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'The most Roman of the Romanists': Thomas Jefferson's Classical Taste, 1768-1826

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Abstract

This thesis is about Thomas Jefferson and his classical taste in architecture, ornamented gardens and the *locus amoenus*. Thomas Jefferson curated a classical world in Virginia, for himself and later for others. He created an oasis of classicism in both thought and architecture, and this thesis explores how and why he did it. Classicism during the eighteenth century was not unique to the American Thomas Jefferson, for classicism spread throughout Western Europe from the Renaissance on and Jefferson was a direct participant in this wider European (especially British) rush to adopt, adapt and possess the ancient Mediterranean. Although Jefferson's participation in acquiring classical taste was not unique to this American, he did do something unique with classicism: he blended it with the American landscape and thus created an American classicism relevant for an American and, especially, a Virginian. Jefferson brought Arcadia to America and Virgil to Virginia.

This thesis puts forth different terms for understanding Jefferson's classical taste. First, it explores 'taste' as an eighteenth-century equivalent of 'aesthetic', though with less philosophising. It argues that taste existed as a substitute for liking, interest in, appreciation for. Jefferson's taste was inextricably linked with the Classics and his taste cannot be understood without the Classics. Next, it uses the Latin term *utile dulci* as Jefferson's requirement for taste, which Jefferson infused with Epicureanism.

The first aspect of Jefferson explored is his Epicureanism, which he received from different avenues. This chapter explores the depth of Jefferson's classicism that fuelled his taste. The next chapter is on the villas Monticello and Poplar with their aesthetic connections to Antiquity, the Italian Renaissance and Georgian England. This chapter will illustrate that Monticello was designed as a classical home not only in architecture, but in intent as well. Finally, Jefferson the Father of the University of Virginia will be explored. This chapter argues that Jefferson created the university as a seat of classical and Epicurean learning and will highlight the university's direct connections to Antiquity.

This thesis will paint a portrait of Jefferson seldom seen in his historiography—it will illuminate a side of Jefferson that was creative, imaginative and idealistic. In so doing, this thesis will illustrate the relevance of Classical Reception for American Studies and will displace Jefferson from American History and place him within Classics.

Lay Summary

Jefferson wrote on the classical world in his personal correspondences. He designed his home, Monticello, as a site of classicism in the middle of the Virginian countryside. He played with ideas on designing temples in his backyard, he called his home Mount Parnassus (the ancient mountain of wisdom), and others referred to him as Jove on top of his little mountain. This is what this thesis will explore and demonstrate, and more. This thesis will tell a story about Jefferson that is overlooked in favour of politics and philosophy. This thesis will enter the classical world that Jefferson created for himself and Virginia.

Jefferson frequently used specific words and concepts while writing and designing his classical world, which are relevant for understanding his classicism within this thesis. The first word is 'taste'. English writers during the eighteenth century wrote on taste in different ways and it was, largely, a word whose meaning adapted to whomever used it. As it pertains to Jefferson, taste can be substituted for 'interest in', 'admiration for', beauty, *et cetera*. To have classical taste, therefore, is to be a person with knowledge in classicism and the ability to apply it to one's life through books, clothing, architecture and polite discussion. Thomas Jefferson was such a person, and this thesis will illustrate how. Next, Jefferson infused his classical taste with a term adopted by the Roman poet, Horace, call the *utile dulci*, which roughly means 'useful pleasures'. Jefferson believed that classical taste should be both useful (*utile*) and beautiful (*dulci*). So, Jefferson's classical buildings were designed to inspire and admire, but were also meant to be functional, such as housing students and professors. This thesis will not only highlight this but will explore its classical roots and attach it to Renaissance Italy and Georgian England in order to understand how and why Jefferson came to understand this term.

In order to fully understand Jefferson's classical taste, this thesis will explore three aspects of his classicism in art: his Epicureanism, his villas and his university. This thesis will explore Jefferson's villas in Virginia: Monticello and Poplar Forest. Much has been written on Monticello as a working plantation and the house of the third president, but Monticello's classicism and connections to classicism in Europe have been largely ignored. Finally, this thesis will examine the University of Virginia as the culmination of Jefferson's classical taste. This chapter will explore how Jefferson's classical taste evolved from the literature of the grotto to the promulgation of classicism to Virginia's youth.

This thesis will paint a portrait of Jefferson seldom seen in his historiography—it will illuminate a side of Jefferson that was creative, imaginative and idealistic. In so doing, this thesis will illustrate the relevance for Classical Reception in American Studies and will displace Jefferson from American History and place him within Classics.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself and is of my own creation. I have not submitted this thesis for any other degree or professional qualification. Some ideas and research for this thesis stem from my MA History degree (University of San Diego 2016), but this thesis has greatly evolved and matured from its beginnings.

Alley Marie Jordan

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During 1824, Thomas Jefferson wrote that ‘A man is not qualified for a professor, knowing nothing merely but his own profession.’ This is a quality seldom found in Academia today, and I am fortunate to have found a supervisor who is most qualified because his knowledge reaches so far beyond his own profession as a classicist. Calum Maciver’s breadth of knowledge and his relentless pursuit of understanding is an admirable quality that I, as a student, have only experienced a few times. In choosing professors for his university, I believe Jefferson would have been most eager and adamant to recruit this Scottish scholar of the Classics. Not only is my thesis the better for Calum’s guidance, but my identity as an historian and lover of wisdom is the better for him. I take great comfort knowing that this rare scholar and educator will remain a caretaker of learning and history. *Gratias tibi ago.*

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In part, I would like to thank J.R.R. Tolkien, whose writing taught me how to tell a story and to be a storyteller. A thesis is a proposition of an idea that is subject to scrutiny, academic criteria and mindless procedure, but it is also a small story in the history of the world. This is how Tolkien taught me to understand and write a history of things. Language has value beyond measure, and with something as formulaic as a PhD thesis, the opportunity of language can transform it into a story that is, above all else, enjoyable to read. So, it is my hope that this thesis is at least an enjoyable read.

Dedication

For my mother, Dee Ann LaFontaine, 1963-2019.
I miss you more than I can bear.

‘a sublime luxury’: Thomas Jefferson’s Classical Taste, an Introduction

‘The letters of a person, especially one whose business has been chiefly transacted by letters, form the only full and genuine journal of his life’ (Thomas Jefferson to Robert Walsh, 5 April 1823).¹

‘He was a strange man, indeed, this Thomas Jefferson’ (Karl Lehmann).



(Photo: Alley Marie Jordan. Jefferson’s Study, Monticello.)

Introduction

This thesis is about Thomas Jefferson’s development and execution of his classical taste in architecture. It is designed to explore Jefferson’s classical architecture in Virginia and the aesthetic legacy of Antiquity that he intended to fulfil in America. This introductory section will: define the terms used throughout this thesis, outline the argument, illustrate the purpose

¹ As it concerns in-text citations, Thomas Jefferson will hereafter be referred to as TJ. ‘From Thomas Jefferson to Robert Walsh, 5 April 1823,’ *Founders Online*, U.S. National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3436>.

of this thesis, and illuminate Jefferson's longstanding significance today. In a significant time of political and cultural change in Virginia (and America), Jefferson aligned both himself and Virginia with an antique legacy that represents knowledge, power and art. The spaces of Jefferson's classical taste are the villas Monticello and Poplar Forest and the University of Virginia. An examination of these spaces will reveal Jefferson's deeply entrenched view of the importance of the Classics in Virginia. These places as expressions of Jefferson's intelligible, meaningful and reasoned 'taste' will be revealed. In order to unearth this quality of Jefferson's classicism, this thesis will explore Jefferson's objective: reforming American attitudes toward art, knowledge and civic duty; the settings in which this occurred, i.e. the various landscapes in which he attempted to accomplish his objective; and the methods through which he sought his objective: letters, bills and buildings.² Jefferson used the Classics in order to create a classical self-portrait, and a new interpretation of Jefferson's legacy for Art History, American History and Classical Reception Studies will be revealed.³ This thesis, on the basis set out above, does not claim to expose Jefferson's 'true identity,' but seeks to uncover an unexplored side of his character through his taste. This project treats Jefferson as a *classicist* and an *architect*, not as a politician or political philosopher.⁴ Jefferson was influential in the reform of American laws, politics and education. He was also influential in American culture and sought to reform it through the Classics. This thesis identifies Jefferson's classical taste because he adopted classical architecture in Virginia (and beyond) in order to establish Rome as the aesthetic ancestor to America.

The Classics provided Jefferson with a mode of thought that had direct consequences on how he understood Virginia and his personal identity that went far beyond Bernard

² According to Barbara Arciszewska: 'Classicism is not only the object of study by architectural historians, it also shapes our subliminal concept of what art/architecture is, and ought to be' (Arciszewska and McKellar 2004: 19). Classicism will be discussed more fully in this chapter.

³ This method of objective, method and setting was borrowed from Caivano 2019: 29-30.

⁴ Politics is ever relevant to an understanding of Jefferson, but it will not be the specific intended focus of this study.

Bailyn's claim that the Classics were mere 'window-dressing,' (using Samuel Johnson's term) for colonial Americans (Bailyn 1967: 24). Indeed, Bailyn was correct when he observed that in eighteenth-century America, 'this elaborate display of classical authors is deceptive. Often the learning behind it was superficial' because 'knowledge of classical authors was universal among colonists with any degree of' (Bailyn 1967: 23). But this was not the case with Jefferson. Jefferson did have a typical eighteenth-century gentry education in the Classics, but what makes Jefferson special and worthy of this study is what he *did* with that education, besides merely name-dropping Publius in a pamphlet or quoting Livy in a letter. The Classics furnished Jefferson with an all-encompassing identity that went far beyond furnishing his villa.

Thomas Jefferson's Classical Formation

Jefferson's classical education began as a young boy.⁵ Like most members of the gentry during the eighteenth century, Jefferson received a classical education at a young age; he began Latin at nine years old. '[M]y teacher mr Douglas,' Jefferson wrote in his *Autobiography*, 'a clergyman from Scotland was but a superficial Latinist, less instructed in Greek' (Peterson 1984: 4). Later at the age of fifteen, Jefferson studied under the Reverend John Maury for two years, whom Jefferson characterised as a 'correct classical scholar,' after which he attended the College of William and Mary (Peterson 1984: 4). After this foundational education in the Classics, Jefferson studied Law. Such was Jefferson's formal education in Classics, and his engagement with ancient texts and aesthetics continued throughout his life. Of his youthful readings, William Howard Adams noted:

The importance of Jefferson's early reading and of the aesthetic inspirations he received from literary sources as he shaped his own taste in art, particularly sculpture, architecture, and landscape design, becomes all the more obvious when one attempts to identify the few

⁵ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 9, *September 1815 to April 1816* (Looney, J. 2012: 454–456).

works of art which Jefferson would have known as a young man beyond commonplace family portraits and engravings (Adams 1976: xxxv).

In his *Literary Commonplace Book*, for example, Jefferson inscribed various Horatian quotes, which later reflected his design aesthetic for his 1771 grotto.⁶ Included amongst these quotes is the following from Horace's *Satire* 2.6.60-62: '*O rus quando ego te aspiciam? quandoque licebit nunc veterum libris, nunc somno & inertibus horis ducere sollicitae jucunda [sic] obliviae vitae?*' (Wilson 1989: 83).⁷ Such a sentiment, which emphasises the importance of *otium* over *negotium*, the literary over the political, and the rural over the urban, reflects Jefferson's eighteenth-century attitude toward the *beatus ille* tradition that influenced his classical taste.⁸ Moreover, this Horatian quotation, whether Jefferson was aware of it, upholds a large tension between town and country life that goes beyond regarding them as ideal opposites. That is to say that each setting has its own moral connotations, especially in terms of the wealth divide. Jefferson channelled such sentiments while reflecting on his Palladian villa as well, but his rustic views on classical taste, especially concerning villa and garden architecture, developed toward the *homo civilis* in his plans (both mental and architectural), for the University of Virginia.⁹ Aside from his youthful studies in the Classics,

⁶ See Jordan (2019), "'beautiful shells from the shore": Thomas Jefferson's Classical Grotto of 1771' *Journal of Garden History* 48: 256-262.

⁷ 'O rural home: when shall I behold you! When shall I be able now with books of the ancients, now with sleep and idle hours, to quaff sweet forgetfulness of life's cares!' (Wilson 1989: 83).

⁸ In Nisbet and Hubbard's exploration of Horace's *Ode on Tranquillity* (*Odes* 2.16), they highlight of *otium*: 'To the statesman the word meant "peace" whether at home or abroad [...] To rich Romans *otium* was the leisure needed for innocent enjoyment, particularly in the country [...] To the philosopher, and in particular the Epicurean, *otium* signified the withdrawal from the crowd that was thought desirable for spiritual felicity; cf. Sen. *epist.* 68. 10 "'otium," inquis "Seneca, commendas mihi? ad Epicureas voces delaberis?'"', Epicurus, *frr.* 426, 551 (ἐὐημερία), Leo, *anth. P.* 15. 12. 1 ff.' (Nisbet and Hubbard 1991: 253).

Horace's *Ode on Tranquillity* recalls the Epicurean sentiment of ease of mind when faced with pain and fear in Lucretius *DRN* 2.14-19: 'O pitiable minds of men, O blind intelligences! In what gloom of life, in how great perils is passed all your poor span of time! Not to see that all nature barks for is this, that pain be removed away out of the body, and that the mind, kept away from care and fear, enjoy a feeling of delight!' *o miseras hominum mentes, o pectora caeca! Qualibus in tenebris vitae quantisque periculis degitur hoc aevi quodcumque!* Nonne videre nil aliud sibi naturam latrare, nisi utqui corpore seiunctus dolor absit, mensque fruatur iucundo sensu cura semota metuque? (Henderson 1992: 94-95).

⁹ A visitor's account of a visit to James Madison's Montpelier noted a similarity and influence of Jefferson's Monticello, one directly relevant to *otium* and *negotium*: 'In this retirement he devotes himself to the innocent pursuits of agriculture, and, like the patriarch of Monticello, he seems to manifest a degree of delight at the idea of having honorably freed himself from the cares, the burdens, and the miseries of government' *The*

Jefferson did not study the Classics formally at university. Instead, he studied Law at the College of William and Mary. As he later included the Classics in the curriculum at the University of Virginia, it seems Jefferson chose to remedy his lack of university training in the Classics for his future students. Nevertheless, Jefferson developed his classicism through independent study during his adulthood, as illustrated through his letters on various classical themes, philosophies and writers.

Jefferson's Architectural Formation

In his 1762 *Dialogue on Taste*, Allan Ramsay, who was a Scottish portraitist, presented classical taste as both beautiful and useful:

The present taste in architecture was formed, not upon the palaces and dwelling-houses of the ancient Greeks and Romans, of which there were no vestiges at the revival of the arts, but upon their temples and other public buildings, from which the ornamental part has been borrowed and applied to domestic use, in a manner abundantly absurd, for the most part; and which, nevertheless, custom has rendered agreeable to the sight (Ramsay 1762: 52).

Ramsay's description here of the reception of classical taste largely echoes Jefferson's own—that use be combined with ornament. Moreover, Ramsay highlighted the borrowing from classical temples, rather than palaces—Jefferson himself admired the Maison Carrée in Nîmes above all classical structures as the epitome of classical architecture and taste.¹⁰

Likewise, Robert Adam wrote on classical taste in *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia*:

Scarce any monuments now remain of Grecian or of Roman magnificence but public buildings ... the private but splendid edifices in which the citizens of Athens and Rome

Papers of James Madison, Retirement Series, vol. 2, 1 February 1820–26 February 1823 (Mattern, D., Stagg, J.C.A., Johnson, M. and Mandeville Colony, A 2013: 90–92).

¹⁰ On the Maison Carrée, Jefferson wrote to James Madison: 'We took for our model what is called the Maison quarrée of Nismes, one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful & precious morcel [*sic*] of architecture left us by antiquity. It was built by Caius & Lucius Caesar & repaired by Louis XIV. and has the suffrage of all the judges of architecture who have seen it as yeilding [*sic*] to no one of the beautiful monuments of Greece, Rome, Palmyra & Balbec which late travellers have communicated to us. It is very simple, but it is noble beyond expression, and would have done honour to our country as presenting to travellers a morsel of taste in our infancy promising much for our maturer age' *The Papers of James Madison*, vol. 8, 10 March 1784–28 March 1786, (Rutland and Rachal 1973: 366–369).

resided, have all perished; few vestiges remain of those innumerable villas with which Italy was crowded ... Some accidental allusions in the ancient poets, some occasional descriptions in their historians, convey such ideas of the magnificence, both of their houses in town and of their villas, as astonish an artist of the present age ... There is not any misfortune which an Architect is more apt to regret than the destruction of these buildings, nor could any thing more sensibly gratify his curiosity, or improve his taste, than to have an opportunity of viewing the private edifices of the Ancients, and of collecting, from his own observation, such ideas concerning the disposition, the form, the ornaments, and the uses of the several apartments, as no description can supply (Brown 2001: 19-20).

During the first half of the eighteenth century, ‘taste’ was broad enough that it could be defined according to whomever holds the pen. ‘The Word Taste,’ according to a 1736 edition of *The Universal Spectator*, ‘is lately grown into universal Use, and the Sense of it as universally laid claim to’ (Noggle 2015: 1). According to James Noggle’s ‘Literature and Taste, 1700-1800’, taste was a new word ‘infused [with] an insistent but uncertain cultural energy’ that served eighteenth-century British minds with ideas and concepts about ‘the historical character of modern Britain and that of other nations and periods, too’ (Noggle 2015: 1). Doing so allowed British intellectuals to reflect upon what would become ‘aesthetics’ in later centuries, thus creating and fostering an intellectual culture surrounded and necessarily founded upon the Classics. The term was normalised through ‘practices of buying, reading, dressing, thinking, and spectating’ (Noggle 2015: 4). Taste was not only a philosophy upon which to theorise—it was a way of living and cultivating the self, at least in polite society. Lord Shaftsbury was cautious of wide applications of taste. ‘[N]othing is more fatal,’ wrote Shaftsbury, ‘either to Painting, Architecture, or the other Arts, than this false Relish which is govern’d rather by what immediately strikes the Sense, than by what consequently and by reflection pleases the Mind, and satisfies the Thought and Reason’ (Shaftsbury 1713: 46).¹¹ Francis Hutcheson only mentioned taste as something acquirable for anyone, elites and peasants alike. He focused on the ‘sense of beauty and harmony’, which is

¹¹ Cooper, A.A., Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1713), *A Notion of the Historical Draught or Tablature of the Judgment of Hercules*: 46.

not taste but is closer to aesthetics—that is, philosophy.¹² Hume, on the other hand, believed that only an elite few could cultivate taste and they are distinguishable for it. Edward Gibbon later observed in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that some societies, like the Goths, could not cultivate taste at all due to their barbarity.¹³ In a similar vein, Adam Smith in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* argued that indigenous Americans could not possess taste due to their brutality and savagery. Jefferson himself had a discussion in the *Notes on the State of Virginia* of African Americans' inability to understand beauty as well. It seems that for the elite of eighteenth-century Britain and America, taste was a white man's quality and ability.

Taste was applied to gardens as well, especially those gardens inspired by Roman poetry, like Stowe, which Jefferson visited during 1786. William Gilpin's *Dialogue upon the Gardens ... at Stow in Buckinghamshire* (1748) presents a 'Variety of beautiful Views'. The characters wandering around the vast garden, stopping to admire follies and historical sculpture invite discussion on 'improved Taste for Pleasure, and a Taste for Virtue' (Gilpin 1748: 11). The architectural context of taste in which Jefferson wrote and designed was such that classicism was ever pervasive and was the ideal to attain in Britain. Jefferson aligned himself with this classical, Palladian-mania, as it were. Jefferson's books on architecture were written by British architects, alongside many French and Italian architects who were also engaging in classicism on the Continent, such as Charles Louis Clérisseau, Antoine Babuty Desgodets, Vincenzo Scamozzi and more. Jefferson's own formal training in

¹² Hutcheson (1725), *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue; In Two Treatises*: 8. 'But in all these Instances of *Beauty* let it be observ'd, That the Pleasure is communicated to those who never reflected on this general Foundation; and that all here is alledg'd is this, That the pleasant Sensation arises only from Objects, in which there is *Uniformity amidst Variety*: We may have the Sensation without knowing what is the Occasion of it; as a Man's Taste may suggest Ideas of Sweets, Acids, Bitters, tho he be ignorant of the Forms of the small Bodys, or their Motions, which excite these Perceptions in him' (Hutcheson 1725: 26). Jefferson believed similarly when it came to the architecture of the University of Virginia, and other public buildings, such as the U.S. Capitol.

¹³ Gibbon and Womersley eds. (1994), *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1: 237.

architecture did not exist. He did not study under an architect, nor did he participate in the Grand Tour in order to learn about architecture. Jefferson's visit to Italy was primarily agricultural, not architectural. In the Marquis de Chastellux's own words along his visit to Monticello during 1782, Jefferson consulted the Fine Arts to learn architecture.¹⁴ Jefferson was, importantly, one of the first to bring classical architecture to the United States, and he is certainly the most recognised.

Taste As Jefferson Used It

This section will define classical 'taste' as Thomas Jefferson understood it and as this thesis uses it. According to Edith Hall, 'the term "classics" has, since the early eighteenth century, been used in English to designate the ancient Greek and Roman authors, their languages and civilizations, and the institutional study of them' (Hall 2018: 3).¹⁵ Classical archaeologist, Karl Lehmann (1894-1964) called Jefferson a classicist and an aesthetic classicist, indeed more:

But Thomas Jefferson was not merely an aesthetic classicist. He was a student of the classics in every sense; of the dark sides of ancient history, of their good and bad philosophies, of all that vast realm of science and literature. His own classicism in architecture unfolded itself hand in hand with his ever-deepening penetration of the antique world in all its aspects (Lehmann 1947: 157).

Lehmann is since the only author to call Jefferson both a classicist and an aesthetic classicist. A goal is to develop Lehmann's argument and to fill this long-awaited gap in Jefferson studies and Classics. The term 'aesthetic' is not adopted, but the eighteenth-century version of it is, taste. A person of classical taste/aesthetics is a person who can be identified as a classicist who in turn develops an artistic style infused not only with the designs of antiquity, but with certain values from them, (as they understood them). Jefferson's classical taste, as

¹⁴ According to Chastellux, Monticello (I) 'resembles none of the others seen in this country' and added that "Mr. Jefferson is the first American who has consulted the Fine Arts to know how he should shelter himself from the weather' (Chastellux, *Travels*, ii, 391)'.
¹⁵ Jefferson also used 'classics' as well in the same context as today.

executed in his architecture, was founded upon the Classics, and cannot be seen as separated from the Classics. Through art, Jefferson's goal was to inspire and equip Virginians toward civic duty and the intellectual enterprise of understanding and valuing knowledge. Jefferson chose the Classics as the language through which to accomplish this because he believed that the Classics were the best models for an ideal learned society—that is, an American (white) society. This is the politics of Jefferson's taste—that it was reserved for a specific class of American, one that has access to education, to wealth and to race and gender. Although this thesis is not focused on politics specifically, politics was nonetheless involved with and a consequence of Jefferson's taste, chiefly because he expressed political ideas on classical taste for the University of Virginia—namely using taste to foster political men. Jefferson's taste was thus both a means to end and an end in it and of itself. The politics of Jefferson's classical taste (as he understood it through his version of Epicureanism) necessitated his own political leanings: that of an educated and wealthy Southern planter.¹⁶

As for 'aesthetic', Jefferson himself never used the term, but he did use 'taste'. Jefferson's own concept of taste did not differ from his contemporaries, as there was no coherent definition of taste, but more of an ideal. There existed no strict definition of 'taste' to which eighteenth-century aesthetes adhered. The Duc de La Rochefoucauld, with whom Jefferson corresponded, visited England during 1784 and had this to say on taste and art: 'Many people believe that the "English gardens" are made without artistic skill or knowledge, that taste alone presides, and that, in consequence, they can do the job themselves, for everyone thinks he has "taste", all because no one can properly define what "taste" is' (Black 2007: 63). Upon his visit to Monticello later on, furthermore, the Duc de La Rochefoucauld noted of Jefferson's villa:

The house stands on the summit of the mountain, and the taste and arts of Europe have been consulted in the formation of its plan... Monticello, according to its first plan, was infinitely

¹⁶ Jefferson's Epicureanism will be explored in the following chapter.

superior to all other houses in America, in point of *taste* [emphasis added] and convenience; but at that time Mr. Jefferson had studied *taste* [emphasis added] and the fine arts in books only (Duc de La Rochefoucauld Liancourt 1800: 137).

Alexander Pope discussed taste in relation to architecture in his famed 1731 'Epistle to Lord Burlington, Of the Use of Riches', which was originally called 'Of Taste'.¹⁷ Lord Burlington owned Chiswick house, which Jefferson used as a model for the second Monticello after he visited the Palladian country house during 1786.¹⁸ In the poem, which Jefferson owned, Pope highlights the 'high' taste of Lord Burlington by contrasting him with another's (Timon's) lowly, commercialised tastes. The story of taste during the eighteenth century, according to Noggle in *The Temporality of Taste in Eighteenth-Century British Writing*, is 'of the civilization of the passions, the rise and progress of the arts and sciences from the crude, feudal past to the modern age... And in this process of refinement towards the present, nothing plays a more effective role than taste' (Noggle 2012: 43). Jefferson himself regarded his taste in classical architecture along these lines when he designed the University of Virginia as an antidote to the colonial College of William and Mary.¹⁹ In the *Essay*, Pope describes this intuitive quality in similar terms, which Ferraro then discusses:

'Yet if we look more closely, we shall find
Most have the *Seeds* of Judgment in their Mind;
Nature affords at least a *glimm'ring Light*; (11.19-21)'

The additional couplet emphasises the fact that 'Good Sense' is an intuitive, almost moral quality which cannot be learned, even from the best of models. The *Epistle* achieves something akin to dramatic irony when the addressee of the poem, 'Occasion'd by his Publishing Palladio's Designs', asserts a secondary role for the kind of influence which he himself seeks to exercise (Ferraro 1996: 145).

¹⁷ The full title reads: *An epistle to the Right Honourable Richard Earl of Burlington: Occasion'd by his publishing Palladio's designs of the baths, arches, theatres, &c. of ancient Rome.*

¹⁸ In his 1786 'Notes on a Tour of English Gardens', Jefferson observed of the Chiswick house and gardens: 'Cheswick. Belongs to D. of Devonshire. Garden about 6. acres. The Octagonal dome has an ill effect, both within and without; the garden shews still too much of art; an obelisk of very ill effect. Another in the middle of a pond useless' *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 369-375). Despite his unaffected notes, Chiswick house bares a great resemblance to Monticello, especially after Jefferson redesigned Monticello during 1794. This is especially curious since Jefferson's own octagonal dome is plain, both inside and out.

¹⁹ This contrast between UVA and the College of William and Mary will be developed more fully in the final chapter of this thesis.

The exceptions of ‘the best of models,’ of course, are Palladio and the Classics themselves. The idea was to transform the classical/Palladian models into something unique as *tasteful*—an exercise in architectural Classical Reception—rather than merely copying the ancients, Palladio or whomever else: ‘Yet shall (my Lord) your just, your noble Rules Fill half the land with Imitating Fools’ (Pope 1735). Jefferson did just this: he transformed the Palladian models of Renaissance Italy, Georgian England and the classical models into a unique, tasteful style for himself that can be identified as Jeffersonian.²⁰ There were many different approaches to classicism during the long eighteenth century, primarily in painting, sculpture and architecture. Jefferson’s particular approaches to the antique will be explored, as there are works on eighteenth-century British artists’ approaches to the antique, especially those of Robert Adam, Joshua Reynolds, Sir William Hamilton, etc. Gilroy-Ware observes the same of the sculptor Thomas Banks in her 2020 *The Classical Body in Romantic Britain*: ‘In his hands, the classical body became a vessel for utopian ideas tied to a particular image of ancient Greece that intersected with the wider pursuit of liberty permeating European culture over the course of the late eighteenth century, a movement reaching its climax during the Revolution in France’ (Gilroy-Ware 2020: 4). Since Jefferson did not himself expound or expand upon the theory and philosophy of taste (as Shaftsbury and Addison did, for example), this thesis will not do so either.²¹ Instead, taste will be explored as simply as

²⁰ A few characteristics of Jeffersonian external architecture include, but are not limited to: Chinese railings, white painted Tuscan and Ionic columns, red bricks, *piano nobile*, white trim, pediments, octagonal forms, and hidden stairs and passages. A few examples of Jeffersonian buildings include: Rose Hill Manor in Leesburg, VA; Barboursville in Barboursville, VA; Lower Brandon Plantation in Prince George County, VA; Bremo Plantation in Fluvanna County, VA; Belle Mont plantation in Tuscumbia, AL; Ruffner Hall of Longwood University in Farmville, VA; Peabody College in Nashville, TN; Grawemeyer Hall of the University of Louisville in Louisville, KY; Montpelier in Orange, VA; and many more.

²¹ For Shaftsbury’s discussion on taste, see the essay, ‘Plastics or the Original Progress and Power of Designatory Art’: ‘the great business in this is “to correct our taste”. For whither will not taste lead us?’ (Noggle 2012: 44). Longinus heavily influenced Addison’s theory of taste. According to Noggle: ‘Longinus for Addison grants his readers a more immediate experience of the “Pleasure” that spontaneously “rises” in their minds than they could get on their own, an immediacy from which the application of rules merely distracts us. By Longinian alchemy, “the very Spirit and Soul” of the object, “fine Writing”, may transfer “a Greatness of Mind to the Reader”. The spirit flows from the object, through the relay of the critic to the reader, to whom the pleasure of the triangular exchange accrues’ (Noggle 2012: 47).

Jefferson did—which is to use taste as a substitute for preference, artistic judgment and *all’antica* bourgeois standards of beauty for the eighteenth century, *i.e.*, classicism.²²

Jefferson’s own first recorded use of ‘taste’ in relation to art occurred during 1767 in his *Memorandum Book*. He used ‘taste’ while describing the classical architecture for his new home, Monticello: ‘For cap of Attic sheets 11.I. broad 128 f. long besides doublings. For cornice of 6 windows, 6 sheets 9.I. broad 6 f. long. Decoration of paper machee [*sic*] for cieling [*sic*] 14 f. 4 I. sq. in compartmts [*sic*]. in taste of the... Send for Aeolian harp’ (TJ *Memorandum Book*, September 1767).²³ Jefferson next used ‘taste’ during 1771 while also designing classical architecture, this time for a grotto never built: ‘The roof may be Chinese, Graecian, or in the taste of the Lanthern [*sic*] of Demosthenes at Athens’ (TJ, *Memorandum Book*: December 1771).²⁴ Jefferson continued his use of ‘taste’ in different ways other than those associated with the Classics, but he usually used it in reference to art/architecture and the classical sentiments explored in this thesis, such as happiness, *locus amoenus*, *utile dulci* and *otium*. Writing during 1783, for example, Jefferson discussed his daughter’s education: ‘Her time in Philadelphia will be chiefly occupied in acquiring a little taste and execution in such of the fine arts as she could not prosecute to equal advantage in a more retired situation’ (TJ to marquis François Barbé-Marbois, 5 December 1783).²⁵ ‘I have now in my eye,’ Jefferson wrote to Eliza House Trist on the beauty of Monticello, ‘a mountain where nothing but the eagle can visit you which I think would suit your present taste for retirement. It looks

For more on taste in Alexander Pope, see Ferraro, J. (1996): 141-156.

²² By ‘bourgeois’, this thesis means standards of beauty afforded to a person of Jefferson’s station: a wealthy planter, an educated lawyer, a well-travelled ambassador, a president, a villa dweller, *et cetera*. Jefferson’s taste may necessarily have been different from those of a common New England farmer, a London merchant, or a Virginian enslaved person, for example.

²³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Second Series, Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, vol. 1 (Bear and Stanton 1997: 3-43).

²⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Second Series, Jefferson’s Memorandum Books*, vol. 1 (Bear and Stanton 1997: 213-266). For an in-depth exploration into Jefferson’s grotto, see Jordan 2019 ‘“beautiful shells from the shore”: Thomas Jefferson’s Sacred Grotto of 1771’ *Journal of Garden History* 47: 256-262.

²⁵ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 6, 21 May 1781–1 March 1784 (Boyd J. 1952: 373–374).

down on mine as a giant does on a dwarf' (TJ to Eliza House Trist, 11 December 1783).²⁶

During 1785, Jefferson wrote to James Buchanan and William Hay on classical architecture for America:

I was a considerable time before I could find an architect whose *taste* [emphasis added] had been formed on a study of the antient models of this art: the style of architecture in this capital being far from chaste. I at length heard of one, to whom I immediately addressed myself, and who perfectly fulfills [sic] my wishes. He has studied 20 years in Rome, and has given proofs of his skill and *taste* [emphasis added] by a publication of some antiquities of this country (TJ to James Buchanan and William Hay, 13 August 1785).²⁷

Jefferson used the term again during this same year in a letter to Edmund Randolph on the classical Virginia State Capitol: 'How is a taste for a chaste and good style of building to be formed in our countrymen unless we seize all occasions which the erection of public buildings offers, of presenting to them models for their imitation?' (TJ to Edmund Randolph, 20 September 1785).²⁸ Writing to John Banister Jr. on a modern Roman education, furthermore, Jefferson wrote: 'The advantages of Rome are the acquiring a local knowlege [sic] of a spot so classical and so celebrated; the acquiring the true pronuntiation [sic] of the Latin language; the acquiring a just taste in the fine arts, more particularly those of painting, sculpture, Architecture, and Music' (TJ to John Banister, Jr., 15 October 1785).²⁹ Jefferson was particularly interested in furnishing taste among young Americans, and he believed that architecture could help generate a suitable taste. Writing to James Madison on the Virginia State Capitol, Jefferson suggested:

²⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 6, 21 May 1781–1 March 1784 (Boyd, J. 1952: 382–383). During 1784, Jefferson wrote to George Washington: 'our citizens have had too full a taste of the comforts furnished by the arts & manufactures to be debarred the use of them,' *The Papers of George Washington*, Confederation Series, vol. 1, 1 January 1784–17 July 1784 (Abbot, W.W. 1992: 215–218.)

²⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 366–368).

²⁸ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 537–539). While in France during this same time, Jefferson wrote to Abigail Adams on classical sculpture: 'With respect to the figures I could only find three of those you named, matched in size. These were Minerva, Diana, and Apollo. I was obliged to add a fourth, unguided by your choice. They offered me a fine Venus; but I thought it out of taste to have two at table at the same time. Paris and Helen were presented' *The Adams Papers*, Adams Family Correspondence, vol. 6, December 1784–December 1785 (Ryerson, R. A. 1993: 390–392).

²⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 635–638).

À propos of the Capitol, do my dear friend exert yourself to get the plan begun on set aside, & that adopted which was drawn here. It was taken from a model which has been the admiration of 16 centuries, which has been the object of as many pilgrimages as the tomb of Mahomet; which will give unrivalled honour to our State, and furnish a model whereon to form the *taste* [emphasis added] of our young men (TJ to James Madison, 8 February 1786).³⁰

During this same year, Jefferson and John Adams travelled to the English countryside in order to examine and experience the English gardens and country houses. Jefferson took along with him Thomas Whately's *Observations on Modern Gardening*, the Introduction of which included 'taste' as Jefferson used it: 'Gardening, in the perfection to which it has been lately brought in England, is entitled to a place of considerable rank among the liberal arts. It is as superior to landskip painting, as a reality to a representation: it is an exertion of fancy, a subject of for taste' (Whately 1772: 1).³¹ Jefferson recalled of Whately's garden guide:

While his descriptions in point of style are models of perfect elegance and classical correctness, they are as remarkeable [sic] for their exactness. I always walked over the gardens with his book in my hand, examined with attention the particular spots he described, found them so justly characterised by him as to be easily recognised, and saw with wonder, that his fine imagination had never been able to seduce him from the truth (TJ, 'Notes on a Tour of English Gardens, 1786').³²

Whately's guide is full of classical quotations and evokes the beauty of classicism within English gardens, including follies, sculpture and temples.

³⁰ *The Papers of James Madison*, vol. 8, 10 March 1784–28 March 1786 (Rutland, R. and Rachal, W.M.E. 1973: 485–489).

³¹ Along their tour, Adams likewise used this term for aesthetic, starting with Shakespeare's house in Stratford-upon-Avon: 'But paintings and sculpture would be thrown away on his fame. His wit, fancy, his taste and judgment, his knowledge of nature, of life and character, are immortal. —At Birmingham we only walked round the town, and viewed a manufactory of paintings upon paper. The gentlemen's seats were the highest entertainment we met with. Stowe, Hagley, and Blenheim, are superb; Woburn, Caversham, and the Leasowes are beautiful. Wotton is both great and elegant, though neglected. Architecture, painting, statuary, poetry, are all employed in the embellishment of these residences of greatness and luxury. A national debt of two hundred and seventy-four millions sterling, accumulated by jobs, contracts, salaries, and pensions, in the course of a century might easily produce all this magnificence. The pillars, obelisks, &c., erected in honor of kings, queens, and princesses, might procure the means. —The temples to Bacchus and Venus are quite unnecessary, as mankind have no need of artificial incitement to such amusements. The temples of ancient Virtue, of the British worthies, of Friendship, of Concord and Victory, are in higher taste,' *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 369–375).

³² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 369–375).

As it pertains to the University of Virginia, Jefferson wrote to Charles Willson Peale during 1824: ‘I should be delighted to shew you both our rising University, because you have eyes and taste to judge it’ (TJ to Charles Willson Peale, 15 February 1824).³³ For Jefferson, as for the eighteenth century, ‘taste’ generally referred to judgment. During 1824, Gulian Verplanck gave an address to the American Academy of Fine Arts, which he sent to Jefferson, who then responded in kind: ‘the beauties of refined taste are nearly allied to the *to kalon* of morals, and prepare the mind to relish whatever is good and amiable in the contemplation and practice of the virtues’ (TJ to Gulian C. Verplanck, 7 June 1824).³⁴ During this same year, Jefferson even connected the essence of the *utile dulci* with taste: ‘so devoted to the arts of taste as well as of use, and so successful in them’ (TJ to Charles Willson Peale, 18 July 1824).³⁵ Indeed, Jefferson connected taste with utility earlier during 1819: ‘the utilities we derive from the remains of the Greek and Latin languages are as models of pure taste in writing’ (TJ to John Brazier, 24 August 1819).³⁶ The classical dormitories of the University of Virginia, Jefferson further noted, ‘should be models of taste and correct architecture’ (TJ to Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 5 November 1816).³⁷ Jefferson used ‘taste’ extensively in his letters, and with variation. His most common uses, however, directly pertained to art, the Classics and architecture.³⁸ Jefferson used it again in a 1787 letter to

³³ *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-4057>.

³⁴ *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-4319>.

³⁵ *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-4417>. While referencing himself in the third person, furthermore, Jefferson wrote to Benjamin Gould during 1821 that ‘he is, with mr Gould, a zealous advocate for classical education, as a foundation for science and taste’ (“From Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin A. Gould, 25 September 1821,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-2334>).

³⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 14, *1 February to 31 August 1819* (Looney, J. 2017: 629–631).

³⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 11, *19 January to 31 August 1817* (Looney, J. 2014: 431–432).

³⁸ In his *Autobiography*, furthermore, Jefferson described his participation in the Virginia State Capitol, directly modelled on the temple at Nîmes: ‘thinking it a favorable opportunity of introducing into the state an example of architecture in the classic style of antiquity, and the Maison Quarreé of Nîmes, an antient Roman temple, being considered as the most perfect model existing of what may be called Cubic architecture, I applied to M. Clerissault, who had published drawings of the Antiquities of Nîmes, to have me a model of the building made in Stucco, only changing the order from Corinthian to Ionic, on account of the difficulty of the Corinthian

Madame de Tessé while reflecting on classical architecture: ‘I was then in great good humour, at the Pont du Gard, a sublime antiquity, and preserved. But most of all here, where Roman taste, genius, and magnificence excite ideas analogous to yours at every step’ (TJ to Adrienne Catherine de Noailles, Comtesse de Tessé, 20 March 1787).³⁹ Jefferson did not visit Rome himself, but this does not make him any less ‘classical’, nor his taste any less of an engagement in classicisation. Indeed, the Roman values that Jefferson borrowed from his taste (Epicureanism, Horatian retirement, *otium*, locus amoenus and *utile dulci*) all necessitate a removal from the city of Rome and into the countryside.⁴⁰ As it pertains to Jefferson’s classical taste, that he did not visit the city of Rome is irrelevant—his Rome was to be found elsewhere. Jefferson’s use of taste was common amongst his British contemporaries in that he used taste when describing *objects d’art* through a refined education in the Humanities, especially the Classics, a certain display of wealth and travel, and a display of artistic quality, whether that be architecture, interior design, poetry, *etc.*

Jefferson’s engagement with the Classics was extensive. According to William Howard Adams in his 200th Anniversary of the *Declaration of Independence* publication, *The Eye of Thomas Jefferson*:

The classics had done more than furnish Jefferson’s mind with basic appointments of philosophy and history, however. They had also educated his eye and imagination to appreciate the universal beauty and truth that Wincklemann had pursued and that architects from Palladio to Clérissieu had appropriated from the ruins of Rome, Palestrina, Nîmes and Spalatro. ... Statues, urns, fallen columns and bronze artifacts were carefully sought out and studied. Ancient coins which he collected in his travels were later given to the American Philosophical Society and the Roman askos he saw in the museum at Nîmes was to be translated into a splendid silver vessel for the dining table at Monticello (Adams 1976: xxxix).

Jefferson not only included Latin quotations into his correspondences but took great care to examine and analyse classical texts. In an 1816 letter to George Ticknor, for example,

capitals. I yielded with reluctance to the taste of Clerissault in his preference of the modern capital of Scamorai to the more noble capital of Antiquity’ (Abernethy 1964: 41).

³⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787 (Boyd, J. 1955: 226–228).

⁴⁰ These terms will be defined and explored throughout this thesis.

Jefferson discussed at length which Greek editions, texts and translations he considered of best quality. He wrote from Monticello ten years before his death: 'I am attached to the Scholia of the Greek classics because they give us the language of another age: and with the Greek classics prefer translations as convenient aids to the understanding of the author' (TJ to Ticknor, 8 February 1816).⁴¹ Jefferson then proceeded to list his preferred German editions, such as 'Homer's Iliad of Heyne, in addition to that of Didymus; & I shall also be glad of his Virgil' (TJ to Ticknor, 8 February 1816).

As Catherine Edwards observes in her chapter in the 2011 *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, 'Possessing Rome: The Politics of Ruins': 'The boy's immersion in Latin texts equips him with the intellectual—and emotional—outlook of an ancient Roman. At the same time the study of the classical past is intimately connected with his own personal past... Thus the experience of visiting the classical sites of Italy allows the sensitive viewer to fuse nostalgia for the vanished world of the ancient Romans with nostalgia for the vanished world of his own childhood' (Hardwick and Stray 2011: 347).⁴² Whether or not this can be applied to our Thomas Jefferson is yet to be determined, but it can be suggested that Jefferson's later visits to the Roman ruins of Provence did have a significant impact upon both his imagination and his classical taste that was in turn translated or transmitted into the architecture of the United States. For example, Jefferson pressed for the design of the Richmond Capital to be

⁴¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 9, *September 1815 to April 1816* (Looney, J. 2012: 454–456).

⁴² Edwards is writing about the 'rhetoric of ownership' with the city of Rome and her focuses on identities shaped by an education in the Classics (Hardwick and Stray 2011: 345). Specifically, Edwards argues, in terms of Reception Studies, that 'The "meaning" or rather "meanings" of the city and its buildings are not to be found only in the intention of those who originally created them but also in the relationship between the city and those who encounter it' (Hardwick and Stray 2011: 346). She continues with a quote the author of a prominent travel guide for British Grand Tourists, J.C. Eustace, during 1812: 'Our early studies, as Gibbon justly observes, allow us to sympathize in the feelings of a Roman, and one might almost say of every school boy not insensible to the sweets of his first studies, that he becomes in feelings and sentiments, perhaps even in language, a Roman. It is not then wonderful, that when in a riper age he visits that country and beholds those very scenes which he has imagined to himself so long before, he should feel an uncommon glow of enthusiasm' (Hardwick and Stray 2011: 346–347).

modelled upon the Maison Carrée in Nîmes, an endeavour in which he was successful.⁴³

Jefferson wrote to James Madison during 1785:

We took for our model what is called the Maison quarree of Nismes, one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful and precious morsel of architecture left us by antiquity... It is very simple, but it is noble beyond expression, and would have done honor to our country, as presenting to travellers a specimen of taste in our infancy, promising much for our maturer age. [...] You see I am an enthusiast on the subject of the arts. But it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world, and procure them its praise (TJ to Madison, 20 September 1785).⁴⁴

While Jefferson's engagement in the Classics during his pre-Revolutionary years was primarily a representation of his tasteful ties to the British tastes of the new Augustans, he justified his later engagements in the Classics as useful tools for the United States by bolstering its aesthetic reputation and historical legacy. Although Jefferson did not visit Rome itself, he did visit the ruins of Provence and viewed them with awe and admiration. And, as stated above, the city of Rome was irrelevant for Jefferson's classical taste because his taste encompassed those elements of Roman culture defined outside the city: *otium* over *negotium*, *locus amoenus*, Horatian retirement and the *utile dulci*. Edwards continues: 'To be present in Rome, to see the ruined monuments of the classical past, was to activate, bring to life, the classical education with which—in theory—every gentleman was equipped' (Hardwick and Stray 2011: 346). Jefferson's education and imagination were certainly activated while experiencing the Maison Carrée, as he wrote to the Comtesse de Tessé during the spring of 1787:

Madame de Tott too did me the same honour. But she being only the descendant of some of those puny heroes who boiled their own kettles before the walls of Troy, I shall write to her from a Graecian, rather than a Roman canton; when I shall find myself for example among her Phoecean relations at Marseilles. Loving, as you do Madam, the precious remains of antiquity, loving architecture, gardening, a warm sun, and a clear sky, I wonder you have

⁴³ Jefferson wrote of the Maison Carrée to Madam de Tessé during 1787: 'Here I am, Madame, gazing whole hours at the Maison quarree, like a lover at his mistress. The stocking weavers and silk spinners around it, consider me as a hypochondriac Englishman, about to write with a pistol, the last chapter of his history' *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787 (Boyd, J. 1055: 226–228).

⁴⁴ *The Papers of James Madison*, vol. 8, 10 March 1784–28 March 1786 (Rutland, R.A. and Rachal, W. 1973: 366–369).

never thought of moving Chaville to Nismes. [...] Were I to attempt to give you news, I should tell you stories a thousand years old. I should detail to you the intrigues of the courts of the Caesars, how they affect us here, the oppressions of their Praetors, Praefects &c. I am immersed in antiquities from morning to night. For me the city of Rome is actually existing in all the splendor of it's [*sic*] empire (TJ to Adrienne Catherine de Noailles, Comtesse de Tessé, 20 March 1787).⁴⁵

Unlike the Grand Tourists, Jefferson believed that the city of Rome—that is, its history and art—existed outside the city itself, where he could find it in relative quiet and tranquillity.

Regardless of his never having visited Rome, Jefferson fully immersed himself in the ancient world which he inevitably brought back to Virginia.

Utile Dulci



(Photo: Alley Marie Jordan. View of Monticello from the peonies)

⁴⁵ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787 (Boyd, J. 1955: 226–228).

This section will explain the *utile dulci* as central to Jefferson's classical taste and explore its literary and aesthetic heritage. The concept of the *utile dulci* originates with Horace in his *Ars Poetica* 333-344 in which he writes that 'poets aim either to benefit, or to amuse, or to utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life. [...] He has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the reader' (Henderson 1929:479).⁴⁶

What this term meant for Horace is the upholding of Epicurean virtues in writing, sometimes concealing Epicurean messages. This also meant finding balance between his duties to Maecenas and Augustus, while finding his own leisure in the countryside. 'Thus Horace's poetry,' writes David Armstrong in his essay for (2010) *The Companion to Horace*, ed.

Gregson Davis,

especially after Maecenas had given him the Sabine Farm (by 30 BCE, when he was 35), is full of what his rank required of him, unenthusiastic references to the boredom of business work in Rome as *scriba* and *iudex*, and idealizations of country quiet, study, and peace at the farm (*Satires* 2.6–7). For that matter in *Satires* 1.6.111–31, as part of his self-portrait as a potential senator, he makes perfectly clear that even in Rome he already had abundant leisure, daylong if he liked (Davis 2010: 14).

The term likewise can be attributed to other situations, like gardening. Nonetheless, the central definition of balance between *otium* and *negotium*, between beauty and usefulness, arises. There are studies on use and beauty during the eighteenth century.⁴⁷ (Receptions and historiography generally misspell *dulci* with the Italian *dulce*. Nevertheless, eighteenth-century Grand Tour narratives largely evoked the spirit of the *utile dulci* (or *dulce*) while exploring the antique sites of Italy).⁴⁸ The ideal combination of use and pleasure, however

⁴⁶ Horace, *Ars Poetica* 333-344: *Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitae. [...] omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci, lectorem delectando pariterque monendo* (Henderson 1929: 478). See Brink 1971.

⁴⁷ See Batten 1978: 24-25.

⁴⁸ See Guentner 1995: 131-155; Crawford 2008: 894-905.

one chooses to translate *dulci*, was a common characteristic of taste during the eighteenth century, especially of classical taste.⁴⁹

When Jefferson used the phrase, *utile dulci*, he referred to architecture and gardening. The eighteenth-century garden equivalent, of which Jefferson was familiar, is the *ferme ornée*, an ornamented farm.⁵⁰ Jefferson used the phrase *utile dulci* on his tour of Italy during 1787 and highlighted this concept in English (from Latin) thereafter. He also believed in this ideal combination of use and beauty/pleasure a decade earlier. This illustrates that Jefferson borrowed from the Classics and distilled the idea for himself. Jefferson enlarged the scope of the *utile dulci* to fit architecture and landscapes. The *utile dulci* is the heart of Jefferson's classical taste. Lucia Stanton briefly mentions the *utile dulci* while discussing Jefferson's letter to Charles Willson Peale on his plow:

'In point of beauty, nothing can exceed that of the waving lines and rows winding along the face of the hills and vallies.' Here was something that combined beauty and utility, satisfying Jefferson's love of the 'utile dulci' (the useful with the delightful) celebrated by a favorite Roman poet, Horace. He continued sporadic efforts to make Monticello a *ferme ornée*, or ornamental farm, by 'interspersing occasionally the attributes of a garden' (Memorandum, February 1, 1808, Betts 1944, 360) (in the 1790s he had planted field boundaries with weeping willows and peach trees, both beautiful and useful) (Stanton 2012: 264).

But this is where Stanton ends with the *utile dulci*.⁵¹ The *utile dulci* is woven into and is central to Jefferson's classical taste. In fact, his classical taste cannot be understood without it.

⁴⁹ The Lewis and Short dictionary noted that *dulcis* means 'agreeable, delightful, pleasant, charming, soft, flattering' (Lewis and Short s.v. 'dulcis'). Likewise, the dictionary defines *utile* as 'Useful, serviceable, beneficial, profitable, advantageous, etc. (cf. commodus). [...] Neutr. absol.: utile is, n., what is useful, the useful: omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci' (Lewis and Short s.v. 'utile').

⁵⁰ Jefferson visited the first *ferme ornée* in England during his 1786 Garden Tour, of which he noted the mixture of use and pleasure: 'Woburn. Belongs to Ld. Peters. Ld. Loughborough is the present tenant for 2. lives. 4. people to the farm. 4. to the pleasure garden. 4. to the kitchen garden. All are intermixed, the pleasure garden being merely a highly ornamented walk through and round the divisions of the farm and kitchen garden' *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786 (Boyd. J. 1954: 369–375).

⁵¹ Andrew Holowchak briefly mentions the *utile dulce* in *The Cavernous Mind of Thomas Jefferson, an American Savant*, but only in passing and with vague reference to other scholarship: 'he preferred architecture to art and agriculture to gardening, due to the utility of architecture and agriculture. As one person notes, poetry was dulce but not utile' (Holowchak 2019: 254).

Writing to Robert Skipwith during the late summer of 1771, Jefferson highlighted his lifelong philosophy on use and pleasure: ‘A little attention however to the nature of the human mind evinces that the entertainments of fiction are useful as well as pleasant’ (TJ to Skipwith, 3 August 1771).⁵² He continued in his praise of fiction that everything is useful that ‘contributes to fix use in the principles and practice of virtue,’ (TJ to Skipwith, 3 August 1771).⁵³ Later in this same letter, Jefferson continued his Horatian theme of Epicurean garden tranquillity:

Come to the new Rowanty, from which you may reach your hand to a library formed on a more extensive plan. [...] A spring, centrically situated, might be the scene of every evening’s joy. There we should talk over the lessons of the day, or lose them in Musick, Chess, or the merriments of our family companions. The heart thus lightened, our pillows would be soft, and health and long life would attend the happy scene (TJ to Skipwith, 3 August 1771).⁵⁴

In Jefferson’s instructional letter, he called for the blend of pleasure and use in order to form a ‘moral rule of life,’ with which he then connected learning in ‘the happy scene’ of his ancient (Rowanty) garden. Years before he composed sentiments on revolution in the *Declaration of Independence*, Jefferson composed sentiments on romanticism in the garden. Even though Jefferson’s attitudes toward classical tastes matured and developed, he nonetheless retained his attitude toward the marriage of use and pleasure throughout his lifetime, from revolution to retirement.

Years later during 1785, Jefferson transferred his *utile dulci* philosophy from literature to education proper. Even though his later writings did not address the ‘spacious field of imagination,’ Jefferson still valued reading, learning and education as vital to the moral life and, thus, valuable to an American. Writing to John Banister Jr. during the autumn of 1785, Jefferson argued that ‘The advantages of Rome, are, the acquiring a local knowledge

⁵² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 1, 1760–1776 (Boyd, J. 1950: 76–81).

⁵³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 1, 1760–1776 (Boyd, J. 1950: 76–81). Jefferson later changed his opinion on fiction, but the sentiment on use and pleasure remained, nonetheless.

⁵⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 1, 1760–1776 (Boyd, J. 1950: 76–81).

of a spot so classical and so celebrated; the acquiring the true pronunciation of the Latin language; a just taste in the fine arts...' (TJ to John Banister, Jr., 15 October 1785).⁵⁵ In answering his question of 'What are the objects of an useful American education?' Jefferson first listed 'Classical knowledge,' followed by modern languages, the sciences and today's social sciences. Regardless of the possibilities afforded by an education in Rome, argued Jefferson, an American education would generate moral Americans. 'To enumerate' all the disadvantages of a European education, argued Jefferson, 'would require a volume' (TJ to Banister, 15 October 1785).⁵⁶ In Europe and England, the young American man learns 'drinking, horse racing and boxing,' among other 'peculiarities,' such as consorting with 'female intrigue,' 'a passion for whores' and is seduced by the 'voluptuary dress and arts of the European women' (TJ to Banister, 15 October 1785).⁵⁷ Jefferson called for an American education:

Cast your eyes of America: who are the men of most learning, of most eloquence, most beloved by their countrymen, and most trusted and promoted by them? They are those who have been educated among them, and whose manners, morals and habits, are perfectly homogenous with those of the country (TJ to Banister, 15 October 1785).⁵⁸

Jefferson's letter to Banister illustrates his perspective on the usefulness of education in order to generate moral citizens. During this time, Jefferson wanted to reform the College of William and Mary, which eventually led to him creating a university of his own in the next century. When paired with a pleasurable American university experience, especially the future University of Virginia, the ideal combination between utility and pleasure is found. The pleasures of an American education in a beautiful setting, uncontaminated by European cities, would pair ideally with the usefulness of an American education in order to produce moral citizens.

⁵⁵ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 635–638).

⁵⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 635–638).

⁵⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 635–638).

⁵⁸ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 635–638).

According to Jennings Wagoner: ‘Jefferson’s letter to Banister was thus an appeal to a rising American consciousness. It also highlighted an important facet of his concept of utility in education: republican citizens must themselves be educated in the new republic’ (Wagoner 1993: 7). Much American History scholarship that focuses on utility neglects its partner: pleasure. For Horace and Jefferson, one could not be understood, or even applied, without the other. Wagoner’s observation will align with Jefferson’s later goals for the University of Virginia. During the 1780s as he visited the villas and gardens of Italy, Jefferson explicitly called them the finest ‘mixtures of the *utile dulci* as I ever saw’ (TJ, ‘Notes of a Tour into the Southern Parts of France,’ 3 March 1787–10 June 1787 and ‘Hints to Americans Travelling in Europe,’ 19 June 1788).⁵⁹ Later during his reconstruction of Monticello, Jefferson expressed his connections between his own villa and classical mythology, calling Monticello Parnassus. His villas were the ideal combinations of use, as it was a working plantation with kitchen gardens, vineyards, orchards, workhouses and farms, and were also pleasurable with their own pleasure gardens and encouragement for friendship, an Epicurean theme. Finally, during his retirement years, Jefferson transferred the *utile dulci* to the University of Virginia where he designed beautiful and ‘chaste’ architecture in order to educate and inspire the young American into becoming a *homo civilis*. The *utile dulci* is the central thread woven throughout Jefferson’s classical taste.

Jefferson commented on the usefulness of a classical education years later during 1800. In a letter to the Reverend Joseph Priestley, Jefferson remarked: ‘it was not that I think, as some do, that they [ancient languages] are useless. I am of a very different opinion. I do not think them essential to the obtaining eminent degrees of science, but I think them very useful towards it’ (TJ to Priestley, 27 January 1800).⁶⁰ In this letter, Jefferson observed that

⁵⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 13, March–7 October 1788 (Boyd, J. 1956: 264–276) and *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787 (Boyd, J. 1955: 415–464).

⁶⁰ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813 (Looney, J. 2009: 68–70).

the classical languages are useful toward other branches of knowledge, such as the sciences and law, but he also characterised reading Latin and Greek as a ‘sublime luxury,’ a luxury which he considered as justifiable in science as in the arts and humanities as it represents the *dulci* side of his classical taste (TJ to Priestley, 27 January 1800).⁶¹ Of Greek and Latin, ‘whether we examine them as works of reason, or of style & fancy,’ Jefferson continued in his *utile dulci*, ‘the Greeks & Romans have left us the purest models which exist of fine composition’ (TJ to Priestley, 27 January 1800).⁶² The Classics are both ‘models’ and are of ‘fine composition’: *utile* and *dulci*. In terms of the luxury of the Classics, Jefferson himself failed to recognise the privilege of reading such works even as a luxury, or to even have luxury at all. While Jefferson luxuriously read Horace in his garden, his enslaved workers bent their backs building his villas and gardens so that Jefferson could have luxury. This access to the Classics even then during the eighteenth century certainly has ramifications now during the twenty first century where the Classics are still regarded as a luxury, accessible to only the wealthy classes. While this need not be the case anymore, Jefferson did nothing to promote the Classics beyond his own circle of wealthy, white, male Virginians. As Jefferson believed that black Americans could not write like Homer or design like the Augustans, he necessarily knew that people of colour could not live as he did in a classical villa, let alone have the intellectual capital with which to uphold and understand it.

Jefferson’s conception of utility was classical and artistic. For Jefferson, the marriage between utility and art necessarily led to happiness, which could be done through the art of living and through formal education. Jefferson’s taste in the useful and beautiful manifested largely in his relationship with the art of gardening. In 1813, for example, Jefferson infused the usefulness of gardening with poetic fancy, writing to Charles Willson Peale:

⁶¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813 (Looney, J. 2009: 68–70).

⁶² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813 (Looney, J. 2009: 68–70).

the plough is to the farmer, what the wand is to the Sorcerer. it's effect is really like sorcery. [...] We now plough horizontally, following the curvatures of the hills and hollows, on the dead level, however crooked the lines may be. [...] in point of beauty, nothing can exceed that of the waving lines & rows winding along the face of the hills & vallies (TJ to Charles Willson Peale, 17 April 1813).⁶³

For Jefferson, utility should pair with beauty. Jefferson's garden ideals on waving lines and winding fences sound remarkably similar to William Hogarth's serpentine line of grace, which Jefferson later incorporated at the University of Virginia with his serpentine wall.

Alexander Pope likewise understood the aesthetics of utility. In his fourth epistle, Pope wrote that 'Tis use alone that sanctifies expense/ And splendour borrows all her rays from sense' (Pope 1824: 403). Many eighteenth-century writers on the taste of landscape architecture, like Jefferson, translated Horace's poetic *utile dulci* to architecture.⁶⁴ Jefferson took it one step further and applied that architecture to education and happiness.

⁶³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813 (Looney, J. 2009: 68–70).

⁶⁴ For more on eighteenth-century garden aesthetics borrowed from Horace, see Hunt 2006, 1988 and 1978: 91. For more on the *utile dulci* in garden history, see Clifford 1963.



(Photo: Alley Marie Jordan, Serpentine Wall of UVA)

A simplified approach is taken in which virtue is understood as Jefferson understood it through his use of the word in his Epicurean doctrine: ‘utility is the standard and test of virtue’. Jefferson used virtue throughout his writings under the general guidance of acting goodly. In a 1771 letter to Robert Skipwith, for example, Jefferson connected virtue with the *utile dulci*:

But wherein is it’s [sic] utility, asks the reverend sage, big with the notion that nothing can be useful but the learned lumber of Greek and Roman reading with which his head is stored? I answer, every thing is useful which contributes to fix us in the principles and practice of virtue (TJ to Robert Skipwith, 3 August 1771).

Jefferson connected the concept of virtue to acting in such a way as to achieve happiness.

Jefferson, ever the Epicurean, believed that the greatest good is happiness.⁶⁵ This view was

⁶⁵ According to Sir William Temple in *Upon The Gardens of Epicurus; or of Gardening, in the Year 1685*: ‘All concluded that Happiness was the chief Good, and ought to be the ultimate End of Man; that as this was the End of Wisdom, so Wisdom was the Way to Happiness’ (Temple 1731: 173).

initially put forth by Epicurus. Epicurus' ideas on happiness are explored through Jefferson in order to understand how Jefferson understood happiness and, by extension, virtue (virtue and happiness were intertwined in Jefferson's Epicureanism).⁶⁶ Later during 1814 and well into his retirement, Jefferson laid out that 'Utility then, is the standard and test of virtue' (TJ to Thomas Law, 13 June 1814).⁶⁷ For Jefferson, utility, (especially when considered within the *utile dulci*), is the way to measure virtue—by acting goodly and pursuing things useful, one can act toward virtue. Earlier around 1799, Jefferson composed his 'Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus,' and about twenty years later during 1819, he composed a nearly identical 'Syllabus of the doctrines of Epicurus.'⁶⁸ During these twenty years, Jefferson's understanding of Epicureanism developed and continued to do so until his death in 1826. During 1799, Jefferson systematised the Epicurean philosophy for himself:

'Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus

- The Universe eternal
it's parts great & small inter-changeable
- Matter & Void alone
Motion inherent in matter, weighty & declining
eternal circulation of elements of bodies
 - Gods, neither creators nor preservers of the universe
 - Happiness the aim life
 - Virtue the foundn [*sic*] of happiness.
 - Utility the test of virtue
- Pleasure active & indolent
indolent is the absence of pain, the true felicity
- active, consists in agreeable motion & is not happiness but the means to produce it. thus the absence of hunger is an article of felicity. eating the means to obtain it.
- Summum bonum is to be not pained in body nor troubled in mind.
i.e. in-dolence of body, tranquility of mind.
- to procure tranquility of mind we must avoid desire & fear the two principal diseases of the mind.
- Man is a free-agent.

Virtue consists in	1. Prudence	2. Temperance,
	3. Fortitude	4. Justice

⁶⁶ For further discussions on happiness in the ancient world, see: Lobel 2017.

⁶⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 7, 28 November 1813 to 30 September 1814 (Looney, J. 2010: 412–416).

⁶⁸ The U.S. National Archives dates the 'Notes' to circa 1799 because, in 1819, Jefferson composed a 'Syllabus of the doctrines of Epicurus', which he sent to William Short, noting that he composed it 'some 20. years ago'.

which are opposed to 1. Folly 2. Desire
3. Fear 4. Deceit'
(TJ, 'Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus,' 1799).⁶⁹

Jefferson's sense of what virtue consists in, *e.g.*, prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice are different from classical Epicureanism and are necessarily framed through his eighteenth-century worldview.⁷⁰ To be useful and to engage in the usefulness of things was a way to test a person's virtue, according to Jefferson. Jefferson copied the Epicurean credo to the Maine educator, Amos Cook: 'And if the Wise, be the happy man, as these sages say, he must be virtuous too; for, without virtue, happiness cannot be' (TJ to Amos Cook, 21 January 1816). Jefferson believed that virtue lay within good acts, friendship and learning.⁷¹ Jefferson emphasised learning within a classically designed university as a way to encourage virtue and the process of classicisation amongst southern men. To learn within a classical structure is to emphasise those values held by certain ancients, like Epicurus: utility is the test of virtue, virtue is the foundation of happiness. To design something useful, a building infused with classical ideologies and sentiment is to encourage acting goodly amongst those who learn within it. Jefferson conceived of virtue in his mind as measuring it against the *utile dulci* in the pursuit of happiness, as seen in his 'Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus'.

Jefferson's 'engagement with the classical model worked as' a framework through which he self-identified and identified Virginia (Hall and Stead 2018: 16). Jefferson adhered to the *utile dulci* of both the Classics and art—he believed that classical art was both beautiful and useful. The chapter on Jefferson's villas, therefore, focuses on the beauty of the Classics, while the final chapter on the University focuses on the usefulness of the Classics.

⁶⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 31, 1 February 1799–31 May 1800 (Oberg 2004: 284–285).

⁷⁰ Jefferson's Epicureanism will be explained more fully in the subsequent chapter. Right now, this provides a brief overview of what is to come in the next chapter on Jefferson's Epicureanism.

⁷¹ From learning, Jefferson aligned himself with Locke: 'I think I may say, that, of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education' (Locke, *Education*, §1). Education was the path to virtue.

Ultimately, the classical theme of the *utile dulci* is woven throughout because it is central to Jefferson's classical taste and to understanding it. On the usefulness of the Classics, Jefferson believed in the following:

To the moralist they [the classical authors] are valuable, because they furnish ethical writings highly and justly esteemed. The lawyer finds in the Latin language the system of civil law most conformable with the principles of justice of any which has ever yet been established among men, and from which much has been incorporated into our own. [...] The statesman will find in these languages history, politics, mathematics, ethics, eloquence, love of country, to which he must add the sciences of his own day, for which of them should be unknown to him? And all the sciences must recur to the classical languages for the etymon, and sound understanding of their fundamental terms. [...] To sum the whole, therefore, it may truly be said that the classical languages are a solid basis for most, and an ornament to all the sciences (TJ to John Brazier, 24 August 1819).

For Jefferson, the Classics served a purpose for both him and learners—namely, providing the intellectual tools for any given voting citizen: to the farmer, the Classics provided instruction on tilling the earth; to the lawyer and scientist, the Classics provide the universal languages through which to understand law and nature; and to the architect, the Classics provide the models of chaste architecture in the beautiful and useful settings for learning, though with limitations on access to such learning.

Classical Reception

This section will define Classical Reception and how it is used here in order to place Jefferson within the sub-discipline. The principles of Classical Reception is the theoretical basis, which means that it explores how Jefferson received the Classics and appropriated them. Classical Reception is not merely the recognition of a Corinthian column or a reference to Homer. The strategy of Classical Reception from von Stackelberg and Macaulay-Lewis' introduction in (2017), *Housing the New Romans: Architectural Reception and Classical Style in the Modern World*, is adopted in which they argue the following:

Furthermore, much of what has been written often suffers from what one might term the 'Look, it's Roman!' or 'Look, it's Greek!' model of interpretation. In these studies (sometimes amounting to little more than guidebook), the obvious Classical forms are

identified—the triumphal arch, the honorific column, the temple architrave—with little indication as to how or why such design decisions were made and how they were received. Reception studies experience a similar problem that one might call “parallelism.” In such studies, the questions about design decisions and viewer reception that are often glossed over with the ‘Look, it’s Roman!’ model are asked, but the parallels between the source and the finished work are taken *prima facie*, without investigating if an apparent connection reflects a deeper intellectual, creative, or cultural dialogue with Classical culture (von Stackelberg 2017: 9-10).

This model of reception is adopted by moving beyond merely mentioning when Jefferson ‘did something classical.’ In contrast to historiography on Jefferson’s classical architecture (which will be discussed more fully in the Literature Review), this thesis will move beyond Jefferson’s Ionic columns and bucrania by delving into the social consequences of these designs, exploring their ancient antecedents, and illustrating Jefferson’s intentions for designing classically—that is, his classicisation. For a definition of its use of Classical Reception, this thesis also takes the simplified approach of Hardwick and Stray in their 2011 *A Companion to Classical Receptions*: ‘By “receptions” we mean the ways in which Greek and Roman material has been transmitted, translated, excerpted, interpreted, rewritten, re-imaged and represented’ (Hardwick and Stray 2011: 1). The varied and developing debates on reception methodologies beyond this particular view of reception are not engaged with, as defined above.⁷² Rather, the purpose of this introduction is to engage with American historiography on Jefferson and the Classics and to uncover an unrecognised version of him.

⁷² For more on the various ways to approach Classical Reception, see Hardwick and Stray 2011, who sum up the trends in Classical Reception: ‘Possible approaches include: starting from particular examples in order to draw out patterns and trends (condemned by some critics as “list-making” or “positivist”); concentrating on the historical contexts of ancient and subsequent receptions (which may prompt charges of cultural materialism, a.k.a. covert Marxism, or of ignoring the text); emphasizing the formal and aesthetic or “transhistorical” relationships between the ante-text and its receptions (challenged for ignoring the social and political elements in the construction of judgements or for neo-Kantian idealism); charting the histories of particular texts, styles or ideas (attacked variously for privileging the influence of the ancient, for assuming that the meaning of the ancient is fixed or unproblematic or for replacing this with the “progress” or “presentism” of the modern); emphasizing the impact of receptions in shaping perceptions of the ancient texts and contexts (criticized for cultural relativism and denial of the autonomy and value of the ancient material)’ (Hardwick and Stray 2011: 2-3).

That being said, this introduction contrasts Richard Guy Wilson's claim that Jefferson was not an aesthetic classicist:

Of Jefferson as a classicist much has been said: the "greatest" and the "first" according to Sully. Jefferson recognized a connection between the classical language and his ideals for political virtue in America, and he sought to give dignity to the civic landscape. But he was never an "aesthetic classicist"; he knew the dark side, that virtue and vice could commingle. Although Jefferson followed some of the rules of the ancients, he changed and modified them as necessary. He never attempted to make reconstructions of ancient buildings, as did many of his contemporaries, and as he had read about it in his library. Jefferson adapted elements of celebrated ancient structures such as their fronts, but then placed modern functions inside (Wilson 1993: 68-70).

Wilson did not take into account the perspective of classicists who do Reception Studies while exploring Jefferson's classical architecture.

According to Karl Lehmann in his 1947 *Thomas Jefferson, American Humanist*: 'Jefferson's eclectic combination of models from various antique sources, and their use within the new context of a building or a group of buildings, checked his tendency toward literal classicism and prevented it from degenerating into unimaginative copying' (Lehmann 1947: 171). For Lehmann, because Jefferson did not directly copy classical architecture in America, his creative reception of classical architecture necessarily gave him 'a creative transformation in which his own imagination availed itself of new conditions as well as of a new content' (Lehmann 1947: 171). This is a process of classicisation. This same sentiment is echoed by von Stackelberg, who notes that the socio-political fluctuations of late eighteenth-century Europe and the United States necessarily called for a change in identity amongst the wealthy classes:

The construction of domestic architecture, gardens, and tombs was not only a technical and rational action but an essential, poetic one; expressions of self, status, culture, and one's position in the socioeconomic, cultural, and/or political hierarchies and systems of the day. For many individuals, aristocratic and bourgeois, Classical and Egyptian art and architecture offered a flexible template with rich, diverse cultural resonances that could be exploited in the creation of newly fabricated Pompeian parlors, Egyptian tombs, and Roman gardens (von Stackelberg 2017: 17).

It is true that Jefferson participated in the wider European trend of designing Palladian buildings and Brownian gardens, but his specific goals, methods of building, and the effects of building were entirely different and unique to himself and Virginia, as Jefferson himself recognised.⁷³ Gilroy-Ware notes that Thomas Banks ‘designed sculptures that, while formally based on ancient relics, were of entirely his own invention’ (Gilroy-Ware 2020: 3). The same will be said of our Thomas Jefferson: that the Classics inspired his thought and architecture, but that his architecture was ultimately his own creation and is characterised as a process of classicising. Indeed, the term Jeffersonian Architecture is unique to Jefferson’s adaptation of classical and Palladian architecture. Gilroy-Ware continues in her analysis of Banks: ‘Banks’s “empirical approach to the antique” - that is, the adaptation of Greco-Roman sculptural exemplars into fresh, original designs - materialized the otherwise ethereal discourse on ancient Greece and freedom’ (Gilroy-Ware 2020: 5). The same perspective can be applied to Jefferson: Jefferson’s adaptation of Greco-Roman architecture into ‘fresh, original designs’ materialised discourse on Roman Epicureanism. Jefferson’s reception of the Classics identified his character in such a way that he was compelled to design villas and a university based upon the Classics. Though mediated, Jefferson’s connection to the Classics, by virtue of his travels and readings, necessarily made his reception of the Classics direct and is defined as classicism and classicisation.

Literature Review

⁷³ Jefferson designed and constructed Monticello during the same decades that Sir William Hamilton was excavating Pompeii, Herculaneum and the Bay of Naples. He owned a 1774 copy of Hamilton’s *Observations on Mount Vesuvius, Mount Etna, and other volcanos* and mentioned the discoveries being made there. While in Europe during the mid-to-late 1780s, Jefferson toured the Roman ruins of Southern France during the same time new and increasing discoveries of antiquities were being made in Italy by Hamilton and others. Jefferson was present during the same years that ancient Rome was literally being unearthed and displayed in the manors and villas of Britain’s élite.

Academic and popular interest in Jefferson is evergreen. The historiography on Jefferson and Classical Reception is a peculiar one. On the one hand, there are numerous mentions of Jefferson and the Classics, though many not tangible enough to be characterised as Classical Reception. On the other hand, there are histories of Jefferson that explore Jefferson and the Classics to an extent that have provided context for this thesis and have allowed this thesis to expand upon their inquiries. Of course, the dynamics of reception change with each new engagement.

Each section of this Literature Review concerns, chiefly, two subjects: Thomas Jefferson and the Classics. As stated in the Introduction to this thesis, the Classics is the primary lens through which this thesis examines Jefferson; this is done in order to better understand, specifically, how Jefferson and the Classics have been treated by other historians. This is not the place to find Jefferson's political theories, his jurisprudence, his ethics, his views on slavery and more. It very well may be true that Jefferson's classical ideas on taste influenced his ideas on politics, philosophy, *etc.*, a worthy enterprise in itself but not the focus of the present one, though political implications are always present, especially when concerned with the University of Virginia.⁷⁴ This thesis on taste and *otium* is itself written in

⁷⁴ See: Becker (1922), *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas*, in which he established the political connection between Jefferson and John Locke that has remained in Jefferson scholarship thereafter; Dumas Malone, Joyce Appleby, Merrill D Peterson and Daniel Boorstin have all adhered to the liberal interpretation of Jefferson's political theories, with roots in Louis Hartz' 1955 *The Liberal Tradition in America*. Such studies have placed Jefferson's thought within Locke's. In contrast to Lockean liberalism, Gordon Wood put forth his seminal interpretation of classical republicanism in *The Creation of the American Republic 1776-1787*, upholding connections to Aristotelianism and civic duty. Later, J.G.A. Pocock, in *The Machiavellian Moment*, upheld classical republicanism and its traditions during early modern Europe by focusing on virtue as an antidote to political and economic corruption. Richard Hofstadter put forth Jefferson's agrarian republicanism as the American alternative to commercialism, one that would instil virtue in the citizenry and, thus, the Aristotelianism developed by Wood and Pocock. Later, Jefferson scholarship set its sights on the Scottish Enlightenment as possible sources for his thinking. Garry Wills in (1979) *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* suggested that Francis Hutcheson was responsible for Jefferson's ideas of man in nature and the nature of government. During the twentieth century, scholarship has shied away from intellectual history to specificities of Jefferson's action and writings that can be applied to various ways of examining Jefferson, from anthropology to art. In so doing, modern scholarship tends to reject a strict framework and instead adopts the complexities and contradictions in Jefferson's thought. This is where this Literature Review will end on the trends in Jeffersonian scholarship that deal exclusively with politics. This Literature Review seeks to discover Jefferson in other places that will reveal a classical man.

response to the large volume of scholarship on Jefferson's *negotium*, here defined as business, engagement in public affairs and the opposite of *otium*.

By taking Jefferson out of his typical place as a politician and placing him within the realm of poetry and architecture, this thesis presents a more radical way of examining him and provides a more *avant garde* perspective on Jefferson than current scholarship provides.⁷⁵ This thesis looks toward those studies on Jefferson that have, for the most part, been overlooked in favour of such historians like Dumas Malone and Peter Onuf. Instead, this thesis adopts the early classical interpretations of Leo Marx and Karl Lehmann, and the more recent work of Caroline Winterer and Victoria Tietze Larson. This thesis is a realignment of Jefferson, or 'way of doing Jefferson'—it is new for its interpretations and for its subject. The first section of this historiography chiefly examines the two most significant texts that have contributed to the development of this thesis: Karl Lehmann's (1947) *Thomas Jefferson, American Humanist* and Caroline Winterer's (2004) *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780-1910*. Both of these studies will be explored so that the reader may get a full grasp of how this thesis is situated amongst them and how it has developed and evolved from them. On the contrary, the three studies that this thesis challenges most are Andrew Holowchak's (2019), *The Cavernous Mind of Thomas Jefferson* and Carl Richard's (1994) *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* and (2008) *Greeks and Romans Bearing Gifts: How the Ancients Inspired the Founding Fathers*. This thesis is written, in many ways, in contrast to these latter studies.

In the beginning of *Thomas Jefferson American Humanist*, Lehmann remarks: 'I have limited myself to published sources, because they are extensive and eloquent enough to allow the drawing of this outline. And such limitation seemed advisable, since an exhaustive

⁷⁵ See previous footnote.

investigation of all the details of the voluminous documentation now being edited at Princeton University' (Lehmann 1947: vii).⁷⁶ This is the point from which this thesis is launched. It is, in a way, a project to finish what Lehmann started and could not finish due to the limitations of his time. Still, almost eighty years later, not all of Jefferson's papers have been published, but there is enough completed that this historian is able to write not a comprehensive study on Jefferson and the Classics, but one focused and detailed enough to present a fuller grasp of Jefferson's classicism and its roots. Like Lehmann, I have chosen to focus on Jefferson's taste because that is where his classicism was strongest. Of course, this thesis and Lehmann's study are not identical, for we have chosen to approach Jefferson differently and to focus on aspects of Jefferson's classicism we deem relevant to both our time and expertise. For example, Lehman compared Jefferson to Goethe as men of genius and taste and focused primarily on Jefferson the philologist. Lehmann traced the thoughts in their historical contexts throughout the centuries. Lehmann did not engage with the Classics themselves, but Jefferson's *use* of them. When mentioning Horace, Lehmann did not engage with those passages used by Jefferson and their historic legacies. The reader understands that Jefferson engaged with these texts, but they do not find the meanings as to why.

To a classicist, however, Lehmann's study still provides the most comprehensive account of Jefferson's classicism and, most importantly, an understanding of Jefferson's relationship with the Classics as not only an eighteenth-century fashion, but as an engagement in world-making. This perspective on world-making is unique to both Lehmann's study and this one. What makes Lehmann's study significant and special is his regard for Jefferson's classical imagination, a perspective that American historians tend to overlook. By looking at Jefferson's classical *imaginaria*, as it were, both Lehmann and this

⁷⁶ At the time of Lehmann's research and publication, Princeton University was beginning to compile all of Jefferson's letters into a set of volumes. Lehmann did not have access to these published letters, so he admits that his research remained unfulfilled. Indeed, decades later, still not all of Jefferson's letters have been published. The last years of his retirement remain unpublished.

thesis focus on Jefferson's classical taste and the world he constructed for himself at Monticello and for others at the University of Virginia. Lehmann touched upon this idea of world-making but did not fully develop it. Lehmann remarked that 'Monuments offered a great visual approach to the ancient world, along with the texts of ancient authors' (Lehmann 1947: 24). Lehmann touched upon not only Jefferson's engagement with antiquity, but his immersion within it: 'The ancients had become living companions of Jefferson's own personal world' (Lehmann 1947: 50). And, importantly, Lehmann observed that Jefferson's classical research 'was also an attempt to integrate classical experience in the living present' (Lehmann 1947: 51). Such observations help to present a portrait of Jefferson in which he is fully immersed in bringing antiquity to his life and developing his world—that is, Monticello and the University of Virginia—through the reception of the Classics, as this thesis will develop more fully. This thesis is not only about Jefferson's classical taste, but about how Jefferson's taste was necessary for his world-making in Virginia. It is through the lens of classical taste that this thesis unearths Jefferson's classical world.

'The classics,' continues Lehmann, 'with their accumulated mass of written statements about all realms of life, furnished him with experience beyond his natural range not only, and not even primarily, in politics' (Lehmann 1947: 74). This is the perspective of this thesis: that Jefferson's relationship went far beyond politics, though politics are always present. For Lehmann, as for this thesis, in Jefferson's libraries, 'the various writers of antiquity are classed as living sources of knowledge and ideas in their respective fields' (Lehmann 1947: 75). Jefferson's recognition of the Classics as 'living' means to be in dialogue with them and they were, therefore, active in his mind. Lehmann continues with the living Classics: 'Jefferson's empiricism made the ancient world of long-past history the object of all-inclusive, extended and ever-expanding concrete experience. It was a process of conjuring the ghosts of the past and making them come alive' (Lehmann 1947: 75).

Lehmann's writing of Jefferson is unique amongst the historiography because he regarded Jefferson in many ways as one would with J.R.R. Tolkien—a scholar and maker of worlds:

In the spheres of thought and poetry and art, the books and works of the ancients were a source of other adventures, great and more enjoyable than the gathering of historical facts and reflection on them. Here was the field for another ever-expanding experience of the creative powers which were the natural endowment of man nurtured by true civilisation and reason, mental instinct and artistic taste (Lehmann 1947: 122).

For Lehmann, reason and imagination together formed Jefferson's comprehensive classicism. Moreover, imagination served Jefferson's intellect because, for Lehmann, it was natural and, therefore, to be enjoyed. 'Imagination', according to Lehmann, 'was, as it were, prompted by a second sense—the aesthetic sense—taste. Taste, too, was a natural endowment of man; it was definitely not to be confounded with morality' (Lehmann 1947: 144). It is likewise the perspective of this thesis that Jefferson did not engage with the Classics in order to serve some sort of modern or ancient 'virtue' or moral standards. Instead, Jefferson's classicism served the life-long making of his world, though virtue was central. According to Jefferson:

We have indeed an innate sense of what we call beautiful, but that is exercised chiefly on subjects addressed to the fancy, whether through the eye in visible forms, as landscape, animal figure, dress, drapery, architecture, the composition of colors, etc., or to the imagination directly, as imagery, style, or measure of prose or poetry, or whatever else constitutes the domain of criticism or taste, a faculty entirely distinct from the moral one (TJ to Thomas Law 13 June 1814).⁷⁷

Such as it is, if taste is separated from morality, then it is not 'virtuous' to engage with it. For the arts, however, 'some amount of imagination was not only needed for making moral reflections articulate, but pure works of art could incidentally convey more powerful experiences of good and evil in concrete form than actual happenings or records of history' (Lehmann 1947: 145). This is to say that Jefferson's classical imagination provided him a better understanding of what it means to live happily than mere calculated recollections of historical facts. To truly understand the human experience, one need not only study History,

⁷⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 7, 28 November 1813 to 30 September 1814 (Looney, J. 2010: 412–41).

but to engage with the creative writers like, for example, Horace. This is what makes reading Horace more fruitful and engaging. Richard Tarrant in his 2020 *Horace's Odes* illustrated the influence Horace had in his later receptions. As it pertains to the eighteenth century, Tarrant focuses on Samuel Johnson. Tarrant notes that Johnson, like Jefferson, included lines from Horace in his letters while reflecting on significant moments in his life.⁷⁸ Continuing in English literature, Tarrant also explores the reception of Horace with Rudyard Kipling and A.E. Housman. One sees, therefore, that Horace was not only relevant to Jefferson, but the reception of Horace began much earlier than Jefferson and lasted well after him. This can, perhaps, give a sense of the profound influence and popularity Horace had in the eighteenth century and beyond, and add to the overall picture by way of explaining why Jefferson engaged more with Horace than any other classical author—because of Horace's creativity and imagination in subject, but also his provenance. Horace's Epicureanism is especially strong in and central to Jefferson's classical taste, such as the evocation of *utile dulci*, the *locus amoenus* and *otium*. The *utile dulci* is the central tenant of Jefferson's taste and so Jefferson's taste could not be understood without Horace.

In recent years, Caroline Winterer has been at the forefront of Classical Reception in early America. In her 2005 article 'From Royal to Republican: The Classical Image in Early America', Winterer discusses how classical imagery in America changed from militarism to agriculture, and how American political priorities shifted from defence and war to economy and self-sustainability (Winterer 2005: 1264-1290). She observes that 'Americans deliberately made the classical past represent republicanism in the hope of using the moral authority of Greek and Roman antiquity to convey new meanings' (Winterer 2005: 1268). As it pertains to American historiography on the Classics in early America, Winterer notes of the problems therein: 'we have thoroughly investigated early Americans' classical *reading* at the

⁷⁸ Tarrant 2020: 203.

expense of the more tangible, impassioned *aesthetics* of their classicism’ (Winterer 2005: 1269). In other words, Winterer rightly observes that American historians’ investigations into the classical influences in early America have been relegated to book lists and name-adoption, which is not, as stated in the Introduction to this thesis, Classical Reception. This is exactly what this thesis attempts to correct. Moreover, Winterer decides to take the Classics out of the politics in early America in order to see more clearly the influences and changes: ‘But by classifying the neoclassical prints as political, rather than classical, we obscure their roots in the flourishing culture of classical imagery that preceded republican revolution in America’ (Winterer 2005: 1265). This thesis hopes to do the same.⁷⁹

In her chapter ‘Classical Taste at Monticello: The Case of Thomas Jefferson’s Daughter and Granddaughters’ in 2009 *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America*, ed. Cole and Onuf, Winterer discusses a classical sculpture of Ariadne that Jefferson owned and explores his daughter and granddaughters’ ownership of it after his death. Although she does not focus on Jefferson himself, but his daughters, Winterer observes that Jefferson’s legacy of classicism influenced his female relatives, effectively extending his classical legacy beyond himself. She notes that ‘classicism was one of the barriers keeping men in one sphere, and women in another, part of the natural order of things’ (Onuf and Cole, eds. 2009: 81). But, Winterer observes, Jefferson believed differently. Jefferson believed that women’s engagement with the Classics not only fostered their own well-being and happiness, but that of the country’s as well. She writes: ‘Jefferson also thought classicism was a critical part of their development as *American* women—independent, resolute, self-sufficient’ (Onuf and Cole, eds. 2009: 81-82). Winterer then

⁷⁹ For more on Winterer’s work on the Classics in early America, see Winterer, C. (2009), ‘The Female World of Classical Reading in Eighteenth-Century America,’ in *Reading Women: Literacy, Authorship, and Culture in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. Brayman Hackel H. and Kelly, C., and Winterer, C. (2007), *The Mirror of Antiquity: American Women and the Classical Tradition, 1750-1900*.

delves into classicism during the nineteenth-century, Jefferson's daughters' generation, and the classical education of his daughter and granddaughters that Jefferson encouraged.

Then, later during 2010, Winterer published 'Model Empire, Lost City: Ancient Carthage and the Science of Politics in Revolutionary America' in *The William and Mary Quarterly* in which she further explores early Americans' self-proclaimed connections with antiquity:

Eighteenth-century Americans liked to present themselves as thoroughgoing empiricists, mustering ancient exempla for this or that cause, and it is easy to take their statements about what they knew about the ancient world at face value. Many close studies of the revolutionary generation's classicism have revealed the vast learning that eighteenth-century Americans possessed about ancient Greece and Rome. Yet that ancient knowledge was not nearly as precise or total as historians often insist it must have been. There were in fact large gaps in their knowledge, which they acknowledged quite often, though modern scholars tend to read right over these awkward moments (Winterer 2010: 5).

Although she does not discuss Jefferson at length, Winterer's recent work is vital to understanding this thesis because her work has helped to illustrate that Jefferson was the exception to this rule of classical ignorance and dilettante engagements. She continues:

New European works about the ancient world flooded the American market, and the key intellectual participants in the American Revolution eagerly snapped them up. These books yielded a great deal of information about the ancient world—from Greece to Rome to Carthage to Egypt—but only up to a point. And it is that point—the point at which knowledge ended—that John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison (among others) repeatedly mentioned, especially in the case of ancient Carthage (Winterer 2010: 5).

Jefferson's classicism went beyond the adoption of monikers like Publius when writing letters. His adoption of the ancient Mediterranean extended far beyond the imprecision adopted by his American contemporaries. This thesis does not claim that Jefferson 'knew' more Classics than this or that American. It does claim, however, that Jefferson *did* more with the Classics than any other American of his time. Yes, Jefferson's ancient Greek was stronger than Adams', but their classical learning was about the same. Jefferson, unlike Adams, however, not only expressed his classicism more fully, but engaged with it more through his building constructions and developing a university founded upon the classical

world of Greece and Rome. Jefferson, as was so common during the eighteenth century, embroidered the classical world onto the modern one.

Winterer expands her discussion on American historiography by explaining that ‘Historians have tended to describe the totality of ancient learning among Americans of the revolutionary era in one fell swoop with phrases such as “the classicism” of “the Founders”’ (Winterer 2010: 23). She explains that such terms are too broad and, therefore, do a disservice for examining the depth of the relations on individuals (Winterer 2010: 23). ‘By contrast,’ she continues,

the thick classicism of a few key revolutionaries including John Adams, John Dickinson, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and others reflected deep, lifelong study, the province of a much smaller group of people. Acquired usually through formal education in grammar school and college, this knowledge grew over the years through intensive reading in original sources and modern translations. These men’s private libraries were monuments to eighteenth-century erudition about the ancient Mediterranean. Precisely because of this kind of reading, their knowledge was constantly in flux, changing as they revised their opinions in light of new knowledge acquired from books or travel abroad (Winterer 2010: 23-24).

Winterer goes on to discuss Madison’s thick classicism in the *Federalist Papers*, particularly *Federalist* 63. Although Winterer does not engage with Jefferson’s ‘thick classicism’, her method of looking beyond booklists is relevant to this thesis and has provided a framework through which to examine Jefferson and the Classics. It has also identified a gap that this thesis will fill.

In her 2012 chapter for the *Companion to Thomas Jefferson*, ‘Jefferson and the Ancient World’, Winterer notes that ‘Even in this pantheon of classical Americans, Jefferson stands out as having the most wide-ranging antiquarian interests. Jefferson embodied more than any of his contemporaries the eighteenth-century ideal of classicism as something that was not just seen or read only, but something that was fully lived’ (Winterer 2011: 380-381). Winterer’s chapter provides an overview of Jefferson’s relationship with the Classics, from education to religion to politics. In her discussion of Monticello, Winterer notes the items

brought back from France, especially books on classicism (Winterer 2011: 385). As it relates to this thesis, Winterer observes: ‘Jefferson designed Monticello with this vision of pastoral virtue and simplicity in mind; everywhere Monticello’s architectural motifs reminded him of the Sabine Farm extolled by the Roman poet Horace’ (Winterer 2011: 386). Aside from this mention of Horace, Winterer’s chapter goes no further on the subject, which leaves room for this thesis to expand on it. After a discussion of slavery ancient and modern, Winterer discusses Egypt as a source of inspiration for Jefferson.

Most recently, classicist Victoria Tietze Larson has published on Jefferson and his relationship with Monticello in her 2019 “Man of the Mountain”: Seeing Jefferson at Monticello’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 42. Although published after this thesis was already established, Larson’s article provides great support for this thesis. Larson’s recent work situates my argument in scholarship, giving it roots and legitimacy. And, most importantly, Larson is a classicist and so her connections between Jefferson and the Classics align with those of this thesis, further situating the way of looking at Jefferson through this lens. Larson looks at Jefferson’s relationship with Monticello as ‘a process of self-imaging’ (Larson 2019: 283). In her article, Larson focuses on visitors’ perspectives of Jefferson that encouraged his self-fashioning: ‘Visitors provided the requisite viewers for the portrait that he presented there’ (Larson 2019: 283). This projected self-fashioning as a way of seeing was ‘promoted by the theme of rural retirement in classical and European, especially British, polite literature, which, as a body, created what William C. Dowling has well described as “a single transatlantic universe of thought”’ (Larson 2019: 284). What sets my study and Larson’s apart, however, is her emphasis on Jefferson’s self-projection post-1776 as inherently republican and, thus, political. This is not a fault in Larson’s argument, but the difference illustrates that although both of our studies focus on Jefferson’s retirement on his mountain, we two classicists take a slightly different approach that reveals different ways of

seeing Jefferson's self-portrait[s]. She notes: 'A new beginning, shifting rhetoric, and the symbolism of a work continuously in progress were, I hypothesise, some of the means by which Jefferson sought, albeit subconsciously, to appease his critics and accommodate his retirement to his evolving view of himself as an American' (Larson 2019: 286). Larson focuses on Jefferson's classical mountain seat as a way of examining the self-fashioning of his power in the eyes of his visitors. This thesis, on the other hand, focuses on Jefferson's classical mountain seat as a way of examining his classical taste in his *own* eyes—the classical mountain seat that he designed for *himself*. A further difference is that this thesis is largely concerned with architecture and landscape architecture, whereas Larson focuses on the interior of Monticello, nor does she discuss Poplar Forest or the University of Virginia. Again, this is by no means a fault in Larson's argument—it is merely to point out the differences in our approaches to understanding Jefferson's self-portraits, as it were. Larson continues in her argument: 'Reading these [visitors'] accounts helped form my thesis that their knowledge of the literary imagery of classical retirement and, in particular, of the significance therein of the mountain-top villa, was crucial to visitors' understanding of the message Jefferson sent by building' (Larson 2019: 285). Such is the greatest difference in our two arguments.

The second of Larson's works on Jefferson and the Classics is her 2017 article, 'Byrd and Jefferson's Libraries: Roman otium "at the end of the world"', *Pacific Coast Philology* 52: 238-254. In this article, Larson focuses on both our Thomas Jefferson and another Virginian, William Byrd II (1674-1744). Notorious amongst historians for his epistolary naughtiness, Byrd, like Jefferson, was deeply interested in the Classics. In this article, Larson focuses on the Virginians' libraries as sites of their classical identities. Larson argues:

these classical works can be seen as particularly representative of the ambivalent message projected as a whole by Byrd and Jefferson's libraries. Their books, especially their classical holdings, and the rooms in which they kept them, symbolically embodied the

ambiguities and complexities of Byrd and Jefferson's identity as Americans and of their relationship, as such, with the Old World (Larson 2017: 239).

She argues that Byrd and Jefferson's classical libraries both describe and prescribe a 'vision of American life' that is identified, in short, as rustic (Larson 2017: 239). Larson rightly argues that Roman *otium* provided Byrd and Jefferson's idealised view of their plantations. Much of Larson's article focuses on the contrasts in Byrd and Jefferson's visions between the Old and New Worlds, and their desires to perfect Virginia through the Classics, which is a major theme of this thesis as well. Her focus is on contrast: city/country, Old World/New World, male/female, master/slave. As it pertains to books and libraries, Larson notes 'Context, therefore, was everything. Luxury that struck Byrd and Jefferson as wrong in the context of the European city could be made right, it seemed, in the context of the American wilderness' (Larson 2017: 248). This is an interesting observation because it highlights what may seem contradictory in Jefferson's actions—namely, owning European books and other material objects like French furniture—was in fact an attempt to downplay the luxury within Europe by giving it value in America. In other words, by distancing European luxury goods from Europe, they were made well again in America as *objects d'art* and knowledge. Although this thesis does not engage in material culture and the history of Jefferson's book collecting, Larson's point is still relevant because it helps to contextualise Jefferson's engagement with the Old World via his bringing its history and objects back to Virginia as an exercise in self-fashioning or the creating of the self.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Larson further observes: 'Furthermore, the transportation of the benefits of the European city to the wilds of Virginia befitted Byrd and Jefferson's view of the New World as the positive to the Old World's negative, or as the beneficent and miraculous inversion of it. In classical rhetoric, this figure of thought was recognized as the adynaton (literally, the "impossible," but known traditionally as "the world turned upside down") [...] Viewed from this angle, Westover and Monticello represented the miraculous (and laborious) transportation of elite European culture, material and intellectual, to what Byrd's father colorfully described as "the end of the world"—and, in the case of Monticello, its almost magical and godlike conveyance to the top of a mountain, no less' (Larson 2017: 249).

In contrast to Lehmann, Winterer and Larson's works, this section now turns to those works with whom this thesis is in dialogue and disagreement. This thesis is written large part in contrast to the following works. In recent years, historian Carl Richard has put forth studies on the Founders and Jefferson's relationship with the Classics that are valuable for shedding light on the relevance of the Classics in early America, but are concerning for their lack of depth in doing so. In his 1989 'A Dialogue with the Ancients: Thomas Jefferson and Classical Philosophy and History' in the *Journal of the Early Republic*, Richard discusses Jefferson's classical philosophies on morality and history, while delving into Jefferson's Epicureanism, as the first chapter of this thesis does, and Tacitus.⁸¹ Richard's piece is focused on morality. Richard argues that Jefferson used the classical political systems as cautionary tales against how not to form a government. Richard writes:

Jefferson's criticisms of the ancient republics were a genuine recognition of the irrationality involved in perceiving them as exact models for modern government. Direct democracy, such as that practiced at Athens and (to some extent) at Rome, was not only impractical for a large republic like the United States, Jefferson felt, but would lead to administrative incompetence (Richard 1989: 453).

In his discussion of Epicureanism, Richard argues that 'Epicurus provided Jefferson with a cogent form of materialism that he attempted to reconcile with the Christian ethics he so loved. This reconciliation served a vital emotional function. It saved him from the painful necessity of abandoning the religion of his ancestors and countrymen. Ironically, the reconciliation required an immense leap of faith from this leading figure of the Age of Reason' (Richard 1989: 454). This thesis argues differently. Where Richard claims that Jefferson's Epicureanism 'required an immense leap of faith,' this thesis argues that Jefferson

⁸¹ In his 1988 PhD dissertation, *The Founding Fathers and the Classics*, Richard focuses on philosophy, (Stoicism, Epicureanism, Christianity), and does not discuss art and taste. Richard discusses the buildings at UVA but does not explore their meaning for Jefferson—he does not explain what the classical architecture was doing for him, although he highlights the architectural features. This is not Classical Reception as Winterer defines it and is 'thin' because it is recognising when something looks classical. It is true that the Rotunda resembled the Pantheon, but the identification should be expounded and clarified. Richard does not delve deeper into Jefferson's designs and the meanings they held for him. He does the same in his brief discussion of Monticello, only recognising Lehmann's work on the subject.

did not abandon reason for emotion in his Epicureanism, indeed quite the opposite.⁸² Where Richard claims that Epicureanism served the function of reconciling reason with ‘the religion of his ancestors,’ this thesis argues that Jefferson aligned with Epicureanism in order to better understand how to pursue happiness through taste and knowledge, which Richard does not explore, both in his thesis and in this article. Where Richard focuses on reason and Christianity, this thesis focuses on Jefferson’s pursuit of happiness through taste and classical knowledge as reinforced by the balance of pleasure and usefulness in Epicureanism, i.e., *utile dulci*.

In the Preface to his 2009 monograph, *Greeks and Romans Bearing Gifts: How the Ancients Inspired the Founding Fathers*, Richard remarks that his previous book, (1994) *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment*, scarcely had any Classics in it at all, despite alluding to them, or mentioning: ‘Though my book was received favorably by both academic and popular reviewers, even many highly educated readers confided that they struggled with it due to a lack of knowledge concerning many of the ancients to whom I alluded’ (Richard 2009: ix). In order to remedy this, Richard has included brief biographies of selected classical authors whom he discusses in *Greeks and Romans*. Richard interjects Jefferson into discussions on the Founders and the Spartans, Carthaginians and more by inserting Jefferson’s references to ancient history, such as when Jefferson called Aaron Burr Catiline.⁸³ Richard sees Jefferson’s offhanded references to Britain as Carthage as evidence for a direct classical contribution to his political views.⁸⁴ This is the extent to which Richard discusses Jefferson and the Classics. This thesis is, in a way, a remedy to Richard’s work on Jefferson and the Classics because there is more depth to explore between Jefferson and the Classics.

⁸² See Jefferson’s 1786 ‘Head and Heart’ letter to Maria Cosway, which is heavily Epicurean.

⁸³ Richard (2009): 155.

⁸⁴ Richard compares Washington to Horace while mentioning Mount Vernon, though he gives no evidence that Washington read Horace.

Richard argues that the Founders' classical education is sufficient to heavily influence their politics. To his credit, Richard does not claim to be doing Classical Reception, which requires more investigation than illustrating the most common type of education for eighteenth-century boys. Where it is true that some of the Founders were not classicists and therefore did superficially borrow from the Classics in their rhetoric and philosophies, Jefferson was no dilettante. Of all the Founders, Jefferson was the greatest classicist, and his classicism should not be compared with his contemporaries but should be seen as unique amongst Americans. It is true that John Dickinson was well-educated in the Classics, but Thomas Jefferson transformed his classical background into an all-encompassing taste that was actualised in physical places with direct consequences on identities beyond his own.⁸⁵ Where Richard examines Plutarch quotations by Dickinson and Tacitus quotations by Jefferson, this thesis explores Jefferson's built environments and illuminates the classically-inspired imaginative worlds he created for himself and posterity.

Aside from Richard's relevant work is the historian, Andrew Holowchak. Holowchak's 2019 *The Cavernous Mind of Thomas Jefferson* is organised in a similar way as this thesis. In chapter six, Holowchak discusses 'Jefferson the aesthetician' then limns 'Jefferson's catalogue of Fine Arts, and include an analysis of each of those arts. I end with elaborations of two significant disclosures' (Holowchak 2019: xii). Then Holowchak explores 'Jefferson as educationalist through his efforts to birth the University of Virginia' (Holowchak 2019: xii-xiii):

Next, I turn to some thoughts on Jefferson's philosophy of education. Thereafter, I show how his philosophy of education is related to his political philosophy. I then discuss Jefferson's layout of the University of Virginia and how that layout served his philosophical and practical aims for higher education. I end with some thoughts concerning the relevance of Jefferson's vision of higher education today (Holowchak 2019: xii-xiii).

⁸⁵ For Dickinson and the Classics, see Gummere 1956: 81-88.

Despite the similarities in organisation and subject, however, this thesis contends with much of Holowchak's scholarship, which will help reinforce the distinctiveness of this thesis.

Holowchak's nostalgia for the 'age of wonder, excitement, and unity of purpose, due to belief in scientific progress, and for many, cosmic goodness' of Jefferson's time causes him to deify Jefferson in which he does not examine Jefferson without praise—not to judge Jefferson, but to contextualise him and measure his 'cosmic goodness' against his reality.

Despite his frequent use of 'aesthetic' to describe Jefferson (a term that did not exist during Jefferson's lifetime), Holowchak's analysis of Jefferson's aesthetic (taste) relies on an exploration of his book lists containing the Scottish philosophers Henry Home Lord Kames' ideas of beauty, rather than developing Jefferson's. Aside from Kames and a little Burke, Holowchak looks toward no other possible influences on Jefferson's ideas of beauty, with the exception of Aristotle, whom Jefferson appears never to have written about with any interest. In short, as it pertains to Jefferson's aestheticism, Holowchak recognises Jefferson's listing of Kames in a book list and commonplace book, then develops a philosophy of beauty based upon Kames that Jefferson himself never actually put forth. Holowchak's construction of connections are not secure enough to make such a claim. Holowchak writes: 'Jefferson's views on the aesthetic sense, as is his view of the moral sense, are much influenced by Kames' thinking. Both think that the aesthetic sense is a faculty, separate from intellection and moral sensing. Both think that the aesthetic sense, though distinct from the moral sense, is a faculty that reinforces moral judgments' (Holowchak 2019: 158). Holowchak does not take into account that common eighteenth-century term that Jefferson actually did use—taste. By not picking up on this specific historical context of the eighteenth century beyond the commonly explored Kames and Burke, Holowchak misses Jefferson's use of the *utile dulci* and, therefore, its classical origins and the classical development of Jefferson's taste.

Further in his discussion on architecture, Holowchak explores ‘a fine art such as gardening and architecture, [which] is in contrast both autotelic and heterotelic and hence, can be aesthetically assessed on its autotelic merits as well as heterotelic merits—i.e., whether the dining area is not only beautiful but also fully functional’ (Holowchak 2019: 166). It does appear that Holowchak is picking up on the overall tenor of the *utile dulci* but without explicitly stating it or expanding upon it. Instead, Holowchak creates a modern aesthetic theory for Jefferson which at times can seem complicated and inaccessible. Holowchak, as he stated in his introduction, sought to explain Jefferson on Jefferson’s own terms, but he tends overly to complicate Jefferson and, thereby, dislodges Jefferson from his eighteenth-century home and places him within the realm of modern aesthetic philosophy.

In his discussion of Monticello, Holowchak does not mention the Classics or any of Jefferson’s associations of Monticello with the classical past, which is largely concerning given the wealth of letters Jefferson wrote associating one with the other. This thesis, and especially the chapter on Monticello, will fill this omission of classical influence on Jefferson’s architectural taste. In chapter 8, Holowchak’s discussion of classical influences is unfulfilled. He devotes a paragraph to the classical taste of the University, and largely does so through other historians. Finally, his form of Classical Reception is relegated to the University as a UNESCO world heritage site ‘along with the Pyramids of Giza and the Acropolis’ (Holowchak 2019: 231). Holowchak’s scholarship is valuable because it opens the doors to further discussion and investigation into not only Jefferson’s classicism, but others of his era as well. Despite this, however, there are gaps in his scholarship that this thesis attempts to remedy.

Classical Jefferson in American Historiography

Aside from classicism in art and architectural history, this section will now return to Thomas Jefferson. This section will further contextualise him in current and past scholarship. Perhaps the most recognisable text on Jefferson and the Classics is the 2011 edited volume *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America*, edited by Nicholas Cole and Peter Onuf. With such contributors as Caroline Winterer, Richard Guy Wilson and Paul Rahe, the volume provides different perspectives on the Classics related to Jefferson. In his chapter “Ancients, Moderns and the Progress of Mankind”, Peter Onuf connects Jefferson’s interest in the classical languages with the progress of humankind. If, for example, modern Greece would once again become independent (quoting Jefferson) ‘then “the language of Homer” would become “again a living language”’ (Cole and Onuf ed. 2011: 37). Onuf explains that, despite this connection to ancestry, the ancients were of no use to modern constitution-making: ‘Jefferson’s constitutional quarrel was less with John Marshall than with the principles of mixed government, traceable through the republican revival of early modern Europe to Aristotle and classical political philosophy’ (Cole and Onuf ed. 2011: 39). Michael Zuckert’s chapter, “Thomas Jefferson and Natural Morality: Classical Moral Theory, Moral Sense, and Rights” focuses on Jefferson’s understanding of classical morality, while trying to avoid politics. ‘In place of classical politics,’ writes Zuckert, ‘Jefferson affirmed the natural rights liberal commitments of early modern political philosophy, especially as articulated by John Locke’ (Cole and Onuf ed. 2011: 56). Zuckert then explores such early modern philosophers as Thomas Hobbes, David Hume and Francis Hutcheson. In so doing, Zuckert’s exploration into the Classics largely ends.

As it pertains more directly to this thesis, Richard Guy Wilson’s chapter, “Thomas Jefferson’s classical Architecture: An American Agenda”, argues that Jefferson’s goal in designing the University of Virginia was to reform and redirect American colonial

architecture toward the classical. Wilson argues that Jefferson established ‘an American architectural identity rooted in the classical architecture of Europe’ (Cole and Onuf ed. 2011: 102). Where this is certainly true, this thesis takes the statement further beyond the classical architecture of Europe to the poetry of antiquity as a source of Jefferson’s American architectural identity. Wilson’s essay is chiefly concerned with Jefferson’s architecture as useful and inspirational by serving the American public, and while this thesis is in accord, it again takes this idea further by suggesting a more fundamental connection between classical architecture and Jefferson’s identity. In his discussion of Jefferson’s architectural taste, Wilson is primarily concerned with Jefferson’s specificity and adherence to proportion and geometry.⁸⁶ While this knowledge is important for understanding Jefferson and his architecture, this thesis instead focuses on the meanings from art and poetry that identified and characterised Jefferson’s architecture—only not to understand *that* Jefferson created, but to understand the meaning of it.⁸⁷ Furthermore, Wilson’s connections between Jefferson and the Classics remains within geometric principles handed down through Palladio.

In his chapter, Nicholas Cole notes that ‘the suspicion that Jefferson’s well attested classical reading reflected his aesthetic sense far more than it contributed to the formation of his ideas is difficult to avoid’ (Cole and Onuf ed. 2011: 172). In his discussion of various Founders, such as Adams and Hamilton, Cole explores the depth of classical learning amongst the Founding generation and, especially, their engagements with each other about the Classics. According to Cole, ‘writers began to use the ancient world to reconsider their relationship with Britain and their loyalty to the king at more fundamental levels’ (Cole and

⁸⁶ Wilson notes: ‘To Jefferson, classical architecture was controlled by rules of geometry, composition, and proportion, and by the five orders: Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite. The treatises spelled out specifically the mathematical and proportional relationship of an order and its components: the column, the base, the shaft, the capital, and the entablature. ... He was intoxicated with proportions and spent considerable time figuring out dimensions, in some cases down to 1/100 of a foot’ (Cole and Onuf ed. 2011: 109).

⁸⁷ In his section on “Meaning”, Wilson explores the possible political meanings within Jefferson’s architecture.

Onuf ed. 2011: 180). For Cole, and unlike Bernard Bailyn, the Classics not only furnished the language through which to articulate pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary sentiments, but the Classics provided ways of understanding Revolutionaries' relationship with Britain as a colony. The Classics did not merely provide catchy names like Cicero or Publius for revolutionary Americans—the Classics provided ways to self-identify, which is instructive of my own approach. In his 1976 'The Eye of Thomas Jefferson', William Howard Adams noted that 'It would again be misleading to claim, however, that Jefferson subscribed to any particular aesthetic ideas, nor can we conveniently identify him with our latter-day academic labels as a romantic or neoclassicist' (Adams, W.H. 1976: xxxiv). Where Jefferson did not subscribe to 'any particular aesthetic ideas' (because he never used the 'term' aesthetic), he did have a particular *taste*, as this thesis will illustrate—classical taste.

Of all the histories of Jefferson's classicism and architectural taste, architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson is perhaps the most accomplished. Wilson's 1994 *Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village: The Creation of an Architectural Masterpiece* is a text that this thesis has consulted greatly in order to better understand Jefferson's architecture.

According to Wilson:

Jefferson understood the symbols he chose; the best models of antiquity contained meanings. He based the Rotunda, as the Capitol at Richmond, on Roman models that had been assigned by authorities as belonging to the Republic, not the Empire, which he would have found repugnant. [The Maison Carrée was built during the Augustan Age. Additionally, Virgil, Horace, Pliny all wrote during the Empire.] Jefferson admired many classical buildings and gardens in Europe, including those of royalty, but his use of them as models always included a change of purpose. Palladio expressed the laws of nature in mathematical terms that appealed to Jefferson. But in execution he realized that not everything could be so reduced; he adapted as necessary, stretched proportions as with the dormitory colonnade, combined and changed in his typically pragmatic fashion. Jefferson belonged to his time: classicism was the language of architecture, but it was elastic and was as capable of change and growth as knowledge (Wilson 1994: 70).

For Wilson, Jefferson's classical knowledge ran deep within him, but he was not enslaved to the principles of either the ancients or of Palladio and adapted and changed accordingly,

which is one reason why this thesis focuses on Jefferson—his classicism was uniquely adapted to himself, rather than mere copies of things ancient and modern.⁸⁸

Aside from Wilson's study, Mary Woods' 1985 "Thomas Jefferson and the Planning of the University of Virginia" for the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* is relevant to this thesis because she directly links Jefferson's idea of his University to the ancient Greeks.⁸⁹ Woods notes that Jefferson was an avid supporter and subscriber of the *Encyclopédie*, helping to illustrate Jefferson's connections between the architecture of the University to the antique world via French architecture, like Marly, which Kimball highlighted during the 1920s, which Richard Guy Wilson then argued against during 2012.

Woods continued:

The *Encyclopédie* description of the Greek philosophers and their students residing in a village-like compound would surely have exerted a strong pull on Jefferson's imagination. Paw's account also stressed the close association of master and pupil and a system of learning based on discourse and dialogue. Jefferson too believed that a professor should relate to his students as a father to his sons and envisioned a course of study based, not on the usual program of memorization and recitation, but on lectures and discussion (Woods 1985: 272).

But this is where Woods' engagement with classicism ends. Although in accord with Woods' connection between the University and antiquity, this thesis will extract more classicism from the small connections already made and expand upon their origins and trends in taste.

⁸⁸ Wilson further observes that 'The new Greek architecture that the younger architects were espousing did not interest Jefferson. An old man when he designed the University, he had an insular quality in his later years and consequently returned to what he knew, the older translations of Palladio and not new editions. To him Roman architecture expressed an authority of time and knowledge that was sufficient to his purpose' (Wilson 1993: 70).

⁸⁹ She notes: 'Just as Jefferson consciously tied the Richmond capitol to ancient Rome, he may have tried to link the University of Virginia to the Greek academies through his reference to the academic village. This association of the ancient academy with a village occurred in the entry on the colleges in the Quatremère de Quincy's first volume on architecture in the *Encyclopédie Methodique* (1789). The relevant passage excerpts part of Monsieur Paw's researches on the Greek schools of philosophy: "When the highly celebrated philosophers, such as Polemon, had so many disciples that they could not be accommodated within the enclosure of a garden, they constructed for their use, some huts around their master's dwelling, which are called *calybia* in Greek, that is to say some very primitive huts made of wood and covered with thatch where the Greek students resided with a singular satisfaction. ... Meanwhile this manner of living preserved the youth from the city's corruption and diminished considerably the costs of public education. ... *An accumulation of such habitations presented from afar the appearance of a village where one learned ethics like a trade*" (Woods 1985: 272).

Jack McLaughlin's *Jefferson and Monticello: The Biography of a Builder* (1988) expanded upon Jefferson's identity as intertwined with Monticello and his domestic life. McLaughlin's book goes through the processes through which Jefferson went to achieve his singular dream of Monticello. He highlights the classical motifs and architectural characteristics of Monticello and goes through Jefferson's books on architecture in order to illustrate Jefferson's learnedness. As the title suggests, however, McLaughlin's study is that of a builder's biography, and is not a piece of Classical Reception because the Classics is not the central theme of the text. McLaughlin's mention of the Classics helps readers better contextualise Jefferson's imagination. Nonetheless, the Classics appear as the decorations of an Enlightened mind, rather than as essential to Jefferson's identity.

As it pertains not to architecture, but to other aspects of Jefferson's classicism, Joy Connolly has written much on Jefferson's classical education that is particularly relevant to the chapter on Jefferson and the University of Virginia within this thesis.⁹⁰ While she focuses on the Revolution and the appropriation of the Classics toward violence during the Revolution, Connolly rightly points out that past historical scholarship on the Classics in early America has failed to fully understand the legitimacy of the Classics in American thought:

Through most of the twentieth century, historians saw early American memories of the Greek and Roman past as the passive backdrop to revolutionary experience, the product of a convention-bound set of school texts that at best provided white men of only slightly different backgrounds with common political catchwords and notions of history. The scholarly worm has turned. Recently, scholars like Meyer Reinhold and Caroline Winterer have compellingly demonstrated the ways in which classical knowledge did much more: it actively motivated and energized revolutionary movements [Reinhold 1984, Winterer 2002, 15-21; cf Wood 1991, 100-2, 205-16], [Connolly, 75-76 in ed. Dufallo, *Roman Error*, 2018]' (Connolly 2018: 76).⁹¹

⁹⁰ For more on Jefferson and education, see: Arrowood (1930); Lee (1967); Conant (1962); Kett (1986); Hellenbrand (1990).

⁹¹ Connolly then goes on to explore how American classicism has been treated as a positive value for white male Americans like Jefferson:

'To date, however, the revised intellectual and cultural history of revolutionary classicism has largely concentrated on the common identity and positive values it provided. [...] In this view, classicism and particularly its political expression, classical republicanism, represent clear goods such as moderation, public

Although she addresses the Classics in early America, Connolly's concern is primarily with politics and early American society at large.⁹² This thesis, however, focuses on Jefferson and classical taste, though politics are an inevitable consequence with Jefferson's actions, especially with the University of Virginia. In any case, Connolly has illustrated how the Classics were utilized in various American imaginations that provide a healthy context for this thesis.

Peter Onuf's 2007 *The Mind of Thomas Jefferson* is seminal for what it provides on Jefferson's thoughts. As it pertains to this thesis, however, it falls short of actually exploring Jefferson's mind on the Classics. Onuf's work provides no references to the Classics and only one passing reference to Rome. Onuf does not necessarily seek to engage with the Classics and this thesis will fill in that gap.

Annette Gordon-Reed and Peter Onuf's (2016) "*Most Blessed of the Patriarchs*": *Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of Imagination* looks toward Jefferson's way of creating his world at Monticello through his own thoughts and writings. This thesis adopts a way of looking at Jefferson through his imagination, but from the classical angle. Gordon-Reed and Onuf's book focuses on how Jefferson curated his world at Monticello as he adopted the identity of a patriarch and caretaker of American liberty and the American empire. According to the authors:

Jefferson actually had little interest in the day-to-day life of farming. It was, instead, his seemingly endless building campaigns over the years—which subtracted from rather than added to his financial bottom line—that consumed him and allowed him to imagine himself

morality, and civic virtue, and any tension stoked by classical discourse had mainly to do with relevance. [...] Though this was ignored at the time, scholars now point out that classical education was used to justify hierarchical divisions of class, gender, and race, since Latin and Greek and classical history were not taught to most working-class and poor men, women, and people of color—but recognising their social capital and intellectual value, members of these groups fought tirelessly for access to them' (Connolly 2018: 76). Caroline Winterer's 2002, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780-1910* is also relevant for this topic.

⁹² For more on early American politics, see Pocock 2003: 506-552. For the influence of civic humanism and the republic tradition on the American Republic and Anglo-American political thought more broadly, see Pocock 1989: 80-103. Also, see Bailyn 1967: 62-101.

as a plantation patriarch in a prosperous and improving landscape. Construction signalled progress (Gordon-Reed and Onuf 2016: 39).

According to the authors, Jefferson's engagement in architecture was an intellectual overpowering of nature. Although they engage with Jefferson's imagination, the authors mention the Classics in passing. When mentioning the Classics, Gordon-Reed and Onuf do so as a general characteristic of early Virginians: 'Instead, they [young Virginians during the Revolution] went directly to the sources of modern European civilization found in ancient Greece and Rome, and looked forward to its future progress in their own part of the Western world' (Gordon-Reed and Onuf 2016: 77). Gordon-Reed and Onuf regard the Classics only in connection with their use for early Virginians. Though the authors mention words like 'idyll' and 'agrarian', they do not trace the intellectual and historical lineages of these concepts back to antiquity, which was not their goal in writing the book. In their characterisations of 'Jefferson's idealized vision of home,' the authors do not mention classical taste or ideals (Gordon-Reed and Onuf 2016: 41). In their discussion of literature and language, furthermore, the authors discuss Jefferson's enthusiasm for Anglo-Saxon: 'This same logic led Jefferson to identify with the Irish and Scots, Celtic peoples, and the Welsh, his father's people. It also led him to emphasize the importance of recovering the ancient languages of liberty' (Gordon-Reed and Onuf 2016: 228). In their mention of 'the ancient languages of liberty,' the authors do not mention Greek or Latin, and then move on to explore Jefferson's interest in ancient British history as a source of British liberty (included in the 1774 Summary View): 'Jefferson identified not only with the ancient traditions of the British Isles; he appreciated modern British poetry and music as well' (Gordon-Reed and Onuf 2016: 231).

Aside from Gordon-Reed and Onuf's book, there are some historians who have touched upon Jefferson's Monticello and the Classics in this 21st century. 'In these early years [1774-1794],' wrote Lucia Stanton in her 2012 *"Those Who Labor for My Happiness"*:

Slavery at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, 'he was in the midst of re-creating the ideal world he saw in the paeans to country life of Horace and Virgil. He designed his house and its surroundings with the villas of the Romans in mind. He looked down on a landscape of literary allusions, its features bearing names he had given them to evoke ancient landscapes' (Stanton 2012: 57). This is where Stanton ends her discussion of Jefferson's classicism. There is, at least, a recognition and acceptance of the type of classicism put forth in this thesis—one that acknowledges Jefferson's attempt to recreate a classical ideal at his country seat. A goal of this thesis is to develop this observation and expound upon this idea in order to fully understand what such historiography hints at. This thesis accordingly seeks to contribute to the complex historiography of Jefferson and the Classics examined above through an exploration of the overlooked connections to antiquity and its later receptions, thereby establishing a centrality between Jefferson's classical architecture and his classical musings.

Conclusion

A study on Jefferson's architecture is not new to the field of American History. It is my hope, however, that many elements of this thesis will contribute to the ways in which we understand Jefferson as both an architect of buildings and an architect of the United States. My reading of Jefferson's classical taste is novel because it assigns the *genius loci* of his architectural designs and their classical antecedents from the perspective of Classics, Eighteenth Century Studies, and Art History, and, in so doing, extends the body of literature on Jefferson through these disciplines and provides a different interpretation. This thesis is situated within Classical Reception during the eighteenth century, particularly as it relates to architecture and landscape architecture. In studies on Classical Reception and eighteenth-century architecture and landscapes, Jefferson is often mentioned, but is seldom devoted

significant attention. This thesis will enter these fields and provide an intervention for Jefferson within studies on Classical Reception during the eighteenth century. Highlighting Jefferson's humanism paired exclusively with his classicism provides a bridge from his ethics to his politics to his art. There is not one monograph devoted to Jefferson's classical taste. There are many that highlight this subject and devote sections to it, and there are articles devoted to it as well, but there still remains this gap in Jefferson Studies, Classical Reception and Eighteenth-Century Studies.⁹³

Brief Overview of This Thesis

Chapter Summary

Drawing upon classical heritages in art and architecture, Jefferson's various ways of receiving the Classics presents a complex mosaic of classical taste. There is not one way to receive the Classics—Reception comes in many forms and is fragmented. Each chapter, therefore, differs (in varying degrees) in how it assesses the ways Jefferson received, appropriated, interpreted and represented his classical taste due to many factors, including diverse media from religion to architecture. Classical tastes had implications for Jefferson's ideals on how to be a moral American. Jefferson received the classical world primarily through his books and the prints within them and through his travels through Southern France and Northern Italy, which exposed him to Antique models of inspiration. His understanding of the classical world was necessarily mediated through Renaissance and eighteenth-century perceptions on the classical world and through his own early American identity. Jefferson

⁹³ For historiography on Jefferson that does not address the two subjects of this thesis—Classics and art—see: Gordon-Reed (2008), Gordon-Reed (1997), Gordon-Reed and Onuf (2016); Stanton (2012), Stanton (2000); Valsania (2017); Wills (2018). For more on articles that have touched upon Jefferson and the Classics, but are not directly relevant to this thesis, see: Boutin and Rodgers 2011: 399-412; Brown 1991: 125-162; Hafertepe 2000: 216-31; Holowchak 2002: 277-297; Larson, 2007: 238-254; MacKendrick 1977: 97-106; Wright 1943: 223-33; and Richard 1989: 431-55.

effectively transformed the already popular style of neoclassicism and Palladianism in Europe to a new, eclectic classicism unique to America. Where the classicism of Jefferson's villa stands alongside the Palladian villas of England, his villa still stands out due to its unique infusion of *Americana*, from Indian artefacts to the presence of slavery, to its sublime landscape.

Jefferson the Epicurean Classicist

This introductory chapter will provide a background from which to understand the depth of debt Jefferson owed to Epicureanism, which was at the heart of his classical taste, as the subsequent chapters will demonstrate. First, this chapter examines the Garden School of Epicurus as a place that influenced Horace's ideas on the *locus amoenus*, which Jefferson later upheld in his architecture. Then, this chapter diverts from taste and explores Jefferson's philosophical and cosmological connections to Epicurus as a foundation for his classicism and the classicising of his taste. In short, in order to fully understand Jefferson's classical taste, his debts to Epicureanism must be explored in all their features because Epicureanism had a direct effect on his taste.

The Genius Loci at Thomas Jefferson's Classical Villa

This chapter examines Jefferson's Monticello and Poplar Forest and his ideals of a villa. This chapter argues that Jefferson's classical villas provided him with a framework through which to construct his classical taste. Monticello was a hive of activity with its workhouses, shops, seemingly never-ending construction, numerous enslaved workers and Jefferson's own family and visitors. Unlike certain classical villas in Europe (such as Palladio's Villa Rotonda), Jefferson had to accommodate the situation of his reality and adopt certain characteristics to Monticello that made it distinctly American and Southern, such as the

presence of Mulberry Row next door. This chapter will explore Jefferson's own ideas and writings on his villas. This is done in order to understand how Jefferson recognised himself and his classical world.

This chapter will paint a picture of Jefferson's classical taste, which was founded upon the *utile dulci*, encouraged the illimitable freedom of the mind, was aligned toward the *novus ordo seclorum*, and was deeply rooted in classical literature. This chapter represents a development in Jefferson's classical taste, one that existed in his imagination and in reality.⁹⁴

'the land of dreams': Thomas Jefferson's Classical University

This final chapter argues that Jefferson viewed the Classics as a means to not only alter social and political relations, but also to transform human nature towards a more learned 'democratic societal configuration,' which was open-ended and indeterminate (Caivano 2019: 34). This chapter is the culmination of Jefferson's classical taste. This chapter will explore classical tastes at the University of Virginia, expound upon its artistic and historical lineage, and explore the classical education that Jefferson designed. In so doing, this chapter will illustrate that Jefferson was successful in his vision for a classical university. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson upheld the connection between architecture and education: 'Architecture being one of the fine arts, and as such within the department of a professor of the college, according to the new arrangement, perhaps a spark may fall on some young subjects of natural taste, kindle up their genius, and produce a reformation in this elegant and useful art' (Abernethy 1964: 146-47). Jefferson again connected the useful with the artful. Jefferson here proposed a new style of architecture in order to reform Virginian architecture and, therefore, tastes in art and beauty. Jefferson continued: 'But all we shall do in this way

⁹⁴ An observer of Jefferson during 1821 wrote of him: 'Jefferson's Arcadia must have been sought, not in Virginia or Maryland, but in Virgil's or Pope's pastorals, or in Thompson's seasons' (Carey 1821: 53). In other words, a contemporary of Jefferson noted that Jefferson regarded his home not as it really was, but as he imagined it through literature.

will produce no permanent improvement to our country, while the unhappy prejudice prevails that houses of brick or stone are less wholesome than those of wood' (Abernethy 1964: 147).

This passage illustrates Jefferson's desire to improve Virginia through architecture—a 'permanent improvement' that would both increase the permanency of education and buildings, while also increasing a sense of taste among Americans and, thereby, establishing Virginia as a prominent place for the arts. Jefferson then explained his vision of taste in full:

A country whose buildings are of wood, can never increase in its improvements to any considerable degree. Their duration is highly estimated at fifty years. Every half century then our country becomes a *tabula rasa*, whereon we have to set out anew, as in the first moment of seating it. Whereas when buildings are of durable materials, every new edifice is an actual and permanent acquisition to the State, adding to its value as well as to its ornament (Abernethy 1964: 149).

In this passage, Jefferson outlined his Horatian philosophy in the *utile dulci* of architecture and landscape architecture. Jefferson's use and philosophy of the *utile dulci* will be seen throughout because he evoked the phrase and its concept in his and others' villas, gardens and the university.

In Query XV of the *Notes*, Jefferson outlined his opinions on American colleges and their architecture. According to Jefferson, the only buildings in Virginia 'worthy [of] mention' included the capital of Williamsburg, but only because of its classical features.

Jefferson continued:

The capitol is a light and airy structure, with a portico in front of two orders, the lower of which, being Doric, is tolerably just in its proportions and ornaments, save only that the intercolonnations are too large. The upper is Ionic, much too small for that on which it is mounted, its ornaments not proper to the order, nor proportioned within themselves (Abernethy 1964: 146).

In his observations, Jefferson only described its classical features. He lamented that there 'are no other public buildings but churches and court-houses, in which no attempts are made at elegance' (Abernethy 1964: 146). Jefferson abhorred the colonial architecture of Williamsburg but emphasised its classical features when relevant. Jefferson called the College little more than a brick-kiln and lamented that 'the genius of architecture seems to

have shed its maledictions over this land' (Abernethy 1964: 146). Given his antipathy toward the colonialism of his homeland, Jefferson regarded it his personal and civic duty to transform the architecture of Virginia, which will be explored more fully in this final chapter.

What This Thesis Offers Its Three Main Audiences

Most work done on Jefferson's architecture is descriptive and neglects to explore what the Classics did for him as an architect, classicist, and thinker. This thesis provides a remedy to this problem through its specificity and in-depth exploration into the examples from Antiquity that Jefferson admired and emphasised in his taste. It explores which classical sources contributed to his classical taste and how/why they formed and affected him so strongly that he was led to build structures in order to emulate them. The direct classical contributions that influenced Jefferson aesthetically and the contexts in which he would have received these classical examples will be explored. Jefferson's system of education, which he believed necessitated classical buildings, was the fulfilment of his classical taste. After all, as an eighteenth-century man, Jefferson believed in the ideal combination of utility and pleasure—the *utile dulci* (to be explored later). Classical architecture did nothing for Jefferson if it did not help serve a purpose—namely the purpose of fostering cultured, educated citizens, just as he was himself fostered. Indeed, Jefferson wrote in his 1818 *Report the Commissioners of the University of Virginia*:

Education, in like manner, engrafts a new man on the native stock, and improves what in his nature was vicious and perverse into qualities of virtue and social worth. And it cannot be but that each generation succeeding to the knowledge acquired by all those who preceded it, adding to it their acquisitions and discoveries, and handing the mass down for successive and constant accumulation, must advance the knowledge and well-being of mankind, not *infinitely* as some have said, but *indefinitely*, and to a term which no one can fix and foresee (TJ, 'Report of the Board of Commissioners for the University of Virginia to the Virginia General Assembly,' 1818).⁹⁵

⁹⁵ *The Papers of James Madison, Retirement Series*, vol. 1, 4 March 1817-31, 1820 (Mattern, Staggs, Parke Johnson and Mandeville Colony 2009: 326-400).

Jefferson has been both a popular interest and an academic interest since 1776 because of his diverse complexity and influence, from enslavement to equality. The works published on Jefferson speak to his perpetual relevance for scholars and the reading public alike. There is much more to say on the Sage of Monticello and the continual publishing and public interest in Jefferson helps to illustrate his lasting influence in western thought.

A multidisciplinary perspective will both confirm findings on Jefferson and the Classics and will highlight new ways of thinking about scholarship in the Arts and Humanities, especially Classical Reception Studies. Jefferson has been explored by art historians, classicists and historians alike, and all three disciplines are bridged in order to delve into the depth of debt that Jefferson owed to Antiquity. This three-pronged approach (Art History, Classics and History), rather than a singular approach, is important because it examines Jefferson from different angles seldom taken in scholarship. In so doing, this approach will illuminate aspects of Jefferson's architecture that will contribute to all three fields simultaneously, thereby broadening interest (both public and academic) in Jefferson. Thinking outside the box not only challenges academics intellectually but allows us to expand our subjects into other fields and to examine them through new and innovative lenses. The three-pronged approach in this thesis does just this. This method is used in order to see what results arise from these fields of endeavour, and by so doing will reveal a place for Jefferson in all three. Jefferson will be placed as a classicist and architect alongside studies on such classicising figures as Alexander Pope, Lord Burlington, Robert Adam, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the Williams Kent and Chambers, Isaac Ware, James Gibbs and more.

This thesis is by its very nature interdisciplinary because it combines Classics, History and Art History. A goal is to 'enhance perspectives by applying various different disciplines to problems that have in the past been treated as the exclusive concern of a single given discipline' (Nagy 1995: vix). The devices of all will be bridged into a coherent work on

Jefferson's classical taste. It needs to be emphasized that this thesis does not necessarily concern Jefferson and classical politics. This thesis contributes to the wider discussion on Classical Reception for eighteenth-century architectural history and for Jefferson Studies. There are many direct references from Jefferson to the Classics, but it was more common for Jefferson to distil the essence of the classical message of the *utile dulci* by taking this classical idea and making it his own, thereby engaging in the process of classicising. Therefore, tracing the specific roots of Jefferson's ideals to a specific passage in a classical text is largely irrelevant. Even his elaboration of Horace's *utile dulci* is lifted, expanded and taken out of its Horatian context. Through Jefferson's writings, his classicising on the taste with which he surrounded himself will be seen. Throughout Jefferson's lifetime, the Classics was a recurring subject for expression on the beautiful and useful and was an object of inspiration and examination. His interpretation was upbeat and neglected to emphasise the tensions within Horace's poetry. In other words, Jefferson chose to read Horace in a particularly uncomplicated, positive way that served his own particular needs. In its focus on Classical Reception, this thesis is not an exploration into a mindset of Antiquity itself, but a representation of it—Jefferson's representation of it in order to see his classicism as he saw it.

Jefferson's ideas remain a significant step in the history of American architecture.⁹⁶

According to von Stackelberg, Jefferson 'understood the legacy of seventeenth- and

⁹⁶ Of other early American Classical structure, Fiske Kimball provided a brief overview: 'Christ Church, Philadelphia, rebuilt under the direction of Dr. John Kearsley in 1727-44, showed the result of careful study of English architectural books; St. Michael's, Charleston, begun in 1752 "after one of Gibson's designs," had a Doric portico of tolerably academic detail. Faneuil Hall in Boston, 1740-42, followed a relatively classical design supplied by the painter Smibert, who had been brought to America by Dean Berkeley. The several buildings in Newport, Boston, and Cambridge designed by Peter Harrison between the years 1748 and 1766 are exceptional in their architectonic character. [...] Such models, however, though not without a certain influence on the styles of their own localities, had not greatly affected the mass of building throughout the colonies. Among domestic buildings the portico remained less frequent than is often supposed. White Hall in Maryland and Woodlands near Philadelphia, commonly dated in 1750 and 1770, had porticoes running through two stories. Neither of these two buildings offers an exception to the usual freedom in detail. Although, in its very short-comings, colonial architecture may have been unconsciously superior in frankness of expression, it was, none the less, backward in relation to the stylistic movements of Europe which furnished its received ideals.'

eighteenth-century Neoclassicism, but his autodidactic and idiosyncratic reception of Roman architecture signalled a new, eclectic turn towards the American' (von Stackelberg 2017: 19). Of his time, Jefferson has a great reputation as a classicist, and Monticello epitomises this. Mount Vernon was more colonial/British than it was classical, for example. The conclusions reached argue that Jefferson's classical taste belongs in studies in Classical Reception, not just in American History and that Jefferson used the Classics to help define his legacy, which has had an impact upon Americans since.

Conclusion

In order to unearth Jefferson's classical reception, it is necessary to identify the objective, setting and method of his classical taste. These features encourage a retelling of Jefferson's legacy and the place of the Classics in early Virginian aristocratic life. In order to illustrate this, the history of Jefferson's classical reception will be explored that illuminates the significant classical spaces he created for himself, both mentally and physically. Jefferson's classicism was formed by the aesthetic lineages of past classical receptions and necessarily formed his way of receiving the Classics, which he adapted to his own time and place. Engaging with Jefferson's classical taste necessarily forms a holistic understanding of the culmination of his classical taste into the University of Virginia, which he considered amongst his greatest achievements and gift to posterity. In order to elucidate Jefferson's classical vision, which includes its limitations, this introduction will trace how scholarship has treated Jefferson's classical taste in order to illustrate which problems remain, which insights can be gleaned, and which classical connections still remain unearthed.

Virginia especially was then wanting in men or buildings that might have imparted a formal knowledge of architecture as understood in Europe. [...] Shirley, Gunston Hall, and other mansions had wooden verandas or porticoes, which, however, scarcely suggested anything classical' (Kimball 1916: 19).

Jefferson recognised the aesthetic heritage of the previous centuries' classical receptions and executed them at Monticello, but his idiosyncratic receptions ushered in a *novus ordo seclorum* for American architectural history. Jefferson linked his identity to his buildings, which helps to situate him in the wider classical aesthetic trends of the eighteenth century because Jefferson, unlike Alexander Pope or Sir John Soane, directly influenced America's relationship with race, education, government and art. This analysis helps to illuminate Jefferson's architecture—a retelling of his thought in material form, one applicable in aspects of American life.

Jefferson the Epicurean Classicist

Utilising Jefferson's 'Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus' as a framework through which to understand his relationship with the Classics, this chapter situates Jefferson's Epicureanism within his classicism in general. This section is about Jefferson's identity as an Epicurean. Even though this thesis as a whole concerns Jefferson's classical taste, there exist recurring themes of Epicureanism in Jefferson's taste that are explored in this thesis—Epicureanism is at the heart of Jefferson's taste. If we are to understand how the Classics affected Jefferson's taste, understanding a large feature of his philosophy is essential because the various classical writers whom Jefferson emulated, *e.g.*, Horace, subscribed to the Epicurean model of the pursuit of happiness, and Jefferson wrote extensively on Epicureanism while he designed the University of Virginia.

Important for understanding Jefferson's classical taste as Epicurean is understanding which aspects of Epicureanism influenced his taste, namely: the *locus amoenus*, *otium* and the *utile dulci*. This chapter on Epicureanism will, naturally, begin in the garden.⁹⁷ This chapter will explore the garden's fundamentals, nature in its purest form from Lucretius, but it will first explore the ideals of the garden in order to determine the *locus classicus* of Jefferson's Epicurean taste.

The school of Epicurus was held in a garden, and that school's name was aptly called Epicurus' Garden. Cicero mentions this in *De Finibus* 5.4-5. In his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Diogenes Laertius wrote of Epicurus and his garden in 10.9-11:

For our philosopher has abundance of witnesses to attest his unsurpassed goodwill to all men – his native land, which honoured him with statues in bronze; his friends, so many in number that they could hardly be counted by whole cities, and indeed all who knew him, held fast as they were by the siren-charms of his doctrine [...] the School itself which, while nearly all the others have died out, continues for ever without interruption through numberless reigns of one scholarch after another [...] Friends indeed came to him from all parts and lived with him in his garden. [...] Diocles in the third book of his Epitome speaks

⁹⁷ As all things should.

of them as living a very simple and frugal life; at all events they were content with half a pint of thin wine and were, for the rest, thorough-going water-drinkers. He further says that Epicurus did not think it right that their property should be held in common, as required by the maxim of Pythagoras about the goods of friends (Hicks 1925: 537-541).⁹⁸

Despite the rumours surrounding the Garden, which Wright puts to rest in *A Few Days in Athens* (1822) as well, Epicurus' Garden school was a place of learned leisure and, importantly, friendship, a trait Jefferson would later share at Monticello. Wycherley in his 1959 'The Garden of Epicurus' connects Epicurus' Garden with the actual home of the school—a house: 'To realize or approach the Epicurean idea of philosophic communion, house and garden must surely have been, if not a single unit, then at least closely associated. A garden would provide the kind of extension of the household which was needed' (Wycherley 1959: 73). The connection between house and garden is an important one for this thesis that will be explored in-depth in the next chapter on villas. For now, an Epicurean connection between garden (or Garden) and house is important because it lays a foundation for the ideals or philosophy that connect physical spaces (garden and house) with Epicureanism—that is, the 'household', or friendship or, for the final chapter of this thesis, students. According to Diskin Clay in his 2009 'The Athenian Garden', the entrance of Epicurus' garden school had an inscription that read: 'Stranger, your time will be pleasant here. Here the highest good is pleasure', (Clay 2009: 9). This highlights the connection between place and pleasure

Wycherley continues:

Epicurus' garden, like Plato's and Dr. Jowett's, was a little one. Seneca speaks of his *hortuli*, Juvenal of his *parvi horti*. The house too was not large. Cicero says, *At vero Epicurus una in domo, et ea quidem angusta, quam magnos quantaque amoris conspiratione consentientes tenuit amicorum greges! quod fit etiam nunc ab Epicureis*. This remark, incidentally, when one remembers what Diogenes says about Epicurus and his friends living together in the garden, makes better sense if one can associate garden and house. Epicurus himself said that the philosopher should not attempt to draw crowds. This does not conflict with Cicero's words. Cicero is speaking rather exaggerated language, and

⁹⁸ Jefferson owned three copies of Diogenes, two in Latin and one in French from 1616, 1668 and 1692.

in any case it is all a question of relative numbers. What Epicurus disapproved of was Theophrastos' habit of giving popular lectures to thousands at the Lyceum. Epicurus avoided not only the Agora but the gymnasia. The Epicurean garden was something different from the spacious arboriculture of the gymnasium with its *peripatoi* and *dromoi*; the Epicurean society retained the intimacy of the household (Wycherley 1959: 76).⁹⁹

Here Wycherley notes of the modest size of Epicurus' Garden, especially when experienced against other places of learning. The modesty of the Garden is an important feature to remember because a garden's humble size will be important to Thomas Jefferson as a way of examining his classical taste because modesty will illustrate his aversion to *negotium*, vanity and excess. This was particularly relevant for Jefferson during his 1786 garden tour of England with John Adams where he (and especially Adams) remarked on the English grand country houses' over-ornamentation and, inevitably, ostentation, like his comment on Blenheim Palace: 'Art appears too much. There are but a few seats in it, and nothing of architecture more dignified' (TJ, 'Notes on a Tour of English Gardens' 1786).¹⁰⁰ Diogenes and Wycherley's observations highlight Epicurus' ideal of the *locus amoenus*: a modest garden as a place of friendship, learning and nature. The Roman poet Horace adopted this term in his poetry, which Jefferson would later highlight.

Epicurus' chief method of disseminating his philosophy was through letters, much like Jefferson. According to Clay, 'Once Epicurus had established himself in Athens, letters were a means to maintaining the cohesion of the "fellow philosophers" abroad...' (Clay 2009: 19). As this chapter will illustrate, Jefferson engaged in this same practice when writing on Epicureanism to both John Adams and the Reverend Joseph Priestly. Epicurus considered the Epicurean Garden much as a family, as a home.¹⁰¹ As seen in Annette Gordon-Reed and Peter Onuf's 2019 *Most Blessed of the Patriarchs*, Jefferson also considered Monticello as a big family, which included the enslaved as extensions of his

⁹⁹ Wycherley is here quoting *De Finibus* 1.65.

¹⁰⁰ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 369–375).

¹⁰¹ See Clay 2009.

children. Indeed, when two members of his enslaved ‘family’ attempted to escape, Jefferson, acting as a father, could not understand why they would want to leave him. Where Epicurus only had one enslaved person in the Garden, Mouse, Jefferson had over 200.¹⁰²

In Spencer’s 2009 ‘Landscape & Aesthetics’, furthermore, she observes of Pliny the Elder’s perception of the Garden:

Writing in the mid-first century CE, Pliny the Elder makes Epicurus’ Garden – in effect, a landscaped, outdoor setting for philosophical study – the inspiration for the luxury estates beloved of Rome’s wealthy families [...] Romans enthusiastically redrafted and gave new context to Greek philosophy by locating it in the colonnaded gardens of suburban and rustic villas, blending the traditional agricultural focus of the villa with Greek civic architectural form (the *stoa*) (Spencer 2009: 18)

Here Spencer directly connects the Garden as an inspiration for the later Roman villas, which would, furthermore, influence the 18th-century villa/country house. Spencer connects the Roman reception of Epicurus’ Garden by marrying the contemplative garden with learned architecture. Jefferson would do exactly this during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This connection between landscape and intellectual freedom was shared by Jefferson’s contemporaries as well, though often in less-than-direct ways. Continuing in her discussion of Thomas Banks and other British artists in Italy during the eighteenth century, Cora Gilroy-Ware observes of Winckelmannianism and a connection between living in a garden, *per se*:

One of his close colleagues was the Anglo-Swiss painter Henry Fuseli, a cosmopolitan intellectual who had translated Winckelmann's *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke* of 1754 into English as *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*. In this earlier treatise, Athenian democracy is not credited with nurturing art and beauty. Rather, it is proclaimed that, in addition to Greece's temperate climate, the physical freedom enjoyed by every Greek citizen from birth nurtured their pre-eminent beauty and taste. Babies born in various parts of Greece, states the text's opening pages, were not wrapped in swaddling, hence their limbs were allowed to grow without obstruction in the open air (Gilroy-Ware 2020: 5).

Jefferson owned a 1779 Italian edition of Winckelmann’s *Storia delle arti del disegno presso gli antichi*, though he did not own Winckelmann's *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der*

¹⁰² See Clay 2009: 27. According to Clay, Epicurus freed Mouse upon his death. Jefferson did not free all of the enslaved at Monticello upon his death, but he did free his own children.

griechischen Werke or *Geschichte*. Nevertheless, this sentiment of the success of Athenian democracy as directly connected to the landscape is reminiscent of Epicureanism and the idea that happiness by way of learning is best done in the garden—garden as a place out-of-doors and in nature. Gilroy-Ware connects this idea with the body in eighteenth-century Britain as a way of comparing ancient Greek bodies (via sculpture) with British ones, making connections and contrasts between freedom and constraint, thereby making classical sculpture political (Gilroy-Ware 2020: 5). For our purposes with Thomas Jefferson, however, Winckelmann’s observation about landscape and learning/taste/physical freedom can be applied to Jefferson’s use of the *locus amoenus* and the *utile dulci* as seeing the success of Virginia as tied to ancient ideas on gardens and landscapes.

As it pertains to Horace, Jefferson’s greatest source of classical reception, an example of Horace’s use of *amoenus* is seen in *Odes* 1.17, the poem with a great amount of pastoralism, though Horace is not strictly speaking a pastoral poet. The ode begins: *Velox amoenum saepe Lucretilem mutat Lycaeo Faunus et igneam defendit aestatem capellis usque meis pluviosque ventos* (Rudd 2004: 58).¹⁰³ This use of *amoenus* situates Horace’s garden as a place of pleasure and seeds the ideal of his garden as a *locus amoenus*.¹⁰⁴ The garden is a place of tranquil retirement, as seen in Horace’s writing of the gods’ protection for those in his dwelling. Horace’s *locus amoenus* is a place without fear and is thus a place in which to find pleasure and happiness. Such is a central Epicurean tenet, as this chapter will illustrate

¹⁰³ *Odes* 1.17: ‘Often, by way of a change, swift Faunus comes from Lycaeus to my delightful Lucretilis and unflinching protects my goats from the blazing summer heat and rainy winds’ (Rudd 2004: 59).

¹⁰⁴ Of Horace’s reception of Epicurus, Sergio Yona observes in his 2018 *Epicurean Ethics of Horace*: ‘By highlighting the role of Epicurean ethics in particular in the *Satires*, this study also attempts to demonstrate how Horace shows consistency in developing a persona throughout the collection that is not only concerned with “saving face,” as Ellen Oliensis argues, but with actively justifying his *virtus* and defending his place in society. The poet accomplishes this goal not only by engaging closely with the works of Lucretius and Cicero, but by working largely within the framework of Epicurus’ moral doctrines as Philodemus of Gadara presents them in his treatises’ (Yona 2018: 3-4). Here Yona describes a process of developing an ethical code or way of living through research into Epicureanism, by ‘not only engaging closely with’ Epicurean works, but ‘by working largely within the framework of Epicurus’ moral doctrines’ as gathered from other receptors.

through Jefferson's own writing. In her observations on Horace's *Odes* 2.19, moreover, Spencer connects the *locus amoenus* of the Sabine Farm with Bacchus: 'The poet gazes beyond the confines of fields, groves, and woodland, fixing his eyes instead on remote crags. Here Bacchus is in control, hinting at a challenging, entropic, and dangerously wild landscape of the imagination' (Spencer 2009: 21). Spencer is referring to *Odes* 2.19: 'I have seen Bacchus teaching songs on a distant crag (believe me, my future readers!), and the Nymphs learning them and goat-footed Satyrs with their pointed ears pricked. Euhoe!' (Rudd 2004: 315)¹⁰⁵ Spencer continues:

Here, the *locus amoenus* trope disconnects Horace's villa and country landscapes from their tenuous connection with the reality of life on the farm. The intellectual and aesthetic complexity of these landscapes obeys no rational pattern of spatial organization to suit a productive and profitable villa. In this, as in other Latin literary pastoral texts, artfully wild but intrinsically productive and fertile nature frames and nourishes the figures that populate it, enabling them to compose music and song while participating in a world that straddles myth, history, and reality (Spencer 2009: 22).

Here Spencer notes that Horace's *locus amoenus* is at once productive and leisurely—that is, useful and pleasant—the *utile dulci*. Horace's *locus amoenus* is a place in which 'poets and philosophers find that verse and thought come naturally and with divine support' (Spencer 2009: 22). It is a place in which to learn (art or philosophy) connected to such divinity found in the garden, *e.g.*, Bacchus. Spencer notes that 'Latin literary pastoral explicitly and often self-consciously negotiates the boundaries and shared spaces of rural and urban ways of life and attitudes to the world' (Spencer 2009: 23). That is, the balance between *otium* and *negotium*. Horace's ideal of the *locus amoenus* as one without *negotium* in the city can also be seen in *Epistles* 1.14: 'as for me, you know that I'm consistent with myself, and depart in gloom, whenever hateful business drags me to Rome' (Henderson 1929: 339).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ *Odes* 2.19: *Bacchum in remotis carmina rupibus vidi docentem—credite posteri—Nymphasque discentis et auris capripedum Satyrorum acutas. Euhoe!* (Rudd 2004: 134).

¹⁰⁶ *Epistles* 1.14: *me constare mihi scis et discedere tristem quandocumque trahunt invisa negotia Romam* (Henderson 1929: 338).

Moreover, Victoria Rimell in *The Closure of Space in Roman Poetics* discusses Horace's *angulus* as a place for the *locus amoenus*—that is, a place of retreat, enclosure and desire, not unlike Jefferson's own *sanctum sanctorum*.¹⁰⁷ Rimell writes on the *angulus*: 'As a half-open space that nevertheless projects a reassuring sense of refuge, the corner instantiates a dialectic of inside and outside that operates in parallel to, and within, the internalizing mechanisms of empire' (Rimell 2015: 84). Rimell observes that the ever-expanding empire necessarily generated Horace's sentiment for retirement and enclosure. Rimell highlights the *angulus* as not merely a nook, but as a psychologically charged space in which to retreat and protect oneself from outside, possibly perilous, forces, which in turn generates that space as one of poetic inspiration. She notes that the *angulus* is '*just open enough* to fire up energetic, groundbreaking poetry' much like Jefferson's own *sanctum sanctorum*, which had windows open to the outside, but still under his own lock and key (Rimell 2015: 84). Jefferson could see the enslaved outside his windows or unwanted visitors, but was nonetheless protected, just as Monticello itself was enclosed on a mountaintop distant from political and commercial centres (indeed, far from everything). Continuing with the *dulci* side of the *utile dulci*, the *angulus* that Rimell discusses in Horace relates directly to Jefferson's Monticello and illustrates a connection beyond Epicurean retirement and Lucretian materialism, but reaches to the daily actions of the villa-dweller and the fundamentals of human action, namely sex. Here the *angulus* of architecture expands beyond thought and into those things unseen or unwritten about at Monticello. Where Jefferson explicitly wrote on the retirement of Monticello, his reception of Horatian Epicureanism through the *angulus*, *locus amoenus* and

¹⁰⁷ Rimell, V. (2015), *The Closure of Space in Roman Poetics*, Cambridge. Rimell notes that 'Horace experiments in the *Odes* in mapping and shaping imperial space within his architectural verse, but also in crafting a poetic-philosophical landscape which seems variously to evade, inhabit and reorder Augustan *imperium*' (Rimell 2015: 82). In fact, in replacing Jefferson with Horace, we can see similarities in intention: Jefferson experiments in mapping and shaping republican space within his architecture, but also in crafting a poetic-philosophical landscape which seems variously to evade, inhabit and reorder American republicanism.

utile dulci reach beyond those things he explicitly wrote about and designed, and extend into a personal life not meant to be uncovered, let alone studied.

Sergio Yona in his 2018 *Epicurean Ethics in Horace: The Psychology of Satire* observes of Horace:

By highlighting the role of Epicurean ethics in particular in the *Satires*, this study also attempts to demonstrate how Horace shows consistency in developing a persona throughout the collection that is not only concerned with ‘saving face,’ as Ellen Oliensis argues, but with actively justifying his *virtus* and defending his place in society. The poet accomplishes this goal not only by engaging closely with the works of Lucretius and Cicero, but by working largely within the framework of Epicurus’ moral doctrines as Philodemus of Gadara presents them in his treatises (Yona 2018: 3-4).

Yona is here describing the process of developing an ethical code or way of living through research into Epicureanism, by ‘not only engaging closely with’ Epicurean works, but ‘by working largely within the framework of Epicurus’ moral doctrines’ as gathered from other receptors. Jefferson did this same thing, as this chapter will illustrate.

Jefferson’s Epicureanism

One of Jefferson’s early writings on Epicureanism came with his 1786 *the Head and the Heart* letter. During the Autumn of 1786, Jefferson wrote a love letter to Maria Cosway in the form of a platonic dialogue between his head and his heart. The dialogue, quite uncharacteristic for Jefferson’s writing, discusses his struggle between loving Maria while suffering versus never loving at all and living a life according to reason. The letter begins:

‘Head: Well, friend, you seem in a pretty trim.

Heart: I am indeed the most wretched of all earthly beings. Overwhelmed with grief, every fibre of my frame distended beyond its natural powers to bear, I would willingly meet whatever catastrophe should leave me no more to feel or to fear.

Head: These are the eternal consequences of your warmth and precipitation. This is one of the scrapes into which you are ever leading us. You confess your follies, indeed: but

still you hug and cherish them, and no reformation can be hoped where there is no repentance' (TJ to Maria Cosway, 12 October 1786).¹⁰⁸

This discussion illustrates Jefferson's similar way of receiving Epicurus as Horace—that is, by 'working largely within the framework of Epicurus' moral doctrines' and applying them to his own dilemmas and context. Here Jefferson's Epicureanism was a personal matter that he never expressed in his letters afterwards. Indeed, after his time in France during the late 1780s, Jefferson's Epicureanism changed from the love and beauty of *the Head and the Heart* letter to strict materialism and cosmology during his later retirement years. As he aged, Jefferson altered his focus from his private feelings of affection to the fabric of existence itself, as the rest of this chapter will illustrate.¹⁰⁹

Moreover, Jefferson received his ideas of Epicurus' Garden through many different avenues, including modern ones. One such avenue was taken through the contemporary author, Frances Wright in her short didactic book, *A Few Days in Athens*. Jefferson gave the novel high praise, which was quite unusual for him, especially of a novel written by a woman:

miss Wright had before favored me with the 1st edition of her American work: but her 'Few days in Athens' was entirely new, and has been a treat to me of the highest order. the matter and manner of the dialogue is strictly antient; the principles of the sects are beautifully and candidly explained and contrasted; and the scenery and portraiture of the Interlocutors are of higher finish then any thing in that line left us by the antients; and, like Ossian, if not antient, it is equal to the best morsels of antiquity. I auger, from this instance, that Herculaneum is likely to furnish better specimens of modern, than of antient genius; and may we not hope more from the same pen? (TJ to Marquis de Lafayette, 4 November 1823).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 10, 22 June–31 December 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 443–455).

¹⁰⁹ Whether or not the cause of this change was due to his broken heart from Maria Cosway is unknown. But after this letter the two never saw each other again. She ended up in a convent in Italy schooling girls as Jefferson opened his university schooling men.

¹¹⁰ "From Thomas Jefferson to Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert du Motier, marquis de Lafayette, 4 November 1823," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3843>.

Jefferson regarded the book as he would an ancient text due to his perception of its closeness to classical writing. Jefferson read Wright's novel during the last years of his life when he was frequently writing on Epicureanism to Joseph Priestly and John Adams, which will be explored further on in this chapter. As it pertains to this section of Epicurus' Garden, Wright's novel provided a lively engagement into that classical time in an ancient dialogue and 'the principles of the sects are beautifully and candidly explained and contrasted; and the scenery and portraiture of the Interlocutors are of higher finish than any thing in that line left us by the antients'. In short, Wright provided a window into Epicurus' Garden that modern readers did not necessarily have access to. For Jefferson, the novel was as much ancient as modern.

Jefferson's direct Epicureanism when not seen in the garden took place within the realm of cosmology and religion. Exploring these connections will help to solidify Jefferson's identity as an Epicurean, which will further help understand the depth of Jefferson's Epicureanism and how it evolved or manifested itself in his classical taste, of which Epicureanism was at the heart. For Jefferson and the classical Epicureans mentioned in this chapter, nature is matter. If all of nature is matter, then it can be examined, understood and assigned value for the *beatus vir*. Under Jefferson's materialism, 'Utility then, is the standard and test of virtue' (TJ to Thomas Law, 13 June 1814).¹¹¹ This Epicurean line means that there are different ways in which to measure the value of art and architecture beyond merely geometry. Understanding Jefferson's materialist views on nature can help us to better understand the purpose and value that he gave to nature. After all, Jefferson's attitudes toward nature influenced his attitudes on art and architecture, which were classically inspired. For Jefferson, 'moral facts [are] as important as physical ones' (TJ to Richard Rush, 20

¹¹¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 7, 28 November 1813 to 30 September 1814 (Looney, J. 2004: 412–416).

October 1820).¹¹² In other words, value could be found in the material world.¹¹³ Despite differences in natural philosophy between the Stoics and Epicureans, Sir William Temple observed that they all share in the same perspective on morality in the pursuit of happiness. According to Temple in his 1731 *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus*: ‘All concluded that Happiness was the chief Good, and ought to be the ultimate End of Man; that as this was the End of Wisdom, so Wisdom was the Way to Happiness’ (Temple 1731: 173).¹¹⁴ This is Jefferson’s same Epicurean perspective. Contemporary interest in Epicurus’ Garden, such as Temple’s, will here illustrate part of what characterises Jefferson’s Epicureanism. As for materialism, Pierre Gassendi was influential not only for Jefferson, but for early modern Europe.

According to Catherine Wilson, Gassendi’s ‘efforts to reconcile Epicurean natural and moral philosophy with Christian doctrine by expurgating Epicurus’ most characteristic doctrines, his anti-providentialism, his doctrine of the mortality of the human soul, and his many-worlds theory, were ambitious and largely successful’ (Wilson 2008: 3). In contrast to Descartes, Gassendi, contended with the concept of the soul and put forth concepts on the materiality of the Universe.¹¹⁵ Hobbes did the same, arguing that there exists no soul in the *Leviathan*.¹¹⁶ Gassendi’s empiricism would later influence Thomas Hobbes and, as is particularly relevant for Jefferson, John Locke. Jefferson owned a 1669 version of Hobbes’ *elementa philosophica de cive* published by *Apud Danielelem Eizevirium* in Amsterdam. Of Locke, Jefferson owned a 1693 edition of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, London: Printed for A. and J. Churchill; a 1741 of *Some Thoughts on the Conducts of the*

¹¹² “From Thomas Jefferson to Richard Rush, 20 October 1820,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1599>.

¹¹³ See Miller 1988: 91.

¹¹⁴ Sir William Temple, *Upon The Gardens of Epicurus; or of Gardening, in the Year 1685*. Jefferson owned a 1750 edition of Temple’s collected works, which included the *Gardens of Epicurus*.

¹¹⁵ Wilson 2008: 3.

¹¹⁶ Tuck, R., ed. (1996), *Leviathan*, Cambridge.

Understanding in the Search of Truth, London; a 1751 edition of *The Works of John Locke, esq.: in three volumes*, London: Printed for S. Birt, D. Browne, *et al.*; a 1737 *Some Familiar Letters Between Mr. Locke, and Several of His Friends*, London: A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch; a 1790 *A Letter Concerning Toleration*; and a 1748 *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, London.¹¹⁷ Jefferson's thinking on Epicurean materialism was 'stimulated by his familiarity with ancient and modern atomism' (Wilson 2008: 151). And by highlighting certain Epicurean features of Jefferson's contemporaries, we can acquire a better understanding of the context in which Jefferson was thinking and those works that may have captivated his thinking. For example, Epicurus taught that people should not burden themselves with the unknowability of things, for such frustration leads to unhappiness. Locke picked up on this same thought, noting in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that 'These insensible Corpuscles, being the active parts of Matter, and the great Instruments of Nature, on which depend not only all their secondary Qualities, but also most of their natural Operations, our want of precise distinct Ideas of [the] primary Qualities [of rhubarb, hemlock, etc.] keeps us in an incurable Ignorance of what we desire to know about them' (Nidditch 1975: 555-556). William Temple earlier noted that 'Solomon, Socrates, and Marcus Antoninus have all spoken of [...] "the Vanity of all that mortal Man can ever attain to know of Nature, in its Originals or Operations"' (Wilson 2008: 35).

Further in the early modern reception of Epicurus, Descartes argued that God 'is a constrained maximizer of the good' and set a system of goodness for humanity but left them to act as they so choose (Wilson 2008: 265). Descartes also remarked upon the act of loving and its effect on the human condition, a subject that Jefferson handled with great care in his *Head and Heart* letter. Descartes argued that 'love, "however immoderate it may be, gives

¹¹⁷ If, in this list, there are publication information missing, it is because this information is missing in Jefferson's libraries.

pleasure”. As evidence he adds, “[T]hough the poets often complain of it in their verses, I think that men would naturally give up loving if they did not find it more sweet than bitter” (Wilson 2008: 266). At the end of the *Head and Heart* letter, Jefferson’s Epicurean heart wins through the conclusion that loving led to his happiness that will last the rest of his life. Jefferson concluded his letter:

This world abounds indeed with misery: to lighten its burthen we must divide it with one another. [...] Morals were too essential to the happiness of man to be risked on the incertain combinations the head. [...] We have no rose without its thorn. [...] But, when I look back on the pleasures of which it is the consequence, I am conscious they were worth the price I am paying. [...] I should love her forever... (TJ to Maria Cosway, 12 October 1786).

Here Jefferson’s Epicureanism matched with Descartes’. Jefferson owned two works of Descartes, a 1664 *Renati Des-Cartes Principia philosophiae* published by *Amstelodami, apud Ludovicum Elzevirium*, and a 1677 edition *L’Homme de René Descartes, et la formation du fœtus, avec les remarques de Louis de la Forge* published in Paris by Chez Charles Angot. Jefferson’s romantic views on love match the emerging trend in thought on the pursuit of happiness by not ignoring the passions, so long as those passions do not corrupt or contribute to unhappiness. A follower of Descartes, Antoine Le Grande, published his own Epicurean treatise called *The Divine Epicurus, or, The Empire of Pleasure over the Virtues* during 1676 in which he argued that pleasure services the ultimate good, which is in contrast to the contemporary Christian view that man must suffer due to his Original Sin and must live his life in order to be accepted by God. The early modern Epicureans, by contrast, argued that man is by nature good and must live his life trying to preserve and pursue that goodliness. Thus, Horace’s *carpe diem* grew in popular philosophical thought.

Later in England, Lord Shaftsbury argued that love is not only necessary to happiness but is necessary to virtue. ‘The admiration and love of order, harmony and proportion,’ Shaftsbury wrote in *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit*, ‘in whatever kind, is naturally improving to the temper, advantageous to social affection, and highly assistant to virtue,

which is itself no other than the love of order and beauty in society' (Klein 2000: 191). Shaftsbury here linked love and beauty to civic duty, thereby making it a virtue by connecting love to social harmony. According to Wilson, Shaftsbury 'appreciated Lucretius' invocation of "Nurturing Venus, who fills with your presence the ship-bearing sea, beneath the gliding stars of heaven, and the crop-bearing lands" at the start of *On the Nature of Things* (Wilson 2008: 275). Seen through his *Head and Heart* letter, Jefferson's early Epicureanism manifested in ways other than materialism and civic duty. Later in his life, however, his Epicureanism leaned strictly toward the universe and man's place within it.

Jefferson's Epicurean Materialism

This chapter strives to understand whether Jefferson's Epicurean materialism, which helped form the basis of happiness, enabled certain actions and ways of thinking, such as classical taste and architecture. This section investigates how Jefferson adopted Epicurean materialism after 1800 (especially after his retirement in 1809), and how Jefferson used Epicureanism to form his ideas on the soul and the composition of life itself.¹¹⁸ This chapter is further important because Epicurus, Lucretius and Jefferson's ideas on materialism necessarily served ideals on taste because materialism serves the *utile dulci*, *otium* and the *locus amoenus* through their connections to nature, the process of learning (and epistemology), the purposes of living (to find happiness).

Much has been written on Jefferson's ideas on religion/deism, particularly as these ideas relate to the central Epicurean-Lockean line in the *Declaration of Independence*: Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. The leading historians amongst whom this chapter situates its discourse are Garry Wills in his foundational study, *Inventing America*:

¹¹⁸ Mere days before his retirement in March 1809, Jefferson wrote a letter on engaging in science as he entered retirement: 'nature intended me for the tranquill pursuits of science, by rendering them my supreme delight', ("From Thomas Jefferson to Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours, 2 March 1809," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-9936>.)

Jefferson's Declaration of Independence and Matthew Stewart's *Nature's God: The Heretical Origins of the American Republic*. Wills argues that Jefferson's 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' stemmed from the Scottish Enlightenment (e.g., Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, Lord Kames) and earlier English philosophers such as John Locke and Thomas Hobbes. Stewart examines the influence of Epicurus on the American Founders more broadly, funnelled through Wills' British figures. Carl Richard in the *Founders and the Classics* addresses Jefferson's Epicureanism, especially in its relationship with Christianity.¹¹⁹ Richard argues that Jefferson's Epicureanism did not contradict his materialistic Christianity, tying reason to both philosophies. As Jefferson himself stated, and Richard argues, Epicureanism gave Jefferson his cosmology, whereas Jesus gave him morality. Richard focuses on Jefferson's retirement writings on Epicurus, which provide the historian with the greatest amount of evidence on Jefferson's Epicureanism as it pertains to cosmology. This chapter takes these studies one step further by examining the implications of Jefferson's Epicurean phrase and its effects on taste and by delving more deeply into Jefferson's classical sources. In order to do so, the classical sources are examined while also looking sideways to the early modern British and Enlightenment figures who also influenced Jefferson and who were no less Epicurean. Moreover, Richard Matthews, in (1984) *The Radical Politics of Thomas Jefferson*, devotes a few pages to Epicureanism while discussing Epictetus and Jesus, but he overlooks the classical sources themselves.¹²⁰ This chapter hopes to provide a transformative exploration into how the Classics helped shape Jefferson as a thinker and his self-portrait. This is done by examining the classical texts alongside Jefferson's writings.

¹¹⁹ Richard 1995: 187-195.

¹²⁰ Matthews 1984: 91-96. Matthews' source on Epicureanism came from Rist (1972).

Jefferson received his Epicureanism through different avenues. Most, if not all, early modern and modern thinkers received their Epicurean materialism primarily from Lucretius and his single poem in six books, *De Rerum Natura*. Poets and philosophers in the post-classical era, such as Pierre Gassendi and John Locke likewise received their Epicurean materialism from Lucretius (the revival of whose works emerged during the Italian Renaissance) and later Horace, especially Alexander Pope. In *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695), for example, Locke channelled Lucretius' understanding that fear drives believers toward god, not reason: 'Though the works of nature, in every part of them, sufficiently evidence a deity; yet the world made so little use of their reason, that they saw him not, where, even by the impressions of himself, he was easy to be found' (Baker 2001: 275).¹²¹ Further, according to Catherine Wilson, 'Epicureanism's promise to take away the fear of death and the dread of hell was appealing in the face of the ferocity of the clerics and the horrifying Calvinist doctrine of arbitrary election that had infiltrated the Protestant churches. The moral message that pleasure and self-sufficiency were good was simple and congenial, provided it could be purified of the libertinage with which it had been branded' (Wilson 2008: 9). Jefferson acknowledged the aversion to fear as well in a 1787 letter to his nephew, Peter Carr: 'Question with boldness even the existence of a god; because, if there be one, he must more approve the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear' (TJ to Peter Carr 10 August 1787).¹²²

Jefferson educated himself in Lucretius' Epicurean materialism; he owned copies of *De Rerum Natura* from: 1675; 1680; 1712; 1714; 1759; 1773; 1794; and possibly more.¹²³

The editions of Lucretius' *DRN* that Jefferson owned are as follows:

1675: Cantabrigiae: Ex officina Joann. Hayes, Impensis W. Morden, 1675.

¹²¹ See Baker (2001).

¹²² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 12, 7 August 1787–31 March 1788 (Boyd, J. 1955 Princeton: 14–19).

¹²³ Jefferson's book lists, put forth through Monticello, are as of yet incomplete, so it is entirely possible that Jefferson owned more than these seven copies.

1680: Parissis: Apud Federic. Leonard, 1680.

1712: Londini: Sumptibus & typis Jacobi Tonson, MDCCXII.

1714: London: Printed by J. Matthews for G. Sawbridge, at the Three Golden Flower de
Luces in Little Britain... MDCCXV.

1759: Glasguae: in aedibus academicis excudebant Robertus et Andreas Foulis academiae
typographi, 1759.

1773: Birminghamiae: typis Johannis Baskerville, MDCCLXXIII.

1794: Paris: De l'imprimerie de Didot le jeune a Paris: chez Bleuet père., L'an deuxième de la
république.

In addition to Lucretius himself, Jefferson possibly looked to Diogenes Laërtius' section on
Epicurus in his *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* and to Pierre Gassendi's *Syntagma
Philosophiae Epicuri*. Jefferson owned a 1658 copy of Gassendi's *Syntagma*, and this section
uses a 1659 version.¹²⁴

This section begins with Lucretius' Epicurean intentions in *De Rerum Natura* before
comparing it to Jefferson's own versions. Early in *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius referenced
Epicurus and his exalted place in his verse: 'When man's life lay for all to see' wrote
Lucretius in *DRN* I. 62-67, 'foully grovelling upon the ground, crushed beneath the weight of
Superstition, which displayed her head from the regions of heaven, lowering over mortals
with horrible aspect, a man of Greece was the first that dared to uplift mortal eyes against her,
the first to make a stand against her' (Henderson 1992: 7-9).¹²⁵ Lucretius referenced the
Graius homo, Epicurus, as the premier Greek to condemn the tyranny of religion and,
therefore, fear. Lucretius set his Epicurean cosmology against religiosity because Epicurus

¹²⁴ This section only uses copies of the classical texts that Jefferson either owned/read himself, or ones that
came from his era. This choice was made because both translations and the original texts themselves changed
and developed as the centuries progressed.

¹²⁵ *DRN* I. 62-67: *Humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret in terris oppressa gravi sub religione quae caput a
caeli regionibus ostendebat horribili super aspect mortalibus instans, primum Graius homo mortalis tollere
contra est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra* (Henderson 1992: 7-9).

decried the vices of mystical religion early in western history and was amongst the few Hellenistic Greeks to do so. A cosmological question that classical Epicureans sought to answer took the following form: What if the explanation for natural phenomena does not stem from superstition, but can be explained atomically; and what does this knowledge do for us morally and intellectually? The purpose of such knowledge is to achieve happiness. For Epicurus, blind faith in the gods' direct influence on natural phenomena led to perpetual fear of the gods and their capricious wielding of power. Epicurus taught that living in fear and pain (irrational ways of living) led to unhappiness. As a result, Epicurus designed his Garden School as a place in which to attain happiness through learning. The snake in Epicurus' Garden took the form of ignorance. Epicurus could help grow enlightened, and thus happy, citizens if he could cure his pupils of ignorance on the nature of things. Thomas Jefferson likewise placed Epicurus as the prime Greek philosopher on how to live happily. Jefferson, like Lucretius, shared Epicurus' religious scepticism, in particular as it related to cosmology and morality. If one were to live in constant fear of the gods, then happiness is unattainable.

During 1799, Jefferson systematised his version of the Epicurean philosophy in his 'Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus':

'Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus

- The Universe eternal
it's parts great & small inter-changeable
- Matter & Void alone
Motion inherent in matter, weighty & declining
eternal circulation of elements of bodies
 - Gods, neither creators nor preservers of the universe
 - Happiness the aim life
 - Virtue the foundn of happiness.
 - Utility the test of virtue
- Pleasure active & indolent
indolent is the absence of pain, the true felicity
- active, consists in agreeable motion & is not happiness but the means to produce it. thus the absence of hunger is an article of felicity. eating the means to obtain it.
- Summum bonum is to be not pained in body nor troubled in mind.
i.e. in-dolence of body, tranquility of mind.

- to procure tranquility of mind we must avoid desire & fear the two principal diseases of the mind.
- Man is a free-agent.

Virtue consists in 1. Prudence 2. Temperance,
 3. Fortitude 4. Justice

which are opposed to 1. Folly 2. Desire
 3. Fear 4. Deceit'

(TJ, 'Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus,' 1799).¹²⁶

Even though Jefferson expressed his Epicureanism well-before his retirement in 1809, after this date his expressions became more explicit, more frequent and more impassioned, not least because of the attacks on his deism/alleged atheism while in office. These 'Notes' are mere snippets into Jefferson's Epicureanism, and this section aims to show how his Epicurean philosophy of life solidified into a comprehensive philosophy. Jefferson's nineteenth-century quest to sort out his ontology/religious beliefs was born out of his frustrations over Christianity's stronghold on the American mind: 'for I have sworn upon the altar of god,' Jefferson wrote to Benjamin Rush from Monticello during 1800, 'eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man' (TJ to Benjamin Rush, 23 September 1800).¹²⁷ In this same autumnal letter, Jefferson expressed his frustrations with the American print media through Horace's verse. 'I have a view of the subject [Christianity] which ought to displease neither the rational Christian or Deist,' Jefferson began, 'I do not know however that it would reconcile the *genus irritabile vatum*, who are all in arms against me. their hostility is on too interesting ground to be softened' (TJ to Benjamin Rush, 23 September 1800).¹²⁸

¹²⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 31, 1 February 1799–31 May 1800 (Oberg 2004: 284–285).

¹²⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 32, 1 June 1800–16 February 1801 (Oberg, B, 2005: 166–169).

¹²⁸ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 32, 1 June 1800–16 February 1801 (Oberg, B, 2005: 166–169). The Latin comes from Horace, *Epistulae* II.2.102. The Latin comes from Horace, *Epistles* 2.2.102 in which he wrote: 'Much do I endure, to soothe the fretful tribe of bards, so long as I am scribbling, and humbly suing for public favour' (Henderson 1929: 433).

How Jefferson Reconciled Epicureanism with God

John Locke reconciled his Epicureanism with God by acknowledging that there exists ‘unsensed incorporeal things outside the realm of practical, efficacious human knowledge,’ according to Wilson (Wilson 2008: 154). Locke referenced the existence of incorporeal things as ‘incogitative Matter’ and by ‘acknowledging an eternal, cogitative, incorporeal being—God—Locke was able to construct a system that in fact privileged matter, absolutely requiring it as an explanatory principle. He could now sketch a conception of scientific and moral knowledge based on Epicurean-Gassendist premises, corresponding to what he took to be the actual practice of his most admired contemporaries’ (Wilson 2008: 154). Like Locke before him, Jefferson believed in God, though his beliefs changed. It is, therefore, difficult to pin down Jefferson’s one religious belief, as it changed. His Epicureanism, however, did reconcile with his belief in God. While in his uncertainty, Jefferson reverted to the unknowingness of all things in the Universe. In an 1801 letter, Jefferson remarked that ‘the laws of nature have withheld [*sic*] from us the means of physical knowlege [*sic*] of the country of spirits and revelation has, for reasons unknown to us, chosen to leave us in the dark as we were. [...] I have thought it better, by nourishing the good passions, & controuling the bad, to merit an inheritance in a state of being of which I can know so little, and to trust for the future to him who has been so good for the past’ (TJ to Isaac Story, 5 December 1801).¹²⁹ This is a reconciliation between Epicureanism and Jefferson’s deist beliefs: that trying to understand God is impossible and only causes unhappiness in the never-ending attempt. After all, as Gassendi noted in *Three Discourses of Happiness, Virtue and Liberty*: ‘Mankind having a natural Inclination to be happy, the main bent and design of all his Actions and Endeavours tend chiefly that way. It is therefore an undeniable Truth, that Happiness, or a Life free from Pain and Misery’ (Wilson 2008: 255). Jefferson accepted his ignorance on the nature of God

¹²⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 36, 1 December 1801–3 March 1802 (Oberg, B. 2009: 30).

and Locke's 'incognitative Matter'. In an 1823 letter to John Adams, furthermore, Jefferson recognised the Epicurean materialism seen in Lucretius, but reckoned this with the notion of cause and effect. Jefferson wrote:

I hold (without appeal to revelation) that when we take a view of the Universe, in it's [sic] parts general or particular, it is impossible for the human mind not to percieve [sic] and feel a conviction of design, consummate skill, and indefinite power in every atom of it's [sic] composition. the movements of the heavenly bodies, so exactly held in their course by the balance of centrifugal and centripetal forces, the structure of our earth itself, with it's [sic] distribution of lands, waters and atmosphere, animal and vegetable bodies, examined in all their minutest particles, insects mere atoms of life, yet as perfectly organised as man or mammoth, the mineral substances, their generation and uses (TJ to John Adams, 10 March 1823).¹³⁰

Jefferson then went on to characterise a 'fabricator of all things' and that there are 'evident proofs of the necessity of a superintending power to maintain the Universe in it's [sic] course and order'. In other words, Jefferson regarded the Universe as Lucretius did—that is, as a series of material occurrences forever in motion, but there must have been a facilitator and preserver of this motion. In this passage, Jefferson did not see God as Calvin did or as a being like humans, but as an entity that is unknowable, not benevolent, or malevolent, but neutral. Jefferson regarded God as intelligent Himself, but 'Of the nature of this being we know nothing' (TJ to John Adams 10 March 1823). Jefferson was not a Christian, as he rejected the divinity of Jesus and all the miracles set in the Bible, including Original Sin. This is another way that Jefferson applied his Epicureanism to God—by rejecting the impossibilities that Christianity relied upon. Jefferson believed that God operated under the laws of the Universe, *i.e.*, nature.

As it pertains to Christianity, during late March 1801, Jefferson wrote to Dr Joseph Priestley from the President's House in Washington, D.C. on the Christian community's ill-treatment of Priestley's writings in the United States. Provoked by the criticism surrounding

¹³⁰ "From Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 11 April 1823," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3446>.

Priestley, Jefferson characterised Christianity as the ‘most perverted system that ever shone on man’ (TJ to Joseph Priestley, 21 March 1801).¹³¹ Having entered office nearly two weeks earlier as successor to his fellow materialist John Adams, President Jefferson welcomed Priestley, (whom England exiled five years earlier for his radical views on Christianity), to the new Republic:

[It] is with heartfelt satisfaction that, in the first moment of my public action, I can hail you with welcome to our land, tender to you the homage of it’s respect & esteem, cover you under the protection of those laws which were made for the wise & the good like you, and disclaim the legitimacy of that libel on legislation which under the form of a law was for sometime placed among them (TJ to Joseph Priestley, 21 March 1801).¹³²

Jefferson regarded Priestley’s entrance into the United States as further evidence of modernity; this new, enlightened immigrant legitimised the United States’ prime role in developing it. As President of the first modern nation, Jefferson welcomed Priestley and his radicalism with an open mind. Unlike England, Jefferson envisioned America as the intellectual Garden of Eden.¹³³ Moreover, Jefferson saw Priestley’s enlightened deism—knowledge—as the Lucretian remedy to the ‘ignorance [of Europe, which] put every thing into the hands of power & priestcraft’. With Priestley now an American, (in spirit if not in legal citizenship), modernity *was* America: ‘we can no longer say there is nothing new under the sun. for this whole chapter in the history of man is new. the great extent of our republic is new’ (TJ to Priestley, 21 March 1801).¹³⁴ With the American experiment, Priestley’s deism and Jefferson’s growing Epicureanism combined as the key to modernity.

Importantly, both Jefferson and Priestley regarded the Jefferson Administration as the promulgators of modernity, versus the Adams Administration. In this same letter to Priestley,

¹³¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 33, 17 February–30 April 1801 (Oberg, B. 2006: 393–395).

¹³² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 33, 17 February–30 April 1801 (Oberg, B. 2006: 393–395).

¹³³ Upon his entry into the United States, Priestley received criticism for his radical Unitarianism, to which Jefferson referred in this letter. In response, however, Priestley noted that he received ‘much worse treatment to which I was for many years exposed in England’ (*The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 33, 17 February–30 April 1801 (Oberg, B. 2006: 567–568).

¹³⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 33, 17 February–30 April 1801 (Oberg, B. 2006: 393–395).

Jefferson condemned former President Adams for his backwardly praise of pre-modern (including Puritan) learning. Addressed to the Young Men of Philadelphia in 1798, President Adams claimed: ‘you all will find no principles, institutions, or systems of education more fit, in general, to be transmitted to your posterity, than those you have received from your ancestors’ (John Adams to the Young Men of Philadelphia, 7 May 1798).¹³⁵ Jefferson, on the other hand, preferred America’s youth to abandon the shackles of pre-modern knowledge acquisition, which, importantly, did not mean abandoning classical learning. Jefferson would later create his own university with control of how and why students learned, which will be the topic of the final chapter of this thesis. During 1801, President Jefferson wrote to Priestley criticising Adams for his damaging words three years previous:

the President [Adams] himself declaring in one of his answers to addresses that we were never to expect to go beyond them [ancestors] in real science. this was the real ground of all the attacks on you: those who live by mystery & charlatanerie, fearing you would render them useless by simplifying the Christian philosophy (TJ to Priestley 21 March 1801).¹³⁶

For Jefferson, merely relying on antiquated authority (which implied Church authority), without thinking with the tools of reason and self-guided, self-sought education led to a relapse into Gothic darkness. In his reply, Priestley characterised Adams’ actions as president (in which he sought to suppress Priestley under the Alien and Sedition Acts on suspicion of French espionage) as the ‘extreme absurdity and violence of the late administration’ (Priestley to Jefferson, 10 April 1801).¹³⁷ Much to his intellectual disgust, Jefferson saw Adams’ address and his attempts to undermine the First Amendment as undoing the efforts of transitioning the American—republican—experiment into modernity. For Jefferson, Adams mistakenly equated simple Christianity (deism) with heresy; Jefferson on the other hand

¹³⁵ “From John Adams to Pa., Young Men of Philadelphia, 7 May 1798,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-2450>.

¹³⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 33, 17 February–30 April 1801 (Oberg, B. 2006: 393–395).

¹³⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 33, 17 February–30 April 1801 (Oberg, B. 2006: 567–568).

regarded simple Christianity as pure, natural and truly republican.¹³⁸ He likewise expressed similar sentiments again in Horace's Latin verse to John Dickinson during July, referencing Horace's *Odes* 3.3: '*civium ardor prava jubentium, Nec vultus instantis tyranni mente quatit solida*' (TJ to letter to John Dickinson, 23 July 1803).¹³⁹ Even though Jefferson here wrote on the division of politics within government, the sentiment nonetheless relates to his contemporaneous concerns on the religious division amongst offended Americans during his presidency.

During the next year, March and April 1802, seven years before his retirement, President Jefferson requested a Latin edition of Lucretius and a French edition of Pierre Gassendi's seventeenth-century *Syntagma Philosophiae Epicuri*.¹⁴⁰ Dufief later sent Jefferson copies in 1803.¹⁴¹ Upon receiving Dufief's copy of Gassendi's *Syntagma*, Jefferson wrote to Priestley that same spring of 1803 on the 'moral doctrines of the most remarkable of the ancient philosophers,' which included Epicurus (TJ to Joseph Priestly, 9 April 1803).¹⁴² After receiving Priestley's *Socrates and Jesus Compared*, Jefferson described his intentions to write a comprehensive overview himself on the classical philosophers, Greek and Roman alike, compared with Judeo-Christian theology. After analysing classical moral philosophies, Jefferson intended to highlight Judaism before expanding upon the philosophy of Jesus. Jefferson accepted Judaism's 'principles of pure deism [and] their moral doctrines to the standard of reason, justice, & philanthropy' (TJ to Priestley, 9 April 1803).¹⁴³ In so doing, Jefferson sought to clear his Christology of immaterialism/spiritualism. After outlining his

¹³⁸ A decade later, Jefferson and Adams reunited their friendship and forgave their unfriendly sins. In their retirements, the former presidents delighted in Epicurean discourse until their timely deaths on Independence Day, 1826.

¹³⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 34, 1 May–31 July 1801 (Oberg, B. 2007: 616–617). The line translates as: 'the man of integrity who holds fast to his purpose is not shaken from his firm resolve by hot-headed citizens urging him to do wrong, or by the frown of an oppressive despot' (Rudd 2004: 146–147).

¹⁴⁰ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 37, 4 March–30 June 1802 (Oberg, B. 2010: 113–115).

¹⁴¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 39, 13 November 1802–3 March 1803 (Oberg, B. 2012: 511–513).

¹⁴² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 40, 4 March–10 July 1803 (Oberg, B. 2013: 157–159).

¹⁴³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 40, 4 March–10 July 1803 (Oberg, B. 2013: 157–159).

proposed book, however, Jefferson succumbed to the demands of political office and noted that the idea ‘will therefore rest with me in contemplation only.’ Nevertheless, these pivotal years of the early nineteenth century illustrate Jefferson’s increased readings on Epicureanism and deism, which he read simultaneously. As his political career came to a close in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Jefferson turned from legislation and policy to ontology and cosmology.

Thirteen days after his letter to Priestley, Jefferson included his outline (described to Priestley) in an enclosure to Doctor Benjamin Rush called the ‘Doctrines of Jesus Compared with Others.’ Jefferson confessed to the Edinburgh-educated doctor: ‘I am a Christian, in the only sense in which he [Jesus] wished any one to be; sincerely attached to his doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to himself every human excellence, & believing he never claimed any other’ (TJ to Benjamin Rush, 21 April 1803).¹⁴⁴ Priestley inspired Jefferson to write his ‘Doctrines of Jesus Compared with Others,’ as he himself noted to Rush, through his *Socrates and Jesus Compared*.¹⁴⁵ In the enclosure, Jefferson affirmed the ancients’—namely the Stoics and Epicureans’—‘government of those passions which, unrestrained, would disturb our tranquillity of mind’ (TJ enclosure to Rush, 21 April 1803).¹⁴⁶ In his later University of Virginia, Jefferson decreed that there would be no university church or the subject of Religion.

Jefferson summarised the Epicurean tenet that the ‘Summum bonum’ of life is found in ‘tranquillity of mind,’ which he laid out in his 1799 ‘Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus.’ Judaism, Jefferson further outlined, affirmed his deistic principles, but characterised God too

¹⁴⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 40, 4 March–10 July 1803 (Oberg, B. 2013: 251–253).

¹⁴⁵ Jefferson wrote: ‘in the moment of my late departure from Monticello, I recieved from Doctr. Priestly his little treatise of ‘Socrates & Jesus compared.’ this being a section of the general view I had taken of the field, it became a subject of reflection, while on the road, and unoccupied otherwise. the result was, to arrange in my mind a Syllabus, or Outline, of such an Estimate of the comparative merits of Christianity, as I wished to see executed, by some one of more leisure and information for the task than myself’ (*The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 40, 4 March–10 July 1803 (Oberg, B. 2013: 251–253).

¹⁴⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 40, 4 March–10 July 1803 (Oberg, B. 2013: 251–253).

harshly. Jesus' 'natural endowments,' on the other hand, were 'great, his life correct & innocent; he was meek, benevolent, patient, firm, disinterested, & of the sublimest eloquence' (TJ enclosure to Rush, 21 April 1803).¹⁴⁷ Jefferson regarded Jesus' late antique, medieval and early modern receptions and treatments as the great tragedy of Jesus' philosophical legacy. Twisted and manipulated into power and priestcraft, Jefferson sought to revive Jesus' teachings to their first-century origins. By January 1804, Jefferson began his Bible collage 'with a design to cut out the morsels of morality, and paste them on the leaves of a book, in the manner you describe as having been pursued in forming your Harmony' (TJ to Priestley, 29 January 1804).¹⁴⁸ Priestley died a week after this letter; he never had the opportunity to reply to Jefferson's final letter with his learned seal of approval. Nevertheless, Jefferson persisted.

Four years into Jefferson's retirement, his years of heated political rivalry with Adams finally dissipated, and the former presidents reignited their friendship through Priestley's memory and Epicurean discourse on cosmology. Before his death, Priestley published his *Doctrines of Heathen Philosophy* in 1804, which Adams summarised to Jefferson in an 1813 letter, two years after their reunion in 1811.¹⁴⁹ 'I Send you this extract for several reasons,' Adams wrote Jefferson, '1st because you Sett him [Priestley] upon this work. 2dly because I wish you to endeavour to bring it to light and get it printed. 3ly Because I wish it may Stimulate you, to pursue your own plan which you promised to Dr Rush'—that is, the plan

¹⁴⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 40, 4 March–10 July 1803 (Oberg, B. 2013: 251–253).

¹⁴⁸ Jefferson also wrote to Nicolas Gouin Dufief, 20 January 1804: 'I am desirous to obtain two copies of the New testament in Greek or Greek & Latin, both of the same edition exactly; and two others in English, both also of the same edition; and all four of the same format, that they may admit being bound up together. the format to be either 8vo. or 12mo. but the latter of preference. will you be so good as to endeavor to procure these for me? Accept my salutations and best wishes' *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 42, 16 November 1803–10 March 1804 (McClure, J. 2016: 320).

¹⁴⁹ In 1813, Adams cried over Priestley: 'I regret; oh how, I lament, that he did not live, to publish this Work! It must exist in Manuscript', *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813 (Looney, J. 2009: 317–319). Little did Adams know, however, that Priestley published the *Doctrines* nine years earlier, which helps to illustrate Adams' newness to the topic. Jefferson, of course, was already familiar with the *Doctrines*.

Jefferson promised ten years earlier (Adams to TJ, 9 August 1813).¹⁵⁰ During July 1813, Adams regretted his actions toward Priestley a decade earlier; and as a retiree, his attitude toward Priestley's religious views evolved toward Jefferson's Epicurean ways of thinking. Without Priestley from whom to learn, Adams turned toward his premier American authority on Epicurean deism, Thomas Jefferson:

One is, learned and Scientific Sir! you have written largely about matter and Spirit, and have concluded, there is no human Soul. Will you please to inform me, what matter is? and what Spirit is? Unless We know the meaning of Words, We cannot reason in, or about Words (Adams to TJ, 22 July 1813).¹⁵¹

Thus began Jefferson and Adams' decade-long inquiry into the order of nature and its implications for happiness.

At the urging of Adams, Jefferson began his ontological quest during 1814 to reduce Plato out the western canon of moral philosophy. Where Priestley compared Jesus to Socrates, Jefferson criticised Plato himself. Jefferson's anti-Platonism served more clearly to illustrate his acceptance of Epicureanism. Jefferson began with 'reading seriously Plato's republic', he wrote to Adams in July, and characterised his reading as 'the heaviest task-work I ever went through' (TJ to Adams, 5 July 1814).¹⁵² Jefferson continued that Plato's 'foggy mind, is for ever presenting the semblances of objects which, half seen thro' a mist, can be defined neither in form or dimension.' For Jefferson, Plato's philosophies consisted of mere jargon and rhetorical flourish; Plato lacked the moral substance of the first-century AD Jesus and the materialist substance of the Epicureans.¹⁵³ Plato in Book V of the *Republic*, for

¹⁵⁰ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813 (Looney, J. 2009: 367–368).

¹⁵¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813 (Looney, J. 2009: 317–319).

¹⁵² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 7, 28 November 1813 to 30 September 1814 (Looney, J. 2010: 451–455).

¹⁵³ In *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 9.7.40, Diogenes Laërtius observed that 'Aristoxenus in his *Historical Notes* affirms that Plato wished to burn all the writings of Democritus that he could collect...', because of Democritus' foundational idea that the composition of the Universe consisted of atoms (Hicks 1972: Online access: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0258%3Abook%3D9>).

example, suggested that the ideas of things existed separately from the things themselves, such as the abstract idea of beauty versus a beautiful object (Plato, *Republic*, 226). That such ideas as beauty, or any other abstract concept, ‘roll some how between existence and non-existence,’ wrote Jefferson, was absurd. The Epicureans, on the other hand, argued that ideas were material substances, which existed within the body, and so could not exist separately in a mysterious realm separate from physical reality. Jefferson argued for the physicality of materials and the attainability of their ‘essences’ through sensory reception. Lucretius argued likewise in *DRN* 4.520-521: ‘So therefore your reasoning about things must be warped and false whenever it is based upon false senses’ (Henderson 1992: 317).¹⁵⁴ For Jefferson the materialist, one could understand reality only through the senses, not through spiritual, Platonic-Christian and passive receptions. Lucretius further poeticised in *DRN* 1.215-16 and 262-64:

Add to this that nature resolves everything again into its elements, and does not reduce things to nothing.

[...]

Therefore no visible object utterly passes away, since nature makes up again one thing from another, and does not permit anything to be born unless aided by another’s death (Henderson 1992: 20-23).¹⁵⁵

Jefferson likewise remarked that ‘The dead are not even things. The particles of matter which composed their bodies, make part now of the bodies of other animals, vegetables, or minerals, of a thousand forms’ (Jefferson to Maj. J. Cartwright, 5 June 1824).¹⁵⁶

For Jefferson, reality was not thought-of, but experienced. Such Platonic thinking dangerously led, for Jefferson, to corruption of power and thought:

the Christian priesthood, finding the doctrines of Christ levelled to every understanding, and too plain to need explanation, saw, in the mysticisms of Plato,

¹⁵⁴ *DRN* 4.520-21: *sic igitur ratio tibi rerum prava necessest falsaque sit, falsis quaecumque ab sensibus ortast* (Henderson 1992: 316).

¹⁵⁵ *DRN* 1.215-216: *Huc accredit uti quidque in sua corpora rursum dissoluat natura neque ad nilum interemat res. DRN* 1.262-264: *haud igitur penitus pereunt quaecumque videntur, quando alid ex alio reficit natura, nec ullam rem gigni patitur nisi morte adiuta aliena.*

¹⁵⁶ “From Thomas Jefferson to John Cartwright, 5 June 1824,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-4313>.

materials with which they might build up an artificial system which might, from its indistinctness, admit everlasting controversy, give employment for their order, and introduce it to profit, power & pre-eminence (TJ to Adams, 5 July 1814).¹⁵⁷

The corruptions of Jesus' teachings by Christian leaders, Jefferson argued, stemmed directly from Plato's 'sophisms, futilities, & incomprehensibilities.' Plato muddled cosmology and ontology in order to leave room for the rein of supposed Philosopher Kings. Meanwhile, Christians muddled the doctrines of Jesus with Platonism in order to leave room for the corruption of kings and popery. Locke observed similarly in *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695):

Sense and lust blinded their minds in some, and a careless inadvertency in others, and fearful apprehensions in most, (who either believed there were, or could not but suspect there might be, superiour unknown beings,) gave them into the hands of their priests, to fill their heads with false notions of the Deity, and their worship with foolish rites, as they pleased: and what dread or craft once began, devotion soon made sacred, and religion immutable. In this state of darkness and ignorance of the true God, vice and superstition held the world (Locke, 1824).¹⁵⁸

Locke's reference to darkness echoes Lucretius in *DRN* 4.337: *E tenebris autem quae sunt in luce tuemur* (Henderson 1992: 302).¹⁵⁹ Unlike Plato's impenetrable jargon, Jesus simplified his philosophy so that a child could understand his principles. The Christian canon, however, generated 'thousands of volumes' which 'have not yet explained the Platonisms engrafted on them: and for this obvious reason that nonsense can never be explained. their purposes however are answered' (TJ to John Adams, 5 July 1814).¹⁶⁰ Written in response to Jefferson, Adams' answer to Plato's peculiar place in western thought lay in government. For Adams, never before had the science of politics and government been studied as 'in the latter part of the last Century and the beginning of this, more than at any former Period' (Adams to

¹⁵⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 7, 28 November 1813 to 30 September 1814 (Looney, J. 2010: 451–455).

¹⁵⁸ Jefferson owned a 1751 edition of Locke's *The Reasonableness of Christianity in The Works of John Lock Esq in Three Volumes...*, which he then sold to the Library of Congress in 1815 (Sowerby, E.M. 1952-1959, *Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson* vol. V, no. 30).

¹⁵⁹ The line translates as: 'Again we see out of the dark what is in the light' (Henderson 1992: 303).

¹⁶⁰ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 7, 28 November 1813 to 30 September 1814 (Looney, J. 2010: 451–455).

Jefferson, 16 July 1814).¹⁶¹ The constitution-making of the United States, France, and South America naturally evolved into improvements in republican government, which led to improvement in scientific and philosophical thought, as Jefferson argued further in his retirement. As a result, Plato's place in government was ill-fated.

In contrast to Plato's (irrational) cosmological system, Jefferson sought enlightenment in Epicurus' system. Jefferson's reflections on Plato led to acceptance and affirmation of Epicurus. Two years later during 1816 and well into his retirement, Jefferson observed to Charles Thomson (former Secretary to the Continental Congress during the Revolution) that Epicurus' philosophy was 'the most rational system remaining of the philosophy of the ancients' (TJ to Charles Thomson, 9 January 1816).¹⁶² Twelve days later, Jefferson copied the Epicurean credo to the Maine educator, Amos Cook: 'And if the Wise, be the happy man, as these sages say, he must be virtuous too; for, without virtue, happiness cannot be' (TJ to Amos Cook, 21 January 1816).¹⁶³ As the years progressed to the close of the 1810s, Jefferson's Epicureanism progressed as well, and he lamented not pursuing the hard sciences in his youth: 'the truth is that I have been drawn by the history of the times from Physical & mathematical sciences, which were my passion, to those of politics & government towards which I had naturally no inclination' (TJ to Caspar Wistar, 10 June 1817).¹⁶⁴ Although Jefferson's academic pursuit into cosmology stifled due to the Revolution and its aftermath, he nevertheless held fast trying to understand it in discourse.

Two years later during 1819 (two months earlier the University of Virginia had opened), Jefferson expressed his learnedness as well: 'I was a hard student until I entered on

¹⁶¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 7, 28 November 1813 to 30 September 1814 (Looney, J. 2010: 476–482).

¹⁶² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 9, September 1815 to April 1816 (Looney, J. 2012: 340–342).

¹⁶³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 9, September 1815 to April 1816 (Looney, J. 2012: 374–375).

¹⁶⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 11, 19 January to 31 August 1817 (Looney, J. 2014: 426–427).

the business of life, the duties of which leave no idle time to those disposed to fulfill [sic] them; & now, retired, and at the age of 76. I am again in a hard student' (TJ to Vine Utley, 21 March 1819).¹⁶⁵ Later that year, Jefferson engaged in Epicurean dialogue with his adoptive son, William Short, throughout his declining years. Without a son of his own, Jefferson bequeathed his philosophy of life upon Short. Under Jefferson's educational and fatherly influence, Short wrote the following letter to Jefferson during October 1819, quoting Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

This growing indolence (which I know I am wrong to indulge & yet continue to do so—"video meliora, pejora sequor") has made me give up by degrees my daily exercise on horseback—I have so far adopted the principles of Epicurus, (who, after all I am inclined to believe was the wisest of all the ancient Philosophers, as he is certainly the least understood & the most calumniated among them) as to consult my ease towards the attainment of happiness in this poor world, poor even in making the best of it (Short to Jefferson, 21 October 1819).¹⁶⁶

As Jefferson's protégé, Short chose Epicurus as the ancient philosopher to lead him 'towards the attainment of happiness' with Jefferson as his Dantean Virgil, as it were. Ten days after Short's letter to Jefferson, the elderly Founder explicitly stated his Epicureanism in response: 'As you say of yourself, I too am an Epicurean. I consider the genuine (not the imputed) doctrines of Epicurus as containing every thing rational in moral philosophy which Greece & Rome have left us' (TJ to William Short, 31 October 1819).¹⁶⁷ For Jefferson, the Stoics mischaracterised Epicurus, and Cicero especially foolishly followed Plato's 'sophisms', much to Jefferson's disappointment.¹⁶⁸ Likewise, Christians foolishly adopted Plato as the precursor to Jesus and as the philosophical justification for the establishment of their bad religion. The adoption of Plato into Christianity adulterated Jesus' doctrines, which left open

¹⁶⁵ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 14, 1 February to 31 August 1819 (Looney, J. 2017: 156–158).

¹⁶⁶ "To Thomas Jefferson from William Short, 21 October 1819," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-0834>.

¹⁶⁷ "From Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 31 October 1819," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-0850>.

¹⁶⁸ According to Gilbert Highet in *Poets in a Landscape*, Cicero encouraged Memmius to not sell Epicurus' school for the sake of history (Highet 1957: 24).

the possibility of moral corruption. Cicero's 'prototype Plato,' Jefferson replied, 'eloquent as himself, dealing out mysticisms incomprehensible to the human mind, has been deified by certain sects usurping the name of Christians' (TJ to William Short, 31 October 1819).¹⁶⁹ Plato's impenetrable language left open the opportunity for fabrication, 'these they fathered blasphemously on him whom they claimed as their founder, but who would disclaim them with the indignation which their caricatures of his religion so justly excite' (TJ to William Short, 31 October 1819).¹⁷⁰ Although Jefferson's Epicurean deism can be seen in his epistolary materials, he did intend to compose his thoughts into a comprehensive text, but only reached so far as compiling Jesus' teachings from the New Testament. Writing to Short in this same letter of 31 October 1819, Jefferson mused:

I have sometimes thought of translating Epictetus (for he has never been tolerably translated into English) of adding the genuine doctrines of Epicurus from the Syntagma of Gassendi, and an Abstract from the Evangelists of whatever has the stamp of the eloquence and fine imagination of Jesus (TJ to Short, 31 October 1819).¹⁷¹

Even though Jefferson never publicly published his amalgamation of Epicurus and Jesus, he nevertheless wanted to, which serves to illustrate the importance of this philosophy on the drafter of the *Declaration of Independence*. With 'one foot in the grave', however, Jefferson instead devoted his declining years to 'the delights of classical reading' rather than writing (TJ to Short, 31 October 1819).¹⁷²

By December, Short heartily encouraged Jefferson to make his Epicurean deism public, suggesting Jefferson publish *The Life and Morals of Jesus*, which Jefferson began as President in 1804, the same year as Priestley's *Doctrines of Heathen Philosophy* and the year

¹⁶⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 15, 1 September 1819 to 31 May 1820 (Looney, J. J. 2018: 162–165).

¹⁷⁰ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 15, 1 September 1819 to 31 May 1820 (Looney, J. J. 2018: 162–165).

¹⁷¹ "From Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 31 October 1819," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-0850>.

¹⁷² "From Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 31 October 1819," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-0850>.

after Jefferson composed his ‘Doctrines of Jesus Compared with Others.’ After all, Jefferson influenced Short on ‘the great & virtuous Philosopher’ Epicurus to such an extent that Short adopted Jefferson’s systematised Epicureanism as the ‘torch to guide me in this labyrinth & would make me more willing to enter it’ (Short to Jefferson. 1 December 1819).¹⁷³ Short at least believed that Jefferson’s ‘penetrating & able research into the whole system of Epicurus, & exhibited in your usual lucid & simple manner’ was worth publishing, which Jefferson took into consideration. After all, Jefferson as Founder concerned himself with the education of America’s youth as the next generation of leaders.¹⁷⁴ To prevent false knowledge and adherence to superficial authority, Jefferson looked to education. In the same letters on the vices of Plato that he exchanged with Adams during 1814, Jefferson hoped for the next generation to engage in active learning, the generation to which Short belonged:

Our post-revolutionary youth are born under happier stars than you and I were. they acquire all learning in their mothers’ womb, and bring it into the world ready-made. the information of books is no longer necessary; and all knolege [sic] which is not innate, is in contempt, or neglect at least. every folly must run it’s round; and so, I suppose, must that of self-learning, & self sufficiency; of rejecting the knolege [sic] acquired in past ages, and starting on the new ground of intuition (TJ to Adams, 5 July 1814).¹⁷⁵

For Jefferson, the post-revolutionary generation acquired learning through their position as Americans, as the natural inheritors of liberty. By virtue of their American status, all subsequent generations after the Revolution acquired knowledge through their selfhood. Jefferson did not agree that ‘the knolege [sic] acquired in past ages’ should be set upon the

¹⁷³ “To Thomas Jefferson from William Short, 1 December 1819,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-0928>.

¹⁷⁴ Such sentiment naturally led Jefferson to establish the University of Virginia in 1819, though he conducted plans much earlier in 1800: ‘We wish to establish in the upper & healthier country, & more centrally for the state an University on a plan so broad & liberal & *modern*, as to be worth patronizing with the public support, and be a temptation to the youth of other states to come, and drink of the cup of knowledge & fraternize with us’ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 31, 1 February 1799–31 May 1800 (Oberg, B. 2004: 319–323). The last chapter of this thesis will explore the University with greater depth.

¹⁷⁵ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 7, 28 November 1813 to 30 September 1814 (Looney, J. 2010: 451–455).

minds of young Americans. Rather, he believed that the act of learning was natural ‘in their mothers’ womb,’ not knowledge itself, which distinguished Americans from their ancestors.

As an Epicurean and reader of Lucretius, furthermore, Jefferson understood that enquiry into self-attained knowledge and ‘the particular sciences of real use in human affairs,’ such as cosmology, naturally led to happiness. According to Lucretius as well, understanding the ordering of the cosmos safeguarded the Epicurean from fear and ignorance, and thus the reliance on superficial authority. ‘This terror of mind therefore and this gloom,’ wrote Lucretius in *DRN* 1.146-148, ‘must be dispelled, not by the sun’s rays or the bright shafts of day, but by the aspect and law of nature’ (Henderson 1992: 15).¹⁷⁶ For Jefferson, knowledge of life led to good government because self-sufficiency in both education and economy naturally bred republican citizens. The alleged unknowability of nature/God and Plato’s impenetrable prose placed man in fear and darkness, receiving Jesus’ doctrine and nature ‘as if dropped from the moon.’ For the Epicureans, happiness can only be attained in the absence of fear and darkness, as Lucretius wrote in the passage quoted above. Epicurus wrote similarly in his letter to Menoeceus: ‘Hence a correct comprehension of the fact that death means nothing to us makes the mortal aspect of life pleasurable, not by conferring on us a boundless period of time but by removing the yearning for deathlessness’ (Strodach 2012: 156). For the Epicureans, explaining the *clara lumina* of the universe reveals the true path to happiness. As a result, the individual no longer lives in melancholy for not understanding how to live happily. Once the Epicureans could observe themselves within the ordering of the cosmos, they could clearly understand how they ought to live within it.

In moments of complex change, such as the American Revolution, understanding the origins is crucial to understanding the outcome. This section argued that understanding the

¹⁷⁶ *DRN* 1.146-148: *Hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necesseest non radii solis neque lucida tela diei discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque* (Henderson 1992: 14).

origins of Jefferson's thoughts on morality and ontology is necessary to understanding the phrase, 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.' In other words, Epicurus had an impact on the *Declaration of Independence*, but if we do not realise this impact, we can read it and Jefferson wrongly. Classical conceptualisations framed discourse in the early modern and modern eras, and they also framed Jefferson's discourses on happiness.

The *Genius Loci* at Thomas Jefferson's Classical Villas

*You show us, Rome was glorious, not profuse,
And pompous buildings once were things of Use
(Alexander Pope 1797: 275).*

[H]e is first encountered in the entrance hall of his immense Palladian house. Here he is surrounded by a restrained Palladian interior, punctuated by elegant ionic classical sculpture. From there, the visitor and the marquis traverse the state rooms of the house, which are also embellished with the occasional sculpture and history painting, and they may end up in the library sitting amidst the texts and busts of the great classical authors. The environs at once absorbs and contextualizes the marquis (and the visitor by extension) as well as functions as a backdrop to distinguish the marquis. As a consequence, time is both elided—the marquis is at one with the classical world—and disrupted—the classical trappings emphasize the marquis's gravitas in the contemporary realm (on the Marquis of Rockingham, Coutu 2015: 207).



(Photo: Sharesse Ann Edie, Monticello).

Introduction

This chapter argues that Thomas Jefferson's classical villas provided him a framework through which to construct a classical identity. This chapter explores Jefferson's villas, Monticello and Poplar Forest, as sites of classical inspiration.¹⁷⁷ By examining Jefferson's villas in architecture and landscape, this chapter will illuminate Jefferson's classical taste. What made Jefferson's villas 'classical' was their classical designs and the classical sentiments about which he wrote on these places. Jefferson's writings while reflecting on his houses was informed by classical texts on villas, such as Horace's works and Pliny the Younger's villas and their later receptions. According to Jack McLaughlin in his 1998 *Jefferson and Monticello: The Biographer of a Builder*, 'those who construct their own shelter replicate themselves, at their deepest and most significant level, in their houses. They are what they build' (McLaughlin 1998: vii). Jefferson's villas represent his aims for happiness in the private sphere, as well as his self-portrait. In contrast to the classical English house of Lord Burlington's Chiswick, for example, Jefferson's classical villa rested in Virginia and, therefore, adopted characteristics unique to America. With the aid and inspiration of the Classics, Jefferson designed an American architectural style infused with the spirit of the classical world, and this chapter explores that process and result. Jefferson's villas blurred the boundaries between the natural and artificial worlds, and between the classical and modern worlds. He articulated classical tastes and ideals in an American language, paired with American characteristics. With that idea in mind, this chapter will illustrate how Jefferson's private homes—his villas—reflected his classical imagination and were constructed through it, as well as highlight his philosophy of the *utile dulci*. This chapter will illustrate how both architecture and landscape reinforced each other and

¹⁷⁷ This thesis focuses on Jefferson's homes in Virginia and does not explore his apartment in Paris. The reasons for this are two-fold: Jefferson did not design his Parisian home, though he did design the interior, and because this thesis is largely concerned about Jefferson's attempt to create an Arcadia and *locus amoenus* in Virginia, a place outside the city and a place dear to Jefferson's heart.

complemented each other as sites of classical *otium*, both composing a *genius loci*, or the ‘genius of the place’.¹⁷⁸

Jefferson’s villas served practical functions as well as tasteful ones. While reflecting upon the colonial architecture of Williamsburg in the *Notes on the State of Virginia*, for example, Jefferson argued in Query XV: ‘The private buildings are very rarely constructed of stone or brick; much the greatest proportion being of scantling and boards, plaistered [*sic*] with lime. It is impossible to devise things more ugly, uncomfortable, and happily more perishable’ (Abernethy 1964: 145). Beyond this, Jefferson believed that buildings made of durable materials like stone and brick extended human lifespans: ‘A country whose buildings are of wood, can never increase in its improvements to any considerable degree. Their duration is highly estimated at 50 years’ (Abernethy 1964: 148). For Jefferson, classical architecture not only inspired the intellect, but extended life expectancies of the inhabitants, which he believed was a benefit from European architecture. ‘Whereas when buildings are of durable materials,’ Jefferson argued, ‘every new edifice is an actual and permanent acquisition to the state, adding to its value as well as to its ornament’ (Abernethy 1964: 148). Such was Jefferson’s classic special combination: utility plus ornament. Adherence to geometry in architecture served both beauty and utility, which was a landscape goal common amongst eighteenth-century architects.¹⁷⁹ With a wild, expansive landscape unpopulated by temples and follies, one’s mind can wander without artful distraction and influence in order

¹⁷⁸ Alexander Pope coined the modern phrase, ‘genius of the place’ in his fourth *Epistle* to Lord Burlington:

‘Consult the genius of the place in all;
That tells the waters to rise, or fall;
Or helps th’ ambitious hill the heav’ns to scale,
Or scoops in circling theatres the vale;
Calls in the country, catches opening glades,
Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades,
Now breaks, or now directs, th’ intending lines;
Paints as you plant, and, as you work, designs.’

The phrase, however, is classical in origin. Virgil evokes this sentiment in *Georgics* 2.177: *Nunc locus arborum ingeniis*. See also Hunt (1988).

¹⁷⁹ See below for more on the *utile dulci*. See also Leighton (1976).

to contemplate the universe, or whatever else. Aligned with the Epicurean doctrine of tranquillity of mind, Jefferson's sublime landscape led directly to the pursuit of happiness, according to his definition of it. Jefferson's villas can be seen as a witness to British classicism and as a declaration of classicism in America, but also as representations of an American's classical vision.

The first section of this chapter explores the definition of a villa put forth by classical figures, Italian Renaissance architects, eighteenth-century Georgian architects and Jefferson himself. The second section explores the architecture of Jefferson's Monticello and Poplar Forest. The third section explores Jefferson's landscape architecture. Finally, the fourth section explores the spirit of Jefferson's villas by examining the Epicurean theme of retirement. According to Brown in (2018) *Allan Ramsay and the Search for Horace's Villa* on the characteristics of a villa:

As an architectural type – small though often elaborate, and situated near the town where lay its owner's duty or business ("negotium", in Roman terms: the negation of leisure) – the villa became established as the prevalent building type of the mid and later eighteenth century and one intimately connected with the idea of the cultivation of leisure and friendship in rural peace and quiet (Brown 2018: 19).

The primary texts that are most used in this chapter are: Robert Castell's (1728) *Villas of the Ancients Illustrated*, Giacomo Leoni's English edition of Palladio's (1715) *Four Books of Architecture*, all of which Jefferson owned, and Jefferson's own personal letters and drawings. The secondary texts are James Ackerman's (1990) *The Villa*, William Howard Adams' (1997) *The Eye of Thomas Jefferson*, Jack McLaughlin's (1998) *Biography of a Builder*, and Susan Stein's (1993) *The Worlds of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello*. These texts were chosen for their insight into the designs of Jefferson's villas and the spirit of Antiquity that he evoked in his designs and collections. Of all the texts mentioned, however, this chapter largely explores Jefferson's letters, design plans and the visuals of his villas gained through first-hand observation.

What Is A Villa?

A villa exists because of where it is not: in the city. For two thousand years, the country villa has been situated outside the city and stands as a patrician symbol of economic, political and social virtues of independence, especially those in contrast to the vices of the city. A villa, therefore, necessarily belongs to the wealthy. In the American South, the villa belonged to wealthy planters in a rural area with a relatively large population of enslaved workers. The villa exists as both a physical place that displays wealth and culture and is an ideal place in which the owner can exercise their rural fantasies. The villa represents the myth of the Arcadian idyll in which the patrician, or in Jefferson's case the patriarch, can exact their fantasies from villa literature. For Jefferson, such was an ideal in design only, for Jefferson's villa was a site for economic activity. His was a rural society without urban attachments. In Britain during the eighteenth century, villas owners such as Lord Burlington, (called the "Apollo of the Arts"), and Alexander Pope would evoke the classical sentiments of Horace and others followed by our Thomas Jefferson for their own villas.¹⁸⁰

Up in Scotland's capital, the elder and younger Ramsays lived in an urban villa called the House of the Muses: 'Clearly,' according to Ian Gordon Brown in *Allan Ramsay and the Search for Horace's Villa*, 'Edinburgh wits appreciated less than the founders of the house this attempt to create an Horatian retreat – an architectural equivalent of an "imitation" of the Roman poet, a place in which his imagined manner of living might be translated' (Frischer, B. and Brown, I.G. eds. 2001: 18). Brown further notes:

Admiration of Horace was at its peak in the eighteenth century. Perhaps the most significant of the presiding *genii* of 'Augustan' Britain, Horace was, as has been well said, 'a kind of cultural hero of the age'. He was the most frequently quoted and deferred to of any classical author, not excepting Virgil and Cicero. There were substantially more translations of Horace into English in the period of 1600-1800 than of any other Latin or

¹⁸⁰ Furthermore in *Allan Ramsay and the Search for Horace's Villa*, Brown notes: 'In the eighteenth century, before the discoveries of Roman house in the buried cities of Vesuvius had become familiar to Europeans, the five most celebrated domestic (as opposed to monumental public or religious) buildings of the Roman world were Hadrian's imperial villa at Tivoli; Diocletian's palace at Split in Dalmatia; Pliny the Younger's Laurentine and Tuscan villas; and Horace's Sabine farm' (Frischer, B. and Brown, I.G. eds. 2001: 19).

Greek author. In the *Satires* especially, Horace was thought by John Dryden to be ‘teaching us in every line’. Dryden, in his translation of André Dacier’s Preface to his great and influential edition of 1683-97, defined Horace’s contribution thus: ‘In a Word, he labours to render us happy in relation to our selves, agreeable and faithful to our Friends, and discreet, serviceable, and well bred in relation to those with whom we are oblig’d to live, and to converse.’ Alexander Pope may speak for his age when he maintains that ‘An Answer from Horace was both more full, and of more Dignity, than any I cou’d have made in my own person’ (Frischer and Brown eds. 2001: 7).

Jefferson engaged in this nearly identical ‘manner of living’ translated from Horace and the Roman villa writers. Although there have been political and philosophical connections between Jefferson and Scotland in historiography (a popular topic for early American historians), the Classics are also another connection between Jefferson and the British Empire, especially to other areas of the Empire, like Scotland.¹⁸¹ As it pertains to Jefferson’s architecture, the Classics directly connected him to the architectural tastes happening in Great Britain and Europe.

Alexander Pope built his career and reputation around Horace, having composed his own *Satires* influenced by Horace; his letters even addressed his own eighteenth-century version of Augustus, Lord Burlington of Chiswick; Pope’s villa at Twickenham, like Horace’s Sabine Farm represented the rural retreat of retirement for the poet, which included Horatian quotations on rusticity in his grotto.¹⁸² According to garden historian, John Dixon Hunt in (1988) *The Genius of the Place*:

The Italian garden, in particular, not least because of its perceived continuity with classical Rome, maintained a special place in English culture and constituted a powerful if submerged link between Jacobean garden art and the ideas of villa and garden held by the neo-Palladians around Lord Burlington (Hunt 1988: 8).

Jefferson was familiar with the classical villa writers: he visited Italian Renaissance classical villas and he used Chiswick as a direct inspiration for Monticello. As this chapter will illustrate, Jefferson’s Monticello had much in common with the villas of Renaissance Italy

¹⁸¹ For literature on Jefferson and the Scottish Enlightenment, see Wills (1978); Herman (2001); Galvin (2002).

¹⁸² Pope inscribed a message from Horace’s *Epistle* 1.18.103 in his garden.

and Georgian England, but the one exception is that he infused his villa with *Americana*, thereby designing a unique classical villa for his time and place, especially when understood against the backdrop of Augustan England.¹⁸³ For America, Monticello was unique for its classicism and architectural innovations, not to mention its august occupant. Monticello can be seen as an aesthetic bridge between the classicism of eighteenth-century Britain and the coming Classical Revivalism of the American South during the nineteenth century.

Palladio's influence during the eighteenth century acted as the strongest connection to antiquity for classicising architects. The revival of Palladianism occurred during Jefferson's building timeline, put forth by such British architects as Robert Adam and Lord Burlington.¹⁸⁴ According to James Ackerman in *The Villa* (1990):

The subtlest aspect of the new Palladianism was the revival of the Platonic concept that architecture could imitate nature by exemplifying the principles of harmony in the universe. This led to the emphasis on geometric form, symmetry and on proportions that characterize the new style of architecture (Ackerman 1990: 141).¹⁸⁵

Eighteenth-century Britain saw a reimagination of the works of the sixteenth-century Italian architect, Andrea Palladio (1508-80), whose *Four Books of Architecture* (1570) rested on shelves and drawing tables across Britain's educated élite.¹⁸⁶ Our Thomas Jefferson owned six copies of Palladio's *magnum opus* in both French and English.¹⁸⁷ Palladio's classicism reflected the immutable laws of nature: order, harmony, symmetry. Like Jefferson two centuries later, Palladio adapted classical architecture to suit his and his élite circle's interests. Palladio is famous for his drawings on classical villas and country houses, which he

¹⁸³ According to Spencer in *Roman Landscape: Culture and Identity*: '[S]tudying what "landscape" means now and might have meant then sheds light on some of the most urgent issues confronting wealthy, educated, ambitious, and politically minded citizens during this era—for example, historical destiny, citizen identity in a time of rapid cultural change, and the relationship between labor, otium, luxury, and the search for the best of all possible worlds' (Spencer 2010: 2).

¹⁸⁴ Robert Adam, author of (1764) *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro in Dalmatia*, was influential in reviving classical architecture in Britain. Jefferson was also inspired by Diocletian's villa.

¹⁸⁵ Of course, Jefferson rejected Plato, as seen in the first chapter of this thesis, but the architectural principles remained nonetheless.

¹⁸⁶ Called in Italian, *I quattro libri dell'architettura*.

¹⁸⁷ Their dates were: 1650 (French), 1715-20 (English), 1738 (English), 1764 x2 (French), and 1742 (English).

did not witness, and so incorporated temple-like structures in his Renaissance designs, later adopted by Georgian architects and American Revolutionaries. Palladio largely based his *Four Books of Architecture* on the first-century Roman architect Vitruvius' *De Architectura*.¹⁸⁸ Vitruvius provided a vague definition of a villa in *De Architectura* 4.5.3: 'In town, the atrium is customarily right behind the entrance portal, while in the country, in the *pseudourbana* type of residence, peristyles come first and then the atrium surrounded by a paved portico' (Ackerman 1990: 42). Later, Palladio defined a villa as the entire estate, the *casa di villa*.¹⁸⁹ This thesis defines 'villa' as both the house and estate, like Palladio, because Jefferson's classical taste at home included aspects relevant to both house and landscape. Indeed, one cannot be understood without the other.

The villa represents a space of both *negotium* and *otium* for the ancient and modern man. Jefferson evoked the Classics by surrounding himself with classical objects, such as the house itself, books, art and the combination of *otium* with *negotium*. For the Roman villa dwellers, *otium* meant leisure for reading and enjoying the fresh air. For many wealthy Romans, *otium* was synonymous with the villa, especially its gardens. In his literary commonplace book, for example, Jefferson copied a passage from Horace's *Satire* 2.6.62: '*O rus quando ego te aspiciam? quandoque licebit/ Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno & inertibus horis/ Ducere sollicitae jucunda obliviae vitae?*' (Wilson 1989: 83). So says McEwan in his work on Vitruvius:

Gardens and planted courtyards figure greatly in both the Laurentine and the Tuscan, as they did in most Roman villas, as the gardener's art of cultivating nature reflecting *otium*, and the cultivation of the mind it entailed. Similarly, the art whereby an orator trained and fructified his "natural" memory was also "cultivation" and, like *otium*, linked to the shady villa setting (McEwan 1995: 16).

¹⁸⁸ Jefferson owned two editions of Vitruvius, both in French from 1674 and 1684.

¹⁸⁹ Ackerman 1990: 9.

Negotium, on the other hand, meant quite the opposite—engagement in the duties and affairs of the *urbs*. Jefferson owned three copies of Pliny the Younger’s *Epistles* (1653, 1750, 1752). Roman writers such as Horace and Pliny the Younger held fast to this leisurely philosophy. In his *Epistles* (1.9.5), for example, Pliny the Younger waxed rhapsodic on *otium* versus *negotium*:

I always realize this when I am at Laurentum, reading and writing and finding time to take the exercise which keeps my mind fit for work. There is nothing there for me to say or hear said which I would afterwards regret, no one disturbs me with malicious gossip, and I have no one to blame—but myself—when writing doesn’t come easily. Hopes and fears do not worry me, and I am not bothered by idle talk; I share my thoughts with myself and my books. It is a good life and a genuine one, a seclusion which is happy and honourable, more rewarding than almost any “business” can be. The sea and shore are truly my private Helicon, an endless source of inspiration. You should take the first opportunity yourself to leave the din, the futile bustle and useless occupations of the city and devote yourself to literature or to leisure’ (Radice 1969: 29).¹⁹⁰

Even though villa dwellers certainly prefer *otium* to *negotium*, *negotium* is nonetheless still present at the villa given the status of the villa owners, who are typically aristocratic men who have held or hold positions of political leadership or influence. Jefferson’s Monticello was both a farm and place of leisure, surely, but it was also a place to host visitors, both political and non-political alike. Jefferson would begin to complain heavily of *negotium* after he left his post as the Minister Plenipotentiary to France during 1789 at the outbreak of the

¹⁹⁰ Pliny the Younger *Epistles* 1.9.5: *Quod evenit mihi, postquam in Laurentino meo aut lego aliquid aut scribe aut etiam corpori vaco, cuius fulturis animus sustinetur. Nihil audio quod audisse, nihil dico quod dixisse paeniteat; nemo apud me quemquam sinistris sermonibus carpit, neminem ipse reprehendo, nisi tamen me cum parum commode scribe; nulla spe nullo timore sollicitor, nullis rumoribus inquietor: mecum tantum et cum libellis loquor. O rectam sinceramque vitam! O dulce otium honestumque ac paene omni negotio pulchris! O mare, o litus, verum secretumque, quam multa invenitis, quam multa dictatis!* (Radice 1969: 28). According to Gazda and Haeckl in (1994) *Roman Art in the Private Sphere*: ‘Villa owners likewise recount the quiet hours spent in *diaetae*, where, with all nature centering on them, they could contemplate the sea, the woods, and the heavens. Pliny enjoyed “these seas” captured within a single room of his villa... The ordered access to nature, which is contained within the geometry of architecture, determined the appearance of actual and painted landscape in the Roman domus’ (Gazda and Haeckl 1994: 60-61). In her commentary on her visit to Monticello during 1809, Margaret Bayard Smith likewise noted that: ‘The space between Monticello and the Allegany, from sixty to eighty miles, was covered with a thick fog, which had the appearance of the ocean and was unbroken except when wood covered hills rose above the plain and looked like islands. As the sun rose, the fog was broken and exhibited the most various and fantastic forms, lakes, rivers, bays, and as it ascended, it hung in white fleecy clouds on the sides of the mountains’ (Smith 1809). Smith observed Jefferson’s *sanctum sanctorum* where he would spend hours alone reading, writing and designing, with views of the ‘sea’ beyond.

French Revolution. His greatest complaints occurred during his retirement years of 1809 to 1826, which will be explored later in the chapter.

In the midst of perceived and proclaimed Roman decadence, Horace, like Jefferson after him, esteemed living simply as a virtue distinct to Romans, just as Jefferson did with regards to Americans.¹⁹¹ For Horace, achieving this virtue was done through tilling the earth. From his second *Epode*, Horace writes: ‘The man is happy who, far from negotiations, works the oxen like his ancient kin, free from all debts.’¹⁹² Horace believed that tilling the earth would generate virtues in Roman citizens and, therefore, uphold the Roman virtues lost due to aristocratic extravagance, such as honesty, frugality and duty. His *Odes*, for example, include various references to upholding tranquillity, chiefly achieved at the villa. In *Ode* 3.29, Horace’s ‘Ode to Maecenas’ opens with a call to the theme of *otium* at Horace’s Sabine Farm in direct contrast to the hustle and *negotium* of Rome:

Maecenas, descendant of Etruscan kings, there is some mellow wine in a jar not yet tilted that has long awaited you at my house [...] Leave behind your blasé surfeit, and the pile that almost touches the clouds overhead. Stop looking with admiration at prosperous Rome with its smoke, wealth, and noise. Usually rich men welcome a change; a simple dinner without purple hangings at a small house belonging to a man of modest means relaxes the anxious brow (Rudd 2004: 213).¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ For Horace, living simply meant living in contrast to ambition and flattery. Yona observes of Horace: ‘In both *Satires* 1.6 and 2.5 the poet is deeply concerned with social tact, which is opposed to the folly of unbridled ambition and the obsession with fame. Tillius and Ulysses are clearly discontented with their current lots and immediately prepare an aggressive plan for acquiring wealth. Contrasted to this is Horace’s contentment, lack of ambition and willingness to wait patiently for nine months while Maecenas decides on whether to accept him into his literary circle or not (cf. S. 1.6.61–2). Horace also emphatically states that it was his virtue that impressed Maecenas rather than anything else, and that, unlike Ulysses, he is not ambitious but rather more than satisfied with his modest way of life (cf. S. 1.6.111–28). Ulysses’ fear of poverty (S. 2.5.9: *pauperiem...horres*) and refusal to endure a life of little means (6: *nudus inopsque*) conflicts not only with the poet’s advice elsewhere in the *Satires* (cf. 1.1.93: *pauperiem metuas minus*), but also with Ofellus’ philosophical equanimity and Epicurean understanding of the requirements of nature as easily fulfilled in *Satires* 2.2’ (Yona 2018: 216).

¹⁹² Jefferson copied the Latin passage in his 1771 *Memorandum Book* for his grotto plans. See previous chapter.

¹⁹³ Horace *Odes* 3.29: *Tyrrhena regum progenies, tibi non ante verso lene merum cado cum florem, Maecenas, rosarum et pressa tuis Balanus capillis iamdudum apud me est. eripe te morae, nec semper udum Tibur et Aefulae declive contempleris arvum et Telegoni iuga parricidae. Fastidiosam desere copiam et molem propinquam nubibus arduis; omitted mirari beatae fumum et opes strepitumque Romae. Plerumque gratae divitibus vices mundaеque parvo sub lare pauperum cenae sine aulaeis et ostro sollicitam explicuere frontem* (Rudd 2004: 212).

Horace then addresses the Epicurean theme of needless anxiety/fear arising from political concerns that can only be sedated through tranquil retirement, which Jefferson addressed as vices and the opposite of Epicurean virtue in his 1799 ‘Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus’: ‘Summum bonum is to be not pained in body nor troubled in mind. [...] [Virtue is opposed to:] folly, desire, fear, deceit [*sic*]’ (TJ, ‘Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus’ 1799).¹⁹⁴ An important discussion on this theme in Horace’s *Odes* is Nisbet and Rudd’s 2003 *A Commentary on Horace: Odes III*. They note that Horace’s emphasis is ‘on private happiness and how it is threatened by the anxieties of wealth and connect the ode to Lucretius’ writings on fear’ (Nisbet and Rudd 2003: 3-4). The commentators then connect Horace’s Epicurean ode to traditional Roman values: ‘Criticisms of *avaritia* and *luxuria* had been popular since Cato with moralizing orators, and had recently found forceful expression in the monographs of Sallust’ (Nisbet and Rudd 2003: 4). However, the commentators note, Horace rejected luxury because it did not lead to Epicurean happiness, not because such thinking was socially unacceptable (Nisbet and Rudd 2003: 4). Jefferson also believed that place affects living well. Simplicity in living would make Americans strong in mind, body and spirit.

Further in book 6 of his work, Vitruvius outlines the role of the house for each category of social status. Typical for the villa owner of the Roman nobility, Italian Renaissance and Georgian England, Vitruvius details the general design of the villa and its surrounding gardens in 6.5.2:

But for nobles, who in bearing honours, and discharging the duties of the magistracy, must have much intercourse with the citizens, princely vestibules must be provided, lofty atria, and spacious peristylia, groves, and extensive walks, finished in a magnificent style. In addition to these, libraries, pinacothecæ, and basilicæ, of similar form to those which are made for public use, are to be provided; for in the houses of the noble, the affairs of the public, and the decision and judgment of private causes are often determined (Thayer 2019).

¹⁹⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 31, 1 February 1799–31 May 1800 (Oberg, B. 2004: 284–285).

Despite Vitruvius' observations on the appropriate house for the nobility, which Jefferson followed to an extent, Jefferson was much more Horatian in his attitudes toward country living than the Roman aristocracy.¹⁹⁵ Indeed, Jefferson fell more closely into Vitruvius' first category of social status in the countryside: the planter. Jefferson's Monticello included such workhouses along Mulberry Row, mere steps from the main house. Even the house itself has a basement level cleverly disguised to conceal the wine and beer cellars, storerooms and corridors through which enslaved domestic workers moved for their various household duties. For Jefferson and Horace, modesty in living reflects and reinforces living goodly so as to not be corrupted by opulence and vanity. In this vein, the country villa is designed so that its occupant can reflect on nature and the intellectual enterprise of understanding, which is ultimately the pursuit of happiness. To be in harmony with nature is to be happy, the ultimate aim of living, according to Epicurus. Horace highlighted this philosophy in *Ode* 3.1: 'The gentle sleep that countrymen enjoy does not despise their lowly cottages, or the shady riverbank, or the valley fanned by zephyrs. The one who desires what is enough is not worried by a stormy sea' (Rudd 2004: 143).¹⁹⁶

Jefferson's exposure to the design and function of villas was achieved chiefly through his material books and visits to the villas of Italy and England. During his tour of Italy, for example, Jefferson reflected on the classical houses of Milan:

Among a great many houses painted al fresco, the Casa Roma and Casa Candiani by Appiani, and casa Belgioiosa [Palazzo Belagioso] by Martin are superior. In the second is a small cabinet, the cieling [*sic*] of which is in small hexagons, within which are Cameos and heads painted alternately, no two the same. The salon of the casa Belgioiosa is superior to any thing I have seen. The mixture called Scaiola, of which they make their walls and floors, is so like the finest marble as to be scarcely distinguishable from it (TJ, 3 March-10 June 1787, '*Notes of a Tour into the Southern Parts of France*', &c.).¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ For more on Horace's humble beginnings as the son of a slave, see David Armstrong's chapter in the 2010 *Companion to Horace*, 'The Biographical and Social Foundations of Horace's Poetic Verse'.

¹⁹⁶ Horace *Odes* 3.1: *somnus agrestium lenis virorum non humilis domos fastidit umbrosamque ripam, non Zephyris agitate Tempe. Desiderantem quod satis est neque tumultuosum sollicitat mare* (Rudd 2004: 142).

¹⁹⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787 (Boyd, J. 1955: 415–464).

Jefferson's observations here stand out amongst all the rest during his Italian tour because he devoted most of his notes to agriculture and landscape. It is significant, then, that Jefferson detailed particular attention to the villas of northern Italy, mere years before he reconstructed Monticello. At the Palazzo Durazzo in Genoa, furthermore, Jefferson explicitly connected villas, particularly their gardens, to Horace. In his 1787 *Notes of a Tour into the Southern Parts of France*, Jefferson noted that: 'The gardens of the Count Durazzo at Nervi exhibit as rich a mixture of the *Utile dulci* as I ever saw. All the environs of Genoa are in olives, figs, oranges, mulberries, corn and garden stuff' (TJ, 3 March-10 June 1787).¹⁹⁸ Here Jefferson referenced the *utile dulci* of Horace's *Ars Poetica* 343 in which Horace writes: *omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci, lectorem delectando pariterque monendo* (Henderson 1929: 478).¹⁹⁹ Jefferson regarded gardening as a fine art, and here Jefferson made the connection between architecture, the Classics and nature in one sentence while in the antique land of Italy. Furthermore, Harris observes in *The Nature of Authority*:

For example, a text written by the Renaissance architect and theorist Francesco di Giorgio Martini indicated that princely dwellings should contain secret passages and even stairways that would both allow the prince to surprise his servants with his presence—thus keeping them vigilant in performing their duties—and serve to keep household workers out of sight. But sequestering servants below ground no doubt allowed them a crucial measure of autonomy in much the same manner that eighteenth-century North American slave cabins,

¹⁹⁸ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787 (Boyd, J. 1955: 415–464). Jefferson noted later in his 1788 'Hints to Americans Traveling to Europe' that 'Woburn farm in England is the only thing I ever saw superior, in this point, to Count Durazzo's gardens at Nervi,' (TJ, 19 June 1788). Jefferson was not alone in his classicisation. During 1787, the year he travelled Southern France and Northern Italy, Benjamin Franklin received an address by Augustus Chatterton called *The buds of beauty; or, Parnassian sprig. Being a collection of original poems, upon various subjects. By Augustus Chatterton, Esq.* in which he wrote of Horace and the United States: 'Sir, when the Roman empire had arrived at its highest pitch of grandeur, and literature illuminated the world with a ray which has enlightened the present age, Augustus would not have been displeased at receiving an address similar to this, from any of the contemporaries of Horace.—A custom so ancient will apologize for this intrusion.

The Muses, said Socrates, follow Liberty—and I think his assertion was somewhat prophetic, for, if I may be permitted to judge, from the productions that have already appeared in this free empire, a considerable portion of their influence is already felt in America. I should be glad to see the refinements of Art, going hand in hand with the refinements of Government, and the citizens of the United States become more famed as a nation, while they become more accomplished men' (Chatterton 1787: 5).

¹⁹⁹ Horace *Ars Poetica* 343: 'He has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the reader' (Henderson 1929: 479).

kept at a distance from the Big House, permitted a much-needed degree of subversion and autonomy for the slaves (Harris 2003: 97).²⁰⁰

The connection between Renaissance villas and Jefferson's own villa illuminates the *utile dulci*, seen here with the servants' passages. At Monticello, Jefferson designed underground passages through which his enslaved servants travelled so as to not be seen above ground. Jefferson preserved the beauty of the house while not compromising his servants' use and function. Upon her visit to Monticello during the late summer of 1809, for example, Margaret Bayard Smith reflected upon the optics of slavery at Monticello:

We passed the outhouses for the slaves and workmen. They are all much better than I have seen on any other plantation, but to an eye unaccustomed to such sights, they appear poor and their cabins form a most unpleasant contrast with the palace that rises so near them (Smith, 'Account of a Visit to Monticello', 1809).²⁰¹

Even though Jefferson attempted to submerge the enslaved at Monticello, they were still visible on the grounds. In this way, Jefferson's goal of the *utile dulci* for his classical taste was not entirely successful, despite his architectural efforts.

Jefferson owned many books on architecture, ancient and modern. For eighteenth-century English architects and villa-dwellers, Horace and Pliny the Younger provided the strongest literary sources for antique villas. In his *Epistles*, for example, Pliny the Younger went into detail on the design and function of his Laurentine villa at 2.17, in which he described the visitor's experience upon entering Laurentinum, quoted in Robert Castell's *Villas of the Ancients Illustrated*, a text Jefferson owned: 'The first thing that offers itself is a plain, tho' not mean Atrium; from thence you enter a Porticus in the form like the Letter O, which surrounds a small but pleasant Area' (Castell 1728: 3). In addition, Jefferson gathered villa ideals from Horace's works (1660, 1709, 1711, 1715, 1750, 1760, 1767, and 1768);

²⁰⁰ See Harris 2003: 155 for discussion on the Villa Belgioioso, enslavement (*risaroli*) and rice production, which Jefferson visited and of which he was enthusiastic. The villa included a grand formal garden with Classical motifs, which Jefferson would have seen because he witnessed the rice fields.

²⁰¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 1, 4 March 1809 to 15 November 1809 (Looney, J. 2004: 386–401).

Cicero's *Tusculum Disputationes* (1744, 1748); and Statius' *Sylvae* (1671). Vitruvius was greatly admired as well, but the eighteenth-century reception of Vitruvius was largely received through Andrea Palladio. Jefferson read of classical villas through contemporary writers as well, which was a popular discourse during the eighteenth century.

Among the modern texts, Jefferson owned multiple texts on classical architecture, including, but not limited to, Robert Castell's 1728 *The Villas of the Ancients Illustrated*, which Castell dedicated to Lord Burlington, the Palladian architect of Chiswick house, and which Jefferson admired and upon which he largely modelled Monticello. Jefferson acquired Castell's book while living in Europe between 1784-89. British Grand Tourists similarly acquired the text while on the Continent, including the famed antiquarian and architect, Sir John Soane.²⁰² Castell's popular book on classical villas included descriptions and reimaginings through detailed plates of Pliny the Younger's *Epistles* 2.17 and 5.6, which detailed Laurentinum and Tusculum. During her 1809 tour of Monticello, Margaret Bayard Smith noted that Jefferson

showed us everything he thought would please or interest us. His most valuable and curious books—those which contained fine prints etc.—among these I thought the most curious were the original letters of Cortez to the King of Spain, a vol of fine views of ancient villas around Rome, with maps of the grounds, an minute descriptions of the buildings and grounds (Smith 1809).²⁰³

Of his Greek romances, Smith noted that Jefferson 'took pains to find one that was translated into French, as most of them were translated in Latin and Italian' (Smith 1809).²⁰⁴ Smith's

²⁰² For a classical account of a British Grand Tourist, Hardwick and Stray observe of James Boswell: 'James Boswell, visiting Rome as the climax of his Grand Tour in 1765, gives an account of his explorations of the ancient sites of the city in the company of the antiquary James Morison. After a tour of the Palatine, they visit what was believed to be the site of Cicero's house. "Struck by these famous places, I was seized with enthusiasm. I began to speak Latin. Mr Morison replied ... We made a resolution to speak Latin continually during this course of antiquities. We have persisted, and every day we speak with greater facility, so that we have harangued on Roman antiquities in the language of the Romans themselves" (1955: 65). Through displaying his mastery of Latin, the visitor actualises his identity as a Roman' (Hardwick and Stray 2011: 346). Jefferson expressed such classical enthusiasm himself with the Maison Carrée.

²⁰³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 1, 4 March 1809 to 15 November 1809 (Looney, J. 2004: 386–401).

²⁰⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 1, 4 March 1809 to 15 November 1809 (Looney, J. 2004: 386–401).

mention of the ‘fine views of Antient villa’s round Rome’ is likely Castell’s *Villas of the Ancients Illustrated*, according to Looney, editor to *Jefferson’s Retirement Series*.²⁰⁵ In addition to Castell, Jefferson owned and read Thomas Whately’s 1770 *Observations on Modern Gardening*, which he used along his 1786 Garden Tour. He owned the popular text by Robert Morris, (1755) *Select Architecture*, before 1770, which he used while researching for the design of Monticello. Morris also wrote a treatise during 1728 called ‘An Essay in Defence of Ancient Architecture’. Morris believed that nature and the Universe are ordered, as wells as architecture. For classicists and Palladians like Morris and Jefferson, harmony in nature required harmony in architecture. Upon visiting Hampton Court during 1786, for example, Jefferson noted that the seventeenth-century country house was too ‘old fashioned,’ and that at the magnificent Blenheim Palace ‘Art appears too much’ (TJ, ‘Notes on a Tour of English Gardens’, 2-14 April 1787).²⁰⁶ Jefferson, like Morris, agreed that architecture should not overshadow nature, as Baroque architecture did. Finally, Jefferson owned: Gibbs’ (1728) *A Book of Architecture*; Inigo Jones’ influential (1727) *The Designs of Inigo Jones*; Errard’s (1766) *Parallele de l’Architecture Antique avec la Moderne*; Clérisseau’s (1778) *Antiquités de la France*; and Antoine Desgodetz’s (1779) *Les edifices antiques de Rome*. Desgodetz was a seventeenth-century Parisian architect who measured antique ruins for accuracy and contended with Palladio on the Temple of Vesta, which Desgodetz actually measured, and Palladio did not. Jefferson also owned Piranesi’s (1748) *Varie vedute di Roma Antica e moderna*, in which he composed over ten drawings of the Temple of Vesta; Ficoroni’s (1744) *Le vestigia e rarità di Roma antica*; Scamozzi’s (1582, 1764) *Discorsi sopra l’antichità di Roma*, which featured detailed drawings of Pliny the Younger’s villas; Rossi’s (1654, 1652) *Ritratto di Roma antica*; Stuart’s (1762) *The Antiquities of Athens*; Le Roy’s (1759) *Ruins of*

²⁰⁵ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 1, 4 March 1809 to 15 November 1809 (Looney, J. 2004: 386–401).

²⁰⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 369–375).

Athens, with Remains and Other Valuable Antiquities in Greece; William Chambers' popular (1763) *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Perspective Views of the Gardens and Buildings at Kew*; and, finally, Seeley's (1783) *Stowe*, which Jefferson visited during 1786.

Monticello



(Photo: Alley Marie Jordan. Monticello)

Thomas Jefferson inherited his landscape from his father, Peter Jefferson, and enslaved and paid workers levelled his 867-foot mountaintop during 1768.²⁰⁷ Construction began on the

²⁰⁷ According to Victoria Tietze-Larson: 'In the early days of construction, however, Jefferson had called his future dwelling The Hermitage. While this name did not yet draw attention to the mountainous nature of the site, it did clearly signal that his living there should be construed as a posture of retirement with literary connections: hermits were both stock fictional types, like Fielding's *Old Man of the Hill* (or 'Man of the Mountain', as Ticknor referred to him), and also real-life adornments to European country-house gardens, hired to engage in exhibitions of philosophical contemplation and literary study' (Larson 2019: 287).

villa the next year and never really ended. The first Monticello was constructed from 1768 to 1796, and then the second Monticello was built from 1796 until Jefferson's death during 1826. This thesis will focus on Monticello II because Jefferson engaged in substantial renovations during this time and wrote most classically on it.²⁰⁸ This is due to Jefferson's engagement in the Roman ruins in Southern France and the villas of Northern Italy. There are many sources for the models of Jefferson's Monticello, all of which are equally credible due to their similarities and sources of inspiration. Chief among them is Palladio's villa, La Rotonda (1566-70) in Vicenza, Italy.²⁰⁹ Jefferson was enthusiastic over the Pantheon: he not only used the ancient temple as inspiration for Monticello's Dome, he also used it as a model for both the U.S. Capitol and the Rotunda—a slight change of spelling from Palladio's Rotonda—of the University of Virginia.²¹⁰ Jefferson acknowledged that he knew of the Pantheon 'only from models and drawings' (TJ to James Sloan, 15 June 1818).²¹¹ He called 'the immortal beauties of Rome... the sublimest [*sic*] works of man' (TJ to James Sloan, 15 June 1818).²¹² Writing to James Sloan, the American author of *Rambles in Italy*, during 1817,

²⁰⁸ In fact, this thesis does not make such a difference between the two Monticellos because this chapter is much more about Jefferson's ideas for his villa, rather than the strict architecture itself, though the latter will be explored. According to Larson on not distinguishing between Monticello I and II: 'The second house, just like the first, would have its genesis in Old World architecture, would be filled with European furniture, and would have its gentleman's library in which Jefferson could shut himself up. As such, the second Monticello, just like the first, inscribed Jefferson 'within the imperial periphery', even as he sought, through living there, to retire or remove himself from it, and it thus reinforced his cultural ties with other gentleman 'retirees', American and European' (Larson 2019: 285).

²⁰⁹ During 1804 in a letter to James Oldham, Jefferson noted the scant copies of Palladio's works in America: 'In answer to your's of the 17th. desiring me to procure a Palladio for you either here or at Philadelphia, there never was a Palladio here even in private hands till I brought one... the chance of getting one in America is slender' (TJ to James Oldham, 24 December 1804). "From Thomas Jefferson to James Oldham, 24 December 1804," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-0889>. While planning the University of Virginia, furthermore, Jefferson wrote to James Madison during 1817 on his desperate need for Palladio, the very first line being: 'We are sadly at a loss here for a Palladio' (Mattern et al. 2009: 159–60).

²¹⁰ According to Scully (1988): 'but the whole movement has a grander dimension, also suggestive of France but with ancient Mediterranean overtones, in that the dome of the house is the culmination of the dome of the little mountain from which the place gets its name. As in Hadrian's villa, for example, crypto-portici are employed' (Scully 1988: 73).

²¹¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 96–97).

²¹² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 96–97).

Jefferson wrote: ‘I have experienced but one disappointment in reading your book, that of not finding the Pantheon among your enchanting descriptions. this building, I consider as the perfection of Spherical, as the Maison carrée is of Cubic architecture’ (TJ to James Sloan, 15 June 1818).²¹³ Of all the Roman buildings, Jefferson admired the Pantheon and the Maison Carrée above all others.²¹⁴ Palladio went on to describe La Rotonda as ‘*sopra un Monticello*’ (Leoni 1715: 700).²¹⁵ It is no wonder, then, that Jefferson called his own Palladian villa on a hill Monticello.²¹⁶ On La Rotonda, Palladio wrote:

This Gentleman, after having travell’d a long time to improve himself, being come to settle at last in his own country... chose his abode at a country-house he had on a hill... Its situation is as advantageous [*sic*] and delicious as can be desir’d, being seated on a hillock of a most easie [*sic*] ascent, at the foot of which runs the *Bacchilione*, a navigable river. On the other side, it is surrounded by several hills, that seem to form a great Theatre, and which besides are all of them cultivated, being very fertile, abounding with excellent Fruits and Vineyards: so that having the advantage of fine prospects on all sides, some confin’d, some more remote, and some farther than the sight can reach (Leoni 1715: 540).

Indeed, Palladio’s description of the landscape surrounding La Rotonda in Vicenza reads remarkably similar to Pliny the Younger’s *Epistle* 5.6, in which he described his Tuscan villa:

The countryside is very beautiful. Picture yourself a vast ampitheatre such as could only be a work of nature; the great spreading plain is ringed round by mountains, their summits crowned by ancient woods of tall trees, where there is a good deal of mixed hunting to be had. [...] Below them the vineyards spreading down every slope weave their uniform pattern far and wide, their lower limit bordered by a plantation of trees (Radice 1969: 339-341).²¹⁷

Like Pliny the Younger, Palladio described his *monticello* surrounded by great vistas and vineyards that resembled a theatre, within proximity to a navigable river that transported

²¹³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 96–97).

²¹⁴ Lord Burlington was also interested in the Pantheon, having erected a smaller version in his garden by the Amphitheatre.

²¹⁵ This 1715 edition of Palladio as edited by Leoni is an identical edition that Jefferson owned, which he sold to the Library of Congress during 1815.

²¹⁶ Another source is Trajan’s Courtyard of the Temple of Nerva, which Jefferson saw in Leoni’s edition of Palladio’s *Four Books of Architecture*, book 4, plate 15.

²¹⁷ Pliny the Younger *Epistles* 5.6: *Regionis forma pulcherrima. Imaginare amphitheatrum aliquod immensum, et quale sola rerum natura possit effingere. Lata et diffusa planities montibus cingitur, montes summa sui parte procera nemora et antiqua habent. Frequens ibi et varia venatio. [...] Sub his per latus omne vineae porriguntur, unamque faciem longe lateque contexunt; quarum a fine imoque quasi margine arbusta nascuntur* (Radice 1969: 338-340).

goods from the neighbouring towns.²¹⁸ Jefferson did not build his villa next to the Rivanna River. In contrast to Pliny the Younger and Palladio's villas, furthermore, the ascent to Monticello was much larger and less easy, though Jefferson attempted to remedy this through a series of winding paths. Nevertheless, Jefferson's *monticello* included vineyards, fruit orchards and views 'surrounded by mountains' that formed an amphitheatre of nature's works. Jefferson wrote of his *clair-voyées* from the South side of the mountain during 1809 to the gardener, William Hamilton: 'you are sensible that this disposition of ground takes from me the first beauty in gardening' (TJ to William Hamilton, July 1809).²¹⁹ Along his visit to Monticello during the 1780s, the Marquis de Chastellux observed of Jefferson's mountain:

But it was a debt Nature owed to a philosopher and a man of taste, that in his own possessions he should find a spot, where he might best study and enjoy her. He calls his house *Monticello*, (*in Italian, Little Mountain*) a very modest title, for it is situated upon a very lofty one, but which announces the owner's attachment to the language of Italy; and above all to the fine arts, of which that country was the cradle, and is still the asylum (Chastellux to TJ, 27 December 1784).²²⁰

Chastellux's observation helps to illustrate Monticello's connection to Italy—classical, early modern and modern. During a visit in 1782, Victoria Tietze Larson further observes of Chastellux's classical visions of Jefferson: 'This was the context of the remark made by the marquis de Chastellux, visiting Monticello in 1782, that it was "a debt Nature owed to a philosopher and a man of taste, that in his own possessions [Jefferson] should find a spot where he might best study and enjoy her"'. Statius' poem about his Roman patron Pollius' mountain-top villa had similarly described a "conquered" female Nature "yield[ing] to the developer" (*Silvae*, 2.2.52-3), and had praised Pollius' fashioning of lawn, gardens and palatial house out of what had once been mere wilderness (*Silvae*, 2.2.54-8)' (Larson 2019: 289-290).

²¹⁸ For more on Pliny the Younger's villa at Tusculum, see *Epistles* 5.6.

²¹⁹ *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-4111>.

²²⁰ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 7, 2 March 1784–25 February 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 584–586).

Palladio's La Rotonda was not only one of his most widely recognised villas but was also the chief design from which Jefferson modelled his own buildings. Inspired by the Pantheon, the La Rotonda sits on a square plan flanked by loggias. Instead of an oculus, however, La Rotonda is decorated with a cupola. In the centre of the main square emerges the dome with skylight windows to encourage sunlight. The four façades are decorated each with a pediment, which sits on top of six Ionic columns.²²¹ Each pediment is decorated with three statues of classical gods on top. Palladio wrote on the details of La Rotonda, which is worth quoting in full:

Of all the Temples which are to be seen in Rome, none is more famous than the Pantheon, at present call'd the Rotonda; nor indeed that is more intire, seeing it appears almost in its original State, as to what regards the Fabrick, but stript of all it Statues and other Ornaments. According to the opinion of some, it was built by Marcus Agrippa, about the 14th Year of Christ; but I am apt to believe, that the body of the Temple was erected in the time of the Republick, and that Agrippa only added the Portico to it, which may be concluded from the two frontons in the front of it. This Temple was call'd the Pantheon, either because, after Jupiter, it was consecrated to all the Gods; or, as others will have it, because it bears the figure of the World, or is round. The height of it from the floor to the opening at the top, (whence it receives all its light) is the diameter of its breadth from one Wall to the other: and as People go down to the floor, so anciently they ascended to it by some Steps. Among the most famous things which we read were in this Temple, was the Statue of Minerva made of Ivory by Phidias; and another of Venus, which had in its ear for a pendant the one half of that Pearl, whereof Cleopatra dissolv'd the other half, and drunk it at Supper to surpass the liberality of Anthony. 'Tis said, that this half only of that Pearl was valu'd at 250 thousand Ducats of Gold. This whole Temple was of the Corinthian Order, as well without as within. The Bases are compounded of Attick and Ionick; and the Capitels are wrought with Olive Leaves. The Architraves, Frizes, and Cornices, have very fine Moldings, but otherwise little carving. In the thickness of the Wall are certain void spaces left quite round the Temple, both to preserve it the better against Earthquakes, and also to save expence and materials (Palladio 1742: 28).

Because the villa sits at forty-five degrees askew from the South, Palladio designed it so that all four sides would equally welcome sunlight; Palladio designed his villa according to its position under the Sun and evoked nature into the house. Views from the four façades look to the open landscape beyond, and in this way house and landscape are in harmony with each

²²¹ Palladio wrote on the La Rotonda: 'I have made Portico's to all the four fronts, under the which, and also of the hall, I have contrived rooms for the use and conveniency [*sic*] of those of the Family. The hall which is circular, and plac'd in the middle of the building, receives its light from the top' (Leoni 1715: 540).

other. Not only is the architecture itself—its form and structure—reflective of nature’s harmonious construction, (through proportion, geometry and symmetry), but Palladio designed the villa in order to invite nature inwards and to encourage views of nature outwards. Its Pantheonic design resembles a temple, with visitors ascending from the foot of the *monticello* to the spiritual site on top. Jefferson would adopt this same feature two hundred years later.

The most recognizable Palladian villa in England is Lord Burlington’s 1725 Chiswick House. Lord Burlington largely modelled Chiswick on Palladio’s La Rotonda. Chiswick’s rectangular form is flatter than La Rotonda, with a more imposing octagonal dome, and its frontal pediment is supported by Corinthian columns, versus the circular dome and Ionic columns of La Rotonda.²²² According to Ackerman, Chiswick ‘also resembles the Rotunda in function, having been intended as a place for entertainment, relaxation, study and contemplation—thus reviving the Plinian image of villa life’ (Ackerman 1990: 136).²²³ Despite its simplified exterior, Chiswick’s interior was overly ornamented and elaborate in the Baroque design, reflecting its occupant’s aristocratic status and dissolving Epicurean simplicity. Where the exterior of Chiswick adhered to Palladian purity and simplicity, the interior reflected the Baroque ornamentation of the previous century, in a way contradicting itself. Alexander Pope had this to say of Lord Burlington and his villa in his letter to him: ‘Yet thou proceed; be fallen Arts thy care,/ Erect new Wonders, and the Old repair,/ *Jones* and *Palladio* to themselves restore,/ And be whate’er Vitruvius was before’ (Pope 1731: 28).²²⁴ Despite his negative notes while visiting Chiswick during 1786, Jefferson redesigned

²²² There are many other differences between Chiswick and La Rotonda, but that is for another study, since this thesis is concerned primarily with Monticello. Moreover, despite the differences between Chiswick and La Rotonda, Chiswick was nonetheless designed with many classical motifs, particularly of the Augustan Age.

²²³ For more on the Plinian villa lifestyle, see Myers (2005).

²²⁴ Jefferson was well-read in Pope’s works, including his *Epistles*, *Essay on Man*, translations of the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, *Satires*, and others. He quoted extracts from most of the latter works in his literary commonplace book.

Monticello very similarly to Chiswick. Jefferson belonged to this direct chain of architecture from Vitruvius, used and admired by modern architects. The interior of Monticello, in contrast to Chiswick, retained that designed simplicity of Palladian tastes. Unlike the Baroque character of Chiswick's interior, which in no way resembled the purest form of nature, Jefferson brought nature indoors at Monticello, especially in the atrium, as this chapter will illustrate. Jefferson made 'his architecture attractive to the new nationalistic leaders' through his lack of ornamentation and evocation of classical naturalism (Ackerman 1990: 140).

Aside from Palladio and the Pantheon's direct influences on Monticello, Jefferson's house likewise bears great similarity to the designs in Robert Morris' 1755 *Select Architecture*.²²⁵ In the Preface to his most famous work, Morris noted that he intended *Select Architecture* to reflect the natural quality of classical architecture and lamented the neglect of classicism:

Another was, That most who have wrote on this Subject, have raised nothing but Palaces, glaring in Decoration and Dress; while the Cottage, or plain little Villa, are passed by unregarded.—Gaiety, Magnificence, the rude Gothic, or the Chinese unmeaning Stile, are the Study of our modern Architects; while Grecian and Roman Purity and Simplicity are neglected (Morris 1750).²²⁶

With Vitruvius as his guide, Morris stated that he preferred 'Plainness and Utility to Gaiety and Ornament,' and thus composed his text according to the 'harmonious Dictates which Nature and Science teach' (Morris 1750). Such elements from Lord Burlington can be seen in *Select Architecture*, Plate 43. Morris here illustrated a 'Garden House' of rectangular shape, fitted with a dome in the centre, peering over a pediment, which sits on top of an open portico

²²⁵ *Select Architecture* was first published as *Rural Architecture* five years earlier during 1750.

²²⁶ Morris defined 'Purity' as it was understood 'in its original State, when the Art was perfected; and I think this may be traced, and proved to have existed in Perfection in Greece, above two thousand Years since, and long before the building of Rome' (Morris 1750). He continued in his estimation of Chiswick in his *Essay Upon Harmony*, 32: 'It will be endless, to trace Harmony through all the little Clues and Labyrinths of Planting, and the nice Appropriation of Art, where little Seats, or Temples, for Beauty and Ease, and Retirement, may be placed in them. But of these, no Pattern can give a more agreeable Idea, than those of Lord Burlington at Chiswick' (Leatherbarrow 1985: 54).

supported by four Ionic columns. The façade is composed of rectangular windows and a triangular pediment rests above the central doors. Jefferson's Monticello can be described in this way, except for an octagonal dome instead of a circular one. La Rotonda used a circular dome, whereas Lord Burlington used an octagonal design, which Jefferson adopted. Moreover, Jefferson used Doric columns instead of Ionic. In addition to his classical architectural works, Morris also published an anonymous poem called (1742) *The Art of Architecture, a poem in imitation of Horace's Art of Poetry*, which Jefferson did not own. Nevertheless, Morris was primarily concerned with evoking the Classics themselves, not entirely filtered through Palladio. Jefferson's inspirations came from the filter of Palladio, surely, but he also received his classical taste from other Early Modern architects.

After his return from Europe during 1789 with new books on ancient and modern architecture, Jefferson began reconstruction on Monticello in order to build it in a new style more akin to the classical villas he visited in Europe, namely Chiswick. On his Spring 1786 Tour of English Gardens, Jefferson and John Adams first visited Chiswick.²²⁷ Jefferson's observations were less than admiring: 'Garden about 6. acres. The Octagonal dome has an ill effect, both within and without; the garden shews still too much of art; an obelisk of very ill effect. Another in the middle of a pond useless' (TJ, 2-14 April 1786).²²⁸ Jefferson remarked the 'ill effect' of its dome. Strangely enough, however, Jefferson adopted the same feature at Monticello, making it Monticello's most distinguished characteristic. Nonetheless, Chiswick made an impression upon Jefferson because soon after he returned from Europe, Jefferson redesigned Monticello largely under Lord Burlington's classical/Palladian design.

²²⁷ Jefferson's tour of the English gardens was not due to mere touristy interest or the want of fresh air to the crowded London streets. 'My enquiries,' Jefferson later wrote in his memorandum book, 'were directed chiefly to such practical things as might enable me to estimate the expence [*sic*] of making and maintaining a garden in that style' *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 369–375). Jefferson used Thomas Whatley's 1771 *Observations on Modern Gardening* during the garden tour. Whatley, however, did not describe Chiswick in his garden book.

²²⁸ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 369–375).

Jefferson re-designed Monticello to be partially open, much like the architecture in the gardens of Chiswick. Morris wrote in *An Essay in Defence of Ancient Architecture* (1728): ‘But beyond dispute, the *Grecians* were the first happy Inventers, they extracted the beauteous Ideas of it from rude and unshapen Trees, the Product of Nature, and embellish’d it, by degrees of Perfectness, with those necessary Ornaments, which have been since practised by those of the most sublime Genius’s in all Ages’ (Morris 1728: 18).²²⁹ Such was a common sentiment expressed by British philosophers and architects alike during the eighteenth century. Joshua Reynolds, for example, expressed similar sentiments that art/beauty is identical, or should be, to nature. According to Reynolds during 1776: ‘The terms beauty, or nature, which are general ideas, are but different modes of expressing the same thing, whether we apply these terms to statues, poetry, or pictures’ (Miller 1988: 104).²³⁰ Earlier in 1728, Castell wrote on the desirable connection between landscape architecture and nature, expressed through Pliny the Younger’s landscape: ‘In the *Pratulum* Nature appears in her plainest and most simple Dress; such as the first Builders were contented with about their *Villas*, when the Face of the Ground itself happened to be naturally beautiful. [...] if the Ornaments of Gardens are allow’d to be only Imitations of Nature Productions’ (Castell 1728:116-18).²³¹ Palladio touched upon this sentiment during the sixteenth century, writing: ‘*L’Architettura imitatrice della natura*’ (Kimball 1916: 23).

In order for Monticello to more closely resemble the temples of Antiquity, Jefferson hid the upper storey of the house as an optical illusion, hid the central staircase, and

²²⁹ The exhaustive title reads: *An essay in defence of ancient architecture, or, A parallel of the ancient buildings with the modern: shewing the beauty and harmony of the former, and the irregularity of the latter; with impartial reflections on the reasons of the abuses introduced by our present builders; to which is annexed an inspectional table, universally useful; illustrated with sixteen copper-plates.*

²³⁰ Reynolds (1776).

²³¹ Castell observes that villas should be accompanied by surrounding gardens, for they complement each other and should be regarded and understood in tandem with one another.

elongated the width of the house.²³² In his notes on the ‘Orders of Architecture’, Jefferson cited inspiration from the Temple of Fortuna Virilis and the ‘attic pilaster of the Temple of Nerva Trajan,’ in addition to mentioning the columnar orders from Palladio eight times.²³³ The Dome of the Pantheon, La Rotonda, Chiswick and Monticello can be understood as attempts in which to accomplish this architectural goal. Jefferson designed his Dome to be modelled on the most recognised temple of ancient Rome, the Pantheon. During 1805, Jefferson wrote to Benjamin Henry Latrobe on the Capitol’s dome, which he compared to his own Dome at Monticello, referring to La Rotonda:

[T]he appearance of the dome might be a little lightened by windows in the stile [*sic*] of those of Armerico’s house in Palladio. I know that the method proposed in your letter for keeping out the sun would be effectual & convenient, because I have hit on the identical devise for my skylights. the string with me, is fixed to the upper end of the bar, & a weight to the lower end. besides this however, my blinds open back on hinges as in the winter we want both the light & warmth of the sun (TJ to Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 8 September 1805).²³⁴

Jefferson’s classical connection to antiquity in his architecture was a lifetime pursuit, even while he served as President. Of all the architectural features of Monticello, its Dome most closely resembles the Pantheon, La Rotonda and Chiswick. It is the feature of the Dome that best connects Monticello to the classical forms of nature in architecture, and illustrates the lineage of the Dome, from Rome to Jefferson’s home. In this we can see the ‘historical evolution of ancient forms’ (Ackerman 1990: 99).

The next classical design feature that Jefferson included at Monticello were its columns. The columns of the West Portico are in the Doric order. During construction, Jefferson even used real tulip poplar trees as stand-ins for the columns until he could find a suitable stonemason. According to Augustus John Foster, a British diplomat who visited

²³² According to Ramsay in (1762) *A Dialogue on Taste*: ‘The present taste in architecture was formed, not upon the palaces and dwelling-houses of the ancient Greeks and Romans, of which there were no vestiges at the revival of the arts, but upon their temples and other public buildings, from which the ornamental part has been borrowed and applied to domestic use...’ (Brown 2018: 19).

²³³ See Kimball 1916: fig. 146.

²³⁴ More on the Capitol will be explored in the next chapter.

Monticello during 1807: ‘The house has two porticos of the Doric order, though one of them was not quite completed, and the pediment had in the meanwhile to be supported on the stems of four tulip trees, which are really, when well grown, as beautiful as the fluted shafts of Corinthian pillars’ (Peterson 1989: 37). Where Jefferson opted for the more ‘masculine’ order, Palladio used the Ionic order for La Rotonda, and Lord Burlington included the Corinthian. For the Doric order, Vitruvius wrote in book 1 of *De Architectura*: ‘The temples of Minerva, Mars, and Hercules, will be Doric, since the virile strength of these gods makes daintiness entirely inappropriate to their houses’ (Morgan 1960: 5, 13-7).²³⁵ Writing to James Madison during that infamous year of 1800, Jefferson discussed column-making, with references to Palladio and Chiswick’s Lord Burlington:

Mr. Anthony tells me there is a guinea & a half for every print of J. Trumbul’s to be paid by those subscribers who paid half on subscribing. Your prints are not sent here. He supposes them sent to some place in Virginia. I have wished very much to see La Trobe in order to consult him as to a coating for your columns. But it has not been in my power. I spoke on the subject with W. Hamilton of the Woodlands who has skill & experience on the subject. From him I got only that common plaister [*sic*] would not do. He whitewashes his brickwork. In Ld. Burlington’s edition of Palladio he tells us that most of the columns of those fine buildings erected by Palladio are of brick covered with stucco, & stand perfectly. I know that three fourths of the houses in Paris are covered with plaister [*sic*] & never saw any decay in it. I never enquired into it’s composition; but as they have a mountain of plaister [*sic*] of Paris adjoining the town, I presume it to be of that. I imagine a coat of the thickness of a knife blade would do on brick, which would cost little. I presume your plaisterer Wash could do it well (TJ to James Madison, 12 May 1800).²³⁶

Jefferson adopted this method of column-making himself, and wrote an identical observation to the American architect, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, four years later on the U.S. Capitol.

Not only in terms of architecture did Jefferson emphasise the connections between Monticello and antiquity. While serving as the American Ambassador to France from 1784-89, Jefferson often longed for the mountains of Virginia. Writing to the Anglo-Italian artist Maria Cosway during 1786, Jefferson tried to persuade the young artist to accompany him to

²³⁵ Jefferson referenced Vitruvius circa 1775 while planning on Doric columns at Monticello in a paper fragment displayed in Kimball 1916: fig. 93.

²³⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 31, 1 February 1799–31 May 1800 (Oberg, B. 2004: 579–580).

his landscape. From ‘The Falling spring, the Cascade of Niagara, the Passage of the Potowmac thro the Blue mountains, [and to] the Natural bridge,’ Jefferson attempted to encourage Cosway to come to Virginia with her artistic sensibilities (TJ to Maria Cosway, 12 October 1786).²³⁷ In his famous romantic letter to Cosway, the *Head and Heart Dialogue*, Jefferson expressed his sentimental thoughts on his sublime visions of Virginia:

It is worth a voiage across the Atlantic to see these objects; much more to paint, and make them, and thereby ourselves, known to all ages. And our own dear Monticello, where has nature spread so rich a mantle under the eye? mountains, forests, rocks, rivers. With what majesty do we there ride above the storms! How sublime to look down into the workhouse of nature, to see her clouds, hail, snow, rain, thunder, all fabricated at our feet! And the glorious Sun, when rising as if out of a distant water, just gilding the tops of the mountains, and giving life to all nature! (TJ to Maria Cosway, 12 October 1786).²³⁸

This passage is remarkable for what it reveals about Jefferson’s imagination.²³⁹ Through this passage, Jefferson expressed the process of life-giving and world-making. Jefferson’s reader was able to participate in the actions of nature, to the unfolding of birth and re-birth of the earth’s lifecycle. Jefferson observed from up high the earth’s facial features: stone, flora, water. He observed the textures, smells, sensations and sounds of nature’s activity—the implied feeling of cool rain, the noise of thunder (and its accompanied shocks and fears), and the loud fall of hail. Jefferson called this layer of atmosphere nature’s ‘workhouse,’ as if nature were an ancient goddess building the troposphere with her divine tools of craftsmanship.²⁴⁰ In his horse-drawn chariot (carriage), Jefferson imagined himself riding

²³⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 10, 22 June–31 December 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 443–455).

²³⁸ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 10, 22 June–31 December 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 443–455).

²³⁹ Larson observes that: ‘Jefferson’s description of himself as ‘rid[ing] above the storms’ with ‘majesty’, seemed designed to conjure up Homer’s picture of Zeus seated on Mount Olympus, where (in Pope’s translation) ‘no rude winds presume to shake the skies,/ No rains descend, no snowy vapours rise’ (*Odyssey* Bk VI, 51-2)’ (Larson 2019: 289).

²⁴⁰ Larson further observes of Peter Collinson, who had a similar experience himself: ‘in 1764, the English botanist Peter Collinson, who had recently retired from his London wool-trading business, described his hilltop retirement home in a letter to his similarly retired American correspondent Cadwallader Colden, stressing that ‘from its High Elevation’ he could ‘Look 40 or 50 Miles round Mee on the Busie Vain World below’ and ‘with a Pious Mind filled with admiration [...] contemplate the Glorious Constellations above, and the Wonders in the Vegitable Tribes below’ (Larson 2019: 291).

above the processes and products of nature's—that is, his—workmanship, as a combination of Jupiter and Vulcan. Riding above the earth, Jefferson envisioned himself experiencing the morning Sun gift his rays and warmth to the flora and fauna below. This was Jefferson's imagined world, much like Ovid's Golden Age in *Metamorphoses* 1.54-56: *illic et nebulas, illic consistere nubes/ iussit et humanas motura tonitura mentes/ et cum fluminibus facientes fulgura ventos* (Goold 1916: 6).²⁴¹ Like Jefferson's divine craftswoman, Nature, Ovid sees his Creator curate the clouds in the *caelum*, place the frightening thunder amongst them, and engage the winds to produce thunder and lightning. Like Jefferson, Ovid describes the sky and its terrifying, weatherly formation. As an empiricist, Jefferson placed vision at the forefront of his world. Such a vision of overcoming storms is a common theme in Roman Epicureanism, as seen especially in Statius' *Silvae* 2.2 139-146 in which he writes: 'Others in their turn are tossed upon that ocean, but your bark has made safe harbour and tranquil rest, unshaken. So continue, nor ever send your ship into our storms: her voyaging is over'.²⁴² This scene of riding calmly above the storm is most famous in the opening of book 2 of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, in which the Epicurean writes: 'Pleasant it is, when on the great sea the winds trouble the waters [...] Pleasant is it also to behold great encounters of warfare arrayed over the plains, with no part of yours in the peril' (Henderson 1992: 94-95).²⁴³ These passages and this sentiment are aligned with the sublime, which was a theme in Roman Epicureanism and was gaining popularity during Jefferson's time as well.

Jefferson encouraged Cosway to 'see these objects' and to 'look down into the workhouse of nature.' Timothy Saunders, in *Bucolic Ecology* (2008), notes a similar feature in Virgil's second *Eclogue* where Corydon paints a landscape of bucolic bliss for Alexis: 'the

²⁴¹ 'There did the creator bid the mists and clouds to take their place, and thunder, that should shake the hearts of men, and winds which procure lightening and thunderbolts' (Goold 1916: 6-7).

²⁴² *Illo alii rursus iactantur in alto, sed tua securos portus placidamque quietem intravit non quassa ratis. Sic perge, nec umquam emeritam in nostras puppem demitte procellas*, (Bailey 2003: 134-135).

²⁴³ *Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis [...] suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli* (Henderson 1992: 94).

offering over of this image of the natural world to Alexis also casts the object of Corydon's affections somewhat in the role of a god, at whose coming that world blossoms into life' (Saunders 2008: 119). A parallel explanation can be seen in Jefferson's letter addressed to Cosway in which he used the pronouns 'ourselves,' 'we' and 'our.' Jefferson intended to gift Cosway this scene of Virginia, to present her an object of study so that she can paint it, thus rendering the scene everlasting. With his use of first-person pronouns, moreover, Jefferson took ownership of the unfolding scene—it was his, it was theirs, their world. Importantly for his world-making, Jefferson described movement and action within this letter. He explained that nature 'spread so rich a mantle under the eye' and the Sun was 'giving life to all nature!' Jefferson encouraged Cosway to paint (if possible) such a divine sight in order to make the goings-on in the sky 'known to all ages.' Through the ekphrasis, Jefferson hoped to preserve his sublime visions into perpetuity so that all who knew him and all who see the painting will understand that this was Jefferson's mountain-seat, that this was Jefferson's home and landscape. In this vision, Jefferson hoped to secure his grandeur and participation in creation. Additionally, Jefferson had his own relationship with the sublime at the Natural Bridge, beyond just the villa.

After finally reaching to sixty-five and a half metres above ground, which 'few men have resolution to walk,' Thomas Jefferson fell to his hands and feet (Abernethy 1964: 21). Slowly, he crept along the rocky parapet of the stone bridge, peeping cautiously over it. As he looked over the cliff edge, Jefferson was overcome with a violent headache, both painful and intolerable. This painful view from up high and down below was what Jefferson called: 'so beautiful an arch, so elevated, so light, and springing as it were up to Heaven!' (Abernethy 1964: 21).²⁴⁴ Jefferson felt the sublime rapture from viewing such an 'awful' sight, the

²⁴⁴ 'Though the sides of this bridge are provided in some parts with a parapet of fixed rocks, yet few men have resolution to walk to them, and look over into the abyss. You involuntarily fall on your hands and feet, and creep to the parapet, and peep over it. Looking down from this height about a minute, gave me a violent headache. If the view from the top be painful and intolerable, that from below is delightful in an equal extreme. It is

Natural Bridge. While gazing into endless space, whether from standing on a cliff edge, reading euphoric prose, or gazing at a painted landscape, one feels pleasure while being overcome with ‘impending danger’ and calm.²⁴⁵ In *The Lure of the Sea* (1995), historian Alain Corbin observes similar sublime experiences when coupling the art of nature with contemplation and sublime feeling: ‘Henceforth, his glance would be cast upon the horizon as he endeavoured to size up the incommensurable. The institution of such a model of appreciation was a historic event: the changes had begun that would lead to the Romantic model of contemplation’ (Corbin 1995: 126).

The Natural Bridge in Rockbridge County, Virginia, which now belongs to the State of Virginia, once belonged to our Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson began his inquiry into purchasing the Natural Bridge during 1773, and he received the rocky bridge the next year. Jefferson wrote his ecphrastic observations and recollections of the Natural Bridge largely in the language of the sublime. In his intellectual and scientific treatise, the *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson wrote that the *Natural Bridge* is ‘the most sublime of nature’s works’ (Abernethy 1964: 21). Jefferson experienced a ‘sublime moment’ atop the rocky structure, what Alain Corbin called the ‘emotions in the soul that create sublime moments’ (Corbin 1995: 128). Atop this vertiginous rocky arch, Jefferson’s nature shock threw him into an experience both frightening and heavenly. Corbin continued that ‘The sight of the incommensurable forces man to experience his finite nature; it arouses passions in his soul in which the aesthetics of the sublime take root’ (Corbin 1995: 127).²⁴⁶ Through the terror of death from almost falling off arrives a beautiful moment, a sublime moment. Jefferson wrote:

impossible for the emotions arising from the sublime to be felt beyond what they are here; so beautiful an arch, so elevated, so light, and springing as it were up to heaven! The rapture of the spectator is really indescribable!’ (Abernethy 1964: 21).

²⁴⁵ Quoted from Longinus, *On the Sublime*, who comments on *Iliad* 15.624-8, 203.

²⁴⁶ Likewise, in her discussion in *Rome and the Literature of Gardens* (2006), Pagan noted that ‘The garden, with its clearly defined boundary, invites transgression that yields transformation. The undeniable beauty of the garden induces a trance-like reverie from which the author, caught up in describing the garden’s pleasures, may recall himself back to the task at hand’ (Pagan 2006: 121).

‘It is impossible for the emotions arising from the sublime to be felt beyond what they are here’ (Abernethy 1964: 21). Corbin argues that the sublime is likened to aesthetics. When Jefferson wrote on the sublime, (by naming it and not only evoking it), but he also highlighted the beauty of the scene. The evocation of the sublime morphs the *Notes* from a piece of topography into a piece of ecphrastic writing. Jefferson used specific words in the *Notes* that accompany the indescribable nature of the sublime. Jefferson did not only paint a picture of the landscape, but he also painted *his* picture of it, his interpretation and appreciation. We can therefore regard Jefferson’s experience as open to interpretation. In Query IV, Jefferson wrote: ‘The passage of the Potomac through the Blue Ridge is, perhaps, one of the most stupendous scenes in nature’ (Abernethy 1964: 16).

This is continued in Jefferson’s ecphrastic description of mountains in Query IV of the *Notes* in which he vividly describes his native landscape, much in the way of Statius’s opening in *Silvae* 2.2. Jefferson’s descriptions of landscape in Query IV read like the prose of a writer experiencing a landscape. Jefferson did not only paint a picture of the landscape, but he also painted *his* picture, his interpretation and appreciation. We can therefore regard Jefferson’s ‘picture’ as an artwork in it and of itself, open to interpretation. ‘The passage of the Potomac through the Blue Ridge is, perhaps, one of the most *stupendous scenes* in nature,’ wrote Jefferson in the *Notes* (Abernethy 1964: 16).²⁴⁷ Here, Jefferson set up for the viewer an image of his landscape as if he were setting up his easel. He did not merely describe the scene, he painted it. Jefferson continued: ‘You stand on a *very high point* of land. On your right comes up the Shenandoah, having ranged along the foot of the mountain an hundred miles to seek a vent. On your left approaches the Potomac, in quest of a passage also’ (Abernethy 1964: 16). Jefferson placed the reader into the scene with him through his use of pronouns: *you* and *your*. ‘In the moment of their junction,’ Jefferson continued, ‘they

²⁴⁷ All italicised words are of my own doing in order to emphasise Jefferson’s ecphrastic language.

rush together against the mountain, rend it asunder, and pass off to the sea.' Jefferson here brought in the element of the sublime into his painted image. We journey with him to and in the sublime moment of rivers crashing into each other, forcefully hitting the mountain, then gliding off into the sea. Such images were purely from Jefferson's own imagination, for he himself did not witness these violent acts of Nature done millennia before; he imagined them and painted the image for us to visualize and experience. He continued his sublime imaginings on the rivers: 'that continuing to rise they have at length broken over at this spot, and have *torn the mountain down from its summit* to its base. The piles of rock on each hand, but particularly on the Shenandoah, the evident marks of their *disrupture and avulsion from their beds by the most powerful agents of nature*, corroborate the impression' (Abernethy 1964: 16-17). Continuing in the strain of the sublime which pairs terror with awe, Jefferson used an artistic vocabulary to illustrate Nature's scene, which was at once calming and tremendous.

Additionally, Jefferson used an eighteenth-century ecphrastic word that most emulated art and nature: picturesque. While describing the landscape of the Rhone during 1787, Jefferson blended his use of 'picturesque' and the sublime:

Nature never formed a country of more savage aspect than that on both sides the Rhone. A *huge torrent, rushing* like an arrow between high precipices often of *massive rock*, at other times of loose stone with but little earth. Yet has the hand of man *subdued this savage scene*, by planting corn where there is a little fertility, trees where there is still less, and vines where there is none. On the whole, it assumes a *romantic, picturesque* and pleasing air. The hills on the opposite side of the river, being high, steep, and laid up in terrasses, are of a singular appearance. Where the hills are quite in waste, they are covered with broom, whins, box, and some clusters of small pines.²⁴⁸

Jefferson was here participating in the 18th-century trend of evoking and observing the picturesque and the sublime, moving toward the emotiveness of Romanticism.

²⁴⁸ Emphases are my own in order to illustrate Jefferson's use of sublime language and the picturesque. Jefferson, T. (1787), 'Notes of a Tour into the Southern Parts of France, &c.'

Poplar Forest



(Photos: Alley Marie Jordan. Poplar Forest, back and front views)

After the reconstruction of Monticello and before he designed the University of Virginia, Jefferson built a personal villa specifically for retirement, Poplar Forest. Jefferson began construction on Poplar Forest during 1806 as a secluded house surrounded by forests and mountains. Jefferson's octagonal villa was largely based on plates 31 and 32 in Robert Morris' *Select Architecture*, though with modifications to suit Jefferson's interests. Jefferson opted out of a dome on top of his octagon and included a basement level. Additionally, Jefferson kept his signature Doric columns, versus Morris' Ionic. Despite other modifications, the general shape and appearance of Poplar Forest closely resembles Morris' octagon. Poplar Forest adheres to geometrical purity, but also functions in order to maximise sunlight, as in the dining room. Reminiscent of a temple in design, Jefferson modified his structure to function in order to live in, rather than worship in, as a temple. Unlike the circle or square (more traditionally classical and Palladian), Jefferson designed his own geometric villa still based on the same principles of architectural purity put forth by Vitruvius and Palladio, but with a distinctively Jeffersonian creativity. An octagon, furthermore, presents a circle to the eye by still allowing each edge to have a window, which is more difficult to

construct with a circle. Jefferson's modern appropriation of the classical circle allows a more intimate engagement with nature by encouraging sunlight and views of the gardens beyond.²⁴⁹

The central room of Poplar Forest still retained the Doric order. Jefferson directly copied the frieze within from the Baths of Diocletian. According to Jefferson: 'You are right...those of the Baths of Diocletian are all human faces.... But in my middle room at Poplar Forest I mean to mix the faces and ox-skulls. ... I can indulge in my own case, although in a public work I feel bound to follow authority strictly' (TJ to William Coffee, 10 July 1822).²⁵⁰ Of Diocletian, Jefferson owned a print of what he called 'the Diocletian Portico.' According to Susan Stein, 'Much of the drawing for this study had been accomplished by Clérissseau. The work that Jefferson owned, now lost, may have been an inedited plate or drawing given by Clérissseau to Jefferson or an entirely different work' (Stein 1993: 84). The association with Diocletian in architecture was a significant metaphor for villa dwellers in both the Italian Renaissance and eighteenth century. According to Holberton on Diocletian during the Italian Renaissance:

In the sixteenth century the same sentiments recur, though usually transposed on to classical precedents. Taegio praises Diocletian, 'that very wise and very powerful emperor, who, since he well recognized and understood the toils of ruling, retired to private life, and at Salone [that is, Split] in a villa of his in Slavia used to plant shoots with his own hand, and never could be induced by plea or circumstance to depart from that firm and brave resolution, preferring the glorious tranquillity of that private life to the turbulent and stormy greatnesses of empire and command.' In Agostinetti's treatise on agriculture published in the early seventeenth century this commonplace has become particularly silly: 'The Emperor Diocletian, having renounced the Empire, retired to his villa at Spalato, which he had chosen for his enjoyment. When the Roman Senate sent ambassadors to call him back to the throne, he replied, "Did it seem to them honourable, that one who had planted and dug out these tender lettuces should leave them to go back to the uproar of Rome?"' (Holberton 1990: 153).

Jefferson aligned himself with this popular train of thought and inspiration.

²⁴⁹ See McLaughlin 1988: 61.

²⁵⁰ "From Thomas Jefferson to William John Coffee, 10 July 1822," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-2943>.

Jefferson's retirement villa assumes a natural taste through its odd, irregular shape and its placement surrounded by woodlands and farms. The red brick Jefferson used to build the house came from his natural environment, with its natural texture and colour. Even though Monticello and Poplar Forest are geometric villas, their placement within the wild landscape still places Jefferson's houses in a rural setting, living in tandem with nature. As an architect in a rural landscape, Jefferson was particularly sensitive to the relationship between classical architecture and nature.

As for interior design, in his notes on the 'Orders of the Rooms' (ca. 1771), Jefferson noted that the parlour of the first Monticello was to be in the Corinthian according to Palladio; the dining room in Doric; the chambers in Ionic according to Palladio's Temple of Fortuna Virilis; the study in Ionic; the attic according to Palladio's 'Temple of Nerva Trajan'; and the south octagon in Tuscan 'according to Palladio' (Kimball 1916: fig. 88).²⁵¹ Of all references to classical architecture at Monticello, Jefferson consistently referred to Palladio's drawing of the Temple of Fortuna Virilis in Rome. In his notes entitled 'Dressing room, or Chambers', Jefferson referenced an Ionic order 'from Palladio's temple of Fortuna virilis,' with the 'Frieze ornaments as in Palladio's' (Kimball 1916: fig. 85). The frieze in his room was based on the Temple of Fortuna Virilis in Rome, seen in Plate IV of Desgodetz's (1779) *Les Edifices Antiques de Rome*. There is a sense here of Jefferson looking beyond Palladio to the classical inheritance that Palladio utilised. In the parlour, Jefferson designed the entablature from Desgodetz's *Les Edifices Antiques de Rome*, modelled on the Temple of Vespasian. The entablature depicts bucrania, sacrificial tools and decorated amphorae. In his notes on the 'Windows of Parlours', Jefferson noted that the door of the parlour should be from plate 38 no. 3 from Gibbs, 'but the proportions of columns to be taken from Palladio'

²⁵¹ As mentioned earlier, Jefferson redesigned Monticello after his return from France during 1789. His workers demolished the upper storey during 1796, built the Dome during 1800, and added pavilions during 1806.

(Kimball 1916: fig. 73). In nearly every room of Monticello, Jefferson mixed classical styles from modern architects. In the Entrance Hall, for example, Jefferson designed a section of the wall with a frieze modelled on the temple of Antonius and Faustina, of which he knew through plate IV of Desgodetz's *Antiques de Rome*. Jefferson's interior designs illustrate his knowledge of classical history, but also 'place[s] Monticello within the context of the universe and natural world' (Stein 1993: 63). Jefferson's Entrance Hall is still called the first greatest art collection in America, especially if it was executed according to his inventory.²⁵² Jefferson brought with him from France eighty boxes of furniture, 'making it incomparable in America up to that time' (Adams 1976: xxxiv). Jefferson's interest in Roman temple architecture was surprisingly religious, but they served as symbolic decorations for his interests in nature and the Classics. As explored throughout this chapter, Jefferson's classicism was not merely decorative. Jefferson justified his villa lifestyle 'and the wealth that makes it possible by giving it transcendent meaning,' as Myers argues in her article, "'Doctia Otia': Garden Ownership and Configurations of Leisure in Statius and Pliny the Younger', about Statius and Pliny's attempts during the Empire, referring to the *docta otia* of Statius *Silvae* 1.3.108 and Pliny's *studiosum otium* in *Epistulae* 1.22.11 (Myers 2005: 103). This retired lifestyle of learned leisure was particularly attractive when measured against Jefferson's political past, much like Statius' patrons.²⁵³ As the pastoral tradition cannot be

²⁵² More on art will be explored below.

²⁵³ According to Larson, who mentions Horace: 'Behind these contemporary literary explorations of retirement lay classical, especially Roman, literary glorifications of it, based on a formula that juxtaposed the simplicity and honesty of the countryside with the 'luxury' and corruption of the city, familiar to Jefferson via the classical education he had received as a male member of the Virginia gentry. Aside from the writings of Horace and the ancient philosophers that Jefferson explicitly mentioned in connection with this formula, there were others that he knew and kept in his library. In particular, the contemplative life led by Roman gentlemen in lavish hilltop country villas of the Imperial age, celebrated by prose writer Pliny the Younger and poets Martial and Statius, was important in inspiring a manner of country-house living, revived in the Renaissance and perpetuated into the eighteenth century, that helped define Jefferson's vision of himself at 'Monticello'. As this name finally settled on by Jefferson suggests, the mountainous location of his house was key to the message he sent by building it there' (Larson 2019: 287).

seen without regarding the *urbs*, so cannot *otium* be seen without its contrast, *negotium*.²⁵⁴ So it was for Statius too: ‘the qualities of the landscape and architecture allude to the virtues of the owners (<*stagna*>...*dominique imitantia mores*, 2.2.29)’ (Myers 2005: 107).

Landscape Architecture



(Photo: Alley Marie Jordan. Mound at Poplar Forest)

The mound ‘Mount Parnassus’ at the Villa Medici in Rome stands twenty metres high and is rumoured to have been built on top of a third-century AD temple, which helped form the mound. Alexander Pope had his own mound Parnassus at Twickenham, which Jefferson would have experienced during his Garden Tour of 1786. According to myth, Mount Parnassus stood as the mountain of Apollo and the Muses, below which Delphi stood, home

²⁵⁴ Indeed, this thesis on taste and *otium* is itself written in response to the sheer volume written on Jefferson’s affairs in *negotium*.

of the Oracle.²⁵⁵ Upon the mountain sprung the spring within the Castalian grotto.²⁵⁶ Mount Parnassus served as a significant symbol for Jefferson's landscape and the vision of himself that he painted. As this section will illustrate, Jefferson reflected on the idea of Monticello as Mount Parnassus, curating his landscape and reflecting upon it as a classical site of inspiration, a *village perché*. In an 1807 letter written to his granddaughter, Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge, Jefferson called Monticello an American Parnassus. His letter even included the presence of the nine Muses atop his antique hill:

[O]ur newspapers have been rather barren in that ware for some time past. whether the muses have been taking a nap, or our news writers have been prevented from making their weekly visits to mount Parnassus, by their occupations with Burr & the Chesapeake I cannot decide. but we will leave these idle ladies to their dreams in the Castalian valley, & descend to the more useful region & occupations of the good housewife, one of whom is worth more than the whole family of the muses (TJ to Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge, 29 June 1807).²⁵⁷

In his grandiloquent description of Monticello as Parnassus, Jefferson here mentioned the 'Castalian valley,' which is in reference to the Pleistos River near Mount Parnassus, from which the Castalian Spring emerges. Jefferson's connection between his own landscape and that of antiquity echoes mythological scenes and consecrates Monticello as an American site of classical myth. In another letter written to his granddaughter from his Mount Parnassus the following year, Jefferson also referenced his inspiration from the Muses: 'altho' you have been long silent, the muses have been uncommonly loquacious. they have enabled me to send you three of their effusions which do not want merit' (TJ to Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge, 20 December 1808).²⁵⁸ The term 'villa' in this sense refers not only to the

²⁵⁵ See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.313-47.

²⁵⁶ See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.1-49.

²⁵⁷ *The Family Letters of Thomas Jefferson* (Bear and Betts 1966: 310).

²⁵⁸ "From Thomas Jefferson to Ellen Wayles Randolph Coolidge, 20 December 1808," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-9354>.

Jefferson was not alone in calling his villa the home of the Muses. The Scottish painter and author of 'An Enquiry into the Situation and Circumstances of Horace's Sabine Villa Written During Travels through Italy in the Years 1775, 76, and 77', Allan Ramsay, likewise called his Horatian home in Edinburgh the 'House of the Muses' (Brown 2018: 18). This common theme amongst British writers and Jefferson further seeds his place amongst the Classicism of eighteenth-century Britain.

architecture, but the house's use as well. The connection between Monticello and Parnassus as the mountain of the god's house is further seeded by Richard Rush's observation that Jefferson was like a mountain-dwelling god, Jove, (though not Apollo) atop his mountain seat. That Jefferson named his hilltop home 'Monticello' recalls the Parnassian garden features of the Italian Renaissance, whose designers referred to a rustic little mountain as a *monticello*.²⁵⁹ On the gardens of the Villa d'Este, for example, Cellauro writes:

The Pegasus on the artificial mount above the river gods and the Tivoli fountain has been interpreted as an allusion to d'Este and his patronage of the arts, although it could allude to the hill town of Tivoli as a new Parnassus, whose woods and waters would inspire scholars and poets of d'Este's literary circle as it had once the great minds of Greece (Cellauro 2003: 45).

Jefferson's reference to Monticello as Parnassus could also allude to his perspective that Virginia was a new Parnassus, which would call artists and poets to his landscape, as he illuminated in his 1825 letter to Alfred W. Elwes and his earlier letter to Cosway. Indeed, Jefferson attempted to bring artists to Virginia in order to represent its sublime scenery, especially that of the Natural Bridge, which Jefferson owned. During 1791, Jefferson wrote to the artist John Trumbull on the picturesque characteristics of the Natural Bridge.²⁶⁰

Jefferson was particularly keen to have an artist represent the sublime structure. Jefferson wrote:

There I hope it will meet you in good health, and resolved to return by the way of the Natural bridge. Remember you will never be so near it again, and take to yourself and your country the honor of presenting to the world this singular landscape, which otherwise some bungling European will misrepresent (TJ to John Trumbull, 20 February 1791).²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ See Cellauro (2003): 1, 44.

²⁶⁰ On her terrifying carriage ride with Jefferson, winding down his mountain, Margaret Bayard Smith noted of her experience in the landscape and Jefferson's plans for it: 'Notwithstanding the terror I suffered I would not have lost this ride; as Mr. J. explained to me all his plans for improvement, where the roads, the walks, the seats, the little temples were to be placed. There are two springs gushing from the mountainside; he took me to one which might be made very picturesque' *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 1, 4 March 1809 to 15 November 1809 (Looney, J. 2004: 386–401).

²⁶¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 19, 24 January–31 March 1791 (Boyd, J. 1974: 298–301).



(Photo: Alley Marie Jordan, 'The Natural Bridge' 2018)

Trumbull's potential representation of the Natural Bridge reflected a sort of national identity and honour for Jefferson, much like a national monument. Years later during his retirement in 1809, Jefferson similarly encouraged the British-born architect, Benjamin Henry Latrobe to sketch Monticello, as he had encouraged Maria Cosway and Trumbull to paint it. Unlike the artificial mounds of the Italian aristocracy, Jefferson did not have to create artificial mountains, groves and springs because his landscape already provided such natural ornaments, which were not available to the villa owners of the Italian Renaissance and Georgian England. According to Jefferson, 'Gardens. [are] peculiarly worth the attention of an American, because it is the country of all others where the noblest gardens may be made without expence [*sic*]. we have only to cut out the superabundant plants' (TJ 'Hints to

Americans Travelling in Europe’, 19 June 1788).²⁶² Unlike his Renaissance predecessors, Jefferson did not have to over-ornament his landscape in order to evoke sentiments on ancient myth and poetry—his natural, wild landscape spoke for itself. Unlike such villa gardens as the Villas d’Este in Tivoli and Rome, Jefferson’s landscape rested in the relatively untamed wilderness, unaffected by culture and civilisation for millennia, whereas the gardens in and around Rome had been built in used soil from antiquity to modernity. Jefferson’s *monticello*, as he understood it, retained the spirit of antiquity more than the over-ornamentation of the Italians, French and English ever could. America was still ancient and still mythological.

Although Monticello is not an artificial mound, as at Twickenham, he nevertheless created artificial mounds at his retirement villa, Poplar Forest. Poplar Forest covers sixty-one acres of an enclosed, ornamented landscape, which Jefferson called a ‘curtilage’. According to Palladio, a house should be situated between two architectural pavilions, which Jefferson supplanted with nature, namely a row of Mulberry trees (wings) and two grassy mounds (pavilions). As discussed earlier, mounds were a popular design feature in early modern landscape architecture due to their associations with the classical mountains Parnassus and Helicon. Jefferson’s mounds could be seen through the Palladian lens of pavilions, but they can also be understood through the common practice of mound-making in order to fill a garden with classical mountains, reflecting the position of Arcadia within a mountainscape.

Where the front of Poplar Forest is wild and natural, the landscape of the back of the house is geometric and ordered, reflecting the eighteenth-century ideal that nature is both disorderly and orderly, which should be reflected in the country house and garden. At Poplar Forest, Jefferson included ‘clumps of trees,’ as made popular by Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown, which was furthered inspired by early modern landscape painting, then reinforced by

²⁶² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 13, March–7 October 1788 (Boyd, J. 1956: 264–276).

the Arcadian naturalism in classical literature. He further included a sunken lawn at the back of the house. A sunken lawn creates a *trompe-l'œil* (similar to a ha-ha) that would increase views onto the wild landscape beyond, while still confined to an ornamental garden. Jefferson witnessed such garden optical illusions at Stowe during his 1786 Garden Tour.



(Photo: Alley Marie Jordan. Monticello from the garden.)

Jefferson's landscapes at both Monticello and Poplar Forest illustrate his aestheticization of nature in the classical language of design. His houses were designed with careful attention to proportion and geometry that he planned for decades. His landscapes included farms and ornamental gardens that were at once productive and pastoral. During her visit to Monticello during 1809, Margaret Bayard Smith recorded Jefferson's relationship to his landscape: 'As we walked, he [Jefferson] explained his future designs. "My long absence

from this place, has left a wilderness around me.” “But you have returned,” said I, “and the wilderness shall blossom like the rose and you, I hope, will long sit beneath your own vine and your own fig-tree” (Smith 1809). These pastoral allusions help to illustrate both Smith’s observations of Jefferson at Monticello and Jefferson’s own vision of himself. Both house and garden rested in the sublime landscape of wild Virginia. ‘What nature has done for us,’ wrote Jefferson to Latrobe during 1809, ‘is sublime and unique’ (TJ to Latrobe, 10 October 1809).²⁶³

Jefferson’s taste in gardening was similar to English garden design—indeed, Jefferson was a bit late to Brownian gardens. According to garden historian, John Dixon Hunt:

[T]hough Ramsay rightly guessed that Horace played down the size and luxuriousness of his farm, Horace’s poetic attacks on garish, luxurious and tasteless building would have ensured that his idea of a country estate need not be an ideal reserved for an elite of the especially wealthy. This conception of a rural estate appealed to a whole range of landowners; indeed, the more modest British country places would have been closest to his classical example, which rejects princely piles that pre-empt useful ploughing land or grandiose porticoes that lie open to the “shady north”. Incidentally, when Pope launches his attacks on Timon’s villa in “An Epistle to Lord Burlington”, he picks up both of those *topoi* from Horace’s *Odes* (2.15-18):

Tir’d of the scene Parterres and Fountains yield,
He finds at last he better like a Field.
And
Or call the winds thro’ long arcades to roar,
Proud to catch cold at a Venetian door’ (Hunt 2001: 34).²⁶⁴

Ever in line with Pope, Jefferson made similar sentiments on the gardens of Stowe:

The straight approach is very ill. The Corinthian arch has a very useless appearance, inasmuch as it has no pretension to any destination. Instead of being an object from the house, it is an obstacle to a very pleasing distant prospect. The Graecian valley being clear of trees, while the hill on each side is covered with them, is much deepened to appearance (TJ, 1786 ‘Notes on a Tour of English Gardens’).²⁶⁵

²⁶³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 1, 4 March 1809 to 15 November 1809 (Looney, J. 2004: 595–596).

²⁶⁴ See Horace *Epistle* 1.14.19 for *otium* at his villa in contrast to the *neogitium* of Rome. He characterises his villa as in a woodland (*silvae*), like Jefferson’s.

²⁶⁵ On Pope’s own garden, Jefferson had this to say: ‘Pope’s original garden 3 ½ as. Sr. Wm. Stanhope added 1 ½ acre. This is a long narrow slope, grass and trees in the middle, walk all round. Now Sr. Wellbore Ellis’s. Obelisk at bottom of Pope’s garden as monument to his mother. Inscription. Ah! Edithe matrum optuma, mulierum amantissima, Vale. The house about 30. yds. from the Thames; the ground shelves gently to the water side. On the back of the house passes the street, and beyond that the garden. The grotto is under the

All along Jefferson's tour did he (and John Adams) opt for simplicity, though enjoying the classical motifs.



(Photo: Sharesse Ann Edie. View of Monticello.)

Aside from his personal landscape representing the ideal landscapes of classical Rome, Jefferson extended his American association with antiquity to America itself and, peculiarly, to its native inhabitants. Like Greece and Rome, Carthage was an interest during the eighteenth century, especially because of its historical obscurity. According to Caroline Winterer: 'Aside from a few coins and inscriptions that only a scholar could love, few scraps of material evidence survived to fuel a neo-Carthaginian aesthetic style akin to the neoclassical, neo-Egyptian, and neo-Etruscan styles sweeping Europe and America' (Winterer 2010: 8-9). Interests, in particular Jefferson's interests, in the ancient

street, and goes out level to the water. In the center of the garden a mound with a spiral walk round it. A rookery' *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 369–375).

Mediterranean went beyond Greece and Rome to Carthage. Some eighteenth-century thinkers in Britain, France and Spain, to the chagrin of William Robertson, thought that the Carthaginians originally landed in North America, becoming Native Americans, thus giving eighteenth-century Europeans an ancient ancestry and, therefore, an ancestry of legitimacy in the Americas. Even Jefferson entertained the idea in a 1788 letter to Edward Rutledge:

You promise, in your letter of Octob. 23. 1787. to give me in your next, at large, the conjectures of your Philosopher on the descent of the Creek Indians from the Carthaginians, supposed to have been separated from Hanno's fleet during his periplus. I shall be very glad to receive them, and see nothing impossible in his conjecture. I am glad he means to appeal to the similarity of language, which I consider as the strongest kind of proof it is possible to adduce. I have somewhere read that the language of the ancient Carthaginians is still spoken by their descendants inhabiting the mountainous interior parts of Barbary to which they were obliged to retire by the conquering Arabs. If so, a vocabulary of their tongue can still be got, and if your friend will get one of the Creek language, the comparison will decide. He probably may have made progress in this business: but if he wishes any enquiries to be made on this side the Atlantic, I offer him my services chearfully [*sic*], my wish being, like his, to ascertain the history of the American aborigines (TJ to Edward Rutledge, 18 July 1788).²⁶⁶

Such a connection would, for Jefferson, make legitimate his belief in America as the ancestor to Rome and the ancient Mediterranean. It would seed his personal place in the United States and especially in the ancient world. Jefferson continued in another letter to Rutledge the next year:

The conjecture that inhabitants may have been carried from the coast of Africa to that of America by the trade winds is possible enough; and it's probability would be greatly strengthened by ascertaining a similarity of language, which I consider as the strongest of all proofs of consanguinity among nations. Still a question would remain between the red men of the Eastern and Western sides of the Atlantic, which is the stock and which the shoot? If a fact be true, which I suspect to be true, that there is a much greater number of

²⁶⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 13, March–7 October 1788 (Boyd, J. 1956: 377–379). Edward Rutledge wrote to Jefferson a year earlier, starting Jefferson's curiosity into the Indians' origins: 'You seem to consider the quarter of the Globe from whence America was peopled, and the Manner, as now reduced to a certainty. But, it is not so absolutely determined, as to preclude conjecture. A Gentleman with a great deal more learning, and a great deal more Sense than I have, is convinced that America was peopled from Carthage. He maintains that when Hanno their famous Admiral was sent out to settle Colonies, some of their Vessels mist their port of Destination, and were never able afterwards to regain it; that the Trade-Winds blew them to the Coast of America, thro' the Gulph of Mexico. In this opinion he is confirmed from the exact resemblance which he observed between the People who inhabit that Country, and the Creek Indians, the first time he saw an Indian, and from words of both, sounding alike, and conveying the same meaning. Diodorus Siculus is the Author who particularly mentions Hanno's Voyage. You have him at Hand, we have him not, and you can refer to him' (Edward Rutledge to TJ, 23 October 1787). *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 12, 7 August 1787–31 March 1788 (Boyd, J. 1955: 263–264).

radical languages among those of America, than among those of the other hemisphere, it would be a proof of superior antiquity which I can conceive no arguments strong enough to over-rule (TJ to Edward Rutledge, 18 September 1789).²⁶⁷

Jefferson was particularly interested in Carthage's blood link to the Americas due to modern commerce in the Mediterranean. He continued in this letter to Rutledge with a keen interest in rice: 'But the object of our commerce in the Mediterranean is so immense, that we ought to surmount that obstacle, and I believe it could be done by means in our power, and which instead of fouling us with the dishonorable and criminal baseness of France and England, will place us in the road to respect with all the world' (TJ to Edward Rutledge, 18 September 1789). Jefferson was concerned with the loss of language from both the ancient Mediterranean and the varied languages of American Indians. In Query XI in the *Notes on the State of Virginia*, for example, Jefferson discussed the languages of the Powhatans (the tribe of Pocahontas), Mannahoacs and Monacans among others (Abernethy 1964: 88). In the *Notes*, Jefferson did suggest possible origins of the Native Americans, such as from Greenland, which, when compared to his letters to Rutledge, illustrates his keen interest in investigating the origins of the American peoples. 'It is to be lamented then,' wrote Jefferson in the *Notes*, 'that we have suffered so many of the Indian tribes already to extinguish, without our having previously collected and deposited in the records of literature, the general rudiments at least of the languages they spoke' (Abernethy 1964: 97). Depositing such knowledge in 'all the public libraries,' argued Jefferson, would 'construct the best evidence of the derivation of this part of the human race' (Abernethy 1964: 97). Jefferson concerned himself with legitimating the antiquity of America through language. He continued in the *Notes* that 'A greater number of those radical changes of language having taken place among the red men of America, proves them of greater antiquity than those of Asia' (Abernethy 1964: 97). According to Winterer: 'Carthage reminded Americans that the ancient

²⁶⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 15, 27 March 1789–30 November 1789 (Boyd, J. 1958: 451–453).

Mediterranean, far from being a corpse to be confidently autopsied, was in fact a dynamic intellectual project to be constantly modified in light of new archaeological discoveries and philological revisions' (Winterer 2010: 7).

The Spirit of the Villa

In his 1787 *Notes of a Tour into the Southern Parts of France, &c.*, Jefferson travelled along the Italian Riviera and observed of Albenga: 'If any person wished to retire from their acquaintance, to live absolutely unknown, and yet in the midst of physical enjoiments [*sic*], it should be in some of the little villages of this coast, where air, earth and water concur to offer what each has most precious' (TJ, 3 March-10 June 1787).²⁶⁸ In this ancient land, through which the Via Julia Augusta travels, Jefferson reminisced on *otium* and retirement in nature. He would associate similar sentiments of sensibility with his own villas, especially during his retirement years from 1809 to 1826.²⁶⁹ On the eve of his retirement, Jefferson wrote with enthusiasm to the French émigré, Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours:

[W]ithin a few days I retire to my family, my books, & farms & having gained the harbor myself, I shall look on my friends still buffeting the storm, with anxiety indeed, but not with envy. never did prisoner, released from his chains, feel such relief as I shall on shaking off the shackles of power. nature intended me for the tranquill [*sic*] pursuits of science, by rendering them my supreme delight. but the enormities of the times in which I have lived, have forced me to take a part in resisting them, and to commit myself on the boisterous ocean of political passions. I thank god for the opportunity of retiring from them without censure, and carrying with me the most consoling proofs of public approbation (TJ to Nemours, 2 March 1809).²⁷⁰

As he attempted to remove himself from the public, Jefferson sought the solitude of his villas. Well into his retirement, Jefferson expressed his mountain as the *locus amoenus* of his special

²⁶⁸ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787 (Boyd, J. 1955: 415–464).

²⁶⁹ According to Larson: 'Just as for Byrd and Jefferson, for the Romans this *otium* involved communion with the books of the "ancients" in the context of beautiful rural surroundings: Cicero, for example, describes reading the ancient Greek geographer Eratosthenes in the delightful surroundings of his villa at Antium (*Letter to Atticus* 2.6)' (Larson 2017: 243).

²⁷⁰ "From Thomas Jefferson to Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours, 2 March 1809," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-9936>.

retirement. ‘I am living retired in the mountains of Virginia,’ Jefferson wrote to the Spanish consul, Josef Yznardy (TJ to Josef Yznardy, 6 August 1813).²⁷¹ As his retirement years advanced, Jefferson identified himself more closely as a mountain-man than in any other moment. His attachment to mountains during retirement can be seen in his frequent references to his mountain homeland. During 1814, Jefferson told Thomas Clark: ‘I live among the mountains’ (TJ to Thomas Clark 20 March 1814).²⁷² In contrast to his busied political life in Washington, Philadelphia and Paris, Jefferson’s retirement reflected the sublime calmness of his mountains. ‘[R]etired, as I am,’ Jefferson wrote to President James Monroe during the summer of 1821, ‘among the mountains of our interior country, I see nobody but the farmers of my neighbourhood’ (TJ to James Monroe, 13 August 1821).²⁷³ While in retirement, Jefferson consistently referred to being amongst the mountains when discussing his exodus from political affairs.²⁷⁴ Like his Indian Hall, Jefferson linked his identity to his native Virginia, to its ancient seat. Jefferson wrote to his old friend, the French revolutionary, the Marquis de Lafayette during the Autumn of 1822: ‘on our affairs little can be expected from an Octogenary, retired within the recesses of the mountains, going nowhere, seeing nobody but in his own house, & reading a single newspaper only, & that chiefly for the sake of the advertisements’ (TJ to Lafayette, 28 October 1822).²⁷⁵ And again, a month later to William Annesley, Jefferson wrote that he was ‘born & bred among the

²⁷¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813 (Looney, J. 2009: 359–360).

²⁷² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 7, 28 November 1813 to 30 September 1814 (Looney, J. 2010: 256).

²⁷³ “From Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, 13 August 1821,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-2241>.

²⁷⁴ Similar to Jefferson’s antipathy toward duty and the conflict between Horatian retreat, David Hume on leaving his country estate for a position in Paris, quoted in his *Letters*, vol. 1: ‘I own that in common decency, I ought to have left my *Horace* behind me, and that I ought to be ashamed of to look him in the face. For I am sensible that at my years no temptation would have seduced *him* from his retreat; nor would he ever have been induced to enter so late into the path of ambition’ (Hume 1932: 401).

²⁷⁵ “From Thomas Jefferson to Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert du Motier, marquis de Lafayette, 28 October 1822,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3120>.

mountains' (TJ to William Annesley, 20 November 1822).²⁷⁶ As he aged, Jefferson expressed a greater connection to his mountainous landscape than he had ever done before. During his retirement, Jefferson's Epicureanism likewise manifested as he retreated into the interior. The mountain, to which Jefferson referred as Parnassus years earlier, provided him a classical language through which to articulate his sentiments on retirement and *otium*. Landscape, specifically the classical landscape represented in early modern painting and eighteenth-century gardens, furnished Jefferson with a virtuous lifestyle rooted in nature, removed from the vices of the city.



(Photo: Sharesse Ann Edie. View from Monticello)

Jefferson frequently used terms from his 1799 *Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus* during his retirement as a linguistic tool to frame and discuss the spirit of his villas. Writing to William Short during the Autumn of 1821, for example, Jefferson wrote: 'I was just

²⁷⁶ "From Thomas Jefferson to William Annesley, 20 November 1822," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3167>.

returned from Poplar Forest which I have visited four times this year. I have an excellent house there, inferior only to Monticello, am comfortably fixed and attended, have a few good neighbors, and pass my time there in a tranquility and retirement much adapted to my age and indolence' (TJ to William Short, 24 November 1821).²⁷⁷ Such words as 'tranquility' [*sic*] and 'indolence' did Jefferson reference in his systematisation of Epicurus' doctrine, noting that the *summum bonum* of life is to be found in tranquillity, which he found in retirement to the garden. During 1813, Jefferson wrote that he is 'old now, and retired from the world, and anxious for tranquility' (TJ to Margaret Bonneville, 3 April 1813).²⁷⁸ And again, during this same year of 1813, Jefferson continued to impart his Epicurean advice on tranquillity to the next generation of Americans. The rural retirement ushered in for Jefferson (and his eighteenth-century English contemporaries) Epicurean sentiments with 'a strong emphasis on the landscape of retirement as a divine hieroglyph' (Røstvig 1971: 10). Even before his retirement from the presidency during 1809, Jefferson longed for rest and tranquillity during 1803: 'and when that is done, you and I may retire to the tranquillity which our years begin to call for' (TJ to George Clinton, 31 December 1803).²⁷⁹ And again during 1821, Jefferson remarked that 'tranquility is the summum bonum of that age. I wish now for quiet, to withdraw from the broils of the world' (TJ to Archibald Thweatt, 24 December 1821).²⁸⁰ He referred to tranquillity in retirement during 1804, writing to Elbridge Gerry: 'my great desire having been to retire at the end of the present term to a life of tranquillity [*sic*], and it was my decided purpose when I entered into office. ... I shall be free to enjoy as you are doing my

²⁷⁷ "From Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 24 November 1821," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-2445>.

²⁷⁸ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813 (Looney, J. 2009: 47).

²⁷⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 42, 16 November 1803–10 March 1804 (McClure, J. 2016: 214–215).

²⁸⁰ "From Thomas Jefferson to Archibald Thweatt, 24 December 1821," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-2519>. Jefferson wrote nearly identical sentiments two other times during this year, to John Taylor on 14 March and to A. & J.W. Picket on 25 September.

family, my farm, & my books' (TJ to Elbridge Gerry, 3 March 1804).²⁸¹ As Jefferson noted in the *Declaration of Independence*, nature institutes in all persons 'Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.' For Jefferson and Epicurus, happiness was the aim of life.²⁸² Jefferson found happiness at his villas.

Writing during 1809 to Kosciuszko, Jefferson envisioned himself in a few days' time 'retiring to the Shades of Monticello for which I have been long panting. there at length I hope I shall find rest and happiness among my family, my friends, my farm & books' (TJ to Kosciuszko 25 February 1809).²⁸³ The books that Jefferson read specifically were chiefly classical texts: 'I have retired' from politics, he wrote during the winter of 1812, 'and given up newspapers for more classical reading' (TJ to Benjamin Galloway 2 February 1812).²⁸⁴ His granddaughter, Ellen Randolph Coolidge, observed of her grandfather: 'Books were at all times his chosen companions. ... he derived more pleasure from his acquaintance with Greek and Latin than from any other resource of literature. ... I saw him more frequently with a volume of the classics in his hand than with any other book' (Stein 1993: 100). For Jefferson and the Epicureans, pursuing happiness related to aligning oneself with nature, and was accomplished chiefly in retirement. Retirement in the Epicurean sense did not necessarily mean living in old age, though Jefferson did both. Rather, Epicurean retirement meant retiring from public life and the city and living a life in the natural landscape amongst family

²⁸¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 42, 16 November 1803–10 March 1804 (McClure, J. 2016: 580).

²⁸² See Jefferson (1799), *Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus* in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 31, 1 February 1799–31 May 1800 (Oberg, B. 2004: 284–285).

²⁸³ "From Thomas Jefferson to Tadeusz Andrzej Bonawentura Kosciuszko, 25 February 1809," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-9894>.

²⁸⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 4, 18 June 1811 to 30 April 1812 (Looney, J. 2007: 470–471).

and friends. Jefferson himself received his retirement like an old friend. The pastoral villa life for the Epicureans was the ideal setting in which to eliminate pain.²⁸⁵

A month before Jefferson's retirement during February 1809, the poet Philip Freneau composed a lengthy poem for the President's retirement. Freneau began the poem with a line from Horace's *Epistles*, 2.1.15: *Præsentī tibi maturos largimur honores* (Philip Freneau to TJ, February 1809).²⁸⁶ Freneau opened his poem with Horace's letter to Augustus, associating Jefferson with the Emperor. Both Horace and Freneau bestowed honours upon Augustus/Jefferson's deaths and retirements. Freneau addressed Jefferson: 'To you, great Sir, our heart-felt praise we give, / And your ripe honours yield you—while you live' (Freneau to TJ, February 1809).²⁸⁷ Freneau here touched upon the classical theme of deifying heroes and leaders. The poet then placed Jefferson in his landscape and villas:

*But silent walks on solitary plains:
To bid the vast luxuriant harvest grow,
The slave be happy and secured from woe
[...]*

Whether, with NEWTON, you the heavens explore,

And trace through Nature the creating power

(Freneau to Jefferson, February 1809).²⁸⁸

Freneau envisioned Jefferson's retirement upon Monticello indulging in the *otium* of his pastoral villa and engaging in the natural sciences, which included both cosmological enquiries and gardening. This was an image of Jefferson in many Americans' minds.

²⁸⁵ This can be viewed especially, as this thesis has shown, in Horace's repeated emphases on his country retreat as an antidote to civil, martial and political strife – all of this is summed up especially in his famous closing ode to Maecenas (3.19).

²⁸⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 1, 4 March 1809 to 15 November 1809 (Looney, J. 2004: 226–229).

²⁸⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 1, 4 March 1809 to 15 November 1809 (Looney, J. 2004: 226–229).

²⁸⁸ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 1, 4 March 1809 to 15 November 1809 (Looney, J. 2004: 226–229).

Moreover, Freneau's inclusion of Jefferson's favourite poet, Horace, fits well with Jefferson's Epicurean vision of himself, most importantly because Horace expounded upon retirement from the city into the country, so as to avoid politics, a tenet of Epicurean living. Implied in Freneau's poem is the mention of 'the slave', whether this be Jefferson himself or the enslaved required for Jefferson's pastoral vision. Regardless, the mention of slave and Jefferson necessarily suggests that the reality of Monticello was very different from the visions. This is a compromise Jefferson had to make in order to realise Monticello as a kind of Parnassus: slavery. Slavery was to Jefferson a necessity for his artistic and philosophic vision. To Jefferson as the *pater familias*, the enslaved at Monticello were property inheritances from both his father and his wife, Martha Jefferson. This familial wealth allowed Jefferson to exact his Epicurean fantasies. In a similar vein, Epicurus himself relied on family wealth to sustain his Garden School and lifestyle, though Epicurus' lifestyle was less lavish than Jefferson's.²⁸⁹ For Jefferson, however, to live luxuriously was not a concession or sacrifice of his Epicureanism, even though Epicurus himself claimed to live on one copper coin each day.²⁹⁰ Jefferson regarded his villa lifestyle as the embodiment of modern Epicureanism through his retreat from the city, the building of a classical house, the inclusion of a *sanctum sanctorum*, the useful gardens and the upholding of retirement. Though in contrast to Epicurus' actual lifestyle, Jefferson's version of Epicureanism was filtered through the Romans. Whether or not this is because Jefferson did not have access to Epicurus' own writings is unknown, though this is a fair assumption.

Another concession is politics. After his return to France, Jefferson frequently wrote about retiring specifically from political life, even though he later entered the presidency for two terms. Immediately after his presidency, Jefferson continued to write on his retreat from

²⁸⁹ See Clay, D. (2009): 16.

²⁹⁰ See Clay, D. (2009): 16.

political life. Nevertheless, Jefferson continued to participate in political dialogue throughout the many years after his return from France and until his death (1789-1826). Despite Epicurus' warning to 'not get involved in political life', Jefferson continued to do so (Clay 2009: 16). Politics was a sacrifice to Jefferson's lifestyle (or so he claimed) because he regarded it as his civic duty to develop the young nation. During his retirement years, Jefferson consistently wrote about the burden of politics.

Jefferson's classical villa, Monticello, stands as a beacon to neoclassicism in America. Monticello represents republican ideals, architectural innovation, and the pursuit of happiness. It also represents, however, the history of enslavement. While romanticising his bucolic villa, Jefferson quoted Roman poets, though he did not mention Mulberry Row, which sits close to his villa. Mere feet from Monticello rests Mulberry Row, a busied lane of enslaved workhouses and dwellings lined with mulberry trees. Mulberry Row was not a quiet path in the shadow of Monticello. Nevertheless, various images of Monticello, (through letters, engravings, paintings), ignore it. Mulberry Row was a busied lane composed of over twenty dwellings and workshops for the enslaved, freed, and indentured. As he sat in his study, Jefferson wrote about Epicurean tranquillity and quotes from Horace's Sabine Farm. However, Jefferson would have smelled the stench of smoke emanating from the smokehouse, heard clanking from the nailery where enslaved boys produced hundreds of nails, and he would have smelled the various animals wandering the path. Jefferson as an artist/architect crafted his villa and landscape to draw visitors' gazes away from Mulberry Row and toward the picturesque house and gardens instead. Looking at Mulberry Row can help understand how landscape architecture was used to shield white Americans from slavery. We can see how Jefferson appropriated classical aesthetics to fit his Southern plantation lifestyle.

Moreover, Jefferson himself at times acknowledged that slavery got in the way of his vision, not just the institution, but the enslaved themselves. As Jefferson contemplated retirement during 1798 (long before he would retire), Jefferson wrote:

My latest revulsion from retirement has overshadowed me with despair when I contemplate the necessity of reformation in my farms. That work finds obstacles enough in the ignorance and unwillingness of the instruments employed, even in the presence of the master. But when he is obliged to be absent the half of every year no hope remains of that steady perseverance in a fixed plan which alone can ensure it's success (TJ to William Strickland, 23 March 1798).²⁹¹

This passage illustrates just one of the compromises Jefferson had to make in order to realise his vision: slavery. Another compromise was money. As Jefferson's debts lasted longer after his death, certain architectural compromises were made. An example of this is a garden grotto that Jefferson designed during 1771 that was never realised. In this design, Jefferson envisioned in the side of a mountain: a temple, classical statues, engravings of Horace's quotation and a cave.²⁹² Beyond this, Jefferson compromised his Epicurean philosophy of simplicity. As will be explored later in this chapter, Jefferson's villa nearly crossed the line into ostentation beyond his ideas for simple living on a plantation, just as both Horace and Pliny had done before him. Jefferson regarded Monticello as a sanctuary from politics and the corruptions of city politics, where in fact it was a place of wealth, gentry education, patriarchy and enslavement. Monticello represents the greatest faults of America during the 18th century: class, status and slavery. As historiography shows, Jefferson understood the vices of slavery, its inhumanity and that it would eventually cause a war within the nation. Nevertheless, Jefferson held fast to the preserving slavery at Monticello, not to mention that he regarded people of colour as less-than-human compared to whites. One of Jefferson's greatest legacies is his contradictions: planter/republican, *otium/negotium*, display/conceal. In

²⁹¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 30, 1 January 1798–31 January 1799 (Oberg, B. 2003: 209–214.)

²⁹² See Jordan, A.M. (2019), "'beautiful shells from the shore': Thomas Jefferson's Sacred Grotto of 1771", *Journal of Garden History* 47:

order to build his Epicurean villa, Jefferson had to compromise, ironically, his Epicureanism. Or at least he created a form of Epicureanism that suited him.



(Photo: Sharesse Ann Edie. View of Jefferson's Garden)

A year into his retirement, Jefferson wrote to Charles Holt, expressing his connection between himself and Horace: ‘but I wish at length to indulge myself in more favorite reading, in Tacitus & Horace, and the writers of that philosophy which is the old man’s consolation & preparation for what is to come. accept the tribute of that approbation so justly due to the labors of the Bee’ (TJ to Charles Holt, 23 November 1810).²⁹³ During the late spring of 1813, Jefferson expressed himself on retirement in Horatian verse: ‘but our schoolbooks tell us that “levius fit patientia, quiequid [sic] corrigere est nefas”’ (TJ to William Short, 30 May

²⁹³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 3, 12 August 1810 to 17 June 1811 (Looney, J. 2006: 227). Jefferson copied this near identical sentiment to friends during December 1810 and February 1812. See Jefferson, letter to George Jefferson, 15 December 1810 and letter to Charles Pinckney, 2 February 1812.

1813).²⁹⁴ Jefferson here quotes Horace's *Odes* 24.19-20, which translates as: 'But endurance can make lighter what no one is allowed to put right' (Rudd 2004: 71).²⁹⁵ Having recently returned from his Bedford estate two weeks earlier, Jefferson used the Roman poet in order to express himself in old age on the workings of his Monticello farm. Jefferson quoted Horace again during his retirement in 1819, this time from *Satires* 1.1.69-70: 'I may end these egotisms therefore, as I begin, by saying that my life has been so much like that of other people, that I might say, with Horaice, to every one, "Nomine mutato, narratur fabula de te"' (TJ to Vine Utley, 21 March 1819).²⁹⁶ The full Latin line reads: *mutato nomine de te fabula narratur*, which translates as: 'Change but the name, and the tale is told of you' (Henderson 1929: 8-11). In this satire, Horace writes about avarice and the Epicurean balance of the pleasures, for being miserly leads to unhappiness for never having enough. Jefferson was here humbling himself by not distinguishing his faults from others. Horace provided Jefferson and many of the English gardener/poets of the eighteenth century a language through which to articulate their associations between landscape and happiness. As the Horatian excerpt shows, Jefferson himself becomes the fabula, his life a symbol. Just after he quotes Horace's *Satires* 2.7.83-8, Jefferson notes in a letter to Amos Cook during 1816: 'And if the Wise, be the happy man, as these sages say, he must be virtuous too; for, without virtue, happiness cannot be. this then is the true scope of all academical emulation' (Jefferson to Amos Cook, 21 January 1816).²⁹⁷ Jefferson brought this 'scope of all academical emulation'

²⁹⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813 (Looney, J. 2009: 155–156). According to Wilson's edits in Jefferson's *Commonplace Book*: 'Unlike the other two [Virgil and Ovid], who are present in only a few entries, Horace is relatively well represented, not only in the school period but later on as well' (Wilson 2016: 166).

²⁹⁵ Horace is here addressing Virgil in his mourning.

²⁹⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 14, 1 February to 31 August 1819 (Looney, J. 2017: 156–158).

²⁹⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 9, September 1815 to April 1816 (Looney, J. 2012: 374–375).

to his university thereafter. It is in this passage that Jefferson directly connected Horace to his ideal for education and, therefore, his university, as the next chapter will illustrate.

Conclusion

Jefferson's classical taste at Monticello and Poplar Forest reveals a classicist's sensibilities toward architecture. He imbued his villas with feelings of retirement and *otium*. There are at his villas a projection of his self-image and definition. The personalisation of his designs illustrates that Romantic combination of feeling and sense, as seen in his gardens and architecture. Jefferson's classical architecture helped frame his (and the wider eighteenth century's) Epicurean lifestyle of combining emotion and reason. According to Ackerman, the garden and house:

[B]oth called upon what were understood to be the laws of nature: the garden imitated sensible nature in recreating its spontaneity and informality; the architecture, conforming to the principles of Palladio and the Renaissance tradition, undertook to obey the invisible harmony of the universe in its proportions, its symmetry and its axuality. Together they represent paired polarities of the Age of Enlightenment, romanticism and rationality (Ackerman 1990: 183).

These shared characteristics of the villa lifestyle have been transported throughout the centuries, from the virtues of farming and gardening, to the health of country air and fitness, the joys of reading and learning, and the company of friendship, all before an idyllic landscape.

Jefferson believed that 'Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue' (Abernethy 1964:157). He believed that the lavishness of the English (and European) aristocracy corrupted morals, which helps to illustrate why Jefferson remarked that the gardens of Hampton Court are 'Old fashioned' (TJ, 'Notes on a Tour of English Gardens', 2-14 April 1786).²⁹⁸ Jefferson's companion during his English Garden

²⁹⁸ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 369–375).

Tour, John Adams, was much more explicit in his opinions of English gardens than Jefferson.

Adams noted in his diary for April 1786:

It will be long, I hope before Ridings, Parks, Pleasure Grounds, Gardens and ornamented Farms grow so much in fashion in America. But Nature has done greater Things and furnished nobler Materials there. The Oceans, Islands, Rivers, Mountains, Valleys are all laid out upon a larger Scale. -- If any Man should hereafter arise, to embellish the rugged Grandeur of Pens Hill, he might make some thing to boast of, although there are many Situations capable of better Improvement (Adams 1786: 9).

Even though Jefferson was more concerned with the practicalities of English gardens than their politics, he nevertheless surely engaged in such discussion with the ever-opinionated

Adams during their tour. Jefferson's sentiments on the simplicity of gardening aligns with Adams' diary entry and helps to illustrate trends in thought during eighteenth-century

America. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson directly linked nature to morality:

'Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example... Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition' (Abernethy 1964: 157).

Jefferson may have believed that the stronghold of American virtue rested with the farming class of America, even though he himself did not labour the earth and was not a lay farmer.²⁹⁹

Nonetheless, Jefferson held fast to this belief and associated himself with the farming class.

Writing to the American painter, Charles Willson Peale from Poplar Forest during 1811, for example, Jefferson observed:

I have heard that you have retired from the city to a farm, & that you give your whole time to that. does not the Museum suffer? and is the farm as interesting? here, as you know, we are all farmers... I have often thought that if heaven had given me choice of my position & calling, it should have been on a rich spot of earth, well watered, and near a good market for the productions of the garden. no occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, & no culture comparable to that of the garden. [...] I am still devoted to the garden.

²⁹⁹ Jefferson wrote in a letter during 1793: 'I am then to be liberated from the hated occupations of politics, and to sink into the bosom of my family, my farm and my books. I have my house to build, my fields to form, and to watch for the happiness of those who labor for mine' (Catanzariti 1997: 449-50). Jefferson, however, would later be elected president in 1800.

but tho' an old man, I am but a young gardener (TJ to Charles Willson Peale, 20 August 1811).³⁰⁰

Jefferson may have chosen flowers for this bowling green, but this does not mean that he was a farmer. While his enslaved workers, indentured white servants and paid white workers tilled his farms and gardens, Jefferson went for leisurely walks about his landscape and worked in his *sanctum sanctorum* enjoying the comforts of 'the most blessed of the patriarchs' (Catanzariti 1997: 450). Jefferson's own *sanctum sanctorum* has parallels to Pliny's reading room at his Laurentine villa: 'Round the corner is a room built round in an apse to let in the sun as it moves round and shines in each window in turn, and with one wall fitted with shelves like a library to hold the books which I read and read again' (Radice 1969: 135).³⁰¹ Such a connection in both thought and architecture illustrate a way that Jefferson saw himself with an identical thought and design as a Roman. What was going on with Pliny's villa descriptions was an engagement into ecphrasis, so his letters 'makes listeners into spectators,' as Ruth Webb notes in *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Webb 2009: 8). Jefferson's use of ecphrasis speaks to this tradition, especially in his 1786 letter to Maria Cosway.³⁰² And, like Jefferson, Pliny's villa ecphrasis explore his own duplicity—balancing between wealth and modesty, that what is obvious and that what is meant to be concealed. Jefferson does this in his own letters by describing that which is meant to be solitary and hidden—i.e., his *sanctum sanctorum*. Jefferson all but flaunted his wealth on top of his mountain with his Palladian villa full of artifacts and the enslaved working next door. But the way that Jefferson was able to

³⁰⁰ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 4, 18 June 1811 to 30 April 1812 (Looney, J. 2007: 93–94).

³⁰¹ Pliny *Ep.* 2.17. 8-9: *Adnectitur Angulo cubiculum in hapsida curvatum, quod ambitum solis fenestris omnibus sequitur. Parieti eius in bibliothecae speciem armarium insertum est, quod non legendos libros sed lectitandos capit*, (Radice 1969: 134).

³⁰² As Webb observes, the word 'ecphrasis' was not used before the nineteenth century, which helps to explain why Jefferson did not explicitly reference ecphrasis in his writings. Webb also notes that Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (an eighteenth-century source for much literature on ecphrasis), did not mention the term 'ecphrasis' in his 1766 work on aesthetics, *Laokoön*, which Jefferson apparently did not read.

circumvent his wealth, which was unbecoming of a pastoral republican, was through thought, namely Epicureanism. Through philosophy could Jefferson sanitize his wealth and power by justifying that his mind was virtuous. After all, Epicurus taught that one needs only the base necessities in life in order to live happily. A classical villa on a mountaintop was certainly not a necessity. However, if Jefferson could live according to the pursuit of happiness, participating in civic duty, lacking idleness and engaging in the intellectual enterprise of understanding, he could at least pretend and project an image of Epicurean virtue (as he saw it) as a modern republican living according to ancient virtues. If Jefferson could project the image of the pastoral, anti-cosmopolitan scholar, he could promote himself in opposition to negotium, corruption and Platonism. Despite the wealth, his mind was virtuous, and he was at least a gardener (in his mind).

Jefferson, like the English Augustan poets before him, ‘would consider the intellectual survey of the landscape as the prime duty and interest of the would-be *beatus vir*...’ (Røstvig 1971: 10). Despite his patrician background, Jefferson’s attitude toward the independence of landowners and farmers preserved economic independence and ensured their freedom from urban influences. Personally, Jefferson discovered a civic duty in the landscape surrounding his villas and in Nature herself. With his classical taste, Jefferson articulated a new classical language which argued that happiness is to be found in nature through beautifying it and understanding it. For Jefferson, gardening institutes a sound moral centre in the private individual and, therefore, institutes such a moral stronghold on the nation.³⁰³ This is the Epicurean tradition and justification that Jefferson regarded for both himself and the republic.

³⁰³ Røstvig observed that other eighteenth-century figures like John Lawrence and Timothy Nourse adopted this view of cultivating one’s soul by cultivating one’s soil (Røstvig 1971: 37).

This chapter concludes with a quote from the art historian, James Ackerman, who writes on Palladio, but the sentiment surely applies to Jefferson as well:

The experience of Palladio's buildings can be greatly enriched by knowing why and how they came to be, how contemporaries saw them and what the architect himself said about them, but they speak for themselves in multiple ways through their creation of and response to ambiances and conditions of light and atmosphere and through their scale, proportions, textures, colors and so on. They can be different every time we see them' (Ackerman 1990: 107).

This chapter attempted to see Monticello and Poplar Forest in a different way than has been explored in the past by Jefferson scholars—to see it through the eyes of a classicist in order to enrich our experience and knowledge of Jefferson's tastes.



(Photo: Sharesse Ann Edie. Vegetable Garden of Mulberry Row)

'Mr. Smith got in, the door shut and we drove from the habitation of philosophy and virtue'

(Smith 1809).³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ Hunt (1906): 79.

‘the land of dreams’: Thomas Jefferson’s Classical University

‘This dream in masonry and living rock is not a drop scene in a theatre, but a city in the world of reality’ (Robert Louis Stevenson).

Rhodopaeaque saxa loquentur (Lucan, Pharsalia 6.618).

Timeline

1778-80: Jefferson drafts ‘A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge.’

1814: Jefferson elected to the Board of Trustees of Albemarle Academy. Simultaneously, he details a plan for a university to Peter Carr.

1816: Virginia General Assembly charters the Central College in Albemarle. Jefferson elected to Board of Visitors and Rector, and designs plans for the grounds.

1817: Jefferson selects site for College’s location. The first building’s (later Pavilion VII) cornerstone is laid.

1818: General Assembly approves funds for the University of Virginia.

1819: Central College to be consumed by UVA. Jefferson appointed Rector.

1821: Board of Visitors Report that six pavilions, two hotels and 82 dorms are completed.

Four more pavilions, four more hotels and more dorms yet to be completed.

1822: Board of Visitors report that all but one building is completed, which is the Rotunda.

1823: Construction on the Rotunda begins.

1825: UVA officially opens.

1826: Jefferson dies at Monticello with ‘Father of the University of Virginia’ inscribed on his tombstone. James Madison replaces Jefferson as Rector.

Introduction

This chapter will explore classical tastes at the University of Virginia, expound upon its aesthetic and historical lineage, and explore the classical education that Jefferson designed. In so doing, this chapter will argue that Jefferson was successful in his vision for an everlastingly classical university. In his 2019 book, *Thomas Jefferson’s Education*, Alan Taylor recognises that he treats Jefferson’s ‘curriculum only in passing,’ while focusing on ‘the social relationships of education’ (Taylor 2019: 2). Branching off Taylor’s exploration, this chapter treats Jefferson’s curriculum at the University of Virginia with attention in order to highlight and expound upon his vision for the place of the Classics in both public education more broadly and in his beloved state of Virginia. This chapter contributes new

knowledge to this on-going dialogue on Jefferson by exploring the classical tastes and education at the University of Virginia, which will help shed light on his vision for Virginia. This chapter will illuminate new ways of understanding Jefferson, both his motivations for and the consequences of his classical visions.³⁰⁵

Jefferson's educational system within classical buildings was the fulfilment of his classical taste, for he wrote during 1821 that the University of Virginia 'will be a splendid establishment, would be thought so in Europe, and for the chastity of its architecture and classical taste leaves every thing in America far behind it' (TJ to William Short, 24 November 1821).³⁰⁶ After all, as an eighteenth-century man, Jefferson believed in the ideal combination of utility and ornament—the *utile dulci*.³⁰⁷ Classical architecture did nothing for Jefferson if it did not help serve a purpose—namely the purpose of fostering educated, goodly citizens.³⁰⁸ Jefferson wrote during 1818 that 'education generates habits of application, of order, and the love of virtue, and corrects, by the force of habit, any innate obliquities in our moral organisation' (TJ, Draft of the Rockfish Gap Report of the University of Virginia Commissioners, ca. 28 June 1818).³⁰⁹ Jefferson's classical villas and gardens and the virtuous ideas of his educational plans all culminated in the University of Virginia. The University is the lasting legacy of Jefferson's classical taste and his vision for Virginia. Jefferson was successful in executing his classical taste at the University. Jefferson designed

³⁰⁵ This theme of assessing Jefferson's University with education has been done before in Jefferson Studies. Architectural Historian at the University of Virginia, Richard Guy Wilson, likewise explored this connection: 'the way in which his [Jefferson's] views on public education and architecture came together...' (Wilson 1993: 6). This chapter differs, however, in its focus upon the classical taste.

³⁰⁶ "From Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 24 November 1821," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-2445>.

³⁰⁷ See the *Introduction* to this thesis for an overview of the *utile dulci*.

³⁰⁸ Richard Guy Wilson believes the same: 'Thomas Jefferson designed the University of Virginia as a summation of his architectural, scholarly, educational, and political thought. It resembles him as an individual: sometimes contradictory, open to new ideas, looking to the past, and believing in the future. ... He believed the architecture to be part of the educational component of the University. For the future leaders of the democratic republic he hoped to attract, the buildings and spaces would be essential; from the architecture would flow and education in taste, values, and ideals' (Wilson 1993: 72).

³⁰⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 189–208).

a public university with classical tastes and an education in the Classics as its foundation in order to pursue and promote an education for the public. Gilroy-Ware observes similarly with British sculptors creating classical statues: ‘With its fixation on Greek freedom, one keeps itself simple. In order for the classical body to harbour a certain vision of how society ought to be, it must appear legible; paint is thin, color muted, marble left untreated or washed with coffee to render it more evocative of the relics of ancient Athens’ (Gilroy-Ware 2020: 10).³¹⁰ This can be seen in Jefferson’s architecture—that he designed his architecture with a purpose that was not merely to imitate the Greeks and Romans, but to serve a classical ideal, one with roots in the Epicureanism previously explored in this thesis. Jefferson’s architectural choices were due to beauty and the *utile dulci*. As explored in the Introduction to this thesis, Jefferson explained his tasteful philosophy of the *utile dulci* in the *Notes on the State of Virginia*:

A country whose buildings are of wood, can never increase in its improvements to any considerable degree. ... Whereas when buildings are of durable materials, every new edifice is an actual and permanent acquisition to the State, adding to its value as well as to its ornament (Abernethy 1964: 149).

In this passage, Jefferson outlined his Popean/Horatian philosophy into the *utile dulci* of architecture and landscape architecture—the balance between utility and ornament. For Jefferson, the most permanent buildings of history were those of classical Greece and Rome, for he observed the ‘finest models of Antiquity’ first-hand during his tour through the South of France and came to emulate the Roman architecture of the Empire over Greek architecture. The classical colonnades around the central campus of the university, for example, were both beautiful and useful. Jefferson wrote in his draft of the Rockfish Gap Report that ‘a Colonnade in front gives a passage along the whole range under cover from the weather’ (TJ,

³¹⁰ Gilroy-Ware also observes that ‘Meaning is not inscribed upon the surface of the form but contained within it and, as a result, is able to conceal itself when necessary’ (Gilroy-Ware 2020: 4). This observation is also similar to architecture, especially Jefferson’s architecture, as this chapter will illuminate.

‘Draft of the Rockfish Gap Report of the University of Virginia Commissioners’, 28 June 1818).³¹¹ The University of Virginia represents the culmination of Jefferson’s classical taste in the *utile dulci* through both its architecture and educational plan.

In order to understand Jefferson’s university, it is important first to understand his famous term for it: an ‘academical village.’ Jefferson first used the term in a 1785 letter to Samuel Henley while writing on Williamsburg, Virginia: ‘This has made of Williamsburgh a mere academical village, disfigured by the burning of the president’s house the palace and some others of smaller note’ (TJ to Samuel Henley 14 October 1785).³¹² Upset at the removal of the state capital to Richmond, Jefferson lamented the thought of Williamsburg becoming a mere university town. Jefferson’s attitude toward academical villages changed, however, during the next century. He wrote to L.W. Tazewell during 1805 that ‘a university should not be a house but a village’ (TJ to L.W. Tazewell, 5 January 1805).³¹³ While writing to the Trustees of the Lottery for East Tennessee College during 1810, Jefferson encouraged the planning of an academical village, one that would generate a tranquil retirement of the mind, entirely separate from non-university folk and policed by the university staff: ‘the whole of these arranged around an open square of grass & trees would make it, what it should be in fact, an academical village, instead of a large & common den of noise, of filth, & of fetid air. it would afford that quiet retirement so friendly to study’ (TJ to Trustees of the Lottery for East Tennessee College, 6 May 1810).³¹⁴ What Jefferson here described (and would continue to do so as his retirement years advanced) is an Epicurean garden school in spirit. Jefferson’s adherence to the philosophy developed and blossomed during his retirement, as seen in his

³¹¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 189–208).

³¹² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 634–35).

³¹³ “From Thomas Jefferson to Littleton W. Tazewell, 5 January 1805,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-0958>.

³¹⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 2, 16 November 1809 to 11 August 1810 (Looney, J. (2005: 365–366).

letters to the Reverend Joseph Priestly. In Jefferson's mind, an academical village would 'lessen the dangers of fire, infection & tumult,' because it should exist as its own enclosed space, separated from both the people and colonial architecture of the neighbouring towns (TJ to Trustees of the Lottery for East Tennessee College, 6 May 1810).³¹⁵ Later in a letter to the architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe during 1817 while discussing the Doric order, Jefferson referenced his academical village: 'when we get our academical village under way, I am in hopes you will think that & Monticello worth a visit: the levelling the ground into terraces will take time and labor' (TJ to Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 16 July 1817).³¹⁶ Indeed, Jefferson acknowledged his claim to the term in another letter to Latrobe three weeks later: 'the general idea of an Academical village rather than of one large building [w]as formed by me, perhaps about 15. years ago' (TJ to Latrobe, 3 August 1817).³¹⁷ In an 1822 letter to Maria Cosway, furthermore, Jefferson connected his 'academical village' to the structures of classical Rome:

... already blest with a soil and climate emulating those of your favorite Lodi. I have been myself the Architect of the plan of it's [sic] buildings, and of it's [sic] system of instruction. four years have been employed on the former, and I assure you it would be thought a handsome & Classical thing in Italy. I have preferred the plan of an Academical village rather than that of a single, massive structure (TJ to Maria Cosway, 24 October 1822).³¹⁸

Jefferson's many references to the University of Virginia as an 'academical village' are relevant to his classical taste because the characterisation helped him to frame his ten

³¹⁵ Jefferson further observed that 'the large and crouded [sic] buildings in which youths are pent up, are equally unfriendly to health, to study, to manners, morals & order: & believing the plan I suggest to be more promotive of these & peculiarly adapted to the slender beginnings & progressive growth of our institutions' *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 2, 16 November 1809 to 11 August 1810 (Looney, J. 2005: 365–366).

³¹⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 11, 19 January to 31 August 1817 (Looney, J. 2014: 534–536).

³¹⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 11, 19 January to 31 August 1817 (Looney, J. 2014: 586–588). Jefferson called his university an 'academical village' again a year later on 25 October in a letter to George Ticknor in an attempt to persuade him to teach at the University of Virginia. See *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2014: 338–339).

³¹⁸ "From Thomas Jefferson to Maria Hadfield Cosway, 24 October 1822," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3111>.

pavilions and the Rotunda as not only individual buildings with their own merit, but as parts of a united whole design, both beautiful and pedagogical.³¹⁹

As the previous chapter illustrated, Jefferson conceived of Monticello as a villa, and thereby a ‘village.’³²⁰ Jefferson adopted this same concept for the University of Virginia, calling it a village, which, as Ackerman illustrated in *The Villa*, is an extension of the villa house.³²¹ Jefferson even placed the Rotunda within eyesight of his villa as an extension of Monticello, fulfilling the Renaissance concept that a village exists within the shadow of a villa. Jefferson’s concept for an academical village grew from his earlier notions on villa rusticity from Horace, Pliny the Younger, Cicero and other Roman writers at Monticello.³²² According to architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson, the village/villa concept ‘was an architectural type much more comprehensible and capable of being ordered. The village became a metaphor for an organization of architectural elements and also of knowledge,’ (Wilson 1993: 68). With his terminology of an ‘academical village,’ Jefferson connected his own modern American university with the *villeggiatura* of the Italian Renaissance, inspired by antiquity. According to Louis Cellauro in his 2003 ‘Iconographical Aspects of the Renaissance Villa and Garden: Mount Parnassus, Pegasus and the Muses’:

As early as 1427, Poggio Bracciolini named his villa at Terranuova in the Val d'Amo ‘Academia Valdomina’, probably in emulation of Cicero's villa at Tusculum which included an Academy and Lyceum based on the Athenian prototypes. Similarly, at Careggi,

³¹⁹ On 8 July 1818, Jefferson designed the famous serpentine walls in his “Ground Plan for West Range with Gardens.” According to Scully, ‘the formal elements of any Greek sanctuary are, first, the specifically sacred landscape in which it is set and, second, the buildings that are placed within it. The landscape and the temples together form the architectural whole, were intended by the Greeks to do so, and must therefore be seen in relation to each other,’ (Scully 2014). Quoting Edith Hamilton, furthermore, Scully wrote: ‘to the Greek architect the setting of his temple was all-important. He planned it seeing it in clear outline against sea or sky, determining its size by its situation on plain or hilltop or the wide plateau of an acropolis.... He did not think of it in and for itself, as just the building he was making; he conceived of it in relation to the hills and the seas and the arch of the sky.... So the Greek temple, conceived as a part of its setting, was simplified, the simplest of all the great buildings of the world...’ (Scully 2014). Jefferson designed the University along these similar lines, paying close attention to the location of the university in the Shenandoah Valley with the Blue Ridge Mountains beyond that resemble the ocean, and also and especially, within view of his villa, Monticello.

³²⁰ See Ackerman 1990: 63.

³²¹ Ackerman 1990: 63.

³²² For more on Pliny’s influence in villa architecture, see Derek Clifford’s chapter ‘Pliny and the Renaissance Garden’ *A History of Garden Design* (1963): 17-47.

Cosimo de' Medici's humanist protégé Marsilio Ficino had a villa given to him by Cosimo, which Marsilio named the Academia. At Poggio a Caiano, Lorenzo de' Medici's villa was put under the protection of the nymph Ambra to whom Lorenzo and Poliziano both dedicated poems. The villa was to be the sanctuary for the contemplative life of the poet and philosopher, so Pietro Ricci could describe it as a 'retreat of the Muses' (*musarum secessus*) and say that it was provided with a library after the example of the *museion* of Ptolemy Philadelphus at Alexandria (Cellauro 2003: 54).

Even though Jefferson did not explicitly align his academical village with Careggi, Lorenzo de' Medici, or Bracciolini's 'academical' villages, the same classical sentiments remain nonetheless: the villa and academical village as places of exclusion and *otium* in order to develop and expand the mind through learning and leisure.³²³ These Renaissance villa owners developed this concept of art from the Ancients through their villas and gardens, which Jefferson adopted two centuries later. Indeed, in an 1819 letter to George Ticknor, Jefferson even called the University a villa: '[on our] excursions to our University those of daily exercise that goes on with much activity and hope, and will form an unique and beautiful Academical Villa' (TJ to George Ticknor 24 December 1819).³²⁴ Jefferson often associated both Monticello and the University with the concept of the villa, and thereby infused both with connotations from the Latin villa literature of Rome. There are aesthetic values of the classical world that Jefferson intentionally adopted at the University of Virginia in order to create an 'academical village' worthy of Epicurus' Garden School, which Jefferson believed would generate a goodly, voting public. Jefferson believed that 'education, in like manner, engrafts a new man on the native stock, & improves what in his nature was vicious and perverse into qualities of virtue & social value' (TJ's Draft of the Rockfish Gap Report of the University of Virginia Commissioners, 28 June 1818).³²⁵

³²³ For a discussion on *otium* at Renaissance villas, see Ackerman 1990: 63-88.

³²⁴ "From Thomas Jefferson to George Ticknor, 24 December 1819," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-0981>.

³²⁵ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 189-208).

Building the University

This section will highlight the process of developing and building the University of Virginia, seen through Jefferson's eyes. This section is important for the overall argument of the thesis and for the chapter specifically because it details Jefferson's motivations for creating a university in Virginia, both for education and taste, and it details Jefferson's sentiments on the architecture and its importance for posterity. Karl Lehmann echoed this same sentiment over half a century ago: 'Therefore, it is necessary to relate his architectural classicism to that process. Without doing this, we should fail fully to understand its function for his time and country as he saw them, and we should overlook particular features of his own architectural creations, of his style' (Lehmann 1947: 157). Jefferson believed that architecture should be didactic. Writing during 1816 while designing the University, Jefferson argued that it will be 'exhibiting models in architecture of the purest forms of antiquity, furnishing to the student examples of the precepts he will be taught in that art' (TJ to Wilson Cary Nicholas, 2 April 1816).³²⁶ Here Jefferson directly linked classical architecture with education, which illustrates his concern for 'the purest forms of antiquity.'

During August 1814, Jefferson first drew up plans for Albemarle Academy, which he later used for the University of Virginia. Jefferson's plans included pavilions, loggia, and a central lawn. He suggested transforming the Academy into Central College, which failed in the Senate during 1817.³²⁷ Instead, Jefferson petitioned to build a state university in Charlottesville, his neighbouring town. The man with whom Jefferson collaborated to design the University of Virginia was the classical architect, Benjamin Henry Latrobe. English in origin, Latrobe arrived in the newly united states during 1796. After Jefferson's failed collaboration with William Thornton (though he kept many of his designs) Jefferson

³²⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 9, *September 1815 to April 1816* (Looney, J. 2012: 623–629).

³²⁷ Sherwood and Lasala 1993: 13-14.

consulted Latrobe and they developed an everlasting friendship based on classical architecture. Jefferson wrote to Latrobe during the spring of 1807, noting: ‘you know my reverence for the Graecian [*sic*] and Roman style of architecture’ (TJ to Latrobe, 22 April 1807).³²⁸ Writing to President Jefferson a month later on the President’s House and the Capitol, for example, Latrobe expressed his classical, especially Hellenic, taste: ‘My *principles* of good taste are rigid. In Grecian architecture, I am a bigotted [*sic*] Greek, to the condemnation of the roman architecture of Balbec, Palmyra, Spalatro, and of all the buildings erected subsequent to Hadrian’s reign’ (Latrobe to TJ, 21 May 1807).³²⁹ Even though Latrobe admired Greek architecture, he loathed over-ornamentation, with which Jefferson was inclined to agree. Latrobe continued:

Wherever therefore the Grecian style can be copied without impropriety I love to be a mere, I would say a slavish copyist... If our climate were such as to admit of our doing legislative business in the open air,—that is, under the light of an open orifice in the crown of a dome, as at the pantheon,—I would never put a cupola on any spherical dome. It is not the ornament,—it is the use that I want (Latrobe to TJ, 21 May 1807).³³⁰

Like Jefferson, Latrobe preferred naturalist architecture—the skylight (or oculus) was ornament enough to not need a cupola.³³¹ His classical taste was rooted in the *utile dulci*—a cupola served no purpose to the function. Unlike Jefferson, however, Latrobe was a strict Hellenist, whereas Jefferson leaned toward the architecture of the Roman Empire. Like Jefferson even more, Latrobe admired the Pantheon as an appropriate building for the early American Republic, both for its naturalism and its associations with deities. The two architects recognised their shared love for classical tastes and so collaborated to ensure their success in the United States, both in the Capitol and in Charlottesville.

³²⁸ “From Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 22 April 1807,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-5491>.

³²⁹ “To Thomas Jefferson from Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 21 May 1807,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-5608>.

³³⁰ “To Thomas Jefferson from Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 21 May 1807,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-5608>.

³³¹ Instead of a cupola, a statue of Freedom stands atop the Capitol building.

The seventy-seven-year-old Thomas Jefferson was appointed Rector of the University of Virginia during 1819, which officially opened during 1825. During 1820, Jefferson wrote to his nephew, John Wayles Eppes that: ‘our university is now so far advanced as to be worth seeing. it exhibits already the appearance of a beautiful Academical Village, of the finest models of building and of classical architecture in the U.S. it begins to be much visited by strangers and admired by all, for the beauty, originality, and convenience of the plan’ (TJ to John Wayles Eppes, 30 June 1820). Again, Jefferson referred to his university as an ‘Academical Village’ and characterised it as a model of classical architecture. A year later, Jefferson wrote to William Short that the University ‘will be a splendid establishment, would be thought so in Europe, and for the chastity of its architecture and classical taste leaves everything in America far behind it’ (TJ to William Short, 24 November 1821).³³² Decades earlier while in Provence during 1787, Jefferson similarly admired the Augustan architecture for its ‘Roman grandeur’ and its ‘sublime antiquity... where Roman taste, genius, and magnificence excite ideas’ (TJ to Madame de Tessé, 20 March 1787).³³³ Jefferson’s classical taste did not change, but evolved the older he grew, from the twenty-eight-year-old lawyer, to the forty-three-year-old ambassador, and to the seventy-seven-year-old retired president. Jefferson’s consistent evocation of classical architecture remained with him throughout his life and culminated in the University of Virginia, which he regarded as the finest model of classical architecture in the United States. Where Monticello was a private villa shared only with friends and family, the University was (theoretically) open to all and served a noble purpose: educating the future leaders of Virginia and the United States. Monticello was a private classical villa where Jefferson could exact his classical fantasies, but the University was his chance to promulgate the Classics for posterity so that they may be inspired by the

³³² “From Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 24 November 1821,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-2445>.

³³³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787 (Boyd, J. 1955: 226–228).

Classics as he was, whether or not they could visit the antique ruins themselves. In effect, the American public did not need to visit Rome or Greece—Jefferson brought antiquity to America. After all, ‘The great object of our aim from the beginning, has been to make the establishment the most eminent in the United States, in order to draw to it the youth of every State,’ Jefferson wrote to Joseph Cabell, advocate of the University of Virginia during 1822 (TJ to Joseph C. Cabell, 28 December 1822).³³⁴



(Photo: Alley Marie Jordan. Pavilion V, University of Virginia)

Jefferson’s classical taste culminated in the University of Virginia. Jefferson intended the university’s classical architecture to serve both an aesthetic and pedagogical purpose for the

³³⁴ Thomas Jefferson to Joseph C. Cabell, 28 December 1822, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mtjib024540/>.

growing republic. During 1818, Jefferson, acting on behalf of the Central College Board of Visitors, wrote that ‘each professor they should be able to employ, with an apartment for his lectures, and others for his own accommodation, connecting these pavilions by a range of Dormitories, capable each of lodging two students only, a provision equally friendly to study as to morals & order’ (Central College Board of Visitors to James P. Preston, 6 January 1818).³³⁵ Jefferson wanted each pavilion to be distinct from one another in order to educate architecture students on the various classical styles, while at the same time they stood as lodging each for a professor and a classroom for the students. Writing to William Cabell Rives during 1825, Jefferson argued:

the introduction of chaste models, taken from the finest remains of antiquity, of the orders of architecture, and of specimens of the choicest samples of each order, was considered as a necessary foundation of instruction for the Students in this art. ... we therefore determined that each of the Pavilions erected for the accomodation [*sic*] of the schools and their Professors should present a distinct and different sample of the art (TJ to William Cabell Rives, 25 November 1825).³³⁶

While exemplifying the ‘chaste models’ of architecture, Jefferson believed that both experiencing and living at these classical pavilions would both educate students in formal styles of architecture, but also inspire them morally, as fits within his taste for the *utile dulci*. The architecture served a practical purpose in an education of the arts. After all, Jefferson was largely concerned with replacing the colonial architecture of the College of William and Mary, which he believed fostered student debauchery and immorality. If students learned of and lived within classical styles, which he called ‘chaste,’ then students would be less tempted toward immoral attitudes. In this respect, the Classics served a function for Jefferson—namely uplifting his students toward knowledge and good acts. Jefferson’s private classical villas already uplifted himself toward knowledge and virtue; the classical University

³³⁵ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 12, 1 September 1817 to 21 April 1818 (Looney, J. 2014: 326–330). Jefferson was a member of the Board of Visitors, amongst future presidents, the Jameses Madison and Monroe.

³³⁶ “From Thomas Jefferson to William Cabell Rives, 25 November 1825,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-5684>.

would do the same for the public, thereby extending Jefferson's private taste to the public realm. By characterising classical architecture as 'chaste models', which he also did three years earlier, Jefferson assigned value to the taste and so expressed his own identity as a man of classical taste.³³⁷ Indeed, in an 1822 letter to Maria Cosway, Jefferson confessed: 'I, am laying the foundation of an University in my native state, which I hope will repay the liberalities of it's [sic] legislature by improving the virtue and science of their country' (TJ to Maria Cosway, 24 October 1822).³³⁸ Writing to Englishman William Roscoe earlier during 1820, furthermore, Jefferson noted of the University of Virginia: 'this institution will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. for here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it' (TJ to William Roscoe, 27 December 1820).³³⁹ With these goals in mind, Jefferson designed the University in various classical styles as 'chaste models' of architecture that he believed would best evoke and suit such goals for the virtuous republic he helped establish.

Of course, the republic was anything but virtuous, considering the subjugation and disenfranchisement of various groups of peoples. Jefferson's virtuous republic required enslavement and the repression of women in order to succeed. Indeed, the Commissioners for the University of Virginia met at a Tavern at Rockfish Gap in order to 'enquire and report a proper site for the University contemplated by that act. in this enquiry they supposed that the governing considerations should be the healthiness of the site, the fertility of the neighboring [sic] country, and it's centrality to the white population of the whole state' (TJ, 'Draft of the

³³⁷ Jefferson wrote to Robert Walsh: 'the buildings are in a classical and chaste style of architecture' (TJ to Robert Walsh, 21 December 1822). "From Thomas Jefferson to Robert Walsh, 21 December 1822," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3227>.

Horace expounded upon the connection between architecture and morality *Ode* 3.29, in which he contrasted the luxury of the tower of Maecenas' from Horace's own farm. Such humility in architecture and the home is connected with humility in the self and being free from stress.

³³⁸ "From Thomas Jefferson to Maria Hadfield Cosway, 24 October 1822," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3111>.

³³⁹ "From Thomas Jefferson to William Roscoe, 27 December 1820," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1712>.

Rockfish Gap Report of the University of Virginia Commissioners’, ca. 28 June 1818).³⁴⁰

According to Jefferson’s own word, the University was to be placed in the whitest area of Virginia in order to both attract white men to its site of learning (among other reasons, such as topography and climate) but to also exclude African Americans from its campus. The Commissioners calculated ‘a total of 582,123 for the whole state, [and] found, that on the Western side of the Blue ridge there were about 216,000 white inhabitants, and on the Eastern side about 366,000, leaving 150,000 more below than above the ridge’ (TJ, ‘Draft of the Rockfish Gap Report of the University of Virginia Commissioners’, ca. 28 June 1818).³⁴¹ Jefferson directly participated in the placement of the University in the whitest area of Virginia, which was his native area of Virginia and where the University was eventually placed.

As he mused on the ‘chaste’ architecture of antiquity, Jefferson failed to acknowledge the great human expense that came from building such a lyceum. Similarly, Jefferson would casually describe the profitability of enslaved workers, just as he would describe the types of materials used for building. In a letter to John Wayles Eppes during June 1820, Jefferson discussed the University’s proposed lecturers who would teach ‘antient languages’; at the same time Jefferson acknowledged his debts the usefulness of selling of people in order to settle his debts. Despite ‘having scruples, about selling negroes,’ Jefferson noted that he could ‘spare 20. negroes in all from those plantations, men women and children in the usual proportions’ (TJ to John Wayles Eppes, 30 June 1820).³⁴² Jefferson then proceeded to discuss selling portions of his Bedford estate in order to relieve some debts. For Jefferson, the selling of people and the selling of land belonged in the same conversation and, therefore, belonged

³⁴⁰ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 189–208).

³⁴¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 189–208).

³⁴² “From Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, 30 June 1820,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1352>.

in the same category: property. For Jefferson, selling people (and owning them) was another means through which to achieve his classical taste; enslaved African Americans were necessary for both the financial construction of the University and its physical construction.³⁴³ Jefferson continued in this same letter on the profitability of enslaved mothers and their usefulness as producers of the enslaved: ‘I consider a woman who brings a child every two years as more profitable than the best man of the farm. what she produces is an addition to the capital, while his labors disappear in mere consumption’ (TJ to John Wayles Eppes, 30 June 1820).³⁴⁴ Despite ‘having scruples,’ Jefferson’s nonchalant attitudes toward enslaved peoples, especially while discussing his goals for the University, forces us to recognise that they were absolutely essential to his classical taste. Although his writings on classical architecture can be inspiring and elegant, such a vision came at great cost and had detrimental consequences on real people. Jefferson intended his classical taste to inspire America’s white male élite toward civic duty and the pursuit of knowledge. According to Daniel Boorstin in (1948) *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson*:

Despite all that had been said about distributing educational opportunities in the proportions in which the Creator had distributed talents among men, the large outlines of the Jeffersonian educational system were designed to prepare each individual for the practical tasks assigned him by his present place in the social hierarchy. ... [T]he Jeffersonian demand that education give men implements immediately and obviously useful, has surely helped establish the American tradition, which combines enthusiasm for education with an insistence that education be uncritical and conservative (Boorstin 1948: 222-23).

The people whom Jefferson admitted to his university necessarily reflected both his and Virginia’s narrow attitudes toward African Americans and women. For enslaved African Americans, Jefferson’s classical taste represented and was founded upon tyranny, bondage and subjugation. For women and Native Americans, Jefferson’s classical taste was founded upon

³⁴³ During 1808, a former enslaved man wrote to Jefferson: ‘O! Thomas, you have had a long nap, and spent a great number of years in ease & plenty upon our hard earned property, while we have been in the meantime, smarting under the cow hide and sweating in the fields. Is this the fruits of your education, sir?’ (Taylor 2019: 150).

³⁴⁴ “From Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, 30 June 1820,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1352>.

the exclusion of the intellectual enterprise of understanding and the restriction of the pursuit of happiness. In designing his ideal University, Jefferson called for the pursuit of happiness. By so doing, however, Jefferson's educational plan did just the opposite: it/he contributed to the perpetuating subjugation of marginalised identities in the American South through the Classics and the institution of learning.

According to Jefferson, 'knowledge is power, that knowledge is safety, and that knowledge is happiness' (TJ to George Ticknor, 25 November 1817).³⁴⁵ Jefferson's pedagogical system of educating white men was built upon the exclusion of African Americans. If knowledge is indeed power, as Jefferson remarked during 1817, then African Americans' access to knowledge would likewise gain their access to power and challenge white planters' authority.³⁴⁶ Additionally, Jefferson's remarks that knowledge is both safety and happiness necessarily suggests that he did not believe enslaved people should have access to both. In the Epicurean tradition, to which Jefferson adhered, happiness is the ultimate aim of life, and knowledge is the means through which to pursue happiness. Jefferson's safety and happiness, however, required enslavement. His pursuit of happiness through classical tastes/architecture (and the knowledgeable tools with which to learn of it) was built upon enslaved labour.

An American Pantheon

This section explores the physical features of Jefferson's Rotunda at the University of Virginia. It focuses on the Rotunda specifically because it is the building upon which Jefferson spent the most time discussing and reflecting. Jefferson shared the designs of the ten pavilions with William Thornton and Benjamin Henry Latrobe, but the Rotunda was

³⁴⁵ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 12, 1 September 1817 to 21 April 1818 (Looney, J. 2014: 203–205).

³⁴⁶ See Taylor 2019: 151–54. See also Morgan (1975), *American Slavery, American Freedom*, as this is his overall argument: 'American reliance on slave labor must be viewed in the context of the American struggle for a separate and equal station among the nations of the earth' (Morgan 1975: 5).

Jefferson's special building and bears the closest resemblance to a Roman building, namely the Pantheon, and, therefore, serves as the best building for illustrating Jefferson's educational vision through classical architecture. Exploring the Rotunda will help illuminate the sources of Jefferson's classical taste and help to better visualise the aesthetic lineage to which he adhered. Much has been written on the architecture of the University of Virginia, especially the work of Fiske Kimball and Richard Guy Wilson. That being the case, this section will build upon their work while simultaneously presenting a more in-depth exploration into Jefferson's architectural ancestry. By examining the architecture of the University, this section will illustrate the results of Jefferson's plans, as seen in the previous section, and provide an architectural framework for the next section on education.



(Photo: Alley Marie Jordan, Rotunda, UVA)

During 1820, Jefferson listed each pavilion (or house/classroom) with their direct classical styles:

‘Pavilions

No. I. Doric of Diocletian’s baths from Chambray

II. Ionic, with dentils from the temple of Fortuna Virilis. Palladio.

III. Corinthian. Palladio.

IV. Doric of Albano. from Chambray.

V. Ionic with modillions. Palladio’s.

VI. Ionic of the Theatre of Marcellus. dentils. Chambray

VII. Doric of Palladio. with mutules.

VIII. Corinthian of Diocletian’s Baths, from Chambray.

IX. Ionic with dentils. Temple of Fortuna Virilis. Palladio.

X. Doric of the Theatre of Marcellus. Chambray.

Rotunda. Corinthian of the Pantheon. from Palladio’ (TJ ‘List of Styles of Pavilions at the University of Virginia,’ 1820).³⁴⁷

Jefferson here listed the classical styles of each pavilion and the modern sources from which he gathered this information, namely from (1650) *Parallele de l’architecture antique et Moderne* by Fréart Chambray and Andrea Palladio’s works, both in French.³⁴⁸ He wrote to James Madison during 1817 that ‘We are sadly at a loss here for a Palladio. I had three different editions, but they are at Washington, and nobody in this part of the country has one unless you have’ (TJ to Madison 15 November 1817).³⁴⁹ Jefferson, therefore, borrowed his books on classical architecture from his fellow Classics-enthusiast, James Madison.³⁵⁰ As explored in the previous chapter, Jefferson likewise used Chambray’s illustrations of the Baths of Diocletian for his designs of Monticello, as seen in the entablature of the North

³⁴⁷ “Thomas Jefferson: List of Styles of Pavilions at the University of Virginia, ca. 1820, December 1820,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1727>.

³⁴⁸ Jefferson sold his original copies of parts of these works to the Library of Congress during 1815, (vol. 2 of Palladio and vol. 4 of Chambray), but quickly repurchased the entire collections for his Retirement Library the following year. He acquired a 1766 edition of Chambray and a 1764 edition of Palladio. See David Bailie Warden to TJ, 20 February 1816 and 9 August 1816.

³⁴⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 12, 1 September 1817 to 21 April 1818 (Looney, J. 2014: 193–194).

³⁵⁰ Like Jefferson, Madison was also an enthusiast for classical tastes, especially in his gardens, which included a Tuscan Temple to Vesta and is the only original part of Madison’s garden that still stands at Montpelier today. The design was likely gathered from Palladio, who illustrated his own monopteron Ionic temple in the 1766 edition, based on Vitruvius’ accounts. There is much room to explore James Madison and the Classics, politically, philosophically, and aesthetically.

piazza, which retains the metope masks of Apollo. The University can then be seen as a tasteful extension of Monticello, and thus of Jefferson himself. These same entablature metope masks rest in the parlours of Pavilions I, VI and IX at the University of Virginia. Jefferson's chief sources for the architecture of the University were literary.³⁵¹ Jefferson used *Parallele de l'architecture antique avec la modern* (1766) by Charles Errand and Chambray for his designs for the University of Virginia. With his copies of Palladio safe in Washington, Jefferson turned to the antique buildings themselves, not Palladio's interpretations, as seen in Fréart, Clérisseau and Desgodets.

The Rotunda was Jefferson's special project. Of all the buildings at the University, the Rotunda was the building to which Jefferson spent the most careful attention. And of all the buildings at the University, the Rotunda was also the most symbolic, both because its exterior structure resembled the Pantheon, but also because its interior (or at least Jefferson's ideas for it) generated visions of the heavens when paired with a library. Although the Rotunda stands one-half the size of the Pantheon, it nonetheless evokes awe, grandeur and antiquity.³⁵² Like the Pantheon, Jefferson used the Corinthian order for its six columns (the Pantheon has eight), unusual for Jefferson's more simplistic preferences for the Tuscan, Doric and Ionic. Jefferson's American pantheon to knowledge encourages more light than the Roman

³⁵¹ Comparisons have been made by Michelle Benoit and Richard Guy Wilson on the UVA Lawn to the French gardens at Marly in (2012), 'Jefferson and Marly: Complex Influences,' *Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles*. The authors note: 'The detailing and materials of the pavilions themselves are another point of comparison between Marly and the University of Virginia. The budget and availability of materials to reconstruct Jefferson's classical pavilions was limited, so he disguised some of his materials to give off a grander appearance. This is not unlike the facades of the Château de Marly, which were painted with faux architectural details. The doors of the pavilions at the University of Virginia are made of solid pine, a fine material by today's standards, but were painted with false graining to look like mahogany. In addition, the columns that run along the porticos are masonry covered with stucco, and finished with a layer of paint mixed with sand, to make the columns appear to be limestone. Jefferson's exposure to the use of faux materials could have been influenced by his travels abroad, especially his visit to Marly. An eighteenth-century French encyclopaedia explains the concept of "imitation architecture," or *architecture feinte*' (Wilson and Benoit 2012: 25).

³⁵² It should be noted that the original Rotunda caught fire during 1895 and there were alterations to the original design, such as not rebuilding the annex and another floor. Later during 1976, however, the building was reconstructed to Jefferson's original designs.

Pantheon due to its windows encircling two levels of classrooms, allowing students to study by natural light in the library, while the Dome Room is exposed to the *oculus* above, as in the Pantheon.³⁵³ While the Pantheon is at street-level and sunken, Jefferson's Rotunda is highly elevated and thus imposes over the pavilions as the focal point of the Lawn. '[I]n its animated and articulate vitality,' wrote Karl Lehman, 'is something entirely different. In that sense, it is more beautiful' (Lehmann 1947: 171-2). Jefferson's classical reception still retains the atmosphere of the Pantheon and was directly modelled on it but was adapted to the functions of a university building. Jefferson wrote to William Short during the autumn of 1821: 'the Library is to be on the principle of the Pantheon, a sphere within a cylinder of 70.f. diameter, to wit one half only of the dimensions of the Pantheon, and of a single order only' (TJ to William Short, 24 November 1821).³⁵⁴ According to Wilson, Jefferson recognised that the sphere is of the perfect forms in geometry, which Jefferson adapted: 'In his [Jefferson's] scheme, the human mind is at the center, and the library is the mind of the University—the repository of wisdom, knowledge of the past, and ideas for the future' (Wilson 1993: 71). The Rotunda had a practical function as the University's library, but also served a symbolic function as well.

The interior of the Rotunda was as classical as the exterior, though in a different way. Jefferson designed the interior of the Rotunda as a magical place in which to be inspired by the cosmos, a subject he treated with great interest. While the Pantheon existed as a place of

³⁵³ Jefferson on the windows of the Rotunda: 'Mr Dinsmore consulted me yesterday on the entablature of the Rotunda & of it's windows. I reviewed them, and find no reason to substitute any other than that of my original drawing for the main entablature, which was that of Palladio Book. 1. Pl. 26. taking the base however from his plate 23. that of Pl. 25. having too much work as well as that of the Pantheon. I have examined carefully all the antient Corinthians in my profession, and observe that Palladio, as usual, has given the finest members of them all in the happiest combination. I think too that his plates 35. 36, give the handsomest entablatures for windows that I can find here, but I would adopt the architrave at the left hand bottom corner of pl. 35. give it a plain frize [*sic*] instead of his swelled one, and the dentil cornice at the bottom of pl. 36' (TJ to Arthur S. Brockenbrough, 22 April 1823). "From Thomas Jefferson to Arthur S. Brockenbrough, 22 April 1823," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3471>.

³⁵⁴ "From Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 24 November 1821," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-2445>.

divine worship, Jefferson's Dome likewise represented the heavens, though through the devotion to science instead of the gods. Jefferson intended his pantheon to function as a temple to knowledge. He even designed the ceiling to act as a planetarium: it was to be painted dark blue and ornamented with moving golden stars, (illuminated lanterns from below casting light into the dome), so that students could study astronomy within a classical temple.³⁵⁵ 'The dome of heaven became an instrument of modern science,' wrote Wilson, 'and revelation was to be replaced with empiricism in a true spirit of enlightenment' (Wilson 1993: 71). Jefferson's celestial ceiling was intended as a place in which to reach the celestial realms, whether divinely or scientifically.³⁵⁶ Where Wilson rightly acknowledged the planetarium as a devotion to enlightenment (assuming the Enlightenment), it was also a devotion to Jefferson's interest in cosmology, as seen in his Epicurean inquiries.

'Illimitable Freedom': Thomas Jefferson's Educational Vision

This section will explore Jefferson's perspectives on education and how they relate to architecture and the Classics. Doing so will help place classical tastes within Jefferson's timeline and illustrate his decades-long interests in reforming Virginian education, which included classical art as a means to do so. Indeed, as early as 1771, Jefferson designed a quadrangle to the main building of the College of William and Mary, his *alma mater*. Similar to Palladio's 'Building at Vicenza' in Plate IX, book 2, Chapter 3, in Leoni (1742), Jefferson's design included an interior arcade around an open courtyard, reminiscent of Roman courtyards. As he designed his classical grotto, Jefferson designed a Palladian

³⁵⁵ Original illustration in Jefferson's Specification book, July 18, 1819: 3. *Jefferson Papers*, UVA.

³⁵⁶ Karl Lehmann observes that Jefferson may have received the idea of a planetarium from Dio Cassius: 'It is evident that his plan to make the dome of the Rotunda an observatory of astronomical phenomena was suggested by Dion Cassius, the historian, who is the most important ancient source for the Pantheon in Rome, the model of the Rotunda of Charlottesville. Dion, whom Jefferson read often and put on the list of required readings in history, said that the dome of the Pantheon represented the heavens. However, he did not find in Dion the concept of mechanically moving stars. This he found in Varro's description of the domed rotunda of his aviary' (Lehmann 1947: 187).

educational building. His attitudes toward classical architecture did not change from 1771 to the finishing of the University of Virginia during 1825, despite the complex political situations in between, from the American Revolution to the presidency of John Quincy Adams. As illustrated in this chapter thus far, Jefferson intended the architecture of the University to serve as a visual marker of academic inspiration and aspiration. Now that the architecture itself has been explored, this section turns to Jefferson's various writings on education, which complemented his classical taste and illustrates the culmination of his classical taste for Virginia. His educational system, which necessitated classical buildings, was the fulfilment of his classical taste. After all, as an eighteenth-century man, Jefferson believed in the ideal combination of utility and ornament—the *utile dulci*, which is a theme throughout Jefferson's classical taste. Indeed, according to Wagoner:

Jefferson's insistence that education that is valuable must also be useful invites a definition of utility that transcends the moment and the mundane. To 'pursue happiness' in the grandest meaning of that concept, Jefferson would have us understand, requires attention to the moral, civic, and aesthetic dimensions of life as well as to the immediately useful. ... Although Jefferson tended to measure the value of all his studies and activities on the basis of functional utility, his intellectually active mind, tasteful sensibilities, and notions of virtue, service, and the progress of mankind all provide a remarkable example of a life that was both useful and beautiful (Wagoner 1993: 48-49).

Classical architecture did nothing for Jefferson if it did not help serve a purpose—namely the purpose of fostering educated, goodly citizens. As this section is the culmination of Jefferson's classical taste, it is likewise the culmination of this thesis. All of Jefferson's classical tastes before this aided in the eventual construction of the University of Virginia. Importantly, Jefferson designed the University of Virginia as a direct contrast to the College of William and Mary, ideologically, aesthetically and pedagogically. On the architecture of Williamsburg, Jefferson observed in the *Notes on the State of Virginia* that 'It is impossible

to devise things more ugly, uncomfortable, and happily more perishable’ (Abernethy 1964: 145).³⁵⁷



(Photo: Alley Marie Jordan. Governor's Mansion, Williamsburg, VA)

This section will discuss the subject of History as necessary to Jefferson's philosophy of education, which he believed was essential to the education at the University of Virginia. For Jefferson, in order for American citizens to be the 'guardians of their own liberty,' they must learn the subject of History. 'The need,' wrote Wagoner, 'quite simply, was for an education that would be useful for republican citizens' (Wagoner 1993: 10). In so doing, students would be able to safeguard themselves against government, both intellectually and politically.

³⁵⁷ Although he did not remark on the gardens of the Governor's Mansion, it is likely Jefferson would have rejected them too, as they were (and are) in the Dutch manner of design, which is wholly antithetical to Jefferson's taste in landscape architecture.

Already during the 1780s as he composed the *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson illustrated his philosophy of History. In Query XIV, Jefferson argued:

For this purpose the reading in the first stage, where they [the students] will receive their whole education, is proposed, as has been said, to be chiefly historical. History by apprising them of the past will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men; it will enable them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views. In every government on earth is some trace of human weakness, some germ of corruption and degeneracy, which cunning will discover, and wickedness insensibly open, cultivate and improve. Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves therefore are its only safe depositories. And to render even them safe their minds must be improved to a certain degree (Abernethy 1964: 142).

Fresh from the American Revolution, which ended three years prior (and stationed in a tumultuous France on the brink of its own Revolution), Jefferson was particularly concerned with posterity's ability to arm themselves intellectually and morally against whatever new forms of government that were developing locally, nationally and even internationally.³⁵⁸ 'It is an axiom in my mind,' Jefferson wrote to George Washington during 1786, 'that our liberty can never be safe but in the hands of the people themselves, and that too of the people with a certain degree of instruction. This it is the business of the state to effect, and on a general plan' (TJ to George Washington, 4 January 1786).³⁵⁹ During the publication of the *Notes* in 1787, Jefferson's protégé, James Madison, led the ratification process of the United States Constitution, while attempting to persuade the voting public of its benefits through the

³⁵⁸ According to Wagoner: 'Jefferson's conviction that history offered lessons that could serve to prevent the reappearance of tyranny was tied to his belief that the study of the past presented limitless opportunities for calling the moral sense into play. He observed in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*:

Instead therefore of putting the Bible and Testament into the hands of children, at an age when their judgments are not sufficiently matured for religious enquiries, their memories may here be stored with the most useful facts from Grecian, Roman, European, and American history. The first elements of morality too may be instilled into their minds; such as, when further developed as their judgments advance into strength, may teach them how to work out their own greatest happiness, by shewing them that it does not depend on the condition of life in which chance has placed them, but is always the result of good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits.

For Jefferson, then, the utility or value of moral development was that it contributed directly to the happiness and well-being of the republican citizen and to the harmony of the republican state. The useful citizen was the moral citizen, respected and admired by his countrymen' (Wagoner 1993: 19-20).

³⁵⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 150–152).

Federalist Papers. Jefferson's perspective on the benefits of studying History for Virginia's youth occurred during a time in which history was particularly relevant. It was no coincidence that the authors of the *Federalist Papers* signed their names as Publius and included frequent references to classical history, which evoked the Roman Republic and, in theory, inspired American voters toward the establishment of their own republic by linking (at least in name) themselves to the legacy of the Republic.

As it pertains to Jefferson and education, chief among the disciplines to be taught at the University of Virginia was the subject of History, which included Classical History. Jefferson believed that history was equally important for young Virginians as the progression of the modern sciences. Without a proper education in History, Jefferson argued, the citizenry will not know to recognise tyranny, nor will they have the intellectual tools required to overthrow it. Jefferson compared such a situation to the fall of the Roman Republic, as he wrote in Query XIV:

Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves therefore are its only safe depositories. And to render even them safe their minds must be improved to a certain degree. This indeed is not all that is necessary, though it be essentially necessary. An amendment of our constitution must here come in aid of the public education. The influence over government must be shared among all the people. If every individual which composes their mass participates of the ultimate authority, the government will be safe; because the corrupting the whole mass will exceed any private resources of wealth: and public ones cannot be provided but by levies on the people (Abernethy 1964: 142-43).

Jefferson believed that institutions of public education, such as state universities, were the most important safeguard against corrupted government. Without public education, and thus civic participation in government, such a government would degenerate and fall to a dictator, as he wrote in Query XIII:

They had sought this precedent in the history of Rome, where alone it was to be found, and where at length too it had proved fatal. They had taken it from a republic, rent by the most bitter factions and tumults, where the government was of a heavy-handed unfeeling aristocracy, over a people ferocious, and rendered desperate by poverty and wretchedness... constitution therefore allowed a temporary tyrant to be erected, under the name of a Dictator (Abernethy 1964: 123).

It is important to remember that Jefferson admired Roman architecture. Even though Jefferson regarded politics and art as separate from one another (at least in this regard), he did believe that art could influence politics.

Later in Query XV, Jefferson lamented the lack of classical styles of architecture in Virginia: ‘But the first principles of the art are unknown, and there exists scarcely a model among us sufficiently chaste to give an idea of them’ (Abernethy 1964: 146). Jefferson complained that no ‘chaste’ architecture existed in Williamsburg in order to educate the students at William and Mary in science and architecture. By ‘chaste’ architecture, Jefferson meant classical architecture, as he often used this adjective while describing the tastes of classical architecture.³⁶⁰ As early as the *Notes*, Jefferson was thinking about the necessity of classical architecture in Virginia. Jefferson believed that a chaste form of architecture would mould young learners into goodly citizens in stark contrast to the debauched students at his *alma mater*. For Jefferson, the University of Virginia would be the remedy to the influences of modern Europe and youthful apathy, and the University would inspire civic participation with a robust education in the fine arts, languages, moral philosophy and the natural sciences. Jefferson believed that if students lived and studied under classical columns and arcaded loggias, then they would *want* to become virtuous men by upholding the ancient traditions of learning since Epicurus’ Garden School. This is the legacy in which Jefferson actively participated and attempted to fulfil in the United States. ‘Architecture being one of the fine arts,’ Jefferson continued in the *Notes*, ‘and as such within the department of a professor of the college, according to the new arrangement, perhaps a spark may fall on some young subjects of natural taste, kindle up their genius, and produce a reformation in this elegant and useful art’ (Abernethy 1964: 146). Jefferson again referenced architecture as a ‘useful art,’

³⁶⁰ See earlier discussion.

evoking the *utile dulci* of Horace. Only a useful art, such as architecture, could reform America's youth toward living well. Indeed, it must be a chaste style of architecture, which the Gothic and Baroque styles were not. Classical architecture was the most chaste and, therefore, the only one appropriate for educating young American men.³⁶¹

Jefferson believed that Rome's classical past, in both architecture and language, would furnish the young American man with knowledge and an admiration for the arts to bring back to the United States. 'The advantages of Rome,' Jefferson wrote during 1785 while in Paris, 'are the acquiring a local knowlege [*sic*] of a spot so classical and so celebrated; the acquiring the true pronuntiation [*sic*] of the Latin language; the acquiring a just taste in the fine arts, more particularly those of painting, sculpture, Architecture, and Music; a familiarity with those objects and processes of agriculture which experience has shewn [*sic*] best adapted to a climate like ours; and lastly the advantage of a fine climate for health' (TJ to John Banister Jr., 15 October 1785).³⁶² Despite these advantages in language, however, Jefferson believed that Americans could just as well receive an education in the arts and sciences in the United States: 'It is true that the habit of speaking the modern languages cannot be so well acquired in America, but every other article can be as well acquired at William and Mary College as at any place in Europe' (TJ to John Banister Jr., 15 October 1785).³⁶³ Jefferson believed that Americans should educationally distance themselves from the attractions of the Grand Tour, so popular amongst British gentry-men. 'It also highlighted

³⁶¹ Jefferson was a lifelong enthusiast for reforming education in America. During his later years in 1821, Jefferson connected his early writings on education with the completion of the University of Virginia, 1779-1821: 'Nobody can doubt my zeal for the general instruction of the people. Who first started that idea? I may surely say myself. Turn to the bill in the revise code which I drew more than 40. years ago; and before which the idea of a plan for the education of the people generally had never been suggested in this state' (TJ to James Breckenridge, 15 February 1821). "From Thomas Jefferson to James Breckenridge, 15 February 1821," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1839>.

Jefferson here referenced his 'Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge' of 1779, which ridded the state of two of its divinity schools.

³⁶² *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 635–638).

³⁶³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 635–638).

an important facet of his concept of utility in education,’ wrote Wagoner, ‘republican citizens must themselves be educated in the new republic’ (Wagoner 1993: 7). This perspective, which Jefferson wrote years before the University of Virginia, aligns with his later goals for the University. Indeed, its purpose was to educate men in Virginia with an education comparable to an experience in Rome—namely learning within classical architecture and learning from European-trained professors. ‘It appears to me,’ continued Jefferson,

then that an American coming to Europe for education loses in his knowledge [*sic*], in his morals, in his health, in his habits, and in his happiness. [...] Cast your eye over America: who are the men of most learning, of most eloquence, most beloved by their country and most trusted and promoted by them? They are those who have been educated among them, and whose manners, morals and habits are perfectly homogeneous with those of the country (TJ to John Banister Jr., 15 October 1785).³⁶⁴

Jefferson believed that the beauty of Rome could be found and built in Virginia, and that the usefulness of such an education could be designed in Virginia as well. One need not travel to Europe and become debauched by their vices.³⁶⁵

During that same year of 1785, Jefferson expressed the importance of a classical education for young men. Writing from Paris during the summer of 1785, Jefferson wrote to his nephew, Peter Carr on a proper education into the Classics:

First read Goldsmith’s history of Greece. This will give you a digested view of that field. Then take up antient [*sic*] history in the detail, reading the following books in the following order. Herodotus. Thucydides. Xenophontis hellenica. Xenophontis Anabasis. Quintus

³⁶⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953L 635–638).

³⁶⁵ Of the disadvantages of a European education, Jefferson wrote at length: ‘Let us view the disadvantages of sending a youth to Europe. To enumerate them all would require a volume. I will select a few. If he goes to England he learns drinking, horse-racing and boxing. These are the peculiarities of English education. The following circumstances are common to education in that and the other countries of Europe. He acquires a fondness for European luxury and dissipation and a contempt for the simplicity of his own country; he is fascinated with the privileges of the European aristocrats, and sees with abhorrence the lovely equality which the poor enjoys with the rich in his own country: he contracts a partiality for aristocracy or monarchy; he forms foreign friendships which will never be useful to him, and loses the season of life for forming in his own country those friendships which of all others are the most faithful and permanent: he is led by the strongest of all the human passions into a spirit for female intrigue destructive of his own and others happiness, or a passion for whores destructive of his health, and in both cases learns to consider fidelity to the marriage bed as an ungentlemanly practice and inconsistent with happiness: he recollects the voluptuary dress and arts of the European women and pities and despises the chaste affections and simplicity of those of his own country; he retains thro’ life a fond recollection and a hankering after those places which were the scenes of his first pleasures and of his first connections’ (TJ to John Banister Jr., 15 October 1785). *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 635–638).

Curtius. Justin. This shall form the first stage of your historical reading, and is all I need mention to you now. ... The next will be of Roman history. From that we will come down to Modern history. In Greek and Latin poetry, you have read or will read at school Virgil, Terence, Horace, Anacreon, Theocritus, Homer (TJ to Peter Carr, 19 August 1785).³⁶⁶

Jefferson's insistence here on classical reading was not only for the intellectual enterprise of understanding—it served to mould him into a 'public man' when paired with modern studies, thus, fulfilling his later goals for the University of Virginia—that is, to inspire young American men toward civic duty inspired from classical learning.³⁶⁷ For Jefferson, the Classics and education should not be separated, just as the Classics and architecture should not be separated. The Classics, therefore, served a purpose for Jefferson to both educate and inspire. Joy Connolly observes that Jefferson's liberal arts education at a Roman university generated 'An ethos of autonomy, liberty, competition, and self-determination... and a newly intensified insistence on the putatively natural difference of race' (Connolly 2010: 78-9). In Jefferson's ideal, the white students would discuss Livy under Ionic columns as their enslaved counterparts served them behind open doors. Women, of course, were not privy to such a masculine culture either, though Jefferson did believe that they deserved at least a basic education in the Classics.

For the girls and women in Jefferson's life, a classical education was necessary, but to an extent. Writing to his granddaughter during 1808, Jefferson instructed: 'I congratulate you, my dear Cornelia, on having acquired the valuable art of writing. ... To this we are indebted for all our reading; because it must be written before we can read it. To this we are indebted

³⁶⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785 (Boyd, J. 1953: 405–408).

³⁶⁷ Such an education, Jefferson argued, could only occur in the United States due to the corrupted governments of Europe. Writing to his mentor and fellow classicist, George Wythe, Jefferson argued: 'If all the sovereigns of Europe were to set themselves to work to emancipate the minds of their subjects from their present ignorance and prejudices... a thousand years would not place them on that high ground on which our common people are now setting out. ... I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom, and happiness. If any body [*sic*] thinks that kings, nobles, or priests are good conservators of public happiness, send them here. ... Preach, my dear Sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people' (TJ to John Wythe, 13 August 1786). *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 10, 22 June–31 December 1786 (Boyd, J. 1954: 243–245).

for the Iliad, the Aeneid, the Columbiad, Henriad, Dunciad, and now, for the most glorious poem of all, the terrapiniad, which I now enclose you' (TJ to Cornelia Jefferson Randolph, 26 December 1808).³⁶⁸ Jefferson's enthusiasm for a classical education was unsurpassed in Virginia during this time. He provided various lists of classical works to his daughters, his protégés and to the students at the University of Virginia, among others. To his daughter, Martha, furthermore, Jefferson insisted she complete her reading of Livy in Latin and connected the exercise to the American spirit:

I do not like your saying that you are unable to read the antient print of your Livy, but with the aid of your master. We are always equal to what we undertake with resolution. ... If you always lean on your master, you will never be able to proceed without him. It is a part of the American character to consider nothing as desperate; to surmount every difficulty by resolution and contrivance (TJ to Martha Jefferson, 28 March 1787).³⁶⁹

Jefferson then went on, however, to suggest his daughter learn to embroider because it is a suitable subject for a country wife: 'In the country life of America there are many moments when a woman can have recourse to nothing but her needle for employment' (TJ to Martha Jefferson, 28 March 1787).³⁷⁰ In Jefferson's idyllic universe and University, women were meant to be in the home. Jefferson's daughters, at least, were allowed a glimpse into the classical world, but only so that they may learn to be hardy in country life, not to train as architects or astronomers. Jefferson was chiefly concerned with his daughters' presentations and appearances of intelligence and worldliness. In a particularly nasty letter to Martha during 1783, Jefferson instructed his dear Patsy from Paris:

But be you from the moment you rise till you go to bed as cleanly and properly dressed as at the hours of dinner or tea. A lady who has been seen as a sloven or slut in the morning, will never efface the impression she then made with all the dress and pageantry she can afterwards involve herself in. Nothing is so disgusting to our sex as a want of cleanliness and delicacy in yours. I hope therefore the moment you rise from bed, your first work will be to dress yourself in such a stile as that you may be seen by any gentleman without his

³⁶⁸ "From Thomas Jefferson to Cornelia Jefferson Randolph, 26 December 1808," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-9406>.

³⁶⁹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787 (Boyd, J. 1955: 250–252).

³⁷⁰ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787 (Boyd, J. 1955: 250–252).

being able to discover a pin amiss, or any other circumstance of neatness wanting (TJ to Martha Jefferson, 22 December 1783).³⁷¹

For the male voting public, on the other hand, Jefferson believed it was the university's responsibility to educate its students in the morality of government in order to encourage a virtuous, enfranchised population.³⁷² In his draft of the Rockfish Gap Report of 1818, Jefferson listed the purposes of a public university:

to form the statesmen, legislators & judges, on whom public prosperity, & individual happiness are so much to depend:

to expound the principles and structure of government the laws which regulate the intercourse of nations, those formed municipally for our own government, and a sound spirit of legislation, which, banishing all arbitrary, and unnecessary restraint on individual action, shall leave us free to do whatever does not violate the equal rights of another:

to harmonise and promote the interests of agriculture, manufactures and commerce, and by well-informed views of Political economy to give a free scope to the public industry:

to develop [sic] the reasoning faculties of our youth, enlarge their minds, cultivate their morals, & instill [sic] into them the precepts of virtue and order:

to enlighten them with Mathematical and Physical sciences, which advance the arts & administer to the health, the subsistence, and comforts of human life:

and generally to form them to habits of reflection, and correct action, rendering them examples of virtue to others, and of happiness within themselves (TJ, 'Draft of the Rockfish Gap Report of the University of Virginia Commissioners', 28 June 1818).³⁷³

Jefferson was both the architect of the University and the architect of its educational system.

This curriculum illustrates Jefferson's vision for the University of Virginia's students and the effects of his design. He designed such a curriculum to reflect the political and social needs of the nation. In this way, the *utile dulci* of the university reflected not only such functions as colonnades shielding from the weather, but the university's *utile dulci* shielded American men from ignorance and corruption. The university acted as 'guard for their future security' (*Declaration of Independence*, 1776). After all, Jefferson continued in the Rockfish Gap Report: 'education generates habits of application, of order, and the love of virtue, and

³⁷¹ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 6, 21 May 1781–1 March 1784 (Boyd, J. 1952: 416–17).

³⁷² He wrote during 1807: 'I am not a friend to placing young men in populous cities, because they acquire there habits & partialities which do not contribute to the happiness of their afterlife' (TJ to Caspar Wistar, 21 June 1807). "From Thomas Jefferson to Caspar Wistar, 21 June 1807," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-5789>.

³⁷³ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 189–208).

corrects, by the force of habit, any innate obliquities in our moral organisation' (TJ, 'Draft of the Rockfish Gap Report of the University of Virginia Commissioners', 28 June 1818).³⁷⁴

Such a safeguard for 'Safety and Happiness' took on a form of education, which, like government, could help direct Americans toward 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' (*Declaration of Independence*, 1776). 'Education,' Jefferson continued, 'engrafts a new man on the native stock, & improves what in his nature was vicious and perverse into qualities of virtue & social value' (TJ, 'Draft of the Rockfish Gap Report of the University of Virginia Commissioners', 28 June 1818).³⁷⁵ Jefferson's associations with the principles laid out in the *Declaration of Independence* nearly fifty years earlier can be seen in the principles laid out in Rockfish Gap Report for the University of Virginia. Jefferson continued:

nor must we omit to mention, among the benefits of education, the incalculable advantage of training up able Counsellors to administer the affairs of our country, in all it's departments, Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary; and to bear their proper share in the councils of our National government; nothing, more than education, advancing the prosperity, the power, and the happiness of a nation (TJ, 'Draft of the Rockfish Gap Report of the University of Virginia Commissioners', 28 June 1818).³⁷⁶

Although this thesis is not about Jefferson's political philosophy(/ies), it is important to acknowledge the social consequences of his *utile dulci*. Jefferson believed that his university could give such an education in order to train many elite Virginian and Southern men in learning the virtues necessary for a well-balanced government, such as those that would advance prosperity, power and the 'happiness of a nation.' Jefferson further connected *utile* with *dulci* in his educational plan: 'to these should be added the arts which embellish life, dancing, music, and drawing; the last more especially, as an important part of military education' (TJ, 'Draft of the Rockfish Gap Report of the University of Virginia

³⁷⁴ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 189–208).

³⁷⁵ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 189–208).

³⁷⁶ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 189–208).

Commissioners', 28 June 1818).³⁷⁷ The skill of illustration, which embellishes life according to Jefferson, would directly translate into illustrating military plans, maps and record surroundings in an accurate manner, which is crucial to manoeuvres. Moreover, the student body of Jefferson's University were gentlemen—the members of high society who would become military officers. West Point was established during his presidency, moreover, in which Jefferson took an interest.³⁷⁸ Jefferson extended his *utile dulci* to not only architecture and government, but to the very fabric of the military.

In Jefferson's vision, the study of government would take place in the same academical village as the study of the classical languages and Natural Philosophy. Jefferson channelled the *utile dulci* while discussing the proposed education of languages at the University:

In my letter of the 18th. I omitted to say any thing of the languages as part of our proposed university. it was not that I think, as some do, that they are useless. I am of a very different opinion. I do not think them essential to the obtaining eminent degrees of science, but I think them very useful towards it. I suppose there is a portion of life during which our faculties are ripe enough for this & for nothing more useful. I think the Greeks & Romans have left us the purest models which exist of fine composition, whether we examine them as works of reason, or of style & fancy; and to them we probably owe these characteristics of modern composition. I know of no composition of any other antient people which merits the least regard as a model for it's matter or style. to all this I add that to read the Latin & Greek authors in their original is a sublime luxury; and I deem luxury in science to be at least as justifiable as in architecture, painting, gardening or the other arts. I enjoy Homer in his own language infinitely beyond Pope's translation of him (TJ to Joseph Priestly, 27 January 1800).

For Jefferson, the education in all these disciplines generated both moral and intellectual future leaders, equipped with the modern science of politics and the history of its classical beginnings. Languages, especially the classical ones, served genuine purposes of utility, but they also provided a 'sublime luxury', essential to the *dolce vita/beata vita* Jefferson espoused so often in relation to classical tastes. Jefferson was particular about his choices for

³⁷⁷ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 13, 22 April 1818 to 31 January 1819 (Looney, J. 2016: 189–208).

³⁷⁸ See McDonald 2004.

the Classics at the University library: ‘I begin indeed to be uneasy on the subject of editions; because the value of the library will depend so essentially on the best choice of these. in selecting the editions of the Classics, I was very particular in seeking out and specifying the latest and best editions’ (TJ to William Hilliard, 31 August 1825).³⁷⁹ According to Arciszewska and McKellar:

The cerebral, rational and text-based regime of classicism meant that its principles could be taught and mastered. In the new eighteenth-century economy, with traditional systems of control over printing in Britain removed, its tenets were easier and easier to circulate in an affordable printed form. This had further profound consequences for art production and consumption. The classical ideals could be learnt by aspiring artisans, as much as the ability to recognize works complying with the dominant canon (good taste) could be learned by viewers. This had two results: artisans could become professionals and people of lower classes (without classical education) could, by acquiring taste, become discriminating viewers (Arciszewska and McKellar, eds. 2004: 20).

This is what Jefferson wanted with the University of Virginia for both its students and the Virginians. He wanted to create a place where classicism could be formulated, understood and practised—a place in which to acquire taste.

Conclusion

Both Richard Guy Wilson and Alan Taylor observe that the University of Virginia represents Jefferson’s ‘vision of an ideal society composed of liberated and cooperating individuals,’ that ‘consummated his educational concerns’ (Taylor 2019: 7 and Wilson 1993: 47). This chapter also argued that the University of Virginia was the summation of Jefferson’s classical taste and his concerns with liberating the American mind. Jefferson’s plans for the University were not only for the public benefit but also for the culmination of his own personal classical taste. After all, Jefferson intentionally placed the University’s Rotunda within eyesight of his classical villa. Writing to Maria Cosway during 1822, Jefferson reflected on the optics of

³⁷⁹ “From Thomas Jefferson to William Hilliard, 31 August 1825,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-5504>.

viewing the Rotunda from a telescope through a gap in the trees at Monticello: ‘it is within view too of Monticello, So it’s most splendid object, and a constant gratification to my sight’ (TJ to Maria Cosway, 24 October 1822).³⁸⁰ Jefferson could stand on his mountaintop and observe his creation below—a place where he was both Rector and Creator.

Earlier during 1820, Jefferson wrote to John Wayles Eppes that ‘our University is now so far advanced as to be worth seeing. it exhibits already the appearance of a beautiful Academical village, of the finest models of building and of classical architecture, in the US’ (TJ to John Wayles Eppes, 30 June 1820).³⁸¹ Jefferson’s pride in his creation can be seen through his evocations of the University as ‘advanced,’ ‘beautiful,’ and ‘of the finest models.’ He continued that the University is ‘much visited by strangers and admired by all, for the beauty, originality and convenience of the plan’ (TJ to John Wayles Eppes, 30 June 1820).³⁸² Such sentiments illustrate Jefferson’s sense of accomplishment with the University as a site of classical art and, therefore, its success. In this letter, Jefferson did not explain the educational quality or its political ties and influences. Instead, he focused on the genius of the place and its uniqueness in the United States and the world. After all, there existed no other such classical university in Great Britain or the United States at the time. Institutions like Oxford (which Jefferson visited during 1786), Harvard and the College of William and Mary all retained their early modern architecture and ties to established religion.³⁸³ The University of Virginia was ardently secular (in line with Jefferson’s Lucretian sentiments toward

³⁸⁰ “From Thomas Jefferson to Maria Hadfield Cosway, 24 October 1822,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3111>.

³⁸¹ “From Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, 30 June 1820,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1352>.

³⁸² “From Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, 30 June 1820,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1352>.

³⁸³ See Woods 1985: 268. Jefferson did believe, however, that Oxford produced superb classicists: ‘for a classical professor we should expect better qualifications from Oxford or Cambridge than from Edinburgh’ (TJ to George Ticknor, 24 December 1819). “From Thomas Jefferson to George Ticknor, 24 December 1819,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-0981>. He also believed, however, that Oxford only produced classicists; for most other subjects he preferred Edinburgh scholars. Moreover, in Jefferson’s ‘Bill for Amending the Constitution of the College of William and Mary and Substituting More Certain Revenues for Its Support,’ he eliminated four professorships of Religion.

religion) and infused with the spirit of antiquity which Jefferson believed focused on science and reason over the Church.³⁸⁴ Jefferson designed no chapel at the university (one was included in the nineteenth century), nor was Divinity included in the curriculum. Such a spirit, in the words of Karl Lehmann, was the Classics' 'sense of freedom, their science, their poetry, their philosophy, [and] their arts' (Lehmann 1947: 188). Although the University of Virginia did not have the centuries of history and academic prestige as Oxford and Harvard, Jefferson enriched his university with the aesthetic lineage of antiquity, with a focus on the classical languages and study of architecture in order to establish it within the classical heritage as entirely separate and, therefore, new from the ancient universities of the English-speaking world.³⁸⁵ In order to create something entirely new, Jefferson looked to what was the oldest.

Daniel Webster observed during January 1824: 'Even the Edifice in which we assemble, these proportioned columns, this ornamented architecture, remind us that Greece has existed, and that we, like the rest of mankind, are greatly her debtors' (Daniel Webster, 'A Speech Delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States,' 19 January 1824).³⁸⁶ Webster, like Jefferson, recognised the inspiration gained from living and working within a classical structure. As Jefferson noted years earlier, he intended the classical architecture of the University to stand as reminders of their antique legacy to the classical

³⁸⁴ Jefferson wrote to Peter Carr from Paris during 1787: 'Religion. your reason is now mature enough to examine this object. in the first place divest yourself of all bias in favour of novelty & singularity of opinion. indulge them in any other subject rather than that of religion. it is too important, & the consequences of error may be too serious. on the other hand shake off all the fears & servile prejudices under which weak minds are servilely crouched. fix reason firmly in her seat, and call to her tribunal every fact, every opinion. question with boldness even the existence of a god; because, if there be one, he must more approve the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear ... I repeat that you must lay aside all prejudice on both sides, and neither believe nor reject any thing because any other person, or description of persons have rejected or believed it. your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven, and you are answerable not for the rightness but uprightness of the decision' (TJ to Peter Carr, 10 August 1787). *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 12, 7 August 1787–31 March 1788 (Boyd, J. 1955: 14-19).

³⁸⁵ In the *Notes*, Jefferson said of Europe and classical learning: 'The learning Greek and Latin, I am told, is going into disuse in Europe. ... but it would be very ill-judged in us to follow their example in this instance' (Abernethy 1964: 141).

³⁸⁶ Webster and Whipple 2001: 57.

cultures. As Webster's remark illustrates, Jefferson was not alone in this vision, but he was alone in building and executing it for Virginia's youth. Jefferson believed wholeheartedly in his vision for the University of Virginia. Alan Taylor concluded that Jefferson's vision for UVA was, ultimately, a failure due to the realities of the student body, beyond Jefferson's control.³⁸⁷ Whether or not he was successful depends, of course, on the time in history being examined. Regardless, as it pertains to this thesis, the realities are not of concern so much as what Jefferson intended, as seen through his letters and designs. Jefferson was successful with his visions for the university, thereby illuminating and actualising his classical taste.

'Mine after all may be an Utopian dream; but being innocent I have thought I might indulge in it till I go to the land of dreams, and sleep there with the dreamers of all past and future times' (TJ to Joseph Correa de Serra, 25 November 1817).

³⁸⁷ See Taylor 2019.

Classical Curiosities, a Conclusion

Scito idem agrum quod hominem (Cato, *De Re Rustica* 4.45).

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than dreamt of in your philosophy'
(Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 1.5.167-8).

'You say I must go to writing history. while in public life, I had not time: and now that I am retired, I am past the time. to write history requires a whole life of observation, of enquiry, of labor and correction. it's materials are not to be found among the ruins of a decayed memory. at this day I should begin where I ought to have left off. the 'solve senescentem equum' is a precept we learn in youth, but for the practice of age; and were I to disregard it would be but a proof the more of it's soundness' (TJ to Josephus B. Stuart, 10 May 1817).

I.

Trends in classicism during the eighteenth century generated renewed interests in the past not experienced since the Renaissance. As the politics in Europe leaned toward Enlightenment, archaeological discoveries in Italy ushered in 'new' ways of thinking about the past—that is, classical thought. By 1750 when our Thomas Jefferson was just seven years old, classicism was held firm in Britain and France, only to grow as young Tom grew.³⁸⁸ Classical thinking not only influenced Enlightenment thought and philosophy, but pervaded everyday life for the gentrified classes. Commonplace books, architecture, dress, education, gardens, literature, interior design and more were all affected by the discoveries in the Bay of Naples. Such influences reached ladies' fashion at the same time Jefferson built the University of Virginia in the early nineteenth century. As women dressed like Romans, men were educated by Romans. As Robert Adam designed the classical/Palladian architecture all over the isle of Great Britain, Jefferson built his own classical/Palladian villa in Virginia. Josiah Wedgwood's popular Roman wares dotted British country houses and London townhouses in colours of blue and white; such classical decorations could even be found in the backwoods of the American South. In this respect, Jefferson was a basic eighteenth-century

³⁸⁸ The first excavations in Pompeii and Herculaneum began during 1738 and 1748.

man. He, like the British aristocracy, collected an Apollo Belvedere; could read Latin and Greek; occupied a Palladian country house (or two); upheld Enlightenment ideals; engaged in civic duty; and built an Arcadian garden. But Jefferson was not just a man of intellect, and his classical mind extended beyond Pope's poetry or Lord Burlington's house. Jefferson extended his classicism for the new nation of the United States. As an American, Jefferson was unique in his classicism, and, unlike his classical British contemporaries, Jefferson's utilised his classicism for effects beyond himself and his private villas. The University of Virginia is exceptional among classicism during Jefferson's time. A public university designed entirely in the classical fashion and placed in the small town of Charlottesville, Virginia makes Jefferson's classicism unique for both Europe and America. This is the story of this thesis—how Jefferson's classicism developed in this changed classical modern world, culminating in a classical academical village put strictly for the public and not for himself.

II.

Audiences can take away from this thesis three things. The first is that Jefferson (and other American political figures) should be considered within other disciplines like Classics in order unearth qualities he may have possessed that can contribute to a more wholistic understanding the figure and his legacy. Second, audiences can take away from this thesis the understanding that mixing and exchanging different disciplines can be beneficial for academic study. That combining, for example, Art History, Classics and History can help readers and researchers expand their subjects through examining multiple ways of understanding. Thirdly, audiences can take away the relevance of the Classics in the post-classical world through the examination of Classical Reception in order to understand the depth the Classics' influences on the modern world that may be less obvious than initially seen.

This thesis has contributed to knowledge in the following ways: it has included Thomas Jefferson in the field of Garden History while expanding his presence in Architectural History. Along this same line, this thesis has explored the depths to which Jefferson belongs in Classical Reception by examining him outside the field of politics and philosophy. Such was a goal of this thesis—namely, to propose that Jefferson could be examined through alternative and different lenses simultaneously, thereby expanding these fields (Art History and Classical Reception) and Jefferson studies. This thesis, then, provides a foundation and structure for future scholarship of this interdisciplinary kind. Beyond this, this thesis has explored the architectural and classical legacy that Jefferson intended to fulfil in Virginia and the United States through the spaces of his classical taste: his villas Monticello and Poplar Forest and his University of Virginia. In so doing, through the preceding chapters, this thesis has examined and emphasised Jefferson’s use and reflection upon the *utile dulci* as the ideal through which he thought about and upon which he built his architecture and developed his architectural taste.

III.

The Introduction to this thesis first explored the eighteenth-century conception of ‘taste’, to which Jefferson and his contemporaries subscribed. During the eighteenth century, taste was ‘normalized [through] practices of buying, reading, dressing, thinking, and spectating,’ and Jefferson’s taste was likewise acquired and normalised through this process of, essentially, collecting, whether collecting knowledge, friendship, or classical thinking (Noggle 2015). The Introduction explored the different ways in which eighteenth-century British thinkers, such as Francis Hutcheson and David Hume, utilised taste in their philosophies. But it also explored how taste was used in pleasure gardens, such as William Gilpin’s description of Stowe, which Jefferson visited during the spring of 1786. By exploring the connection

between taste and Jefferson, the Introduction expanded Jefferson's character and opened further discussion on his attitudes toward art and beauty. This thesis used taste as Jefferson did—which is to use taste as a substitute for preference, artistic judgment and *all'antica* bourgeois standards of beauty for the eighteenth century, such as classicism. The Introduction then explored how this thesis identifies itself within Classical Reception proper. This thesis took the simplified approach of Hardwick and Stray in their (2011) *Companion to Classical Receptions*: 'By "receptions" we mean the ways in which Greek and Roman material has been transmitted, translated, excerpted, interpreted, rewritten, re-imaged and represented' (Hardwick and Stray 2011: 1). Next, the Introduction explored the *utile dulci* and Jefferson's understanding of the term. As this thesis illustrated, Horace first used the term *utile dulci* in the *Ars Poetica* 333-334: 'poets aim either to benefit, or to amuse, or to utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life. [...] He has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the reader' (Henderson 1927:479).³⁸⁹ The Introduction examined Jefferson's particular use of the *utile dulci* in reference to gardens and buildings expanding the concept to education, which, in turn, was woven into Jefferson's architecture for the University of Virginia. Then, the Introduction examined the relationship between the *utile dulci* and Epicureanism, the only classical philosophy to which Jefferson explicitly subscribed. By highlighting Jefferson's 1799 'Notes on the Doctrine of Epicurus', the Introduction examined how Jefferson fit utility in with virtue and, thus, learning and art.

The Introduction then connected each chapter through the evolution (or maturity) of Jefferson's use of the Classics in Virginia. The Introduction outlined how the villa chapter focuses on Jefferson's early engagements with the Classics through beauty. The Introduction then highlighted how the final chapter on the University of Virginia focused on Jefferson's

³⁸⁹ Horace *Ars Poetica* 333-344: *Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitae. [...] omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci, lectorem delectando pariterque monendo.* See Brink 1971.

outward exploration of the Classics—that is, how he used the Classics for the public good and not just for his own private enjoyment. The Introduction then put forth its limitations: it did not provide a comprehensive overview of Jefferson and slavery, it did not explore the history of women, and it did not compare Jefferson to his American contemporaries because of their lack of direct classical connections to Jefferson.

The first chapter of this thesis illuminated Jefferson’s Epicureanism as it relates to both taste and philosophy, including religion and cosmology. By exploring Epicurus’ Garden School, this chapter highlighted the trends in thought trickled down from Epicurus to Jefferson himself. Before exploring Epicureanism through Lucretius, this chapter emphasised the connections between Jefferson and Epicureanism that was seen in Horace.

The second chapter explored the first execution of Jefferson’s classical taste in a physical building—Monticello. This chapter largely explored Monticello as a villa, reminiscent of the classical villas accompanied by the literature of the *villa rustica*, e.g., Horace and Pliny the Younger. This chapter argued that Jefferson’s classical villas provided him a framework through which to construct a classical identity. This chapter first explored the definition of a villa from classical times, through the Italian Renaissance, and to eighteenth-century England in order to understand the villa as Jefferson understood it. The chapter then examined the architecture and landscape architecture of both Monticello and Poplar Forest, highlighting the villas’ unique characteristics as classical/Palladian buildings infused with Americana, reflecting Jefferson’s dual identity as a man of both the ancient Mediterranean and early Virginia. Examined within the private sphere, this chapter explored Jefferson’s villas as representations of his idea of happiness—that is, an Epicurean one—by highlighting happiness, *otium* and the *utile dulci* at Jefferson’s villas.

The third and final chapter explored the University of Virginia, which can be seen as the ultimate execution of Jefferson’s classical taste of the *utile dulci*. This chapter highlighted

both the architecture of the University, but also the educational system that Jefferson meticulously put forth for it. Jefferson's educational system within classical buildings was the fulfilment of his classical taste. Jefferson designed a public university with classical tastes and an education in the Classics as its foundation in order to pursue and promote an education for the public. This chapter first highlighted how the University of Virginia, as an academical village, can be seen as an extension of his own villa, Monticello, thereby connecting both chapters as extensions on the same theme. Then, the chapter examined the processes that led to the University's creation, such as planning and designing. Through these trains of thought, Jefferson's classical taste can be better understood as it developed both in his mind and in reality.

Next, this chapter explored the architecture of the Rotunda, Jefferson's American Pantheon. This section focused on the Rotunda specifically because it is the building upon which Jefferson spent the most time discussing and reflecting. Using the Rotunda as an example, this chapter illuminated the sources of Jefferson's classical taste and helped to better visualise the aesthetic lineage to which he adhered. Moreover, of all the buildings at the University, the Rotunda was also the most symbolic, both because its exterior structure resembled the Pantheon, but also because its interior (or at least Jefferson's ideas for it) generated visions of the heavens when paired with a library. The next section was directed toward Jefferson's educational vision for the University of Virginia. Jefferson's various writings on education complemented his classical taste and illustrate the culmination of his classical vision for Virginia. The first section discussed the academic subject of History as integral to Jefferson's educational reform from the College of William and Mary to the University of Virginia. Jefferson was particularly concerned with posterity's ability to arm themselves intellectually and morally against whatever new forms of government that were developing; he believed that History was a remedy against such ignorance. Jefferson argued

that without a proper education in History, the citizenry will not know how to recognise tyranny, nor will they have the intellectual tools required to overthrow it. Like history, Jefferson believed that architecture, specifically classical architecture, would inspire American learners from Rome's example. This chapter then connected Jefferson's taste for the *utile dulci* with education and architecture. Through the curriculum, intended to be taught within classical buildings, Jefferson designed a curriculum to reflect the political and social needs of the nation. In this way, the *utile dulci* of the university reflected not only as places of learning, but the university's *utile dulci* shielded American men from ignorance and corruption.

IV.

Ultimately, this thesis has taken Jefferson at his word. It has attempted to remove 'the old varnish from his portrait' (Rosslyn 1990: 7). In other words, this thesis has chosen to listen to what Jefferson said about himself and his relationship with classical taste, rather than highlighting the contradictions in his thought and actions. It was not a goal of this thesis to contradict modern interpretations of Jefferson, but to illuminate him from a dimmed light and to see him as he saw himself in his own classical world. In other words, this thesis sought to see Jefferson in his time and not see him through our modern eyes of criticism and social justice, though such studies are important for understanding Jefferson and his relevance for our time. This does not mean that this thesis has entirely neglected the contemporary perspective of examining Jefferson. But it is equally important to understand him as he understood himself to attempt to understand him as fully and holistically as possible to see what he can share with us and what we can learn from his example and his mistakes. This portrait of Jefferson is more focused on Jefferson's imagination and his classical mind.

This thesis has placed Jefferson within scholarship on architectural history and classical reception, though it also fits well within American history and eighteenth-century studies. This study adds to scholarship on architectural history not merely by including Jefferson within it, but by including classical studies in order to not only understand the structures and their historical sources of the architecture, but to understand the processes of construction and inspiration gathered from the Classics. By including classical reception within architectural history, this thesis has broadened the ways in which we understand buildings and their architects.

As it stands, this thesis' contributions to scholarship are two-fold: 1) it has widened our understanding of Jefferson through its perspective on classical reception, and 2) it has widened our understanding of architectural history and the Classics through its analysis and inclusion of Jefferson. By bringing in poetry, art history, eighteenth-century history, and classical studies to an examination of Thomas Jefferson, this thesis has revealed him in new lights only touched upon in Jefferson scholarship. By expanding upon this, we are better able to see Jefferson as a classicist and a person of classical taste in architecture, which had direct influences on the public and were constructed with both an Arcadian fantasy in mind, but also an intentional eye toward the betterment of the voting public.

Future work could build upon this thesis through its interdisciplinarity and three-pronged approach in order to better recognize gaps in established scholarship within these fields, namely by including a greater degree of the field of American History into Classical Reception, as well as bringing the Classics more fully within the field of American History, for example. This is the biggest gap in scholarship on American History as it stands with Thomas Jefferson. This thesis has shown how relevant the Classics are for understanding even one person in American History who had a relationship with it. Through its classical analysis, this thesis has shown how the Classics directly influenced Jefferson's design for

America's first public university, and its architectural legacy thereafter. It has revealed aspects of Jefferson's classical identity previously unexplored, such as the connections with Monticello as Parnassus. Such aspects may seem decorative, but through the classical lens, such examples have revealed a person deeply entrenched in the Classics. This thesis has taken aspects of Jefferson's thought overlooked by American historians, such as Latin inscriptions on grottoes or planetarium plans, though are the object of devoted scholarship by classicists and art historians, which this thesis has brought to the forefront of Jefferson scholarship. Doing so has revealed our Thomas Jefferson to be more fully entrenched in the Classics, Arts and Humanities than previously thought. By taking such closer looks at political figures like Jefferson, we can better understand their motivations and connections to their self-proclaimed historical legacies that have direct consequences on society today. In such a modern time when the knowledge of the Classics is far less prevalent, by highlighting their importance at the beginning of the Modern Era, we can better see how vital they are for understanding how we came to be. This way of examining history (whether American, political, jurisprudential, etc.) through different fields like Classics and Art History is a foundation upon which future scholarship can develop. Utilising different methods in different fields of study can only deepen and broaden such studies and connect them more strongly.

V.

Perhaps Jefferson's classicism was a mere fantasy—something that could only exist in his mind and mountain. His ideas on government and slavery are so heavily focused upon in scholarship that this scholar has wondered what she is doing writing about gardens and Doric columns. What can this scholar, trained equally in both classical literature and American legal history, contribute to the canon on Thomas Jefferson? To be trained in two different

fields equally, one recognises the great gaps in both fields. One recognises how relevant one is to the other. The question asked of this thesis over the years has been: What did the Classics *do* for Jefferson? The Classics gave Jefferson a language through which to articulate his vision for Virginia—of a virtuous, learned public. Thus, every aspect of Jefferson’s classicism becomes relevant and significant. We cannot examine Jefferson’s (or anybody’s) classicism within one discipline—e.g., politics, Classics, or philosophy. Doing so neglects a holistic approach to Jefferson’s all-encompassing relationship with the Classics. Even a grotto, designed as a young man years before the Revolution, had an impact on his later identity, like the architect of the University of Virginia. Even within the University of Virginia, a small plan for a planetarium, placed within a library within a pantheon, was carefully thought by Jefferson with an historical lineage that contains a wealth of history, philosophy, art and literature. Jefferson was a meticulous person and was carefully thoughtful and intentional. As a result, an historian of Jefferson must examine the details of his designs and writings because Jefferson placed them there for a reason, and by bringing in other disciplines to the study of Jefferson, like Classics and Art History, such details reveal their own histories and connections. So a plan for a grotto jotted down one Winter was no mere classical flourishing—such a plan has a history with connections to Georgian England, Renaissance Italy and classical Greece, with its own accompaniment of literature, art, science and mythology, and their legacies reveal the priorities and values of their later receptors. This is what this thesis has done—it has focused on aspects of Jefferson’s life overlooked in scholarship and highlighted their intellectual ancestry and illuminated what they tell us about Jefferson and what Jefferson told us about them.

I give the final lines of my thesis to Thomas Jefferson, for I could not speak more honestly of him than he did himself, nor could I conclude it with any more eloquence or finality:

As to what is to be said of myself, I of course am not the judge. but my sincere wish is that the faithful historian, like the able Surgeon, would consider me in his hands, while living, as a dead subject: that the same judgment may now be expressed which will be rendered hereafter, so far as my small agency in human affairs may attract future notice: & I would of choice now stand as at the bar of posterity ‘Cum semel occideris, et de te ultima Minos Fecerit arbitria.’ the only exact testimony of a man is his actions, leaving the reader to pronounce on them his own judgment (TJ to Louis H Girardin, 27 March 1815).³⁹⁰

³⁹⁰ *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series, vol. 8, 1 October 1814 to 31 August 1815 (Looney, J. 2011: 384–386). Jefferson here quotes Horace, *Odes*, 4.7.21–4. The line continues: ‘non, Torquate, genus, non te facundia, non te restituet pietas.’ The line translates as: ‘Death comes to all, despite their nobility of birth, access to learning, or piety’.

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