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PRIDDY, SUMPTER TURNER, III
FANCY: ACCEPTANCE OF AN ATTITUDE, EMERGENCE OF A STYLE.

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE (WINTERTHUR PROGRAM), M.A., 1981

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FANCY:

ACCEPTANCE OF AN ATTITUDE,

EMERGENCE OF A STYLE

By

Sumpter Turner Priddy, III

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Early American Culture.

November, 1981

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FANCY:

ACCEPTANCE OF AN ATTITUDE,

EMERGENCE OF A STYLE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

> Imagination and Fancy; . . . this laughing jade of a topic, with her endless whims and faces, and the legions of indefinable shapes that she brought about me, seemed to do nothing but scatter my faculties, or bear them off deridingly into pastime.
>
> -- Leigh Hunt, "An Illustrative Essay on Wit and Humor." 1847.[1]

My own thoughts regarding fancy and imagination -- like those of Leigh Hunt -- had difficulty finding tangible components to focus upon; even then, they easily were distracted. I, therefore, feel compelled to start this thesis with a note of thanks to those who have encouraged, assisted, and humored me in the course of its preparation. The total number are far too great to mention -- but certain individuals have been instrumental, and I would here like to acknowledge their contributions.

Initially, I am grateful to the friends, professors, and curators associated with the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture: Benno Foreman, Susan B. Swan, Arlene Palmer Schwind, and George B. Tatum were particularly helpful. But I am especially thankful to June Sprigg, whose encouragement convinced me to undertake this project when my thoughts regarding the subject were hazy and ill-defined, and to Kenneth Ames, in whose class I first perceived the

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importance of this thing known as fancy, and who served as my adviser throughout its development and preparation.

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Why, Fancie is a frende
to every curteous Knight:
Why Fancie is the chiefest thing
that doth the minde delight.

-- Nicholas Bretton, "The Forte of Fancie," 1582.[2]

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INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE SCENE

The year was 1830. Alexander Jackson Davis, one of America's leading architects, sat in a New York studio admiring his newly completed watercolor sketch of an ideal Grecian interior -- a sketch that represented a level of style confined to an exceptionally small percentage of the American populace (Figure 1). Each architectural detail, each classical furnishing, was as artistically perfect as any the era created.[3] If any single word could best describe this austere classicism, it would have been "restraint," and the impact was derived not from ornamentation but from the cautious use of tempered Grecian forms. There was but one color that ideally suited this austere style -- "the whitest of the white," observed Charles Dickens, recalling the brilliant marble of ancient temples.[4] "There are pleasant associations in that word," wrote another critic when analyzing the color applied to the President's House in Washington: "It breathes an innocent purity and a spotless virtue."[5]

The style of furniture used in such a setting was the Empire style, based upon the massive forms and austere lines of French designs popularized in America following the War of 1812. Considering their substantial but somewhat cold character, it comes as no surprise to find that objects in this taste were described later by one critic as

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"frigid and ponderous monstrosities."[6]

Within a few years of the completion of Davis's ideal Grecian interior, another artist was equally busy at work. His name, coincidentally enough, was Joseph A. Davis, and as an itinerant painter traveling the muddy spring roads of rural New England, he stopped in Strafford Ridge, New Hampshire, where he hoped to find sitters for his portraits (Figure 2). This Davis had no formal training in the fine art of painting, and though his technique left much to be desired from an academic standpoint, it possessed a magnetic appeal that attracted people everywhere he visited. The level of consciousness that infused his work was only peripherally touched by the aura of Grecian design, but in his eyes the settings for his portraits were no less ideal than those created by his classically trained New York counterpart. Like Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery who sat for their portrait, Joseph A. Davis was concerned not with restrained classical taste, but with eye-catching flamboyance; his world, and theirs, was virtually obsessed with pattern and color. Not only did Davis depict the Montgomerys in fancy rocking chairs upon a fancy ingrain carpet, but he lay their Bible upon a fancy table and on the wall he hung a fancy picture dressed in ornamental trappings. Davis used this same setting for virtually dozens of portraits, and its magical appeal not only pleased him, but also his clients, who were delighted to envision themselves in that lively environment.

Interestingly enough, Davis's watercolor portrays only a small

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number of the goods that helped to satisfy the Montgomerys' desire for fancy articles. As New Englanders, they undoubtedly possessed a fancy sleigh -- in which they not only went to church, but to fancy balls dressed in fancy clothing. Mr. Montgomery was probably a farmer by occupation, and he may have owned a fancy horse that grazed upon fancy grass. When Mrs. Montgomery caught a cold, she sniffled in a fancy handkerchief, and on fine summer days she might wander into her garden and pick fancies from its borders. On special occasions when they journeyed into town, Mr. Montgomery may have stopped at the Fancy Hardware Store while his wife sampled specialties at the Fancy Bakery or browsed at the Fancy Millinery Shop. After returning home and consuming a wholesome dinner, perhaps upon a table set with fancy china, they retired to the parlor to sing a rousing chorus of "Tell Me, Where is Fancy Bred"[7] or "Delighted Fancy Hails the Hour"[8] around their decorated piano. When their clock struck eight, Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery sent the children upstairs to their rooms, where they pulled back their fancy coverlets, crawled into their fancy beds, and assuming they had been properly raised, dreamt the night away -- though, one would hope, not of fancy men or fancy women.

John and Abigail Montgomery made their home in Strafford Ridge, New Hampshire, but their tastes were no different from millions of middle Americans who lived throughout this nation in the early 19th century. They might just as well have lived in a Philadelphia townhouse, on a Carolina plantation, or on a mid-western farm -- and would have felt quite at home in the colorful settings they found there.

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The Montgomerys represent the mainstream of American society at a time that commonly is thought to find its primary inspiration in restrained Grecian classicism. But in reality, classical design played only one of many roles in the rapidly changing face of the early 19th century, and the Montgomerys' world was touched only peripherally by it. Instead, their lives were dominated by a delight with stimulating images. Theirs was a world virtually obsessed with colors and patterns, with visual excesses and superfluities.

How did the Montgomerys perceive their colorful world, and what were the means by which they understood its contrast to the austere taste of Grecian classicism? As strange as it may seem, they did so through a concept and a style both popularly and widely known as "fancy."

If the average American were asked to define the word today, he would possibly thumb his nose and reply in a negative tone, "excessively decorated." Though it may be hard to imagine, this was not originally the case at all. One of the most highly ornamented styles of the 19th century -- the gothic revival -- was often considered diametrically opposed to the very concept. If an American colonist a century before the Montgomerys had been asked to answer the very same question, he eagerly would have retorted the now somewhat puzzling response, "imagination." This seemingly confusing transition is integral to comprehending the American experience intellectually, socially, and artistically. Exactly how the word changed conceptually between these

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extremes is a document of America's attitudes toward itself and toward the world around it.

* * *

Concepts of fancy at times seem vague and ill-defined. Joseph Addison, publisher of London's Spectator and one of Europe's foremost literary critics, complained as early as 1712 that few components of the English language were "employed in a more loose and uncircumscribed sense." He considered himself to use the word "promiscuously."[9] Edgar Allen Poe expressed the same sentiment over a century later when he lamented that "fancy" was used "with very little determinateness of meaning."[10] An English contemporary, Leigh Hunt, agreed with him and insisted that it was not " . . . the best that might be found . . . "[11]

Was it indeterminate in meaning? It had to be. And yet, despite inherent ambiguities and shifting definitions, fancy stood for something that was unmistakably comprehendable in the minds of those whom it touched. Though the concept eventually evolved into a recognizable style, its original association was not with style at all, but with a faculty of the mind known as creative imagination. Like many intangible components of human make-up, fancy is not confined by artificial boundaries or hard and fast rules. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that fancy came to signify almost any activity or object that delighted the human spirit or stirred the imagination. Virtually everything that pleased the soul fell within its realm -- not

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only lively three-dimensional objects, but music, literature, sports, and entertainment. It inevitably created an unmistakable enthusiasm which permeated life and its experiences. One 16th century poet observed it to be the power that "moveth men to love,"[12] and from that point onward, it was frequently related to that passion. In 19th century England, it oftimes meant a short musical composition, described by one modern dictionary as "a lively little air."[13] It frequently was applied to several different sports, not infrequently boxing,[14] and, oddly enough, the racing of homing pigeons.[15] A fancy in the 16th century sometimes signified a costume decoration of colorful ribbon[16] and, in the 19th, quite simply a violet.[17]

Despite what may appear to be a diverse and incongruent mass of information to digest, attitudes toward fancy can be easily subdivided into stages of development from the word's inception to its demise. These facilitate an understanding of the subject.

The first period, in which the word was used exclusively as a noun, lasted from the time of the ancient Greeks until approximately 1760. During this phase the word evolved from its root "fantasy." By the 16th century it was used synonymously with imagination -- though it often referred to the lighter, more playful elements of the imagination rather than its more somber side. From the 17th century onward -- a period virtually obsessed with classicism and its emphasis on the power of reason -- fancy was often viewed as the antithesis of reason and a power of which to beware: It diverted one's attention from the pursuit

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of truth and the classical ideal, which reason alone could comprehend. To a strict classicist, fancy had an unmistakably negative connotation. It is essential to note that conceptions of the word during this phase limited its use to a noun and a verb, and its primary function was to define a faculty of the mind rather than a particular style. A chair could appeal "to the fancy," or an individual could "fancy" a chair; but there was no such thing as a "fancy chair."

During its next phase, as the 18th century progressed and neo-classic tenets gathered momentum, many philosophers and critics questioned the premise that man was a strictly rational being. Men were viewed not only as vulnerable to the influences which opposed reason, but capable of responding positively to them. Such outlooks were probably given significant impetus by the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii, where the first real views into the colorful homes of the ancients emphasized the fact that even they were not governed solely by strict reason. As these realizations gained increased recognition, negative attitudes toward the fancy began to subside. People began slowly, but surely, to use the word as an adjective. The word gained acceptance as a legitimate basis for describing the origin of a piece; take, for example, "fancy floorcloth" -- referring to a floorcloth "inspired by the fancy" rather than based on strict classical precedent. This transitional phase, in which the word found more frequent use, lasted until the early years of the 19th century. The War of 1812 seems an appropriate end to this period since America slowly entered a new period of self-awareness, prosperity, and independence following victory

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in 1815. Use of the word at that point indicates that it defined objects considered by their makers and owners to be quite "fashionable." Some of these, particularly furniture, had features that appeared consistently from object to object and legitimately represent a definable new style. Others had no more consistency than a tendency to delight their beholders. They are important nonetheless because they reflect this new attitude toward imagination that helped to shape the relationship between people and the things around them. In either instance, whether a style or an attitude, the objects which evolved can be said to represent the most up-to-date outlooks and were confined largely to individuals at the forefront of artistic awareness. Objects that were "fancy" were seen as alternatives to more austere forms of neo-classic design, even if they frequently were used in conjunction with them.

As romanticism superceded neo-classicism after the War of 1812, a distinction between fancy and imagination emerged. They were still closely allied, but fancy assumed the role of a more humorous and playful faculty while imagination took on a more serious identity. As this happened, many of the academic elite shifted away from the influence of fancy and expressed their romantic outlooks through the austere lines of Grecian classicism. In return, many aspects of fancy shifted into the domain of popular culture and blossomed into a third phase. Its influence would never be more widespread and it maintained its momentum through the 1830s and 1840s. Broad interpretations of the spirit created a clearly definable style that contrasted more markedly than ever with austere classical taste. During this period fancy became a clear-

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cut alternative to Empire classicism, and in many respects it outweighed strict classical design as the major decorative taste. The development of the style during this period is tied in many respects to the Industrial Revolution, and it was the result of advances in technology which helped to mold the fancy into an unmistakable identity. Exactly how widespread was it? It was virtually ubiquitous, and as the Industrial Revolution made color and pattern increasingly inexpensive, fancy became a hallmark of the rising middle class. The movement is tied inextricably to the traditional artisan who harnessed his own ingenuity to meet the decorative challenge presented by machines producing a profusion of ornament with astounding speed.

The fourth and final phase of the fancy coincided with the Victorian era. It was a period in which the word slowly lost its primary association with delight and eventually came to mean merely "decorated." In comparison to its earlier use, the word was employed with significantly less discrimination, and it underwent a traumatic and eventually fatal crisis as conservative attitudes toward the use of decoration established a stranglehold upon 19th century flamboyance. Slowly but surely, fancy and all that it stood for fell prey to the moralistic teachings that ushered in a new century.

Charting a logical course through the long period when fancy was at its height is a confusing and exhausting task. It would be impossible, within the scope of this thesis, to cover fully the topic from its emergence in the 16th century to its demise in the 20th. I, there-

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fore, have limited this work to outlining the concepts that converged to give meaning to the word. I have then clarified how changes in attitudes toward some of those concepts caused a major shift in its use as applied to the arts in the 18th and very early 19th centuries. Admittedly the word is a virtual chameleon; but moving step by step, phase by phase, and attempting to understand how changes in attitude toward the concept eventually molded a mentality and a style, it is possible to trace the subtle distinctions which created an outlook representing the antithesis of our 20th century existence. To us, "fancy" is simply an uncommon adjective -- one which sounds just a little alien among the plastic, glass, and steel that comprise our physical surroundings. We scarcely comprehend the full significance of the original concept because the emphasis has been taken away from the human mind and replaced with an emphasis on the excessive decoration of the object. It would be unfair, under the latter circumstance, to justify fully any great fascination with the term. But it is similarly unfair to impose so limited a concept upon a word which played an entirely different, and far more significant role, than it does, or can, in our modern society. After all, fancy is a concept that helped to shape the late 18th and 19th centuries, and there is no single word that better captures the spirit of those periods in a simple, concise note. Admittedly, its boundaries are sometimes hazy and ill-defined, but it unmistakably held a fascination which was ten-fold, perhaps even a hundred-fold, of that which it means for us. Understanding that fascination opens up an entirely new means of experiencing the world and

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the material things that fill it. In doing so, the fancy reflects a long-forgotten fact that objects and situations are tied inextricably both to the imagination of their creators and to the delight of their beholders. This point is one of the primary differences that separates the concepts of the fancy from the cool, calculated philosophy of modern functionalist thought. At last its helps to illumine the late 18th, and early 19th, century sense of enthusiasm that has so long confused us.

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CHAPTER I: THE COMPONENTS OF FANCY

> Tell me where is Fancy bred,
> Or in the heart or in the head?
>
> -- William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, 1597.[1]

What exactly was the fancy, and where did it originate? William Shakespeare posed that question in The Merchant of Venice in 1597. From that time until the concepts surrounding it fell from favor nearly three centuries later, the problem remained in the forefront of the literary mind in England and America. Comprehending how and why the fancy captivated these cultures over so long a period is best begun by taking a brief look at the etymology of the word. We then will explore its relationship to the main currents of classic and neo-classic thought as they developed during the 17th and 18th centuries, when the concepts unfolded and jelled into a recognizable entity.

Fancy is a contraction of fantasy.[2] Fantasy was the English derivation of the Greek noun phantasia, drawn from the verb phantasier, literally meaning "to make visible." It referred to the mind's capacity to recall images as they were or to combine them anew and create completely different ones. Phantasia subsequently was adopted by the Romans, but another word almost identical in meaning also emerged during the late Roman period. This was the Latin "imaginatio" or, as

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we know it, imagination -- which was used in a context that was virtually synonymous with phantasia. The equivalent use of phantasia and imaginatio was adopted by both the emerging French and English language and continued largely unaltered through the Dark and Middle Ages,[3] though the English frequently contracted their word phantasy to form "phantsy" or "phansy."[4]

By the time of Shakespeare the spelling of "phantasy" and its contraction "phansy" had gradually evolved into fantasy and fancy, and had diverged significantly enough in meanings to achieve separate identities. Both maintained their alliance to the creative powers of the mind, but fancy usually was confined to imaginary creations based either upon reality or upon situations which combined sufficient elements of reality to remain believable. Fantasy, on the other hand, severed virtually all ties with the real world and projected the creation into a capricious or dreamy realm with few restraints. The exact line of demarcation between fancy and fantasy was not always clear, though the extremes of their divergence left little room to doubt that there was a significant difference.[5] This breakdown between fantasy and fancy, and the subsequent replacement with an uneasy alliance between fancy and imagination, was an important step toward establishing new outlooks which eventually shaped a new style. The tenuous nature of the relationship also clearly identified the unstable character of vocabulary intended to define the process of mental creation -- and it played an important role in shaping attitudes toward the subject when inherited by 17th and 18th century society.

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The Classics and Fancy

Attitudes toward fancy during the 17th and 18th centuries were shaped largely by classicism and neo-classicism, the two major schools of thought that dominated the intellectual spirit of Europe from the mid-17th to the end of the 18th century. Together, these encompass a period frequently termed the "Enlightenment" or the "Age of Reason," which counts as its major classical legacy a philosophy now known by the broad and elusive term "humanism."[6] Unlike earlier phases of the Renaissance, in which intellectual inquiry frequently emphasized scientific or artistic pursuits, "humanism" stressed the development of human potential through the search for time-proven truth and virtue, through the pursuit of the "immutable principles and aspirations of human beings throughout history."[7] In 1759 Samuel Johnson, the renowned English classicist, enumerated the aspirations of a humanist with great clarity:

> He must divest himself of the prejudice of his age and country; he must consider right from wrong in their abstracted and invariable style; he must disregard present laws and opinions and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same.[8]

Fancy had many meanings to classicism, and though a number of 17th and 18th century English classicists attempted to define its many facets, none did so as completely as Johnson, who first published his Dictionary of the English Language in 1755. His work was of utmost importance, for he drew upon a broad range of personal experiences as both a critic and philosopher to cover the broadest range of the word's significance. Both his contemporaries and those who followed him

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recognized the success of the achievement, for they relied upon his definition, frequently verbatim, until the middle of the 19th century -- often to the point of excluding more up-to-date or relevant meanings.

In order to clarify both classical and neo-classical attitudes toward the fancy, Johnson's nine definitions for the word as a noun are reproduced below. These not only establish its broadest significance at a given time, but set the stage for attitudes at the beginning of a significant transition period that began shortly thereafter.

Fancy, noun
1. Imagination
2. An opinion bred rather by the imagination than reason
3. Taste; idea; conception of things
4. Image; conception; thought
5. Inclination; liking; fondness
6. In Shakespeare it signifies love
7. Caprice; humor; whim
8. False notion
9. Something that please or entertains without real use or value[9]

Two points should be observed. First, Johnson did not identify the word as an adjective. Secondly, the list is divisible into two distinct groups. The first four definitions represent the serious side of the fancy; the remaining five constitute its lighter aspects. Analyzing these and shedding further light on them by augmenting specific points with the insights of other critics will help to set the stage for a more complete understanding of the word and will clarify its divergence from our limited conceptions of its meaning in the 20th century.

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Fancy and Imagination

Samuel Johnson's first definition for fancy clearly establishes its equivalence with imagination; the two frequently were used synonymously. Thomas Dyche and William Pardon, who published A New General English Dictionary in 1740, defined fancy as "that internal sense, power, or faculty of the soul that is sometimes called imagination,"[10] and earlier Joseph Addison spoke of "The pleasures of the Imagination or Fancy."[11] Even as late as the mid-19th century, when virtually every critic and philosopher had finally concluded that fancy and imagination were not the same, Edgar Allen Poe still insisted there was no difference between the two.[12]

Classical philosophers and critics frequently viewed fancy or imagination as an all-encompassing power that embraced virtually every aspect of mental creation. Its most limited function included the passive reception of ideas by the senses and the subconscious storage of those ideas within the mind. On a more sophisticated level, it encompassed the subsequent recollection of such images from the storehouse of the memory and their active recombination -- with the assistance of reason -- into new and distinct images.[13] Such a viewpoint perceived the fancy to be impressed equally with breathtaking mountain scenery or a fiery description of hell -- with the lively or dull; the happy or sad; the good or bad. In the broadest sense of the word, virtually anything in the physical world could contribute to this storehouse; any vision could emanate from its depths.[14] This classical concept was non-discriminatory in subject matter, tone, or mood; and it

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helps to explain the dichotomy in Johnson's nine definitions, which were equally divided between the serious and lighter aspects of the subject.

Fancy Opposed to Reason

In the Middle Ages and the early phases of the Renaissance, religious faith served as the primary means for achieving virtue; the Age of Reason stressed the importance of knowledge achieved through understanding as the way to attain that end. In stressing the role of reason, humanism did not endorse the belief that spontaneous sentiments or responses were, in themselves, either good or desirable ends.[15] Such opinions were based upon a recognition of the imagination's influence over the feelings and upon the fear that these would divert the mind from rational pursuits; that haphazard and immediate whim would displace immutable truth; that the search for time-honored ideals would be shortchanged for the sake of momentary notion.[16] Therefore, to most classicists, the power of fancy was contraposed to the purpose of judgment in the classical search for truth. Samuel Johnson emphasized this dichotomy in his second definition of the word: "An opinion bred rather by the imagination than reason."[17]

Neo-classicism

During the mid-seventeenth century, many intellectuals felt the precepts of classical philosophy to be inadequate to their established state. The nature of man being what it is, and the status quo seeming always likely to improve, classicism became a focal point for change.

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This resulted in the evolution from "classicism" to "neo-classicism," and like many major transitions, it branched into two major philosophical camps that directly opposed one another. One school, particularly common in the late 17th century, attempted to codify rules for attaining the ideal standards and immutable truths set forth by classical philosophy, and in many instances carried them to rigid and extreme conclusions. This inevitably gave rise to a second school of thought that attempted to contradict the absurd extremes to which codification had gone. Grouped together -- first codification with its rigid conclusions and then the inevitable counteractions -- they comprise neo-classicism as a historical phenomenon.[18]

Neo-classic Rationalism

Strict neo-classicism often contended that neither the ancients nor their modern followers had been astute enough in their observance of rules and that the responsibility of true classicists was to methodize their techniques to establish a rational approach to truth. The basis of this neo-classic approach was to exclude all but those "clear and distinct" ideas that were "self evident" and, by such exclusion, to narrow one's thoughts and actions and the rules that governed them to time-honored truths and mathematical equations. The solutions then lay merely in "arranging" and "methodizing" the ideas into proper order.[19] Fancy, with visions garnered via the senses rather than the mind, was ardently discouraged from interfering, since any attempt to comprehend truth through it was considered impossible. In its emphasis upon the mathematically demonstrative, strict rationalism established a

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more rigid distinction than classicism between the fanciful response a human may have and that which one should think.[20] It was desirable to occupy the mind with subjects that "bridled" and "controlled" it lest it be thrown into disorder with a "mad or idle fancy." The significance was clear enough: "How many men have been made sick by the mere power of imagination?" asked Montaigne.[21]

Neo-classic Reactions

By the end of the 17th century, the extremes of neo-classicism encountered significant opposition by a sizable school of French and English philosophers who insisted that scientific progress did not necessarily imply progress in the arts. With the growth of such philosophy arose a school of thought which undermined the dedication to hard-and-fast rules and strict reason. It brought a significant new outlook toward the role of fancy in comprehending both the world and the truths it held.[22]

No individual seems to represent the revisionist spirit more succinctly than Joseph Addison, the noted critic and editor. His essays entitled "Pleasures of the Imagination" popularized many of the thoughts that eventually replaced the conservative approach of rationalism. Unlike many of his forebears who warned of the dangers of the imagination, Addison found its diversionary influence immensely lifting to both mind and body:

> A man should endeavor to make the sphere of his innocent pleasures as wide as possible, that he may retire into them with safety, and find in them such a satisfaction as a wise

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> man would not blush to take. Of this nature are those of imagination, which do not require such a bent of thought as is necessary to our more serious employments.[23]

Though admitting that the pleasures of imagination were "not so refined as those of understanding," he acknowledged that each was, nonetheless, as "great" and "transporting" as the other.[24] A beautiful view is as pleasing to the fancy "as the speculations of eternity or infinitude are to the understanding," he noted, also observing:

> The pleasures of the fancy are more conducive to health, than those of the understanding, which are worked out by dint of thinking, and attend with too violent a labour of the brain.[26]

Delightful scenes, he went on to say, "whether in nature, painting, or poetry, have a kindly influence on the body, as well as the mind." They not only "clear and brighten the imagination," but "disperse grief and melancholy" and "set the animal spirits in pleasing and agreeable motions."[27]

Even classicists who insisted that fancy held no place in a search for immutable truth were frequently more lenient when it came to the appreciation of art. Samuel Johnson certainly did not totally distrust fancy, but rather its "complete and untutored preponderance."[28] "It is ridiculous to oppose judgment to imagination," he noted, "for it does not appear that men have necessarily less of the one as they have more of the other."[29] And while he did not consider fancy to have a viable role in a classical search for truth, that is in philosophy, he did think that the appreciation of art was dependent upon a cautious

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combination of the two. His belief that art should "instruct by pleasing," that it could imbue both the emotions and the mind with an understanding and a desire for truth, was a recurrent theme in much classic literature concerned with artistic creation and appreciation. But the qualification that reason must temper unbridled fancy and bring it in line to reflect higher ideals was ever present.[30] John Dryden observed a similar relationship though he expressed it in a slightly different manner:

> Fancy and reason go hand in hand; the first cannot leave the last behind; and though Fancy, when it sees the wide gulf, would venture over as the nimbler, yet it is withheld by reason, which would refuse to take the leap, when the distance over it appears too large.[31]

The Effects of Neo-classicism on Fancy

How did the dichotomous rise of neo-classic thought affect attitudes toward the fancy? To begin, the broad range of visual and mental powers encompassed within the classical outlook toward fancy created a crisis for strict neo-classic philosophers and led to attempts to redefine its boundaries. As the rules governing reason became increasingly strict and as imagination and passion were regarded with increasing skepticism, extreme neo-classicists came to regard the one essential and primary faculty of the artist to be rational "invention," and they ascribed to fancy or imagination the qualities of adorning the resulting creation with "figurative or symbolic expression."[32] In their eyes this reinforced fancy's less ethical, and therefore lower, position in the scheme of creation. Such redefinition was not, in itself, of lasting importance, for the simple reason that the boundaries continued to

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shift; but it did reinforce within the public mind a dichotomy between the creation of a primary thought and the subsequent clothing of that thought with decorative imagery. This had profound influence as a clear-cut distinction between fancy and imagination began to emerge in the closing years of the century.

A second ramification, closely tied to the first and dependent upon the separation between imagination and invention, was the tendency to view imagination as a power which encompassed the use of the total unconscious mind. As this conception became more prevalent toward the close of the 18th century, other terms frequently were used to denote more specific functions of the mind. Fancy was one such word.[33]

Numerous writers attempted to define the exact role that fancy played within the unconscious realm of the intellect. Among those whose thoughts exerted significant influence was Dugald Stewart, a Scottish writer who rightfully observed that "Imagination is a complex power." In analyzing its components, he found it to employ several "faculties," including:

> . . . simple apprehension, which enables us to form a notion of those former objects of perception perceived through the sense of knowledge, out of which we are to make a selection; abstraction, which separates the selected materials; and judgment or taste, which selects the materials, and directs their combination. To these powers we may add that particular habit of association to which I formerly gave the name of fancy [my emphasis].[34]

It is interesting that Stewart equated fancy with "association" or, more fully, the "association of ideas" -- a faculty first identi-

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fied by John Locke at the end of the 17th century. Its explanation is actually rather simple: objects, situations, or ideas inevitably stimulate the mind, and in doing so, they draw a potentially unique or personal response according to the circumstances that surround them. By their very nature such situations often occur repeatedly, and the mind tends subconsciously or automatically to evoke the same response and mental association each time an object or scene occurs for an individual.[35] Through association, every human develops bit by bit as a result of interaction with the "external forces" of the world and through the slow accumulation of knowledge achieved through experience and sensations. Because of this, activities, impressions, and thoughts become personal, habitual, and often automatic.[36]

Locke's recognition of the mind's capacity for association did not cause an overnight repudiation of the precepts espoused by classical humanism. Instead, the groundwork which he laid formed an important point of departure for those who followed him, and over the next century it encouraged a somewhat more subjective approach that depended upon individual interaction with the physical world. In the long run, the continued emphasis of the period upon the workings of the human mind, the development of a sizable group of philosophers who, like Locke, delved into psychology, and the general tendency of these psychologist-philosophers to use the arts to illustrate their points converged to give new meaning to the fancy.

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Fancy and Sight

In keeping with the neo-classic inclination to confine fancy to the unconscious faculties of the mind, there arose a tendency to restrict the influence of fancy merely to the retention of ideas gathered by sight. This penchant, first vaguely expressed by Hobbes and then by Locke, was most clearly enumerated by Joseph Addison in his essays "Pleasures of the Imagination," where he first analyzed the relationship between imagination, sight, and emotion, and stressed the predominant importance of the eye in gathering and recording life experiences and forming a reservoir of images from which the rational mind could draw.[37]

"Our sight is the most perfect and most delightful of all our senses," he noted early in these essays.[38] "We cannot indeed have a single image in the fancy that did not make its first entry through the sight." Addison then asked his readers to remember that by using the term pleasures of the imagination, he actually meant only the pleasures that "arise from visible objects."[39] He then clarified these by dividing them into two categories: primary, in which the delight results from objects immediately visible, and secondary, where they result from images stored, unaltered, in the memory, or "recombined to form visions of things that are either absent or fictitious."[40] Addison also recognized two separate kinds of beauty, and the manner in which men respond to these is instrumental in clarifying the relationship of fancy to the tangible world. The first elicits a "secret satisfaction: and a "complacency" from the viewer, such as the scene of a beautiful mountain range or a peaceful sunset. The second -- a dis-

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tinction that would hold greater significance as the 18th century progressed and a clearer distinction was made between fancy and imagination -- he found "apt . . . to raise us in a secret delight, and a kind of fondness for the places or objects in which we discover it." He continued, "this consists either in the gaiety or variety of colours, in the symmetry and proportions of parts, in the arrangement and disposition of bodies, or in a just mixture and concurrance of all together."[41] Of these attributes, it is important that Addison first listed a "variety of colors" among the characteristics most likely to raise a "secret delight" within the fancy.

Light and Color

Light and color, when reduced to a common denomination, are actually one and the same. Imagine a ray of light refracted through a prism and broken down into its seven constituent colors. "Light . . . is the cause . . . whereby coloured things are seen, whose shapes and images pass to the Phantasie," but in either state, whether pure or refracted, it has the potential to delight the eye.[42] Light glistening through cut glass can be equally alluring as a multitude of colors in the most pleasing configuration. In literature concerned with imagination, the two were sometimes grouped together, but for the most part, even when both were addressed, color inevitably took the upper hand and received far greater attention by virtue of its inherent diversity.

"Colours paint themselves on the fancy," noted Addison. "We are struck, we know not how . . . and immediately assent to the beauty

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of an object without inquiring into the particular cause of it":[43]

> Among these several kinds of beauty, the eye takes most delight in colours . . . . For this reason we find the poets, who are always addressing themselves to the imagination, borrowing more of their epithets from colours than from any other topic . . . . Colours speak all languages, but words are understood only by such a people or nation.[44]

Color was equated with fancy from the time the word emerged in the 16th century, just as it had been associated with imagination from the time of the ancients. Nicholas Bretton, whose 1582 poem "The Forte of Fancie" concerned itself with a myriad of fancy's characteristics, devoted several lines to its love of color:

> The colours of her cloth
> are fair and very gay;
> White, red, blue, green, carnation,
> yellow and Popyniay:
> Of blacks, but very few:
> but other colors store
> Of mingled colors, or such as
> I told you of before.[45]

A brilliant color quite naturally impressed the imagination. But its effect is heightened significantly when combined with others, whether of equal or different intensity. "We no where meet with a more glorious or pleasing show in nature," observed Addison,

> than what appears in the heavens at the rising and the setting of the sun, which is wholly made up of those different strains of light that show themselves in clouds of a different situation.[46]

He noted the same in relation to painting: "The different colors of a picture, when they are well disposed, set off one another," and give to the viewer "an additional beauty from the advantage of their situation."[47] One needs only to experience the mystical aura of a rainbow

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emerging from a tempestuous storm, or witness colors dancing on a wall when light is refracted through a prism, to know the feeling. It comes as no surprise to recognize that the initial impact of many sights is tied inextricably to the vivacity of their colors. The best safeguard to assure a fertile imagination, therefore, is to imprint the mind with images that remain strong. The more lively the colors, the deeper their impression; the more breathtaking their combination, the longer they remain within reach of memory and imagination.

Although many individuals attempt to define colors by absolute or immutable standards, it is virtually impossible to do so. "Light and colours, as apprehended by the imagination, are only ideas in the mind, and not qualities that have any existence in matter," Addison noted.[48] That observation was first made by John Locke, whose Essay Concerning Human Understanding established the important distinction between two very different characteristics of objects. Some qualities, Locke observed, are actually an immutable part of the objects themselves, like the materials of which they are made and their density, for example. He called these primary qualities. Others do not actually exist in the objects themselves, but are the products of human response to external stimuli, such as color and light, sounds, tastes, and smells. These are secondary qualities, and like the responses they elicit, they change according to outside influences and to inevitable variations in individual perceptions.[49] In classical terms, this means that light and color are not immutable or constant but vary according to the moment and the individual. Though Locke could have had only an inkling of what he

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was doing, by recognizing this distinction he opened a floodgate that explained variations in individual perceptions. In the long run, this effectively legitimatized a far greater degree of subjectivity in the understanding and judgment of art than classicism had ever admitted. Like virtually every characteristic which lent viability to the personal and the momentary, such an outlook not only removed color from the camp of the immutable, but drove home its unmistakable relationship to imagination or fancy.

Motion

Unlike color, motion in an object does not rely upon the subjective response of a beholder to exist, for it is an undeniable part of that object itself and can be felt as well as seen.[50] This was sure to make motion of some importance to 18th century philosophy, and when it came to his discussions concerned with fancy, Joseph Addison addressed this characteristic, if only briefly:

> We are quickly tired of looking . . . where everything continues fixed and settled in the same place and posture, but find our thoughts a little agitated and relieved at the sight of such objects as are ever in motion.[51]

Motion always seems to enliven an uneventful occasion and helps to commit it to memory. A peaceful night that otherwise might be forgotten can be recalled for years if a shower of meteors shoots across the sky. Similarly, a waterfall or the constant whir of arms on a whirligig has the capacity to impress itself indelibly upon the fancy if their beholders are in the right frame of mind.

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The power of color and motion to impress the mind is unmistakably clear, but in the end these characteristics hold their greatest importance when linked to another feature that appeals to fancy and further separates it from the calculated intent of a rational response. This is the element of surprise.

Surprise

> . . . it is the common effect of things unexpected to surprise us into a delight; and that is to be ascribed to the strong appetite, as I may call it, of the fancy.[52]

The importance of surprise should never be underestimated when concerned with fancy, for unexpected images often impress themselves indelibly upon the mind and leave behind an image that is immensely difficult to erase. Montesquieu noted in the mid-18th century that things which elicit surprise are either "marvelous, new, or unexpected," and he observed that the accessory sensations of delight which these evoke depend upon how quickly that object acts upon the mind.[53] He also noted:

> Surprise may be excited either by the object itself that is presented to our view, or by the manner in which we perceive it, and the circumstances under which we consider it: for an object may appear, in our perception, greater or less than it is in reality; it may appear different from what it actually is; and even in those cases where we see it as it is, we may see it under circumstances which excite an accessory feeling of surprise.[54]

Several valuable insights regarding fancy's proclivity for impressions can be garnered from Montesquieu's observations. On the simplest level, consider those situations where we see things exactly as

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they are, even when static, and which subsequently excite an "accessory feeling of surprise." We react to a rush of unexpected color or a profusion of ornamentation in such a manner, and provided we don't encounter colorful or profusely ornamented objects too frequently, they simultaneously surprise and please us. The feelings are totally beyond rational control when they first take hold, and inevitably they stir the imagination and excite it, through association, to recall similar delights.

The second level of surprise that Montesquieu observed is the result of our changing perceptions of objects. "Things would make but a poor appearance to the eye if we saw them only in their proper figures," he noted. This surprise is due to an object's capacity to appear greater or lesser than it is in reality or, in some instances, to appear completely different from what it actually is. Though neither classicists nor neo-classicists concerned with fancy used the now-popular French term "tromp l'oeil" (literally translated "fool the eye"), no other words better express the result of objects that surprise us by means of our changing perceptions of them. Many objects inspired by fancy present a constant exchange between reality -- as first perceived by the viewer -- and the element of surprise incorporated into that object, either intentionally or accidently. Surprise strikes the viewer's fancy at precisely the moment he realizes an object represents something other than it does at first. The sensation is one of both amusement at the new perception and delight at having dis-

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covered or overcome a deceit. By its very nature, it sets up a triangular relationship between the viewer, the object, and the object's creator, and it makes the viewer not only delighted with the thing he has seen but somewhat in awe of its creator, who has left behind his imprint even in absentia.

But the element of surprise has far greater ramifications than the mere impact of brilliant colors, moving objects, or changing perceptions upon the human mind, for surprise is linked to the fancy through the unmistakable impressions made by humor, farce, and wit. If any elements beyond color, motion, and surprise can be said to impress the fancy, these are certainly among the most important, and inevitably they stand at the forefront of our minds when we attempt to draw experiences from our memory or imagination.

The Lighter Aspects of Fancy

Samuel Johnson's most succinct definition for the lighter aspects of fancy is best captured by his seventh interpretation of the word: "Caprice, humor, whim." Admittedly, classical critics recognized that fancy was equally liable to pain or pleasure, but in the 17th century it was frequently used synonymously with wit, and as the 18th century progressed, common employment of the word clearly inclined toward its lighter character.[55] By the early 19th century its more somber aspects were almost totally excluded: subjects that were serious, despondent, tragic, frightening, evil, or mysterious were usually equated with the term imagination. Those that stood at the opposite end

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of the emotional spectrum -- the humorous, witty, or farcical -- were most frequently used in conjunction with the term fancy. The distinction could not be more important, for eventually the dichotomy grew so large that the words were separated not only through usage, but through definition as well.

Humor, farce, and wit, of course, cause us to laugh. Like all passions, those inspired by laughter were heeded with maximum caution by strict neo-classicists, who felt that these frequently served to divert the mind from the straight and narrow pursuit of the ideal. But laughter also causes men to focus outwardly rather than inwardly, and in doing so, it serves as an important release from the strain of intense thought. This latter feature proved immensely attractive to many philosophers who, from the end of the 17th century onward, sought alternatives to the harsh rationalism that characterized much neo-classic philosophy, and who subsequently saw the benefit of carefully using humor, farce, and wit as means to fuel the imagination.

Humor and Farce

John Dryden felt that the success of humor lay in its appeal to both judgment and fancy. "Comedy causes laughter in those who can judge of men and manners, by the lively representation of their folly or corruption," he wrote in 1671. He observed that its nature required both a fertile imagination and a reasonable judgment to fully appreciate; humor, after all, necessitates both a discerning mind capable of choosing events worthy of "lively representation" and an ability to adorn these in a manner that elicits laughter.

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On the other hand, Dryden felt that farce consisted primary of "forced humor and unnatural events," and acted "on the fancy only." "I detest . . . farces . . . . I am sure I have reason on my side," he wailed. The absurdity of farce simply does not require the exercise of judgment; a fertile imagination alone is necessary to provide the colorful images that characterize its extremes.[57]

Leigh Hunt, a 19th century British critic, noted the possibility of laughing at the humorous or the farcical out of a "contemptuous sense of superiority," for humor and farce frequently depend upon an individual or situation to bear the brunt of a joke. But different levels of <u>understanding</u> clearly separate the two: Literally <u>anyone</u> under any circumstances can comprehend the absurd extremes of farce; humor, on the other hand, is not always apparent. How frequently a joke must be explained because someone simply cannot <u>understand</u> its point.[58]

<u>Wit</u>

Wit differed from humor and farce. Joseph Addison first pointed out the necessity of gathering "congruity" out of "incongruity"[59] for humor to qualify as wit. It is the ability to draw parallels where no real parallels exist, to establish analogies where it is stretching a point to do so.

Addison added two further characteristics that separated wit from humor and farce -- surprise and delight[60] -- and Leigh Hunt, over a century later, incorporated them into his own definition of wit: Wit

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does not "contemplate its ideas for their own sake . . . but solely for the purpose of producing an effect by their combination." The effect, of course, is delight, and the height of the delight depends upon "the vivacity of the surprise":[61]

> Our surprise is the consequence of a sudden and agreeable perception of the incongruous; -- sudden, because even when we laugh at the recollection of it, we undergo, in imagination, a return to the suddenness of the first impression (which is why we say of a good thing that it is always new).[62]

Delight, he surmised, is as much physical as mental, and is related to the visceral reactions that cause one to temporarily and subconsciously hold one's breath: "The breath recedes only to reissue with double force; and the happy convulsion which it undergoes is the process of Laughter."[63]

Other features separate wit even further. Unlike humor or farce, in which men laugh out of a "contemptuous sense of superiority," the satisfaction given by wit is significantly different. We laugh "not to anyone's disadvantage, but simply to our joy and reassurance."[64] The joy depends upon the surprise of finding similarity in dissimilarity, the reassurance in recognizing and overcoming the double meaning.

And how does wit relate to fancy and understanding? Like farce, wit requires only a fertile fancy,[65] but here it must be susceptible not only to strong images, but to strong association as well. These, more than anything else, contribute to a quick wit; for what is wit besides the capacity automatically to associate similar but un-

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related ideas when a thought comes to mind? Fortunately enough, John Locke, the perennial humanist, carried the analogy one step further and marked the difference between men of wit and men of judgment to additionally clarify the distinction:

> . . . men who have a great deal of wit, and prompt memories, have not always the clearest judgment or deepest reason. For wit, lying most in the assemblage of ideas, and putting these together with quickness and variety . . . thereby . . . make up pleasant pictures and agreeable visions in the fancy; judgment, on the contrary, lies quite on the other side, in separating carefully, one thing from another, ideas wherein can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being misled by similitude, and by affinity to take one thing for another.[66]

The exercise of wit is by no means confined to words, for like virtually every literary convention, it also has physical manifestations. Just as wit can suggest two different meanings for a word or phrase having a single outward identity, so can a single object elicit two different ideas according to the manner in which it is perceived. No better words existed in the 18th century to express this character than wit, or deceit, but for the 20th century we again return to the French phrase "tromp l'oeil" or "fool-the-eye," since none other better expresses the intent of objects meant to surprise us with their creator's wit. The fact that many philosophers confined the realm of the fancy to experiences gathered through sight makes visual objects prime candidates for three-dimensional representations of wit, and they undeniably incorporate the "quickness" and "variety"[67] the John Locke found to be its hallmarks and the "surprise"[68] that Montesquieu observed likely to impress a fertile imagination.

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Fancy and Love[69]

When William Shakespeare wrote the lines

> Tell me where is fancy bred
> Or in the Heart or in the Head?[70]

he used the word fancy to mean "love."[71] He also employed fancy in many other contexts, and though no other author can be identified who actually viewed the two synonymously, love frequently was associated with the power of fancy from the 16th century onward. Numerous examples, both in prose and poetry, reinforce this bond. As early as 1582 Nicholas Bretton observed a relationship between the two:

> Why Fancy is the thing
> that mooveth men to love
> And tells the Lovers what to doo
> as best for their behoove.[72]

Love is a passion, and as Joseph Addison so assiduously pointed out, "The passion of love is the most general concern among men."[73] Imagination plays an integral part in arousing the feeling, for fancy "forms the pictures which . . . excite the passions."[74] Imagination fuels the passion of love, sets it spinning uncontrollably beyond the reach of rational control. Two South Carolina ladies toasted a group of gentlemen that included their husbands in March of 1773: "When passions rise may reason be the guide," but as they probably knew all too well, love simply does not respond to the yoke of reason.[75] No degree of understanding can easily control it, any less than it negates any other human sentiment.

> Love is by fancy led about
> From hope to fear, from joy to doubt.[76]

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Upon first glance, it might appear that Shakespeare's use of "fancy" to mean "love" would contrast against the precepts set forth by Addison, who confined fancy to the retention of ideas gathered solely through sight. In reality, the two are closely allied, for sight clearly supplies the imagination with the ideas that fuel the passions. In the end, Shakespeare may have been the first to suggest the relationship between fancy and sight, for after a great deal of contemplation, he finally realized that fancy was bred neither in the heart nor in the head:

> Tell me where is fancy bred,
> Or in the heart or in the head?
> How begot, how nourished?
> Reply, reply.
> It is engendered in eyes.[77]

Fancy and Taste

Taste operates on many different levels, and in the 17th and 18th centuries the role of fancy in determining taste was the subject of endless discussion. Samuel Johnson gave the words "taste, idea; conception of things" as his third definition of the word. In its crudest manifestation, taste frequently was considered to be the result of pleasure incurred jointly between novelty and excitement:[78] "Fancy forms the pictures which affect taste," noted one critic in 1764, and "these same pictures excite the passions."[79] On the opposite extreme, neo-classic rationalists felt true taste was the ability to use rational judgment, and rational judgment only, to determine between the good and bad, the right and wrong, in art. Eventually the most frequently encountered conceptions of the power generally stood

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somewhere between these two extremes and included elements drawn of each.[80]

One of the greatest problems incurred by the broad range of conceptions encompassed by taste was that of terminology. Both classical humanists and strict neo-classic rationalists complained of the indiscriminate application of the words fancy and taste to artistic preference formed on any basis, whether dependent upon intellect or upon momentary pleasure. Samuel Johnson outlined the problem well when he observed:

> Our judgment upon an airy nothing, a fancy which has no foundation, is called by the same name which we give to our determination concerning those truths which refer to the most general and unalterable nature: to the works which are only to be produced by the greatest efforts of the human understanding.[81]

In an attempt to solve that very problem, Voltaire, after some reflection, offered the following solution:

> In many things taste seems to be of an arbitrary nature, and without any fixed or uniform direction, such as in the choice of dress and equipage, and in everything that does not come within the circle of the finer arts. In this low sphere it should be distinguished, methinks, by the name of fancy; for it is fancy rather than taste that produces such an endless variety of new and contradictory modes.[82]

Voltaire's analysis is important for several reasons. He not only distinguished between taste of "arbitrary nature" and that based upon logical premise, but he applied these to objects differing significantly in character. To true taste he assigned articles that fell within the fine arts, which he supposed to be inspired by the loftiest ideals of classical antiquity. To arbitrary taste, or fancy,

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he gave the remainder -- putting the emphasis on dress and equipage, but leaving the field open to include an endless array of objects. This distinction between high art and low art, between classical inspiration and personal preference, took on increasing significance at the 19th century approached and as classically inspired objects were separated from those inspired by fancy.

By limiting the role of reason and the search for truth to the fine arts, and thereby justifying the role of personal and immediate preference in the lower sphere of the arts, Voltaire had established humanistic middle ground between the concepts of taste as espoused by strict neo-classic rationalists, and those put forward by their opponents, who conceived of taste as a totally non-rational entity.

The critics who espoused such antipathy to rules are generally called "The School of Taste" today, and they found their primary inspiration in the French phrase "Je ne sais quoi" -- literally translated "I don't know what." They frequently used the phrase synonymously with "taste." This was undoubtedly an open affront to strict neo-classicists, who asserted that they knew exactly what approach shaped their judgment of art. However, even strict rationalists did not doubt the existence of "Je ne sais quoi"; they merely questioned whether it should serve as a basis for aesthetic judgment.[83]

The School of Taste in England both encouraged and drew support from the rising interest in the ancient treatise On the Sublime,

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attributed to the Greek philosopher Longinus. By stressing the importance of emotion to both the creation and understanding of art; by advocating that art should not only persuade but transport; by emphasizing "boldness and grandeur of conception" as well as the ability to raise the passions -- by doing these things Longinus created an important focal point for the School of Taste and its defense of an emotional and subjective analysis of art.[84] As one early translator of Longinus noted in an attempt to negate the extreme teachings of neo-classic rationalism: " . . . poetical Reason is not the same as mathematical Reason," and taste "cannot be reduced to a Science or taught by any set precept." Both experience and knowledge were indispensable to the development of taste, but only to such a degree that, by constant and serious inquiry, the gain was rendered "instinctive" through association. The basis of taste in the arts he considered to reside primarily in imaginative reaction -- and imagination "is as much a Part of Reason as is Memory or Judgment."[85]

By the last quarter of the 18th century the influence of the School of Taste and the widening appeal of association caused almost every discussion of the component of taste to include a combination of factors, including judgment, imagination or fancy, and personal preference established through individual experience. This conception is not far removed from our own outlook toward taste today.[86] The tendency to use the word "fancy" to signify such broad boundaries had fewer advocates as "taste" found broader and more acceptable subscription. Samuel Johnson's inclusion of taste as one definition for fancy

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therefore seems to be a concession to its popular use or its use by followers of the School of Taste, for Johnson, himself, would probably never have used fancy to suggest true or ideal taste. This does not negate the fact that he, like many classicists, saw the virtue of incorporating an element of imagination into certain levels of artistic invention or selection. Rather, reason should be the reigning power that shaped the creation of an object and its judgment.

Objects Defined by Fancy

Almost all writers concerned with fancy and reason discussed the subjects within the abstract terms of literature, philosophy, or psychology, but the relationship between them is extended easily into the two and three dimensional world of the object. Just as imagination and fancy generally were opposed to classicism, so objects inspired by fancy stood contraposed to the ideal in classical design. "In sculpture, did ever anybody call the Apollo a fancy piece?" asked Ralph Waldo Emerson in the mid-19th century.[87] Certainly not in his time, or before. Strictly classical art objects were intended to elevate men's thoughts to immutable, time-honored ideals, not to dissolve them in the face of momentary delight; they simply could not appeal to, or emanate from, the fancy. This basic precept -- the contrast of strict classical design against that based on individual preference -- is central to an understanding of the contrast between ancient art and that inspired by fancy. No other single element is more essential to grasp when concerned with the subject.

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Does this mean that all classical subjects stand diametrically opposed to the fancy? Certainly not, only those intended to elevate men's thoughts to time-honored truths do so. Cupid, Jupiter's rape of Europa, Sirens luring sailors to their deaths -- neither these nor the other fictitious events or superhuman creatures conceived in the classical period represent the classical ideal. Thomas Sheraton observed that even the ancients were given to wild expressions of fancy, and when he published a design in 1793 for a plaque showing Diana visiting the sleeping Endymion, he made a poignant and telling observation: This "and a thousand others of the same kind" were merely the "fabrications" of ancient poets and idolaters and were created "according to their vain imagination."[88] The message was clear enough.

Despite the exceptions, distinctions between classical art and that inspired by fancy eventually had profound ramifications. The history of western art from antiquity to the end of the 18th century was an endless cycle of sometimes emulating, sometimes mocking, and sometimes reinterpreting classical styles. Classical style, nonetheless, always served as the focal point. Neither art nor philosophy could break the dominant grasp of classicism until an intellectual alternative existed to replace its influence. A positive recognition of fancy's attributes provided that alternative, and though the word today may seem the antithesis of modernism -- due to the values imposed by late Victorian society -- it was originally perceived as quite the opposite: It was literally the antithesis of classicism.

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Any style which contrasted against the straightforward lines of classical design were considered to be inspired, either wholly or in part, by fancy. When Thomas Chippendale published his Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director in 1754, he confessed in his introduction that "in executing many of the drawings my pencil has but faintly copied but those images my fancy suggested,"[89] and he claimed that his designs were suited to "the Fancy and Circumstances of Persons in all Degrees of Life."[90] Most of his elaborate engravings offered an obvious alternative to strict classicism through the abundant use of ornament. This is not to say that some of Chippendale's works were not strictly classical; they certainly were, but by introducing a profusion of decoration into the majority of his designs, he frequently intended to go against the very essence of classical philosophy. Rococo styles, with their asymmetrical, free-flowing, naturalistic designs, appealed to the fancy. So did oriental design: "The general fancy of the people runs upon East India goods," wrote Daniel Defoe in 1708,[91] and the term applied to oriental or orientally inspired objects literally until the end of the 19th century. The same was said frequently of the Gothic, as Chippendale himself showed; but in the mid-19th century the tendency to equate that style with Christian teachings which bemoaned excesses frequently negated the relationship for those who considered themselves "moral" individuals.

Objects that found their primary inspiration in fancy were not envisioned to comprise the "fancy" style in the mid-18th century. To begin, language simply did not allow it. References to the

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"Chinese," "Gothic," and "Modern" tastes abound, but none is found to the "fancy" style for the simple fact that the word was simply not used in such a context as an adjective. Equally important, objects appealing to or inspired by fancy frequently fell within the realm of already established tastes.

How might one treat those non-classical objects that fell totally outside the realm of any recognized style? These include such decorative but utilitarian goods as earthenwares with vibrant decorations, painted furniture with exhilarating surfaces, or wonderfully abstract and colorful needlework or textiles. Their invigorating, abstract, or wildly patterned designs were often described individually by words that captured their character: "spotted," "speckled," and "striped" were favorites, but as a group they had no unifying designation. The decoration on each object was inspired undoubtedly by fancy, but no name concisely encompassed the genre because fancy had not yet evolved into an adjective; therefore, it probably was impossible to perceive the material as a unified group.

Summary

Numerous 17th and 18th century critics observed and analyzed fancy. They did not always agree, and even the most perceptive of them all, Samuel Johnson, did not give sufficient information to make the word fully comprehendable. Bits and pieces, garnered from scattered sources, therefore must complete the picture of its importance to the 18th-century mind.

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A number of elements contribute to the fancy; others in turn draw from it. Taken individually, each has significance, but they hold their greatest impact when their relationship is seen as an entity. Light, color, and motion serve as external stimuli that provide the basis for visual impressions and, in turn, create a repertoire of mental images. The fancy's capacity for association, working in conjunction with these, makes it possible to recall the delights, the surprises, and the pleasures that accompanied the moment when the images were first received. Drawing upon these impressions, the fancy therefore helps to comprise and condition our responses to the world and helps to make us, individually, quite different. In turn, it provides the essential materials -- both the images and, through association, the feelings -- from which memory, imagination, taste, wit, love, and, as some neo-classic philosophy showed, even reason can draw. We can say that it provides the means by which every man is fed both mentally and emotionally, and fulfills a need as inherent and indispensable as that for food and shelter.

The acute analysis of imagination was of paramount importance to the arts, for it kept an awareness of the components of creativity and their significance to individual character in the forefront of the 18th-century mind. It also observed that, through the effects of delight, fancy provided a therapeutic alternative to classical thought and to strict reason. One of the most notable results to emerge from this analysis was recognition for the significance of an object's first

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impression. Realizing that striking appearances became indelibly impressed upon the mind, individuals began to comprehend the merit of elements that succeeded in delighting both their creators and their beholders and, subsequently, of incorporating these into objects. As positive attitudes toward it gained increased subscription, the concept became integral to artistic creation and essential to perceiving the delights of the world.

After a long period of evolution and a protracted debate concerning its merits relative to reason, fancy attained a degree of acceptance that guaranteed its place and its influence in the mid-18th century mind. As it entered this period, it began an ascent that eventually reached unprecedented heights, and with that ascent arose a need to express the word's new-found significance. Fancy was about to undergo the most influential transition in the entire course of its evolution, and during the last half of the 18th century this transition reshaped the manner in which men perceived themselves and, in turn, the way they interacted with the world around them.

> Fancy, to thy power I owe,
> Half my happiness below.[92]

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CHAPTER 2: TRANSITION

By the mid-18th century, discussions concerned with fancy identified not only its contrast to reason and to strict classical design, but finally clarified its role in providing a storehouse of visual images for the mind and emphasized its contributions to creativity and human delight. But neither these nor the dozens of other factors which converged to give it meaning hold major significance without changes in attitudes toward the word. These gave impetus to extend its use and subsequently for it to take on a new dimension as an adjective in the latter half of the 18th century.

The shift began in the 1760s. Over the next half century the change transformed the manner in which both Englishmen and their colonial counterparts viewed the material world that surrounded them. No longer was it sufficient to say that an object was merely "inspired by fancy," rather that it was a "fancy object" -- that it owed its very existence to the powers which responded to external stimuli and in return fed the mind and delighted the soul. This very change was instrumental in driving home the important new attitudes toward the dependence of creativity upon imagination, for it extended the contraposition of classical and anti-classical -- of reason and imagination -- directly into the three-dimensional world of the object. Such a

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relationship had slowly been recognized as a result of neo-classic influence, but by assimilating fancy as an adjective brought it into immediate association with the tangible world and clarified beyond doubt that objects could be unmistakable reflections of its power.

What did it mean in the 18th century to use fancy as an adjective and exactly how did it sound to the ear and mind? Take the term "fancy chair," for example, which first appeared in the 1790s. To begin, this certainly did not mean a fine chair or a decorated chair -- though either "fine" or "decorated" might be used in certain circumstances to define such objects. It did not necessarily mean that the chair struck one's fancy -- though fancy chairs undoubtedly did just that. The closest analogy, and one that might seem a bit obtuse at first glance, is to juxtapose "fancy" chair with "Grecian" or "Roman" chair. This may appear a bit inequitable, since a chair cannot actually be constructed within the fancy as one might in the other two places. But to prefix a place name before the word "chair" did not necessarily imply place of origin so much as it did concept of origin: The concepts of chair design in Greece or the concepts of chair design in classical Rome. After all, design concepts in either place differed significantly from those of the other. Similarly, one should think of fancy as having a domain or realm -- albeit within the soul or mind -- and imagine the concepts of chair that came from it as opposed to those that come from strict classical origins. One can then begin to approach 18th-century attitudes and feelings toward the use of the word as an adjective and to understand exactly how it was

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"heard" by both the ear and mind.

This idea of fancy as a conceptual place of origin was probably responsible for the long delay of lexicographers to incorporate its expanded use as an adjective into period dictionaries.[1] If the word had actually changed in meaning, it may have found more prompt recognition in a new context, but it took nearly a century for a separate definition to emerge in any published dictionary. It was no more conceivable that the word would have been entered as an adjective into an 18th-century dictionary than London or Boston. Their meanings as nouns were clearly understood, and their use as adjectives was merely a convenient extension of their primary significance: A London chair, for example, or a Boston chair. A change in emphasis for fancy did not imply a change of meaning, but rather a change in attitude toward that which it represented.

The last question to ask is why the word "fanciful" -- which was clearly, though infrequently, used as an adjective -- did not fill the need as well as that of "fancy." Simply put, it meant something different: "Full of fancy" or, as Samuel Johnson observed, "full of wild images," rather than "from the fancy."[2] The distinction may seem unimportant to us today, but for the 18th century the difference was quite significant. To imply that the primary interest in the chair was its origin rather than its effect was to lend viability to its existence. It was a clear means of showing an up-to-date outlook, a willingness to accept this new way of perceiving the world. As the

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mind and ear became adjusted to hearing the word fancy in its new context, entire new realms opened, and they slowly created a means not only of identifying the origin of a piece, but of identifying its character as well. By the last decade of the century, the use of the word in its new context made it possible to identify quickly and clearly a genre of material that had never before been concisely unified for lack of an appropriate term. A change in attitude precipitated a change in vocabulary, and the change in vocabulary began to create a new stylistic designation. But the change was not immediate, and from its introduction in the 1760s, until the word attained a new status in the 1790s, the period of transition was cautious and at times uneasy.

Fancy Millinery Goods and Fancy Textiles

The earliest reference to fancy as an adjective before a noun dates from 1761. Found on the trade card of Martha Wheatland and Sister, Milliners and Haberdashers "At Queen Charlott's Head" in Cheapside, London, it advertised "all sorts of Haberdashery & Fancy Millinery Goods at the Lowest Prices" and "in the most Elegant Taste."[3] This does not preclude the possibility of earlier references, but if they do exist, they are rare at best. A similar example, in which the word is used as a predicate adjective, dates from the same year, is again from London, and seemingly reinforces the novel use of the word: New and colorful wallpapers that had recently appeared in London shops "are all what they call fancy."[4] A third reference, and the first yet found from the American colonies, also comes from the ad-

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vertisement of a milliner -- this one by Sarah Pitt of Williamsburg, Virginia -- who had on hand for sale in 1769 "A very fancy assortment of paper boxes."[5] In 1770 a notable English woman recorded in her diary that she had attended a dance and observed a friend "who had on a fancy dress" much like her own. Between 1770 and 1773 milliners in America advertised a variety of costume accessories that ranged from "True Italian Fancy Caps"[7] and "Fancy stomachers"[8] to "fancy pins"[9] and "French fancy collars."[10] These show that the word had been assimilated into American "English" within a decade of its apparent introduction into London. In the 1780s the importance of fancy to costume and costume accessories was given further impetus by the broad application of the word to colorfully decorated textiles, and by 1790 it was common, even standard, to find a range of fancy millinery goods and fancy textiles for sale by any respectable merchant. That year, for example, Denton, Little, and Company of New York advertised the arrival of ships bearing from England "A very handsome assortment of Fall Goods," including

> Printed, purple, and fancy calicoes, of the newest fashions . . . plain, fancy, colored, and tamboured muslins . . . fancy and black ginghams . . . Fancy, sattin, and lutestring ribbons . . . and . . . a variety of fancy swansdown vest patterns . . . .[11]

It seems only natural that costume and textile should have been the first areas to find widespread acceptance for the influence of fancy, for the colorful and wildly patterned designs often representative of fashions seldom demonstrate strictly rational taste. Numerous writers had used the word to describe costume, as Shakespeare did when

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he observed the quality of a "habit" or smock worn by one of his characters: "Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy; but not express'd in fancy; rich not gawdy."[12] In the mid-17th century ribbons worn on suits with open-legged breeches were known as "fancies."[13] Remember, too, that Voltaire had considered fancy to be the very cause of the "endless variety of new and contradictory modes"[14] that characterized clothing, for clothing changes style with far greater frequency, and is far more susceptible to individual notion, than literally any other area of design, where it does so more slowly.

* * *

References to fancy as an adjective were infrequent throughout the 1770s and indicate an uneasy acceptance of the word in its new role. A constant exchange between the positive new feelings and the negative old created a cautious attitude regarding the degree and extent to which it could be employed. It was seldom applied to mediums beyond those of clothing and textiles; but in 1772 Davis and Minnit, ceramic dealers in New York, may have first applied the word to pottery in America when they advertised " . . . all kinds of earthenwares, with some curious fancy wares" for sale at their store.[15] By the late 1780s the story began to change, and everywhere one turned, the term appeared with increasing frequency: Whereas in 1773 an immigrant Philadelphia glass cutter named Lazarus Isaac had cut glass with figures "to the particular fancy of those who may please to employ him,"[16] in 1789 John Frederick Amelung, who established the first suc-

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cessful glass manufactory in America, cut "Devices, Cyphers, Coats of Arms, or any other Fancy Figures on Glass."[17] Even nature was not immune, for in 1784 George Washington observed the virtues of a new variegated grass as feed: "If cattle or horses will eat the fancy grass in the green state, or made into hay, it certainly must be very valuable."[18]

By the 1790s the power of fancy began to jell into an acceptable identity for individuals who considered themselves aware of the latest trends in the arts. Its use as an adjective became increasingly common, and with every year that passed, fancy found new objects to define, new audiences to please. The year 1792 seems to have been particularly important: "Fancy Goods," an all-encompassing term referring to a diversity of small personal objects -- scented soaps, tortoiseshell combs, fine stationery, and perfume -- may have been advertised for the first time in America when they were offered for sale in Boston.[19] After that point they continued to be one of the most popular manifestations of the spirit.

Interest in the fancy during this period found further encouragement by the increased accessibility of literature that dealt with its concepts. The earlier writings of Shakespeare, Dryden, Locke, and Addison found broad subscription as they were printed and reprinted in both England and America, but significant new works also appeared to give the subject further impetus. In 1770 Philip Freneau, one of the earliest Americans to publish poetry, wrote "The Power of Fancy" in

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which he not only extolled its virtues but clearly embraced them as his own:

> Fancy, thou the Muses' pride,
> In thy painted realms reside
> Endless images of things,
> Fluttering each on golden wings,
> Ideal objects, such a store,
> The universe could hold no more:
> Fancy, to thy power I owe
> Half my happiness below;[20]

About that same time Charlotte Smith, an English poetess, wrote another, "To Fancy":

> Thee, Queen of Shadows! -- shall I still invoke,
> Still love the scenes thy sportive pencil drew,
> When on mine eyes the early radiance broke
> Which show'd the beauteous, rather than the true.[21]

Numerous others existed as well, but their full magnitude and their combined influence perhaps is represented best by the work of Richard Alsop, a young Connecticut writer who, in 1788, wrote a poem of over 200 pages in length entitled "The Charms of Fancy." Though easily criticized by today's standards and not published until 60 years after it was written, the poem was based upon materials "drawn from English writers, and selected, compounded, and used, with a degree of ingenuity, taste and poetical ability perhaps superior to any of their own poets of a similar class."[22] The sheer length of the poem stands today as a major testimony to the pervasive influence of the fancy and its concepts at the end of the 18th century.

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Neo-classic Style

Just as neo-classic thought was responsible for many of the new outlooks that reshaped perceptions of the fancy, so neo-classic style contributed significantly to its prosperity.[13] The excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii opened the eyes of the 18th century to the realization that the thoughts and tastes of the ancients had not been governed solely by restraint. Brilliant colors and non-rational designs covered literally every surface of their homes and possessions and made it increasingly clear that emotion and delight had permeated their world.[23] Such inconsistencies with the classical "ideal" were undoubtedly a revelation to the 18th-century mind, which sought through a "new" classicism to approach more closely not only the art of the ancients but, with some restraint, their attitudes and feelings as well.

This new awareness of the bounds and extent of classicism were further reinforced by Longinus' treatise On the Sublime, and together they had a profound influence on the acceptance of the attributes of fancy. In realizing that the ancients had not viewed fancy and reason as mutually exclusive, these provided a legitimate means of accepting one without refuting the other. "Fancy and Reason go hand in hand,"[24] as John Dryden had observed, and such an outlook significantly affected attitudes in the late 18th century. This was a time of transition that carefully weighed the relative merits of reason and feeling: Each was considered to have redeeming features that complemented the other and

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further contributed to human experience.

Subsequently, objects designed in the neo-classic period frequently responded to a variety of influences, and to fully understand their style, one must realize that they often drew upon a broad range of sources. Even the fanciest of goods might incorporate elements drawn from the rigid order of rationalism. Geometric forms -- circles, squares, and ellipses, among others -- found direct application not only as inlay and design motifs, but as the very basis for the shapes of objects as well. Demi-lune commodes, elliptical tables and teapots, oval-back and square-back chairs became acceptable and standard shapes in neo-classic design. Sometimes fancy objects responded to the influence of classicism and incorporated classical motifs that represented the ongoing interest of 18th-century designers and philosophers in the decoration and philosophy of the ancient world. These, too, were subtle reminders that fancy alone should not determine either an object's final design <u>or</u> its merit.

Just as fancy goods sometimes incorporate elements of strictly rational or classical design, those primarily classical or rational in nature might include an element of fancy. Even the most restrained geometric forms and the most rational classical symbols frequently were given new life through the use of contrasting materials and opposing colors that heightened the effect of the geometry and the meaning of the symbols. Consider the free use of wildly grained wood veneers, often with eye-catching contrasts in color, that character-

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ize even the most formal furniture of the period. One cannot help but think of Samuel Johnson extolling the complimentary roles of feeling and reason in art, where emotion was expected to imbue the mind with a desire for immutable truth and not merely a need for it.[25]

But none of this specifically clarifies what a fancy object looked like, nor identifies those features which precisely designated goods tagged with its label. In many instances, this is still a very difficult question to answer. Use of the word usually reflected the acceptance of a new attitude more than it did the specific attributes of a new style. What would characterize this new attitude? It is not purely rational, of course. It usually indicates a decorative quality capable of impressing the mind, and it suggests a degree of subjectivity or personal notion on the part of the creator. These might be expressed through a generous use of color, of patterned decoration and naturalistic ornament, or of elements that elicit surprise or laughter.

What objects might reflect the influence of this new attitude? Fancy goods, which encompassed a multitude of objects in an array of forms, did so. So did clothing, which, as Voltaire observed, changes with greater frequency than literally any other area of creative endeavor. The same could be said of textiles and wallpaper, and of literally any of the other dozens, or hundreds, of classifications to which the word was applied. In essence, if any object was not purely rational in its approach; if it possessed a character that was visually stunning and gave a sense of delight to behold; then it was legitimate

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to call it fancy regardless of its similarity or dissimilarity to other goods called by the same name. Fancy was not a strict stylistic designation, in most instances, but a designation of a postive attitude toward the role of imagination in the three-dimensional world.

When, then, did objects reflect a new awareness of fancy as it expressed a specific style? This, too, is a difficult question to answer, though furniture seems to encompass one of the few categories in which certain features appear consistently enough to legitimately designate the word as such. After looking at some of those features that repeatedly characterize fancy furniture, we will then consider "fancy pictures," in which the very opposite is true.

Fancy Furniture

The emergence of fancy furniture in the late 1790s seems to have been an outgrowth of formal, painted furnishings encouraged by the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii. Such formal furniture was given significant impetus by George Hepplewhite, who published engraved designs for it in 1788, and by Thomas Sheraton, who did the same over the following 15 years. But neither man used fancy to describe his work nor specifically included designs of the type that shortly thereafter comprised fancy furniture. Hepplewhite was quick to admit that his products had a "rich and splendid appearance";[26] but he also made clear his intention of avoiding "mere novelty . . . whim at the instance of a caprice," and he openly eschewed "fancies" and advocated only articles "of general use and service."[27]

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Sheraton did not treat the subject much better. In one of his earlier works he designed a carved element that he called a "fancy leaf"[28] and observed that his engraving for a particular bed appealed most to the "fancifulness" of women.[29] However, he ignored the word fancy altogether in his Cabinet Dictionary of 1803. Even the list of subscribers and cabinetmakers appended to that work is devoid of a single fancy chairmaker -- though some of the numerous "japanned" chairmakers listed there may have advertised elsewhere as such. Why would it be that Sheraton occasionally used fancy in his earlier publications yet, as the word gained popularity, cautiously avoided it in his last? This is possibly due to the fact that fancy, as applied to furniture, was evolving from a general term to a specific one but was not yet consolidated sufficiently to warrant a separate identity.

By the 1790s an acceptance of japanned finishes and a positive encouragement for the precepts of fancy converged to create new furnishings in which colorful decoration was used with more versatility than previously allowed. My earliest reference to fancy furniture dates to 1790, when the estate inventory of Joseph Barnard of Deerfield, Massachusetts, included a "fancy looking glass" worth 8 shillings.[31] This, however, seems to be an isolated example, and not until 1797 did William Challen, "Fancy Chairmaker from London," offer "every article in the fancy chair line" for sale in his New York showroom.[32] From that point onward, such advertisements appeared with increasing frequency. Soon after the turn of the century they suggest

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an emerging identity for goods that bore the name and begin to imply the appearance of a specific new style.

What did fancy furniture look like? Several features appear commonly enough to tie together the genre. First, and most important, is the liberal use of paint -- almost totally replacing the carved elements that decorated earlier pieces and more formal examples in the same period. Fancy furniture was invariably "painted and gilt in the most fanciful manner," as John and Hugh Finlay, Baltimore chair-makers, had advertised.[33] Every visible surface was covered -- usually by red, green, or yellow; occasionally white or blue was used and, on rare occasions, even black. The overall impact was often heightened by the use of decorative stripes that outlined flat areas or high-lighted turning, or by the selective use of gilt. Sometimes fancy furniture was ornamented with "real views" or "fancy landscapes"[34] -- chairs and settees had them on their crests, case pieces on their tops or drawer fronts. Frequently, they had decorative details drawn from antiquity: Not only urns, vases, and peacock feathers, but "trophies of music, war, husbandary, love . . . . "[35]

The overall forms of the earliest fancy furniture did not vary from their plain counterparts -- particularly in case pieces. In chairs, a new form seems to have emerged around 1810 after an initial period relying upon standard neo-classic forms, and as they did so, the style assumed a new identity.[36] This new type of chair seemed limited exclusively to fancy furniture and usually consisted of delicately

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turned front legs splaying outward just before the floor; a rounded seat made of painted rush and faced with a painted fascia; and rear legs that engaged the seat and then continued upward to support the crest and stay rails (Figure 3).

What was the inspiration for these chairs or, more generally, this furniture? This is not yet totally clear, as absolutely no original research in the derivations of the type has yet been undertaken. The most important element to comprehend in regard to fancy furniture is its overall effect, which brings to mind the colorful interiors of Herculaneum and Pompee. These furnishings would seem perfectly at home among the vividly painted walls and the landscape scenes that characterize such interiors. However, fancy furniture was not a strict emulation of any element of classical antiquity, but an attempt to adapt its outlooks and its perceptions to the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Finally, in looking at this furniture, it is important to re-emphasize that no other group of objects to which the word fancy applied so readily represents a stylistic designation. The consistency of both the ornamentations, the application of the term fancy to these pieces, and even the emergence of a specific chair form exclusively reserved for the style all reinforce this. No other word was applied to the genre, for none other was as explicit in eliciting the specific associations that it had established in the neo-classic mind. "Painted" and "japanned" were not satisfactory because they referred

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to techniques applied to a broad range of goods -- not all of which were "fancy." No other word suited the objects so well.

This does not preclude the possibility that fancy was used as a specific stylistic designation for other goods, but the information currently at hand is too sketchy to suggest so clear a designation as with furniture. When more research is done, other areas may fall into this category, and if any seems a likely candidate, it is textiles. For the time being, however, in order to be cautious, the field should be carefully limited.

In contrast, we should take a look at an area in which fancy had only the vaguest connotations, where it had far more to do with attitudes than it did stylistic designations.

Fancy Pictures

The term "fancy pictures" seems to have appeared in the 1780s and was confined to paintings whose subjects derived from imagination. Thomas Reid, a Scottish philosopher writing in the early 1780s, is the first individual I have found to use the term, but his comments suggest that the meaning already was well comprehended. He helped to clarify its significance in an essay he wrote regarding the powers of the mind. In this essay he drew an interesting analogy between what he called "the different kinds of our conceptions, and the different works of the painter." A painter "either makes fancy pictures, or he copies from the painting of others, or he paints from life," wrote Reid, and

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"I think our conceptions admit of a division very similar." He went on to explain his view of such "fancy pictures":

> They are commonly called creatures of fancy, or of imagination. They are not copies of any original that exists, but are originals themselves. Such was the conception which Swift formed of the island of Laputa and of the country of the Lilliputians; Cervantes of Don Quixote and his Squire; Harrington of the government of Oceana; and Sir Thomas More of that of Utopia. We can give names to such creatures of imagination, conceive them distinctly and reason consequentially concerning them, though they never had an existence.[37]

The estate of John Hancock, president of the Second Continental Congress, included several "fancy pictures" when the inventory of his personal possessions was taken after his death in 1787;[38] just five years later James L. Walker, an artist who advertised from Baltimore, advised the public that he painted "Landscapes, either from Nature or fancy."[39] Lawrence Sully, brother of the well-known portraitist Thomas Sully -- and himself an artist -- advertised that he painted "Fancy and Mourning Devices" when he first landed in Norfolk, Virginia, from Britain in 1793.[40]

Precisely what did a fancy picture look like? Innumerable painters composed them, and each, undoubtedly, did so somewhat differently. Yet, it seems from the evidence at hand that the term applied most frequently to imaginary landscapes -- whether intended to be hung on the wall or incorporated into the myriad of decorative goods popular at that time. Thomas and Hugh Finlay, Irish artisans who came to Baltimore in the 1790s and who were among the first in this country to advertise fancy furniture, often decorated their products with either "real Views" or "Fancy Landscapes."[41] Imaginary

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views also were incorporated into wallpapers, and by 1813 Moses Grant, Junior, advertised "Fancy Landscape Paper Hangings" among the "fashionable" goods that he offered for sale in Boston.[42] Unfortunately, it usually is conjectural whether such views were real or fancy -- since they do not seem to differ in exterior character when executed by the same artist. But an indisputable look at one such picture can be garnered from the well-documented, imaginary landscape painted several decades later, in 1829, by Charles Codman of Portland, Maine (Figure 4). Signed on the reverse, "Fancy Piece," probably by its first owner, this painting gives an unmistakably clear look at one man's perception of the genre.[43] And yet, even with this example, it would be impossible to separate this piece from any of the dozens of real landscapes that Codman painted if it were set next to any of them. The reality of the situation is such that, unless we know the subject, there is simply no way of telling from any exterior quality of the piece itself. This further drives home the unmistakable point that fancy, during the neo-classic period, was often a totally subjective characteristic reflective of inner human attitudes and not an exterior characteristic that reflected a solidly objective quality.

Nonetheless, fancy did have real significance to the fine art of painting. A recognition of its positive attributes encouraged a positive new attitude toward the very acceptability of landscape painting. The idea of painting a landscape, either imaginary or real, or of painting anything that did not exist and therefore had to be imagined, was not popularly subscribed to until the end of the 17th

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century. The subsequent introduction of fancy as a viable source of creation, and the general tendency of discussions concerning it to draw upon the magnificence of nature,[44] opened a new world of perception for the painter and helped to redefine the course of the arts in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Women and Fancy

Fancy was frequently associated with women, and along with shifts in attitude toward its concepts, there emerged an increased awareness of its relationship to them. The ancients had represented imagination through a seated woman with colorful robes draped around her torso and a crown with winged images surmounting her head.[45] From that point onward, literary references personified fancy and alluded to its character with the feminine pronoun "she." In the mid-18th century the word sometimes was used as a woman's name.[46] Consider the estate of William Powell of York County, Virginia, whose probate inventory of 1764 enumerated a number of valuable possessions, including "A Negro woman called Fancy,"[47] Were men never named "Fancy"? Barring some unimaginable exception, it simply was not done.

After the mid-18th century, the gradual shift of fancy to an adjective served to further reinforce the alliance between its character and the minds of women. Consider the areas in which the new use of the word found its most widespread subscription: The first was women's clothing; the second, textiles intended for clothing or household decoration; and the third, furniture. Admittedly, the word was

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often used in other contexts, but the significance lies in the fact that it frequently defined objects worn by women, used by women, and, equally important, purchased by them -- quite often exclusive of the immediate use or influence of their husbands.

By the 1790s an association between women and fancy was unmistakably established within the neo-classic mind. Thomas Sheraton, who published The Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book in 1793, admitted in a moment of candor that "fancifulness seems most peculiar to the taste of females."[48] When one surveys the attitudes of the period, his observation had broad subscription, but depending on the outlook of the beholder, it had either positive or negative connotations.

Among those who frequently associated women and fancy with a negative point of view, and apparently considered the relationship a matter of fact, was the future president John Adams. Coming as he did from conservative New England stock, he found himself forever at odds between his intellectual response to the dangers of the material world that surrounded and his personal appreciation of it.[49] His fear that young America would aspire to riches and to luxury, and that those, in turn, would evoke "effiminicy" and vice, concerned him almost constantly from the period of the Revolution until his death a half century later.[50] The time he spent in Europe during the 1770s, particularly in the courts of France, served to heighten both his awareness and his suspicion of luxuries of every sort. "The delights

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of France are innumerable," he wrote his wife in July of 1778. "If human nature could be made happy by anything that can please the eye, the ear, the taste, or any other sense, or passion, or fancy, this country would be the region for happiness."[51] He went on to say:

> But what is all this to me? I receive but little pleasure in beholding all these things, because I cannot but consider them as bagatelles, introduced by time and luxury in exchange for the great qualities, and hardly manly virtues of the human heart. I cannot help suspecting that the more elegance, the less virtue, in all times and countries [my emphasis].[52]

Adams considered the "manly" virtues of restraint and reason the very staples of neo-classic thought, and he repeatedly advocated their importance to the aspirations of the young nation. He disapproved of art that was "merely ornamental"; for Adams the sole purpose of art was to imbue its beholders with didactic or moral lessons. One of his enlightened moments of flexibility toward that philosophy surfaced in a family letter of 1770: "I don't mean to suggest that Arts and accomplishments which are merely ornamental, should be wholly avoided or neglected," he wrote his daughter, "especially by your sex; but that they ought to be slighted when in comparison or competition with those which are useful and essential [my emphasis]."[53]

To the dismay of many women, the tendency to equate their minds with fancy usually did little to encourage the value of an education: "I found the mind of a female, if such a thing existed, was thought not worth cultivation,"[54] lamented a young woman in the early years of the 19th century. But fortunately for most women, conservative neo-classic thought differed significantly from the enlightened

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philosophy of the period which usually looked upon women quite differently. Sometimes the philosophy reflected an outlook which suggested that they, like men, had the potential to be "governed by reason" as Benjamin Rush noted in his examination address to the ladies of the Philadelphia Female Seminary in 1809.[55] As a result of these new attitudes, many women -- particularly those of the upper classes -- were offered educational opportunities that their forebears had been denied. One of the most significant changes wrought by such opportunities was observed by a husband at the beginning of the 19th century:

> Instead of wasting precious hours of their lives in trifling amusements and petty occupations, the ladies, in a majority of instances, are now profitably employed in the cultivation of their minds . . . . The husband no longer need blush at the folly of his wife, or dread to spend the long evenings of winter in her insipid company.[56]

Equally influential was an interesting melding of these two philosophies that viewed women in a positive light and advocated preparing them to be intelligent wives and responsible citizens. At the same time it considered them to have a strong penchant for fancy and often emphasized its virtues in their education.

Such an outlook had a pragmatic as well as a philosophical approach. Reading philosophy and attending lectures may have been marvelous new experiences for the rich, but the limited alternatives of the 18th century spared few women, except those of substantial means, the luxury of a life of total intellect.

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One might rightfully argue that the improved status of women was due, in part, to the rhetoric of the Revolutionary period that espoused the broadest philosophy of liberty and equality; but it also seems essential to suggest that their status was given significant impetus by the changing attitudes toward imagination: That an improved image of fancy effected an improved status for those who embodied its precepts. Women were perceived differently, in part, for the simple reason that fancy was perceived to have a significantly more positive role than it had ever before possessed. Unfortunately, progress for most women -- even those of prosperous means -- was confined to more limited rewards. There was seldom little time for them to spare in the pursuit of pure intellectual endeavors and so they were reduced to finding a broadened field of fulfillment within the confines of their household existence.

An increased awareness of fancy provided the means for women to improve both their outlooks and their sense of self-esteem. By recognizing the positive virtues of imagination, by exercising these virtues with the careful balance of reason, women found a new option within the limited alternatives offered by 18th-century society. With approval of its concepts growing literally daily, with the possibility of exercising fancy without the guilt that had so long been imposed as a by-product of societal disapproval, women indeed found a new sense of release. The capacity of imagination to disperse "grief and melancholy" became immediately visible; it was "conducive to health" and

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"set the . . . spirits in pleasing and agreeable motions."[57] But these pleasures were by no means confined to the mere, intangible exercise of imagination, for its attributes extended into the lives of women even further by the new emphasis placed on fancywork and fancy cooking.

Fancywork

Fancywork referred to a variety of needlework that relied upon decorative stitches beyond running or whipstitch. It ranged from needlepoint and embroidery to lacemaking and tambour. It also encompassed such diverse goods as painted firescreens and handscreens, ornamental flower stands, and boxes embellished with a profusion of eye-catching designs. One early 19th-century English periodical noted that some "fancy-work" was embellished with compositions of figures, flowers, shells, landscapes, and numerous other designs "which fancy may suggest," either in colors or "relief."[58]

Unlike fancy goods, which were purchased at retail stores, fancywork was learned at school or produced within the home, and it helped to balance significantly the mundane responsibilities of everyday life. Almost all objects encompassed by the term had practical use as well as ornamental appeal, and the terminology suggests that they frequently were perceived as essentials even if, in fact, they were not. They were fancy work, not fancy play. And yet, despite the fact that they were often tedious and time-consuming to produce, they were a welcome alternative to the uninspired responsibilities of most household chores. They were of great significance to women, and the

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important social change which they reflected at the end of the 18th century, both in England and America, was best expressed in a periodical published in England in 1810:

> It is impossible to congratulate our fair countrywomen too warmly on the revolution which has of late years taken place, when drawing and fancy-work of endless variety have been raised on the ruins of that heavy, unhealthy, and stupifying occupation, needlework.[59]

Schools founded to educate women in the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic taught a variety of fancywork skills. But despite the liberal rhetoric that sometimes recognized the mental capacities of women and emphasized a need to cultive their intellectual talents, even women frequently preferred the immediate joys of fancywork above those of strict intellectual pursuits or practical household responsibilities. Dr. William Buchanan, an eminent English physician concerned with the responsibilities of women toward their children, observed with dismay that a great deal of time was "inconsiderately spent by young ladies in fancy works, and in learning to draw, to paint, or to play upon some musical instrument," for which they would never have a need.[60] His sentiments were not without foundation; the reality of women's education often stressed music above mathematics, painting above philosophy, fancywork and conversation above composition.

Fancywork was the medium through which women could immediately express themselves and their creativity. It became an increasingly acceptable outlet for them to contribute to the world where they

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lived in a thoroughly delightful and an unmistakably tangible way. Fancywork's beneficial effects contrasted against the dulling, burdensome responsibility of everyday housework and sewing. It lifted the mind, prompted the imagination, and gave a substantial sense of self-worth. Fancywork did not become an end in itself, but a means by which women could measure themselves and develop their taste while they broadened their horizons. An American woman expressed her glee at having learned the skills when she had been in school at the turn of the 19th century: "fancy work opened up a new world of delight," she exclaimed in her remembrances nearly three quarters of a century later.[61]

Fancy Cookery

Beyond the delights of fancywork, women's creative outlets most frequently were expressed in the kitchen. Throughout the 18th century, fancy was always considered an integral component of creative cooking, and references to it in cookbooks are numerous; but the earliest reference to "fancy" as an adjective in that context is 1801. The term found rapid adaption thereafter.[62] Any food that included an element of imagination -- either in form, content, or decoration -- fell within its realm. Hannah Glasse, a mid-18th century Englishwoman who wrote several cookbooks that found great popularity in America, used fancy most frequently in relation to desserts, and once the word was adopted as an adjective, it defined sweets more often than any other kind of food.

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For women the delight of fancy foods was magnified beyond the joy of consuming the final product, because it gave them an option to use their creativity and provided an alternative to the plain foods that dominated their existence. Even wealthy women who had servants to prepare their meals, to serve, and to clean up afterwards frequently took part in the preliminary preparation of fancy foods. Fancy foods were not only the high point of a dinner, but they usually were prepared in a comfortable setting away from the direct source of fire. This had particular appeal in summer, when fruit-flavored ices or ice creams were in vogue, or when cold butter was required for pastry dough -- and preparing fancy foods at that time of the year was a particular pleasure. But the dirty work -- the long hour stooped over a vat of ice while turning a sorbétière by hand awaiting the cream to jell or standing before a hot fire that belched smoke while the pastry baked -- was left to servants in the households of fashionable ladies.

For most late 18th-century women, learning fancywork and fancy cooking was a halfway point between learning plainwork and learning philosophy. The skills were not only "innocent pleasures" that safely refined a young lady's tastes and talents, but they further reinforced a sense of self-esteem without raising expectations to levels that could not be fulfilled within the inevitable responsibilities of motherhood or the limited opportunities offered by 18th-century society. It was neither an intentional ploy by men nor the blind acceptance of women that caused the fancy to assume such significance. Rather, the increased visibility and improved image of the concept; the liberal

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rhetoric of the Revolutionary period that encouraged social experimentation; an improved self-esteem for women; and a new sense of economic security that afforded the luxury of spare time -- all of these converged to nurture the acceptance of the fancy within the limited opportunities available to neo-classic women.

Changing Life Styles

By the fourth quarter of the 18th century the influence of fancy began to transform not only the intangible world of the intellect and the world of the object but, more importantly, the manner in which individuals interacted with each other in their surroundings. By discouraging the predominance of rigid rules and encouraging a somewhat more subjective or personal approach to life, fancy nurtured a new sense of informality among those willing to accept its attributes. Mark Girouard, the English social and architectural historian, points to the dawning of this new informality about 1770 -- a period that immediately followed the first evidence of the word's transition from a noun to an adjective:

> . . . increasing value was put on spontaneous expression of emotion, on sensibility rather than sense, on love matches rather than arranged marriages . . . . Young girls sat at their dressing tables and had fantasies about Byron, who became the symbol of revolt against convention . . . . Men and women began to lounge and recline instead of sitting up straight . . . . The upper classes as a whole became increasingly enthusiastic about the country and country pursuits.[63]

Other aspects of life changed as well, seeking to further break down the long-established distinctions between reason and fancy. Pots

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filled with ornamental flowers found their way into passages and parlors, and the rigid forms of geometric parterres and topiary gave way to naturalistic landscapes. The salubrious effects of nature enumerated by Joseph Addison nearly three-quarters of a century before finally found expression in acceptable outlets by those who were aware of the most up-to-date outlooks. Taking walks to contemplate and observe the landscape could compete with the benefits of reading the classics, and country gentlemen freely could pursue their instincts and enjoy the "primitive emotions" aroused by hunting.[64]

"What?" one would say, "This sounds like the beginning of romanticism!" Indeed it does; in the end, what is romanticism besides a rejection of Roman classicism and the all-pervasive power of reason and the subsequent embrace of a subjective approach based upon the virtues of feelings nurtured by imaginative response? A change in attitudes toward the relationship of fancy to reason stood at the very core of the move from classic to romantic, and use of the word fancy became a popular means of expressing an undeniable acceptance of such attitudes. The neo-classic period, by insisting upon a cautious balance of fancy with reason and by looking back at classicism for inspiration, did not yet fully embrace a romantic outlook. But the seeds of the new attitude had been sown, and as the 19th century progressed, they found a populace anxious to nurture them and, in the end, to harvest them.[65]

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Conclusion

Changes in attitude toward the fancy and its extension as an adjective had progressed significantly by the early 19th century. The incongruous ideas surrounding it had grown to moderately well-defined concepts that found their primary inspiration in literature. Their academic use was confined largely to well-educated individuals exposed to the influences of poetry and philosophy; to those who purchased their clothing and their furnishings in urban areas; and to those who had the means to afford the luxury of elaborate homes and surplus decoration.

A positive outlook toward the relationship of fancy to creativity and taste inevitably wrought changes both in the way men thought and in the way they perceived the world around them. By finding virtue in subjective response -- a virtue which not only equalled reason in many cases but actually surpassed it in others -- it gave significant impetus for the co-existence of imagination and reason not only within the realm of the mind, but within the tangible world of the object. It thereby generated a new designation for objects that contrasted against restrained classical art and created not only a new genre of household goods, but a positive new influence in literature and music and a new approach to personal deportment. It also gave new recognition to the value of certain work and to the "innocent pleasures" of imaginative leisure.

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As the precepts of fancy found widespread subscription and began their evolution into a recognizable style, they assumed an increasingly clear connection with the taste of women. They opened up a new world of self-esteem, security, and delight in an era that frequently expressed the equality of the female sex but was neither totally willing, nor totally able, to grant it. They contributed to the status of men by elevating wives to a level of refinement and awareness that not only reflected favorably upon them but, more significantly, helped men to perceive the world with a new sense of values and an acute eye. But men, too, continued to use the word with great frequency, prompted by the increased visibility of the word and an obvious appeal that helped them to comprehend the concepts better than ever before. With new outlooks and new understandings, with a clearer picture of the role that fancy played in creativity, men were no less susceptible to its influence than their wives. When industrialization began to take hold in the early 19th century and new means of producing inexpensive decoration became an important hallmark of the factory system as well as a necessity for the traditional artisan wishing to meet that competition, men became almost as instrumental to the industrial production of the style as women were in a domestic context. At its height, it would be no less dependent upon their influence than that of their wives.

Despite the widespread acceptance of fancy in the years before 1815, it was limited in use when compared to the period that followed.

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Major shifts remained to take place. Taste-conscious, urban-oriented individuals who had first molded the concepts into an acceptable entity slowly lost control and interest as the fancy slipped into the realm of the middle class. Its character began to change as well, due in part to the people who became increasingly aware of the concepts but, more significantly, to both the philosophy and literature which finally suggested, quite clearly, that fancy and imagination were significantly different. Increasingly fancy was perceived to respond to the lighthearted and delightful; the somber and the sad became more clearly the jurisdiction of imagination. As the separation became more clear, the emphasis of the concepts surrounding fancy gradually shifted from a word that defined the origins of objects or thoughts to one that frequently suggested their effect. The change was subtle but significant.

As the lighthearted and delightful fell within the domain of fancy, the character of objects that it prefixed not only changed -- they became more clearly defined. Fancy was not just a term used to identify objects inspired by the imagination but, increasingly, a specific term that identified specific objects with specific stylistic characteristics, as fancy furniture had been in the earlier period. Fancy carpets came to signify boldly patterned Scotch carpets; fancy coverlets referred to colorful Jacquard coverlets; and fancy painting most frequently meant the delightful art of "marbling" and "graining" woodwork or furniture. Its generic use increased as well and blossomed into full flower in the 1820s and 1830s when it seemed impossible to

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find enough objects to display the public's acceptance of the new attitude. In this respect, literally nothing was immune from its influence.

Between 1760 and 1815 the fancy created a sense of balance by offsetting the rigid extremes of neo-classicism and providing an alternative to the confining limits of strict reason and a diversion from the overriding monotony that must have characterized 18th-century life. It may well have been this balance, this sense of completeness, that provided a desirable model for emulation when the full impact of the fancy finally spread beyond the conservative confines of the wealthy and the well-educated in the early years of the 19th century. As a romantic outlook was increasingly ascribed to, those of moderate means slowly but surely obtained the ability and the awareness to emulate its attitudes. This started slowly after the War of 1812, gained momentum in the 1820s, and finally culminated in unprecedented expressions of jubilation that often characterized the taste in the mid-1830s. At that point, people like Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery, whose representative lives we explored at the beginning of this thesis, took the interpretations as close to total exuberance as they could possibly hope to do. It would never again be the same.

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NOTES: ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND INTRODUCTION

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2. The Works in Verse and Prose of Nicholas Bretton, ed. Alexander Grossat, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (1879; rpt. New York: A.M.S. Press, 1966), II, 20, cited henceforth as Works in Verse and Prose.

3. Richard J. Koke, Curator of the Museum of the New-York Historical Society, New York, New York, to Sumpter T. Priddy, III, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia, 8 May 1981:

> This study of double parlors with a screen of Ionic columns has a date ascribed of possibly ca. 1830, but it has also been cited as the parlor of the residence of John Cot Stevens, 1845, at the southeast corner of Murray Street and College Place (now West Broadway), New York City. This attribution is questionable, however, insofar as the room does not match the exterior plan of the house which is also in the Society's collection.

4. Marshall B. Davidson, ed., History of American Antiques from the Revolution to the Civil War (New York: American Heritage, 1968), p. 102, cited henceforth as History of American Antiques.

5. Charles Anderson Dana, ed., The United States, illustrated; in views of city and country (New York: H. J. Meyer, n.d. [c. 1853]), p. 9.

6. Davidson, History of American Antiques, p. 105.

7. William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, III, ii, 63-64. These lines were adapted as a song for piano by Sir J. Stevenson, "Tell Me, Where is Fancy Bred" (New York: W. DuBois, n.d. [c. 1820]). Courtesy the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

8. James Hewitt, "Delighted Fancy Hails the Hour: A Favorite Song" (New York: J. Hewitt, n.d. [c. 1830]). Courtesy the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

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9. Joseph Addison, "Pleasures of the Imagination," in The Spectator, 3 vols., ed. Henry Morley (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1883), II, 714.

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16. C. Willet Cunnington, Phillis Cunnington, and Charles Beard, A Dictionary of English Costume 900-1900 (Philadelphia: DuFour, 1960), p. 76, cited henceforth as Dictionary of English Costume.

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NOTES: CHAPTER I

1. William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, III, ii, 63-64.

2. Murray, et al., The Oxford English Dictionary, IV, 60.

3. Joseph T. Shipley, Dictionary of World Literary Terms, 2nd ed. (1943; rpt. Boston: The Writer, Inc., 1970), p. 116.

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5. Ibid., IV, 67.

6. Walter Jackson Bate, From Classic to Romantic: Premises of Taste in Eighteenth-Century England (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), p. 1, cited henceforth as From Classic to Romantic.

7. Ibid., pp. 2-5.

8. Ibid., p. 61.

9. Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language (1755; rpt. London: W. Strahan, 1773), see "fancy," cited henceforth as A Dictionary.

10. Thomas Dyche and William Pardon, A New General English Dictionary (1740; rpt. New York: George Olms Verlag Hildesheim, 1972), see "fancy."

11. Addison, "Pleasures of the Imagination," II, 714.

12. Poe, "The Literati of New York," XV, 13, note 1.

13. Dyche and Pardon, A New General English Dictionary, see "fancy."

14. Addison, "Pleasures of the Imagination," III, 4-7.

15. Bate, From Classic to Romantic, p. 12.

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17. Johnson, A Dictionary, see "fancy."

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19. Ibid., p. 30.

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21. Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren, eds., Great Treasury of Western Thought (New York and London: R. R. Bowker, 1977), p. 344.

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25. Ibid., II, 717.

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29. Ibid., p. 78.

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31. John Dryden, Dramatic Essays by John Dryden, ed., William Henry Hudson (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, and New York: E. P. Dutton, 1921), pp. 72-73, cited henceforth as Dramatic Essays.

32. Bate, From Classic to Romantic, p. 36.

33. Ibid., p. 116.

34. Dugald Stewart, Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind (London: A. Strahan, 1792), pp. 477-478.

35. Bate, From Classic to Romantic, pp. 96-100. According to Bate, association emphasizes "attention," "repetition," and the importance of pleasure and pain in establishing ideas within the mind. It operates on several levels. On the simplest, certain objects, ideas, or situations which occur repeatedly (either simultaneously or in sequence) tend automatically to evoke one another. Put in modern terms, the appearance of a cause automatically causes us to imagine an effect. The

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appearance of a friends walking down the street with a baseball bat, for instance, causes us to imagine a game about to take place. Or, through resemblance, an object or picture calls to mind some intimately related picture -- a photograph of a specific occasion, for example, calls to mind the original experience, or a flower evokes in a botanist an image of other examples within its group. Or, the power of association can operate through contiquity -- meaning that the mind automatically relates images of objects or circumstances that were associated in time and place. Walt Whitman, for instance, relived his sorrow at Abraham Lincoln's death each spring when the lilacs bloomed, because his own pain at the loss had been mingled with their scent when the tragedy was fresh in his mind; or the smell of cookies elicits the sounds of screen doors and little feet for a woman whose children have long since grown and left home.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., p. 57.

38. Addison, "Pleasures of the Imagination," II, 713.

39. Ibid., II, 714.

40. Ibid.

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52. Dryden, Dramatic Essays, p. 78.

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58. Hunt, An Illustrative Essay, p. 5.

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62. Ibid.

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65. Dryden, Dramatic Essays, p. 78.

66. Locke, Human Understanding, II, ix, 2.

67. Ibid.

68. Montesquieu, "An Essay on Taste," pp. 274-277.

69. Few discussions of love go to great lengths to establish its relationship to fancy, but it would seem a safe generalization to say that, for the strict classicist and the neo-classic rationalist, any relationship between the two must be limited to "eros" or erotic love. This is opposed to levelheaded "filos" or brotherly love -- which served as one of the immutable, time-honored ideas of traditional classicism. Uncontrolled eros, by itself, was considered a frivolous and lustful lure that served no purpose but that of momentary pleasure, thereby serving to divert attention from the lofty pursuits that should occupy the discerning mind of the enlightened humanist.

70. Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, III, ii, 63-64.

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71. Johnson, A Dictionary, see "fancy."

72. Bretton, Works in Verse and Prose, p. 20.

73. Addison, "Pleasures of the Imagination," I, 114.

74. Alexander Gerard, An Essay on Taste . . . , 2nd ed. (1764; rpt. New York: Garland, 1970), p. 190.

75. Josiah Quincy, Jr., "Journal of Josiah Quincy, Jr., 1773," in Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, October 1915-June 1916, XLIX, 448.

76. Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language, 9th ed. (1755; rpt. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1805), II, see "fancy."

77. Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, III, ii, 63-64.

78. Bate, From Classic to Romantic, p. 84.

79. Gerard, An Essay on Taste, p. 190.

80. Bate, From Classic to Romantic, p. 85.

81. Ibid., p. 84.

82. [Francois Marie Arouet] de Voltaire, "Mr. De Voltaire's Essay on Taste," in An Essay on Taste . . . by Alexander Gerard, 2nd ed. (1764; rpt. New York: Garland, 1970), p. 215, cited henceforth as "Essay on Taste."

83. Bate, From Classic to Romantic, p. 44.

84. Ibid., pp. 46-47.

85. Ibid., pp. 47-48.

86. Ibid., pp. 95-96.

87. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Society and Solitude and Poems (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), p. 50.

88. Thomas Sheraton, An Accompaniment to the Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book, 3rd ed. (1802; rpt. New York: Prager, 1970), p. 22, cited henceforth as Accompaniment.

89. Thomas Chippendale, The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director, 3rd ed. (1762; rpt. New York: Dover, 1966), preface.

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90. Ibid., title page.

91 Gertrude Z. Thomas, Richer Than Spices (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1965), p. 38.

92. Philip Freneau, "The Power of Fancy," in American Literature Survey: Colonial and Federal to 1800, ed. Milton R. Stern and Seymour L. Gross, 3rd ed. (1962; rpt. New York: Viking, 1975), p. 618.

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NOTES: CHAPTER II

1. The earliest dictionary I have found to give a supplemental definition for fancy as an adjective is Joseph E. Worcester, A Dictionary of the English Language (Cambridge, Massachusetts: H. O. Houghton, 1860), p. 537. Worcester defines "fancy," the adjective, as follows: "Fine; elegant; fantastic; ornamental rather than useful; adapted to please the taste or fancy; as Fancy goods."

2. Johnson, A Dictionary, see "fanciful."

3. Ambrose Heal, London Tradesmen's Cards of the XVIII Century (London: B. T. Batsford, 1925), p. LXVI. Courtesy Mildred Lanier.

4. Murray, et al., The Oxford English Dictionary, IV, 61.

5. Virginia Gazette (Rind, ed.), 26 October 1769. Courtesy Mildred Lanier.

6. Murray, et al., The Oxford English Dictionary, IV, 62.

7. Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon, eds.), 30 April 1772.

8. Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon, eds.), 14 October 1773. Courtesy Mildred Lanier.

9. Virginia Gazette Supplement (Purdie and Dixon, eds.), 19 April 1770. Courtesy Mildred Lanier.

10. Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon, eds.), 31 October 1771. Courtesy Mildred Lanier.

11. Commercial Advertiser (New York), 18 October 1799.

12. Shakespeare, Hamlet, I, iii, 71.

13. Cunnington, et al., Dictionary of English Costume, p. 76.

14. Voltaire, "Essay on Taste," p. 215.

15. New York Gazette Supplement, 6 September 1772. Courtesy Arlene Palmer Schwind.

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16. Pennsylvania Packet, 17 May 1773. Courtesy Arlene Palmer Schwind.

17. Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser, 22 May 1789. Courtesy Arlene Palmer Schwind.

18. Mitford M. Mathews, ed., The Dictionary of Americanisms (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951), p. 584.

19. Burchfield, A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary, I, 1030. This information refers to the Columbian Centinel (Boston), 12 May 1792.

20. Freneau, "The Power of Fancy," p. 618.

21. Charlotte Smith, "To Fancy," in Elegiac Sonnets and other Poems, the first Worcester Edition from the 6th London Edition (Worcester, Massachusetts: Isaiah Thomas, 1795), p. 67.

22. Richard Alsop, The Charms of Fancy: A Poem in Four Cantos, with notes, ed. Theodore Dwight (New York: D. Appleton, 1856), p. xii.

23. Wilhemina F. Jashemski, The Gardens of Pompeii (New Rochelle, New York: Caratza Brothers, 1979). The illustrations in this work are testimony that the tastes of the ancients were not restrained.

24. Dryden, Dramatic Essays, p. 72.

25. Bate, From Classic to Romantic, pp. 76-79.

26. George Hepplewhite, The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide, 3rd ed. (1794; rpt. New York: Dover, 1969), p. 2.

27. Ibid., preface.

28. Sheraton, Accompaniment, p. 7.

29. Thomas Sheraton, Appendix to the Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book, 3rd ed. (1802; rpt. New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 3, cited henceforth as Appendix.

30. Thomas Sheraton, The Cabinet Dictionary, 1st ed. (1803; rpt. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), pp. 435-451.

31. Hampshire County Probate Records, Hampshire County Probate Court, Greenfield, Massachusetts, XVI, 135. Inventory of Joseph Barnard, 1 March 1790.

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32. Dean Fales, American Painted Furniture 1660-1880 (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972), p. 102, cited henceforth as Painted Furniture.

33. Charles F. Montgomery, American Furniture: The Federal Period (New York: Viking, 1966), p. 449.

34. Fales, Painted Furniture, p. 133.

35. Ibid., pp. 176-183.

36. No in-depth research has yet established the earliest date at which the new form of fancy chair evolved.

37. Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man (Edinburgh: John Bell, 1785), p. 365.

38. Suffolk County Probate Records, Suffolk County Probate Court, Boston, Massachusetts, Number 20215, John Hancock, 1794.

39. Alfred Coxe Prime, The Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia, Maryland, and South Carolina, series 2 (Topsfield, Massachusetts: The Walpole Society, 1932.

40. Virginia Chronicle (Norfolk), 18 May 1793.

41. Fales, Painted Furniture, p. 133.

42. Nancy McClelland, Historic Wall-Papers: From Their Inception to the Introduction of Machinery (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott, 1924), p. 270.

43. John Holverson, Director, Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine, to Sumpter T. Priddy, III, 4 February 1977 and 8 March 1977. I am grateful to Donald R. Walters for informing me of the inscription on this painting.

44. Numerous discussions concerned with fancy draw upon landscape views to emphasize the mind's proclivity for impression. John Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding and Joseph Addison's "Pleasures of the Imagination" from The Spectator are among the best.

45. Nathan Bailey, Dictionarum Brittanicum (London: T. Cox, 1736), see "fancy."

46. Frances Tasker Carter of Nomini Hall Plantation in Westmoreland County, Virginia, occasionally may have been called "Fancy" by her Maryland relatives. Information courtesy John R. Barden, Cura-

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torial Fellow, Department of Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

47. York County Virginia Wills and Inventories XXI, 1760-1771, pp. 223-224, Inventory of William Powell, 1764. Information courtesy Kathleen B. Smith, Curatorial Fellow, Department of Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

48. Sheraton, Appendix, p. 3.

49. Wendell D. Garrett, "John Adams and the Limited Role of the Fine Arts," in Winterthur Portfolio 1 (Winterthur, Delaware: The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1964), p. 243.

50. Ibid., p. 247.

51. Ibid., p. 249.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid., p. 252.

54. Susan B. Swan, Plain and Fancy, American Women and Their Needlework (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977), p. 74, cited henceforth as Plain and Fancy.

55. Ibid., p. 75.

56. Ibid., p. 174.

57. Addison, "Pleasures of the Imagination," II, 715-716.

58. Rudolph Ackermann, "Observations on Fancy-work," in The Repository of Arts, Science, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions, and Politics, 3 (1810), 397.

59. Ibid., p. 192.

60. Swan, Plain and Fancy, p. 72.

61. Ibid., p. 74.

62. Burchfield, A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary, II, 1030.

63. Mark Girouard, Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History (New Haven and London: Yale, 1978), pp. 214-215.

64. Ibid., pp. 214-244.

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65. This argument is central to understanding the transition from classic to romantic outlined by Bate. It permeates his book from beginning to end.

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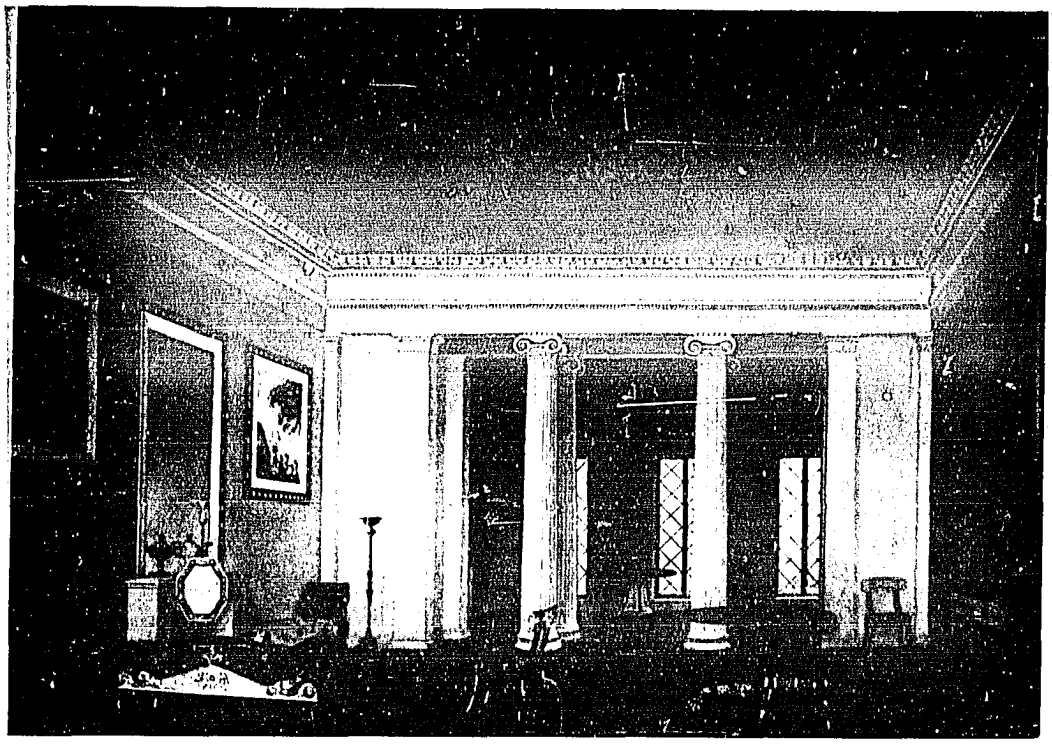

Figure 1

"Greek Revival Double Parlor."
New York, New York, c. 1830.
Attributed to Alexander Jackson
Davis. Watercolor on paper.
Height 13 1/4", width 18 1/8"
(Courtesy the New-York Historical
Society, 1902.28).

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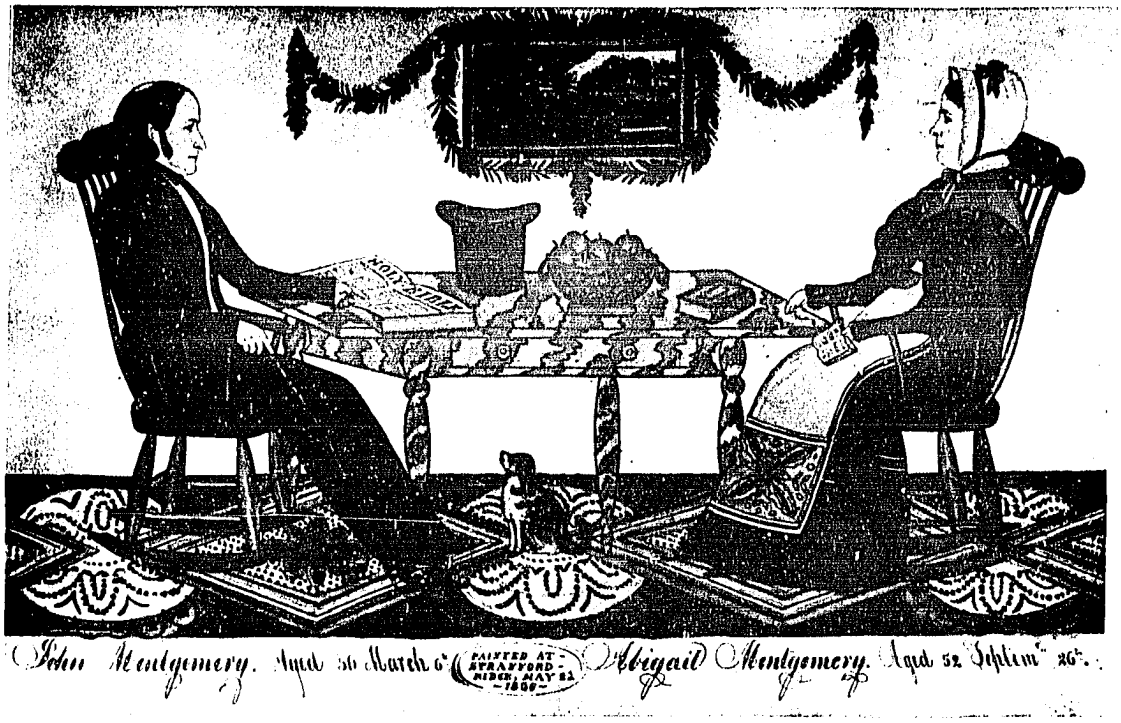

Figure 2

John and Abigail Montgomery. Strafford Ridge, New Hampshire, 1836. Attributed to Joseph H. Davis. Watercolor on paper. Height 10 1/2", width 15 1/2" (Courtesy the National Gallery of Art, B-25, 175).

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Figure 3

Fancy Chair. Probably New York, c. 1815. Maple and Paint. Height 33", width 18 1/4" (Courtesy Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, G1975-338).

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Figure 4

"Fancy Piece." Portland, Maine, 1829. Attributed to Charles Codman. Oil on Panel. Height 19", width 26 1/2" (Courtesy Portland Museum of Art).

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the dimensions of each design specified. The whole comprehended in two hundred copper-plates . . . . 3rd ed., 1762; rpt. New York: Dover, 1966.

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