

The London/Paris, Paris/London design dialogue of the late eighteenth century

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Summary: *Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century England enjoyed a tumultuous relationship with France, reinforced by the establishment of an Anti-Gallican Association (founded in 1745) and fuelled by events such as the French Revolution and later, the Napoleonic Wars. In England, members of the Anti-Gallican Association sought to deter what they saw as ‘the insidious arts of the French Nation’, opposing Anglo-French trade and expressly the importation of French commodities. Pamphlets, cartoons and even a novel stressed the importance of discouraging the use of French design models and of promoting British manufacturing. In spite of what can be termed a Francophobe attitude, French influences thrived within London during this same period. The influx of émigrés working in the city and the influence of arbiters of taste, such as the Comte de Caylus, ensured that an appreciation of French design continued. Within the furniture trade in particular a dialogue of mutual appreciation arose. The influence of the French was clearly apparent in the ‘frenchified’ designs of English cabinet-makers, whilst English furniture designers, including Chippendale and Ince and Mayhew, exported their designs to France through translated versions of their pattern books (a French edition of Chippendale’s Director, Le Guide du Tappissier, de L’Ebéniste et de tous ceux qui travaillent en meubles appeared in 1762). This article considers the reciprocal design dialogue which continued defiantly, examining the influence of Paris in London, and London in Paris.*

Keywords: *Eighteenth century, design, furniture, pattern books, interiors, culture*

Résumé : *Durant la deuxième moitié du XVIII^e siècle l’Angleterre entretenait une relation tumultueuse avec la France, renforcée par l’établissement de l’Anti-Gallican Association (fondée en 1745) ainsi que par la Révolution française et, plus tard, par les guerres napoléoniennes. En Angleterre, les membres de l’Anti-Gallican Association cherchaient à dissuader ce qu’ils considéraient comme « les arts insidieux de la nation française » en s’opposant au commerce anglo-français et, notamment, à l’importation de marchandises françaises. Pamphlets, bandes dessinées et même un roman soulignaient l’importance de décourager l’usage de modèles français de design et de promouvoir la production britannique. Malgré cette attitude que l’on peut qualifier de francophobe, les influences françaises florissaient à Londres durant cette même période. Notamment dans le commerce de meubles s’élevait un dialogue marqué d’une appréciation mutuelle.*

L'influence française était nette dans les designs « francisés » des ébénistes anglais, alors que les dessinateurs de meubles, tels que Chippendale et Ince et Mayhew exportaient leurs designs en France à travers les traductions de leurs livres de modèles (une édition française de Chippendale's Director, Le Guide du Tappissier, de L'Ebéniste et de tous ceux qui travaillent en meubles parut en 1762). Cet article présente le dialogue de design réciproque qui continuait, comme par provocation, pour étudier l'influence de Paris sur Londres et de Londres sur Paris.

Mots-clés : Dix-huitième siècle, design, mobilier, livres de modèles, intérieurs, culture

Introduction

This essay considers Franco-British relations during the latter half of the eighteenth century through the medium of a design dialogue between London and Paris. Britain and France are often viewed as traditional enemies, separated by the narrow English Channel and historically socially divided through differences in church, state and monarchy. The second half of the eighteenth century saw the two countries enjoying a particularly tumultuous relationship, reinforced by the establishment of an Anti-Gallican Association in England and fuelled by events such as the Seven Years War, the French Revolution and later, the Napoleonic Wars. During the eighteenth century the two countries developed their capital cities as expressions of their culture and as their seats of power; by the outbreak of Revolution Paris was France and London was England, each representing not just city but country: Montesquieu wrote '[i]n France there is only Paris'¹ and Thomas de Quincey referred to 'the nation' of London (De Quincey, 1834). London and Paris had become polarizing cultural, economic, industrial and political centres; national arbiters of taste and authority. Whilst the uneasy tension and threat of war engendered a natural antipathy, the two nations and their capitals continued to learn from one another during the period, a cross-fertilization of ideas producing some key debates, particularly amongst men of 'taste'. In spite of war and revolution, England and France shared philosophies, individuals and ideologies, producing interpretations upon common themes pertinent to both. Set against this backdrop, the specific dialogue of design functions as a metaphor for the larger relationship between the two cities, and by extension, the two nations. Although the influence of French design upon the English during this period has been commented upon,² the idea that English design may have had just as potent an effect on the French has yet to be fully explored. Discussed less still is the idea that a reciprocal dialogue may have been in existence, with designers from the two countries interpreting each others' drawings or ideas, creating new versions of objects or styles. It is my contention that such a dialogue did exist, underpinned by areas of commonality within manufacture and process and aided by the open-access nature of designs, and that the results of it are clearly visible in the interior design schemes and furniture of the period. Within this essay I wish to examine a few key examples of this design dialogue, exploring the influences of Paris in London and London in Paris. I will begin with a brief note on the nature of design in the eighteenth century, establishing that the mode of working during the period laid the foundation for a fluid design dialogue.

Design in the eighteenth century

During the eighteenth century both London and Paris functioned as centres of new design ideas, housing the showrooms of established furniture-makers, interior designers, architects and craftsmen. By the 1750s they each had a system of Guilds to which their furniture-makers belonged, ensuring professionalism, high standards and the stamping or labeling of pieces. The Guild system also encouraged the specialization of aspects of the interior design trade within each capital city, a different Guild for joiners, carvers, painters, carpet-makers, goldsmiths and so on. Under this system both London and Paris gained a new breed of furniture-maker. In England they were known as the *gentleman cabinet-makers* and in France as *menuisiers en ébène*, later shortened to *ébénistes*; within this essay I shall refer to them as cabinet-makers. The aristocracy, the owners of country estates and smart townhouses, commissioned pieces of furniture, or even entire schemes of interior decoration, from these cabinet-makers. The process bore similarity to the commissioning of artworks, with the home-owner choosing to patronize a cabinet-maker in the same way as they would an artist. The 'gentleman' cabinet-makers were at liberty to visit the homes of their clients and discuss the designs with them, showing the client a variety of drawings and asking them to pick and choose the elements which they most approved of.³ In addition to working with their clients in this way, the cabinet-makers were also the authors of the pattern book, a published book of designs. The pattern books formed a catalogue of design ideas for the fashionable interior. Examples include Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director* (1754) and André Roubo's *L'Art du Menuisiers* (1769). The title of Chippendale's text reflects the intended audience: Chippendale published his book by subscription at the prohibitive cost of three pounds;⁴ his subscribers were gentlemen interested in the design of their homes, and his fellow tradesmen. The practice of showing clients the pattern books of other designers was commonplace, allowing them to choose from not only the designs of their chosen cabinet-maker, but also from a wide-range of published drawings.⁵ The designs that cabinet-makers published in their pattern books were often fanciful and highly unrealistic. They were meant to be inspirational rather than accurate. Thus designs were not usually copied exactly, but instead formed a body of imaginative material from which client and cabinet-maker alike could draw inspiration. This practice highlights the different way in which furniture was perceived in the eighteenth century; more as a work of art, commissioned from an expert, than as a purely functional object. The cabinet-makers of both nations worked with the interior designers and architects of the time, including Robert Adam and Henry Holland, Guillaume Gaubert and Georges Jacob.

It was the wealthy and/or empowered of the two nations who patronized these architects, interior designers and cabinet-makers. Taste in the arts was considered to be a social refinement, especially in urban areas; cities and towns with large populations had access to theatres, concert halls, booksellers and art dealers. The 'sociable man' of Addison and Steele was akin to the 'honnête homme' of Voltaire: he who could carry out agreeable conversation covering the subjects of art, music and literature. Led by arbiters of taste, connoisseurs such as Joshua Reynolds, Horace Walpole and the Comte de Caylus, wealthy homeowners in both countries looked to furnish their abodes in the latest styles,

commissioning work from the most fashionable designers in order to make a statement through their home about their wealth, social standing or intellectual prowess. The connoisseurs of London and Paris were united by a common source: an interest in the art and design of the past. Recent discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum had prompted a wealth of readily available publications on Roman, Greek, Etruscan and Egyptian artifacts in both England and France, from which designers and their clients alike drew inspiration. In spite of these strong areas of commonality, France and England developed different styles of design during the period. In France Rococo, with its opulent swirls, inlay and gilding was slow to give way to the more austere neo-classicism favoured by English designers. Thus it is possible to see the effects of the two countries upon one another, to see a cross-channel design dialogue emerging.

Paris in London

For London, the influence of Paris during the latter half of the eighteenth century was a constant battle between the accepted and the decried. The design dialogue between the two cities, dependent upon Anglo-French trade relations, the availability of French books, works of art and designs, and reactions to events in Paris, reflects this battle. In 1745, as a reaction to the Jacobite rebellion, the Anti-Gallican Association was established in London; its members sought to deter what they saw as 'the insidious arts of the French Nation', opposing Anglo-French trade and expressly the 'importation of French commodities' (Coleridge, 1966:64). Pamphlets, plays, cartoons and even a novel (Long, 1757) stressed the importance of discouraging the use of French design models and of promoting British manufacturing. Yet, just two years later in 1747, Robert Campbell was able to remark in *The London Tradesman* that 'anyone who could anticipate fashions from Paris' could 'make a good living in the furniture trade' (Beard, 1985:18), his comments suggesting that, in spite of the Anti-Gallican Association, demand for Parisian objects in London was high. This demand was partly predicated upon tradition, precisely what the Anti-Gallican Association was riling against; a large sector of the London furniture trade was composed of established French furniture-makers, often expelled Huguenot craftsmen who had settled in the capital in the 1680s. Émigrés such as Francis Lapiere, an upholsterer with a shop in Pall Mall, and Philip Guibert, a furniture-maker with a base in Jermyn Street, St. James's (Saumarez-Smith, 2000:20), had brought French tastes to the London market early in the century. English cabinet-makers, following Campbell's advice, were importing Parisian goods at low cost to sell on to their clients. The trade label for London firm Ince and Mayhew anticipated this profitable enterprise, announcing themselves as importers of 'French Furniture, consign'd from Paris [sic]'.⁶ The popularity of Parisian design was aligned to an admiration of all things French, with valets, dance masters and hairdressers joining the ranks of émigrés making their living in the English capital. The arrival of the Seven Years War in 1756 renewed suspicions about the 'insidious' nature of the French. Garrick provoked riots when he brought French dancers to London to perform his Chinese Festival. He redeemed himself with the 'Harlequin's Invasion' which opened in December 1759 at the height of the Seven Years War. The play was a call to arms with characters from Shakespeare defending London against a French invasion led

by the Harlequin. The play ended with an effigy of Shakespeare chasing the French from the stage to the patriotic song *Hearts of Oak* (Brewer (1997:412). A reminder here that the Seven Years War was primarily a trade war fought at sea, with William Pitt intent on destroying French trade routes and eliminating France as a rival to Empire. The war ended in 1763 with an English victory and the pattern books of the London cabinet-makers began promoting French style with renewed vigour. The 1762 edition of Chippendale's *Director* had entire sections of drawings entitled 'French chairs', 'French tables' and 'French beds' suggesting that French design was very much *en vogue*.

During the Seven Years War and throughout the Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars which followed it, Londoners had a wealth of French ideas at their disposal. English gentlemen drew not only on French fashion and taste but also on its intellectual riches, the work for example of Voltaire, Molière, Marivaux, Racine, Corneille and Rousseau. More translations of French poetry were available in London than any other language save Greek (Brewer, 1997:172). The European Enlightenment movement (championed in England by amongst others Joseph Addison, Edmund Burke, William Hogarth and David Hume) was as popular in London as it was in Paris, with French authors often revered as the authority on matters of 'taste'. Texts such as French critic Abbé Batteaux's *Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe* (1746) and Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* (1751) travelled easily to London. These works praised the arts as being worthy of philosophical enquiry and, through the medium of ever-cheaper printing, brought these ideas to a larger public. Amongst the texts travelling to London was the five volume publication *Recueil d'Antiquités Égyptiennes, Étrusques, Grecques, Romaines, et Gauloises*, by Anne-Claude-Philippe de Tubières, Comte de Caylus, published between 1752 and 1755 (Savage, 1969:38). A copy of *Recueil* was owned by banker Thomas Hope and potter Josiah Wedgewood; it was in the library of the gentleman as well as the designer. The availability of texts such as *Recueil* opened the door for a discursive dialogue between designers and connoisseurs within the two cities, working as they were from a common source material. Motifs from ancient finds at Pompeii and Herculaneum and other archaeological sites, especially classical, were repeated in the furniture of cabinet-makers in London, mediated through writers such as Caylus and the objects that they chose to represent. Within his work Caylus stressed the 'plus noble simplicité' of Greek designs, receiving support from Winckelmann, Gouyet and Le Roy. Caylus took an active role in promoting the *gout Grec* revival in France, touring as a lecturer and connoisseur, but his influence was more widely felt in England where neo-classicism stood as the predominant style in interior decoration and furniture design. The enduring popularity of columns, urns, egg and dart and fret decoration within London was not a testament to Parisian design, but, by virtue of French books on design from antiquity, took something from it.

As well as working from design books from Paris,⁷ English cabinet-makers were encouraged to create new designs in the French style from prototypes brought back by their clients. For the 'sociable man' a visit to Paris was essential. In spite of having their own furniture-makers, English aristocrats chose to purchase pieces from the Parisian *marchands-merciers* in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré area (Hayward 1965:120). English visitors to Paris in the mid-eighteenth

century reported back on the latest fashions, 'impressed by French modes of interior decoration' (Saumarez-Smith, 2000:18-19). Architects such as James Gibbs, William Kent and Robert and James Adam, along with cabinet-makers Chippendale and Sheraton, reflected what the men of taste wanted: French design. Whilst elements of French interior design were present in many homes of the period, the clearest expression of Parisian interior decoration in England was the refurbishment of Carlton House. The house was the project of the Prince of Wales, the future George IV, and the architect Henry Holland. Begun in 1783, the year of the treaty of Versailles which re-opened trading links with France, Carlton House was a triumph in Francophile taste. The team of workers was led by a Frenchman, Guillaume Gaubert, who chose the furniture and designed a number of the interior ornaments, and furniture makers and suppliers included French exile Dominique Daguerre. Remarking on a visit to Carlton House in 1785, Horace Walpole wrote that the design was 'not rather classic than French', reinforced by the single-colour rooms, rich layered drapes and by the sets of removable covers on the furniture, aping the French practice of interiors adaptable for both summer and winter - *meuble d'été* and *meuble d'hiver* (Saumarez-Smith, 2000:199). The impact of Carlton House upon contemporary London should not be underestimated. Descriptions by commentators such as Horace Walpole, along with the sheer scale, opulence and cost of the project, made French design all the more popular. Taking their lead from the Prince, projects by Earl Spencer at Althorp in Kent and Samuel Whitbread at Southill in Bedfordshire employed the painters T. H. Pernetin and Louis-André Delabrière and cabinet-maker Daguerre (Saumarez-Smith, 2000:202), ensuring that the style proliferated outside the capital as well as within it.

Whether considered in the light of Anglo-French trade, the availability of French texts or the passion for French interiors, the problematic nature of the relationship between London and Paris is most acutely reflected in the design dialogue during the French Revolution. Revolution had a resounding impact in England, especially within London. In some literary and artistic circles the Revolution was immensely popular, initially seen as signaling the end of the ancien régime and its institutions, its despotic church and state. To those of fashion and taste the Revolution was pleasurable and exciting; anti-Revolution movements were seen as moralistic, advocating strong religious values and 'plain living'. Rather than ceasing, communication with Paris was strengthened; the London Corresponding Society led by Thomas Hardy opened a continuous line of communication between London and Paris (Plumb, 1951:156), and the influx of émigré aristocrats brought first-hand tales of Paris with them to London. French design was aligned with luxury, freedom and promiscuity. Objects such as the 'French commode', famed for its 'total exclusion of any practical function' (Wood, 1994:1) and more of an *objet d'art* than a utilitarian product, became increasingly popular, representing the height of a Frenchified lifestyle. But as time wore on the upper classes began to fear that a similar uprising might take place in London and support for the Revolutionaries diminished. Revolution renewed fears first aired during the Seven Years War, that French imports sapped the 'native English spirit' (Brewer, 1997:82), turning the bold, masculine English nation into a fey and effeminate one, like that of France, at the mercy of its lower classes. And yet, paradoxically, French design continued

to flourish within London. The cabinet-maker Sheraton, writing in his *Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book* of 1793, stated that he had reflected 'the new designs from France', including a state bed 'introduced of late with great success in England' (Sheraton, 1793:84). The taste for fashion from Paris continued in London throughout the Napoleonic Wars and beyond.

London in Paris

We are perhaps not as prepared for the influence of London in Paris within the eighteenth century as we are for the influence of Paris in London, the prevailing idea being that fashion came from Paris, rather than went to it. But as Parisian designs found their way to England, so designs from London travelled to France. The Anglo-French trade problems affected France as much as they did England, but the class tension within France had a more positive impact upon the relationship between the two countries, as French aristocrats looked to their British counterparts for support. The availability of English furniture designs, such as those of Adam, within Paris should not be underestimated. The eighteenth century was the period of the English literary 'classic', with Shakespeare, Chaucer and Spenser all being revived, revered, translated and exported. English writing of the previous century represented a liberty of political thought, in contrast to the absolutism and formalism of French authors of the same period (Brewer, 1997:479). English culture was exported during the eighteenth century, with English authors, artists and performers admired throughout Europe. Cabinet-makers, including Chippendale and Ince and Mayhew, exported their designs to France through translated versions of their pattern books. A French edition of Chippendale's *Director*, *Le Guide du Tappissier, de L'Ebeniste et de tous ceux qui travaillent en meubles*, was published in 1762.⁸ Ince and Mayhew's *Universal System* and Adams' *Works in Architecture* were both published in Paris, first with subtitles, and then as French editions. As Alice Hepplewhite wrote in the preface to her *Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterers' Guide* of 1794, 'English taste and workmanship have of late years been much sought for by surrounding nations' (Hepplewhite, 1793). There is little evidence that cabinet-makers exported their wares to France in the same way that they imported French goods, although Ince and Mayhew are believed to have exported furniture to France during the 1750s and 60s (Coleridge, 1966:63). However, the anglicizing of some traditional French furniture, the use of Adam designs in French interiors and the translation of English pattern books into French (indicative of a reciprocal dialogue as opposed to the English merely borrowing designs from Paris) suggests that English design was met with approval within France, especially, though not exclusively, post-Revolution.

Whilst France and England had many common items of furniture in use in the eighteenth century, they also had designs which were particular to each other. A fluid design dialogue meant that designs with a common function, types of table for example, often gained the traits of their cross-channel counterparts whilst retaining the name or feature that made them specific to their country of origin. The low pedestal table, often referred to as a tea or lunch table, was an English phenomenon which found its way to France in the 1760s, replacing the French *Guéridon*, a taller corner pedestal table with a narrow top, used for displaying

candelabra, which was popular from the 1730s onwards. The *Guéridon* and the tea-table were both tables, but their existence was dictated by their function - as the act of taking tea increased in popularity, if only briefly, within mainland Europe, so did the design for a table with that specific function. Interest in something new led to the appearance of tea tables in smart *apartements* in Paris (Verlet, 1963:35), but the endurance of the design within France is more likely linked to a new interest in furniture made from mahogany. On a visit to England, Françoise de la Rochefoucauld remarked in 1784 upon the English over-reliance on mahogany within their country houses: 'not only are their tables generally made of it, but also their doors and seats and [the] handrails of their staircases'.⁹ For de la Rochefoucauld the use of mahogany was an overt expression of wealth as the wood was so expensive. Mahogany was expensive, but it was also the wood of choice for English cabinet makers as it was durable, relatively easy to work and warp-resistant, suiting England's damp climate. Mahogany was also more readily available, often received as payment for goods sent to the colonies, in particular Jamaica.¹⁰ Shortly after de la Rochefoucauld's visit to England, France was enjoying a mahogany revival thanks to great quantities being shipped in from the Antilles. Marie-Antoinette's boudoir at Fontainebleau was parqueted with it and featured chairs made of it (Félice, 1920:49). Viewed as an English wood, French cabinet-makers turned to the designs of their English counterparts in order to work effectively with mahogany. Georges Jacob was the first French maker to use solid mahogany, adapting designs from the work of Chippendale following a visit to England. When Jacob's sons took his business over in the 1780s they began touting the *chaise à l'anglaise*, first made for the Comte de Provenance, a solid mahogany design with a pierced back (Hayward, 1965:126). Other makers followed suit; Jean Henri-Riesner, working in Paris, made mahogany-veneered pieces of simple English designs featuring classical motifs and straight legs. English designs which called for mahogany, such as tea-tables, grew in popularity in the 1790s. Ironically, in England strained trading links as a result of war with France increased the price of mahogany during the same period, making painted furniture, produced from cheaper base woods, more fashionable there as the century drew to a close.

Once again it is the French Revolution that sharpens the focus of the design dialogue. Prior to Revolution France was a relatively self-sufficient and insular country. The translated books of designs were exported to Paris by the English cabinet-makers, rather than imported at the request of the French, but post-Revolution Paris was less confident. Regular communication with London resulted in proposals, put forward in August 1793, from the so-called *Monarchiens* or 'English Party', a group led by Mounier, Malouet and Lally Tollendal, members of the French nobility. They advocated a mixed English-model constitution with power divided between the King, the nobles and the commons, with only property-owners having the vote. Their proposal was defeated (Rudé, 1964:101). Although the subsequent success of Napoleon was predicated on isolating England (Tocqueville, 1966:100), it was through his lead that the popularity of Rococo design dwindled in France. In the absence of this dominant style, Parisian designers turned to their London counterparts for ideas on how to move forward. The English style of architect and interior designer Robert Adam featuring clean lines, a pale colour palette and classical accents, gained

popularity within Paris from 1789 onwards (Verlet, 1963:31). Adam's work mixed architectural forms with decorative detail drawn from his visits to archaeological sites. He had visited Rome in the late 1750s and had chosen a Frenchman, Charles-Louis Clérisseau, as his mentor, guide and companion (Summerson, 1993:520). Later to become the architect of Villa Monticello and the Virginia State Capitol, Clérisseau had first championed Adam's designs within France, echoing his work at Harewood House (Yorkshire) in the interior at the mansion on the rue Biossy d'Anglas in the 1770s (Savage, 1969:57). Adam's designs, mediated through the work of Clérisseau, influenced Jean-Simon Rousseau de la Rottière's interiors at Madame de Sérilly's apartment in the rue Vielle-du-Temple in Paris which drew on Adam's designs visible at country estates such as Kedleston Hall (Derbyshire), and also in the London houses of the aristocracy, such as Derby House in Grosvenor Square. As with the influence of Parisian design in London at the same time, English design seems to have been at its most popular in Paris during the Napoleonic Wars - running against the grain of hostility between the two nations.

Concluding thoughts

Within this essay I have examined just a few of the elements of the design dialogue between Paris and London/London and Paris in the late eighteenth century. There are many questions still to be asked concerning the existence of this dialogue - how can we accurately plot influences which were so wide and varied; how influential was the common body of ancient source material; how far did the dialogue extend beyond the capital cities? With any established design dialogue between London and Paris set against a backdrop of anti-French feeling within England, further questions should also be asked about the French reaction to the translated pattern books, and their willingness to accept English furniture and interior decoration. Further examination of this topic should answer these questions and should also highlight other objects and interiors which reflect the influence of the French in England and the English in France.

Illustrations:



Commode made by the Firm of Gillows, London branch, in 1788 for their client John Christian for display in his country house, Workington Hall, in Cumberland. It is an item of French design by an English maker featuring very 'English' inlaid designs (Lindsay Boynton Archive, Hartley Library, University of Southampton)



Chippendale design for a tea-stand, 1762 (collection of the author) is very similar to the French Guéridon, c. 1700, maker unknown (collection of the author).

'Boiserie d'un salon en bois doré, première moitié du XVIII^e Siècle', Plate XLIII, from Andre Perate & Gaston Briere, *Collections Georges Hoentschel Vol.II*, (Paris, Librairie Centrale des Beaux-Arts, 1908). Collection of the author.



Madame de Sérilly's apartment in the rue Vielle-du-Temple in Paris, now at the Victoria & Albert Museum (collection of the author)

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Archival material

- Westminster City Archives, 344/165/175, 26th April 1765, letter from Gillows to Sir George Warren.
- Westminster City Archives, 344/169/505, 9th June 1781, letter from Gillows to Thomas Tarlton, Liverpool.

Notes

¹ Montesquieu in a letter to a friend, 1740, quoted by Tocqueville (1966:99).

² Many texts on furniture and interior design discuss the influence of the French, including Fastnedge (1962) and Saumarez-Smith (2000).

³ The archives of Gillows of Lancaster, a furniture-making firm established in 1731, show many instances of this type of client-led design. For example, Gillows wrote to Thomas Tarlton of Liverpool in 1781, stating that 'if you want [a chair] exactly like that you saw ... send a sketch of it', Westminster City Archives, 344/169/505, Gillows to Thomas Tarlton, Liverpool, 9th June 1781.

⁴ To put this into a context, in 1754 £3 was enough to buy a mahogany dining table. Chippendale's entire workshop, spanning numbers 60, 61 and 62 St. Martin's Lane was insured for just £250.

⁵ Gillows' sketches of a library bookcase for Sir George Warren were sent accompanied by a letter which stated, 'if any of Chippendale's designs be more agreeable can execute 'em and adapt them to the places they are for', Westminster City Archives, 344/165/175, 26th April 1765, letter from Gillows to Sir George Warren.

⁶ Quotation from a trade label of the London furniture-making firm of Ince and Mayhew, quoted by Coleridge (1966: 63).

⁷ Design books by French cabinet-makers, including Jean Bérain, Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier and Daniel Marot were available in London from 1700 onwards, initially in the original French, then with subtitles and eventually in the form of translations.

⁸ Chippendale sold 400 copies of his first *Director* (1754) within England; it is not known how many copies of the French edition (1762) were published, although copies were owned by Catherine the Great and Louis XVI (Gilbert, 1978:xvii)

⁹ François de la Rochefoucauld, *A Frenchman In England, 1784*, quoted by Saumarez-Smith (2000:203).

¹⁰ For example, during the 1770s and 1780s Gillows of Lancaster regularly dealt with Swabreck and Denton of Kingston, Jamaica, sending out items of furniture and receiving lengths of mahogany as payment (Gillows letter books, Westminster City Archives).