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The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637
The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London
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Printed in the United States of America

10 09 08 07 06 05 04 03 02 01 1 2 3 4 5
ISBN: 0-226-75342-5 (cloth)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Shiner, L. E. (Larry E.), 1934–
The invention of art : a cultural history / Larry Shiner.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Arts—History. 2. Arts—Philosophy. I. Title.
NX440 .S5 2001 700'/.9 — dc21 00-053247


To the memory of my mother,
whose love of music, art, and literature
was the beginning of this book
were willing to make women natural arbiters of taste, for still others, women’s inconstant reason limited them to an appreciation of the merely ornamental and sentimental aspect of the arts. It is perhaps no accident that one male writer dismissed Bouhours as a ridiculous précieuse who had spent too much time with “women and minor teachers,” whereas Madame de Sévigné found Bouhours a man of many-faceted intelligence (Ferry 1990, 54).

In attempting to enlarge the idea of reason, the partisans of feeling and visual immediacy took an important step toward the modern idea of the aesthetic, but few offered a theoretical elaboration of their position. The major thinker besides Pascal to formulate the philosophical implications of the cognitive role of feeling or rapid reason was Leibniz. Whereas Descartes had spoken of the discovery of “clear and distinct” ideas as the guarantee of certainty, Leibniz argued that there are ideas that are clear and yet not distinct; that is, we clearly perceive them but cannot distinctly separate them into parts for analysis. Such ideas are “fused” or compact, like the perception of red, the taste of a lemon, or the sound of a chord.

Rather than thinking of each musical note distinctly, we grasp harmony and melody all at once in a fused way (Leibniz 1969, 291; Barnouw 1993). Similarly, “we sometimes know clearly, without the slightest doubt, that a poem or a picture is well or badly done, because there is in it an I know not what which satisfies or shocks us” (Leibniz 1951, 325). Yet Leibniz did not limit tacit knowing or the je ne sais quoi to the arts any more than Bouhours had. Before ideas like those of Bouhour’s and Leibniz’s could lead to the modern idea of the aesthetic, the fine arts would have to be separated from both the crafts and the sciences and reconceived as an autonomous category requiring a distinct faculty of judgment. The late seventeenth century remained in these respects, as in so many others, a transitional period.

PART II

ART DIVIDED

Overview

J. H. Plumb describes the cultural scene of mid-seventeenth-century England this way: “No public libraries, no concerts, . . . no museums” (Plumb 1972, 30). By the end of the eighteenth century, all these cultural institutions and more had appeared across Europe along with the rise of a distinct market and public for the fine arts and the new concepts of fine art, artist, and the aesthetic. The convergence of these social, institutional, and intellectual changes gave us the modern system of fine arts. There were actually three stages of convergence: an initial one from around 1680 to 1750 during which many elements of the modern system of art that had emerged piecemeal since the late Middle Ages began to be more closely integrated; a second and crucial one from around 1750 to 1800 that definitively separated fine art from craft, artist from artisan, and the aesthetic from other modes of experience; and a final stage of consolidation and elevation, from around 1800 to 1830, during which the term “art” began to signify an autonomous spiritual domain, the artistic vocation was sanctified, and the concept of the aesthetic began to replace taste. Although the word “art” also continued to be used in its older and broader sense, by the time the new system of fine art was firmly established in the nineteenth century, the adjective “fine” could be dropped, leaving the term “art” ambiguous when context did not make clear whether the older sense of “an art” was intended or the new fine art sense.

But why was the art system of the previous centuries replaced by a fine art system at just this time? At one level, the reasons were intellectual: ideas of fine art, artist, and aesthetic provided solutions to a series of conceptual problems inherited from previous centuries. But an exclusively conceptual study focused
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on “great thinkers” would be false to the extent that changes in concepts were also justifications for the new institutions that embodied them and the new cultural class that believed in them. Tracing how the use of terms changed and how various thinkers worked out the meaning of new ideas is necessary, but it does not by itself account for why one regulative system (art) was replaced by another system (fine art) at this time.

Another way of explaining why the modern system of fine arts only became fully established between 1680 and 1830 would take a long-term sociological view and consider it the final stage of a process of social differentiation beginning in the late Middle Ages. Viewed from such a distance, art’s becoming an independent domain simply looks like part of a natural dissolution of the integrated activities of medieval society into distinct spheres of politics, economics, religion, science, and art. Unlike essentialist views, which treat the modern idea of art as a human universal or a historical destiny, the concept of differentiation does not see the modern fine art system as the unfolding of an essence but as a contingent response to the general forces of modernization and secularization. Unfortunately, the differentiation model operates at such a high level of generality that it gives us little sense of the specific mechanisms by which art became an autonomous realm.

A third approach is also needed, one that links conceptual changes to specific social and economic factors, such as the rise of a market economy, the growth and status aspirations of the middle class, the increase in literacy, and the preservation of gender roles. The point is not that these factors “caused” the invention of fine art, a claim that would simply be the converse of assuming that ideas like fine art and the aesthetic are the result of discussions among a few philosophers. Yet there is clear evidence that many of those who articulated the new ideas of fine art, artist, and aesthetic were not merely completing the conceptual developments of their predecessors but were also reacting to the expanded role of the market and the middle class and to new institutions and practices. The new art institutions played a key mediating role between changing concepts and socioeconomic contexts. Institutions such as the art museum, the secular concert, and literary criticism were the point at which the social and ideational met, mutually constituting and reinforcing each other.

Each of the following three chapters describes this interplay among intellectual, institutional, and social-economic factors in the emergence of the fine art system. Chapter 5 begins with the conceptual and semantic evidence for the division of the older idea of art into fine art versus craft, then looks at the institutions and behaviors that embodied that division and connects them to the growth of a market system for the arts and the expansion of a middle-class art public. Chapter 6 relates the new ideal of the artist to artists’ need to assert independence of the new art market and art public in the wake of the breakdown of the old patronage system. With the emergence of institutions like separate exhibitions and dealers for painting, regular secular concerts, and the establishment of copyright, a new image of the artist as creative genius was consecrated along with a new concept of the “work” as a self-contained world. Chapter 6 also looks at the gendering of genius and the fate of the artisan and closes with an analytical comparison of the patronage and market systems. Chapter 7 shows how the idea of a distinct aesthetic experience for fine art emerged from the problem of taste and describes the institutional expression of this new sensibility through such things as the elimination of stage seating in the theater and the development of the picturesque tour. Although a book of this size cannot attempt to follow particular theories of art or the aesthetic—only the general assumptions that underlie such theories—I close chapter 7 with a brief discussion of the views of Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Schiller, whose writings on aesthetics offered influential justifications for the modern system of art as it had developed up to the end of the eighteenth century.
On January 22, 1687, Charles Perrault read a long didactic poem to the Académie Française declaring modern writers to be the equal of the ancients, citing as one of his proofs the superiority of modern science to Aristotle and throwing in a few criticisms of Homer along the way. Many of the "forty immortals," as the members of the academy were called, could hardly sit still. The leading poet and critic Nicolas Boileau muttered throughout the session and had something like a nervous breakdown afterward. The famous Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns was on, a "Battle of the Books," as Swift satirized the English version, which flared up periodically from 1690 to 1730. Perrault was not the first to claim that just as Galileo's physics was superior to Aristotle's, so modern writers might equal or excel the ancients. But to suggest to a generation brought up on Homer and Virgil that a work such as Jean Chapelain's 1656 epic The Maid of Orleans, was the equal of the Aeneid could induce sputtering outrage.

Yet the issues at stake were much deeper than a mere squabble among academics. One issue was the question of whether the emerging art public rather than the scholarly elite are to be judges of literature and, more specifically, whether a new (female-identified) genre, such as the novel, was to be accepted as a successor of epic poetry (DeJean 1997). Above all, the quarrel brought into the open the shake up of the old liberal arts system by the rise in prestige of the sciences and the decline of rhetoric that had been taking place during the last half of the seventeenth century. By 1700, the old liberal arts scheme was undergoing a reorganization that would eventually lead to the separate categories of fine art, science, and humanities. The traditional core of the liberal arts, it will be remembered, included the trivium of grammar, rhetoric, and logic and the quadrivium of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music theory. Of the modern fine arts, poetry had long been taught as a subdivision of rhetoric, and by the beginning of the eighteenth century, music was seen by many as closer to rhetoric than to mathematics, and painting, sculpture, and architecture were also widely accepted as liberal arts. Before the modern category of fine arts
could be constructed, however, painting, sculpture, and architecture not only had to join poetry and music as liberal arts, but these five then had to be separated from the other liberal arts of grammar, rhetoric, logic, mathematics, and astronomy and regrouped under a new name. The success of the experimental sciences and the reduction of rhetoric to style in the course of the seventeenth century were crucial to this process of dissolving the old liberal arts scheme, and the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns pushed it along.

Constructing the Category of Fine Art

Even before the dust had settled on the quarrel, there was a general recognition of the deep differences between the sciences and the arts. Leading "moderns" were ready to concede that progress may be easier to discern in those areas that depend on calculation than in arts, which depend on individual talent. William Wotton lists "Natural History, Physiology and Mathematics" as typical of disciplines in which the moderns have clearly excelled over the ancients but admits that in "Poesie, Oratory, Architecture, Painting, and Statuary" the moderns can at best equal their predecessors. (Notice that he omits music, which he still regarded as connected to mathematics [Wotton (1694) 1968, 18].) Although the quarrel merely dramatized changes that had longer-term causes, the period from 1730 to 1750 following the quarrel saw various proposals for new groupings until the new category of fine arts became firmly established in the 1750s.

The state of classification in the early decades of the eighteenth century is well illustrated by the abbe Dubos's widely read Critical Reflections on Poetry and Painting (1719), which talked of painting, poetry, and music within the same book yet did not make a fixed category of them, even occasionally joining them to the arts of military leadership or medicine ([1719] 1993). Similarly, the tree of knowledge at the head of Chamber's Cyclopaedia of 1728 broke out a category of science from the old liberal arts scheme— but not one of fine art. Chambers grouped arithmetic and geometry with the new disciplines of physics, mineralogy, and zoology under "Natural or Scientifical" knowledge, but he nowhere hints at the modern category of the fine arts, scattering painting, sculpture, architecture, and music among fortification, hydraulics, and navigation, all under the general rubric of "mixed-mathematics," and still locating poetry next to grammar and rhetoric (Chambers 1728) (fig. 15). Before the modern category of fine art could be established, three things needed to come together and gain wide acceptance: a limited set of arts, a commonly accepted term to easily identify the set, and some generally agreed upon principle(s) or criteria for distinguishing that set from all others.

The set that formed the modern category of fine art had at its core poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, and music, to which one or more arts might be added such as dance, rhetoric, or landscape gardening. This core set, which was formalized in the 1740s, was not without partial and scattered precedents in the Renaissance and seventeenth century, such as invocations of Horace's ut pictura poesis or vague references to the "sister arts," but none of these lists were consistently put forward as an articulated category using an identifying term and a unifying principle, nor did any of them become regulative of discourse about the arts as was now about to happen (Kristeller 1990).

The term that eventually won out over such phrases as "elegant arts," "noble arts," or "higher arts," of course, was the French "beaux-arts" (beautiful arts), which was translated directly into German, Spanish, and Italian, as well as into English as "polite arts" or "fine arts." Although "beaux-arts," often without the
hyphen, had been used during the late seventeenth century to cover the three visual arts, when it was extended beyond the visual arts the resulting lists could include not only music and poetry but also mechanics and optics, as we have seen. Even the Société Académique des Beaux-Arts, which flourished in Paris from 1726 to the early 1730s and aimed at improving the arts "with the help of the sciences," included, among its members, not only a painter, a dance master, and a few engravers but also several watchmakers, surgeons, and engineers (Hahn 1981). The referent of the term "beaux-arts" was still a fluid one down into the 1730s and only become fixed in its modern sense in the 1740s and 1750s.

The final intellectual requirement for the construction of the category of fine art was some principle(s) that could justify uniting the visual, verbal, and musical arts under a single head yet also distinguish them from the other liberal arts as well as from the sciences and the crafts. The principle of design used by the Italian academies since the Renaissance was too narrow due to its close connection with the visual arts. The ancient liberal arts principle of mind over body was too broad since it would not by itself account for separating painting, poetry, and music as a group from the arts of grammar or history. One other long-established principle, imitation, was also too broad since it included activities such as embroidery, pottery, or birdcalls that might also imitate nature. Accordingly, many writers believed that only a special kind of imitation, the imitation of Beautiful Nature (la belle Nature), applied to the beaux-arts. Yet not even the principle of imitating beautiful nature became the primary criterion justifying the new set and term.

Some combination of at least four other principles was regularly invoked. Two of these principles—"genius" and "imagination"—concerned the production of works of fine art; the other two—"pleasure versus utility" and "taste"—concerned the aims and mode of reception of the beaux-arts. The combination of pleasure versus utility with genius and imagination was frequently employed to distinguish the beaux-arts from the mechanical arts or crafts. The combination of pleasure versus utility with taste was employed to distinguish the beaux-arts from the sciences and from other liberal arts like grammar or logic. Among these principles, pleasure versus utility played a pivotal role. As we have seen, the old Horatian commonplace that the arts aim to "instruct and please" had been current since the Renaissance. Sometimes the two aims were seen as parallel and equally valid functions; more often, pleasure was seen as subordinate to the aim of instruction or utility. But in the eighteenth century, pleasure began to be systematically opposed to utility as a criterion for distinguishing one group of the liberal arts from the rest under the name "beaux-arts." But not just any kind of pleasure was involved. Over the course of the century, the notion of a special kind of refined pleasure or taste would be transformed into the modern idea of the aesthetic, a process we will discuss in chapter 7 on the construction of the aesthetic.

Obviously, a cultural transformation as broad as the construction of the modern category of fine art cannot be dated or tied to any individual. But intellectual historians often cite Charles Batteux's Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe (The fine arts reduced to a single principle) (1746) as the first widely read book to integrate the term "beaux-arts" with a restricted set of arts, in this case music, poetry, painting, sculpture, and dance, and to group them on the basis of an explicit principle, the imitation of beautiful nature (Batteux 1746 1989). Although Batteux made imitation his central criteria, he also gave an important place to the opposition between pleasure and utility. On this basis, Batteux claimed there are actually three classes of arts: those that simply minister to our needs (the mechanical arts); those whose aim is pleasure (the beaux-arts par excellence); and those that combine utility and pleasure (elegance and architecture). Batteux also used two other criteria for separating the beaux-arts from the rest: genius, which he calls "the father of the arts," because it imitates beautiful nature, and taste, which judges how well beautiful nature has been imitated (Batteux 1989, 83–85).

Batteux's treatise had an immediate effect not only in France but also in Germany, where two translations appeared in 1751. His book made it into English even sooner, with a pirated translation/adaptation published in 1749 as The Polite Arts; or, A Dissertation on Poetry, Painting, Musick, Architecture, and Eloquence (Kristeller 1990, 210). Batteux had clearly managed to hit on a formulation that captured the direction toward which ideas about the classification of the arts had been moving for some time. This is nowhere more evident than in France itself, where another work destined to have even greater influence on elite thinking offered a more fully articulated case for the new category: the Encyclopédie (Diderot and d'Alembert 1751–72). At the head of the Encyclopédie, Diderot placed a comprehensive table of all knowledge based on Bacon's division of human faculties into memory (history), reason (science), and imagination (poetry). A comparison of the Encyclopédie's 1751 tree of knowledge with Chamber's Cyclopaedia (1728) shows that a decisive turn toward the modern category of art had occurred. Whereas Chambers had placed poetry next to grammar and rhetoric and put sculpture with trades and manufacture, the Encyclopédie now grouped all five fine arts (poetry, painting, sculpture, engraving, and music) under the faculty of imagination as one of three main divisions.
of knowledge, splendidly isolated from all other arts, disciplines, and sciences (fig. 16).

D'Alembert's "Preliminary Discourse" in the Encyclopédie, justifying the new tree of knowledge, announced, in an obvious reference to Batteux, that some of the liberal arts had been "reduced to principles" and "called Beaux-Arts primarily because they have pleasure for their aim" (d'Alembert 1986, 108–9). D'Alembert's list of the newly classified and baptized beaux-arts included poetry, painting, sculpture, music, and architecture (from Batteux's list, he dropped dance and rhetoric and added architecture, abandoning without comment the category mixed arts). But pleasure was not the only thing by which d'Alembert distinguished the beaux-arts from the "more necessary or useful liberal arts such as Grammar, Logic or Ethics." These other liberal arts, he claimed, have fixed and established rules, but the beaux-arts are the product of an inventive genius. Above all, the beaux-arts are distinguished from other arts and sciences by belonging under the faculty of imagination rather than memory and reason. In a general summary of the tree of knowledge, d'Alembert explained why he and Diderot substituted the term "poetry" for "beaux-arts" in their table of knowledge: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Poetry, Music and their different divisions, make up the third general distribution that is born of imagination, and whose parts are included under the name Beaux-Arts. One could also include them under the general title of Painting, since all the Beaux-Arts can be reduced to painting, and only differ by the means they employ; finally, one could relate them all to Poetry, taking that word in its natural signification, which is nothing else than invention or creation" (1986, 119).

There is a certain irony in the Encyclopédie's role in spreading the new category of fine art since one aim of the encyclopedists was to celebrate and codify the mechanical arts, to which it devoted many articles and most of its plates. Diderot's article "Art" in the first volume of 1751, for example, is devoted entirely to an appreciation of the mechanical arts and makes no reference to the new category. "Beaux-arts" only gets a separate section in the 1776 supplement to the Encyclopédie, and it wasn't until 1798 that the Académie Française finally gave it official recognition in its dictionary (Robinet 1776).

Yet the new category and term spread steadily across Europe between 1750 and 1770. By the end of the eighteenth century, almost all discussions of the arts in Germany, England, and Italy used the new grouping and a version of the name. In Italian, "beaux-arts" became belle-arti, in German schönen künste, and in English the term "fine arts" eventually won out over "elegant arts" and "polite arts." Americans also picked it up, Writing home from Paris in 1780, John Adams remarked that it was not "the fine Arts" America needed just then,
but he must "study politics and war" in order that his grandchildren might study "painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain" (Adams 1963, 3:342).

Although the term "fine arts" was firmly established by the end of the eighteenth century, the set of arts assigned to it obviously varied from writer to writer. Most, like d'Alembert, dropped Batteux's category of mixed arts and simply put architecture with poetry, painting, sculpture, and music. These five formed a common core to which one or two others could be added, such as dance (Batteux; Moses Mendelssohn), oratory (J. A. Schlegel; Thomas Robertson), engraving (Jacques Lacombe; Jean-François Marmontel), and landscape gardening (Henry Home, Lord Kames; Immanuel Kant). Adams was unusual in including tapestry and porcelain, but his was a passing comment in a letter, not an attempt to enunciate a set.

If the core set and the term "fine arts" were well established by the 1770s, there was considerably more variation in the criteria for the new category. Although some combination of imitation, genius, imagination, pleasure, or taste was almost always named, there were often sharp divergences over which criteria were most important and what they meant. Writers as different as Diderot, Mendelssohn, and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, for example, found Batteux's imitation principle inadequate. By the 1770s, critical and theoretical discussion of the criteria for inclusion in the new category focused on either the production of the fine art work (genius vs. rule) or its reception (pleasure vs. utility). A competing revision of the Encyclopédie, published at Yverdon in Switzerland in 1770, turns the original table's organizing categories of memory, reason, and imagination into history, philosophy, and art. Under "art," the Yverdon adaptation creates three subdivisions: the "Art of Signs" (gestures and letters), the "Symbolic Arts" (language, grammar, and rhetoric), and the "Imitative Arts" (further divided into "Beaux Arts" and "Aesthetics") (Darnton 1979) (fig. 17). Both the separation of artist from artisan (genius vs. rule) and of the aesthetic from the instrumental (pleasure vs. utility) were implicated in the construction of the category of fine art from the beginning.

Although the category of beaux-arts was not created by a few elite thinkers, such as Batteux and d'Alembert, and then filtered down to the public, codifications by popular dictionaries and handbooks did their part in establishing it. In 1752, for example, about the time the Encyclopédie began to appear in a costly edition, Jacques Lacombe published in Paris a far more accessible small book that deftly summed up the new assumptions: "Arts (Beaux); are distinguished from the Arts in general, insofar as the latter are destined for utility, the
former for pleasure. The Beaux-Arts are the offspring of genius; they have nature for model, taste for master, pleasure for aim . . . the true rule for judging them is feeling” (Saisselin 1970, 18). Although hardly portable, J. G. Sulzer’s four-volume General Theory of the Fine Arts (1771) was also arranged as a dictionary for the German public. But more important than treatises by Batteux and d’Alembert or dictionaries by Lacombe and Sulzer were informal conversations at exhibitions, concerts, bookstalls, and reading rooms, in French or Italian salons, British clubs, Dutch and German coffeehouses, and the many essays, reviews, and letters in the periodical press. The important role of such social exchanges will become more apparent when we look at some of the art institutions that embodied the new concepts and some characteristics of the art public that talked about them.

The New Institutions of Fine Art

With the exception of the theater and opera, nearly all of our modern fine art institutions were established in the eighteenth century. Naturally, if one is trying to trace the “origin” of such institutions, various forerunners and precedents can be found, but it is only in the eighteenth century that the art museum, the secular concert, and literary criticism take on their modern functions and meanings and spread across Europe. Such institutions embodied the new opposition between fine art and craft by providing places where poetry, painting, or instrumental music could be experienced and discussed apart from their traditional social functions. This institutional separation probably did as much as any number of essays or treatises by intellectuals to establish a distinct category of fine art.

In the case of literature the rapid growth of the market for books and journals along with the spread of circulating libraries and the establishment of copyright hastened the division of the category of “letters” into imaginative versus general literature (fig. 18). These more directly market-related institutions helped spread three other practices that were more specifically “literary” in the modern sense: literary criticism, literary history, and the vernacular literary canons (Kernan 1989). Although general theoretical treatises on poetry go back as far as Aristotle, literary criticism in the modern sense of the review of current works of belles lettres only fully institutionalized in the eighteenth century. Not only did journals begin to appear that focused primarily on reviewing the review of new books, but there was also a steady shift from religious titles to belles lettres (Berghahn 1988). In the early eighteenth century, the audience was still small enough to support heavily topical poetic satire of the kind written by Pope or Voltaire; poetry was a cudgel—and it got Voltaire literally cudgeled in return (Tompkins 1980). But by the second half of the century a few writers could even make part of their living from criticism as a growing audience of anonymous consumers sought advice on what to read amid the flood of new publications. It was only a step from this general critical practice to the emergence of journals like Schiller’s Horen that set out to separate works of literary fine art from works of instruction or mere entertainment (Berghahn 1988).

Although there had been a recognition of authoritative texts in the ancient world and anthologies of model passages from Greece and Rome down through most of the seventeenth century, the modern vernacular canon began to take on additional functions in the eighteenth century. The passages chosen by the creators of ancient, medieval, or Renaissance anthologies were conceived of primarily as models of good style rather than as self-contained “works of art” in the modern sense. The vernacular anthologies of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century were also assembled from the most popular authors for teaching style, not as an authoritative selection of great masterpieces of
literature (DeJean 1988). But the print explosion of the eighteenth century and the lack of sophistication of much of the new middle-class readership seemed to call for a triage of the fine from the ordinary, and it is in this situation that the religious notion of a “canon” of authoritative vernacular books began to take on its modern form.

John Guillory has argued that vernacular canons have also operated as a form of “cultural capital” that helped separate the middle and upper classes from those that did not possess such cultural goods. In the British middle-class academies, for example, vernacular literature or “polite letters” was substituted for the aristocracy’s badge of status, the Latin classics. Various anthologies of poetry and prose, with selections from Milton, Shakespeare, Addison, Gray, and Barbauld, were used for teaching composition. Although this new cultural capital was still being taught primarily as a way of learning eloquence in speech and writing, the vernacular linguistic canon later merged with the idea of the self-contained work of art to form the nineteenth-century curriculum of great works appreciated as exemplars of literature itself (Guillory 1993).

Paralleling the shift to a new classification system that placed painting in a separate category of fine art, there was an institutional shift from showing or selling canvases along with furniture, jewelry, and other domestic goods to displaying them in separate fine art institutions, such as art auctions, art exhibitions, and art museums. Here, too, the market played a key role. As the number of collectors increased, specialization became possible and the social standing of dealers improved with the result that “the organization of the [French] art market, as it exists in its current form came into being towards the middle of the eighteenth century” (Pomian 1987, 158).

In England commercial pressures also had the “effect of increasingly splitting art from other areas of trade” and fostering an “aura of exclusivity that began to distinguish [paintings] from other products” (Pears 1988, 64).

In the early eighteenth century, the few public exhibitions of paintings in Italy or France were usually of a few days duration on the occasion of religious festivals. But from 1737 on, the French academy began to hold annual salons, which became extremely popular with a mixed audience ranging from artisans and law clerks to rich bourgeois and members of the nobility, “the first regularly repeated, open, and free display of contemporary art in Europe to be offered in a completely secular setting” (Crow 1985, 3) (fig. 19). In England, in contrast, the early exhibitions of the 1760s charged an entrance fee in order to exclude “livery servants, foot-soldiers, porters, women with children, etc.” (Pears 1988, 127).

It was but a natural step from the growth of a middle-class public for art exhibitions to the idea of a public art museum. Across Europe, parts of royal collections were opened to the public in the second half of the century (London, Paris, Munich, Vienna, and Rome). In Florence, the Uffizi gradually separated painting and sculpture from natural and scientific curiosities so that it had become essentially an art museum by the end of the century (Pomian 1987). Although many of these collections severely limited public access, their establishment is an important testimony to the idea of art as an autonomous realm since the works in them were torn away from their original functional contexts. The transformation of the Louvre into a fine art museum during the French Revolution engendered such an intense debate over the meaning and effects of this separation that it merits a special discussion in chapter 9.

Another indicator of the transformation of hitherto functional works into “art” is the upper-class educational experience that the English called the Continental Grand Tour and that the French and Germans referred to as the Italian
Journey. Hitherto limited to a few members of the aristocracy, the phenomenon grew in the eighteenth century and the arts claimed center stage. Painting and sculpture were viewed in detachment from their original purposes, especially for the nominally Protestant English or Germans or the Voltairean Frenchmen who visited St. Peter's or the Duomo of Florence. The Grand Tour also encouraged the tendency to look at architecture, the most "utilitarian" of the fine arts, primarily in terms of beauty and style. Closely related to the Grand Tour of the nobility and the wealthy bourgeoisie was a desire for travel and "viewing" nature and other locales that developed among the middle class after mid-century. The new word "tourist" was coined, and the English, especially, traveled to see picturesque landscapes and to visit the great country houses and gardens of the aristocracy (Abrams 1989).

The new art tourist and museum visitor needed guidance as to what was famous and noteworthy. Most traditional treatises on painting, sculpture, or architecture had been written primarily for use by artisan/artists themselves or by small circles of connoisseur-collectors. But with the rise of the art exhibition, journalistic criticism developed to evaluate new works and exhibitions for the general public. Along with art criticism in the modern sense came the first modern art histories. Most previous histories had been organized biographically, but the construction of the category of fine art meant that it was now conceivable to write a history of the "art" of some limited period or place. In 1764 J. J. Winckelmann published the first book with the phrase "history of art" in its title (History of Ancient Art [1764] 1966).

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, music was still integrated into the fabric of social life, written and played for religious and civic occasions or for private and public entertainment. But over the course of the century the number and importance of public concerts grew steadily. The first advertised concerts for pay had been given in London in the 1670s; by the turn of the century, these small concerts were a regular feature of London life, and by the 1750s they had become socially fashionable. In France, where the state opera held a monopoly on public performance, the first regularly scheduled concerts were held from 1723 at the Tuileries Palace on the thirty-five holy days when opera performances were forbidden (Goubert and Roche 1991). In the small German principalities, there had already been subscription concerts in Frankfurt from 1723, Hamburg from 1731, and Leipzig from 1743 where the ground floor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus (cloth merchant's hall) was remodeled in 1781 to become the first European concert hall dedicated to an orchestra playing instrumental music (Raynor 1978). This new experience of listening to music for itself was also accompanied by the beginnings of modern music criticism, as well as the first general histories of music.

Although not a specifically musical institution, one of London's most celebrated eighteenth-century sites, Vauxhall Gardens, offers a good example of the institutionalization of the split between the so-called polite and vulgar arts. When Jonathan Tyers took over Vauxhall in 1728, it still had the reputation of being an outdoor brothel. Tyers cleaned it up physically and culturally by banning prostitutes, freelance vendors, and wandering musicians and by creating broad, well-lighted avenues lined with colonnades, arches, statues, and tastefully designed supper boxes. He also brought polite culture to Vauxhall by hiring an orchestra and well-known London singers to perform the music of J. C. Bach and George Frederick Handel. Of course, Vauxhall was primarily an outdoor pleasure garden, and for most people the music was background rather than something to listen to in silence (fig. 20). Yet already by 1735 there was also an orchestra housed above ground level in a cylindrical pavilion that "imposed

Figure 20. Thomas Rowlandson, Vauxhall Gardens (ca. 1784). Courtesy Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, New Haven, Conn.
a gulf between players and their listeners.” The social and cultural message of Vauxhall was not lost on contemporaries who explicitly contrasted its refined pleasures with the vulgar amusements of the fairs and taverns (Solkin 1992, 115).

The New Art Public

In the seventeenth century, the audience for most writers, composers, or painters had been a small one of patrons, connoisseurs, and amateurs whose demands were specific and tastes well known. In the eighteenth century, the new art institutions of secular concert, painting exhibition, and literary review helped bring a far larger and more varied public into being, one whose increasing diversity and anonymity forced a recasting of the terms in which the arts were conceived. The audiences that came to the exhibitions and concerts, read books and criticism, and met in coffeehouses and clubs to discuss them were now large enough to subsidize artistic production through their combined individual choices. Eighteenth-century writers were deeply divided over who should be listened to among this new art public—were divided, in fact, over who was even to be counted as part of it. For the term “public” could sometimes mean all the people, but more often it distinguished the worthy part of society from “the people.” The “people” in this restricted sense had various names, ranging from the merely pejorative (“multitude,” “populace”) to the outright hostile (“mob,” “rabble,” “canaille, Pöbel”), who were said to be easily swayed by emotion, prejudice, and selfish interests. The true “public,” in contrast, were those whose property and education empowered them to judge political and cultural matters impartially (Barrell 1986; Chartier 1991).

Obviously, the increasing involvement of people from the middle and lower ranges of the social order in the new art institutions posed an acute problem for those trying to define the appropriate public for the fine arts. If there was broad agreement that the lowest orders were incapable of appreciating the fine arts, there was no clear point at which middle became lower-middle and lower-middle became lowest. What we call the middle class in England and the bourgeoisie on the Continent was actually a hierarchy of great disproportion in wealth, education, status, and experience, ranging from rich merchants or financiers at the top down through layer after layer of decreasing wealth to laborers, shopkeeper, and self-employed artisan or independent farmer. Wherever one stood in this hierarchy, there was a tendency to ape those in the ranks above, whether by attending a concert or exhibition or, in the case of the more affluent, by acquiring a harpsichord or hiring a portrait painter. Some reacted to this emulation and its inevitable mixing of lower and higher art forms with patronizing amusement as in Horace Walpole’s description of his experiences as a parliamentary candidate in 1761: “Think of me . . . dining with two hundred of them. . . amid. . . huzzas, songs, and tobacco, and finishing with country dancing at a ball and six penny whistle! I have borne it all cheerfully. . . . have sat hours to hear misses play on the harpsichord, and see an Alderman’s copies of Rubens” (Porter 1990, 65). Hogarth, Swift, and Pope were not so gentle with the cultural pretensions of the upwardly mobile.

The result of the use of cultural choices to mark social ascension was not only middle-class asp credited with aristocratic tastes in the fine arts but also a gradual withdrawal from lower-class culture. One expression of this withdrawal was a tendency to stigmatize popular cultural forms as “mere recreation” when compared to the elite pleasures of the fine arts. In Joseph Andrews, Fielding humorously called attention to the eighteenth-century split between elite and popular culture: “Whilst the People of Fashion seized places to their own use, such as courts, assembles, operas, balls, etc; the people of no fashion, beside one Royal Palace, called his Majesty’s Bear Garden, have been in constant possession of all hops, fairs, revels, etc. . . . So far from looking on each other as brethren in the Christian Language, they seem scarce to regard each other as of the same species” ([1742] 1961, 136). As Peter Burke sums up his study of this separation, “In 1600, popular culture was everyone’s culture; a second culture for the educated, and the only culture for everyone else. By 1800, however, in most parts of Europe, the talented, the nobility, the merchants, the professional men—and their wives—had abandoned popular culture to the lower classes” (1978, 270). Of course, frequent borrowing and visitation between high and low culture continued in the eighteenth century and since, but the new ideas and institutions of fine art made the difference palpable (Burke 1993) (fig. 21).

Fraternization between the aristocracy and the upper reaches of the British middle class had already occurred to a limited degree in politics, where both groups had a stake in order; it happened even more frequently in charities, scientific clubs, book circles, and musical societies, as well as in coffeehouses or public gardens like Vauxhall. A key term for those able to participate in this social and cultural stratum in Britain was the “polite.” Although the term “politeness” suggests a minor virtue to us, in the eighteenth century it was a crucial social and cultural term of broad application. It signified not only good manners but also the cultured outlook of a gentleman or lady. The polite were people who could converse knowingly but not pedantically about the “polite arts,” “polite letters,” and “polite learning” in the coffeehouses, clubs, and societies (Klein 1994).

It could be argued that one small factor contributing to England’s social
stability in the eighteenth century was the creation of a common arena of high culture and fine art in which the nobility, gentry, and educated middle class could share. The point was stated openly in Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism*:

“The Fine Arts have ever been encouraged by wise Princes not simply for private amusement, but for their beneficial influence in society. By uniting different ranks in the same elegant pleasures, they promote benevolence; by cherishing love of order, they enforce submission to government” (1762, iii). As Kames makes clear elsewhere, laborers and artisans were definitely not included. However wearying Walpole found the endless harpsichord recitals and the copies of Rubens, in their modest way, they were tokens of a common belief in the solidarity of the "polite" through a participation in "the same elegant pleasures."

Although social divisions in France and Germany were more pronounced than in England, those parts of the nobility and bourgeoisie most affected by Enlightenment ideas also began to find a common ground in high culture institutions, such as the salons and academies. Although touching only a handful of people, these institutions were seen by philosophers such as d’Alembert as a place apart where the members, whatever their social standing, temporarily became part of the “republic of letters” without compromising the society of orders and privileges (Goodman 1994). A large middle class was even slower to emerge in the various German states, but even there one can discern a limited meeting on the terrain of fine art between the aristocracy and the wealthier and more educated parts of the middle class. Kant, for example, begins his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* with a contrast between those of grosser appetites who look at things in terms of money or sex and persons “of noble sensitivity” who are concerned with “finer feeling” (Kant 1960, 46).

If the middling orders could ascend into the polite public in part by shunning the crude amusements of the poor and frequenting fine art institutions, some of the nobility and bourgeoisie might exclude themselves from the cultured public by failing to exhibit an acquaintance with the fine arts and/or indulging in low entertainments like cockfights (fig. 22). Obviously, the untutored French noble buried in the provinces, the English “booby squire” who cared for nothing but meat, drink, and the hunt, or the Prussian Junker occupied with his horses and rank were little more sensitive or knowledgeable in the fine arts than some of the populace. The cultured middle class and nobility who made up the fine art public could be as scathing about their more boorish social equals as about the ignorant populace. In 1746 the Earl of Egmont and two well-off members of the middle class entertained themselves in a coffeehouse by ridiculing an ennobled merchant "worth a hundred thousand pound if not two" who "brags that in his whole life he never bought a book, picture or print" (Pears 1988, 14).

The category of fine art and its criterion of refined pleasure and informed judgment was neither a purely intellectual construct nor the simple expression of an existing social division but part of an effort to institute a new distinction at once social and cultural. On this high cultural ground, noble and bourgeois could meet as a fine art public, rejecting both the frivolous diversions of the rich and highborn as well as the vulgar amusements of the populace. There is a line in Diderot’s *Salon of 1767* that nicely draws on both these rejections at once: “Money ... degrades and destroys the fine arts ... [which] are subordinated to the fantasy and caprice of a handful of rich men ... or abandoned to the mercy of the indigent multitude, which strives, by poor work in every genre, to give itself the credit and lustre of wealth” (Diderot [1767] 1995, 77). It is no accident that when Batteux’s book *Les beaux arts réduit à un même principe* appeared in its pirated English paraphrase, the term “beaux-arts” was translated as “polite
Figure 22. William Hogarth, *The Cockpit* (1759). Betting on cockfights was one of the most popular eighteenth-century pastimes in England. Here, the blind Lord Albemarle Bertie is shown at the center of a raucous crowd gathered in the "Royal Cockpit" of St. James' Park.

"polite arts" and "elegant arts" alternated with "fine arts" as the name of the new category, although "polite arts" was the more widely used and remained current throughout the century. The new category of polite or fine arts would henceforth serve European and American societies as a crucial marker for a new kind of social refinement and cultural distinction.

The Separation of the Artist from the artisan

By the time Voltaire entered the Panthéon, the old idea of the artisan/artist had been definitively pulled apart. This can be vividly seen in a change in the meaning of the terms themselves. Dubos's widely read *Critical Reflections on Poetry and Painting* of 1719 refers to painters and poets throughout as "artisans," although Dubos apologized for the term, explaining that it would have been too clumsy to always combine "artisan" with adjectives like "illustrious or some other appropriate epithet" (Dubos 1993, 2). Obviously, he did not consider the word "artist" an alternative. As late as 1740 the official dictionary of the Académie Française still defined "artist" as "one who works in an art... in particular those who perform chemical operations." Nor did eighteenth-century English, Italian, or Spanish definitions of the terms "artist" and "artisan" sharply distinguish them.¹

Yet by the 1750s there were unmistakable signs that the modern polarity of artist versus artisan was taking hold. Lacombe's popularizing *Portable Dictionary*
of the Fine Arts (1752) showed no hesitation: “One gives this name [Artist] to those who exercise one of the liberal arts and especially to painters, sculptors and engravers” (1752). Soon other dictionaries and encyclopedias began to define “artist” and “artisan” as opposites (Heinich 1993). Rousseau recognized the new polarity in Emile (1762), mocking “these self-important fellows who are called artists instead of artisans and work solely for the idle rich” (Rousseau [1762] 1957, 186). Initially, examples of artists, in the new sense, were drawn from the visual arts, but the term came to have such prestige that it was soon extended to musical and literary creators as well (Watelet 1788, 286). In fact, so many professions laid claim to the title artist that a shrewd observer like Mercier began to make fun of it, suggesting that “the reign of the word Artist may have come to an end thanks to the trial brought by the Artists-poulterers of La Flèche against the Artists-poulterers of Le Mans” (Shroder 1961, 5).

Before looking at how the ideal qualities of the older image of the artisan/artist were divided between the two concepts, we need to consider the social and institutional conditions that were pushing artist and artisan farther apart.

Despite the rise in status of court painters from Leonardo to Velasquez and the prestige brought by the French Academy, the Marquis d’Argens could still complain in 1730 that most of the French “cannot tell a painter from a shoemaker” (Chatelus 1991, 277). One of the difficulties in generalizing about painters in the eighteenth century is that their condition varied enormously, ranging from a handful of wealthy and ennobled academicians at the top to the humblest decorators of furniture, coaches, and signs at the bottom. Several factors regularized the already more elevated status of easel painters and further demoted the more directly functional genres. One institutional factor was a sudden spurt in the founding of academies, which numbered ten in 1740 but over a hundred by 1790. The most notable of these, the British Royal Academy (1769), was intended to raise the status of artists by association with the French model. Its first president, Joshua Reynolds, exhorted his colleagues and students to pursue “ideal beauty” lest they fall to the level of the “mere mechanick” (Reynolds [1770] 1975, 43) (fig. 24). Most of the new academies had royal protectors, officers with high-sounding titles, freedom from guild restrictions, and regular...
exhibitions of member's work. Thanks to their new academies, Dresden (1764), Copenhagen (1769), Stockholm (1784), and Berlin (1786) had their first official art exhibitions (Pevsner 1940).

If the creation of so many academies tended to elevate the status of some painters at the expense of others, an even more important factor was the expanding art market that led to increased specialization. In the first half of the eighteenth century, many painters still worked at a variety of tasks, often beginning as coach or sign painters and gradually working their way up to more complex and difficult genres, including the large-scale figurative scenes with which a François Boucher or Jean Honore Fragonard decorated the walls of aristocratic houses (Chatelus 1991). In the second half of the century, the lesser-ranked specializations fell farther in status due to specific changes in the decoration of houses, carriages, and signs. The painting of elaborate pictorial signs, which had been done by people as distinguished as Jean Antoine Watteau in France or Godfrey Kneller in England, was almost eliminated in London by a 1768 law forbidding large overhanging signs that impeded traffic (fig. 25). Because of changes in domestic tastes, the figural parts of house decoration became smaller and painted in the studio, further diminishing contact between easel and decorative painters. Finally, as commercial paint manufacture developed, decorative painters no longer needed to know how to grind pigments but were mostly selling their labor (Pears 1988). By the century's end "artist" and "artisan" had been separated not only semantically but also in daily practice and contact.

At the same time that social and technological changes were driving down the status of utilitarian painters, other market forces were further lifting the status of easel painters. Under the patronage/commission system the owner of a painting obviously knew who produced it and may have even suggested its subject matter. But the increasing resale of paintings through dealers and exhibitions led to an increase in the number of paintings done in advance for the market, which led in turn to a greater interest in the painter's individual style and signature. As Krystoff Pomian has discovered, catalogs of French painting sales in the first half of the eighteenth century typically described paintings by size, framing, and subject matter, mentioning the name of the painter only at the end of the description. This reflected the fact that subject matter and "beauty," as evaluated by the connoisseurs, were often considered more important in a contemporary painting than the identity of the painter or workshop (fig. 26). By the late 1750s, however, sale catalogs began placing the names of painters at the beginning of descriptions of paintings. Something similar happened with the catalogs for the French Academy's biennial exhibitions called "Salons" (after the Louvre's Salon d'Apollo, where they were held). Salon catalogs, which had once listed paintings by the order of their placement on the walls, also switched to the painter's name in the late 1750s (Pomian 1987). It does not seem a mere accident that at the same time this practical and circumstantial need to know the provenance of a painting was developing, critics and theorists were increasingly stressing originality and creative expression.²

Institutional factors not unlike those influencing the image of painters also helped transform the image and status of the architect. In early eighteenth-century Britain, there were still master mason-architects as well as many aristocratic amateurs who designed their own buildings, but the modern professional architect was already emerging as a result of the growth of cities and the increasing wealth of the middle class. The surge in urban construction led to the creation of building committees that sought the services of professional architects, and market competition began to replace the older relation between the individual architect and their aristocratic patron. The new type of professionals not only developed well-organized offices and negotiated substantial fees but also insisted on controlling all details of the construction of their designs. Other

Figure 25. Jean Antoine Watteau, The Shop Sign of Gersaint (1720). Charlottenburg Castle, Berlin. Courtesy Foto Marburg/Art Resource, New York. Gersaint was a picture dealer, and Watteau's painting actually hung outside his shop as an advertisement.
in institutional signs of the growing separation of the architect from master masons, surveyors, and engineers were the British government's abolition of the positions of surveyor general and master mason (1782) and the emergence of such distinct organizations as the Society of Civil Engineers (1771), the Surveyor's Club (1792), and the Institute of British Architects (1834). Between 1800 and 1830 another great change resulting from rapid urban growth was the increasing importance of the "general contractor," who now stepped between the client and architect on the one side and the various master craftsmen on the other, leading to "a gradual decline in both skill and initiative among the building crafts" and an increased dependence on the architect's detailed drawings and specifications (Wilton-Ely 1977, 194). Just as "artist" and "craft" painters were further separated by social and economic changes as much as by the spread of new ideas, so architects were further elevated above master masons by changes in construction practices.

In France the elevation of the architect above the master masons had already received a great boost in the late seventeenth century with the creation of the Académie Royale d'Architecture in 1671, where students received a purely intellectual instruction before being introduced to the stone yards and building sites. By 1747, the year Batteux's treatise codified the new category of fine arts versus crafts (with architecture and rhetoric among the "mixed arts"), the creation of the École des Ponts et Chaussées (School of Bridges and Roads) marked the beginning of a separation of engineers from architects, a separation further accentuated with the establishment of the École Polytechnique in 1794. Yet both the École Polytechnique and the École des Beaux-Arts (successor to the academies of painting, sculpture, and architecture after the Revolution) offered courses in architecture, a fact reflecting architecture's "mixed" status.

One result of this dual teaching was a tendency for some French architects to see themselves primarily as engineer-builders and others to see themselves primarily as artists and architecture as the creation of works of art. For Étienne-Louis Boullée, whose designs for colossal ideal structures have recently become celebrated, architecture was a species of poetry, something to be looked at rather than lived or worked in, and the architect was primarily an artist who creates images (fig. 27). Actual building was "secondary" to Boullée, and he envisaged an eventual "museum of architecture" that would contain everything of significance to the art. Obviously, this exalted image of the architect-as-artist had little room for either the craftsman's practical knowledge or the engineer's calculations (Rosenau 1974). Speaking from a position similar to Boullée's, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux wrote of the architect in 1804: "The craftsman is the machine of the Creator; the man of genius is the Creator himself" (Kruft 1994, 162).

The rise in the status and self-conception of writers like Voltaire or Alexander Pope also went hand in hand with the gradual replacement of patronage relations by a market system. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, many British writers still found jobs as secretaries, librarians, and hired pens, turning out encomiums or vitriol as needed. By mid-century the British reading public was large enough to provide a precarious but independent living for a growing
number of writers. In France and Germany, most writers remained more dependent on patronage, yet as Voltaire’s reception in Paris shows, by the 1760s the French “man of letters” began to take on a spiritual authority higher than the clergy (Benichou 1973). A telling instance of the shift from patronage to market-based independence is Samuel Johnson’s famous letter telling off Lord Chesterfield, who had pretended to have supported the preparation of Johnson’s Dictionary: “A patron is someone who looks on with unconcern at a man struggling for life in the water, and when he reaches the bank, encumbers him with help.” But more important than this famous quip was the fact that by publishing the Dictionary in his own name and basing it not on the language of the court or “polite society” but on examples drawn from other writers, Johnson had made the “The King’s English” into “The Author’s English” (Kernan 1989, 202).

Yet whatever the market gave in terms of momentary fame or temporary income, it often took away in dignity, as writers competed for such scraps as “Grub Street” might throw their way. It is not surprising that Alexander Pope, one of the first writers to actually earn a living from print, presented himself as an old-style gentleman-amateur and mercilessly ridiculed the tribe of hacks and scribblers who worked for pay (fig. 28). In France, the combination of censorship and tight restrictions on the number of printers forced many writers to labor for clandestine publishers. High above these jobbers were a few successful entrepreneurs (Voltaire) and a handful of government-subsidized editors (Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Suard) who looked with contempt on “the literary rabble.” The rabble returned their contempt and several—Jacques-Pierre Brissot, Jean Paul Marat, Jean-Marie Collot d’Herbois—later played out their resentment during the Revolution. In between the high flyers and the rabble were writers like Diderot and Rousseau, who relied on small inheritances, occasional patrons, and an always uncertain income from print (Darnton 1982).

A legal innovation at the beginning of the century had a profound effect on the writer’s status and self-esteem: copyright. In England the Licensing Act, which granted printers perpetual rights, was replaced in 1709 by the world’s first
copyright law that vested the ownership of a manuscript with the writer, who could sell it for two consecutive fourteen-year terms. Contrary to what one might think, the law was not advocated by writers themselves but by printers desirous of stifling pirates, and at the time, "no one... seems to have recognized the radical change of ownership from printer to writer that had occurred in the statute." Samuel Johnson was one of the first to articulate the implications of copyright laws, observing that writers have "a stronger right of property than that by occupancy; a metaphysical right, a right, as it were, of creation, which should from its nature be perpetual" (Kernan 1989, 99, 101).

Copyright laws did not come to France and Germany until the end of the century, but comments similar to those of Johnson were made by Diderot and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, the latter arguing that the content of ideas may not be protected, but the form is original and belongs to the author as its "creator" (Woodmansee 1994, 52). Whatever intellectual antecedents we can find for the ideas of genius, originality, and creation, the print market and the development of copyright obviously needed something like them. In the old patronage system the piece produced was often seen as the property of the patron. But as patronage gave way to the market, the writer, by selling his or her work, publicly affirmed both ownership and authorizing power (Becq 1994a, 766).

Musicians remained dependent on the system of patronage longer than either writers or painters. Playing for pay remained a lower-status employment, whereas playing by aristocratic or bourgeois amateurs was a sign of cultivation (fig. 29). With the exception of Handel in England and some vain efforts by Haydn and Mozart, it was not until Beethoven, at the end of the century, that composers began to gain what we consider the artist's natural right to independence. A glance at the contracts governing Bach, Haydn, and Mozart confirms the musician's dependency: most musicians needed permission to travel or compose for others, might be asked to compose in a certain style or to compose on a day's or even a few hour's notice, and, finally, might be reprimanded for taking liberties not approved in advance (Geiringer 1946; David and Mendel 1966; Elias 1993).

But with the rise of the secular concert and the increasing middle-class demand for lessons and sheet music, it became possible for a few musicians to envisage survival without a full-time patronage position. Handel was able to take on numerous private and university commissions, embark on ventures in the production of operas and subscription concerts, and, finally, die well off. In 1749, for example, twelve thousand people paid to hear the final open rehearsal of Handel's Music for the Royal Fireworks at Vauxhall Gardens. Handel was present at Vauxhall not only through his music but also by virtue of a fine marble

Figure 29. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, Ange-Laurent de Lalivé de Jullly (1759). Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Samuel H. Kress Collection. © 2000 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Lalivé de Jullly not only is shown as an amateur musician but also sits in a finely carved neoclassical-style chair with a statue and a sheaf of prints behind him.
statue carved by the celebrated sculptor, François Roubiliac (fig. 30). By the 1790s Franz Josef Haydn was given a leave by his princely patron to go to London, where he had no difficulty living from his concerts, commissions, and teaching and reveled in his new freedom: "How sweet is some degree of liberty!" (Geiringer 1946, 104). But when Prince Esterhazy summoned him back to Austria, Haydn went.

Among those who gave up a regular position out of exasperation, Mozart is the most famous, and for the first few years he made ends meet from lessons, subscription concerts, and commissioned operas, although he failed to please one of his patrons, the Emperor Joseph II, who made the famous complaint, "Too many notes, my dear Mozart, too many notes" (Elias 1993, 130). The aristocratic connoisseurs and the bourgeois patriciate who followed their lead in matters of taste were often themselves amateur composers and players who sometimes regarded their judgment in music as the equal of the musicians themselves. Mozart ran up against the problem awaiting all musicians who launched out on a freelance career in the early stages of the art market. If an archbishop or town board could curb one's freedom, so could the "public"—simply by staying away. Norbert Elias has suggested that Mozart attempted the freelance mode a decade too soon. To have comfortably succeeded would have required a further development of the public concert, a more extensive and secure market for printed scores, some system of royalty payment, and a larger and more varied audience. By the late 1790s, the situation had improved enough so that Beethoven, fifteen years Mozart's junior, was able to maintain his independence, although he too had aristocratic patronage along the way. It is also striking that Beethoven made explicit use of the idea of the artist as the "unfettered genius" to justify his demands for independence (Beethoven 1951, 72).

The Ideal Image of the Artist

Whereas the ideal qualities desired in an artisan/artist in the old system combined genius and rule, inspiration and facility, innovation and imitation, freedom and service, these qualities were finally pulled apart in the course of the eighteenth century. As this happened, all the "poetic" attributes—such as inspiration, imagination, freedom, and genius—were ascribed to the artist and all the "mechanical" attributes—such as skill, rules, imitation, and service—went to the artisan. The 1762 dictionary of the Académie Française, for example, defined an "artist" as "he who works in an art where genius and hand must concur" whereas the artisan is simply called "a worker in a mechanical art, a man with a trade" (Brunot 1966, 682). Among the many attributes of the artist, genius and freedom seemed to sum up all the superlative qualities that now separated the free, creative artist from the supposedly dependent and routine craftsman.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century it was widely believed that everyone had a genius or talent for something and that their particular genius could only be perfected by the guidance of reason and rule. By the end of the century,
not only had the balance between genius and rule been reversed, but in addition, genius itself had become the opposite of talent and instead of everyone having a genius for something, a few people were said to be geniuses (Duff 1767; Gerard [1774] 1966). Among the key qualities of genius in the fine arts, freedom held a unique place. Although there had long been an elite among artists who claimed freedom from the dictates of patrons, artists' claims to independence were now extended and intensified. The idea of the artist's freedom versus the artisan's dependence underlay each of the other ideal qualities ascribed to the artist: freedom from the imitation of traditional models (originality), freedom from the dictates of reason and rule (inspiration), freedom from restrictions on fantasy (imagination), freedom from the exact imitation of nature (creation) (Sommer 1950; Jaffe 1992; Zilsel 1993).

**Originality.** Two very different kinds of imitation were debated in the eighteenth century: the imitation of nature and the imitation of great predecessors. Although the latter kind of imitation had always left room for innovation, the following of past masters now began to be roundly condemned. "Great genius is mere strength of natural parts ... an imitation of the best authors is not to compare with a good original," wrote Addison in the *Spectator* (1711, no. 360). The enormous change that took place over the next forty years is apparent in Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition*: "Shakespeare mingled no water with his wine, lowered his genius by no vapid imitation" ([1759] 1965, 34). The turn toward originality was shared across the continent and went hand in hand with a new emphasis on feeling (Mortier 1982).

**Inspiration/Enthusiasm.** The enthusiasm of genius was variously described as irregular, wild, untamable, a devouring fire. "Don't ask, young artist, what genius is," Rousseau declared, "if you have it, you will know. If you do not have it, you will never know" ([1768] 1969, 227). But it was in Germany that the small world of arts and letters was swept by a "cult of genius." In *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Goethe writes of the "torrent of genius" that "thunders and overwhelms ... the soul" and strikes fear in the "respectable" ([1774] 1989, 33). It was only a short step from the view that the genius is above the "rules of art" to the belief that the genius is also above the "rules of society." As Diderot said of the playwright Racine, "If we have to choose either Racine the mean husband and father and false friend but sublime poet, or Racine the good father, husband and friend but mediocre poet, the choice is easy. "What is left of the mean Racine? Nothing. Of Racine the genius? The work is eternal" (Dieckmann 1940, 108).

Not everyone jumped on the genius/enthusiasm bandwagon. Samuel Johnson grumbled in *Rambler* (no. 154) that "the mental disease of the present generation" is "a disposition to rely wholly upon unassisted genius" (Johnson [1750-52] 1969, 3:55). Voltaire cautioned that while enthusiasm may be a "racehorse carried away in its course, the course is regularly drawn" (Becq 1994a, 698). By the 1790s Goethe had also turned away from the "torrent of genius" ideal, as had Diderot, who now described genius as "the spirit of observation ... exercised without effort, without argument ... a sort of sense which others do not have" (Diderot 1968, 20).

In addition to developing a more nuanced understanding of the enthusiasm of genius, eighteenth-century writers modified another concept that was to play an important role in the nineteenth century: expression. In the seventeenth century, to praise an artist for "expression" in painting or music usually meant to praise their skill in depicting the feelings of others. But the new emphasis on sensibility gradually developed into the idea of the artist's empathy with their subjects. Writers on genius such as Giambattista Vico, Johann Gottfried Herder, and Karl Philipp Moritz often mentioned "sympathy" as an important sensitive power of the artist (Herder 1955). The shift toward sympathy marked an inward turn in the ideal of the artist that would eventually lead to the Romantic emphasis on self-expression (Engell 1981; Marshall 1988).

**Imagination.** So completely has the idea of the "creative imagination" triumphed since the end of the eighteenth century that it requires a disciplined effort to remember that "imagination" previously referred either to a general image-storing faculty or to a dangerous power of fantasy. The first steps toward the idea of the creative imagination were taken not by philosophers but by poets and critics such as Addison in his 1712 essays titled "The Pleasures of the Imagination," where he can even say that the imagination "has something in it like creation" (*Spectator*, no. 417). The numerous poetic and critical invocations of the imagination in the following generation culminated in Joseph Worton's claim that "a creative and glowing imagination, and that alone ... makes a poet" (Engell 1981). At the same time that critics and poets were celebrating the imagination, philosophers like Hume, Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, and Kant were increasing its scope in the theory of knowledge. It only remained for Alexander Gerard and Kant, in their very different ways, to push the idea of the imagination's integrative power over the line that separates the "combination" of images from "creation." Once the productive rather than merely reproductive power of the imagination had been established, the old idea of invention in the service
of imitation could be replaced by the stronger idea of creation as an end in itself (Gerard [1774] 1966, 29, 43; Kant 1987, 182; Sweeney 1998).

**Creation.** Today, when corporations hire the services of "creativity consultants," the idea of creation has become so banalized that it is difficult to appreciate the reluctance of eighteenth-century critics and philosophers to call artistic activity "creation." In the early eighteenth century, the dominant term was still "invention," and the artist/artisan's activity was still seen as construction. That is the way Batteux and many others understood the difference between invention and creation: "The human spirit cannot properly create... To invent in the arts isn't to give being to an object, but to recognize where and how it is... [that] the men of genius who dig deepest, discover only what existed before" (Batteux [1746] 1989, 85).

In order to become "creation," invention first had to be separated from the imitation of nature. Two factors contributed to diminishing the role of imitation. First, the claim that the fine arts imitate only "beautiful nature" had already downgraded the exact imitation of existing nature. Second, a number of writers argued that imitation in any form is irrelevant to architecture and music or even to lyric poetry (Abrams 1958; Becq 1994a). Yet many thinkers still hesitated to substitute "creation" for "invention" on religious grounds. In the Old Testament, God creates by bringing order out of chaos; in Christian dogma God creates ex nihilo, out of nothing. Many people, like Batteux, believed that creation ex nihilo by a human being is a logical impossibility. Without sharing Batteux's theological view, Diderot agreed: "The imagination creates nothing, it imitates, it composes, combines, exaggerates, expands, and contracts" (Diderot [1767] 1995, 113). Other writers used cautious phrases, such as Addison's "something...like creation," Johnson's "a right, as it were, of creation," Yves Marie André's "human creation, if I dare speak thus," and Kant's "creates, as it were..." When "creation" was taken in the limited sense of ordering a chaos of existing impressions, eighteenth-century writers seemed more comfortable with it. As a demiurge shaping new beings out of a material already given, the artist could be seen not as equal to God but at least bearing the honorific divinity of a lesser god. Shaftesbury likened the true poet to "a second Maker; a just Prometheus under Jove" ([1711] 1963, 136).

The spontaneous creativity of the artist did not entirely exclude the old value of facility since painting still required skill of hand, music a gift for harmony and melody, and poetry the ability to versify and follow meters. But the old union of facility with invention had now become the subordination of facility to spontaneous creation. In the old system of art, facility meant gracefully overcoming difficulties in the imitation of created nature; in the new system, the artist-genius was granted the creative power of nature itself, or in Kant's famous phrase, "through genius nature gives the rule to art" ([1790] 1987, 175–76).

What happened to the image of the "artisan" or craftsman as the old union of facility and inspiration, genius and rule, innovation and imitation, freedom and service were pulled apart? Once divided from inspiration, facility was easily stigmatized as mere technique; once separated from genius, rule became the routine imitation of past models; once separated from freedom, service could be depreciated as mercenary trade. Whereas the artist was said to act with the spontaneity of nature, the artisan was said to act "mechanically," following rules, using imagination only to combine, serving only by filling orders. As a result, the former virtues of rule, skill, imitation, invention, and service were gradually turned into reproaches if not vices. Table 3 summarizes the separation of qualities that had gradually emerged since the Renaissance and was codified in treatises, encyclopedias, and various practices and institutions during the eighteenth century.

| TABLE 3 |

| From Artisan/Artist to Artist versus Artisan |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before the Split</th>
<th>After the Split</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talent or gift</strong></td>
<td><strong>Genius</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspiration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inspiration/sensibility</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facility (mind and body)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spontaneity (mind over body)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reproductive imagination</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creative imagination</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emulation (of past masters)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Originality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imitation (nature)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service</strong></td>
<td><strong>Freedom (play)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trade</strong> (pay)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Rule** (body) |
| **Calculation** |

**The Fate of the Artisan**

Yet this lowly image of the artisan/craftsman did not come to dominate all at once even in the eighteenth century. There were many who resisted one or another aspect of the idealization of the artist at the expense of the artisan, attempting to maintain something of the integration characteristic of the old system of art. Yet even some of those who resisted the increasing separation of artist and artisan were ambivalent since there seemed so much to be gained.
In music, Handel's borrowing and recycling tied him to the old ways, but his manipulation of patrons and the market and his successful achievement of public status signaled what was to come. Samuel Johnson retained much of the older craft approach to writing, yet his Lives of the Poets was one of the first literary histories in the modern sense, and he went on to articulate the implication of copyright for the ideal of the artist as creator (Johnson [1781] 1961). To give a fuller sense of ambivalent practices and attitudes toward the separation of artist and artisan in the eighteenth-century, I will look more closely at an artist—William Hogarth, the English engraver and painter of subjects depicting the mores of eighteenth-century London—and a craftsman-entrepreneur—Josiah Wedgwood, the Staffordshire potter turned industrialist and supplier of fine ceramics.

Hogarth began as a silver engraver, but his talent for satire soon led him to the original satirical prints of "modern moral subjects" for which he is famous. His two innovative series, Harlot's Progress (1732) and A Rake's Progress (1735), also reflected his status ambitions as an artist since they were originally done as paintings to be engraved by others, thereby setting Hogarth off as the artist-painter from the artisan-copyist (although fortunately for us he ended up engraving them himself) (Paulson 1991–93, vol. 1). Hogarth's aspiration to the status of artist was also expressed in his sponsorship of a copyright law protecting original engravings. Hogarth shrewdly decided to hold up the release of A Rake's Progress until the Engraver's Act went into effect, but when pirates brought out their own cheap series of the same title, Hogarth had even cheaper copies made and beat the print sellers at their own game. This last move hardly jibes with our modern myth of the artist driven solely by the inner fire of genius and disdainng all commercial calculations. Hogarth is an exemplary figure for the present study just because he straddles two worlds, the old world of the artist/artisan who worked alongside other craftspeople and the new world of the artist who wanted to widen the distance from craftspeople as far as possible. Although Hogarth insisted on the importance of invention and not imitating the work of others, he seems to have had no truck with the new "genius" talk. Like most craftspeople, he carefully considered the tastes of his potential buyers, calibrated his prices to different classes, and made shrewd use of newspaper advertising. For all his status aspirations, Hogarth remained an artisan/artist, keeping in uneasy alliance the two aspects of the artistic career that were being pulled apart in his time (Paulson 1991–93, vol. 2).

Hogarth's ambivalence can best be seen in his attitude toward the art exhibitions organized by the new Society of Artists. In the Spring of 1762 Hogarth, who admired the large figural tavern signs then in vogue, seems to have been involved in a mock "Sign-Painters Exhibition" that satirized the pretensions of the Society of Artists with advertisements and a catalog containing doctored pub sign titles like "The Hen and Chicken, a Landscape" and "Adam and Eve, an Historical Sign." What Hogarth found most objectionable about the direction some of his fellow painters were taking was their quest for a national academy on the hierarchical French model. Hogarth wanted free academies, democratically organized and supportive of an indigenous art that responded to the real society around it (Paulson 1991–93, vol. 3). This is suggested by his artist satires, such as The Distressed Poet or The Enraged Musician, which gently mock the poet's high art pretensions that leave his wife and child facing the milk bill, or the well-coifed violinist with his hands over his ears vainly trying to shut out the cacophony of daily life (fig. 31). By 1769 when the Royal Academy finally opened, Hogarth was dead and Reynold's version of fine art theory was in the ascendant. It is perhaps significant that the year 1768 saw both the final steps in the organization of the Royal Academy and the parliamentary act forbidding large overhanging signs that spelled the end of sign painting as a pictorial art.
If Hogarth rose to prominence as an artist-painter from the craft of silver engraving, Josiah Wedgwood rose from the craft of potter to become a world-renowned manufacturer of decorative arts. Hogarth, secure in his reputation as a successful painter and engraver, could safely embrace many of the ideals and practices of the older system of art/craft. Wedgwood, as one engaged in the "craft" and "manufacture" of utilitarian and ornamental products, yearned for a status closer to fine art for his products. Wedgwood was apprenticed at fourteen in one of the many Staffordshire potteries, finally setting up on his own in 1759 and quickly learning to create new forms and glazes that won him a wide following. His very success, however, foretold the end of the old style crafts-person who knew all aspects of the ceramic process. When Wedgwood built his new pottery, Etruria, in 1769, it was a pioneering venture in a kind of assembly line. In order to break his craftspersons of their old habits of working at all aspects of production, he hired artists to design for him and segregated the modeling, molding, handle making, painting, and firing in separate buildings arranged in a semicircle. The clay arrived at one end and the finished products emerged at the other. His workers were to be specialists, not only for efficiency and quality but also for executing each step in precisely the way Wedgwood demanded. Wedgwood is famous for striding through the pottery with a stick, smashing work he considered inferior and scrawling "not good enough for Joseph Wedgwood" on the wall (McKendrick 1961; Burton 1976). Although many of his workers did in fact become more skilled at their specialty, the old freedom of the crafts-person to work at their own pace, to conceive of their work as a whole, and to shift from modeling, to glazing to firing was gone. Wedgwood's practices show one way in which the all-around artisan/artist of the old workshop system was being forced either to become an artisan executing orders and designs of others or to venture the precarious independence of the artist (McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb 1982).

Wedgwood scored some of his greatest triumphs with the Etruscan and Portland vases, which caught the neoclassical tide in the fine arts (fig. 32). But his clearest play for fine art status were his jasper tablets, which were made of a material he developed himself, were almost as fine as china, and needed no glazing but were easily able to take luminescent color. The jasper bas-reliefs with their cool blue or green backgrounds and raised white neoclassical figures are now considered among his finest pieces, but he could not convince the most respected architects of the day, like Robert Adam, to incorporate them into their buildings. Ann Bermingham believes it is significant that shortly after this failure Wedgwood commissioned a painting of The Corinthian Maid from Joseph Wright of Derby (1778). The subject of the painting was chosen by Wedgwood himself from Pliny’s tale of the origin of ceramic bas-reliefs: a Corinthian maid, in love with a youth who was leaving the country, traced the outline of his shadow on the wall and her father later filled it in with clay and fired it with his other pottery (fig. 33). Wedgwood's commission seems intended to connect ceramic bas-reliefs to the origin of painting itself in order to give the craftsperson a central role in its invention. Bermingham wonders if the architects’ resistance to Wedgwood’s jasper tablets was the result of “their own growing pretensions of being ‘artists’ and a corresponding wariness on their part about supporting the manufacturer of Queen’s ware” in what may have seemed to be a vulgarization and even feminization of the neo-classical taste” (1992, 148).

The “feminization” Bermingham mentions is suggested by the connection between the maid tracing a shadow and the still prominent idea of women’s “accomplishments” in drawing, music, and dance. Wedgwood’s factory made
unglazed vases, bowls, and other pieces for decoration at home, and his 1781 catalog lists lady's paint boxes in jasper, complete with color cups and a small palette. Eighteenth-century drawing manuals for ladies provided designs to copy, just as many of the artisans in Wedgwood's factory were copying the designs of the artists he hired. Bermingham concludes that "the denigration of craft in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by both industrial capitalism and the Academy facilitated its feminization, and this feminization of craft ensured its marginalization as 'women's art'" (1992, 162). Wedgwood and Wright of Derby, like Hogarth, were trying to hold together an older art system that was being pulled apart by the market and by the new ideas and institutions of fine art and the artist. Of course, Wedgwood's tablets and vases are now found in fine art museums, although often still separated from painting and sculpture by their relegation to departments of decorative arts.

The Gender of Genius

The issue of the feminization of craft shows how deeply involved gender prejudices were in the split between artist and artisan. Christine Battersby (1989) has approached the gender issue from the side of the artist's attributes, showing how the modern concept of artistic genius was strongly gendered from the beginning. When genius and talent were still close in meaning, women and artisans could be said to have a genius for some particular activity. Of course, writing great poetry, composing operas, or painting historical canvases were not likely to be one of them. A writer in Addison's Spectator suggests that needlework is "the most proper way wherein a Lady can show a fine Genius" and adds the wish "that several Writers of the Sex had chosen to apply themselves rather to Tapestry than Rime" (1712, no. 606). This dig is firmly in the tradition of developing men's intellectual powers but teaching women amateur "accomplishments" in needlework, dancing, singing, and drawing (fig. 34). In suggesting needlework as women's proper sphere of production, the Spectator writer also reflected the further demotion and feminization of embroidery and other needle arts that began with the Renaissance. Women who did venture into professional work as painters or writers were still considered capable of only the lesser genres, for example, portraits and flowers or the novel and short lyrics. But as the ideas of originality, imagination, and creation came together to form the modern ideal of the artist-genius, new arguments were now available to deny genius to women.

Since French writers such as Diderot or Rousseau gave pride of place to enthusiasm in genius, it is not surprising to hear Rousseau argue that "women in general possess no ... genius ... [because] the celestial fire that emblazons and ignites the soul, the inspiration that comes and devours ... are always lacking" (Rousseau 1954, 206). English writers of the time, such as William Duff, who made imagination the central attribute of genius, found women incapable of genius because they lacked the "creative power and energy of imagination" (Battersby 1989, 78). Kant shared Duff's perspective and said that if a woman did possess a vigorous mind, it would be against nature were she to express it publicly; a woman scholar "might as well even have a beard." Kant makes women's strength (and deficiency) just the opposite of Rousseau's: women can respond to what is emotional in art but lack a strong understanding, without which an artist produces only nonsense (Kant 1960, 78–80).

Nothing better illustrates the gendering of genius in the late eighteenth century than Mary Wollstonecraft's hesitancy concerning female genius in her...
Figure 34. Paul Sandby, A Lady Copying at a Drawing Table (ca. 1760–70). Courtesy Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, New Haven, Conn.

Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792). Accepting the idea that genius requires physical vigor, she wonders whether "the few extraordinary women" who have appeared in history "were male spirits, confined by mistake in female frames" (Wollstonecraft [1792] 1989, 5: 66). The redoubtable Germaine de Stael had no such hesitation, and in her novel Corinne, or Italy (1807) makes her heroine a poet "joyously devoting herself to genius" who is crowned with the laurel by the Senators and people of Rome (1807, 32). But by the end of the novel, Corrine has succumbed to the lot of woman and dies for love. Another example of the tension between genius and womanhood can be found in the career of Sophie La Roche, a widely read and admired German novelist of the second half of the century. Her better-known friend, the poet Christoph Wieland, wrote a preface to her first novel in which he patronizingly tells critics to address their complaints to him since La Roche "never intended to write for the world or to create a work of art" (Woodmansee 1994, 107).

The new idea of genius in the eighteenth century seemed to set before women the choice of being a genius or being a woman. That is the implicit message in Diderot's hailing of Racine as the artist who must follow his genius, whatever the cost to those around him. Accordingly, following this line of thinking, while nature has destined males for the public sphere, there is no exception to traditional female roles even for the woman of great natural gifts. Women in "male" vocations such as one of the fine arts either were suspect as a threat to social order or were accepted only because they were "really" male spirits in a female body.

The Ideal of the "Work of Art"

It is striking that when Wieland wanted to "protect" Sophie La Roche from critics, he assured them she did not intend to create a "work of art." The counterpart of the male artist’s creative power was the work of art as genial creation. In the old system of art, the phrase "work of art" meant the product of "an art," something constructed rather than created, although the best of such constructions, like Sophocles’ Oedipus, had always been praised for achieving unity (Aristotle, Poetics). But such works were not necessarily conceived of as fixed, self-contained creations. As we saw in the case of the seventeenth-century theater, Ben Jonson was one of the first to insist on publishing his plays under the title of "works." Paintings and statues were more obviously fixed works even in the old system of art/craft, yet most were not thought of as self-contained but as connected to a purpose and place. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, Roger de Piles was emphasizing the internal unity and total impression made by a painting rather than the painting's subject matter, message, or fitness to purpose (Piles [1708] 1969). But it is musical practice that most dramatically reveals the depth of the break between the older idea of a work of art (construction) and the modern idea of a work of Art (creation).

Paradoxical as it may sound, the old system of art produced an enormous number of beautiful pieces of music, but people seldom thought of these pieces as "works" in the modern sense of fixed, self-contained "worlds." Lydia Goehr lists a network of practices still regulative in the early eighteenth century that make the application of our modern notion of the work to the musical practice of this period anachronistic. First, most early eighteenth-century music was composed as a vehicle for specific occasions by people who usually performed
the pieces they wrote, sometimes composing as they performed. Second, the enormous demands placed on musicians by their employers often led them to recycle chunks of their own pieces and borrow freely from each other with few compunctions about originality. Third, notation was not always complete and performers sometimes "finished" the work to their own understanding as they played it. Finally, most composers did not think of their music as lasting beyond their lifetime in the form of discrete works—they simply composed a quantity of music to be used on various occasions. Bach turned out an enormous amount of music year after year at the Thomas-Kirche in Leipzig and assumed that those who followed him would not use the pieces he wrote any more than he used theirs and "indeed his works were as promptly laid aside when he died as theirs had been" (David and Mendel 1966, 43). Goehr concludes, "In a practice that demanded ... functional music, and which allowed an open interchange of musical material ... musicians did not see works as much as they saw individual performances" (1992, 186).5

But as the new ideas of fine art and the artist spread from the mid-eighteenth century on, the open borrowing and free recycling of musical elements gradually ended. Some writers on music now began to criticize earlier composers for what had once been normal practice, complaining that Handel "has plundered from all Manner of Authors ... putting even his own subjects in so many different Works over and over again" (Goehr 1992, 185). The changed situation is reflected in Beethoven's claim in 1797 that he never attended Mozart's operas nor did he like "to hear the music of others lest I forfeit some of my originality" (Sonneck 1954, 22). An equally sure sign that the work concept had begun to be accepted was the increasing concern to provide exact notation of dynamics and the insistence that performers follow them. Beethoven began replacing tempo notations such as "andante" with precise metronome marks, asserting in a letter that "the performers must now obey the ideas of the unfettered genius" (Beethoven 1951, 254). Finally, just as Shakespeare's malleable play scripts quickly came to be treated as fixed works after his death, so at the end of the eighteenth century, the pieces that Bach or Haydn wrote for specific occasions began to be treated as self-contained works and given opus numbers in place of the old title page references to their original purpose (Goehr 1992).

The concept of the literary work inaugurated by Ben Jonson in the seventeenth century was reinforced in the eighteenth from two directions, one theory using the idea of supernatural or romantic worlds, the other the idea of fictional versions of the empirical world. According to Richard Hurd in Letters on Chivalry and Romance (1762) the poet does not "follow ... the known and experienced course of affairs" but "has a world of his own" (Abrams 1958, 272). By severing supernatural poetry from the natural world, the work of art could become a "second nature" or creation, and the Swiss critics Johann Jakob Bodmer and Johann Jakob Breitinger explained it with the help of Leibniz's concept of "possible worlds." As Leibniz's famous phrase has it, given all the things he wished to include in it, God made this "the best of all possible worlds." Similarly, the artist as creator conceives of each artwork as a kind of "possible world" and, like God, must make this work/world an internally consistent whole (Abrams 1958).

But other writers on the arts argued that the artist creates a fictionalized version of our actual world: "He forms a whole, coherent and proportioned in itself, with due subjection and subordinacy of the constituent parts [and] ... can thus imitate the Creator" (Shaftesbury [1711] 1964, 146). In Shaftesbury's view the artist's creation is defined primarily by its internal fictional content and formal organization rather than by an external purpose. Later in the century, the German playwright Lessing claimed that works done for some external purpose do not deserve the name "art" at all since they are more about "meaning than Beauty"—such a work is "not made for itself, but as a mere auxiliary to religion" (1987, 80–81).

The strongest expression of the modern idea of the work of art as a self-contained world was offered by the German novelist and philosopher Karl Philipp Moritz in his 1785 essay "Toward a Unification of All the Fine Arts and Letters under the Concept of Self-Sufficiency." Moritz contrasted craft works that "have their purposes outside themselves" with works of art that "are complete in themselves" and exist only for the sake of their "own internal perfection" (Woodmansee 1994, 18). In the traditional idea of unity, a work's internal coherence was still affected by what was external to it—the imitation of nature and the work's function. In the new idea of the work of art as a self-sufficient creation, the unity is completely internal and the work forms "a little world in itself," as Goethe put it (Abrams 1958, 278).

Closely connected to the emergence of the idea of the work as creation was a final transformation in the idea of the "masterpiece." Originally a masterpiece was the piece by which an artisan/artist demonstrated to the guild that he or she was now a master of the art. These demonstration pieces—which continued to be required down to the eighteenth century—were often set problems, such as a 1496 Lyon statuary requirement for a "Jesus Christ in stone, entirely naked, showing his wounds, wearing a little loin cloth ... a crown of thorns on his head" (Cahn 1979, 11). By the late Renaissance, the term "masterpiece," although still referring to demonstration pieces, was already used for any superlative achievement in the arts. But a further transformation occurred.
in the eighteenth century when the notion of masterpiece merged with the new idea of the work of art as creation. The notion of masterpiece became attached to it as signaling a particularly exceptional work in the new sense of a fixed and self-contained world. With the decline and eventual disappearance of the guilds in the nineteenth century, the older sense of masterpiece disappeared with them. The modern idea of a masterpiece was then completely absorbed into the concept of the artist as creator, with the result that art, music, and literary history often came to be written as the story of a series of artist-genius and their "masterpieces."

From Patronage to the Market

Although writers, painters, and musicians experienced the transition from the patronage to the market system at different rates from country to country, there are enough features in common that we can draw up a general comparison of the situation before and after the separation of artist from artisan and the work as creation from the work as construction. There were obviously many varieties of patronage/commission relations in the old system of art, some of which approached features of a market economy, just as the market system today still leaves room for commissions and patron sponsorship, as well as government sinecures and grants. The following comparison of the two systems of art practice sets in relief the structural differences by sketching the most typical characteristics of each.

In the old system of art, patrons or clients normally commissioned poems, paintings, or compositions for particular places or contexts, often prescribing subject matter, size, form, materials, or instrumentation. Even in cases where producers were left considerable freedom, they still made their pieces in response to specific requests of clients or regular needs of employers. The criteria of success for poems, paintings, or music produced within this system obviously included how well the piece satisfied its purpose(s), along with such traditional tests of beauty as harmony and proportion. The "price" of the resulting piece was usually determined by materials, difficulty, and time, along with the reputation of the shop or master and the function the piece was to serve.

In the purest form of a market system, in contrast, writers, painters, and composers produce in advance and then attempt to sell their work to an audience of more or less anonymous buyers, often using a dealer or agent. The absence of a specific order or a prescribed context of use gives the impression that the artists are completely free to follow their own inclinations. Works produced under the market system are viewed as the expression of a personality, and the receiver is buying not only a self-contained work but also the producer's imagination and creativity expressed as reputation. The criteria of success are largely internal to the work, such as originality, expressiveness, and formal perfection, although the creator's reputation and current fashions play a role. Hence, the "price" of the work of fine art seldom has any basis in the work itself—not in its materials, not in the amount of labor, not even in the difficulty of execution since it is no longer a construction but a spontaneous "creation." In itself, the work of fine art is literally "priceless," its actual price set by the artist's reputation and the buyer's desire and willingness to pay.

Historians have often described the transition from the old system of art to the new system of fine art as a "liberation." In the old system, patrons were generally in a superior position and the artisan/artists often had to submit to their wishes; in the new market system, artists and buyers come closer to being on equal footing. The new art institutions, such as criticism, histories, academies, and conservatories, along with the artists themselves, attempt to guide the public's taste, and the public is more susceptible because it is no longer gathering as a corporate group in church or palace or private salon where the art works serve well-understood purposes that anyone can judge. Now people come as individuals to exhibitions, concert halls, and theaters, where they encounter works that are often complex and strange to those not familiar with the latest trends in the various arts (Elias 1993). Obviously, the modern image of the artist, with its notions of genial freedom and creative imagination, helps convince this fragmented public that artists, critics, and other specialists know best what should be appreciated and paid for. Yet we should not exaggerate the freedom of the artist in the new market system. If artists want to earn a living from their work, they will have to offer works within a range that some audiences and critics will accept or else join forces with other artists and critics to impose a new direction. The insistence on artistic independence and freedom, which has been a leitmotif since the late eighteenth century, is in part a reaction to a new kind of dependence.

The French literary historian Annie Becq has described the transition from patronage to the market as a move from "concrete labor" to "abstract labor," necessitated by the shift from use value to exchange value. In the older system of art, the producer's labor was concrete in the sense that facility, intelligence, and inventiveness were employed in executing a commission that often had a specific use and an agreed on subject matter. In the emerging market system,
labor becomes abstract in the sense that it has no tie to a specific place or purpose, no predetermined subject matter and, therefore, no specific tasks of execution but only a generalized creativity. Table 4 shows the differences Becq discerns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Old “Art” System (Patronage/Commission)</th>
<th>New “Fine Art” System (Free Market)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Concrete labor</td>
<td>Abstract labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Piece</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>Imitation</td>
<td>Creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>Use; enjoyment</td>
<td>Exchange; contemplation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, this table describes ideal types; the actual situation of producers seldom approached either model in its purity. This was especially true of the long eighteenth century (1680-1830), which saw a gradual transition from the dominance of a patronage model in the late seventeenth century to the dominance of a market model in the early nineteenth. The shift was more rapid in some parts of Europe than others, with England moving earliest to the market system and France lagging behind until the Revolution swept away many of the old elements of patronage. Figures such as Hogarth and Wedgwood in the visual arts, Diderot and Johnson in literature, Haydn and Mozart in music show the difficulties and ambivalence of those who lived through this transformation.

Initially, many eighteenth-century artists and critics regarded the shift from patronage to the market as a liberation. Such a response was especially characteristic of England where people like Johnson, Hogarth, and the visiting Haydn all exclaimed of their freedom. Nor did Johnson feel any conflict between art and money: “No man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money.” Of course, by the time of the early Romantics, even the new public audience for fine art would be scorned as a shackle. “Where any view of money exists, art cannot be carried on,” William Blake would declare (Porter 1990, 242-49). The dialectic of art and money had already taken on the form it has retained to this day: the artist’s need to show independence of the very people whose approval is necessary to success (Mattick 1993).

For our purposes what is important about the displacement of patronage by the market is that it occurred at the same time that the new ideas of fine art, the