Modern Britain: Aristocrats Old and New
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• Once the Whigs came to power with the first George from the House of Hanover in 1714, the Tories took a back seat for many years to come.

• Tories philosophical underpinning rested on twin planks—supremacy of the Anglican Church and a monarch deigned by God to reign.

• Tories could not turn back the clock on the changes wrought by the Act of Settlement.
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- The Whig Party practiced pragmatic toleration.
- Politically minded Protestant dissenters would join the Anglicans so as to enter circles otherwise closed to them.
- The Whigs came to dominate national politics, and in the Hanover monarchs had willing accomplices.
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- The Whigs made the Crown something to be bestowed by Parliament and not by God.
- The House of Hanover had been invited to reign in Britain and the Whigs issued the invitation.
- The first King George (left) couldn’t speak English; the first and second Georges spent portions of each year in Hanover, and implicitly this put England at risk of continental involvement in a difficult place to defend.
- The Whigs received the plums of royal patronage.
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- The first 2 Hanover kings didn’t seek to lead Britain; so, into this royal void stepped the king’s ministers and led to the development of cabinet government.

- William of Orange had drawn his early cabinets from members of both political organizations, but as his reign progressed he selected ministers from parliament’s majority party.
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• With most MPs a Whig, the monarch could pick and choose from among the leaders of the party’s many factions.

• Administration of Great Britain became a system of manipulation, bargaining, and influence peddling.
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• The knights of the shire comprised two MPs representing each county.
• Elected at large by persons (men) who held freehold property worth 40 shillings annually.
• Candidates for the knights of the shire seats had to hold land worth 600 Pounds a year.
• Most of the Commons comprised of representatives of parliamentary boroughs—designated by the monarch
• Anything from a crowded city to a remote hamlet.
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- William Hogarth 
*The Election: 1. An Election Entertainment* 1754 (the scene depicts an electoral feast organized by the Whig party to garner support)

- During the course of the 18th century, election patronage became quite a complex and sophisticated system.

- Over time and with diligence, a large-landowner would control a group of MPs and build up what they called in the time, his “interest”--
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- The Cabinet could count on several groups of reliable votes--MPs who served in the military and what were called “placemen” (today civil servants).
- The 45 Scottish MPs would often look to English power brokers for assistance.
- The government always required substantial support from independent MPs who owed no one their seat and voted as they pleased--the Country Party, distinct from the Court Party.
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- The “Loyal Opposition.” Persons opposed to government policies but did not plan extra-legal measures to bring it down.
- The Tories were too small a group to provide any meaningful disruption to Whig plans.
- Whig intra-party disputes divided them into factions.
- Different generations of Whig Party dissidents often attempted to disrupt the cabinet by rallying around the Prince of Wales.
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- Laws enacted in Glorious Revolution’s wake kept the landed aristocracy in power at the national and local levels.
- Justices of the Peace were the most important figures in persons day-to-day lives; they invariably came from the ranks of the well-to-do.
- JPs resided in the county in which they served without pay, but with high status and much power.
- JPs held sway in administrative and judicial matters.
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- MPs and JPs were amateurs who came from the gentry who expected to spend no more than few months, usually weeks, in government responsibilities.
- Drawn primarily from the country-side estates, society’s upper strata; they were the ruling class.
- Improvisers rather than specialists.
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- First 2 Hanover monarchs patronized work of George Frederick Handel.
- Best known for his oratorio *The Messiah*, first performed in Dublin in 1742.
- Established an English musical tradition of choral singing and made London a required venue at which for continental musicians to play.
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- Excess crept into the machinations of aristocrats.
- Blenheim Palace (left), the Duke of Marlborough’s great country house proved a brooding presence in one of England’s most serene and spacious parks.
- The ruling class reveled in “assemblies,” gatherings of polite persons of both sexes to chat and to play.
- Often the ruling class’ reach overstretched its grasp, and they found themselves perpetually in debt.
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- Continental Europe’s estate owner employed large numbers of peasants to work the land.
- In Britain, the country gentleman was a glorified landlord who divided his land and let it to lease to rent-paying tenants.
- Allowed the land-owner to serve in Parliament or as a Justice of the Peace.
- Division of an estate among several sons would wreak havoc on their place in society.
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• During the Enlightenment, Britain boasted a number of philosophes—men who inquired into the ways of man and nature and through this examination reached conclusions about the fundamental importance of “natural laws.”

• The poet Alexander Pope wrote of Isaac Newton, “Nature and Nature’s laws lay hid in night/God said Let Newton be! And all was light.”

• Newton’s younger associate Edmund Halley came to predict the exact transit of a comet that bears his name (See left from 1910).
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• his *Two Treatises on Government* of John Locke presumed a contract between governed and governors for the benefit of the former.
• When a government, such as the one of James II, did not abide by that contract it should be removed.
• Locke posited that human beings were born as a blank slate to be filled with experience.
• Radical philosophes’ thinking co-opted and curbed by Whig Party.
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• Not London but Edinburgh, the “Athens of the North,” served as center of British Enlightenment.

• University of Glasgow a center for mathematical and philosophical divination and Edinburgh developed the best medical school in the English speaking world.

• (Upper left, Adam Smith (economics), (center) David Hume (philosophy), and (lower left) William Robertson (historical inquiry) led British academia and intelligentsia into modernity.
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- In their time in Britain the impact of, Locke, Smith, and Hume, was nothing as compared to the painter William Hogarth.
- Around 1731 he set himself up as a portrait painter, but that same year he executed his first series of modern morality paintings, a totally new concept intended for wider dissemination through engravings.
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- William Hogarth, “A Harlot’s Progress,” 1733 (Plates 1 and 2)
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- William Hogarth, “A Harlot’s Progress,” 1733 (Plates 3 and 4)
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- William Hogarth, “A Harlot’s Progress,” 1733, (Plates 5 and 6)
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- William Hogarth, “A Rake’s Progress,” 1733, (Plates 1-4)
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- William Hogarth, “A Rake’s Progress,” 1733, (Plates 5-8)
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• Alexander Pope, from “Essay on Man:”

Submit: in this or any other sphere,
Secure to be as bless'd as thou canst bear;
Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
Or in the natal or the mortal hour.
All Nature is but Art unknown to thee;
All chance direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good:
And spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.
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- Of Lord Chesterfield’s advice to his illegitimate son Philip, Samuel Johnson wrote, “[They teach the morals of a whore and the manners of a dancing master.”
- An overarching concern not with the advance of any particular cause or field, but with the traits needed to be accepted by society as a gentleman.
- “Everyone could be flattered to the eventual success of the flatterer.”
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• At the first impulse of passion, be silent till you can be soft.
• Avoid cacophony, and, what is very near as bad, monotony.
• Avoid singularity.
• Better refuse a favor gracefully, than to grant it clumsily.
• Conceal all your learning carefully.
• Deepest learning, without goodbreeding, is unwelcome.
• Either do not think, or do not love to think.
• Endeavor to please and oblige our fellowcreatures.
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- Even where you are sure, seem rather doubtful.
- Every man knows that he understands religion and politics.
- Frequently make friends of enemies, and enemies of friends.
- Guard against those who make the most court to you.
- If you will persuade, you must first please.
- Judges from the appearances of things, and not from the reality.
- Keep your own temper and artfully warm other people's.
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Legacy of King George III:
- An ambitious patrician who sought to use extra-constitutional means to restore the British monarch primacy.
- A conscientious king vilified by the people whose stations and power had been elevated.

• Events in George III’s childhood reverberate throughout his reign.
  - Educated to be king, but his schooling was cloistered and he had little or no interaction with peers.
  - The first two George’s had ceded such authority to their Cabinet and for 50 years the Whig oligarchy had dominated government policy.

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• George III married a German princess to be his Queen Charlotte.
• They had 15 children; the royal couple eschewed the court for their private chambers and the country for the city.
• George III collected books, 65,000 of them, and supported the sciences particularly astronomy.
• Early Victorians.
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- The essayist and critic Samuel Johnson supported George III and even visited with the monarch early in his reign.
- Conversely, the journalist John Wilkes (left) might be regarded as a product of his time—a British gadfly.
- A series of inept ministries had brought the parliamentary system into disrepute and allowed political radicalism to enter the mix.
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• By the 1760s London boasted 4 daily papers, 10 tri-weeklies, well-regarded monthlies such as Gentleman’s Magazine; at least one newspaper would publish in the major provincial towns, and the public sphere was inundated by pamphlets by advocates who felt left out from the journalistic mix.

• Wilkes was irreverent, irreligious, immoral, and unafraid to attack the Cabinet and eventually the king himself.

• Tested freedom of the press.

"The Gentleman’s Magazine," September, 1780
Imprint: London, F. Jeffries, 1731-1907
Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives, APM .G33 V.50 1780 1, Stanford University Libraries
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- Wilkes was a sitting MP when he was arrested in a nameless warrant for the North Briton’s seditious and libelous statements.
- One imprisonment led to a 2nd charge, and Wilkes fled to France.
- After 4 years abroad Wilkes returned to England, stood for election, won returned to prison.
- Widespread support from artisan class. Repeated.
- Wilkes the newspaperman pushed for publication of Parliamentary debates.
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- British radicalism were concerned not with the issues of the country landowner but of the urban shopkeeper who felt an unfair tax burden.
- These concerns eventually led to the rise of party politics where groups of people worked together in pursuit of policy objectives.
- Led to the diminishing of the monarch’s initiative, but allowed parliamentary structures to endure.
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- Did the Industrial Revolution commence in the 10th century?
  - International trade fairs, the growth of medieval cities, the initiation of transoceanic commerce in the 15th and 16th centuries, and the progressive improvements in textile weaving, shipbuilding, and coal mining.

- These developments proceeded along a more languid evolutionary line.

- From the 1760s through the mid 19th century Britain transforms from a preponderantly agrarian world to one where most persons engage themselves in the production of goods or the provision of services.
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• Prevailing historical wisdom held Europe’s population explosion of the late 18th century came as a result of the Industrial Revolution, but demographers provide an analysis that it preceded it.

• Ireland has never known hard-core industrialization but in 17th century its populace increases tremendously.

• England saw its population grow by 14% between 1701 and 1751, by 50% between 1751 and 1801, and by 100% between 1801 and 1851.
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- Reasons for population growth:
  - Women marry younger and have more children.
  - Inoculations for smallpox and the disappearance of bubonic plague.
  - Most likely cause better, more abundant, and cheaper food.
- Among foodstuffs the humble potato made the biggest difference.
- Manageable population growth of 1.5% per year.
- Societies able to adapt to it rather than being overwhelmed.
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- To facilitate move to enclosure Parliament passed acts to consolidate land.
- Persons without title to the land they worked saw traditional rights to pasture livestock eliminated almost overnight.
- In the Scottish Highland clearances landlords encouraged their former tenants to collect seaweed for soap and glass industries. Many
- Highlanders chose to emigrate internally to cities or overseas to the colonies in America and Australia.
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• Requirements for industrialization:
  – Resources to power it; Means to distribute its manufacture,
  – A market big enough to absorb new products;
  – A society flexible enough to allow people to shift from traditional endeavors and into new way of life, and encourages innovation and entrepreneurship.

• Great Britain had two key elements to power its new industry—coal and iron.
Modern Britain: Aristocrats Old and New

- Wealthy people willing to risk capital on public projects rather than only on their country houses.
- Education system began to produce innovative thinkers and patents for new inventions grew exponentially.
- Protestant dissenters, less than 3% of the English population counted some 50% of the inventors and entrepreneurs of Britain’s Industrial Revolution.
- Driven to excel in a state which granted them religious toleration but not social equality; they could earn their ways into manor homes.
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- Impossible to analyze the growth of the British coal, iron, and cotton industries absent any of the individual components.
- Because of weather and topography cotton industry grows up in Lancashire.
- Manchester becomes the manufacturing center and Liverpool the port.
- Ripple effect of need and solution, e.g. British mills could cotton thread quickly required raw cotton harvested more quickly; Eli Whitney’s cotton gin answered the need, but this machine spurred cotton growing across the American South, which increased the justification for slavery, and helped to lead to the U.S. Civil War of 1861.
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• In the 1760s James Watt perfected a steam engine that could be employed for multiple purposes.
• Liberated industry from dependence on running water.
• Steam driven pumps enabled more coal to be dug more safely, and this allowed more iron to be processed.
• Britain kept steam engine design and manufacture a virtual monopoly until the 1830s
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- Britain had become the world’s superpower, a commercial, military, and economic colossus.
- What is the flip-side of this prosperity?
- A few persons’ prosperity derived from the exploitation of the many, “The Midas Curse” brought about untold human suffering and misery.
- Was Britain’s industrial revolution built on the backs of African slaves?
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- Industrialization wrought the explosion of factory towns.
- New cities unprepared, ill-equipped, and unwilling to make adjustments to cope with the scale of change.
- London counted a population of 960,000 as the 19th century commenced and 30 years later had almost doubled.
- The natural rhythms of the sun and the seasons replaced by the factory whistle and the work shift.