

READINGS: NEO-CLASSICISM

Background:

Neo-classicism. Term coined in the 1880s to denote the last stage of the Classical tradition in architecture, sculpture, painting and the decorative arts. Neo-classicism was the successor to Rococo in the second half of the 18th century and was itself superseded by various historicist styles in the first half of the 19th century. It formed an integral part of THE ENLIGHTENMENT in its radical questioning of received notions of human endeavour. It was also deeply involved with the emergence of new historical attitudes towards the past -- non-Classical as well as Classical -- that were stimulated by an unprecedented range of archaeological discoveries, extending from southern Italy and the eastern Mediterranean to Egypt and the Near East, during the second half of the 18th century. The new awareness of the plurality of historical styles prompted the search for consciously new and contemporary forms of expression. This concept of modernity set Neo-classicism apart from past revivals of antiquity, to which it was, nevertheless, closely related. Almost paradoxically, the quest for a timeless mode of expression (the 'true style', as it was then called) involved strongly divergent approaches towards design that were strikingly focused on the Greco-Roman debate. On the one hand, there was a commitment to a radical severity of expression, associated with the Platonic Ideal, as well as to such criteria as the functional and the primitive, which were particularly identified with early Greek art and architecture. On the other hand, there were highly innovative exercises in eclecticism, inspired by late Imperial Rome, as well as subsequent periods of stylistic experiment with Mannerism and the Italian Baroque. [www.groverreference.com/TDA/Samples/Neo.htm]

Background:

The French Revolution began in 1789, when citizens stormed the Bastille prison in Paris. Within a few years, France had adopted and overthrown several constitutions and executed its former king. It found itself at war with most of the Continent and endured horrible violence at home during the Reign of Terror. Finally, in 1799, the successful young general Napoleon Bonaparte seized control and, in 1804, proclaimed himself emperor. Though he made important administrative reforms, he was preoccupied by constant warfare and his heroic but failed attempt to unite all of Europe by conquest. After being defeated at Waterloo in 1815, Napoleon was exiled and the Bourbon monarchy was restored in the person of Louis XVIII.

With the revolution, French painting resumed its moral and political purpose and embraced the style known as neoclassicism. Even before 1789, popular taste had begun to turn away from the disarming, lighthearted subjects of rococo; as revolution neared, artists increasingly sought noble themes of public virtue and personal sacrifice from the history of ancient Greece or Rome. They painted with restraint and discipline, using the austere clarity of the neoclassical style to stamp their subjects with certitude and moral truth.

Neoclassicism triumphed -- and became inseparably linked to the revolution -- in the work of Jacques-Louis David, a painter who also played an active role in politics. As virtual artistic dictator, he served the propaganda programs first of radical revolutionary factions and later of Napoleon. As a young man David had worked in the delicate style of his teacher François Boucher, but in Italy he was influenced by ancient sculpture and by the seventeenth-century artists Caravaggio and Poussin, adopting their strong contrasts of color, clear tones, and firm contours. David gave his heroic figures sculptural mass and arranged them friezelike in emphatic compositions that were meant to inspire his fellow citizens to noble action.

Among the many artists who studied in David's large studio was Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. Unlike his teacher, Ingres did not involve himself in politics and spent most of his youth in Italy, returning to France only after the restoration of the monarchy. During his long life, he came to be regarded as the high priest of neoclassicism, pursuing its perfection after younger artists had become enthralled with romanticism. A superb draftsman, Ingres insisted on the importance of line though he nevertheless was a brilliant master of color. A mathematical precision pushes his work toward formal abstraction despite the meticulous realism of its surfaces. [http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/gg56/gg56-over1.html]

Other resources:

<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/david/>

<http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/n/neoclassicism.html>

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Neo-classicism

Term coined in the 1880s to denote the last stage of the classical tradition in architecture, sculpture, painting and the decorative arts. Neo-classicism was the successor to Rococo in the second half of the 18th century and was itself superseded by various historicist styles in the first half of the 19th century. It formed an integral part of the Enlightenment in its radical questioning of received notions of human endeavour. It was also deeply involved with the emergence of new historical attitudes towards the past—non-Classical as well as Classical—that were stimulated by an unprecedented range of archaeological discoveries, extending from southern Italy and the eastern Mediterranean to Egypt and the Near East, during the second half of the 18th century. The new awareness of the plurality of historical styles prompted the search for consciously new and contemporary forms of expression. This concept of modernity set Neo-classicism apart from past revivals of antiquity, to which it was, nevertheless, closely related. Almost paradoxically, the quest for a timeless mode of expression (the 'true style', as it was then called) involved strongly divergent approaches towards design that were strikingly focused on the Greco-Roman debate. On the one hand, there was a

commitment to a radical severity of expression, associated with the Platonic Ideal, as well as to such criteria as the functional and the primitive, which were particularly identified with early Greek art and architecture. On the other hand, there were highly innovative exercises in eclecticism, inspired by late Imperial Rome, as well as subsequent periods of stylistic experiment with Mannerism and the Italian Baroque.

However rationally dictated, these fresh interpretations of the Classical evoked powerful emotional responses to the past that require Neo-classicism to be understood within the broader movement of Romanticism, rather than as its opposite. Arguably, the most original phase of Neo-classicism anticipated the political revolution in France with which it is inevitably associated, providing visible expressions of ideology in buildings and images. By the early 19th century an increasing concern with archaeological fidelity, together with the daunting range of newly explored cultures and alternative styles (including the medieval, Gothic and Oriental), began to inhibit imaginative experiment and originality of vision within the Classical tradition for all but a few outstanding artists and designers. Moreover, what had originated as a style inspired, in part, by principles of republicanism was transformed under Napoleon I into a fashionable and international language of imperial opulence

1. Archaeology and the rise of historicism.

From the mid-18th century antiquity could no longer be regarded as finite, either in time or place. The remarkable burst of archaeological activity during the latter half of the 18th century served to encourage a growing awareness of historical change and of the almost limitless fund of inspiration offered by the diverse cultures that comprised antiquity. In this pluralistic revaluation of the past, aesthetics swiftly emerged as a necessary discipline to assess the relative values of art. The striking discoveries in Roman domestic life, gradually uncovered at Herculaneum (from 1738; see [Herculaneum, §VI](#)) and Pompeii (from 1748; see [Pompeii, §VI](#)), were disseminated through the plates of the official publication *Le antichità di Ercolano esposte* (1755–92). The full impact of these finds on the visual arts was slow to take effect, but literal transpositions from engravings of wall paintings can already be seen in such modish works as Joseph-Marie Vien's *Cupid Seller*, exhibited at the 1763 Salon (Fontainebleau, Château; see Vien, Joseph-Marie, fig. 1). Among the objects uncovered were bronze tripods, such as that found in the Temple of Isis, Pompeii, in the early 1760s; these spawned a type of furniture derived from what became known as the *Athénienne* (after the object's appearance in Vien's *Virtuous Athenian Girl*, 1763; Strasbourg, Mus. B.-A.; for further discussion see [Pompeian revival](#)).

Rome, which by the mid-century had become the main focus of the [Grand tour](#), brought together not only influential patrons and collectors (notably the *milordi inglesi*) but also the most progressive young artists and designers in Europe. The record of decisive encounters with the cultural palimpsest of Rome before 1800 constitutes a roll-call of such influential figures in the arts as Robert Adam, James Adam, Antonio Canova, Jacques-Louis David, John Flaxman, Jacques Gondoin, Joshua Reynolds, Charles Percier, Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, James Stuart and Bertel Thorvaldsen. In the city that Wilhelm Tischbein described as 'the true centre of the arts', a major reassessment of antiquity and the achievements of later flowerings of classicism, such as the Renaissance and the Baroque, began to inspire fresh visionary and poetic compositions, which replaced the traditional, laborious studies of antique exemplars. The distinction of the period between 'imitation' and 'copying'—that is, following the creative spirit rather than the letter of antiquity—was vividly demonstrated in the works and influence of Giovanni Battista Piranesi, in his lifelong crusade to improve contemporary design through a formidable output of engraved images. At the forefront of this shift from the interpretative towards the speculative and experimental was a significant group of students at the Académie de France in Rome during the 1740s and early 1750s. It included Charles-Michel-Ange Challe, Charles-Louis Clérissseau, Charles de Wailly, Pierre-Martin Dumont, Jean-Laurent Legeay, Louis-Joseph Le Lorrain, Ennemond-Alexandre Petitot and Marie-Joseph Peyre. Their innovative ideas, which derived from a radical reappraisal of antique forms and structures and were mainly developed in temporary festival structures, were subsequently to have a far-reaching influence after the artists had dispersed to work throughout Europe, as far as Russia.

Although Rome continued to be a centre for cultural interchange throughout the most productive phases of Neo-classicism, many challenging new discoveries were being made elsewhere in an increasing number and range of archaeological expeditions throughout the Mediterranean and the Near East. While recognition of the reforming potential of Greek antiquity can be traced back to Jean-Louis de Cordemoy earlier in the century, a fresh interest was awakened by the radical questioning of Roman design in favour of Greece in Marc-Antoine Laugier's *Essai sur l'architecture* (Paris, 1753). Like Rousseau's quest for fundamentals in human nature and social conduct, the cult of the Primitive, signified by the rustic 'Vitruvian hut' of rough-hewn trees that was illustrated in Laugier's frontispiece, emphasized the functional and almost ethical principles of truthful construction. Similar ideas were then being advocated independently in Venice through the Socratic teachings of Carlo Lodoli. Far more significant and persuasive, however, was the highly emotive advocacy of Greek art as a cultural phenomenon by [Johann Joachim Winckelmann](#), initiated through his manifesto *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (Dresden, 1755; Eng. trans., London, 1765), followed by his equally influential *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (Dresden, 1764). His poetic and highly persuasive writing, evoking the nobility of Hellenic life and achievements, was largely based on a deep knowledge of Classical authors and Roman copies of Greek original works of art. In lyrical passages of empathetic analysis, he created an awareness of Greek art and civilization on a par with Piranesi's potent imagery of Rome (see also [Greek revival, §2](#)). Understandably, his ideas had a less immediate influence on architecture, which features less in his writings than sculpture or painting. This is perhaps reflected in the brittle decorative pastiches of Greek temples that Carlo Marchionni added during the early 1760s to the villa (now Villa Torlonia) of Winckelmann's patron, Cardinal Alessandro Albani, in Rome (see [Rome, §V, 27](#)). Within the main *salone* of the villa, Anton Raphael Mengs's acclaimed ceiling painting *Parnassus with Apollo and the Muses* (1760–61; *in situ*) provided a pictorial equivalent that owed far more to Raphael than to Greek antiquity, despite its featuring of a baseless Doric column and its relief-like composition. The first true Greek Revival building was, in fact, James Stuart's Doric temple (1758) in the park at Hagley Hall, Hereford & Worcs (see [Greek revival, §1](#)). Also in 1758, Julien-David Le Roy's publication in Paris of the first reliable illustrations of the principal monuments in Athens, *Les Ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grèce*, anticipated Stuart's and Nicholas Revett's more carefully considered *Antiquities of Athens* (3 vols, London, 1762–95; see [Greek revival, fig. 1](#)). Following the 'discovery' (c. 1746) of the gaunt Doric temples at Paestum in southern Italy, a sequence of publications, which ironically culminated in sublime etchings (*Differentes vues ... de Pesto*, 1778) by Piranesi, helped, by the end of the century, to transform the Greek Revival in architecture from an archaeological interest into an emotional understanding.

Predictably, the extravagant claims advanced for Greek architecture and design provoked a fierce polemical battle, led, on the Roman side, by Piranesi with his magisterial survey *Le antichità romane* (Rome, 1756), followed during the 1760s by his series of ambitious archaeological folios, with themes ranging from Rome's achievements in architectural composition and ornament to Roman engineering and urban planning. In certain of these works Piranesi championed the Etruscans as the sole mentors of Rome's creative genius; in fact, Etruscanology had already begun to develop as an important field of enquiry in its own right, with the establishment of the Accademia Etrusca at Cortona in 1726 and the Museo Etrusco Guarnacci at Volterra in 1727. Demonstrations of Roman achievement further afield appeared in Robert Wood's folios on *The Ruins of Palmyra* (London, 1753) and *The Ruins of Baalbec* (London, 1757), as well as in Robert Adam's *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia* (London, 1764). Other expeditions and books, such as James Dawkins's and Richard Chandler's *Ionian Antiquities* (London, 1769; additions 1797), were subsequently sponsored by the [society of Dilettanti](#), an extremely influential dining club of leading British patrons and *cognoscenti*.

2. The search for a contemporary style.

Winckelmann's assertion in 1755 that 'there is only one way for the moderns to become great and, perhaps, unequalled: by imitating the Ancients' encapsulated Neo-classicism's concern with fostering contemporary art and values. During the 1750s the new theories and practice in art and design were impelled by a deliberate aim to replace what was seen as the frivolity and superficiality of the Rococo by an art with greater seriousness and moral commitment. In their different ways, theorists and teachers such as Winckelmann, Joshua Reynolds and Francesco Milizia emphasized the reforming power of antiquity, while Denis Diderot's regular critiques of the annual Salons in Paris praised the moral values of paintings by Jean-Baptiste Greuze at the expense of those by François Boucher. By the mid-1750s the Scottish artist Gavin Hamilton was pioneering in Rome a new type of history painting that featured morally uplifting themes from antiquity; this was perfected by Jacques-Louis David with such heroic exhibition pieces as *Andromache Mourning Hector* (exh. Salon 1783; Paris, Ecole N. Sup. B.-A., on dep. Paris, Louvre), *Oath of the Horatii* (exh. Salon 1785; Paris, Louvre; see David, Jacques-Louis, fig. 1) and the *Lictors Bringing Brutus the Bodies of his Sons* (1789; Paris, Louvre; see fig. 1); these drew, thematically as well as formally, on authentic sources and came close to paralleling David's active involvement with Revolutionary politics. Likewise, the *Death of Marat* (1793; Brussels, Mus. A. Anc.; see France, fig. 25) provided a new kind of political icon in the manner of a secular Pietà, complementing David's designs for Revolutionary festivals of Liberty and of the Supreme Being, which similarly exploited the heritage of Classical symbolism. During the same period, the semicircular plans and tiered seating of Greek theatres and Roman *curiae* were being adapted for political assemblies, passing later into building patterns for legislative halls, such as Benjamin Henry Latrobe's House of Representatives (1803–7; destr. 1812–15) for the US Capitol in Washington, DC.

Contemporary sculpture, following Winckelmann's precepts of 'noble simplicity and calm grandeur', likewise showed a new seriousness of purpose, as well as formal restraint. In the work of Canova, Neo-classicism's greatest sculptor, complex energies and powerful emotions were confined within relief-like compositions and governed by geometrical settings, as, for example, in works as varied as *Hercules and Lichas* (1795–1815; Rome, G.N.A. Mod.) and the funerary monument to *Clement XIV* (1783–7; Rome, SS Apostoli; see fig. 2). Among the most eloquent examples of the uses of funerary geometry is Canova's poignant tomb of *Maria Christina of Austria* (1798–1805; Vienna, Augustinerkirche; see Canova, Antonio, fig. 3), where a stark pyramid frames a dramatic tableau of personifications, including Death, Mourning, Piety and Beneficence. Likewise, Jean-Antoine Houdon, Joseph Nollekens and Johann Gottfried Schadow attempted in their portrait sculpture to reconcile the incidences of likeness and psychological character within the timeless properties of the Ideal, as derived from ancient prototypes. In Houdon's words, 'one of the finest attributes of the difficult art of sculpture is truthfully to preserve the form and render the image of men who have achieved glory or good for their country'. The same dilemma between the universal and the particular, recognized by Reynolds in his *Discourses on Art* (London, 1769–90), was one that he attempted to resolve in his portraits by the use of such Classical prototypes as the *Apollo Behedere* (Rome, Vatican, Mus. Pio-Clementino) for *Commodore Keppel* (c. 1753–4; London, N. Mar. Mus.; see Reynolds, Joshua, fig. 1). The tension between the Ideal and the three-dimensional conventions of pictorial composition were, however, avoided in the stark simplicity of such line engravings as Flaxman's illustrations to the Homeric epics (published 1793 and 1795) and Dante (published 1807), effectively demonstrating Winckelmann's 'noble simplicity' or, as William Blake put it in another context, 'the wiry line of rectitude'.

In the applied and decorative arts, theorists such as Charles-Nicolas Cochin *le fils* similarly advocated an emphasis on austerity and geometric restraint; their sharp reaction against the curvilinear and sensuous forms of such Rococo designers as Germain Boffrand and Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier was expressed in Cochin's celebrated article *Supplication aux orfèvres, ciseleurs, sculpteurs en bois pour les appartements et autres*, published in *Mercure de France* (Dec 1754). In France this was to launch a fashion for the so-called [Goût grec](#), as pioneered by Le Lorrain's furnished interiors (1756–8; now Chantilly, Mus. Condé) for the Parisian financier Ange-Laurent de La Live de Jully.

The new style was taken to a greater pitch of refinement by such outstanding *menuisiers* and *ébénistes* of the Louis XVI era as Georges Jacob (ii) and Jean-Henri Riesener, and its influence spread through the production of the copious plates of Jean-François de Neufforge's *Recueil élémentaire d'architecture* (10 vols, Paris, 1757–68 and 1772–80), in which the author claimed to imitate 'the masculine, simple, and majestic manner of the ancient architects of Greece and of the best modern architects'. These reactions to the *goût pompadour* also display a considerable element of revival of the arts of the Grand Siècle of Louis XIV, as found in Angès-Jacques Gabriel's masterpiece of geometric harmony and restraint, the Petit Trianon (1762–8) at Versailles (see Versailles, fig. 4).

In England the [Palladianism](#) of the early 18th century, led by William Kent, Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington and 4th Earl of Cork, and Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester, had anticipated continental Neo-classicism by several decades, in creating architecture and interiors from direct archaeological sources. Kent had been among the first designers in Europe to reintroduce the antique style of grotesque painting in such works as the Presence Chamber (1724) in Kensington Palace, London, inspired by Raphael's decorations in the Vatican loggias and the Villa Madama, Rome (see Raphael, fig. 9). However, a major new phase of experiments, involving radical and imaginative styles of design *all'antica*, took place between 1760 and 1780. These included James Stuart's Painted Room (from 1759) in Spencer House, London (see fig. 3), the first convincingly Neo-classical interior with integrated furnishings in Europe. This scheme, combining Greek and Roman decorative and architectural sources within a framework of painted Raphaellesque grotesques, contained a suite of carved and gilt seat furniture. Particularly notable were four sofas incorporating winged lions and a pair of ormolu tripod candelabra—perfume burners supported by stands richly decorated in keeping with the surrounding walls. Equally remarkable was the first Pompeian interior, complete with classicizing Klismos chairs, in the gallery at Packington Hall, Warwicks (1785–8), designed by the Adams' assistant Joseph Bonomi in collaboration with the owner, Heneage Finch, 4th Earl of Aylesford (for illustration see [Pompeian revival](#)). With its dominant colour scheme of deep reds and lustrous blacks, shared in common by the walls, ceilings, hangings and upholstery, this interior preceded by many years the main Pompeian Revival schemes on the Continent.

Under Neo-classicism, the search for a new or 'true style'—one that would be peculiar to the late 18th century and responsive to fresh social needs—took a variety of forms. In architectural design, eclectic solutions included Jacques-Germain Soufflot's Ste Geneviève (begun 1755; now the Panthéon), Paris (see Soufflot, Jacques-Germain, fig. 3), whose design combined Greek and Roman forms with Gothic principles of vaulting, while at the same time observing Laugier's advocacy of columnar functionalism (see also [Rationalism \(i\)](#)). Piranesi's modest reconstructed church of S Maria del Priorato (1754–5; Rome; see Piranesi, Giovanni Battista, fig. 2) incorporates motifs drawn from Etruscan, late Imperial Roman and Mannerist sources in accordance with the bold philosophy of design advocated in his treatise *Parere su l'architettura* (Rome, 1765), which defended an extreme eclecticism. This broadly based system of composition found its most accomplished and original application in the architecture and furniture designs of Piranesi's associate Robert Adam. The consummate mastery with which Adam exploited an awkward series of given spaces and changes of level at Syon House (1760–69), London, is displayed in the Anteroom, where rich colours and textures are combined with Greek and Roman decorative sources to create an effect of patrician opulence. The highly self-conscious and consumer-led Adam Style (defended and illustrated in *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, i–ii (London, 1773–9)), reached its most experimental form in a series of Etruscan rooms. In the most complete surviving example, the Etruscan Dressing-room (c. 1775–6; for illustration see [Etruscan style](#)) at

Osterley Park, London, the unifying system of ornament combined ingredients from Pompeian wall decoration with motifs and colours from antique vase paintings, then believed to be Etruscan.

Stylistic solutions involving extremes in geometric simplification and surface austerity were predictably limited to paper projects, such as Friedrich Gilly's design for a Schauspielhaus in Berlin (pen and ink with wash, c. 1798; ex-Tech. Hochsch., Berlin, 1945); Etienne-Louis Boullée's design for a gigantic spherical cenotaph to Isaac Newton (pen and ink with wash, 1784; Paris, Bib. N.; for illustration see [Boullée, etienne-louis](#)); and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's engravings of visionary designs for the Saline de Chaux at Arc-et-Senans, near Besançon, later published in his *L'Architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des moeurs et de la législation* (vol. i, Paris, 1804). Works of a more practicable nature that were actually executed included such public buildings as Jacques Gondoin's anatomy lecture theatre (1780; see fig. 4) at the Ecole de Chirurgie (now Faculté de Médecine), Paris, its interior displaying a remarkable fusion of the Pantheon in Rome and a Greek theatre.

Thomas Jefferson and Clérisseau had recourse to a celebrated Roman exemplar, the Maison Carrée, Nîmes (see Nîmes, fig. 2) for the basic form, albeit considerably enlarged, of the State Capitol (1785–99), Richmond, VA (see United states of america, fig. 5). Other striking solutions included Ledoux's ingenious series of toll-houses or *barrières* (1785–9) erected around Paris, and Leo von Klenze's Walhalla (1830–42) near Regensburg, which consisted of a peripteral Doric temple sited on the crest of a hill and containing busts of celebrated Germans (for an illustration of the interior see Greek revival, fig. 3). In all these works, classic restraint was to be seen as expressive of civic and national virtues.

3. Education and society.

In the applied arts the new mass-production processes of the early years of the Industrial Revolution, often allied to the use of new synthetic materials, were swiftly adapted to the simplified forms and abstracted ornaments characteristic of astringent Neo-classical design. Britain came to fulfil a pioneering role with the foundation in 1754 of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, the first organization established to promote industrial design. Its founder-members included the potter Josiah Wedgwood, who in his new factory, the Etruria works, opened in 1769 near Burslem, Staffs, exploited the vase forms, colours and decorative vocabulary of Pierre François Hugues d'Hancarville's *Collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble Wm Hamilton* (4 vols, Naples, 1766–76). Wedgwood's new materials, also inspired by the ancient world, were black basalts imitating Etruscan bronzes, and jasperware inspired by Roman cameo glass (for illustration see [Wedgwood](#)). A comparable entrepreneurial spirit was shown by Matthew Boulton, a fellow member of the Royal Society of Arts. At his Soho factory in Birmingham Boulton produced abstracted classicizing forms in a wide range of ornamental metalwork, from ormolu, Sheffield plate and silver (see England, fig. 79) to cast-iron architectural fittings. Both men also belonged to the Lunar Society, an influential discussion group of industrialists, scientists and avant-garde designers in the English Midlands, who met on evenings when they could travel by moonlight. This pioneering concern with the control of design and manufacture in industry bore fruit internationally early in the next century, through such outstanding architects as Schinkel, who in 1819 helped found the influential Technische Deputation in Prussia.

The role of the Royal Society of Arts highlights the central importance given to education in the theoretical and practical concerns of Neo-classicism. The very nature of the Enlightenment and the objective of Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* (Paris, 1751–72) was to promote enquiry into the broadest range of activities; the arts were seen to have an important responsibility in spreading knowledge, as well as serving the interests of an ever-widening public. Consequently numerous art academies were established during the later 18th century to improve the intellectual training of artists and architects (see [Academy](#), §4). Moreover, the subject-matter of art and the range of specialized building types extended accordingly to meet the needs of a wider social clientele. Accompanying this concern with education was the rise of professional organizations for artists and architects (often providing qualifications and diplomas) to enhance their social status, as exemplified in Reynolds's programme for the Royal Academy (established 1768) in London. Within this institution, the status of women artists was recognized with the inclusion of Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser among the 40 founder-academicians, and the social significance of the institution was signalled by the Academy's impressive headquarters in Sir William Chambers's Somerset House (from 1776; moved to Burlington House by 1869), London.

In response to the didactic role of art as a moral and intellectual force in society, public museums and art galleries also began to be established, involving educationally motivated programmes of display and housed in some of the earliest custom-built structures. Such private galleries as the Uffizi in Florence and the Antiquarium at the Residenz in Munich (see Munich, fig. 5) had been in existence since the Renaissance, while cabinets of curiosities and *Kunstkammern* (see [Kunstzimmer](#)) had been developed in the 17th century. In 1753 the British government founded the British Museum in London from the collection of Sir Hans Sloane, while in Paris the Musée Central des Arts in the Palais du Louvre was designated a public museum in 1792. In the last quarter of the 18th century, in the reigns of Clement XIV (reg 1769–75) and Pius VI (reg 1775–1800), the Vatican's unrivalled collection of antiquities was arranged within a sequence of sophisticated displays, and in the early 19th century several important new museums and galleries were constructed in Europe (see [Museum](#), §§I and II; see also [France](#), §XIV; [Germany](#), §XIV; [Italy](#), §XIV; and [England](#), §XIV).

The attention paid to the developing social commitments of artists, architects and designers, as well as new areas of patronage and widening audiences, posed new problems over the definition of 'art'. Creating forms of universal significance with eternal validity related uneasily at times to the search for fresh modes of contemporary expression and demands for new subject-matter. This dilemma is vividly illustrated by such works as Benjamin West's *Death of General Wolfe* (1770; Ottawa, N.G.; see West, benjamin, fig. 1), where the event is controversially depicted in modern dress despite the use of historical formulae. Particularly challenging was Jean-Baptiste Pigalle's *Voltaire Nude* (1770–76; Paris, Inst. France), an uncompromising marble statue of the elderly writer reminiscent of the antique ('Borghese') *Dying Seneca* (Paris, Louvre). A reevaluation of Nature and its associated phenomena, in which the emotions were seen to play an increasingly dominant role, is expressed in such paintings as Joseph Wright of Derby's *Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (1768; London, N.G.; for illustration see [Enlightenment, the](#)) portraying human reactions of excitement and apprehension to scientific enquiry. In George Stubbs's *Horse Devoured by a Lion* (exh. ?1763; London, Tate), the wild character of the enveloping landscape amplifies an epic subject, later to be a favourite theme of such 19th-century Romantic artists as Géricault.

4. Nature and classicism.

The conception of landscape as Nature perfected by mankind's intervention, characteristic of art and landscape design in the previous 200 years, was now replaced by one in which sentiment and idealized forms demanded a deeper act of involvement by the spectator. This is reflected in works as diverse as the imaginary landscape paintings of Richard Wilson or Joseph Anton Koch and such portraits as Gainsborough's *Mrs Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (1785; Washington, DC, N.G.A.) or Wilhelm Tischbein's *Goethe in the Roman Campagna* (1787; Frankfurt am Main, Städel. Kstinst. & Städt. Gal.; for illustration see [Goethe, johann wolfgang von](#)). Ideas first explored in the early 18th century by Alexander Pope and Kent attained new levels of significance in such poetic landscape gardens as Stourhead, Wilts, developed from 1743 by its owner, Henry Hoare the younger (for illustration see [Stourhead](#)), and [Ermenonville](#), near Senlis, created between 1766 and 1776 by Louis-René de Girardin and to be, appropriately, a temporary resting-place for Jean-Jacques Rousseau's remains in a tomb designed by the ruin painter Hubert Robert. In this type of garden a calculated sequence of symbolic structures—intact or ruined classical temples, rough-hewn grottoes and rustic structures—was carefully sited to arouse a variety of responses from the perambulating visitor (a person of [Sensibilité](#)), as characterized by Girardin's *Promenade ou*

itinéraire des jardins d'Ermenonville (1788). Marie-Antoinette's severely classical dairy at Rambouillet, designed by Hubert Robert and constructed in 1785–8 by Jacques-Jean Thévénin (fl 1770–90), opens into a rocky grotto framing a marble statue of the nymph Amalthea and provided a setting for the Queen and her retinue to act out pastoral pursuits in harmony with Arcadian Nature (see [Dairy](#)).

Edmund Burke's essay *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* appeared in 1756 during the long evolution of literary-inspired gardening in Britain and marked a new critical stage in its analysis of the psychological roots of aesthetic perception (see [Sublime, the](#)). This discussion culminated in the Picturesque debate of the 1790s led by Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price, which involved a conflict between the regular, geometric forms of the Classical ideal and the consciously asymmetrical, pictorial forms associated with the emerging [Gothic revival](#) (for illustration see [Picturesque](#)). Architectural solutions to this dilemma, whereby buildings were carefully integrated with the surrounding landscape, included Knight's own house Downton Castle (1772–8), Hereford & Worcs, with its medieval castellar exterior and a classical dining rotunda among the principal rooms within. Robert Adam's exceptional sequence of Scottish castles of the 1780s and 1790s, such as Culzean Castle (1777–92), Strathclyde, and Seton Castle (1789–91), Lothian, while retaining an uncompromising classical symmetry and simplicity of volume, was effectively sited to bring out the full scenic potential through oblique views and dramatic settings. Similarly, the pioneering villa (c. 1802) in the Italianate style at Cronkhill, Salop, by John Nash (see Nash, John, fig. 1) involved a scenic composition that deployed classical forms in a skilfully asymmetrical plan (for further discussion of gardens see [Garden, §VIII, 4\(ii\) and \(iv\)](#)).

By the early 19th century the newly awakened forces of the emotional and pictorial in art were beginning to undermine the dominance of certain aesthetic and cultural principles associated with the classical tradition over past centuries. Moreover, an increasing search for archaeological truth served to impair imaginative processes and to weaken the character of the Neo-classical movement to a point where, according to Honour, it was 'drained of the force of conviction' and replaced by an international style of great decorative finesse and fashionable appeal.

5. The late phase.

The adoption of Neo-classicism as an official style by the Jacobins of the French Revolution (see France, fig. 47), accompanied by secular cults of Republican imagery, was succeeded during the Napoleonic age by the spread throughout Europe, by means of Bonapartist regimes, of a propagandist language of absolutism. Greek austerity was exchanged for the florid rhetoric of Imperial Roman art, extending from the creation of large urban-planning projects and public monuments down to schemes of interior decoration and furnishing (see [Directoire style](#) and [Consulate style](#)). At its highest level, the applied arts of the First Empire (1804–15) involved such outstanding designers as Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, whose *Recueil de décorations intérieures comprenant tout ce qui a rapport à l'ameublement* (Paris, 1801) served as a manifesto for this politically motivated classicism. Defining the official Napoleonic style, works ranged from the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel (1806–7), Paris, with its polychromatic programme of imperial imagery, to interiors for the châteaux of Saint-Cloud and Malmaison (for illustration see [Fontaine, pierre-françois-léonard](#)) and for the Palais des Tuileries in Paris, and such ceremonial settings as that depicted by David in the *Coronation of Napoleon in Notre-Dame* (1805–7; Paris, Louvre; version Versailles, Château). With the spread of the empire and its needs for an appropriate political image, the new classicism was developed by able practitioners: in Italy, for example, by such architects as Luigi Cagnola, Giovanni Antonio Selva and Giuseppe Valadier, and such designers as Antonio Basoli (1774–1843), Luigi Canonica and Pelagio Palagi. Meanwhile, the sculptural identity of Napoleon and his family was provided by Canova, who produced several monumental images between 1803 and 1809, including a bronze equestrian statue of the Emperor (later completed as *Charles III of Naples and Spain*, 1807–19; Naples, Piazza Plebiscito), a colossal standing nude figure depicting *Napoleon as Mars the Pacifier* (marble, 1803–6; London, Apsley House; bronze replica, 1809; Milan, Brera) and *Paolina Borghese Bonaparte as Venus Victorious* (marble, 1804–8; Rome, Gal. Borghese), which is strangely reminiscent of Etruscan burial effigies while being the best-known, if unconventional, portrait of Napoleon's sister. Like the Roman Empire, its principal source of inspiration, the Napoleonic era converted for its use the decorative language of invaded cultures, notably that of ancient Egypt following the North African campaign in 1798. The resulting researches made by Vivant Denon, the future director of the Musée Napoléon (formerly the Musée Central des Arts), were published in the form of two influential source-books, *Voyage dans la basse et la haute Egypte pendant les campagnes du général Bonaparte* (2 vols, Paris, 1802) and *Description de l'Egypte* (24 vols, Paris, 1809–22), and often converted into designs for the imperial court. Examples of this new taste in the decorative arts are Martin-Guillaume Biennais's coin-cabinet (c. 1800–14; New York, Met.) based on the pylon at Qus (Apollinopolis Parva) in Upper Egypt and a lavish Egyptian service in Sèvres porcelain (1809–12; London, Apsley House; for further discussion see [Egyptian revival](#) and [Empire style](#)).

In Britain the contemporary [Regency style](#), despite strong affinities in its formal language and decorative values to the French Empire style, was largely saved from a similar stereotyped character by the originality of a number of artists, architects and designers working within the classical tradition. Soane's exceptional and complex system of interlocking interiors for the Bank of England (1788–1833), London, with an ingenious use of toplighting and daring abstractions of classical structure and ornament, made it the most original public building of late Neo-classicism anywhere in Europe (see [Soane, John, §2](#)). Flaxman, apart from various funerary monuments (e.g. *Lord Nelson*, 1808–18; London, St Paul's Cathedral) and book illustrations to the Homeric epics and the works of Dante (see §2 above), was a highly versatile designer in the applied arts. In addition to his early work for Wedgwood (e.g. the jasperware vase with the *Apotheosis of Homer*, 1786; London, BM), he served the royal goldsmiths Rundell, Bridge & Rundell (see [England, §IX, 1\(v\)](#)). Thomas Hope, a discerning patron of such artists as Canova and Flaxman, exerted a considerable influence as a designer himself, transforming the interior of his own house (1799–1801; destr. 1850) in Duchess Street, London, and publishing the designs in his *Household Furniture and Interior Design* (London, 1807; for illustration see [Hope, \(1\)](#)). Inspired by Piranesi and familiar with the contemporary work of Percier, Fontaine and Denon, he created a sequence of highly personal rooms, complete with furniture according to stylistic themes, and incorporating material from Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Indian and Turkish sources (for illustration see [Egyptian revival](#)). In 1818–19 and 1823 he remodelled and extended his country house, The Deepdene (destr. 1967), Surrey, with skilful Picturesque planning, incorporating similar ideas.

In its most original and productive aspects, the period of late Neo-classicism covering the first quarter of the 19th century was a time of considerable achievements in urban design, involving a large number of major public buildings and civic works. Almost in contrast to the art of the Napoleonic age, the later [Greek revival](#)—ideologically associated with both liberal and nationalist movements—became the preferred style for significant monuments. Outstanding among these were buildings and structures in Berlin by Carl Gotthard Langhans and Schinkel, in Edinburgh by Thomas Hamilton and William Henry Playfair, in Philadelphia by Benjamin Latrobe and Pierre-Charles L'Enfant and in St Petersburg by Thomas-Jean de Thomon (e.g. the Stock Exchange, 1805–10; now the Central Naval Museum; see Russia, fig. 11) and Andreyan Zakharov (e.g. the Admiralty Building, 1806–12; for illustration see [Zakharov, andreyan](#)). The most significant innovations in planning as such, however, were in England, where between 1754 and 1775 John Wood I and John Wood II pioneered highly original and flexible housing patterns in Bath, Avon, in response to the natural contours of the site (e.g. the King's Circus, 1754–c. 1766, and the Royal Crescent, 1767–c. 1775; see Bath (i), fig. 3). Many of these ideas were exploited in London from 1813 on a metropolitan scale by John Nash (i), with the active encouragement of the Prince Regent

(later George IV, *reg* 1820–30) in the innovative scheme for Regent's Park with its related royal processional route (*see* Nash, John, fig. 2; *see also* London, fig. 7). Nash's ingenious blend of 'natural' landscape in the current Picturesque mode, placed within the heart of a monumental scheme of formal classical terraces and individual villas in the parkland, together with a satellite village and water-borne services by canal, was to provide key concepts for the [Garden city](#) movement 100 years later.

The fact that Nash's design for Regent's Park can be interpreted as either Neo-classical or Romantic (or even considered within the context of the hybrid term [Romantic classicism](#)) indicates the degree of ambiguity of works of art and design within the classical tradition in the early 19th century. As Honour has pointed out (p. 186–7), early Romantic artists such as Anne-Louis Girodet had trained in David's studio and had emerged to develop a style that exploited rhapsodic and supernatural effects and themes found in contemporary nationalist literature in northern Europe (e.g. Girodet's *Ossian and the French Generals*, 1800–02; Malmaison, Château N.; *see* Girodet, Anne-Louis, fig. 2). Meanwhile, [les Primitifs](#)—artists who had taken the cult of Primitivism and simplicity to puritan extremes—left few works of any significance but disturbed the careful balance and ambiguity that had made the Neo-classical style so effective a force in its early development. Even the conventional polarity so often devised between Ingres, the ostensibly archetypal Neo-classicist, and Delacroix, the Romantic, appears more complex when the subject-matter and strong degree of sentiment are examined, even in Ingres's most classicizing works.

Like the social forces that condition their origins, maturation and development, stylistic movements have a lifespan that determines their relevance and effectiveness as well as, ultimately, their replacement by fresh intellectual climates. Neo-classicism, while still traced as an identifiable mode of classicism well into the 19th century in, for example, Alexander Thomson's churches in Glasgow or Thomas Couture's Salon paintings and James Pradier's sculptures in France, had ceased to be a commanding idea. In the 20th century it reappeared, most significantly in architecture, as an influence on designers with strong classical sympathies as sharply contrasting as Mies van der Rohe and Albert Speer, and it has made a questionable 'come-back' in certain aspects of the Post-modern movement (*see* [Post-modernism](#), §1).

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- JOHN WILTON-ELY

Alexander Pope, Essay on Man

THE DESIGN

HAVING proposed to write some pieces on human life and manners, such as (to use my lord Bacon's expression) *came home to men's business and bosoms*, I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering Man in the abstract, his nature and his state; since, to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.

The science of human nature is, like all other sciences, reduced to a few clear points: there are not many certain truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind as in that of the body; more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels, the conformations and uses of which will for ever escape our observation. The disputes are all upon these last, and I will venture to say, they have less sharpened the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and have diminished the practice, more than advanced the theory of morality. If I could flatter myself that this Essay has any merit, it is in steering betwixt the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible, and in forming a temperate yet not inconsistent, and a short yet not imperfect, system of ethics.

This I might have done in prose; but I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious; that principles, maxims, or precepts so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards: the other may seem odd, but it is true; I found I could express them more shortly this way than in prose itself; and nothing is more certain, than that much of the force as well as grace of arguments or instruction depends on their conciseness. I was unable to treat this part of my subject more in detail, without becoming dry and tedious; or more poetically, without sacrificing perspicuity to ornament, without wandering from the precision, or breaking the chain of reasoning. If any man can unite all these without any diminution of any of them, I freely confess he will compass a thing above my capacity.

What is now published, is only to be considered as a general map of Man, marking out no more than the greater parts, their extent, their limits, and their connection, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow. Consequently, these Epistles in their progress (if I have health and leisure to make any progress) will be less dry, and more susceptible of poetical ornament. I am here only opening the fountains, and clearing the passage. To deduce the rivers, to follow them in their course, and to observe their effects, may be a task more agreeable.

 EPISTLE I
 OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH
 RESPECT TO THE UNIVERSE

1. AWAKE, my St. John! leave all meaner things
 2. To low ambition, and the pride of kings.
 3. Let us (since life can little more supply
 4. Than just to look about us, and to die)
 5. Expatriate free o'er all this scene of man;
 6. A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
 7. A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous
 shoot;
 8. Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
 9. Together let us beat this ample field,
 10. Try what the open, what the covert yield!
 11. The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
 12. Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;
 13. Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
 14. And catch the manners living as they rise:
 15. Laugh where we must, be candid where we
 can;
 16. But vindicate the ways of God to man.
 17. Say first, of God above, or man below,
 18. What can we reason, but from what we know?
 19. Of man, what see we but his station here,
 20. From which to reason, or to which refer?

21. Thro' worlds unnumber'd tho' the God be
 known,
 22. 'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.
 23. He, who thro' vast immensity can pierce,
 24. See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
 25. Observe how system into system runs,
 26. What other planets circle other suns,
 27. What vary'd being peoples every star,
 28. May tell why heav'n has made us as we are.
 29. But of this frame the bearings and the ties,
 30. The strong connections, nice dependencies,
 31. Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
 32. Look'd thro'? or can a part contain the whole?
 33. Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,
 34. And drawn support, upheld by God, or thee?
 35. Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst thou
 find,
 36. Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?
 37. First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
 38. Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less?
 39. Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
 40. Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade?
 41. Or ask of yonder argent fields above,
 42. Why Jove's Satellites are less than Jove's?
 43. Of systems possible, if 'tis confest

44. That wisdom infinite must form the best,
 45. Where all must full or not coherent be,
 46. And all that rises, rise in due degree;
 47. Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 'tis plain,
 48. There must be, somewhere, such a rank as
 man:
 49. And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
 50. Is only this, if God has plac'd him wrong?
 51. Respecting man whatever wrong we call,
 52. May, must be right, as relative to all.
 53. In human works, tho' labour'd on with pain,
 54. A thousand movements scarce one purpose
 gain;
 55. In God's, one single can its end produce;
 56. Yet serves to second too some other use.
 57. So man, who here seems principal alone,
 58. Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
 59. Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;
 60. 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.
 61. When the proud steed shall know why man
 restrains
 62. His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;
 63. When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
 64. Is now a victim, and now Aegypt's god:
 65. Then shall man's pride and dullness
 comprehend
 66. His actions', passions', being's, use and end;
 67. Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd; and
 why
 68. This hour a slave, the next a deity.
 69. Then say not man's imperfect, heav'n in fault;
 70. Say rather, man's as perfect as he ought:
 71. His knowledge measur'd to his state and place;
 72. His time a moment, and a point his space.
 73. If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
 74. What matter, soon or late, or here or there?
 75. The blest to-day is as completely so,
 76. As who began a thousand years ago.
 77. Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of
 fate,
 78. All but the page prescrib'd, their present state;
 79. From brutes what men, from men what spirits
 know:
 80. Or who could suffer being here below?
 81. The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
 82. Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
 83. Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
 84. And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.
 85. Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n,
 86. That each may fill the circle mark'd by heav'n:
 87. Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
 88. A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
 89. Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
 90. And now a bubble burst, and now a world.
 91. Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions
 soar;
 92. Wait the great teacher death, and God adore.
 93. What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
 94. But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
 95. Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
 96. Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest:
 97. The soul, uneasy and confin'd from home,
 98. Rests and expatiates in a life to come.
 99. Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
100. Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
 101. His soul, proud science never taught to stray
 102. Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
 103. Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n,
 104. Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
 105. Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
 106. Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,
 107. Where slaves once more their native land
 behold,
 108. No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for
 gold.
 109. To Be, contents his natural desire,
 110. He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
 111. But thinks admitted to that equal sky,
 112. His faithful dog shall bear him company.
 113. Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense,
 114. Weigh thy opinion against providence;
 115. Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such,
 116. Say, here he gives too little, there too much:
 117. Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
 118. Yet cry, If man's unhappy, God's unjust;
 119. If man alone ingross not Heav'n's high care,
 120. Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
 121. Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
 122. Re-judge his justice, be the God of God.
 123. In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies;
 124. All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
 125. Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
 126. Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
 127. Aspiring to be gods if angels fell,
 128. Aspiring to be angels men rebel:
 129. And who but wishes to invert the laws
 130. Of order, sins against th' eternal cause.
 131. Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
 132. Earth for whose use? pride answers, "'Tis for
 mine:
 133. For me kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,
 134. Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
 135. Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew
 136. The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
 137. For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
 138. For me, health gushes from a thousand
 springs,
 139. Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
 140. My foot-stool earth, my canopy the skies.'
 141. But errs not nature from this gracious end,
 142. From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
 143. When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests
 sweep
 144. Towns to one grave, whole nations to the
 deep?
 145. 'No ('tis reply'd) the first almighty cause
 146. Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;
 147. Th' exceptions few; some change since all
 began:
 148. And what created perfect? - Why then man?
 149. If the great end be human happiness,
 150. Then nature deviates; and can man do less?
 151. As much that end a constant course requires
 152. Of show'rs and sun-shine, as of man's desires;
 153. As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
 154. As men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise.
 155. If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's
 design,

156. Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?
157. Who knows but he, whose hand the light'ning forms,
158. Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms;
159. Pours fierce ambition in a Caesar's mind,
160. Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?
161. From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs;
162. Account for moral as for nat'ral things:
163. Why charge we heav'n in those, in these acquit?
164. In both, to reason right is to submit.
165. Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,
166. Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
167. That never air or ocean felt the wind,
168. That never passion discompos'd the mind.
169. But all subsists by elemental strife;
170. And passions are the elements of life.
171. The gen'ral order, since the whole began,
172. Is kept in nature, and is kept in man.
173. What would this man? Now upward will he soar,
174. And little less than angel, would be more;
175. Now looking downwards, just as griev'd appears
176. To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
177. Made for his use all creatures if he call,
178. Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all;
179. Nature to these, without profusion, kind,
180. The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd;
181. Each seeming want compensated of course,
182. Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;
183. All in exact proportion to the state;
184. Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
185. Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:
186. Is Heav'n unkind to man, and man alone?
187. Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
188. Be pleas'd with nothing, if not blest with all?
189. The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
190. Is not to act or think beyond mankind;
191. No pow'rs of body, or of soul to share,
192. But what his nature and his state can bear.
193. Why has not man a microscopic eye?
194. For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
195. Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n,
196. T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?
197. Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
198. To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore?
199. Or, quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,
200. Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
201. If nature thunder'd in his op'ning ears,
202. And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
203. How would he wish that heav'n had left him still
204. The whisp'ring zephyr, and the purling rill?
205. Who finds not Providence all good and wise,
206. Alike in what it gives, and what denies?
207. Far as creation's ample range extends,
208. The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends:
209. Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race,
210. From the green myriads in the peopled grass:
211. What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
212. The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:
213. Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
214. And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
215. Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
216. To that which warbles through the vernal wood?
217. The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
218. Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
219. In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
220. From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew:
221. How instinct varies in the grov'ling swine,
222. Compar'd, half reas'ning elephant, with thine!
223. 'Twixt that, and reason, what a nice barrier?
224. For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near!
225. Remembrance and reflection how ally'd;
226. What thin partitions sense from thought divide?
227. And middle natures, how they long to join,
228. Yet never pass th' insuperable line!
229. Without this just gradation, could they be
230. Subjected, these to those, or all to thee?
231. The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone,
232. Is not thy reason all these pow'rs in one?
233. See, thro' this air, this ocean, and this earth,
234. All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
235. Above, how high progressive life may go!
236. Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
237. Vast chain of being! which from God began,
238. Natures aethereal, human, angel, man,
239. Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
240. No glass can reach; from infinite to thee,
241. From thee to nothing. On superior pow'rs
242. Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
243. Or in the full creation leave a void,
244. Where, one step broken, the great scale's
destroy'd:
245. From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,
246. Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain
alike.
247. And, if each system in gradation roll
248. Alike essential to th' amazing whole,
249. The least confusion but in one, not all
250. That system only, but the whole must fall.
251. Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
252. Planets and suns run lawless thro' the sky;
253. Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
254. Being on being wreck'd, and world on world;
255. Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre
nod,
256. And nature tremble to the throne of God.
257. All this dread order break- for whom? for thee?
258. Vile worm!- oh madness! pride! impiety!
259. What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
260. Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head?
261. What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd
262. To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
263. Just as absurd for any part to claim
264. To be another, in this gen'ral frame;
265. Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains
266. The great directing Mind of all ordains.
267. All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
268. Whose body nature is, and God the soul;

269. That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same,
 270. Great in the earth, as in th' aethereal frame,
 271. Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
 272. Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
 273. Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
 274. Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
 275. Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
 276. As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
 277. As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
 278. As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
 279. To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
 280. He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.
 281. Cease then, nor order imperfection name:
 282. Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
 283. Know thy own point: this kind, this due degree
 284. Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.
 285. Submit. In this, or any other sphere,
 286. Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
 287. Safe in the hand of one disposing pow'r,
 288. Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
 289. All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
 290. All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
 291. All discord, harmony not understood;
 292. All partial evil, universal good.
 293. And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
 294. One truth is clear, 'Whatever is, is right.'

EPISTLE II
 OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH
 RESPECT

TO HIMSELF, AS AN INDIVIDUAL

1. Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
 2. The proper study of mankind is man.
 3. Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
 4. A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
 5. With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
 6. With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
 7. He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
 8. In doubt to deem himself a God, or beast;
 9. In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
 10. Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
 11. Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
 12. Whether he thinks too little or too much;
 13. Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;
 14. Still by himself abus'd or disabus'd;
 15. Created half to rise, and half to fall;
 16. Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
 17. Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurld:
 18. The glory, jest, and riddle of the world! ...
 19. Two principles in human nature reign;
 20. Self-love, to urge, and reason, to restrain;
 21. Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call,
 22. Each works its end, to move or govern all:
 23. And to their proper operation still
 24. Ascribe all Good, to their improper, Ill.
 25. Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;

26. Reason's comparing balance rules the whole.
 27. Man, but for that, no action could attend,
 28. And, but for this, were active to no end:
 29. Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar spot,
 30. To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot:
 31. Or, meteor-like, flame lawless thro' the void,
 32. Destroying others, by himself destroy'd.
 33. Most strength the moving principle requires;
 34. Active its task, it prompts, impels, inspires.
 35. Sedate and quiet the comparing lies,
 36. Form'd but to check, delib'rate, and advise.
 37. Self-love, still stronger, as its objects nigh;
 38. Reason's at distance, and in prospect lie:
 39. That sees immediate good by present sense;
 40. Reason, the future and the consequence.
 41. Thicker than arguments, temptations throng,
 42. At best more watchful this, but that more strong.
 43. The action of the stronger to suspend
 44. Reason still use, to reason still attend.
 45. Attention habit and experience gains;
 46. Each strengthens reason, and self-love restrains...

EPISTLE III
 OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN WITH
 RESPECT TO SOCIETY

1. HERE then we rest; 'The universal cause
 2. Acts to one end, but acts by various laws.'
 3. In all the madness of superfluous health,
 4. The trim of pride, the impudence of wealth,
 5. Let this great truth be present night and day;
 6. But most be present, if we preach or pray.
 7. Look round our world; behold the chain of love
 8. Combining all below and all above.
 9. See plastic nature working to this end,
 10. The single atoms each to other tend,
 11. Attract, attracted to, the next in place
 12. Form'd and impell'd its neighbour to embrace.
 13. See matter next, with various life endu'd,
 14. Press to one centre still, the gen'ral good.
 15. See dying vegetables life sustain,
 16. See life dissolving vegetate again:
 17. All forms that perish other forms supply,
 18. (By turns we catch the vital breath, and die)
 19. Like bubbles on the sea of matter born,
 20. They rise, they break, and to that sea return.
 21. Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole;
 22. One all-extending, all-preserving soul
 23. Connects each being, greatest with the least;
 24. Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast;
 25. All serv'd, all serving: nothing stands alone;
 26. The chain holds on, and where it ends,
 unknown.