of neo-classicism.

pedestals and porticos in a single visual evocation of the world of Greece and Rome. Adam, the son of a landed Scottish architect, had only one ambition in life, to dominate the architecture of his age. He embarked on his career with the advantages of a good education and of foreign travel and study in Italy. Even while in Rome in the 1750s he knew that his only possible rival was Chambers, categorised at that date as a 'formidable foe.'

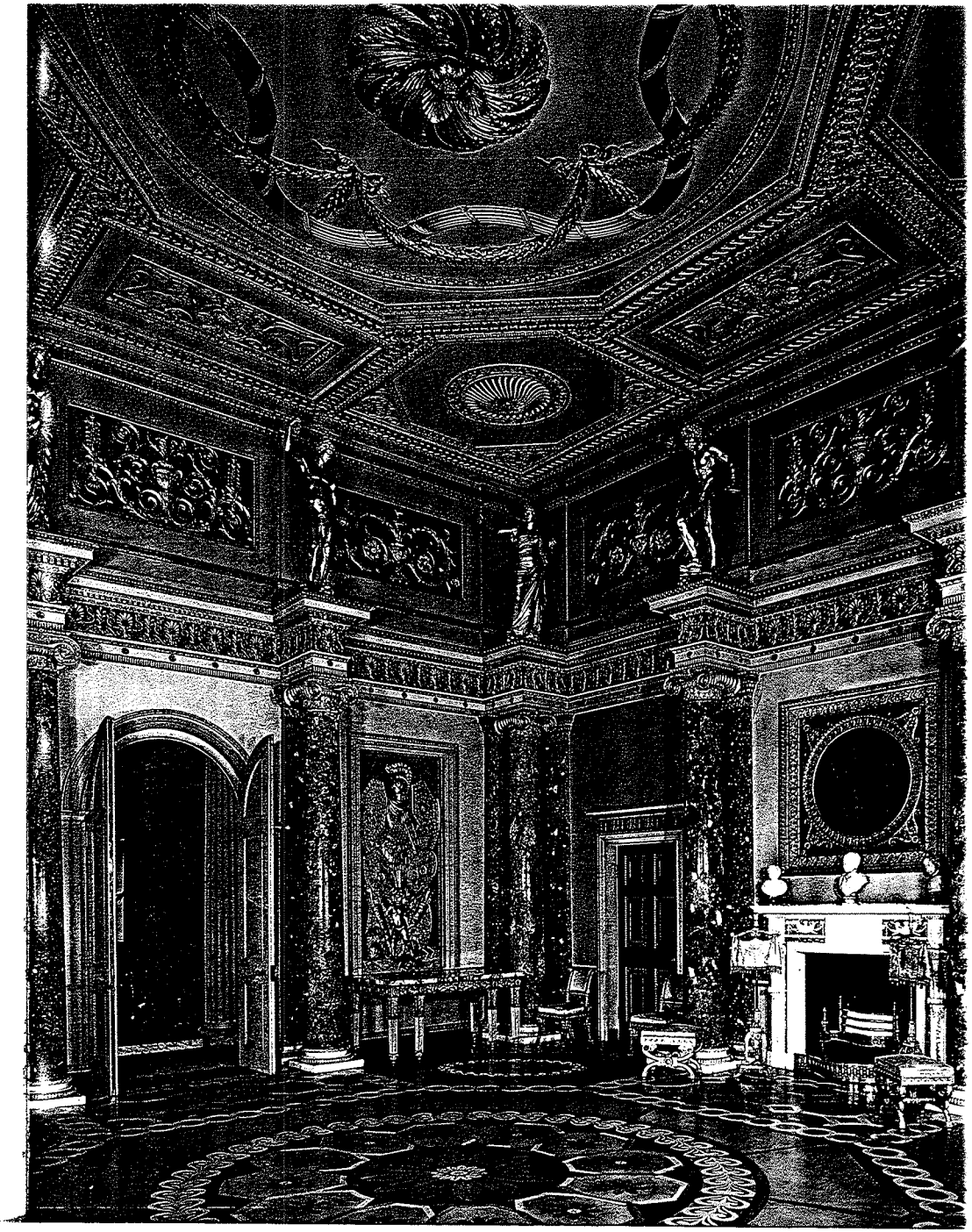
Adam arrived in London in 1758 setting himself up jointly with his brother James in the grand manner as the social equal of his clients. His publicity machine knew no bounds, he himself proclaiming: '. . . to have brought about in this country, a kind of revolution in the whole system of this useful and elegant art.' His was a vision of a new architecture based on his own response to the public and domestic building of imperial Rome as revealed through the new archaeology. There was no lack of wealthy patrons to whose demands he responded by providing a living style which now called for contrasting enclosures for specific social purposes, dining, playing cards, conversation or dancing. His style was to work from the fundamental idea that the Romans did not adhere to rules but that such rules as they had were elastic, to be adapted as the architect thought fit. Drawing on a wide mélange of sources Adam formed a style unique for its richness of variety and its sense of movement. The roll call of great houses from the 1760s alone is breathtaking: Harewood House (York-

shire), Croome Court (Worcestershire), Kedleston (Derbyshire), Bowood (Wiltshire), Syon and Kenwood (Middlesex). Then, in the 1770s, followed a series of splendid town houses of which his surviving masterpiece is Home House, Portman Square. Such houses responded to the elaboration in entertaining as hostesses outvied each other in the ostentation and elegance of their interiors. In addition he embarked on a series of property developments, including the Adelphi, which was to prove a disaster and nearly bankrupted him.

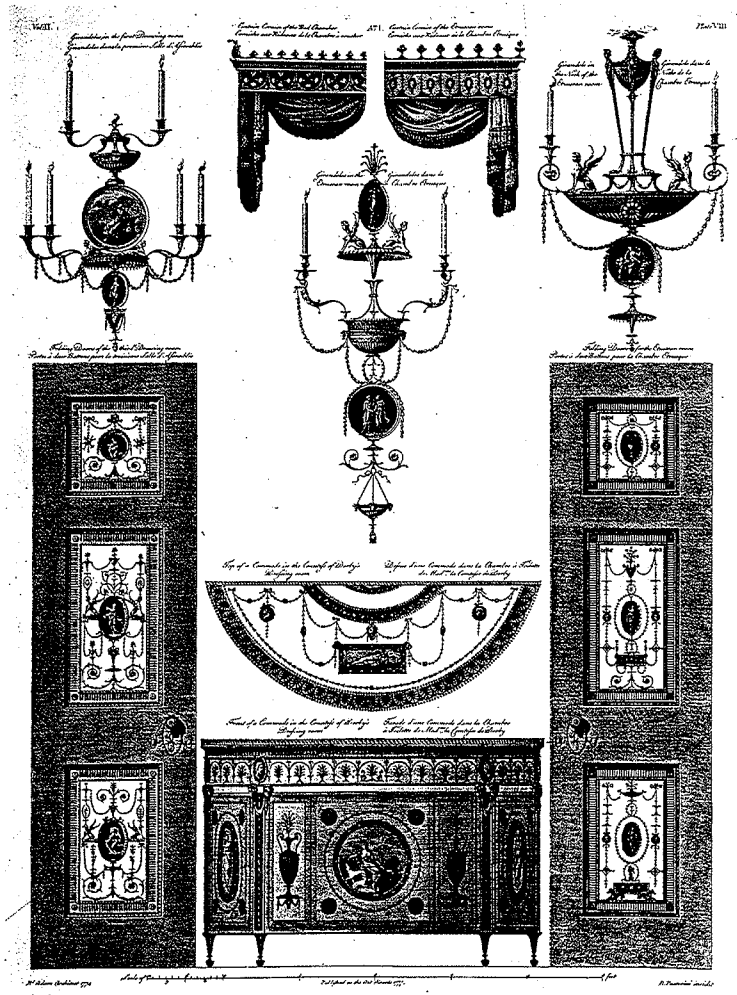
The war with the American colonies and the French Revolution brought an end to the boom. Also, taste changed, and Adam became the target of criticism as tastemakers like Horace Walpole began to label him as a purveyor of 'gingerbread' and 'sippets of embroidery.' Money was tighter too, so Adam looked northwards to Scotland. In his later years he worked on Charlotte Square in Edinburgh, and, surprisingly, on a series of Scottish castles. Culzean for the Earl of Cassilis remains his masterpiece in that seemingly puzzling genre. Within, its rooms are neo-classical but outside, at first glance, it would seem to have little connection with what had gone before. But in Adam's view of history castle architecture was a direct descendant of the architecture which the Romans had brought to Britain. In his squaring of the medieval castle into the classical tradition he is in fact touching something central to the age, the desire to reconcile the two as twin aspects of a single civilisation.

The significance of Adam was to be far wider than any other architect of the period because he gave birth to what we know as the 'Adam Style', one still recognisable at a glance and one also which crossed not only this country but Europe and the United States, where it is known as the 'Federal Style'. The reason that this was so is because Adam's work coincided with the building boom of the 1760s and 1770s. His influence was huge because he provided a synthesis of the latest fashions, drawing on old and new, which could be applied to all manner of buildings, both public and private as well as large and small. His *Works in Architecture* (1773) gave everyone access to the ingredients of the style in which ponderous Palladianism was banished as well as the fripperies of the Frenchified rococo which had enjoyed some success in the 1740s and 1750s. Adam was the first architect to devise an overall integrated look to a house which ran through everything in it, from its façade to the silver on the table. The gospel of neo-classicism stemming from the British archaeologists and turned into a reality for the present by Adam was copied by countless imitators.

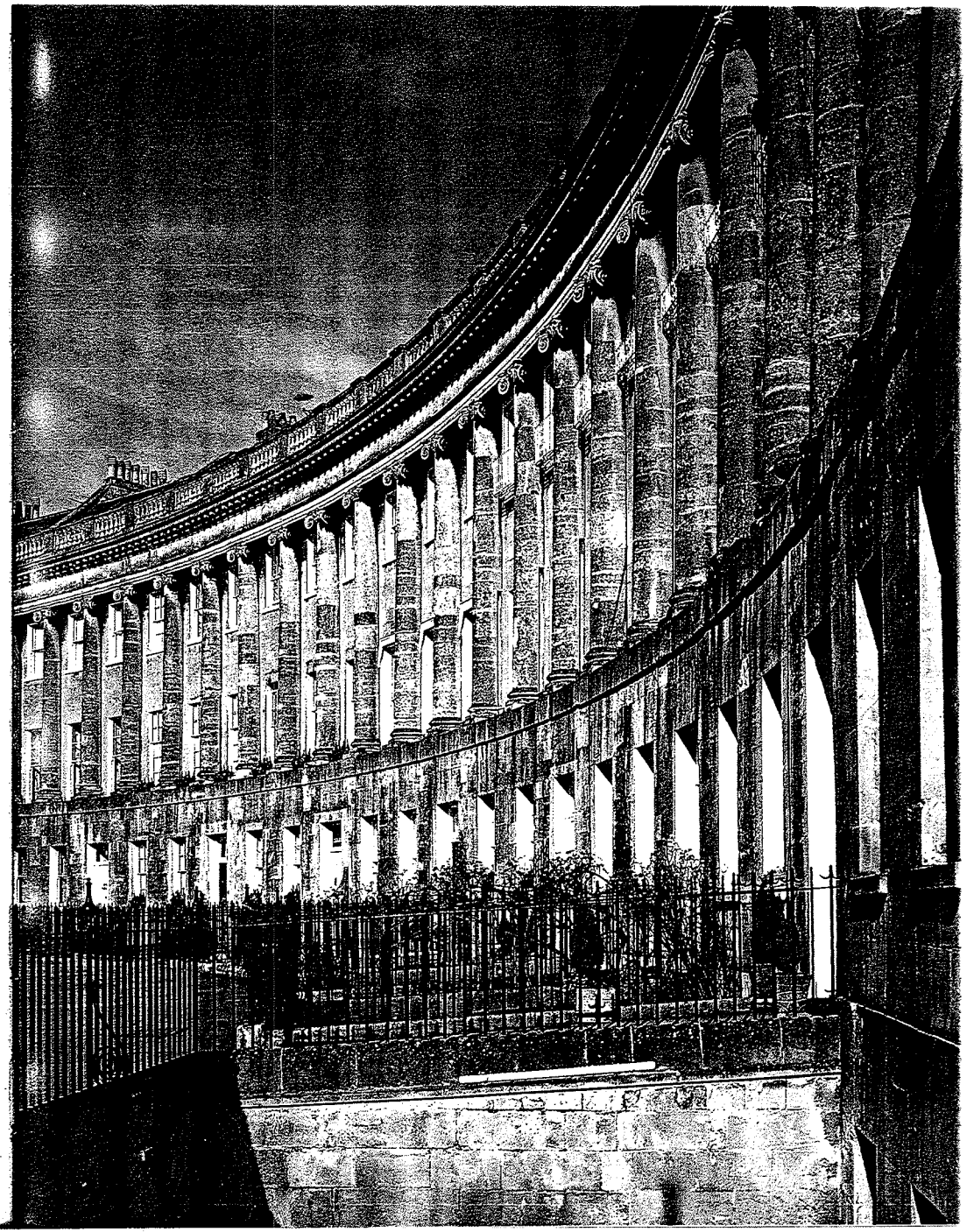
Although the Adelphi terraces had been a near disaster for the architect they set new standards in urban housing, for it was the first development in which



All the magnificence of imperial Rome was evoked by Robert Adam for this ante-room at Syon Park, Middlesex, for the 1st Duke of Northumberland. The twelve Ionic columns veneered with verd-antique scagliola *were purchased in Rome in 1765 by Robert's brother, James.*



Designs for decorations for interiors from Robert Adam's Works in Architecture *(1773-78). Strong architectural forms are set off by delicacy of line combined with the use of a repertory of neo-classical motifs such as vases and griffins. Such a publication was a public relations exercise and spread the highly adaptable style.*



The Royal Crescent, Bath, by John Wood the Younger, 1767-75, showing how vertical town houses were united to form a single sweeping classical composition which became the model for the next half century.

houses were conceived as a single architectural composition, striking the eye at first glance from afar as a single Italian palazzo rather than a separate series of houses. All over Britain squares, crescents and terraces arose in the new neo-classical manner, designed by far lesser architects or just put up by jobbing property speculators from pattern books which spread the style across country and down the social scale. In the 1760s Edinburgh New Town arose, and in the fashionable spa resort of Bath the earlier speculative building by John Wood of Queen Square and the Circus (begun 1754) reached a climax in Royal Crescent (1767-1775). With its monumental sweeping curve this became the model for every grandiose housing project for over half-a-century. In London Bedford Square (completed 1783) scaled new heights of elegance as each side of the square assumed the mantle of a palace façade. What set these town houses apart from their European counterparts was that they were vertical and that however modest the façades, orders and other items from the repertory of the Adam style of decoration were used in order to give both emphasis and a sense of movement. The result was a style of house unequivocally British.

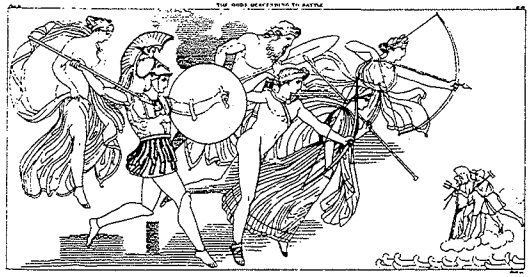
The Adam style was to be linked with two other great names, Thomas Chippendale and Josiah Wedgwood. Chippendale, like Adam, was an adept publicist. Born in Yorkshire he set up shop in London in 1753. Although he produced the first edition of his famous *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director* in 1754 it was to be the third edition in 1762 which promoted the neo-classical style. For thirty years Chippendale ran a team of some fifty craftsmen producing pieces from these designs in a range of styles which also included the rococo and chinoiserie, ones which were also copied by a host of minor workshops. His influence was to be European and stretched also into America. Chippendale furnished some of Adam's finest interiors and remained true to the neo-classical ideal.

Just as Chippendale fused the increasing demand for furniture to match the new neo-classical taste so the Staffordshire potter Josiah Wedgwood met the demand for ceramics in the same manner. With Thomas Bentley he opened his new works at Etruria in 1769. This was

Ceramics in the neo-classical style. Josiah Wedgwood's 'Homer Vase'. Such pieces were factory produced taking the new style into more homes than ever before.

factory production in a village specially built for the workmen. Wedgwood was to be the first ceramicist to harness the new simplicity and purity of the neo-classical style to everyday china. Through that and mass production what had hitherto been regarded as unattainable luxuries became generally accessible. What is so striking about the Adam Style is that it became the first to be taken up by the increasingly prosperous middle classes. It was one which could be adapted for the most modest of domestic interiors and as a consequence it has retained its hold to the present day.

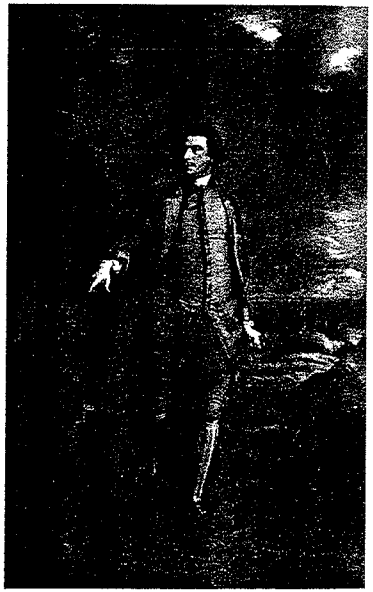
Architects were not the only British artists studying in Rome in the 1750s. Painters and sculptors were too, and the impact of direct contact with the art of classical antiquity and of the 16th and 17th centuries was to be as profound on them also. Sculpture in England had been dominated by foreign artists, in the first half of the century by Michael Rysbrack and Louis François Roubiliac, the former an exponent of the baroque and the latter of a far more rococo style. Both had responded to the Augustan demand for works in the antique manner, particularly portrait busts. Joseph Wilton who had been in Rome in the 1750s returned to England with a zeal like Robert Adam's to raise the status of the artist. Wilton signals the advent for the first time of a native school of sculptors. Its greatest exponent was yet to come, the effect of contact with Italy being far less immediate than in the case of painting. That man was to be John Flaxman. He was a rare phenomenon, a British sculptor who enjoyed European fame, being praised by the great German writer Goethe, and the French neo-classical painter Ingres. Although he was not to get to Italy until he was nearly forty, Flaxman saturated himself in antiquity from youth onwards, devouring all the great archaeological volumes and studying the Greek vases from the Hamilton collection in the British Museum. The result of this was his extremely refined and elegant linear style of drawing, which eschewed the use of any shadow, and which he used for his illustrations to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, published in 1793. These were known and acclaimed all over Europe and were re-issued many times. The same style was used by him for the many commissions which he received from the Wedgwood



The neo-classical style in graphics. A plate from the sculptor John Flaxman's hugely influential Outline Drawings to Homer *(1793).*

pottery during the 1770s and 1780s. In Italy he deliberately set out to emulate antiquity in a series of works including *The Fury of Athamas* (1790) which was commissioned by the Earl Bishop of Bristol (almost a permanent Grand Tourist and the man after whom all the hotels are named) for his house at Ickworth, Suffolk where it remains. Back in England Flaxman embarked on a series of monumental tombs in the neo-classical manner taking the style through into the 1820s.

The effect of the Grand Tour on painting was to be accomplished with remarkable rapidity in the figure of one man, Joshua Reynolds, who arrived in Rome in 1750. He also, like Adam, was bent on lifting the status of his profession, inspired by the writings of Richardson and therefore wishing to see painting as a liberal art, recognised as the visual equivalent of tragic or epic poetry. The son of a Devon cleric, Reynolds had learnt his trade, for such it then was largely viewed, in the studio of the fashionable portrait painter, Thomas Hudson. Reynolds, however, knew that he could not succeed in his mission unless he had studied antique sculpture and the great works of the Renaissance. He remained in Italy for two years and arrived in London in 1753.



Sir Joshua Reynolds's advertisement for his talents: the naval commander, Augustus Keppel, strides along the seashore in the pose of the famous classical statue, the Apollo Belvedere.

His earliest portrait, painted on his return as a demonstration piece, was designed to exhibit his revolutionary powers. Nothing quite like it had ever been seen before. He depicted the naval commander, Admiral Keppel, in a pose based on the famous 'Apollo Belvedere' striding, windswept, along a stormy foreshore, the whole rendered with a rich dark chiaroscuro effect derived from studying the work of Titian and Tintoretto. From that moment on Reynolds's career was one long triumph. Up to a hundred and fifty sitters came to him in any one year and his success was such by 1760 that he moved to a large house in Leicester Square with liveried servants. But his ultimate ascent to establishment fame was to come with the creation of an academy along the lines of those usual in other European countries.

An informal academy of some kind had existed in Rome among British artists who aspired to painting history and mythology in what was called the Grand Style, that is a style modelled both on a study of antiquity and

of the great masters of the past. But it had languished. That the idea was revived was owed to an influential gentlemen's dining club, the Society of Dilettanti, which had been founded in 1734 for men who had been on the Grand Tour and which was to be responsible for some of the major publications devoted to the new archaeological discoveries. In 1755 the notion of an academy resurfaced leading to a tortuous history involving two rival groups of artists, the Free Society of Artists and the Incorporated Society of Artists, of which Reynolds was a leading light. The latter was granted a royal charter in 1765; three years later a group seceded from it and, with the aid of Sir William Chambers, gained the patronage of George III. The Royal Academy of Arts was the result and Reynolds was elected its first President with the accolade of knighthood bestowed the following year. Not only did the Academy guarantee an annual exhibition of its members' works but it set out to provide 'well-regulated schools of design' with a cast collection, a library, life classes, prizes and lectures. Reynolds became a leading member of a new cultural establishment, moving with ease in society and including among his closest friends Dr Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith. When he died in 1792 he had achieved what he had set out to do, elevate the insular and empirical tradition of British art to a more universal realm through becoming a living reincarnation of the old masters he worshipped. He was also to leave in his *Discourses on Art*, lectures delivered at the Academy to students and to 'people of fashion and dilettanti', a coherent body of practice so distinguished in thought and prose style that they were to earn a major place in the history of aesthetics.

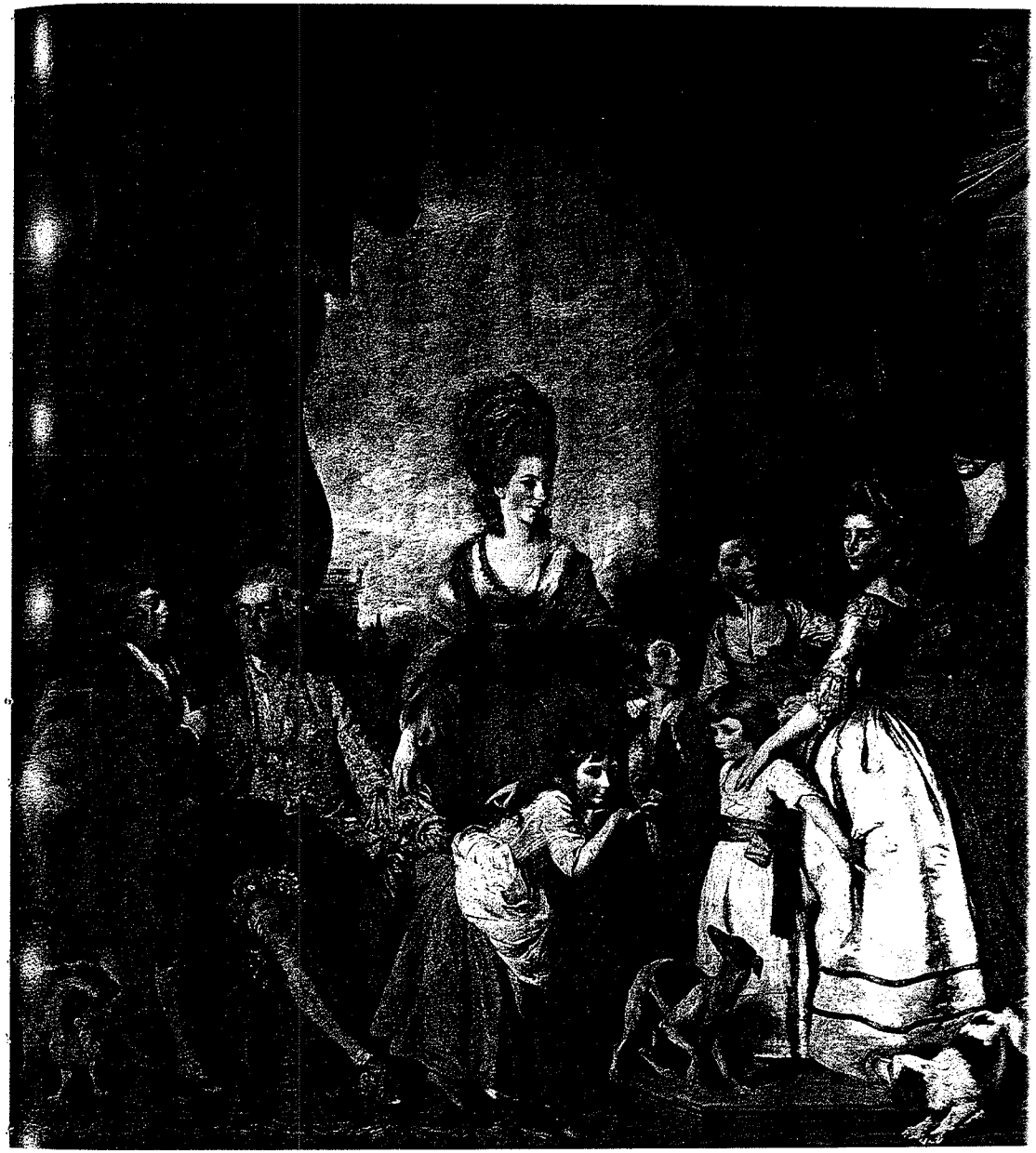
Reynolds's portrait of Lady Sarah Bunbury sacrificing to the Graces, painted probably in 1763, epitomises aristocratic taste for the antique.

That elevation should have come as the result of painting what was universally recognised as the only true form of high art worthy of the Grand Style, historical scenes and allegories. Reynolds, it is true, occasionally painted such pictures but today we view them almost as travesties of the old masters they sought to emulate. The quest to paint this kind of picture was to haunt British painters into the twentieth century. The problem resided in the lack of demand and the uniquely British obsession with portraiture, which came out of an élite culture whose focus was no longer the royal

palace but the great private house. British sitters were depicted with almost unrivalled princely splendour in a way that continually astonished foreigners. Reynolds's solution to practising the Grand Style therefore was to elevate his portraits by casting his sitters into impressive roles, transforming them, whatever the reality, into heroic and poetic personages. Solemn rich colour and dramatic lighting effects enhanced sitters presented with a relaxed grandeur. The men command authority in their heavy ceremonial robes, the women exude good breeding, intelligence and sensibility. Time and again poses and effects derived from the antique and the old masters are used to glamorise them, although nothing is permitted which might erode an aura of high seriousness. In the case of female portraits contemporary dress was modified into 'something with the general air of the antique for the sake of dignity.'

Reynolds's greatest masterpiece, the family group of the 4th Duke of Marlborough, sums up in one magisterial image the fruits of this new classical civilisation born of the Grand Tour. In it the younger members of the family group romp and engage the spectators' attention, providing a foil to the reticent and dignified bearing of the parents and their eldest son and daughter. The duke's heir carries to him cases containing items from the fabled ducal collection of antique gems while the duke himself holds a magnificent cameo of the Emperor Augustus. The game the children play is indeed derived from an antique gem and a final classical gesture is bestowed in the figure presiding over the scene proffering a winged Victory. Here in one outstanding image Reynolds has gathered together the ideals of an age, combining the transference of the classical inheritance from Italy to Britain with a tribute to the splendour and taste of her ruling classes. It is a picture which speaks of the domestic virtues and of humour alongside powerful reminders of the duties incumbent upon those with a great heritage.

This classical high point with its resonances of the Grand Tour is also caught potently in the work of another artist, Richard Wilson. There again are the same impulses to lift not only himself socially but also the art of landscape painting which he practised to another sphere. He too studied the antique and the works of the old masters, in his case those of Claude Lorraine and Gaspard Dughet, in order to formulate a Grand Style. Returning from Italy in the middle of the 1750s he found, like Reynolds, little demand for mythology and history but a ready market first for views of Roman ruins and also for landscapes of his own country rendered in terms of the classical tradition. Wilton House, for instance, is glimpsed as a Romanised



Eighteenth century aspirations distilled in one image. Reynolds's group portrait of George, 4th Duke of Marlborough and his family, painted during the 1770s, records aristocratic classical culture at its most assured. The statue of Victory and the cameo of the Emperor Augustus brought to the duke by his son are just two motifs that draw on antiquity in a composition of monumental grandeur.

Richard Wilson's painting transforms Wilton House into a classical villa set amidst a landscape evocative of the Roman campagna, *c.1758-60.*

rural ideal, a vision in paint parallel to what the Augustan poets depicted in words. This is the island recast as a classical arcady caught in an unfading and effulgent golden light. The great house looms almost incandescent as the seat of this new classical civilisation. Pliny's Tuscan villa has been transported to Britain.

In the decades after 1760 one sees evidence everywhere of the consequences of the British obsession with classical antiquity, the result of the Grand Tour. It was carried out in the spirit of a transference of both a political and cultural empire to the island of Great Britain. At the same time the island's own ancient cultural traditions were being rediscovered. The progressive urgency was to create out of these two streams a single British culture, one that could simultaneously look back to Greece and Rome but equally to the Anglo-Saxons, the barons of the Middle Ages and the heroes of Gloriana's England. And it is to that quest that we must now turn our attention.

Chapter Twenty-Seven

FORGING A CULTURE

Stowe is the largest, grandest and most important landscape garden in England. Situated on a south-facing hillside in mild, undulating country to the north of the town of Buckingham, it stretches over some four hundred acres. Its owners were the Grenville-Temples, one of the most powerful of Whig families, a network of connection which was to remain a dominant political force for over a century during which its owners ascended in rank from baronet to viscount, from viscount to marquis and, finally, from marquis to duke. Every phase of landscape garden style is encapsulated at Stowe, from the early formality of the turn of the century, with its stately walks and avenues, clipped evergreens and geometric ponds, to the sweeping informality of the genius Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (who became head gardener here in 1741), in which it seems that the native British countryside has been ordered by the artist's brush to accord to a perfection of pastoral paradise.

But Stowe is much more than a monument to garden style, for it catches vividly a particular moment in time when the notion of a common national culture began to take on substance. That it did so here came out of the politics of the 1730s as they affected one man, Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham. Cobham had been one of Marlborough's officers, married to a rich heiress, who had honours heaped upon him by the new Hanoverian dynasty. But in 1733 he fell out with Sir Robert Walpole over the Excise Bill and went into opposition, leading a coalition loosely known as the Patriots. That event was to precipitate the creation of a new scenic landscape at Stowe, the Elysian Fields, based, it seems, on an article written by Joseph Addison:

> 'The great road lay in a direct line, and was terminated by the temple of Virtue . . . The persons who travelled up this great path were such whose thoughts were bent upon doing eminent services to mankind, or promoting the good of their country . . . The edifices at the extremity of the walk were so construed, that we could not see the temple of Honour, by reason of the temple of Virtue, which stood before it . . .
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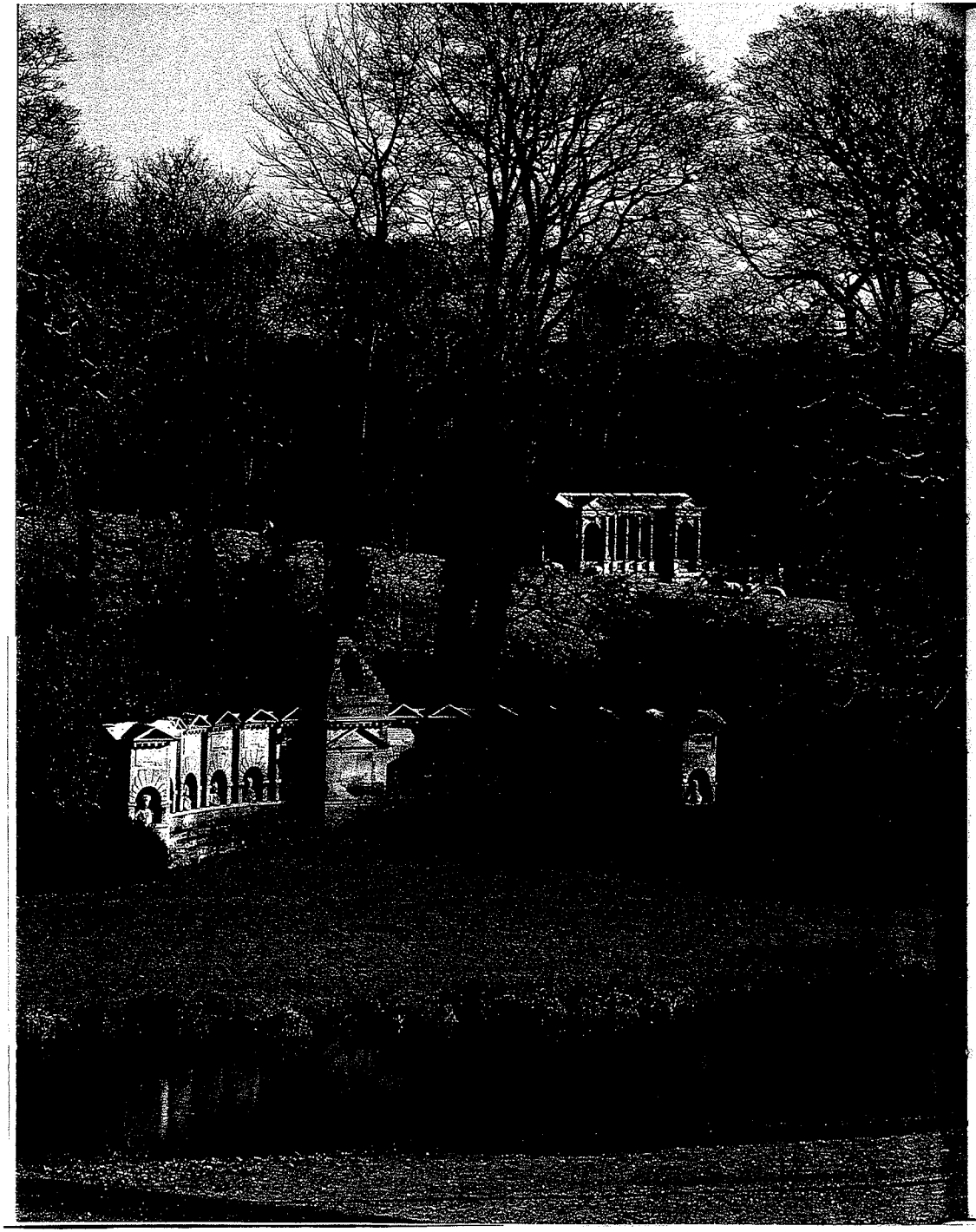
> Having seen all that happened to this band of adventurers, I repaired to another pile of building, that stood within view of the temple of Honour . . .



> I found that the stones were laid together without mortar, and that the whole fabric stood upon so weak a foundation, that it shook with every wind that blew. This was called the temple of Vanity . . . [and] was filled with hypocrites, pedants, free-thinkers, and prating politicians . . .'

This is in fact exactly what we still see today. The Temple of Virtue contained statues of Greek heroes, role-models for the Whig politicians, while that of Vanity, which lay in ruins, had within it a headless statue which some said was Walpole. The Temple of Honour, or the Temple of British Worthies, contained a series of portrait busts of those 'members of the British nation thought worthy of being set in such exalted company.' These were in two groups, representing the classical division of human life into the active as against the contemplative. Those embodying the *vita activa* included figures such as Alfred the Great, Elizabeth I and Sir Francis Drake. Those who represented the *vita contemplativa* were Inigo Jones, Shakespeare, Milton, Francis Bacon, John Locke, Sir Thomas Gresham (a gesture towards mercantilism), and, from among the living, Alexander Pope. Cobham was to go on and erect other buildings which filled out this initial message of his political principles. These included one of the earliest in the revived Gothic style, the Temple of Liberty, which was decorated with Saxon heraldry and scenes celebrating the freedoms and ancient British liberties which Walpole, by inference, had violated.

This was a tableau designed to inspire those who saw it and many did, for Stowe's gardens enjoyed a European fame and were the most visited of all the great landscape ensembles. In them the visitor was confronted with what was in effect a representation in three dimensions of a theme which was to dominate the century, the creation of a British national cultural tradition, equal to if not surpassing that of Greece and Rome. What is striking about the Temple of British Worthies is that it was an expression not of the court, nor of the government of the day, but of the opposition. Secondly, that, apart from Pope, its heroes were all located firmly in the past and, although it was three decades on from the Act of Union there was no Scot. This pantheon was firmly English in spite of its British label.

That such a cultural configuration could be staged at all stemmed directly from the Scientific Revolution of the previous century, which had demonstrated the superiority of the Moderns as against the Ancients in proving that what had been accepted as immutable truths for centuries were, in fact, not so. This celebration of the achievement of later ages explains the presence of Bacon, Newton and Locke but not at first glance that of the poets. It was, however, inevitable that once this emulation of the distant by

A pantheon of national heroes. William Kent's Temple of British Worthies in the garden at Stowe, Buckinghamshire, constructed in the 1730s, includes in its gallery cultural figures such as Shakespeare, Milton and Inigo Jones.

the more recent past had been established in the scientific sphere it should equally affect the cultural. So Shakespeare, Milton and Inigo Jones are made to take their place in this new starry firmament, one invoked on behalf of a political opposition claiming that it was the true guardian of ancient virtue.

But it was not only the political opponents of Walpole who were to stimulate this drive towards a national cultural identity: it was also a deep desire to establish the country's cultural credentials against France. This was a period during which Britain was at war on and off with France, culminating in the decades of the Napoleonic wars at the close of the century. It was indeed the defeat of France in the Seven Years War, which came to an end in 1763, that prefaced what can only be described as an unprecedented efflorescence reflecting what was a new-found confidence in the country's cultural potential. The war had also seen for the first time Scottish and English troops fighting side by side in what was a common British cause. The division of Scotland and England did not so easily vanish. The old Stuart concept of the multi-kingdoms lingered on, fuelled by the Jacobite cause which was not finally laid to rest until after 1745. In the second half of the century Scotland was both politically and socially drawn more and more into the network of England, a development which in the long run was also to have a cultural dimension. That was to be found, as it had been in the case of England, by looking backwards towards an antiquity which could be shared north and south of the border.

What emerges as the century progresses is the firm belief that the strength of British culture lay not in a monolithic uniformity but in its very diversity. A people of mixed descent governed by a mixed constitution was seen to call for a culture which drew on elements from each part of its historic generic make up. Ancient British, Celtic, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, Huguenot, Jewish and Flemish antecedents could bring a cornucopia of cultural gifts embracing such attributes as the elegance of Latinity, the sense of liberty which fuelled the Germanic races, French grace and the sublimity of the Celtic bards. All of these strands were held together not only by the geographical confines of the island but by a common Christian tradition, predominantly Protestant and firmly based on the Old Testament. A vision which had long equated England with Israel was now extended to embrace the whole of Britain. All of this coincided too with a recognition of the racial origins of the country. In the past it had been accepted that Britain was founded by Brutus, the grandson of Aeneas, the founder of Rome. By 1700 that myth had given way to the reality that its roots lay in a variety of peoples who had crossed the Channel and settled here, or as Daniel Defoe, in his *True Born Englishman* (1701), neatly put it:

> . . . a Race uncertain and unev'n,
> Deriv'd from all the Nations under Heav'n.

As a result at the same time that it seemed that all roads led to Rome, others were firmly thrusting back in time into the island's past, questioning whether a classically based culture was indeed the ideal one for a modern nation. This concern was heightened as Britain moved to imperial greatness. The British Empire was billed as a very different phenomenon from its Roman predecessor, basing itself firmly on trade and not on brutality. The new *Pax Britannica* was cast not as an aggressor but as a liberator and guardian of peace, bringing to its subject peoples friendship and commerce, practical science and the benefits of Christianity. The false values of the Roman Empire were contrasted with the benevolent mercantile virtues of the British. The poet William Cowper in his poem 'Charity' catches the ethos:

> . . . the band of commerce was design'd
> T'associate all branches of mankind;
> And, if a boundless plenty be the robe,
> Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.

Those who wished further confirmation that the British Empire was an act of divine providence, a belief which was fervently held, need only turn to Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-81). In this, the greatest historical work of the age born of a Grand Tour visit, could be discerned the fate of an empire which had based itself on the false values of brutality and degradation as well as untold vice and violence.

Parallel, therefore, to the all-pervasive cult of politeness as a bridge crossing the previous century's religious and political divide, came this exploration of the nation's cultural past seeking further common cultural ground. It was to be found in one supreme figure, William Shakespeare, whose ultimate apotheosis was to be one of the most astonishing phenomena of the Georgian age. Shakespeare's plays had, of course, never ceased being performed from the moment that the theatres reopened after the Restoration, and indeed after the Licensing Act of 1737 were even more in evidence, establishing what was a nascent canon of national dramatic classics. That Shakespeare was able to take on this role as the supreme artistic hero of a nation was due to his ability to be a cultural chameleon. His plays were cheerfully altered and rewritten as both dramatic taste and the political scene changed. As a consequence they could be made to coincide with the views of whoever happened to be in power or, for that matter, out of power. In addition what was added or omitted enabled the

plays to conform to every shift in taste and fashion. To Alexander Pope's generation Shakespeare's low comedy characters were an offence against classical decorum, so Pope in his edition of the plays blamed their appearance on 'the ignorance of the Players' and relegated whole passages to the footnotes. But during the 1740s and 1750s the comedies enjoyed huge popularity as a result of having been cut and rewritten to be monuments to patriotism, celebrating both trade and national glory. In this way Shakespeare became an icon of middle class mercantilism, a poet who gave voice to the heroic age of Elizabeth I. The virtues Shakespeare was seen to extol were those now billed as the essence of any true-born Englishman, ones diametrically opposed to those cultivated by decadent French aristocrats subject to an absolute monarch.

In 1734, the year before William Kent's Temple of British Worthies at Stowe, a campaign was launched to commemorate Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey. That too was an anti-Walpole project by those anxious to establish a shrine to one now presented as the quintessential embodiment of the nation's values. Nothing initially came of this until, in 1737, a supporter of the government subscribed to the erection of a bust of John Milton in Poets' Corner. Then the campaign for a monument to Shakespeare was revived by the opposition Patriots with Lord Burlington as a leading proponent and Kent as the designer. In 1741 Peter Scheemakers's elegant rococo statue of the playwright was unveiled, which almost instantly supplanted in the popular imagination every previous image of the poet. Here was Shakespeare, the man of letters, the British Worthy, who had immortalised a nation's golden age when true liberty had reigned. A national icon had been successfully launched.

Peter Scheemakers' monument to Shakespeare in Westminster Abbey, 1740, launched what was to become a major cult of the bard as a national political and cultural symbol.

This was Shakespeare sanctified within a church when, in reality, it was to the theatre that he belonged. He was not to wait long for his recapture. In 1741, the same year that the Scheemakers statue was revealed, a young actor, David Garrick, made his debut on the London stage. For almost forty years Garrick was to dominate the theatre as the greatest actor of the age (a subject to which we will return), a position he occupied as a man with a mission, to elevate his profession and along with it that of the drama within society. To do this he cast himself as the guardian of a sacred inheritance, that

of Shakespeare, claiming to have restored his true words to the stage. In fact he did what his predecessors had done, re-edited them to accord with current taste. In 1755 Garrick signalled his arrival as an establishment figure by purchasing a villa on the Thames at Hampton and erecting in its grounds a temple to the glory of Shakespeare or rather to Garrick as Shakespeare, for he posed for the statue himself to the sculptor Roubiliac. Garrick's Shakespeare is a very different one from the sinuous figure in Poets' Corner. Here the playwright takes on the role of the presiding deity of bourgeois morality, one whose plays, tidied up, were beginning to take their place on the shelves of virtually anyone who claimed to belong to the educated classes.

Then came the canonisation. Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee, staged in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1769, is remarkable amongst other things for the fact that not one line of the poet's works was uttered. Amidst a barrage of publicity the actor presented a statue of Shakespeare, along with a portrait of himself with a bust of him, to the town. There were balls, a masquerade, a horse race, not to mention the Grand Procession of Shakespeare's Characters which had to be cancelled due to torrential rain. No matter, for the disastrous Jubilee was restaged at Drury

The great actor David Garrick joins the man he idealised. Shakespeare, attended by Tragedy and Comedy, awaits to welcome Garrick as he is borne heavenwards. Seventeen actors, each in a Shakespearean role, bid him farewell in this picture painted three years after his death in 1779.

Lane and became one of the greatest theatrical hits of the century. At Stratford, however, the climactic moment was Garrick's unveiling of the bard's statue. He had arranged for an actor in the role of a Grand Tour aristocrat to spring up from the audience and protest at the apotheosis of this low-born provincial. Garrick then stepped on stage banishing such ignorance and delivered an ode to full orchestral and choral accompaniment with music specially composed by Thomas Arne. In Garrick's ultimate lines we witness the birth of bardolatry:

'Tis he! 'tis he! – that demi-god!
Who Avon's flow'ry margin trod,
While sportive *Fancy* round him flew,
Where *Nature* led him by the hand,
Instructed him in all she knew
And gave him absolute command!
'Tis he! 'Tis he!
The god of our idolatry!'

This is Shakespeare cast as the universal man inspired by Nature to voice the truths of humanity enshrined as a national cultural deity.

Shakespeare, however, was not to be alone for long. In 1757 the poet Thomas Gray, in his *The Progress of Poesy*, had charted the progress of poetry from Greece to Rome and thence to Britain, enshrined not only in the works of immortal Shakespeare but in those of Milton and Dryden. Until the 1770s the transmission of that literary heritage was in the hands of the booksellers who controlled the copyrights. The Tonson family owned, amongst others, those of Spenser, Milton, Waller, Dryden and Congreve. Admittedly in 1709 Tonson's great series of critical editions began to appear, but the widespread reading of that heritage could not take off until the booksellers' control was challenged in the courts. That happened in the 1760s resulting in a flood of cheap editions in response to what was a spreading literacy. The effect of this on booksellers was to make them turn publisher and for a new type of bookseller to emerge, one epitomised by Hatchards in Piccadilly, which opened in 1797.

The putting together of the literary heritage was a piecemeal affair. In the Temple of British Worthies there was Shakespeare, Milton and Pope. By the middle of the century Chaucer had joined them as a paternal ancestor, a rough but natural British voice. Edmund Spenser was re-cast as a master of a quasi-Gothic, allegorical epic which was now viewed as a pure expression of the native moral and religious imagination. The political aspects of Milton were quietly forgotten about as he was remoulded into the blind seer who wrote a sublime modern epic. Alexander Pope

and James Thomson were designated as the present-day inheritors of this mighty mantle. So by the third quarter of the century side-by-side with the classical pantheon filled with the likes of Homer, Virgil and Ovid there emerged a parallel one in which figured Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton and Dryden. In order to achieve that called for abandoning long held classical criteria of judgement and replacing them instead with criteria judging the works on their own merits. So, for example, Spenser's imaginative vigour was seen as being more important than his failure to observe classical form. In the case of Shakespeare, being Nature's darling and the model of genius, the classical canons were simply abrogated. This movement was summed up in the magisterial editions of Samuel Johnson, *Prefaces Biographical and Critical to the Works of the English Poets* (1779-81), the introductions to which were printed separately as *Lives of the Poets*. This was a milestone in literary history placing the poets into the political and social context of their age and attempting to relate their private lives to their work.

What had begun as an antiquarian quest into early literature was to have major implications for contemporary writing, in effect loosening and finally demolishing the Augustan canon. By the middle of the century the fascination with earlier native literature had taken a strong hold. In 1754 Thomas Warton published his *Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser* and a decade later Thomas Percy produced his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). So far the literary heritage was firmly English but to be British it needed to pull in the Celtic fringes. That necessity was recognised by Thomas Gray in his ode 'The Bard' (1757) which tells the story of Edward I's attempts to kill all the Welsh bards after the conquest of Wales and how that free-born native poetic tradition was to survive and be reborn in Tudor England. That was written a decade on from 1745, memories of which had to fade before the Celtic fringe could finally be brought into the cultural fold. And that was to be achieved by the publication of the works of Ossian (1760-65) under the aegis of James Macpherson.

Macpherson claimed to have translated the works of an early Celtic bard, Ossian. The result is a mixture of orally transmitted Gaelic originals held together by bridging passages by Macpherson. In it some genuine pieces of Highland poetry were refashioned to meet the growing interest in early primitive poetry. The result was quite unlike anything else at the time and Ossian naturally took on the dimension of a literary sensation. A passage from the opening book of *Temora* is sufficient to capture how different it was:

'. . . There Moriath stood with darkened face. Hidalla's long hair sighs in the wind. Red-haired Cormar bends on his spear, and rolls his side-looking eyes.

> Wild is the look of Malthos from beneath two shaggy brows. Foldath stands, like an oozy rock, that covers his dark sides with foam. His spear is like Simora's fir, that meets the wind of heaven. His shield is marked with the strokes of battle. His red eye despises danger. These and a thousand other chiefs surrounded the king of Erin, when the scout of ocean came . . .'

The public was suddenly presented with an epic set in a distant and heroic past of a totally different kind from that offered by either Homer or Virgil. Its heroes were noble, not brutal, champions of truth and justice. Its womenfolk were sentimental and virtuous. The impact of Ossian was to be European in extent, being translated into German, French and Italian. Through it a door was opened into an unknown mythic Celtic past and its effect was hypnotic. Ossian painted a picture of a Scotland which was proud and independent but, as it was set in the misty past, there was no problem in accommodating it within the new British cultural pantheon. It also appeared at a moment when, as culture became more and more metropolitan, a nostalgia set in for a past which had either gone or was going. That glance over the shoulder across the centuries enshrined in Ossian was to prove a liberating force on poetry itself, driving it towards the romantic age.

If the creation of a national literary culture was summed up in the Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769, the establishment of a musical one was to be epitomised in the Handel Commemoration in Westminster Abbey in 1784. As in the case of literature that heritage also came out of an exploration of the past. But the story in respect of music was to be a rather different one from that of either plays or poetry which remained in print to be read or performed. In sharp contrast there was no tradition or ostensible reason for continuing to play old music. Up until the eighteenth century music was occasional, written for a specific event and then discarded. The idea of a canon of classics did not exist and England was the first country in Western Europe where such a notion was to emerge. By the close of the eighteenth century there was no other country where such a diversity of old music could be heard or where it had assumed such a major role as part of the ritual of national culture.

As in the case of literature it was to be the quite unique political circumstances which were to bring this about. The role of the Chapel Royal and of the musical network which stretched out from it across country to the cathedrals was to be crucial. The Chapel musicians cherished their musical heritage from Byrd and Tallis down to Purcell because it was one the Puritans had almost succeeded in destroying. Church music had been wiped out for two decades during the previous century. So, after the Restoration in 1660, the Chapel Royal acted as guardian of a precious musical tradition which now symbolised also the Stuart monarchy and loyalty to the Church of England. By 1700 that body of music was known as 'ancient music' and, with the advent of the House of Hanover in 1714, it was to assume an even greater ideological potency. Just as in the Elizabethan age, when much of the music by the Chapel Royal's composers was a cryptic lament for the loss of pre-Reformation Catholicism, so the music composed for the Tudors and Stuarts was cultivated by a broad spectrum of the opposition, Tories, High Anglicans and Jacobite sympathisers. This movement, which originated in Oxford, was to find institutional form in the antiquarian Academy of Ancient Music (1710).

Other developments were to assist this drift towards the performance of 'ancient music'. One was the abdication by the court as the focal point of musical innovation. As it provided few splendid occasions for the composition of music the inevitable result was to play what already existed. And, also as a consequence of the court's abdication, the greatest annual musical event ceased to be a royal but a City one, the service held in St. Paul's Cathedral to raise funds for the charity, the Sons of the Clergy. This had begun in the aftermath of the Restoration to provide for children of clergy who had suffered during the Interregnum but it gradually escalated into a magnificent musical occasion to which all the musicians of the Chapel Royal contributed, and where a full orchestra provided accompaniment. Each year its focal point was the performance of Purcell's *Te Deum* and *Jubilate*.

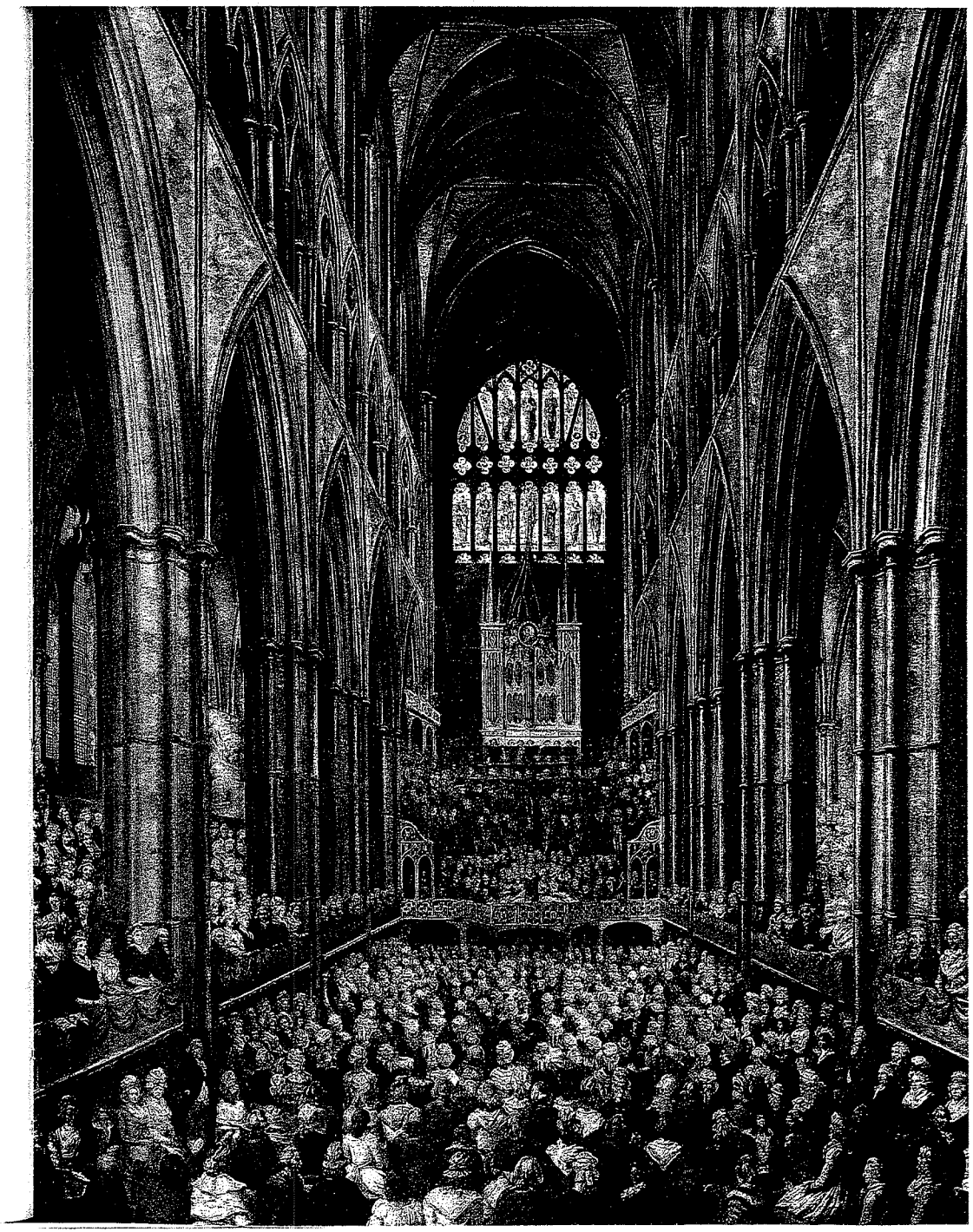
Such an event, as it crossed into the Georgian age, took on political overtones for it was seen as a celebration of the Church of England and its clergy within a framework of music composed in the Stuart era. The Three Choirs Festival, alternating between Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester, was a provincial imitation of this event, a fund-raising and again basically Tory celebration where the music of Purcell dominated.

That indeed was the problem, because for any truly national canon to emerge called for a composer who was not so doctrinally and politically committed, one whose work, like Shakespeare's, could be read in more ways than one, according to changing times and circumstances. This role was to be more than amply fulfilled in the figure of Handel. His political affiliations were never very definite and the fact that his oratorios were given concert performances in theatres and not in churches meant that he bridged the divide between the Church of England and dissent. The libretti, however much they may have had a special context on their first performance, were like Shakespeare's plays, adaptable to every situation. Their subject matter in the main dealt with the triumphs and deliverances of the Hebrew nation which by long tradition was equated with the English and by extension the British.

By the 1750s, as the Jacobite cause faded, the Three Choirs Festival and others which proliferated across the country began increasingly to stage oratorios by Handel. At the same time these events began to spill over to several days and the local aristocracy and gentry not only attended but took on particular roles. In this way 'ancient music', primarily that of Purcell and increasingly that of Handel, became the means whereby the English fashioned a musical ritual which stood outside the liturgy and conflicting church traditions. The performance of old music gradually became part of an upper class ritual expressive of a new-found cultural unity.

The association of aristocracy with what were viewed as the virtues of antiquity was a long one. It formed part of the argument for maintaining the hierarchical status quo. However, in the third quarter of the century, that came under threat not only from ideas of equality seeping into England from the thinkers of the French Enlightenment but, more particularly, from demands from below for parliamentary reform and an extension of the franchise. At the same time the defeat of Britain in the American War of Independence severely dented establishment confidence, engendering a drawing together of the aristocratic classes. Cultural solidarity was to be one manifestation of the reassertion of aristocratic status and music was where it found its earliest concrete expression. In 1776, the year of the Declaration of Independence, John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich, was the moving force behind the foundation of the Concert of Ancient Music. This man, unpleasant in so many aspects, was yet not only the most distinguished amateur musician of his day but also a powerful innovator. At these concerts 'ancient music' was finally defined as that which was more than twenty years old and that alone was to be played before an audience which was a display of caste. In 1785 the entire court attended, and admittance to concerts was reserved virtually exclusively to those of aristocratic descent. As a result of this time embargo a canon of classics was for the first time established in Europe. Old music and the *ancien régime* were interlocked together in an annual musical ritual which was also viewed as having a role in the moral regeneration of the upper orders, for many who came were committed evangelicals. The Concert of Ancient Music in effect created Britain's musical establishment, one which was to hold on to its dominance until the 1840s.

The Handel Commemoration of 1784, organised by the Concert of Ancient Music, was the composer's canonisation. The event followed the end of the disastrous American war which lost the colonies, and the aftermath of a general election which was a royalist triumph and in which the younger Pitt came to power. The Royal Family and



Handel apotheosised as a national symbol. The Handel Commemoration of 1784 was without precedent in the nation's musical history. The painter, Edward Edwards, records the scene in Westminster Abbey as it would have been viewed by the king.

the entire establishment, regardless almost of political stance, came together in Westminster Abbey to listen to Handel's sacred music. Music for his operas was staged at the Pantheon, but it was the Abbey gathering which was the significant one, a national musical ritual in which all could join. George III was himself deeply involved in the whole affair which cast the monarchy into a role of being protector of the civic virtues. The commemoration was a huge success and went on being repeated for a few years until it was finally abandoned. By then, however, the notion of the performance of a canon of old music, classics, as an expression of civic order had been firmly put in place. It is still going strong today, as the building of a concert hall at the heart of any urban configuration and the maintenance of an orchestra bears testimony.

All of this went hand-in-hand with something else which was to be a *leitmotif* of Britishness, the landscape. Indeed the link between national identity and the British landscape first became fixed in the eighteenth century, a vision brought about by literature and art rather than direct perception. As in the case of literature there was a move away from looking towards classical antiquity turning instead towards an appreciation of native beauties. The landscape gardens of William Kent early in the century had transformed nature into a series of pictures inspired by Ancient Rome. That still pertained in the 1740s when, for instance, William Hoare laid out his grounds at Stourhead in Wiltshire. He cast its central lake as Avernus, the lake across which Aeneas in the *Aeneid* had passed to Hades, and the scenes Hoare constructed around its perimeter were designed to recall events in Virgil's epic poem. But that approach was to change dramatically after the middle of the century. If a landscape garden was to be a series of pictures it presupposed a role for Nature as a painter. The result of that equation was for people to look increasingly at the untouched countryside in pictorial terms, as examples of Nature's pencil at work. The other change was that just as the first landscape gardens had appealed through the intellect to the imagination now that appeal was to be transferred to the passions.

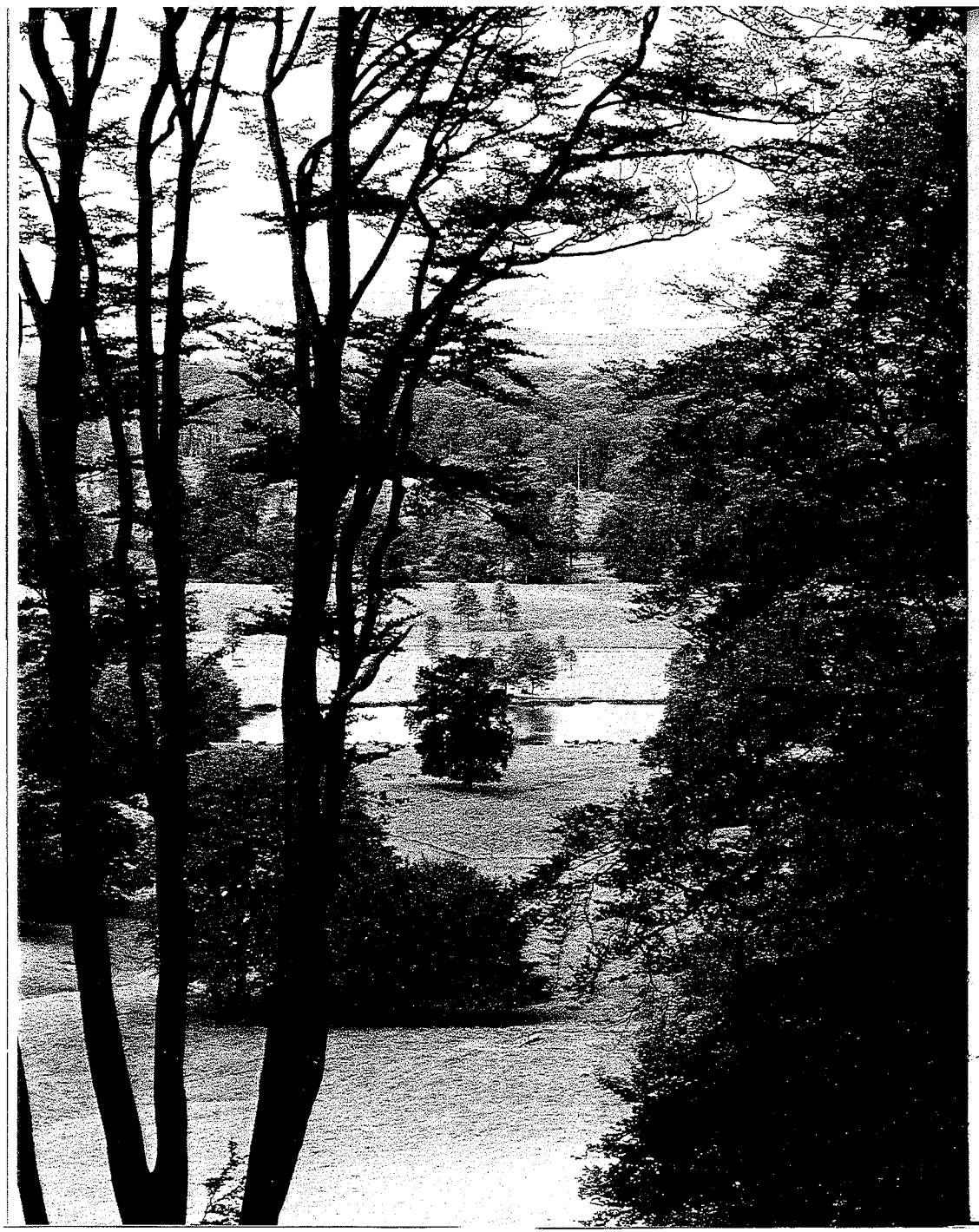
Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas on the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1756) was to be hugely influential and innovative, contributing to this new perception of things which stressed the primacy of psychology in artistic response. A new valuation was given to emotions such as awe and terror which gave status for the first time to negative qualities like darkness and solitude, silence and immensity of scale. This was a radical shift from Augustan ideals of harmony and proportion. In the case of landscape it opened the way to an appreciation, for example, of mountains and all kinds of other wild terrain hitherto regarded as horrendous aberrations.

The change in the aesthetic perception of Nature coincided with the Agricultural

Revolution which in effect created the English landscape of today. That entailed massive enclosure and the creation of our present field system with hedges and clumps of trees. Common land vanished and, as a result, an underclass of agricultural labourers emerged. But the enclosure movement meant that estates could be arranged on an even more gigantic scale to accord with the emotional response now called for from landscape. That immensity of vision was to be met in the work of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown who set up his own practice in 1751. In the 1750s he was to remodel the huge parkland areas of Burghley, Northamptonshire, Longleat, Wiltshire and Wrest, Bedfordshire. In the 1760s he moved on to places like Blenheim, Oxfordshire, where some two thousand acres were rearranged to his diktats. During his thirty-five years of professional practice he improved up to a hundred estates of the aristocracy and gentry, leaving thereby an indelible mark on the landscape. And he had, of course, many imitators.

No more was England rearranged as though it were the Roman *campagna* imported. Instead it was a proudly British terrain of a kind which could stir the passions of a man of feeling, a Nature perfected with flowing hills capped by irregular groves of trees and watered by serpentine rivers exuding a gentle timeless serenity. For the aristocratic classes who could afford such magnificent private elysiums they were British liberty in landscape form. It was an image of the nation as gentle and pastoral, peopled by contented rural workers happy with their lot. The reality was far different but gazing through their rose-tinted quizzing glasses the aristocracy saw what it wanted to see, a vision which accorded perfectly with the presentation of the country's imperial might as essentially peace-giving and benevolent.

Such a reassessment of the rural landscape led to what is known as the 'discovery of Britain.' Faster horses, better coaches, proper signposting, not to mention an ever-expanding network of turnpike roads, made travel easier than it ever had been. The new emotional aesthetic responses outlined by Burke could be found by touring through Britain's countryside along the dramatic scenery of the Wye Valley or in the Lakes of Cumberland and Westmorland or, even further afield, in the Scottish Highlands. Guidebooks, which began to appear during the 1770s, told travellers not only *what* to look at, but *how* to look at it. Highlights were picked out, attracting the words 'romantic', 'sublime' or 'picturesque'. Those who voyaged often took with them what was called a Claude glass, a slightly convex mirror about four inches in diameter which could capture any picturesque view in the palm of the hand. This experience was the reverse of that at the beginning of the century. Then Nature had been recast to look like a painting. Now Nature was investigated to see where she had painted her own pictures unassisted.



Such a view in the long term was to tell against the manipulations of 'Capability' Brown, whose work could not survive the onslaught of the new picturesque aesthetic as expounded by William Gilpin in his *Observations on the Wye and South Wales* (1782), in which he demonstrated the picturesque nature of that terrain reflected in its natural wildness and ruined abbeys and castles, scenes unpolluted by the hand of the improver. By the 1780s and 1790s increasing urbanisation, together with the tidying up of the countryside due to the Agricultural Revolution, rendered that which had not been so, more and more alluring. These early tourists came in search of a lost primitive world, a journey back in time. In doing so they simultaneously eroded what they had come to experience.

By about 1790 a British culture had been forged. This is caught in a roll-call of books which traced the history and celebrated the achievements of the native tradition: Horace Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1762), Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1774-78), Samuel Johnson's *Works of the English Poets* (1779-81), Sir John Hawkins's *A General View of the Science and Practice of Music* (1776) and Charles Burney's *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (1776-89). A cultural identity was firmly in place to meet the challenge of the French Revolution and the decades of war with France. The British State and all it represented was to find itself under siege from without as never before. Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790) was a powerful attack on what had happened across the Channel arguing against sudden innovation and for organic evolution. It was to be the foundation stone of British conservatism. The cultural unity which had been fabricated during the previous decades now acquired a new urgency as one aspect of a programme which would pull people together to stave off the ideology of revolutionary France and the threat of radicalism from below. The success of this young national culture, which was in essence élite and aristocratic, would depend on how long its various partners would acquiesce in the dominance of England. But its ability to hold was to lie in the acknowledgement from its inception that its strength lay in unity in diversity.

A British landscape. The grounds of Longleat House, Wiltshire, were transformed by 'Capability' Brown from 1757 onwards with his characteristic mixture of undulating hills, clumps of trees and serpentine lake.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

SENSIBILITY

The Morning Walk, a portrait of a handsome young couple, Mr and Mrs William Hallett strolling in the countryside was painted in the autumn of 1785. It is one work among the many which proclaimed that the art of painting had come of age, and is recognised as one of Thomas Gainsborough's masterpieces. The paint is thin, in places almost transparent, in order to capture the gauzes, rustling silks and nodding ostrich plumes of the couple as well as the landscape which enfolds them, its feathery trees shimmering in the morning light. The blissful marital pair are presented as ideals, his a young and serious face, hers, in contrast, modest, with eyes slightly downcast, averted from the onlooker. The gravity of their affection is dispelled by the white dog which bounces up at them adoringly. Gainsborough's control of his chosen palette range is total, a symphony of blues and greens and whites with only a few touches of creamy gold. As a consequence the couple virtually dissolve into the landscape around, Nature as it were taking them in her embrace. Husband and wife, elemental man and woman, are as one in a paradisal vision. In one radiant image the artist has transmuted into paint the ethic of an age, that of sensibility.

By the middle of the eighteenth century sensibility was used to describe the expression of heightened, intense human feelings, ones which embodied a new kind of refinement of response by the educated classes. This attribute was to establish the credentials of a different type of human being, the man or woman of 'feeling'. The nervous heroines of Richardson's novels, above all *Clarissa*, portray exactly this new feminine ideal. In Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) sensibility is a badge of moral and aesthetic refinement. Such a return to emotion could only happen once the extremes of religious enthusiasm, which had been such a marked feature of the previous century, had become a distant memory. This made it possible for refined persons to be judged by their emotional responses to both art and nature, a reaction which was to find support not only in Burke's exposition of the sublime and the beautiful but also in an earlier work, David Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1739), in which he demonstrated that the mind oper-

At one with the world of Nature. Gainsborough's famous portrait of a young couple known as 'The Morning Walk', painted in 1785, captures exactly the mood of unpretentious relaxed sensibility adopted by the leisured classes during the decades preceding the French Revolution.

ated from patterns of association and juxtaposition rather than from Reason. Together Burke and Hume contributed to a conception of mankind which showed that man was ruled not by Reason but by feelings and by the passions.

This shift in ideals was to have a profound effect on the cultural ethos of the generation which preceded the French Revolution. The 'man of feeling' was a person in whom courage and good nature mingled, whose tender heart and benevolence was overt. Sensibility was above all a spontaneous characteristic and, at first glance, quite contrary to the etiquette of politeness. The irony is that both were found to be compatible. Sensibility released eighteenth century man to give rein to a whole range of emotions such as grief and pity, joy and love. This perception of natural and moral beauty was held to be divinely implanted by God in the soul, expressly in order that it might give man happiness and evoke his most noble passions.

These internal currents were reinforced by ones from abroad. The great French philosopher of the Enlightenment, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, was widely read in England. Rousseau argued that mankind had been corrupted by civilisation. In his philo-

Robes of state and coronet are put aside in favour of being depicted as a country gentleman hugging his dog. Gainsborough's portrait of Henry, 3rd Duke of Buccleuch, painted in 1770, shows him to be a 'man of feeling'.

Men and women 'of feeling' took joy in family life, childhood for the first time being seen as a separate phase. The American painter John Singleton Copley's group portrait of Sir William Pepperell and his family was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1778.

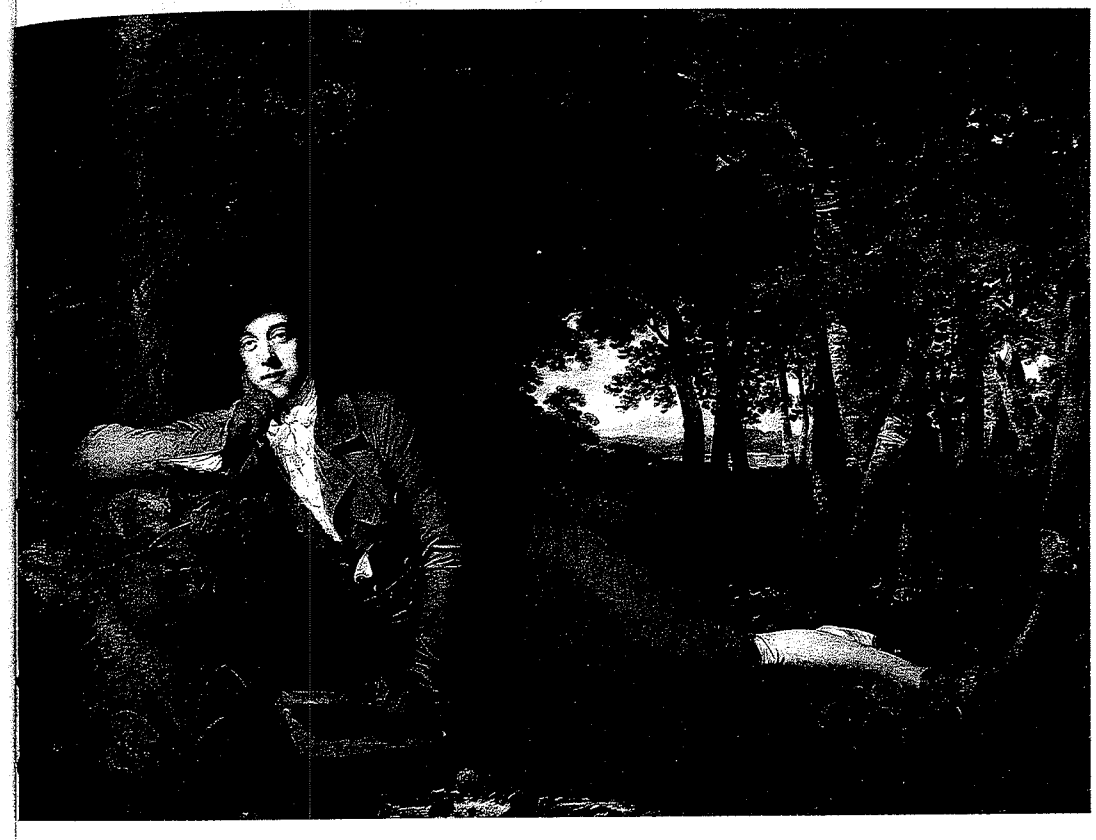
sophy the passions and affections could be improved by an education which was founded on contact more with things than words. Priority should be accorded to the expression of natural feelings and emotions above any official code of morality. In his novel *Émile* (1762), which was translated into English in 1763, Rousseau believed that children should be nurtured naturally, just as one might cultivate a tree. The effect was a revolution in child-rearing among the upper classes where children ceased to be regarded as miniature adults. Instead childhood was recognised as a distinct segment of life which demanded, for example, different, loose-fitting clothes and the freedom to roam. Nothing was to disturb Rousseau's influence in England until 1789. He was seen as the epitome of the French Enlightenment, a man opposed to decadent French absolutism.

These ideas gained acceptance simultaneously with the coming to maturity of two

dazzling generations of British painters, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Francis Cotes, George Stubbs, Joseph Wright of Derby, John Opie, George Romney and Thomas Lawrence. Although many of them were openly to curse the British obsession with the genre, their livelihood lay in portraiture however much their aspirations were to scale the heights of history. That frustration was not, however, to be a negative force, for the consequence of it was an age of quite outstandingly innovative portrait painting, one which was unparalleled anywhere else in Europe. Gradually the inherited French-inspired conventions were displaced by compositions designed to reflect the unique nature of British society.

The portraits by these artists trace the emergence of informality. Men of social rank were no longer posed in an assertive manner but depicted wearing country attire, often with gun and dog, in what was seen as the antithesis of French court dress and therefore viewed as expressive of British liberty. Gainsborough, who began his life in Suffolk followed by Bath and who finally settled in London in 1774, gives supreme expression to this changing ideal. His sitters almost conceal their social rank. Even the Order of the Garter star, which it was obligatory to wear at all times, could virtually be hidden beneath a coat lapel. His male sitters' faces are depicted open, often smiling, a visual testament to a recognition that nobility was no longer only a matter of birth but a principle of virtue. In the case of women rank is also discarded, choosing rather to be presented as monuments to the female virtues which extolled not only purity but domesticity. Time and again Rousseau's new concept of motherhood and childhood is celebrated as infants fondle, play and tumble across aristocratic canvases. These are 'women of feeling' and feelings, according to Burke, become more acutely excited as the scenery becomes wilder and more remote. So often the grandest of ladies is discovered attired in a simple dress seated, pensive, her dog at her side, amidst nature untamed.

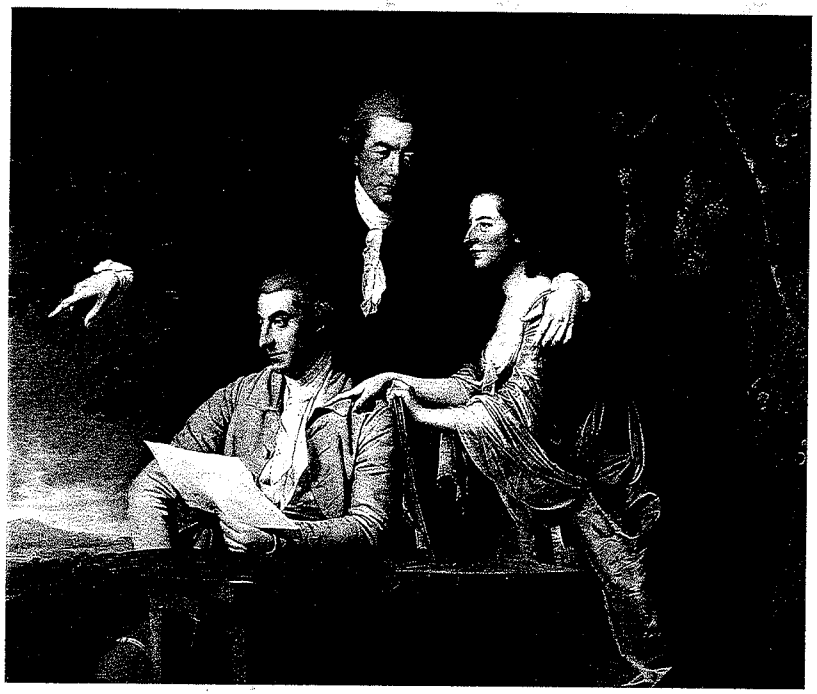
Joseph Wright of Derby, who passed his life in the regions, is another artist who responded fully to the cult of sensibility. His famous portrait of Sir Brooke Boothby (1781) shows an elegantly dressed young man who does not hesitate to embrace Nature to the full, casting himself on the ground and clutching a volume of Rousseau in one hand. In his portraits Wright captures this new philosophical and sentimental enjoyment of the countryside, as well as recording what is clearly pride in ownership by the sitter. But Wright also recorded something else which was more disturbing about the cult of sensibility, that it was not unifying but in a sense divisive. In his group portraits, like that depicting the progress of an experiment with an air-pump, the reactions of those gathered around are not the same but different, each face registering separate aspects of private emotion and sensation. Like Gainsborough,



Wright was able to respond to the discovery of the British landscape, moving away from painting views of Italy to ones of Matlock and Dovedale.

Stubbs is another painter whose subject matter could only have come about through the uniqueness of English society with its passion for the open air, for field sports and racing. The love of animals, along with the realm of Nature, was one aspect of sensibility as the ever attendant horse and dog testify, but in Stubbs's case

Joseph Wright of Derby's portrait of Brooke Boothby commemorates his friendship with the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a volume of whose works lies by his side. He epitomises in his casual elegance the new ideal of the gentleman with references not only to contemporary sensibility but to a long tradition of the thinking man seeking the shade of the greenwood tree.



Wright of Derby's portrait masterpiece depicting the Rev. D'Ewes Coke, his wife Hannah and his cousin Daniel Parker Coke was painted about 1781-82. In it we see sensibility in action as an affectionate family group respond to the landscape as they consider what may be either a design for altering the park or a drawing of the view by Mrs. Coke.

these creature assume an importance of their own, demanding separate canvases. The pictures in which these adored animals are celebrated by their owners form a sharp contrast to the painter's unerring delineation of the lower classes who wait upon them. His observation confirms the suspicion that sensibility was as much as anything the attribute of an élite.

The cult of sensibility undoubtedly liberated painters. Its effect on writers was to be less dramatic. All the time there is a sense that they were being constrained by the sheer weight of the classical inheritance. The result is a kind of frustration because the existing forms of poetic expression were inadequate for what the poets increasingly wanted to say. Thomas Gray's famous *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751), inspired by the one at Stoke Poges, draws together the attitudes of an era. This is a poem permeated with a sense of isolation and a withdrawal into the inner self, the

poet indeed as that 'man of feeling' meditating on obscurity and death, time and history, fame and passion. At its close he imagines his own epitaph:

> Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
> And Melancholy marked him for her own.
> Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
> Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
> He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
> He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend.

Other poets like William Shenstone, William Collins, William Cowper and Christopher Smart articulate the new sincerity but not without stress. Collins had a mental breakdown and both Cowper and Smart had periods of insanity. Together they represent a movement away from the public themes which dominated the Augustan age towards a poetry which was more domestic and personal. Although banality too often creeps in, such lyrics can even now be delicately moving, like Cowper's 'Friendship' which reads almost as a handbook to the new masculine ideals:

George Stubbs's picture of Captain Samuel Sharpe Pocklington with his wife Pleasance and his sister, painted in 1769, offers another microcosm of people of feeling at one with the landscape which they own, sensitive and sincere not only to each other but equally to the horse.

Who seeks a friend, should come disposed
To exhibit in full blood disclosed
The graces and the beauties,
That from the character he seeks,
For 'tis an union that bespeaks
Reciprocated duties.
Mutual attention is implied,
And equal faith on either side,
And constantly supported . . .

Christopher Smart, like Cowper, was a man of deep religious sensibility who began his life as a Cambridge classicist and then moved to London, where he was overtaken by several bouts of madness from which he finally recovered in 1763. The impact of that on his work led him to break the Augustan mould, first in *Song to David* (1763) and secondly in the even more radical *Jubilate Agno* which, although written in 1760, was considered unpublishable until the twentieth century. This is less poetry than prose run berserk but it includes passages of quite startling originality, like the one on his cat, Jeoffry. What the poem appears to be is a series of antiphonal prayers whose exact meaning is quite opaque but whose general drift is a hymn to the Almighty from a universe in which the cat too finds his place:

For he is of the Lord's poor and so indeed is he
called by benevolence perpetually – poor Jeoffry!
poor Jeoffry! the rat has bit thy throat.
For I bless the name of the Lord Jesus that Jeoffry is better.
For the divine spirit comes about his body to sustain it in compleat cat.

These are poets besieged by melancholy, anguish and affliction. Their plight is caught in the tragedy of Thomas Chatterton whom poverty drove to suicide at the age of eighteen. His fame was to rest on what was eventually unmasked to be a forgery, a series of fifteenth century poems written in the Chaucerian style supposedly by a Bristol monk which were published in 1777. Many were taken in by them, but for the Romantic generation that followed Chatterton was cast as the youthful poetic genius in the making whose life was cut short by the indifference of the world around him. What he also represented, however, was poetic liberation of a different kind kindled not by madness, like Smart, but through going back in time and responding to the rediscovery of medieval and Renaissance poetry.

One figure towers above every other and that is the awkward bulk of Dr. Samuel Johnson. He was the supreme literary lion of the age and he too was a man of sensibility, for feeling in his case ultimately counted more than abstract reasoning. Even more than Alexander Pope, whom he defended, Johnson was a man of letters in his own right, able to retain a gentlemanly status and respectability in spite of being paid for his labours. As in the case of Garrick and Reynolds this arose from the acknowledgement of his genius. In the long run his achievement was to help free the writer from the burden of patronage. Johnson's energy was such that he contributed to every form of literature: drama, poetry, moral essays, travel, satire and the novel. He arrived in London from Lichfield with David Garrick but fame only came his way from the essays he wrote in the *Rambler* (1750-52). It was cemented by his monumental *Dictionary* (1755) which he undertook virtually single-handed and which was the earliest critical account of the English language as a means of thought and communication. Three years later came his edition of Shakespeare, one of the great pieces of

Dr Johnson in his travelling dress as described by Boswell in his Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland *(1775).*

criticism which challenged contemporary views on plays like *Antony and Cleopatra*, which went unperformed because it defied the classical unities. Johnson was universally looked upon as a quite extraordinary figure, farouche, lonely, sympathetic to the afflicted and attuned to the young. He was supremely a humanitarian whose humanity radiates across the centuries as it was fortunately caught by his friend James Boswell in his *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791), regarded at the time of its publication as scandalous, but now seen as uniquely capturing Johnson's personality and brilliant flow of conversation. That was given a forum all of its own in the Literary Club which was formed in 1764 precisely for that purpose and in which came together the worlds of art, literature and politics including Reynolds, Garrick, Gibbon, Burney, Burke and Sheridan. Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775), which he made with Boswell, is a great work, fascinating for delineating a meeting between a representative of a highly sophisticated metropolitan culture and members of one regarded as a primitive survival.

Oliver Goldsmith, like Johnson, was a polymathic writer of prose, plays, history, poetry, biography and novels, of which the most notable was *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1768). He again was an exercise in tender sensibilities lamenting, in *The Deserted Village* (1770), the social and economic woes inflicted on the countryside by the enclosure movement. The creators of the great landscape ensembles were viewed not as improvers but destroyers of a time-honoured way of life, the death knell of a society. The fate of 'Sweety Auburn! loveliest village of the plain' is a dismal one:

> Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
> Amidst thy bow'rs the tyrant's hand is seen,
> And desolation saddens all thy green . . .
> While, scour'd by famine, from the smiling land
> The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
> And while he sinks, without one arm to serve,
> The country blooms – a garden and a grave.

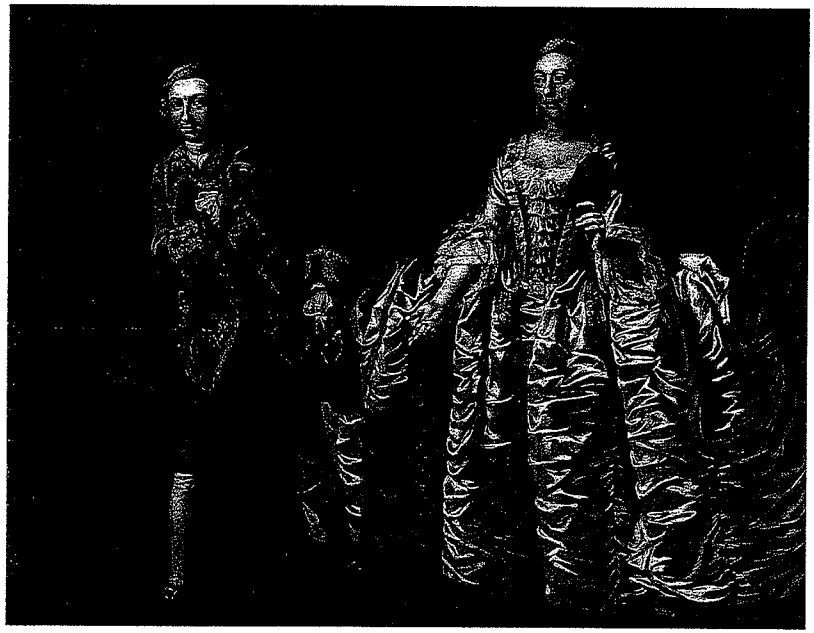
Goldsmith also wrote one of the great comedies of the century, *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), where the debt to Shakespeare is amply evident and in which he parodies in the lovers the extremes of sensibility.

Sensibility too was to pervade the theatre during the long reign of David Garrick, who had taken the London stage by storm in 1741 in the role of Richard III. Six years later he teamed up with James Lacy as joint proprietor-managers of Drury Lane. For twenty-nine seasons Garrick was to dominate the theatre, retiring finally in 1776 and dying three years later. He stood unchallenged as the greatest actor of his age. Endowed with strong expressive features and a bone structure which responded to artificial lighting, his eyes were large and dark, his voice flexible and his movements both graceful and powerful. These physical attributes were brought into play in achieving a revolution in acting style. That in its own way was a response to sensibility, for his approach to any role was a psychological one, replacing the heavy and slow delivery of the older generation of actors with one in which the words he uttered matched as closely as possible to what looked like natural movement and emotional reaction. Here was an actor who pointed his lines and used his face, as any of his numerous portraits in character reveal.

Garrick was always a man with a mission. Through his alliance with Shakespeare he set out to create a dramatic inheritance divorced from politics and religion. This he achieved by means of a blaze of publicity, making himself a thespian archetype who was to be emulated down to Laurence Olivier, an actor-manager who was also a public figure. Garrick posed as a gentleman of taste and saw that his repertory complied with contemporary sensibilities with plays that extolled the domestic virtues and patriotism. As a result the theatre began to be viewed less as a threat to social order, becoming instead part of a new establishment culture which crossed the political and religious divide. Garrick believed that plays only truly existed in performance, and both press and public were gradually educated to appreciate individual qualities of acting, especially in the great Shakespearean roles.

Garrick's contribution did not end there for he initiated significant practical reforms, banishing spectators from the stage and taking away the hooped chandeliers which had lit the acting forestage. To compensate for their loss he increased the number of footlights and introduced batteries of lights on poles in the wings. Although the auditorium continued to be lit during the performance, the cumulative effect was a move towards the peepshow. By bringing in the painter Philip de Loutherbourg stage scenery gave the audience all the emotional experiences sensibility extolled. Garrick may have failed in lifting the status of his profession overall but he certainly lifted himself. Edmund Burke was to declare that Garrick had 'raised the character of his profession to the rank of a liberal art.' But for the most part those on stage were regarded as the incarnation of what the audience had come to see, wit and beauty but also lasciviousness.

Garrick's acting style called for a degree of intimacy but as the market for the theatre expanded the two licensed playhouses were rebuilt on a vastly extended scale. By the 1790s Covent Garden held some three thousand people and Drury Lane three thousand five hundred. The result was the end of the theatre of the Enlightenment as these vast spaces demanded an acting style full of grand gesture which could be seen



David Garrick in one of his favourite roles, the rake in Benjamin Hoadly's The Suspicious Husband *first produced in 1747. The actress is Mrs. Pritchard who began by playing comedy moving later to tragedy. Painting by Francis Hayman, c.1747.*

from afar. Spectacle took over as the theatre of the word went into abeyance for virtually a century. Richard Brinsley Sheridan's updatings of Restoration comedy, *The Rivals* (1775), *The School for Scandal* (1777) (which included a parody of sensibility in the relationship of the two Surface brothers) and *The Critic* (1779) lowered a curtain in the history of the drama which was not to rise again until Oscar Wilde.

London continued to maintain its place as the musical capital of Western Europe, concerts taking over from opera in offering the most *avant garde* musical experiences. In 1765 Johann Christian Bach, known as the London Bach, together with Carl Friedrich Abel began the long series of subscription concerts at Carlisle House in Soho Square, importing dazzling foreign virtuoso performers like the young Mozart. There they introduced to the London public the latest music in the new lighter 'galant' style. A decade later they built a new concert room in Hanover Square. In the 1770s the Pantheon opened in Oxford Street, a magnificent venue for balls, masquerades and music-making. Joseph Haydn's concerts there during the 1790s caused a sensation. In music too the attributes of sensibility also manifested themselves. The audiences

which had previously moved around and chatted during concerts now sat responding in rapt silence.

But by 1790 London was no longer alone in having the monopoly of an élite culture. The second half of the century witnessed a huge surge of urbanisation caused by the stirrings of the first phases of the Industrial Revolution. Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bath and Brighton were boom towns, each sustaining a cultural life dominated by the local gentry and professional classes. This they modelled closely on that in the metropolis to which they were linked by easy means of communication. Gradually each acquired its own assembly rooms, theatre, concert hall, lending library and pleasure gardens. Bath had led the way earlier in the century where Richard Nash had introduced a code of behaviour based on politeness in which the nobility, gentry and middle classes could mingle freely. By the 1780s even the wearing of swords had vanished.

Such a significant shift in the pattern of urban life was reflected in architectural change, in elegant streets, squares and crescents in the new classical style as well as places of public assembly. Each town developed its own season of cultural activities and engendered its own clubs and associations which covered the wide variety of topics typical of the Enlightenment. In Birmingham it was the Lunar Society, in Manchester the Literary and Philosophical Society and in Edinburgh the Dilettanti. These emphasised yet again that refinement no longer came from birth but through knowledge and wisdom. They also crystallised the faith of the age in collective endeavour, the belief that those who held varying views could come together united by a creed committed to moral, technical and cultural improvement. Culture, science and philosophy harnessed by Reason and disseminated in print, it was believed, would lead the nation to enlightenment.

Not all of this was by any means to be lost in the turbulent decades ahead, but the French Revolution spelt the end of sensibility. It was seen as linked to politically dangerous ideas of social levelling and equality. In the 1790s it was condemned as being self-indulgent, anti-social, effeminate, vicious and, worst of all, foreign. But it did not vanish. Jane Austen could still censure it in the character of Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*, published in 1811.