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# Ancient Designs and Modern Folly: Architecture in *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*

John F. Sena

**F**EW EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FICTIONAL CHARACTERS exhibit the extensive interests of Matthew Bramble. Medicine, politics, religion, social change, to name but a few, are topics on which he discourses freely during his journey, most often for the purpose of setting forth the opinions and sentiments of his real-life creator. While Bramble's involvement with these topics and their significance in the novel have been frequently discussed, one of his most absorbing interests — his preoccupation with architecture — and its function in the work have been virtually ignored.

It is readily apparent from the length, frequency, and quality of Bramble's architectural observations that the subject is important to him. Major portions of his epistles from Bath and London, for instance, consist of detailed descriptions of local structures; in fact, architecture is so prominent a subject in those letters that our impressions of Bath and London are probably as much a result of his depiction of their buildings as they are of his description of their entertainments, social institutions, smells, and sounds. Bramble's architectural observations are not, of course, confined to those two cities, nor are they restricted exclusively to buildings. His remarks, rather, extend throughout his entire journey and include a full range of architectural concerns: the design of pleasure gardens, the pattern and construction of streets, the relationship of architectural style to climate, and the general arrangement of physical structures within a city. It is also evident that his analyses are not superficial or cursory, but reflect, instead, an extensive knowledge of the field. He generally employs, for instance, technical terms in his descriptions with accuracy and precision, and virtually always bases his judgments, not on subjective norms, but on the criteria enunciated by classical or humanist architects. In brief, Bramble's letters suggest that he is as interested in the

state of contemporary architecture as he is in any topic that he discusses, and that he has a knowledge of the subject commensurate with his interest.

To be sure, one would expect a novel that may be included in the *genre* of travel literature to contain observations on buildings, streets, and town planning. Yet the prominence of architecture in the novel and the importance associated with it by the age suggest that Bramble's comments are not simply decorative ornaments intended solely or even primarily to supply the reader with local color. Architecture, it should be remembered, from the time of the ancients through the eighteenth century had a moral as well as a physical function; buildings were conceived of as not only providing man with shelter from the elements, but also embodying the moral strength and virtue, the order and harmony, of the society that created them. Contemporary writers were not unmindful of the moral implications of architecture; in fact, Paul Fussell reminds us that for eighteenth-century humanist writers "architectural imagery and moral imperatives seem never very far separated."<sup>1</sup> With this relationship in mind, we shall see that Bramble's architectural remarks are not merely superfluous comments intended to lend a degree of realism to the novel, but have instead a vital moral function. Through Bramble's architectural analyses, Smollett is able to present a general indictment of English society — a society which he saw as vain and proud, as cut off from tradition, as tearing down all hierarchical distinctions — while asserting the essential virtue and integrity of Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 172. For an excellent discussion of the use of architecture for moral instruction, as well as the widespread contemporary interest in architecture, see chap. 8. I wish to thank my colleague, Professor Dan Barnes, for the guidance he provided at all stages of this essay.

<sup>2</sup> Bramble may be assumed to be Smollett's architectural spokesman. His observations, notwithstanding two fleeting dissenting remarks by Lydia, stand without challenge or balance by the other four letter-writers, while the moral and social values — the essentially conservative position — that one may infer from his analyses may be found in Smollett's historical and fictional works. For a discussion of the similarity between the conservative attitudes expressed by Bramble and Smollett's personal views enunciated in *The Critical Review* (1756-63), *A Complete History of England* (1757-58), *Continuation of the Complete History of England* (1760-65), and *The Present State of All Nations* (1768), see John Sekora, "Smollett and Social Controversy: Luxury, Politics, and *Humphry Clinker*" (Dissertation, Princeton University, 1972). For an excellent overview of the conservative nature of Smol-

In evaluating the architecture of England and Scotland, Bramble employs, as I have suggested, the precepts of a type of architecture that began with the ancients and is generally referred to as "classical" or "humanist."<sup>3</sup> The architectural principles of the Greeks and Romans were first codified by Vitruvius in his *De Architectura*, a work which became for subsequent ages the most influential single source for classical architectural practices. When a complete copy of the *De Architectura*, which was only available in fragmented form in the Middle Ages, was discovered in a monastery in the fifteenth century, it inspired the architects of Renaissance Italy, most notably Leon Battista Alberti and Andrea Palladio. The designs of Alberti and Palladio were, in turn, popularized in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Inigo Jones and Lord Burlington. Stimulated by the buildings of antiquity and Renaissance Italy and guided by the works of Vitruvius, Alberti, and Palladio, a substantial number of eighteenth-century English architects — Robert Morris, John Gwynn, Colin Campbell, Henry Wotton, Isaac Ware, to name only a few — endorsed in theory and practice the principles of classical architecture. The precepts, then, upon which Bramble bases his evaluation of contemporary architecture are not peculiar to him, nor are they reflections of his eccentricity, but have a genealogy that is approximately 1800 years old.<sup>4</sup> Since these precepts are essential to his conception of the practice and function of architecture — and to Smollett's evaluation of England and Scotland — it may be useful to review briefly several of the fundamental assumptions of classical architecture.

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Smollett's philosophy and its embodiment in his satires, see Michael Rosenthal, "Smollett as Conservative Satirist," *ELH*, XLII (1975), 556-579.

<sup>3</sup> For an examination of the principles of "classical" or "humanist" architecture, see Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914); John Summerson, *The Classical Language of Architecture* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1963); Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (New York: Random House, 1965). I shall follow the practice of architectural historians and use the terms "classical" and "humanist" interchangeably.

<sup>4</sup> Given the popular interest in architecture and the reverence for classical architectural ideals, it is likely that Smollett's audience would have readily understood the criteria employed by Bramble: "One reason why the eighteenth-century imagination is so full of architectural images is that everybody who was anybody was either 'building' or had friends who were. Just as a minimum technical knowledge of fortification was assumed in any civilized person, so anyone of the middle or upper class was expected to possess some technical architectural learning . . . During all this activity, Rome never diminished as a focus of architectural interest and imitation . . ." (Fussell [note 1 above], p. 173).



## I

When Alberti declared that architects "ought to imitate Nature" in their designs, he enunciated an aesthetic and moral principle that was as vital and binding to classical architects as it was to classical poets.<sup>5</sup> To build well and build properly meant for humanist architects from the time of Vitruvius through the eighteenth century to imitate in their buildings the balance, harmony, and proportion found in the natural world. The humanist view of the relationship between art and nature was perhaps best epitomized by Robert Morris, one of the most prolific eighteenth-century defenders of classical designs, when he declared that "artificial" architecture (the product of man's labor) is always best when it most closely resembles "natural" architecture ("the Handiwork of Nature"), "because the Similitude is not only pleasant, but the Pattern more perfect."<sup>6</sup>

While the entire natural world was replete with models for man to imitate, it was a commonplace among humanist architects that the perfect — and thus the most desirable — pattern to imitate was the human body. Indeed, to Vitruvius the body — with its precise symmetry, balance, and proportion — was the original model for the buildings of ancient Greece. The Greeks, he asserted in his *De Architectura*, "collected from the members of the human body the proportionate dimensions which appear necessary in all building operations." When, for instance, they wished to determine the proper proportions for achieving strength and grace in a column, "they measured a man's footstep and applied it to his height. Finding that the foot was the sixth part of the height in a man, they applied this proportion to the column." The result was the Doric column in which the height is six times the thickness of the base of the shaft. When they modified the Doric to achieve a "feminine slenderness" with "volute, like graceful curling hair" hanging over either side of the capital, the Ionic column, according to Vitruvius, was born. When they wished to create a column that would permit "more graceful effects in

<sup>5</sup> For the context of Alberti's statement, see his *Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. James Leoni (1726), ed. Joseph Rykwert (London: Alec Tiranti, 1955), Bk. 9, chap. 5. Additional injunctions to imitate nature may be found in Andrea Palladio, *Four Books of Architecture*, trans. Isaac Ware (London, 1738), Bk. 1, chap. 20.

<sup>6</sup> *An Essay in Defence of Ancient Architecture; or, a Parallel of the Ancient Buildings with the Modern: Shewing the Beauty and Harmony of the Former, and the Irregularity of the Latter* (London, 1728), p. 2.

Ornament" than either the Doric or Ionic, they imitated "the slight figure of a maiden" and invented the Corinthian. Nor was the importance of the body confined to inspiring the three orders of columns. The manner in which "Nature has planned the human body so that the members correspond in their proportions to its complete configuration" suggested the necessity, he wrote, of creating a unified design, or integrating the "several members [of a building] to the general pattern of the plan," while the functional quality of the body served as an impetus to build structures that were not merely beautiful but useful ("convenient") and practical as well. Indeed, the intimate relationship Vitruvius posited between the structure of the human body and the design of a building may be seen in the common practice among his Renaissance imitators of drawing the figure of a man with arms and legs extended to serve as the basic model for all buildings.<sup>7</sup>

Implicit in Vitruvius' injunction to imitate the body is the concept that a building should reflect the order and regularity of God's creation. To the humanist architect the universe operated according to fixed and immutable principles. All life and all matter fitted harmoniously into a divinely created schema which functioned in a systematic fashion. It was the task of the builder to reflect this order and regularity in his work; to produce a visible embodiment of the divinely ordained harmony of the creation.<sup>8</sup> Since man was created in God's image and the proportions of the body were produced by the divine will, one way of doing this was to employ in the design of a building the ratios and proportions of the human body. Regardless, however, of how he went about designing a building — whether he based his plans on the human body, animal bodies, or vegetative life — the humanist architect strove to reveal in his work the mind and will of

<sup>7</sup> *De Architectura*, trans. and ed. Frank Granger, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931). Vitruvius' commentary on the architectural imitation of the body may be found in Bks. 3 and 4 of the *De Architectura*. For the importance of the human body as a model for Renaissance architects, see Wittkower (note 3 above), pp. 14-15.

<sup>8</sup> A recent description of Inigo Jones's commitment to this ideal is applicable to humanist architects in general: "It is evident that Inigo Jones, as did so many of the great Renaissance artists on the mainland of Europe, viewed architecture . . . as an opportunity, if not an obligation, to echo the structuring of the universe as it was then understood; to reawaken man to the reality of deeper truth than lies in the world of appearances" — John Harris, Stephen Orgel, Ray Strong, *The King's Arcadia: Inigo Jones and the Stuart Court* ([London:] AES Council of Great Britain, 1973), p. 63.

the Divine Architect who "ordered all things in measure and number and weight" (Wisd. of Sol. 11.20).<sup>9</sup>

In addition to reflecting the order of the universe, classical designs provided to the Renaissance and the eighteenth century a link with the heroic past. The buildings of Greece and Rome, it was believed by many, were the ideal embodiment of the virtue and grandeur of those civilizations; they stood as visible expressions of the genius, magnificence, and nobility of the ancient world.<sup>10</sup> By imitating those structures, by employing the architectural principles of the ancients, it was hoped that contemporary society could, to a degree, recapture the strength and heroism, the sense of purpose and the spirit of achievement, of Greece and Rome. Classically designed buildings were, then, a bond with the past, a constant reminder of the value of tradition and the contemporary relevance of the ancients.

The moral and historical implications of classical architecture were, of course, not ignored by the satirist, for they provided him with a means for depicting the state of contemporary society that was convenient as well as philosophically sound. By describing a structure which employed classical architectural ideals, a satirist could suggest an orderly, rational, and moral society, one conscious of tradition and desirous of imitating the virtue and wisdom of the Greeks and Romans. Conversely, by describing structures which ignored classical standards — buildings, for instance, which disregarded concepts of symmetry, proportion, unity, and convenience — the satirist could

<sup>9</sup> By embodying divine order, humanist designs were, according to Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, morally as well as aesthetically pleasing. For Shaftesbury, whose neoplatonism was shared by humanist architects, the harmony and proportion of the universe were the bases of beauty, and beauty was identical with truth and goodness: "what is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable; what is harmonious and proportionable is true; and what is at once both beautiful and true is, of consequence, agreeable and good" ("Miscellaneous Reflections" [1711], "Miscellany III," in *Characteristics*, ed. John M. Robertson [London, 1900], II, 268-269). In addition, Shaftesbury insisted upon the essential unity of the outward and the inward (*ibid.*, 270-271), so that to him, as to humanist architects, the design of a building was a mirror of the spiritual state of the owner. Thus when we view buildings and gardens that are ordered and regular, balanced and harmonious, we should infer the moral beauty and strength of their owners.

<sup>10</sup> Palladio declared in his *Four Books of Architecture* (note 5 above) that "after so much time, and after so many ruins and mutations of empires, there still remain both in *Italy* and out of it, the vestiges of so many of their sumptuous edifices, by which we are able to get at a certain knowledge of the *Roman* virtue and grandeur, which perhaps had not otherwise been believed" (Bk. 3, "Preface").



suggest a chaotic, irrational, and degenerate society, one cut off from the achievements of the past, one without, in the words of Robert Morris, "Honour and Greatness."<sup>11</sup> The remarks of Morris, in fact, who wrote at length on the moral significance of architecture, may have provided a specific theoretical basis for Smollett's satiric use of architecture in *Humphry Clinker*. To Morris, "The Decay of the State and Government of a Kingdom" may be seen in the "Decay of publick Buildings," and this, he averred, was readily apparent in eighteenth-century England. The moral weakness of contemporary England may be observed in the "deform'd and irregular Composition," in the numerous edifices built in defiance of classical standards, which were every day being constructed by our "modern Builders." Such buildings, according to Morris, indicate for their inhabitants and for society generally "an amazing Dulness and Stupidity in our Actions," which "argues our Weakness of Judgment, or our acting in a direct opposition to the Dictates of natural Reason . . ." <sup>12</sup> Buildings, on the other hand, constructed along classical lines, may be responsible for stopping the contemporary decay and resurrecting the virtue of the ancients. "I shall conclude with my Wishes," he wrote in a statement that Smollett undoubtedly would have endorsed, "that the Love of Virtue may become the Practice of our Nation in general; I mean, such a Virtue as is contain'd in the plain and obvious Rules design'd by the Practitioners of ancient Architecture, founded upon the Result of natural Reason . . ." <sup>13</sup>

## II

The first object of Bramble's architectural attention is the Circus at Bath. It is significant that he should begin with the Circus, for it was regarded by many as the most notable and famous structure in that city. Begun in 1754 by John Wood from the unfinished designs left by his father, and completed in 1764, the Circus was a three-story,

<sup>11</sup> *Defence* (note 6 above), p. 10. For two recent discussions of the moral use of classical architecture by eighteenth-century writers, see William A. Gibson, "Three Principles of Renaissance Architectural Theory in Pope's *Epistle to Burlington*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, XI (1971), 487-505; Dennis M. Oliver, "Gibbon's Use of Architecture as Symbol," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, XIV (1972), 77-92.

<sup>12</sup> *Defence* (note 6 above), pp. 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.



semicircular building which contained thirty-three contiguous residences. In its houses, which shared a common façade, were lodged the rich and powerful who came to Bath, not primarily to benefit from the waters, but for the opulent balls, the gaming tables, and the midnight fêtes. At a time when the city was experiencing a rapid building program, with structures such as the Royal Crescent and the buildings on Queen Square arising, the Circus was often considered to be the most elaborate and impressive building in Bath, a paragon of architectural splendor that could serve as a model for countless other modern buildings. By beginning his analyses with the Circus, then, Bramble was doing more than simply depicting a building that he happened to see on his tour. He was, rather, describing a symbol of the spirit and achievement of Bath, a building that embodied the temper and pride — the *Zeitgeist* — of the city and the people who gathered there.

Bramble begins his description of the Circus by criticizing its appearance in terms of the two concepts that humanist architects asserted were essential constituents of beauty or magnificence — proportion and unity of design: “If we consider it in point of magnificence, the great number of small doors belonging to the separate houses, the inconsiderable height of the different orders, the affected ornaments of the architrave, which are both childish and misplaced, and the areas projecting into the street, surrounded with iron rails, destroy a good part of its effect upon the eye . . .”<sup>14</sup> To the humanist architect, for a structure to be beautiful, its elements — the columns, doors, windows — had to be in precise proportion to one another and to the building as a whole. Furthermore, the various parts of the building had to be integrated into the whole so that nothing could be added, removed, or altered without destroying the sense of oneness or completeness of the entire structure. Anything that detracted from the impression of coherence and unity — elaborate ornaments or excessive decorations, for instance — was anathema. Palladio, who wrote at length on the nature of beauty in architecture, epitomized the humanist view when he described beauty in terms of proportion and wholeness. “BEAUTY,” he wrote in *Four Books of Architecture*, “will result from the form and correspondence of the whole, with respect to the several

<sup>14</sup> Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, ed. Lewis Knapp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 34-35. All subsequent quotations from the novel will be from this edition and will be cited by page number in the text.

parts, of the parts with regard to each other, and of these again to the whole; that the structure may appear an entire and compleat body, wherein each member agrees with the other."<sup>15</sup>

It is evident that Bramble is displeased with the appearance of the Circus precisely because it lacks proportion and unity. In his judgment the "several parts" of the building — the doors and the columns — are out of proportion "to the whole," for the doors should be larger and the columns higher in order to be in proportion to the façade of the Circus. In addition, the "misplaced" ornaments and the patios in front destroy the unity and coherence of the design.<sup>16</sup> The failure of the Circus to have a good "effect upon the eye" of Bramble, then, results from the rejection by its architect of nature as an aesthetic norm in favor of subjective standards for beauty. Although Wood has paid lip service to classical forms, perhaps in an effort to capture the grandeur of the past through the pseudo-classical façade of the Circus, he has succeeded only in creating a fatuous imitation of ancient architecture. Ultimately, the architectural failure of the Circus stands as a testimonial, not only to the egotism of its creator and the lack of taste of its admirers, but to the failure of contemporary English society to re-create the heroism and virtue of the ancients.

If the Circus, when judged by the humanist criteria for beauty, is found deficient, it is "still more defective," according to Bramble, "if we view it in the light of convenience" (35). There was no architectural principle more important to the humanist architect than convenience. The concept meant, in simple terms, that a building must

<sup>15</sup> Palladio (note 5 above), Bk. 1, chap. 1. Alberti (note 5 above) offered a similar definition of beauty: "I shall define Beauty to be a Harmony of all the Parts . . . fitted together with such Proportion and Connection, that nothing could be added, diminished or altered, but for the Worse" (Bk. 6, chap. 2). See also Robert Morris, *Lectures on Architecture. Consisting of Rules Founded Upon Harmonick and Arithmetical Proportions in Building* (London, 1759): "BEAUTY and Proportion are inseparable, for which Reason Beauty is always center'd in Proportion, and Proportion is ever beautiful . . ." (p. 120). In his *Defence* he printed an engraving of a modern "irregular" building so that the reader could judge its unattractiveness compared to the "geometrical" and proportional beauty of a classically designed building.

<sup>16</sup> "Redundancy of Members, Ornaments, and Dress," averred Morris, "are the Productions of unthinking Geniuses. Undecorated Plainness . . . in a well proportioned Building will ever please" (Robert Morris, *Rural Architecture* [London, 1750], p. vi). Isaac Ware, in *A Complete Body of Architecture* (London, 1756), divided architects into "the superficial and the judicious," and asserted that the former are "always influenced by the ornament, the other by the proportion . . ." (p. 128).

be useful and practical; it must serve the function for which it was designed. In its broadest sense, the concept included, in addition to the design of a building, its relationship with its physical location as well. Convenience demanded, for instance, that a building be constructed on a site (or situation) that would promote the health of its inhabitants. Since moist and noxious air was generally considered to be inimical to health, it became a commonplace among humanist architects that locations exposed to impure or vaporish air must be avoided at all costs. Alberti, for example, echoing the remarks of his master, Vitruvius, declared anathema sites "where there is a continued Collection of thick Clouds and stinking Vapours," or areas exposed to "gross Winds" which carry "pestiferous" vapors, or "Neighbourhoods from which any noxious Particles may be brought." He even went so far as to theorize that people who breathe pure, dry air will not only be healthy but will have "better Understandings than those who breathe a heavy moist one." In a vaporish climate, "the Understanding can never be clear, the spirits being damp't and stupified . . . their Minds will never be free from Vexation and Uneasiness."<sup>17</sup> Writing under the influence of Vitruvius and Alberti, Palladio also condemned building sites surrounded by damp air. Especially dangerous, he argued, was the practice of building too close to mountains, for such a situation is "entirely contrary to health; because the earth being impregnated by the rains that settle there, sends forth pestiferous vapours, infecting both the body and mind; the spirits being by them weaken'd, the joints and nerves emasculated . . ."<sup>18</sup>

Bramble's description of the situation of the Circus suggests the extent to which modern builders have ignored this vital concept. Instead of constructing it, for instance, where it would be free from

<sup>17</sup> *Ten Books on Architecture* (note 5 above), Bk. 1, chaps. 3, 4. In Book I (chaps. 4, 6) of his *De Architectura* (note 7 above), Vitruvius enjoins architects to select healthy sites, free from moist air, excessive rain, and strong winds, when constructing an individual building or an entire city. Similar notions may be found throughout the works of English humanists: see, for instance, Henry Wotton's recommendation at the beginning of his popular *The Elements of Architecture* (London, 1624) to build near salubrious air and to avoid "foggy noysomnesse" (p. 3), as well as Ware's statement that "Pleasure can never be where there is not health; therefore such a situation is to be chosen as is not infected with damp or other unwholesome vapours . . ." (*A Complete Body* [note 16 above], p. 95).

<sup>18</sup> *Four Books of Architecture* (note 5 above), Bk. 2, chap. 12. Ware expresses a similar idea in Bk. 2, part 1, chap. 2 ("Of the Air") in his *A Complete Body* (note 16 above), pp. 97-99.



moist and noxious air, it was placed in a location permeated with "humid and unwholesome" air. Instead of selecting a site where air would circulate freely, it was built — in defiance of Palladio's injunction — too close to a hill, with the result that "clouds, formed by the constant evaporation from the baths and rivers in the bottom, will, in their ascent this way, be first attracted and detained by the hill that rises close behind the Circus, and load the air with a perpetual succession of vapours . . ." (35–36). Furthermore, when the wind blows, smoke is "forced down the chimneys, by the gusts of wind reverberated from the hill behind . . ." (35).

The concept of convenience was also ignored in designing the access routes to the Circus. Classical architects stressed that the roads, streets, and paths that lead to a building should be broad, straight, and safe. Slippery or precipitous walks or thoroughfares should be avoided, as well as building sites which are, in the words of Sir Henry Wotton, author of the widely read *The Elements of Architecture* (1624), "of too steepic and incommodious *Accesse* to the trouble both of friends and *familie*."<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, climatic peculiarities, according to Palladio, must also be taken into consideration when designing walks or streets. Porticos, he asserted, should be constructed in inclement areas so that "the citizens might, under cover, go and do their business, without being molested by the sun, by the rains and snow . . ."<sup>20</sup> The access routes leading to the Circus defy, according to Bramble, these injunctions. "The only entrance to it," he tells us, ". . . is so difficult, steep, and slippery, that, in wet weather, it must be exceedingly dangerous, both for those that ride in carriages, and those that walk a-foot . . ." (35). In the winter walking to the Circus is especially perilous, for when the precipitous entrance to the building is covered with snow, "I don't see how any individual could go either up or down, without the most imminent hazard of broken bones" (35). In addition to the possibility of causing broken bones, the unprotected streets will aggravate more serious disorders, for carriages and chairs are forced to remain from morning to night in the rain, "till they become so many boxes of wet leather, for the benefit of the gouty and rheumatic . . ." (35). Bramble's remedy is not unlike

<sup>19</sup> P. 4. For a general discussion — which greatly influenced seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British architects — of the classical criteria for roads, see Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture* (note 5 above), Bk 3, chap. 1 ("Of Roads").

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Bk. 3, chap. 2.



Palladio's suggestion for the use of porticos. The iron rails in front of the Circus ("which seem to be of very little use") should, he avers, be replaced by arcades which would provide pedestrians with a "covered walk" and shelter "the poor chairmen and their carriages from the rain, which is here almost perpetual" (35).

Ignoring the concept of convenience in selecting a site for and in building access routes to the Circus suggests more than simply a deviation from a specific principle of classical architecture. For the concept of convenience acknowledged that, in the most fundamental sense, the purpose of a building is to contribute to man's health and comfort by providing him with shelter from the inclemencies of his environment. The Circus, as we have seen, makes no such contribution; in fact, it imperils rather than preserves health. Its deviation from this architectural principle, then, calls into question the very purpose of building. It is a deviation not simply from tradition, but from reason itself. In its rejection of convenience, the Circus stands as Smollett's indictment of Wood and modern architects in general, as well as the vain and supercilious society which allows them to flourish, a society which values appearance and pretension more than the health and well-being of its people.

In addition to employing classical architectural principles in his analysis, Bramble draws a direct comparison between the Bath Circus and one of the most famous buildings of classical antiquity, the Coliseum: "The Circus is a pretty bauble; contrived for shew, and looks like Vespasian's amphitheatre turned outside in" (34). The reference to Vespasian's amphitheatre provides us with a specific structure — not simply abstract precepts — for judging the Circus and the society that produced it. Whereas, for instance, the Coliseum was a massive and majestic edifice, suggestive of the strength of the Romans, the Circus is a mere "bauble" which reflects the superficiality and ostentation of contemporary Englishmen. Whereas the Coliseum was an arena where physically powerful men engaged in life-and-death struggles, the Circus, its modern equivalent, is the home of fops and coquettes who spend their time absorbed in petty squabbles and vicious gossip. In a larger sense, if the Coliseum, along with the other surviving structures of Rome, is a physical reflection of the virtue and grandeur of the entire Roman culture, a "virtue and grandeur, which" (in the words of Palladio) "perhaps had not otherwise been believed,"<sup>21</sup> then the Circus

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Bk. 3, "Preface."

may be seen as a reflection of the failure of Hanoverian England to re-create the spirit and achievement of ancient Rome. The vision of an Augustan England, cherished by Smollett, that would resemble and rival the reign of Caesar Augustus has been shattered by fifty-five years of Hanoverian and Whiggish rule.<sup>22</sup> The hope epitomized by Barton's remarks when, upon seeing George III, he described him as "Augustus, in patronizing merit; Titus Vespasian in generosity; Trajan in beneficence; and Marcus Aurelius, in philosophy" (96) has turned to cynicism. Contemporary England, like the Circus, bears only an inverted relationship to its model; instead of being a new Rome, eighteenth-century England is a Rome "turned outside in."

Immediately after his account of the Circus, Bramble moves on to a general description of Bath. Applying the same criteria that he did to the Circus, he condemns the "want of beauty and proportion" and the inconvenience of the entire city:

. . . but the rage of building has laid hold on such a number of adventurers, that one sees new houses starting up in every out-let and every corner of Bath; contrived without judgment, executed without solidity, and stuck together, with so little regard to plan and propriety, that the different lines of the new rows and buildings interfere with, and intersect one another in every different angle of conjunction. They look like the wreck of streets and squares disjointed by an earthquake, which hath broken the ground into a variety of holes and hillocks; or, as if some Gothic devil had stuffed them altogether in a bag, and left them to stand higgledy piggledy, just as chance directed. What sort of a monster Bath will become in a few years, with those growing excrescences, may be easily conceived; but the want of beauty and proportion is not the worst effect of these new mansions; they are built so slight, with the soft crumbling stone found in this neighbourhood, that I should never sleep quietly in one of them . . . and, I am persuaded, that my hind, Roger Williams, or any man of equal strength, would be able to push his foot through the strongest part of their walls . . . (36)

Bramble's description of the streets of Bath in particular — chaotic, without plan or regularity — recalls the importance humanist architects gave to properly designed thoroughfares. The greatness of Rome, according to Palladio, could be seen not only in her buildings but in her roads and streets which were so designed "that also in them might be

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of what Byron Gassman calls Smollett's "dual vision of George III's England," see his article, "'Humphry Clinker' and the Two Kingdoms of George III," *Criticism*, XVI (1974), 95-108.

known the grandeur and the magnificence of their minds." <sup>23</sup> Palladio's standards for a properly designed street were similar to his standards for a properly designed building: it should be beautiful and convenient. For a street to be beautiful, it must be straight and commodious and afford the traveler delightful views of beautiful houses; for it to be useful it must be safe, clean, broad, and airy.<sup>24</sup> The streets of Bath — unlike the streets of the Romans — obviously will never convince future generations of the grandeur and magnificence of the minds of the city's inhabitants.

The importance Renaissance architects ascribed to designing streets that were beautiful and useful was reflected as well by Smollett's contemporaries. John Gwynn, for instance, who is perhaps best known to literary students as the man whose plans for the Blackfriars Bridge were adamantly defended by Samuel Johnson, made an impassioned plea in 1766 for town planners to lay out streets in an orderly and regular fashion. Reiterating the sentiments of Wren and Evelyn, who wanted London's streets redesigned in a more logical fashion after the great fire of 1666, Gwynn contended that for a city to be "magnificent" and "convenient" it is essential that the "ground-plan" be "composed of right lines, and that the streets intersected each other at right angles . . ." Acute angles should be avoided at all costs, for "they are not only disagreeable to the sight, but constantly waste the ground and spoil the buildings. . ." <sup>25</sup> In his opinion, there should be at least three major thoroughfares running across London with other major arteries intersecting them "at right angles." London, however, because of "tasteless builders" and selfish property owners, has grown, like Bath, without plan or regularity until it is now, in a passage that resembles Bramble's description of the streets and houses of Bath, "nothing more than a confused heap, an irregular, slovenly, ill-digested composition, of all that is absurd and ungraceful; that its principal avenues are narrow and crooked, that the greatest part of the crawl is composed of blind alleys and narrow unconnected passages, equally inconvenient and unwholesome, that some of its houses are suffered to project before the others . . ." <sup>26</sup> Resolute action, according to

<sup>23</sup> *Four Books* (note 5 above), Bk. 3, "Preface."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Bk. 3, chaps. 1, 2.

<sup>25</sup> John Gwynn, *London and Westminster Improved* (London, 1766), p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 7. Gwynn's explanations for London's rapid expansion in population also bear a similarity to Bramble's: the "migration of foreigners" (p. 16); the influx of the *nouveau riche* (p. 17); and people deserting "their native homes and



Gwynn, must be taken immediately, for architecture, he avers, is the cornerstone of all the arts and an index to the refinement and taste of the public.<sup>27</sup> In the context, then, of Gwynn's and Palladio's work, it is likely that Smollett's readers would have seen the bizarre design of the streets of Bath as a rejection of classical architectural principles as well as symptomatic of the moral and aesthetic decline of contemporary society.

Immediately after describing the buildings and streets of Bath, Bramble provides us with an explanation of the causes for the city's architectural blight:

All these absurdities arise from the general tide of luxury, which hath overspread the nation, and swept away all, even the very dregs of the people. Every upstart of fortune, harnessed in the trappings of the mode, presents himself at Bath, as in the very focus of observation — Clerks and factors from the East Indies, loaded with the spoil of plundered provinces; planters, negro-drivers, and hucksters, from our American plantations, enriched they know not how; agents, commissaries, and contractors, who have fattened . . . usurers, brokers, and jobbers of every kind; men of low birth, and no breeding, have found themselves suddenly translated into a state of affluence unknown to former ages . . . all of them hurry to Bath, because here, without any further qualification, they can mingle with the princes and nobles of the land. (36-37)

The lack of order and regularity in the plan of the city, the disarray of the buildings, the absence of intersecting streets at clearly defined intervals may be seen, then, not simply as examples of local color, but as metaphors for a chaotic and confused society, one without social stratification, class distinction, or a sense of hierarchy, a society which, like its buildings and streets, is "higgledy piggledy." The general sense of architectural grotesqueness may be seen as a physical representation of the moral and spiritual grotesqueness that permeates the city, while the weakness and impermanence of the buildings suggest, as they do in Hogarth's *Gin Lane*, a society that has no future, a society that stands on the brink of apocalyptic doom. Bath has become a worshipper of the "Gothic devil" instead of the Divine Architect.

Bramble intersperses his letters from London, as he did from Bath, with frequent architectural references, some of them at least partially complimentary. He applauds, for instance, the Bridge at Blackfriars,

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quitting their innocent country retreats for the sake of tasting the pleasures of this great city . . ." (p. 16).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 11-12.



judging it — in terms of humanist architecture — to be a work of “magnificence and utility.” Immediately, however, he undercuts his tribute to the people of the city by expressing his surprise and “wonder” at “how they stumbled upon” such a structure (87), implying that the bridge was the result of a fortuitous accident rather than conscious planning. He also finds the streets of London — judged according to Palladio’s criteria — “spacious, regular, and airy”; but this too is subverted by his description of the city in general as overcrowded and unplanned, “an overgrown monster” with a “dropsical head” (87).

Less ambivalent is his treatment of the buildings and gardens of Vauxhall. It is little wonder that Bramble should select Vauxhall for his most acrimonious, as well as his most lengthy and detailed, analysis of a London structure, for since its reopening in 1732 under the ownership of Thomas Tyers, it had become the most elaborate and popular recreational area in London. In fact, with its semicircular colonnades, dining pavilions, porticos, rotundas, triumphal arches, pillars, statues, painted perspectives, imitation ruins, tree-lined walks, and Temple of Neptune, it was probably the most frequently visited, written about, and talked about public place in the entire city. By attacking it, Bramble — and Smollett — was attacking a complex that reflected the taste and manners, sophistication and cultivation of contemporary London.

Bramble begins his criticism of Vauxhall by expressing the traditional humanist displeasure at excessive ornamentation and lack of unity: “Vauxhall is a composition of baubles, overcharged with paltry ornaments, ill conceived, and poorly executed; without any unity of design . . .” (89). Humanist architects insisted, as we have seen, upon completeness and oneness in their designs. While they did not oppose ornamentation (or mild diversity), they demanded that it be subordinated to the total design or controlling theme. As the various elements of the human body are subordinated and unified, according to Henry Wotton, so must be the various elements of any structure: “Each side, agreeing with the other, both in the number, in the quality, and in the measure of the Parts.”<sup>28</sup> Ironically, although Vauxhall lacks tasteful and appropriate decorations as well as a unified design, it does support the humanist contention that a structure should be a reflection of the people who use it, for Bramble avers that there

<sup>28</sup> Wotton (note 17 above), p. 21.

is a general lack of "taste and decorum" among the visitors to the area, as well as an absence of social or class unity among them. They are, according to him, a disagreeable mob who crowd together in the damp and insalubrious night air to hear songs that are inaudible to half their number; they are "possessed by a spirit, more absurd and pernicious than any thing we meet with in the precincts of Bedlam" (89).

Bramble next criticizes Vauxhall for its uniqueness and oddness, for its generally bizarre appearance:

It is an unnatural assembly of objects, fantastically illuminated in broken masses; seemingly contrived to dazzle the eyes and divert the imagination of the vulgar — Here a wooden lion, there a stone statute; in one place, a range of things like coffee-house boxes, covered a-top; in another, a parcel of ale-house benches; in a third, a puppet-show representation of a tin cascade; in a fourth, a gloomy cave of a circular form, like a sepulchral vault half lighted; in a fifth, a scanty slip of grass-plot, that would not afford pasture sufficient for an ass's colt. (89)

His description, while implying that Vauxhall fails to embody the order and logic of the natural world, would have also been understood by contemporary readers as reflecting the specific and well-known humanist prejudice against architectural "Novelty and Singleness."<sup>29</sup> To humanist architects, as to humanist writers such as Pope and Johnson, the novel and singular in art produce works which are modish and transitory, appealing to a limited audience for a limited time. Such works are the product, not of reason, but of an unbridled and uncontrolled imagination. It was theorized by Smollett's contemporaries that novelty and singleness in architecture was first introduced into Western society by the Goths and Vandals. John Gwynn, for instance, in *The Art of Architecture* (1742), a poem which consists of brief summaries of the major precepts of humanist architecture, asserted that

The Goths first introduc'd the frantick Way  
Of forming *Apes*, or *Monsters*, wild as they  
Because the Tumult, fond of Tricks and Apes,  
Lov'd such Variety, and antick Shapes.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Morris, *Defence* (note 6 above), pp. 20, 28. Colin Campbell, a leading exponent of classical architecture, also criticized in his *Vitruvius Britannicus* (London, 1717-25) the "absurd Novelties [of modern architects], so contrary to those excellent Precepts in *Vitruvius*, and so repugnant to those admirable Remains the Antients have left us" (II, 2).

<sup>30</sup> London, rpt. in Augustan Reprint Society, no. 144, ed. William A. Gibson (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 24-25.

To Gwynn the legacy of the Goths may be seen among our "Modern FOOLS" who, "Renouncing all the *Rules* the ROMANS had," build bizarre and tasteless structures.<sup>81</sup> Gwynn's opinion was shared by Morris, who averred that classical architecture was initially subverted by the Goths and Vandals, and that their grotesque creations "but too much resemble the unhappy Practices of our present Enemies to the Rules of the Ancients."<sup>82</sup> By viewing Vauxhall, then, in the context of these historical attitudes, contemporary readers would have been reminded, as they were with the Circus, of the degeneration of modern society from the classical ideal. Vauxhall would have been seen as a modern counterpart of the "frantick" creations of the Goths, built and inhabited by contemporary barbarians whose taste and manners are no better than those of the hordes who invaded Rome.

In addition to implying that Vauxhall is comparable to the absurd and irregular creations of the Goths and Vandals, Bramble also describes the pleasure gardens in a manner that suggests an analogy between the physical structure and the society that visits it. The absence of "propriety of disposition" (the lack of proper arrangement of the parts), for instance, and the description (quoted above) of the grounds as a type of grotesque architectural great chain of being may be seen as the physical equivalent of the social chaos of contemporary London — the unnatural blending of classes and professions, the lack of hierarchy — that so disturbed Bramble as well as Smollett. "In short," writes Bramble immediately before his remarks on Vauxhall, "there is no distinction or subordination left — The different departments of life are jumbled together — The hod-carrier, the low mechanic, the tapster, the publican, the shop-keeper, the pettifogger, the citizen, and courtier, *all tread upon the kibes of one another . . .* they are seen every where, rambling, riding, rolling, rushing, justling, mixing, bouncing, cracking, and crashing in one vile ferment of stupidity and corruption" (88). Furthermore, the primacy given to the imagination rather than the reason (Vauxhall is "seemingly contrived to dazzle the eyes and divert the imagination of the vulgar" [89]) suggests the inversion of the proper hierarchy in human nature as well as in art. The imagination's gaining ascendancy over the reason, it should be remembered, was thought in the eighteenth century to result in madness. Vauxhall, in its lack of rational design and

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>82</sup> Robert Morris, *Defence* (note 6 above), p. iv. See also pp. 11, 21.



in its imaginative excesses, thus becomes for Bramble (and Smollett) the embodiment of the madness of contemporary London, a London in which everyone appears "impelled by some disorder of the brain" (88).

Although much of Bramble's attack is contained in his commentary on the architecture of Bath and London, his satiric use of architecture is not confined to those two cities. In a letter from Scarborough, for instance, he makes a lengthy pause in his description of the city to remark on the failure of British architects to adapt their designs to suit the characteristics of the British climate. Lord Burlington, who was instrumental in introducing the designs of Palladio to eighteenth-century England, recognized the need to modify designs employed in hot, dry climates for the rigors of the cold, damp air of his native country. Thus the porticos generally found on each side of a Palladian building were reduced by him at Chiswick House to a single portico in front, for while four porticos may be necessary to catch the breezes in warm Italian summers, they would provide too much ventilation for the English climate. Furthermore, he added a greater number of chimneys, which, while not enhancing the appearance of a building, were necessary to provide the inhabitants in a colder climate with warmth. In the context, then, of the theory and practice of classical architects of making the plan — even the building materials<sup>88</sup> — of a structure conform to the locale, Bramble criticizes the use by British architects of the Gothic — or what he calls "Saracen" — design in English churches. Gothic or Saracen buildings, such as the Minster at York — "vast, narrow, dark, and lofty" — are appropriate to the hot and dry climates of Africa and Spain, according to Bramble, but "nothing could be more preposterous, than to imitate such a mode of architecture in a country like England, where the climate is cold, and the air eternally loaded with vapours; and where, of consequence, the builder's intention should be to keep the people dry and warm" (180). Bramble's remarks on sacred architecture, then, alert the reader that not only is the new evangelicalism — as seen in Clinker's Methodism — threatening religion, but ignorant architects are as well, for by

<sup>88</sup> Ware, for instance, insisted that red bricks were not appropriate to the English climate: "in summer," he wrote, "it has an appearance of heat that is very disagreeable: for this reason it is most improper in the country" (*A Complete Body* [note 16 above], p. 61). The use of red bricks, it should be added, which during Queen Anne's reign had been the favorite building material for London structures, did in fact decline in favor of gray and yellow bricks by mid-century.



attending churches such as the Minster at York or the Abbey church at Bath one may, paradoxically, lose his life while trying to save his soul. Sacred architecture, which Vitruvius valued as the cornerstone of any society, has become a subversive element in English society.

In addition to attacking English society through his lengthy and detailed architectural analyses, Bramble often provides us with the means to evaluate contemporary society in his briefer references to architectural matters. He frequently complains, for instance, of the cramped, restricted rooms he is forced to stay in on his trip and of the pernicious effect they have on his health. In London, it will be recalled, he laments that he is "pent up in frowzy lodgings, where there is not room enough to swing a cat" (119). The first topic he talks about after arriving at the inn at Harrogate is the small rooms; he complains that lodgers are "obliged to put up with dirty holes, where there is neither space, air, nor conveniencce," while his own apartment "is about ten feet square; and when the folding bed is down, there is just room sufficient to pass between it and the fire" (163). In each case — at London and Harrogate — his description of his lodgings is followed immediately by complaints about his declining health.

While the rooms that Bramble describes would have reminded the reader of the failure of contemporary England to follow the architectural practices of the past,<sup>34</sup> they also have a metaphoric function in the novel. Small rooms may be seen as symbolic of a society grown too large, too flooded with people, to be able to accommodate them. The rapid expansion in urban population has caused a corresponding shrinkage of the space available for an individual to be by himself. Bramble's rooms, then, which should be a refuge from this overcrowding, become instead an architectural prison which imposes on him the same type of restriction and threats to his health that he seeks to escape. There is, in fact, no asylum, no sanctuary, in contemporary England.

Although Bramble's most famous and most detailed analyses deal with the architecture of England, he continues to evaluate buildings and cities in terms of classical architecture on his journey through

<sup>34</sup> Bramble's remarks are in keeping with the philosophy of classical architects, who emphasized that rooms should be commodious and conducive to good health. Wotton, for example, who endorsed Vitruvius' love of "Luminous rooms," reiterated the notion that rooms should be airy and "spiritous" (*The Elements* [note 17 above], p. 68), while Colin Campbell praised "spacious and convenient" rooms throughout his *Vitruvius Britannicus* (note 29 above), e.g., I, 8, 10; II, 5, 7.

Scotland. He finds, however, that in Scotland the principles of classical architecture have for the most part been observed. He remarks, for instance, that most of the ancestral mansions that he passes have been built on a proper situation, and give the impression of beauty and magnificence, while not sacrificing utility. The cities, too — especially Edinburgh and Glasgow — reflect the ideas of beauty and order valued by classical architects from Vitruvius through the eighteenth century. By conforming to the basic principles of humanist architecture, then, the buildings and cities of Scotland suggest a virtuous and moral people who have not, unlike the South Britons, allowed their pride and vanity to obscure the value of tradition and the wisdom of the past.

Since as a satirist Smollett is more concerned with delineating the general moral decay of England — the baleful effects of luxury, the ugly displays of vanity and pride, the disintegration of the great chain of being — than he is with establishing Scotland as an unequivocal ideal, it should not be surprising to find that his observations on the architectural achievements of the Scots are not as elaborate and comprehensive as his descriptions of English architecture. In fact, many of his most complimentary remarks about Scottish buildings are brief references which lack development or specific details. He writes, for instance, that from Dunbar to Edinburgh “there is a continual succession of fine seats, belonging to noblemen and gentlemen; and as each is surrounded by its own parks and plantation, they produce a very pleasing effect . . .” (216). He finds that Fife “exhibits a surprising number of fine seats, elegantly built, and magnificently furnished. There is an incredible number of noble houses in every part of Scotland that I have seen. — Dalkeith, Pinkie, Yester, and lord Hopton’s, all of them within four or five miles of Edinburgh, are princely palaces, in every one of which a sovereign might reside at his ease” (234). He tersely describes Hamilton as “a noble palace, magnificently furnished” (269), while he despairs of being able to capture the beauty of the Castle of Drumlanrig for his correspondent: “I shall not pretend to enter into a description of this palace, which is really an instance of the sublime in magnificence, as well as in situation, and puts one in mind of the beautiful city of Palmyra, rising like a vision in the midst of the wilderness” (270). Despite the brevity of these and other references, however, their cumulative effect is to inspire the admiration and respect of the reader, for through these allusions is

suggested the presence of a noble and aristocratic people whose spirit and vitality, whose sense of distinction and grandeur, are no less visible and permanent than the buildings which they have created and inhabit.

Bramble's favorable impression of Scottish architecture is not confined to rural seats, but extends, as I have suggested, to Scottish cities as well. He commends, for instance, the beauty of Edinburgh's buildings, and, although he is less than enthusiastic about its situation, he insists to Dr. Lewis that the city's general "air of magnificence commands . . . respect." He praises the castle that dominates the city as "an instance of the sublime in scite and architecture" (233). The palace of Holyrood-house is, he avers, "a jewel in architecture" despite its low situation which, he adds, is in no way the fault of the "ingenious architect" who built it (233). In addition to these magnificent edifices, the city boasts of "divers little elegant squares" on its south side, while the improvements that are being undertaken in the north sector "will add greatly to the beauty and convenience of this capital" (234). For Bramble as for the reader, the grandeur and utility of Edinburgh's architecture is an appropriate counterpart to a city whose vitality and fame as a center of learning allowed it to be called the Athens of the North.

While Bramble is favorably impressed with Edinburgh, it is in his description of Glasgow that we are presented with a city that appears to be the architectural ideal of the entire journey. His initial remarks on Glasgow suggest the extent to which the city reflects the precepts of classical architecture, as well as the extent to which it differs from the English cities that he visited: "In short, it is a perfect bee-hive in point of industry. It stands partly on a gentle declivity; but the greatest part of it is in a plain, watered by the river Clyde. The streets are straight, open, airy, and well paved; and the houses lofty and well built of hewn stone. At the upper end of the town, there is a venerable cathedral . . . the college [is] a respectable pile of building . . ." (246). Instead, then, of the precipitous declivity which made the streets of Durham almost impassable,<sup>85</sup> we have here a city built, as Vitruvius advised, on a freely accessible site. The narrow, tortuous, and unpleasant streets of Bath and Durham have been replaced by

<sup>85</sup> "The city of Durham appears like a confused heap of stones and brick, accumulated so as to cover a mountain, round which a river winds its brawling course. The streets are generally narrow, dark, and unpleasant, and many of them almost impassable in consequence of their declivity. The cathedral is a huge gloomy pile . . ." (p. 202).



streets that Palladio himself would find agreeable. Unlike the houses of Bath, which Bramble insisted were so flimsy that his hind could put his foot through their walls, the dwellings here are "lofty" and built of stone. Instead of the architecturally inappropriate churches at York and Bath or the "huge gloomy pile" where people worship at Durham, the cathedral at Glasgow is "venerable." Finally, the "confused heap of stones and bricks" that affronted Bramble at Durham is here a "respectable pile of building." In short, virtually every detail cited by Bramble in this Scottish city is the antithesis of what he found in England.<sup>30</sup>

Unlike Bath and London, which, according to Bramble, resemble grotesque organisms — a "monster" with "growing excrescences" (36) and an "overgrown monster" (87), respectively — Glasgow is described as a "bee-hive" of industry, a metaphor which conveys pre-eminently the idea of order. As a beehive, Glasgow is not simply a place of great activity, but a city of ordered, systematic, and regulated activity. In a larger sense, the metaphor also implies a structural order, for a beehive is composed of symmetrical units harmoniously arranged in a total design that is logical and functional. It is an example of architectural principles found in the natural world which have been ignored, instead of imitated, by modern builders in England. Furthermore, as a social structure built upon the principle of hierarchy, a beehive embodies the idea of stratification or subordination — an entomological great chain of being — that Bramble failed to find in Bath and London. By comparing Glasgow to a beehive, then, he is able to imply that the Scottish city reflects architecturally and socially the order and harmony missing in the major cities of England.

Although Bramble generally approves of Scottish architecture, he also makes a number of negative observations. These faults are often attributed by him, however, not to vanity, bad taste, or general moral decay, as with the Circus and Vauxhall, but to the economic problems of Scotland. One instance of this may be found in his description of High Street in Edinburgh. He favorably evaluates — using criteria that appear in the section of Palladio's work dealing with town plan-

<sup>30</sup> Smollett, who thought that "The people of the city (of Glasgow) are remarkable for their industry, their commercial spirit, their punctual observance of the presbyterian discipline," asserted in *The Present State of All Nations* (London, 1768-69) that "in a word Glasgow is the most beautiful town of Great Britain" (II, 106, 104).

ning — the mile-long stretch of the street that runs from the lower part of the city to the castle that stands overlooking Edinburgh: “Considering its fine pavement, its width, and the lofty houses on each side, this would be undoubtedly one of the noblest streets in Europe” (217). He quickly adds, however, that the beauty and convenience of the street is marred by a row of commercial shops called the Lucken Booths, “an ugly mass of mean buildings,” which has “thrust itself . . . into the middle of the way” (217). The intrusion of the Lucken Booths into an otherwise desirable street may be seen as an architectural manifestation of a dilemma Smollett saw Scotland facing. The desire for economic gain (as seen in the Lucken Booths), the “spirit of industry” that Smollett declared in *The Present State of All Nations* to be necessary for Scotland’s prosperity,<sup>87</sup> is concomitantly threatening to destroy the traditional beauty — both physical and moral — of the country. The very force that can raise the Scottish standard of living can also undermine its ancient values: “a glut of wealth,” as Lismahago observes in a statement with which Smollett would have been in sympathy, “brings along with it a glut of evils: it brings false taste, false appetite, false wants, profusion, venality, contempt of order, engendering a spirit of licentiousness, insolence, and faction, that keeps the community in continual ferment, and in time destroys all the distinctions of civil society; so that universal anarchy and uproar must ensue” (280). Lismahago’s solution — which reflects a moderate and reasonable position — is as applicable to architecture as it is to economics. Commerce must be “restrained” and controlled by “proper regulations,” not allowed, like its physical expression in the Lucken Booths, to grow without plan or direction and destroy the native beauty of the country.

Bramble’s disapproval of the landscape architecture in Scotland may also be seen as a manifestation of an economic — rather than a moral — problem. The gardens and parks, he tells us, “are not comparable to those of England . . . The pleasure-grounds are, in my opinion, not so well laid out according to the *genius loci*; nor are the lawns, and walks, and hedges kept in such delicate order” (234). The rigid arrangement of trees also displeases him. In his indictment of Scottish landscape architecture, however, he also gives the reason for its inferiority to English landscape design: “almost all the gardeners of South-Britain were natives of Scotland.” The migration of talented

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 23.

gardeners from Scotland to England is part of a larger problem that Bramble described in his discussion of Anglo-Scottish relations with Lismahago. Poor economic conditions and lack of opportunities have caused a migration of the most gifted Scots — those, both Bramble and Lismahago agree, who are “remarkably sober, orderly, and industrious” — to England where their “industry, œconomy, and circumspection” have allowed them to amass large fortunes. Since, according to Lismahago, it is a “hackneyed maxim” that “a supply of industrious people is a supply of wealth” to a nation, the migration southward has enriched England while reducing Scotland’s ability to improve its economic climate and thus to halt the flow. The southward migration of gardeners, then, suggests that with people as with “the produce of our lands, and all the profits of our trade . . . the exchange between the two kingdoms is always against Scotland” (278).

Upon re-entering England, Bramble employs an architectural concept to describe the first place where he is confronted with moral culpability — the Baynard estate. The vanity, egotism, and pride of Mrs. Baynard are portrayed by him largely in terms of her rejection of the precept of convenience, a precept stressed in their descriptions of country estates by poets as well as by architects.<sup>38</sup> Instead, for instance, of designing the grounds of the estate so that they would provide her family with food, protection from the weather, and a place for contemplation, her plans have rendered them totally useless. The garden, which was once “well stocked with the best fruit which England could produce,” has been devastated so that “there is not now the least vestige remaining of trees . . . Nothing appears but a naked circus of loose sand . . .” (286). Trees and walls which had formerly acted as a wind screen have been torn down so that her family is now exposed to the east wind and its attendant melancholia. Tall oaks that had once given needed shade have been cut, while a stone gallery which furnished the inhabitants with a tranquil place for meditation has been replaced by “a screen of modern architecture.” Nor is the interior of the house any more functional. The parlor, we are told, is so “fine and delicate, that in all appearance it was designed

<sup>38</sup> In Jonson’s “To Penshurst,” Carew’s “To my friend G.N. from Wrest” and “To Saxham,” Herrick’s “A Panegerick to Sir Lewis Pemberton,” and Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House,” for instance, the poet emphasizes that the grounds of an estate must be useful, capable of supplying the residents with all the necessities of life from food to mental relaxation, while the house itself must be conveniently constructed so that the social obligations of the owner may be met.



to be seen only, not inhabited. The chairs and couches were carved, gilt, and covered with rich damask, so smooth and slick, that they looked as if they had never been sat upon. There was no carpet on the floor; but the boards were rubbed and waxed in such a manner, that we could not walk, but were obliged to slide along them . . ." (290). Instead, then, of designing a residence like Burlington's Chiswick House, where the modesty, dignity, and good "Sense" of the owner may be seen in the priority given to convenience — "'Tis Use alone," Pope tells us, "that sanctifies Expence"<sup>30</sup> — the Baynard estate reflects the ostentation, pride, and foolishness of the Timon-like "builder [who] spent/ More cost in outward gay Embellishment,/ Then reall use . . ." <sup>40</sup>

If the Baynard estate fails to conform to the precept of convenience, it also fails to embody the social obligations traditionally associated with country houses. Unlike, for instance, the estate of Wrest and the home of Saxham, celebrated by Carew, the Baynard residence is not a "house for hospitalitic" or a haven for the "weary Pilgrim,"<sup>41</sup> but is rather a "temple of cold reception" at which the visitor, Bramble, is offered as a sacrifice to the "inhospitable powers." Unlike country houses where the staff reflects the generosity and hospitality of the owners, so that there is no "*currish Waiter* to affright," no porter "who strikes" or who stands "at the doore/ T'examine, or keep back the poore,"<sup>42</sup> the servants at the Baynard residence literally and figuratively close the gates of the estate to Bramble. They accost him, we are told, with "no civility" and keep him waiting a "considerable

<sup>30</sup> Alexander Pope, "Epistle IV. To Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington," ll. 179-180, *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 594.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Carew, "To my friend G.N. from Wrest," ll. 53-55, *The Poems of Thomas Carew*, ed. Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), p. 87. After examining the major country-house poems of the seventeenth century, as well as Pope's "Epistle to Burlington," G. R. Hibbard concludes that ". . . the right and proper end of building is use, not show; and that the proper aim of the individual should be the subordination of himself to the service of the community, not exploitation of the community for his own personal ends"—"The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XIX (1956), 174.

<sup>41</sup> "To my friend G.N. from Wrest," l. 24, "To Saxham," l. 38, Carew, *op. cit.* (note 40), pp. 87, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Herrick, "A Panegerick to Sir Lewis Pemberton" ll. 47, 18, *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*, ed. F. W. Moorman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915), pp. 146-147; "To Saxham," ll. 49-50, Carew, *op. cit.* (note 40), p. 28.

time in the coach" before telling him that the Baynards are not available. After entering the house, the valetudinarian is kept waiting an additional half-hour before either Baynard appears. Unlike Wrest, where "No sumptuous Chimney-peece of shining stone/ Invites the strangers eye to gaze upon/ . . . but cleare/ And cheerefull flames, cherish and warme him here,"<sup>43</sup> the "stove" of the Baynards provides no warmth or comfort to the visitor: "it was too bright and polished to be polluted with sea-coal, or stained by the smoke of any gross material fire" (290). Instead, then, of embodying the traditional ideals of a country home — an edenic dwelling infused with the spirit of hospitality and altruism, administered by a virtuous man married to an equally virtuous woman<sup>44</sup> — the Baynard house is a wicked and pernicious place, inhabited by a vainglorious woman, a neurotic son, and a man who has become physically ill from the general moral decay.

In a sense, with Bramble's depiction of the Baynard estate we have come full circle, for the estate created by Mrs. Baynard seems spiritually akin to the architectural and social disorder of Bath and London. The vanity and pretension, the egotism and presumption, of the *nouveau riche* — those social interlopers who, according to Bramble, have little regard for propriety or the wisdom and practices of the past — that are partially responsible for the physical and social chaos of Bath and London have been transferred by Mrs. Baynard to the country.<sup>45</sup> Unlike the "fallen" cities of England, however, the Baynard estate is restored to order through the intercession of Bramble, whose pragmatic suggestions transform the estate to its former condition. By being brought into conformity with the Augustan ideal of a rural retreat, the Baynard estate becomes, like its urban counterpart, Glasgow, an emblem for the ordered and moral society valued by Bramble and his creator.

It is evident, then, that Bramble's architectural observations are

<sup>43</sup> "To my friend G.N. from Wrest," ll. 25-28, *ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>44</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between the ideals of a country house and the myth of the golden age, see William Alexander McClung, *The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), esp. pp. 7-17.

<sup>45</sup> "Criticism of corrupted rural existence is," in *Humphry Clinker* as well as in the novels of Richardson and Fielding, according to David Evans, "centered primarily around the passivity, extravagance and uselessness which make the life of the gentry analogous to city life under the 'tide of luxury' "—"Humphry Clinker': Smollett's Tempered Augustanism," *Criticism*, IX (1967), 258.

not superfluous ornaments gratuitously added by Smollett to provide the novel with local color or a heightened sense of realism, but are instead central to the author's satiric vision. By allowing Bramble to evaluate and condemn structures in terms of a theory of architecture employed by the ancient Greeks and Romans, a theory which conceived of buildings as having moral as well as physical dimensions, Smollett has complemented his verbal indictment of contemporary England, as did Dryden and Pope, with graphic symbols of a world in decline. Although Scottish architecture, and the morality it embodies, is seen as superior to England's, Bramble's architectural analyses provide the reader with a contrast not primarily between England and Scotland, or, for that matter, between the urban and the rural, but rather between the old and the new, between the heroism and virtue of the past and the foolishness and vice of the present. In the rejection of classical architectural practices, one may perceive the failure of Hanoverian England to reconstruct a society modeled after the ideals of Augustan Rome. Appropriately enough, Bramble, who expressed his desire — and doubtless Smollett's — to be like "Hogarth in these dull and degenerate times," has in fact succeeded in imitating the work of the pictorial satirist, for he has through his architectural commentary condemned contemporary society, not merely in words, but in visible metaphors.



## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

*Anne Henry Ehrenpreis* died on 24 October 1978, a loss that is deeply regretted by the Editors, to whom she was a friend as well as a valued contributor. A previous article appeared in the Autumn 1958 issue of the HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN, and she had edited an anthology entitled *The Literary Ballad*, two novels of Charlotte Smith for Oxford English Novels, and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* for the Penguin English Library. Her edition of *Happy Country This America: The Travel Diary of Henry Arthur Bright* has recently been published by Ohio State University Press. Before her marriage she was for a number of years Bibliographer in the Harvard College Library.

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*John F. Sena*, Associate Professor of English at Ohio State University, wrote "The English Malady: The Idea of Melancholy from 1700 to 1760" as his dissertation at Princeton, and his other writings include *A Bibliography of Melancholy from 1700 to 1760* (London: Nether Press, 1970).

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### ERRATA

SEVERAL WORDS were transcribed incorrectly in the article on Bonfils in the October issue. The correct readings (pages and lines indicated in parentheses) are: (448:19) *costumes*; (449:23) *relieur*; (450:9) *Syrie-Palestine*; (451:38 & 469:36) *Estampes*; (457:9) *Cie., Rue*; (458:8) *renforcé*.