

instruction on polite behavior, the most important of which by far were two posthumous works by Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield (1694–1773)—*Letters to His Son** (London, 1774) and *Principles of Politeness* (London, 1775)—both of which were common in libraries and frequently reprinted in America during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Third was the literature of social reform oriented towards the mitigation or elimination of social ills such as poverty and slavery. Typical of this literature was William Bailey, *A Treatise on the Better Employment, and More Comfortable Support of the Poor in Work-Houses** (London, 1758) and the voluminous anti-slavery literature that began to appear in massive quantities in the 1760s and 1770s and proliferated in succeeding decades. Representative of this literature was Granville Sharpe (1735–1813), *The Law of Retribution; Or a Serious Warning to Great Britain and Her Colonies, against Tyrants, Slave-Holders and Oppressors** (London, 1776).

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The Civic Humanist Tradition

THOSE WHO celebrated the new ethos of commerce, improvement, politeness, and liberal individualism did not go unchallenged in Britain during the century before the American Revolution. Some of the critics were simply people who, like Sir William Temple (1628–99) in his *Essay upon the Origin and Nature of Government** (London, 1680), were skeptical about the natural-rights tradition and the notion of the contractual origins of government, while others, like the high Tory churchman Charles Leslie (1650–1722) in his *The Finishing Stroke, Being a Vindication of the Patriarchal Scheme of Government** (London, 1711), were endeavoring to refute Locke's attacks upon the concept of patriarchy. But the predominant strain of opposition writing took a much different tack and has been called the classical republican or commonwealth tradition. To some small extent, this tradition looked across the English channel to the republican government of the Netherlands, which had been described for English readers by Temple in his *Observations upon the United Provinces* (London, 1673) (Logan) and by the Dutch writers Pieter de la Court (1618–85) and Jan De Witt (1625–72) in *The True Interest and Political Maxims of the Republic of Holland** (Leiden, 1669), which appeared in English translation in 1702.

Opposition writings primarily drew upon the civic humanist tradition developed in Renaissance Italy in the writings of the Florentines Niccoló Machiavelli (1469–1527), *The Prince** (Florence, 1532) and *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy** (Rome, 1531); Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540), *The History of Italy** (Florence, 1561); and Donato Giannotti (1492–1573?), *Libro de la Republica de Venetiani**