Another pointer to the future was the public museum. The age of the private collectors' cabinets or of institutionalized versions of them had now been succeeded by one which entertained broader Enlightenment hopes of public accessibility. Antiquity was served by the Museo Capitolino in Rome, opened in 1734, and after 1750 two popes financed the Museo Pio-Clementino there. Following Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733–34), which recommended the 'well-mix'd [nation] state', there also came secular initiatives. Whatever nationalistic aspiration underlay it, the British Museum's opening in 1759 at once signalled the ethnographical richness of man's past and the intention of placing it in front of the living for their 'advancement and improvement', albeit hedged around by restricted hours of opening and the need for tickets. In Philadelphia, America's largest city – with a population of about 44,000 – C.W. Peale opened his museum of paintings (mainly portraits of patriots and scientists) and natural curiosities (the two ingredients were often combined) in 1786. The idea of the public museum was to go forward as one of the leading motivations of the nation-states of Europe and of America in the next hundred years. The Louvre became the first national art gallery in 1793. In Berlin the great German architect Schinkel designed a vast Neo-classical museum (1825–30) as a symbol of deliverance after the Napoleonic Wars, on the most important site in the town opposite one of the power-bases of the Old World, the Schloss (Fig. 14). The British Museum was enlarged in 1824–27 (again in Neo-classical style) to house George IV's recent bequest from the Royal Library to the nation. In Jefferson's Virginia, a museum of painting, sculpture and natural history opened at Richmond in 1817. The major American developments came after 1850: but Washington's Smithsonian Institution for 'the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men' was inaugurated in 1846.

The question which Diderot had, in effect, put to readers of the *Encyclopédie* – what did the term 'art' really cover? – would recur again and again in the changed conditions of the next century. The relating of the designing arts to the onset of industry on the one hand, and the opening up of the perspectives of man's creative past in museums on the other, were to provide the nineteenth century with some of its most intractable problems. How were traditional crafts to relate to the machine? How did 'beauty' – an ideal which many artists of the Romantic age appropriated for 'high art' – relate to 'utility'? What was the role of the artist to be? The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, founded in 1754 in London, had opened up a valuable route through the problems to be posed by factory production. But the deepening effects of the Industrial Revolution were to be obvious and, as we shall see in Chapter Six, it was in Schinkel's Prussia and in industrial Britain that these questions would in particular be asked.

**The Periodical and the Book**

Whatever reservations have to be made about the extent of the reading public in the years 1700–1850, the multiplication of newspapers and periodicals,
Press restrictions and freedoms

In England, as we have seen, the existence of a free press since 1695 had created a precious advantage over conditions in much of Europe, where absolutist regimes required newspapers and journals to accept official supervision under licence. The highly-regarded Mercure de France (1724, circulating in 26 French towns in 1748 and 55 by 1774) became the ultra-conservative organ of official opinion at the hub of information. The Paris daily, the Journal de Paris ou la Poste du Soir (1777) - which, like the Mercure, aimed to report artistic events and had Voltaire as one of its subscribers - found that the everyday pressures to find new items brought it into conflict with other publications which had licences to report them. In Germany, where political fragmentation in fact favoured the growth of local papers (often family-owned) in individual towns, severe controls applied: as they did in Frederick the Great's Prussia. Although the Habsburg Emperor Joseph II introduced a liberalizing policy in Austria, where the Wiener Diarium had flourished and became the Wiener Zeitung in 1780, free debate suffered reverses, as in other parts of Europe, after the outbreak of the French Revolution.

In England too there were restrictions, such as that which lasted until 1771 on reporting Parliament. And there were potential problems: the introduction of a daily newspaper, the Courant, in 1702, and of provincial counterparts, spelled the end of patronage of writers by political parties but also the rise of the Grub Street hack. Entrepreneurial publishers, usually booksellers, came to wield a power which amounted to monopoly. Writing was tested out by these men in the market-place, which was also to be the proving-ground of the 'professional' writers of quality as they emerged into being. Many of the better writers now worked for the more 'educational' periodicals: among the earliest and most influential of these was the twice-weekly Tatler (1709-11), followed by the daily Spectator (1711-12, 1714), edited by Richard Steele (1672-1729) and Joseph Addison (1672-1719).

The Spectator initiated an age. Its two-page sheets (price one penny) used the essay form, 1400 or so words in length, to attract, in Addison's words, 'everyone that considers the world as a theatre, and desires to form a right judgment of those who are the actors on it'. Through the persona of 'Mr Spectator', Addison presented his own 'actors', like Sir Andrew Freeport the city merchant, and Sir Roger de Coverley the country squire who, with other regular 'characters', built up a relationship with the reader as fellow 'clubman'. This recipe for success was enhanced by correspondents' letters, real or invented, which increased still more the sense of rapport. Sir Andrew's purview, as Spectator 69 (19 May 1711) revealed, was world-wide. He 'calls the vineyards of France our gardens; the Spice-islands our hot-beds; the Persians our silk-weavers; and the Chinese our potters'. Sir Roger, when not in town, presides with an iron hand over his estates; and in church 'sometimes stands up, when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing'. Matters social, political, domestic, philosophical, all featured in the periodical essay, upheld by writers of the quality of Fielding, Defoe (himself a journalist), Swift and, after the middle of the century, Samuel Johnson, in his twice-weekly Rambler (1750-52) and Idler (1758-60). A model in Britain for the burgeoning profession of journalism, the essay persisted as a popular form, as in Hazlitt's celebrated contributions to The Examiner (1814 onwards) and Lamb's 'Essays of Elia' in the London Magazine (c. 1820).

The repercussions of Mr Spectator were widely felt, in France, where Marivaux produced his Spectateur français (1721-24), and notably in Holland, Germany, Russia and America. The German writer and critic J.C. Gottsched (1700-66) studied Addison, and his wife Luise Kulmus translated the Spectator (9 volumes, 1739-43). In Russia a liberal initiative by Catherine the Great (reigned 1762-96) led to the training of young writers to produce a weekly miscellany, All Sorts (1769), with a Mr Spectator persona figure. This provoked the bookseller Novikov's Spectator-like The Drone (1769), which survived financially for two years. Satirical magazines, together with a few original novels (from 1763), were to give a precarious strength to Russian literary life.

While British periodicals introduced a yeasty freedom into censor-repressed circles in Europe, American counterparts developed under their own special conditions, although the Spectator was not forgotten. It is easy to see how a colonial society of tradesmen, craftsmen and professionals establishing themselves in a new continent found an invaluable focus in newspapers. Licensing ended soon after England had abandoned it, despite misgivings in the mother country. If the English periodical was unthinkable without Steele and Addison, that of America was equally so without Benjamin Franklin (1706-90), printer, publisher, inventor of the lightning conductor and bifocal spectacles, and utopian visionary. Having worked with his brother on the New England Courant, from 1729 he ran the Pennsylvania Gazette from Philadelphia, capitalizing on the attractions of the Spectator-type essay. He also took up the almanac, a form of publication concerned mainly with practical matters of medicine, science or agriculture but including some popular moral maxims. Franklin's Poor
Richard's Almanac, published annually from 1733 for a quarter of a century, found its way to the remotest frontier settlements of America. But the newspaper remained his central vehicle; almost everything he wrote, apart from scientific papers, appeared there or in magazines.

Besides showing how cheap, printed literature could publicize Enlightenment notions, Franklin's work gave further evidence of the link between printing and the growing profession of journalism, on the one hand, and writing of more than ephemeral interest, on the other. (Two of the century's novelists, Samuel Richardson and Rééf de la Bretonne, were working printers.) Franklin's printing career also testified to a principle which the Enlightenment strove to establish, that of impartiality in debate. In his Apology for Printers (1731), he wrote: 'Printers are educated in the belief, that when men differ in opinion, both sides ought equally to have the advantage of being heard by the Public.' Franklin's close links with London newspapers had begun in 1724-26 and were extended on his later visit in 1757. Though writers for the press were often dubious hacks, political debate of an open forum type had now become established. Franklin's America would develop its uses; and the influence of the French Revolution would intensify vitriolic political division amongst the newspapers of Philadelphia and elsewhere.

Together with the Addissonian essay and the Franklinian ideal of impartial debate, 'occasional' publications, notably pamphlets, could offer inspired partisanship of causes. Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was almost in a class of his own in this field, with his works on Ireland, Church matters, and A Modest Proposal for preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents or Country (1729), which ironically applied the methods of current economic argument to maintain that the best way of dealing with surplus children was to eat them. Voltaire too found the pamphlet form congenial; it enabled him to concentrate his critical body-blow against a clearly-defined target. His Lettres Philosophiques (1733, 1734), on England, were burned by officialdom in France. Of his later pamphlets written from his retreat at Ferney, his Avis au Public (1766) repudiated the execution of a Protestant merchant Calas for the alleged murder of his son, and made its effect as a civilized, 'reasonable' address to the reader on the vexed question of religious persecution.

The widening reading public

While the habit of reading will certainly have been helped by the topicality of periodicals (particularly as many were available in coffee-houses), reviews and advertisements in them also encouraged the sale of books. In Britain certain books also came out in 'number' form weekly, fortnightly or monthly, and subscribers could have them delivered to them, with newspapers, by newspaper distributors. Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719) and other novels, and Johnson's Dictionary (after the first edition of 1755) and many works of non-fiction, were published in this way. The Grub Street Journal remarked in 1732: 'this Method of Weekly Publication allure Multitudes to peruse Books into which they would otherwise never have looked.' The brief articles and notes in the famous Gentleman's Magazine (1731-1914), and similar periodicals, had a similar effect. Demand was evidently strong enough to justify the publication by some newspaper proprietors of compilations of articles called 'miscellanies', a practice which endured through the next century. The instalment idea for books especially favoured the novel as serial story; Dickens's Pickwick Papers (1836-37) was the most widely snapped up of a dozen of his novels to appear in green monthly parts over periods of up to eighteen months or two years. He often modified his plots in response to readers' letters as the parts came out. Thackeray's Vanity Fair (1847-48), appearing in yellow parts, was a famous rival. In North America, testing out its own brand of purified European culture (pp. 128-9), the Old Continent's sitter-with-book portrait formula took on a new vitality in works by the Boston painter Copley and others (Fig. 15).

As entrepreneurial publishing in the eighteenth century grew, no effort was spared to make it more widely available. The records of French publishing and of the Frankfurt and Leipzig book fairs reveal that by the 1780s scientific and literary subjects had taken precedence over religious ones, at any rate in quantity. Even in Russia the Church's surveillance over the written word was in decline before 1700, as is shown by the number of imported chapbooks that purveyed anti-clerical romances and satires. The novel's move to represent the variety of human experience and motive, and its ready marketability, were clear indicators to publishers as to where their best prospects lay. But the spectrum was a wide one, including popularizations of Christian precepts on obedience, collections of folktales, the French Bibliothèque bleue, German stories of village life, books on magic, and 'underground' literature — including seditious tracts and pornography — which were peddled round the towns and countryside of Europe.18

Other publishing efforts, inherited from the seventeenth century but now to be transformed in scope, were directed towards producing the encyclopedias. Pierre Bayle's Dictionnaire historique et critique (16 volumes, Rotterdam, 1697), became 'the bible of the eighteenth century'. Ephraim Chambers's Cyclopaedia (1728) laid foundations on which the crowning event, Diderot and D'Alembert's Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers (28 folio volumes, Paris, 1751-72) was to rest. The first encyclopedia to solicit contributions from specialist writers, this immense work survived the hazards of censorship not only to become available to the rich, but to reach the professional middle classes in quarto and octavo editions.19 The entrepreneurial Lille bookseller, C.J. Panckoucke, who settled in Paris from 1762 and was involved with the Encyclopédie, also began to publish what became a multi-volume Encyclopédie méthodique. Other mid-century dictionary encyclopedias issued from Leipzig and Venice. In 1760 the Encyclopaedia Britannica began to emerge from an Edinburgh printer's in sixpenny parts. With its appearance in three volumes in 1771 the biggest yet account in English of the world which surrounded Adam Smith's 'Economic Man' (p. 257) was there for him to refer to. A second edition ran to ten volumes (1777-84) and a third (1788-97) to eighteen.
The scope and number of books calculated both to entertain and to inform were therefore considerable. It is estimated (see R. Birn, Further Reading, p. 272) that there were about 1,500 main booksellers in Europe in the later part of the century, not counting those who were primarily local printers. Most of them operated in capital cities or other large towns, an inconvenient fact for country dwellers. Prices could be formidable: at least ten shillings in Britain, up to 1780, for quartos and folios — often the weekly wage of a London journeyman or craftworker — with five shillings for octavos. In France, the equivalent of fifteen shillings could buy a controversial work by Rousseau; but prices could easily quadruple if, as happened with *Emile* and the *Social Contract*, the Government banned it. The young Hazlitt obtained English authors whose work had run out of copyright in sixpenny weekly numbers, allowed under an Act of 1774. Also in 1774, an energetic converted Methodist, James Lackington, opened in London’s Fitzroy Square a ‘Temple of the Muses’, which offered books at half price or even less. The enquiring browser was meanwhile finding bargains at second-hand stalls in St Paul’s Churchyard or on the Paris quais. By the time that *The Pickwick Papers* came out in parts in the 1830s the price was a shilling per part.

Circulating libraries had meanwhile come into their own. Private collectors’ libraries had long been made open to approved members of the public, at least since Mazarin’s initiatives in mid seventeenth-century France; and this practice continued (notably in Germany). But in 1725 in Edinburgh, Allan Ramsay (1686–1758), anthologist and poet, began to lend books for a fee from his shop. London’s first library opened in the early 1740s. In France there were *cabinets de lecture*: the novelist Marmontel describes how in the 1730s he and fellow schoolboys borrowed books from a circulating library at Clermont Ferrand. While libraries were sometimes attached to more or less exclusive literary and philosophical societies, others were the outcome of voluntary associations, who provided what Arthur Young terms a book-club. He describes a visit at Nantes, one of France’s most thriving commercial towns, to such an institution which offered heated and well-lit rooms for reading and conversation. Similarly, the German states ran what were called *Lesegesellschaften*, ‘reading societies’. All such schemes required social standing and ability to pay: for others there were shops which allowed books on hire. The contemporary writer and editor of Rousseau’s works, Louis-Sébastien Mercier, indicates that in Paris the rent for the best-selling novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, supplies of which ran short, was twelve sous for sixty minutes per volume (there were six).

One of the staples of the circulating library, the novel that conveyed adventure, mystery, romance, and above all emotional involvement in the crises suffered by the main character, was calculated to attract anyone who could read. Following the international success of Richardson’s formidable-detailed and morally-earnest *Pamela* (1740), *Clarissa Harlowe* (1747–48) and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753–54), Europe wept over Rousseau’s *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and Goethe’s *Sorrows of Werther* (1774). (All of these are discussed further in Chapter Two.) A flood of sentimental fiction by hack writers then

Figure 15: Joseph Steward (1753–1822). Portrait of John Phillips (1719–1795). Oil, 201.3 x 174 cm. About 1793. Commissioned by the Trustees of Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

The portrait radiates the self-reliance that characterized the businessman in newly independent America. John Phillips of New Hampshire was a Harvard graduate and founder of the Phillips Exeter Academy in 1781. His head is at the apex of a triangle that includes a book-strewn table. The man of action, suggested by the open door and the view out of the window, is balanced by the man of contemplation, indicated by the finger keeping his place in the book. The perspective of painted canvas floor-cloth squares, leading into the picture, adds to his air of self-possession.
broke loose. Sheridan, in *The Rivals* (1775, Act I, Scene ii), made his character Lydia Languish comb the libraries of Bath for such titles as *The Reward of Constancy* and *The Mistakes of the Heart*. In 1764 Horace Walpole, remodelled in a medievalizing mode of his villa, Strawberry Hill, produced the first of the ‘Gothic’ novels, *The Castle of Otranto*, destined to have a copious progeny on the Continent (notably Germany) as well as in Britain. In the 1790s, with the appearance of the culminating works of the genre, by Mrs Ann Radcliffe, the vogue for themes involving the incarceral of vulnerable heroines behind castle walls was confirmed. By 1790 William Lane’s Minerva Library in London (founded in 1770) was offering, among its 1000 volumes for loan, a high proportion of ‘Gothic’ novels of romance and adventure, mainly to well-heeled subscribers. ‘Blue books’ and ‘sixpenny shockers’, replete with crudely-coloured woodcuts, emerged to attract those less well provided for down the social scale. But in the dangerous days of the French Revolution heady illustrated stories which emphasised the flouting of parental will and received notions of moral order would provoke anxious official scrutiny, and re-open questions about what it was appropriate for the ordinary man and woman to know.

In the age just before photography, the influence of reproductive prints and book illustration over what ordinary people knew of the world outside their own experience could, of course, be paramount. The ongoing potency in cheap literature of the medieval woodcut technique reminds us of a kind of continuity that had its nearest counterpart in oral tradition itself. But new mass-market techniques, wood-engraving (from about 1780, Fig. 7), lithography (from 1800, Fig. 58) and steel-facing of copper plates (from the 1820s) would more than answer the needs of mushrooming journalism. Britain’s *Punch* (1841) or the *Illustrated London News* (1842) depended on them. Robert Seymour’s *Humorous Sketches* of sporting life (1833–36), which sparked Dickens’s *Pickwick Papers*, were first issued as threepenny lithographs.

Besides modern techniques of illustration, the post-Waterloo world benefited from the steam-press, first used for printing *The Times* in 1814, and destined to supersede hand labour in book-printing by the eighteen forties. Book-publishers had to adapt to ever-greater demand, especially for fiction, and make conditions to meet it. Scott’s fame was crucial: his *Waverley* (1814) required eight editions (11,500 copies) in seven years; *Kenilworth* (1821), selling at a guinea and a half, set the economic price for a three-decker novel for decades to come. *Guy Mannering* appeared in French in 1816, the first of a series of translations which produced its own Scott-mania. In Britain John Murray’s Family Library (1829) of biography and travel, and Henry Brougham’s initiatives on behalf of Useful Knowledge (Chapter Six, p. 256) topped growing markets for non-fiction. There were areas of worry. When, from 1823, the Mechanics’ Institutes opened libraries of books on science and technology, which were perceived to be of practical benefit to workmen, the craze for ‘Gothic’ thrills was long past its peak: but fiction that was thought to be unsettling was excluded. Admission continued to be warily granted through subscription; free public libraries were only to be established after 1850.

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**Audiences and Critics**

It is no surprise that as the Enlightenment sought to analyse, compare and reach conclusions from which society – the audience at large – might benefit, more was to be required of the critic of the arts as cultural mediator. Journalism was to provide opportunities here not only for scribblers, but also for critics of the calibre of Diderot and Hazlitt. In particular the newer kinds of aesthetic experience – the public concert and the exhibition – were to create a need for personal critical comment, which the rise of topical journalism was ideally suited to meet.

**The theatre**

One of the oldest forms of community art – the drama – also felt this need. But here audience attitudes tended to be fixed by habit and expectation. The French classical stage cast its long influence on ‘serious’ drama, notably in Germany, where Gottsched (1700–66) pressed its claims in critical journals (1723–29), and where Lessing (1729–81) was to oppose it in the search for a living German experience. Lessing’s reforming magazine *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (1767) had to argue a largely theoretical case. The history of play-acting in Britain reveals how audience predilections might be fed by vulgarized versions of Shakespeare’s language, or contrived ‘happy’ endings to the tragedies (Lear’s tragic ending was only to be restored in 1824). Against such conventions, the progress of a broad-based independent theatre criticism was to require both objectivity and vision. Charles Gray, the historian of London theatre criticism in the period to 1795, found that newspapers and magazines only began to make regular space for reviews of specific theatre performances after the middle of the century; Thomas and Hare’s researches have confirmed that there was then ‘independent comment, which develops into the first true dramatic and theatrical criticism’. Intense factors were now at work: notably, in the age of sensibility, the enhanced interest in picturing complex human relationships and, in the heyday of internationally famous actors, the quality of acting which invited audiences to see characters like Shakespeare’s Shylock and Richard III in new ways. However much powerful actors and actresses – as Lessing found at Hamburg – might resent criticism, such factors helped to account for the sense of theatre in these years as the unmissable social art *par excellence*, and therefore for the appearance of a species of theatre critic, concerned with a particular performance as ‘occasional’, as distinct from the dramatic critic, concerned with a play as literature.

‘The Business of the Theatre will also come under my Eye; and as the Inhabitants thereof are manifestly the Servants of the Public (while they are paid for it) without Scruple, whenever they deserve it, they shall have my Lash.’ So wrote one ‘Oxymel Busby’ in the first number of a periodical *The Scourge*, 28 November 1752: but in practice his ‘criticism’ turned out to be little beyond
giving the summary of a plot and anodyne examination as to whether it had been 'moral' or not. His words, and those of countless commentators like him, were directed at audiences which since the very invention of theatre had been used to applying lashes of sorts themselves. The fashion-conscious members of them were likely to be too concerned with being seen to bother; but in the Comédie Française at Paris, and in other theatres, a vociferous public stood in the less expensive part of the house known as the parterre, in front of the stage. From here, every moment on the stage was followed, and repeats could be demanded or the action halted. In the London theatre such interventions came most frequently from the 'gods'. Goldsmith's Chinese 'Citizen of the World' (1762, letter XXI) remarks that 'those who were undermost all the day, now enjoyed a temporary eminence, and became masters of the ceremonies... indulging every noisy freedom'. Indeed, the contacts made between 'artist' and 'consumer' in the theatre of these years were as raw as they had ever been: the Public Advertiser for 13 November 1776 carried a notice from the Drury Lane Theatre management offering twenty guineas to anyone helping to convict for offences against the actors.

It is easy to point to factors that constrained the theatre in this period. In Catholic countries censorship was tight, and Protestant states did not escape. England's Licensing Act of 1737, directed against political satire in the theatre, was to last for a hundred years. Despite constraints, however, the eighteenth-century stage afforded both innovation and experiment. The plays of the Dane Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754), about his own society, were to point the way to other national forms of drama. The formalities of the French classical stage, though still sometimes observed in new writing, were to carry less weight with middle-class audiences who wished to see characters from their own contemporary world being rewarded or punished for choices made pragmatically rather than out of respect for the gods. Sentimental bourgeois comedies using everyday speech flourished; Goldoni (p. 76) put new life into the old Italian commedia tradition; R.B. Sheridan (p. 52) at Drury Lane did the same for satire in his The Rivals (1775) and The School for Scandal (1777). The German national theatre that was being built up from the 1760s registered in the plays of Lessing, Goethe and Schiller (pp. 184–5), all the subtle motions and nuances of what was to captivate audiences of the time, notably moral dilemma and pathos in northern latitudes — those of Hamlet and Macbeth, in fact, for Shakespeare was the rising star. Classical verse tragedy, meanwhile, was beached on a barren southern shore. Voltaire could draw audiences of 30,000 to watch his tragédies in Paris; but Beaumarchais attracted 100,000 to an exceptional run of over 73 performances of his comedy Le Mariage de Figaro in 1784. The French theatre, associated with opera (p. 11), was also famed for spectacle: Arthur Young, in Paris in 1787, preferred the theatre he saw there to his own: 'writers, actors, buildings, scenes, decorations, music, dancing, take the whole in a mass, and it is unrivalled by London'.

The French theatre enjoyed international esteem for its vitality, but Britain was acknowledged by witnesses to have the liveliest acting. After 45 years' stage experience the Italian actor Riccoboni had said as much in 1741. In the same year David Garrick (1717–79) made his London debut in Shakespeare's Richard III. Joint manager at Drury Lane from 1747 to 1775, he was nicknamed 'Shakespeare's priest'. Garrick's naturalism (a contemporary speaks of his 'mobile figures and flashing expressive eyes') broke with all modern precedent (Fig. 16). On his third visit to Paris in 1765 he performed scenes from Macbeth and Lear, which profoundly moved all present, including Diderot and F.M. Grimm, editor of the cultural periodical Correspondance Littéraire. After the Olympian years dominated by Sarah Siddons (1755–1831) and her statuesque brother John Philip Kemble, another 'mobile' actor was to appear, Edmund Kean (1789–1833), also a famous Shakespearean, whose Shylock deeply impressed Heine in London, and who was as successful in America as in Europe. In 1827, a year after the death of the great French tragic actor François-Joseph Talma (1763–1826), the English company of Charles Kemble presented Shakespeare in Paris to high acclaim (p. 235).

No conjunction of planets could have been more creative than the coincidence of Edmund Kean's acting career and the theatre criticism of William Hazlitt (1778–1830). The virtuosity of Kean was such that he could act Othello and Iago on successive evenings (in 1814). Although Hazlitt was to follow Johnson and Lamb in developing a theory that Shakespeare's plays made imaginative demands that only reading could satisfy, he himself owned that he could not read the parts Kean had played without thinking of him. Hazlitt wrote his theatre reviews from 1814 at a high tide of dramatic criticism in Britain, which included the work of Lamb and Leigh Hunt.

Theatre in Europe inevitably took time to recover from the Napoleonic occupation. Napoleon's censorship of new writing (not only in France but in the countries that he conquered) had opened the way to a stream of popular melodrama: although 'serious' theatre was maintained by Kleist (1777–1811) in Berlin and Grillparzer (1791–1872) in Vienna. In Paris the visit of the English Shakespeare company to the Odéon in 1827 proved a catalyst for the Romantic dramas of Alexandre Dumas (1802–70), which delighted audiences with their historical settings (Henri III et sa Cour, 1829). In the 1830s the Journal des Débats (1791) published some of its most lively feuilletons on the arts, and the theatre critic Jules Janin (1804–74) entered his most pungent period of making and breaking reputations.

The first night of the verse-drama Hernani by Victor Hugo (1802–85), on 25 February 1830, now secured a lasting place in theatre annals. Here, for the Théâtre Français, the battle-lines between classicists and Romantics were joined. The friends of the author's 'free verse' openly brawled with supporters of the classical unities. Charles Magnin of the Globe and most of the youth of Paris declared for Hugo. To the critic Sainte-Beuve (1804–69), who sat with the author, the whole affair seemed, however, like a Napoleonic campaign, leading to a victory, but one secured at some cost: 'I believe it is useless to hope for art to be worshipped in public places: it is asking for trouble', he wrote to Hugo.
Music and the visual arts

The rise to full public outspokenness of the music critic took place only in this same Romantic generation, with composer-writers such as Berlioz and Schumann. The eighteenth century had however laid essential foundations. "Sensibility" had worked to particular effect on music's appeal. In Germany, where the first European music periodical had begun to appear in the 1720s, critical writing analysed music according to the qualities of feeling that it generated. Reflecting on the change from the Baroque of Corelli and Handel to the modern classicism, Burney ("Essay on Musical Criticism" prefaced to the third part (1789) of his General History of Music) considered how it affected listeners. As instrumental sounds became so various alongside the vocal tradition represented by opera, music acquired non-vocal performing stars: Burney told of Farinelli, the renowned male soprano, sharing the limelight in a duet with a trumpeter-player. In his detailed account of the Handel Commemoration of 1784 in Westminster Abbey, he reported that 'every hearer seemed afraid of breathing'.

Above all, where music-making had been essentially private or for limited audiences of courtiers or nobles, it became public: musicians, amateur and professional, performed for people who had come to listen and to pay for listening. From 1725 the Concert Spirituel series in Paris offered a paying public sacred music on days of religious observance when theatres closed: and secular works were steadily introduced. Public concerts were organized by J.C. Bach and K.F. Abel in London from 1763; other promotions took place in Leipzig, Vienna and Berlin. The Holywell Room in Oxford, opened in 1748 and reputedly the first purpose-built hall for music, prefigured a tradition of intimate concert spaces. Larger halls were needed for orchestras: Leipzig's Gewandhaus opened in 1781 (Fig. 17). The illustrious Haydn was enticed in old age from Austria as far as London in 1791–92 and 1794–95 to attend benefit concerts in his honour. Paris became the centre of operations for hundreds of composers, performers and publishers: a high degree of technical facility was available in the Conservatoire National Supérieure de Musique (founded 1795, and much copied, e.g. at Brussels 1813, Vienna 1817, London: Royal Academy of Music 1822, Leipzig 1843). In Vienna the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde was founded in 1812, and in the following year a Philharmonic Society was formed in London.

Figure 16: Garrick as Hamlet. Mezzotint by James McArdell (1728–65) after Benjamin Wilson (1721–88). 45 × 34 cm. 1754. British Museum.

Garrick played Hamlet ninety times between 1742–43 and 1776, his final season. For many this became a defining theatrical experience. Hannah More, at the last performance, pitied the posterity that would never see it. For G.C. Lichtenberg, the German professor from Göttingen, Garrick's scene with the Ghost and the speech "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" – spoken 'at the end of a breath' – was 'one of the greatest and most terrible which will ever be played on any stage'. Wilson's record, in McArdell's sensitive mezzotint, was popular enough for a line-engraved copy to be published in 1769.
the piano's enhanced capacity for light and shade, compared with the even dynamic of the harpsichord (as noted above, p. 18), had given it an important edge, to be enhanced after 1800 by improvements to the Erard and Pleyel pianos and by the iron-braced Broadwood. Such resonant instruments in a large hall could persuade more and more concertgoers that a single piano might represent qualities which had hitherto been felt to be exclusive to the human voice. Concert tours by pianist-composers therefore flourished: among them Hummel, Thalberg, Chopin and Liszt (though with Chopin, the larger the hall, the more he hated it). Along with the piano, the violin also captured audiences, notably at the concerts of the legendary Paganini (Fig. 49).

Secondly, big, ground-breaking compositions like Beethoven's Third (Eroica) and Fifth Symphonies (1803 and 1808) presented problems of assembling the orchestral forces that were needed for them, and also — a matter that had earlier preoccupied Haydn — of achieving internal co-ordination and balance. The leadership provided by a keyboard player directing a performance according to the older Baroque tradition was inappropriate for such works and for their performance in large halls. The conductor now established himself. The composer Spohr claimed that he took up the baton to conduct at a Philharmonic Society rehearsal in London in 1820. The German opera companies were certainly using a conductor in the 1830s, and Mendelssohn was a famous practitioner. The emergence of such a figure was further evidence of the coming of age of the idea of the musician as interpretative artist, no longer looked on primarily as a paid servant, as he had been in the heyday of the old courts.

The post-Napoleonic world therefore inherited, with this transformed musical scene, a potentially vast musical public that wished to be informed about it. As the reporting of cultural matters of all kinds increased, the German writer Heine, living in Paris, became the first major critic to write on music for a non-musical paper, the Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung; his articles were an influence on the young Wagner. In the Correspondant of 1829, Berlioz asserted that modern music had begun with Beethoven's Ninth, and defended the C sharp minor quartet. As outspoken music critic of the Débats from 1835, he revealed the web of subterfuges and deceptions which controlled reputations. But there were even more pressing matters to put right in an age when a concert promoter might mix together in one programme the movements of several Beethoven symphonies or an expert might 'correct' them. Berlioz, arguing publicly for the integrity of the work of art, was the man to take these matters up.

How transformed the public image of music had become was also shown in the number of specialist journals which began to operate, most of them run by music publishers. Longest-lasting among these was the Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung, founded in 1798 by J.F. Rochlitz at Leipzig. The Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, begun as a platform for modern music by Schumann in 1834, was, in his hands, an impassioned rival. In all, 262 new music journals were begun in Europe between 1798 and 1840, the majority of them intended for the musical public at large, not just professionals.28

While critical comment on the visual arts was encouraged in mid-eighteenthcentury French and English periodicals by the setting-up of public exhibitions,
fully-rounded press criticism arrived only, as with music, after 1800. But visual art had the constraining arguments of a Neo-classical age to reckon with: while few expected the admittedly sensuous art of music to be ‘improving’, in visual matters there was likely to be a pronounced didactic reason for every swish of a critical scalpel. Already before 1750, a French writer who has been called the first modern art critic, La Font de Saint-Yenne, had suggested that it was only those ‘firm and equitable men’ of the public, unconnected with artists, who had in their mouths ‘the language of truth’. He wanted a morally charged form of history painting to become a ‘school of living’, and claimed that he was voicing the public’s own desire for reform. The idea of the critic as the lay public’s mouthpiece or ‘representative’ (albeit often anonymous, and often opposed by artists themselves) was launched in France on this wave of moral feeling. For Diderot, who reviewed the Paris Salon exhibitions from 1759 (though only for the titled foreign subscribers to J.M. Grimm’s journal Correspondance Littéraire), the edifying message was vital, even if his habit of befriending such artists as Chardin, master of kitchen scenes and creamily highlighted still life, reflected his own lively curiosity about the expressive properties of paint as such. As attendances at the Salon became more mixed, a sense of objectives widening beyond the approbation of audiences already informed enough to appreciate the Academy’s learned subjects persuaded it to include what the Mercure de France wrote of as ‘a sort of accounting to the public’. David committed his Oath of the Horatii (Fig. 25), begun for the King, to working out his own language of truth: ardent, concentrated, devoid of all blandishments of brushstroke, it was hung in the Salon of 1785 (Fig. 18) to great acclaim.

In Britain the spread of lay art criticism was to be channelled through periodicals such as the Gentleman’s Magazine (1731), the Monthly Review (1749), the Critical Review (1756) and the famous political review periodicals of the nineteenth century. A forum was created for it with the beginning of regular exhibitions by the Society of Artists in London (1760, name adopted 1761) and the eventual foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768. But in Britain, with the late founding of its Academy, the prime object had to be to establish authority for artists and for painting in the public domain: in France the aim was rather to use painting’s established authority to enhance the quality of public response to it. The two briefs were taken up respectively by the English painter

Figure 18: The Salon of 1785. Engraving by Pietro Antonio Martini. Page size 39.5 x 54.5 cm. 1785. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

The dense hanging methods used in ‘official’ eighteenth-century exhibitions, with the largest pictures placed high and furthest from the viewer, tended to reinforce the hierarchy of values which put history painting – the painting of human example and achievement – at the top of the scale of importance, above portrait (seen to good advantage here halfway up the facing wall), and both these categories above rustic landscape and genre, the smallest pictures at eye-level. The large painting in the centre – guaranteed prominence as a Crown commission – is David’s Oath of the Horatii, which made as great an impression on visitors in Paris as it had earlier in Rome (Fig. 25).
Joshua Reynolds (1723–92), in his Discourses delivered as President of the Royal Academy, and by Diderot in France, insofar as his art criticism became generally known in his lifetime.31 Efforts by an English art establishment to latch native painting onto the ‘Great Style’ stemming from the Italian Renaissance, and the parallel phenomenon of independent patronage by a newer, very different middle-class taste, created particular problems for artists, critics and audiences in Britain. When George III became king in 1760, the individualist Hogarth was near the despondent end of his career; younger painters, like Stubbs and Wright, were to maintain cool relations with ‘official’ Royal Academy doctrine. John Barrell and others have discussed the effects of a type of ‘civic humanism’, which promoted in print a masculine, polite and essentially ruling-class view of public virtue as the goal of the arts – a goal derived from the past – to the disadvantage of those made wealthy by trade and manufactures in the present.32 English painters seeking to engage with the growing purchasing power of this group found little to help them in the high doctrine spearheaded at the Academy by Reynolds. Maintaining Italian painting as his measure of serious purpose in his 1788 Discourse (late in the canon), Reynolds referred to an ‘English School’ as still a hope for the future.33 This was in the year of Gainsborough’s death, some five years after that of the first British landscapist of genius, Richard Wilson, and over twenty years after that of Hogarth.

After 1800, as Turner, Constable and then Delacroix freed themselves from convention, critics faced a further problem of explaining, or themselves coming to terms with, the technical and imaginative departures involved. Hazlitt – himself a painter – felt this. In 1815, he was seeing in Turner ‘the ablest landscape painter now living’ but also, in his pictures of air, earth and water, a process of rejection of form and of return to ‘the first chaos of the world’.34 For most observers concern about ‘lack of finish’ (see Chapter Four, p. 205) was also an appreciable worry. Turner suffered especially from critical unpreparedness for this. In 1808 John Landseer could observe, in the Review of Publications of Art, that Turner, exhibiting in his own gallery, seemed to ‘mingle light itself with its colours’, accurately reflecting a central interest of this artist. But The Athenaeum (founded in 1828, and one of the most widely-read journals) thought that in Turner’s Burning of the Houses of Lords and Commons (British Institution 1835) ‘truth is sacrificed to effect’. The verifiable facts of this scene – the broad river at Westminster and leaping flames fanned by a westerly breeze, above a watching crowd – were the perfect catalyst for the kind of translation into light and void which critics had already remarked as Turner’s objective. And the Athenaeum admitted that this effect was ‘in parts of the picture, magnificent’. Slowly, truth would be seen to coincide with Turner’s effect, as, in 1842, it did for the great landscapist’s most celebrated interpreter, the critic and artist John Ruskin (1819–1900). ‘It began to occur to me’, Ruskin later recalled, ‘that perhaps even in the artifice of Turner there might be more truth than I had understood’.35 The first volume of Ruskin’s famous apologia on Turner’s art, Modern Painters, appeared a year later, in 1843. Without such advocacy, the percep-

tion that a given effect might convey its own truth was a difficult one for the wider exhibition-going public of the period to reach: herein lay one of the greatest contributions that a thoughtful art critic might make to his time. And so it has remained since.

Notes

2. Daniel Defoe, A Review of the State of the British Nation (1709), VI, no. 36, p. 142
4. Robert Darnton, ‘A Bourgeois puts his World in Order’, in The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French Cultural History (1984), p. 139. Darnton describes the relation of ‘bourgeois’, as interpreted in regard to himself by a citizen of Montpellier, in 1768, to the seventeenth-century homme libre, the term for a well-born citizen with origins in aristocratic notions of behaviour. By the 1760s this also conveyed self-respect, a quality associated with the bourgeois
10. Arthur Young, entry for 9 June 1789, in Travels in France and Italy (1792, reissued 1976), p. 125


30. For example Edinburgh Review (1802), Quarterly Review (1809), Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine (1817), Fraser’s Magazine (1830).


34. William Hazlitt, in his essay ‘On Imitation’, included in The Round Table (1817); see Complete Works, P.P. Howe ed. (1930–34), vol. IV, p. 76.