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Vancouver Region

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THE FRENCH EMIGRES IN LONDON - Eileen Sutherland.

Jane Austen wrote, in 1811: "Nothing can satisfy me but I must have a straw hat, of the riding hat shape, like Mrs. Tilson's; & a young woman in this neighbourhood [Sloane Street] is actually making me one. I am really very shocking, but it will not be dear at a Guinea." [Letter #69]. This "young woman" was probably one of the émigrés who augmented their income by selling various types of hand work.

Literally thousands of French citizens were forced to take refuge in England during the Revolution - estimates of the total number who came to Britain between 1789 and 1802 range from 13,000 to 40,000. Some already had social contacts in London society, and the transition from aristocrat to émigré was relatively painless.

French was the language of well-to-do society all over Europe, and communication, aided by a sense of humour and an amused tolerance on both sides, was not difficult. English families, especially Catholic ones, sympathized with the plight of their friends, and generosity was spontaneous. Most important for the émigrés was the sense of relief at escaping from the danger in France.

The earliest aristocratic émigrés were accustomed to taking long summer holidays abroad, and they came with the attitude that this was merely a visit of a few months in England: they had a sense of adventure and anticipation of good times in London. The more realistic ones felt that even if the Revolution were not successful, France would be changed beyond recognition.

Deciding on a permanent life in England, they brought their fortunes in jewels, valuables, and funds to provide the sort of life they had been accustomed to. Until the attempted escape of the royal family in June 1791, they had been free to leave France, but of course forfeited their estates, appointments and income.

Others, fleeing the bloody excesses of the Revolution, arrived later in a pitiable state with almost nothing to live on. The brilliant society of the aristocratic émigrés obscured the presence

of a dense throng of poverty-stricken working-class figures. Our knowledge of the lives and opinions of theémigrés depends on diaries and letters of the educated and wealthy. Domestic servants and craftsmen - makers of watches, jewellery, fashion accessories and other fine goods - who would have found few customers in Republican France, were among the émigrés and shared the royalist opinions of the aristocrats.

The newly-arriving émigrés often stayed in hotels in Soho. The district was a meeting place for the exchange of information, news of friends, contacts, accommodations, and the site of an established international merchant community. The most important French bookshops and publishers were situated in Soho. French was fluently spoken or at least easily understood. The diversity of people, customs and cultures made the French feel more at home in Soho than anywhere else in London. Parks and tea-gardens were favourite places for the French to dance and mingle - relatively affordable entertainment for summer evenings.

There was a constant flow of émigrés through Soho, however, as those who first settled there relocated to either a cheaper or more elegant area, or left London altogether. Living in London or the south of England was expensive - many settled in America as an alternative, but usually only as a last resort.

There was a well-established social hierarchy of districts in London. The village of Marylebone, a favourite settlement area, was on the edge of the city and looked out onto fields. Life for the émigrés who settled in Marylebone, Richmond or Hampstead was not difficult - these were the aristocrats and social élite. They certainly had to make some adjustments in their lifestyle, but they could live comfortably through the émigré years. A few individuals had enough wealth at their disposal to form an elegant set which kept fine horses and carriages, where young women were sought after and young men concentrated on their own pleasures.

Many members of the British upper classes, the Duchess of Devonshire, Horace Walpole, Fanny Burney and Mary Russell Mitford, for instance, became part of the social circle of the wealthy émigrés. Mitford wrote in retrospect: "Something wonderful and admirable it was to see how these Dukes and Duchesses, Marshals and Marquises, Chevaliers and Bishops, bore up under their unparalleled reverses! How they laughed and talked and squabbled and flirted, - constant to their high heels, their rouge, and their furbelows, to their old liaisons, their polished sarcasms, their cherished rivalries." [*Recollections of a Literary Life*, 1859].

Henry Austen married his cousin Eliza, who had been educated in France and whose first husband was guillotined. Because of Eliza's connections, they moved socially among émigré groups. Jane Austen went with them to visit the Comte D'Antraigues, and their son Comte Julien, a musician. She wrote to Cassandra: "It will be amusing to see the ways of a French circle." [Letter #69]. Later she continued: "Eliza means to cultivate the acquaintance - & I see nothing to dislike in them, but their taking quantities of snuff.- Monsieur the old Count, is a very fine looking man, with quiet manners, good enough for an Englishman - & I believe is a Man of great Information & Taste. He has some fine Paintings, which delighted Henry as much as the Son's music gratified Eliza . . . Count Julien's performance is very wonderful." [Letter #70]

The strains of exile increased social pressures and the émigrés became more petty and vindictive than the Parisian society they had left. Most, however, preserved their sense of humour in spite of all there was to be gloomy about: money grew scarce, the news from France told of friends and relatives perishing on the guillotine, and their own emigration seemed to be permanent.

The poorest of the émigrés - those with no source of assistance and nothing left to sell - lived in squalid areas on the south side of the Thames in a cold harsh reality very different from the gay life in Marylebone. Insanitary accommodation, lack of heat in winter, and long working

hours, took their toll. The population here was mixed, all they had in common were their misfortunes and their stoic perseverance. Magnificent fund raising and relief efforts were carried out by the British community, but it was all too inadequate.

The emigration which had begun as a trickle, in mid-1792 became a flood, as moderates who initially had supported the Revolution, now defected and fled to Britain. The British began to feel a certain apprehension as events in France became more and more violent. The émigrés quietly accepted their new life. Ads in newspapers had appeared from time to time, but now became more frequent: "A Young Woman, a Native of France, who has received a very liberal Education, and is perfectly Mistress of the French Language, would be happy to find a situation as French Teacher in a Genteel School." Others sought positions "as companion to a Lady", or "would willingly superintend Young Ladies as Governess to teach them her own language, geography, history, etc." These were women unaccustomed to working for a living, and met with a certain sympathy from the British public.

A relief organization helped to provide clothing, bedding and medicine to those in need. The large numbers taxed food and clothing supplies, housing accommodation, and transportation. Especially in London, there were concerns that relief to the French would lessen relief to the local needy, and that the French would take jobs away from the local population. The disputes were political or economic, not religious. Anglican and Dissenting parishes supported a national collection on behalf of their Catholic brethren. The émigrés understood the workings of pressure and patronage - they were connected to Members of Parliament, the peerage, and influential men of commerce. With this support, the total charitable relief amounted to around £70,000, an enormous amount of money for the time.

The aristocratic lifestyle of the early days had changed by the beginning of the 19th century. Those who had arrived wealthy with rents and income from colonial properties, and who had impressed London Society with their sumptuous taste and lavish entertaining, had been humbled by the events of the war and the loss of their fortunes. Many were reduced to some form of supplementing their income. Aristocratic émigré women turned their accomplishments into profitable endeavours. Shops were set up to sell their work - screens, embroideries, fashion accessories and all manner of trinkets. Fanny Dashwood gave each of the Steele sisters "a needle book, made by some emigrant." [*S&S* p.254]. Fashionable straw hats, such as Jane Austen wanted, were probably the best-known products of émigré labours. Finely painted miniatures were another popular item which sold very well. Both men and women were painters. Others taught music - singing or playing the guitar. Not many made fortunes, but some who had established reputations before they arrived, managed to have successful careers.

About two-thirds of the émigrés returned to France in 1802, and others after the war ended. They had gained many friends in England, and felt deep gratitude for the support Britain had given them. The excitement of returning to France was tinged with sadness. Parting was a heartfelt wrench on both sides.

[For more information and interesting accounts of the life of the émigrés see: *Refugees of the French Revolution.. Emigrés in London,* 1789-1802, by Kirsty Carpenter (1999)]

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Jane Austen Day - May 26, 2001.

Summary of the Talks Given by the Guest Speakers. - Wantha Caron.

Who Can Be In Doubt Of What Followed? - Dr.Inger Brodey, University of Puget Sound.

Dr. Brodey presented a talk on the endings in Jane Austen's novels and what has been cited by some critics as an "overhasty desire at the end of the novel to get the thing over with." The question was posed, "Why did Jane Austen so carefully develop characters and dilemmas and then sacrifice the characters for the sake of closure?" Dr. Brodey described different ways of looking at the endings. The psychological view presents the idea that the narrator in the novel is impatient and that the author cannot bear to show the happiness of the characters (perhaps due to Jane Austen's unhappiness at being unmarried). The political view sees in the ending "a token of social or literary conservatism or an expectation of romantic comedy." Using examples from *Emma, Northanger Abbey, Persuasion,* and *Sense and Sensibility,* Dr. Brodey discussed the literary tools employed by Jane Austen: the rhetorical question; the narrative voice; a contract between the implied author and the implied reader; and an ending which includes reference to the narrator as author. Employing these tools, Jane Austen provides the reader with a "happy ending" but "works hard to let us know the ending could have been otherwise." Dr. Brodey referred to this as an "abdication of authority to the reader." In this way, the reader becomes a "co-author of the heroine's fate." Individual growth of the heroine is the "focal point." In order to have a happy ending there must be a "desire to shape our lives." If a happy ending is not possible then it is necessary to "tolerate fate." The talk also included a presentation of an act of a rather short, ambiguous play by Jane Austen called *Mystery* (thanks to members of the Vancouver Jane Austen Society).

Status and Class in *Emma*: Dr. Paul Delany, Simon Fraser University.

Dr. Delany described how status in Jane Austen's time was dependent on a long connection with land or an estate. Land needed to be held for at least one hundred years. To maintain status there were restrictions on social relationships, marriage included. This created exclusivity. However, status could still be conferred through recognition by a person with status. Also, status was not diminished by lack of fortune. A word associated with status was "consequence." Class, on the other hand, was created through "incentive" and was dependent upon "constant re-evaluation of the market." Inheritance of property by the eldest son led some younger children to intermarriage with the merchant class and involvement with trade. During Jane Austen's lifetime there was a growth in the commercial middle class. Words associated with class were "wealth" and "fortune." Dr. Delany presented Emma Woodhouse as a woman who has "status insecurity" and who wants to improve and defend her social position. The Woodhouses do not have land but have a fortune. Emma would like Mr. Knightley, who has status, to act more formally. Dr. Delany described the romantic ending of *Emma* as a "compromise between status and class." Emma defers to Mr. Knightley's morality. With her marriage to Mr. Knightley, Emma no longer has the need to "social climb" and can instead concentrate her efforts on looking after the estate of Donwell Abbey and the estate's people. Dr. Delany described Jane Austen as mistrusting the aristocracy which she sees as "arrogant and vicious." Dr. Delany sees this novel as "anticipating the triumph of the Victorian middle class and the curbing of aristocracy."

Manners and Mayhem: The Regency in its Own Words - Adele Shaak.

With the help of some of the Vancouver Jane Austen Society members, Ms. Shaak presented a humorous and informative talk on entertainment and manners in Jane Austen's time. Ms. Shaak stressed the necessity of "homegrown entertainment" and the obligation to provide entertainment to one's guests. Using anecdotes written by people who lived in the time of Jane Austen, Ms. Shaak described a day's entertainment which started out at breakfast with newspapers, walking and hunting and ended with after dinner activities such as games of skill or chance and, for some, "hard drinking." Seaside retreats were popular as were natural springs, such as that in Bath. Jane Austen's time saw the beginning of the end of the formal bow and the introduction of the handshake and its consequent "evils." Women of the time created their own cosmetics and shampoos. Ms. Shaak shared a recipe for Rosewater and a recipe for a face cleanser which included French brandy and rose water. The importance of knowing the lineage of the people attending a dance was stressed. Dances were one of the main events at which a young lady could find a husband and there could be no friendship or affection with a person who was not of your status. Hunting was another activity. Gentlemen could hunt on property unless asked not to by the landowner or lands keeper. The humorous account of a duel was truly an example of "mayhem." Even the English Prime Minister Pitt took part in a duel, which ended in both parties missing one another and satisfaction achieved.

Special Thanks to Jean Oriente and the committee for organizing Jane Austen Day, as well as those who volunteered to greet guests and to do readings.

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Sources.

Adele Shaak has sent a list of the books which she used for the anecdotes for her entertainment at the luncheon on Jane Austen Day:

From the Vancouver Jane Austen library:

A Charming Place: Bath in the Life and Times of Jane Austen: Maggie Lane.
Regency Etiquette: The Mirror of Graces (1811): by a Lady of Distinction.

From the North Vancouver District Library:

The Georgian Gentleman: Michael Brander.
Life in Georgian England: E.N.Williams.
Life in Regency England: R.J.White.

[These, and many other similar books, can be found under the call number 914.2, or thereabouts.]

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"Rather like *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations* is a grand public entertainment. It joins Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, and a round dozen of Shakespeare's plays, as works certain to survive our ongoing Information Age, and not just as film or television."

- *How to Read and Why*: Harold Bloom.

Books and Berries. Bev Gropen.

At the June 16th meeting of the Vancouver Chapter of JASNA, several members spoke of their recent readings concerning Jane Austen, her historical period, or her place in literature.

Barbara Phillips drew attention to an article by Elizabeth Nickson in the *National Post* titled "Modern Literature Has Failed Me." The author finds that contemporary literature is largely unhappy and depressing. Today's novels are rooted in political agendas such as gender or race and often depict the lives of victims that are played out in poverty and oppression. Reading these works induces sleeplessness and anxiety. By contrast Nickson cites Jane Austen whose work, particularly *Sense and Sensibility*, is full of a range of characters, clever dialogue and intelligence. She believes that Austen's six "perfect" novels hold all the world and its contents. They, like all great literature, demonstrate a consciousness that reveals intelligence and makes the reader happy.

Sandy Lundy then spoke of two biographies of Georgiana, the Duchess of Devonshire, the recent one by Amanda Foreman and one of about a decade ago by Brian Masters. Georgiana was a great beauty and leading society figure of her time. She was married to the Duke in 1774 and in spite of his coldness, his family's rejection and the usual separation of that class from their offspring, she succeeded in being a warm and loving mother. Early in her marriage she became very interested and actively involved in politics, and Devonshire House in London became a centre of political activity. Georgiana is considered to be one of the founders of the Whig party. Sheridan's witty play, *School for Scandal* (1777) was a parody of the Devonshire set. Georgiana's great weakness was gambling and much of her life was spent engaged in that vice and then attempting to borrow money from everyone she knew (including the Prince of Wales) to meet her huge debts.

Sandy feels that Foreman's book is too heavily weighted with Georgiana's problems and thus offers too gloomy a view of her life. Both books, but particularly Foreman's, explore Georgiana's long and deep friendship with the fragile-looking and lovely Lady Elizabeth (Bess) Foster, who also became the Duke's mistress (bearing two of his children) and later, after Georgiana's death, his wife. Sandy recounted many interesting stories of Bess's dramatic life and of her eccentric family. Sandy suggested that Masters's biography better illustrated Georgiana's great charm and influence. Both works, however, offer fascinating insights into English aristocratic society in Jane Austen's time.

Irene Howard next talked about Claudia Johnson's 1999 review ("Run Mad, But Do Not Faint") in the *Times Literary Supplement* of Patricia Rozema's film *Mansfield Park*. Irene was surprised to find the review far more positive than she'd expected. In this controversial adaptation, Fanny Price is not portrayed as the frail and timid creature of the novel, but as a spirited, humorous and energetic young woman who retreats to her room where she writes to revenge the hurts and rejections she experiences living with her wealthy relatives. Johnson sees that perspective as similar to Jane Austen's own practice while writing her early works. Fanny is thus seen as writing the juvenilia attributed to Austen. Rozema establishes the Mansfield Park family's link to slave labour early when Fanny hears noises of "black" cargo near the sea and later through the drawings of the slaves on the West Indian property. The director clearly demonstrates her view that the family's moral crime has stunted its growth and threatens to destroy its future. Sir Thomas's misrule abroad leads to turpitude at home. A parallel is also drawn between slavery and the confinement of women in this period.

The reviewer acknowledges that the film's open approach to sexuality in several instances was distressing to conservative Janeites. She also points out the interesting similarity of Fanny's acceptance of Henry on one day and her rejection of him on the next and Jane Austen's equally brief engagement. Johnson clearly feels the Rozema film remains true to Austen's overall vision. By the conclusion of the film the "wicked" characters have been dealt with appropriately and a chastened Sir Thomas decides to grow tobacco instead of the slave-dependent sugar. Fanny has prevailed in winning her man, but her writing (of which Edwin approves) will provide her with some escape from her narrow and parochial world, as it did for her creator.

Members at the meeting who spoke of *Mansfield Park* and the review felt the film was too distorted and unfocussed. It was not the sexuality that they found offensive, but the exaggerations and fabrications that moved too far from the original characters or plot.

John Parker read the beautiful and very moving letter written by Virginia Woolf to her husband, Leonard, on the day of her suicide. The letter is reproduced in the recently published novel, *The Hours*, by Michael Cunningham.

Keiko Parker reported on her reading of Carol Shield's new biography of Jane Austen. This slim volume, which is part of a Penguin series of author biographies, was likely a commission. In it, highlights of Austen's life are interspersed with Shields's views and ideas about her. Most of the information seems to have been gathered from several previous biographies. The work is not well documented and places too much emphasis on tensions between Jane and her sister, Cassandra, when they were, in fact, very close and good friends. Keiko suggested that the book is a worthwhile read if you are familiar with the more extensive biographies, but in general it is more like a "Coles' Notes" approach for students.

Caroline Warner reported on a book she found worthwhile, Paul Chamberlain's *Can We Be Good Without God.* The work contains a series of easily accessible readings on key moral issues, each examined from various divergent viewpoints. Caroline recommends it.

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Navy List. - Eileen Sutherland.

"**Navy List:** official book with all naval officers' names and other information"

"She found the Miss Musgroves just fetching the navy-list (their own navy list, the first that had ever been at Uppercross); and sitting down together to pore over it, with the professed view of finding out the ships which Captain Wentworth had commanded." [*Persuasion* p.64]

Where did the Musgroves get "their own navy list?" They had only met Captain Wentworth about a week before. They had no experience of knowing other naval officers: "There was a very general ignorance of all naval matters throughout the party." [P.p.64]

Surely it was not something to be found in any village shop. And time did not allow for them having written away for a copy, and received it so soon. And how did they know about a "navy list" anyway?

They would not have got one when their "very troublesome, hopeless son" became a midshipman half a dozen years before - he would not have been mentioned in a navy-list.

Has Jane Austen slipped up a bit here? I suppose the Austens had a navy list, with two sons in the Navy, but the Musgroves?

Can anyone explain this?

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Harvest Home.

"As we approached the isolated hamlet we were aware of a may-pole, that unsophisticated trophy of innocence, gaiety and plenty; and as we drew near, saw that it was decorated with flowers and ribands fluttering in the evening breeze. Under it stood a wagon with its full complement of men women, children, flowers and corn; and a handsome team of horses tranquilly enjoying their share of the finery and revelry of the scene, for scarlet bows and sunflowers had been lavished on their winkers with no niggard hand.

On the first horse sat a damsel, no doubt intending to represent Ceres. She had on, of course, a white dress and straw bonnet - for could Ceres or any other goddess appear in a rural English festival in any other costume? A broad yellow sash encompassed a waist that evinced a glorious and enormous contempt for classical proportion and modern folly [tight corsetry] . . . I ascertained . . . that she was good-natured, that she enjoyed the scene as a downright English joke - and that she had the most beautiful set of teeth I ever beheld. (What a stigma on all tooth-doctors, tooth-powders and tooth-brushes!)

There was something very affecting in this simple festival, and I felt my heart heave, and the fields looked indistinct for some minutes.

- *The World of William Hone* [1780-1842], John Wardroper, ed. (1997).

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Associations of Bath

"A place full of associations is Bath. When we had fairly done with the real people, there were great fictions to fall back upon; and I am not sure, true and living human beings as Horace Walpole and Madame d'Arblay have shown themselves in their letters and journals - full of that great characteristic of our human nature, inconsistency, of strength and weakness, of wisdom and folly, of virtues and faults; I am not sure, eminently human as these worthies shine forth in their writings, that those who never lived except in the writings of other people - the heroes and heroines of Miss Austen, for example - are not the more real of the two. Her exquisite story of *Persuasion* absolutely haunted me. Whenever it rained (and it did rain every day that I stayed in Bath, except one), I thought of Anne Elliot meeting Captain Wentworth, when driven by a shower to take refuge in a shoeshop [actually, Mrs. Molland was a 'Cook and confectioner' in Milsom Street. E.S.]. Whenever I got out of breath in climbing up-hill (which, considering that one dear friend lived in Lansdown Crescent, and another on Beechen Cliff, happened also pretty often), I thought of that same charming Anne Elliot, and of that ascent from the lower town to the upper, during which all her tribulations ceased. And when at last, by dint of trotting up one street and down another, I incurred the unromantic calamity of a blister on the heel, even that grievance became classical by the recollection of the similar catastrophe, which, in consequence of her peregrinations with the Admiral, had befallen dear Mrs. Croft. I doubt if any one, even Scott himself, have left such perfect impressions of characters and place as Jane Austen." (p.323)

Reflections of a Literary Life, or, Books, Places, and People: Mary Russell Mitford (1858)

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Tea, Beer and the Industrial Revolution: Eileen Sutherland

Why did the birth of the Industrial Revolution occur in Britain, and why particularly towards the end of the 18th century? Alan Macfarlane, a professor of anthropological science at King's College, Cambridge, proposes an interesting answer.

The main conditions required for such an outburst of industry are: technology and power to operate factories, large concentrated populations for cheap labour, transport to move goods around, an affluent middle-class to buy mass-produced objects, a market-driven economy, and a political system that allows all this to happen. England met these conditions; other European nations, and China, for instance, had most of these factors. Something else must have been necessary to get things going.

Macfarlane considers that the missing factors were tea and beer, necessary to fuel the revolution. Tannin, the active ingredient in tea, and hops in beer both have important antiseptic properties. Also, both are made with boiling water. Urban communities where these are the popular drinks could flourish at close quarters without succumbing to waterborne diseases such as dysentery. This was no frivolous suggestion by Macfarlane. A lot of solid research supported his case, which has been favourably reviewed by distinguished medical historians such as Roy Porter.

Population fluctuations occurred around the middle of the 18th century, 1740-1760. In the space of twenty years the infant mortality rate halved - in all classes, and in rural and urban areas. There was no change in bacteria or viruses, no revolution in medical science (this was a century before Lister, and good sanitation was not widespread before the 19th c.), no altered environmental conditions. A change in food is not an explanation either - diet grew worse in this period, and the height and weight of the population declined.

Was it merely an extraordinary chance that the population increased just in time to provide labour for the Industrial Revolution? Usually crowded conditions mean more disease and deaths. Records showed that there was a lower incidence of waterborne disease at the time - Macfarlane deduced that whatever the population was drinking must have been the important factor in regulating disease.

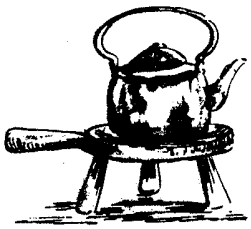
Beer had been the popular drink of the common people in England for generations. But in the late 17th century a tax was introduced on malt and the price of beer became too high for the poor. They turned to water and gin, and almost at once the mortality rate rose. However, quite suddenly it dropped again.

Japan presented an example of a country of growing cities and industries, with no system of sanitation. However, Japan had a much lower incidence of waterborne disease. Macfarlane thought the prevalence of tea-drinking in Japanese culture might be the reason.

The history of tea in Britain showed a coincidence of dates: tea was relatively expensive until the early 18th century, when a direct clipper service with China was introduced. By the 1740s, tea was inexpensive and common - the same period that infant mortality was dropping. The combination of the antiseptic qualities of tea, and the fact that the water had to be boiled, meant that mothers and mothers' milk were healthier than they had ever been. No other European country had the same consumption of tea as England.

At the same period, Japan had a large tea consumption, large cities and high literacy, but industry could not flourish there because wheeled vehicles and animals to draw them had been given up so that they would not put people out of work. An industrial revolution there at that time was impossible.

Believing that his surmises are correct, Macfarlane is advocating that the UN should encourage aid organizations to supply tea to underdeveloped areas of the world. In the meantime, pour yourself another cup!



Anjana Ahuja, *Times of London*, Vancouver *Sun*, May 11, 2000.

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Art Exhibitions.

Henry & I went to the Exhibition in Spring Gardens. . . . I was very pleased - particularly with a small portrait of Mrs. Bingley, excessively like her.(Letters, p.309***).***

"Like the art museum, the temporary exhibition is a relatively recent phenomenon . . . In the past, those anxious to view works of art had to rely on the brief displays organized by auction houses . . . It was effectively during the French Revolution, with its seismic effects on society and on concepts of the public, that the art exhibition in something like the Modern guise first emerged. Haskell argues (with a faint bending of the definition of 'exhibition', since it was not intended that the works of art would subsequently be dispersed) that the displays of looted art arranged in the Louvre by the victorious French during the 1790s and under Napoleon helped to initiate this tradition. It became the custom, whenever a major haul of paintings was extracted from a defeated nation, to display the booty in the Louvre, a style of exhibition which has fortunately gone out of fashion. (It is an interesting phenomenon that the idea of there being any impropriety in such art loot never occurred to the French under Napoleon). . . These displays, organized with relatively sophisticated catalogues on historical lines, were to exert an international influence. They transfixed French and foreign visitors, most notably perhaps the British, who flocked to Paris to see them in 1802 and again in 1814.

Vigorous as British buyers of old masters were in the 18th century, many of the works they brought proudly back from Italy were of mediocre quality or worse, as our country houses still depressingly testify. It was only in the early 19th century, with the dispersal in London of a series of magnificent foreign collections - most notably the Orléans sale of the 1790s - that the character of aristocratic collections began to change.

The Musée Napoléon prompted various public-spirited aristocrats to establish a new body, the British Institution, in 1806, and it is in their displays of old masters from private collections that Haskell identifies the first old-master loan exhibitions in the modern sense. . ."

Review by Giles Waterfield of *The Ephemeral Museum* by Francis Haskell.

TLS Nov.17, 2000.

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