

18th century britain: consumerism, industrialization, and social change

[Economics](#)



This assignment will focus on consumerism, industrialization and social change in Britain during the eighteenth century. The focus on consumerism will be the pleasure gardens of eighteenth century Britain, in particular Vauxhall, London. For industrialization, it will be the work of Josiah Wedgwood and the different strategies he used to sell his products. The social change aspect of the assignment will look at the poem *The Mores* by John Clare.

The pleasure gardens of the eighteenth century were a grand display of Georgian society and culture. The pleasure gardens provided entertainment and commerce to social nobility, doctors, gentry, prostitutes and whoever could afford the price of admission. The most famous of the eighteenth century pleasure gardens is Vauxhall, London. Vauxhall was a showcase of British architecture and interior design. Exhibitions of art and musical performances attracted great crowds to Vauxhall. As a venue, Vauxhall was a huge PR and marketing success. The use of exhibitions, music and art were key in promoting and displaying British culture to the masses. Pleasure gardens brought people from all parts of society together in one place interacting and enjoying the displays that were on offer for all. The social importance of the pleasure garden was not just that it brought people from all classes together but it was the display of culture and entertainment on offer. The pleasure garden is undoubtedly the first of its kind in terms of an exhibition showcasing British culture and society. (Vickery, A. 2013, pp. 31-32).

Josiah Wedgwood was not just a hugely successful potter, but he was also an advertising and marketing genius. The manner in which Wedgwood

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advertised and marketed his products were extraordinary for the time and in some aspects are still used today. Wedgwood gave his work away as gifts to the royal houses of Europe ensuring that the nobility and the middle classes all saw his work on display in the various European palaces. This method of advertising and marketing provided Wedgwood with custom not just from the nobility and middle classes but also from the same royal houses which he presented gifts to. To make the product affordable for the middle classes, Wedgwood increased production and reduced prices. Wedgwood's work was of such high quality that German potters started copying his work after he had sent pieces to the German princes. (Wedgwood, J. Finer, A. Savage, G. 1965, p. 126-131).

The Mores by John Clare is a brilliant piece of literature showcasing the social change in Britain. The Mores portrays open fields of unspoilt and untouched land, spread as far as the eye can see. " In uncheckt shadows of green, brown, and grey unbounded freedom ruled the wandering scene nor fence of ownership crept in between" (Clare, J. 1990, p. 169). This is Clare's vision of his childhood, his perfect world. It is almost as if Clare is telling the story of the mores. The unspoilt, untouched land in the beginning of the poem goes through various social changes throughout the poem. " Inclosure came and trampled on the grave of labour's rights and left the poor a slave" (Clare, J. 1990, p. 170). Clare writes that man and flock are imprisoned and he goes on further to say that " Thus with the poor, scared freedom bade goodbye" (Clare, J. 1990, p. 171).

This assignment has shown the importance of the pleasure garden in eighteenth century Britain. The pleasure gardens use of arts, commerce and entertainment brought people from the middle classes and the nobility together. The exhibitions of British culture on display to the masses was a very clever way to promote Britishness. Josiah Wedgwood's method of promoting his products using royal families was extraordinary for his period. The importance of Wedgwood is evident in that his methods are somewhat still used today. The Mores poem by John Clare showcases huge social change in society. The portrayal of the mores and the social change it goes through really has a negative effect on life.