When Josiah Wedgwood (1730–95) moved his London showroom to better premises in 1774, his partner Thomas Bentley (1731–80) reported that there was 'no getting to the door for coaches, or into the rooms for ladies and gentlemen — and vases all the rage'. That 'rage' was Neoclassical in style, enthusiastically promoted by Wedgwood's pioneering firm, which sold the most expensive British pottery in London. Commercial concerns at both the luxury and popular ends of the market played a major part in the evolution of Neoclassicism, aided by the ease with which the clean lines of shapes and the shallow moulding of decorative details could be adapted for factory production.

Let us start with one of the most familiar of all industrialists' names in the eighteenth century. So conscious was Wedgwood of the important role he came to play in British industry, that when he later displayed his copy of the famous ancient Roman Portland Vase, he issued invitations as if to the private view of an art exhibition (117). This was in keeping with the area of London he had chosen for his showroom, the artists' and writers' quarter of Soho, rather than the traditional commercial heart of the city further east. The Wedgwood showroom later moved to a grander part of town, the fashionable residential square of St James's (just off Piccadilly), where the showroom was to flourish in the early nineteenth century.

Wedgwood's basalt and jasperware pieces, especially ornamental items such as vases, were priced highly enough to attract the aristocracy. As he shrewdly observed in a letter to his partner: 'A great price is at first necessary to make the vases esteemed ornaments for palaces.' Wedgwood wanted his ceramics to be accepted as works of art. He also wanted to be accepted himself as a country gentleman, not merely as an industrialist, as can be
seen in George Stubbs’s family portrait group (118). The smoke from the factory chimney is scarcely perceptible in the background of the otherwise idyllic setting.

A labour-intensive piece such as the Portland Vase replica was not a typical product of Wedgwood’s factory. Rather, it was a technical challenge to capture the public’s imagination. Wedgwood had judged correctly that fashionable taste was becoming ever more deeply committed to an antique past, and as a forward-looking manufacturer, he helped to promote that Neoclassical style through his products.

Wedgwood was one of the earliest manufacturers to see himself as a disseminator of good taste, combining public benefit with private profit. That taste was almost exclusively Neoclassical. Other revival styles of the period – Gothic, Chinese and Egyptian – were largely ignored by the Wedgwood firm. This dissemination of good taste was furthered by Wedgwood’s catalogues, published in English, French, German and Dutch editions. Unlike other manufacturers’ trade catalogues, they were not just bald listings of items, with measurements and prices, and perhaps a few illustrations. In Wedgwood’s catalogues customers were told what classical and other sources of inspiration lay behind the designs, giving the text the appearance of a scholarly treatise. Customers were also taught something of the firm’s motivation, a rare insight into an eighteenth-century industrialist’s mind. Wedgwood (or the author of his early catalogues, perhaps Bentley) shows an almost missionary zeal in extolling the beneficial effects of the Industrial Revolution.

Those who duly consider the influence of the fine arts on the human mind will not think it a small benefit to the world, to diffusse their productions as wide, and preserve them as long, as possible. The multiplying of copies of fine works, in beautiful and durable materials, must obviously have the same effect in respect of the arts, as the invention of printing has upon literature and the sciences: by their means the principal production of both kinds will be for ever preserved, and will effectively prevent the return of ignorant and barbarous ages.

The consumer society in the second half of the eighteenth century was expanding rapidly, and the close link between user and maker was increasingly breaking down. Manufacturers seldom knew the individuals who bought their products, in contrast to earlier craftsmen-dominated periods. The modern manufacturers therefore played a key role in the design of goods they marketed to satisfy an ever-increasing public demand. The wealthy still employed painters, sculptors and craftsmen for special works, but even they did not commission every item for their houses. The less affluent had to rely even more on mass-production. Well-intentioned manufacturers like Wedgwood produced good designs, but as one British commentator was already grumbling in 1766 when the Industrial Revolution was not even in full swing:

‘How much more valuable a manufactory would Birmingham be (as well as many others) to this nation if it were in the hands of people of taste!’ Greedy industrial commercialism was present from the start, and persisted on the manufacturing scene despite many attempts to improve the general quality of industrial design made by governments, artists and polemists, as well as by such manufacturers as Wedgwood. When the architect Henry Latrobe was giving a lecture in Philadelphia in 1811, in which he justified the practical utility of the arts in modern society, the first manufacturer he mentioned was Wedgwood, ‘whose pots and pitchers, and cups and saucers, and plates, shaped and decorated by the fine arts, have thus received a passport to the remotest corners of the globe’.

Wedgwood initially ran two factories in Staffordshire. One produced large quantities of inexpensive creamware dinner and tea services, providing the substantial profits which made his experiments in more expensive wares feasible. The expanding population was a ready market for tableware which Wedgwood and other manufacturers exploited. Wedgwood’s products for everyday use were partially influenced by classical prototypes in shape and decoration, but the full impact of antiquity was evident in his other products.
These were made at his other factory, opened in 1769 and appropriately named Etruria after the region in Italy associated in the eighteenth century with the vases wrongly called ‘Etruscan’ (in fact Greek vases found in Etruscan tombs). This was the factory where the Portland Vase was copied, changing the original dark blue glass into ‘black basalt’, an expensive kind of stoneware. Basalt was used for the first vase made at the new factory, painted in red and white to simulate the colour scheme of the classical prototypes.

More frequently used was jasperware, another kind of stoneware in which the ground is one colour and the applied decoration another, a technique which Wedgwood perfected in 1775. The decoration was nearly always white, and the base very often in the familiar shade of ‘Wedgwood blue’, but it could also be lilac, pale green, mustard yellow or other colours. Wedgwood’s name became synonymous with jasperware, and on these pieces his international reputation largely rested. These were also among the pieces that foreign factories copied, including ones as famous as Sèvres in France and Meissen in Germany.

For the design of his products, Wedgwood relied heavily on engravings and plaster casts of classical antiquities, building up a large collection at his factory. He persuaded country house owners to let him take casts of sculptures in their collections. He corresponded with Sir William Hamilton and was sent engravings of his first collection of Greek vases in advance of publication. This on-the-spot museum was used by draughtsmen at the factory as a constant source of reference. But as Wedgwood himself said: ‘I only pretend to have attempted to copy the fine antique forms, but not with absolute servility. I have endeavoured to preserve the style and spirit, or if you please, the elegant simplicity of the antique forms.’

Wedgwood also employed artists living in London (a three-day journey from the factory), who usually sent drawings and models from their studios. The sculptor John Flaxman (1755–1826) supplied a large body of work in this way. He had been recommended to Wedgwood in 1775 by Bentley, who was largely responsible for design policy in the early days of the firm’s development, while Wedgwood concerned himself more with scientific and technical matters. Bentley probably first came across Flaxman serving in the London shop which sold his father’s plaster casts and models largely after the antique. The discovery of ‘so valuable an artist’ led to a fruitful association that was to last for more than a decade, until Flaxman set off on his Grand Tour in 1787.

Flaxman produced designs for every level of Wedgwood’s production, from some of the shapes and decorations of the creamware table services to the more elaborate ornamental plaques and vases, and even a chess set. The largest group of his designs formed part of Wedgwood’s long list of jasperware portrait medallions. These ‘illustrious’ figures from past and present history reached a wide market, mostly selling at what Wedgwood called a ‘moderate’ price of one shilling. (For comparison, a pair of stockings cost twice this sum.) Buyers could select from an enormous range which embraced kings, emperors and popes, as well as philosophers, scientists and politicians, including recent figures such as Rousseau and Benjamin Franklin. This ambitious project was unique in the European ceramic industry. Flaxman’s many additions to the list included Captain Cook, Dr Samuel Johnson, Warren Hastings and Sarah Siddons (119). This last medallion of the famous actress was issued in 1782, just after her return to the Drury Lane Theatre in London. From then onwards her career flourished, her reputation enshrined on Flaxman’s medallion as the Tragic Muse, a pose she later adopted in a dramatic portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–92). On the medallion she is shown in profile, in low relief, like other portraits in the series, imitating the appearance of ancient Roman cameos.

The Sarah Siddons medallion is a good example of how Wedgwood, like other industrialists, seized the opportunity of a topical subject to design a new product. Wedgwood wasted no time in commissioning Flaxman to design a jasperware plaque to commemorate the commercial treaty
which Britain and France signed in 1786, after the American War of Independence, in which the French had fought against the British (120). By now the Neoclassical style was so readily marketable that Wedgwood saw no incongruity in depicting a contemporary politico-economic event as two classically dressed women, representing Britain and France, their hands joined by Mercury, the god of traders.

In 1786 Wedgwood presented 'the finest and most perfect vase I have ever made' to the British Museum (121). This unusual gesture of an industrialist presenting one of his own recent products clearly indicates not only Wedgwood's self-esteem but also his contemporary fame, since the gift was accepted. The vase was decorated with a relief designed by Flaxman showing the Apotheosis of Homer, about which Wedgwood wrote to Sir William Hamilton: 'I never saw a bas-relief executed in the true, simple antique style half so well.' The source for that style derived from Greek vases of the fifth and fourth centuries BC collected by Hamilton. The antiquarian who had edited the first collection for him had pointed out in his preface that such vases had many possible uses, benefiting not only scholars and artists, but also manufacturers: from the many illustrations, they could 'as in a plentiful stream, draw ideas which their ability and taste will know how to improve to their advantage, and so that of the public.' Flaxman followed this precept, adopting his composition for Homer's apotheosis from one of Hamilton's vases. Initially manufactured as a plaque in a variety of sizes from 1778 onwards, the Homer design proved very adaptable.

With his jasperware and basalt products Wedgwood was helping to create a new market in luxury goods available in a showroom and through a catalogue. No one had catered for the luxury end of the British market in this way before, and the eighteenth-century consumer responded.

The industrial promotion of Neoclassicism, however, inevitably meant some standardization in the dissemination of the style. Household items, architectural details and garden ornaments became increasingly available from a wide range of factories, initially in Britain and then on the Continent. Some of these products were promoted in illustrated catalogues, offering variants from which the customer could choose. A page from such a catalogue, issued by a Leeds pottery firm (122), shows a familiarity with ornate Neoclassical silver candlesticks and candelabra that have been successfully, if unimaginatively, transformed into the much cheaper medium of creamware.

Architects and decorators were not averse to using ready-made items, especially if they cut costs. Moulded, artificial stone was one such solution. The flourishing business run by Eleanor Coade (1733–1821) in London from 1770 onwards is a particularly noteworthy example of individual initiative. Here was a product that was not only cheaper than the real thing, but infinitely more durable. With the help of the Neoclassical sculptor John Bacon (1740–99), who acted as her manager and principal designer, she built up a large stock of wall decorations, columns, keystones,
chimney-pots, even fonts, pulpits and tombs, as well as garden ornaments and sculptures, of which a River God was the largest (123). At £200 it had a high price tag, equivalent to £12,000 or some $18,000 today, but considerably less than a comparable marble would have cost.

So successful had the Coade enterprise become by 1799 that she opened at the factory a ‘Sculpture Gallery’, easily accessible across the river from the fashionable north shore by the Westminster Bridge. (The site was near today’s Festival Hall.) Even Wedgwood did not call any of his showrooms a ‘gallery’. The new Coade catalogue which accompanied the opening is liberally scattered with classical and modern literary quotations. Among these she included Ovid, whom she had already quoted on her trade card, to the effect that the poet too had created a work that time could not destroy (‘nec edax abolere vetustas’). The durability of her products and the quality of her designs kept the kilns of the Coade factory busy, supplying not only to the British market, but dispatching goods as far afield as Poland and Jamaica.
The new British manufacturers identified themselves in many ways with the classical past. The engraving that appears on a health insurance certificate issued by the Birmingham manufacturer Matthew Boulton to his employees is a good case in point (124). Boulton developed the famous steam engine along with James Watt, but he also manufactured a large range of products that included jewellery and buttons (125), clocks (126) and door-handles, electroplated ware and even reproduction oil paintings.

Like his friend Wedgwood, he was a pioneering industrialist, and his insurance scheme was an early form of social welfare. Contributors received a certificate listing the rules and regulations of the scheme, printed under an engraving which shows a worker sitting in front of Boulton's factory, surrounded by classical figures symbolizing various arts and trades. A cartouche at the bottom proclaims 'From Art, Industry and Society, Great Blessings Flow'. Those blessings helped to fill Boulton's coffers, while at the same
time disseminating ever more widely the Neoclassical style, the first to be promoted on a modern, industrial scale.

On the Continent, where the commercialism associated with the Industrial Revolution got under way later than in Britain, the dissemination of the Neoclassical style in the decorative arts initially relied more on aristocratic and state patronage, rather than on free enterprise. The outstanding example of such patronage was the Sévres ceramic factory on the outskirts of Paris. Flourishing under the protection of royal patronage, the Sévres factory had no need to sell in the market-place, but its products were of course not restricted to French royal court clients. Consequently the factory produced some of the most luxurious ceramics in Europe during the Neoclassical period, including the two most lavish royal dinner services of the later eighteenth century, one for Louis XVI and the other for Catherine the Great. Wedgwood also supplied the empress with a dinner service (the ‘Frog’ service), but it was not on the same opulent scale, although large and ambitious in the range of its decorative ornament.

During the eighteenth century the serving of dinner had become increasingly elaborate, following a fashion that had originated in France in the previous century. The dining table would be laid with a central ornament, flanked by dishes for the display of fruits and delicacies. Each place setting might have specially designed plates, with glasses and cutlery engraved with coats of arms. The varied dishes served at each dinner necessitated an equally large number of tureens and other serving dishes. The less formal partaking of tea, coffee or chocolate in other rooms was subjected to the same meticulous attention to presentation, involving both taste and status.

The centrepiece of the Sévres Russian service, totalling nearly 750 pieces, was an 85 cm (33 in) high allegorical sculpture representing the Parnassus of Russia, or the Apotheosis of Catherine the Great (127), modelled by Simon-Louis Boizot (1743–1809), a Neoclassical sculptor in charge of modelling at the factory. He was a prolific designer while he held this part-time post, but in terms of spectacle nothing matched this Russian centrepiece. A helmeted bust of Minerva, goddess of war but also of the professions and the arts, symbolizes the empress, mounted on a fluted column. Around the base an elaborate group of figures represents the arts, letters and sciences. The creation of the group, one of the most elaborate of all Sévres pieces, involved the making of 110 moulds.

The dining tables of the great were therefore status symbols, evidence of power and wealth as tangible as any larger display in architecture. For the most ceremonial of occasions the table ornaments would be in silver-gilt, and such a service commissioned for presentation to Napoleon (see 155) will be discussed in the next chapter. Ceramic pieces, however, were the norm, and although Sévres produced some of the most splendid examples, the French factory did not have a monopoly.

The royal ceramic factory in Berlin, for example, was commis-
sioned in 1791 by Frederick William II of Prussia to produce a table-set on the theme of 'The Kingdom of Nature'. Two elegant temples housing statues of Bacchus (128) and Venus were the largest pieces, joined by the Hours and Graces, the Elements and the Seasons, sphinxes and obelisks. This elegant miniature gallery of classical antiquity was intended to remind those dining, according to one contemporary, of the prodigalities and mysteries of Nature for which mankind should be continuously thankful. Such allegories on the dinner tables of the great were not unusual, giving an added dimension to the food and wine.

Other ornamental ceramic sculptural groups and figures were usually not so elaborate. Like the piece for Catherine the Great and the figure of Bacchus in his temple, these miniature sculptures in the Neoclassical period were usually made of biscuit, an unglazed white porcelain that has the colour and texture of marble. Sèvres was the first factory to see the potential of this material, and from the 1750s onwards made a large number of such decorative sculptures. They became popular all over Europe, appealing to the aristocracy and the rich middle class. These miniature sculptures were perfect ornaments for mantelpieces and bureaux, as well as the dinner table. When buying a dinner service from the Sèvres factory, customers would add one or more of these biscuit figures to the order to complete the table decoration.

One of Boizot's predecessors in charge of modelling had been another Neoclassicist, the sculptor Etienne-Maurice Falconet (1716–91), one of the leading artists of the late 1750s and early 1760s. He played a key role in developing Sèvres models. Falconet's reputation had been established by a marble Cupid (L'Amour menaçant), commissioned by Madame de Pompadour for her Paris house and exhibited in 1757, the year that Falconet took charge of the modelling at Sèvres. The following year he produced a smaller biscuit model of his Cupid (129), and later added to his range of models a Psyche, so that the amorous pair could be united. Such was the demand for the two statuettes that in the decade from 1761, when the Psyche was first produced, 230
examples were sold, a large number for a luxury item. Falconet’s Cupid was one of the most famous and frequently copied eighteenth-century sculptures, not only in Sèvres biscuit. A bronze version appears, for example, among the scientific equipment of the physicist Abbé Nollet. The Cupid sat on top of his Leyden jar, used for electrical experiments, its charge perhaps analogous in Nollet’s mind to the flight of Cupid’s arrow.

Falconet’s Cupid has an attractive vitality which contemporaries obviously admired. Cupid’s posture is delicately balanced between the silence implied by the raised finger and the imminent action evident from the other hand, which is reaching for an arrow. The Cupid lives up to Falconet’s own aspirations as a sculptor, expressed by him in a discourse a few years later:

In attempting the imitation of the surfaces of the human body, sculpture ought not to be satisfied with a cold likeness, such as man might be before the breath of life animated him. This sort of truth, although well rendered, can only excite by its exactitude a praise as cold as the likeness, and the soul of the spectator is not moved by it. It is living nature, animated, passionate, that the sculptor ought to express.

Falconet’s ‘living nature’ dominated the painted decoration of the vases and tableware which formed the substantial part of the Sèvres output. Flowers in particular were prominent, a reflection initially not only of the taste of Madam de Pompadour, but also of the overall artistic director at the factory, Jean-Jacques Bachelier (1724–1806). His reputation as a painter was based on his flower-pieces. Because of these preferences in taste, the Neoclassical style only gradually came to dominate the painted decoration of Sèvres products.

A fuller commitment to Neoclassicism only materialized later in the century, when Bachelier had to share artistic direction with another painter, Jean-Jacques Lagrenée (1739–1821). He was much more deeply interested in classical antiquity than Bachelier, as can be seen in one of the sets of china the factory produced in 1788, for Marie-Antoinette to use in the new Neoclassical dairy at the royal hunting estate of Rambouillet. The drinking of milk had become a fashionable health fad, to be pursued in elegant surroundings built for the purpose, and furnished with appropriate china, but of a far more luxurious nature than would be found in a farmhouse dairy. Pails, bowls for rising cream, together with cups and saucers, suitably decorated with cows and goats, were supplied by ceramic factories throughout Europe to satisfy this new fashion. Those made for Marie-Antoinette excelled in refinement, their perfection reflecting the extravagant expenditure of the French royal court on the art of good living.

The dairy set made for Rambouillet (130) is among the most Neoclassical pieces produced by the Sèvres factory in the late eighteenth century, before the total dominance of the style there once Napoleon came to power. So classical were the Rambouillet
pieces that the original design for the cup is labelled 'with
Etruscan handles'. It had been copied from Greek vases recently
given to the factory by the minister of state in charge of the enter-
prise, the Comte d'Angiviller, which were 'to be used as models of
simple, pure forms, and to change, by these examples, the bad
direction given to the shapes of porcelain under the recent regime'.
In other words, the minister did not think that the Sévres products
sufficiently reflected the current Neoclassical taste. Other
European factories in this respect were far more up-to-date. The
royal factory in Naples, for instance, had begun work in 1785 on a
very Neoclassical 'Etruscan' dinner service (131) which was to be
presented to George III, its shapes and decorations inspired by
ancient Greek vases and the antiquities of Herculaneum. Other

factories in the 1780s were also making fuller use of classical
sources. An elegant coffee set made by the Vienna porcelain
factory is another good example of Herculaneum antiquities being
adapted for modern use (133). Across the other side of Europe, in
Spain, where Charles III had established a porcelain factory in
1759 in the grounds of the Buen Retiro palace in Madrid,
Neoclassicism had taken a firm hold in the design of its products
by the 1780s, especially vases (132).

The dominant role in Europe of French taste embraced other areas
of the decorative arts, with other French manufactured goods
selling as widely as its expensive ceramics. Among these products
were printed cottons and wallpapers. When shopping for printed
cottons in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a
customer might be offered, among a range of furnishing fabrics
dominated by floral repeats, designs of a different kind. The pat-
ttern might be based on a famous seventeenth-century ceiling
fresco, or some peasant idyll or historical scene which had origi-
nated as an oil painting by a recent painter. In order to make a
repeating pattern, these images were combined with a variety of
foliage and flowers, animals and figures, and engraved on copper
plates and cylinders. This kind of pictorial printed cotton has come
to be known universally as toile de Jouy, named after the village

near Versailles where the first printed textile factory in France
was established. Set up by Christophe-Philippe Oberkampf
(1738–1815), who had been brought up in the textile industry, the
factory began production in 1760. It was to be the start of one of
the most successful industrial ventures in eighteenth-century
France. Conveniently situated near the court, the factory attracted
a wealthy and influential clientele. They appreciated the high qual-
ity of Oberkampf's designs and production, not only of his pictorial
prints but also his floral and geometric patterns. The finely drawn
engravings were made possible by the British invention of copper-
plate printing, which Oberkampf introduced into France, and which was taken up by other manufacturing centres, such as Mulhouse and Nantes. By the time he commissioned two large portraits of himself, his wife and family (134) from Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), Oberkampf was in his sixties and at the peak of his achievement. He had a Paris showroom, a considerably enlarged factory, a workforce of over 250 printers and a stock of 30,000 engraved plates. He was amply justified in standing proudly in his portrait, backed by his factory and surrounded by fields covered in lengths of fabric stretched out for the bleaching process. Official recognition came in the 1780s when he was ennobled and his factory was added to the few on the list of manufactures royales (by royal appointment), a list which already included Sèvres. In spite of his royal patronage he managed to survive the Revolution by funding patriotic causes and by incorporating republican themes into some of his pictorial textiles. Oberkampf is the nearest equivalent in France during the Neoclassical period to Wedgwood, the epitome of the modern, design-conscious industrial capitalist.

In the early days at Jouy, patterns for printing on the cotton were produced by draughtsmen working at the factory. But in 1783, the year in which Oberkampf gained the royal licence, he started to employ the part-time services of a Parisian painter, Jean-Baptiste Huet (1745–1811). He was to be responsible for many toiles de Jouy pictorial designs, starting with one depicting the printing process itself, portrayed as an imaginary outdoor idyll with each stage of the printing taking place under the shade of trees. The imagery may have been inaccurate, but this rural idyll became typical of many of the toiles in the 1780s, in which modern and increasingly classical figures were combined with the delights of nature. Austerely printed in only one colour (usually red), the designs were a charming version of Neoclassicism, illustrating contemporary events, traditional customs and popular novels.
One of Huet's designs depicted the traditional village festival of the crowning of the rosière, the virtuous young maiden rewarded by a wreath of roses and a small dowry. Modern political events included one cotton marketed as American Liberty, for which Huet's original design was quickly amended so that Oberkampf could cash in on the colonists' recently won independence. A profile portrait of Benjamin Franklin was incorporated into the pattern, a scanty concession to topicality surrounded by the existing, unaltered range of goats, fishermen, fountains and Gothic ruins. Oberkampf's most up-to-the-minute toile was one sold as the Fête de la Fédération, the main celebration commemorating the first anniversary in 1790 of the outbreak of the Revolution (136). Huet himself would almost certainly have been present at the celebration in Paris, which took place simultaneously with celebrations in many other cities, including Rome. At the Paris celebration Louis XVI stood before an altar dedicated to Liberty and swore an oath of allegiance, to the accompaniment of the joyous cries of the citizens dancing on the ruins of the hated prison of the Bastille, which had been demolished at the start of the Revolution the year before (see 142).

That Revolution had seen one of the first of the rioting mobs unleashing its fury on a wallpaper factory, the Paris premises of Jean-Baptiste Réveillon (d.1811), France's leading producer of this commodity. He had set up business in a lavish seventeenth-century house which was on tourists' regular itineraries of the city. It was so beautifully decorated that the surroundings must have provided much 'material to excite the imagination of the artists employed in the workshop,' according to a Paris guidebook published shortly before the Revolution. Réveillon had by that time pushed the standard of wallpaper design to new heights (135). His elegant and brightly coloured Neoclassical designs, largely inspired by ancient Roman wall-paintings, had earned his establishment the title of manufacture royale, and he had received the award from Necker, the Finance Minister, of a prize-winning medal for the encouragement of the decorative arts. He had built up a prosperous concern by the time the mob rampaged through
his premises destroying everything in revenge for unjust taxes believed to have been levied by Réveillon on his workers. There is thus no record of the identity of the ‘very distinguished’ artist on his payroll who was receiving a substantial annual retainer. The name of Huet is one of several that has been suggested. This and other tantalizing pieces of information are provided by the pamphlet Réveillon published immediately after the riot, attempting to justify himself in the eyes of the Revolutionary authorities. The pamphlet could not restore what he had lost, however, and he fled for safety to England.

While manufacturers played an important role in disseminating the Neoclassical style, credit should also be given to the publication of design pattern-books and their widespread use, both in the hands of patrons and in those of factory designers. France, as the most design-conscious country in Europe, was responsible for a large proportion of these publications, which found their way into many other countries. These books supplemented the large body of archaeological illustrations plundered by artists, decorators and manufacturers alike. The number and variety of pattern-books increased considerably from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. By the mid-nineteenth century they had become a flood. There were two kinds: those published specifically for use by designers, usually without a text; and those which were primarily treatises on architecture. Illustrations for the first kind of book were often published in groups or individually, leaving purchasers to buy only those they wanted, so that when eventually bound the set might well be incomplete.

These pattern-books catered for one form particularly well: the vase. Vases were ubiquitous in the Neoclassical period, large and small, three-dimensional, in relief and linear, made of stone, metal, ceramic, wood and plaster, woven in silk and wool, and printed on fabric and paper. From balustrades and tombs, cast-iron stoves and fireplace fenders, to clocks and coffee pots, the vase was inescapable. It was a very adaptable shape, available in a multiplicity of contours and details, derived mainly from Roman and
Greek sources. One of the earliest Neoclassical pattern-books is devoted exclusively to vases. It is a volume by the painter Joseph-Marie Vien, published in 1760, consisting of a sequence of twelve engravings of his own invention 'in the taste of the antique' (137). The publication could not have been intended as a scholarly archaeological one, since none of the plates are of identifiable antiquities. But as Vien provided no text we must guess his intentions, and assume that he meant his book to be useful to artists and craftsmen alike. He was certainly interested in design, because much later in life he was a member of the jury for industrial exhibitions in Paris, an innovation in the period of the Revolutionary 1790s. His painting of the Seller of Cupids (see 83), executed only three years after the pattern-book, amended the Herculaneum fresco from which he had borrowed the composition (84), by incorporating the vase on the background pedestal and an incense burner on the table. Both these additions are in the same style as the items in his Suite de vases. Indeed, the whole painting, while ostensibly reinventing a scene in the classical past and thus representing one of the earliest Neoclassical history paintings, is at the same time an imaginary architectural setting that could be a contemporary interior, designed and furnished in the newly emerging robust, heavy forms that characterize French Neoclassicism in the mid-eighteenth century.

The French did not have quite a complete monopoly of design pattern-books in the early phase of Neoclassicism. Other countries produced a few examples, most notably Britain. After the turn of the century important examples started to be published elsewhere, in Germany for example. In Britain the leading design publication was Works in Architecture published by Robert and James Adam in two volumes in 1773 and 1779 (with a third posthumous volume in 1822). The range of engravings was unusually comprehensive, providing not only the customary elevations and plans of their buildings, but ample examples of tables, mirrors, wall-lights, clocks, doorknobs and even sedan chairs (138). The wealth of visual material was a marvellous resource for designers, craftsmen, builders – anyone looking for ideas to transform into any scale and any medium. As the architect John Soane was to say of Robert Adam in the next generation (1812): 'Manufacturers of every kind felt the electric power of his revolution in art.' The Adam office had little direct contact with manufacturers, since they designed for specific clients, and this 'electric power' therefore came mostly through the intermediary of the plates in the Works. The volumes were primarily a form of self-publicity, immodestly trumpeting the 'approbation of our employers' and the adulation in the form of imitation by other artists. The result, as the Adam brothers put it, was a transformation of the 'whole system of this useful and elegant art', which would afford 'entertainment to the connoisseur, but also convey some instruction to the artist'.

Artists were increasingly confronted by a new challenge against the backdrop of the Industrial Revolution: should they be
concerned with mass design or turn their backs on it as unworthy of an artist's studio? This chapter has presented examples of artists designing for the decorative arts and for industrial products, but this collaboration was not automatically taken for granted.

Should the artist be involved in the 'useful' arts or exclusively in the higher realm of the 'fine' arts? The question is a fundamental one, raised from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, and involves not only the relationship of the two kinds of art to each other, but also - on a wider front - the relationship of the artist to society.

The debate, art versus industry, became intense from the mid-nineteenth century, galvanized by the Great Exhibition of 1851 in the Crystal Palace in London. The foundations of that debate, however, were laid in the Neoclassical period.

A constant thread in the discussions was the conviction that the 'fine' arts of painting, sculpture and architecture were superior to other kinds of art, such as ceramics, textiles, and so on, because they were intellectual. They would then be on a level with the long-established seven 'liberal' arts, comprising grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. Reynolds, when delivering his discourses at the Royal Academy, was worried about accepting even architecture into the fine arts because it served 'our wants and necessities', but he did concede that architecture was also concerned with 'higher principles'.

To the theoretical arguments were added practical worries. Some artists objected to factory-made wares making them redundant. For example, the increasing popularity of wallpaper, it was felt, supplanted the architect's role as interior designer and that of the painter as a muralist. No one in the Neoclassical period, however, pushed the argument to the extreme of the 'art-for-art's sake' stance that was to emerge in France in the mid-1830s, culminating later in the century in the writings and art of such figures as Oscar Wilde and Whistler. The Goncourt brothers, best known for their reassessment of French eighteenth-century painters, even wrote in a virulent tract of 1854: 'Industry sets out from the useful; it goes for the profitable for the greatest number. Art starts from the

useless; it aims at what is agreeable for the few.'

Less extreme positions were adopted in eighteenth-century arguments on either side of the debate. Denis Diderot (139) faced it in his article on 'Art' in the encyclopedia which he co-edited. Under a subheading 'Distribution of the arts into the liberal and mechanical', he maintained that earlier thinkers had treated the mechanical, or useful, arts unjustly. While admitting that the arts should be separated into those which are 'more the work of the mind than the hand' and those that are 'more the work of the hand than the mind', he continued with a caveat.

Though it is well founded, this distinction has produced an undesirable effect. Firstly, it has vilified some eminent, respectable and very useful people, and secondly, it has enhanced a kind of natural laziness which tends to make us believe all too readily that for us to devote our constant and sustained attention to particular experience and to tangible, material objects was something unworthy of the human mind.
Here speaks a man of the Age of Reason, who in his youth would have seen the errors of such thinking, since his father was a master cutler. His encyclopedia devoted many articles and illustrations to the mechanical or useful arts, including porcelain manufacture, textile weaving, wallpaper printing, silversmithing and iron casting (140) – information that remains to this day one of the most important sources for our knowledge of manufacturing processes in the eighteenth century.

Diderot’s argument was taken up by Jean-Jacques Bachelier (1724–1806), who had started a free drawing school for artisans (the first of its kind in Europe) and campaigned on behalf of art education. Artisans were unjustly scorned, he argued: ‘In what system of physics or metaphysics can one see more intelligence, more shrewdness, more accuracy, than in the machines for spinning gold thread, for making stockings, and in the trades of trimmers, gauze workers, cloth manufacturers or workers in silk?’ The skills of such people were ‘essential to public utility, which need intelligent hands and eyes enlightened by taste’. That taste was being developed, he hoped, at his drawing school.

Discussions about the interrelationship of art and industry were increasingly to focus on art education, especially in the
nineteenth century, when the notion of taste for its own sake had been replaced by the recognition that better design increased marketability. The direct equation between art and commerce was to be appreciated and acted upon at government level, most notably by the establishment of art schools for design and also the founding of museums of the decorative arts as sources of inspiration and mentors of good taste. These developments began throughout Europe from the 1830s, later becoming a movement of major importance.