AngloMania
AngloMania:
Tradition and Transgression
in British Fashion

Andrew Bolton
With an Introduction by Ian Buruma

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Sponsor's Statement

The year 2006 marks the 150th anniversary of Burberry. As we reflect on the signature qualities that have enabled Burberry to withstand the test of time, our British provenance resonates as a treasured hallmark.

It is, therefore, a great honour to collaborate with The Costume Institute of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in support of “AngloMania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion.” Capturing the spirit of British style in its juxtaposition of modern clothing with period art and furniture, the exhibition and this catalogue highlight iconic looks from Burberry alongside those of our colleagues and countrymen in the UK fashion field.

We see “AngloMania” as a glorious salute to our heritage, as well as to the unparalleled range, diversity, and creativity of design in Great Britain today. For this recognition, we owe our thanks to The Costume Institute and the extraordinary team that made it possible.
FOREWORD

Over the past thirty years, British fashion has been defined by a self-conscious assimilation of historical references. In their search for novelty, designers have exhumed and adapted past styles in an audacious manner. Their historicism, while selective, is rarely literal or time specific. Rather, it is a mingling of traditions and inspirations that come together in wholly new ensembles and silhouettes. In the exhibition “AngloMania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion,” held this year at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, these new fashions were juxtaposed with those from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in a series of ironic theatrical vignettes in the Museum’s English Period Rooms, The Annie Laurie Aitken Galleries. This installation, which resulted in startling insights into representations of Englishness, was a radical departure from the exhibition “Dangerous Liaisons: Fashion and Furniture in the Eighteenth Century,” held two years ago in our French Period Rooms, The Wrightsman Galleries, in which costumes and furniture of the same period blended harmoniously. In “AngloMania” modern fashions seemed to clash with their historical counterparts and surroundings. It was a collision, however, that not only provided deeper insight into our understanding of Englishness, but one that also challenged our perceptions and perhaps even established notions of museological practice.

The exhibition and this handsomely illustrated catalogue represent another collaboration between The Costume Institute and the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts. “AngloMania” was organized by Andrew Bolton, curator, The Costume Institute, with support from Harold Koda, curator in charge, The Costume Institute; Ian Wardropper, Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Curator, European Sculpture and Decorative Arts; and Daniëlle O. Kisluk-Grosheide, curator, European Sculpture and Decorative Arts. The vignettes, elegantly staged by Patrick Kinmonth and Antonio Monfreda, were expertly photographed by Joseph Coscia Jr. of the Museum’s Photograph Studio. The preface and chapter texts were written by Andrew Bolton. The introduction is by Ian Buruma, Luce Professor of Democracy, Human Rights, and Journalism at Bard College.

“AngloMania” would not have been possible without the generous contribution by the Annie Laurie Aitken Charitable Trust for the renovation and restoration of the English Period Rooms. Encompassing decorative arts from the late sixteenth to the late eighteenth century, these remarkable galleries include many rooms considered to be the finest outside of England. We are also indebted to the donors who enabled the purchase of the costumes in the exhibition that are now in The Costume Institute. We also wish to thank the lenders not only for their loans but also for allowing us to reproduce their costumes on the following pages.

We are extremely grateful to Burberry for their generous support of both the exhibition and the catalogue. We would also like to thank Condé Nast for their additional support and their tireless efforts on behalf of The Costume Institute.

Philippe de Montebello

Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
In 2004, The Costume Institute collaborated with the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts on the exhibition “Dangerous Liaisons” in the French Period Rooms, The Wrightsman Galleries. At the time, there were discussions about expanding the exhibition to encompass the English Period Rooms, The Annie Laurie Aitken Galleries. It was felt, however, that the premise of the exhibition, to establish a discourse between fashion and furniture through a series of erotically charged vignettes inspired by libertine imagery and literature, was more suitable to the French rooms than to the English rooms. This decision was not arrived at by curatorial capriciousness, but by the nature of the interiors themselves. There is no equivalent in the English rooms, as there is in the French rooms, of a salon ovale or a cabinet des glaces, small rooms designed, in part, to facilitate intimate encounters. Nor are there examples of specialized furniture, such as a table mécanique or a table de voyage, tables with various functions designed, again in part, to define carefully cultivated identities and sociabilities. While the French rooms were installed primarily to showcase masterworks from the Museum’s collections rather than to recreate actual room settings, they reflect the density of objects typical of French interiors of the period, as well as the range of furnishings required to facilitate leisured conduct. In France, artful living was central to the creation of cultural identity in a way that it was not in England. As Mimi Hellman observed in her introduction to the catalogue for “Dangerous Liaisons,” “This design sophistication was widely regarded as uniquely modern and uniquely French, a sensitivity to personal comfort and convenience that existed in no other place or time.”

While we have to be careful of defining notions of Frenchness or Englishness in any context, such definition is precisely the premise of the exhibition “AngloMania.” Historically, France and England have defined themselves in deliberate contradistinction. This is true, especially, in the eighteenth century, when for the English the threat of a French military invasion was omnipresent. Indeed, England was at war with France from 1701 to 1714 (War of the Spanish Succession), from 1740 to 1748 (War of the Austrian Succession), and from 1756 to 1763 (Seven Years War). Against these threats, England sought to assert its national identity by affirming, or, rather, reaffirming its national distinctions. Most critically, it pitched English liberties against French tyrannies, a “propaganda of antithesis” eagerly embraced and promoted by cultural patriots such as William Hogarth. Particularly noteworthy is his The Gate of Calais (ca. 1848–49, pp. 14–15). Loaded with satiric vitriol, the painting, which records a visit to France by Hogarth in 1748 during which he was arrested and deported for sketching the ramparts of Calais, conveys the artist’s claim that France was characterized by “poverty, slavery and insolence, with an affection of politeness.” Set against the city gate, Hogarth presents a group of Gallic stereotypes, including strutting soldiers to represent military tyranny and emaciated workmen to represent the misery of the people. Dominating the scene is a large hunk of beef that stands as a symbol of England’s superior prosperity, attributable to its superior liberties.

This image of England was not limited to patriots. Voltaire, who first visited England in 1726 (thirty-eight years after the Glorious Revolution that established the country’s constitutional monarchy), strenuously advocated England as a model of freedom and tolerance. Like Hogarth, Voltaire had personally experienced the heavy hand of French tyranny. His early satirical writings, which attacked the aristocracy and the government, resulted in several stretches in the Bastille. Indeed, his visit to England between 1726 and 1728 was one of exile, following a squabble with an aristocrat by the name of chevalier de Rohan. In England, Voltaire found “liberty of conscience,” and through his writings on English culture, most notably his Letters Concerning the English Nation (1733), he effectivelyinstigated “modern” Anglomania, or anglomanie. As it emerged in the 1740s, Anglomania was a political and intellectual phenomenon (anglomanie was also known as philosophisme), channeled through the works of Voltaire, and later Montesquieu, specifically his political treatise The Spirit of Laws (1748). By the 1760s, however, Anglomania had become associated with customs, manners, and fashions. In clothing, it was manifested by an increasing emphasis on plainness, simplicity, practicality, and informality (men in France, it should be noted, had begun to adopt the more casual styles associated with England as early as the 1740s, a fact that points to the close connection between sartorial and ideological Anglophilism throughout the
eighteenth century). The 1780s saw an even more fevered interest in England, with French men and women turning to English sports, novels, theater, gardens, and even cuisine, to define their identities and express their fashionability.

In its subsequent manifestations, Anglomania, as Ian Buruma outlines in the introduction to this catalogue, has remained a stylistic phenomenon. Moreover, it has remained a fantasy, based, as it is, on a caricature of England, concocted from the essential “otherness” of the outsider’s perspective of Englishness. However, this caricature, like all caricatures, is not entirely fictitious. Nor is it wholly “foreign.” It is based on idealized concepts of English culture that the English themselves not only recognize, but also, in a form of “autophilia,” actively promote and perpetuate. For, Englishness, like Anglomania, involves the idea of England rather than the reality of England. As Aileen Ribeiro observed in “On Englishness in Dress” (2002), Englishness is a romantic construct, formed by feelings, attitudes, and perceptions, as opposed to Britishness, which is a political construct, based on shared practices and institutions. Indeed, by its very definition, Britishness embraces the diverse, disparate, and diasporic character of the country (or rather countries). Englishness, however, despite social, political, and economic developments, continues to suggest singularity and homogeneity. This image, of course, is a pretense, but Englishness, “enduring Englishness,” is maintained by its mythologies, the most powerful being that of timelessness.

Through the lens of fashion, “AngloMania” explored various normative representations of Englishness. Like “Dangerous Liaisons,” they were presented in a series of “fictive” vignettes that drew on artistic and literary references. Unlike its flirtatious predecessor, however, the exhibition juxtaposed historical and modern costumes with the intention of revealing a conceptual continuum of the “English imaginary.” It is a strategy that The Costume Institute has employed in previous exhibitions and has the tonic effect of the new enlivening the old and the old verifying the new. What was novel, perhaps, was the use of historical and modern clothing to represent “characters,” as if in a play or a painting. Apart from a device to encourage visitors, such an approach referenced one of the defining features of the English, namely their interest in character and biography. This is reinforced in this catalogue, as it was in the exhibition, by the inclusion of grand manner portraits. Indeed, the show presented the opportunity of highlighting significant paintings from the Museum’s holdings, including Thomas Gainsborough’s Mrs. Grace Dalrymple Elliott (1778, p. 156). One of the most celebrated courtesans of the eighteenth century, Mrs. Elliott was the mistress of some of the most eminent peers of her period, including Lord Cholmondeley. Allegedly, when she became pregnant in her late twenties (following her husband’s divorce on the grounds of her infidelity), four men, including the Prince of Wales, stepped forward to claim paternity. English history is alive with such eccentric characters, some real, and some, as in the exhibition, fictitious.

Apart from the novelty of narrative, peopled with ghosts from the past and the present, the show was equally radical in terms of its styling, which in some instances mixed period costumes with modern accessories. Seemingly anachronistic, such juxtapositions were determined by both aesthetic and intellectual criteria. The former usually provided by the creative consultants, Patrick Kinmonth and Antonio Monfreda, and the latter, as stated in the relevant chapters of this catalogue, by the curator. The wigs were another point of departure. Whereas in “Dangerous Liaisons” they were made from hand-knotted human hair and styled after period coiffures, those in “AngloMania,” made by Julien d’Ys, were emphatic in their artificiality and exaggeration. The wigs were an exercise in the conceptual historicism reflected in the garments themselves. Most of the modern pieces were selected for their avant-gardism and their self-conscious historicism, two of the defining features of British fashion of the past thirty years (the “modern” time frame of the exhibition, chosen for its developmental Postmodernity). All of the pieces, whether modern or historical, were selected for their relevance to the interiors. This relevance may have been symbolic, metaphorical, or iconographical, but it supplied the exhibition’s justification. Like mixing old clothes with new clothes, the presence of costumes in the English Period Rooms provided a contextual relativity that was at once startling and seductive. More poignantly, it presented a vortex for nostalgic and utopian longings, the essence of both Englishness and Anglomania.
Apart from everything else, Anglomania is about clothes. But clothes can be about many things. Goethe's Werther (1774), the young man whose suicide tickled the morbid impulses of a generation, dressed in an English-style blue frock coat and yellow breeches, thereby setting the tone for dreamy young men all over Europe. The English look, in Werther's case, was associated with high Romantic lacrimae rerum, a yearning, sensitive, beautiful melancholy. While the Wertheresque Anglomaniacs contemplated self-destruction in the face of ugly materialism and industrial enterprise, young women sighed over Samuel Richardson's virtuous heroines and dashing men in riding coats.

Several decades before that, Voltaire's Anglophiliac tendencies, acted out in Cirey, his château in Champagne, affectionately known to Voltaire and his mistress Emily du Châtelet as "Cireyshire," were quite the opposite of Wertherism. His infatuation with England was all about Reason and the Enlightenment; not about mooning young Romantics but scientific geniuses like “Sir Newton” and "Mr Loke" (Locke). The cult of reason and freethinking, garbed in simple British elegance, was promoted by Voltaire as a rebuke to the Catholic obscurantism and royal absolutism of France.

Voltaire's view of England was echoed in England. Simplicity, in the eyes of Hogarth, and other boosters of the image of "Roast Beef and Old England," had always been a British virtue, as opposed to the velvet fripperies of France. Voltaire was too French to go in much for roast beef; his tastes were extravagant in clothes and in food. But the notion of British simplicity inspired a new form of Anglophilia in France. In the late nineteenth century, Baudelaire and other Parisian decadents dressed in black, mimicking the English dandies of the Regency. Black, to the French decadents, was the color of aristocratic aloofness from bourgeois mediocrity and the new industrial age.

The rise of gentlemanismo in Italy, France, or wherever else men dressed in fine tweeds, club ties, pin-striped suits, and other accoutrements of classy Englishness (more than Britishness, I should say), came near the end of the nineteenth century but stretched well into the 1960s. In some places (advertisements in The New Yorker, for example, or in Ralph Lauren stores) it still lingers on. The difference between an Italian Anglomane and a real English gentleman can usually be discerned in the Italian's tweeds, which look so much smarter than the cultivated shabbiness of the trueborn Englishman's dress.

Although the style based on that of the English gentleman may strike some as conservative, this is not the whole story. For it, too, shares with the previous phases of Anglomania an element of protest: not just against the mass-produced vulgarity of modern democracy, but, in a way, even against the privileges of birth. The gentleman, like the Regency dandy, does not stand out because of his bloodlines, which may be relatively humble, but by sheer dint of his style. This is why gentlemanismo has often appealed to successful men who felt like social outsiders.

Gentlemanismo was followed in the 1960s and 1970s by Pop and Punk. Perhaps—yet again—in protest against the uniformity of mass-produced affluence, young people in London dressed up as Regency rakes, 1920s flappers, or officers in the Crimean War. British fashion was at once romantic and socially subversive. Those who were not born in the working class pretended that they were and adopted Cockney accents, while working-class boys dressed up like toffs. The hedonistic fancy dress of Swinging London was followed by the darker, more violent, more bitter Punk style of "Thatcher's Britain." There was something of the Punk in the Iron Lady herself: the desire to destroy, but also to adopt the class trappings she affected to despise.

Romantics, Enlightenment rationalists, French flaneurs, flower children, Mrs. Thatcher, and Punk rockers may not appear to have anything much in common, certainly nothing traditionally associated with England. And yet they do, and it does have something to do with an idea of Englishness. This idea can be both reactionary and rebellious, liberal and conservative, sober and flamboyant, deliberately classy and a mockery of old class distinctions. What always has been admired, I think, from Voltaire's time to the present, is a peculiarly English (or perhaps here I should say "British") combination of freedom and nostalgia, of tradition and individualism.

Baudelaire was a great admirer of Beau Brummell, the Regency dandy whose last word on how to
starch a shirt or tie a stock was taken as gospel by a small London coterie, which included the prince regent, later King George IV, until he fell out with the famous dandy. Brummell was not from a rich or grand family but behaved as though he were much grander than any aristocrat, or indeed royal personage. The main characteristics of Brummell’s circle of fops were a studied air of insolence, even rudeness, and a total disdain for doing anything useful. When the Prince of Wales, who got tired of Brummell’s mockery, snubbed him while strolling down Bond Street, Brummell inquired of the prince’s companion who his “fat friend” was. Brummell, then, was a climber, while treating the ladder he was climbing with contempt.

Living for nothing but pleasure, taking nothing more seriously than tying the faultless cravat, was seen by Baudelaire as the ideal attitude to emulate in a utilitarian age. As he put it in his Intimate Journals (published posthumously in 1930), “A dandy does nothing. Can you imagine a dandy addressing the common herd, except to make game of them?” Baudelaire, like Brummell, loathed the idea of democracy, which he regarded as banal and opposed to individual eccentricity. Which is why both he and his English heroes—“the last champions of human pride”—posed as aristocrats.

And posing is of course what Anglomania, especially of the sartorial kind, is all about: the freedom to be something one is not. This pose can be a reactionary one. Indeed, among Anglophiles, it very often is. But it does demand a particular kind of liberty, the liberty to imagine, to dress up. But it is also related to the history of British class distinctions. Tocqueville was one of many foreign observers in Britain who noted the porous quality of the British upper class. In Germany or Austria, or under the French ancien régime, the nobility was a caste more than a class, inaccessible to upstarts and outsiders. The British nobility was of a more liberal disposition, which allowed men and women with talent or wealth, or even superior style and wit, such as Beau Brummell, to share in its privileges. It allowed for assimilation, as it were, which was one reason, perhaps, why the British upper class managed to avoid a violent revolution, and why it attracted so much admiration among those who lived in more oppressive societies.

The importance of posing, of cutting a dash, through outrage as well as originality, is part of the strong but porous class system. The fact that, traditionally, class was a matter of detailed codes of dress and speech, that each Englishman and woman was instantly readable to anyone familiar with these codes, gave to English life an unusual degree of theatricality. The class system could be oppressive, to be sure, and a reason for some people, who felt excluded in one way or another, to move abroad. But the theatricality of English life, owing to the importance of presentation as well as the fluidity of class, has also been a great source of creativity, even playfulness, in the streets as much as in the theater. In England, more than most places, the world is indeed a stage.

Now that most of the codes and trappings of class have either collapsed or become increasingly confused, people are free to rummage in the vast national storehouse of costumes to pick and choose what they want. Since the English have always plundered their past, often for their own amusement, Postmodernism is quite suited to England. It is no longer subversive for a working-class boy to dress like an Edwardian fop, for an aristocrat to pose as a working man. Dressing up has become a free-for-all.

This eclecticism is not always properly understood by Britain’s admirers. Many foreign followers of gentlemanismo are disappointed when they visit the actual place of origin. The English gentleman may now be a more common sight in Milan, Philadelphia, or Calcutta than in London. But no matter, Anglophiles never were the same as Englishmen. Imitating the English has provided a great deal of pleasure to many people, who felt that dressing up in English clothes gave them a sense of dash and distinction. But Anglomanes have, over the ages, given at least as much pleasure to the English themselves, who could bask in the sincerest form of flattery, while being reassured of their natural superiority when even the most assiduous foreign mimic managed to get the smallest detail wrong.
Anglomania, the craze for all things English, gripped Europe during the mid- to late eighteenth century. As perceived by Voltaire, the father of Anglomania, England was a land of reason, freedom, and tolerance, a land where the Enlightenment found its greatest expression. It was a view held by many English writers and artists of the period, such as David Garrick, Henry Fielding, Samuel Johnson, and particularly William Hogarth, whose work reflects a fierce and forthright nationalism. Two of his most patriotic paintings are *The March to Finchley* (ca. 1749–50, pp. 10–11) and *The Gate of Calais* (ca. 1748–49, pp. 14–15). While not painted as pendants, they are united by their jingoism. Filled with noises, tastes, and smells, they are teeming with national symbols. The British flag flies proudly above the melee in *The March to Finchley*, while the English coat of arms basks in the sunlight of *The Gate of Calais*. Originally entitled *O! the Roast Beef of Old England* after a song by Fielding, *The Gate of Calais* features a large joint of beef as an emblem of England.

Beef had long been a bearer of national identity, but in the 1700s it became equated with English liberty and manly virtues, as did other meaty symbols of England, such as butchers, bulldogs, and, particularly, John Bull. Created by the satirist John Arbuthnot in his pamphlet *Law Is a Bottomless Pit; or, The History of John Bull* (1712), this allegorical character was originally depicted as greedy, gullible, and irascible. However, during the eighteenth century, he emerged as a heroic figure, the basic archetype of the freeborn Englishman. When he began to appear in prints in the 1760s, it was often in the form of a bull or a bulldog. From the 1780s, however, he was more usually depicted as a human, often cast as a sailor, farmer, artisan, or merchant (his original occupation). Frequently, he was portrayed alongside other national symbols, as in James Gillray’s lively drawing *Politeness* (1779, p. 18), which shows him with a full mug of ale in his hand, a loyal bulldog by his side, and a large joint of beef on the wall behind him. Typically, he is depicted wearing boots, breeches, waistcoat, and frock coat, a loose coat with plain cuffs, a turned-down collar, and minimal side pleats. Defined by its plainness, practicality, and informality, the frock emerged as the supreme sartorial symbol of England, a powerful signifier of its perceived liberties. It is the frock that conveys the English appearance of Goethe’s Werther in *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774).

Patriotic symbols are brought together in a spectacle of nationhood at the entrance to the exhibition “AngloMania.” The staging, based on Hogarth’s *The Gate of Calais*, includes a large faded Union Jack as a backdrop for two ensembles that represent, respectively, eighteenth- and late-twentieth-century concepts of sartorial freedom. On the left is a three-piece suit from the mid-1700s that echoes a version worn by the figure on the far left of the painting, a depiction of Hogarth himself. Made from wool, a plebeian, relatively inexpensive material that the English elevated to high fashion, its sense of the demotic is expressed through its simplicity. In a reversal of fortune, the bondage suit from the late 1970s, made by Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood, asserts its liberalism through its very complexity. For while the suit’s zips and straps, taken from fetishistic and sadomasochistic clothing, are worthy of a Houdini challenge, they liberate the wearer through the language of street style, more specifically, that of Punk and its freewheeling, self-expressive vocabulary.

Made from tartan, the suit evokes the figure on the far right of *The Gate of Calais*, probably a veteran of the Jacobite Uprising (1745). Tartan is a potent (albeit romanticized) symbol of Scotland, as is the unicorn, which along with the lion, a symbol of England, appears in the Royal Standard as a supporter, a carved, painted, and gilded version of which hangs above the entrance to the exhibition. In terms of its political complexity, the history of the Royal Standard parallels that of the Union Jack, the design of which is based on the crosses of Saint George, Saint Andrew, and Saint Patrick, respectively the patron saints of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Its strong graphic impact and its ability to serve as a vehicle for national identifications have guaranteed the Union Jack’s co-option by the fashion industry, as seen in the frock coat designed by David Bowie and Alexander McQueen. Although based on a jacket worn in the 1960s by Pete Townsend, the lead singer of The Who, its style is more redolent of John Bull. Ruined yet precisely tailored, the coat is a pastiche of patriotism, a Postmodern reworking of Hogarth’s “Roast Beef of Old England.”
The English Garden
Kirtlington Park Dining Room (Oxfordshire, ca. 1748)

The vast parks that surround the grandest country houses of the nobility are among Britain's greatest artistic achievements. Writing in 1780, Horace Walpole commented, "We have discovered the point of perfection. We have given the true model of gardening to the world; let other countries mimic or corrupt our taste; but let it reign here on its verdant throne, original by its elegant simplicity, and proud of no other art than that of softening Nature's harshness and copying her graceful touch." While these parks seem to represent the English landscape at its most unaffected, they are the result of careful planning and cultivation. A product of the Age of Reason, they emerged out of a desire for improvement (particularly agricultural improvement) and reflected the belief in the logic, harmony, and equanimity of Nature.

Unlike the formal, enclosed gardens of the seventeenth century, they attempted to subsume the entire visible landscape, a concept developed by the French landscape designer André Le Nôtre. This "ideal of extent" was most fully realized in the gardens of Lancelot "Capability" Brown, whom the poet William Cowper described as "Th'omnipotent magician." Brown strove to show the English countryside to advantage, exploring its expressive possibilities and presenting an idealized picture of Nature. His Utopian landscapes, typically comprising extended prospects, informal tree plantings, winding watercourses, and smooth rolling lawns, were copied in France, in Germany, and even in Russia. In a letter to Voltaire, who often boasted of having introduced le jardin anglais to France, the Russian empress Catherine II (the Great) wrote, "I passionately love gardens in the English style, the curved lines, the gentle slopes, the ponds pretending to be lakes, the archipelagos on solid ground, and I deeply disdain straight lines . . . should say my anglophilia gets the better of planimetry."

The dining room at Kirtlington Park in Oxfordshire, commissioned by Sir James Dashwood, overlooked one of Brown's idyllic landscapes. Designed by the architect John Sanderson, the room's naturalistic stuccowork, with its scheme of the Four Seasons on the ceiling and its trophies of fruit and flowers on the walls, seems to be an extension of Brown's Claudian landscapes. This impression is underscored by the integration in the overmantel of John Wootton's painting, a genre scene in the manner of Claude Lorraine. Depicting moments of perfection and grandeur, Lorraine's landscapes had a conscious influence on noblemen like Dashwood, who had been on the grand tour, a compulsory component in the education of any gentleman. Addressing these "blest youths" in his poem The English Garden (1772), William Mason wrote, "And scenes like these, on memory's tablet drawn Bring back to Britain: there give local form To each Idea; and if Nature lend Materials fit of torrent, rock and shade, Produce new Tivolis."

If the room's exuberant plasterwork is a counterpart to Brown's Utopian gardens, so are the dresses made from silks woven and designed by a specialized, principally Huguenot workforce in Spitalfields during the eighteenth century. Ranging from the "bizarre" designs of the early 1700s to the Rococo patterns of the 1740s and 1750s, they reveal a variety of flowers that have been given three-dimensional form through Philip Treacy's "orchid" hats. While orchids appear in the designs of Spitalfields silks (notably those by Anna Maria Garthwaite, known for her use of exotic flowers), the affinity between Treacy's floral tributes and those seen in the dresses, especially from the 1730s and 1740s, is established through their scale, their fresh coloring, and, most importantly, their botanical naturalism. In art history, realism, as Nikolaus Pevsner has noted in The Englishness of English Art (1964), is a decidedly English characteristic. It is evident in the work of various English artists, including George Stubbs. In his Lady Reading in a Park (ca. 1768–70, p. 28), Stubbs points to the interplay between realism in art and in fashion by painting his poised beauty in a robe of Spitalfields silk. The pink tulle dress by Hussein Chalayan, however, seems to denounce, or at least destabilize, the notion of naturalism. Made from hundreds of nylon rosettes shaved to resemble topiary, it recalls the formal gardens of the seventeenth century with their complex geometry of clipped hedges. Chalayan's inspiration, however, was the erosive and tectonic forces that create all kinds of shapes in nature, an inspiration that, ultimately, points to the futility of man's attempt to master nature.
The English country house, like the English country garden, is equated with a fundamental Englishness. This association is partly owing to its social structure, which, until as late as World War II, was defined by the master-servant relationship (a creation and a recreation of Britain’s distinctive hierarchical organization). The word “servant” was not in general use until the eighteenth century, a period in which the demand for servants increased dramatically. At this time, as Giles Waterfield has observed in *Below Stairs* (2003), employers usually looked upon their employees with coldness and contempt. Maids were often seen as sexual targets, a theme that was explored by Samuel Richardson in *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740). One of the earliest and greatest British novels, it tells the story of a virtuous maidservant, whose resistance to the repeated attempts at seduction by her employer, Mr. B., finally leads to their marriage. With its themes of romance, sexuality, and class conflict, the novel became an immediate best seller not only in Britain but also on the Continent. The writer and intrepid traveler Lady Mary Wortley Montagu commented, “It has been translated into French and Italian; it was all the fashion at Paris and Versailles, and is still the joy of chambermaids of all nations.” So successful was *Pamela* that several artists, most notably, Joseph Highmore (p. 38), created a series of scenes from the novel for the print market, thereby extending its appeal to an illiterate audience.

The theme of domestic service informs the vignette enacted on the staircase from Cassiobury Park in Hertfordshire, which contrasts a lavish court gown by the House of Worth with a group of ragged, tattered dresses by Hussein Chalayan. Worn by Esther Chapin, whose great-great-granduncle was George Washington, probably when she was presented at an afternoon court of Queen Victoria in the late 1880s (the climax of the Season and a debutante’s coming-out), the gown serves as the ultimate symbol of the wearer’s social standing. While its origins are French, the gown’s colors and pattern of lilies, rendered realistically, owe more to the British Aesthetic Movement of the late nineteenth century. This love of naturalism, as we have seen in “The English Garden,” has a strong tradition in Britain and is evident in the scrollwork balustrade of the staircase, which depicts acanthus flowers and bursting seed or pea pods. (This sculpture in wood is attributed to Edward Pearce for Sir Henry Capel, first Earl of Essex, whose family portraits hang on the walls of the staircase.) Although the style of the gown reflects popular fashions of the period, the train is a vestige of earlier court styles. Equally antiquated is the man’s court suit of coat, breeches, and waistcoat. Worn by men who did not have a prescribed uniform, its sartorial paralysis was an avowal of tradition and formality. A deliberate solecism as well as archaism is reflected in the servant’s livery, made by Henry Poole & Co., which aped court dress of the early 1700s.

Status was as important downstairs as it was upstairs, and liveried employees, such as footmen and coachmen, belonged to the category of lower servants. At the bottom of the hierarchy of female employees were “buntings,” usually identifiable by their torn and patched clothing. In terms of their aesthetic, Hussein Chalayan’s layered and shredded garments (actually inspired by voodoo and the sorceress Medea) recall the abject poverty of these lowly maids. However, in terms of their production, which reflects the handcrafted, labor-intensive processes of the haute couture, they are more likely to appear in the wardrobes of mistresses than of maidservants. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, upper female servants often inherited or were given the cast-off clothes of their mistresses, usually stripped of their trimmings. In Richardson’s novel, we learn that Pamela, during the two or three years that she worked for her mistress, received several gifts of clothing. Upon the death of her “good lady,” Pamela is given additional garments from her mistress’s son and new employer, Mr. B. In a letter to her parents she reports of the first gift, “He has given me a suit of my late lady’s clothes, and half a dozen of her shifts, and six fine handkerchiefs, and three of her cambric aprons and four holland ones. The clothes are fine silk, too rich and good for me to be sure.” This practice of receiving an employer’s hand-me-downs is referenced in Chalayan’s ensembles. With the skill of the most imaginative and resourceful of maidservants, Chalayan combines secondhand garments with elements from his own repertoire (such as fabrics buried with iron filings to imbue them with a false patina of age) to create poetic collages that suggest the sartorial stratagems of servitude.
THE DEATHBED
HAMPTON COURT STATE BED (HEREFORDSHIRE, CA. 1697–98)

For centuries the country house or estate has served as a highly visible symbol of wealth and status. This is true, especially, from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when families built new houses or rebuilt old ones to assert their financial standing against the backdrop of an emerging capitalist economy. Often, such architectural vainglories were undertaken by recently elected, or as in the case of Thomas Coningsby, the owner of Hampton Court in Herefordshire, recently elevated members of the nobility. Coningsby was created Baron of Clanbrassil in 1690 for his loyalty to King William III during the Battle of the Boyne (earlier he had supported William’s claim to the English throne during the Glorious Revolution of 1688). Almost immediately, he set about remodeling and lavishly refurbishing Hampton Court, which had been built in 1435 and had passed to his family in 1510. While the house’s exterior received a romantic medieval facelift, the interior, in keeping with prevailing fashions, received an assertive Baroque makeover.

Typical of the baron’s extravagance and the Baroque’s exuberance is this state bed, one of two Coningsby ordered in 1697 or 1698, in the opulent style of William III’s French architect-designer Daniel Marot. Triumphs of the skills of weavers, upholsterers, and the makers of trimmings, state beds were the focus of the state apartment, a suite of rooms, including bedchamber and antechamber, at the center of any grand scheme of interior decoration. Bloated symbols of prestige, they were reserved for noble and royal visitors or for formal family receptions following births and marriages. Upon the death of a senior member of the household, the apartment was hung in black, and the corpse lay in state in the bedchamber.

Such a practice is reflected in “The Deathbed,” which features a mourning dress worn by Queen Victoria after the death of her consort, Prince Albert, from typhoid fever in 1861. In the nineteenth century, mourning clothing became an outward signifier of gentility and respectability, since only the rich could afford the minutia of its etiquette. Black was worn for full mourning, which, for a widow, usually lasted two years, and gray, white, violet, mauve, and lavender for half mourning, which usually lasted six months. Queen Victoria’s dress, almost entirely covered by black crepe, indicates that she was in the early stages of full mourning. More than any other material, crepe was associated with bereavement, imposing upon the wearer a rigid convention. Its lifeless, lusterless surface achieved the desired optical effect of mourning, namely the abolition of reflection. While Queen Victoria gradually abandoned her wrappings of widowhood, she never fully emerged from her eclipse, remaining in black for most of the rest of her life (earning her the sobriquet the “Widow of Windsor”). Her majestic mourning for the prince was in the tradition of the Romantic obsession with Love and Death, concepts that have dominated the fashion sensibility of several British designers, especially that of Alexander McQueen.

The language of Romanticism is invoked in his black mesh top and black silk skirt, the hem of which has been ravaged as if to suggest the violent passions that fueled the Romantic cult of the heart. A poetic morbidity is imposed upon the ensemble by pairing it with a hat by Philip Treacy. Encrusted with crystals imitating jet (the jewelry of sentiment par excellence), it recalls Queen Victoria’s Mary Stuart widow’s cap, so-called because it came to a peak on the forehead à la Marie Stuart. Explicit references to death and transience inform the brooch made from a rabbit skull by Simon Costin and the aluminum “spine corset” by Shaun Leane, both of which draw on the tradition of the memento mori, as depicted in John Evelyn’s portrait (p. 50). So does the aluminum “jawbone,” also by Leane, worn with an ensemble by McQueen that includes a pair of trousers made from tartan (of his own clan). Tartan is a fabric that the British monarchy, including Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, has long co-opted. In the 1840s and 1850s, the royal couple helped generate a craze for tartan, or “tartanmania,” as part of their wistful romance with Scotland. McQueen’s employment, however, often has darker implications, as in his “Highland Rape” collection (autumn/winter 1995–96), which took the theme of the Jacobite Uprising. Its aggressive styling, including staggering, blood-splattered models wearing torn and shredded garments trimmed with McQueen tartan, was intended to counter fanciful and idealistic notions of Scottish history such as those held by Queen Victoria and her beloved husband.
The British have always found portraiture appealing. It is congruent with their conviction, stemming from a deep-rooted puritanism, that art, like dress, should be useful. For the nobility, the functional relevance of portraits, not unlike the country houses or estates for which they were commissioned, has long rested on their value as propaganda. Traditionally, portraits, that is to say grand public portraits, have served to affirm wealth and status and reaffirm pedigree and ancestry. This function is true, especially, of the state portrait, the primary impulse of which is political. As Andrew Wilton has noted in *The Swagger Portrait* (1992), it invokes the right to rule and, as such, places a great emphasis on the outward trappings of authority. This accent is seen clearly in the portrait of Queen Elizabeth I (ca. 1599, p. 62) from Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, in which the figure is depicted full length, fully frontal, and from a low viewpoint, devices employed in portraiture to enhance the grandeur of the subject.

As is typical of the queen’s later portraits, when all hopes of a marriage had been abandoned, she is depicted as an icon, whose pallid masklike face is invested with a saintly idealization. The bejeweled magnificence of her costume and coiffure embodies the glory and riches of the queen’s sacred and secular imperial kingdom, presenting a dazzling impression of “the admired Empresse through the worlde applauded.” With its symbolic profusion and complexity, the portrait has a heraldic quality; made all the more explicit by the presence, in the chair’s carving and upholstery, of heraldry relating to Elizabeth. Indeed, with its bold central figure placed against what appears to be a scarlet velvet curtain with a border of gold thread embroidery, the portrait serves as an ornate coat of arms, pointing to the strong alliance between royal arms and portraits and their function as expressions of sovereignty.

Given such cultural significance, it is perhaps not surprising that portraiture has proved a critical source of inspiration for several British designers, most notably Vivienne Westwood, who, as part of her autumn/winter 1997–98 collection, “Five Centuries Ago,” created a facsimile of the costume represented in the portrait from Hardwick Hall. It forms the focal point of the Elizabethan Room from Great Yarmouth in Norfolk. The entrance to the room has been constructed to resemble a picture frame, above which hangs a carved depiction of the royal coat of arms. This framing device is employed throughout “AngloMania,” specifically in instances whereby garments are transformations of canonical artifacts from the fields of painting and photography to that of fashion, like the ensemble by Westwood of tweed crown and fake ermine tippet (frontis), a parody of the robes and insignia of office depicted in royal images for more than five hundred years. Even the corset, based on those worn in the 1700s, and her “mini-crin,” a hybrid of the 1960s mini-skirt and the 1850s crinoline (a garment associated with the overblown opulence of Empire) evoke regality through their color (scarlet) and their material (silk velvet).

In the Elizabethan Room, the painterly origins of Westwood’s costume are underscored through its juxtaposition with a portrait of a noblewoman (late 16th century), whose face, like many women of her status, was made up or “painted” to resemble Elizabeth’s un wrinkled smoothness of countenance (the ideal of female beauty). While the shape of Westwood’s dress resembles the fashionable Elizabethan silhouette, achieved through a corset and an underskirt, or farthingale, the bodice is only lightly boned and the skirt’s volume is attained primarily through pleating and the relative stiffness of the material, a sumptuous duchessa satin. The design of the fabric is a faithful rendering of that in the portrait from Hardwick Hall. Although printed, the clarity and vibrancy of the motifs, including birds, flowers, and sea monsters, makes them appear to have been painted, as they may have been originally (equally, they may have been embroidered). The brooch, pinned to the black velvet jacket with a high “ruff” collar, is a vestige of the gorgeous bombast of jewelry adorning the jacket in the queen’s portrait, as is the necklace, invoking the dark sensibility of Elizabethan literary imagery. Made by Simon Costin and entitled the “Incubus Necklace,” it incorporates five glass vials of human semen, from which dangle creamy baroque pearls. The vials are set against a filigree of copper wire with snaky silver sperm entwined over its surface. Surmounted by a small silver plaque engraved with the words “Vice and Virtue,” the “pearl necklace” serves as an ironic commentary on Elizabeth’s assumed status as a semidivine immortal, the widely hailed “Virgin Queen.”
At the same time that France was in the grip of Anglomania, England was in the thrall of Francomania. Commenting on this interchange of influences, Horace Walpole noted, “Our passion for everything French is nothing to theirs for everything English. The two nations are crossing over and figuring in.” Francomania was principally an aristocratic predilection, and one that was not specific to the eighteenth century. As indicated in the writings of Samuel Pepys, the English nobility’s fondness for French goods and services was much in evidence a century earlier. However, whereas in the 1600s French tastes in art, music, fashion, and furniture were channeled through the court, in the 1700s they were disseminated through the great Whig grandees who ruled the country. This proclivity was a source of irritation among patriots lower down the social scale, who regarded the Gallic tastes of the upper classes as distinctly unpatriotic.

At least until the French Revolution (1789–99), the English nobility remained thoroughly Francophile. Typical of men of his class, George William, sixth Earl of Coventry, spent much of his wealth decorating the interiors of Croome Court, his seat in Worcestershire, with French paintings, porcelain, and furniture. After the Treaty of Paris (1763), which ended the Seven Years War (1756–63), the earl indulged his passion for French luxuries by ordering a set of tapestries from the Royal Gobelins Manufactory in Paris for one of three rooms at Croome Court designed by the architect Robert Adam. The acme of the earl’s Francophilia, the tapestries, like wallpaper, cover the four walls from cornice to chair rail. Designed with borders resembling gilded wood frames, they are composed of medallions featuring allegories of the Four Elements by François Boucher, that most French of French painters.

It seems that the earl’s aesthetic perspicacity extended to women, for in 1752 he married the actress Maria Gunning. She along with her sister Elizabeth were considered “the handsomest women alive.” Walpole recorded that the “ Beauties” caused a furor wherever they went, noting, “they make more noise than any of their predecessors since the days of Helen.” Many artists attempted to represent Lady Coventry’s comeliness, including Francis Cotes and Sir Joshua Reynolds, but none seem to capture her surpassing loveliness quite as well as Sir Joseph Highmore (p. 68). In his painting of 1745, she wears a silk robe without a pannier, a hooped underskirt responsible for the wide-hipped, flat-fronted silhouette fashionable throughout the eighteenth century. While a typical convention of portraiture intended to convey a timeless classical beauty, it appears to be a style the countess favored. Recalling a visit to her house by Lady Coventry, Mrs. Delany, that indefatigable commentator on dress and etiquette, observed, “Her dress was a black silk sack made for a large hoop which she wore without any, and it trailed a yard on the ground.” Mrs. Delany also noted that “she had a thousand prettiness in her cheeks,” a reference, perhaps, to the countess’s penchant for powder. Indeed, her makeup was her downfall, for she died at twenty-seven from consumption aggravated by the cosmetic use of white lead.

Lady Coventry’s “death by vanity” informs the vignette in Croome Court, in which the figure, wearing a headdress by Stephen Jones in the form of a raven (a Romantic symbol of death) reaches to touch her mirrored reflection. Similar to the Meissen birds on the pier table, the headdress is a three-dimensional representation of the birds in the tapestry surrounds. The dress, in color, material, and long train, evokes that worn by Lady Coventry when visiting Mrs. Delany. Made by John Galliano for Christian Dior, it is an unabashed expression of his long-standing Francophilia, apparent as early as his 1984 graduation collection, inspired by the Incroyables and Merveilleuses of post-Revolutionary France. Based on Dior’s 1947 collection, dubbed the “New Look” by Harper’s Bazaar editor Carmel Snow, the dress, in its references to eighteenth- and mid-nineteenth-century French styles, reveals the genesis of Dior’s remarkable silhouette that combined rigorous shaping with wanton drapery. With the acuity of a dress historian and the vision of a creative maestro, Galliano, in one dress, outlines the history of French fashion, as well as the history of the House of Dior. Galliano stands in a long line of British designers, beginning with Charles Frederick Worth (p. 146), working in the tradition of haute couture. Like Worth, Galliano’s ideas of French fashion are informed by his ideals of French culture. It is his status as an outsider that enables him to articulate the “Frenchness” of French fashion so discerningly. As with Lord Coventry, Galliano’s Francomania is a fantasy that merges fact with fiction, imitation with variation.
In his *Journey to England and Ireland* (1833), Alexis de Tocqueville noted, "'Gentleman' and 'gentilhomme' evidently have the same derivation, but 'gentleman' in England is applied to every well-educated man whatever his birth, while in France *gentilhomme* applies only to a noble by birth." It was an astute observation, for while ancestry was an important component in the definition of an English gentleman, a more decisive factor was that of character, defined by a code of conduct based on such medieval concepts as loyalty, chivalry, and courtesy. He thrived in England because of the nation's unique social system, the porous quality of which could facilitate the ambiguity and mutability of his identity.

As an indicator of his character, an English gentleman's appearance was paramount. Guy Miege wrote in *The Present State of Great Britain* (1691), the title of "gentleman" was conferred upon those who distinguished themselves by "a genteel dress and carriage." In Miege's day, this sartorial gentility was beginning to be associated with notions of restraint and modesty, ideals that became more entrenched in the 1700s and that were to achieve their ultimate expression in the figure of the Regency dandy. Although from the 1830s dandyism became increasingly associated with a foppish exhibitionism, taken to its extreme in the fin-de-siècle aesthete, it was originally associated with a rigorously disciplined asceticism. George Bryan "Beau" Brummell, whose emphasis on a relaxed, effortless appearance (achieved through arduous dressing rituals) was central to the dandy creed, is commonly regarded as the greatest exemplar of Regency dandyism. "His chief aim," wrote his biographer Captain William Jesse in 1844, "was to avoid anything marked; one of his aphorisms being that the severest mortification that a gentleman could incur was to attract observation in the street by his outward appearance." Brummell's meticulous minimalism was, however, conspicuous by its inconspicuousness.

More interested in refinement than innovation, Brummell exploited late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century developments in tailoring techniques to achieve his studied but stunning simplicity. Cut and line, as well as quality of fabric, were forefronted to accomplish an emphatically masculine silhouette (although taken to extremes, it could have the reverse effect, as highlighted in Richard Dighton's *The Dandy Club* (1818, p. 74). Indicative of Brummell's emphasis on "naturalness," the cut of his clothes followed the lines of Greek statuary, reflecting concurrent decorative preoccupations with Neoclassicism. Such concerns are expressed in the dining room from Lansdowne House in London. Designed by Robert Adam, it includes nine niches for classical statues. The use of sculpture as decoration was a typical feature of Adam's interiors of the 1760s and is accented in "AngloMania" by the inclusion of a white muslin dress by John Galliano that evokes the sculptural characteristic of "wet drapery" and references the fashionable Neoclassical silhouette of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Taking as its theme "The Gentlemen's Club," the Lansdowne dining room pitches Punks in designs by Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood against gentlemen in bespoke suits by Richard James, Richard Anderson, Timothy Everest, Henry Poole & Co., and H. Huntsman & Sons, and ready-to-wear suits by Kilgour, Burberry, Paul Smith, and Ozwald Boateng. Reflecting the tribal identities that exemplify British fashion and culture, this scene of Hogarthian propensity is presided over by a group of dandies, including figures dressed in evening suits by Alexander McQueen and Anderson & Sheppard. McQueen trained at Anderson & Sheppard, the eponymous founders of which served their apprenticeship with the formidable Frederick Scholte, principal tailor to the Duke of Windsor from 1919 to 1959. The Duke of Windsor is represented in "The Gentlemen's Club" by an evening suit in midnight blue, a color that was promoted by Brummell and favored by his royal descendant for its photogenic possibilities (blue, in terms of black and white photography, allowed for the recognition of such tailoring details as lapels, pockets, and fabric-covered buttons). Like the Duke of Windsor, late-twentieth-century Punks and early-twenty-first-century gentlemen are, in very different ways, inheritors of the tradition of Brummellian dandyism, the former through their political posturings and the latter through their sartorial sublimity. For, in spite of, or rather because of its exquisite propriety, Brummell's self-presentation was, fundamentally, oppositional, an antifashion statement that mocked the sartorial superiority of the aristocracy and the sartorial mediocrity of the bourgeoisie. In essence, Brummell was a Punk disguised as a gentleman.
gonna wake up
and know what
you've been lying
and
THE HUNT

Few sports seem more English than fox hunting. Originally the private informal recreation of country squires and farmers, it emerged as a highly organized, influential, and fashionable institution in the late eighteenth century (largely through the efforts of Hugo Meynell, who, from the 1750s, helped realize the potential of breeding hounds fast enough to keep up with a fox, thereby enhancing the excitement of the chase). From the outset, fox hunting embodied what Voltaire and many other Angliphiles, most notably Montesquieu and Pierre de Coubertin (whose romantic concept of the English gentleman as sportsman prompted the founding of the modern Olympic Games), regarded as the defining features of British culture, namely elitism and egalitarianism. For while fox hunting, at least in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was a sport of the gentry and the aristocracy, it was also a sport of the people. This image of fox hunting, its magnanimity, helped to maintain the traditional deferential relationships on which not only the sport but also rural life in general depended.

During its golden age, usually regarded as 1800 to 1870, fox hunting developed a reputation for boldness and recklessness and became associated with a truculent masculinity. In his biography of Thomas Asherton Smith, one of the most revered horsemen of the early nineteenth century, Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, wrote that fox hunting “gives hardiness, and nerve, and intrepidity to our youth, while it confirms and prolongs the strength and vigour of our manhood.” Asherton Smith, who Napoleon described as le premier chasseur d’Angleterre, was the epitome of the virile, manly British sportsman. Master of the Quorn in Leicestershire from 1806 to 1817, Asherton Smith was considered unequaled as a horseman. Always ready to take a risk, he rode to hunt, as opposed to many bloods who hunted to ride. He had a very light hand on the rein, which Nimrod, the famous sporting journalist, said he held like silk. Equally as well known for his pugnacity, Asherton Smith was never afraid to resort to the “noble art” of fisticuffs. “Except for my father,” he once noted, “I am the worst tempered man in England.”

There were also heroines of this Corinthian Age. Most notable, perhaps, was Lady Laetitia Lade, who, in 1796, was said to be the best woman riding to the hounds in England. The wife of the prince consort’s honorary racing manager, Sir John Lade, she was originally a servant in a London brothel and formerly the mistress of the notorious highwayman Sixteen String Jack (so-called because he wore a cluster of sixteen colored strings at the knees of his breeches). She was a favorite of the Prince of Wales, who, in 1793, commissioned an equestrian portrait of her by George Stubbs (p. 106). Shown skillfully controlling a rearing horse, she is depicted in her hunting costume of dark blue jacket and petticoat. Like the clothes of her equestrienne predecessors of the seventeenth century, Lady Lade’s costume, in terms of its simplicity of tailoring and ornamentation, is adapted from stylish menswear. Indeed, apart from her petticoat, the only concession to feminine fashionability appears to be her hat, decorated with provocative plume that would, no doubt, have amused the prince.

In “The Hunt” this tradition of sartorial transference from fashionable menswear to equestrian womenswear can be seen in the trench-coat dress by Christopher Bailey for Burberry. Developed by Burberry in 1914 for British officers serving in World War I, the trench coat, like fox hunting itself, has become one of the most potent badges of Englishness. In his trench-coat dress, Bailey substituted the traditional gabardine with an opulent silk faille, the lining of which echoes the scarlet riding coat by Bernard Weatherill, the company that has supplied equestrian clothing to the royal family since 1912. Traditionally, scarlet coats are worn by the master of the foxhounds, the huntsman (who “hunts” the hounds), the whipper-in (who keeps the pack together), and members of the hunt entitled to wear a hunt button. Such archaic formalities are parodied in the hunt ensemble by Vivienne Westwood, which displays her love of history and sexuality through its 1880s-style bustle, 1890s-style sleeve, and black leather fetish boots. Westwood’s fondness for English tailoring, however, is asserted through the cut and line of her coat, showing the perfection equaling that of any Savile Row tailor. In contrast, John Galliano’s vastly oversized coat upends the tailoring finesse of traditional hunting clothing. At the same time, his outfit of fur headdress, like Burberry’s trench coat with fox-fur skirt, cuffs, and collar, is symbolic of the grisly realities of the hunt, which in 2005 resulted in an act of Parliament banning the sport that Oscar Wilde once referred to as “the pursuit of the uneatable by the unspeakable.”
By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, fox hunting had emerged as an integral feature of country society, a symbol of unity, vitality, stability, and harmony. It was a social sport that, at least on the level of the ideal, brought together all classes of people in a spectacle of cordiality and conviviality. Off the field, hunt clubs organized a number of social events, such as meets, races, and hound shows, many of which, in the spirit of fox hunting, were open to everyone. Other forms of entertainment, including hunt balls and dinners, were less egalitarian. Dinners, which became reasonably commonplace in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, were usually limited to men. Class rather than gender determined the formalities of hunt balls, which became increasingly popular from the late eighteenth century. They were major social events to which only the gentry, or those with claims to gentility, were invited. Unlike dinners, which, in one form or another occurred on a weekly basis, balls were often given at the end of a season.

From the early 1800s, many hunts, or at least those with either prestige or pretensions, specified evening as well as daytime uniforms. Two styles of coat were worn in the field, namely the skirted and the swallow tail, the former being regarded as the more practical and the latter as the more dashing. A tailcoat, cut along the same lines as formal evening wear, prevailed for hunt balls and dinners. Not unlike field coats, they were much admired by women for their suavity. As Harriette Wilson, the notorious Regency courtesan whose patrons included Lord Byron and the Duke of Wellington, observed in her memoirs, “The evening hunting dress is red, lined with white, and the buttons, and whole style of it, are very becoming. I could not help remarking that these gentlemen never looked half so handsome, anywhere in the world, as when, glowing with health, they took their seats at dinner in the dress and costume of the Melton hunt.” Red or scarlet had been allied with fox hunting long before Harriette Wilson was writing, a fact owing, perhaps, to the rural association between hunting and Toryism (red, at the time, being the color of the Tories, blue that of the Whigs).

The vignette entitled “The Hunt Ball,” based on William Hogarth’s The Country Dance (ca. 1745, p. 124), follows the sartorial etiquette of hunt balls with the male figures dressed in hunt dress suits by Henry Poole & Co. and H. Huntsman & Sons, two of the oldest firms on Savile Row. Their histories and successes are closely linked with the sporting fraternity, especially those of Henry Poole, who in the mid- to late 1800s boasted a list of clients that included some of the most raffish bloods in the country. Such a blood was the Earl of Stamford, master of the Quorn from 1856 to 1863, who famously shocked polite society by marrying a circus equestrienne. Lady Stamford, in turn, shocked hunting society through her role in the “Skittles” affair. Skittles (whose real name was Catherine Walters) was one of the most celebrated of the Victorian courtesans. Like Lady Stamford, she had been a circus equestrienne and, therefore, a proficient horsewoman. She enjoyed fox hunting and often rode to the Quorn hounds, much to the chagrin of the countess, who had gone to great lengths to escape her déclassé background. Lady Stamford prevailed upon her husband to bar Skittles from the field, which he did reluctantly. While Lord Stamford was criticized publicly for violating the democratic nature of fox hunting, his wife, not surprisingly, was attacked privately for her blatant hypocrisy.

Britain, at least abroad, was well known for its moralizing tendencies, which, in terms of artistic practice, were most forcefully expressed through the tradition of satire and caricature. Providing a raw and candid analysis of a person or situation, satirical prints and caricatures abounded from 1760 to 1900. Many focused on modish fashions, such as corsets, panniers, and crinolines, taken to extremes by women. Indeed, extremity was considered a particularly British characteristic (one of the original meanings of eccentric, another national attribute, is extremity). In his Letters on the English and French Nations (1747), Abbé Jean le Blanc wrote that the English “do not seem capable of being moderate in anything.” Extremity remains one of the hallmarks of British fashion, and, in “The Hunt Ball,” is expressed in the dazzling, historicist confections of John Galliano, Alexander McQueen, and Vivienne Westwood. Their designs are not only a celebration of the theatricality of British fashion history, but also of its originality. Like the styles from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to which they allude, they are the product of Britain’s eternal paradox, the simultaneity of its tradition and its transgression.
**John Bull**

**Entrance to “AngloMania”**


**The English Garden**

**Dining Room from Kirtlington Park, Oxfordshire (ca. 1748)**

Kirtlington Park was built for Sir James Dashwood (1715–1779) between 1742 and 1746 by William Smith (1705–1747) and John Sanderson (d. 1783). The house and its park, which was laid out by Lanseolot “Capability” Brown (1716–1783), are situated about ten miles north of Oxford. The dining room’s plaster decoration is derived from a design signed by John Sanderson (act. 1730–74) and was executed by Thomas Roberts (1711–1771). At the four sides of the ceiling are panels emblematic of the seasons. The overmantel painting of a landscape with figures is signed by John Wootton (ca. 1662–1765) and dated 1748. The marble chimney-piece can be attributed to John Cheere (d. 1787) or Sir Henry Cheere (1703–1781). The mahogany doors and shutters are equipped with their original gilt-bronze hardware. The oak floor was probably cut from trees felled on the estate. As documented by microscopic examination of the various layers of paint, the color of the room approximates that of the original.

British. Mantua (open robe and petticoat), ca. 1708. “Bizarre” silk with pink ground brocaded with polychrome silk threads and gold threads. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Rogers Fund, and Isabel Shults Fund, and Irene Lewisohn Bequest, 1991 (1991.6.1a, b)


British. Robe à l’anglaise (closed robe), ca. 1725. Spitalfields silk with brown ground brocaded with rust and beige silk threads. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Irene Lewisohn Bequest, 1964 (C.I.64.14)


British. Robe à la française (open robe and petticoat), fabric ca. 1730. Spitalfields silk with green ground brocaded with polychrome silk threads. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Irene Lewisohn Bequest, 1959 (C.I.59.54 a, b)


British. Robe à la française (open robe and petticoat), fabric ca. 1730s. Spitalfields silk with blue ground brocaded with polychrome silk threads, and trimmed with fly fringe. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Catherine D. Wentworth Bequest, 1948 (48.187.709a, b)


British. Robe à l’anglaise (open robe and petticoat), fabric ca. 1730s. Spitalfields silk with cream ground brocaded with polychrome silk threads. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1934 (34.108)


British. Robe à l’anglaise (closed robe), fabric ca. 1730s. Spitalfields silk with mauve ground brocaded with polychrome silk threads. Courtesy of Cora Ginsburg, LLC


British. Robe à la française (open robe and petticoat), fabric ca. 1750s. Spitalfields silk with pink ground brocaded with polychrome silk threads and trimmed with fly fringe. Courtesy of Cora Ginsburg, LLC


John Wootten, British (1682–1765). Classical Landscape with Hunters and Gypsies, 1748. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1931 (32.53.2)

François Boucher, French (1703–1770). Washermen, 1768. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Julia A. Berwind, 1953 (53.225.2)

François Boucher, French (1703–1770). Shepherd’s Idyll, 1768. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Julia A. Berwind, 1953 (53.225.1)


Sir Peter Lely (Pieter van der Faes), British (b. Holland, 1618–1680). Mary Capel (1630–1715), Duchess of Beaufort, and Her Sister Elizabeth (1633–1678), Countess of Carnarvon, ca. 1660. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Jacob Ruppert, 1939 (39.65.3)

Sir Peter Lely (Pieter van der Faes), British (b. Holland, 1618–1680). Sir Henry Capel (1638–1696), ca. 1660. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Jacob Ruppert, 1939 (39.65.6)

Jacob Huysmans, British (b. Flanders, ca. 1633–1696). Earl of Rochester (1647–1689) with a Monkey and a Book, ca. 1675. Oil on canvas. Private collection

Robert Peake the Elder, British (act. by 1576, d. 1619). Princess Elizabeth (1596–1662), Later Queen of Bohemia, ca. 1606. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Kate T. Davison, in memory of her husband, Henry Pomroy Davison, 1951 (51.194.1)

Upstairs/Downstairs

Staircase from Cassiobury Park, Hertfordshire (ca. 1677–80)

The staircase, attributed to Edward Pearce (ca. 1635–1695), comes from Cassiobury Park (now destroyed), Hertfordshire, and was executed between 1677 and 1680 for Arthur Capel, first Earl of Essex (1632–1683). The scrollwork balustrade and pinecone finials are of ash, and the handrail and stringcourse are of pine.

House of Worth, French (1858–1956). Court dress, ca. 1888. Skirt of lilac satin; train and bodice of ivory, green, and yellow voided velvet. Courtesy of Museo de la Moda y Textil, Santiago, Chile

British. Court suit, ca. 1877. Blue silk velvet. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mary Pierpont Beckwith, 1969 (C.I.69.33.16e–f)


British. Settee, ca. 1730–35. Walnut, gilt gesso, modern silk. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1924 (24.136.1)
The Deathbed

State Bed from Hampton Court, Herefordshire (ca. 1698)

The state bed of carved oak and pine covered with blue silk damask was made for a courtier of King William III, Thomas Baron Coningsby (1656–1729) at Hampton Court, Herefordshire. With its richly carved tester and headboard, it is related to designs by Daniel Marot (1663–1752), architect to William and Mary.

Possibly Sarah Ann Unit, British (dressmaker to Queen Victoria, 1851–76). Dress worn by Queen Victoria, 1862–63. Black silk, black silk crepe, and white lawn cotton. Courtesy of The Museum of London (54.1371/–)


British. State bed, ca. 1698. Oak and silk damask. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William Randolph Hearst Jr., 1968 (68.217.1)

Empire and Monarchy

Elizabethan Room, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk (ca. 1595–1600)

The carved paneling of this room came from a house on the Hall Quay, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. It was built at the end of the sixteenth century for William Crowe, a bailiff of Yarmouth and a member of the Company of Spanish Merchants. The coat of arms of this trading company is set over the original stone chimneypiece of the room. The company traded exclusively with the Low Countries, and the decoration of the room is strongly influenced by Netherlandish styles of the time. The carving, which incorporates male and female term figures and architectural motifs freely derived from classical models, has been called “probably the most elaborate specimen of late Tudor woodwork of its kind.” The room lacks its original plaster ceiling, which was enriched with moldings and pendants. In the eighteenth century, Crowe’s descendants sold the house, which by 1788 had been converted into an inn known as the Star Hotel. Charles Dickens is thought to have used the Star Hotel as a setting in his novel David Copperfield (1850). The inn was demolished in 1935, and the Yarmouth post office now stands on the site.

Vivienne Westwood, British (b. 1941). Ensemble, autumn/winter 1997–98. Dress of silver duchesse satin printed with birds, flowers, and aquatic motifs; jacket of black velvet and black satin with gold-plated and simulated pearl jewelry. Courtesy of Vivienne Westwood


British. Portrait of a Noblewoman, late 16th century. Oil on wood. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1911 (11.149.1)

British. Armchair, ca. 1685–88. Walnut and modern velvet. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 1918 (18.110.18)
British. Chimneypiece, ca. 1600. Carved stone. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Edward Pearce Casey Fund, 1965 (65.182.2)


FRANCOMANIA

Tapestry Room from Croome Court, Worcestershire (ca. 1771)

Lancelot "Capability" Brown (1716–1783) was responsible for the plan of the grounds at Croome Court, Worcestershire, the seat of the Earls of Coventry, and for the design of the house, which was his first essay in architecture. Parts of the interior were executed from Brown's designs between 1751 and 1760, when Robert Adam (1728–1792) replaced him as architect. The tapestry room was begun in 1763 and finished in 1771. The sixth Earl of Coventry (1722–1809) commissioned the tapestries in Paris in August 1763. The set was delivered and in place by June 1771. The group was the first using this design to be woven with a crimson background, and it may have been the first made specifically to extend around four walls of a room without architectural frames.


Philip Treacy, British (b. Ireland, 1967). Hat worn by HRH the Duchess of Cornwall on the occasion of her marriage to HRH the Prince of Wales, 2005. Feathers and crystals. Courtesy of HRH the Duchess of Cornwall


Alexander McQueen, British (b. 1969). Formal evening suit (black tie), autumn/winter 2006–7. Jacket of black wool with black satin facings; trousers of black wool with black satin side trim.Courtesy of Alexander McQueen

Alexander McQueen, British (b. 1969). Formal evening suit and cape (black tie), autumn/winter 2006–7. Jacket of black wool with black satin facings; trousers of black wool with black satin side trim; cape of black silk tulle with gold thread embroidery. Courtesy of Alexander McQueen


Christopher Bailey, British (b. 1972) for Burberry, British (founded 1856). Two-piece suit, spring/summer 2006. Blue wool and mohair. Courtesy of Burberry


Malcolm McLaren, British (b. 1946) and Vivienne Westwood, British (b. 1941). Ensemble, ca. 1977–78. Sweater of red, blue, black, and green mohair; bondage trousers of black cotton sateen with black wool kilt. Courtesy of Resurrection


The Hunt


Christopher Bailey, British (b. 1972) for Burberry, British (founded 1856). Trench coat dress, spring/summer 2006. Lilac and red silk faille. Courtesy of Burberry


Thomas Gainsborough, British (1727–1788). Mrs. Ralph Izard (Alice DeLancy, 1746/47–1832), 1772. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Jeanne King deRham, in memory of her father, David H. King Jr., 1966 (66.88.1)


Thomas Gainsborough, British (1727–1788). Portrait of a Man, Called General Blyth, ca. 1770. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Lillian S. Timken, 1959 (60.71.7)

THE HUNT BALL

H. Huntsman & Sons, British (founded 1849). Formal dress hunt ensemble from the Iroquois Hunt, Kentucky (founded 1880), ca. 1970s. Jacket of red barathea wool with black silk velvet collar and pale blue grosgrain facings; trousers of black wool with black grosgrain side trim.Courtesy of H. Huntsman & Sons

H. Huntsman & Sons, British (founded 1849). Formal dress hunt ensemble, ca. 1970s. Jacket of red barathea wool with black wool collar and red grosgrain facings; trousers of black wool with black grosgrain side trim. Courtesy of H. Huntsman & Sons


Manolo Blahnik, British (b. Spain, 1942). Shoes ("Zorat"), spring/summer 1975. Pink and black silk satin. Courtesy of Manolo Blahnik


Manolo Blahnik, British (b. Spain, 1942). Shoes, autumn/winter 2005. Pink silk satin with pink velvet ribbon, lilac silk ribbon, and lilac leather trim. Courtesy of Manolo Blahnik

Alexander McQueen, British (b. 1969). Ensemble, spring/summer 2005. Skirt of lilac silk brocaded with silver threads; jacket of lilac silk with polychrome silk thread embroidery; body stocking of cream nylon with polychrome silk thread embroidery. Courtesy of Alexander McQueen


Alexander McQueen, British (b. 1969). Dress, spring/summer 2005. Pink silk brocaded in silver thread with red and pink silk rosettes. Courtesy of Alexander McQueen


Illustrations


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