Facing independence: American Revolutionary portraits within the context of British identity

Susan Jensen Rawles

College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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FACING INDEPENDENCE
American Revolutionary Portraits within the Context of British Identity

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the American Studies Program
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by
Susan J. Rawles
2005
APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of

The requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Approved, April 2005

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the content of eighteenth-century American and British portraits within the ideologically-expanding context of eighteenth-century British identity. It explores the ways in which Britons and Americans negotiated who they were and, consequently, their claims on society, in the era preceding and including the American Revolution. It does so for three reasons: to advance a more interdisciplinary approach to the study of American portraiture; to motivate further dialogue on the relationship between American and British portraits; and to invoke the potential for American portraits as documentary evidence of social history.

Through historical examination of philosophical influences informing the development of British narratives, Part One considers the contexts within which portraits were produced and the implications of those contexts for the interpretation and presentation of identity. Against this ideological backdrop, Part Two deconstructs the content of selected portraits by John Singleton Copley, Charles Willson Peale, Ralph Earl, William Hogarth, Allan Ramsay, Sir Joshua Reynolds and others in order to come to terms with contemporary perceptions of reality and identity vis-à-vis the dominant narrative.

Broadly speaking, American Revolutionary portraits suggest a standard for identity based on principles drawn from conflicting narratives. This standard intimates an effort to conflate the principal ideals of a dominant neo-Country narrative—those of natural progress, potentiality and virtue, for example—with Liberal and Reformed notions of autonomy, self-determination and industry that denied the doctrines of hierarchy, fixity and birth upon which the traditional ideals were said to depend. The results signaled a gap between British ideology and colonial experience visually manifest as conflicting perceptions of reality. Implicated in these conflicting perceptions was an alternative meaning of life whose suppression may have led, ultimately, to revolution.
PART 1
FACING INDEPENDENCE
INTRODUCTION

IMAG[IN]ING IDENTITY: SELF AS SUBJECT

And is not the fairest sight of all... for him who has eyes to see it, the combination in the same bodily form of beauty of character and looks to match and harmonize with it?

- Plato, ca. 375 BC

Mirror, mirror, On the wall, Who is the fairest One of all?

- Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, 1812

it is impossible... to prevent the Sale of Portraits and Looking Glasses.

- John Oakley, 1761

When the Wicked Queen sat down before her dressing mirror in the Brothers Grimm tale, Snow White, she instigated the negotiation of her own identity through engagement with two interested parties: the maker (the mirror); and the spectator (the voice behind the mirror). The subject beautified herself, the maker captured and framed her image, and the spectator proclaimed her the fairest—or not—of them all.

Each participant was necessarily ‘interested’ in the outcome, for in the Wicked Queen’s identity resided their own relative one; her claim to “fairest of all” denied

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their title to it, as well as any accompanying privileges. Herein resides the power of identity—and its threat to social order.

John Oakley’s allusion to an underlying link between mirrored and painted images suggests the possibilities attendant the imagining of identity in eighteenth-century Britain. For example, the classical narrative of Aristotle and Plato understood the internal and external selves to be complementary facets of a single whole, their common purpose the individual’s advancement towards a predetermined unity—the virtuous ideal. In this analysis, the internal self was understood as the essential self—one’s thoughts, feelings, and beliefs—, the external self the material form on “which these mental states bear.” The matter of the external self was thus understood to be a natural extension of the essence of the internal self and, so, a natural signifier of one’s virtues vis-à-vis the universal ideal.

By the late Middle Ages, manuals were being produced to instruct princes in the appropriate presentation of their persons at court. Prompted by an evolving self-consciousness, these manuals—aptly termed “mirrors”—reflected a need for guidance

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4 Indeed, the medieval thinker, John of Salisbury (1115/20-1180), understood “imagines” to be likenesses of “the forms of material things.” (Copleston, II, p. 172) John Canfield suggests that the mirrored image were intended to represent a unified objectification of the immaterial and material self. Hence, identity, as “likeness,” was challenged to summarize a singular self. Nonetheless, as Claire Pajaczkowska reminds us, the challenges “likeness” posed undermined the certainty of a unified self, a circumstance which may have urged more concentrated efforts manifest, in part, in the development of portraiture. “Lacan’s concept of the mirror phase... offers the insight that the structure of the [visual] image is inherently connected to the subject's desperate quest for imaginary unity...” (Pajaczkowska, pp. 103-108) See Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 6 vols, II (New York: Doubleday, 1993), p. 172; John V. Canfield, *The Looking-Glass Self: An Examination of Self-Awareness* (New York: Praeger, 1990), pp. 174-175; Claire Pajaczkowska, “The ecstatic solace of culture: self, not-self and other; a psychoanalytic view,” in Juliet Steyn, ed., *Other than identity: the subject, politics and art* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 103-108.

in the construction of public personae. As Stephen Jaeger describes it, "Words, gestures, intonation, and facial expression all bear meaning, express policy—no act or gesture is random.... Conduct becomes so highly structured that life approaches art: the courtier is himself a work of art, his appearance a portrait, his experience a narrative." This suggested that one's external persona was no longer the implicit expression of one's internal self.

The intervening development of the mediaeval 'mirror', and the like evidence of self-fracturing resonant in *Snow White*, implied not only a mediaeval split in the relationship between the internal, private, essential self and its external, public, and material representation, but an evolving tension between them. As Taylor observes,
the growing influence of the psychological (individual) self came at the expense of social standards and authority.\textsuperscript{10} With the advent of the divided self, the classical premise of a natural identity, born of the complementary relationship between the internal and external self, was undermined. Identity became a means of reconciling the self with a narrative of coexisting others.\textsuperscript{11} Indeed, \textit{Snow White} and the mediaeval \textit{Mirror} suggest that, by the late Middle Ages, identity was no longer simply received by the individual from society, but might rather be posited by the individual for society’s rejection or approval—it might be \textit{negotiated}.\textsuperscript{12}

These developments implied a degree of individual autonomy and self-determination not found in ancient classicism. They also signaled the prospect of social fluidity and competition, pitting one person’s claims against another’s desires in a society where resources were shared and finite. This nurtured the development of individual self-fashioning that, in turn, expanded the demand for prescriptive literature. Like the mediaeval ‘mirror’, Baldassare Castiglione’s \textit{The Book of the Courtier} outlined the standards of courtly appearance and behavior for a Renaissance audience of upper-class persons.\textsuperscript{13} By the eighteenth century, the audience had

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{10} Taylor, pp. 163, 188, 510.
\item \textsuperscript{11} Baumeister writes: “Identities exist only in societies, which define and organize them. Thus, the search for identity includes the question of what is the proper relationship of the individual to society as a whole....” See Baumeister, p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{12} As Baumeister writes, “the search for identity includes the question of what is the proper relationship of the individual to society as a whole.” See Baumeister, p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Written between 1508 and 1516, \textit{The Book of the Courtier} was first published in Venice in 1528. The first English edition was printed in London by Thomas Hoby in 1561. Providing an informal account of Italian courtiers engaged in after-dinner entertainment, it became a model—a \textit{Mirror}—for the ideal courtier. See Count Baldesar Castiglione, \textit{The Book of the Courtier}, trans. Leonard Eckstein Opdycke (New York: H. Liveright, 1929).
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stretched to a British ‘middling’ sort.¹⁴

Over time, the balance-of-influence between the internal and external self shifted. If initially the historical shift from a unified to a divided self was marked by a sociological emphasis, in which identity was prescribed by the Public on the basis of external social factors, by the eighteenth century, it increasingly assumed a psychological one. Ultimately, the shift from a sociological to psychological identity signaled a changing relationship between the individual and society.¹⁵

This paper examines identity in eighteenth-century portraits within the context of these ideologically-expanding opportunities. That these opportunities were matched by a burgeoning demand for visual self-imagery suggests: first, that the physicality and legibility of painted images provided a recognized means by which individuals could claim and assert their identity;¹⁶ and, second, that this may have

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¹⁴ With regard to the notion of a “middling” sort, the use of this term helps to distinguish between an expanding group of individuals whose improved economic circumstances separated them from the lower classes without defining them as a political group—i.e. a bourgeoisie. In speaking of her neighborhood, Samuel Richardson’s Pamela notes that “All the rest were but middling people, and traders, at best.” (Richardson, p. 166) These were distinct, too, from those “fine folks, who live upon their means.” (Richardson, p. 85) See Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740), ed. Peter Sabor, intro. Margaret A. Doody (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), pp. 85, 166.

¹⁵ According to Taylor, the drift away from a sociological towards a more psychological identity was the consequence of an “historical evolution” effected by a shift in the balance-of-influence between the individual and customary authority. The resulting “new subjectivism,” as Taylor describes it, bore significant implications for identity. Once the formal self came to be understood as a by-product of the process of disengagement, objectification and rationalization—what Taylor terms “radical reflexivity”—, identity became a matter of rationalizing the external world in a manner beneficial to one’s attributes—in other words, of imposing one’s own standards of interpretation. This “new subjectivism,” Taylor writes, removed the mask of objectivity supporting classical standards of comparison, giving “rise to the notion of a subject in its modern sense... whereby we place ‘within’ the subject ... an order which is inseparably indexed to a personal vision....” See Taylor, pp. 163, 188, 510.

¹⁶ As Jonathan Richardson argued, painting is a useful “means whereby we convey our Ideas to each other.... And thus it must be...accordingly esteem’d not only as an Enjoyment, but as another Language, which completes the whole Art of communicating our Thoughts....” (Richardson, p. 5) Hence, he adds: “Upon the sight of a Portrait,” he wrote, “the Character... of the Person it represents [is]... apt to... be the Subject of Conversation.” (Richardson, p. 16) See Jonathan Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (London: printed by W. Bowyer, 1715), pp. 5-6, 16.
been a factor in the expanding market for portraits. This premise turns on the assumption that paintings are social and linguistic constructions inscribed by a narrative that functions to locate the individual within a visually-articulated social context. On the one hand, then, coming to terms with a portrait's content permits a glimpse at the ideological context informing its making. On the other hand, coming to terms with the ideological context of a portrait permits a glimpse at the social implications attendant the resulting identity. As Locke aptly noted, “One who holds a belief is ... engaged with, or operates from within, a specific social system...”; hence, “to comprehend a given ‘belief’ means to understand the system within which the belief is... accepted.” Hence, as Edgar Wind has observed:

Portraiture shows this give and take... especially clearly. Attached to the painting of a portrait is a social situation, in which the artist has to come to terms with an attitude, that of his sitter, ...that will often be supported by philosophical views.... Then there is the correspondence between the objectives of the painter and of the philosopher, the one aiming at the representation of individual man, the other enquiring into the nature of man, and both working in an intellectual climate which fostered speculation on the aesthetic and moral qualities of ‘the perfect man’. As a result, the historian is able to use the works of art of the period to illustrate the controversy about the

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17 According to Ellen Miles, “About four times as many portraits were painted in the colonies between 1750 and 1776 than in the first fifty years of the century.” (Miles, p. 10) As Gibson-Wood notes: “The economic historian Peter Earle has analyzed how the London middle class spent the wealth they were accumulating in the period 1660-1730, and notes that, along with increased expenditure on fashionable clothes and comfortable furnishings, ‘another feature of middling homes was the huge increase in pictures, ornaments, and bits and pieces as the period goes on’. We know this largely through the detailed inventories of household goods that were routinely made on the death of London citizens....” Spawning by a growing popularity and audience for connoisseurship, the evidence of inventories suggests that “by the time Richardson was writing pictures were a common feature in the homes of tradesmen and craftsmen, in both London and the provinces, and that a dramatic rise in the frequency of ownership had occurred between 1695 and 1715.” (Gibson-Wood, pp. 14-17, 200) For a discussion of this development, see Ellen G. Miles, “Introduction,” in The Portrait in Eighteenth-Century America (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1993), p. 10; Carol Gibson-Wood, Jonathan Richardson: Art Theorist of the English Enlightenment (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 14-17, 200.

18 As Brilliant describes it: “…the artistic definition of identity would seem to be the focus of that visual processing of information needed to bring together the various ingredients that constitute the basis of identification.” See Richard Brilliant, Portraiture (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 14.

19 Canfield, p. 132.
idea of Man and to find the conflict of views concerning human nature reflected in the pictorial representations of particular human beings.\textsuperscript{20}

This paper considers the ways in which Britons and Americans negotiated who they were—and, consequently, their claims on society—by examining the ways in which their portraits supported, challenged, or manipulated the dominant narrative through the use—and misuse—of inherited visual languages. Putting aside more conventional interpretations of portraiture—as souvenirs of family and friends, displays of economic condition, and evidence of ancestral lineage—, it aims to recover the language and context of eighteenth-century image-making as a means of coming to terms with the intent of Americans and Britons as they conceptualized and negotiated their identities.\textsuperscript{21}

To this end, the paper has been divided into two parts. Part One explores the narrative contexts within which portraits were produced and the implications of these narratives for the interpretation and presentation of identity. Chapter I considers "narrative" as a structure for 'meaning-making', the foundations of classical narratives, differences between theoretical and empirical narratives, and their significance for the evaluation of identity. Chapter II sketches the body of philosophical ideas informing the narratives of the pre-modern period, from


\textsuperscript{21} This paper relies heavily on the excellent work of others in researching and identifying such criteria as maker, date, materials, condition, and biographical information. Its highly interdisciplinary approach is a natural outgrowth of current trends in British art history applied, less characteristically, to American art. As Ellen Miles aptly notes, the portrait genre has excited less attention among American scholars than the single image and the monograph, noteworthy exceptions being the work of Richard Brilliant and Joanna Woodall. See Ellen G. Miles, "Introduction," in \textit{Painting and Portrait Making in the American Northeast}, ed. Peter Benes, vol. 19 (Boston: Boston University and The Dublin Seminar}
Augustine to Machiavelli. Chapter III addresses the ideological polarities plaguing seventeenth-century Britain—arising, for example, from the economic and political pressures accompanying commercial expansion and the collapse of monarchy—and the struggle to squeeze them into a civic humanist paradigm. Finally, Chapter IV examines the implications of these developments for eighteenth-century British narratives and identities.

Part Two focuses on a few of the most illuminating portraits produced in the eighteenth century. It begins by outlining the influence of British ideology on the interpretation of art, technique, and the stature of portraiture and portrait-painters. Chapter VI continues with a narrative deconstruction of John Singleton Copley's Major Hugh Montgomerie. Finally, borrowing on an observation of Aristotle—that how something is said bears direct relation to what is being said—, Chapter VII examines American Revolutionary portraits within the context of British ideological and aesthetic conventions. For all its obvious challenges, the goal of this study is three-fold: to advance a more interdisciplinary approach to the study of American portraiture; to motivate further dialogue on the relationship between American and British portraits; and to invoke the potential of American portraits as documentary evidence of social history. To this end, a concluding chapter considers the implications of eighteenth-century American portraits for our understanding of the American Revolution.

PART ONE
CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY: THE CONTEXT

CHAPTER I
THE NARRATIVE OF IDENTITY

Modern scholars have convincingly argued that identity is a social construction; through language, society provides the narrative parameters within which—or against which—identities are assumed and negotiated.\(^1\) However, as “perception”—how one understands “reality” and one’s place within it—, is prone to relativism, so conflicting perceptions risk narrative crisis.\(^2\) The result is identity crisis—what Taylor describes as “an acute form of disorientation, which people often...
express in terms of not knowing who they are, but which can also be seen as a radical uncertainty of where they stand.”

Broadly speaking, ancient classicism embraced two forms of reality, each conditioned upon a different kind of knowledge and each conducing to a specific kind of narrative. Where reality implied a metaphysical realm of eternal existence informed by universal truths, and the meaning of life was understood to derive from a theoretical comprehension of nature’s ‘first principles’, the resulting narrative was theoretical—classical *theoretike*—, employing intellectual contemplation to arrive at the fixed standards of natural law and civic life. By contrast, where reality implied a physical realm of temporal history informed by sensory knowledge, and the meaning of life was confined to a cumulative understanding of one’s particular experience, the resulting narrative was practical—classical *praktike*—, employing observation to arrive at the fluid standards of human convention.

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1 Taylor, p. 27.
2 Aristotle described three kinds of knowledge: theoretical knowledge, equated with philosophy and wisdom, “in which knowledge as such is the end in view”; empirical knowledge (practical); and a middle kind of “poetical knowledge” or art, which “has to do with production and not with action as such....” (Copleston, I, p. 277) As Saunders suggests, Aristotle’s endorsement of philosophical knowledge presupposed not only that pure truth or wisdom existed, but that it was intelligible. Socrates and Plato had shared this belief. Moreover, all three had used this principle to distinguish theoretical and prescriptive narratives from empirical and “descriptive” ones. See Saunders, introduction to Aristotle, *Politics*, T. A. Sinclair, trans., Trevor J. Saunders rev. (London: Penguin Books (1962), 1981), pp. 19, 37; Desmond Lee, introduction to Plato, *Republic*, Desmond Lee, trans. and intro. (London: Penguin Books, (1955) rev. 1974) p. xxxiii; Copleston, I, pp. 143, 149, 277.
3 According to Aristotle, the highest form of knowledge “deals with the first principles and causes of things, and so is universal knowledge in the highest degree.... [This] is the science which is furthest removed from the senses, the most abstract science.” (Copleston, I, p. 288) The primary methodology of *theoretike* was contemplation, though Aristotle conceded the need for observation. As Sinclair observes, theoretical narratives were “regarded as truly philosophical and truly scientific... [for being] based on *theoria*, observation plus contemplation.” (Sinclair, in Aristotle, *The Politics*, pp. 14-15) See Copleston, I, pp. 205-206, 288; Sinclair, in Aristotle, *The Politics*, pp. 14-15.
4 According to T. A. Sinclair, “the distinction between *theoretike* and *praktike* was not at all the same as between theory and practice. They were two separate branches of knowledge, not two different ways of dealing with knowledge.” See Sinclair, in Aristotle, *The Politics*, pp. 14-15.
In fact, theoretical narratives recognized both forms of reality, but ranked the metaphysical and eternal above the physical and temporal according to the hierarchy of knowledge; as that which attained universal truth was necessarily superior to that which arrived at particular ones, so a reality and identity premised on metaphysical knowledge was necessarily higher than a reality and identity premised on physical data.⁷ Extrasensory reality thus came to be associated with truth and “Being,” the “final cause” or end—presumed “Good”—towards which man naturally progressed.⁸ By the same token, sensory reality became affiliated with ignorance and “Becoming,” the imperfect activity of temporal life.⁹

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⁷ Both Plato and Aristotle recognized two realms of existence: “the realm of change and appearance, the everyday, physical world in which we live; and the realm of the forms, a realm of eternals and absolutes.” (Lee, introduction, Republic, p. xxxix, and Copleston, I, p. 327) As Lee describes it, the realm of “unchanging forms, which are the objects of the philosopher’s knowledge, are what is ultimately real. The world perceived by the sense, the world of change, though not unreal, has a lower status ontologically than the realm of forms....” (Lee, p. 205) Though Aristotle’s interpretation of the two realms differed from Plato’s—for example, he opposed Plato’s location of the soul in the external realm of the intelligences on grounds that it precluded the achievement of self-actualization, which required that the body be united with the soul so that it participated in the Universal Mind of truth—he did not deny the two realms of existence or their separate modes of intelligence; as Copleston writes: “Reason is the highest faculty of man, and theoretical contemplation is the highest activity of reason.” (Copleston, I, pp. 348-349). See Lee, introduction to Plato, Republic, p. xxxix; Plato, Republic, pp. 149-164, 205, 260; Copleston, I, pp. 112, 151-155, 163-206, 327-329, 348-349; Plato, Laws, pp. 434, 519; Plato, Republic, pp. xxxix, 149-164, 205, 260; Sir David Ross, Aristotle, John L. Ackrill, intro. (Routledge: London and New York, (1923) 1996), p. 77.

⁸ For Aristotle, the end for man was the fulfillment of potentiality, a self-actualization that Plato described, similarly, as a “unity with oneself” arising from one’s comprehension of the Ideas and one’s place within them. Moreover, the state was the proper venue for this progress; as Aristotle described it, “while the state came about as a means of securing life itself, it continues in being to secure the good life.” (Aristotle, Politics, p. 59) As a consequence of this, Sinclair notes, “Aristotle was saddled with ... the notion that whatever is good is according to nature” and, inversely, that whatever is natural is necessarily good. (Sinclair, in Aristotle, The Politics, p. 21) See Aristotle, The Politics, translated by T. A. Sinclair, revised and re-presented by Trevor J. Saunders (New York and London: Penguin Books (1962, 1981), 1992), p. 21; Aristotle, Politics, pp. 21, 56-59, 187, 439; Aristotle, The Rhetoric, in The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle, W. Rhys Roberts, trans., Edward P. J. Corbett intro. (New York: Random House, Inc. (1954), 1984), pp. 37-38; Plato Republic, pp. 58-65, 138-139, 142-147, 161; Plato, Laws, p. 121, 124-126; Taylor, pp. 115-116, 121; Ross, p. 76; Copleston, I, pp. 216, 160-162, 260-261.

⁹ Copleston writes: “Socrates tries to show that the objects of perception are, as Heraclitus taught, always in a state of flux: they never are, they are always becoming.” (I, p. 144) This supported the Aristotelian premise that “nature makes nothing without some end in view, nothing to no purpose”—i.e. “Becoming” was necessarily a stage in the process towards “Being.” (Aristotle, Politics, p. 79)
Ultimately, the theoretical narrative was teleological and evolutionary; man, it suggested, began in a state of nature and, through the virtuous improvement attendant intellectual enlightenment, was naturally advanced from a mechanical to a philosophical condition, from a savage to a civic and, ultimately, to an ideal state of “happiness” and “independence.” In this analysis, the gap between one’s ‘potentiality’ and ‘actuality’ was gradually reduced by an innate motivation towards “self-realisation” that occurred as part of man’s natural social development. In other words, as the relationship between society—the state or polis—and the individual was deemed complementary to nature, so society was deemed the natural venue for “self-actualization.” Moreover, as society was deemed the natural venue of the general, godliness was the height of a descending scale of lesser virtue; as Plato described it, “God ... is pre-eminently the ‘measure of all things.” Hence, those who inspired good in others assumed the heroic stature of Great Men (Guardians) responsible for guiding society. (Plato, Laws, pp. 175-176, 195-196; Plato Republic, pp. 14, 77-78) However, Aristotle and Plato entertained slightly different interpretations of the relationship between Being and Becoming; whereas Plato interpreted the realization of potentiality as a “unity with oneself” arising from the recovery of divine Ideas, and perceived this as occurring within the spiritual realm, this separation between the spiritual and material realms presented difficulties for Aristotle: how did one reunitewith an inaccessible soul? He thus relocated the universal element of man—his soul or ‘active intellect’—within his temporal matter—his body. This required a rethinking of the relationship between Being—divine—and Becoming—temporal. Ultimately, Aristotle recast Being as natural rather than divine; each living thing has “an innate and natural tendency towards its own full evolution.” (Copleston, I, p. 313) By this means, “the development from a state of potentiality to one of actuality” precluded the need for metaphysical revelations. (Copleston, I, p. 325) This difference between the two theorists informed variations in mediaeval scholarship. See Plato, Laws, pp. 175-176, 195-196; Plato, Republic, pp. 14, 77-78; Aristotle, Politics, p. 79; Taylor, pp. 115-116, 121; Baumeister, pp. 248, 251; Copleston, I, pp. 144, 209, 313, 325.

As Aristotle described it: “Generally, of course, it is the good, and not simply the traditional, that is aimed at....” (Aristotle, Politics, p. 138) “This end,” he later wrote, “is happiness and its constituents”—i.e. “prosperity combined with virtue; or... independence of life....” (Aristotle, The Rhetoric, pp. 37-38) See Plato, Republic, pp. 56, 58-59, 63-69, 71-78; Plato, Laws, p. 162; Aristotle, The Politics, pp. 138, 187; Aristotle, Rhetoric, pp. 37-38; Copleston I, pp. 335, 338-339, 343; Taylor, pp. 278-279.

According to Aristotle “the state... exists by nature.” (Aristotle, Politics, p. 55) Plato concurred; as Lee writes, “society, with its regulations, is a ‘natural’ growth....” (Plato, Republic, p. 56) Indeed, Copleston adds, “human life is not lived out... apart from Society and the State, nor is man a being entirely apart from nature....” (Copleston, I, p. 199) Hence, Saunders notes, “‘Nature’ seems to carry strong social and political imperatives.” (Saunders, in Aristotle, Politics, p. 186) See Aristotle,
individual, so that which advanced the ‘good’ of society was presumed to advance the ‘good’ of the individual—hence the origins of “common good.”

In theory, then, advocates of theoretical, classical narratives endorsed fixed moral codes that rationalized and ordered society according to a prescribed set of values and beliefs that deemed the ‘common good’ natural, attainable, and ideal. Within this context, one’s identity became the measure of one’s virtue—one’s capacity and inclination to advance the common good prescribed by the fixed moral principles of eternal law intelligible through contemplation. Because this capacity and inclination were affiliated with disinterested independence—with leisured self-sufficiency—those whose circumstances permitted of virtue—i.e. those not dependent on commercial or domestic activities for material sustenance—assumed the highest identities.

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12 Both Plato and Aristotle interpreted the good to mean the simultaneous advancement of the individual and the state. Copleston writes: “in [Aristotle’s] eyes the end of the State and the end of the individual coincide, not in the sense that the individual should be entirely absorbed in the state but in the sense that the State will prosper when the individual citizens are good, when they attain their own proper end.” (Copleston, I, p. 357) Consequently, as Plato wrote: “The object of our legislation ... is not the special welfare of any particular class in our society, but of the society as a whole; ... its purpose ... is not to leave everyone to please himself, but to make each man a link in the unity of the whole.” (Republic, p. 263) Thus Sinclair observes, “the subject of political philosophy, or politike, embraced the whole of human behaviour.... It was the aim of political philosophy to establish standards of social behavior.” (Saunders, in Aristotle, The Politics, pp. 26-27) See Plato, Republic, p. 263; Sinclair, in Aristotle, Politics, pp. 26-27; Copleston, I, p. 357. For Aristotle’s discussion of the best states, see Politics, pp. 379-393, 401-426, 439-444.

13 According to Trevor Saunders, the “guiding principles” of this approach were as follows: “(a) That certain absolute moral standards exist. (b) That such standards can be, however imperfectly, embodied in a code of law. (c) That most of the inhabitants of the state, being innocent of philosophy, must never presume to act on their own initiative in modifying either their moral ideal or the code of laws which express it; they must live in total and unconditional obedience to the changing rules and regulations laid down for them by the legislator.” See Saunders, introduction to Plato, Laws, pp. 28-29.

14 Plato described three kinds of men: Guardian-Rulers, a citizen class characterized by “a philosophical disposition and a love of learning” (Plato, Republic, p. 69); Auxiliaries, a citizen-military whose “function is ‘to assist the Rulers in the execution of their decisions’” (Lee, in Plato, Republic, p. 121); and a ‘Third Class’ of non-citizens whose function “is to provide for the material and economic needs of the community”—i.e. Lee writes, “Their virtue is obedience....” (Lee, in Plato, Republic, p.
The symbiotic relationship between the individual and society ensured that "citizenship" assumed a central role in the classical evaluation of identity; classical citizenship distinguished the independent, wise, and virtuous from the dependent, ignorant and self-interested.\textsuperscript{15} However, precisely because citizenship meant political action on behalf of the public good, because this good was deemed intelligible only to those with a knowledge of 'first principles', and because this knowledge was deemed accessible only to those whose virtue made them capable of disinterested reason, citizenship was confined to leisured—and, so, educated—men.\textsuperscript{16} By this means—i.e. 1) the subordination of the individual to the state; 2) the privileged position of the state in the attainment of actuality; 3) the correlation between actuality and reason; 4)
and the resulting emphasis on reason as the medium of virtue and, therefore, the highest standard of citizenship—, reason became the pivot on which identity turned.¹⁷

Significantly, the classical term for the wise and virtuous man was ‘aristocrat’; as ‘aristocracy’ was esteemed the best form of political constitution—the best means of ordering society—, so the aristocrat was esteemed the best kind of citizen.¹⁸ Those constitutions which embraced lower standards of citizenship were thus interpreted as something less than ‘best’; the risk of democracy, for example, which granted citizenship to non-‘aristocrats’, was that it permitted men without wisdom to hold public office, thereby sacrificing statesmanship (the just rule of citizen-equals) for mastership (power in the pursuit of self-interest) to the detriment of good.¹⁹ On this

¹⁷ Plato and Aristotle argued that true knowledge was absolute and unchanging. It was, therefore, an appropriate and fixed measure of human value. Thus, the capacity for theoretical wisdom became a measure of one’s capacity for universal virtue and the attainment of wisdom became a reflection of one’s progress towards the ideal. But Aristotle also believed—as did Socrates before him—that individuals were complementary in this regard and, hence, that there was a necessary and harmonious inequality of virtue among members of a state. It was this which lent credence to the principle of social hierarchy. See Aristotle, Politics, pp. 93, 95; Copleston, I, pp. 216, 218.

¹⁸ According to Aristotle, the name “aristocracy... is justly given only to that constitution which is composed of those who are... best in virtue... For only [in this]... type of aristocracy are good man and good citizen one and the same....” See Aristotle, Politics, p. 257.

¹⁹ As Aristotle described it, statesmen rule “men who are free, and similar in birth,” (Politics, p. 182) whereas the “rule of master over slave is exercised primarily for the benefit of the master and only incidentally for the benefit of the slave....” (Aristotle, Politics, p. 188) In general, Aristotle defined three ‘good’ and three ‘bad’ constitutions according to “three grounds for claiming equality [citizenship] in a constitution”: “freedom, wealth and virtue (a fourth claim, called ‘good birth’, arises out of the two last of these three, for good birth is wealth plus virtue going back to one’s forebears).” (Aristotle, Politics, p. 160) Good constitutions were those which sought the common good and included monarchy (which granted citizenship and, so, sovereignty to a virtuous one, though it could vary in type), aristocracy (which granted citizenship and sovereignty to a virtuous few), and polity, which granted citizenship and sovereignty to a middling group whose combined attributes approximated the virtuous mean. In the absence of virtuous men, Aristotle supported polity as the most conducive to the ideal because it located a moderate amount of wealth in the hands of a large number of persons, thereby combining elements of oligarchy and democracy (wealth and numbers) while defending against the tyrannical tendencies of each. Bad constitutions were similarly structured, but were motivated by interest rather than good; tyranny promoted the interests of one man, oligarchy of wealthy men, and democracy of unpropertied men. As Aristotle wrote, “only with the arrival of extreme democracies have workmen attained to participation in office.” (Aristotle, Politics, p. 181) Like Aristotle, Plato endorsed monarchy or aristocracy as most conducive to the ideal state, rejecting “timarchy,” oligarchy, democracy and tyranny as destructive factions that undermined social stability.
premise, the classical social hierarchy descended from the philosopher-prince to the manual laborer.20

Theoretical narratives thus suggested that empirical knowledge of sensory experience was valuable only insofar as it nurtured the human behavior prescribed by theoretical ideals. Politics, for example, a science derived from the evidence of human experience, was ‘good’ only insofar as it served the ideals of a metaphysical reality; it was not in itself meaningful—i.e. the proper foundation for a narrative ‘meaning of life’—but rather an instrument for procuring a meaningful life. Of course, all facets of life were necessarily implicated in this doctrine; identity, for example, became a theoretical prescription, rationalized and articulated by a ‘natural’ elite for receipt by the individual.21 Perhaps for this reason, alternatives emerged to


20 Hence, Copleston writes, although Aristotle began his Metaphysics with the claim that “All men by nature desire to know’...,” he continued by recognizing “different degrees of knowledge,” ranking “the man who seeks knowledge for its own sake above him who seeks for knowledge of some particular kind with a view to ... some practical effect.” (Copleston, I, p. 287) As Aristotle wrote, “no two of us are born exactly alike. We have different natural aptitudes, which fit us for different jobs.” (Aristotle, Politics, p. 59) Plato concurred: “the man naturally fitted to be a shoemaker, or carpenter, or anything else, should stick to his own trade....” (Plato, Republic, p. 161) Hence the premise of social order; as “men differ in intellectual and physical capacities and are thereby fitted for different positions in society,” so they will enjoy varying levels of virtue and independence. (Copleston, I, p. 352) As a rule, Plato explained, “only a small part of mankind—a few highly-educated men of rare natural talent—is able to steel itself to moderation when assailed by various needs and desires....” (Plato, Laws, p. 457) Hence, as a tradesman should never participate in politics, so “a gentleman must never participate in trade....” (Plato, Laws, p. 459) On these grounds, Plato sought to make land inalienable. (Plato, Laws, pp. 449-452) While both Plato and Aristotle emphasized reason as the highest standard of identity, Aristotle was wary of accepting Plato’s emphasis on birth, fearing it granted too much power to unproven men. (Aristotle, Politics, p. 153) Ultimately, however, the relationship between birth, wealth, and reason confined classical citizenship to the landed classes. See Aristotle, Politics, pp. 58-59, 153, 169; Plato, The Republic, pp. 161, 261-262; Plato, Laws, pp. 449-452, 457-459; Copleston, I, pp. 287, 352.

21 Theoretical narratives were concerned with the individual only insofar as the individual participates in the universal human ideal. As a result, “the most exact description of each individual will be a
challenge the intelligibility and credibility of universal truths and fixed standards, undermining the influence of theoretical narratives. 22

Historians have persuasively argued that the dominant narrative of eighteenth-century Britain derived from a classical concern to render human existence intelligible and meaningful in universal and fixed terms. 23 Ultimately, however, British neoclassicism represented the selective quilting of Aristotelian and Platonic ideas with those of Christianity and science. This blending resulted in ambiguities and inconsistencies that subjected the dominant narrative to manipulation, criticism and rejection. The greatest risk came from empirical and ‘convention’ narratives—those which denied the intelligibility of metaphysical reality and premised knowledge on sensory experience, challenging the credibility of social prescription. 24 Locke, for
example, condemned theoretical narratives and customary authority as instruments of power politics. As he described it,

it was of no small advantage to those who affected to be masters and teachers, to make this the principle of principles, that principles must not be questioned: for having once established this tenet, that there are innate principles, it put their followers upon a necessity of receiving some doctrines as such; which was to take them off from the use of their own reason and judgement, and put them upon believing and taking them upon trust... in which posture of blind credulity, they might be more easily governed by, and made useful to some sort of men, who had the skill and office to principle and guide them.... Whereas had they examined the ways, whereby men came to the knowledge of many universal truths, they would have found them to result in the minds of men, from the being of things themselves....

Alternative narratives were not new to the modern period; indeed, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle had condemned the moral relativism of the Sophist tradition as the ignorant by-product of inferior minds and methodologies. However, as theoretical

determined capacity of all men, Locke leveled the intellectual playing field, making moral virtue—the proper pursuit of all men—a universal privilege. See Woolhouse, introduction to Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, pp. xi-xii. 25 See Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in Woolhouse, p. 106. Locke was highly critical of the Scholastics and, in particular, the Aristotelian theory of 'first principles' or "maxims" from which certain truth might be deduced. According to Copleston, this affected Locke's notion of general and particular ideas; "since universality and generality are not attributes of things, which are all individual or particular, but of ideas and words... it is the mind which observes... likenesses among particular things and uses them as the occasion to form general ideas." (Copleston, V, p. 105) This distinguished Lockean general ideas from those of Aristotelian "abstraction," which recognized general essences in particular things and, so, granted a concrete source for universal ideas. See Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, pp. 59, 564, 576-577; Woolhouse, introduction to Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p. xv; Copleston, V, pp. 73-78, 101-107. 26 For practical purposes, the Sophists—including Protagoras, Prodicus, Hippias, and Gorgias—employed an empirical, inductive method to explain human behavior—i.e. for "the art and control of life." (Copleston, I, pp. 82-83) Consequently, Copleston notes, "Socrates considered ... the Sophists ... superficial thinkers who merely adopted and reflected the prejudices of society at large...." (Copleston, I, p. 20) Moreover, Saunders writes, Aristotle's "repeated emphasis ... on the state's being 'natural' suggests ... the polemical purpose of refuting those who believed that the state was an 'artificial' or a 'conventional' creation." (Saunders, in Aristotle, *Politics*, p. 56) Significantly, empirical narratives challenged the classical distinction between liberal and illiberal men; whereas Aristotle distinguished between liberal (theoretical) and illiberal (practical) thinkers, Locke conflated the two forms of knowledge into one. (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, pp. 139-140) See Saunders, introduction to Aristotle, *Politics*, pp. 26, 56; Aristotle, *The Rhetoric*, pp. 139-140; Copleston, I, pp. 20, 82-83, 219; Saunders, introduction to Plato, *Laws*, pp. 20-24. For a further discussion of the Sophists, and their
narratives came under pressure to reconcile gaps between theory and practice, the opportunity for alternatives increased. For example, if *in theory* the capacity for public office turned on a capacity for civic virtue (as measured by disinterested reason), *in practice* it turned on a capacity for leisure. In the absence of state subsidies, virtue became conflated with a leisured independence conditioned upon birth and wealth.\(^{27}\) As a result, the relationship between virtue and independence was inverted; whereas in theory one’s independence was a measure of one’s virtue, in practice one’s virtue was a measure of one’s independence. In the end, men of birth and wealth were *presumed* more virtuous—more “aristocratic”—than those of modest birth and property. Ultimately, it was this conflation between virtue and leisure which made the classical standard for identity so complementary to the objectives of a later generation of British elites: the model classical citizen was the well-to-do gentleman.\(^{28}\)

Significantly, empiricism’s denial of intelligible fixed truths implied a like denial of absolute standards. This suggested not only that identity was artificial, fluid,

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\(^{28}\) Indeed, Saunders suggests, “gentleman” and “citizen” were interchangeable: “The chief aim of a gentleman’s, that is, a citizen’s education is to enable him to enjoy his intellectual and artistic faculties to the full, to live a life of ‘virtue’ and of ‘leisure’….“ See Aristotle, *Politics*, p. 455.
and distinct from an ‘authentic’ singular self—a circumstance which conduced to the mediaeval split between the internal and external self—but, more radical still, that it was born of—and conditioned upon—relative social interests. Such a suggestion was not without risks. Indeed, William Hogarth’s *The Painter and his Pug* (Fig. 1-1; 1745; oil on canvas, 35-7/16 x 27-1/2 inches; Tate Britain) hints at the implications attendant social relativism. His portrait-within-a-portrait format uses spatial juxtapositions—that between the ‘fictional’ portrait and the ‘real’ Pug, for example—to highlight the specious nature of imagined realities and identities. One has only to compare the viewer’s space with Trump’s to know that the pug’s space, too, is ‘false’ and our own position uncertain.


30 Plato described this as being “deceived in one’s own mind about realities,” a condition attendant convention narratives, which made men “the victim of falsehood and ignorance.” (Plato, *Republic*, p. 79) As David Bindman notes, Hogarth’s portrait-within-a-portrait “conceit points wittily to the paradox inherent in the painting of reality.” (Bindman, *Hogarth*, p. 151) As Bindman likewise adds: “The threat of a Scottish invasion in 1745 also encouraged defiant displays of patriotism, and it is surely significant that the great self-portrait painting, *The Painter and his Pug* (Tate Gallery), should be dated to the same year. Hogarth rests his fictive portrait on volumes by great English authors, Shakespeare, Milton and Swift, though he omitted these names in the engraving (no. 23). In fact, only the last could be considered a major influence on his work to date, so his claim to an exclusively English literary ancestry should be treated as little more than patriotic rhetoric.” (Bindman, *Hogarth and his Times*, pp. 47-48) See Bindman, *Hogarth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 151; Bindman, *Hogarth and his Times* (London: British Museum Press, 1997), pp. 47-48; Plato, *Republic*, pp. 79-80, 85-86.
Hogarth's image is useful for two reasons. On the one hand, it reminds us that the implications of social relativism dogged civic humanism well into the modern period; as Baumeister notes, "rejection of the legitimacy of the traditional, stable political and social order led to a troubled recognition of the pervasive conflict between the individual and society." On the other hand, however, it suggests an awareness of the problems attendant these narrative inconsistencies. It was this awareness that invited the development of alternative narratives. But it was also this

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31 Baumeister, p. 59. For Plato, any "division of purpose" caused people to "wrong each other" and to erode the justice upon which a harmonious and stable society depended. Hence, once empirical narratives permitted the individual to define his own purpose, conflict was inevitable. See Plato, *The Republic*, p. 38.
awareness that nurtured the development of alternative narratives supportive of more desirable identities.\textsuperscript{32} The result was instability; as identities were most stable when the relationship between ideology and experience was deemed natural and ‘fixed’, so they lost that stability when the standards of reality became mutable and uncertain. As Homi K. Bhabha suggests, imperial powers were particularly vulnerable; governed by narratives supportive of inequality, they struggled to defend their narrative legitimacy in the face of opposing pressure.\textsuperscript{33}

Perceptions of the origin, purpose, and end of society thus affected the interpretation of identity. Once gaps emerged between perception and prescription, once language was used to ‘name’ and, so, ‘define’ an alternative reality, there arose new opportunities for describing the self.\textsuperscript{34} All of this bore relevance for portraiture; as Richard Brilliant aptly notes: “Conflicting views on the nature of personal identity have confounded the very concept of the portrait as a significant genre of representation because they affect the answer to a basic question presented by art works of this kind: ‘Who is the who that is being represented?’”\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{32} This occurred, Baumeister argues, because people “began to be chronically dissatisfied with the identities society had given them.” See Baumeister, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{33} Inequality was characteristic of imperialism, which was fueled by the demand for property and, as Rousseau observed, “nascent inequality” is one of “the main effects of property.” (Rousseau, \textit{A Discourse on Inequality}, p. 119) According to Homi K. Bhabha, in colonial identity-making, ‘fixity’ functions to order individuals according to their ‘differences’. This has the advantage of subverting differences to the interests of the colonizer. See Rousseau, \textit{Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men} (1755) (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1984), p. 119; Homi K. Bhabha, “The other question,” \textit{Screen}, 24 (6), Nov.-Dec. 1983, p. 23, quoted in Gange, “Beyond Identity? The Beyond in Beyond Japan,” p. 209; Taylor, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{34} Once experience no longer corresponds with received ideas, or received ideas no longer complement practice, practices or ideas are modified. As Benjamin notes, this “necessitated... another thinking of identity...” (Benjamin, “Figuring self-identity,” pp. 28-29) See Benjamin, “Figuring self-identity,” pp. 9-10, 16, 28-29; Canfield, p. 1-10, 32; Taylor, pp. 204-205.
\textsuperscript{35} See Brilliant, \textit{Portraiture}, pp. 13-15. Whereas Aristotle described “Character” as the moral matter of the individual—as that which “makes us ascribe certain moral qualities to the agents”—and, hence, as the signifier of moral quality, Baumeister highlights contemporary ambiguities: “The differing usages

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For Plato and Aristotle—who deemed society the natural venue of self-
actualization, who considered identity a singular representation of the individual’s
virtue vis-à-vis the final, universal ideal and, so, as a measure of one’s location on the
road to perfect virtue, who held virtue and vice as properly represented by modes of
painting as by modes of government, and, hence, for whom each type of government
necessarily endorsed accompanying aesthetic standards—, the ‘best’ portrait was the
aesthetic complement to the aristocratic ideal; lesser minds, with their more limited
understanding of reality, necessarily embraced inferior forms of government and
inferior aesthetic standards.36

Ultimately, then, classicism endorsed parallel social and stylistic hierarchies:
as society descended from the virtuous and intellectual aristocrat to the interested and
ignorant laborer, so portraiture descended from the philosophical to the mechanical,
from the general to the particular, from the beautiful to the ugly—from the heroic to
the graceful to the conversational to the comic.37 In the end, a portrait’s success

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36 Thus, Saunders writes, “‘correct’ artistic standards” demanded that “art should portray ‘good’ men
attractively and ‘bad’ men unattractively.” (Saunders, in Plato, Laws, p. 83) As Plato described it (and
Reynolds later observed), those styles based on ornament and variety were symptomatic of ignorance.
(Plato, Laws, p. 109) A true knowledge of art thus required an education in Taste—in the virtuous
standards of truth. In the end, it was assumed, only the aristocrat might judge. For a further discussion,
see Aristotle, The Poetics, pp. 224-225; Aristotle, Politics, p. 224; Plato, Laws, p. 83, 154; Copleston,
I, pp. 200, 259-260.

37 The hierarchy of styles was informed by the need to fix the standards of virtue and vice through
visual standards of beauty. “That Plato regarded beauty as objectively real, is beyond all question...[;]
all beautiful things are beautiful in virtue of their participation in the universal Beauty.... The obvious
consequence of such a doctrine is that there are degrees of beauty...[;] beautiful things will
approximate more or less to this objective norm.” (Copleston, I, p. 254) Although Aristotle says that
the beautiful is not the same as the good, it is clear that both derive from a rational love of truth—from
“order and symmetry and definiteness.” (Copleston, I, p. 359) The result was a classical standard of
ideal beauty complementary with the standards of reason and virtue. This was likewise supported by
turned on its proper rendering of ‘correct’ narrative principles. Hence the origins of the “grand-style” portrait as the visual metaphor of the neoclassical identity.

However, by the eighteenth century, the content and context of portrait images was being informed by a rich legacy of philosophical opinions. The next three chapters will examine their influence on developing British narratives.


38 On this premise there emerged a hierarchy of styles descending from the heroic to the indecent. For Plato, the hierarchy ran from the “pyrrhic” style, divided into the “heroic” and the “graceful”—a style taken up in the eighteenth century by Richardson, who called it “greatness” and “grace”—to the comic, what Aristotle described as the lower “iambic” style of “life” and “conversation.” (Plato, Laws, p. 307; Aristotle, Poetics, pp. 227-228, 258) Significantly, however, Plato and Aristotle understood different interpretations of imitation: for Plato it was mimetic and, therefore, mechanical; for Aristotle, it was an abstraction and, therefore, philosophical. Hence a portrait likeness might represent either the universal or the particular and, thereby, reflect a higher or lower ideological standard. (Copleston, vol. I, pp. 360-362) See Plato, Laws, pp. 83-84, 108, 307-308; Aristotle, The Poetics, pp. 227-228, 258, 260; Copleston, I, pp. 360-368; Jonathan Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting (London, 1715), pp. 161-163, 175, 177; Carol Gibson-Wood, Jonathan Richardson: Art Theorist of the English Enlightenment (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 163, 169-171.

39 The eighteenth-century artist-theorist Jonathan Richardson, for example, although he did not assume a high level of art knowledge among his readers, did intend his work for “a literate public that was abreast of current British philosophical and theological” writings, “particularly the writings of John Locke and his followers.” (Gibson-Wood, p. 181) Indeed, Gibson-Wood argues, Richardson’s writings suggest not only his own “familiarity with the fundamentals of Lockeian philosophy, which had by 1715 been popularized by writers like Addison,” but “his expectation that his readers were likewise informed.” (Gibson-Wood, p. 147) See Gibson-Wood, Jonathan Richardson, pp. 147, 181.
CHAPTER II
NARRATIVE CONFLICTS

Eighteenth-century British narratives included a selective blending of ancient, mediaeval, Renaissance and early modern theories. The purpose of the next three chapters is to indicate the scope of narrative possibilities which arose from this blending and their relevance for the imagining of identity in eighteenth-century Britain and America. In order to provide for a richer deconstruction of eighteenth-century portraits in Part II, these chapters give particular attention to those ideas thought to have dominated the period.

According to Frederic Copleston, the post-ancient period was marked by a classical revival that is best understood in two parts: a pre-Aristotelian phase, based primarily on the neo-Platonism of Roman Patriarchs like St. Augustine; and an Aristotelian phase, in which the writings of Aristotle were assimilated into Christian thought in tandem with ideas from Islamic and Jewish thinkers. Although

1 These chapters draw heavily on the writings of Frederick Copleston, whose nine-volume history of philosophy provides an excellent foundation for interpreting the primary documents of various periods. The first six volumes have been used in this paper. See Copleston, A History of Philosophy, volumes I-VI (New York: Doubleday, 1993)
2 Baumeister writes, “Political historians generally agree that medieval social theory was wholly dominated by Augustine’s views.” (Baumeister, p. 52) See Baumeister, p. 52; Copleston, II, pp. 9-10; and The Essential Augustine, ed. Vernon J. Bourke (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Co., 1964-1974).
3 The introduction of Aristotle’s work marked the beginning of the second phase of mediaeval philosophy, which witnessed a shift in the balance-of-influence between theology and philosophy, to
Augustinian neo-Platonism continued to provide the foundation for mediaeval philosophy, the introduction of Aristotle’s writings complicated its legacy. In the end, classicism continued to provide a structure and language for the organization and articulation of Christian thought, but the influence of its content varied considerably, often to contrary ends.

In general, medieval thought was based on a selective interpretation of neo-Platonism, which provided an effective conduit for advancing Christian beliefs. For example, both Plato and Augustine regarded soul and body as distinct and separate elements, the rational, immortal, and spiritual soul guiding the sensitive, mortal, and material body during historical, temporal life. In addition, however, by bending and extending the parameters of neo-Platonism, Plato’s perfect, impersonal Good became the point-of-departure for explaining Augustine’s perfect and personal God; on grounds of Plato’s necessary perfection, manifest in his exemplary Form of the Good—that from which the essence of goodness found in lesser forms necessarily emanated—, Augustine could defend the notion of a necessarily perfect Being—that by whom all lesser beings are lovingly created and on whom those beings necessarily depended. This served as the foundation for Augustine’s Holy Trinity, a single God
composed of three persons: the Godhead or Father, source of the Divine Ideas or
Essences—the rationes seminales of universal truth;\(^7\) Christ (the neo-Platonic Nous)
or The Word (Logos), by which the divine ideas were impressed on the human soul;\(^8\)
and the Holy Spirit or Grace, the medium of final cause—that eternal happiness/
goodness (as opposed to temporal classical virtue) manifest in reunion with God.\(^9\)

The Augustinian narrative thus blended the philosophy of Platonism with the
theology of Christianity, subordinating the reason of the former to the revelation of
the latter in a manner conducive to lower (temporal and active) and higher (eternal
and contemplative) realities.\(^10\) Significantly, however, this dual reality—one natural,
material and temporal, the other supernatural, spiritual and eternal—was joined with a Christian narrative of Fall and Redemption that nurtured the specter of moral duality: a post-Fall ethic based on the imperfection of civil society; and a post-Redemption ethic based on the goodness of eternal life. Christianity thus complicated the balance-of-influence between the individual and society. As the relationship between individual and State was subverted to the relationship between individual and God, so the classical emphasis on public virtue in the civic sphere was properly subordinated—at least in theory—to the Christian emphasis on private goodness in the realm of salvation.¹¹

This shift in the balance-of-influence between the individual and society implied a like shift in the proper context for identity. As the individual was made

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¹¹ Augustine's emphasis on sin as the background of human society after the Fall led him to cast temporal life in negative terms, its only goodness arising from Christ's sacrifice for man's salvation. For Augustine, the purpose of civil society was to protect the individual from the sins of others until salvation was attained. This caused him to make a more marked distinction between the secular and sacred spheres than had the ancients. Plato and Aristotle looked upon temporal society as an integral part of man's advancement towards eternal goodness and potentiality and, therefore, as in itself 'good'. It also permitted certain inconsistencies in his thought to stand as dualities rather than conflicts. For example, Augustine accepted that a hierarchical order was necessary in the secular realm in order to maintain peace and stability, but he did not consider such distinctions divine in origin. While Plato had recognized that temporal society fell short of the ideal, even though the laws of the ideal necessarily informed temporal life, Augustine believed that divine laws—and, so, the ideal—were suited to man only after salvation. As a result, the principles informing the ideal were not necessarily applicable to man's temporal state. Nonetheless, Augustine's position on natural equality provided important material for later Reformed Christians. See Taylor, pp. 47-49; Plato, Republic, p. 188.
responsible for his own self-realization, so he became the agent of his own goodness. Hence the Christian emphasis on ‘will’ as the highest faculty of the human soul. As Augustine explained it, though the will was naturally directed towards the good, it required the voluntary action of the individual to nurture its progress, an action compatible with the higher ideals of reason impressed upon man by God. This made the individual an agent in his own identity.

In practice, however, the potential for individual self-determination was tempered by the implications attendant the Fall and the need for a well-governed State. For Augustine, if the totality of individuals in the State governed themselves according to those temporal virtues conducive to eternal good, society would attain happiness, but if the people succumbed to worldly desires, society would suffer from privation and evil. Hence, the Christian State was rightfully ordered—and its people aptly judged—according to intelligible eternal standards informing man’s final, supernatural end. Indeed, Augustine’s belief in harmonious order, coupled with his

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12 According to Augustine, our progress towards perfection comes from God’s gift of free will received at the time of Creation. Although all men are naturally inclined towards the good—the final cause towards which they are divinely directed—the determination to act on one’s reason, and thereby advance that inclination, was a matter of will. Combined with faith—itself motivated by will—, will paves our progress “from the temporal to the eternal.” (Augustine, *The True Religion*, 24.42, in Bourke, p. 32) See Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter*, 34.60, *City of God*, V, 9, XII, 6, and XIV, 6-7, *The True Religion*, 24.42, 29.52-53, in Bourke, pp. 22, 32, 60-62, 132-133, 158-160; Copleston, II, pp. 85-86, 285, 288-291.

13 Sin is likewise voluntary. As Copleston explains, man must choose to follow the way of God or, alternatively, choose not to; “The will is free to turn away from the immutable Good and to attach itself to mutable goods....” (Copleston, II, p. 82) See Aquinas, *The Summa of Theology*, II-II, Qu. 64,8, in Sigmund, p. 81; Copleston, II, p. 82.

14 As the proper end of human life is eternal salvation, so the proper end of temporal society is the City of God. In both cases, the pursuit of happiness is the pursuit of goodness—the pursuit of God. See Augustine, *Confessions*, 20.29, *The True Religion*, 7.13, and *City of God*, XIX, 23-24, in Bourke, pp. 209-211; Copleston, II, 87-90.

15 According to Augustine, God is the highest standard by which all else is judged; He is “the highest good.” See Augustine, *The Nature of the Good*, 22, in Bourke, p. 55.
fear of social instability, resulted in his support for fixed social ranks.¹⁶ The implications of self-determination nonetheless remained (however dormant). Although Augustine restricted self-determination to the eternal sphere, thereby limiting its implications for civic identities, he planted the seed for a later generation of Reformed thinkers.¹⁷

The duality of Augustine's narrative—its notion of separate higher and lower realms—continued to characterize the philosophy of his followers.¹⁸ And although it did not, of necessity, point to moral duality, the credibility of a single, fixed moral standard depended on certain assumptions. Augustine assumed that, by virtue of the rationes seminales impressed on the human soul during Creation, the eternal standards governing perfect goodness were temporally intelligible through internal contemplation and, therefore, that man might reason the fixed standards of harmonious order informing society and, by extension, the standards of human virtue and identity. In fact, the intelligibility of eternal laws informing final cause was essential to Augustine's theory insofar as it was through divine illumination of this

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¹⁶ Baumeister writes: "The medieval Christian believed the social hierarchy to be fixed and legitimate. St. Augustine had written that God assigned to each person a definite place in the community." (Baumeister, p. 52.) This supported the notion of harmonious order; according to Augustine, proper ranks "tend in the divine providence to that end which is embraced in the general scheme of the government of the universe... producing that which was designed to be their result...." (Augustine, City of God, XII, 4, in Bourke, p. 101) See Augustine, City of God, XII, 4 and XIX, 13, in Bourke, pp. 101, 216-218.

¹⁷ In theory, Augustine opened the way for a self-determined identity; that the capacity for truth was equal among men, that grace was the true mark of privilege: both opened the way for the lowest born to assume the highest ranks of identity. In practice, however, "the earlier medieval concept of virtue [which] included fulfilling the tasks and duties of one's station in society...[meant] the person was equated with the social roles...[and, therefore,] in order to fulfill one's potential, one had to do the tasks assigned by society to him or her." See Baumeister, p. 56.

¹⁸ Roger Bacon, for example, distinguished two kinds of moral philosophy, one governing the actions of men in relationship with other men, and one governing the actions of men in their relationship with God. See Copleston, II, p. 447.
intelligence that man came to know the existence of God.\textsuperscript{19} On these grounds, a singular perfect goodness linking temporal with eternal became the necessary corollary of a singular perfect reason linking man with God. By the same token, that which was less than good reflected the absence of reason—the sensory instincts belonging to a lower realm of existence.\textsuperscript{20} In the end, Augustine crafted a hierarchy of morality and intelligence in which identity was necessarily implicated: as morality ascended from interest to virtue, as knowledge ascended from the particularities of sensory experience, to the speculations of reason (\textit{scientia}), to the authority of ‘wisdom’, so too did the individual ascend from ignorance and vice to wisdom and virtue.\textsuperscript{21}

Ultimately, then, the standards shaping identity and social order turned on the relationship between knowledge and virtue. As long as knowledge—the by-product of contemplation and divine illumination—and virtue—the by-product of divine goodness—were deemed perfect corollaries, knowledge was the necessary standard of

\textsuperscript{19} Augustine, \textit{On Free Choice}, II, 39-41, \textit{Confessions}, VII, 10.16-11.17, in Bourke, pp. 124-128. One had to be “illuminated” by the divine light in order to see the truth impressed on the human soul during Creation. In the process, one came to know the existence of God. Later Christian thinkers responded differently to Augustine’s doctrine of illumination. See Copleston, II, pp. 63-65, 68.


\textsuperscript{21} As Copleston remarks, “There is one true ‘philosophy’ or wisdom, which is attained adequately only through Christian revelation, though Greek philosophers divined something of the truth.” (Copleston, II, p. 19) On this premise, Augustine conceived of an \textit{a priori} access to virtue in the form of illumination, “that natural light by which [the mind] can recognise truth and rectitude;” illumination is the means by which the soul “apprehend[s] …the \textit{rationes aeternae} (which) are … in fact identical with the Word of God.” (Copleston, II, p. 288-289) This is the higher reason of \textit{sapientia} derived from faith-based illumination. As Augustine described it, one has to think in order to believe, but one also has to believe in order know God. Ultimately, Augustine described three levels of understanding in terms of an ascending order of vision: the sensory (sight); the spiritual (image); and the intellectual (understanding). Aquinas likewise distinguished between speculative and practical reason, the former conducing to the understanding of first principles, the latter to good judgments. Aquinas also spoke of light, but he confined its purpose to the vision of God. See Augustine, \textit{On the Trinity}, XV, 12.21, \textit{Predestination of the Saints}, 5, \textit{On Free Choice}, II, 6, \textit{The True Religion}, 3.3, \textit{Literal Commentary on Genesis}, XII, 6.15, 31.59, in Bourke, pp. 19, 22-23, 25, 34, 47-48, 53, 93-94, 97; Aquinas, \textit{Summa Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.}
identity—of virtue.22 By the twelfth century, however, a growing uncertainty about the nature and limitations of human knowledge was undermining this standard. This surfaced as a debate over particular and universal ideas: how is the knowledge of particulars (which exist outside the mind as material things) translated into a knowledge of general principles (which exist inside the mind as universal concepts) and, indeed, can universal concepts be said to exist if they have no objective existence in reality?23 This raised doubts about the nature and extent of human knowledge: was certain truth, in fact, intelligible by any means other than revelation? And, if not, if internal contemplation could not yield even a handful of certain truths, on what grounds could one claim the perfect link between knowledge and virtue? Such questions threatened the standards of identity and social order.24 For example, was there a difference between civic virtue—the public attribute of the temporal sphere—and goodness—the private attribute of the eternal sphere? Could the public virtues of the civic man be said to reflect the personal virtues of the good Christian?25 And, if

Against the Gentiles, II, 53, The Summa of Theology, I-I, Qu. 79, 12, and I-II, Qu. 62, 3, in Sigmund, pp. 9, 35-36; Copleston, II, pp. 19, 48-51, 225, 288-289, III, pp. 5-7.

22 According to Copleston, the ascending stages of the soul, from the vegetative to the sensitive to the intellectual state—the latter being composed of a lower, sensory aspect and a higher, intelligible aspect—and ultimately to the will, represented “different potentialities” in the progress from nature to grace. According to Lee, the elision between knowledge and virtue had roots in the Greek definition of ‘wisdom’, which “had a strong ethical meaning.” (Lee, introduction to Plato, Republic, p. xv) See Copleston, II, p. 427; Lee, in Plato, Republic, p. xv; Ross, Aristotle, p. 76.

23 “In other words,” Copleston continues, “objects outside the mind are individual, whereas concepts are general, universal in character, in the sense that they apply indifferently to a multitude of individuals. But, if extramental objects are particular and human concepts universal, it is clearly of importance to discover the relation holding between them...[;] if these terms have no foundation in extramental reality, ... science is an arbitrary construction, which has no relation to reality.” (Copleston, II, p. 139) See Copleston, II, pp. 139, 150-151, 153, 389.

24 As God creates man according to His universal idea of man, so likeness becomes the expression of this idea. For example, Copleston writes, “The likeness of humanity is abstracted from individual men, and this likeness, considered by the mind, is the idea of the species.” (Copleston, II, p. 138)

25 According to Aquinas, “every human act that is good or bad is meritorious or lacking in merit in relation to God by virtue of the act itself,” not “in relation to the political community.” (Aquinas, Summa of Theology, I-II, Qu. 21, 4, in Sigmund, p. 43) Machiavelli’s Prince and Discourses, on the
not, was the personal worth of the good Christian made manifest in the character of the civic man and, if so, how?

If the first phase of mediaeval thought envisioned a universal reality made fully intelligible by divine Grace and partially intelligible by philosophical contemplation, the second phase witnessed a more neo-Aristotelian interpretation of revelation and reason.\(^{26}\) Whereas Augustine had argued that certain truth was possible only by a divine illumination of the *rationes seminales*—the seeds of reason implanted in man for his contemplation during his progress towards perfect goodness—, and, hence, insofar as God was the only source of “illumination,” His was the only active intellect, Aquinas, accepting the Aristotelian interpretation of the human intellect, granted man both active and passive intellectual capacities.\(^{27}\) On the other hand, wholly dispensed with Christian virtue as unsuited to the political sphere. As Pocock described it, “There is one theological problem here, and one philosophical. Does the republic substitute itself for Christ’s kingdom, thus subverting the existence of any church distinct from political society? Both Hobbes and Harrington seem to have looked on Christ as returning to restore the theocracy God had exercised in Israel…. For Hobbes the political form of this theocracy had been monarchy, but for Harrington it had been a republic….“ (Pocock, introduction to Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, p. xxii) See Aquinas, *Summa of Theology*, I-II, Qu. 21, 4, in Sigmund, p. 43; Pocock, introduction to James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, in *The Commonwealth of Oceana and a System of Politics* (1656), ed. J. G. A. Pocock (New York: Cambridge University Press (1992), 1999), p. xxii; Grafton, introduction to Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, intro. Anthony Grafton, rev. George Bull (London and New York: Penguin Books, (1961) 1999), p. xxi; Crick, introduction to Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, p. 63; Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, Disc. III.28, in Crick, p. 482.

\(^{26}\) According to Copleston, the influence of Augustinian neo-Platonism was extended into the Middle Ages by thinkers like Boethius, whose *De Consolatione Philosophiae* distinguished between the dogmatic theology of neo-Platonic revelation and the natural theology of Aristotelian philosophy. By the ninth century, Charlemagne was encouraging the establishment of monastic schools structured around Aristotle’s seven liberal arts. According to Copleston, John Scotus produced “the first great system of the Middle Ages" based on a reconciliation of “the categories and modes of thought and ideas which former writers had bequeathed to him…[l] moulding them into a system.” (Copleston, II, p. 112) See Copleston, II, pp. 101-133.

\(^{27}\) Unlike Plato, who located the soul in the realm of the intelligences external to the body, Aristotle located the soul in man and made the “active intellect” the source of human progress. (Copleston, I, p. 331) Drawing, in part, on Plato, Augustine argued that “the soul is illumined, in order that it may see and truly understand everything, either in itself or in the light. For the light is God himself, whereas the soul is a creature; Yet, since it is rational and intellectual, it is made in His image.” (Augustine, *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, XII, 31.59, in Bourke, p. 97) Aquinas also spoke of light, but he confined its
one hand, the "passive" intellect received the particularities of a material object as a sensory experience and, transmitting that reception to the mind, created a visual image or "likeness." On the other hand, this likeness might be received by the "active" intellect, which translated the image into a universal idea from which axioms might ultimately be deduced—axioms which, when combined, fostered our knowledge of universal reality and efficient cause. By this means, Aquinas transformed universal ideas into the potential by-product of the active intellect's abstraction of common essences in particular things. On the one hand, this served to relocate the soul in the body—a circumstance indicative of the philosophical shift-influence from Plato to Aristotle—and, thereby, to make man a 'whole' and autonomous—if imperfect—being. On the other hand, by shifting the emphasis from contemplation and illumination to observation and contemplation, it served to restore the link between knowledge and virtue: the closer the individual approached to perfect knowledge the closer he approached to perfect goodness.

28 According to Aquinas, "The human intellect... is able to know the form that exists individually in corporeal matter... by abstracting the form from individual matter as it is represented by sensory images." (Aquinas, The Summa of Theology, I-I, Qu. 85,1, in Sigmund, p. 36) Hence, he continues, "to understand humanity apart from individual conditions, that is, ...to universalize it, humanity must be perceived by the intellect as the likeness of the typical nature, not of the individual men." (Aquinas, The Summa of Theology, I-I, Qu. 85,2, in Sigmund, pp. 36-37) See Aquinas, The Summa of Theology, I-I, Qu. 85,1-2, in Sigmund, pp. 36-37; Copleston, II, pp. 189-190, 197-199, 201-204, 389-390.

As Aquinas wrote, "since all knowledge that a person has about a thing is based on his understanding of its substance (according to the Philosopher [Aristotle]...), in this life all knowledge that is in our purpose to the vision of God. (Aquinas, Summa Against the Gentiles, II, 53, in Sigmund, p. 9) Thomas Aquinas located the source of divine light directly in the intellect and, thereby, deemed the theory of illumination redundant; according to Aquinas, who adopted an a posteriori method of reasoning, the existence of God might be proved in five ways: by "the argument of motion," which Aristotle employed in the form of Unmoved Mover; "from the nature of an efficient cause," which derived from Aristotle's Metaphysics, V, 2; on the basis of "possibility" and "necessity"; on the principle of gradation—there being a lower, there must be a highest; and on the evidence of "order... in the universe." (Aquinas, The Summa of Theology, I-I, Qu. 2,3, in Sigmund, pp. 30-32) See Copleston, I, p. 331, and II, p. 225; Augustine, Literal Commentary on Genesis, XII, 31.59, in Bourke, p. 97; Aquinas, Summa Against the Gentiles, II, 53, The Summa of Theology, I-I, Qu. 2,3, in Sigmund, pp. 9. 30-32.
As a result of Aristotle’s influence, St. Albert the Great (1206-1280) and, more notably, St. Thomas Aquinas broke from Augustine, emphasizing empirical observation as a necessary component of reason.\textsuperscript{30} While Aquinas, too, believed that morality and reason were informed by eternal law, he added the intermediary context of natural law, discernible to man through his participation in, and observation of, the external world.\textsuperscript{31} This was to relocate the source of “realism.” Whereas Augustine’s neo-Platonist realism cautioned against the subjective, fluid and, ultimately, imperfect knowledge born of sensory experience,\textsuperscript{32} and endorsed internal contemplation as the proper method for attaining wisdom,\textsuperscript{33} Aquinas’s neo-Aristotelian realism, while continuing to privilege philosophical contemplation as the medium of higher reason, grounded knowledge in sense-perception.\textsuperscript{34}

In general, then, a more external and secular approach to the understanding of intellects originates in the senses.” See Aquinas, \textit{The Summa Against the Gentiles}, I, 3, in Sigmund, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{30} Copleston, II, pp. 293-300, 303-306, 310-311.

\textsuperscript{31} Aquinas, \textit{The Summa of Theology}, I-II, Qu. 100, 1, in Sigmund, p. 58. According to Aquinas, “Rational creatures... participate in eternal reason in that they have a natural inclination to their proper actions and ends. Such participation in the eternal law by rational creatures is called the natural law.” (Aquinas, \textit{The Summa of Theology}, I-II, Qu. 91, 2, in Sigmund, p. 46) For a further discussion on eternal, natural, human and divine laws, see Aquinas, \textit{Summa of Theology}, I-II, Qu. 91-109, in Sigmund, pp. 46-60.

\textsuperscript{32} Augustine calls this process of internal gazing as seeing “the truth within your own heart.” (Augustine, \textit{On Free Choice}, II, 4; in Bourke, p. 23) As Copleston writes, “Augustine assumed, with Plato, that the objects of true knowledge are unchanging, from which it necessarily follows that knowledge of changing objects is not true knowledge.” (Copleston, II, pp. 56-57) Sensory knowledge was less useful for contemplation because more likely to deceive. See Augustine, \textit{On Free Choice}, II, 4, \textit{On the Trinity}, XII, 14.22-15.25 and XV, 12.2, \textit{City of God}, VIII, 6, \textit{Confessions}, 17.23, in Bourke, pp. 23, 36-37, 59, 130-131; Copleston, II, pp. 55-61.

\textsuperscript{33} While holding that the end of temporal life was eternal life, and that the moral codes of society were necessarily prescribed by the eternal laws of God, Augustine did not ground these beliefs in evidence drawn from nature. And it was not that God impressed the soul with the standards of truth themselves (the ideogenetic viewpoint), or even with a vision of God from which such standards might be deduced (the ontological viewpoint), but simply with the necessity of their existence. See Copleston, II, pp. 64, 71, 139-142, 392, and III, p. 50.

\textsuperscript{34} Copleston, II, pp. 55-56.
reality went hand-in-hand with the growing influence of Aristotle and his alternative theory of human intellect. Combined, the effect was to generate an alternative interpretation of classicism. In general, although all continued to advance those fundamental positions consistent with Augustine, Plato and Aristotle—the intelligibility of reality, for example, and the notion of a necessary state of perfection towards which man progressed and in conformity with which he was necessarily designed—, they differed where their mentors likewise differed—as in the relationship between body and soul, existence and essence, matter and form, faith and reason, contemplation and observation, nature and God.  

These differences were reflected in the various schools of thought that emerged in the thirteenth century. For example, whereas the more neo-Platonic Augustinians of the Franciscan school continued to locate knowledge in the contemplation and illumination of rationes seminales impressed on the human soul during Creation, the more neo-Aristotelian Augustinians of the Dominican school located knowledge in the observation and contemplation of the external evidence of the natural world. Similarly, whereas Augustine and the Franciscans adopted a neo-Platonic position, holding body/ matter/ existence and soul/ form/ essence to be

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35 Copleston, II, p. 424.
36 Initially, Copleston writes, "the prevailing philosophy... was derived from Platonism... and... the Platonic tradition continued for long to dominate Christian thought from the philosophic viewpoint." (Copleston, II, p. 14) By the thirteenth-century, however, Augustinianism could be divided into two major schools whose differences were informed by a more Platonic or Aristotelian bias. Essentially, Franciscans like St. Bonaventure stressed a neo-Platonic tradition whereas Dominicans like St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas emphasized an Aristotelian view of knowledge. This gap was narrowed at the end of the thirteenth century when John Duns Scotus established a neo-Franciscan tradition more complementary with Aristotelianism. In general, then, although other schools of thought continued to exist, thirteenth-century Scholasticism was dominated by a neo-Aristotelian reconciliation of Augustinian and classical influences. See Copleston, II, pp. 14, 213-217, 242-243, 245-246, 460-475.
37 Copleston, III, pp. 416, 418.
separate entities, the soul or "form" being "pure potentiality" in containing the essence of human perfection, the Dominicans sided with Aristotle who, supporting the unity of body and soul, concluded that matter, as the medium of change and motion, was the primary instrument of self-realization. Finally, against Augustine, who deemed human society a negative consequence of the Fall, neo-Aristotelian Thomists emphasized the positive role of society in the attainment of good, making the narrative of Christianity more complementary with classicism.

Thus, by the thirteenth century, a more critical and empirical approach was shaping the analysis of knowledge and reality. This effected a slightly different interpretation of identity: whereas the neo-Platonism of Augustine and the Franciscans suggested soul/form/essence to be the proper context of being and, so, made virtue the by-product of internal contemplation—insofar as the spiritual realm of the intelligences was the proper context for understanding the eternal relationship between man and God—, the Dominicans inquired after body/matter/existence as...

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38 Hence Aristotle’s definition of the Unmoved Mover. As Aquinas likewise described it, “the human soul needs bodily organs to derive its knowledge from bodily things.” (Aquinas, *Summa Against the Gentiles*, III, 81, in Sigmund, p. 10) By contrast, Augustine held the external soul to move the body towards knowledge. (Augustine, *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, VIII, 20.39, in Bourke, pp. 63-64) See Aquinas, *Summa Against the Gentiles*, III, 81, in Sigmund, p. 10; Augustine, *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, VIII, 20.39, in Bourke, pp. 63-64; Copleston, III, p. 29; Bourke, pp. 67-68.

39 Like Aristotle, Aquinas believed that “man is by nature a political and social animal.” (Aquinas, *On Kingship*, Ch. 1, in Sigmund, p. 14) Society was thus the context for good. But he added to this classical vision a Christian emphasis on eternal life: “Now, because the man who lives the life of virtue is destined for a higher end which is, as we have said, the enjoyment of the divine, this must also be the final end of human society. The final end of organized society then is not [merely] to live the life of virtue but through a life of virtue to attain the enjoyment of God.” (Aquinas, *On Kingship*, Ch. 1, in Sigmund, p. 27) See Aquinas, *On Kingship*, Ch. 1, 14, in Sigmund, pp. 14, 27.

40 Like Aristotle before them, the thirteenth-century philosophers were more moderate ‘realists’ than Augustine had been, basing knowledge of reality on contemplation born of sense-experience. This helped distinguish philosophy from theology. See Copleston, III, pp. 2-3.

41 On the one hand, Franciscans like St. Bonaventure envisioned a unified and harmonious reality hierarchically ordered according to the relationship between God and His created beings. Although each being was considered equal in essence—its divine origin—, it was necessarily ‘higher’ or ‘lower’ by virtue of its capacity for intellectual and moral truth—i.e. its temporal capacity for contemplation.
the proper context for being, making virtue, at least in part, a by-product of action—insofar as nature was the proper context for understanding the relationship between man and God.  

This advanced the role of empirical science as a point-of-departure for theological, philosophical and, ultimately, scientific inquiry.  

According to Paul Sigmund, St. Thomas Aquinas was the most influential philosopher of the mediaeval period. He brilliantly blended Aristotelian and Christian doctrines into a credible synthesis that made classicism and Christianity compatible, reconciling their different visions of society, their different emphases on reason and faith, and their different perceptions of the relationship between man and God. The results were a more moderate realism based on natural law and the
elevation of philosophy into a distinct discipline.\(^\text{47}\) Indeed, by grounding social relationships in natural laws made newly accessible by observation, Thomism allowed for the examination and resolution of social issues without theological intervention.\(^\text{48}\) This paved the way for an autonomous, secular State.\(^\text{49}\)

In the end, then, Augustine’s legacy became linked with conflicting interpretations of knowledge and virtue and their varying methodologies: while Augustine and the Franciscans deemed knowledge to move from efficient to final cause—our knowledge of God thus being the point-of-departure for our knowledge of the world\(^\text{50}\) — and, therefore, endorsed an \textit{a priori} method based on internal contemplation, St. Thomas and the Dominicans, while admitting man’s implicit knowledge of God, located the source of that knowledge in internal contemplation of

\(^{47}\) Both Aristotle and Aquinas argued “for an order and purpose in nature and man that can be determined by the study of their structure and development…” Moreover, whereas the Platonists “argued for the real existence of universal Ideas or Forms, apart from individual things,” Aristotle and Aquinas argued only for the existence of individual things, from the essence of which universal ideas might be abstracted. See Sigmund, introduction, pp. xix-xx.

\(^{48}\) As Sigmund writes, Aquinas crafted “a vision of an objective and purposive order of justice in the universe in which reasons and purposes can be found for what we observe in the external world, in society, and in man.” (Sigmund, introduction, p. xxvi) Sigmund adds: “Aquinas shares with his mentor, Aristotle, a belief in the human capacity to identify goals, values, and purposes (‘teleology’) in the structure and functioning of the human person that can provide the basis of a theory of ethics….. His Christian belief in the providence of God and his Aristotelian doctrine of teleology combine to convince him that life has meaning, and that that meaning is, at least in part, available to human reason.” (Sigmund, introduction, pp. xxvi-xxvii.) See Sigmund, introduction, St. Thomas Aquinas on Politics and Ethics, pp. xxvi-xxvii; Aquinas, Summa Against the Gentiles, II, 2-3, 25, in Sigmund, pp. 6-7.

\(^{49}\) Sigmund, introduction, p. xxi. Whereas Augustine was skeptical of man’s will and capacity to pursue virtue in the social sphere—Augustine interpreted temporal history as a battle between the will of the Church (goodness) and the will of the State (interest)—, Aquinas adopted the Aristotelian vision of progress as the natural course of society.” (Sigmund, introduction, pp. xiii-xiv.) He explains: “The teleological outlook of Aristotle is used to fashion a rational philosophical basis for the Christian belief in a purposive and loving Creator. Their combination leads Aquinas to look for an order and harmony in human society, politics, and ethics that is free of contradiction, although not of tension....” (Sigmund, introduction, p. xxvi) See Augustine, City of God, XIX, 17, and On Psalm 64, 2, in Bourke, pp. 203-205; Copleston, II, pp. 289-291; Aquinas, The Summa of Theology, I-II, Qu. 92,1, in Sigmund, p. 47; Sigmund, introduction, St. Thomas Aquinas on Politics and Ethics, pp. xiii-xiv, xxii, xxvi.

\(^{50}\) Copleston, II, p. 253.
the external world, thereby endorsing an *a posteriori* method that moved from the evidence of final effect back to efficient cause—from Nature to God.\(^5\) This required that some element of God—the perfect universal—exist in the material world for mental detection. Hence the Thomist emphasis on the real existence of common essences in particular things.\(^5\)

This difference bears relevance for the study of portraiture. In the study of portraits, the issue of knowledge is reflected in the issue of “likeness.” Among Thomists, “likeness” was understood to be an expression of the universal idea contained in the common essences found in particular things. Franciscans, on the other hand, while not denying that “likeness” might capture similarities among things, rejected any necessary correlation between these similarities and universal ideas, since all sensory knowledge is necessarily singular and, so, particular.\(^5\) The importance of this difference rests in its intellectual implications for the meaning and value of likeness. Among those who subscribed to the Thomist view, a “likeness” might be said to advance human knowledge and, so, goodness, by providing an audience with universal truths about reality. Among Franciscans, on the other hand, a “likeness” might provide little more than the subjective rendering of a particular experience.\(^5\)

\(^5\) Aquinas distinguished this form of knowledge from the perfect truth of revelation acquired upon knowledge of God. But man is given “a certain foretaste” of such knowledge by the first principles of nature—those which his natural reason recognizes as self-evident and those deduced from self-evident principles. See Aquinas, *Summa Against the Gentiles*, I, 3 and 8, IV, 54, in Sigmund, pp. 3, 5, 12.

\(^5\) Copleston, II, pp. 253, 258-260, 309-310, 325, 336-346. Augustine and the Franciscans argued that universal ideas have only a conceptual existence, without foundation in reality. St. Bonaventure, for example, though he differed from Augustine in admitting sensory objects as a source of passive sensation, defended the interior source of eternal truth. See Copleston, II, pp. 250-258, 283-284.

\(^5\) As Copleston writes, “One can speak of abstracting something ‘common’ from things, if one means that one can consider things according to their likeness to one another. But the universality of the concept... is superimposed by the mind...” See Copleston, III, pp. 39-40.

\(^5\) According to Augustine, likenesses are but images of memories based on experience—real or imagined. See Augustine, *Confessions*, X, 8.14, in Bourke, p. 79; Copleston, III, pp. 29-33.
theory, then, whereas a "general" likeness could be interpreted as more valuable than
a "particular" likeness, insofar as the general expression of a subject might be said to
equate with a general knowledge of its species and, so, with a knowledge of its
potentiality and final cause, such an argument would bear relevance only among those
who subscribed to the intelligibility of reality and located the source of that
intelligibility in the reasoned contemplation of sense-experience.55

Significantly, this appears to have been the case in Britain.56 Even the
Franciscan Roger Bacon (d. circa 1292) emphasized the importance of sensory
observation.57 Indeed, the writings of Roger Bacon mark a stage in the development
of neo-Franciscan thought that culminated in the consensus of John Duns Scotus (c.
1265/6 - 1308). Endorsing an Aristotelian view of knowledge, Scotus defended
scientific demonstration based on observation and experiment as the only method for
proving God's existence in the absence of revelation, thereby advocating the a
posteriori approach endorsed by Thomism in matters of philosophical inquiry.58 At
the same time, however, while rejecting the Augustinian doctrines of rationes
seminales and divine illumination, Scotus denied any extramental foundation for
universal concepts, thereby undermining the value of likeness.59

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55 According to Copleston, for example, Francis Suarez endorsed the Thomist theory of abstracted
likeness, but whereas neo-Aristotelians understood individuality to derive from distinctions of matter
(body), Suarez perceived them to derive from differences of form (soul). See Copleston, III, pp. 360-
361, 366-367. For further comparison between Suarez and Thomas, see Copleston, III, pp. 376-378.
56 According to Copleston, the Oxford University curriculum represented "a characteristic mingling of
the Augustinian tradition with 'empiricism'...." See Copleston, II, p. 212.
58 Copleston, II, pp. 454, 519-523.
59 Copleston, II, pp. 475, 483, 488, 491, 497, 499, 510-512, 517. For more information about John
Duns Scotus, see Copleston, II, pp. 476-551.
In the end, although the debate between the Franciscans and Dominicans was largely theoretical—insofar as the disciplinary distinctions between theology and philosophy engendered in the work of Dominicans like Aquinas in no way denied the supremacy of revealed truth or fundamental tenets like the intelligibility of reality, the necessary relationship between eternal and moral laws, and the necessary perfection of the eternal end for which man was divinely intended—, their differences forged a gap between philosophy and theology that affected the perception of human intellect and identity. Over time, a more critical understanding of the relationship between truth—the by-product of wisdom—and reason—the medium of knowledge—undermined the credibility of an intelligible supernatural reality; whereas strict Franciscans continued to perceive knowledge as deriving from an internal contemplation and illumination of the *rationes seminales* impressed on the human soul during Creation, and neo-Aristotelian Dominicans and neo-Franciscan Scotists continued to hold that a limited knowledge of reality might derive from a reasoned understanding of the external world—neither group denying the primacy of contemplation or revelation—, the way was opened for more radical interpretations.

Indeed, the neo-Aristotelian emphasis on sensory experience invited a critique of

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60 Not all Dominicans were Thomists; some, for example, like James of Metz, held form—rather than matter—to be the “principle of individuation,” thereby aligning with the Franciscans. See Copleston, *III*, p. 24.

61 The Dominican hierarchy of knowledge informed the thought of later philosophers. Machiavelli, for example, wrote: “There are three kinds of intelligence: one kind understands things for itself [knowledge], the second appreciates what others can understand [customary authority], the third understands neither for itself nor through others [ignorance].” (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 75) See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 75; Copleston, *II*, pp. 545-546, 548-550.
realism that inverted the relationship between contemplation and observation, with important implications for identity.\textsuperscript{62}

As the interpretation of reality came increasingly to turn on a question of knowledge, the Scholastic consensus of the late thirteenth century was weakened. In general, Scholastics continued to recognize a realist hierarchy of knowledge descending from theology (wisdom based on revealed truths), to philosophy (knowledge based on reasoned observation and deduction), to physical science (knowledge based on demonstration—hypothesis and experiment—and induction).\textsuperscript{63}

And this continued to guide their realist interpretation of virtue and identity. Since knowledge was the medium of goodness—the final state of eternal happiness and perfection (beatitude)—, and the value of the individual turned on his contribution to the good life, a contribution dependent upon knowledge, those with claims to a higher knowledge of reality were necessarily more virtuous—and, therefore, superior—to those without such claims.\textsuperscript{64} But by the fourteenth century, a nominalist movement led by the Franciscan, William of Ockham, was challenging the credibility of

\textsuperscript{62} For a discussion of this difference, and its influence on St. Thomas Aquinas, see Copleston, II, pp. 328-334, 375-376, 385-386. The heightened emphasis on empirical studies can be attributed, in part, to the evolution of science and mathematics with which William of Ockham and the nominalist movement was affiliated. According to Copleston, “Already in the thirteenth century... we can see the beginning of a scientific investigation of Nature.” (Copleston, III, p. 422) See Copleston, III, pp. 15-16, 420-422.

\textsuperscript{63} Copleston, II, p. 325, and III, p. 419.

\textsuperscript{64} Aquinas described three levels of happiness and goodness: pleasure, affiliated with corporeal desire and ignorance; virtue, affiliated with civic goodness and reason; and truth, affiliated with divine wisdom and pure happiness. One’s identity thus turned on one’s will and capacity to attain ever-higher levels. (Aquinas, \textit{Summa Against the Gentiles}, II, 63, in Sigmund, pp. 9-10) As inequality was an effect of will, so society fell into a natural order “based on different duties and functions” in which superior persons ruled inferior ones. (Aquinas, \textit{Summa of Theology}, I-I, Qu. 96, 3-4, in Sigmund, p. 38-39) However, because Aquinas conditioned a “good life” on two things—“to act in accordance with virtue” and “a sufficiency of the material goods that are necessary for virtuous action”—will became a complement to landed leisure. (Aquinas, \textit{On Kingship}, 15, in Sigmund, p. 29) The end result was three social classes: nobility, gentry and commons. (Aquinas, \textit{Summa of Theology}, I-I, Qu. 108, 2,
Scholastic realism. Ockham’s insistence on the liberty of the divine will, which implied the possibility of arbitrary laws and standards, and his rejection of the necessary relationship between eternal and natural laws, advocated only two types of knowledge: revealed truth and demonstrated fact. On the one hand, this was to complicate—if not deny—the necessary link between knowledge and virtue; if metaphysical knowledge were a matter of divine will, and virtue a matter of human will, upon what might virtue be based and by what standards measured? On the other hand, by subverting the authority of philosophy to the interests of science and, by extension, the place of the philosopher to the place of the scientist, the conditions upon which one might acquire knowledge and, so, ascend the scale of human value, were made more inclusive.

In denying the relevance of philosophy to knowledge, in confining knowledge to revealed truth and demonstrated fact, nominalism upset the balance-of-influence between theoretike—the realm of philosophy—and practike—the realm of science—

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65 According to Copleston, nominalism twisted Aristotelianism: “questions which were formerly treated as metaphysical questions are treated primarily as logical questions.” (Copleston, III, p. 12) Petrus Aureolus, who rejected the material foundations of universal ideas, marked a stage in the development of nominalism. (Copleston, III, pp. 41-42) See Copleston, III, pp. 12, 41-42.

66 According to Copleston, William of Ockham recognized two kinds of science: physical science, which deals with real things and effects ‘first terms’; and rational science or logic, which deals with terms and concepts. Since only real, material things exist—as Aristotle and the Thomists likewise believed—physical science must serve as the rightful foundation for logical science. Hence, observation and demonstration must properly precede metaphysical contemplation or rationalization. Physical science thus became affiliated with two forms of knowledge: certain truths based on analytical propositions—i.e. self-evident principles that cannot be contradicted—; and uncertain facts, based on repetitive cause and effect. This was to deny the a priori approach of traditional Franciscan thought. See Copleston, II, p. 323, and III, pp. 11-14, 41-42, 59-60, 69, 91-92, 101, 125-126, 151-157, 166-167.

67 Aristotle and Plato understood the meaning of life to be the attainment of good and identity to be the measure of one’s contribution to this end—one’s virtue. In general, Augustine also understood the end of human life to be the achievement of Good and the standard of individual worth to be virtue, but he took the classical position one step further by making this virtue a matter of ‘will’; by virtue of our will,
and the balance-of-authority between the ‘higher’ standards of theoretiκe—those based on eternal, natural laws—and the ‘lower’ standards of practike—those based on convention and experience.\textsuperscript{68} Fundamental tenets were affected, including the necessary relationship between divine and human intellect (the latter an imperfect image of the former), the necessary relationship between divine and human will (the latter an imperfect complement to the former), and the principle of perfection as necessarily informing the foundations of law and virtue, the intelligibility of reality, the theory of potentiality and, by extension, the standards of social order and individual identity.\textsuperscript{69}

Indeed, having located the standards of human life in the evidence of particular experience, nominalism upset the traditional social order.\textsuperscript{70} Whereas St. Thomas had deemed the common man too preoccupied with labor to indulge in the contemplation essential to truth and, consequently, made the common man dependent on a leisured—disinterested and self-sufficient—elite, nominalism suggested that the leisured intellectual was no better a source of truth than the common observer.\textsuperscript{71} At the same time, its denial of theoretical truth invited the common man to narrate a reality and identity suited to his particular experience, regardless of customary

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\textsuperscript{68} Copleston, III, pp. 21-22. As Copleston notes, the result was a new emphasis on empiricism and the reality of everyday life; although “Renaissance scientists ...[were] interested primarily in knowledge for its own sake...[,] new scientific discoveries and the opening up of the new world naturally suggested a contrast between a knowledge of nature... for man’s benefit, and the older abstract discipline which seemed devoid of practical utility.” See Copleston, III, p. 21.


\textsuperscript{70} Copleston, III, pp. 420-422, 425.

\textsuperscript{71} As Copleston writes: “By making the moral law dependent on the free divine choice [Ockham] implied... that without revelation man can have no certain knowledge even of the present moral order established by God.” See Copleston, III, pp. 14-15; quoted from p. 14.
authority. This was not without risk. Once individuals became persuaded they could shape narratives and identities beyond the parameters of a socially-defined subjecthood, the social order became subject to ‘false’ standards at the risk of instability. In the end, those who held eternal laws to be unintelligible severed the link between eternal standards and temporal life, opening the way for moral fluidity and a more subjective interpretation of identity. As Frederic Copleston writes, “a new age for man was beginning.... And [it]... favoured the growth of individualism.”

The second phase of mediaeval thought was thus characterized by a move from consensus to criticism. By the fourteenth century, the realist consensus of the “old” schools—those which retained the legacies of St. Thomas (The Thomists or Dominicans), Duns Scotus (The Scotists or, more loosely, the Franciscans), Giles of Rome (the Hermits of St. Augustine) and Henry of Ghent—was being challenged by those who denied the intelligibility of universal truths in the absence of revelation. In denying the credibility of realism, nominalism weakened the customary foundations for evaluating identity: whereas most mediaeval thinkers had come to

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73 John Canfield describes ‘false’ identities as mere summations of “what the self-image images,” effected by a ‘false’ consciousness. (Canfield, p. 134) Among theorists as dissimilar as Locke, Shaftesbury, and Rousseau, a society composed of false identities was considered to be dangerous, for false identities signaled false realities, the foundation of instability and corruption. See Canfield, p. 134; Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, III, p. 193; Taylor, pp. 21, 159-161; Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 464-6, 495-6, 538.

74 For Augustine and his followers, moral laws were fixed, based on the intelligible standard of goodness. This was not necessarily the case in the modern period. See Augustine, Moral Behavior of the Catholic Church, 5-8, in Bourke, pp. 155-158.

75 Copleston, III, pp. 18-20; quoted from p. 19.

76 Copleston, II, pp. 9-11, 435-440.
endorse the Aristotelian description of man as a social animal and society as the natural inclination of human potentiality, nominalism rejected such claims on grounds of divine liberty, which entitled God to any agenda, however inconsistent with the demands of human reason; whereas most mediaeval thinkers had come to perceive the rise of civil society as occurring, first, for purposes of mutual preservation and, ultimately, for purposes of higher good, nominalism reclaimed the Augustinian tenor of self-interested preservation; whereas most mediaeval thinkers had come to believe that political authority was properly vested in the people and the purpose of “compact” was to effect a natural and harmonious balance between government and governed, the “natural rights” retained by the individual being justly balanced by the necessary powers of a sovereign authority, nominalism opened the way for a more arbitrary understanding of compact—i.e. for individual rights and sovereign authority to become “social conventions” without foundation in natural law.77

Indeed, nominalism changed the relationship between nature, man, society, and God, recasting the State in Augustinian terms, conducive to more radical convention narratives—those based not on a natural proclivity towards the good, but on a need to protect against evil.78 At the same time, it elevated the role of empirical observation at the expense of contemplation. In the end, two competing narratives emerged, each endorsing different combinations of classical and Christian doctrine:

77 Copleston, III, pp. 312-315. Joannes Althusius provided perhaps the first “clear statement of the contract theory” in which “a contract lies at the basis of every association or community of men.” (Copleston, III, p. 327) However, unlike Jean Bodin, Althusius argued that individuals necessarily retained their natural authority in the act of compact, a point which linked him to Locke rather than Hobbes. As Copleston explains it, because contract is sanctified by its roots in natural law, according to divine authority, “sovereignty rests always, necessarily and inalienably with the people.” See Copleston, III, p. 327.

on the one hand, a moderate realist narrative supported a neo-Aristotelian correlation between knowledge and virtue characterized by a traditional Christian ethic and an interest in empirical observation as the point-of-departure for higher reason; on the other hand, a nominalist narrative subverted the neo-Aristotelian correlation between knowledge and virtue to an Augustinian pessimism and a secondary interest in scientific methodology.

In part, these developments reflected the growing influence of science on society and narrative. The emerging perception of nature as whole in and of itself and, so, as intellectually accessible in the absence of revelation inclined attention away from the eternal realm of theological contemplation towards the temporal realm of scientific observation. As nature became the complement to science—their relationship reflected in the popularity of mathematics—, traditional religion lost ground to deism and contemplation lost ground to observation. At the same time, as knowledge became more inclusive, the opportunities for individual agency in narrative and identity increased. This influence persisted during the early modern period: as observation and induction informed modern British empiricism, so mathematical deduction shaped Continental rationalism.

79 Copleston, III, pp. 248-250. For an overview of the arguments engaged in this development, see Copleston, III, pp. 250-289.
81 Science informed the development of two strains of thought: continental rationalism, led by Rene Descartes (1596-1650) in France; and British empiricism, led by Francis Bacon (1561-1626) in England. For a discussion of these developments, see Copleston, III, pp. 290, 300, IV, pp. 1, 13-33, 37-38, 55-62, 396-403, 427-433, and vol. VI, pp. 405-415.
In part, too, the criticism motivating the nominalist movement was born of the
tensions between Church and State. Similar conditions affected the Renaissance
period. Machiavelli’s *Prince*, for example, defended absolute monarchy and secular
interests in the interest of political stability. Indeed, faced with Florentine political
turmoil from 1494 to 1530, Machiavelli crafted a political discourse that undermined
the authority of traditional realist narratives. Not only did it counsel princes to
privilege power above virtue, it dismissed with the principle of moral continuity,
forging a separate ethic for political society than that ascribed to eternal life—one
based on civic virtue (per human reason) the other based on moral goodness (per
divine wisdom). As Bernard Crick writes, “Here we are, for the first time, on the
edge of the relativity of morals; and there is a case... for seeing Machiavelli rather
than Montesquieu as the first master of political sociology.”

The influence of Machiavelli’s *Prince* is resonant in Hobbes’s *Leviathan*,
which was likewise motivated by contemporary political tensions and the demands of
a commercial experience. Indeed, the political absolutism of Machiavelli’s

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82 Machiavelli wrote in *The Discourses*: “It is the Church that has kept, and keeps, Italy divided.” (Machiavelli, Discourse I.12, in Crick, p. 145.) For a full discussion of Machiavelli’s concerns, see Discourse I.12, in Crick, pp. 142-146; Copleston, III, pp. 346-347.


84 Machiavelli wrote: “a man who wants to act virtuously in every way necessarily comes to grief among so many who are not virtuous. Therefore if a prince wants to maintain his rule he must be prepared not to be virtuous...” (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 49-50) See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 19, 30-50, 56-58; Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, Discourse I.32, in Crick, p. 188.

85 As Crick describes it, Machiavelli recognized two moralities, “the morality of the soul and the morality of the city,” which coexisted in tension. (Crick, introduction, p. 65) This observation undermined the classical theory of virtue, which presumed a single moral standard operating towards potentiality. See Crick, introduction to Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, pp. 28, 33-34, 63, 65-67.


87 Indeed, what is significant about Machiavelli’s perspective is that his notion of gentlemen is not based on landed birth and leisure but on positive productivity. Venetian “gentlemen,” he wrote, were gentlemen in name only, “for they do not derive any considerable income from estates: their great
Prince—and the self-preserving negativism of Augustinian nominalism—helped make credible both the practical absolutism of Hobbes’s Leviathan and the theoretical absolutism informing the ‘divine right of kings’. Yet political absolutism was, in general, short-lived. Over time, the principle of individual rights—of the people’s natural authority and the sovereign’s natural duty—and the neo-classical perception of society—as the by-product of a divine and natural inclination among men to compact, first, among themselves and, second, between themselves and a legislator—, were reasserted with greater force. In the end, the influence of Machiavelli’s Prince was exceeded by his Discourses, whose practical republic appeared a modern update on neo-Aristotelian realism.

In fact, Machiavelli’s republic represented an unusual blending of theoretical principles and practical expediency. As Crick observes, the conditions it invoked reflected an urban bias not found in traditional Aristotelian narratives. Indeed, a

wealth is based on merchandise and movable goods.” (Machiavelli, Discourse I.55, in Crick, p. 247) As Crick observes: “Here is a bourgeois assumption, indeed [...] property... has a dynamic of its own: it is the duty of men—just as John Locke was to argue—to use and improve it.” (Crick, introduction to Machiavelli, The Discourses, p. 39) But Machiavelli was not consistent on this point, for he also advocated poverty as a means of de-emphasizing the connection between property and virtue. (Machiavelli, The Discourses, Discourse III.25, in Crick, p. 475) See Crick, introduction to Machiavelli, The Discourses, pp. 39; Machiavelli, Discourse I.55 and III.24, in Crick, pp. 245-247, 475; Grafton, introduction to Machiavelli, The Prince, p. xxiv.

88 Copleston, III, pp. 311-312.
89 Copleston, III, pp. 347-348.
90 Machiavelli’s Discourses were probably begun, at least in thought, by 1513, when he wrote the Prince. The two works appear as bookend manuals for alternative political conditions. Yet, even when he was writing the Prince, he was casting himself in the guise of humanist; a letter to Vettori records: “When evening comes, I return to my home, and I go into my study; and on the threshold, I take off my everyday clothes, which are covered with mud and mire, and I put on regal and curial robes; and dressed in a more appropriate manner I enter into the ancient courts of ancient men...; and there I am not ashamed to speak to them, to ask them the reasons for their actions; and they, in their humanity, answer me...: I become completely part of them.” See Machiavelli, Letter to Vettori, quoted in Grafton, introduction to Machiavelli, The Prince, p. xix.
91 Machiavelli’s methodology is a posteriori, based on practical experience as well as theoretical ideals. See Crick, introduction to Machiavelli, The Discourses, pp. 48-49.
traditional emphasis on custom and civic virtue was joined with the authority of town
over country, "a large middle class," and the institutional participation of commoners
in politics.92 Coupled with his concession to "flexibility," Machiavelli's narrative
anticipates the commercial humanism of eighteenth-century Britain.93 Moreover,
while endorsing common good as the end of society, Machiavelli makes the means by
which it is attained less fixed than traditional neo-Aristotelian narratives. Indeed, in
the interest of social stability, not only does he make the three "powers" or estates of
Aristotelian theory more fluid in both character and authority, he advocates a
controlled tension between nobility and common as essential to the security of
liberty.94 The sum effect was to alter the nature of republican identity. While
continuing to highlight the heroic virtue attendant active civic life, Machiavelli
emphasized the singular talents of distinguished elites—"Great Men" or "Catos"—as
opposed to a body of citizen-equals.95

92 Crick, introduction to Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, p. 41. Machiavelli's emphasis on a large middle
class, like Aristotle's endorsement of polity, was intended as alternative to democracy or oligarchy.
93 As Crick writes, Machiavelli's republic suggested "that civilization itself—morality, civic spirit,
learning, art, science and commerce—was a product of city life..."—not country life. See Crick,
introduction to Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, pp. 43, 536 (Note 34).
94 For example, circumstances that require absolute rule may call on the estate of kingship. See Crick,
in Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, pp. 30, 34, 534 (Note 27); Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, Discourse 1.4,
1.9, 1.17, in Crick, pp. 113, 132, 159.
95 Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, Discourse III.1, in Crick, p. 386-389. The ideal legislator was
celebrated in the person of Cincinnatus, a virtuous Roman citizen called on to serve as a military
dictator in order to save Rome from defeat. Having completed his public task, Cincinnatus returned
to his farm and resumed his place as a private citizen—a prime example of the "ruled and be ruled" ethic
exalted by Aristotle. Still, Machiavelli's legislators are "great men"—as opposed to citizen-equals.
They "rise above the rank and file" to govern the natural tensions between the upper and lower classes.
A similar position was held by Polybius and Aquinas. As Thomas Aquinas described it: "the best
constitution for a city or kingdom is one in which one person rules in accordance with virtue, and under
him there are others who govern in accordance with virtue.... This was... the government established
by divine law." (Aquinas, *Summa of Theology*, I-II, Qu. 105, 1, in Sigmund, p. 59) See Machiavelli,
*The Discourses*, Discourse I.2, III.1, III.25, III.34, and Crick, introduction and Notes 2, 8, 14, in Crick,
pp. 24-25, 27-28, 110, 386-390, 475-476, 497, 529-531; Aquinas, *Summa of Theology*, I-II, Qu. 90, 3
Although the endorsement of republican ideals—however much modified—implied a rejection of convention theories and a general belief in natural law as the proper basis for society—for interpreting sovereign authority and individual rights, for example—, alternative narratives continued to coexist, often to conflicting ends.\(^\text{96}\)

Machiavelli's version of the classical republic, for example, subverted the private and domestic to the public and civic, Christian goodness to pagan virtue. By contrast, Northern Renaissance narratives tended to subvert public to private, heroic virtue to Christian goodness. Indeed, while both sides acknowledged the necessary role of sense-perception in the development of knowledge—even self-knowledge—, and both accepted the principle of perfection as the final cause and necessary standard of human life—each an indication of Aristotle's expanding influence—, the Northern Renaissance placed greater emphasis on the internal individual, thereby effecting a different relationship between the individual and society.\(^\text{97}\)

Beginning around 1536, when John Calvin argued that an individual's worth was a measure of his Christian goodness in the temporal realm, the Protestant Reformation initiated an 'ethic of ordinary life' that, in complement with the expanding marketplace, turned attention towards the private man in the social sphere.\(^\text{98}\) This conflicted with traditional distinctions between public and private men—the former an essential feature of the virtuous republic, the latter a metaphor

\(^{96}\) Copleston, III, pp. 207-220, 227-228, 273-274, 348-349.

\(^{97}\) In general, the Italian Renaissance was characterized by a renewed interest in classical literature for purposes of improving man and society. In Northern Europe, this interest was wed with demands for moral and social reform. See Copleston, III, pp. 223, 225, 228, 322-324, 329-332, 335-344.

\(^{98}\) The "key point," Taylor writes, "is that the higher is to be found not outside of but as a manner of living ordinary life," and this ethic, he adds, fostered "anti-elite" sentiments, a key influence in the development of a "bourgeois" ideology. See Taylor, pp. 13-14, 23, 211; John Calvin, *Institutes of the*
for patronage and corruption—, recasting the private man in Christian terms. In fact, however, the emerging influence of ‘ordinary life’ was indicative of a changing social and political environment caused, at least in part, by three interlocking trends: a growing uncertainty about customary authority and the possibility of intelligible truth; a corresponding uncertainty about the credibility of social prescriptions; and a consequent emphasis on the secular realm as the only ‘knowable’ sphere of human existence.

The possibility that truth was unintelligible prior to revelation freed Reformed Christians from the natural and fixed standards to which more orthodox Christians were subject. As Baumeister suggests, people became conscious of their two selves, one public and external, the other private and internal. As a result, he writes, they “gradually ceased to equate the individual with the individual’s [birth-]place in society, and they ceased to feel that the person was morally obligated to fulfill the role

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99 As Machiavelli described it, only public citizens benefited society. However, Baumeister notes, “dramatic social changes at the end of the Middle Ages” witnessed “the spread of religious dissent and a great increase in social mobility ....” By the sixteenth century, he goes on, there was an awareness of a “self not directly visible in social actions and roles.” (Baumeister, pp. 30-45) See Baumeister, pp. 30-45; Machiavelli, The Discourses, Discourse III. 28, in Crick, p. 482.

100 According to Roy Baumeister, the “transition from the medieval to the early modern period included two developments important for identity. First, the Protestant Reformation divided the educated classes over the correct interpretation of Christian truth. As a result, instead of being a firm basis for identity, Christian belief became itself somewhat problematic.... Second, social mobility made it quite possible to change one’s rank in society, at least to some extent. Thus, one major component of identity (social rank) came to depend on individual achievement rather than on passive assignment.” See Baumeister, p. 57; Plato, Laws, pp. 277-278, 284-289.

101 As Baumeister observes, “The ‘inner self’ does not really exist. It is a useful concept for describing important parts of human experience and behavior.... [However, as] the contents of the inner self are essentially contents of meaning,” in the absence of a universally-convincing narrative, the context of meaning was lost. (Baumeister, p. 164) Hence, the Reformed Christian turned inward to discover his own “purpose and meaning” for life. (Baumeister, p. 171) See Baumeister, pp. 56-57, 164, 171.
assigned by society." The effects were resonant in the accompanying shift from sociological to psychological identities. As the individual was made responsible for his own salvation and was thus charged with determining his own 'meaning of life', a wedge was forged between the individual and the community manifest in a philosophical isolation between man and his world. Over time, morality and identity assumed a new fluidity as a secular Christian ethic emerged disengaged from the civic ideals of neo-Aristotelian politics and the universal authority of Augustinian realism. The result was a division between the public/external and private/internal self resonant, for example, in the spatial segregations of Renaissance portraiture.

All this rested uneasily with classicism. Although classical principles continued to inform the dominant ideology, the 'internal self' nurtured by the

102 On the one hand, Baumeister writes, "the decline of Christian moral and political views erased the requirement that the individual be content with his lot in society...." (Baumeister, p. 56) On the other hand, the absence of fixed standards made it essential that "each identity ... contain an inner structure of values and priorities" to guide its subject. (Baumeister, p. 164) As a result, "the concept of person was separated from the concept of his or her place in the social structure." (Baumeister, p. 57) This conducd to the Puritan vision of two selves—one private and internal, one public and external. Indeed, Baumeister notes, "It is likely that the two developments were related." (Baumeister, p. 171) See Baumeister, pp. 15, 30-45, 53, 56-57, 164, 171, 246.

103 As Baumeister writes, "Medieval attitudes lacked... emphasis on individuality.... A main reason for the relative indifference to individuality was the firm medieval faith in Christianity.... Salvation ... was collective.... In the twelfth century, however, this seems to have changed.... The later medievals expected the archangel to evaluate your soul based on what you did during your life.... This shift... put the all-important issue of salvation in individualistic terms." See Baumeister, pp. 30-45.

104 Against traditional Christian and classical narratives, the Reformed ethic of 'ordinary life' privileged the private individual in the secular world. As Baumeister observes, "Morality survived as a set of rules about right and wrong, but morality was no longer the means used for fulfilling one's potentiality." See Baumeister, pp. 56-57.

105 By the Renaissance, a growing awareness of individual autonomy was made manifest in portraiture through the compositional, linguistic, and psychological devices of space, gesture, brushstroke, and color. "This freeing of nature from the iconographic tradition," Taylor writes, "also carries consequences for the place of the subject.... There is a new distance between subject and object, and they are clearly situated relative to each other....[—space] 'at one and the same time objectifies the object and personalizes the subject'." See Taylor, pp. 200-202.

106 Plato's insistence on the divine and fixed nature of morality was a conscious refutation of the moral-relativism of convention theories. See Plato, Laws, pp. 408-409, 416-424, 516.
Reformation urged an individual autonomy and self-determination that undermined the ‘fixed’ social and political structure advanced by neo-Aristotelian realism.\textsuperscript{107} The result was a paradoxical blending of individualism and neo-Aristotelian realism in which the principle of individual agency coexisted with the principle of universal perfection.\textsuperscript{108} On the one hand, men were taught that the evaluation of civic virtue and social identity was informed by fixed, natural standards of goodness grounded in eternal laws. On the other hand, they were increasingly encouraged, within this context, to advance and improve themselves according to their independent evaluation of those standards. The result was a constant renegotiation of one’s identity and social place.\textsuperscript{109} In the end, the Reformation’s dissent from customary authority permitted the autonomous and self-determining individual to surface as the agent of his own identity.\textsuperscript{110} As Baumeister explains it, the gain in individual agency that resulted from the Reformation’s dissent from orthodox standards granted the individual “more latitude for defining himself” according to his own “sense of personal potential.”\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{107} Baumeister concludes: “By the eighteenth century, “persons could be permitted to choose their own forms of potential to try to fulfill…. A person’s potentiality thus became an unknown instead of a fixed and known quantity.” See Baumeister, pp. 56-57.

\textsuperscript{108} Copleston, III, pp. 242-243.

\textsuperscript{109} As Crick notes, “What is decisive to Machiavelli, as to Shakespeare, is the interplay between the two presumed forces of character and circumstance, not the fixity of either. If he had meant to say that human nature is everywhere the same, in a strong rather than a weak sense, then he would, presumably have laid out schematically what types of human nature there are, or what basic humours. Plato had done so, and the Mediaeval allegorists.” See Crick, in Machiavelli, \textit{The Discourses}, Note 72, p. 544.

\textsuperscript{110} Taylor, p. 21; Baumeister, pp. 168, 252.

\textsuperscript{111} Baumeister, p. 171.
CHAPTER III
THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

_Persona_ in Latin signifies the _disguise, or outward appearance_ of a man, counterfeited on the Stage; and sometimes more particularly that part of it, which disguiseth the face, as a Mask or Visard.... So that a _Person_, is the same that an _Actor_ is, both on the Stage and in common Conversation; and to _Personate_, is to _Act, or Represent_ himselfe, or an other; and he that acteth another, is said to beare his Person, or act in his name....

- Thomas Hobbes, 1651

Empirical science, practical politics and Reformed Christianity continued to influence the development of British neo-classicism well into the early modern period. In the seventeenth-century, a growing emphasis on politics and the proper distribution of political authority brought the relationship between the individual and society to the fore. On the one hand, in a nod to Machiavelli, Royalists like Lord Halifax urged the authority of a single sovereign on grounds that commoners lacked the capacity for disinterested virtue essential to social stability and public good; the King (supported by the House of Lords) was thus the best means of protecting society from the dangers attendant human power relations.

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1 “A PERSON,” he goes on, “is he [to whom] ... words or actions are ... attributed, whether Truly or by Fiction.” See Hobbes, _Leviathan, or the Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth. Ecclesiastical and Civil_ (London, 1651), p. 217. Hobbes’s philosophy was outlined in three works: _De Cive_ (Paris, 1642), _De Corpore_ (1655) and _De homine_ (1658.) See Copleston, V, p. 2.
2 Copleston, IV, pp. 4-10.
3 According to an anonymous essay, “Observations Upon a late LIBEL, called _A Letter from a Person of Quality to his Friend, Concerning the King’s Declaration, &c._,” attributed to George Savile, 1st
Parliamentarians like the first earl of Shaftesbury advanced the House of Commons as the best means of preserving the natural rights of the individual in the interest of public good.  

In 1642, Charles I responded to Parliamentarian demands for a more ‘balanced’ government with his Answer to the Nineteen Propositions of Both Houses of Parliament. This document stands as testimony to the influence of republican principles on British politics, but it also serves as a reminder of the various forms a republic might take; it described a ‘mixed monarchy’ that wed the principles of ‘hierarchy’ and ‘republic’ into a Polybian-Machiavellian variation on Aristotle’s ‘mixed’ government, transforming the Aristotelian distinction between one

Marquis of Halifax, the claims of the Country nobles were exaggerated. In defense of the Court, the author notes the “Excesses of the Commons,” which had resulted in hostility between the two Houses of Parliament. But he also highlights the self-interested motivations of the Letter writer: they “would be glad, instead of being a little men as their Neighbors, to gain that superiority which Nature denied them.” (“Observations,” p. 2) In this, “the Misleaders” went on, they recall the Long Parliament of the Commonwealth period, insofar as “they would have... a House of Commons that may do what they will, and as long as thy will, that is for ever,” without the consent of Lords and King. (“Observation,” pp. 2, 5, 8) This exceeds even the hopes of “our Modern Plato”—i.e. the first Earl of Shaftesbury. See Anonymous, “Observations Upon a late LIBEL, called A Letter from a Person of Quality to his Friend, concerning the King’s Declaration, &c.” (1675) (London: printed for C. Mason, 1681), pp. 2, 5, 8.  

4 In A Letter from a Person of Quality, To His Friend in the Country, attributed to the first Earl of Shaftesbury, the writer outlines contemporary concerns raised by the recent sitting of the House of Lords: the effort to solidify a “Cavalier Party” in disregard of the “Country Lords;” the effort to solidify unalterably the government of the Church, “and so Tacitely owned to be of Divine Right;” and the declaration of a “government absolute and Arbitrary,” in which Parliament is reduced to a fund-raising and administrative arm of the legislature—“to pass such laws, as the Court and Church shall have a mind to....” (Anon., Letter from a Person of Quality, pp. 1, 2, 6) Hence, he argues, he “Cavalier Party” proposes a “divine Institution.... Nay what is worse, they have truckt away the Rights and Liberties of the people in this,... that they might be owned by the Prince to be Jure Divino, and maintained in that Pretention by that absolute power and force....” (Anon., Letter from a Person of Quality, p. 34) Against this platform, the “Old English Lords” support “Magna Charta” as the premise of English liberties and “ humane Laws;” it “says, Our Kings may not take our Fields, our Vineyards, our Corn, and our Sheep....” (Anon., A Letter from a Person of Quality, p. 34) As likewise communicated in A Letter from a Friend, to a Person of Quality: In Answer to A Letter from a Person of Quality to his Friend; about Abhorers and Addressers, attributed to John Locke, the position of the ‘Country Lords’ was heralded as a defense of the people’s rights and liberties and the “Protestant Religion,” in which light, the Church of England was held to be “the best Reformed Church.” (Anon, A Letter from a Friend, to a Person of Quality, p. 1). See A Letter from a Person of Quality, To His Friend in the Country (London: printed in 1675), pp. 1, 2, 6, 33-34; A Letter from a Friend, to a Person of Quality (London: printed for T. Davies, 1682), p. 1.

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(monarchy), few (aristocracy) and many (polity) into a ‘balanced’ authority combining three estates—king, nobility, and people—, each bearing its own form of virtue—security, wisdom, and liberty—and, consequently, each bearing a legitimate claim to political authority.  

Indeed, the ready manipulation of classical principles permitted their assimilation into all kinds of agendas. As Machiavelli suggested, a republic might conduce to hereditary hierarchy or social equality, to a philosopher-prince or a republican citizen. Similarly, it might exclude the commercial classes from political authority or defend their claim to virtue, might make them gentlemen of ‘title’ or deny such title on grounds of birth—thereby setting or bending the standards of Public identity.

According to Pocock, His Majesty’s Answer to the Nineteen Propositions of Both Houses of Parliament, written in August 1642 by advisors to the Charles I, was a key document in the development of republicanism. It described an English parliamentary monarchy that was ‘republican’, Pocock argues, “in the sense that it was Polybian, ... a mixed government in which monarchy, aristocracy and democracy combined to balance one another... [and] check the degenerative tendency of each.” (Pocock, introduction to Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics, pp. xiii-xiv) Borrowing on the writings of Machiavelli, as Harrington explained it: “the senate proposing, the people resolving, and the magistracy executing, whereby partaking of the aristocracy as in the senate, of the democracy as in the people, and of monarchy as in the magistracy, it is complete.” (Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana, p. 25) See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 355-358, 377, 421; Taylor, p. 195; Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana, pp. 23-24, 38, 65-66, 234, 237; Harrington, A System of Politics, pp. 280-281; Pocock, introduction to Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics, pp. xiii-xiv.

As Aristotle and Harrington described it, a “citizen”—as opposed to a “servant”—was a “freeman,” one “that can live upon his own” and, hence, claim title to independence. (Harrington, A System of Politics, p. 269) Likewise, a nation of independent men was a nation of citizens whose “government may [possibly] be democracy,” but was so necessarily. By contrast, a nation composed of independent and dependent men, citizens and servants, was of necessity “either monarchy or aristocracy.” (Harrington, A System of Politics, p. 270) For both Aristotle and Harrington, independence required landed wealth. This was not the case with Machiavelli, whose legislators came from an active and productive urban elite. See Harrington, A System of Politics, Pocock, ed., pp. 269-270; Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana, pp. 67-71; Machiavelli, The Discourses, Discourse I.55, in Crick, p. 247.

Both Plato and Aristotle condemned the participation of commercial men in the civic sphere on grounds that their pursuit of money led to their easy corruption. Harrington adopted a similar position. Thomas Aquinas likewise objected to profit-making and money-lending, but deemed rents and leases, which provided a material good in the exchange for money, acceptable. He also acknowledged that commercial profits could be used frugally to good ends. In this way, he invited the development of a commercial ethic. Machiavelli, by contrast, praised the productivity of merchants and condemned the idleness of leisured gentry. See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 387-388; Machiavelli, The
The intellectual and psychological foundations for political change were thus already in place when Britain faced the collapse of monarchy. As Pocock describes it, Englishmen had already begun to "restate the terms on which [they] as civic beings lived with one another." Because of this, Cromwell's soldiers could cast themselves as public defenders of individual "rights and liberties," invoking a narrative conducive to republicanism. However, as the pragmatic absolutism of Machiavelli's *Prince* was balanced by the republican ideals of his *Discourses*, so the development of British philosophy witnessed harsh dichotomies of opinion. Indeed, the polarities informing Machiavelli's *Prince* and *Discourses* were resonant in the writings of Thomas Hobbes and James Harrington. As Hobbes defended a single sovereign authority and the sacrifice of individual liberties in the interest of social stability, so Harrington defended a republic of citizen-freeholders in which individual liberties were preserved in the interest of progress and virtue. Their work thus stands as useful evidence of the conflicting influences informing seventeenth-century narratives.

I. *The Royal Subject: Thomas Hobbes*

*Discourses*, Discourse 1.55, in Crick, p. 247; Plato, *Republic*, pp. 6-7; Plato, *Laws*, pp. 159, 162; Aquinas, *The Summa of Theology*, II-II, Qu. 77, 4 and Qu. 78, 1, in Sigmund, pp. 73-74.


10 These rights and liberties included those which belonged to the individual's 'first' nature—Locke's life and liberty—and those which were born of society—concerned primarily with property. The question was: how much of the individual's 'first' rights transferred with him into the social state? See Locke, *Two Treatises*, pp. 367, 395, 428-429; Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 374-376.

11 Like Machiavelli, Harrington emphasized the importance of custom in the founding of a republic. Unlike Machiavelli, however, he linked this custom with land. See Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 376-377.
Like Ockham and Machiavelli before him, Hobbes’s philosophy was pragmatically influenced by the political conditions plaguing contemporary Britain. Faced with civil-war tensions, he searched for a political science consistent with natural law—“a basic hypothesis about the nature of things, which could embrace the actions of men in society and their relations with each other.”\(^{12}\) Concluding that power was the central ingredient of social engagement, he set out to know the appropriate distribution of power in society, ending with an endorsement of absolute sovereignty.\(^{13}\) This was the topic of his controversial and popular *Leviathan* (1651).\(^{14}\)

In framing this natural law of social relations, Hobbes employed both empiricism and rationalism. Indeed, his theory borrowed widely from nominalism, science—particularly from a mechanistic view of Nature—, and even Augustine.\(^{15}\) For example, while denying the intelligibility of divine reality, he nonetheless supported a harmonious natural order. At the same time, he deemed society the by-product of convention rather than nature. Finally, unlike Aristotle, who understood motion to be an externally-motivated pressure towards potentiality, Hobbes, a Reformed Christian, located the source of motion internally, explaining external motion as an *effect*—rather than *cause*—of highly competitive, acquisitive, and

\(^{12}\) Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 10, 27. By such means, as Copleston describes it, “the rules of conduct and of political life”—i.e. “moral philosophy”—might be known. See Copleston, V, p. 3.

\(^{13}\) Hobbes describes two types of power, one based on natural attributes—intellectual or physical prowess, for example—the other on material goods. Competition turns on the distribution of these powers. It was thus necessary to control them in the interest of social stability. The best means of doing so, he concluded, was by way of monarchy. See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 150; MacPherson, introduction to Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 33-35, 37; Pocock, introduction to Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics*, pp. xiv-xxv.


interdependent human desires mutually acting upon one another.\textsuperscript{16} This removed knowledge from the exclusive hands of a natural intellectual elite and made it the inclusive by-product of individual will and human industry.\textsuperscript{17} At the same time, it made identity and social order the effect of social interests rather than naturally fixed standards—"not absolute, but a thing dependent on the need and judgement of another."\textsuperscript{18} The same was true of morality.\textsuperscript{19}

Ultimately, Hobbes posed that society was an artificial convention born of selfish interests manifest in the individual drive for power, the stability of which depended on a \textit{Prince}-ly absolutism. As the most stable society was one in which power-relations were managed for the benefit of all, Hobbes supported legal monarchy—as distinct from (absolute) kingship—as least likely to dissolve into conflict.\textsuperscript{20} His primary objective was to remove the self-interested individual—the subject—from political authority until such time as virtue was cultivated; only then might a subject assume the authority of a citizen.\textsuperscript{21}


\textsuperscript{17} As Hobbes wrote, "Reason is not as Sense, and Memory, borne with us; nor gotten by Experience onely; as Prudence is; but attayned by Industry...." (Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan}, p. 115) He thus set out to devise a method of reasoning. See Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan}, pp. 16-18, 21, 26-27, 85-87, 94, 105, 110-112, 115, 682, 688-691; Copleston, V, pp. 3-4, 10-24, 30-31.

\textsuperscript{18} Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan}, pp. 151-152.

\textsuperscript{19} As Copleston concludes: "it is the appetites and aversions of the individual which determine for him what is good and what is evil." See Copleston, V, pp. 28-31; quoted from p. 31.


\textsuperscript{21} Hobbes’s theory was neither the celebration of ‘private vices’ nor the redefinition of ‘Good’ to be found in Bernard Mandeville’s \textit{Fable of the Bees}. Rather, it was a reflection of his cynicism. Hobbes believed that human corruption was too pervasive to permit a "limited benevolence" to serve as the foundation of society. For this reason, he crafted a socio-political structure that managed the negative
In fact, Hobbes was less at odds with Plato and Aristotle than his criticism might suggest. Both Plato and Aristotle had recognized the unlikely probability of philosophical virtue arising with generational regularity and consequently endorsed the rule of law. Recognizing, too, that laws were only as good as the men behind them, Aristotle emphasized the lesser, heroic virtue of the citizen as opposed to the higher, intellectual virtue of the philosopher. Moreover, like Hobbes, both philosophers endorsed education as the means of cultivating reason and virtue.\footnote{Hobbes's rejection of the classical narrative should not be misunderstood as a rejection of classical values: he was an admirer of human virtue, a believer in divine plan, and an advocate of improvement through intellectual refinement; he privileged reason—a consequence of general knowledge—over prudence—the effect of particular experience—and encouraged philosophical inquiry over book-learning; he recognized leisure as a necessary precondition of philosophy and placed the security of the commonwealth on the opportunity for intellectual development; he was an advocate of divine law, premised moral virtue and philosophy on its doctrine, and believed that civil laws should follow their example. What Hobbes rejected was the realist theory of intelligible natural progress and its pendant standards of identity and social order. As a result, he dismissed with the presumption that a noble-born elite could lead society towards perfection. Until such time as men were capable of controlling their passions, until such time as society had nurtured the kind of virtue upon which civic leadership might be based, until such time as society had proven itself to be guided by the moral goals of divine goodness, the influence of interest was too great to risk civic order. See Hobbes \textit{Leviathan}, pp. 37, 162, 168, 173, 178-179, 216, 369, 388, 682-687, 697-699, 726-727.}

Significantly, however, Hobbes's rejection of a 'natural' aristocracy in whom society might be safely entrusted reflected not only his cynicism, but the influence of Reformed Christianity, which defended mankind's universal capacity for reason and virtue. As Hobbes described it:

\begin{quote}
Nature hath made men so equall, in the faculties of body and mind; as that though there bee found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind then another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable...\footnote{Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan}, p. 183; Copleston, V, p. 32.}
\end{quote}
This belief in the commonality of human nature squared with his argument about social relations; so equal were men in their ambition for power that they needed social compact for their mutual interest and preservation.\textsuperscript{24} It also supported his claim to legal equality and the Reformed emphasis on human will: as men were made equal by their natural capacities so they were made unequal by their will.\textsuperscript{25} On these grounds, identity and authority—at least in theory—became matters of ‘will’ rather than birth: even the mechanic might aspire to the philosopher.

Ultimately, then, Hobbes’s vision of power as the basis of social relations informed a self-determined interpretation of identity. But it also advanced the divided self suggested by Augustinian duality. As Hobbes described it, identity was an external ‘Face’ or ‘Persona’ assumed by the individual following his engagement with society; it was not a reflection of his inner self.\textsuperscript{26} Moreover, an individual’s “Value,” he wrote, was dependent upon the “Price” of his “Power”—his rate-of-exchange in the civic sphere.\textsuperscript{27} This was remarkable not only for being at odds with the dominant neo-Aristotelian narrative, but because, while invoking the principle of a divided self, Hobbes subverted identity to the forces of the marketplace. In other words, having rejected the intelligibility of a classical narrative based on natural progress and fixed standards, he turned to the marketplace for an alternative means of evaluating

\textsuperscript{24} “From this equality of ability, ariseth equality of hope in attaining of our Ends” and, so, competition. Hence the need for social controls. See Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan}, pp. 27, 160, 184-188, 194-195, 198-199, 202, 208, 211; quoted from p. 184..


\textsuperscript{27} Hobbes explained, “The Value, or WORTH of a man, is as of all other things, his Price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his Power....” See Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan}, pp. 151-152.
individual value. The effect was to bridge the gap between Reformed theory and commercial experience. It was also to make identity more fluid and relative.

Hobbes's use of commercial language in the evaluation of identity signaled a changing balance-of-influence between contemporary political and economic forces. As Taylor notes, these developments held particular appeal for “artisan and merchant classes which were becoming conscious of their new achievements and aspiring to a new dignity and influence in society. The appeal was all the greater in that their religious faith also stressed the value of work and the equal dignity of all callings.”

But the social and political aspirations of commercially-engaged individuals were also being addressed in the demands for legal equality that accompanied the development of the marketplace. As James Harrington put it, a drive for legal equality reinforced the ambitions of industrious commoners, who sought not social parity but legal access to identities and ranks formerly reserved for the hereditary elite: “Industry of all things is the most accumulative,” he wrote, “and accumulation of all things hates

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28 Hobbes is remarkable for suggesting that social civility and common good might be compatible with modern commerce, but even more so for suggesting that the market provided the only “moral basis for establishing the value of anything.” See MacPherson, introduction to Hobbes, _Leviathan_, p. 51; Hobbes, _Leviathan_, pp. 75, 717-718.
30 Taylor, p. 231. By this time, Baumeister writes, “the person [had become] an individual unity with a separate existence independent of place in society.” (Baumeister, _Identity_, p. 41) See Taylor, pp. 211, 231; Baumeister, p. 41.
31 The demands of the marketplace—the equality of exchange relations—necessitated that contracting individuals have equal legal rights, otherwise exchange values would be biased; as MacPherson writes, the motivation to engage in commerce and finance “could operate only if men were equally free, had equal legal rights to use or offer their powers in the market.” See MacPherson, introduction to Hobbes, _Leviathan_, pp. 58-59.
levelling...”\textsuperscript{32} The result—at least in theory—was a modern social hierarchy based on inequalities of will (reflected by industry) rather than birth.

II. \textit{The Republican Citizen: James Harrington}

In response to Hobbes’s \textit{Leviathan} (1651), the collapse of monarchy, and the problems of Cromwellian rule, James Harrington crafted the \textit{Commonwealth of Oceana} (1656). Pocock calls it a “moment of paradigmatic breakthrough” insofar as it propelled the ideals of “civic humanism and Machiavellian republicanism” to the forefront of British philosophy.\textsuperscript{33} In an Anglo-Protestant nod to Machiavelli’s \textit{Discourses}, Harrington’s \textit{Oceana} provided Britons with an alternative answer to the collapse of monarchy: a stable government based on the ‘ancient’ principle of natural right, as distinct from natural law.\textsuperscript{34}

Harrington’s theory of natural rights was important for suggesting both the primacy of the individual in the state of nature and the virtuous foundations of society.\textsuperscript{35} On the one hand, he made natural rights an inalienable asset of the individual, thereby suggesting that liberty and autonomy were as essential to the

\textsuperscript{32} Harrington continues: “the revenue therefore of the people being the revenue of industry, though some nobility... may be found to have been levellers, yet not any people in the world.” See Harrington, \textit{A System of Politics}, p. 277.

\textsuperscript{33} Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian Moment}, p. 384. As Pocock explains it, “There is a real sense in which republican theories were a consequence, not a cause or even a precondition, of the execution of the King and the temporary abolition of the monarchy.” (Pocock, introduction to Harrington, \textit{The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics}, p. xi.) See Harrington, \textit{The Commonwealth of Oceana}, pp. 53, 60-62; Pocock, introduction to Harrington, \textit{The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics}, pp. vii-xii, xv; Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian Moment}, pp. 384, 421.

\textsuperscript{34} By contrast, Hobbes had argued that, in contracting a sovereign authority, one relinquished one’s natural rights and received back only those liberties complementary to the civic good. It was therefore not natural rights but natural laws which followed man into society—notably the \textit{Lex Naturalis} of self-preservation. See Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan}, p. 189.

\textsuperscript{35} Pocock, introduction to Harrington, \textit{The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics}, p. xii.
social narrative as preservation. This led him to represent natural rights as the proper foundation of political authority and citizenship. On the other hand, in suggesting the natural foundations of society, Harrington drew on the Aristotelian doctrine of natural progress. The combination led Harrington to conclude, first, that equality was the natural promise of all people and, second, that the proper function of government was to secure the natural rights of the individual from negative social interests.

In describing the function of government, Harrington employed a language of “ancient” and “modern” prudence. According to Harrington, when government shifted its attention from natural rights and the common good to property and interest, it neglected reason—the “goods of the mind”—and came under the influence of “Fortune.” This regression from the conditions of truth and goodness was equated with ‘modern’ prudence. In order to restore society’s proper balance, it was necessary to re-institute ‘ancient’ prudence—the reason and ‘liberty’ of the ‘Ancient’ constitution. ‘Balance’, then, was a consequence of the relationship between rights

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36 The result, as Pocock describes it, was a doctrine “in which ... man the political animal was by nature a citizen and not a subject....” See Pocock, introduction to Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics*, p. xii.


38 As Pocock describes it, the “history of property moved men into and out of the dictatorship of fortune.” See Pocock, introduction to Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics*, p. xxi.

39 Whereas ancient prudence guarded against the corruptive forces of self-interested men through the balanced influence of three estates, whereas ‘ancient prudence’ ensured that all ‘independent’ commoners were granted the rights of citizenship supportive of “LIBERTAS”, ‘modern prudence’ (and its alternative government) was “an art whereby some man, or some few men, subject a city or a nation, and rule it according unto his or their private interest; which... may be said to be the empire of men and not of laws.” (Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, in Pocock, ed., pp. 9-10.) Harrington cast Machiavelli as the figurehead of ancient prudence and Hobbes as the figurehead of modern prudence.
and property—that to which one was entitled by nature, and that which one acquired after compact. Where the pursuit of property threatened the liberty of the citizenry, it was up to a “natural aristocracy” of wise (and, so, virtuous) “Legislators” to enact laws—particularly agrarian laws—that protected the naturally ‘independent’ man from the oppression and servitude born of acquisitive instincts.

The distinction between ‘modern’ and ‘ancient’ prudence provided Harrington with a means of narrating the course of English history within the neo-Aristotelian context of natural progress. On its premise, he explained the development and decline of ‘Gothic’ feudalism and its implications for British history: changes in agrarian law had resulted in the more equitable distribution of ‘dominion’—property and its attendant authority—and an attendant class of citizen freeholders; the resulting ‘balance’ not only relieved the oppressed by restoring their ‘liberty’, it freed one-time oppressors to pursue reason and goodness—the higher “goods of the

For a further discussion, see Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana, pp. 43-53, 185-205, 241-244, 256-257.

40 Harrington conditioned balanced social and political relations on a balance between rights and property. See Pocock, introduction, The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics, pp. xii-xvi.

41 As Pocock describes it, the demise of feudalism, and the consequent redistribution of arable land, marked a pivotal point in the progress towards potentiality. The rise of militias that resulted from the decline of feudalism meant the elevation of vassals into landowners—into citizens. The zoon politikon—the local citizen—assumed authority by virtue of “his sword and his freehold,” and the basis of political personality became property. In the end, Pocock writes, agrarian law placed dominion “into the hands of independent proprietors, freeholders and gentlemen,” the effects of which “were revolutionary because neither monarchy nor nobility controlled them.” (Pocock, introduction, The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics, p. xix) Borrowing on Bacon’s History of King Henry the Seventh, Harrington cited Henry VII as marking the turning point in English history. See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 386; Pocock, introduction to Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana, pp. xviii-xix.

42 Harrington’s vision of the ideal legislator, like Plato’s ‘philosopher prince’, combined the attributes of authority (reason) and power (riches). This was the premise of a “natural”—as opposed to “hereditary”—elite. The advantage of agrarian law was that it restored the divine balance conducive to a natural elite. See Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana, pp. 13, 8, 23; Harrington, A System of Politics, p. 281
mind."\[43\] Liberty and virtue were thus entwined. In the end, the vacillating swings of progression and regression—from the Ancient constitution to 'Gothic' feudalism and back again—appeared as a national struggle toward potentiality, an evolution beyond the acquisitive instincts of illiberal mechanics towards the reason and virtue of the 'natural' legislator.\[44\]

Identity was necessarily implicated in this narrative. Harrington understood identity to be a natural consequence of the relationship between rights and dominion in the social sphere. Because 'Gothic' feudalism had confined dominion to king and nobility, it had obstructed the natural right of individuals to acquire property and progress themselves towards the higher goods of reason attainable only through landed leisure.\[45\] Against this, Harrington advocated legal equality and emphasized the authority of the House of Commons.\[46\] Ultimately, then, Harrington's definition of identity was both neo-Aristotelian and Reformed Christian: on the one hand, it perceived identity in terms of a single, whole, and natural self; on the other hand, it simultaneously recognized both natural equality and the inequality of will.

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\[45\] For a description of Harrington's model social order, see Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, pp. 80-81.

\[46\] The House of Commons being a necessary balance to noble authority and the natural defender of individual rights, it was essential to the preservation of civic virtue. See Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 407.
In the end, Harrington’s philosophy conduced to a republic based on meritocracy, not democracy. Indeed, Harrington opposed democracy on grounds that it placed power in the hands of ignorant mechanics—men without land, education or virtue—and, therefore, risked a society based on acquisitive instincts. However, if inequalities of identity were theoretically understood to derive from inequalities of will, they were—in practice—qualified by a definition of independence that rooted virtue in land: Harrington’s ‘wise Legislators’ were “gentleman” freeholders. And this left room for manipulation. Without the advantage of leveling agrarian laws, Harrington’s theory might as conveniently explain the natural claims of a hereditary elite as the natural equality of ambitious commoners. Indeed, although Harrington rejected hereditary authority (based on birth) as an insufficient substitute for a natural aristocracy (based on wisdom), their distinction was readily blurred.

In addition to articulating a natural identity based on common attributes and inequalities of will, Harrington is important for examining the relationship between imperial politics and colonial identities. Harrington described two types of empires:

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48 As Harrington explained it, as “the leading of her armies... seems to be peculiar unto the genius of a gentleman...[,] so it is in the universal series of history, that if any man have founded a commonwealth, he was first a gentleman.” See Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana, p. 38.
49 While Harrington defended the ideal of the citizen-freeholder, he did not advocate social equality; a margin of “social differentiation” was necessary to satisfy the Aristotelian complement between “political functions” and “social characteristics.” What Harrington endorsed was the replacement of a hereditary aristocracy based on birth and custom with a “natural” one based on merit, the latter supported by a large class of citizen freeholders. As he described it, a nobility who need not labor for its livelihood—“such as live upon their own revenues in plenty, without engagement either unto the tilling of their lands or other work for their livelihood”—is “necessary unto the mixture of a well-ordered commonwealth. For how else can you have a commonwealth that is not altogether mechanic?” (Commonwealth of Oceana, pp. 137-138) The principle of meritocracy continued to inform perceptions of social rank through the Revolutionary period. See Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana, pp. 20, 137-14; Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 394-395; Plato, Republic, p. 83.
50 Colonies were groups of people “planted” by the State for their mutual benefit. See Machiavelli, The Discourses, Discourse II.6, in Crick, pp. 292-293.
one ‘internal’ or domestic, the other ‘external’ and expansive; one characterized by limited property, the other by acquisitive interests; one capable of a ‘balanced’ dominion conducive to stability and the common good, the other subject to instability and oppression. In being an ‘external’ empire, Britain was vulnerable to the influence of interest rather than reason, property rather than good, laws rather than rights, power rather than authority. The difficulties attendant this circumstance were exacerbated by the unequal distribution of legal rights to which external empires were likewise prone; according to Harrington, the drive for dominion that motivated external empires wrongly inclined them to compromise the natural rights of provincial and colonial subjects in the interest of homeland power. The result was an imperial social hierarchy informed by proximity to the metropolis. Not only was this inconsistent with natural law, it was inherently unstable: on the one hand, the isolation of colonial societies made distinctions difficult to enforce and easy to ignore; on the other hand, it nurtured the rise of local elites to challenge the authority of distant rivals.

Harrington’s analysis is interesting for what it implies about the rightful claims of colonial and provincial subjects. Against Hobbes, Harrington suggested that colonists and provincials were entitled to the same legal rights as their homeland compatriots. By extension, he suggested that colonial and provincial property was

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entitled to the same rights as homeland property. Thus, at least in theory, a colonial landowner might claim the same social and political privileges as his homeland counterpart. Yet certain questions were left unanswered: could this hold true if the land owned by the colonist was employed for commercial purposes as opposed to being a medium of rents and leases?\textsuperscript{55} And, indeed, within the context of imperialism, on what grounds might a colonist claim disinterested independence?\textsuperscript{56}

For all its theoretical significance, Harrington's thesis suffered from internal weaknesses that left it vulnerable to manipulation. On the one hand, Pocock notes, Harrington failed to foresee the need for a professional army. This prevented him from reconciling his citizen militia with the need for an imperial military.\textsuperscript{57} Second, because his understanding of feudal dominion located power in land, he failed to consider alternative forms of power—for example, the influence of political patronage.\textsuperscript{58} Ultimately, however, it was Harrington's inability to anticipate the overwhelming influence of commercial and financial forces on British politics—and the implications of this influence for the definition of power and property—that prevented his doctrine from satisfying the needs of a later generation. Harrington believed that landed wealth was essential to knowledge, virtue and good, not because

\textsuperscript{55} As Pocock notes, "to make land a source of rentals is not the same as to make it a marketable commodity." (Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian Moment}, pp. 433-434.) Nonetheless, once land became a resource of trade, the modern freeholder no longer appeared as "independent" as his pre-1675 peer. See Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian Moment}, pp. 433-434, 450.

\textsuperscript{56} A commercial plantation did not carry the same connotations and privileges as a multigenerational freehold whose income derived from rents and leases. See Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian Moment}, pp. 433-434, 450.

\textsuperscript{57} Pocock, introduction to Harrington, \textit{The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics}, pp. xix-xx.

\textsuperscript{58} Pocock, introduction to Harrington, \textit{The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics}, pp. xx-xxi.
other forms of economic self-sufficiency were unavailable, but because other forms
did not remove the individual from the corrupting influence of private interest.

Harrington endorsed real property as the foundation of virtue, the basis of citizenship,
and the premise for bearing arms because he believed that mobile property failed to
nurture the kind of personal sacrifice essential to common good—"civic personality
was not a commodity"—, but this presumed that land itself was not marketable.
That this proved unfounded only complicated his legacy.

III. Reforming the Gap

Harrington and Hobbes were not the only thinkers debating the relationship
between the individual and society. British writings of the period invoke a number of
theories, some more influenced by ancient philosophy—the Cambridge Platonists, for
eexample—and some more grounded in contemporary experience—that of John
Locke. In general, however, despite the force of Hobbes's writings, most early-
modern intellectuals were at least minimal realists, conceding at least a modicum of

59 Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 390-391. Machiavellian virtu is distinct from virtue: virtu
is about the temporal, civic force that effects a transformation of power, usually manifest in the sword;
virtue is about the inherent and eternal qualities of the individual, manifest in the pursuit of common
good or, more privately, in adherence to a Christian life. Virtu gives way to virtue in neo-

60 The Cambridge Platonists included Benjamin Whichcote (1609-1683), John Smith (1616-1652),
Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688), Nathaniel Culverwel (c. 1618-c. 1651), Peter Sterry (1613-1672) and
Henry More (1614-1687). In general, Copleston writes, they were Platonists insofar as they drew
inspiration from the "tradition of spiritualist metaphysics from Plato to Plotinus" and, under the
influence of Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648), posited the existence of certain a priori truths
"implanted by God and... apprehended by 'natural instinct'." (Copleston, V, pp. 53-54) As Copleston
writes, they shared "a belief in the mind's power of discerning immutable truths, which bear the
evidence of their truth within themselves and which are in some sense imprinted on the mind...[,]
interwoven... into the principles of our reason." (Copleston, V, pp. 62-63) He explains: "They
believed in the power of the human reason to attain to objective truth about God and to give us insight
into absolute and universal moral laws." (Copleston, V, p. 56) They thus "emphasized the
certain knowledge—a knowledge of God, for example—and endorsing natural reason as an instrument of truth consistent with natural or divine law.  

On the more traditional and conservative front, the Cambridge Platonists were important less as individual theorists than as a conduit for classicism. As a rule, they supported the power of reason, the intelligibility of truth, and the existence of absolute and universal moral laws. Moreover, they advocated contemplation in the attainment of knowledge and believed benevolence to be an instrument of common good. At the same time, they dismissed with the ethic of "ordinary life" and denied the authority of empirical methodologies. Their influence is felt, to varying degrees, in the writings of George Berkeley and the third earl of Shaftesbury.

On the more contemporary and liberal front, Locke is individually important as a spokesman for Restoration (Big) Whigs. In general, while Locke accepted the existence of moral standards, endorsed the theory of natural law, and deemed nature a rational system whose final end was eternal goodness, he simultaneously denied the notion of innate ideas and rejected customary authority as imperfect convention. Moreover, while he conceded an innate knowledge of God and deemed "morality... the proper science, and business of mankind in general," thereby endorsing some contemplative attitude." (Copleston, V, pp. 56-57) Their position was opposed, most notably, by Viscount Bolingbroke. See Copleston, V, pp. 52-65, 164.

61 This was true of both Locke and the Platonists. See Copleston, V, pp. 52-53.
62 As suggested, for example, by A Letter from a Friend, to a Person of Quality (London: printed for T. Davies, 1682), attributed to Locke. His writings were largely influenced by important political figures like Anthony Ashley Cooper—later the first earl of Shaftesbury—and John Somers—later Lord Somers. See Laslett, introduction to Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 37 and 53.
63 Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, p. 570. Locke's denial of innate moral principles was not a denial of moral law and its roots in divine reason. Indeed, An Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles, By Consulting St. Paul himself, defended empiricism only in the absence of revelation: "Now we see but by Reflection the dim, and as it were enigmatical Representation of things.... Now I have but a superficial partial knowledge of things, but then I shall have an intuitive comprehensive knowledge of them, as I my self am known, ...not by the Obscure and
rationalist tendencies, he rejected theoretical methodologies in favor of the ‘scientific method’ advanced by Robert Boyle (1627-1691) and Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727)—that which joined inductive analysis (the compiling of “natural histories” through observation and experiment) with deductive synthesis (the use of mathematical laws for the deduction of certain opinions). Hence his theory of *tabula rasa*—that blank mental tablet progressively impressed by life experience.65

In fact, selective manipulation made numerous combinations of classicism, Protestantism, empiricism, rationalism, and individualism conveniently compatible.66 For example, if Calvinism deemed grace to arise from a voluntary obedience to divine laws—piety, temperance, humility, etc.—and the successful fulfillment of one’s duty or ‘calling’, thereby endorsing a self-determined identity based on will and industry, so, too, did empiricism endorse what Taylor has called a “Baconian Revolution,” “a transvaluation of values” in which human industry, “previously stigmatized as lower,” was made the standard of human virtue—public heroism being newly “convicted of

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66 Indeed, as Taylor writes, “The Puritan theology of work and ordinary life provided a hospitable environment for the scientific revolution.... One can even say that the paradigm authority figure against which both rebellions were levied was the same[,] Aristotle....” (Taylor, p. 230) This is not to suggest a uniformity of thought, but rather a mutual need to identify a secular morality that might fill the gap left by the decline of heroic virtue and orthodox Christianity. This conduced to the ‘ethic of ordinary life’. (Taylor, p. 234) See Taylor, pp. 230, 234.
presumption and vanity). Both, in other words, could be understood to endorse a self-determined worth based on private industry in pursuit of higher good.

Nonetheless, while the goals of Lockean empiricism and Aristotelian classicism could be compatible, Locke’s emphasis on sense-perception as the only medium of knowledge prior to revelation—as opposed to being a mere Aristotelian point-of-departure for higher reason—lent empiricism an intellectual significance not found in the Aristotelian tradition. In addition, moreover, Locke suggested to his readers a natural capacity for independent reasoning and the autonomy to pursue a self-determined good. This underscored the self-determined nature of reason and virtue advanced by the Reformation, undermining the authority of inherited customs and power structures. But it also obscured the standards of identity and social order supporting traditional civic humanism. As the ‘meaning of life’ was made manifest to the individual in the amalgam of mental imprints—‘sensations’—accumulated during the course of experience and known through ‘reflection’, so identity became a byproduct of the relationship between experience and intellect, the effect of which was impressed on the individual consciousness. Identity was thus internal and psychological (discovered) rather than external and sociological (prescribed).

69 As Locke explains, “so far as a man has a power to think, or not to think... according to the direction of his own mind, so far is a man free.... So that liberty cannot be, where there is no thought, no volition, no will.... I think the question is not proper, whether the will be free, but whether a man be free.” (Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, pp. 223-228) See Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, pp. 220-245.
70 For Descartes, the self was manifest in the mind, immaterial but perceptive. For Locke, the self resided in consciousness, built up over experience. See Canfield, p. 26.
71 Copleston, V, pp. 100-101. As Taylor observes, Locke’s emphasis on self-consciousness offered the prospect of self re-making. This distinguished Locke from Hobbes. See Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, pp. 297-312; Laslett, introduction to Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 55-57;
In many ways, Lockean individualism—in which the autonomous and determining self seeks the general good through communion and cooperation with other autonomous and determining subjects—represented a reconciliation of Reformed Christianity with rationalism, empiricism and classicism. However, by rejecting key provisions in classical theory—the possibility of human access to perfect knowledge, the theoretical nature of truth and reality, and the rightful authority of a customary elite to determine the parameters of individual improvement and social progress—Locke undermined the credibility of Aristotelian classicism. Moreover, in shifting emphasis from an external—i.e. sociological—identity to an internal—i.e. psychological—one, he reinforced the Reformed emphasis on private virtue as the measure of individual worth. This introduced a condition of disengagement—the separation and coexistence of individual and society. At the same time, the definition of independence was transformed from a privileged disinterest based on educated leisure to an autonomous pursuit of a self-determined good. Consequently, the self-conscious self-determination, used in Christian doctrine to explain the realization of individual virtue and goodness in the eternal sphere, became a means of defending the individual’s right to political and social authority in the temporal one.

Ultimately, then, Locke united elements of Christianity and classicism into a variation on the classical narrative in which men voluntarily advanced from the state of nature to the state of society in order to preserve their property—their "Life,
Liberties and Estates." In the process, they relinquished their natural executive authority to a communal, public will while retaining a legislative right to sovereignty. They did not, however, relinquish their individual natural rights. And in this sense, they existed simultaneously as individual private persons—with natural rights governed by principles of natural law, the mirror of divine law and human reason—and members of a social community—as public persons with contracted responsibilities and privileges. Significantly, Locke’s vision of equality, like Harrington’s, was one of capacity and potentiality. As such, it was not a denial of inequalities of industry, will or merit. Nor was it an endorsement of democracy. Rather, Locke’s equality bore political implications of a functional nature. Equality meant equal legal protection for all members of the community, regardless of birth, through the general preservation of natural rights. Indeed, if the primary function of

73 Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 367, 395, 428-429. According to Locke, the transformation from communal to private property resulted from the ‘mixing’ of labor with material goods. Over time, men joined together to ensure the security of their property, not only for themselves, but for their posterity. This guaranteed the right of inheritance. Eventually, the surplus of material goods resulted in the introduction of money, which became a recognized alternative to material property. (Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 243-248, 327-344, 374-393) See Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 243-248, 327-344, 374-393; Laslett, introduction to Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 115-117.

74 For a description of Legislative, Executive and Federative powers, see Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 401-412, 456. As Laslett notes, Locke does not quite argue for the separation of powers found in American government. His executive and federative powers likely reside in the same person/assembly and may likewise be part of the legislative branch—as in the British King-in-Parliament. On the other hand, Locke’s insistence on the sovereignty of the people went far to change contemporary perceptions of citizenship as a universal responsibility rather than an elite privilege. See Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 401-412; Laslett, introduction to Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 123-124, 132-135, 395-398.

75 Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 368-369, 374-375, 381-382; Laslett, introduction to Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 120, 127-130.

76 In Locke’s case, Laslett writes, “Natural law was… a part of his rationalism, his conviction that the universe is to be understood rationally… , but at all points it must be compared with, made to fit into, the observed, the empirical facts about the created world and human behaviour.” See Laslett, introduction to Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 93-114; Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 81, 106-110, 309-311, 350-353; Copleston, V, pp. 128-140.

77 As Locke himself wrote, “By Common-wealth, I... mean, not a Democracy, ... but any Independent Community...”—i.e. one premised on the sovereignty of independent men. See Locke, Two Treatises, p. 400.

78 Locke, Two Treatises, p. 346.
government was to progress the good, Locke suggested that the only means of doing so was by preserving natural rights.79 In Locke’s view, when a government failed in this regard, or when it exceeded the limits of its power, it entered upon “a state of War” and the people had a right to dissolve it: “Who shall be Judge whether the Prince or Legislative act contrary to their Trust?... To this I reply, The People shall be Judge....”80

Locke’s influence is often cited in tandem with the events of the American Revolution.81 And, certainly, a much-modified version of his essays on government was reprinted in Boston in 1773 for an audience of increasingly disaffected colonists, informing Jefferson’s writing of the Declaration of Independence.82 In part, Locke’s appeal turned, no doubt, on his pragmatism: he seemed to provide answers for pressing contemporary questions.83 In the portion of his Treatises to hit the colonies, for example, Locke refers specifically to the issue of representation. In this, he argues

79 Locke wrote: “The end of Law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge Freedom....” See Locke, Two Treatises, p. 348.
80 Locke, Two Treatises, p. 476. According to Locke, if a government fails to uphold the good legislated by the people (through their representatives), its authority can be dissolved while society remains intact. On this premise, Locke defined two compacts: the first establishing society; the second establishing its form of government. See Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 401-412, 454-477.
81 Copleston, V, p. 140
82 According to Laslett, the version “read by Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau” and American colonists was based on a translation by David Mazel which omitted the Preface, first Treatise and a portion of the second Treatise. Quietly modified to reflect “the Enlightenment and eighteenth-century Revolutionism,” it arrived in the colonies as a 1773 Boston reprint of Hollis’s 6th London edition (1764). See Laslett, introduction to Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 24-26.
83 Locke’s Two Treatises, for example, while printed at the time of the Glorious Revolution and intended, at that moment, to serve as a rationale for William III’s rule, were initially responsive to earlier controversies, including the notion of divine right advanced by Sir Robert Filmer, and the Exclusion crisis, which turned on Whig efforts to exclude the Catholic James of York from succeeding to the throne of his brother, Charles II. The Exclusion Bill failed—James of York became James II—but Whigs continued to consult against James II, resulting in the so-called Insurrection Plot (1682) and Assassination Plot (1683). In general, then, the Two Treatises were likely written between 1679 and 1683—in three parts rather than two—and only later modified to serve the needs of the Glorious Revolution of 1688-1689. See Laslett, introduction to Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 59-75, 89-90; Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 173-176, 184, 213.
that it is the responsibility of the Executive power—a subordinate of Legislative power—to adjust the balance of representation in accordance with changing times and demographic trends. In fact, however, like most philosophers grappling with the inherent conflicts between ideology and experience, Locke himself was not always consistent. Indeed, the ideological differences separating Hobbes, Harrington, Locke, and others resurfaced in the subsequent debates between ‘Country’ and ‘Court’.

IV. Country and Court

The theoretical disengagement of the internal self from the external world lent new agency to the individual, who was increasingly held responsible for his potential contribution to—and place within—society. The development of commerce only

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84 Locke wrote: “For it being the interest, as well as the intention of the People, to have a fair and equal Representative...[,] in time the measures of representation might vary, and those places have a just right to be represented which before had none....” See Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 418-420; quoted from p. 420.

85 These included: the ‘standing army controversy’ or ‘paper war’ of ca. 1698-1702, which set ‘Country’ representatives Andrew Fletcher and Charles Davenant against Courtiers like Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift; the succession controversy played out in the final four years of Queen Anne’s reign, which pit the Tory Jonathan Swift against Whigs Joseph Addison and (in a switch) Daniel Defoe; the South Sea Crisis (1720), which inspired John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon’s Cato’s Letters and The Independent Whig; and an opposition movement that pit Lord Bolingbroke’s Craftsman against Sir Robert Walpole’s London Journal. See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 426-436.

86 The correlation between Country and Court, Tory and Whig is confusing. It was the 1st Earl of Shaftesbury who initially outlined the Whig/ Country cause in his attack on Danby in 1675. By the accession of William III, however, the success of the Big Whigs—such as Shaftesbury—had placed them in power, encouraged them to modify their cause, and relegated the Tories to the Country position. Some Whigs, however, called ‘Old’ or ‘Independent’ Whigs, opposed the platform of the Modern Court Whigs and allied themselves with the Tories, thus forming a Country party made up of Tories and Independent Whigs. Under the reign of Queen Anne, however, when the Tories once again assumed executive power, the Modern Whigs resumed an Opposition position. By 1714, however, with the Tories again in decline, the Independent Whigs faced a choice between the high-church interests of the Tories, which upset their religious sympathies, and the patronage and professional armies of the powerful Court Whigs, which upset their political sympathies. In the end, they opted in support of the Court Whigs, instigating a long period of powerful Whig rule under the administration of Sir Robert Walpole (1721—1742). Only with the rise of George III (1760-1820) did the Tories, once again, acquire power. At no time, however, did County or Court become marginal. In general, however, the Country party represented the old-style, landed civic humanists. See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 478.
reinforced these changes, putting pressure on the balance-of-influence between social and political authority. The problem was twofold: a civic humanist narrative no longer representative of the dramatic changes affecting the social, economic, and political order; and the emergence of a commercial authority whose very existence contradicted inherited notions of the proper foundation for society.

Essentially, while all sought to retain the purpose of common good, visions of the "good" diverged in the face of socioeconomic change. On the one hand, a Country party continued to stress the means to goodness—the civic virtue born of Aristotelian classicism. Composed largely of freeholders, it likewise persisted in basing this means—civic virtue—on land. On the other hand, a Court party stressed the ends of goodness—the happiness that accrued to individuals and the State. Moreover, composed largely of officials, nobility, and commoners invested in the

87 As Pocock observes: “The Augustan journalists and critics were the first intellectuals on record to express an entirely secular awareness of social and economic changes going on in their society, and to say specifically that these changes affected both their values and their modes of perceiving social reality. They used largely Machiavellian paradigms to articulate and express this awareness.” Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 458-459, 462; quoted from p. 462.
88 “Solutions were of course to be found in seeking to depict society as an economic mechanism, in which the exchange of goods and the division of labor operated to turn universal selfishness to universal benefit,” examples of which can be found in “Addison, Mandeville, and Montesquieu.” Yet “there was an important sense in which all this was either beside the point or the admission of a necessary evil....” (Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 460, 465) See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 451, 460-461, 465.
89 If, at least initially, all civic humanists supported what Pocock describes as the “paradigmatic image of the freeholder founded upon real or landed property which was inheritable rather than marketable....[,] protected by the ancient... common law, [and supported by]... membership in the related structures of the militia and the parliamentary electorate, thus guaranteeing civic virtue,” the influence of new economic circumstances encouraged change and compromise. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 450.
90 Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 408. Around 1675, a ‘Country’ platform can be said to have emerged as a result of a growing recognition of the threat to civic humanism, a recognition resonant in Shaftesbury’s attack on Danby’s ministry. This platform endorsed “frequent parliaments, exclusion of placemen, a qualification in landed property for members of the House of Commons.” See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 478.
pursuit of empire, it was prepared to envision an alternative medium of goodness—an alternative to civic virtue. In the end, because the 'Court'—guided by the demands of an external empire—was more willing to make compromises conducive to commercial expansion and material gain, it appeared to prioritize property and interest above land and reason, at the risk of corruption.

While many Britons were willing to adopt Court practices—and its promise of happiness—, few were willing to accept Court theory. By the late seventeenth-century, the struggle to assimilate a modern economy and its market man into a civic humanist ideology traditionally opposed to commerce and trade was yielding inadequate and ambiguous results. On the one hand, the Country platform became increasingly hierarchical and conservative. For example, whereas the principle of balanced authority between legal equals mutually engaged in the pursuit of higher good was intended by Harrington as a liberating doctrine, by the 1690s, it had been manipulated by a neo-Country 'Opposition' who, while defending the authority of a landed and liberal elite against the corruptive influence of power and property, blurred the line between a 'natural' and 'hereditary' aristocracy, thereby subverting

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93 Without denying the link between independence and virtue, and while continuing to define virtue as the pursuit of common good, the Court denied the existence of 'ancient' principles and rejected the necessary correlation between independence and land, at the same time recognizing the influence of interest. It also deemed the king's engagement in the House of Commons—by way of patronage—a necessary tool of modern politics. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 406-407, 416-420, 483.
94 The Court ideology "accurately identified the forces making for historical change and explained how government must and did work on its new foundations, but which supplied neither polity nor personality with a coherent moral structure...; its moral and philosophical theory affirmed that the mainsprings of both motivation an perception in human beings were pride and passion, fantasy and self-interest. Hard as it was to reconcile the philosophies..., the conditions of British politics in the eighteenth century... commanded that some such attempt be made...." Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 467.
Harrington’s vision of merit to one of birth. At the same time, Harrington’s vision of legal equality was subverted to a more feudal interpretation of Crown and nobility. In this “patriotic” vision, the negative content of “Gothic England” was subverted to the ideology of an “Ancient English” past. This was made evident in the elevated association between Gothic England and Grecian virtue. As Henry Fielding described it in his novel, Tom Jones, “The gothic style of building could produce nothing nobler than Mr. Allworthy’s [—read Mr. Virtue’s—] house. There was an air of grandeur in it that struck you with awe, and rivalled the beauties of the best Grecian architecture....” In this paradoxical twist on ‘ancient’ prudence, ‘modern’ Gothic feudalism became the national variant on ‘ancient’ Greek classicism. The result was a “neo-Country” narrative inconsistent with Harrington’s intentions.

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As Pocock explains, “Down to 1688, ...the Whigs were still a near-rebellious opposition.... [However, the] amalgam which was Whig ideology in the eighties disintegrated during the decade following the Revolution; and the neo-Harringtonian thesis became an instrument of radical reaction in an era of devastating economic change.” (Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 421-422)

Following the Glorious Revolution and the ascension of William III, England’s engagement in global commerce and the Nine Years War (1689-1697) nurtured a distrust of modern interests and the wherewithal of republican ideals to contain them. The failure of the Rump Parliament to enact frequent elections, and to separate the military from the Executive branch, nurtured dissatisfaction with classical republicanism, opening the way for “ideological retrenchment” and a return to monarchy. Consequently, a neo-Harringtonian Country Party emerged that subverted the rule of law to an aristocracy of landed Public Men. See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 380-383, 406, 414, 421-422, 446; Locke, Two Treatises, p. 287; Laslett, introduction to Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 37-53.

In a significant departure from Harrington’s doctrine, for example, Andrew Fletcher described the decline of “ancient” feudalism as causing two key shifts in the social order: the birth of courtiers concerned more with refinement and politeness than military prowess, and the elevation of industrious commoners increasingly vested in an expanding marketplace. From this he concluded that culture and commerce went hand-in-hand, each a catalyst in the loss of independence and virtue. This required the institution of ‘modern’ prudence. Hence the rise of “frugality...[:] the surrender of private satisfactions... and in short the virtue, which the social order itself no longer guarantees.” See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 432; Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, Fable of the Bees, p. xvi.

As Harrington’s position on real and mobile property came face-to-face with an expanding commercial economy, a concern “with virtue as the moral as well as material foundation of social and personal life” led to the development of a neo-Harringtonian civic humanism that replaced Harrington’s ‘natural aristocracy’ with a hereditary nobility. (The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 414, 446)
On the other hand, the Court platform became increasingly individual and liberal. If neo-Country advocates subverted ‘ancient’ to ‘modern’ prudence, the more liberal Court dispensed with ‘ancient’ virtue altogether, maintaining that liberty and balanced government were modern developments born of the elevation of the House of Commons. This served a practical purpose. Once freed from the need for ‘ancient’ justification, the Court could defend the Bank of England and the professional army as necessary consequences of imperial progress. At the same time, while acknowledging the traditional distinction between freeholder and market-man, men like Defoe—borrowing on the example of Locke—could present cash rather than land as the political currency of modern Britain.

Consequently, however, a different form of virtue was required, one that maintained a legal ‘balance’ between power (based on riches) and authority (based on reason). Poised on the theoretical threshold between Harrington and Hobbes, men like Defoe, Addison, and Fletcher were mutually challenged to fabricate a narrative that integrated modern commercial interests into a traditional structure of civic process, the radical elements of Harrington’s theory were supplanted by an agenda compatible with the conservative objectives of the hereditary elite. In the end, Pocock argues, Harrington’s neo-Machiavellian Aristotelianism became the basis for a conservative civic humanism responsive to the effects of “Court, corruption, [and] office” unfamiliar to Harrington. (Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 409.) See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 380-383, 409, 414, 416, 421-422, 446.

According to Pocock, Defoe’s Court Argument (1698) presented ‘mixed government’ as a modern development, not an ancient one. See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 435.

Locke had argued that the introduction of money—an arbitrary medium of exchange—nurtured the transition from a natural economy based on self-sufficiency and bartering to a political economy of property relations. (Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 341-344) Among neo-Country advocates, however, “land ... was understood as the necessary economic foundation of the virtuous citizen...[] money was one of the major dangers to the maintenance of freedom and public virtue.” (Hundert, introduction, The Fable of the Bees, p. xvii.) See Locke, Two Treatises, pp. 341-344; Hundert, The Fable of the Bees, p. xvii; Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 435-436, 447.
virtue. Yet, their effort to construct an alternative ideology was weakened by the
dominance of the civic humanist paradigm, which had already taught them that
commerce was founded on dependence and, hence, was naturally prone to
corruption. It was thus necessary to identify an alternative source of virtue, an
alternative form of humanism, what Pocock calls a “civic morality of investment and
exchange,” which injected commerce with compassion and equated “the commercial
ethic with the Christian.” Enter self-control.

By fabricating a system of credit based on “sympathy and opinion,”
encouraging a frugality that restored excess to the common stock, and eliminating the

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102 Defoe, for one, tried to dampen fears of instability by positing the logic of credit itself. Credit, he
argued, arose “only where men have confidence in one another and in the kingdom.” (Pocock, The
Machiavellian Moment, p. 454) Addison likewise argued that credit was the child not of “popery,
tyranny, and republicanism,” but of “liberty, moderation, and the Protestant succession,” and that the
Royal Exchange was “not... a place of dealing in stocks and funds, but... a concourse of solid
merchants exchanging real commodities through the medium of money.” (Pocock, The Machiavellian
Moment, pp. 455, 457; Addison, Spectator, 3) By these means, Credit itself might be presented as its
own brand of virtue. As Pocock observes, “The ideological thrust was constantly toward the absorption
of stockjobber into merchant: the rentier... into the entrepreneur...; in Locke’s terminology, the
emphasis is switched from ‘fancy’ to ‘agreement’. The latter, of course, is social, where the former is
arbitrary and egocentric, and this makes it more rational and virtuous. But the rationality is only that of
Machiavellian Moment, pp. 454-457; Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, The Commerce of Everyday
Life: Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator, ed. Erin Mackie (New York: Bedford/ St.
Martin’s, 1998).

103 While Defoe and Addison aimed to “validate the commercial world by appeal to conceptions of
public virtue,” they “found themselves confronted by the paradigm of a citizen whose virtue did not rest
upon a capacity for exchange.” (Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 451, 457-458) Moreover,
they “knew no theory of civic or moral personality which could easily be applied to the new
society...[;] the ‘liberal’ or ‘bourgeois’... shift toward privatization [meant]... the admission that in a
commercial society the individual’s relation to his res publica, could not be simply civic or virtuous.”

104 Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 440-441. As Pocock explains, “the civic or participatory
ideal had come to be expressed in terms of an agrarian mode of property acknowledged to exist mainly
in the past... [and] employed a theory of social personality in which virtue was held to be civic and
was grounded on material bases which could not be bartered away without the loss of virtue itself.”
(Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 436)

105 Plato described self-control as the evidence of reason subduing passion. Frugality was its modern
guise. See Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees, p. xvii-xviii. In 1721, the
Bishop George Berkeley published An Essay towards preventing the Ruin of Great Britain, which
public debt—through, for example, the restoration of the militia, which did not require cash pay and, hence, public investment—, interest and speculation might be curtailed, the rightful place of the Public Man restored, and the common good secured. But self-control and frugality were negative virtues—those of restraint rather than action. They were thus more social and less heroic. This contradicted the privileged place of civic virtue in the discourse of civic humanism. Indeed, against the heroic ideal, the Court posited a socio-economic one, arguing in support of a strong executive power to police human passions against the threat of corruption. Hence, as the market man was transformed, ideologically-speaking, into the freeholder, a public-minded “civic” humanism gave way, at least in part, to a private-

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108 Bolingbroke, for example, was less concerned with locating individual or social virtue and more with identifying political virtue. The conservative Opposition leader whose *Craftsman* waged a verbal campaign against Sir Robert Walpole and the Court, Bolingbroke accepted “the constitutional implications of the Glorious Revolution of 1688,” but opposed what he perceived to be the “corruptive influences of the Financial Revolution that had inseparably attended it.” (Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 479) In an effort to offset the ‘corrupting’ influences of executive power, he sought to “restore” the ‘Ancient’ constitution by assimilating the republic-in-monarchy (defined by a king, lords, and commons) into the classical paradigm of three estates (the one, few, and many) and, in so doing, to separate their functions—forging an executive, judicial, and legislative—and curtail the seepage of influence. As Pocock explains, since he and “confounded the languages of function and morality” and viewed independence as a key to moral balance, a separation of powers might be seen as a means of assimilating the English system into a classical paradigm, however unsuited to the British King-in-Parliament format, which turned on the processes of “debate” and “result.” In fact, although his program failed in Britain, it did influence Montesquieu, and it may well have informed—directly or indirectly—the American constitution. See Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 479-485, 488.  
minded "commercial" humanism. Ultimately, faced with the realities of commercial imperialism, more moderate civic humanists rearticulated the standards of moral virtue and social good in a language which conduced to the 'Protestant work ethic'.

Indeed, by 1720, when Trenchard and Gordon were penning *Cato's Letters*, both Country and Court had acknowledged the commercial conditions of modern society. Where the Country party diverged was in its insistence that modern commercialism be held hostage to the higher ideals of civic humanism. Thus separate "landed" and "moneyed" interests emerged to distinguish those who benefited from a traditional land-based economy from those whose future was vested in global commerce and trade. Whereas the former was represented by the

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11 "In what scholars have called a 'Protestant ethic' of frugality, self-denial, and reinvestment, trading society could even be permitted its own version of that classical virtue which consisted in placing the common good... above one's personal profit. But... the ethic... was compelled to take second place to the ethic of self-interest...." Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 464.

12 From 1720 to 1724, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon published *Cato's Letters* in the *London Journal*. Both this and the *Independent Whig* (1714-1719) were widely read by Britons and Americans. Targeting corruption, specifically the "monied interest" held responsible for the South Sea Crisis, *Cato's Letters* employed a "Machiavellian and neo-Harringtonian" rhetoric to represent England as a modified version of the classical polis. The effect was to bring the monarchy and nobility into an interdependence typical of the "Gothic" or feudal past. Within this context, it was the function of virtue to protect independence from corruption, largely by barring those invested in public credit from serving as public representatives. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 467-470, 473-474.

111 "We find it repeatedly conceded that a trading society possesses a psychology of its own...[;] Cato's vision presupposes no agrarian utopia... But the transition from unpolished virtue to politeness must be made, and made with the assistance of commerce..." Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 470.

114 In fact, the "passions now appear as the pursuits of private and particular goods" that can simultaneously serve the public—a transformation of the Aristotelian ethic in which the defense of the public interest simultaneously satisfies a private desire for glory. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 471-472.

115 According to Pocock, the origins of the "grand antitheses between the 'landed' and the 'monied' interests" are in Swift and Bolingbroke. (Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 447) As Hundert writes, the "landed interest" represented families who lived off rental income "and who derived few supplementary revenues from office holding, commerce or finance." On the other hand, the "monied
conservative Country platform, which dictated rule by an elite group of independent patriots, the latter was represented by the more liberal Court platform, which vested authority in laws rather than men.\textsuperscript{116}

Thus, Pocock notes, the "Augustan debate did not oppose agrarian to entrepreneurial interests, the manor to the market, and cannot be said to have arisen from a crude awareness of collisions going on between them."\textsuperscript{117} Rather, difficulties arose from a common investment in the language and values of civic humanism, and the inability to conceive an alternative language or ideology by which to redefine contemporary society in equally-appealing terms. In the absence of an alternative language, one offering a positive view of modern, commercial society, ideas and arguments were often unclear and inconsistent, a condition which explains occasional shifts in allegiance.\textsuperscript{118}
All this affected the definition of independence. On the one hand, Country advocates continued to define independence in terms of an intellectual disinterest based on landed self-sufficiency—evolving in form from a Harringtonian to a neo-Harringtonian narrative. In this version, independence became the preserve of British ‘patriots’—those “willing both to enjoy no source of income but their estates,” Pocock writes, “and to eschew either the possession or the pursuit of executive power.”\(^{119}\) By contrast, the Court recast independence in the form of inter-dependence, a clear nod to market relations.

Ultimately, the debate between Court and Country turned on a question of the meaning of life and its implications for social and political authority. But behind the theoretical issues attendant the demise of the freeholder ideal, there also lurked a thorny question: in the absence of landed independence, upon what standard would identity be based?\(^{120}\) The landed advocates of the neo-Country narrative faced socioeconomic changes whose very nature threatened their social and political authority.\(^{121}\) As England made the transition from a landed to a commercial

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\(^{120}\) As Pocock observes, the resulting gap between ideology and experience fostered "the age’s intense and nervous neoclassicism. The dominant paradigm for the individual inhabiting the world of value was that of civic man; but the dominant paradigm for the individual as engaged in historic actuality was that of economic and inter-subjective man, and it was peculiarly hard to bring the two together." (Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 466) Ultimately, Pocock writes, “The freeman must desire nothing more than freedom, nothing more than the public good to which he dedicated himself; once he could exchange his freedom for some other commodity, the act became no less corrupting if that other commodity were knowledge itself.” (Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 431) See Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 431, 466.

\(^{121}\) As Hundert writes, the Court’s platform “directly threatened its members’ political power, social standing and self-esteem.” (Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, p. xviii) He explains: Sections of the established ruling orders ... felt endangered by persons recently propelled into power by a mysterious finance capitalism whose imperatives seemed at once to subvert traditional morality and threaten their social standing. Most fervently expressed during the financial crises of...
economy, it compromised its emphasis on landed independence as the measure of virtue and identity. Without this standard, identity lost its footing. As E.J. Hundert writes: “The prospect of moveable wealth amongst the newly monied, and of land treated as capital in a volatile market of anonymous risk-takers, conjured up the specter of public opinion alone as the measure of one’s standing....”

As Pocock likewise notes, “Once property was seen to have a consensual value, expressed in coin or in credit, the foundations of personality themselves appeared imaginary or at best consensual: the individual could exist, even in his own sight, only at the fluctuating value imposed upon him by his fellows....”

1696, 1710 and 1720, [neo-Country] ideas retained their force well into the 1760’s and beyond as the vagaeries of fortune initiated by a revolution in public finance loomed as a threat to a landed, antique ideal of civic freedom and public personality. (Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, Fable of the Bees, p. xviii) See Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, Fable of the Bees, p. xviii.

CHAPTER IV
NARRATIVES AND IDENTITIES: THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

According to J. G. A. Pocock, the dominant narrative of eighteenth-century Britain was an Anglo-Protestant neo-classicism rooted largely in the legacies of Aristotle, Machiavelli and Harrington. Harrington, for example, had crafted a realist, neo-Aristotelian ideology that presented modern England in terms of a natural progress from ignorance, interest and passion to reason, virtue and independence, and a variation on this doctrine continued to inform the narratives and identities of eighteenth-century Britain, however much modified. Yet the dominating influence of classical language has tended to obscure the nuances of compromise and reform that characterized the development of British civic humanism and the competing

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influence of alternative narratives. Bishop Berkeley, for example, was critical of deist “free-thinkers” like Shaftesbury and denied the existence of a natural moral sense, deeming will and reason the mediums of moral rectitude, and moral law a divine—as opposed to natural—standard of human virtue. Yet Berkeley’s effort to formulate a moral science of mathematical certainty bore inconsistent results: in the absence of revelation, how could one know universal, moral laws without looking to nature for example?

As in the seventeenth century, when Country and Court advocates were marked by their different emphases on means and ends, so the eighteenth century witnessed the continuation of differences. Neo-Country advocates of the eighteenth century—generally New Tories/ Independent and disaffected Whigs—continued to define virtue in neoclassical terms of an absolute Platonic ideal, emphasizing the natural motivations and character of the active agent—the Public Man (oligarchic descendent of the disinterested freeholder)—in the attainment of common good. By contrast, advocates of imperial commerce and trade—generally Walpolean/ Court Whigs—defined good in civic terms that emphasized national interest at the expense of virtuous motivations and ideals. Whereas the former presumed the existence of a virtuous good that transcended the self-love and material satisfactions of the secular realm, and located its source in the internal, feeling self—a narrative at least

3 As Gibson-Wood has rightly noted: “Partly because of Barrell’s important study, The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt (1986), and partly because of its relevance to discussions of both the public sphere and taste, the concept of civic humanism has dominated the ways in which early eighteenth-century English art and writings about art have been theorized in recent scholarship.” See Gibson-Wood, p. 8.

4 For an outline of Berkeley’s theory, see Copleston, V, pp. 199-200, 253-256.
theoretically compatible with more traditional Christian dogma—, the latter relegated such presumptions to a superior, imperfectly-intelligible reality, making virtue a social construct informed largely by public perception. The resulting narratives endorsed alternative—and potentially conflicting—models of identity.

In general, three schools of thought emerged: a “moral-sense” school, which recognized modern, autonomous and reasoning subjects, each acting with varying degrees of internal virtue and vice, within a singular, natural and progressive reality based on fixed moral standards resonant in a harmonious natural order and the necessary perfection of its divine creator; a “utilitarian” school, which recognized modern subjects as uniformly guided by their private passions and interests within an artificially-constructed social reality based on fluid, legally-enforced standards designed to bring happiness to the greatest number; and a “common-sense” school, which recognized modern subjects uniformly (if not consistently) guided by natural reason to support the moral laws empirically (if imperfectly) evidenced by human nature, these being properly instituted and enforced by the artificial forms of justice undergirding society.

5 Shaftesbury, for example, joined a Lockean subject—autonomous and reasonable—with “anti-Lockean moral views”—akin to those of the Cambridge Platonists—into a single, intelligible narrative of natural progress. In Shaftesbury’s case, as Taylor explains, “The goal of loving and affirming the order of the world could also be described as bringing our particular minds into harmony with the universal one....” See Taylor, pp. 244-253; quoted from pp. 252-253.


7 John Erskine of Carnock engaged in a full analysis of natural law—for him a byproduct of divine law manifest in our conscience—and its proper role as the foundation of positive or civil laws and laws between nations. He distinguished between public laws—those “which hath more immediately in view the public weal, and the preservation and good order of society....”—and private laws—“that which is chiefly intended for ascertaining the civil rights of individuals.” (Erskine, An Institute of the Law of Scotland, in Broadie, p. 611) For a full discussion of his analysis, see John Erskine, An Institute of the Law of Scotland (1773), excerpted in Broadie, pp. 600-613.
The result was three broad standards of identity and social order: a social hierarchy of complementary identities descending from the disinterested, benevolent and polite Public Man—a member of the landed, leisured, and educated elite—to the interested, selfish and vulgar masses, each properly assuming his rightful place; legal equality among competing individuals, each qualified by circumstances and opportunities to assume varying degrees of social and economic stature; and, finally, legal equality among individuals simultaneously conditioned by reason and feeling to attain varying degrees of personal happiness (competitive) and make varying contributions to the social good (complementary). 8

In the end, conflict emerged between advocates of complementary sociological identities based on fixed standards of reality and potentiality, and advocates of dynamic psychological identities based on the fluid standards attendant dual realities and potentialities. 9 Broadly speaking, then, how one responded to the question of identity was a mark of one’s ideological position: those who held tight to natural, fixed and intelligible moral standards operating in the civic realm likewise recognized a natural inequality of progress among individuals and the higher virtue of Public Men; 10 those who deemed society the consequence of convention and interest

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8 Of course, the actual divisions were not so tidy. For example, men like Adam Smith straddled the gap between “moral-sense” and “common-sense,” conceding morality to be a product of feeling rather than reason, while making its relationship to divine law a matter of imperfect deduction. See Taylor, p. 259.

9 The result was a face-off between internal/ psychological and external/ sociological identities. Suddenly, as Taylor observes, “frameworks” were “problematic” because “no framework [was] shared by everyone.” See Taylor, pp. 17-18.

10 For Shaftesbury, for example, the issue was one of moral inequality among men. As Copleston writes, although Shaftesbury believed that “all men possess conscience or the moral sense” and, consequently, considered every man “capable, to some degree at least, of perceiving moral values, of discriminating between virtue and vice,” they were not equally progressed in their capacity to do so. See Copleston, V, pp. 174-175.
tended to deny the natural premise of social inequalities and society’s necessary foundation in moral order, vesting civic authority in laws rather than men.\(^\text{11}\)

All this affected the presentation of identity.\(^\text{12}\) Conscious of discrepancies between one’s self-determined worth and one’s socially-prescribed place, an ambitious commoner might assume an ‘improved’—i.e. ‘polite’ or aristocratic—personality consistent with his desired identity. Employing dancing masters and private tutors, the ambitious could obscure their “humble origins” through an education in social refinement.\(^\text{13}\) Ultimately, as the classical conflation of knowledge and virtue with wealth and birth appeared increasingly oppressive, alternative narratives gained footing.\(^\text{14}\) As Baumeister notes, a “person’s place in society was [no longer] defined by a rigid social structure based on birth and heritage” and “identity was thus [no longer] predominantly determined by society….”\(^\text{15}\) In the end, Baumeister continues, “the social identity components (family, lineage, social rank)

\(^\text{12}\) Canfield, pp. 1-10, 35-36; Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 333, 401-402.
\(^\text{13}\) Once society was freed from customary authority and its armory of fixed standards, the individual was freed to fashion an identity consistent with his desires. In keeping with this, Baumeister notes, “boarding schools… trained young, middle-class girls to pass for upper-class young ladies.” (Baumeister, p. 54) At the same time, theorists like Shaftesbury cautioned against the falsities of self-fashioning, drawing a clear line between the effects of fashion—a form of dependence—and Gentlemen of Fashion—those guided by good breeding. (Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, p. 83) Only the latter shared attributes with the philosopher. (Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, III, p. 161.) In the end, as Baumeister notes, the social ambiguities attendant self-fashioning resulted in a confusion of identities aggravated by intermarriage between the noble and commercial classes. (Baumeister, p. 54) See Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, pp. 83, 124-125, 129-130, 135, and III, p. 161; Baumeister, Identity, pp. 54, 154, 256, 258-259.
\(^\text{14}\) Although in theory this distinction was conditioned upon natural attributes, it became, in practice, a condition of leisure. See Plato, Republic, pp. 17-23, 30-31.
\(^\text{15}\) Baumeister, Identity, p. 170.
began to undergo trivialization and destabilization..." as identity became a matter of social negotiation.16

I. "Moral Sense" versus Social "Utility": Shaftesbury, Mandeville and Hutcheson

As the writings of Hobbes and Harrington served to highlight the ideological gaps informing seventeenth-century British narratives, so the writings of Shaftesbury and Mandeville suggest the narrative polarities informing the imagination of identity in eighteenth-century Britain. The prospect of divided realities and identities posed by disengagement rested uneasily with Shaftesbury, for it undermined the premise of a harmonious and natural social order.17 Indeed, if disengagement nurtured individual autonomy and self-determination, it had a corrosive affect on early Christian and neo-Platonist visions of a fixed social hierarchy in which everyone occupied their preordained place. While it conduced to industry and commerce, it likewise effected an unstable social order. All of which affected the evaluation of identity. As Baumeister explains:

16 Baumeister, p. 154. Beginning in the late mediaeval period, social mobility “transformed a relatively fixed and stable basis for identity into a changeable and problematic one,” as “rank ... became ... contingent on circumstances other than birth.” See Baumeister, pp. 33-34, 154, 158-159, 258-259. In the end, Taylor adds, “the social order ... is more and more seen as based properly on contract....” See Taylor, p. 229.

17 The separation of the individual into objective and subjective selves permitted the detachment of the perceiving self from its subjective experience. In conjunction with the internalization of the gaze, however, this allowed for self-examination from “the first-person perspective.” (Taylor, pp. 256-258) The result was two variations on disengagement: one based on principles of reason, which argued that certain first principles can be abstracted by an emotionally-unencumbered intellect; and one based on principles of sensibility, which argued that certain first principles are perceived by the moral sense. Unlike the Cambridge Platonists and other rationalists, who held “that the human reason apprehends eternal and immutable moral principles,” Shaftesbury and Hucheson relied on the “moral sense.” (Copleston, V, p. 199) On these grounds, the two theorists could argue for the sympathetic relationship between feeling and reason and their mutual engagement in the progress towards virtuous potentiality. As Copleston notes, the idea of the self-perfection of man or of the harmonious and complete
The rise of the middle class during the early modern period gradually eroded this [social] stability.... After centuries of accepting the social order as stable and legitimate, people began to use violent means to change it. Beneath this change in behavior lay a radically altered view of how person and state ought to be related.... At issue was the legitimacy of the system of social rank, which had for centuries been perhaps the most important basis of identity.... The decline of Christianity was not the only reason that the system of identity based on social rank became problematic.... Practical and economic trends also put it in jeopardy.... Social rank had traditionally been defined by a combination of wealth, power, lineage, title, and social connections, all of which were intercorrelated. The rise of the middle class disrupted those correlations.... Some middle-class individuals became quite wealthy... [and] some aristocratic families... became poor.\textsuperscript{18}

Shaftesbury thus set out to ameliorate the effects of disengagement by containing the negative influences of its perceived origins.\textsuperscript{19} On the one hand, for example, blending influences from Aristotle and Harrington, Shaftesbury warned against the immoderate pursuit of wealth threatened by commercial imperialism.\textsuperscript{20} At the same time, he approved the commercial ethic of “fair dealing” and the benefits of refinement and improvement that accrued to society through commerce and industry.\textsuperscript{21} Indeed, in many respects, conversation, “fair-dealing” commerce, and correspondence, each being mediums of ‘improvement’, all carried similar meaning for Shaftesbury, and one might cautiously conclude that his primary objective was to

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\textsuperscript{18} Baumeister, pp. 52-53.

\textsuperscript{19} As Taylor remarks, moral-sense theorists saw in “Lockean self-disengagement... a sure way of... losing contact with... the good. That is why Shaftesbury has to combat the extrinsic theory as an abomination. It stands in the way of re-engagement with our own love of the whole.” See Taylor, p. 254.

\textsuperscript{20} On the classical premise that luxury begets dependence, Shaftesbury deemed British imperialism unwieldy and prone to corruption. See Shaftesbury Characteristicks, I, pp. 108, 111, 113, and II, pp. 150-151, 161.

\textsuperscript{21} Taylor, p. 305; Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, II, p. 155.
control commerce in a compromised variation on civic humanism—a commercial humanism conducive to individual improvement and social good.

In general, however, Shaftesbury's narrative reflected new pressures on the civic humanist narrative and its corporate meaning of life.\(^2\) Once society became a conglomerate of autonomous and self-determined individuals, the only hope of securing the classical ideal was by identifying some natural urge within the individual that satisfied the classical commitment to natural virtue and progress.\(^3\) Shaftesbury thus struggled to free the narrative of social progress from the taint of social relativism.\(^4\) But even Shaftesbury was forced to make necessary concessions. The blurring of public and private that accompanied the demands for legal equality, and the emergence of a commercial environment in which virtue was carried out in an interdependent community of producers and consumers rather than a landed environment of autonomous heroes, could not be ignored.\(^5\) They required that virtue be recast in social terms, in the liminal space between private and public life: in clubs rather than battlefields. As a consequence of this compromise, however, the traditional definition of 'independence'—a virtuous and objective disinterest born of intellectual and economic autonomy (landed birth and leisure)—was called into

\(^2\) Taylor, pp. 341-342.

\(^3\) According to Shaftesbury, the propensity towards goodness is a natural inclination instilled in man by a divine being to foster a general social affection for all mankind. See Taylor, p. 255.

\(^4\) Shaftesbury's theory of self-improvement did not always square with the classical doctrine of 'nature' over 'nurture', for it allowed education by example. See Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, II, p. 64.

\(^5\) Commercial virtue necessarily differed from the Aristotelian heroic ideal in being social rather than civic, involving interactive rather than autonomous practices, and industry rather than leisure. The conversational manner was based on the polite ease and familiarity of the club. But ultimately its parameters were expanded. For example, Mandeville describes his Fable of the Bees as being written in "as easy and familiar a manner as I am able" and compliments Sir Richard Steele on "the usual elegance of his easy style." (See Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees, pp. 20 and 41) See Taylor, pp. 238-240; Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees, pp. 20, 41.
question: who might claim disinterested independence in a world infused by
commercial and conversational relations?26

By the eighteenth century, conservative civic humanists like the third earl of
Shaftesbury were combining the unifying Christian vision of the neo-Platonists—that
which set out to reconcile Plato with Christianity and Aristotle with Plato in a theory
more cohesive and consistent than its ancient counterpart—with a neo-Aristotelian
vision of civil society.27 The resulting narrative endorsed two tenets important to the
evaluation of identity: a classical theory of natural progress; and a notion of public
virtue that wed the private attributes of Christian goodness—those affiliated with
*internal feeling*—with the heroic attributes of the Public Man—those affiliated with
*external action*—in a secular doctrine of moral ethics.28 They were further compelled
to amend political theory. Whereas Harrington—like Aristotle—had located civic
good in the balance of virtues attendant a ‘mixed’ government of three estates, relying
on agrarian laws and annual elections to secure this balance, neo-Harringtonians like
Shaftesbury located civic good in the moral virtues of Public Men. In the end, the
“moral theorists” deemed civic virtue a condition of moral ethics, the byproduct of

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26 See Copleston, V, p. 184. Plato, like Socrates, believed that conversation—or ‘dialectic’—was the
medium of philosophy; not only was his *Republic*... in dialogue form and its style ... conversational,”
but it was the method of education he endorsed at his Academy. (Lee, introduction to Plato, *Republic*;
p. liv) This was more true of Socrates and Plato than their “successors”; Cicero’s dialogues, for
example, are mostly lectures in philosophical doctrine. See Lee, introduction to Plato, *Republic*, pp.
xxxvii, liv-lv.

27 As Taylor notes, Shaftesbury’s neo-Platonism was distinct from traditional Platonism in its attention
to one’s “inward Nature” as the source of religious and moral feeling, an attention influenced by a neo-
Augustinianism. Moreover, although contemplation featured prominently as a medium of virtue, it was
also distinguished by its emphasis on the public actions—as opposed to private contemplations—of

28 Baumeister writes: “With the transition to the Romantic period, we see a great decline in the power
and influence of Christianity. Two important consequences of this decline were a serious revision of
basic political beliefs and a deterioration of the Christian moral scheme. These two consequences
fixed moral laws resonant in natural sentiments and manifest in individual acts of 
public good. 29

One consequence of this development was an emphasis on feeling as the 
medium of virtue, the external evidence of one’s quality, and the proper measure of 
social rank. 30 Another was the equation of moral virtue with aesthetic taste. 31
Ultimately, refinement became equated with virtue. 32 As Shaftesbury described it,
“outward Manners and Deportment” parallel “inward Sentiments and Principles.” 33
Moreover, “improvement”—the process of refinement by which the individual 
progressed from ignorance to knowledge, self-interest to social affection—became 
dependent on “the business of Self-dissection”—i.e. the examination of one’s “inward 
Recess” through “magical Glasses.” 34 This bore relevance for portraiture.

raised several problems for individual identity, including the search for proper models.” See 
Baumeister, p. 58.
29 Copleston writes: “Shaftesbury and Hutcheson had laid emphasis on ‘moral excellence’, on virtue as 
a state of character, on ‘affections’…. But conscience and moral decision are concerned primarily with 
actions. So with [Joseph] Butler we can see a tendency to shift the emphasis from affections to 
actions,…. actions as informed by motives…. ” See Copleston, V, pp. 174, 199-201; quoted from p. 
200.
30 In a harmonious social order, each individual fulfilled his naturally-prescribed place according to his 
moral virtue. Although the good is both passive and active—a matter of character or action—,
Shaftesbury’s emphasis is on character. See Copleston, V, pp. 173-176.
31 Shaftesbury’s interpretation reflected a Platonic bias. Plato understood style in terms of beauty, 
beauty in terms of uniformity, uniformity and harmony in terms of virtue, and virtue in terms of 
character—and, so, identity. (Plato, Republic, pp. 102-103) The purpose of a liberal arts education was 
thus to train individuals in good taste—in the recognition of true beauty—that they themselves might 
also become beautiful and virtuous. (Plato, Republic, p. 106) As Shaftesbury concluded, “the most 
natural Beauty in the World is Honesty, and moral Truth. For all Beauty is TRUTH.” (Shaftesbury, 
32 Shaftesbury, Characteristics, I, pp. 68-70, 72, 90.
33 Shaftesbury, Characteristics, I, pp. 121-122, and III, p. 179.
34 Charles Taylor has termed this introspection “radical reflexivity”—a fracturing of the self into 
subjective and objective parts as a means of coming face-to-face with one’s potentiality. See Taylor, 
pp. 174-175, 178-182; Shaftesbury Characteristics, I, pp. 173-174; Hutcheson, Reflections upon 
Laughter, in Reflections upon Laughter and Remarks upon the Fable of the Bees (Glasgow, 1750), in 
Broadie, pp. 226-227.
In part, Shaftesbury’s emphasis on feeling reflected the influence of Augustinian neo-Platonism, which likewise turned inward to find the source of moral virtue. As Augustine advocated introspection and contemplation as a means of being enlightened to the Word and, by extension, the existence of God, thereby improving one’s self and society through a knowledge of His love, so Shaftesbury advocated introspection and contemplation as a means of nurturing one’s natural affections and, thereby, improving one’s self and society through the love of mankind. But Shaftesbury also reclaimed the principle of a progressive self resonant in Plato and Aristotle. Indeed, the distinction between a progressive—natural to perfect—and a divided—natural versus social—self was a key point of controversy in eighteenth-century narratives.

On the one hand, the principle of a progressive self supported the notion of natural inequalities and a natural social hierarchy. On the other hand, the principle of a divided self—i.e. public or social and private or autonomous—, born of “disengagement,” separated the matter of the secular, social self—legally equal and relative—from the matter of the eternal self—divine and fixed. To amend the gap, and reaffirm the narrative of the progressive self, Shaftesbury subordinated the

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35 As Taylor notes, “The ancient theories that Shaftesbury drew on, those of Plato and the Stoics, weren’t expressed in the language of inwardness....” Inwardness, a consequence of Augustinian Christianity, was intensified during the Renaissance, when the self-conscious “I” emerged as an expression of one’s “inner” personhood. See Taylor, pp. 255-256.

36 Baumeister defined ‘disengagement’ as the “conceptual separation of the person from his or her position in the social order.” It was this “separation of public and private domains of life,” and its accompanying separation between the public (now problematic) and private (now ‘true’) selves, which “laid the foundation for a view of the self as being in conflict with society, a view which became widely influential in the nineteenth century.” (Baumeister, pp. 41-42) See Baumeister, pp. 41-42; Taylor, p. 265.
divided self to the classical theory of natural progress.\textsuperscript{37} As he explained it, “our
Doctrine of \textit{Two Persons} in one individual \textit{Self}” recognized the ‘natural’ self not as a
separate, a-social self, but as the point of departure—“the \textit{Underparts or Second
Characters}”—for the potential self.\textsuperscript{38} Moreover, this potential self was not merely a
social self born of compact and convention relevant only in the civic sphere, but the
“Philosophical \textit{Hero … in himself a perfect Character}” towards which man
progressed according to divine plan.\textsuperscript{39} Through self-reflection in one’s “\textit{Pocket-
Mirrour},” he wrote, one might begin to comprehend this relationship and enter upon
that course of improvement through which the divided self attained its full and unified
potential.\textsuperscript{40}

Shaftesbury’s defense of an intelligible, harmonious, and fixed moral order
responded, in part, to the threat of dual realities and divided identities attendant
nominalist and empirical thinking; as Copleston notes, empiricists denied “objective
standards of morality and objective moral values.”\textsuperscript{41} For Shaftesbury, however, only
a single, fixed, and intelligible moral law could serve as the premise for natural
progress and a natural and harmonious social hierarchy. Once the marketplace

\textsuperscript{37} By 1710, the third earl of Shaftesbury had subsumed the concept of a divided self into the classical
principle of a progressive self. See Shaftesbury, “TREATISE III.: \textit{Soliloquy: or, Advice to an Author},”
in \textit{Characteristicks}, I, pp. 158-161, 173-174, 179, 185-188, 190-191, 194-197, 200-201, 204-207, 239-
240, 250, 277-283, 298.

\textsuperscript{38} Shaftesbury, \textit{Characteristicks}, I, p. 185. Smith likewise employed a notion of self-improvement
dependent on the principle of a divided self. “Hence,” Copleston quotes, “‘I divide myself, as it were,
into two persons…. The first is the spectator…. The second is the agent, the person whom I properly
call myself, and of whose conduct, under the character of spectator, I was endeavouring to form some
opinion’.” Copleston, V, p. 359.

\textsuperscript{39} For Shaftesbury, in other words, the relationship between parts of the divided self represented a
relationship akin to ‘\textit{Pupil}’ and ‘\textit{Preceptor},’ the complementary components of the progressive self.

\textsuperscript{40} Shaftesbury, \textit{Characteristicks}, I, pp. 194-196.

\textsuperscript{41} Copleston, V, p. 177.
assumed greater authority vis-à-vis the political sphere, once individualism and empiricism challenged the necessary correlation between birth and rank, once reason was deemed a universal capacity among men, neo-Country advocates were challenged to find another attribute by which to distinguish and defend the credibility of Public Men and the traditional principles of social hierarchy.  

To this end, Shaftesbury recast the moral rectitude of the Public Man in social terms, shifting the emphasis from heroic virtue to friendship and benevolence, from the external sword to internal feeling. At the same time, he confined this attribute to the landed elite. As the neo-Country Public Man demonstrated his natural and superior virtue through a platonic love of mankind and an innate desire to advance the public good, so his ability to do so continued to turn on his unique capacity for leisured introspection. By upholding this traditional relationship between disinterested leisure and civic virtue, Shaftesbury secured a social order in which only the landed bore access to the universal mind conducive to social affection and public good.  

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44 Shaftesbury wrote: "If there be a general Mind, it can have no particular Interest." See Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks*, I, p. 40.  
45 Baumeister writes: "A conceptual connection between personality and social rank already existed by the early modern period. Evaluative traits, including moral traits, were thought to derive from physical, family heritage ('blood'). People believed that the aristocracy were innately better people than were
men based on natural rights and the universal capacity for reason, neo-Harringtonians like Shaftesbury, while conceding Harrington’s position with regard to natural rights and reason, defended natural inequalities on grounds of man’s unequal propensity for benevolence.46

Significantly, however, in equating internal benevolence with external politeness, Shaftesbury inadvertently opened the way to an alternative standard of identity. While Shaftesbury deemed politeness the attribute of a disinterested, liberally-educated elite—those who employed the “free and familiar Style” of ancient dialogues and treatises in private, clubby settings—, there was little to prevent others from adopting like modes of behavior and, hence, from displaying—however falsely—the evidence of moral virtue.47 Indeed, while Shaftesbury might extol ancient poetry for educating men in the matter of human potentiality and advancing “the business of Self-dissection” by which men were enlightened and, so, ‘improved’, while Shaftesbury might, therefore, condition the business of ‘self-dissection’ and improvement on leisure and, so, like both Plato and Aristotle, make improvement the privilege of a landed elite, others might forego the poetry while donning its effects.48
The result was a confusion of identities. In traditional classical and Christian discourse, social harmony resulted when each member of society assumed and performed his natural role, advancing society through a complementary network of social relations. Because birth was understood to be an index of function, harmony was deemed dependent upon 'keeping one's place'. By shifting attention from public to private virtue, by making private virtue—in the form of benevolence—public, and, perhaps most importantly, by allowing for the possibility of a nurtured benevolence, conservative civic humanists of the moral-sense school made two significant concessions. First, they implied that the stability of modern society relied more on inter-dependence than independence, thereby undermining the notion of natural hierarchy descending from the leisureed and reasoning few (the independents) to the working and passionate masses (the dependents). Second, they opened the way for 'nurture' over 'nature' and the possibility that any individual might rise above (or fall below) his birth 'place', thereby conceding a modicum of social fluidity. These concessions proved compatible with the arguments of convention theorists, who deemed society a compact between autonomous, legal equals motivated by private interests to acquire property and "improve" themselves. In the end, extremists like Mandeville could dismiss with the principle of natural moral standards as unnecessary to the circumstances of modern life: ambition filled the void left by classical virtue.49

Combining his medical studies of human nature with his interest in social relations, the physician Bernard Mandeville presented a vision of society in which the

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49 Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees, p. xv; Copleston, V, p. 177.
moral objectives of civic humanism were abandoned as ill-suited to modern happiness. In "An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue" (1732), Mandeville deemed morality a political tool employed by the elite to manipulate the masses. So successfully ingrained was the principle of morality that even the most oppressed were unwilling to deny it. Yet, Mandeville argued, the moral ideals advanced by Anglo-Protestant civic humanism were unnecessary to stability and happiness in modern society. As he described it, the circumstances of modern Britain have made man's "vilest and most hateful qualities ... the most necessary accomplishments to fit him for the largest and, according to the world, the happiest and most flourishing societies," one resembling the fabled "hive."

This had not always been the case. As Mandeville explained, at some point in the transition from feudalism to modernism, "an unacknowledged historical transformation" had occurred that changed the demands on the individual and society and made the narrative of moral virtue obsolete. As he described it, the transformation of commodities into sources of commercial exchange and profit—wealth—shifted the balance-of-influence between real and mobile property, expanding the means by which to attain power, reducing the inclination for violent

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52 Part of Mandeville's criticism was directed against the false face of Christian virtue; his *Letter to Dion* (1732) responded to Bishop Berkeley's attack on free-thinkers in *Alciphron; or, The Minute Philosopher* (1732). See Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, pp. 1-18, 39-42; Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, pp. x, xv.
54 Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees*, p. xix. In the end, Mandeville deemed pride the basis of social relations. See Hundert, in Mandeville, pp. xxi, xxxii; Copleston, V, p. 178.
revolt—that which made necessary a counter-narrative of virtue—, and putting pressure on the standards by which individual ‘value’ was measured.\textsuperscript{55} One consequence of these “new mechanisms of exchange” was “the relegation of … civic ideals to the realm of nostalgia, and the adoption of an intransigently egoistic morality.”\textsuperscript{56}

Ultimately, Mandevillean interest challenged Shaftesburian virtue;\textsuperscript{57} Mandeville’s analysis rendered suspect any claims to social virtue and self-sacrifice. But it also challenged the ethic of frugality. As Mandeville saw it, commercial society depended upon consumption, and consumption depended on the demand for goods. To premise a commercial society on frugality was to deny its motivation as well as its mode of “happiness.” Unlike his more conservative peers, then, for whom the threat of corruption required some element of virtue, Mandeville did not attempt to assimilate the demands of commerce into the ideals of civic humanism or make commerce compatible with virtue. He did not attempt to make common happiness the same as common good.\textsuperscript{58} It was this rejection of higher good that made his

\textsuperscript{55} Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, \textit{The Fable of the Bees}, p. xxiv.
\textsuperscript{56} Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, \textit{The Fable of the Bees}, p. xix.
\textsuperscript{57} Significantly, Copleston remarks, “his general idea that private egoism and the public good are not at all inconsistent … is an idea which is implicit in the \textit{laissez-faire} type of political and economic theory.” (Copleston, V, p. 178) For a discussion of its impact on philosophical development, particularly in the writings of David Hume, Adam Smith, and Immanuel Kant, see Hundert, in Mandeville, \textit{The Fable of the Bees}, pp. xix-xxxii.
\textsuperscript{58} Mandeville, “An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue,” in \textit{The Fable of the Bees}, pp. 43-44. Shaftesbury and Rousseau also distinguished between a higher, virtuous good and baser forms of happiness—what Shaftesbury called “Dreams of Grandure, Titles, Honours, and a false Magnificence” that turn men into “the merest Drudges, and most abject Slaves.” See Shaftesbury, \textit{Characteristicks}, I, p. 139.
argument so radical and helped to nurture his nickname—"Man-devil"—, which, according to Hundert, "became a synonym for immorality."\textsuperscript{59}

As Hundert argues, Mandeville faced head-on "the eighteenth-century's intense and prolonged dispute about how to understand and evaluate the liberation of acquisitive instincts engendered in modern polities by the infusion of commercial relations into the centers of public life."\textsuperscript{60} Once awakened to the dramatic implications of advancing commercial and financial power on the credibility of civic humanism and its corresponding social and political structures, contemporary theorists struggled to stretch the parameters of classicism, dispensing with its unwieldy ideals while preserving its pursuit of common good. Ultimately, industry became the medium of influence and rank, and symbols of industry became signifiers of identity.\textsuperscript{61} As Hundert explains, "outward displays of wealth alone were now widely accepted as a direct index of social power...."\textsuperscript{62}

All this informed the evaluation of identity. Over time, the civic humanist identity, as defined by Harrington, adopted by Restoration Whigs, modified by neo-Country conservatives, and articulated by the third earl of Shaftesbury, was mutated into a standard increasingly guided by the external evidence of internal morality: the


\textsuperscript{60} Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, \textit{Fable of the Bees}, p. xi.

\textsuperscript{61} Hundert writes: "Mandeville claimed that his work for the first time systematically comprehended from the perspective of society ... monied wealth [for]... moral and social identities." (Hundert, p. xxv) Indeed, he goes on, Mandeville "showed that the aggressive pursuit of wealth had now to be understood ... as central to the self-definition of urban and commercial populations." (Hundert, p. xxv) It was this interpretation of the monied interest that merchants and tradesmen were loath to adopt. See Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, \textit{Fable of the Bees}, pp. xx-xxv.

\textsuperscript{62} This "render[ed] absurd ... the conventional condemnation of luxury as immoral." See Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, \textit{The Fable of the Bees}, pp. xxiv-xxv.
mask of politeness. As virtue became submerged into industry, as industry became
the medium of identity, politeness and benevolence were subverted to its influence.\textsuperscript{63}

As Mandeville suggested, men adopted polite manners and an interest in the social
welfare because they earned the bearer a reputation for public virtue that enhanced his
influence—to the benefit of his personal ambitions.\textsuperscript{64} In other words, the appearance
of refinement was emphasized at the expense of its proper cause—internal virtue.\textsuperscript{65}
Thus, Mandeville could write, “in great commercial cities, where strangers are
regularly encountered, people gain public esteem by their clothes and other
accoutrements of wealth, ‘not as what they are, but what they appear to be’.”\textsuperscript{66}

This proved a boon to the business of portrait-making. At the same time these
‘attributes’ became signifiers of public worth, they were readily assimilated into the
language of portraiture. Costume, gesture, hairstyle, stance: all became signifiers of
individual progress and identity. In fact, the new emphasis on external modes of
politeness meant that portraiture became a means not only of recording one’s person,

\textsuperscript{63} Hundert concludes, “Modern manners thus comprised the last stage in the history of pride, and the
most efficient way to manage [commercial society].... Once men were able to distinguish themselves
by mannered social pretense underwritten by the marks of wealth, the stern and self-denying morality of
virtue which first made communal life possible was effectively reduced to a nostalgic remnant of the
politically defeated and downwardly mobile....” (Hundert, pp. xxix-xxx) See Hundert, introduction to
Mandeville, \textit{The Fable of the Bees}, pp. xvi, xxix-xxx.

\textsuperscript{64} As Pocock notes, “‘manners’, which had once, in the form of custom and tradition, served to retard
the wheel of fortune, have now become progressive and corrupting.” Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian
Moment}, p. 533.

\textsuperscript{65} As Hundert observes, “civility and politeness” became “regulatory devices governing an
unprecedented... process of conspicuous consumption” in which “symbols” were appropriated “for the
promotion of self—a relentless accumulation of emblems that could be acquired by wealth in a
commercial market of marks of esteem.” He goes on: “men could now indulge themselves in the world
of commerce because in it they were free to compete in non-violent ways for the most valued ‘tokens’

\textsuperscript{66} Hundert, introduction to Mandeville, \textit{The Fable of the Bees}, p. xxv.
but of constructing and asserting an ‘improved’ personality through the selective
rendering of a narrative context suited to one’s desired identity.

In the wake of Mandeville’s analysis, the principle of friendship promoted by
Shaftesbury was adopted and refashioned by his theoretical successor, Francis
Hutcheson.67 On the one hand, Hutcheson struck a middle chord between the
competing emphases on means and ends—virtuous causes and good effects—,
affiliating the formal goods of the internal sense with the virtue of moral
benevolence.68 On the other hand, Hutcheson suggested that it was moral sensibility,
not benevolence, that was innate and, further, that, as sensibility was innate to all
men, benevolence, which “is thoroughly internalized in sentiment,” might be
cultivated—theoretically speaking—by anyone.69 This was to boost the position of
‘nurture’ over ‘nature’ and bring the neo-Country platform dangerously close to a
condition of social fluidity.70 What saved it was Hutcheson’s interpretation of
individual will as the complement to social hierarchy: though individual will
determined the degree to which one’s sensibility might be elevated towards
benevolence and virtue, will itself was subject to the natural inequalities necessarily

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67 While rooted in Shaftesbury’s ‘friendship’, the theory of moral benevolence was perhaps most
forcefully articulated by his theoretical successor, Francis Hutcheson. Like Shaftesbury, Hutcheson
deemed morality a social virtue. (Taylor, pp. 259, 262 and 280) But he further distinguished between
its internal and external forms. As Copleston writes, “By external sense the mind receives, in Locke’s
terminology, simple ideas of single qualities of objects.... By internal sense we perceive relations
which give rise to a feeling or feelings which are different from the seeing or hearing or touching of
separate related objects.” (Copleston, V, p. 179) “Thus,” Copleston concludes, “Hutcheson tends to
make virtue synonymous with benevolence...[;] the desire of universal happiness, becomes the
dominating principle in morality.” (Copleston, V, pp. 180-181) See Copleston, V, pp. 179-182; Taylor,
68 Taylor, p. 261.
69 Taylor, p. 264.
70 Taylor, pp. 260-261.
informing the harmonious universe.  

II. Internal Feeling/ Artificial Convention: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and David Hume

The emphasis on benevolence and sentiment in eighteenth-century ideology is significant for what it suggests about the growing influence of private attributes in the evaluation of identity. By the mid-eighteenth century, feeling, once negatively associated with 'passion' and ignorance, had become "the touchstone of the morally good," providing guidance to reason, which served to filter emotional distortions. The full effect of this reversal was felt in the Romantic ethic, which encouraged the individual's internal reunion with his pure potentiality. Through feeling, Rousseau argued, man re-engaged with his internal, noble self and was thereby motivated to throw off the negative effects of disengagement, reconnect with others, and consequently improve and advance both himself and society.

Rousseau's analysis, which located the moral self in the "voice within," served to highlight the implications of the divided self: the coexistence of higher (natural) and lower (artificial) realms of existence; and the accompanying coexistence of higher (virtuous) and lower (social) selves. On these grounds, Rousseau rejected the

71 Unlike Locke, Hutcheson regarded one's place in the social order as already prescribed: one comes to know it through one's internal reengagement with God's will. Taylor, pp. 264-265.
72 In complement with this development, "human nature" emerged as a primary subject of eighteenth-century philosophy. This was particularly true in the case of David Hume. For a discussion of Hume, see Copleston, V, pp. 258-298, 305-317.
73 Previously, although a handful of philosophers, such as Descartes, had credited feeling with the power to unite body and soul, reason was still privileged as the medium of virtue. See Taylor, pp. 283-284.
74 Whereas Lockean empiricism employed disengagement as a means of examining the general self in relation to a representational model of the world, a second model of individualism employed disengagement as a means of reunion with the particular self. See Taylor, pp. 283-284.
75 Jean-Jacques Rousseau highlighted the gap between the moral and social self and, hence, "dramatically and scandalously pointed out a contradiction that others were trying to live with."
utilitarian narrative of “organized egoism,” and its emphasis on “happiness,” as an alternative form of enslavement.\textsuperscript{76} For Rousseau, the meaning of life was not happiness, but the good. And the good was manifest not in pleasure, but in freedom and, so, morality, for only in our capacity as moral agents do we bear the capacity for freedom.\textsuperscript{77} In part, then, Rousseau sought to reconcile the implications of disengagement—the isolation of the individual from society and the consequent gap between the moral and social self—by urging a return to nature as the venue of re-engagement. This return to nature was not a regression to a dependent, primitive state, but a progression towards an independent, unadulterated self, the point-of-departure for individual and social good.\textsuperscript{78}

As Rousseau’s writings suggest, the narrative of internal feeling informed by Augustine and advanced by the “moral sense” theorists was expanded during the course of the century. As Taylor explains it, the “feeling for nature” expressed first as the idealized “virtues of simplicity or rusticity,” became the “sentiments which nature awakens in us”—we “return to nature, because it brings out strong and noble feelings in us....”\textsuperscript{79} This development is resonant in the visual differences between Thomas Gainsborough’s \textit{John Plampin} (Fig. 4-1; ca. 1753-1754; oil on canvas, 19-3/4 x 23-

\textsuperscript{76} Taylor, p. 364.
\textsuperscript{77} Taylor, pp. 364-365.
\textsuperscript{78} “Goodness is identified with freedom, with finding the motives for one’s actions within oneself.... Rousseau is actually pushing the subjectivism of modern moral understanding a stage further.” See Taylor, pp. 359-361; quoted from p. 361.
\textsuperscript{79} Taylor, p. 293, 296-297, 299. According to Taylor, the change was resonant in four key aspects of English culture: commerce, with its attendant politeness; literature and “the rise of the novel,” with its egalitarian language, audience, subject-matter (domestic and particular rather than civic and general), and virtues (social rather than heroic, for example, or based on common men doing heroic deeds); domesticity and the emphasis on marriage, family and emotional commitments; and the role of
1/4 inches; National Gallery, London) and Joseph Wright’s *Brooke Boothby* (Fig. 4-2; 1781; oil on canvas, 58-1/2 x 81-3/4 inches; Tate Britain).

![Fig. 4-1](image1)

![Fig. 4-2](image2)

sentiment. Significantly, all were reflective of social rather than heroic ideals. See Taylor, pp. 286-301, 361, 380; Baumeister, pp. 60-63.

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In the former, the country subject is seated in a natural landscape, the base of his torso supported by the base of a weathered tree, his legs extended like roots into the bare earth, arm draped casually—and possessively—across a low-lying limb. In this relaxed posture, garbed in fashionable attire trimmed in gold braid, Plampin meets our gaze with a proprietor’s air, his confident ease highlighted by the contrasting rigidity of his statuesque pointer. In this image of the country squire, nature is subordinate and complementary to the subject, a symbol of rustic values and, more particularly, the implications and ideals of property-ownership—of roots in land. In this role, it supports—literally and figuratively—the person and pursuits of the sitter.

In Boothby, by contrast, figure bends and flows at one with the landscape, the sitter’s left ankle all but rooting beneath the underbrush while his head emerges like a sprout of new growth. As Stephen Daniels notes, visual precedent for the reclining figure can be found in Elizabethan images, while literary examples include Henry Mackenzie’s *Man of Feeling*. Against the material—artificial—richness of Plampin’s dress, Boothby’s costume assumes the tones and shadows of nature, the glints of light in the distant sky echoed in the whiteness of stockings, collar and cuff. Moreover, against Plampin’s conversational posture, Boothby’s is decidedly contemplative, the split of the index finger signaling the sitter’s engagement with his internal self, a point reinforced by the volume, marked *Rousseau*, that rests on the

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80 According to Kalinsky, the origins of Plampin’s pose derived from an engraving of Watteau’s *Antoine de la Roque*, the influence of which had already affected Hayman’s paintings at Vauxhall Gardens. See Nicola Kalinsky, *Gainsborough* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995), pp. 44-45.
bank in front of him. In other words, if Plampin casts nature in economic (property-ownership), social (the setting of leisurely pursuits like walking, hunting and conversing), and political (landed) terms, Boothby casts nature as the venue of metaphysical engagement with the internal self, the site of self-knowledge and moral improvement. In this guise, Boothby's reunion with the virtuous matter and potentiality found in natural man prior to his adoption of the artificial and pride-effecting 'attributes' endorsed by 'civilization' recalls Shaftesbury's "Magical Glasses;" quoting Buffon, Rousseau wrote: "it is this [internalized] sense that we must use if we wish to know ourselves; it is the only one by which we can judge ourselves."

Ultimately, Taylor writes, the Romantic narrative subverted "the hierarchical order of reason" to the "providential design of nature." By mid-century, the external disengagement that characterized the first stage of internalization and informed the Lockean split between reason and passion in the pursuit of scientific reason, assumed new focus on internal self-discovery and re-engagement with the external world. In the process, feeling, as the conduit of engagement, assumed new stature as the medium of virtue; whereas Locke invoked reason as the medium of feeling, Rousseau

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82 In fact, Boothby published Rousseau's bibliography in 1780, and the folio in front of him likely refers to this manuscript. See Stephen Daniels, *Joseph Wright* (London: Tate Gallery, 1998), pp. 22-23.
85 Unfortunately, Rousseau argued, "we seldom make use of that inward sense which reduces us to our true dimensions, and separates us from all that is not part of us." SeeBuffon, *Histoire Naturelle, generale et particuliere*, vol. IV (Paris, 1752), p. 151; quoted in Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, Remark B, p. 139.
86 Taylor, pp. 283-284.
87 Indeed, there was a shared sense that everything was ultimately reducible to one's inner self and the outer world. See Taylor, pp. 348-349, 351, 353-354.
invoked feeling as the medium of reason.88 Indeed, that the ‘natural’, feeling self
existed prior to the social, reasoning self, that the pursuit of virtuous improvement
required re-engagement with this natural, feeling self, represented an essential
component of the “romantic theory of personality.”89 Whereas moral-sense deists like
Shaftesbury looked externally to locate the evidence of moral laws, and transformed
the will accordingly, the Romantic personality located the evidence of morality
internally and, so, looked inward to discover the good.90

In part, Rousseau blamed philosophy for the distorted emphasis on reason that
had caused the decline in human compassion and nurtured the prevalence of pride
over pity, interest over benevolence.91 As with the moral-sense theorists, benevolence
marked the difference between the higher love of *amour propre* informing natural
rights and common good, and the lower love of *amour de soi* informing self-
interest.92 It was this gap which necessitated the artificial social contract, one
consequence of which was the subversion of natural pity to social pride, another of
which was the sacrifice of natural rights for positive laws.93 Ultimately, having
rejected the premise of a *natural* general will—i.e. a natural association of men—,

88 Taylor, pp. 366-367.
90 Taylor, pp. 368-375.
91 As he explained it, “all the social virtues ... flow from this quality [of pity] alone.... Benevolence,
and even friendship, correctly understood, is only the outcome of” pity. (Rousseau, *A Discourse on
92 Rousseau writes: “One must not confuse pride and self-love.... Self-love is a natural sentiment
which prompts every animal to watch over its own conservation and which, directed in man by reason
and modified by pity, produces humanity and virtue.” (Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, Remark
389.
93 As Victor Gourevitch explains, Rousseau denied that men spontaneously act in conformity with
common natural rights. And it is this weakness which necessitated the formation of society and the

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Rousseau endorsed an *artificial* one, a convention of general laws by which each man was freed from the will of another and all were held mutually subject to a single, uniform, and just standard, the security of which depended upon an elected aristocracy of wise men.⁹⁴

On the one hand, this required the institution of legal equality.⁹⁵ On the other hand, it required a ‘natural’ aristocracy—a meritocracy of wise men guided by *amour propre* (patriotism)—to secure the general will.⁹⁶ Indeed, Rousseau’s platform was not an endorsement of social parity or a denial of individual merit and virtue, but rather a denial of wealth and birth as the necessary foundations of civic virtue.⁹⁷

While he celebrated “enlightened patriotism” as the highest form of virtue and the institution of positive laws. See Gourevitch, introduction to Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, pp. x-xix.


⁹⁶ According to Rousseau, morals are the most important impetus to virtue and good government; “the mainspring of public authority,” he wrote, “is in the hearts of the citizens, and... nothing can replace morals in sustaining government.” (Discourse on Political Economy, p. 13) This is alternately described as “patriotism.” See Rousseau, *Of the Social Contract and Discourse on Political Economy*, in Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, pp. 9, 11, 13, 78, 93; Gourevitch, introduction to Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, p. xxi-xxv.

ingredient most essential to Public men, he never excluded the common man from greatness.98

Rousseau's vision alternately supported and challenged moral-sense theory. On the one hand, Rousseau denied the possibility of achieving potentiality in the civic realm. He also subverted the universal vision and goals of the Christian religion to the goals and interests of the secular, political State; without denying the superiority of Christian dogma for the higher objectives of humanity, he denied their feasibility for "men as they are."99 On the other hand, even though he deemed a hereditary aristocracy the worst form of government, Rousseau reinforced the objectives of moral-sense theory insofar as he privileged an agricultural economy above a commercial one—land over money—on grounds that a preoccupation with commerce risked liberty and virtue.100 Moreover, while he tempered his landed bias by denying

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98 According to Rousseau, "while [aristocracy] ... involves a certain inequality of fortune, ... so that in general the administration of the public business be entrusted to those who can best devote all of their time to it, ... [it is] not, as Aristotle contends, so that the rich always be preferred. On the contrary, ... an opposite choice should occasionally teach the people that men's merit offers more important reasons for preference than do riches." (Rousseau, Of the Social Contract, in Rousseau, The Social Contract and other later political writings, pp. 82 and 94) Indeed, he wrote, "It is patriotism that produced the many immortal actions whose brilliance dazzles our weak eyes, and the many great men whose antique virtues are treated as fables ever since patriotism has been turned into derision." (Discourse on Political Economy, p. 16) See Rousseau, Of the Social Contract, Considerations on the Government of Poland, Of the Social Contract and Discourse on Political Economy, in Rousseau, The Social Contract and other later political writings, pp. 16, 19-20, 70, 82, 94, 183, 188-189; Gourevitch, introduction to Rousseau, The Social Contract and other later political writings, pp. xxii-xxiii.

99 Rousseau did not deny either God or our sense of His presence in us. Rather, Rousseau argued, if the philosophical ideal were possible, men would be as one "moral Being" and society would be unnecessary (Rousseau, The Geneva Manuscript, p. 155) See Rousseau, The Geneva Manuscript, Letter to M. de Franquieres, Letter to Usteri, and Of the Social Contract, in Rousseau, The Social Contract and other later political writings, pp. 144-151, 155, 266, 273-275; Gourevitch, introduction to Rousseau, The Social Contract and other later political writings, pp. xxv-xxix and xxxi; Baumeister, p. 59.

100 One problem with commercial economies was that they encouraged the institution of representative government, which undermined the primacy of participatory politics. But, Rousseau suggested, they also served as a damper to virtue. See Rousseau, Considerations on the Government of Poland and Of the Social Contract, in Rousseau, The Social Contract and other later political writings, pp. 113-123, 224-229.
the principle of a naturally fixed social order, he nonetheless endorsed public honors as a means of enticing heroic virtue and common good.\textsuperscript{101}

Ultimately, as Taylor explains, the Platonism that defined the individual according to his reasoned connection “with the order of things” gave way to a new “sense of human identity” in which “we are defined by purposes and capacities which we discover within ourselves.”\textsuperscript{102} Consequently, as the individual assumed responsibility for his own meaning of life, as the right to identify himself was increasingly asserted, he likewise became responsible for knowing himself.\textsuperscript{103} It was this pursuit of self-knowledge that generated the renewed emphasis on internalization and the evolution of nature as the Romantic “Pocket-Mirrour.” Ultimately, identity became not a publicly-prescribed face, but the translation of the internal self into a persona legible to the public sphere. By these means, Romanticism released the individual from his primary responsibility to the ideals of the classical Public.\textsuperscript{104}

By the end of the eighteenth century, the pragmatic approach to art (concerned with the end result) was supplanted by what M. H. Abrams terms an “expressive theory” of art.\textsuperscript{105} In the process, the mirror was repositioned to reflect the internal

\textsuperscript{101} Rousseau, \textit{Considerations on the Government of Poland}, in Rousseau, \textit{The Social Contract and other later political writings}, pp. 227-229, 244.

\textsuperscript{102} Taylor, p. 302.

\textsuperscript{103} In this environment, Taylor writes, a “new moral culture radiates outward and downward from the upper middle classes of England [and] America” characterized by a growing personal “autonomy”, a “self-exploration, in particular of feeling,” and “visions of the good life generally involv[ing] personal commitment.” (Taylor, p. 305) This also occurred in France. See Taylor, pp. 300, 305.

\textsuperscript{104} Taylor, p. 346.

\textsuperscript{105} By “expressive theory” of art, Abrams defines one “in which the artist himself becomes the major element generating both the artistic product and the criteria by which it is to be judged....” He goes on: “A work of art is essentially the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet’s perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.” (Abrams, p. 22) See M. H. Abrams, \textit{The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition} (New York and London: Oxford University Press, (1953) 1971), pp. 21-22; Taylor, pp. 183-192, 197-198.
thoughts of the subject—the ‘mirror’ becomes a ‘lamp’. With its physical immediacy, pointedly engaging gaze, and dramatic play of light and shadow, Allan Ramsay’s *David Hume* (Fig. 4-3; 1766; oil on canvas, 30 x 25 inches; Scottish National Portrait Gallery) is suggestive of this development.

![Fig. 4-3](image)

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106 Once the balance tilted away from external imitation in favor of internal feeling, the hegemony of the neoclassical model was weakened and “the basic orientation of all aesthetic philosophy” overturned. In its stead, the heroic figure became—as in Henry Mackenzie’s novel—*The Man of Feeling* (1771), free to discover his meaning of life. See Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, pp. 45, 52-53, 69.
On the one hand, Hume's dependence on the external evidence of human merit in the judgment of individual worth is invoked by the physical intimacy between sitter and spectator achieved by the sitter's gaze and his proximity to the picture plane. As Wind notes, "merit is transformed from a hard-won right based on exceptional achievements into a directly perceivable, natural quality which appeals to the beholder's feelings in the same way as physical beauty." At the same time, Hume's emphasis on internal feeling as the site of morality, an emphasis which biased him against the pretentious grandeur of heroic imagery, is highlighted by the Rembrandtesque illumination of head and heart. Indeed, the image appears as a metaphorical allusion to enlightenment itself—the emergence from darkness into light—attained by way of social virtues.

In general, Hume followed Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Rousseau in locating morality in internal feeling. He likewise privileged feeling above reason. But, like Rousseau, he departed from moral-sense theory in deeming society the effect of human convention rather than nature, substituting particular, subjective standards of

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107 According to Wind, "When Hume attacked that view of human dignity which sees an exalted existence as the only one fitting for man, and when he rejected the absolute urge to perform heroic deeds as a senseless and presumptuous attempt to exceed the limits imposed upon man by Nature, he came into conflict not only with moralists like Johnson and philosophers like Beattie, but also with painters like Reynolds." (Wind, p. 2) In fact, Wind continues, Hume's theory "can be reduced in the last analysis to one maxim, that personal merit consists in nothing other than possessing qualities 'useful or agreeable to ourselves or others'." (Wind, p. 6) See Wind, *Hume and the Heroic Portrait*, p. 2, 6.

108 Wind, p. 6.

109 As Copleston remarks, Hume believed "that moral distinctions are derived ultimately, not from reasoning, but from feeling, from the moral sentiment." See Copleston, V, p. 319; Wind, *Hume and the Heroic Portrait*, p. 6.

110 For Hume, moreover, as for Rousseau, the "end of self-exploration is not disengaged control"—as it is for Locke—"but engagement, coming to terms with what we really are...." See Taylor, pp. 344-345.

111 As Hume explained: "first, ... reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and secondly, ... it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will." (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 413) Thus, he concludes: "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and..."
identity for abstract, universal ones. This was not to deny either the existence of general ideas or their superiority to particular ones, but to deny the possibility of abstracting general ideas from properties in nature.

In fact, Hume’s analysis presented general difficulties for the interpretation of morality and identity. Having confined human knowledge to the effects of observation and experiment, Hume limited the knowledge of morality and identity to the evidence of passive observation. As the study of identity depended on the principle of individuation—on knowing the self as a distinct entity, disengaged from its external environment—Hume’s insistence that the human mind cannot distinguish real substance, but only the perception of real substance, meant that identity could not extend “beyond what is immediately present to the senses.” Ultimately, as sense-perception became the only basis of knowledge, external actions became the only evidence of internal feeling, and interpretations of improvement and virtue came to can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.” (Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, p. 415) See Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, pp. 413-415.

According to Hume, because all knowledge stems from subject, because there are no external qualities in the object but only a subjective analysis thereof, there is no essential abstract quality to serve as the foundation of universal ideas. Hence, Hume writes: “all general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals, which are similar to them....” (Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, p. 17) See Copleston, VI, pp. 408-415; Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, pp. xiii-xiv, 1, 17-20, 66-68, 180-181, 266-268; Taylor, pp. 344-345; Baumeister, p. 58.


Rejecting “the entire providential view of the world,” only partially assimilating the principle of disengagement, and adopting the language of sentiment, Hume represents a curious blending of Locke and Hutcheson. (Taylor, pp. 343-344) For a discussion of Hume’s importance to the development of British thought, see Taylor, pp. 343-344; Copleston, VI, pp. 406-412.


Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, p. 73. Whereas Augustine, following Plato, made form or soul the principle of individuation, whereas Aquinas, following Aristotle, made matter or body the principle of individuation. Hume denies both. According to Hume, the individual is not reducible to the simple unity and continuity demanded by true identity. Indeed, of the seven philosophical relations Hume describes, identity ranks among the three that cannot be known with mathematical certainty, whose “necessary connexion” cannot be demonstrated. (Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, pp. 69-77) See

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depend on appearance alone. Consequently, identity became little more than the summary character ascribed by the spectator to the subject, according to his composite perception of various impressions and his interpretation of their cause and motive.

On the surface, Hume’s analysis appeared to support moral fluidity and deny identity. Yet, while conceding the evolutionary nature of moral principles, Hume denied the principle of moral relativism, defending the natural premise of right and wrong on the evidence of the immediacy of pleasure and pain. A similar argument informed his defense of natural beauty—the corollary of virtue. What Hume did not presume was that moral and aesthetic feelings affected all men equally. One man naturally derived more or less pleasure from the evidence of moral good than another. This difference informed his level of Taste and virtue. As with Rousseau, it was this inequality of virtue—evidenced in inequalities of Taste—that informed the need for social compact. At the same time, Taste—the external manifestation of


Remarkably, Hume argued that the “general principles of taste are uniform in human nature,” but that the “case is not the same with moral principles.... They are in continual flux and revolution. The son embraces a different system from the father.” (Hume, Of the Standard of Taste, in Broadie, pp. 259 and 261) See Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, pp. 296, 574-575; Hume, Of the Standard of Taste, in Broadie, pp. 259, 261.

“Let a man’s insensibility be ever so great,” Hume wrote, “he must often be touched with the images of Right and Wrong; and... [know] that others are susceptible of like impressions.” Hume, Theory of Moral Sentiments, quoted in Broadie, p. 145.

While all men bear the capacity for sympathy and, so, virtue, few act solely according to its dictates. See Copleston, V, pp. 331-333, 336-337.

Taste was a measure of one’s love for beauty in all its manifestations, including virtue, as well as a measure of one’s ability to judge. As Hume explained: “‘Tis only by taste we can decide concerning [morality and beauty], nor are we possessed of any other standard, upon which we can form a judgment of this kind.” See Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, p. 297.

Hume denied both the Tory view of government—based on a natural authority—and the Whig view of government—based on contract. Government, he argued, is born of an interest to protect mind, body and property. It is supported by a sense of obligation and duty. Justice is the artificial means by
internal sympathy—became the signifier of “moral sense” and the standard of human virtue. Ultimately, then, one could judge a man—the “right-ness” or “wrong-ness” of his character—through the evidence of his politeness—by the way he looked and acted. Still, Hume could not deny the risks attendant such a superficial analysis of human value. He consequently reaffirmed the importance of wisdom in discerning virtue, in distinguishing “great men” from the masses of false pretenders. Reason thus reemerged as the necessary brace to feeling.

In the end, Hume, like Rousseau, made access to social rank a matter of merit rather than birth (at least theoretically), supporting the principle of social hierarchy as a necessary consequence of human nature, with attendant implications for the distribution of property and social rank. As he explained it:

The skin, pores, muscles, and nerves of a day-labourer are different from those of a man of quality. So are his sentiments, actions and manners. The different which this balance is settled equitably and legally in the interest of happiness. (Copleston, V, p. 343-344, 346, 348) The ideal republic was thus a fiction suited only for the establishment of civil standards. (Copleston, V, p. 352) If government fails to meet its obligation to public liberty, it may be rightfully dissolved. (Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, pp. 551-564) As Copleston observes, “Hume, therefore, will not allow that there are eternal laws of justice, independent of man’s conditions and of public utility.” (Copleston, V, p. 338) See Hume, Of the First Principles of Government, in Broadie, pp. 507-512; Hume, Of the Origin of Government, in Broadie, pp. 513-518; Hume, Of Justice, in Broadie, pp. 579-597; Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, pp. 477, 486-505, 526, 533-538, 551-564, 619-620; Copleston, V, pp. 336-338, 343-349, 352.

With regard to sympathy, Hume wrote: “Thus it appears, that sympathy is a very powerful principle in human nature, that it has a great influence on our taste of beauty, and that it produces our sentiment of morals in all the artificial virtues.” See Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, pp. 577-578.


As Hume explained: “‘Tis evident, that when we praise any actions, we regard only the motives that produced them, and consider the actions as signs or indications of certain principles in the mind and temper…. We must [therefore] look within to find the moral quality. This we cannot do directly; and therefore fix our attention on actions, as on external signs.” (Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, p. 477) See Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, p. 477; Hume, An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, in Broadie, p. 147.

As Copleston writes, “the more our knowledge is increased, the clearer become the connections between character, motive and choice.” See Copleston, V, p. 325.

As Hume wrote: “‘Tis necessary, therefore, to know our rank and station in the world, whether it be fix’d by our birth, fortune, employments, talents or reputation. ‘Tis necessary to feel the sentiment and passion of pride in conformity to it, and to regulate our actions accordingly.” See Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, p. 599.
stations of life influence the whole fabric, external and internal; and these
different stations arise necessarily, because uniformly, from the necessary and
uniform principles of human nature.\footnote{Hence, Hume concluded: “Men cannot live without society, and cannot be associated without

For Hume, social rank was contingent upon property, itself an effect of government
jurisdiction.

For all their similarities, Hume and Rousseau departed on their views of
commerce. Indeed, in his denial of an “ancient constitution” to which England might
return, in his support for a strong executive power, in his concessions to passion and
interest, all of which conduced to the progress of commerce, Hume aligned himself
with a Court narrative at odds with the cause of ‘true’ (Harringtonian/ Commonwealth) Whig “Patriots” and “republicans.”\footnote{“Ideally,” he conceded, “a perfect commonwealth would consist of a one, few, and many of the classic type; but in reality, and even in ideality, there must be means of bringing the interests of all three into identity, and this involved the presence of a patronage-dispensing authority, which must always be in some degree of tension with the forces making for liberty.” See Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian Moment}, p. 495.} Against Rousseau’s vision of
agricultural self-sufficiency, Hume cautiously supported the civility born of controlled
commerce. To reconcile the inherent conflict between commercial imperialism and
republicanism, Hume, like Montesquieu, sought to police interest with virtue—to
assimilate a degree of imperial interest into an otherwise virtuous republic.\footnote{Indeed, Pocock claims, Montesquieu opened the way for “commerce, and therefore passion, [to] contribute to liberty and civic values,” not in the sense of a republican civic virtue, but in the sense of private or social virtues. “Virtue, he laid down, was the principle of republics.... Montesquieu knew that virtue in this sense did not necessarily coincide with private values or personal morality.... Like Machiavelli, he knew that the Christian ethos made demands to which the civic ethos might refuse to give way....” (Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian Moment}, p. 491) See Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian Moment}, pp. 490–491.} To this
end, he endorsed the social virtues of benevolence, politeness and frugality.\footnote{Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian Moment}, p. 492.}
this position, hinted in the writings of Shaftesbury and advanced by Hume and Montesquieu, that was taken up and developed by Adam Smith and common-sense theorists into a narrative of commercial humanism.\textsuperscript{134}

III. \textit{Adam Smith and the Scottish School of "Common-Sense"}\textsuperscript{135}

That the cultivation of politeness—the outward appearance of internal moral sensibility—was affiliated with a civility born of conversation and commerce was, if latent in Shaftesbury's theory, an important tenet in common-sense theory and a key means by which commerce became assimilated into a narrative of civic virtue and social progress.\textsuperscript{136} Although David Hume assisted in this development, insofar as he allowed for a commerce whose language and behavior served to benefit others, it was Adam Smith who crafted the narrative into a commercial variation on civic

\textsuperscript{134} As Pocock observes, the Enlightenment appears to have advanced ahead of itself in England, being "already engaged [in] ...examining the impact of social change on a humanist theory of the social personality which was already wholly secular...[; in fact,] the Augustans... were possessed of a thoroughly social and secular theory of the civic personality, whose parameters suggested that for some centuries social change had been undermining its foundations." (Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian Moment}, p. 477) Indeed, he continues: "the primary threat to social order continued to be understood in terms of an "historical dialectic between virtue and commerce." (Pocock, \textit{The Machiavellian Moment}, p. 497)

\textsuperscript{135} According to Andrew Skinner, the "Scottish School" included Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Ferguson, Henry Home (Lord Kames), George Turnbull, Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart. What united them was a Newtonian methodology—i.e. the ‘experimental method’ of synthesis, “a union between the inductive approach associated with Bacon and the more purely deductive tradition of which Descartes was the representative.” (Skinner, p. 15) They also “shared a common interest in two questions.... First: ‘by what means does it come to pass, that the mind prefers one tenour of conduct to another?’ And secondly: ‘wherein does this virtue consist?’ Or what is the tone of temper and tenour of conduct, which constitutes the excellent and praiseworthy character?” (Skinner, p. 16) Unlike Hume, however, Adam Smith and the common-sense theorists insisted that the "propensities" of human nature... exist independently of our knowledge of them” and are not simply the byproduct of our imagination and ideas. (Skinner, p. 16) As Skinner notes, “The School in fact generally adopted the position that certain characteristics are implanted \textit{in} man by the Author of Nature, thus providing the means by which a Rational Plan, whose purposes are not always known \textit{to} man, is unfolded.” (Skinner, p. 16)

\textsuperscript{136} Significantly, as politeness became associated with Taste, Taste itself became a measure of one’s aesthetic sensibilities. See Gibson-Wood, p. 232.
humanism. As Andrew Skinner writes, "The Wealth of Nations seemed to lend a certain sanctity to the self-interested pursuit of gain, by showing that such activity was productive of benefit to society at large." \( ^{138} \)

Smith's thesis turned on two assumptions relevant to the interpretation of identity. First, against Rousseau and Hume, Smith reclaimed the more traditional Aristotelian description of man as a social animal intended for society by nature, not by contract. In Smith's narrative, there is something in man—the "Invisible Hand" of conscience—which naturally motivates him towards society. This society serves, on the one hand, as a venue of social activity suited to man's natural 'sympathy'. On the other hand, through instruments of justice, it also serves as a means of protecting man from the selfish inclinations of himself and others.\(^ {139} \) Hence, for Smith, human engagement in society represented the natural unfolding of true happiness—i.e. goodness—, a happiness resonant in nature, consistent with reason, manifest in general rules of morality, and prescribed by Divine plan.\(^ {140} \)

Significantly, however, to this Aristotelian narrative, Smith added a

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\( ^{137} \) Hume distinguished between disinterested and interested commerce, as well as the social—as opposed to civic—"promise," the honor code of commercial men. (Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, p. 522) Unlike Rousseau, moreover, Hume accepted the compatibility of individual and social good. (Hume, Of Commerce, quoted in Broadie, p. 388) At the same time, he cautioned against great disparities of fortune, endorsing the advantages of a large middle class; "In this circumstance consists the great advantage of England above any nation at present in the world." (Hume, Of Commerce, quoted in Broadie, p. 395) See Hume, Treatise of Human Nature, p. 522-523; Hume, Of Commerce, in Broadie, pp. 395-396; Broadie, p. 386.


commercial variant: a description of human progress necessarily informed by
economic development. According to Smith, the priorities and circumstances of an
agricultural society will naturally conduce to a different social structure than that of a
commercial society. The degree of human improvement and happiness in a society
will thus depend on the level of its economic progress. Moreover, whereas a purely
agricultural society will conduce to a more vertical hierarchy than a purely
commercial one, so a commercial society will provide more equality, more liberty
and, hence, more happiness to a greater number of individuals than an agricultural
one. What is interesting about Smith's analysis is its implied progress from a state
of dependence to independence to interdependence, a circumstance only tacitly
suggested by the theory of sympathy found, for example, in Shaftesbury, Rousseau,
and Hume. Ultimately, Smith wrote, "Every man ... lives by exchanging, or becomes
in some measure a merchant, and the society itself grows to be what is properly a
commercial society."

As the economic structure of society changed, so too, Smith argued, did the
political structure. Changes in the nature of wealth and birth necessarily affected
individual claims to political authority and this, in turn, affected identity and social

141 Smith, The Wealth of Nations, in Broadie, pp. 621, 626; Broadie, p. 615.
142 As Smith explained: "The difference between the most dissimilar characters, between a philosopher
and a common street porter, for example, seems to arise not so much from nature as from habit, custom,
and education... till at last the vanity of the philosopher is willing to acknowledge scarce any
resemblance." (Smith, The Wealth of Nations, p. 120) See Smith, The Wealth of Nations, p. 120;
143 Smith, The Wealth of Nations, pp. 126, 388. Yet, Smith cautions, there will always be those who
will become victims of mind-numbing tasks. It is therefore essential that government provide greater
educational and cultural opportunities for its citizens, not only because it is the right thing to do, but
because it benefits the state. See Smith, The Wealth of Nations, pp. 179, 461; Pocock, The
Machiavellian Moment, p. 464.
order. On the one hand, the transition from a pasturing (nomadic) to a farming (settled) state made land the primary form of wealth and authority, and this lent landowners a privileged identity. With the development of cities, however, and the emergence of a commercial ‘citizen’ class, the authority of landowners was slowly eroded. At the same time, “liberty” and independence reached a wider population. Ultimately, as political authority was made to accommodate more varied forms of wealth and property—rental income (the wealth of the landowner), wage income (the wealth of the laborer) and profit income (the wealth of the “capitalist”)—, a new model for social order, based on a structure of interdependence and exchange, diluted the value of land. On the one hand, the received wealth of the landowner continued to suggest a more disinterested condition—his property came to him with “neither labour nor care”—, a circumstance that lent him a political

144 Skinner writes: “As before, Smith explained the existence of patterns of authority and subordination in terms of inequalities of wealth and thus birth....” (Skinner, in Smith, The Wealth of Nations, p. 35) In all cases, he suggests, wealth—and, so, the circumstances (as opposed to the bloodlines) of birth—was the medium of authority guiding the “patterns of subordination and dependence.” (Skinner, in Smith, The Wealth of Nations, p. 34) See Skinner, introduction to Smith, The Wealth of Nations, pp. 34-35.


146 The effects of manufacturing were three-fold: an increased market for agricultural production which, in turn, stimulated agriculture and encouraged improvements; the transformation of land from a source of power to a source of investment; and the spread of urban liberty to the country. (Skinner, in Smith, Wealth of Nations, p. 38) The implications were different in Scotland. “In Scotland,” Smith wrote, “…as no leasehold gives a vote for a member of parliament, the yeomanry are... less respectable to their landlords than in England.” (Smith, Wealth of Nations, p. 492) See Skinner, introduction to Smith, The Wealth of Nations, pp. 37-39; Smith, Wealth of Nations, p. 492.

147 By the reign of Elizabeth I, English policy was becoming favorable to commerce. Initially, this worked to the advantage of the reigning authority. Eventually, however, commerce gave rise to “economic, political, and sociological effects of a broadly liberalizing kind.” See Skinner, introduction to Smith, The Wealth of Nations, pp. 37, 41.

148 As Skinner explains, while “men are generally disposed to admire and respect the great, well born, and wealthy ...[with] the advent of the exchange or ‘commercial’ economy, we ... find society divided into three ‘great constituent orders’, landlords, capitalists, and wage labour... linked by a complex pattern of interdependencies, a pattern which is compatible with a considerable degree of personal freedom....” See Skinner, introduction to Smith, The Wealth of Nations, pp. 42-47; Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 464.
On the other hand, however, the industrious capitalist benefited from a drive to improve himself and a consequent propensity to save and invest, a circumstance that conduced to the progress of the state. The function of government was to resolve the resulting tension.

For all the importance he ascribed to economics, Smith’s analysis ultimately depended upon the power of social virtues—his “Invisible Hand” of conscience, Rousseau’s “voice within,” and Hume’s instinctive pleasure and pain—to curb the negative effects of commercialization. Although not a moral-sense theorist, Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* endorsed the importance of human “sympathy” to the successful progress of society. As Smith explained it, the more aware the individual became of his natural sympathy, the more he cultivated his natural virtues, the further he advanced the public good. But Smith’s was an “active” or Aristotelian (as opposed to contemplative or Platonic) sympathy insofar as its benefits

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149 Skinner, introduction to Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, p. 64. Indeed, Smith cautioned against the political influence of capitalists: “legislative proposals emanating from members of the mercantile classes: ‘ought always to be listened to with great precaution…. It comes from an order of men, whose interest is never exactly the same with that of the public, who have generally an interest to deceive and even to oppress the public.’” (Skinner, in Smith, p. 80) See Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, p. 519; Skinner, introduction to Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, p. 80.

150 Smith wrote: “As the capital of an individual can be increased only by what he saves from his annual revenue or his annual gains, so the capital of a society, which is the same with that of all the individuals who compose it, can be increased only in the same manner.” (Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, p. 437) Society thus progressed on the coat-tails of the self-improving commoner. See Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, pp. 429-449; Smith, *The Rules of Morality*, in Broadie, p. 293; Skinner, introduction to Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, pp. 67, 75.

151 According to Andrew Skinner, Smith’s was a “general philosophy,” one important facet of which was economic. See Skinner, introduction to Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, pp. 11, 13, 81-82.

152 As Smith explained it: “How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.” (Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in Broadie, p. 157) See Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in Broadie, pp. 157-164; Copleston, V, pp. 356-357.

were tied to its effects in the public sphere. There thus re-emerged two standards of virtue: the ideal standard of the "impartial spectator"—that of Christianity and the "Philosophical Hero;" and the human standard—that of "men as they are" or their "undercharacter."

Smith's more positive take on commercialism, as an advanced stage of social progress, prepared the way for common-sense theorists to endorse reason and industry as the conduits of moral virtue and the proper foundations for a narrative meaning of life, thereby giving voice to the so-called "Protestant work ethic." In many respects, Richard Price (1723-1791) was a bridge to this school and Thomas Reid an important contributor. Without denying the role of feeling, particularly in the judgment of character, action, and aesthetics, Price, for example, deemed reason the foundation of moral virtue and public good. But there were other influential adherents, including the Rev. Hugh Blair, George Campbell, Lord Kames, Sir James

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154 What Smith described as "the idea of complete propriety and perfection, which... no human conduct ever did... come up to; and in comparison with which the actions of all men must for ever appear... imperfect." See Smith, The Theory of Moral Sentiments, in Broadie, p. 175. See also Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, pp. 170, 195-196; Rousseau, Letter to Usteri, dated 18 July 1763, in Rousseau, The Social Contract and other later political writings, p. 266.


156 According to Taylor, "A new model of civility emerges in the eighteenth century in which the life of commerce and acquisition gains an unprecedentedly positive place." (Taylor, p. 214) He goes on: "commerce is a constructive and civilizing force, binding men together in peace and forming the basis of 'polished' mores. The [Aristotelian] ethic of glory is confronted here with a fully articulated alternative view, of social order, political stability, and the good life.... The 'bourgeois' ethic has obvious levelling consequences, and no one can be blind to the tremendous role it has played in constituting... the modern identity." (Taylor, pp. 214-215) See Taylor, pp. 214-215; Copleston, V, pp. 361, 392-393.

157 Copleston, V, pp. 363-364. Reid insisted on the separate existence of qualities in objects that served as the source of individual attributes. For a discussion of Reid's position and excerpts of his writings, see Broadie, pp. 73-114, 264-282.

Stuart, Sir John Sinclair, John Millar, Adam Ferguson, and John Erskine of Carnock.\textsuperscript{159}

Employing a Newtonian methodology—that which proceeded from effect to cause, from the particular to the general, from analysis to synthesis\textsuperscript{160}, the common-sense theorists occupied a middle position between the moral-sense theorists and the utilitarians, embracing God as the Author of nature and natural law, but locating knowledge in the evidence of particular experience.\textsuperscript{161} In general, all shared a commitment to an internal “common sense”—a sense without intelligible cause—that served as the seat of moral principles, guiding the good acts, self-restraint, and propriety conducive to common good.\textsuperscript{162} They similarly shared a classical notion of progress in which society served as the natural venue for a prescribed human development from ignorance to knowledge, vice to virtue, misery to happiness.\textsuperscript{163} On

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\item A more complete list would include William Robertson, James Dunbar, John Gregory, William Smellie, James Hutton, and Colin MacLaurin. For excerpts of their writings, see Broadie, pp. 675-682, 715-729, 750-795.
\item For a full discussion of Newtonian methodology, see Colin MacLaurin, \textit{An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries} (1748), excerpted in Broadie, pp. 782-795.
\item Dugald Steward (1753-1828), for example, criticized the moral-sense emphasis on self-love and social affection, deeming morality a distinct and separate faculty, and actions—as opposed to affections—it proper subject. Moreover, Steward, like Price, held moral judgments to be rational, not intuitive. All rejected the authoritarian stance, which deemed the human narrative an arbitrary matter of divine will. For a discussion of Steward's ideas, see Copleston, \textit{V}, pp. 380-382.
\item Henry Home, Lord Kames, for example, modified Hume's position, allowing for the existence of “principles implanted in our nature”—our common sense—which permit knowledge without causation. (Broadie, p. 345) On such grounds he could argue that morality is reasonable insofar as good acts are agreeable and bad acts are not, in accordance with divine plan. (Kames, \textit{Sketches of the History of Man}, in Broadie, p. 640) See Kames, \textit{Sketches of the History of Man}, in Broadie, pp. 640-646; Broadie, p. 630.
\item As John Millar explained it, “There is..., in human society, a natural progress from ignorance to knowledge, and from rude to civilized manners, the several stages of which are usually accompanied with peculiar laws and customs.” (Millar, \textit{Origin of the Distinction of Ranks}, in Broadie, pp. 491-492) Adam Ferguson shared this position, additionally allowing for a natural standard of human perfection based on “the best conceptions of his understanding, in the best movements of his heart...” (Ferguson, \textit{An Essay on the History of Civil Society}, in Broadie, p. 506) The progress of mankind was thus conceived to be linear and cumulative, for “the species has a progress as well as the individual; they build in every subsequent age on the foundations formerly laid; and, in a succession of years, tend to a perfection in the application of their faculties, to which the aid of long experience is required, and to
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this premise, the Reverend Hugh Blair, for one, urged a narrative of progress and
improvement in which the meaning of life was cast as a pilgrimage away from the
original state of natural innocence, through the corruption effected by the Fall,
towards a final, divine state of virtuous happiness.\textsuperscript{164} In this he supported not only a
common-sense narrative—i.e. one based on the rationality of moral principles and
man’s divine end—but a Protestant ethic of ordinary life.\textsuperscript{165}

In addition to advocating a narrative of natural progress and an ethic of
individual industry, the common-sense theorists also seem to have shared Rousseau’s
Aristotelian love of patriotism as the most heroic form of public action and the
highest measure of human virtue.\textsuperscript{166} Indeed, patriotism served as a barometer of
social progress.\textsuperscript{167} Inversely, factionalism, tyranny, and luxury were deemed evidence
of the subversion of public virtue to private interest.\textsuperscript{168} Commerce, as a conduit of

\textsuperscript{164} As Blair described it, “this life was intended for a state of trial and improvement to man. His
preparation for a better world required a gradual purification, carried on by steps of progressive
discipline.” (Blair, \textit{Sermons}, in Broadie, p. 337) Religion helps to make this process both possible and
bearable. On the one hand, it provides us with guidelines for a moral life—“the goods of the mind.”
(Blair, \textit{Sermons}, in Broadie, p. 196) On the other hand, it encourages our attention to the duties of
ordinary life and, hence, nurtures the discipline and control essential to virtue. (Blair, \textit{Sermons}, in
Broadie, p. 197) As Broadie notes: “The emphasis throughout his pulpit writings is on what lies
naturally within our power, the exercise of civic virtue, rather than on what is ours by an act of divine
grace.... We are to be good citizens, faithful friends, and loving to our family.” (Blair, \textit{Sermons}, in

\textsuperscript{165} Society, he wrote, “requires every man \textit{to do his own business}.” (Blair, in Broadie, p. 336) Thus, he
concluded, “let us carry on our preparation for heaven, not by abstracting ourselves from the concerns
of this world, but by fulfilling the duties and offices of every station in life... that we may then acquire
purity and dignity of manners suited to our divine hopes....” (Blair, in Broadie, pp. 342-343) See

\textsuperscript{166} Kames, for example, deemed patriotism the foundation of heroic virtue worthy of the highest social
esteem. “In fact,” Kames wrote, “wherever [patriotism] prevails, the morals of the people are found to
be pure and correct.” (Kames, \textit{Sketches of the History of Man}, in Broadie, p. 521) See Kames,
\textit{Sketches of the History of Man}, in Broadie, pp. 521-523; Broadie, p. 520.

\textsuperscript{167} Broadie, p. 520.

\textsuperscript{168} Kames, \textit{Sketches of the History of Man}, in Broadie, pp. 524-525.
interest, was necessarily implicated in this narrative.\textsuperscript{169} Hence, Sir James Steuart’s emphasis on the necessary balance between individual interest and public good, and his consequent examination of the relationship between subordination, dependence, liberty, and commerce.\textsuperscript{170} Significantly, mutual dependence—i.e. interdependence—emerged as the necessary premise of liberty and “the only bond of society....”\textsuperscript{171} At the same time, one’s proper political authority turned on the level of one’s independence.\textsuperscript{172} The difference resided in the definition of independence, which was increasingly regarded as a matter of autonomy rather than birth. Consequently, any form of government which supported fixed standards of subordination and, hence, denied or ignored the rewards of progress that rightfully accrued to individuals

\textsuperscript{169} Kames, \textit{Sketches of the History of Man}, in Broadie, pp. 526-528.
\textsuperscript{170} Steuart shared this position with Adam Ferguson and others. “It has been found,” Ferguson wrote, “that, except in a few singular cases, the commercial and political arts have advanced together.” (Ferguson, in Broadie, p. 548) See Steuart, \textit{An Inquiry into the Principle of Political Economy} (1767), in Broadie, pp. 401-402; Ferguson, \textit{An Essay on the History of Civil Society}, in Broadie, pp. 546-552.
\textsuperscript{171} Steuart, pp. 413-414. He explained: “By a people’s being free, I understand no more than their being governed by general laws... for reasons which regard the body of the society, and not through favour or prejudice to particular persons, or particular classes....” (Steuart, \textit{An Inquiry into the Principle of Political Economy}, in Broadie, pp. 413-414) He consequently defined three degrees of dependence to accompany the incremental stages of economic progress: the natural dependence of a child on a parent; the political dependence of an inferior on a superior—that of the slave, feudal servant, or subject (though slave and subject actually represent different economic phases); and the commercial dependence of the industrious worker on the employer. (Steuart, pp. 414-415) Thus, he wrote: “He who depends totally upon the sale of his own industry, stands in the fourth degree: this is the case of tradesmen and manufacturers, with respect to those who employ them.” (Steuart, in Broadie, p. 415) Nonetheless, by the final stage of commerce, he noted, “liberty [was] extended to the lowest denominations of a people, without destroying that dependence necessary to serve as a band of society....” (Steuart, in Broadie, p. 414) See Steuart, \textit{An Inquiry into the Principle of Political Economy}, in Broadie, pp. 413-415.
\textsuperscript{172} “All authority,” he wrote, “is in proportion to dependence, and must vary according to circumstances.” (Steuart, \textit{An Inquiry into the Principle of Political Economy}, in Broadie, p. 416) Thus, he went on, “In proportion... as certain classes, or certain individuals become more dependent..., in the same proportion ought their just subordination to increase: and in proportion as they become less dependent than formerly, in the same proportion ought this just subordination to diminish.” (Steuart, p. 415) See Steuart, \textit{An Inquiry into the Principle of Political Economy}, in Broadie, pp. 415-419; Millar, \textit{Origin of the Distinction of Ranks}, in Broadie, p. 534.
through human industry, was deemed unnaturally oppressive.\textsuperscript{173} Thus, Steuart concluded, it was the nature of progress that industry succeed servitude, that commerce succeed feudalism and, finally, that wealth succeed birth as the medium of independence—read “interdependence”—and authority.\textsuperscript{174}

Of course, the nature of Steuart’s “progress” conduced more to political competition than social equality.\textsuperscript{175} As the leisured landowner spent more of his income on luxury goods and less on hospitality and a household of retainers, as his retainers become wage-earning laborers, artisans, and tradesmen, the landowner’s vulnerability to increased debts, coupled with the wage-earner’s opportunity for increased savings, made the competition for power both more intense and less relenting.\textsuperscript{176} As his contemporary, John Millar, likewise described it, the landowner’s estate therefore, being more and more incumbered with debts, is at length alienated, and brought into the possession of the frugal and industrious merchant, who, by success in trade, has been enabled to buy it, and who is desirous of obtaining that rank and consequence which landed property is capable of bestowing.\textsuperscript{177}

\textsuperscript{173} This included those governments that continued to endorse political dependence—to base authority on birth rather than industry—after the economic transition to a commercial economy—i.e. those in which “liberty and independence were confined to the nobility.” (Steuart, \textit{An Inquiry into the Principle of Political Oeconomy}, in Broadie, p. 420) As Taylor aptly notes, in some respects, the Enlightenment was little more than a reactionary movement “defined above all by the aspiration to destroy the established order.” (Taylor, p. 343) See Steuart, \textit{An Inquiry into the Principle of Political Oeconomy}, in Broadie, p. 420; Taylor, p. 343.

\textsuperscript{174} As Steuart observed, “industry must give wealth, and wealth will give power.... It was consequently very natural for the nobility to be jealous of wealthy merchants, and of every one who became easy and independent by means of his own industry....” (Steuart, in Broadie, p. 420) See Steuart, \textit{An Inquiry into the Principle of Political Oeconomy}, in Broadie, p. 420; Sir John Sinclair, \textit{The Statistical Account of Scotland}, in Broadie, p. 467.

\textsuperscript{175} See Millar, \textit{Origin of the Distinction of Ranks}, in Broadie, p. 535; Broadie, pp. 532-533.

\textsuperscript{176} Adam Ferguson made a similar claim: “The passion for independence, and the love of dominion, frequently arise from a common source: There is, in both, an aversion to control; and he, who, in one situation, cannot bruik a superior, must, in another, dislike to be joined with an equal.” See Ferguson, \textit{An Essay on the History of Civil Society}, in Broadie, p. 553.

The result was not a mere recycling of the feudal landowner-laborer relationship, but
an entirely different and more fluid social and political structure. In the end, Millar
wrote, as the nature of property changed, money became, “more and more the only
means of procuring honours and dignities....”

Ultimately, the political demands of economic progress aggravated the clash
between landed and monied interests. Completed in 1766 and published in 1767,
Stewart’s writings appear prophetic in light of the ensuing American Revolution.
Such revolutions, he wrote, “have been owing to the short-sightedness of statesmen;
who, inattentive to the consequences of growing wealth and industry, foolishly
imagine that hereditary subordination was to subsist among classes, whose situation,
with respect to each other, was entirely changed.” As Millar likewise recognized,
“Where-ever men of inferior condition are enabled to live in affluence by their own
industry, and, in procuring their livelihood, have little occasion to court the favour of

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178 As Millar argued, “This fluctuation of property, so observable in all commercial countries,... must
necessarily weaken the authority of those who are placed in the higher ranks of life. Persons who have
lately attained to riches, have no opportunity of establishing that train of dependence which is
maintained by those who have remained for ages at the head of a great estate. The hereditary influence
of family is thus, in a great measure, destroyed....” (Millar, Origin of the Distinction of Ranks, in
Broadie, p. 541) As Adam Ferguson observed, the social order was not at all like the “good order of
stones in a wall,” but was rather more fluidly composed of “living and active members.” (Ferguson, An


180 Indeed, Stewart warned, in like circumstances, where compromises failed to be enacted, “a wealthy
populace has broken their chains to pieces, and overturned the very foundations of the feudal system.”
(Stewart, An Inquiry into the Principle of Political Oeconomy, in Broadie, p. 421) See Stewart, An
Inquiry into the Principle of Political Oeconomy, in Broadie, pp. 420-421; Ferguson, An Essay on the History of
Civil Society, in Broadie, p. 549; Kramnick, Bolingbroke and his Circle, pp. 55, 80-83.

181 Stewart, An Inquiry into the Principle of Political Oeconomy, in Broadie, p. 421. As John Millar
explained it, as the increase in arts provided new forms of employment, giving rise to the trades and
professions, dependence gave way to a commercial independence—i.e. one based on mutual
interdependence....” (Millar, in Broadie, p. 540) Significantly, Millar noted, two further consequences
resulted: “While, from these causes, people of low rank are gradually advancing towards a state of
independence, [so] the influence derived from wealth is diminished in the same proportion.” (Millar, in
their superiors, there we may expect that ideas of liberty will be universally diffused." In the end, as the implications of commerce tended towards democracy, so the need to preserve power tended towards oppression, as the implications of commerce tended towards a more inclusive and fluid social hierarchy, so the need to preserve conventional modes of political authority and social rank tended to reinforce a more exclusive and fixed one. As Ferguson aptly notes, the natural progress of liberty was readily thwarted by the pursuit of empire.

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182 "This happy arrangement of things," he went on, "is naturally produced by commerce and manufactures....." See Millar, *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, in Broadie, p. 545.

183 As Millar explained: "It cannot be doubted that these circumstances have a tendency to introduce a democratical government. As persons of inferior rank are placed in a situation which, in point of subsistence, renders them little dependent upon their superiors; as no one order of men continues in the exclusive possession of opulence; and as every man who is industrious may entertain the hope of gaining a fortune; it is to be expected that the prerogatives of the monarch and of the ancient nobility will be gradually undermined, that the privileges of the people will be extended in the same proportion, and that power, the usual attendant of wealth, will be in some measure diffused over all the members of the community." Millar, *Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, in Broadie, p. 542.

PART 2
PART TWO
CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY: THE CONTENT
CHAPTER V
THE BRITISH PORTRAIT

...while she consulted her glass after what manner she should dress, her eyes, the gay, the languishing, the sedate, the commanding, the beseeching air were put on, a thousand times, and, as often rejected; and she had scarce determined which to make use of, when her page brought her word, some ladies who were going to Court desired her to accompany them;... so went immediately, armed with all her lightnings, but full of unsettled reflections.

Eliza Haywood, 1719

By the middle of the eighteenth century, empiricism had undermined the classical correlation between realism and ignorance, the implications of which were felt in portrait painting. The elevation of sensory perception into a recognized medium for *making*—as opposed to *recovering*—knowledge, meant that realism might be understood as a conduit of truth. This undermined classical distinctions between particular and general styles. It was now possible to argue that the close

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2 On the one hand, Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that painting (or anything subject to visual mediation) could never be truly ‘general’: “All general ideas are purely intellectual; if the imagination intervenes to the least degree, the idea immediately becomes particular.... Purely abstract entities ....” he explained, “are conceivable only by means of words.” (Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, p. 95) Thus, Shaftesbury concluded, “A PAINTER, if he has any Genius, understands the Truth and Unity of Design; and knows ... that Particulars... must yield to the general Design....” (Shaftesbury,
observation of nature was the only means to knowledge—that "meaning" and "potentiality" began with the particular. By extension, the "mechanical" efforts of artists might be understood to advance knowledge. Thus Jonathan Richardson (1667-1745) could style himself an art theorist, twisting classical doctrine into an ideological formula compatible with his "mechanical" interests.³

Yet, the analysis of painting continued to be informed by stylistic categories like "grand" and "historical."⁴ Likewise, a standard of beauty, distinct from a "sense of beauty," and characterized by natural and intelligible standards of moral perfection

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³ Richardson was the son of a silk-weaver, a citizen of London who owned his own loom. His father died in 1672, when Richardson was a child. After some grammar school, at the age of 14, Richardson's step-father set him up as an apprentice with a scrivener (notary). Following his tenure as an apprentice, Richardson began his training as a painter in the studio of John Riley, who practised a more realistic or native style of portrait painting—which included "the rendition of individual appearance and character"—than his foreign-born contemporary, Sir Godfrey Kneller. Moreover, for Richardson, Riley also represented the finer qualities of a liberal artist—modest, educated and genteel. Riley and Kneller served jointly as Principal Painter to William and Mary. See Gibson-Wood, pp. 25-30.

⁴ For Reynolds, the "historical" style served as a more contemporary and narrative variation on the universal and philosophical "grand" style. The demands of the "Historical Style"—compositional consistency and unity, the generalization of the subject, the use of "permanent" (i.e. classical) dress—occupied much of Reynolds's fifth Discourse (December 1772). "When a portrait is painted in the Historical Style," he wrote, "as it is neither an exact minute representation of an individual nor completely ideal [—i.e. 'grand' or 'great'—], every circumstance ought to correspond to this mixture.... [W]hen this is accomplished to a high degree, it becomes in some sort a rival to that style which we have fixed as the highest [—i.e. the grand style]." (Reynolds, Discourses on Art, pp. 88-89) See Reynolds, Discourses on Art, pp. 57, 60, 88-89; Broadie, p. 29.
or "Taste," continued to support fixed aesthetic ranks. Thomas Reid, for example, located the quality of beauty, like other qualities, in the object itself, Taste being, therefore, a matter of sensibility and judgment. Even Hume conceded that "there are certain qualities in objects" that naturally predispose the sentiments towards beauty and, therefore, naturally distinguish men of superior intellect. He thus pursued a Standard of Taste—"a rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled"—to assist in the making of aesthetic judgments and the nurturing of moral improvement. Such assumptions predisposed like-minded theorists to conflate beauty and virtue into a principle of "Taste"—what Reid described as "That power of the mind by which we are capable of discerning and relishing the beauties of Nature,  

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5 According to Shaftesbury, beauty represented the formal manifestation of absolute truth and harmony—Aristotle's "Greatness with Order." (Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, 1, p. 143) Hutcheson added: "As to the most powerful beauty... we shall shew... that it arises from some imagined indication of morally good dispositions of mind." (Hutcheson, An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, in Broadie, p. 214) See Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, 1, pp. 142-143; Broadie, pp. 201-202; Hutcheson, An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, 4th ed (1738; Glasgow, 1772), in Broadie, pp. 207-210, 214, 219-220.  

6 Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers, in Broadie, pp. 270-271. Reid denied Hume's claim that "beauty and deformity... belong entirely to the sentiment," arguing instead for qualities in objects. (Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers, in Broadie, p. 264) Sentiment was thus an effect, rather than a cause, of such qualities. (Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers, in Broadie, pp. 270-271) He thus distinguished between two types of Taste: "In the external sense of taste, we are led by reason and reflection to distinguish between the agreeable sensation we feel, and the quality in the object which occasions it." (Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers, in Broadie, p. 266) He continues: "In a like manner, our internal taste ought to be accounted most just and perfect, when we are pleased with things that are most excellent in their kind, and displeased with the contrary. The... faculty of discerning... beauty... is what we call a good taste." (Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers, in Broadie, p. 268) See Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers, in Broadie, p. 266-271.  

7 "Though it be certain," he wrote, "that beauty and deformity... are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external; it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings." (Hume, Of the Standard of Taste, in Broadie, p. 252) He added: "Though men of delicate taste be rare, they are easily to be distinguished in society, by the soundness of their understanding and the superiority of their faculties above the rest of mankind." (Hume, Of the Standard of Taste, in Broadie, p. 259) See Hume, Of the Standard of Taste, in Broadie, pp. 251-259.  

8 Hume, Of the Standard of Taste, in Broadie, p. 248.  

9 Broadie, pp. 243-244.
and whatever is excellent in the fine arts..."\(^{10}\) The objectification of beauty by theorists like Reid lent further credence to the empirical aesthetic resonant in the Richardsonian—as opposed to Shaftesburian—‘abstract.’\(^{11}\) Moreover, for all the emphasis on a fixed standard of beauty, acknowledgement was made of its less perfect—human—form. Even Hutcheson conceded the merits of ‘relative beauty’—the beauty of human experience—at the expense of ‘original’ or perfect beauty. This allowed for a modicum of ‘undercharacter’ in the rendering of human identity.\(^{12}\)

On the one hand, then, modes of painting continued to be informed by fixed standards of beauty rooted in ideals of virtue and excellence. On the other hand, the failing credibility of a theoretical methodology meant that such ideals might be known through more empirical methodologies. The cultivation of virtue and Taste might thus be effected by looking as opposed to ‘imagining.’\(^{13}\) By extension, mediums (and makers) of beauty that depended upon ‘looking’ might thereby claim stature as


\(^{11}\) On these grounds, Reid encouraged the painter to capture on canvas that which was seen, as opposed to that which was thought and, hence, to render visible the abstract signs of the perceived object “whereof every man understands the meaning.” By this means, Reid continued, “we pass from the sign to the thing signified, with ease, and by natural impulse...." See Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*, in Broadie, p. 277.

\(^{12}\) As Hutcheson explained: “we have more lively ideas of imperfect men with all their passions, than of morally perfect heroes such as really never occur to our observation; ... we are more nearly touched and affected by the imperfect characters; since in them we see represented, ... the struggle between the passions of self-love and those of honour and virtue, which we often feel in our own breasts. This is the perfection of beauty for which Homer is justly admired, as well as for the variety of his characters.” (Hutcheson, in Broadie, pp. 220-221) Hence, Hutcheson concludes, a painter might achieve beauty not by “attaining[ing] the highest perfection of original beauty separately considered,” but by combining the “relative beauty” of human experience “with some degree of the original kind.... The like reason may influence artists, in many other instances, to depart from the rules of original beauty, as above laid down.” (Hutcheson, in Broadie, pp. 222-223) See Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, in Broadie, pp. 220-223.

\(^{13}\) In the neo-Platonic narrative informing Reynolds’s *Discourses*, imagination served as the catalyst for higher truth. He takes this up in his ninth *Discourse*. See Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, p. 171.
 mediums (and makers) of virtue. In other words, portrait-painters like Jonathan Richardson might claim the stature of liberal artists. Richardson’s theory is thus interesting not only because its influence was felt from the highest reaches of the Royal Academy to the self-taught painters of the American colonies, but because it suggests how a civic humanist methodology might be manipulated to the benefit of ambitious commoners.

I. Jonathan Richardson and Eighteenth-Century Portraiture

Active in the founding of the Queen Street Academy, and the first British artist to contribute significantly to art theory, Jonathan Richardson provides an excellent point-of-departure for exploring the imagining of identity in eighteenth-century portraiture.14 Blurring the lines between landed and learned, nature and nurture, his selective reformation of continental theory, coupled with his aspirations for English painting—and painters—, earned him a significant following.15 Indeed, while borrowing much from Shaftesbury’s civic humanist discourse, while accepting the continental hierarchy of painting genres, Richardson, in challenging the

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14 Also known as Kneller’s Academy, the Queen Street Academy was a resource for artists in need of models as well as a venue for the transmission of ideas. Here, the influence of Sir Godfrey Kneller, Richardson, and, in its incarnation into the St. Martin’s Lane Academy (a.k.a. Hogarth’s Academy) Hogarth, Ramsay and others found a feeding ground. According to Gibson-Wood, Richardson ranked with Kneller and the Swedish-born Michael Dahl as one of the three most prominent painters in the period. See Gibson-Wood, Jonathan Richardson, p. 36.

15 “The most direct English heir to the substance of Richardson’s Essay on the Theory of Painting was Joshua Reynolds…. Reynolds reiterated and developed in his Discourses many of the same neoclassical principles that Richardson had promoted in his Theory of Painting…. Most important of all is the unprecedented thoroughness of Richardson’s analysis of the sources of ‘grace and greatness’ in relation to Reynolds’ preoccupation with ‘the grand style’ of painting.” See Gibson-Wood, pp. 232-233.
ideological barriers between history and portrait painting, advanced the cause of English painting and painters.16

Richardson published three art-theoretical treatises in the course of his career: *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (London, 1715; second edition, with revisions, 1725); *Two Discourses. I. An Essay on the whole Art of Criticism as it relates to Painting... II. An Argument in Behalf of the Science of a Connoisseur* (London, 1719); and *An Account of some of the Statues, Bas-reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy, &c. with Remarks* (London, 1722).17 While books on art criticism were not new, a number of traits distinguished Richardson’s work from that of his predecessors: its author was an artist, not a philosopher or dilettante; its format was based on the rational essay; its approach was based on empirical as opposed to theoretical reasoning—one that worked from the particular to the general; its purpose, as Gibson-Wood notes, was not so much to foster patronage—already giving way to the influences of the marketplace—as to elevate the stature of English painting and the status of the English artist and, so, to promote “connaissance” (connoisseurship) among Englishman; and its intended audience—like that of Addison’s *Spectator*—included a learned (if artistically uninformed) middle class, which he loosely referred

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16 Unlike his predecessors, for example, Richardson did not consider invention the unique claim of the history painter, but rather heralded the portrait painter’s ‘improvement’ on likeness as another form of invention. For a discussion of Richardson’s theory, see Gibson-Wood, pp. 13-14, 87-88, 139-143, 212-213, 222, 225-229; Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, pp. 42-52, 218-229.

17 Jonathan Richardson outlined a complete program for the rendering of character under the headings of *Invention, Expression, Composition, Drawing, Colouring, Handling, and Grace and Greatness*. According to Gibson-Wood, the three treatises represent “a process of increasing radicalization, from the acceptance of established continental precepts to the rejection of their authority....” (Gibson-Wood, pp. 138-139) For a full discussion of his aesthetic principles, see Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, pp. 38, 43-213; Richardson, *Two Discourses*, II, pp. 27-30; Gibson-Wood, pp. 138-139.
to as "gentlemen." In Richardson's view, the study of art—the establishment of art academies and the promotion of connoisseurship—was a ready means by which to advance social good. Moreover, the makers of liberal art were not excluded from the circle of men who might enact such improvement. Nor, significantly, were portrait painters excluded from the makers of liberal art.

Indeed, whereas Shaftesbury embraced continental theory as both the proper standard of English painting and the exemplar for its improvement, Richardson emphasized empirical and Reformed influences at the expense of continental theory. For example, while supporting a continental technique based on the 'idealization' or 'improvement' of the sitter—what Vertue called "the 'great Manner'"—Richardson rejected its loose treatment of likeness. Similarly, while embracing the principle of 'improvement' and its manifestation in 'idealization', he subverted the continental emphasis on theory and birth to the evidence of experience and the effects of industry.

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18 Indeed, Gibson-Wood remarks, "Richardson had been calling himself a gentleman since the 1690s..." (Gibson-Wood, p. 148) See Richardson, Two Discourses, II, pp. 42-52, 218-229; Gibson-Wood, pp. 14-17, 44-46, 72-73, 88-89, 94, 139-142, 148, 180-181, 195-196, 202-204.

19 By acting the connoisseur, by adopting a scientific approach to art—by learning to distinguish similarities and differences and thereby formulate and defend rational ideas (a "Lockean epistemology")—an artist or spectator refined his reason and improved himself. As Gibson-Wood observes, "Richardson's radical assertion, that knowing who painted a picture and how good it was could be deduced empirically by all clear-thinking persons who devoted themselves to such study, was particularly appropriate for an audience of fledgling English consumers who had little experience of painting, but who did have a firm devotion to the principle of self-advancement." (Gibson-Wood, p. 184) See Gibson-Wood, pp. 184-185, 193, 198, 200-201, 203.

20 Unlike Shaftesbury, for example, who "views the artist as essentially a mechanic, whose taste and aspirations must be guided by informed citizens who have dedicated themselves to the cause of public virtue," Richardson argued for the artist's authority over the improvement of his subject and spectator. See Gibson-Wood, p. 173.

21 Gibson-Wood writes: "In 1731 George Vertue compared the painting styles of some of his contemporaries, and characterized Richardson as having 'a great Manner'.... By classifying Richardson along with Dahl, Kneller, Lely, Riley, Dobson and Van Dyck as having a 'great' manner," she continues, "Vertue was referring to the adoption of both idealized forms or figure types, and the bold application of paint." (Gibson-Wood, pp. 60-61) At the same time, Richardson was critical of Kneller's loose brush. See Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, pp. 41-42, 161-163, 175, 177; Gibson-Wood, pp. 9, 60-61, 171.
These principles carried over into his notion of social order. While he supported a hierarchical social order, he emphasized industry at the expense of birth. As a result, the ideal he set before the portrait painter was based on the potential relationship between the sitter's attributes and social place, as determined by his will. In other words, while Richardson's ideal conceived the potential self in terms of the sitter's social elevation in the 'great chain of being', while his theory of “Grace and Greatness” reaffirmed the liberal progress from imitation to idealization and the necessary transformation of a 'realistic' or 'actual' subject into a 'truthful' or 'potential' likeness—"'Thus to raise the Character: To divest an Unbred Person of his Rusticity, and give him something at least of a Gentleman...’"—, his notions of improvement and potentiality were themselves informed by an 'ethic of ordinary life' in which self-determining individuals achieved their potential through industry and piety. Hence, in dissent from continental and Shaftesburian tradition, Richardson constructed a social order based on merit rather than prescription. And this informed his evaluation of portrait-painting.

Eighteenth-century portraits served a number of functions. On the one hand, they represented the sitter's person—and, by extension, his values, beliefs, interests, allegiances and history—when he was present, absent or dead. At Britain's Temple Newsam house, for example, an imposing wall of family portraits once opposed a

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wall of royal images in the center of a public drawing room. The arrangement served to assert the family’s lineal heritage and political allegiance to a large and varied audience. On the other hand, portraits also served a moral function. As Richardson explained it, they “raised” and “improved” their subjects and spectators by casting them as models of human potentiality. This suited the Aristotelian notion of emulation. In all cases, however, the function of portraits was to make their subjects accessible to a body of spectators in the form of a visual text, the reading of which engaged sitter, artist and spectator in a visual conversation. Moreover, by employing an established visual language to shape background, setting, costume and accoutrements, the portrait painter communicated a context within which the portrait’s ‘conversation’ was conducted and the sitter’s identity understood.

The elevation of visual imagery to the elite status of language was an important marker in the progress of painting. Whereas the ancients defended the superiority of the written word, whereas Shaftesbury esteemed poetry’s superior

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25 Whereas Shaftesbury invoked the improving influence of poetry, Richardson endowed portraits with a didactic ability to advance the public good: “tis rational to believe,” he wrote, “that Pictures of this kind are subservient to Virtue; that Men are excited to imitate the Good Actions, and persuaded to shun the Vices of those whose Examples are thus set before them....” (Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, p. 16) See Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, pp. 240, 278; Richardson, Two Discourses, II, pp. 12, 39-40, 42; Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, pp. 15-17.
26 The arts were intended to foster “emulation.” As Aristotle explained it: “Emulation is pain caused by seeing ... good things [in other persons]... not because others have these goods, but because we have not got them .... Emulation makes us take steps to secure the good things in question.... Further..., moral goodness in its various forms must be such an object... : for men honour those who are morally good....” See Aristotle, The Rhetoric, in Corbett, pp. 120-121.
27 As Taylor observes, “the self is constituted through exchange in language.” See Taylor, p. 509.
28 As Gibson-Wood notes, Richardson replaced the traditional correlation between painting and poetry with “a Lockean conceptual scheme in which visual imagery takes its place alongside verbal language as ‘one of the means whereby we convey our Ideas to each other’.” See Gibson-Wood, p. 147; Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, p. 6.
merits, contemporary comparisons increasingly blurred their differences.\(^{29}\) When Richardson remarked in 1719 that “Painting is but another sort of Writing,” he went so far as to rank visual above verbal in the economy and depth of its expression.\(^{30}\) By the same token, whereas Shaftesbury confined a liberal status to the history painter—“We may conclude,” he wrote, “That in a real History-Painter, the same Knowledge, the same Study, and Views, are requir’d, as in a real Poet”—the way was opened for a more inclusive analysis in which portrait painters practicing in a liberal—i.e. “grand” or “historical”—manner might likewise assume a liberal stature.\(^{31}\) In fact, Shaftesbury’s description of ancient poetry’s “Imitation chiefly of

\(^{29}\) Because Shaftesbury’s neo-Aristotelian interpretation of poetry and painting was biased by a Platonic demand for the philosophical ideal—one derived from a transcendental or metaphysical experience of the ‘imagination’—he could not admit of particularity either in the mind of the philosopher or a true ‘Likeness’. As a result, he necessarily privileged verbal over visual language and poetry over painting, the latter being limited by its objective reference to material form. On these grounds, he dismissed portraiture as the superficial manufacture of ignorant mechanics. By contrast, Richardson insisted that “We PAINTERS are upon the Level with Writers, as being Poets, Historians, Philosophers, and Instruct equally with Them.” (Richardson, *Two Discourses*, II, p. 42) Though he distinguished between its polite and “Vulgar,” liberal and mechanical forms, he explained: “Painting is but another Sort of Writing;” “To read it,” he went on, “is not only to know that ‘tis such a Story, or such a Man, but to see the Beauties of the Thought, and Pencil; of the Colouring, and Composition; the Expression, Grace, and Greatness that is to be found in it: and not to be able to do This is a Sort of Illiterature, and Unpoliteness.” (Richardson, *Two Discourses*, II, pp. 221-222) Hogarth, too, deemed painting a language. (Bindman, *Hogarth*, p. 55) Nonetheless, he considered portrait artists “men of very middling natural parts.” (Gowing, *Hogarth*, p. 42) See Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, I, pp. 144-145, Richardson, *Two Discourses*, II, pp. 42, 221-222; Bindman, *Hogarth*, p. 55; Gowing, *Hogarth*, p. 42.

\(^{30}\) Both Shaftesbury and Richardson invoked a ‘pragmatic approach’ to art, which, rooted in rhetoric, was concerned with ‘ends’ rather than ‘means’—i.e. “Pleasure, and Improvement....” (Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: romantic theory and the critical tradition*, p. 21, and Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, p. 6, and *Two Discourses*, II, pp. 39-40, 42) In this way, Abrams writes, “the work of art continues to be regarded as a kind of reflector.... The artist himself is often envisioned as the agent holding the mirror up to nature... to invent (in the root sense of ‘discover’) aspects of the universe and of human nature hitherto overlooked....” (Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p. 42) But whereas Shaftesbury privileged words, Richardson privileged imagery. As Gibson-Wood explains, Richardson based the superiority of painting on “Locke’s discussion of the imperfection of words” in Book 3 of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Locke had observed that the leading qualities of substances are better conveyed by demonstration than description.” (Gibson Wood, p. 147) See Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, p. 6, and *Two Discourses*, II, pp. 17, 39-40, 42. See also M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: romantic theory and the critical tradition*, pp. 15-16, 21, 34, 42, and Gibson-Wood, p. 147.

\(^{31}\) For Shaftesbury, only the well-educated history painter might qualify as a liberal artist; the portrait’s concern with material qualities precluded portrait painters from advancing beyond the “merely natural”
Men and Manners” as “character being wrought to a Likeness” invited the claim that portraiture, too, was “a sister to poetry.” Hence, Richardson had only to bridge the gap between portraiture and history painting to make the link between portraiture and poetry: “A Portrait is a sort of General History of the Life of the Person it represents,” he wrote, “not only to Him who is acquainted with it, but to Many Others, who upon Occasion of seeing it are frequently told, of ... their General Character at least;” a portrait, therefore, is a type of “Historical Picture.” Thus, by 1758, Samuel Johnson could remark that “poetry and painting... differ only as the one represents things by marks permanent and natural, the other by signs accidental and arbitrary.” The same held true in America, where Mathew Byles noted in “To Mr. Smibert on the Sight of his Pictures”: “‘Alike our Labour, and alike our Flame;/ ‘Tis thine to raise the Shape:/ ‘Tis mine to fix the Name’.”


Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, pp. 196-197. It was widely recognized that paintings were mediums for instruction and improvement. (Gibson-Wood, p. 145) But whereas Shaftesbury confined this attribute to history painting, Richardson expanded its application to include portrait painting. Richardson thus encouraged the portrait painter to study the grace and greatness of classical exemplars—as did the history painter—so as to arrive at a knowledge of the aesthetic qualities informing moral improvement. See Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, pp. 196-197, 206-207; Gibson-Wood, pp. 95-96, 98-99, 103, 144-147.

See Richardson, Two Discourses, II, pp. 45-46. In a separate essay, he wrote: “To be a good Face-Painter, a degree of the Historical and Poetical Genius is requisite, and a great Measure of the other Talents and Advantages which a good History-painter must possess.” See Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, pp. 23-24.

Samuel Johnson, “Punch and Conversation,” in The Idler, 2 vols, 34 (London: Printed for J. Newbery, 1761), pp. 190-191. These parallels elicited frequent comment in the eighteenth century. For example, Plutarch was often quoted (citing Simonides) as saying “that ‘painting is mute poetry, and poetry a speaking picture.’” The popular recitation of Horace’s “ut pictura poesis” further linked the two arts. See Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 33.

In part, the changing relationship between verbal and visual language reflected the growing concession to sense-perception as a necessary point-of-departure in the acquisition of knowledge. Once conceded, an artist’s observation of space, gesture, posture and gaze might be defended as the visual matter of a narrative ‘meaning of life’ informing his sitter’s identity. This empowered both the portrait and the painter. For example, by placing his audience in a passive or active role, an artist might manipulate the relationship between subject and spectator according to the perceived or desired relationship between the sitter and his audience and the degree and type of engagement that relationship entailed. Ultimately, then, the success of an image turned on the artist’s fabrication of a convincing and complementary ‘reality’, for acceptance of the claimed identity presumed acquiescence to its prescribed narrative.³⁶

The declining credibility of theoretical methodologies and universal narratives informed a significant shift in the interpretation of identity and its representation in portraiture. On the one hand, the growing influence of empirical theory challenged the premise of “fixity,” freeing identity to become something fluid and ‘negotiated’. At the same time, visual imagery assumed new authority as a medium for making meaning.³⁷ This lent portraits an import not found in the pre-modern period. Indeed, the growing popularity of portraits may have turned, in part, on their capacity to

³⁷ Whereas Shaftesbury’s more theoretical (neo-Platonic) approach limited the potential role of art to one of inspiration, Richardson’s more empirical (neo-Aristotelian) approach made art itself a medium of human progress. See Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, p. 332; Gibson-Wood, p. 201.
advance, modify, or undermine the prescribed identities of the civic humanist narrative. A close study of portraits might thus reveal not only the standards informing identity-making, but, by extension, the perception of artists and sitters vis-à-vis the dominant narrative.

II. The issue of 'Likeness'

According to Jonathan Richardson, "to sit for one's Picture is to have an Abstract of one's Life written, and published."\(^{38}\) Richardson's use of the term "Abstract" is important, for it suggests a highly selective summary of a subject's key attributes—presumably those bearing significance for the portrait's reading public.\(^{39}\) It also suggests an Aristotelian (non-Humeian) frame of reference—a belief that qualities inhere in objects themselves and, hence, that they can be abstracted, rendered, and "known" visually through portraiture.\(^{40}\)

According to Richardson, the portrait was ideally suited to making legible one's "character"—what Samuel Johnson defined as the public evaluation of one's private attributes according to their social value.\(^{41}\) This was to invoke a sociological interpretation of identity. Less clear, however, was the relationship between

\(^{38}\) He explains: "Upon the sight of a Portrait, the Character, and Master-Strokes of the History of the Person it represents, are apt to flow in upon the Mind, and to be the Subject of Conversation: So that to sit for one's Picture, is to have an Abstract of one's Life written, and published, and our selves thus consign'd over to Honour, or Infamy." (Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, p. 16) See Jonathan Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, pp. 16-17.

\(^{39}\) Abrams writes: "Dr. Johnson held that on moral grounds, the mirror must be selective: it is necessary 'to distinguish those parts of nature which are most proper for imitation'...." (Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 36) Yet the precise content of this 'abstract' has long impeded the interpretation of portraiture. Was it a generalization of attributes common to the species or the selective blending of traits unique to the individual? See Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 36; Copleston, I, p. 258; Brilliant, Portraiture, pp. 13-14.

\(^{40}\) Gibson-Wood, pp. 168-169.

\(^{41}\) See definitions number four, seven and eight in Samuel Johnson, Dictionary (London, 1786).
“character” and “likeness,” for interpretations of “likeness” were rarely consistent.

Plato, for example, understood likeness to be a mimetic copy of sensory perception, an ignorant “shadow image” of a “false” reality bearing dangerous implications. On the one hand, this Platonic correlation between realism and ignorance informed the civic humanist bias against portraiture. On the other hand, however, Shaftesbury differed from Plato in distinguishing between a mimetic portrait and a true “likeness;” unlike Plato, Shaftesbury defined “likeness” as “Imitation,” not “Mimickry.”

Borrowing from Aristotle, who envisioned the “mirror” as a mediating device through which the particularities of nature were absorbed by the intellect and transformed into general principles—the essential ingredients of Plato’s divine Forms—, Shaftesbury equated “likeness” with the “mirrored”—i.e. abstracted—qualities of a general style. This neo-Platonic—i.e. more Aristotelian than

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42 Plato, Republic, p. 79.
43 Those who rejected empirical methodologies as a credible basis for knowledge, and privileged contemplation above observation, necessarily derided the value of portraiture, the truths of which were premised on the effects of sense-perception—“For ‘tis not certainly by virtue of our Face merely, that we are ourselves.” See Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, pp. 279-283; quoted from p. 283.
44 According to Lee, “The Greek word mimesis covers both ‘imitation’ or ‘copying’ and dramatic and artistic representation in the widest sense.” (Plato, Republic, footnote 2, p. 90) By contrast, Shaftesbury extolled “Poetry ... [as] an Imitation chiefly of Men and Manners,” distinguishing between “imitation” and what “in a low [art form] ... we call Mimickry.” (Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, p. 196) As Abrams observes: “In recent criticism (as, to some extent, in the early Renaissance theory of painting) the concept that art is imitation, together with its analogy to a mirror, usually signals a demand for artistic realism, but in neo-classic criticism these concepts were standard components in the theory that art is ‘ideal’, in the general sense that it properly represents an improvement upon things as we find them.” (Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 36) See Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, pp. 144, 196; Plato, Republic, p. 90; Abrams, p. 36.
45 According to Abrams, the correlation of the mirror with imitation—as distinct from mimicry—and, so, generalization—as opposed to realism—was “a favorite with aesthetic theorists long after Plato. In Renaissance speculation the reference to a looking-glass is frequent and explicit.” (Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 30) He goes on: “As late as the middle of the eighteenth century important critics continued to illustrate the concept of imitation by the nature of a looking-glass.” (Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 32) By contrast, he concludes, this interpretation was abandoned; “post-Aristotelian theories ... almost without exception, reverted to concepts of mimesis much closer to the attributes of a literal reflector....” (Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 34) For a discussion of this development, see Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, III, pp. 350-353; Abrams The Mirror and the Lamp, pp. 30-36; Canfield, pp. 174-179.
Platonic—interpretation resulted from Shaftesbury’s different understanding of the relationship between sense-perception and knowledge. For Plato, external nature was but an imperfect allusion to the Forms, whose truth and reality existed only on a metaphysical level. Because sensory perception was at two or three removes from this metaphysical truth, it was dangerously misleading as a source of knowledge.\footnote{Richard Kraut, ed. \textit{The Cambridge Companion to Plato} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 710.}

Aristotle, on the other hand, while agreeing that truth was accessible only through the intellect, disagreed with Plato’s assessment of the Forms. While he, too, located truth in general principles, he held that the essential substance of such principles could be known through the evidence of nature. Observation, coupled with intellectual abstraction—i.e. with the translation of matter into its “likeness”—, might thus result in knowledge.\footnote{Shaftesbury, \textit{Characteristicks}, III, pp. 303, 379.}

In keeping with this Aristotelian analysis, Shaftesbury invoked the trope of the mediaeval “mirror” in his evaluation of likeness.\footnote{Shaftesbury’s “mirror” was not precisely the same as Aristotle’s insofar as the point of introspection conducive to “Mirrour-Writing” represented a higher, Platonic stage of intellectual perfection than that invoked by the ancient philosopher. See Shaftesbury, \textit{Characteristicks}, I, pp. 204-205.} As the medieval “mirror” functioned to transform the imperfect private self into a more noble public character, so Shaftesbury’s \textit{Pocket-Mirrour} functioned to transform the imperfect, ignorant self into its more perfect philosophical form.\footnote{Shaftesbury, \textit{Characteristicks}, I, pp. 204-205.} According to Shaftesbury, the \textit{Pocket-Mirrour} “teaches me to distinguish between [Philosophy’s] Person”—the matter of sense—“and her Likeness”—the matter of potentiality—, “and shews me her immediate and real self, by that sole Privilege of teaching me to know my-self; and
what belongs to me.” He thus coined the term “Mirrour-Writing”—“designing after the life”—to describe the linguistic process by which one arrived at the “Philosophical Hero,” commending “The good Painter...do as the good Poet” in adopting this method.

On the one hand, then, Shaftesbury’s distinction between “Person” and “Likeness” paralleled his distinction between one’s lower “undercharacter” and higher “Philosophical” self. On the other hand, it was his correlation of portraiture with “Person” and “undercharacter,” and “Person” and “undercharacter” with the particular and sensory, that precluded his recognition of portraiture as a liberal art. As Plato had argued, any likeness taking only the “Person” into account was nothing more than a “shadow” image, a characterization of man’s inferior self that dangerously obscured the higher good of philosophical virtue as the foundation of social order. Among advocates of the Shaftesburian narrative, a true likeness, one informed by a liberal understanding of reality and identity, might be attained only by way of a “general” style—i.e. by abstracting those virtues conducive to potentiality. It is thus worth noting that Sir Joshua Reynolds, an outspoken opponent of realism, employed a mirror in his portrait-making; according to the Duchess of Rutland, he would “look at the general effect in a distant glass, chiefly making his picture from that.”

50 Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, p. 298.
51 Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, III, p. 375.
52 Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, III, pp. 348-353.
53 Shaftesbury held that a truly general painting was expressive of “the grand Event,” a theme “wholly philosophical and moral” in which “the highest Tone of Voice and strongest Action are employ’d.” See Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, III, pp. 350-353.
Yet Aristotle’s analysis also suggested alternative possibilities for the interpretation of likeness. Aristotle described the mirror as a pre-Socratic or naturalist device used to mediate between external nature and the internal intellect. A mirrored likeness might therefore represent the translation of sensory data into general principles—i.e. the abstraction of external qualities into ideas, made visually manifest in imagery. An Aristotelian likeness might therefore emphasize not just the abstraction of ideas but their generalization in material forms. Indeed, according to Ross, Aristotle’s endorsement of the universal in the *Poeticks* should not be misunderstood as a condemnation of particularity. He writes:

> There is, of course, danger in this notion of poetry as universal. It easily degenerates into the view that poetry should present general types of character denuded of the individual traits which make both real people and fictitious characters interesting and delightful. But to interpret him so is to think of the universal simply as that which ‘can be predicated of more things than one’ and to forget that for Aristotle the universal is the necessary.55

In other words, for Aristotle, as distinct from Plato and Shaftesburian civic humanists, a visual likeness composed of general forms and “necessary” particularities was not of necessity void of intellectual merit and might even compared with an “abstract” poem.56 This, I think, was Richardson’s intent when he employed the term “Abstract.”57

56 As Abrams aptly observes, “the particular and the circumstantial were not employed as simple and exclusive contraries of the general and the uniform; as Reynolds puts it, ‘he that does not at all express particulars, expresses nothing’; and in many passages, these critics proposed achieving the general by the just selection of those particulars which are most widely possessed…. Taken in its full context, the recommendation of the typical, general, and familiar as basic requirements of art usually turns out to be accompanied by a statement of the need for the leavening qualities of individuality, particularity, and novelty as well.” (Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, pp. 39-40) See Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, pp. 39-42.
57 Richardson’s concern with this principle of an abstract ideal is interesting for being so closely aligned with Aristotle and yet absent in other writings on portraiture. As Gibson-Wood observes,
Richardson’s interpretation of an abstract likeness was not an endorsement of “Mimickry.” While he agreed in principle that realism alone—i.e., analysis without synthesis—served little purpose, he did not believe that the inclusion of particularities necessarily obscured general truths, or that particularities in portraits rendered them necessarily illiberal. For Richardson, it was but a small step from “Mirrour-Writing” to portrait-painting and, so, from the true likeness made by the poet, to the true likeness rendered by painter. Indeed, Richardson argued, a good portrait served much the same purpose as Shaftesbury’s “Magical Glasses”: bringing the spectator face-to-face with his potential and thereby inspiring his pursuit of knowledge and virtue. To this end, he, like Shaftesbury, encouraged the painter to be as the poet: “the Painter must imagine his Figures to Think, Speak, and Act, as a Poet should do in a Tragedy, or Epick Poem...”58 Ultimately, then, the portrait “Abstract” was for Richardson, as the verbal “abstract” was for Aristotle and Shaftesbury, both a product and medium of knowledge. It was this which allowed for the liberal merits of portraiture.59

In the end, Richardson’s likeness was one in which the self was recognized to be a singular example of a larger species, defined by those principles to which the species itself was held universally subject; it was one in which the attributes selected were those whose perceived social value made them most representative of mankind’s

59 Richardson, Two Discourses, II, pp. 13, 16; Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, pp. 47, 50, 52-54.
potential and, so, most conducive to inspiring virtue in others. In this neo-Aristotelian context, the portrait became a philosophical medium for the advancement of public good: “The Great, and Chief Ends of Painting,” he posited, “are to Raise, and Improve Nature; and to Communicate Ideas; ... whereby Mankind is advanced higher in the Rational State, and made Better....” He thus encouraged that “a Peasant have more of the Gentleman, and so of the rest.” In part, then, where Richardson diverged from more conservative, Shaftesburian—i.e. neo-Platonic—civic humanists was in his empirical endorsement of “necessary” particularity—that which impressed “upon the Mind of him that sees it an Idea of its self, distinguish’d from every Other of its Kind.”

But differences between Shaftesbury and Richardson also turned on their perceptions of “nurture.” Shaftesbury’s theory turned on a belief in the progressive nature of identity towards a perfect self—the “Philosophical Hero.” A similar notion of improvement informed the ideas of Richardson. Significantly, however, whereas Shaftesbury emphasized the role of nature—i.e. birth—Richardson emphasized the role of nurture—i.e. industry; through a close study of nature, he argued, supported by

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60 In this way, Richardson reconciled the demand for empirical resemblance with the demand for a general form—i.e. with the demand for evidence of intellectual and moral virtue. See Richardson, Two Discourses, II, p. 16.
61 Richardson, Two Discourses, II, p. 12. As he explained, “if my Ideas are raised, the Sentiments excited in my mind will be proportionably Improved.” (Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, p. 15) See Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, p. 15; Richardson, Two Discourses, II, pp. 15, 39-40, 42.
63 Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, p. 162.
64 Differences between Shaftesbury and Richardson suggest certain influences on Richardson’s philosophy: the reformation ethic, which empowered the individual to determine his own ‘potentiality’; empiricism’s penchant for conversation; Locke’s vision of the autonomous reasoner; and the transforming influence of commerce on society. These encouraged his endorsement of “ordinary life” values. As Gibson-Wood notes, “The traits he is proud to possess include industry, a concern for self-
readings in philosophy, the individual might cultivate a liberal knowledge and thereby
determine his own improvement. Richardson’s allegiance to empiricism thus effected
a modified version of civic humanism: it substituted the autonomy of the empiricist
for the disinterest of the contemplator as the premise of independence; and it
substituted “nurture”—learning (by way of industry)—for “nature”—birth (by way of
wealth)—as the medium of knowledge. By these means, Richardson enhanced
individual control over identity and social order.

On the one hand, then, Richardson wed classical principles with individual
self-determination to arrive at an ideological narrative compatible with the interests of
a landless commoner with intellectual, social and economic ambitions. At the same
time, his position should not be misunderstood as a rejection of social hierarchy or its
presumption of inequalities among men. Richardson, too, cautioned against ‘fashion’
and ‘flattery’ and the prospect of false identities arising from the absence of fixed
standards. He, too, envisioned the progress of virtue to derive from liberal thinking.
He likewise supported the subordination of individual interests to the higher ideals of
improvement without ambition, independence, honesty, benevolence, temperance, rationality and
63 Gibson-Wood, p. 42.
66 Indeed, as Gibson-Wood remarks: “his aims as a writer can be meaningfully understood only in
conjunction with his professional aspirations, which, in turn, cannot be separated from his social and
intellectual ambitions. Richardson sought to exemplify in the conduct of his own life, I believe, many
of the central doctrines of his writings: that portrait painters should be as learned as history painters;
that professional artists of all types could be ‘gentlemen’; that the English need not succumb to
continental authority in the arts; that Everyman could be an authority through the exercise of sound
reasoning and hard work.” See Gibson-Wood, p. 5.
67 Richardson’s social aspirations are suggested by the distribution of his estate; rather than divide it up
equally among his children, as most middle-class families did, he gave the bulk to his son Jonathan in
order to set him up as a gentleman. See Gibson-Wood, pp. 39-40, 46, 49, 54.
68 Although Richardson conceded that “A Painter is allow’d sometimes to depart even from Natural,
and Historical Truth,” he cautioned against flagrant fabrications: “History must not be corrupted, and
turn’d into Fable, or Romance; Every Person, and Thing must be made to sustain its proper Character;
social good. But one cannot ignore the implications of his empirical and Reformed bias for the civic humanist narrative.

Like Shaftesbury, Richardson believed in the existence of divine plan and its manifestation in the moral good. He also believed that, ultimately, this plan might be made known to man through the compatibility of reason with nature. Unlike Shaftesbury, however, Richardson held that human knowledge prior to revelation was necessarily imperfect and, so, unsuited to a paradigm of ‘fixed’ abstract principles. Hence, borrowing from Locke, Richardson argued that secular truth was dynamic rather than fixed and, so, “purely Relative.”

It was this which underscored his empirical methodology and his rejection of customary authority: the only knowledge secular man might hope to acquire was that which might be deduced from the application of general principles initially developed from the evidence of external nature; since no one man or group of men could shore up the evidence of all nature, customary authority was ever imperfect and, therefore, a poor pretext for making fixed pronouncements about the individual, society, and larger world. In the end, while accepting the hierarchy of reason over passion, Richardson granted a privileged place to the autonomous, reasoning man.

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69 Richardson, Two Discourses, II, pp. 98 and 117.
70 He writes: “Since all men are perpetually on the wrong side of truth, by virtue of imperfect knowledge and reason, we are all part wiseman and part fool. Each of us—and the whole of us—can only benefit from the opinions of others, that our own ideas might be tested and raised.” (Richardson, Two Discourses, II, p. 120) He later added: “nothing should be Borrowed, nothing Supposed, or taken for granted.” (Richardson, Two Discourses, II, p. 167) See Richardson, Two Discourses, II, pp. 120, 167.
71 That men might think for themselves—might claim intellectual independence—was, for Richardson, a promise of the Reformation. In this way, he is aligned with the Country narrative. See Richardson, Two Discourses, II, p. 231.
Once freed of theoretical methodologies and a neo-Platonic bias, an abstract likeness based on observation and idealization might bridge the gap between "mechanical" and "liberal" advanced by the writings of Shaftesbury and others. At the same time, common-born artists and sitters might participate in the higher reality born of liberal knowledge and thereby assume a philosophical stature. In the end, for all his commitment to virtue and progress, Richardson's narrative of nurture over nature, industry over birth, was more responsive to the experience of British commoners than that of Shaftesbury. It also anticipated, in part, the ideas of Ramsay and Hume.72

III. Interpreting Likeness

When Shaftesbury spoke of "likeness," he understood the (primarily) verbal expression of those philosophical virtues to which men aspired in common.73 When Richardson spoke of "likeness" he understood, in addition, the visual expression of those virtues manifest in the individual. On one level, then, likeness was about similarity: a means of articulating those attributes that united men and made them similar in their potentiality. On the other hand, likeness was about difference: a

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72 Significantly, Broadie remarks, Hume's analysis supported the notion of nurtured progress; "Hume plainly believed that we are not glued to the level of refinement of sensibility at which we find ourselves. One purpose of [his Of the Standard of Taste]... is to describe what we have to do to move to a higher level. In that respect the essay might be seen as contributing to that search for improvement that so characterized the Enlightenment in Scotland." (Broadie, p. 245) A similar theme informed Ramsay's Dialogue on Taste. See Broadie, The Scottish Enlightenment, p. 245; Hume, Of the Standard of Taste, in Broadie, pp. 251-259; Smart, Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist and Man of the Enlightenment (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 224, 226, 270-272.

73 "Although Shaftesbury, like Richardson, maintained that painters should ideally be able to think like philosophers in portraying the essential significance of actions, he clearly felt that painters were not actually qualified to command this sort of intellectual authority." See Gibson-Wood, p. 153.
means of distinguishing the individual from others of like kind. These varying 
emphases reflected different ways of seeing the world, one of which subordinated the 
individual to a theoretical ideal, the other of which subordinated the theoretical ideal 
to the individual. They likewise conduced to degrees of stylistic generality and 
particularity. In the case of Shaftesbury, who stressed the potentiality of mankind, 
likeness was best rendered in the “general” style, which translated essential matter 
into its potential, universal form.74 But among those who emphasized the potentiality 
of the individual, likeness might best be rendered in a “mixed”—i.e. “historical” or 
even “conversational”—style, one which combined general ideas with the “necessary” 
particularities of the individual. By the same token, those who rejected the classical 
principle of potentiality, and based all knowledge and good on experience, might 
adopt a purely particular style.

Thus the manner in which one rendered a portrait reflected a certain 
perception of reality and its corresponding narrative and identity. Among civic 
humanists, a general style of painting reflected a classical perception of reality based 
on progress and potentiality in which virtue, truth and beauty were affiliated with a 
universal, disinterested and independent mind desirous of public good. In this 
narrative, an excess of particularities was understood to reflect an ignorant mind 
preoccupied with material and sensual interests.75 Hence, those artists who employed 
an abstract or general style were esteemed liberal and virtuous, while those who

75 As Plato described it, “the particulars are objects of sight but not of intelligence, while the forms 
[from which generals are abstracted] are the objects of intelligence but not of sight.” See Plato, 
Republic, p. 246.
employed a particular style were deemed mechanical and interested.\(^7^6\) This informed the neoclassical hierarchy of painting, which descended in rank from history painting (the only "liberal" genre) to portraiture, animal painting, landscape, and still life.\(^7^7\)

By the same token, variations in the visual language of eighteenth-century portraiture suggest dissent from the classical perception of reality and the civic humanist narrative. Although the superior merits of a general style continued to be touted throughout the eighteenth century, the style itself was more loosely and variously interpreted. For example, while both Allan Ramsay and Joshua Reynolds were versed in grand-manner theory, and while both drew inspiration from the writings of Richardson (notably his theory of "grace and greatness"), their varying emphases—Ramsay on "grace," Reynolds on "greatness"—, encouraged different narrative ends.\(^7^8\) At the same time, although Reynolds, like Shaftesbury, believed that intellectual ideals were attainable only through the "imagination"—a transcendental state of contemplation—, and accepted the superior merits of history painting, thereby

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\(^7^7\) As Gibson-Wood notes, the hierarchy of painting—and the civic humanist theory of art—was well established in continental theory, and "was in turn premised on the acknowledgement of the supremacy of humanist learning over all other forms of knowledge." She goes on: "The notion that the demands of different types of subject matter determined the relative esteem in which genres of painting were held had been implicit in Italian Renaissance and baroque art theory. Within the dictates of the French Academie Royale it became official doctrine, and was articulated in print in 1669 by Andre Felibien...." See Gibson-Wood, p. 11.

\(^7^8\) Ultimately, Richardson defined two sets of rules for the models of grace and greatness: "The Contours must be Large, Square, and Boldly pronoune'd to produce Greatness; and Delicate, and finely Waved, and Contrasted to be Gracious.... The Draperies must have broad Masses of Light, and Shadow, and noble large Folds to give a Greatness; and These artfully subdivided, add Graces." (Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, pp. 181-182) See Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, pp. 181-182; Gibson-Wood, p. 141.
basing his “great” style on neo-Platonic ideals, even he demurred from strict adherence to Shaftesburian neoclassicism.\textsuperscript{79}

There is no question that Reynolds drew upon Richardson’s theory of “grace and greatness” in the formulation of his “grand-style” portrait.\textsuperscript{80} At the same time, it would be misleading to suggest that Reynolds likewise adopted a Richardsonian narrative. Richardson’s claims for the intellectual ability of the artist, his intent to grant liberal status to a select body of British painters, his defense of the potential importance of English painting and the consequent need to establish an academy, all find reiteration in the writings of Reynolds. But the influence of Shaftesbury is likewise apparent—in the privileging of history painting, for example, and the reluctance to confer upon portraiture the status of a liberal art. It was, in fact, Reynolds’s shared belief in the neo-Platonic correlation between a general style, a general mind and a metaphysical, universal truth attainable only through the imagination that underscored his opposition to the particular and prompted his effort to reconcile portraiture with the demands of liberal art. These subjects find

\textsuperscript{79} For example, Reynolds recognized the necessity of balancing universal ideals with more particular elements, a concession that may help to explain the oft-cited inconsistencies between his Discourses and his pictures. According to Nicholas Penny, Reynolds “repeatedly insisted on the ‘true dignity’ of [history] painting ‘which entitles it to the name of a liberal Art, and ranks it as a sister of poetry.’” (Penny, “An Ambitious man: The career and the achievements of Sir Joshua Reynolds” in Penny, Reynolds, p. 30) Yet, in his essay on Shakespeare, for example, Reynolds advocated less rigid standards of generalization, recalling Dr. Johnson’s praise of the English bard—that he “‘holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life’.” (Quoted in Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 32) See Penny, in Penny, Reynolds, p. 30; Reynolds, Discourses on Art, p. 239; Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, pp. 32, 39-40.

expression in his *Discourses*—a series of annual lectures delivered to students, academicians and patrons of Britain's Royal Academy between 1769 and 1790.81

IV. Reynolds's Discourses

As his first *Discourse* (January, 1769) makes clear, Reynolds considered painting to be a manufactured—"mechanical"—product, but distinguished it from other manufactures on grounds that its purpose was more than utilitarian.82 As the degree to which a painting exceeded its mercantile function was, for both Richardson and Reynolds, a measure of its intellectual value and liberal status, so the goal of both artists was to nurture the educational value of art towards the improvement of English "Taste."83 However, whereas Richardson premised Taste on general principles derived from empirical observation, Reynolds premised Taste on a fixed ideal accessible only by way of the imagination—a mental transcendence into the metaphysical realm of the ideas.84 In fact, one purpose of the newly-founded Royal Academy (1769) was to establish the standards by which high—liberal and good—art

83 "The value and rank of every art," Reynolds wrote in his fourth *Discourse* (December 1771), "is in proportion to the mental labour employed in it, or the mental pleasure produced by it. As this principle is observed or neglected, our profession becomes either a liberal art, or a mechanical trade." Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, p. 57.
84 Imagination represented the highest level of intellectual achievement; it transformed mere "generalization"—the process of selective imitation and invention conducive to higher truth—into a neo-Platonic manifestation of the ideal. As he argued in his ninth *Discourse*: "the beauty of which we are in quest is general and intellectual...[;] it is an idea that exists only in the mind...: it is an idea... the artist... is always labouring to impart, and which he dies at last without imparting; but which he is yet so far able to communicate, as to raise the thoughts, and extend the views of the spectator... through successive stages of excellence, till that contemplation of universal rectitude and harmony which began by Taste, may, as it is exalted and refined, conclude in Virtue." (Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, p. 171) See Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, pp. 17-20, 27, 42-47, 50, 141, 171, 204, 232, 235-236, 244, 252.
was rendered and judged.\textsuperscript{85} As Reynolds wrote, "the present institution will at least contribute to advance our knowledge of the Arts, and bring us nearer to that ideal excellence which it is the lot of genius always to contemplate and never to attain."\textsuperscript{86} Hence, whereas Richardson rejected the principle of received authority, Reynolds reinforced it.\textsuperscript{87}

All of this affected the analysis of portraiture. On the one hand, Reynolds, like Richardson, endorsed painting as a medium for the advancement of human virtue, thereby invoking a classical narrative of progress and good. Moreover, to this end, both endorsed a variation on ‘grand-manner’ imagery.\textsuperscript{88} On the other hand, however, Reynolds, like Shaftesbury, denied portraiture a liberal stature on grounds of its concern with the particularities of matter. This precluded it from contributing to the progress of truth and goodness.\textsuperscript{89} In an effort to remedy this deficiency, Reynolds

\textsuperscript{85} This program, which endorsed the notion of progress from a mechanical to an intellectual condition and supported a hierarchical order descending from the “intellectual dignity” of the liberal artist to the ignorance of “the mere mechanick,” was divided into three phases. (Reynolds, \textit{Discourses on Art}, pp. 42-43) The first two phases represented the student’s mechanical development: the rudiments of drawing, color and composition; and the study of old master works. In general, Reynolds advocated the serious study of other masters and nature as a means of learning the rules of art and improving taste, a position he asserts in the sixth and twelfth \textit{Discourses}. The third stage represented the artist’s intellectual training: a comparison of art and nature by which one “corrects what is erroneous, supplies what is scanty, and adds by his own observation what the industry of his predecessors may have yet left wanting to perfection.” (Reynolds, \textit{Discourses on Art}, p. 27) This was further divided into ‘invention’ and ‘imagination’. On the one hand, ‘invention’ represented the successful abstraction and combination of selected elements into what Reynolds termed a ‘general’ style. On a higher level, ‘imagination’ represented the successful translation of generalization into the truth of the perfect ideal. See Reynolds, \textit{Discourses on Art}, pp. 17, 27-30, 42-43, 50, 52, 58-59, 93-97, 192, 199, 232-236, 259-261, 272.


\textsuperscript{87} Reynolds, \textit{Discourses on Art}, pp. 41-43, 59, 62, 70-71, 259, 270.

\textsuperscript{88} As the “ornamental” style was inferior to the “grand” style, so portraiture was inferior to history painting; whereas history painting was suited to the “grand” style, portraiture was handicapped by its subject-matter, which demanded a degree of material realism. Reynolds explained: “A painter of
sought some means by which a subject might be rendered so as to instruct and improve the spectator. The result was Reynolds’s “grand-style” portrait. Modeled on the example of history painting, and recalling the “historical” styles of earlier theorists, the “grand-style” portrait was rendered in a general, heroic and elevated manner while being simultaneously located in historic—as opposed to universal—time. Blurring the line between portrait and history painting, Reynolds formalized and institutionalized ideas originating in Shaftesbury and Richardson. In the process, portrait and painter were mutually elevated.

The tenor of Reynolds’s Discourses was broadly indicative of his support for the principle of ideal form and the merits of a theoretical methodology. This philosophy distinguished him from Richardson and aligned him with advocates of neo-Platonism. At the same time, however, Reynolds, like Richardson, advocated

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90 Reynolds writes: “no subject can be proper that is not generally interesting.” Reynolds, Discourses on Art, p. 57.
91 Reynolds, Discourses on Art, pp. 72-73, 88-89, 200. In other words, the “historical style” of the Public Man celebrated the universal virtues of the classical hero in secular time. As he explained it: “It ought to be either some eminent instance of heroick action, or heroick suffering. There must be something either in the action, or in the object, in which men are universally concerned, and which powerfully strikes upon the public sympathy.” (Reynolds, Discourses on Art, p. 57) Moreover, he adds, no “defects ought to appear in a piece of which [the subject]... is the hero.... I call this part of the art History Painting; it ought to be called Poetical, as in reality it is.” (Reynolds, Discourses on Art, p. 60) See Reynolds, Discourses on Art, pp. 57, 60, 275.
92 In general, Plato distinguished three modes of poetry: first-person narrative; representation (tragedy or comedy); and mixed. The first, “narrative” style was characterized by uniformity and an emphasis on the “good man.” Suggestive of “courage, self-control, piety, freedom of spirit and similar qualities,” it informed the grand-manner narrative. (Plato, Republic, p. 94) The second, representational style boasted unlimited “variety.” Characterized by a third-person perspective that required the spectator to assume the position of the subject, it was deemed dangerous by Plato, insofar it risked the impersonation of inferiors by the Guardian class. (Plato, Republic, p. 96) The third, “mixed” style, he writes, while “very pleasant,” is unsuitable, for it undermines Platonic principles (Plato, Republic, p. 97) A discussion of Plato’s stylistic analysis can be found in his Republic, pp. 90-97.
“nurture.” This more inclusive interpretation of neo-Platonic theory reflected the Reformed subversion of ‘nature’ to ‘nurture’ and the implications of Shaftesbury’s concessions to the pressures of contemporary experience. A similar concession informed Reynolds’s analysis of trade. In his ninth Discourse (October 1780), Reynolds examined the relationship between art and trade within a larger social and international context. Here, he, like earlier civic humanists, defended the superior merits of intellectual pursuits and the social dangers inherent to the elevation of trade. Trade, Reynolds argued, benefited man insofar as it provided economic support for intellectual improvement—i.e. ‘progress’—, but it must necessarily be controlled at the risk of social degeneration.

Ultimately, Reynolds’s ninth Discourse—indeed, the Discourses in general—signaled the uneasy relationship between civic humanism and modern life. The concession to nurtured genius invited self-improvement and social mobility, suggesting that the social order was not fixed and, consequently, that universal principles did not, of necessity, inform an individual’s temporal identity. This was to suggest that historical identities were, at least in part, self-determined and, consequently, that the temporal social order was fluid rather than fixed—a stance contrary to civic humanist prescription.

93 He writes in the seventh Discourse (December 1776): “success in your art depends almost entirely on your own industry;... not the industry of the hands, but of the mind....” (Reynolds, Discourses on Art, p. 117) See Reynolds, Discourses on Art, pp. 35, 117-118.
94 For “a people whose whole attention is absorbed in those means, and who forget the end, can aspire but little above the rank of a barbarous nation.” See Reynolds, Discourses on Art, p. 169.
V. Naturalism and the Conversational Style

On the one hand, Reynolds's emphasis on "greatness" aligned him with the "heroic" ideals informing the neo-Aristotelian narrative of "Great" or Public Men. On the other hand, while Richardson, too, privileged "greatness" above "grace," his concession to "grace" lent more credibility to a social or 'conversational' style based on naturalism. This influence is felt, in varying ways, in the work of Kneller, Hogarth, Highmore, and Ramsay.

Shaftesbury outlined a "natural" style to complement his civic humanist objectives. As he explained it, the process by which social affection was elevated to civic virtue was one of Taste. Hence, aesthetics—the rules of art (and life) conducive to beauty and virtue as informed by natural law—became the science of Taste alternately resonant in external signs of politeness. "To live aesthetically," he wrote, "is to conduct oneself in a manner 'naturally' responsive to pleasure but governed, from within, by law."95

Wed to this aesthetic correlation between virtue, beauty, politeness and Taste was a discourse of "conversation" that united the ideals of contemplation and heroic action into a modern model of social behavior. Essentially, "conversation" was the modern variation on the Socratic dialectic, the medium and engine of Platonic dialogue by which the individual was advanced towards greater self-knowledge and society was advanced towards greater good. In other words, it was the group variation on Shaftesbury's "Soliloquy."96 In aesthetic terms, the ideals of

95 Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, p. 125.
96 On the one hand, Shaftesbury endorsed Platonic contemplation—the form of disinterested virtue attained through intellectual reunion with nature. On the other hand, he embraced Aristotelian civic.
conversation were best rendered (in Shaftesbury’s opinion), in a natural, neoclassical style.

John Closterman’s *Maurice Ashley-Cooper and Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury* (Fig. 5-1; 1702; oil on canvas, 95-3/4 x 67-1/4 inches; National

*Earl of Shaftesbury* (Fig. 5-1; 1702; oil on canvas, 95-3/4 x 67-1/4 inches; National
Portrait Gallery, London), in which Shaftesbury was directly involved,\(^9\) is suggestive of his vision of a “conversational” painting, in which nature, conversation and neoclassicism all converge in the depiction of Public Men. In ideological terms, two neo-Platonic philosopher-types stroll through a classicized “temple” of Nature, the younger brother on the left regaling his companion (the 3\(^{rd}\) Earl) in the meaning of the harmonious cosmos that surrounds them, their resulting ‘elevation’ engendering not

![Fig. 5-2](image)

“dialogue” that harkened them to their intellectual and moral capacities and advanced them toward their virtuous potentiality.

only their mutual improvement but foreshadowing the friendly improvement they will bring back to the Public sphere upon re-entry.98

But a natural style could take an alternative form. Sir Godfrey Kneller’s

*Thomas Pelham-Holles, 1st Duke of Newcastle and Henry Clinton, 7th Earl of Lincoln* (Fig. 5-2; ca. 1721; oil on canvas, 50 x 58-3/4 inches; National Portrait Gallery, London), captures the Big Whig brothers-in-law seated in a domestic interior beside a window-view of Newcastle’s estate, *Claremont.*99 In this last of the Kit-cat portraits, which record the members of this prominent Whig club,100 Kneller has dispensed with direct allusion to Platonic contemplation—the classical banyan and robe of the Ashley-Coopers gives way, for example, to powdered wigs and be-medaled frock coats. Moreover, he has removed his sitters from the realm of Nature and planted them in a domestic interior. Indeed, borrowing on Van Dyck’s established convention for aristocratic men-at-ease, Kneller further privatizes the effect by reducing the barrier between sitter and spectator, one effect of which is to engage the spectator in the imag[in]ed conversation.101 In other words, whereas Closterman’s image of the 3rd Earl and his brother exudes the detached disinterest of Platonic philosophy, Kneller’s highlights his sitters’ “interest” through the visual engagement of the

100 As Solkin writes, “here the politics of whiggery and the culture of politeness merged... [among] virtually every important Whig potentate of the period....” (Solkin, p. 28) Founded in the 1680s as part of the growth of political clubs that thrived on the contest between Tories and Whigs, they initiated a cultural propaganda campaign designed to support constitutional change and the new relationship between monarchy, lords and commons. This cultural campaign involved “building a broad ideological consensus based on ‘social, cultural, and commercial values’.” (J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce and History,* p. 235; quoted in Solkin, p. 29) The result was a model of politeness based on “social and moral end[s].” See Solkin, *Painting for Money,* pp. 28-29.
spectator's gaze. This is not the negative "interest" of civic humanist narrative—the interest of acquisitive pride—but rather the positive "interest" of an alternative, "conversational" narrative—the social interest in one's fellow-beings threatened by the alienation attendant disengagement.¹⁰²

In other words, between 1702 and 1721, Shaftesbury's conversation lost its civic—Public—edge to a more social—public—one. At the same time, its premise of disinterested independence was subverted, in part, to a notion of interested interdependence. This suggestion is compounded by the allusion to equality implied by

¹⁰² Solking, Painting for Money, pp. 36-37.
the seated posture and the hospitality of shared drink, all of which function to engage the conversational spectator in the sitters’ image. A similar effect is suggested by Joseph Highmore’s *Mr. Oldham and his Guests* (Fig. 5-3; ca. 1735-1745; oil on canvas, 41-1/2 x 51 inches; Tate Britain), which casts the ‘middling sort’ in a similarly “clubby” guise. Yet the image bears closer examination. Here, the striding posture and rhetorical gesture of the Ashley-Coopers, which became the upright seating and social pleasantries of Newcastle and Lincoln, become the leaning and slouching figures of smoking and drinking men. By the same token, the timeless classical banyan and robe, which became the public be-medaled frock coats, become the modest dress of private commoners. Likewise, *La Belle Nature* with classical temple, which became a baroque interior with view of country estate, becomes a simple domestic interior. Aesthetically-speaking, formal symmetry and uniformity have given way to informal asymmetry and fluidity, something akin to the nature—as opposed to Nature—of Dutch art.

During the course of the eighteenth century, these images suggest, the implications of “conversation” grew increasingly social and egalitarian, becoming a medium for the elevation of the middle-class sitter rather than a celebration of communal soliloquy. Indeed, the three images march in tempered progression from landed to propertied, elite to common, Public to public, ending in what Jurgen Habermas has described as “a more inclusive public of all private people, persons who—insofar as they were propertied and educated—as readers, listeners, and spectators could avail themselves via the market of the... objects that were subject to
The significance of this development is made dramatically evident in the work of Hogarth.

VI. Hogarth

The theoretical descent from Shaftesbury to Richardson to Reynolds was paralleled by alternative modes of descent from, for example, Shaftesbury to Richardson to Ramsay and, more radically, Mandeville to Hogarth. Mandeville suggested in his controversial *Fable of the Bees* an alternative mode of nature—"abject, low, pitiful and mean"—affiliated with Dutch painting. Moreover, in an effective allusion to the mute tongue—and Taste—of the common man, he set up the alternative as a dialectical opposition to Shaftesburian Nature—that of civic humanism—by pitting the marginalized female, Fulvia, against the Shaftesburian Cleomenes. In the process, he unmasked the pretentious conflation of moral virtue with elite Taste as the self-interested drive for money and power undergirding the Whig narrative.

While Hogarth did not endorse Mandeville’s ideological vision for modern society, he did share Mandeville’s view of the elite. Recalling Mandeville’s distinction between ancient virtue and modern happiness, Hogarth proposed that ancient and modern life—and, consequently, ancient and modern art—were premised on...
on different narrative ends. Because the ancients understood the purpose of life—and art—to be the nurturing of natural progress through a knowledge of universal order, they advocated instruction in theoretically-fixed standards by which human virtue was thought to be advanced.\textsuperscript{107} On this premise, Shaftesbury, while conceding the empirical origins of knowledge and, so, admitting a science of aesthetics,\textsuperscript{108} had perpetuated a theory of art based on fixed standards of beauty and Taste, thereby laying the groundwork for the academic prescriptions of Reynolds's \textit{Discourses}.'\textsuperscript{109}

In theory, however, Shaftesbury's aesthetics derived from an ancient division between what Giovanni Lomazzo later described as the “order of training” and “the order of nature.” In the former, would-be artists were instructed in those ideal standards to which art (and life) were subject. In the latter, the artist worked from the particularities of nature in order to arrive at his own generalities—his own standards for art and life.'\textsuperscript{110} Although classical biases against autonomous reasoning and

\textsuperscript{107} Giovanni Lomazzo had called this the “order of teaching,” which worked from established principles. See Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, \textit{A Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Paintinge, Carvinge & Buildinge} (1590), trans. Richard Haydocke (Oxford: printed by Joseph Barnes, 1598)

\textsuperscript{108} According to Ronald Paulson, “Aesthetics, though it dwelt on the beautiful, was an empiricist philosophy based on the sense rather than reason or faith. The first aesthetic treatises were the third earl of Shaftesbury's \textit{Characteristicks} (1711, collecting essays that went back as far as the late 1690s) and Joseph Addison's ‘Pleasures of the Imagination’ essays in \textit{The Spectator} of 1712.” (Paulson, \textit{The Analysis of Beauty}, pp. xix-xx) What distinguished aesthetics from previous art theory was not only its concession to an empirical methodology, but its consequent attention to the role of the spectator in the judgment of beauty. See Paulson, \textit{The Analysis of Beauty}, pp. xix-xx.

\textsuperscript{109} As Paulson argues, Shaftesbury recognized that all knowledge began with a sense-perception, but not that all sense-perception resulted in knowledge. Only those who were sensitive to the relationship between external nature and divine plan, and esteemed the virtues of Nature, were capable of making knowledge out of sensory information. Moreover, as this esteem was conditioned upon a love of moral goodness, it was necessarily confined to those whose leisure allowed for the disinterested comprehension of public good. This distinguished Shaftesbury from Locke, for whom experience was the only basis of meaning. (Paulson, \textit{The Analysis of Beauty}, p. xx) See Paulson, \textit{The Analysis of Beauty}, p. xx; Reynolds, “The true Idea of Beauty,” in Samuel Johnson, \textit{The Idler}, II, 82, pp. 166-169.

\textsuperscript{110} Lomazzo wrote: “There is a two-folde proceeding in all artes and sciences: the one is called the order of nature, and the other of teaching. Nature procedeth ordinarily beginning with the unperfect, as the particulars, and ending with the perfect, as the universals. Now if in searching out the nature of things, our understanding shall proceede after that order, by which they are brought forth by nature,
empirical methodologies deemed “the order of nature” beyond man’s capacities, modern concessions to an autonomous and reasoning subject opened the way for alternative claims.

Supported by the individualist biases informing empirical methodologies, as well as the Reformed “ethic of ordinary life,” Hogarth rejected the inaccessibility of the “order of nature,” devising a theory of art based on the evidence of formal properties in material things.\(^{111}\) At the same time, he denied the necessary correlation between beauty and morality, a definition of “grace” without foundation in reality, and the superiority of a technique based on the copying of received ideas.\(^{112}\) Against the classical model of beauty, for example, Hogarth argued for a form of beauty enhanced not by symmetry and simplicity, but by variety, color, and light made pleasing through intricacy, quantity, novelty and asymmetry—his serpentine line of beauty.\(^{113}\) Indeed, against the classical (Shaftesburian) ideal of ancient Hercules,
Hogarth advanced a modern alternative—the 'natural' ideal of the English street-walker—, invoking the contemporary euphemism of sexual 'conversation'.

In fact, Hogarth’s portraits reflect a compelling manipulation of the “natural” style and “conversational” discourse advanced by Shaftesbury. Whereas Shaftesbury confined “conversation” to polite, Public Men, the way was opened for a more inclusive interpretation. Hogarth’s expansion of the “Public” to include not only the disinterested elite—Hercules—but the marginalized body politic—the Harlot—meant that the “conversational” model set forth by Shaftesbury might be expanded to embrace the “dialogue” of the masses—the “conversation” of the coffee house (as opposed to the club), novels (as opposed to poetry), and the marketplace (as opposed to the assembly). In fact, Bindman writes, Hogarth’s “modern moral progresses” were also called “novels in paint.” Hence his endorsement of the “natural” style. As Reynolds later articulated, whereas Nature in the Italian school “attends only to the invariable, the great and general ideas which are fixed and inherent in

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114 Against Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, Paulson writes, “His version of Addisonian aesthetics is the surprising discovery of the utmost variety within apparent uniformity.” (Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, p. xxxiv) It is interesting to note Mandeville’s similar use of a female subject to convey the trope of the outsider. According to Solkin, this was common practice in early eighteenth-century essay-periodicals. See Bindman, Hogarth, pp. 154, 158, 162; Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, pp. xxii, xxvii, xxiv; Solkin, Painting for Money, p. 14.

115 Bindman, Hogarth, p. 55. As Taylor notes, “The new modern novel stands out against all previous literature in its portrayal of the particular. It… breaks with the classical preference for the general and universal. It narrates the lives of particular people in their detail…[;] its characters have ordinary proper names….” Moreover, Taylor adds, the story is no longer ‘received’ but ‘discovered’; “its meaning is seen as something that unfolds through the events.” See Taylor, pp. 287-288; Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, pp. xlix-l.

116 Hogarth’s concern with an individualistic record of common human traits and the “thinking and feeling” aspects of humanity were not conducive to the civic humanist model on the Shaftesburian example of naturalism. See Gowing, Hogarth, pp. 77, 79.
universal Nature; ... Dutch [naturalism], on the contrary, [attends] to literal truth and a minute exactness ... [and hence to a] naturalness...of a lower order...."

Indeed, Hogarth’s naturalism, which supplanted the theoretical ideal with a “representational” alternative, marked his dissent from modern classicism. Assisted by an uncanny ability to memorize and record the features of everyday life, Hogarth’s empirical approach to his subject-matter tended to the socialization—rather than the veneration—of the sitter. A similar intent informed contemporary literature, which likewise played out in the “representational world.” In *Tom Jones* (1745), for example, the paradigm icons of classicism and Christianity—the Classical narrative, represented by Mr. Square, and the Christian narrative, represented by Reverend Thwackum—are dismissed in favor of a more natural, social narrative invoked by the persons of Squire Allworthy—i.e. Country Virtue—, Sophia Western, and the fallible—Harlot-like—Tom.
Hogarth's penchant for naturalism likely encouraged his expansion into "conversation" pieces. In part, his preference for this more intimate and informal mode of group portraiture probably turned on its more social bias. On the one hand, it provided a suitable format for his representational talents. On the other hand, it also

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"Dissatisfaction with engraving, Hogarth explained, 'made him turn his head to painting portrait figures from 10 to 15 inches high, often in subjects of conversation. It had some novelty... [and] it gave more scope to fancy than the common portrait...'." See Gowing, *Hogarth*, p. 19. For a discussion of the development of the English conversation piece, see David Piper, *The English Face* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1978), pp. 130-139.

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provided a narrative format conducive to unmasking social pretensions about family life, political stability, and social order. Ultimately, the discourse of "conversation" and Hogarth's natural style merged in his compelling portraits of the late 1730s and early 1740s.

In George Arnold (Fig. 5-4; ca. 1738-1740; oil on canvas, 35-2/3 x 27-7/8 inches; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge University), for example, the self-made man is captured in an informal, seated pose, hat in hand, but there is a crowding to his figure and a deference to the gesture that precludes a sense of ease. While he is well-(if conservatively) attired in slate wool and white linen, he appears a bit constrained by his trappings. At the same time, there is a warmth to his face and an openness to his posture that invites the addresses of the spectator. It is as though he has stopped to listen to an adjacent viewer, displaying his "interested" capacity for "conversation." But the conversation he intends is of a 'bourgeois' type, defined by Addison as one of intimate "particulars:" "that which passes between two persons who are familiar and intimate friends."

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123 These pictures appealed to men of taste who were coming to terms with the Rococo style. Hogarth never enjoyed such an elegant patronage again. But there was also something innocent in his expectation that he could both satirise the establishment and serve it. Having allied himself with Thornhill, he necessarily shared in Thornhill's defeat. The double rebuff to his ambition as a court portraitist in 1733 marked a turning-point in his career. Henceforward the patrons for his paintings were bourgeois or eccentric. His distrust of fashionable cosmopolitan taste was confirmed and the sardonic independence of his view developed unchecked." See Gowing, Hogarth, p. 19. See also Bindman, Hogarth, pp. 41, 45.

124 As Bindman observes, the "early single-figure portraits employ essentially the same conventions as the conversation pieces of the 1730s." (Bindman, Hogarth, p. 128) By the late 1730s, however, "Hogarth's interest in a grander and more ambitious type of portrait began to grow..., perhaps stimulated by his experiments with History painting, as well as by a desire to present himself as the leader and spokesman of his profession." (Bindman, Hogarth, pp. 130-131) See Bindman, Hogarth, pp. 128-131.

125 Quoted in Solkin, Painting for Money, p. 40. As David Piper notes, "Hogarth himself insisted... on the fundamental difference between his art, which he called that of character, and that of caricature...." (Piper, The English Face, p. 133) Hogarth may have influenced a similar development in the work of...
Like Shaftesbury, Richardson, and Mandeville before him, Hogarth’s art theory was imbedded in a social and political narrative. Having rescued his “liberty” as an autonomous and reasoning individual from the hands of a landed elite, he worked both within and against the civic humanist paradigm. Whereas Richardson’s dissent from customary authority turned on a desire to make the privileges and prestige of higher ranks more accessible to deserving commoners, Hogarth’s more radical intent turned on unmasking the interested relationship between modern aesthetics and elite politics. Whereas Shaftesbury’s philosophy—part aesthetic, part political, part social, part religious—sought to rationalize the replacement of religious and royal authority—high church Toryism—with a

Highmore and Gainsborough. Indeed, although he never set up a painting factory or took on apprentices, Hogarth did have his adherents, among them Gainsborough, Zoffany, Joseph Wright of Derby and George Stubbs. As Bindman observes, “Hogarth inevitably tended to emphasize his differences from other painters of portraits and to contrast his own independence with the servility of the ‘face painters’ of his time. Recent reconsideration of English portraiture in the first half of the eighteenth century has, however, ...revealed that many others were capable of a high degree of individuality.” (Bindman, Hogarth, p. 144) See Piper, The English Face, p. 133; Bindman, Hogarth, pp. 125, 144; Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, p. xlix. This would have appealed to Hogarth; “Hogarth... came from a dissenter family, joined the anticlerical wing of the Whig opposition to Sir Robert Walpole, was a Freemason of the freethinking sort, and invoked the deist Thomas Woolston in A Harlot’s Progress, shortly after the publication of which he showed his scorn for organized religion by relieving himself against the door of a church in Kent.” See Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, p. xxii.


According to Paulson, “In practical terms aesthetics served as an aspect of the Whig reaction to Stuart absolutism and High Church Anglicanism. It was introduced by Shaftesbury in the empiricist, anticlerical, and Whig context of the 1690s.” (Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, p. xx) However, he adds: “As Hogarth ... recognized, Shaftesbury’s aesthetic disinterestedness had a political underside: the alliance of monarch and church is corrected by a government of gentlemen; royal patronage of art is corrected by similarly disinterested connoisseurs (the same persons). The only people who can afford to appreciate virtue and beauty are the Whig oligarchs....” (Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, p. xxiii) In fact, neither circumstance suited Hogarth, whose “bull-dog patriotism” opposed anything that denied Englishmen their rightful liberties. (Gowing, Hogarth, p. 82) Ultimately, then, in the process of undermining the authority of civic humanist aesthetics, Hogarth tampered with the broader political agenda with which they were concerned. (Gowing, Hogarth, p. 26) See Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, pp. xx-xxiii; Gowing, Hogarth, pp. 26, 82.
‘disinterested’ elite—a landed oligarchy—, Hogarth’s *Analysis* aimed to curtail the authority of the landed elite by reclaiming the liberties of the English people.¹²⁹

To this end, Hogarth subverted the “high” art and ideology of the oligarchs, symbolized by the ancient virtue of the “straight-and-narrow” Hercules, with the “low” art and ideology of the people, symbolized by the modern virtue of the “curvy and commercial” Harlot. At the same time, he linked the lust for political power affiliated with the “conversational” Public Man with the lust for sexual power affiliated with the “conversational” Public Woman. Mandeville had made a similar point, but whereas Mandeville had sought to expose the anachronism of social morality as a mode of social cohesion, Hogarth sought to expose moral declension and, indeed, the dangers of modern politics to art and society.¹³⁰ In other words, Hogarth’s *Analysis* aimed to expose the failings that had accrued to modern England as a result of foreign influences, which subordinated the ideals of true English classicism to the aesthetic and ideological degeneracy of a continental-style ruling elite.¹³¹

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¹²⁹ By extension, as Gowing writes: “It was Hogarth, more than anyone, who identified the right of the artist, ...as a right to resist the tyranny of the instituted idea of art.” See Gowing, *Hogarth*, p. 56.

¹³⁰ As Paulson observes, “In the 1724 edition of his *Fable of the Bees* Mandeville’s strategy was to expose the desire, economic and sexual, under the supposed disinterestedness of Shaftesbury’s civic humanism....” (Paulson, *The Analysis of Beauty*, p. xxiv) Hogarth undertook a similar strategy. However, Gowing notes, “Below politics and patronage, underlying the dilemma of the styles, Hogarth’s criticism dealt most forcefully with the moral constitution of society.... English life at a crucial juncture was seen as greedy, merciless, sanctimonious, improvident and treacherous, with the privileged oligarchy presiding in its blindness, at once noble, pathetic and deeply frivolous.” (Gowing, *Hogarth*, p. 82) See Paulson, *The Analysis of Beauty*, pp. xxiv-xxv; Gowing, *Hogarth*, pp. 16, 82.

¹³¹ Paulson writes: “In the eighteenth century Elizabeth [I] was a symbol of the Country Party, the opposition to Sir Robert Walpole which had in many ways shaped Hogarth’s relationships to aesthetic theory as one of opposition satire with an anti-authoritarian and anticlerical bias. In the discourse of opposition, Elizabeth was one of the ideals of the past to which the English were urged to return....” (Paulson, *The Analysis of Beauty*, p. xlii) See Paulson, *The Analysis of Beauty*, p. xlii; Bindman, *Hogarth*, pp. 17, 26; Gowing, *Hogarth*, p. 82.
Ultimately, Hogarth’s serpentine “line of beauty” became the metaphorical equivalent of an expanded Public—the body politic—and the will and authority of the English people. Implicit to this presumption was a shift in the balance-of-authority between the political (civic and elite) and commercial (social and common) spheres. Indeed, Hogarth’s Analysis, with its allusions to ancient English liberty, equality and virtue, bore the radical imprint of modern “Patriots” and British freemasonry. This may explain contemporary objections to Hogarth by Reynolds and others. On the other hand, it is precisely this concern with the relationship between man and society—what Gowing describes as “the aspect that a man presented to his fellows and the place that he occupied in his world”—that makes his Analysis so relevant to a study of eighteenth-century portraiture. Despite his general disregard for portrait

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132 According to Paulson, “Hogarth’s aesthetics is based on the human body and a political model—the body politic, as represented in the frontispiece of Hobbes’s Leviathan. The Tory-Jacobite model subordinated the many to the one (the monarch); the Whig model replaced the one with the oligarchic few; but Hogarth, while invoking the familiar topos of concordia discors, defines it as the pleasure of discovering the greatest variety in uniformity, or the greatest number of parts within a whole. He might have called this formula... an aesthetics of the crowd....” (Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, pp. xli-xlii) See Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, pp. xli-xliii; Hogarth, “The Analysis of Beauty,” in Paulson, p. 11; Gowing, Hogarth, p. 54.

133 Hogarth’s commitment to English liberties and a “patriot” king allied him with Harrington and Bolingbroke’s Country party. (Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, p. xxxiv) Borrowing on the example of Addison and Toland, Paulson writes, he reacted “against the aristocratic fraternity of civic humanists [whom] Toland had adapted as a counter [to] the model of Freemasonry, which claimed to be democratic, capable of including members of the artisan classes as well as the aristocracy. Freemasonry, of which Hogarth was an observing member at least in the mid-1730s... may have been the ultimate source of his serpentine Line of Beauty.” (Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, pp. xxxv-xxxvi) See Bindman, Hogarth, p. 189; Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, pp. xxxiv-xxxvi.

134 In his Apology for Painters, Hogarth concluded that Greek art was unsuited to a “trading” nation. (Bindman, Hogarth, p. 150) Reynolds’s counter-position resulted in his attacked on Hogarth’s theory in the Idler essays of 1759, which laid the foundation for his later Discourses. (Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, p. xlix) See Bindman, Hogarth, pp. 150-151, Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, pp. xlviii-xlxi, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Discourses on Art, pp. 47-49, 61, 69, 277; Gowing, Hogarth, p. 39.

135 Gowing, Hogarth, p. 42.
painters,\textsuperscript{136} Hogarth’s contemporaries were programmed, he tells us, to know the individual by reading his face.\textsuperscript{137}

VII. Ramsay

As Bindman notes, “it is perhaps indicative of the limitations of artistic theory in the eighteenth century that Hogarth and Ramsay could to such a large degree share a similar theoretical position.”\textsuperscript{138} To very different ends, Ramsay likewise borrowed on the “natural” style of Shaftesburian ‘conversation’, uniting it with Richardsonian “grace.”\textsuperscript{139} Ultimately, however, whereas Hogarth used a “natural” style to counter the ideologies and tastes of an elite, employing an empirical methodology to emphasize the private (common) qualities of his individual English subjects, Ramsay used it as a means of redressing traditional civic humanism so as to highlight the good that accrued to society by way of politeness, “often depicting,” as Bindman observes,

\textsuperscript{136} Gowing, \textit{Hogarth}, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{138} Bindman, Hogarth, p. 147. In addition to his aesthetic and political writings, Ramsay was active in the administration of his profession. He held the position of Principle Painter in Ordinary to the King jointly with John Shackleton until the latter’s death in 1767, when he became the sole Principle Painter, providing a mass of coronation portraits for offices, ambassadors and foreign dignitaries around the globe. He was also Vice President of the Incorporated Society of Artists. For a further examination of Ramsay’s work, see Allan Ramsay, \textit{Dialogue on Taste} (London, 1755) and Alistair Smart, \textit{Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist, and Man of the Enlightenment} (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).
\textsuperscript{139} In the example of \textit{John Sargent} (1753; Holborne Museum, Bath), Smart wrote, there is clearly some influence of Hogarth, “a realism of presentation, together with a breadth of handling, that would have been unthinkable apart from Hogarth’s example.” See Smart, \textit{Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist and Man of the Enlightenment}, p. 101.
people who saw naturalness as a rejection of pomp and who sought to combine ease of manner with intellectual seriousness.140

In fact, Ramsay’s variation on the “natural” style drew from a number of sources.141 Significantly, however, it joined Shaftesbury’s correlation between the natural and the polite with Richardson’s theory of “grace,” their combination effecting a suitable framework for examining the private individual as a medium of improvement and social good. This attention to the private, social self distinguished Ramsay from traditional civic humanists, whose emphasis on “greatness” reflected a preoccupation with the “public” man.142 But in fact, Ramsay’s style provided a much-needed bridge between the standards of identity invoked by Shaftesburian civic

140 Bindman, *Hogarth*, p. 147. As Bindman explains, Ramsay’s “paintings are refined, with a brushwork in the contemporary Roman manner [of Pompeo Batoni], concealed under a smooth surface (in Vertue’s words, ‘rather lick’ t’ than pencilled’). . . . His conception of naturalness is, however, quite different from Hogarth’s; his best works are ‘natural’ in the cultivated sense of the French and Scottish Enlightenment....” See Bindman, *Hogarth*, pp. 146-147.

141 In addition to the influences of Shaftesbury and Richardson, Ramsay’s work appears to reflect the narrative interests of Scottish painting—what Smart describes as “that primary concern with the individual personality which distinguishes the art of Aikman and the Scottish tradition as a whole.” (Smart, *Allan Ramsay*, pp. 20, 110) It also reveals the technical influence of Pompeo Batoni and the compositional intimacy of French painters like Chardin. (Smart, *Allan Ramsay*, pp. 192-193) See Smart, *Allan Ramsay*, pp. 20, 110, 192-193.

142 Whereas Ramsay privileged a conversational model of moral sensibility—the social ideal of individual gentility and politeness—, Reynolds, for example, privileged the grand-manner model and its Aristotelian heroic ideal. In fact, Ramsay returned to England and enrolled at St. Martin’s Lane Academy during the height of Richardson’s theoretical influence. As Richardson was retiring, the informal, polite portrait was on the rise. In general, Richardson’s “grace and greatness” represented two modes of idealization, the former based on the selective presentation of nature’s best parts, the latter on their theoretical improvement. That Ramsay was likewise versed in the “great” style is suggested by his portraits Mead and MacLeod, which have been credited has introducing the “grand style” to England. (Smart, *Allan Ramsay*, pp. 83-84) As Smart concludes: “on the one hand no portrait painter of the period was more deeply concerned with the evocation of individual character, . . . while on the other hand a retrospective survey of his artistic development reveals the single-mindedness of his quest of a mode of portraiture capable of containing feeling within an ordered and rational whole.” (Smart, *Allan Ramsay*, p. 3) See Alistair Smart, *Allan Ramsay*, pp. 3, 83-84.
humanism and the demands of a commercial people intent on assuming greater authority yet unwilling to accept a landed model of virtue.\textsuperscript{143}

Alistair Smart has divided Ramsay's career into two periods, according to his stylistic progress away from the grand-manner towards more individuality and naturalism.\textsuperscript{144} This development was accompanied by an increasingly empirical approach to knowledge and likeness.\textsuperscript{145} But it also suggests the influence of a 'commercial humanist' ethic. Indeed, as the political platform of the Augustan Whigs turned increasingly towards a broad-based combination of landed and commercial interests, way was made for a more inclusive interpretation of virtue based on the social interaction of the commercial sphere. Blurring the lines between public and private, general and particular, civic and social to accommodate the demands for an alternative narrative of social—rather than civic—virtue, Ramsay's "second style"

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\textsuperscript{142} As Lord Chesterfield implied, the social ideal of the conversational individual embraced a broader sector of the community than the civic ideal of the heroic public man, permitting individuals to define themselves "not... with regard to their birth; but with regard to their merit...." (Chesterfield, p. 17). Borrowing on Shaftesbury, Chesterfield wrote: "Good-breeding... does not consist in low bows, and formal ceremony, but in an easy, civil, and respectful behaviour." (Chesterfield, p. 37) He continued: "In short, ... politeness and good-breeding are equally necessary to render us agreeable in conversation and common life..." (Chesterfield, pp. 141-142) Like Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, Chesterfield emphasized the correlation between character and virtue: "virtue makes us pity and relieve the misfortunes of mankind; it makes us promote justice and good order in society; and, in general, contributes to whatever tends to the real good of mankind." (Chesterfield, pp. 113-114) See Chesterfield, \textit{Advice to his Son}, pp. 17, 37, 102, 113-115, 141-142.
\textsuperscript{143} As Smart observed, "henceforth the ideal at which he aimed was the expression of 'the graceful in nature'." (Smart, \textit{Allan Ramsay}, p. 100) Indeed, Smart continued, "The 'natural' idiom of Hogarth and La Tour now becomes the foundation of Ramsay's radical rethinking of the art of portraiture, as he discards the conventions of Italianate Baroque and creates a new style capable on the one hand of reflecting his refined sensibility and on the other of doing justice to that ideal of unaffected truthfulness..." (Smart, \textit{Allan Ramsay}, p. 102) See Smart, \textit{Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist and Man of the Enlightenment}, pp. 52, 102.
\textsuperscript{144} See Smart, \textit{Allan Ramsay}, pp. 100 and 102. According to Smart, by the late 1740s, Ramsey had embarked upon his "second style," which culminated in his mature work of the 1760s. These images are characterized by a growing sense of individuality, informality, and a richness of color that combines the grace of well-bred politeness with the selective handling of French and Italian painting. As Smart wrote: "He was to forge this new manner during a long absence from London between 1753 and 1757, first in Edinburgh and thereafter in Italy..." (Smart, p. 91) See Smart, \textit{Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist and Man of the Enlightenment}, pp. 84, 88, 91-92.
\end{footnotesize}
marks the culmination of the “conversational” portrait whose inklings were earlier felt in the work of Kneller, Highmore, and Hogarth.

Once again, the seated, facing posture and engaged gaze of Lord Drummore (Fig. 5-5; 1754; oil on canvas, 50 x 39-1/2 inches; Scottish National Portrait Gallery)

Fig. 5-5

highlights the mutual engagement between sitter and spectator, each simultaneously assuming the posture of “Pocket-Mirrour” and friend. Left hand raised slightly in the
tense promise of gesture, the intensity of Drummore’s concentration—highlighted by
the pierce of his left eye and the vertical line that marks his brow—is palpable while,
at the same time, his person remains in polite control. The commanding presence of
the sitter is reinforced by the absence of unnecessary color and detail. The splash of
red is but a spark of ignition, the relief of the pilasters a mere surface undulation,
while the black of his corpulent frame anchors the image and calls attention to the
lightness of his face and hands. At the same time, the subtle allusions to classicism
remain, reminding us that the ideals of classical virtue and progress have not been
sacrificed to the intimacy and sociability of the image. Rather, they have
converged.146

As Drummore suggests, the ‘conversational’ style of Ramsay’s work—as
distinct from that of Hogarth—did not dismiss with the classical ideals of virtue and
goodness, but rather stressed their social—as opposed to heroic or aristocratic—
merits.147 In keeping with this emphasis, Ramsay rendered his sitters in private,
domestic settings, their informal gestures and visual engagement with the spectator
offset by a controlled use of line and color and the inclusion of classical details. The
result was something entirely removed from Reynolds’s “greatness” and Hogarth’s

146 Smart, Allan Ramsay, pp. 52, 105-106, 128-129.
147 From the earlier versions of his ‘second style’, Ramsay further developed the ‘natural portrait’ in the
late 1750s, following his return from Italy, 1754-1757, when he addressed the issue of how to anchor
“the informal portrait within an appropriately unpretentious but firmly structured design.” (Smart, p.
128) In complement with this burgeoning interest in moral sense and politeness, books like Nivelon’s
Rudiments of Genteel Behaviour provided a visual vocabulary from which artists might draw in the
formulation of models of grace. See Smart, Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist and Man of the
Enlightenment, pp. 128-129, 174. See also Francis Nivelon, The Rudiments of Genteel Behaviour
(London, 1737).
naturalism. On the one hand, against the classical aesthetic of the general, he advances the superior merits of the particular. At the same time, his notion of the particular is less concerned with the rendering of individual novelty than with conveying the intimacy of social relations and their dependence upon individual virtues.

Much of Ramsay’s ideological intent was suggested by his Shaftesburian Dialogue on Taste, published two years prior to Hume’s Of the Standard of Taste and likely informed by conversations between the two friends. In general, the Dialogue between Colonel Freeman and Lord Modish sets the Lockean free-thinking and free-speaking Englishman (Ramsay or Hume, presumably) against the arbiters of Augustan taste—i.e. Shaftesbury. According to Smart, “The central thesis—that taste cannot be measured or judged by any absolute standard, being merely a matter of

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148 As Smart observed, Ramsay’s “unprecedented view of the ‘negative’ value of the classical ideal goes wholly against the accepted canons of eighteenth-century aesthetics....[As Reynolds] was to declare years later in his Fourth Discourse, ‘If a portrait-painter is desirous to raise and improve his subject, he has no other means than by approaching it to a general idea’. Ramsay’s Dialogue reflects an exact opposite viewpoint, which corresponds precisely to the new direction of his art.” (Smart, Allan Ramsay, p. 141) Consequently, there is marked intimacy and naturalness to Ramsay’s domestic interiors absent in Reynolds’s more dramatic settings. And yet, clearly Reynolds was not immune to his influence, as the intimate examples of Samuel Johnson and Laurence Sterne suggest. (Smart, Allan Ramsay, pp. 182-183). See Smart, Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist and Man of the Enlightenment, pp. 141, 182-183, 192-193.

149 As Smart observed, “Especially from the year 1754 onwards, the beauty of Ramsay’s portraits is the beauty of the particular....” (Smart, p. 141) He goes on: “In every sense his portrayals of his sitters have as little in common with the ideal generalizations of Reynolds as with the glancing brilliances of Gainsborough.” He explains: “Ramsay’s concern for Truth is as much a leading feature of his art as of his Enlightenment philosophy, and it is only on exceedingly rare occasions that we may suspect any departure from his obedience, in his father’s phrase, to the ‘justice of the eye’.” See Smart, Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist and Man of the Enlightenment, pp. 141, 278.

150 Ramsay’s ideas may have been influenced by George Turnbull’s Treatise on Ancient Painting, which revised Shaftesbury’s more “heroic” and civic model into one more “social” and suited to the demands of a commercial society. See Solking, Painting for Money, pp. 171-172.

151 Smart, Allan Ramsay, p. 139.

152 Smart, Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist and Man of the Enlightenment, p. 139.
individual preference”—invokes a Lockean program of autonomous reasoning. In fact, Ramsay’s ‘conversational’ style sat comfortably with his developing political and social opinions, which stressed tolerance and individual liberty. In these, he (once again) distinguishes his interests from those of Hogarth. Rejecting the notion of Magna Carta as the source of English liberty, and equating its ‘ancient’—i.e. ‘Gothic’ origins—with the absolutism and popery of a Catholic monarchy, Ramsay argued, instead, that English liberty owed its origins to subsequent reforms, notably those of the Glorious Revolution, and to William III’s “being a Dutchman, and not…a philosopher…”

Ramsay’s success in refining the conversational mode is suggested by its extensive influence. Until the late 1750s and the growing prominence of Reynolds—signaled by his role as first President of the Royal Academy and his influential institutionalization of an English “grand-manner”—, even the latter was affected, as Samuel Johnson (Fig. 5-6; 1756-1757; oil on canvas, 50-1/4 x 40 inches; National

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154 Conveniently, Ramsay complemented his writings on taste with political essays. His best-known work, Essay on the English Constitution, published in 1765, was followed by his Thoughts on the Origin and Nature of Government. Occasioned by the late Disputes between Great Britain and her American Colonies (1766; not published until 1769). Significantly, in Thoughts on the Origin and Nature of Government, Ramsay defended Britain’s right to tax the colonies on grounds that the colonists were not Englishmen and, therefore, could not invoke the rights of other Englishmen. In general, Ramsay defended free thought and religion and opposed restrictions on non-Anglicans, arguing in his essay, On Ridicule (1753): “We can never be said to be altogether in that state of liberty and common sense, to which the constitution of this kingdom has been verging for this hundred years past, while there is any law in force to punish those who differ in opinion from their rulers in matters merely speculative.” (Ramsay, On Ridicule; quoted in Smart, Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist and Man of the Enlightenment, p. 99) For a further discussion of his political views, see Smart, Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist and Man of the Enlightenment, pp. 99, 224, 226, 270-272.
Portrait Gallery, London) suggests. Here, slouched in a boldly-checked, slip-covered chair, lips slightly parted, left hand contorted in an awkward gesture, right-handed poised with quill, the mental giant seems caught mid-thought, while the spectator perches in anxious anticipation. All pretense at elegance is sidelined.

Indeed, in an ironic twist, it seems to defy the Shaftesburian claim that "outward

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156 While Reynolds's style matured into a different direction, the significance of Ramsay's theory may be generally underestimated. For example, "In Gainsborough's case," Smart writes, "the influence of Ramsay's new manner may be said to have been more dramatic, since it occurred at the very moment when he was turning from the painting of exquisite conversation pieces (comparable with the work of Hayman) to full-scale portraiture. That decisive event in his artistic development has been illuminated by Hayes, who has demonstrated Gainsborough's interest in the 1750s in Ramsay's portrait style as a model worthy of emulation; and it is significant that Gainsborough adopted at the same time the kind of free brushwork which Ramsay had learned from La Tour." (Smart, p. 110) See Smart, Allan Ramsay: Painter, Essayist and Man of the Enlightenment, pp. 110, 170, 239, 278.
Manners and Deportment” parallel “inward Sentiments and Principles.” At the same time, it likewise suggests the sitter’s own form of heroism—what Wind describes as “a desperate struggle of the spirit to free itself from the shackles of the flesh.” And this makes it all the more intimate and revealing in a way unusual in Reynolds’s oeuvre, though peculiarly suited to the likes of Johnson, who, for all his support of heroic imagery, exclaimed: “He only will please long, who, by tempering the acid of satire with the sugar of civility, and allaying the heat of wit with the frigidity of humble chat, can make the true punch of conversation.”

VIII. The Liberal Artist-Commoner

Ultimately, dissent from the civic humanist tradition was likely due to a modern gap between ideology and experience. As John Barrell has convincingly

157 Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, pp. 121-122, and III, p. 179.
158 Wind, p. 11.
160 In her analysis of Richardson, Gibson-Wood gives repeated emphasis to the influence of Locke. She writes: “It was the philosophy of John Locke, not Lord Shaftesbury, that most powerfully shaped Richardson’s thought, and which makes his divergences from the doctrines of both Shaftesbury and continental academic theory particularly significant. As Neal Wood [in The Politics of Locke’s Philosophy (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1983)] has demonstrated, Locke’s writings, notably his Essay concerning Human Understanding of 1690, were ‘a vehicle for the conveyance, of the values and sentiments, of the emergent bourgeoisie’. Its two central doctrines, of the empirical origins of knowledge (versus the presence of innate ideas) and the need to re-examine critically all beliefs based on authority and/or received opinion, both opposed the idea of a ‘natural’ inequality and ruling order in society. Knowledge was acquired through experience and reflection; hence, actual ability was determined by education and environment, not birth, and this could partially be self-determined through industry and the practice of reason.” (Gibson-Wood, pp. 8-9) While I would not disagree with her overall evaluation of Richardson, her reading of Locke’s influence leaves her open to criticism.

As Laslett notes, Locke is often “called... the spokesman of a rising class, the middle class, the capitalists, the bourgeoisie... But at the same time Locke profoundly mistrusted commerce and commercial men... and though he approved the Bank of England, there is [a deep suspicion]... of the capitalists who floated it... [Moreover,] he despised medical men... [as] a profession and he shared Shaftesbury’s contempt for lawyers.” (Laslett, introduction, Two Treatises, pp. 55-56) Nonetheless, Locke was one of a rising “order of free individuals... He is perhaps best described as an independent, free-moving intellectual, aware as others were not of the direction of social change. This is evident in the central issue of the Two Treatises, which is primarily concerned with the structure of the family and

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argued, Reynolds’s version of the ‘general’ style made art the handmaiden of
politics. 161  But this very concern to defend and institutionalize grand-manner
imagery signals unease. Under such circumstances, compromising variations on the
general style suggest changing perceptions of reality and a growing uncertainty about
the principles informing the classical narrative—notably, the universal ideal and its
theoretical premise. A number of conditions converged to make this possible: a
Reformed separation of the temporal and eternal spheres and its effected division
between the internal and external self; a resulting elevation of the individual vis-à-vis
society and an emphasis on self-determination that was augmented by empiricism and
its endorsement of autonomous reasoning; the rhetoric of liberty invoked by
Commonwealth Whigs, advanced by Harrington, assumed and modified by
Restoration Whigs and revived through Patriot and republican ideologies; and, along
with the development of commerce, the emergence of the marketplace as a sphere of
engagement and authority distinct from the Assembly. Effected by these influences
was the elevation of portrait painting and the portrait painter. Whereas Shaftesbury,
like Aristotle, deemed an artist’s ability to render truth—and thereby advance the
common good—to be necessarily conditioned upon his natural (birth-related)
capacities—the proper measure of his progress towards potentiality—and,
consequently, all but excluded the common-born painter from a liberal status, the
ideological variations advanced by Richardson and others offered hope to the portrait

161 See John Barrell, The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt, particularly his

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painter. A common-born artisan bold enough to publish his own theories on art, Richardson insisted that the aptitude for producing a general style and, by extension, the aptitude for liberal knowledge, might be acquired through industry. He therefore implied that an ambitious commoner of any rank might raise himself to the level of a liberal man.

The implications of Richardson’s argument—and its legacy in the work of Ramsay and others—thus went beyond painting. Once a portrait painter could bridge the gap between a particular likeness and a ‘true’ one—once he could bridge the gap between cultivated reason and intellectual independence, private industry and public good—, on what grounds could one defend civic authority as the birthright of a landed elite? The principle of ‘improvement’ that informed Richardson’s ‘grace and greatness’ thus bore specific implications for narrative and identity. First, by transforming the portrait painter, for example, into an empirical scientist, one studying, recording and improving upon the evidence of human nature, Richardson invested him with the intellectual significance requisite to a liberal artist.162 In so doing, he placed portrait painting on a level with history painting.163 But he also removed the taint of commerce from the virtues of industry. Whereas Shaftesbury’s insistence on the “interest” of labor precluded the commoner from claiming “independence,” Richardson’s correlation between independence and industry denied the necessary link between industry and interest. In Richardson’s view, earning an

163 In fact, Richardson gives the edge to portrait painting. “Richardson’s account of grace and greatness in portraits registers his conviction that it is actually more difficult for the face painter than the history painter to succeed in this, the most honourable part of painting.” See Gibson-Wood, p. 171.
honest wage to support oneself and one’s family was very different from being paid to represent someone’s interest—the bane of patronage. The former was virtuous as long as the individual remained autonomous, living by his own industry and his own conscience; the latter, by contrast, was always dependent and, so, always corrupt. Moreover, as Gibson-Wood explains: “What determines the honourableness or otherwise of an occupation is not the acceptance of money, but ‘the Kind, and Degree of Abilities’ required, and its usefulness to mankind.”

Indeed, Gibson-Wood observes, Richardson’s novelty rests, in part, on his timely defense of the respectability of paid employment. This provided an ideological middle-ground between the disinterested leisure of civic humanism and the interested acquisitiveness of Mandevillean utilitarianism. On such grounds, successful commoners could construct a credible meaning of life suited to their experience and desired identities, to which end, Richardson asserted: “I hope it will

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164 See Gibson-Wood, pp. 148-149.
165 He wrote: “But perhaps, tho’ for a Gentleman to paint for his Pleasure without any Reward is not unworthy of him, to make a Profession of, and take Money for his Labor of the Head and Hand is the dishonourable Circumstance, this being a sort of letting himself to Hire to whosoever will pay him for his Trouble. Very Well! And is it more unbecoming for a Man to employ himself, or be more Useful to his Family, or to whomsoever else he sees fit, than so as it shall turn to less account, or none at all? ... if this has something Low and Servile in it, we ... have good Company, that is, all those that receive Money for the Exercise of their Abilities of Body or Mind.” (Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, pp. 31-32). As Gibson-Wood observes: “In Augustan England, especially in London, distinctions between the levels of the social hierarchy were becoming increasingly blurred. Many younger sons of country gentry were entering a profession or trade, and intermarrying with the middling classes, while members of the commercial classes like Richardson himself acquired the material trappings of the gentry and sought to improve their family’s station by entering their sons into more genteel occupations. This confusion of the social ranks challenged accepted definitions of what constituted a gentleman, including the fact that gentlemen did not need to work for their income.” (Gibson-Wood, p. 148) See Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, pp. 31-32; Gibson-Wood, p. 148.

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appear that they may be placed amongst those whom all the World allow to be
Gentlemen, or of Honourable Employments, or Professions.\textsuperscript{166}

Ultimately, although Richardson's ideological commitment to classicism
supported natural progress and a hierarchical social order based on intellectual and
moral virtue, he stopped short of endorsing the landed interest, transforming the
freeholder-citizen into the industrious commoner.\textsuperscript{167} In other words, Richardson
aimed not to overthrow the dominant order or level the social hierarchy, but to expand
its accessibility and the conditions upon which its privileges were said to depend—i.e.
from landed birth to educated industry. In the process, he asserted the individual's
liberty—as an autonomous and self-determining subject—to attain potentiality.\textsuperscript{168}

While placing the burden for identity on the individual, he granted the opportunity for
social mobility through self-improvement, thereby making the virtues of classical
theory—and their manifestation in art—accessible to the common man.\textsuperscript{169}

\textsuperscript{166} Richardson, An Essay on the Theory of Painting, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{167} In other words, while Richardson continued to subscribe to an Aristotelian version of the ideal in
nature and to the primacy of classicism in general, while his ideas about self-improvement, refinement,
and politeness—the "Social Virtues"—were indebted to the theories of moral sentiment articulated by
Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and others, while his vision of self-improvement stemmed from an
understanding of a goodness or self-love that found happiness in contributing to the common good,
while he deemed virtue and the common good complementary, Richardson's omission of land as the
basis of virtue and good marked a significant departure from the civic humanist narrative. Richardson,
\textsuperscript{168} Richardson's opinion of women and economically-dependent men precluded their autonomy and,
\textsuperscript{169} By the same token, as Gibson-Wood remarks, "it is the private virtue of the artist, not the public
virtue of the ruling elite that Richardson identifies as the source of England's potential greatness in
173) "Richardson's loathing of subservience re-emerges in two of the poems published in Morning
Thoughts. In one he declares how glad he is to have escaped 'curs'd dependence on another's will', to

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IX. Imaging Identity

Insofar as the mirror was both a metaphor and a tool for the construction of identity, it shared similarities with the portrait: both relied on the demand for likeness; both presented a ‘representative’ or ‘objective’ self for public view; and both transformed the ‘unrepresented’ self into a spectator. By the same token, while both mirrored and painted images invoked, at least in part, ‘received’ identities, both were likewise understood to present the spectator with an ‘improved’ interpretation of the subject—his physical features, values, beliefs, and allegiances.

Yet, portraits harbored a notable advantage. Whereas reflected images forced upon their subjects a likeness prescribed by the standards of an extant narrative, portraits presented—indeed, ‘imposed’—upon the spectator narrative standards conducive to a desired likeness. Hence, if one could not remove oneself entirely from the particularities of bad skin or an unfashionable house, one could mask them by generalizing flesh and adopting an imaginary setting, thereby visually emulating—and thus claiming right to—‘superior’ attributes or environments suited to a desired identity.170

The portrait’s ability to impede the influence of social contingencies thus gave it an edge in the negotiation for identity. Portraits had the ability not merely to record identity, but to shape and, therefore, to claim it—and hence to claim alternative identities. This meant that eighteenth-century portraits could assume for their sitters

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170 Indeed, as Baumsteiher notes, instead of subverting the individual to society, “Romantic writing emphasized the assertion of the individual self against society as never before.” (Baumeister, p. 65)
identities that denied social convention, that trespassed on the privileges and responsibilities of others, that contested not only social prescription, but the ideologies that shaped them and (perhaps more compellingly) the authority of those who formulated them. Controlling public perception of one’s attributes became a means by which to control one’s place in the social order. This reduced the sitter’s vulnerability to the spectator’s own interest and improved his defense against less desirable interpretations, thereby enhancing his balance-of-power against the community of ‘others’ invested in his image’s meaning.\footnote{171}

On the one hand, then, portraits empowered their sitters in ways that reflected images could not; rather than obsessing over her daily ritual before the mirror, the Wicked Queen might have commissioned a portrait that presented her identity as “fairest of all,” perpetually laying claim to an otherwise contested title. On such grounds, it could be argued, whereas ‘reflected’ images should be understood within the context of the social sphere, ‘constructed’ images should be understood in response to the social sphere.\footnote{172} On the other hand, the audience for portraits was not only larger than that for mirrored images, it was more heavily invested in the effected meaning; family and friends, neighbors and servants, tradesmen and colleagues, tenants and constituents: the audience of the portrait might include a broad cross-

\footnote{171} Patrick Coleman raises a similar point in “Property, politics, and personality in Rousseau,” in Early Modern Conceptions of Property, John Brewer and Susan Staves, eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 256-257.
\footnote{172} According to Richard Brilliant, “Portraits reflect social realities. Their imagery combines the conventions of behaviour and appearance appropriate to the members of a society at a particular time, as defined by categories of age, gender, race, physical beauty, occupation, social and civic status, and class.” See Brilliant, Portraiture, p. 11. While this is true, it seems, too, that portraits “conceive” social
section of the community, each of whom was implicated in the assessment of the sitter’s claims.

Highlighted by the writings of Haywood, Hobbes, Mandeville, and Hogarth is the degree to which eighteenth-century identity was a contest played out between rival parties mutually invested in a collective personality.\footnote{The collective identity or personality is used here to suggest the total social hierarchy to which a community of individuals belongs. It is conceived as being divided into identity types that are assumed by individuals as manifestations of their ‘place’ or rank. The collective identity, then, is the cumulative total of all such ranks.} Navigating contingencies became a contest of wit and influence in which the interests and identities of one or more parties became subordinate to the interests and identities of others—“in a word,” Rousseau writes, “there is competition and rivalry on one hand, conflicts of interest on the other, and always the hidden desire to gain an advantage at the expense of other people.”\footnote{Rousseau, \textit{A Discourse on Inequality}, p. 119.} Ultimately, this meant that, for all their freedom to manipulate the narrative context of identity, portraits could not protect the individual from public critique; portraits could advance the interests of their sitters and patrons by involving them in the construction process, but they could not protect them from the effects of competition: the success or failure of the image, and the credibility of its claims, turned on acceptance by the spectator.\footnote{Indeed, Greg Dening uses the term “Closure” to distinguish the point at which the completed portrait becomes “the platform for somebody else’s critique.” (Dening, “Texts of Self,” p. 159) As Rousseau explained it, “social man lives always outside himself; he knows how to live only in the opinion of others, it is, so to speak, from their judgement alone that he derives the sense of his own existence.” (Rousseau, \textit{A Discourse on Inequality}, p. 136) See Dening, “Texts of Self,” in \textit{Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America}, Hoffman, Ronald, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika J. Teute, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.}
challenge to the sitter because each was necessarily interested in securing his own related identity.\(^{176}\)

Hence, as more inclusive and fluid standards of identity freed the individual to assert himself, so competition grew increasingly fierce, perpetually suspending the attainment of a stable identity. By the same token, as individuals scrambled to assume the ‘polite’ attributes of their peers, Rousseau noted, "it soon became necessary either to have them or to feign them."\(^{177}\) In the end, Rousseau concluded, "Being and appearance became two entirely different things...",\(^{178}\) and identity became ever subject to re-negotiation.

Ultimately, aesthetic differences between Shaftesbury, Richardson, Hogarth, Ramsay, and Reynolds turned on their perception and reception of numerous contemporary developments: the mass commercialization of a previously agrarian society, which initiated a shift from individual to market relations, patronage to clientage, and the isolation of producer from consumer; the corresponding shift from independent/dependent (patron/artisan) to interdependent (buyer and seller) relations; a shift in the balance-of-influence between political and economic forces; a consequent shift in emphasis from the political to social realm and, by extension, a blurring of civic and social authority; the resulting influence of more egalitarian and "conversational" ("plain-speaking," commercial and polite) modes of interaction in

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\(^{176}\) As Bushman reminds us, "Provincials paid heed to the English upper classes... because so much power was focused in their persons...[,] they exercised that most compelling of human authorities, the power to confirm identity." See Bushman, *Refinement of America*, p. 405.

\(^{177}\) Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, pp. 118-119.

\(^{178}\) Thus, he adds: "It was necessary in one’s own interest to seem to be other than one was in reality." Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, pp. 118-119.
the public sphere; the private nurturing of individual potentiality and autonomy—in complement with Reformed Christianity—and, hence, the perceived expansion of a ‘middling sort’ distinct from the lower class in its economic autonomy, yet removed from the upper class in its economic interdependence; the growing recognition of differences between this middle class and the ‘vulgar’ masses; the elevation of the private man as the active agent in the social sphere and the consequent imposition of individual identity onto the public domain; the resulting tension between social—relative—and political—fixed—identities, as individuals assumed the authority of self-determination. Combined, these developments undermined the fixed and stable order fundamental to civic humanism. Increasingly, modifications to the classical narrative appear to have turned on a perception of liberty in which independence was the acquired privilege of self-sufficient intellectuals, merchants, and artisans—the modern freeholders of a commercial humanism. The implications of these developments were likewise felt in the American colonies.179

179 In his thirteenth Discourse, Reynolds drew a parallel between the slavish copying of the mechanic and barbarism and the truth-seeking of the liberal artist and civility. In this, he employed the example of the American colonies: “Painting ... ought to be as far removed from the vulgar idea of imitation as the refined civilized state in which we live, is removed from a gross state of nature; and those who have not cultivated their imaginations... may be said... to continue in this state of nature. Such men will always prefer imitation to that excellence which is addressed to another faculty that they do not possess; but these are not the persons to whom a Painter is to look, any more than a judge of morals and manners ought to refer controverted points upon those subjects to the opinions of people taken from the banks of the Ohio, or from New Holland.” See Reynolds, Discourses on Art, pp. 232-233. It is worth noting that Reynolds has dismissed with the Shaftesburian definition of “imitation” in favor of one comparable to “mimicry.”
CHAPTER VI

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEYS MAJOR HUGH MONTGOMERIE

High against a turbulent backdrop of dark, billowing smoke, Major Hugh Montgomerie (Fig. 6-1; 1780; oil on canvas, 94-1/2 x 59-3/4 inches; Los Angeles

Fig. 6-1

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County Museum of Art) of the 77th Regiment poses before his troops in a commanding posture. Right foot forward, left arm extended, right hand grasping his basket-hilted sword, Montgomerie rises above the fray, the tiered tassels of his leopard-skin sporran neatly keeping their line, while twelve feet of Black Watch tartan cascade in well-ordered pleats around him. Below his elevated position, a tangle of Indians on hands and knees make a last-ditch effort to thwart his soldiers' pistols.¹ Victory, for the Major, appears imminent.

This 1780 portrait by John Singleton Copley (1738-1815)² is a dialogue of contrasts: against the muted palette of the background, Montgomerie appears in clear,

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¹ Indians might be depicted as ignorant barbarians or 'noble savages'. Reynolds's thirteenth Discourse emphasized the barbarism of America. (See Reynolds, Discourses on Art, pp. 232-233) But, as Saunders writes, "We may also note the belief, common in the ancient world, that primitive man, being untouched by civilization, was morally 'better'." (Saunders, in Plato, Laws, p. 118) A similar position was held by Rousseau insofar as primitive man was uncorrupted by pride. See Reynolds, Discourses on Art, pp. 232-233; Saunders, introduction to Plato, Laws, p. 118; Plato, Laws, p. 122; Rousseau, Considerations on the Government of Poland and Of the Social Contract, in Rousseau, The Social Contract and other later political writings, pp. 113-123, 224-229.

² Copley (1738-1815) was the son of Irishman Richard Copley and his wife, Mary Singleton Copley, who emigrated to Boston in 1735. Following the death of Richard Copley in the mid-1740s, Mary Copley remarried Peter Pelham in 1748, an artist-schoolmaster best known for his engravings. From Peter Pelham, Copley received his first artistic instruction. After Pelham's death in 1751, Copley assumed a more professional stature, working largely from prints to produce his own mezzotints, portraits, historical pictures and miniatures. By 1763, he had set up his first studio. In 1765, Copley exhibited for the first time in London, sending his now-famous Boy with a Squirrel to the Society of Artists exhibition. The picture was well-received, and Copley was encouraged to exhibit regularly.

Copley married Susanna Clarke, the daughter of the English-born merchant, Richard Clarke, in 1769. With war pending, he left his family in 1774 to study in London, Paris and Rome. By 1775 he had settled in London and was joined by his family. The following year, he was made an Associate Member of the Royal Academy; he was granted full membership in 1779. Overall, Copley's career was peppered with mixed reviews—the negative reception of The Copley Family (1777) and the Family of George III (1785) was balanced by absolute sensations like Watson and the Shark (1778) and The Siege of Gibraltar (1791). By 1783, he was charging 100 guineas for a full-length portrait. He died of a stroke in 1815. For information about Copley and his work, see Werner Busch, "Copley, West, and the Tradition of European High Art," in Gaetghens and Ickstadt, eds., American Icons: Transatlantic Perspectives on Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century American Art (Chicago: University of Chicago Press for the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1992), pp. 35-59; Wayne Craven, Colonial American Portraiture: The Economic, Religious, Social, Cultural, Philosophical, Scientific, and Aesthetic Foundations (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Emily Neff, John Singleton Copley in England (Houston, TX: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1995); Jules Prown, John Singleton Copley, 2. vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966); Carrie Rebora and Paul Staiti, et. al., John Singleton Copley in America (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1995).
bold color; against bare-skinned Native Americans, his rich ivory waistcoat, ruffled
cuffs, bold red coat, and rhythmically-patterned plaid sing with the material richness
of color and texture; against the frenzy of tomahawks, the zig-zag of smoldering
flames, and the barely-contained tension of protruding muscles and outstretched
fingers, Montgomerie stands erect, his balanced pose and authoritative gesture
achieved with the grace of a dance master. Directing the actions—and, so, the
opinions—of his subordinates, Montgomerie’s posture and gesture suggest a
classical vocabulary with civic humanist objectives.4 As Shaftesbury prescribed, the
principal figure, set apart from his subordinates, unites the accoutrements of battle,
the stance of the orator, and the self-restrained hero’s “Majesty and Superiority,” all
in keeping with “Decorum.”5

The choice of military theme recalls the heroic virtue of the neo-Aristotelian
Public Man; as a military Major, Montgomerie bears arms in defense of his state and
inspires his inferiors to defend the common good. These neo-Aristotelian elements
are complemented by Montgomerie’s landed status and corresponding leisure, the
combination of which entitled him to claims of disinterested independence and
positions of leadership. Such claims distinguished Montgomerie not only from the

3 As Shaftesbury explained it, “outward Manners and Deportment” parallel “inward Sentiments and
4 Against earlier references to the Apollo Belvedere, recent research by David Mannings suggests that
Montgomerie’s pose derives from a French bronze statuette of Apollo, after Legros. (Mannings,
Reynolds, I, p. 288) Regardless of its origins, the gesture served not so much to recall the original as to
express the meaning the lifted feature had come to assume within contemporary visual conventions:
the authority of the Public Man. See David Mannings, Sir Joshua Reynolds: A Complete Catalogue of
5 As Shaftesbury described it, the principal figure “being plac’d in the middle... shou’d by a skilful
Master be so drawn, as ... it shou’d appear by the very Turn... that this young Hero had not wholly
quitted the balancing or pondering part.” (Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, III, p. 358) In Aristotelian
terms, virtue was the harmonious balance or ‘mean’ between two extremes. Shaftesbury,
Characteristicks, III, pp. 358, 361, 366.
ignorant and uncivilized men who fall in a tangle around him, but from the line of dependents who rightfully follow their elevated commander.

Indeed, color, posture, gesture, accoutrements, composition: all serve to reaffirm a natural, hierarchical social order, from the impassioned physicality of the American 'savages' to the rational civility of the British Major. This is no coincidence. As Hobbes observed, the clearest means of establishing one's own identity was by comparison with someone else's. By subjecting the 'other' to a cultural narrative in which one's own self assumed the defining role—in which one's own interpretation of reality became the standard against which others were judged—visual imagery provided a ready means by which to impose upon an 'other' those traits that best demonstrated—often through contrast—the attributes with which one wished to be identified. According to Homi K. Bhabha, this was a common practice of colonialism, which aimed to rationalize the superior identities of British colonizers by 'fixing' the rank of non-British 'others'. Of course, the success of this undertaking was dependent upon two things: the audience's belief in a 'fixed' natural order; and the credibility of the visual narrative.

In addition to illustrating the role of narrative in the imagining of identity, the portrait of Montgomerie is interesting for its Shaftesburian interpretation of the divided self. As a foil for articulating Montgomerie's own progress towards a higher and more virtuous self, the savages represent the 'undercharacters' to Montgomerie's

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6 "For let a man (as most men do,) rate themselves as the highest Value they can," Hobbes wrote, "yet their true Value is no more than it is esteemed by others." See Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 151.
Philosophical Hero. As Shaftesbury might describe it: “In this, there were Two Faces which wou’d naturally present themselves to our view: One of them, like the commanding Genius, the Leader and Chief ..., the other like that rude, undisciplin’d and head-strong Creature, whom we our-selves in our natural Capacity most exactly resembled.”

Significantly, Montgomerie commissioned this image twenty years after the depicted event, on the eve of what became his successful bid for Parliament. In this he followed the recommendations of Aristotle: “In political oratory there is least opening for narration; nobody can narrate what has not yet happened. If there is narration at all, it will be of past events, the recollection of which will help the hearers to make better plans for the future.” That Copley should render the now middle-aged man in the events of his youth signals Montgomerie’s particular interest in exploiting the correlation between military command and political leadership—

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9 Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, p. 170, 185, 195-196. Equally evident is Montgomerie’s superiority to his own troops, as indicated by his compositional placement above his soldiers, the stronger colors of his dress, and his commanding pose and gestures. Copley reiterates this superiority in the inferior placement of the spectator—it is as though we, too, numbered among Montgomerie’s soldiers.

10 Shaftesbury, Characteristicks, I, p. 194.

11 Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1780 as Portrait of a Highland Officer. Montgomerie is shown leading his uncle Archibald’s regiment (Montgomerie’s Highlanders) against the French and Indians in the Seven Years War (1756-1763). Archibald Montgomerie was the 11th Earl of Eglinton and it was to his title that Montgomerie succeeded in 1796. The son of Alexander Montgomerie of Coilsfield in Ayrshire, and his wife, Lilias Montgomerie, daughter of Sir Robert, 11th Baronet of Skelmorlie, Hugh Montgomerie joined the 77th Regiment in 1756 and was engaged in battle at Fort Ticonderoga, Fort Duquesne and elsewhere, earning a reputation for distinguished action, “in the destruction of the Cherokee Settlements...” (see Artist 1780, no. 172, p. 26; quoted in Neff, p. 116, fn. 12). He was repeatedly elected to Parliament as Member for Ayrshire between 1780 and 1796, when he assumed the title of 12th Earl of Eglinton. In 1806 he became a peer of Britain (as opposed to just Scotland), assuming the title Baron Ardrossan. See Emily Ballew Neff, John Singleton Copley in England, exh. cat. (London: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in association with Merrell Holberton, 1995), p. 116, fn. 12; William L. Pressly, “The Challenge of New Horizons,” in Neff, p. 48. For a full summary of the portrait, see Neff, pp. 114-117.

patriotism and statesmanship—in the promotion of his public identity. Clearly, Copley and his patron felt the most effective means of conveying Montgomerie’s credibility as a political figure resided in his one-time identity as a military Major conquering a ‘savage’ people.

On the one hand, then, Copley presented Montgomerie as a detached, controlled and elevated figure—a member of the disinterested elite. On the other hand, he borrowed on the Aristotelian narrative of public action—a narrative that was supported and developed in the eighteenth century by Rousseau and the Scottish common-sense theorists—, thematically subverting the contemplative virtues of the philosopher to the heroic virtues of the patriotic statesman. Copley thus advanced a neo-Aristotelian social hierarchy descending in rank from the intellectually disinterested and socio-economically independent citizen-hero to the interested and dependent man.

Yet there is more to this image. Aristotelian pragmatism suggested that individual Public Men were motivated by honor to achieve virtue. An autonomous individual displayed his military abilities in the public arena and was consequently rewarded with public glory. Aristotle’s brand of heroism, then, required the overt display of courage—physical engagement with the enemy, for example. But Copley’s portrait balances this heroic attribute with the tempering influence of private contemplation. Although present in the field of battle, Montgomerie is not in the trenches, nor is he engaged in combat. Indeed, situated above the conflict,

13 As Lord Kames wrote, “Patriotism ... is the great bulwark of civil liberty.... Those actions only that flow from patriotism are deemed grand and heroic; and such actions, above all others, rouse a national spirit.” See Kames, The Rise and Fall of Patriotism, in Broadie, pp. 522-523.
Montgomerie's sword appears more emblematic—suggestive of military authority—than aggressive, a point reinforced by his unlatched pistol.

Copley's background reinforces this nod to contemplation. The parting smoke and glint of light that frame Montgomerie's calm and intelligent face act to highlight his inner strength and intellectual prowess. While alluding, on the one hand, to his reasoning powers, this also suggests the influence of 'internalization'—a departure from Aristotelian tradition. In the end, Copley's emphasis appears not courage in pursuit of glory, but inner strength in pursuit of virtue—the conquest of barbarism by personal fortitude and public duty. While this, too, honored the agent and benefited the state, the shift in emphasis suggests Platonic modifications to the Aristotelian ethic. As Taylor writes: "Strength, firmness, resolution, control, these are the crucial qualities, a subset of the warrior-aristocratic virtues, but now internalized. They are not deployed in great deeds of military valour in public space, but rather in the inner domination of passion by thought..."14

Copley's portrait illustrates the influence of internalization on the civic humanist narrative. The civic humanist commitment to heroic virtue was tempered by the internalization of moral rectitude and the consequent privileging of internal attributes as the primary mediums of common good. This suggests a perception of reality akin to that of either Shaftesbury or Smith—what Taylor calls a non-utilitarian blend of classical and Christian principles in which "dignity and esteem [are located]

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14 Taylor, pp. 152-153.
at the heart of... moral vision,” and external actions are perceived as the mirror of internal sentiments.\(^{15}\)

Ultimately, the shift in emphasis from glory to sympathy resulted in modifications to the definition of Public Man. On the premise that social benevolence was the medium of civic virtue, the act and appearance of benevolence assumed new relevance as a measure of one’s identity. Hence, virtue was submerged into a principle of politeness in which the appearance of social affection—symbolized by decorous dress, behavior and conversation—became the measure of one’s merit and social rank. In the case of Montgomerie, the resulting identity is that of a rational and moral man who risks his life in order to conquer—and thereby to reform—an infidel people for the common good.

By employing a Reformed, civic humanist narrative as the context for Montgomerie’s identity, by constructing a composition that positioned the viewer to receive Montgomerie as a public leader—we are before and beneath him—, Copley imposed upon his audience a cultural narrative that simultaneously urged their complicity in Montgomerie’s bid for a public status—a Member of Parliament—and perpetuated the ideology that made it legitimate. In other words, Copley simultaneously negotiated and imposed a specific identity and ideology for receipt by both sitter and spectator. By these means, he visually affirmed and advanced the credibility of Reformed civic humanism for a varied audience of contemporary Britons.

\(^{15}\) Taylor, p. 155. Whereas medieval Christians sought grace and salvation in the sacred sphere through a devotion to God and his ‘Word’, autonomous Reformed Christians sought salvation through obedience to moral laws active in the secular sphere. If the winning figure in orthodox dogma was the Christian hero, who sacrificed his life for the glory of God, the winning agent in Anglo-Protestant civic humanism was the civic hero, who sacrificed his interests for the common good.
A comparison of works by Copley, Reynolds, and others serves to highlight the ways in which classical vocabulary might be used—or not—to endorse civic humanist objectives. Visual precedent for Montgomerie can be found among works by Van Dyck—Mountjoy Blount, Earl of Newport (Fig. 6-2; ca. 1637-38; oil on canvas, 85 x 51 inches; Yale Center for British Art, New Haven), for example, similarly blends the attributes of the citizen-soldier with those of the contemplative
philosopher—as well as those by Copley’s slightly-older contemporaries, Allan Ramsay (1713-1784) and Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792). Like Hugh

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) was the son of a Devon schoolmaster. Apprenticed to Thomas Hudson from 1740-1743, he worked both in Devonshire and London between 1743-1749. As the guest of his patron and friend, Commodore Augustus Keppel, Reynolds traveled to Algiers, Port Mahon and Minorca en route to Italy in 1749 before settling in Rome from 1750-1752. There he studied the old masters, notably Titian and the Venetian colorists, before returning to London by way of Florence, Bologna, Parma, Mantua, Venice, and Paris in 1753. Settling permanently in London, Reynolds began painting his important portrait of Augustus Keppel, which became his catalyst to fashionable status. He set up a studio, employed assistants and exhibited regularly. In 1768, under the patronage of George III, he was selected the first President of the newly-established Royal Academy and knighted in 1769. Although he had previously published ideas on art in Samuel Johnson’s *Idler* (September-November, 1759), his career as president of the RA initiated a series of formal writings that significantly influenced subsequent art criticism. He continued to travel, making journeys through northern Europe in 1781 and 1785. By 1783, however, his eyesight had begun to suffer, and by 1791 he was nearly blind. Following the death of Allan Ramsay in 1784, Reynolds was made Painter in Ordinary to the King. Despite a near-rupture with the RA, he continued in his capacity as President until his death in 1792. His experimentation with pigments and glazes has sadly resulted in the poor condition of many of his works. For more information about Reynolds and his work, see A. Asfour and P. Williamson, “On Reynolds’s use of de Piles, Locke and Hume in his Essays on Rubens and Gainsborough,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 60 (1997) pp. 215-229; John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); John Hayes, “Reflections on Reynolds at the Royal Academy: Two Hundred Years On,” *Apollo* 124 (April 1986): 246-253; David Mannings, “Reynolds, Hogarth and Van Dyck,” *The Burlington*
Montgomerie, Ramsay’s Norman, 22nd Chief of MacLeod (Fig. 6-3; ca. 1747; oil on canvas, 88 x 54 inches; Collection of John MacLeod, Dunvegan Castle, Skye)\(^{17}\) and

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\(^{17}\) According to Alastair Smart, “There can indeed be no real doubt that Reynolds’s great full-length of Commodore Augustus Keppel, probably painted in 1753... was partly inspired by Ramsay’s composition,” a chalk copy of which he likely saw in Van Aken’s studio. See Smart, *Allan Ramsay: Painter*, p. 81.
Reynolds’s John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore (Fig. 6-4; 1765; oil on canvas, 93-3/4 x 57-3/4 inches; Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh) belong to the ‘tartan’ tradition. However, comparison of Reynolds’s Dunmore portrait with Copley’s Montgomerie reveals some compelling differences.

Perhaps the most obvious similarity between Montgomerie and Dunmore is the theme of the tartaned figure in an austere landscape, and the most obvious difference the absence of battle in the image of Dunmore. But there are also more subtle similarities and differences. For example, there is far more movement in Copley’s image; the direction of Montgomerie’s gaze, his arms, and his stride all contribute to a criss-cross motion that echoes the action of the background figures and the zig-zag of ascending smoke. The Dunmore is decidedly quieter. The dark clouds that fracture the sky, the muted palette, the sparse vegetation and the shattered oak: these features give the image a doleful aspect not found in Copley’s Montgomerie. It is as though we face the same landscape, only after the battle, now wizened by its effects. While the small bits of blue that pepper Dunmore’s sky signal promise for the isolated figure, this landscape evokes a tension different from that of Montgomerie.

In fact, differences between Dunmore and Montgomerie suggest the disparate functions their respective landscapes served. In Montgomerie, the landscape assumed a narrative function, providing the venue for a historic military event in which the sitter participated. It was expressive only insofar as its technical devices heightened the drama of the event. The real tension derived from the physical contest between the men and their allegorical correlation with concepts of civilization and
savagery. Indeed, more important than the physical setting was the relationship between Montgomerie, his soldiers, the Native Americans and the spectator. It was this human network, and its hierarchy of social relations, that earned for Montgomerie a civic persona.

Like Montgomerie, Dunmore served as an officer during the French and Indian War, but if the landscape he occupies was also intended to signify the American wilderness, its implications for the sitter’s identity were likely different. Notice the way the clouds absorb the wisps of his hair, the earth absorbs his shadow, and the vegetation absorbs the colors of his kilt. By contrast, notice his upright bearing, his steady gait, and the easy cast of his head. Here, the landscape serves a psychological function; tension derives not from any physical action, but from the relationship between man and nature. Whereas Copley employed an *inter*-human relationship to convey Montgomerie’s identity, Reynolds employed an *inner*-human one. As a result, as a metaphor for the emotional and disordered state of nature, Reynolds’s landscape served as a foil for Dunmore’s reason, highlighting the intellectual domination of his natural, inner self. Inversely, it likewise alludes to the passions he controls. Ultimately, in other words, the landscape becomes not a passive recipient of human action, but a force with which Dunmore—and, more broadly, Man—must contend.

18 John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore, was the son of William, the 3rd Earl (d. 1756), and his wife Catherine. In 1759 he married Lady Charlotte Stewart, daughter of the Earl of Galloway. In this portrait he wears the dress of the 3rd Regiment of Foot Guards, which he joined, according to the inscription on the lower left edge of the portrait, in 1755. He served as the unpopular Governor of Virginia in 1771. Sittings for the portrait are recorded by Reynolds in April of 1765, but the picture was never paid for; it was acquired by the family in the nineteenth century. See Mannings, *Reynolds*, I, p. 347.

19 If it were intended to be the American wilderness, the success of the image is even more pointed. Dunmore’s confidence translates not merely as his successful subordination of passion to reason, but his successful subordination—metaphorically speaking—of Americans to Britons.
Despite these contextual differences, both Copley and Reynolds depict Public Men. Both invoke the inner strength required for public rule. Two additional features mediate this intention: the use of ‘public’, military costumes; and the visual disengagement of subject from viewer. In *Montgomerie*, the viewer is forced into a position of passive subordination like a soldier awaiting command. In *Dunmore*, he is acknowledged not at all. And yet the success of both images necessarily depended upon the spectator. Copley, for one, relied upon the viewer to intellectualize the contrast between the well-heeled, calm, and slightly elevated Major and the un-heeled, frantic and subordinate ‘others’. And he depended upon his audience’s ability to correlate that contrast with principles of social order: as rational and virtuous order descended from the reasoned rule of an independent and civilized elite, so chaos and corruption arose from the impassioned fists of savage masses. *Dunmore* is equally dependent, but in a different way. Dunmore’s self-absorption translates into an act of contemplation, the observation of which achieves two ends: by adopting the external gaze, Reynolds alludes to the Platonic gaze of the truth-seeking philosopher-king, transforming Dunmore, metaphorically-speaking, into a virtuous leader; at the same time, by compositionally subjecting the spectator to this act of contemplation, not only is the viewer made to receive Dunmore as a philosopher-ruler, he is prevented from engaging in his own act of contemplation and, hence, from assuming the role of philosopher-king himself.

There is precedent for such tactics. Take, for example, Thomas Gainsborough’s *John Campbell, 4th Duke of Argyll* (Fig. 6-5; 1768; oil on canvas, 92-
Standing full-length in peers’ robes ornamented by the Order of the Thistle, one hand bearing the

**Fig. 6-5**

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20 Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88) was born at Sudbury, Suffolk, and attended Sudbury Grammar School. He began his studies in London in 1740 under the influence of Hubert Gravelot, the French engraver, and Francis Hayman (primarily at Hogarth’s St. Martin’s Lane Academy). His early works show the influence of seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painters. Following his return to Suffolk, ca. 1746 or 1748, he married Margaret Burr, the natural daughter of the Duke of Beaufort, whose annuity brought him some financial independence. Combining landscapes and portraits into diminutive conversation portraits, he painted for a local clientele until his move to Ipswich (1752-1759) and then Bath (1759-ca. 1774). Once in Bath, Gainsborough set up a highly fashionable portrait practice. He was also introduced to the works of Van Dyck hanging in west country homes.

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cordon, the Duke of Argyll presents himself as the consummate Public Man.\textsuperscript{21} The tight curls of his powdered wig, the ermine of his cloak, the glint of metal and gold threads, the sheen of velvet, silk and satin: this is a formal image of a man whose material riches are intended as signifiers of his public, noble status. Even the placement of his feet is indicative of his ‘politeness’.\textsuperscript{22}

As in the case of Montgomerie and Dunmore, the setting reinforces Gainsborough’s intentions. Incorporating a classical arch in an undefined, liminal space—a popular emblem of noble greatness alternately characterized by a column and swag\textsuperscript{23}—Gainsborough effected a sense of timelessness that both universalized his subject and distanced him from the particular and familiar spectator. As suggested by Harrington, classical and historical time were alternately understood as the spheres of ‘ancient’—the rule of reason—and ‘modern’—the rule of fortune—prudence.\textsuperscript{24} Moreover, like Montgomerie and Dunmore, Argyll assumes a disengaged gaze. By so detaching the sitter from the spectator, by so presenting him as a contemplative member of the philosophical elite, Gainsborough forced the

\textsuperscript{21} John Campbell was a professional soldier who defended western Scotland during Prince Charles Edward Stewart’s campaign to restore his monarchy in 1745. A year later, he was named commander in Scotland. It was not until he was sixty-seven that he inherited the dukedom from his cousin. See Companion Guide to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 1999), p. 70.

\textsuperscript{22} Books like Nivelon’s The Rudiments of Gentile Behaviour provided artists with stock poses—based on ancient gestures and classical dance “positions”—for the signifying of politeness. See Francis Nivelon, The Rudiments of Genteel Behaviour (London: s.n., 1737).


\textsuperscript{24} As already noted (see Chapter Three), whereas ancient prudence guarded against the corruptive forces of self-interested men through the balanced influence of three estates, whereas ‘ancient prudence’ ensured that all ‘independent’ commoners were granted the rights of citizenship supportive of “LIBERTAS”, ‘modern prudence’ (and its alternative government) was “an art whereby some man, or some few men, subject a city or a nation, and rule it according unto his or their private interest; which... may be said to be the empire of men and not of laws.” (Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana, pp. 9-10) For a further discussion, see Harrington, The Commonwealth of Oceana, pp. 9-10, 43-53, 185-205, 241-244, 256-257.
spectator, literally and metaphorically, to look up to him: to esteem him. Once again, compositional devices preclude the viewer from engaging in his own act of contemplation, thereby forcing him into a subordinate—private—position.

In general, the conventions employed by Copley, Reynolds and Gainsborough drew on a classical visual language that dominated Academic portrait-painting for most of the eighteenth century. This language included: the superior placement of the subject, achieved through an elevated composition and a disengaged gaze; the formal display of the figure, usually achieved by upright stature and public dress (be it noble, military, judicial or religious); the overt display of intellectual or rational powers, signaled by posture, gesture, or technical effects (light, for example); the inclusion of symbols or accoutrements referencing public service (these might be particular, as in political or military orders, or general, as in classical columns or swags); and the linking of the subject to a universal time-scheme through the symbolic manipulation of costume and/or setting.

But the language could be employed to varying ends. For example, the concern with a universal time-scheme seems to have eased as the eighteenth century wore on. Although classical costumes and settings continue to appear in eighteenth-century portraits, the use of ancient costume seems to have waned by mid-century. Even Shaftesbury conceded a modern dress: “Let his Garb and Action be of the more modish sort, in order to introduce him better, and gain him Audience” among his contemporaries, without yet forgetting that he enacts a role comparable to that of the ancients.\(^{25}\) By contrast, Reynolds defended the superiority of ancient dress for the

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\(^{25}\) Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, I, pp. 204-205.
general style. Ultimately, while the question of dress remained unsettled, the controversy itself suggested changing ideas about the importance of philosophical versus historical pursuits—the pursuit of universal truth versus the pursuit of civic good. For example, ‘acceptable’ modifications to the ‘Grand’ style included the substitution of official costume for classical dress, and landed property, the assembly, the battlefield, or the court for a classical liminal space. Copley’s Montgomerie may thus be understood as a “historical” variation on the “grand-style” type.

In fact, Copley’s image provides compelling evidence of the influence of modern ideas. Changes to Montgomerie during the course of the commission suggest he consciously opted for the historical style and a more active composition. According to Emily Neff, Montgomerie’s original gesture served a didactic function; it indicated the events occurring behind the Major rather than guiding the actions of his unseen soldiers. One effect of this change was to demonstrate Montgomerie’s leadership abilities as opposed to merely alluding to them. But, without denying the allegorical reference to the battle between civilization and savagery that satisfied the demands of grand-style painting, it also served to locate Montgomerie in historical time. This shift in narrative emphasis—from allegorical reference to historical record—was a measure of Montgomerie’s departure from more conservative agendas and, indeed, from the more contemplative and neo-Platonic Dunmore. Further comparisons between works by Copley, Reynolds and others

26 Reynolds, Discourse III, pp. 48-50; Wind, pp. 88-89.
27 Reynolds, Discourses on Art, pp. 57, 60, 88-89.
28 Neff writes: “In an earlier preparatory drawing, Copley positioned Montgomerie closer to the stance of the Apollo Belvedere, with an arm gesturing back into space, as if to display the background action. In a subsequent drawing and the finished painting, Copley sprang the figure into action by depicting him with his left arm stretched in front of him.” See Neff, John Singleton Copley in England, p. 114.
suggest that such visual modifications were informed by important shifts in the social narrative.

Consider, for example, *Commodore Augustus Keppel* (Fig. 6-6; 1753-1754; oil on canvas, 94 x 58 inches; National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England), produced by Reynolds more than a decade prior to the artist’s official endorsement of the academic Grand Style. Here, hand on sword hilt, the striding commodore

Augustus Keppel was the second son of William Anne Keppel, the second Earl of Albemarle, and Lady Anne Lennox. Between 1740 and 1744, he served as a midshipman on Commodore George Anson’s world voyage. In 1749, already a well-seasoned commodore, he transported Reynolds to Italy for the artist’s study. His illustrious career earned him the position of commander of the Channel fleet in 1778 during the War of American Independence. Sympathetic to the American cause, however, he was the target of a court-marshall brought on by his less competent second, Admiral Palliser, who
ventures into the landscape, undeterred by potential hazards.30 Directing the action of his unseen attendants, Keppel’s pose and gesture seem to echo those of Montgomerie.31

According to David Mannings, the Keppel portrait served Reynolds like a diploma piece, marking the artist’s ascension into the ranks of professional painters.32 More intriguing, however, are the changes Reynolds made while the work was in progress.33 These changes transformed the piece from a conventional civic humanist icon into a dramatic, historical variation on the civic humanist type. Mannings writes:

Recent X-rays have confirmed that Reynolds originally placed Keppel slightly further to the left against a classical column... with his head at a different angle...lit from the left.... [This first effort] was taken to an advanced stage of completion before the artist decided that the effect was wrong and reworked the entire passage, altering the position of the hands at the same time and overpainting the column with a stormy coastal view.34

employed this tactic as a means of retaliation for blame that was accumulating to himself. Acquitted of all charges, Keppel retired from his military duties in 1780 and entered Parliament as a Member for Surrey. In 1782 he was made a viscount and served briefly as First Lord of the Admiralty during the Rockingham administration. See Mannings, Reynolds, I, pp. 287-288; Treasure, Who’s Who in Early Hanoverian Britain (London: Shepheard-Walwyn Ltd., 1992), p. 284.

30 According to Northcote, a studio assistant to Reynolds, this is the coast of Brittany where Keppel and his crew were temporarily shipwrecked while in pursuit of a French privateer in 1747. Mannings, Reynolds, I, p. 288.31 The pose of the striding, downward-gesturing Commodore Augustus Keppel (1753-1754) was compared by Ellis Waterhouse with the earlier tartan portrait, Norman, 22nd Chief of MacLeod (ca. 1747) by Allan Ramsay, the latter of which was noted as a possible source (Mannings, Reynolds, I, p. 288). He later dismissed this claim as an impossibility. Alistair Smart restored the point on grounds of a chalk drawing of MacLeod by Joseph Vanhaecken located in Vanhaecken’s studio. This drawing was thought by Smart to have informed both Keppel and Thomas Hudson’s Charles Douglass. (Smart, Allan Ramsay, 1992, pp. 112-113; also cited by David Mannings, Reynolds, I, p. 288) See Smart, Allan Ramsay, pp. 112-113; Mannings, Reynolds, I, p. 288.

32 As one writer recalled in 1794, it was “the first thing that distinguished him after his return to his native country” and was the catalyst for his subsequent rise to fame. (Edmond Malone(?), The European Magazine and London Review, Feb. 1794, p. 91; quoted in David Mannings, p. 287) In his 1797 essay for Reynolds’s Works, Malone noted that the portrait of Keppel “attracted the publick notice” and positioned Reynolds to become “the greatest painter that England had seen since Vandyck.” (Quoted in Mannings, Reynolds, I, p. 288) See Mannings, Reynolds, I, pp. 287-288.

33 Davies writes: “With this picture, says Farington, in his Memoir of Reynolds published in 1819, ‘he took great pains; for it was observed at the time that after several sittings he defaced is work and began again’.” Quoted in Davies, Reynolds, pp. 20-21.

What was Reynolds thinking when he dismissed the traditional column for the rugged landscape? What prevented him from employing—as he later did in *Frederick Howard, 5th Earl of Carlisle* (Fig. 6-7; 1769; oil on canvas, 94-7/8 x 59 inches; Castle Howard Collection, Yorkshire, England)—the classical emblems with which his audience was familiar?

Lifelong friends of Reynolds, both Keppel (1725-1786) and Howard (1748-1825) were noble-born. Against Keppel's "second-son" military career, however, Howard was a "first-born" politician: the eldest son of the 4th Earl of Carlisle, he held the title of Lord Morpeth until he succeeded his father as the fifth earl in 1758; from

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1780-1782, he served as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Here, a similar stride, posture, gesture and gaze—even a comparably monochromatic color scheme—are employed. Although military dress is replaced by robes signifying the Order of the Thistle, the effect is essentially the same: the donning of official uniform by a public man. What makes the comparison so striking is the difference in their settings.

While the Aristotelian ethic acknowledged both the battlefield—patriotism—and the assembly—statesmanship—as proper venues for the exercise of virtue, the display of public virtue in the battlefield was obviously different from that of the assembly. By the same token, neither image gives particular attention to an actual battle or an actual assembly. Indeed, that Reynolds opted for a classicized liminal space in the image of Howard suggests that his ideal of statesmanship transcended historical time and, hence, that it was more theoretical than particular.

While the decision to modify Keppel seems, on first view, to contradict the grand-manner prescriptions of his later Discourses, the changes actually represented modern variations on the civic humanist model. In the case of Dunmore and Keppel, for example, if not for Montgomerie, the landscape is notably sublime. In referencing the sublimity of nature—in presenting its rugged, impassioned force—, Reynolds only revised the context of greatness with which his sitters were identified. According to Walter Hippie, the sublime was representative of "the great," appealing

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36 Howard assumed this honor in 1768. See Mannings, Reynolds, I, p. 266.
37 A setting which John Woodward aptly termed "in the manner of Veronese." See exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, 1961, no. 45; quoted in Mannings, Reynolds, I, p. 266.
38 "Indeed, the 'tempestuous sea and stormy shore' in the background were cited by Henry Fuseli as an example of that favourite aesthetic category of the later eighteenth century, the Sublime..." See Mannings, Reynolds, I, p. 288.
to the spectator's "higher faculties" of "genius and imagination." This squared with Reynolds's demands for the grand-style image.

Still, that Montgomerie, Dunmore and Keppel all employ natural environments instead of classical spaces and, consequently, locate their sitters in historic time is compelling, for it suggests that Reynolds (and/or his sitter) was less concerned with the issue of timelessness than with attributes of publicness. This shift in emphasis may well reflect an urgent desire to reclaim for the Public Man a contemporary significance—and, hence, continued viability—in the face of dissenting political trends. In other words, it may signal a contemporary movement to restore the classically-defined aristocrat to his 'rightful' place.

What, then, of the country landscape? James Latham's provincial portrait, Charles Tottenham (Fig. 6-8; 1731; oil on canvas, 87 x 57 inches; National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin), suggests the pervasive use of classical architectural motifs as a means of affiliating the sitter with the discourse of civic humanism: the sitter's identity is correlated with a classical social order informed by Aristotelian civic leadership symbolically conveyed by the 'pillar-of-the-community' metaphor. And yet consider the differences between Tottenham and Howard. Reynolds's image engages the sitter in an Italian forum, garbed in his noble robes, instructing the spectator who stands beneath him, passively observing his intellectual contemplation.

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39 Hippie, pp. 142-143.
40 Though often conveyed by way of classical (noble) architecture, the "great" could also be conveyed through "the sublime." Hugh Blair argued, for example, that the "sublime... produces 'an effect extremely similar to what is produced by the view of grand objects in nature; filling the mind with admiration, and elevating it above itself.'" (Blair, quoted in Hippie, p. 126) As Hippie observes, "'It must be remembered', says Reynolds, 'that this great style itself ... presupposes in the spectator a cultivated ... state of mind.'" (Hippie, p. 144) For Reynolds, then, "It is an absurdity... to suppose that we are born with this taste, though we are with the seeds of it, which, by the heat and kindly influence of... genius, may be ripened in us.'" (Reynolds, quoted in Hippie, p. 144) See Hippie, pp. 16, 18, 71-72, 126, 144.

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By contrast, Tottenham is depicted in a private, domestic setting, his boots and crop suggestive of leisurely country pursuits. Moreover, Tottenham *engages* the spectator with his gaze; he meets him, literally and figuratively, on the same level.

The everyday clothes, the polite doff of the cap, the engaged eyes: these elements suggest a more informal and egalitarian relationship between subject and spectator, a relationship conditioned by conversational rather than courtly models of behavior. There is no evidence of the philosophical contemplation that subordinated Reynolds's spectator to his sitter. Indeed, emphasis has shifted from intellect to land. Certainly, property was assumed to undergird all civic humanist prescriptions for a public man—it was the foundation of independence, both intellectual and
socioeconomic. But by emphasizing property—and more specifically land—Latham
drew attention to precisely that element of neo-Aristotelian ideology forging a rift
among civic humanists—and precisely that element missing in the other portraits.
Indeed, we confront here two different visions of the public man: the aristocrat whose
birth isolates him from the people and invests him with the intellectual virtues of
independence and disinterest; and the landed gentleman whose property invests him
in the good of the state and its people. In other words, against the neo-Country
directives of Shaftesburian civic humanism, Latham invokes a Harringtonian
‘Country’ principle: that the land itself is the foundation of public virtue. Tottenham
becomes the visual translation of Fielding’s ‘Squire Allworthy’, and one is compelled
to ask: in the absence of title, amidst expanding definitions of property and the
commodification of land, how was the squire to assert his virtue?

On the one hand, then, an artist might revise the civic humanist model without
radically altering its civic humanist objectives: informal poses might replace formal
ones; public spaces might replace classical ones; sublime landscapes might replace
classical architecture. On the other hand, however, selective manipulation of civic
humanist conventions might likewise work to the detriment of its narrative. If, for
example, classical accoutrements imbued the sitter with a public stature, as they did,
for example, in the 4th Duke of Argyll, or invoked attributes affiliated with the landed
nobility, as they did in the 5th Earl of Carlisle, even among aristocratic women—as
suggested, for example, by Reynolds’s Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (Fig. 6-9;
ca. 1775-1776; oil on canvas, 94-1/4 x 58-1/16 inches; Huntington Library, Art
Gallery and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California)—, what of portraits of
commoners and merchants, two 'private' types that went largely unrecognized in the public discourse of civic humanism? What, for example, were the implications attendant Copley's companion portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Lee (Figs. 6-10, 6-11; 1769; oil on canvas, 95 x 59 inches (each); Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford)?

Whereas Georgiana Spencer was the daughter of John Spencer, the 1st Earl Spencer, and the wife of William Cavendish, the 5th Duke of Devonshire, and might therefore claim title to the noble—if female—attributes affiliated with a classical setting, Martha Swett Lee was the daughter and wife of colonial merchants John Swett and
Jeremiah Lee. As such, she bore no claim either to the classical attributes accorded aristocratic birth or the public virtues accorded heroic actions. Similarly, although Jeremiah Lee served as justice of the peace, he was neither noble-born nor landed—indeed, the son of a merchant, he was a radical Whig. The images thus represent a rather paradoxical conflation of ideological elements—public and private, traditional and modern, exclusive and inclusive, Country and Court.

That civic humanist emblems were employed by individuals like the Lees, whose social place was a byproduct of money rather than land, suggests that they had evolved to assume an alternative meaning for their colonial contemporaries. As

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41 Prown, John Singleton Copley, pp. 109; Paul Staiti, in Rebora and Staiti, et al, John Singleton Copley in America, pp. 258-262.
symbols of certain ‘qualities’ traditionally associated with the aristocracy—those of
color character, Taste, intellect, and land, for example—, they were understandably
desirable to a broader audience, but they were also clearly thought to be more readily
accessible. Patrons like the Lees—and artists like Copley—evidently felt safe in
assimilating these symbols into their portraits and, by extension, in claiming their
signified attributes as aspects of their identities. This is compelling, for it suggests
that, at least in the American colonies, private individuals felt free to claim those
virtues traditionally denied them by the civic humanist narrative. The question
naturally arises, then: to what further ends was the language and meaning of civic
humanism modified? Might not the same individuals have felt free to assume the
corresponding privileges of those attributes: the social rank and political authority of
the landed elite?

A conventional vocabulary of postures, gestures, costumes, poses, gazes, and
settings provided a visual language from which artists might draw in the construction
of portrait identities. How the artist employed that language—what he chose to say—
was up to him, but the resulting identity necessarily implied a supporting ideology. In
general, modifications to the civic humanist portrait suggest the coexistence of
various standards and narratives, thereby suggesting the coexistence of alternative
perceptions of reality.

This paper has proposed that the eighteenth-century portrait functioned, at
least in part, to locate its subject—and secure his place—within a larger community.
Portraits thus serve, at least in part, as evidence of the standards informing
contemporary identity and the narrative context within which those standards
assumed meaning.\textsuperscript{42} That portraiture witnessed an eighteenth-century boom among
the upper and middle classes is thus compelling.\textsuperscript{43} On the one hand, if limited control
over a changing cultural narrative was one disadvantage facing the individual,
portraits provided a ready answer: they presented their patrons with the power to
construct cultural narratives supportive of specific standards and identities suited to a
desired identity. By participating in the construction of his own narrative context, a
patron helped to stage the interpretive framework within which his identity was
judged. On the other hand, the deconstruction of portraits might thus advance our
understanding of the values, beliefs and aspirations informing the imag[in]ing of
identity in eighteenth-century Britain and, more particularly, colonial America.

\textsuperscript{42} As Locke aptly—if inelegantly—noted: “the way to discover something’s nature is to find out what
\textsuperscript{43} The quantity and availability of portraits was argued by Carol Gibson-Wood in “Furnishing with
Faces,” talk delivered at The Huntington/ The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art
CHAPTER VII

FACING INDEPENDENCE

Fig. 7-1

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A quarter-century prior to Major Hugh Montgomerie, when still only dreaming of a future in the metropolis, Copley hinted at his grand-style aspirations in one of the most brow-raising images of colonial American origin. Standing before an architectural landscape of balustraded Romanesque arches regimented by Doric-topped pilasters and graced by classical figures in ancient dress, Nathaniel Sparhawk (Fig. 7-1; 1764; oil on canvas, 90 x 57-1/2 inches; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) occupies a liminal position on the landing of a classical portico, his figure a human plinth to the fluted column that rises from his shoulders. One might presume from this interlude that Sparhawk is a pillar of the realm—itself a general and universal space. And the suggestion is supported by other aspects of the image. For example, a grand powdered wig boasts fashionable curls that cascade in a whisper behind his coral velvet suit. Moreover, while the bent knee, jutting hip, and casual placement of arms and hands—one resting across a columned plinth, the other suspended from his right pocket—suggest the informal stature of a man “at ease,” so the placement of his feet recalls the open “third” position of a dance master. The civic humanist undertones of the classical landscape are thus augmented by a “conversational” attitude reminiscent of Shaftesbury. And one is tempted to read in Copley’s grand-manner portrait a colonial interest in—and support for—a neo-Country narrative and identity.¹

Although Reynolds had yet to formulate the academic model for the British grand-style portrait, the manner was well-documented in continental imagery, allusions to which were resonant in Richardson’s writings as well as the public

images and retail prints that found their way to the colonies. It was already apparent, for example, in the work of John Smibert and Robert Feke, two colonial painters whose heroic portraits honoring the victors at Louisbourg (1745) were likely familiar to Copley. 2 Indeed, while Reynolds's *Discourses*, which codified and modified into an aesthetic framework many of the ideological tenets informing Shaftesbury's narrative, became the English model for grand-manner painting, one could also argue that the *Discourses* represented a reactionary response to alternative models and narratives and the need to snuff their growing influence. This possibility returns us to the portrait of Sparhawk.

![Fig. 7-2](image1)
![Fig. 7-3](image2)

Unlike Copley's portrait *Major Hugh Montgomerie* (Fig. 6-1), and his later, even grander, *George John, Second Earl Spencer* (Fig. 7-2; 1799-1806; oil on canvas,

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2 Staiti, in Rebora and Staiti, *John Singleton Copley in America*, p. 204.
104 x 67 inches; Collection of the 9th Earl Spencer)—itself an echo of Reynolds’s *William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland* (Fig. 7-3; 1758; oil on canvas, 100 x 74-3/4 inches; The Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth House Trust, Derbyshire)—, Sparhawk records (however inadvertently) elements inconsistent with grand-manner convention. On the one hand, Sparhawk suffers from an inelegance of features: an expansive forehead crowns small brown eyes, bulbous nose, thin upper lip, and plump chin. This suggests the privileging of likeness over grace for which Ramsay criticized Addison. But it also recalls contemporary literary descriptions of self-made men.

In Frances Burney’s *Camilla* (1796), a retired wig-maker, Mr. Dubster, presumes the stature of a country gentleman on grounds of money alone. Subsequently, he is unable to disguise his natural meanness. For all his pretensions, Camilla can identify Mr. Dubster by his “language and... voice,” through which, “no longer stiff, starched, and proud, as when full dressed, [he] was sunk into the smallest significance.” When asked to identify himself by an Irish officer (Macdersey) of “ancient and respectable” family, Dubster replies:

> “Who am I, sir? I am a gentleman, if you must needs know.”
> “A gentleman! who made you so?!”
> “‘Who made me so? why leaving off business! What would you have make me so?’”

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3 Ramsay criticized Addison, “for ‘not establishing a constant attachment to Truth as the leading and inseparable principle of all... works of art’.... ‘The agreeable...’ [Ramsay] insists, ‘cannot be separated from the exact; and the posture, in a painting, must be a just resemblance of what is graceful in nature, before it can hope to be esteem’d graceful’.” Ramsay, “On Ridicule,” 1753; quoted in Smart, *Allan Ramsay*, p. 100.


5 Burney, *Camilla*, pp. 276-277.

6 Burney, *Camilla*, p. 431.
To this interchange he later adds: “I’m turned gentleman myself, now, as much as the best of ‘em; for I’ve nothing to do, but just what I choose.”

Not only has Dubster confused money with birth, he has confused idleness with leisure, play with improvement, a point confirmed by his “slow and solemn” literal thinking; on being called “a little dirty fellow,” he exclaims: “If I’m little or big, I don’t see that it’s any business of his. And as to dirty, I’d put on all clean linen but the very day before....”

Mr. Briggs, of Burney’s *Cecilia* (1782), likewise highlights the nuances of politeness that distinguished the gentleman of birth from the monied commoner. A “short, thick, sturdy man with very small keen black eyes, a square face, a dark complection, and a snub nose,” he removed his wig and wiped his head in the public company of “gentlefolk” to their “universal horror.”

In fact, the contrast between the polite gentleman and monied commoner illustrates the narrative dissonance between the classical premise of the neo-Country identity and the English premise of its Country cousin. Against the lean elegance of Macdersey, Briggs is short and sturdy, against the former’s “conversational” pastimes—women, wine, hunting, gambling and a natural “disdain” for money—, Dubster tauts “beef steaks and onions” at “the Globe,” a direct allusion to his English and mercantile identity. Moreover, whereas gentlemen (Shaftesbury) equated politeness with the external evidence of internal virtue, commoners, Burney suggests, equated it with a mode of consumption—“a round of toast and butter and a few

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7 Burney, *Camilla*, p. 478.
8 Burney, *Camilla*, pp. 431, 470.
9 Burney, *Cecilia*, pp. 94, 324.
10 Burney, *Camilla*, pp. 281, 479-480. As Adam Smith likewise noted, “A merchant, it has been said very properly, is not necessarily the citizen of any particular country. It is in a great measure indifferent to him from what place he carries on his trade.” See Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, p. 519.
Finally, whereas Macdersey embraces a code of honor, Dubster invokes the rule of law—the former a celebration of individual discipline, the latter a supplement for its absence. Ultimately, the contrast effects two value systems, one based on birth (family/name), education (abstract thought), leisure, honor, rank, and politeness (of language and behavior), the other on money, training (literal/pragmatic thinking), play (work), law, equality, and freedom.

In Sparhawk, the “common” absence of natural grace—in Ramsay’s sense of absent elegance—is compounded by an egalitarian address. Contrary to Montgomerie, Spencer, Dunmore and Argyll, Sparhawk engages the viewer's gaze. Indeed, insofar as his gaze demands reciprocity from the viewer, the spectator's role is an active, intellectual one. For all the grandeur of setting, accoutrements, costume and stance, the subject does not presume to subordinate the spectator, but rather to impress him with material riches and social polish. This urge to impress implies a vulnerability not found in grand-manner imagery. It also presumes the viewer's capacity for judgment. The suggestion of interdependence is further affirmed by optical differences. Copley’s failure to achieve the convex illusionism by which Montgomerie and Dunmore are visually ‘elevated’, becomes a measure of

13 For a literary exemplar of this dichotomy, see Burney, *Cecilia*, pp. xxiv-xxv, 118, 186, 409-410, 431, 659, 745-746, 883-884. As Clarissa Harlowe explains in a letter to her brother, “the principal end of a young gentleman’s education at the university is to learn him to reason justly, and to subdue the violence of his passions.” See Richardson, *Clarissa*, p. 137.
14 This, Skinner notes, was a key component of the commercial ethic, which turned on the reciprocity of social relations. “It is precisely because the individual regards the opinions of the spectator as important,” he writes, “and because he seeks approval, that he imposes upon himself a degree of restraint or self-command....” (Skinner, in Smith, pp. 20-21) As Pocock likewise observes: “Once property was seen to have a consensual value, expressed in coin or in credit, the foundations of personality themselves appeared imaginary or at best consensual: the individual could exist, even in his own sight, only at the fluctuating value imposed upon him by his fellows....” (Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 464) See Skinner, in Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, pp. 20-21; Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 464.
Sparhawk’s distance from their superior rank. And, indeed, Sparhawk was not a member of the landed elite.\textsuperscript{15} In fact, the tradition of a landed elite cast in formal dress, graced with classical accoutrements and distinguished by references to landed stature, a tradition that surfaced as early as the Renaissance—as demonstrated by Robert Peake’s *Henry, Prince of Wales* (Fig. 7-4; ca. 1611-1612; oil on canvas, 68 x 44-3/4 inches; National Portrait Gallery, London)—has undergone a paradoxical twist in the hands of the colonial painter.

\textsuperscript{15} As Troyen notes, Sparhawk was the son of a Bristol, Rhode Island minister whose death altered the course of Sparhawk’s career. Following his mother’s remarriage to a Boston merchant, the path to Harvard veered to his stepfather’s countinghouse. Prosperity won him the hand of Elizabeth Pepperrell and her significant family connections. However, in 1758, a lag in business and increased taxes combined to effect his financial ruin. It wasn’t until 1759, when his father-in-law died, that Sparhawk’s circumstances were restored. See Troyen, “John Singleton Copley and the Grand Manner,” p. 99.
Nathaniel Sparhawk (1715-1776) was forty-nine when this portrait was painted. A resident of Kittery, Maine, he earned his keep through a successful trade in wood and molasses. But Sparhawk’s greatest socioeconomic leap came upon his marriage to Elizabeth, daughter of Sir William Pepperell. The death of Sir William in 1759 won Sparhawk a substantial estate and propelled him into the ranks of the colonial social and political elite. By 1764, when this image was painted, Sparhawk was comfortably ensconced in Sparhawk Hall, his colonial counterpart to the English estate. One is reminded of Adam Smith’s subsequent insight (1776):

In our North American colonies, where uncultivated land is still to be had upon easy terms, no manufacturers for distant sale have ever yet been established…. When an artificer has acquired a little more stock than is necessary…, he does not… attempt to establish with it a manufacture for more distant sale, but employs it in the purchase and improvement of uncultivated land. From artificer he becomes planter, and neither the large wages nor the easy subsistence which that country affords to artificers can bribe him rather to work for other people than for himself. He feels that an artificer is the servant of his customers…; but that a planter who cultivates his own land, and derives his necessary subsistence from the labour of his own family, is really a master, and independent of all the world.

Copley was not the first to subject grand-manner conventions to a narrative context that paradoxically undermined its ideological intentions. William Hogarth’s Captain Coram (Fig. 7-5; 1740; oil on canvas, 94 x 58 inches; Coram Family, in care of the Foundling Hospital, London) stands as compelling evidence of the influence of commerce—and the social and ideological progress of the monied interest—on the aesthetic standards of civic humanism. A seated composition that (yet) measures

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16 Staiti, in Rebora and Staiti, John Singleton Copley in America, p. 204.
17 According to Jules Prown, Sparhawk was a moderate Tory whose annual income ranged in the upper bracket—between 500-1000 pounds. In addition to this economic leap, Sparhawk assumed his father-in-law’s seat on the Court of Common Pleas of York County, Maine. Even more telling, his son, William Pepperrell, bore the honor of being first in his Harvard class—a sign of his social rank. See Prown, John Singleton Copley, p. 114; Troyen, “John Singleton Copley and the Grand Manner,” p. 99.
even larger than *Sparhawk*, the portrait of Thomas Coram provides visual testimony to the reforming force of economics and industry.

On first glance, the composition of *Coram* recalls Sir Godfrey Kneller’s *George I* (Fig. 7-6; 1716; oil on canvas, 97-1/4 x 59-3/4 inches; National Portrait Gallery, London, Beningbrough Hall)—even down to the pinkie ring. But the
comparison is largely a superficial one. In Kneller’s image, gold-banded velvet hangings, a fine oriental carpet, and a richly-carved baroque armchair locate the subject in a grand and fashionable interior. Within a shallow recess to the sitter’s right, canopied by an ornately-carved shell that foreshadows the growing influence of Palladianism—"foreign" tastes—, a draped table displays the trappings of monarchy: crown, orb and scepter.\(^{19}\) Within this grand and formal context, King George I sits

\(^{19}\) As early as the 1720s, the influence of the English Baroque was giving way to Palladianism—the neoclassicism patronized by Lord Burlington and celebrated in works of William Kent. Determined
atop an elevated dais in layers of official dress, the velvet and satin of his endless robes cascading in folds beyond the picture plane. Yet, his relaxed right hand, the cock of his bewigged head, and the "easy" placement of his satin-slippered feet betray a natural confidence and politeness made all the more pointed by his condescending engagement of the spectator's gaze. One might recall Mrs. Selwyn's remark to Evelina:

chancing... to be born of a noble and ancient family, [he] thinks proper to be of opinion, that birth and virtue are one and the same thing.... Fortunately for the world in general, [he] has taken it into [his] head, that condescension is the most distinguishing virtue of high life.  

In a compositionally-similar arrangement, classical pillar and swag, gray stone flooring, and a brass nail-headed and leather-upholstered chair locate Coram in a domesticated liminal space. Against an architecturally-framed seascape that recalls earlier portraits of Elizabeth I (Fig. 7-7; ca. 1588; oil on panel, 38-1/2 x 28-1/2 inches; National Portrait Gallery, London), a walnut pedestal table displays the rewards of his economic success: a scroll marked "The Royal Charter" and the seal of the Foundling Hospital. Within this context, Coram is likewise supported by an elevated dais. But in keeping with the economic premise and stature of his identity, the clothing he wears is private—a great coat, suit and gloves—and the powdered hair is his own. Moreover, against the ease of the king's courtly politeness, Coram appears neither confident nor relaxed: his right hand pointedly labors to give proof of his success, while his left grasps gloves a bit tightly; his disheveled hair veils an

advocates of the English Baroque defended its merits on nationalist grounds. Bindman notes: "The attack on the Palladians and a tendency to invoke the English rather than the classical past shows that Hogarth was already allying himself with a [particular political] point of view...." See Bindman, Hogarth, pp. 17, 26.

awkward tilt to his head; and, left foot dangled, his legs fall crudely toward the floor. Nonetheless, the image casts him as a merchant-prince, his empire "the Globe" at his feet.

In fact, Thomas Coram was an English-born ship-builder whose self-made stature turned on the success of his Boston ship-building firm. This earned his return to London in 1719 and his eventual self-fashioning as an urban philanthropist. Significantly, philanthropy, which witnessed a boom in mid-eighteenth-century Britain, was regarded as a form of patriotism conducive to the material and moral advancement of society. This would have appealed to Hogarth, whose emerging commitment to the "Patriot" cause turned on a support for "English-ness" manifest as a dissent from foreign—i.e. Palladian—tastes, Walpolean corruption, and a devotion.

to the "ancient"—i.e. Elizabethan—liberties of "true" Whiggism. Twenty-years after Coram's return, upon the establishment of The Foundling Hospital, Hogarth commemorated his friend's greatest legacy with an image that simultaneously propelled the artist into the ranks of grand-manner portrait-painters.

Significantly, however, the image of the commoner-cum-prince conveyed by Coram suggests not a rejection of social hierarchy or public greatness—indeed, the "Patriot" cause endorsed a "Patriot King"—but rather, as with Sparhawk, a pressure to expand the accessibility of social ranks that the honors afforded the traditional elite might be open to the deserving (propertied) commoner. As Burney suggests and Paul Langford confirms: "tradesmen did not want to think of themselves as tradesmen but as gentleman." Thomas Coram and Nathaniel Sparhawk might thus be understood as statements of social fluidity and the empowering and progressive influence of commercial industry accorded by the principles of a variant narrative. As such, they would seem to advance the narrative and aesthetic ideals of Jonathan Richardson. A similar claim might be made of more modest colonial portraits by Copley and others. 

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22 As Bindman describes it: "when culture flourished under a benevolent and patriotic monarch, surrounded by a court of public-spirited gentleman." He goes on: "The 1740s saw Hogarth emerge as a self-consciously English artist, and in this he reflects the emergence of opposition 'patriotism' and its eventual adoption by all political interests...." (Bindman, *Hogarth*, p. 46) See Bindman, *Hogarth*, pp. 46-50.

23 As Bindman aptly notes, the portrait presents a blending of the French grand-manner brush and stateliness with English naturalism. However, Hogarth had attempted the "Great Style without a proper academic training or the experience of an apprenticeship to a practitioner of the genre. The problems of such painting were not just technical, of making a convincing illusion on a large scale: they also required an approach to the theoretical question of the depiction of the realm of ideal moral action." (Bindman, *Hogarth*, p. 98) See Bindman, *Hogarth*, pp. 98, 131, 133.


incartes; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), for example, captures a Boston merchant at his desk, an account book and quill in hand, before a column and swag cleverly formed by the shadow of drapery above plinth-like books. Yet the image of Hancock bears still broader implications.

Fig. 7-8

John Hancock (1737-1793), son of the unremarkable Reverend John Hancock of North Braintree, Massachusetts, was left poor and fatherless at age seven until adopted by his merchant-uncle, Thomas Hancock, the highly successful owner of
Boston's *House of Hancock*. By age twenty-six, after years of social indoctrination and a Harvard education, young Hancock was made a full partner. In 1764, following his uncle’s death, he succeeded to the ownership of *House of Hancock* and his uncle’s Beacon Hill estate. The portrait by Copley marks his new consequence.

And yet the portrait itself is hardly grand. An avid consumer of English decorative arts and Madeira wines, “King Hancock” was known to cruise Boston in ostentatious carriages, decked out in costly finery, to the neglect of his business. But none of this is suggested by this image. Nor is reference made to his political aspirations. And it is this combination which makes Hancock’s portrait so compelling. On the one hand, the depiction of Hancock as a hardworking and successful businessman defies grand-manner conventions, casting the common-born man in the guise of an ignorant and interested dependent. Inversely, it removes Hancock from any affiliation with the English upper classes, an affiliation which his income and lifestyle may well have allowed. In other words, Copley presents one of the wealthiest men in the American colonies, an anchored member of the colonial elite, in an *inferior* socioeconomic station; he casts a man who enjoyed the leisurely pursuits and privileges of inherited wealth as a man dependent on the labors of industry. In so doing, Copley reversed the conventions of his *Sparhawk* portrait and, while borrowing on the language of civic humanism, manipulated its symbols for alternative ends. The consciousness of this effort is made all the more certain by the evidence of Hancock’s familiarity with grand-style imagery: shortly before sitting for

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26 According to Staiti, House of Hancock was “the largest transatlantic shipping firm in Boston.” See Staiti, in Rebora and Staiti, *John Singleton Copley in America*, p. 213.
27 Staiti, in Rebora and Staiti, *John Singleton Copley in America*, p. 213.
his own portrait, Hancock commissioned a grand-manner image of his Uncle. The question is: why?

Copley’s presentation probably had more to do with Hancock’s political leanings than his religious ones. The year of Hancock’s portrait marked the year of the Stamp Act, which, following the Seven Years War, served both practical— revenue—and political—control—ends. That it set off a train of ardent political protests, paraded as patriotic assertions of independence and self-sufficiency, confirmed British fears about growing colonial autonomy, as suggested by a letter from David Hume:

... They voted that the Parliament of England had no Right to impose on them any Taxes whatsoever; that they had no Right to make any Laws for them without their Consent; that the Colonies had a Right to trade freely to any Part of the World where they found their Advantage; that they were determined to maintain these Principles to the last Drop of their Blood; and that the whole Militia and Arms be carefully inspected, in order to maintain the Colonies in a State of Defence against all Invaders.... If this Intelligence hold to the Extent here related, there will certainly be a considerable Revolution in the Ministry. Mr. Pitt will be sent for.... He seems the only Man, who can either bring the Americans to submit peaceably by his Authority; or subdue them by his Vigour. It does not seem probable that the Repeal alone of the Stamp Act will suffice.

As political tensions against the empire mounted, Hancock assumed the

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29 Staiti, in Rebora and Staiti, *John Singleton Copley in America*, p. 213.

30 Staiti compares Wayne Craven’s interpretation of the image—as one “expressive of Calvinistic virtues, especially the idea that material rewards in life are the tangible proof of God’s divine blessing”—with Gordon Wood’s savvy reminder of contemporary colonial displeasure with “flamboyant elites.” See Staiti, in Rebora and Staiti, *John Singleton Copley in America*, pp. 213-214.


stature of a radical Whig. In this capacity, he maneuvered for political influence and authority in colonial Massachusetts, building up a network of political dependents and, ultimately, serving as President of the Continental Congress (1775-1777). This may explain why, after only a one-year interlude, Hancock departs so significantly from Sparhawk: the elaborate, highly “public,” architectural landscape with distant parkland, has given way to the shadowy backdrop of a domestic interior; the conversational stance of a polite, velvet-clad, man-of-leisure has given way to an industrious, wool-clad, businessman; scrolled architectural plans, suggestive of grandeur and expense, give way to account books, the evidence of investment and savings. Indeed, whereas Sparhawk recasts the merchant as a member of the landed elite, implying the exclusive nature of grand-manner imagery and, by extension, the exclusive stature of the Public Man, whereas Sparhawk thereby conformed to the neo-Country imperative that commercial affiliations be shed in the assumption of a public identity, Hancock, while not denying certain ideals within the neo-Country narrative, suggests that the attributes of the industrious merchant are more worthy of public esteem than those of the leisured gentleman—that a businessman might be better received as a Public Man than a member of the leisured elite—, a significant modification to the civic humanist narrative bearing major implications for identity.

34 Staiti, in Rebora and Staiti, John Singleton Copley in America, p. 214.
35 Most certainly an imported cloth.
36 Possible made in the colonies.
37 Notably the suggestion of public good signified by the column and swag.
Gordon Wood has argued that industry was recognized neither as a social
benefit nor a qualification of the would-be elite but was, rather, urged on the
commoner as a corrective to idleness. Yet Hancock suggests otherwise. In part, it
could be argued, the presentation of an industrious commoner reflected contemporary
criticism about the moral degeneracy of an ostentatious elite. But as Langford
observes, the failings of the elite gave inverse influence to the virtues of a middling
sort. In fact, as Wood himself suggests, weaknesses within the elite provided the
opportunity for social advancement and occasioned the remodeling of political
relationships on the example of social ones. This invited the inclusion of
commercial attributes—such as industry and ‘fair-dealing’—into the narrative of
public good. Accoutrements like quill and ink, letters and papers, are thus potentially
emblematic of the sitter’s engagement in a larger network of social conversation.
What the portrait of John Hancock suggests, then, is that, by 1765, social engagement
and economic industry had begun to inform an alternative colonial narrative and its
language of visual imagery.

Copley was not alone in celebrating the potentiality of the industrious
individual or in making him a pillar of the classical narrative of public good. Charles

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38 Wood writes: “industriousness and hard work were everywhere extolled and the Puritan ethic was widely preached but only for ordinary people, not for gentlemen, and not for the sake of increasing society’s productivity.” He goes on: “Hard, steady work was good for the character of the common people: it kept them out of trouble; it lifted them out of idleness and barbarism; and it instilled in them the proper moral values; but it was not thought to expand the prosperity of society.” See Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), p. 33.

39 Langford explains: “the new pageantry of urban, bourgeois England was developing fast, subtly transforming the role of nobleman as principal gentleman, without their realizing it. Ostentatious display was still permissible, but display which suggested commitment to an open, equal society rather than one which savoured of lordly superiority. . . . When aristocrats . . . diverged from the patterns of conformity required by the society around then, they were punished. . . .” See Langford, A Polite and Commercial People, p. 600.

40 As Langford notes, “Bourgeois respectability and prudery were rising stocks in the 1760s and 1770s. . . .” See Langford, A Polite and Commercial People, p. 582.

Willson Peale’s allegiance to radical Whiggism has been convincingly argued by a number of scholars and is made visually evident in John Beale Bordley (Fig. 7-9; 1770; oil on canvas, 84-7/16 x 58-1/2 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington).^42^ Here, a contrast of backgrounds punctuated by a brewing storm suggests an allegorical landscape meant to be read, like a weathered text, from left-to-right—west to east. This translates, alternately, into a narrative progress from “what has been” to “what will be.” On the one hand, a skewed oak tree (a metaphorical reference to England gone wrong?) frames an image of a British soldier leading a pack-laden beast (British piracy of colonial goods?).^43^ On the other hand, the prosperity of fruit-bearing peach trees frames an image of the pastoral ideal (the uncorrupted virtue of independent self-sufficiency). In the same vein, a paper marked “Imperial Civil/ Law – Sumary / proceeding” (an allusion to trial without jury),^44^ lies torn and rejected at


^44^ According to David Steinberg, the vice-admiralty courts established in Halifax and elsewhere in 1764 and 1767, were instituted according to Roman civil laws which, unlike common law, operated by

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Bordley's feet. By contrast, the 'natural' premise (rock podium) of mixed
government is precariously reclaimed as a corrective to tyranny and the foundation of
English law upon which justice and liberty depend. But Peale's image also suggests
a looming threat to this natural progress metaphorically rendered as a brewing storm
and a British soldier who moves back into darkness.

Fig. 7-9

Summary proceeding—i.e. without juries—a circumstance which colonists deemed inconsistent with
their rights as British citizens. As Steinberg also notes, however, the confusion plaguing notions of
common (unwritten, by tradition), statutory (written), imperial, natural and divine law complicated the
iconographic use of related emblems, though more so in England than the colonies. See Steinberg, "A
Rough and Unhewn Virtue: Charles William Peale's John Beale Bordley," paper presented at the

The open book reads "Nolumus Leges Angliae mutari"—we are unwilling that the laws of England
be changed. As Mills and Miles aptly observe, the words harkened back to the Commonwealth
emphasis on mixed government to which Charles I responded in his Answer to the Nineteen
Propositions (1642). Four years after Bordley's portrait, John Dickinson invoked the phrase in his
Essay on the Constitutional Power of Great Britain Over the Colonies. See Cynthia J. Mills and Ellen
G. Miles, in Miles, American Paintings of the Eighteenth-Century, p. 114.
Within this context, standing full-length in unadorned brown homespun, the Maryland lawyer-politician turned gentleman-farmer directs our vision to the pastoral image that visually and metaphorically backs English law. In so doing, he persuades our engagement in a political controversy that ultimately turns on a single question; as Burney's Cecilia puts it: "Is then this great secret of happiness ... nothing, at last, but total seclusion from the world?" To which Bordley, in the words of Belfied, might have replied: "No, madam..., it is Labour with Independence." In other words, while Bordley metaphorically alludes to classical progress and common good, his version of its landed populace appears more industrious than leisured, more defensive of the benefits of agricultural activity than the heroic actions and contemplations afforded noble wealth. One is reminded of Harrington's *Oceana*, in which, quoting Francis Bacon's essay, “Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates,” Harrington wrote:

> in making farms and houses of husbandry of a standard; that is, maintained with such a proportion of land unto them as may breed a subject to live in convenient plenty and no servile condition, and to keep the plough in the hands of the owners and not mere hirelings;... you shall attain unto Virgil’s character which he gives of ancient Italy....

As alternately expressed by the *Patricians* (1773), "birth alone has no pretence, to Truth, or honour, dignity, or sense."

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46 Burney, *Cecilia*, p. 659. According to Mills and Miles, Bordley retired from public life “determined to become a self-sufficient patriot farmer and develop a model plantation. He believed that America needed to establish economic independence from England. While he, like most colonists, had long imported many luxuries from Britain, he now substituted homemade beer for London ale and porter, and grew wheat instead of tobacco, the staple of Anglo-American commerce. His farm included its own carpenter and blacksmith shops, as well as looms and spinning wheels that he supplied with his own fleeces, hemp, flax, and cotton.... In the background graze the sheep from which Bordley produced his wool in an effort to reduce dependence on British textiles, a major export to the colonies.” See Mills and Miles, in Miles, *American Paintings of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 113-114; Richardson, Hindle, and Miller, *Charles Willson Peale and His World*, p. 38.  
This visual rendering of a Harringtonian narrative recalls the “Patriot” cause of Hogarth and Coram. By 1770, it had found literary parallel in the contemporary work of English ‘republican’ Whigs. Indeed, while Peale was putting paint to canvas, Catherine Sawbridge Macaulay, whose brother, John Sawbridge, founded the Bill of Rights Society, was dressing down the Rockingham Whigs for their betrayal of ‘true Whig’ principles. Significantly, radical Whigs were unwilling to forego the narrative link between land and virtue, seeking rather to void it of birth-related connotations. Like the “Patriot” cause of earlier years, they disassociated the freeholder from the hereditary elite without disassociating his virtues from independence and progress. This had particular resonance in the colonies. As Wood notes, in contrast to their English compatriots, the majority of colonial Americans were still farmers. Indeed, against the elite monopoly on land in England, land was

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50 Langford writes: “In politics there was always an undercurrent of republican distaste for the House of Lords, which surfaced in times of turbulence. Catherine Macaulay in her onslaught on the Rockingham Whigs in 1770, treated the vested interest of great noblemen as an affront to the Harringtonian values at least as great as that represented by the corruption at the command of the Crown.” (Langford, pp. 590-591) As Langford explains, during the reign of Walpole Whiggism—i.e. the Court Whigs of 1727-1742—, the freeholder ideals originally affiliated with the Restoration Whigs of the Glorious Revolution, which celebrated the rights and liberties of ‘ancient’ England, were being promoted by the Opposition or Country party under the leadership of the old Tory, Viscount Bolingbroke. The ideals continued to find resonance among various groups throughout the eighteenth century, surfacing again in the guise of William Pitt. With the accession of George III, and the return of Tories to court, old ideological divisions became convenient means by which to rally support for one political group or another. In 1768, for example, John Wilkes borrowed on the rhetoric of Country liberty to defend a more radical version of Whiggism incompatible with Court politics. When Catherine Macaulay published her *History of England* (1763-1783), she gave shape to a Whig narrative that, according to Langford, “resembled those of generations of Commonwealth Whigs and Country Tories who had resisted the oligarchical tendencies of early Hanoverian government. This link,” he goes on, “between old style ‘patriot’ ideology, even old Toryism, and the new ‘patriotism’ of the 1760s and 1770s was important. It was to provide the reformers of the late eighteenth century with a fund of arguments and a sense of continuity.” (Langford, p. 528) See Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, pp. 25-27, 230-234, 333-338, 519-529.

more widely dispersed in the colonies, 60% of American colonists owning 70% of the land.\footnote{This as opposed to 5% owning 70% in England. See Komblith and Murrin, “The Making and Unmaking of an American Ruling Class,” in Alfred F. Young, ed. Beyond the American Revolution, pp. 43-45.}

On the one hand, then, that Bordley and Coram—freeholder and merchant—could draw on similar ideological roots in the construction of their “English” identities suggests a point-of-departure for reconciling the differences between Bordley and Hancock. Yet, Coram, like Sparhawk, had “retired” from business prior to claiming his identity. And this suggests the possibility of unresolved tensions between the ideological foundations informing the two images—between the freeholder ideal and a society born on the coat-tails of commerce. Indeed, the potential ideological inconsistencies are made all the more pronounced by the striking contrast between Bordley and Elijah Boardman (Fig. 7-10; 1789; oil on canvas, 83 x 51 inches; The Metropolitan Museum of Art). In fact, painted almost twenty years later, Ralph Earl’s portrait signifies the influence of post-War developments on the modeling of American identity.

Elijah Boardman (1760-1823) was the third son of the Connecticut colonists Sherman Boardman and Sarah Bostwick. Tutored by the local minister, Boardman served as an apprentice-clerk before setting up as a Connecticut shopkeeper in 1781. The success of his undertaking was evident in 1792, when he married, bought out his business partner, and built and outfitted a substantial new home and shop.\footnote{Kornhauser, Ralph Earl: Face of the Young Republic (Hartford, CT: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1991), p. 155.} But it is also resonant in this remarkable image. Here, dispensing with the classical allusions...
of grand-manner imagery, Earl opted instead for the presentation of a shop interior whose visible storeroom displays stacks of fashionable foreign and domestic textiles. Visually and metaphorically, the storeroom “backs” the foreground image—the rows of account books, the richness of Boardman’s silk and muslin

55 According to Ribiero, the inventory includes silks, wools, linens, printed cottons and blends, some of American manufacture. The bottom bolt is marked with a British stamp. See Ribiero, in Kornhauser, Ralph Earl: the Face of the Young Republic, p. 156; Kornhauser, Ralph Earl, p. 155.
costume, the gold watch and accoutrements, the volumes of literature and, ultimately, Boardman himself. But it does more than finance his material riches.

In Sparhawk—as in Spencer (Fig. 7-2) and Cumberland (Fig. 7-3)—, a classical liminal space frames a generalized landscape, their combination alluding to the timeless, ancient virtues of public good born of the disinterested independence affiliated with the landed elite. By contrast, Boardman projects a particular and contemporary architectural interior that frames an individual merchant’s private storeroom, the combination of which might suggest—in the neo-Country narrative—the selfish and fleeting benefits accrued to the merchant as a result of his ambitious interests. Yet such would not seem to be Earl’s intent. For all its differences of setting, the posture of Boardman virtually mirrors that of Sparhawk; the same elegant ease informing Sparhawk’s “politeness” likewise informs the image of Boardman, suggesting a comparable degree of virtue.

According to Paul Langford, while the phrase “polite and commercial” may have originated in William Blackstone’s Commentaries on the Laws of England (1765-1769), “similar terms were commonplace in the 1760s and 1770s, and suggest something of a consensus about the central characteristics of mid-eighteenth-century England.” On the one hand, commercialism had come to be widely accepted as the “fourth stage” in the progress of civilization. At the same time, its necessary concession to widespread consumption demanded alternative methods for keeping corruption at bay. To this end, “politeness” was simultaneously invoked as a medium

56 Ribiero, in Kornhauser, Ralph Earl, p. 156.
57 It is interesting to note that Englishmen considered politeness a uniquely English trait, lost on the rustics of the provinces and colonies. See Langford, A Polite and Commercial People, p. 329.
58 Langford, A Polite and Commercial People, pp. 1-6, quoted from p. 1.
for social elevation and individual regulation. The result was a paradoxical convergence of “landed” (neo-Country) and “monied” (Liberal) influences. By the same token, while the balance-of-influence between land and money shifted in favor of money, the scramble to enhance one’s public stature resulted in the grasping after minor—but conventionally landed—identities.

In some respects, Hogarth’s portrait of Thomas Coram, with its similarly framed view of a merchant’s life-blood, helped to mediate the visual translation of private merchant into Public Man. A similar narrative was subsequently echoed in

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59 Langford explains: “In a sense politeness was a logical consequence of commerce. A feudal society and an agrarian economy were associated with an elaborate code of honour designed to govern relations among the privileged few... But a society in which the most vigorous and growing element was a commercial middle class, involved both in production and consumption, required a more sophisticated means of regulating manners. Politeness conveyed upper-class gentility, enlightenment, and sociability to a much wider elite whose only qualification was money, but who were glad to spend it on acquiring the status of gentleman. In theory politeness comprehended, even began with, morals, but in practice it was as much a question of material acquisitions and urbane manners.... Though it involved much emulation and admiration of aristocrats, it did not imply an essentially aristocratic society.” (Langford, pp. 4-5) See Langford, A Polite and Commercial People, pp. 4-6, 60, 648.

60 Langford writes: “Much significance was attached to the matter of title. The Leicestershire clergyman Aulay Macaulay remarked on the extraordinary increase in the second half of the eighteenth century, in the numbers who described themselves as ‘Mr’, ‘Mrs’, and ‘Esquire’. In principle, the term ‘Esquire’ continued to be restricted to men of property or professional standing. It was considered incompatible with trade, though retired businessmen commonly assumed it as soon as they had invested their profits in property or an annuity.... The depreciation of the currency of title proceeded still more rapidly with the ‘rank’ of gentleman, thanks to its wider connotations. Technically it continued to be a particular rung on the ladder. Small country squires who did not presume to count themselves among the county gentry used it with pride. Substantial tradesmen and merchants felt free to resort to it where their courage failed them in regard to ‘Esquire’.... In the countryside a new term had to be invented to describe the pretensions of men who owned little or no property of their own but enjoyed a measure of opulence. Henry Fielding used the expression ‘gentleman farmer’ in Tom Jones in 1749 and Charlotte Lennox did so in The Female Quixote three years later. During the following decade it was to become commonplace. Agrarian improvement seemed to be raising a new breed of rural capitalists who demanded equality of status with their landlords.... By the reign of George III ‘Mr’ and ‘Mrs’ were widely accepted in towns, and increasingly in the countryside, as the automatic entitlement of anyone who owned property, hired labour, or simply laid claim to a degree of rank and respectability.” (Langford, pp. 65-66) He goes on: “This debasement of gentility is one of the clearest signs of social change in the eighteenth century, the mark of a fundamental transformation....” In the end, Langford writes, England “was not a nation of gentry, but a powerful and extensive middle class. This class rested on a broad, diverse base of property, by no means restricted to land.” It was this class, he continues, which “decided the framework of debate and the terms of tenure on which the traditional politics of monarchy and aristocracy were conducted.” (Langford, p. 66-68) See Langford, A Polite and Commercial People, pp. 65-68.

61 Indeed, having acquired significant property and inherited his father’s interest in public life, Boardman assumed the position of United States Senator. See Kornhauser, Ralph Earl, p. 155.
grand-style variations like Peale’s *William Stone* (Fig. 7-11; 1774-1775; oil on canvas, 100 x 61 inches; Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore) and John Trumbull’s *Patrick Tracy* (Fig. 7-12; 1786; oil on canvas, 91-1/2 x 52-5/8 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington). But only in Earl’s portrait are the “goods” of commerce projected as mediums of virtue and a mode of interdependence advantageous to social good. As the Reverend Mr. Tyrold put it in Burney’s *Camilla*, “That species of independence which proudly flies at all gratitude, is

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62 Commercial virtue necessarily differed from the Aristotelian heroic ideal in being social rather than civic, “easy” rather than formal, involving interactive rather than autonomous practices. As Taylor remarks, “A key feature of it is that our service of self takes productive form, as against the ... aristocratic, caste-conscious pursuit of honour and glory through self-display and the warrior virtues.” (Taylor, pp. 238-240) See Taylor, pp. 238-240, 286-301; Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*, pp. 20, 41.
inimical to the social compact of civilized life, which subsists but by reciprocity of services.  

Historians tend to agree that the colonial American narrative was informed by both ideology and interest. However, whereas Bernard Bailyn and Gordon Wood give emphasis to the influence of Opposition rhetoric in the years preceding the Revolution, Joyce Appleby has endorsed a more liberal interpretation. As she sees it, the economic policies and practices of the seventeenth-century became the foundation for a more liberating outlook that, while undermining aspects of the classical narrative, was encouraged by the Court as complementary to imperial interests. Against "the constitutional ideal of the disinterested citizen," she writes,
imperialism urged industry, wooing the ambitious instincts of common men with the promise of profit, social status, and political authority.\textsuperscript{67}

Yet, as Appleby likewise notes, the "qualities of the liberal model of society that attracted intelligent but uncultivated men and women on the make" were likewise sanctioned by a Protestant ethic that lent acquisition-by-industry a modicum of respectability.\textsuperscript{68} Hence, the ambitions of profit might be ideologically cloaked in the guise of virtuous piety. But independence-through-industry might be additionally perceived as complementary to the promise of English liberty, as variously articulated by Commonwealth and Restoration Whigs and revived by "Patriots" and "republicans." On the one hand, then, the pursuit of profit and rank was attained by way of imperial policy. On the other hand, the colonial defense of industry and improvement was premised on an Anglo-Protestant radicalism perversely grounded in the ideals of an "ancient" constitution—i.e. monarchy. In America, where the availability of land and the absence of a hereditary elite made advancement by profit \textit{and} the ownership of land possible, these variant ideologies appear to have converged.\textsuperscript{69} By uniting selective elements of competing ideologies, colonists appear to have subsumed the "pursuit of happiness" into a narrative of "ancient rights and

\textsuperscript{68} As Appleby explains it, the Opposition "evoked the classical theory of mixed government to stay the course of modernization and to forestall an economic development that would undercut the values they esteemed and the social order that supported those values." See Appleby, "The Social Origins of American Revolutionary Ideology," p. 952.
\textsuperscript{69} As Wood observes, so absorbed were the Americans in the Commonwealth tradition of English radicalism that even the destruction of monarchy and the institution of republicanism did not clearly signify a repudiation of the ancient constitution; for the spirit of republicanism, the spirit of the great men of the seventeenth century, was "so far from being incompatible with the British constitution, that it is the greatest glory of it." See Wood, \textit{The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787}, p. 43.
liberties” in which Harrington, Locke and Anglo-Protestantism featured prominently.\textsuperscript{70} Within this context, British policy of the 1760s appeared tyrannical.

In other words, differences between Bordley and Boardman may reflect ideological disparities born of geographical differences—an agricultural South versus a commercial North—but they also likely reflect temporal ones.\textsuperscript{71} In 1770, when Bordley’s image was painted, the colonial narrative was focused on principles immediately relevant to the imperial conflict—those which made the case for British tyranny and American liberties. By 1789, the imperial crisis had passed, and Americans were celebrating the ratification of a national constitution. In the meantime, a considerably ideological gap had been breached.

After the Revolution, issues resonant in colonial resistance—particularly the issue of representation—precipitated the examination of specific ideological tenets—the notion of the people’s sovereignty, for example—in the formation of the American political structure.\textsuperscript{72} According to Wood, in the process of examining and

\textsuperscript{70} Edmund Morgan writes: “During the years of controversy from 1763 to 1776 the colonists studied Locke and Harrington closely (along with subsequent writers like Thomas Gordon, John Trenchard, and James Burgh...).” (Morgan, pp. 74-75) If the recommendations of Thomas Jefferson are any indication, the Country ideology of Harrington was received in the form of its Opposition variation, by way of the writings of Lord Bolingbroke. The combined influence of Liberal and Opposition thought is reflected in Jefferson’s recommendations to Robert Skipwith for the outfitting of his library in 1771. In addition to works by Locke and Bolingbroke, Jefferson suggested Montesquieu, Hume, Smith and common-sense theorists like Kames, Reid and Steuart. Various novels by noted English authors, as well as works by Pope, Dryden, Milton, Addison and others are also mentioned. Notably absent are the writings of Shaftesbury. Notably present is Hogarth’s \textit{Analysis of Beauty}. See \textit{A Virginia Gentleman’s Library. As proposed by Thomas Jefferson to Robert Skipwith in 1771 and now assembled in the Brush-Everard House, Williamsburg, Virginia}, introduction by Arthur Pierce Middleton (Colonial Williamsburg, 1952); Morgan, \textit{The Birth of the Republic, 1763-1789}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 74-75. See also Thomas Paine, \textit{Common Sense}, in \textit{Common Sense, The Rights of Man, and Other Essential Writings of Thomas Paine}, introduction by Sidney Hook (New York: Penguin Books, 1969).

\textsuperscript{71} Wood, \textit{The Radicalism of the American Revolution}, pp. 30-33.

\textsuperscript{72} Bailyn, \textit{The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution}, pp. 77-79; Wood, \textit{The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787}, p. ix. To some extent, Greene argues, the groundwork was laid in the decades preceding the Revolution, insofar as economics had already infiltrated the political sphere and local government was manned by an established, stable and more inclusive elite. As he explains it, the
redressing these tenets, the definition of individual liberty was clarified and expanded, and the perception of social association was modified. On the one hand, the right to happiness was distinguished from the public good. On the other hand, the individual was recognized as an autonomous entity whose relationship to society was based on contract. The result was a two-part program embracing happiness (interest) and good (progress towards potentiality), according to a narrative of natural law—what Jefferson described as "a free people claiming their rights, as derived from the laws of nature."  

Hence, it was not until the post-War period that the full implications of colonial perceptions of liberty were brought to bear on the American narrative. In the process, Boardman suggests, the gap between agricultural and commercial industry, agricultural and commercial benevolence, agricultural and commercial politeness began to blur as emphasis shifted from the economic means—agricultural or commercial—to the ideological ends—happiness and goodness—of the American cause. In complement with this development, the individual was re-modeled according to moral standards of industry, benevolence, and politeness. By the same

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73 According to Merrill Jensen, within the larger framework of the Revolution there occurred a secondary internal revolt against classical republicanism to which the traditional elite responded with a counter-rebellion in 1787. One unintended effect of this internal revolt was the dissemination of liberal ideals to the populace. See Jensen, The American Revolution within America (New York: New York University Press, 1974), pp. 2, 6-7, 18, 27, 39, 49, 113, 166, 173-175, 207, 219.


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token, government became a Rousseauian corrective to individual imperfection—
what Paine termed "the badge of lost innocence."  

Setting, costume, accoutrements, posture and gaze: all seem to have contributed to the imagin[ining] of identity in eighteenth-century portraiture, their combined influence suggesting that colonial emulation of the grand-manner portrait was increasingly modified at some point in the 1760s, reflecting emerging sensibilities about the nature of liberty and its implications for the American narrative. But the use of technique in the work of Copley and others invites further consideration. Copley's portrait of John Hancock, for example, is all the more compelling for the clarity and crispness of his method. Indeed, the enamel-like surface recalls Vertue's criticism of Ramsay’s "rather lick’t than pencilled" conversational technique. In the language of Reynolds, Hancock is more "mechanical" than Sparhawk and, so, more suggestive of the artist's ignorance. Yet neither Copley nor Hancock would have brooked such slander. Moreover, the technique appears to have been employed consciously and purposefully, for a similar development informs Charles Pelham (Fig. 7-13; ca. 1753-1754; oil on canvas, 36 x 28 inches; Private Collection) and Paul Revere (Fig. 7-14; 1768; oil on canvas, 35 x 28-1/2 inches; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston): in the former, earlier image, a common artisan is transformed into a literate gentleman; in the latter, later image, the attributes of an artisan-silversmith are celebrated with an overt—indeed, defiant—clarity.

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75 Paine, *Common Sense*, p. 24. As Paine explained it, "Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness, the former promotes our happiness positively, by uniting our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions." See Paine, *Common Sense*, p. 24.

76 Bindman, *Hogarth*, p. 146.
The qualities of Copley's colonial technique are commonly attributed, at least in part, to the influence of mezzotints on colonial painting.\textsuperscript{77} And certainly, the linearity of colonial portrait painting likely owes much to the linearity of imported prints. But there is a curious coincidence between the developing influence of empirical modes of analysis and Copley's technical interest in the material quality of his subject-matter, the expanding influence of individualism and Copley's growing emphasis on the singularity of his subjects. Indeed, that Copley should paradoxically progress from the soft, painterly brush and muted tones of \textit{Epes Sargent} (Fig. 7-15; ca. 1760; oil on canvas, 49-7/8 x 40 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington)—a technique, \textit{Spencer} (Fig. 7-2) suggests, he re-employed in England,—to the hard, enamel-like colors and finish of \textit{Hancock}, a progress which belies conventional civic

humanist assumptions about the intellectual and technical prowess informing general and particular styles of painting, is suggestive of alternative aesthetic influences.

As already suggested, there was in fact precedent for Copley's style, most notably in the work of Allan Ramsay, whose "natural" style likewise evoked the clarity and intimacy found in Copley's work. In addition to the Drummore portrait (Fig. 5-1), Ramsay's Mrs. William Adam (Fig. 7-16; 1754; oil on canvas, 37 x 28 inches; Yale Center for British Art) betrays a concern for individual realism enhanced by clean lines, a limited palette, a shock of color, and an inescapable engagement between subject and spectator. Thirty years later, Raeburn was still employing a

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78 As Smart notes, the wife of the architect William Adam and mother of Robert Adam is "presented in widow’s weeds, with a book and a pair of spectacles in her hands, and once more the colour-scheme is largely one of black with a restrained note of red. It would be hard to find a parallel in British portraiture of the period to the intimate realism of this picture." See Smart, Allan Ramsay, p. 106.
"lick’t" technique and like palette in his *Lady in a Lace Cap* (Fig. 7-17; ca. 1785; oil on canvas, 36-1/4 x 28 inches; National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh). It is thus interesting to note the supposed influence of common-sense theory on Raeburn's work. Might not Copley, too, if only inadvertently, have been influenced by the same paragons of empiricism, individualism, and patriotism—Hume, Locke, Bolingbroke, Kames—, the same advocates of industry, education and progress—

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80 Broadie writes: "Raeburn... produced strongly evocative portraits of major figures of the Enlightenment, such as Robertson, Reid, Ferguson, Hutton and Dugald Stewart. He not only painted the philosophers; he knew them personally and was familiar with their writings, including their writings on perception. There is evidence that his art was influenced by those writings, particularly Reid’s... concerning the painter’s need to paint not what is signified by the various patterns of light and shade, but instead the light and shade themselves and to leave it to the spectator to interpret the patterns that the painter has put on canvas." See Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, p. 31.
Smith, Reid, Stewart—, that Jefferson was urging in 1771 for inclusion in Robert Skipwith’s library?81

Considered in this context, Copley’s portraits of Hancock and Revere seem to privilege the material qualities of subject and object at the expense of theoretical truths. He seems to suggest that knowledge depends on the external evidence of internal forms and, hence, that the artisan might employ his mechanical powers to advance the rational good, a point driven home by the dramatic illumination of Revere’s head and hands. This represents a contradiction of Reynolds’s seventh Discourse (December 1776), which argued: “success in your art depends almost entirely on your own industry; ...not the industry of the hands, but of the mind....”82

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82 Reynolds, Discourses on Art, p. 117.
In fact, the use of dramatic lighting is characteristic of Copley's mature colonial work. It is found, for example, in *Samuel Adams* (Fig. 7-18; 1770-1772; oil on canvas, 50 x 40-1/4 inches; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), where the effect is augmented by a monochromatic palette. Here, the merchant-politician is depicted in sturdy brown homespun, his starched white linen and powdered hair the only escape from an otherwise-monotonous color scheme. And yet, it is by these means that the effect of illumination is made all the more successful, for little distracts us from the enlightened face and hands—the engaging eyes and emphatic gesture—that metaphorically convey the complementary union of education and industry—the pillars of self-sufficiency—in the person of this sitter. Behind Adams, almost obscured by shadow, is the classical column that confirms his public stature, but its very faintness suggests redundancy: we can recognize Adams as a Public Man on the evidence of his "enlightenment" alone. A like effect is achieved in Gilbert Stuart's "Vaughan" portrait of *George Washington* (Fig. 7-19; 1795; oil on canvas, 29 x 23-
3/4 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington). In this image, such a force is Washington's mind—and, so, his virtue—that it casts a halo behind him.

According to the evidence of Copley's *Nicholas Boylston* (Fig. 7-20; 1767; oil on canvas, 49 x 40 inches; Harvard University Portrait Collection), costume provided an alternative means for conveying intellectual agility. Here, seated in a rococo side chair beside a covered table topped with thick ledgers, fronting a view of Boston harbor, the Boston merchant dons the banyan and robe of the humanist thinker. One might recall the words of Machiavelli:
When evening comes, I return to my home, and I go into my study; and on the threshold, I take off my everyday clothes, which are covered with mud and mire, and I put on regal and curial robes; and dressed in a more appropriate manner I enter into the ancient courts of ancient men...; and there I am not ashamed to speak to them, to ask them the reasons for their actions; and they, in their humanity, answer me...: I become completely part of them.8

Although not absent in British painting, such allusions were usually reserved for more noted intellectuals. Reynolds’s portraits, *Samuel Johnson* (Fig. 5-6) and *Laurence Sterne* (Fig. 7-21; 1761; oil on canvas, 50-1/8 x 39-1/2 inches; National Portrait Gallery, London), serve as examples of a model that may have originated with Kneller—note *John Locke* (Fig. 7-22; 1704; oil on canvas, 30 x 25-1/2 inches; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond)—before adoption by Richardson, William Hoare, and others—note *Richard Boyle, Third Earl of Burlington* (Fig. 7-23; ca. 1717-1719; oil on canvas, 57-1/2 x 46 inches; National Portrait Gallery, London) and

Alexander Pope (Fig. 7-24; ca. 1738; pastel, 23-7/8 x 17-3/4 inches; National Portrait Gallery, London). Moreover, while such claims were conventionally deemed a privilege of leisure, Boylston rests his title, literally and figuratively, on his ledgers. Once again, the virtues of intellect are supported by the virtues of industry, paradoxically redressing the neo-Country correlation between intellect and birth.

Significantly, precedent for Copley’s breach of the civic humanist narrative can be found among the works of Kneller, whose kit-kat portrait of Jacob Tonson I (Fig. 7-25; 1717; oil on canvas, 36 x 28 inches; National Portrait Gallery, London) depicts the successful tradesman-printer in similar dress. That Tonson bears a copy of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* serves as a cleverly deceptive double-entendre: the overt reference to Tonson’s intellectualism obscures the equally-relevant reference to Tonson’s business and the financial benefits he reaped from the book’s copyright. But it also masks the political undertones resonant in Milton’s work. As Paulson
notes, the “antimonarchical and revolutionary (indeed, regicidal) politics” in Milton’s work were “repolitici[z]d” by Hogarth, who highlighted “the Protestant-Whig element” of “the ‘great English poem’,” most notably its emphasis on “the liberty of human choice.” Ultimately, Tonson suggests, Copley’s Boylston captures the merchant’s rights to claim for himself the Englishman’s liberties—in this case, the autonomous intellect of the landed elite. The same point is made in Richardson’s own Self-Portrait (Fig. 7-26; 1729; oil on canvas 29 x 24-3/4 inches; National Portrait Gallery, London), which captures the aspiring intellectual in his own banyan and robe.

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84 Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, p. xxvii. Paulson adds: “It was the Miltonic association with liberty (vs. tyrannous confinement) that Addison invoked in his ‘Pleasures of the Imagination’.... Toland, a more radical Whig, celebrated Milton the apostle of liberty.... Toland argued that ‘to display the different Effects of Liberty and Tyranny, is the chief design of his Paradise Lost’.” See Paulson, The Analysis of Beauty, p. xxvii.
Increasingly, an *expressive* handling of light and darkness seems to have supplanted a *representational* use of costume and accoutrements. Copley's illumination of the human head as a metaphorical reference to the human intellect suggests the growing influence of internalization on eighteenth-century portraiture. Henry Raeburn presents another case in point. His representational image of the enlightened farmer-scientist, *James Hutton* (Fig. 7-27; 1787; oil on canvas, 49-1/4 x 41-1/4 inches; Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh),\(^{85}\) serves as a point-of-

![Fig. 7-27](image)

comparison for his later and more expressive works, *David Anderson* (Fig. 7-28; ca. 1790; oil on canvas, 60 x 46-1/2 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington) and *Sir John Clerk and Lady Clerk of Penicuik* (Fig. 7-29; 1792; oil on canvas, 57 x 80-1/2 inches; Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh).\(^{85}\) For a discussion of this image, see Thomson, *Raeburn*, pp. 66-69.
inches; National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin), each of which explores the technical properties and effects of light as a means of conveying, at least in part, an otherwise invisible, internal process.\footnote{With reference to Penicuik, Thomson writes: "Contre-jour portraits [are those in which] ... the principal forms are placed against a strong light source so that they are essentially dark by contrast, their outlines clearly defined and their inner forms verifiable mainly by the ambient light that travels back by weakened reflection...." (Thomson, Raeburn, p. 75) See Duncan Thomson, Raeburn, pp. 74-76, 116-117.}
As the inward-looking self-examination of the early eighteenth century—intended, as Shaftesbury explained it, for the advancement of human understanding—gave way to the impassioned self-discovery of the later eighteenth century—intended, as Rousseau described it, as a medium of human re-engagement with the meaning of life—, the affects on portraiture became even more pronounced. Images like Wright’s *Brooke Boothby* (Fig. 4-2), of 1781, which located their subject in natural settings as a means of metaphorically re-uniting them with their natural, moral selves, became images like Mather Brown’s provocative *William Vans Murray* (Fig. 7-30; 1787; oil on canvas, 30-1/8 x 25 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington), a
transition visually mediated by the likes of Ramsay’s *David Hume* (Fig. 4-3), in which a Rembrandtesque use of cast light intensifies the emphasis on internal character.\(^{87}\)

In *William Vans Murray*, the empirical, enamel-like realism of *Samuel Adams* has given way to an intense, imaginative and impassioned brushwork that visually translates the internal workings of the subject’s mind onto canvas through the plasticity of pigment and the manipulation of brush.\(^{88}\) In such imagery, the representative gives way to the expressive—to the act of discovery, the internal pursuit itself.\(^{89}\) And yet, for all its painterly boldness, for all the resulting appearance of a classical swag-cum-fiery backdrop, for all the blurred delineations between figure and background, Murray’s countenance remains paradoxically controlled. It is as though Brown has provided us with the two halves of the divided self: the impassioned, natural and internal self and the controlled, civilized and external persona. A similar intent appears to inform Copley’s *John Quincy Adams* (Fig. 7-31; 1796; oil on canvas, 30 x 25 inches; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) and John

\(^{87}\) Smart, *Allan Ramsay*, pp. 206-208.

\(^{88}\) In art, revelation leads to articulation leads to manifestation; art becomes a medium for expressing nature and the artist becomes a surrogate creator. As Taylor explains it: “Manifesting reality involves the creation of new forms which give articulation to an inchoate vision....” (Taylor, p. 379) Thus “In the perfect work of [Romantic] art, the ‘matter’—the language... or the material—should be entirely taken up in the manifestation; and reciprocally, what is manifested ought to be available only in the symbol, and not merely pointed to as an independent object whose nature could be defined in some other medium.” (Taylor, p. 379) As Abrams likewise observes, the increasingly “expressive” mode of Romantic art was manifest in “the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet’s perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.” (Abrams, p. 22). Or, in Coleridge’s words, “to make the external internal, the internal external, to make nature thought, and thought nature,—this is the mystery of genius in the Fine Arts.” (Hazlitt, quoted in Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 53) By the late eighteenth century, Taylor adds, verbal and visual languages had “come to be seen not only or mainly as directed to the correct portrayal of an independent reality but also as our way of manifesting through expression what we are, and our place within things.” (Taylor, p. 198) See Taylor, pp. 198, 379; Abrams, pp. 22, 52-53.

\(^{89}\) Taylor, pp. 376-379.
Trumbull’s *Alexander Hamilton* (Fig. 7-32; ca. 1792; oil on canvas, 30-1/4 x 24 1/8 inches; National Gallery, Washington).90

Portraits of women were not exempt from the visual manipulations of the neo-Country narrative resonant in Revolutionary portraits of American men. As the classical attributes of the landed peer were stretched to fit the propertied man, so the sister attributes of the leisured lady were stretched to redress the colonial mistress. Take, for example, Copley’s companion portraits *Ezekiel Goldthwait* and *Mrs. Ezekiel Goldthwait* (Figs. 7-33, 7-34; 1771; oil on canvas, 50 x 40 inches (each); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). In the case of Mr. Goldthwait, Copley’s use of a monochromatic palette with white highlights—a tactic he employed in *Samuel Adams* a year earlier—draws the viewer’s attention to Goldthwait’s head and hands: the

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90 Here, the significance of the “lamp” metaphor—the casting of light—becomes apparent. See Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p. 52.
instrument and medium of his progress. Similarly, a tassel and swag allude to the sitter's public merits. But the same holds true for the portrait of his wife. Indeed, differences in the two images turn on the potentiality of their respective genders: if esteem comes to Ezekiel Goldthwait by virtue of his commercial and political roles, it arises to Mrs. Goldthwait by virtue of her domestic one—her role as wife and mother; whereas he bears the conversational accoutrements of quill and correspondence—, she grasps the domestic emblems of her fertility. Moreover, both engage the viewer's gaze.

A similar allusion to the complementary and interdependent nature of public (male) and private (female) life, public (male) and private (female) attributes, is made by Copley's *Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Mifflin* (Fig. 7-35; 1773; oil on ticking, 60-1/2 x 48 inches; Philadelphia Museum of Art). Once again, Copley highlights the mediums of human progress—education (signified by the book) and industry (signified by the
At the same time, he clearly indicates that this is Mrs. Mifflin's sphere of influence: it is *she* who occupies the foreground, to *her* that Mr. Mifflin defers his gaze, it is *she* who commands the spectator, and *her* chair that anchors the classical pillar.

Precedent for this concession to women in portraits may be found throughout the oeuvres of major British painters; Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, Raeburn and Hogarth all recorded the female virtues and the public benefits of domestic life. What stands out, however, are the varying *types* of attributes British artists chose to

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render. On the one hand, the attribute of fertility—as evidenced directly by the inclusion of children or metaphorically through the use of emblems (such as fruit)—
dominates female imagery on both sides of the Atlantic, from Mrs. Freake and Daughter Mary (Fig. 7-36; Unknown artist; ca. 1671-1674; oil on canvas, 42-1/2 x 36-3/4 inches; Worcester Art Museum) to Stephen Slaughter’s A Lady and Child (Fig. 7-37; 1745; oil on canvas, 51-1/6 x 41 inches; National Gallery of Ireland), from George Beare’s An Elderly Lady and a Young Girl (Fig. 7-38; 1747; oil on canvas, 49-1/16 x 40-1/4 inches; Yale Center for British Art), to Earl’s Mrs. Elijah Boardman and Son (Fig. 7-39; ca. 1796, oil on canvas, 85-1/4 x 56-1/4 inches; Huntington Gallery). The same may be said of references to female youth, modesty, grace, and beauty, be they emblematic—note the swag of flowers in Benjamin West’s Jane Galloway (Fig. 7-40; ca. 1757; oil on canvas, 49-3/4 x 39-1/4 inches; Historical Society of Pennsylvania)—or descriptive—as in Joseph Blackburn’s Mrs. James Pitts (Fig. 7-41; 1757; oil on canvas, 50 x 40 inches; Detroit Institute of Arts) and George Romneys’s Mrs. Thomas Scott Jackson (Fig. 7-42; ca. 1770/1773; oil on canvas, 94-
1/8 x 57-7/8 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington). What varies over time and place are references to education, industry and even politics, allusions to which may be found even among the most mechanical images—note the backdrop of books in Winthrop Chandler’s *Mrs. Samuel Chandler* (Fig. 7-43; ca. 1780; oil on canvas, 54-3/4 x 47-7/8 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington). A good example of this is Sarah Mifflin’s fringe-making.

John Wollaston’s *Miss Rebecca Beekman (?)* (Fig. 7-44; 1749-1752; oil on canvas, 52-1/2 x 42-3/8; Art Institute of Chicago) gives evidence of the early use of gaze and industry in female imagery, with which Reynolds’s portrait, *Anne, Countess of Albemarle* (Fig. 7-45; 1759; oil on canvas, 49-2/3 x 39-3/4 inches; National Gallery, London) might be readily compared. In all three images—*Mifflin, Beekman, and Albemarle*—a seated female is interrupted in her work—be it fringe-making or
“knotting”—to monitor the trespass of voyeur-spectators, an action which requires ocular engagement with the (potentially male) viewer. The effect of this engagement is to place subject and spectator on a visually-equal footing while granting the female subject the psychological edge. On the one hand, such boldness on the part of a female subject contradicts traditional interpretations of female modesty and acquiescence. On the other hand, it invokes the authority of women in the domestic sphere.

There is some disagreement about the role and experience of women during the eighteenth century. The patriarchal premise of Christian hierarchy which informed settlement patterns in New England endorsed a communal view of society in which the family served as a micro-unit and the head of household (potentially a
widow) operated as the lowest rung of the political ladder.\textsuperscript{92} Familial and political structures were thus entwined. Different settlement patterns in the Chesapeake South, where immigrants were commonly unmarried Anglican men driven by economic motivations—many of whom were indentured servants (unmarried and unlikely to become so during the term of their indenture)—discouraged any political emphasis on family.\textsuperscript{93} There—perhaps even more so than in England—, familial and political structures were distinct entities, one being a “private” realm of male and female, the other a “public” realm of men.\textsuperscript{94}

The division between private and public spheres informing Chesapeake settlement patterns echoed the development of classical republicanism in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. As Mary Beth Norton and Linda Kerber have each noted, classicism resolved the private-public tensions of patriarchal order by separating the spheres of private (family) and public (political) life and subverting the former to the latter, the private realm becoming a base of support for the public one.\textsuperscript{95}

Eventually, Locke drew on this separation to explain the transition from a natural (familial) to an artificial (political) society—from a community of families to the

\textsuperscript{92} As Mary Beth Norton explains, early Puritan settlers envisioned a hierarchical sociopolitical order based on a divinely-imposed inequality of functions. While all souls were deemed equal, secular society was thought naturally hierarchical and complementary—interdependent—in which “each person ‘might have need of other’ [that]... ‘they might be all knit together in the bond of brotherly affection’,” as John Winthrop wrote in “A Modell of Christian Charity” (1630). Quoted in Norton, Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), p. 9.

\textsuperscript{93} Norton, Founding Mothers and Fathers, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{94} Norton, Founding Mothers and Fathers, pp. 21-22.

\textsuperscript{95} Norton, Founding Mothers and Fathers, pp. 10-11, and Linda Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), p. 7. As T. A. Sinclair notes, this money-earning, extralegal class of private men was sizable, even in Aristotle’s time, yet they were virtually absent from the public sphere, “he has little to say about them except that they are a possible source of discontent and a danger to the established order.” See Sinclair, in Aristotle, The Politics, p. 23.
community of the State—as one of contract between male heads-of-household.\textsuperscript{96} However, one consequence of this structural separation was a formal gendering of politics: whereas the private sphere of the family was of mixed gender, the public sphere of politics was decidedly male.

In Wollaston's *Beekman*, a young lady sits in an imagined, architecturally-framed liminal space, an open view of a wooded landscape, and a portion of a marble-topped pier table, gracing the space behind her. Costumed in a rich and shiny satin dress adorned with delicate lace, Rebecca casts the viewer a pleasant smile before demurely returning to her knotting. Fingers gently curl around a marquise-shaped shuttle and delicately grasp the taut thread. There is no reference to column or swag.

Ten years later, Reynolds captured the “ancient peeress” and grand-daughter of Charles II in a more sophisticated version of a similar composition.\textsuperscript{97} Donning a blue and white floral damask dress with appliqué ruching, topped by a black silk mantle spattered with floral sprigs, Lady Anne Lennox occupies a domestic setting emblematically augmented by classical drapery. Despite the swag, a modest side table supports a wicker work-basket and open scissors beside the upholstered and brass nail-headed chair she occupies. Significantly, Reynolds's portrait of Lady Anne preceded his formal commitment to the grand-style portrait and the political developments of the Revolution. Like *Johnson* (Fig. 5-6) and *Sterne* (Fig. 7-21), it suggests the influence of Ramsay's conversational manner while simultaneously

\textsuperscript{96} Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers*, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{97} Mannings, *Reynolds*, I, p. 287.
alluding to the Anglo-Protestant virtues of industry and domesticity. And like Rebecca Beekman, she engages in “knotting.”

According to William Pressley, “knotting was a favored pastime for ladies, acceptable even at court, as it avoided the appearance of idleness while allowing the practitioner to display feminine grace and dexterity.” As suggested by Beekman and Albemarle, respectively, he goes on, with “younger sitters it is the coquettish aspects that are emphasized, while with older women it is industriousness that is celebrated.” In this latter usage, the act of knotting (as opposed to rosary-telling) bore Protestant (as opposed to Catholic) political connotations. As Pressly explains: “The second stanza of the poem The Royal Knotter, first published in 1704, makes this point when praising [the Protestant] Queen Mary [II]:

‘Bless’d we! Who from such Queens are freed, Who by vain Superstition led, Are always telling Beads; But here’s a Queen, no, thanks to God, Who, when she rides in Coach abroad, Is always knotting Threads...’

In the imagined identity of Sarah Mifflin, the two functions of feminine grace and Protestant industry appear to converge. Instead of knotting, however, which, while emblematic of industry bore no immediate correlation with dutied imports, Mrs. Mifflin is engaged in fringe-making: the production of household trimmings which, like more intricate textiles, were generally imported from

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England. And this recalls the political purposes that knotting metaphorically served. While displaying her grace and dexterity to full advantage, Copley uses the medium of fringe-making not only to assert Sarah’s support for nonimportation, but to make the proper correlation between nonimportation and the virtues of industry informing the Anglo-Protestant narrative.

Once again, precedent for more politicized female imagery can be found in the work of Hogarth. Indeed, Miss Mary Edwards (Fig. 7-46; 1742; oil on canvas, 49-3/4 x 39-7/8 inches; Frick Collection, New York) stands as a female counterpart to the freeholder image of John Beale Bordley. Like Bordley, she draws on the materials of English history—materials affiliated with the causes of English

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101 Staiti, in Rebora and Staiti, John Singleton Copley in America, pp. 318-321.

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patriotism and liberty—to address contemporary political and ideological questions. For example, bearing a copy of an address delivered by Elizabeth I to her troops, she urges:

Remember Englishmen the Laws the Rights The generous plan of power deliver’d down from age to age by your renown’d Forefathers[,] So dearly bought [at] the price of so much contest[,] Transmit it carefully to Posterity[,] Do though great Liberty inspire their Souls And make their lives in they possession happy or die glorious in thy Just defence. ¹⁰²

In this image, surrounded by a blending of classical accoutrements and domestic furnishings, Mary Edwards receives and returns the male gaze. On the one hand, in casting Miss Edwards’s domestic influence as a classical attribute—note the column and swag—, Hogarth conveys her public significance as a guardian of the private sphere. That she can engage the male gaze without loss of decorum only reaffirms her proper authority. But he also alludes to her political significance as a defender of English virtue. Through emblematic references to Elizabeth I and Alfred the Great, Hogarth aligned Mary Edwards with the native virtues and fortitude of England’s “Virgin” Queen and “Patriot” King. ¹⁰³ Decades before the Revolution, then, there is visual precedent for the allegiance of female colonists with the “ancient rights and liberties” of English Protestantism.

¹⁰² Bindman, *Hogarth and his Times*, p. 47.
¹⁰³ Bindman adds: “Such neo-Elizabeth ideals are unmistakably present in Hogarth’s grand portrait of Miss Mary Edwards of 1742 (fig. 11). She is depicted with the busts of Queen Elizabeth and King Alfred in the background, reading from Elizabeth’s defiant address to the English troops as they went out to fight the Spaniards at Tilbury…” (Bindman, p. 47) He continues: “Though the paintings iconography probably owed more the patron’s desires than to the painter, it confirms Hogarth’s familiarity with Patriot ideology…” (Bindman, p. 47) Indeed, Hogarth’s *Election* series would seem to confirm his Opposition bias, as “expressed in Bolingbroke’s *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism*, published in 1749 but written some years before, … [in which he] argues for an end to opposing parties in favour of a ‘Patriot King’ to transcend factionalism, as the great British monarchs Alfred and Elizabeth I had done before him.” (Bindman, p. 50) See Bindman, *Hogarth and his Times*, pp. 45-50.
According to Kerber, a peculiar feature of the mid-century rebellion against British policy was the need to engage women in politics. “Although consumer boycotts seem to have been devised by men,” she writes, “they were predicated on the support of women, both as consumers… and as manufacturers.”104 Mifflin’s fringe-making might thus be understood as an individual variation on the communal “spinning bee,” which, according to Gary Nash, transformed domestic industries “into a patriotic activity and a symbol of defiance against England.”105 In this guise, Sarah Mifflin’s image recalls the 1774 agreement signed by fifty-one women in Edenton, North Carolina, which, according to Norton, “declared their ‘sincere adherence’ to the resolves of the provincial Congress and proclaimed it their ‘duty’ to do ‘everything as far as lies in our power’ to support the ‘publick good’.”106

Significantly, the needs of rebellion laid the foundation for post-Revolutionary social change within the family and between the familial and political spheres. On the one hand, the private, domestic realm of family life became the recognized sphere of female authority.107 By the same token, however, the solidification of the female domestic role inversely affected her political one: for all their influence in the social

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105 Nash, quoted in Kerber, “‘History Can Do It No Justice’,” in Hoffman and Albert, eds., Women in the Age of Revolution, p. 19. Kerber explains: “The boycotts were an occasion for instruction in collective political behavior, formalized by the signing of petitions and manifestos. In 1767, both men and women signed the Association, promising not to import dutied items.” By these means, Kerber adds, “men and women devised a political ritual congruent with women’s understanding of their domestic roles and readily incorporated into their daily routines.” See Kerber, “‘History Can Do It No Justice’,” in Hoffman and Albert, eds., Women in the Age of Revolution, p. 19.
107 This is supported by Kerber, who argues that the nature of female authority was expanded and solidified during the Revolutionary period, although women did not breach the political barrier to citizenship. See Kerber, “‘History Can Do It No Justice’,” in Hoffman and Albert, eds., Women in the Age of Revolution, pp. 31-33, 38-39.
community, women became more certainly non-public. Indeed, Kerber argues, the standard of female identity came to turn on a model of "Republican Motherhood," which united traditional female virtues with the political demands of republican ideology. In this role, as "custodian[s] of civic morality," one hundred women from Hartford, Connecticut, joined in 1786 to form a "Patriotic and Economical Association" encouraging "industry, frugality, and neatness" at home. The influence of this role was likewise felt in contemporary debates over female education.

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108 According to Susan Juster, republican politics engaged a monastic fraternity that celebrated manliness against the effeminacy of a Courtly England. Although women played an active role in the rebellion, their political use was temporary; after the War, they were consciously marginalized. (Juster, pp. 135, 138-143) As Linda Kerber likewise notes, "Even the most radical American men had not intended to make a revolution in the status of their wives and sisters." (Kerber, Women of the Republic, p. 9) See Susan Juster, Disorderly Women: Sexual Politics and Evangelicalism in Revolutionary New England (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 135, 138-143; Linda Kerber, Woman of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America, pp. 7-9.


111 Norton, Liberty's Daughters, p. 255. Judith Sargent Murray described the female ideal in The Gleaner: "a sensible and informed woman—companionable and serious—possessing also a facility of temper, and united to a congenial mind—blest with competency—and rearing to maturity a promising family of children." (Murray; quoted in Norton, Liberty's Daughters, p. 271) As Kerber explains: "A revolution in women's education had been underway in England and America when the Revolution began; in postwar America the ideology of female education came to be tied to ideas about the sort of woman who would be of greatest service to the Republic.... On the one hand, republican political theory called for a sensibly educated female citizenry to educate future generations of sensible republicans; on the other, domestic tradition condemned highly educated women as perverse threats to family stability." (Kerber, Women of the Republic, p. 10)

The notion of female education conflicted with traditional notions of femininity. Jonathan Richardson thought his wife better kept "Ignorant of what is best unknown." As Gibson-Wood notes, "Whereas Richardson steadfastly maintained the importance of thinking through issues like religion for oneself, he, like many of his contemporaries, believed that this applied only to men. He clearly regarded as ideal his wife's supportive but subordinate role in his life." (Gibson-Wood, Jonathan Richardson, pp. 39-40, 46, 49, 54) The two positions are taken up in Burney's Evelina (1778), in which Villars, on the one hand, encourages Evelina's development of "discretion" and "thought" towards "virtue in action," "gentleness and modesty" as well as "fortitude and firmness," whereas Lord Merton, on the other hand, deems "beauty and good-nature" the only requirements of women, "every thing else [being]... either impertinent or unnatural." (Edward A. and Lillian D. Bloom, introduction to Burney, Evelina, p. xxii, and Burney, Evelina, pp. 217 and 361) By 1796, however, Burney had written with regard to Miss Maryland: "though a passion for beauty was still as fashionable as it was natural, the time was past when the altar of Hymen required no other incense to blaze upon it."
The significance of the Mifflin portrait for the interpretation of female identity is thus fourfold: it links the attributes of women with industry and industry with Anglo-Protestant virtue; it bridges the gap between private attributes and public good not only by way of a classicized setting, but by making the domestic sphere and its female agent the source of public virtue; by extension, it transforms the female subject into a political agent; and, in the process, places her on an equal footing with the male spectator.112

In Copley's British work, Mrs. Seymour Fort (?) (Fig. 7-47; ca. 1776-1780; oil on canvas, 49-1/2 x 39-5/8 inches; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford), a domestic interior augmented by a classical swag frames a seated subject engaged in "knotting."

112 In the end, Kerber writes, "virtue would become for women what honor was for men: a private psychological stance laden with political overtones." Kerber, "'History Can Do It No Justice'," in Hoffman and Albert, eds., Women in the Age of Revolution, p. 39.
A decade and a half later, Gilbert Stuart's *Mrs. Richard Yates* (Fig. 7-48; 1793/4; oil on canvas, 30-1/4 x 25 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington) dispensed with the classical swag while retaining the image of the industrious subject. Both portraits present the sitters as arbiters of the (male) gaze. Against such images of female industry and authority, grand-manner portraits asserted a more traditional model. Reynolds's *Duchess of Devonshire* (Fig. 6-8), of 1775-1776, and *The Ladies Waldegrave* (Fig. 7-49; 1780; oil on canvas, 56-1/2 x 66 inches; National Gallery, Scotland), suggest neither the industry nor the authority of his *Albemarle* portrait. Indeed, both highlight the passive role of women as private objects of display and
acquisition. Whereas *Duchess of Devonshire* celebrates the grace and beauty of an aristocratic wife, for example, *The Ladies Waldegrave* appears like a P.R. poster for prospective suitors: *health* (read fertility), *beauty* (undoubtedly genetic), *modesty*, *refinement* (literacy, artistry, and domesticity): *all this* (and more) *can be yours*; only *the qualified* (well-born, well-bred, well-endowed) *need apply*. Through images such as these, female figures became passive recipients of a consuming male gaze for which they tacitly displayed a virtuous package of private benefits.

By the same token, whereas the *Mifflin* portrait subordinated the male spectator to the female subject, thereby alluding to female authority in the domestic sphere, Reynolds's group portrait of the Temple family, *George Grenville, Earl*
Temple, Mary, Countess Temple, and their son Richard (Fig. 7-50; 1780-1782; oil on canvas, 94-3/4 x 72 inches; National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin), places emphasis on the male progeny arising from domestic relations. In this pyramid composition, Mary, Countess Temple, takes a subordinate role to her husband and son, ranking somewhere between the white male heir and the black male servant—a measure of her place in the traditional social hierarchy. By the same token, the classical column arises from the shoulders of the family patriarch, as do the roots of the family tree, metaphorically suggested by the clever layering of oak tree, classical urn, and male torso.

In the end, then, the evidence of colonial portraits suggests that American painters modified—and, in so doing, contradicted—basic tenets of the neo-Country narrative in the interest of satisfying both the realities of colonial experience and the principles of its developing narrative. The replacement of universal landscapes and spaces with simple backdrops and private settings, the subversion of a general style to material realism, the use of simple costumes without public adornments, the unconventional—even paradoxical—use and blending of established signifiers, and the presentation of individuals in their singular potentiality, aligned artists and sitters with alternative narratives that drew on associations between liberty and identity imbedded in Reformed, Liberal, Restoration, Opposition, Patriot and republican ideologies.

As the imagining of identity necessarily engaged in the narrative context-making of artist and sitter, so, too, did it necessarily bear ideological and political implications for society at large. Indeed, images which endorsed alternative
narratives posed an ideological challenge to the established political order. In the case of American Revolutionary portraits, the challenge appears to have turned on the elevation of industrious commoners to positions of esteem on the evidence of virtues like intellect and industry—head and hands—, evidence which the portraits sought to provide.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION: PORTRAITS AND POLITICS, CIRCA 1776

The late-medieval split between the internal and external self, resonant in the example of the Wicked Queen, was important, first, for its allusion to individual duality, second, for its distinction between the individual and secular society, third, for its consequent separation of eternal and secular spheres and, fourth, for its contradiction of the classical narrative. The narrative of natural progress considered the relationship between the natural and social self to be symbiotic and, consequently, looked upon the self as a unified extension of one's form and matter. But the image of the Wicked Queen suggested a contrary narrative and, hence, a different model of identity, based on a distinction between the natural, internal self of the eternal world and the external, social self of the temporal one. The resulting identity, informed by the selective manipulation of Haywoodian 'lightnings'—those attributes deemed momentarily useful as a public signifier for the self—functioned less to express one's natural self than to manipulate the 'others' at whose expense one claimed social privileges.

The possibilities which attended the "divided" self, and their implications for the construction of identity, inform the principle of imag[in]ing used throughout this
paper. But their accompanying difficulties have set philosophers at odds. For example, Hume's rejection of a unified self came at the expense of a 'true' identity; as he described it, "the identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man is only a fictitious one." This sat uneasily with his contemporaries. In an effort to reconcile Hume's claims with persistent demands for a credible identity, Immanuel Kant distinguished between the nonmenal, 'perceiving' or subjective (internal) self, and the phenomenal, 'perceived' or objective (external) self—an effect of the collision between internal self and external world. Because this "phenomenal" self could be "known" through its affect upon observable experience—and, hence, objectified—, Kant was able to restore some matter to identity.

The eighteenth-century explications of Hume and Kant suggest that the inconsistencies arising from the convergence of Mediaeval and Renaissance, Christian and neoclassical, thinking, continued to plague the narratives of the Revolutionary period: was society a natural or an artificial construct, born of divine plan or human interest; was man innately motivated towards improvement and,
indeed, was there anything like an ideal potentiality; if so, was society a natural venue in its achievement or was potential confined to the sphere of revelation; moreover, could men be said to be naturally equal and what bearing had inequality on claims to identity and political authority; finally, to what degree was identity—the appellation of the self—and social rank—its perceived social value—self-determined and, so, fluid, or prescribed and, so, fixed? At the same time, the variety of ideas effected by this divergent thinking provided colonists with a pool of intellectual resources for rationalizing their dissent when the dominant narrative failed to serve them.

While subject to this confusion of influences, portraits simultaneously gave evidence of their conflicting consequences. For example, in yet another image of a Queen before her looking-glass, Johann Zoffany employed a mirror to shape, frame and process identity on the one hand, while underscoring its problematic complexity on the other. Indeed, *Queen Charlotte and her two eldest Sons* (Fig. 8-1; 1764; oil on canvas, 44-1/4 x 50-7/8 inches; Royal Collection) suggests the challenges which attended the depiction of identity. On the one hand, incorporating a “mirrored” public image within a “painted” domestic narrative, Zoffany captured Charlotte’s public “character” as “queen”—conveyed by the regal, “coin-like” profile publicized in the dressing mirror. On the other hand, he underscored its limitations as an index of her identity, for the public “character” that Zoffany “mirrors” does not square with his behind-the-scenes glimpse of Charlotte’s “person.” Yet, we cannot escape the fact

5 Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 166. This, too, was prescribed by Richardson: “Painters should take a Face, and make an Antique Medal, or Bas-Relief of it, by divesting it of its Modern Disguises, raising the Air, and the Features, and giving it the Dress of those Times, and
that the painted image, too, is a dramatic construction, a point driven home by the
children's theatrical dress and the allusion to the domestic "training" of Frederick's
"public" self. In the end, Zoffany's image conveys the mutable and relative nature of
identity, recalling Hobbes's human 'Mask' and Plato's "impersonation" of
"character."7

6 Telemachus was described by Plato as a man of the first or Guardian-Ruler class, one whose "path, so
to speak, has been marked out for him and he must go on his way confident that the poet's words are
ture: "'Some this, Telemachus, your native wit will tell you, And Heaven will prompt the rest. The
very gods, I'm sure, Have smiled upon your birth and helped to bring you up'." (Homer, *The Odyssey*,
III; quoted in Plato, *Laws*, p. 292) In encouraging her son to play Telemachus, Queen Charlotte helps
prepare him for the responsibilities of monarchy. See Marcia Pointon's compelling deconstruction of
this image in *Hanging the Head*, pp. 162-168; Plato, *Laws*, p. 292.
Zoffany's image points to the confusion that dogged the evaluation of modern identity. In the absence of a digestible alternative, the classical presumption about necessary unity between an internal-psychological self and its external-sociological persona, continued to dominate the interpretation of identity for most of the eighteenth century. This is suggested by Samuel Johnson, whose definition of identity invoked a complementary relationship between the internal and external self: “A representation of any man as to his personal qualities;” “Personal qualities; particular constitution of the mind;” “Adventitious qualities impressed by a post or office.”8 At the same time, frequent reference to “character” in eighteenth-century novels, as an evaluative reference for the tangible self (particularly popular for domestic servants), suggests its continued conflation with perceptions of social value.9 In other words, a complementary relationship between internal qualities, external persona and perceived social value, the whole constituting a public signifier of a singular, unified self, continued to hold sway even after the principles of individual autonomy and self-determination—implied by Christian dogma—were articulated (notably by Locke) and acknowledged (even by Shaftesbury) among the wider public.10 The resulting dynamic between inherited narratives and modern

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8 Johnson, Dictionary, definitions four, seven and eight.
9 Samuel Richardson's Pamela wrote to her mother “that every body gave me a very good character....” (Richardson, p. 47) She likewise referred to “the characters and persons of ... four ladies,” describing their physical features, “airs,” mind, and family connections. (Richardson, p. 83) See Richardson, Pamela, pp. 47, 83.
10 Though Pocock warns: “The conventional wisdom among scholars who have studied [the] growth [of myths] has been that the Puritan covenant was reborn in the Lockean contract, so that Locke himself has been elevated to the status of a patron saint of American values and the quarrel with history has been seen in terms of a constant attempt to escape into the wilderness and repeat a Lockean experiment in the foundation of a natural society. The interpretation put forward here stresses Machiavelli at the expense of Locke....” See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 545. It appears to have been Locke who highlighted the disengagement arising therefrom.
identities paralleled an emerging emphasis on negotiation: on the one hand, the
principle of autonomous self-determination permitted individual assertions of
imag[in]ed identities; on the other hand, the necessary concession to social judgment
meant acquiescence to a dominant narrative.\textsuperscript{11}

In effect, the continued demand for a credible identity—one based on
legitimate, reciprocal standards—, and the resulting concession to traditional models
of identity, compromised the influence of empirical and Reformed ideas on eighteenth-
century narratives, despite the experience of social change arising from economic
developments.\textsuperscript{12} Ultimately, the consequent gap between ideology and experience,
reflecting an inconsistent progress from a "stage three" (landed) to a "stage four"
(commercial) society, nurtured the coexistence of overlapping ideologies. On the one
hand, for example, an inherited model of independence might premise identity and
social rank on the natural capacity for disinterested wisdom affiliated with the leisure
afforded a landed elite. On the other hand, a model of independence based on the

\textsuperscript{11} As Hobbes explained: "men measure, not onely other men, but all other things, by themselves." He
goes on: "let a man (as most men do,) rate themselves as the highest Value they can; yet their true
Value is no more than it is esteemed by others." (Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan}, pp. 87, 151-152) Thus, as
Charles Taylor has likewise argued, "One is a self only among other selves...[;] A self can never be
described without reference to those who surround it...." (Taylor, p. 35) This socially-relative, 'other'-
oriented identity represents what some modern philosophers call "identity-thinking," a 'negative'
relativism premised on "Other-ness" versus "Same-ness." See, for example, Juliet Steyn, ed., \textit{Other
than identity: the subject, politics and art} (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997),
particularly: Andrew Benjamin, "Figuring self-identity: Blanchot's Bataille," pp. 9-31; Claire
Pajączkowska, "The ecstatic solace of culture: self, not-self and other; a psychoanalytic view," pp. 101-
112; John Gange, "Beyond identity? The beyond in \textit{Beyond Japan}," pp. 198-210; and Juliet Steyn,
"Painting another; other-than-painting," pp. 211-220. See Hobbes, \textit{Leviathan}, pp. 87, 151-152; Taylor,
pp. 15, 27, 35.

\textsuperscript{12} The persistence of civic humanism is evident in the "modern tension between individual self-
awareness on the one hand and consciousness of society, property, and history on the other." See
evidence of real experience might premise identity and social rank on a self-determined capacity for autonomous reasoning and a potentially nurtured virtue.

In part, the persistent influence of traditional standards of identity was enabled by the strategic concessions of neo-Country conservatives. For example, in response to the implications of individualism and Newtonian empiricism, and seeking to resolve the inherent tension between the unified and progressing self of classicism and the divided self of Liberalism and Reformed Christianity, Shaftesbury contained the implications of the divided self—the coexistence of natural and self-determined selves—by subverting them to an Aristotelian progressive self—form and matter developing from actuality to potentiality. On this foundation, he prescribed a fixed model of social order, one which conformed to the classical doctrine of human intellectual and social progress, in which the social ranks of autonomous, reasoning subjects was premised on a comparative analysis of individual progresses. This model came to inform a neo-Aristotelian bias in the neo-Country narrative: as Aristotelian progress suggested individual advancement from a lower to a higher state, from a state of passion to a state of reason, as all individuals were held subject to the same standards of improvement, so a cumulative summary of all progressing subjects would effect a naturally hierarchical social order.

In this narrative, the "mirror" became a convenient metaphor for the process of self-reflection requisite to an "improved" identity. On the one hand, it conceded

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13 What Canfield has aptly described as the "duality of self as object to itself." See Canfield, pp. 173, 205.
the intellectual separation between an internal and external self and the necessity of their being made "known." On the other hand, it subverted the practice of the "Pocket-Mirrour"—the process of engaging with the internal self in the advancement of "potentiality"—to an overriding natural order. Such is suggested by Clarissa Harlowe's lamentations to her friend, Anna Howe: "I would so conduct myself as not to give reason even for an adversary to censure me; and how shall so weak and so young a creature avoid the censure of such, if my friend will not hold a looking-glass before me to let me see my imperfections?"14 This provided a convenient context for the elevation of portraiture; at least for Jonathan Richardson, portrait-painting became a visual counterpart to "Mirrour-Writing": the metaphorical means by which one's mental reflection was transcribed and improved through visual imagery.15

II. The American Revolutionary Portrait

A visitor to the National Gallery of Art in the spring of 2002 might have been drawn by the proximity of two portraits gracing adjacent rooms in the American and British galleries. The similarities between Reynolds's portrait, Squire Musters (Fig. 8-2; 1777/80; oil on canvas, 93-7/8 x 58 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington), and Earl's portrait, Daniel Boardman (Fig. 8-3; 1789; oil on canvas, 81-5/8 x 55-1/4 inches; National Gallery of Art, Washington) seemed to compel the visitor into their visual comparison. For the hearty looker, the reward was a telling

14 Richardson, Clarissa, p. 73.
insight into the narrative differences informing British and American identities of the Revolutionary era.

Standing full-length in their respective British and American landscapes, Squire Musters and Daniel Boardman serve as striking exemplars of their time and place. On the one hand, the two figures clearly subscribed to similar notions of decorum: as Squire Musters stands supported by his left leg, an angled walking stick artfully grasped in his right hand, so Boardman stands supported by his left leg, an angled walking stick artfully grasped in his right hand; as the bend of Musters's right elbow, and the triangular effect of his right hand-on-hip, is echoed in the bend of his right leg and the triangular effect of his crossed foot (right-over-left), so the same is
effected by Boardman; as Musters's left arm rests aside the torso in parallel with his left leg, so a like complement of lines informs the posture of Boardman; moreover, both men don comparably fashionable attire. In sum, Daniel Boardman shares with Squire Musters a comparable politeness and, so, a comparable level of virtue.

But equally telling are the visual differences between the images. First and foremost, Musters's figure takes pride-of-place in the center of the canvas, a sophisticated use of convex illusionism functioning to elevate him vis-à-vis the spectator. The resulting subordination of spectator to subject is reaffirmed by the sitter's averted gaze, which forces the viewer into a passive position. By contrast, Boardman is placed to the side of the canvas, suggesting a more egalitarian distribution between subject and setting. This suggestion of interdependence extends
beyond the picture plane, where a compositionally-level, extraspatial audience is met by Boardman’s gaze. The effect is more “conversational” and less “grand.”

Differences in the two landscapes are also revealing. On the one hand, *Musters* locates the subject in a general, natural setting in a manner akin to Gainsborough’s *Dr. Ralph Schomberg* (Fig. 8-4; ca. 1770; oil on canvas, 91-3/4 x 60-1/2 inches; National Gallery, London) and *Sir Benjamin Truman* (Fig. 8-5; ca. 1773-1774; oil on canvas, 93-3/4 x 59-9/16 inches; Tate Britain). In all three images, country subjects enjoy the leisurely privileges of gentry life. Indeed, only in *Truman* is reference made to labor, and this of a theoretical kind: allusion to the pastoral ideal—note the shepherd tending his flock—invokes the natural and complementary relationship between Country life and Virgilian virtues, the combination of which supports—visually and metaphorically—the distant country estate nestled in the copse of trees.
By contrast, Boardman suggests a rather different narrative. Recalling Gainsborough’s early portrait, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Andrews (Fig. 8-6; ca. 1748-1749; oil on canvas, 27-1/2 x 47 inches; National Gallery, London), Boardman steps aside in deference to his property and community. As in Andrews—in which the identity of the newlyweds is literally and metaphorically embedded in the economic and social attributes of the farm (fertility being signified by the sheaves of com, for example, politeness with the ownership of land)—Boardman’s economic and social successes are specifically located in New Milford, Connecticut. Against the Musters, Schomberg, and Truman images, which allude to general attributes (land and leisure) and a theoretical context (the discourse of civic humanism), Boardman and Andrews appear more “agricultural” than “landed,” more “industrious” than “leisured,” more “particular” than “general.” Moreover, as each records a subject recently “landed,” so each conflates his social virtues with the function of land as an economic resource. As Rosenthal puts it with regard to Andrews, it “attempts to demonstrate that one can farm and still be polite.” In this way, images like Boardman highlighted the gap between the neo-Country ideals of civic humanism and its more empirical and Reformed variation.

This emphasis on industry and engagement as the basis of identity, progress, and good appears to inform American portraiture until at least the Federal period,

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17 Andrews, like Boardman, “was new to the land, for he ‘actually succeeded to the ... estate in 1750’.” (Rosenthal, p. 18) Hence, the imagining of identity: “Gainsborough assists in creating a fiction that his sitter is long established in living the moral country life.” (Rosenthal, p. 17) See Rosenthal, The Art of Thomas Gainsborough, pp. 17-19.
when portraits by Stuart suggest a heightened emphasis on internal attributes. From
the 1760s to the 1790s, American portraits appear to assert the complementary
relationship between head and hands—intellect and industry—, together with the
virtues of interdependent social relations, as mutually conducing to the public good.
One is reminded of Hume's observation: "Thus industry, knowledge, and humanity,
are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as
reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and, what are commonly denominated, the
more luxurious ages."19 Supporting this narrative was a specific body of personal
attributes—education and industry based on honesty, frugality, politeness, social
engagement and civic commitment—celebrated in portraiture.

III. A Question of Liberty

Ultimately, the evidence of Revolutionary portraits suggests that Britain's
territorial and economic expansion was experienced differently in the American
colonies than in England.20 This different experience effected a comparable gap in
their perceived reality and a like pressure towards narrative reform. Most pointedly,
they suggest a pressure to revise the necessary correlation between landed birth and
civic virtue, a pressure which ultimately turned on the more inclusive and expansive
Public. They also suggest a desire to reaffirm the principle of self-determination and
its supporting virtues of intellect (education) and industry (labor)—the premise of
Belfield's "Labour with Independence."

20 Baumeister, p. 54.
Justification for such revisions borrowed on a combination of ideologies: the Harrington/Country notion of virtuous self-sufficiency ascribed to the industrious freeholder; the Protestant promise of autonomous self-determination; the Liberal rhetoric of social contract; the Whig guarantee of certain "rights and liberties." All of these complemented the classical emphasis on progress and good, as long as the individual was the recognized medium of potentiality and liberty was recognized as the natural right of the individual.\\(^{21}\) In other words, on the one hand, the narrative of American identity turned on a belief in natural liberty and the consequent independence afforded individual will (as opposed to birth). On the other hand, it also recognized the implications of a market-born self—a dependence on contract, a vulnerability to social fluidity, and the challenge of inter-individual competition and the necessity of containing the inclinations towards vice.\\(^{22}\) As Hume aptly observed, the modern Public man derived his greatness from two sets of qualities, the public qualities of his "good and benevolent character"—i.e. "generosity, humanity, compassion, gratitude, friendship, fidelity, zeal, disinterestedness, liberality"—and the

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\\(^{21}\) In fact, Locke’s support for a “free, disengaged subject” and a “society ... made up of and by the consent of free individuals and, corollary to this, ... bearers of individual rights” marked the shift from a traditional classical and early Christian narrative, which encouraged “Rightful submission” to a ‘natural’ social and political order, to a modern narrative encouraging autonomous self-determination. As Taylor explains: “As against earlier contract theories, the one we find with Grotius and Locke starts from the individual.” (Taylor, p. 82) This shift, Taylor argues, informed a key rift between traditional civic humanism and its more individualist variations. It also affected the definition of liberty. In an aristocratic sense, the liberty of ‘ruling and being ruled’ turned on a principle of equality in which only those of equal virtue participated. In a democratic sense, by contrast, the liberty of “ruling and being ruled” turned on a principle of equality in which those equal in freedom might rule and be ruled in turn. This democratic interpretation lent credence to a second definition of liberty, ‘to live as you like’—i.e. to be ruled \textit{not at all}. See Taylor, pp. 82, 106; Aristotle, \textit{Politics}, pp. 362-363.

\\(^{22}\) As Pocock notes, “his only means of self-discovery lay in conforming to everybody else’s notions of what he ought to be and was....” Tocqueville’s “critique of \textit{egalite des conditions},” he goes on, “is basically Aristotelian: it is pointed out in the \textit{Politics} that when men are treated as all alike, we fail to take account of them in those respects in which they are not alike;... a society in which every man is
private qualities of his interested person—"prudence, temperance, frugality, industry, assiduity, enterprise, dexterity."\(^{23}\)

Hence liberty and independence became conflated.\(^{24}\) As the claim to independence implied a claim to liberty, so (and this was the tricky part) the claim to liberty implied a like claim to independence.\(^{25}\) Moreover, once the perception of independence was altered, the entire narrative was pressured to reform—as Aristotle observed: when ideological standards changed, "not only the quality of the democracy altered..., but also its identity."\(^{26}\) That conditions were ripe for reform is suggested by Burney:

'And what is this independence,' cried Mr. Monckton, 'which has thus bewitched your imagination? A mere idle dream ...; one part of a community must inevitably hang upon another, and 'tis a farce to call either independent....'

'Man...,' answered Belfield,... ‘considered merely with respect to his bodily functions, may indeed be called dependent, since the food by which he lives... cannot wholly be cultivated and prepared by his own hands: but considered in a nobler sense... as a being of feeling and understanding..., may he not claim the freedom of his own thoughts?

'But who is there in the whole world,' said Mr. Monckton, ‘...that can pretend to assert, his thoughts, words, and actions, are exempt from controul?'


According to Harrington, "where a people can live upon their own"—a nation of independent "citizens"—"the government may be democracy;" by contrast, "Where a people cannot live upon their own"—where they are dependent subjects/ servants—"the government is either monarchy or aristocracy." See Harrington, *A System of Politics*, p. 270.


even where interest... interferes not,—though where that is I confess I cannot
tell—are we not kept silent... by the fear of offending? and made speak ...by
the desire of obliging...?'

‘All these,’ answered Belfield, ‘are so merely matters of ceremony....
The bow is to the coat, the attention to the rank....’

‘Where, then, do you draw the line...? 

‘I hold that man,’ cried he, with energy, ‘to be independent, who treats
the Great as Little, and the Little as Great, who neither exults in riches nor
blushes in poverty, who owes no man a groat, and who spends not a shilling
he has not earned’.”

Somewhere in this exchange lives the Court-Country balance between
interdependence—social engagement—and independence—individual liberty—
reflected in Revolutionary portraits.

In part, the American Revolution stands as evidence of the ideological
difficulties which attended the assimilation of the autonomous individual into the
paradigm of the natural State.28 On the one hand, the persistent insistence on the
necessity of virtue as a corrective to interested vice suggests the continued influence
of civic humanism.29 Indeed, considering the formative influence of commerce on the
colonies, the “Mandevillian” identity is surprisingly absent, suggesting that the
legitimacy of the Revolutionary narrative depended on the credible assimilation of
commerce and interest into a classical narrative of progress and virtue.30 By the same

27 Frances Burney, Cecilia, pp. 733-736. It is interesting to note that Burney conducts this analysis in
the conversational mode that characterized the writing of Addison and Mandeville.
28 As Pocock notes, the “Court ideology... was based not on a simple antithesis between virtue and
commerce, but on an awareness that the two interpenetrated one another as did land and currency,
authority and liberty;... as far back as 1698, the founders of ‘Country’ ideology admitted this truth,
while drawing different conclusions from it...[—] the country gentlemen never [being] as radically
independent as they liked to pretend....” See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 486, 506, 508-
509, 548-552; quoted from pp. 508-509.
29 Ultimately, Pocock writes, “eighteenth-century attempts to construct a bourgeois ideology contended
none too successfully with the primacy already enjoyed by a civic ideology....” See Pocock, The
Machiavellian Moment, p. 550.
30 See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 507-508. Against the Federalist (Court) vision of the
influence of commerce and, hence, culture, for example, Jefferson posed an agrarian ideal; yet even he

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token, the accompanying emphasis on individual autonomy and self-determination suggests an associated pressure to revise the definition and accessibility of virtue. Difficulties thus turned on the construction of a credible structure for accommodating these divergent ideals.

Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood and others thus seem right to suggest the potency of the Country/Opposition ideology for rebel Americans. But they are also right in suggesting that a great deal of revision was required in order to render it compatible with the American experience. Significantly, for example, as the American version of the republican paradigm never quite condemned a ‘monied interest’ as the source of modern corruption—the distinction between a ‘monied

acknowledged its limitations—land and, hence, virtue were finite. Banking on the American opportunity for westward expansion that culminated in the Louisiana Purchase. See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 533.


32 Without an established ‘natural elite’, for example, the legitimacy of colonial virtue—and hence its claim to independence—appeared more fragile. In compensation, a cadre of property men—the Sparhawks, Lees, Bordleys and Boardmans of American society—were elevated to positions of political prominence. For a discussion of this development, see Rousseau, Of the Social Compact, A Discourse on Political Economy, and Considerations on the Government of Poland, in The Social Contract and other later political writings, pp. 16, 70, 82, 94, 188; Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 514-523; Richard Beeman, “Deference, Republicanism, and the Emergence of Popular Politics in Eighteenth-Century America,” The William and Mary Quarterly (July 1992), 401-430; Robert Gross, The Minutemen and their World, pp. 65-66, 133, 153-155, 169.

interest’ and a commercial people being likely too narrow to admit—, so portraits de-emphasized the distinction between real and mobile property, each serving as a potential medium of independence, progress and good. They were afforded this contradiction through the subtle recasting of ‘landed’ into ‘agrarian’—the former being affiliated with a well-born leisure, the latter with the industrious freeholder—and America’s unique potential for westward expansion.\(^{34}\)

It thus seems that the primary goal of rebelling colonists was to promote the promise of English liberty while ameliorating the negative effects arising therefrom.\(^{35}\)

In this sense, the American Revolution may be viewed as a continuation of the struggle to assimilate the demands of “happiness” into a discourse of “good.”\(^{36}\)

\(^{34}\) As Pocock explains, Jefferson, in 1785, was “as committed as any classical republican to the ideal of virtue, but saw the preconditions of virtue as agrarian rather than natural; he was not a Cato, seeing the relation of natural aristocracy to the natural democracy as the thing essential... so much as... seeing the preservation of a yeoman commonwealth as the secret of virtue’s maintenance. At the same time, we see, he doubted whether agrarian virtue could be preserved forever; but neither his faith nor his doubts separate him from the tradition of classical politics, or from the new liberalism of Madisonian Federalism.” (Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 533). As Pocock observes, “So long as the partnership of expansion lasts, the plunge into nature can be described simultaneously in pastoral and industrial terms....” (Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 539) According to Pocock, the concession is present in the writings of Noah Webster, who argued “that freehold land was a more stable foundation than commerce, but that a predominantly agrarian society could absorb commerce without essential loss of virtue.... We are on the verge of a theory in which frontier, not constitution, is the ‘soul of the republic’...[;] a purely agrarian republic had to be a commonwealth for expansion.” (Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 534-537) By contrast, Pocock continues, “Alexander Hamilton... looked east, not west, saw America as commercial empire rather than agrarian republic, and proclaimed that corruption was inescapable, that the cycle was closed and the end had come, before the covenant was fairly sealed or the experience in escaping corruption had begun.” (Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 544) See Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 533-544.

\(^{35}\) What “was involved,” Pocock writes, “was a flight from modernity and a future no less than from antiquity and a past, from commercial and Whiggish Britain... no less than from feudal and popish Europe....” See Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 546.

\(^{36}\) On these grounds, Pocock has described the American Revolution as “the last act of the civic Renaissance.” (Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 462) As he explains it, “The civil war and revolution which disrupted the English-speaking Atlantic after 1774 can be seen as involving a continuation, larger and more irreconcilable, of that Augustan debate which accompanied the Financial Revolution in England and Scotland after 1688 and issued after 1714 in the parliamentary oligarchy of Great Britain....”(Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 546-547) Conflict ensued because “the forces of change and modernity had crossed the Atlantic somewhat in advance of the governmental imperative that compelled their recognition....” (Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 467) Hence, he argues, “the republic—a concept derived from Renaissance humanism—was the true heir of the
might also be recognized as an intensely modern moment, for it was a certainty about their capacity as individuals—and, perhaps as essentially, about the potential risks to their autonomy—that propelled and united the colonists. In this sense, the balance-of-influence between the individual and society would appear to have shifted in favor of the former, a sign of more liberal tendencies. Thus a new narrative was crafted from the language of the old—Bailyn’s “transformed as well as transforming force”—borrowing on once-conflicting ideas to arrive at a narrative meaning of life that simultaneously liberated Americans and assured them of their virtue.

[Puritan] covenant and the dread of corruption the true heir of the jeremiad...[] the foundation of independent America was seen, and stated, as taking place at a Machiavellian—even a Rousseauan—moment, at which the fragility of the experiment, and the ambiguity of the republic’s position in secular time, was more vividly appreciated than it could have been from a Lockean perspective.” Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 462, 467, 506-507, 545-548; quoted from p. 545.

“...as we now see it,” he goes on, “modern and effective government had transplanted to America the dread of modernity itself, of which the threat to virtue by corruption was the contemporary ideological expression.” (Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 509) Wood adds: “it was the pervasive fear that they were not predestined to be a virtuous and egalitarian people that in the last analysis drove them into revolution in 1776. It was this fear... that made them so readily and so remarkably responsive to Thomas Paine's warning that the time for independence was at hand and that delay would be disastrous.” (Wood, Creation of the American Republic, p. 108) For a brief period, then, internal colonial conflicts were largely masked by the external conflict with England. (Wood, Creation of the American Republic, pp. 81-83) See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, p. 509; Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787, pp. 81-83, 108.

Bailyn, Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, p. 161. Indeed, Pocock adds, for all of Bolingbroke’s influence, the American Revolution resulted in: “a drastic rearticulation of the language and outlook of English opposition thought... [. according to which] the experience of the War of Independence and the constitution-making which followed it necessitated a further revision of the classical tradition, and in some aspects a departure from it.” See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 486, 506.

As Pocock observes, “it was in those vocabularies and within the ambivalences of those cultures that American self-consciousness originated and acquired its terminology.” See Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, pp. 546-547; quoted from p. 546.
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