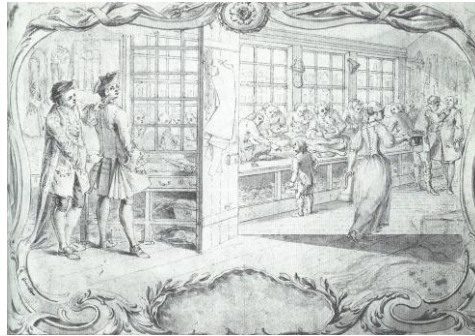


## Wigs Waistcoats and Weepers: Power Dressing in the C18



Where to start in achieving the right look? How to avoid that unforgettable sartorial faux pas? 'Power dressing' in the latest fashions from France and the finest fabrics from Italy was essential to the status of the eighteenth century English gentleman and gentlewoman in polite society. In a period of rapid social change and immense entrepreneurial activity in the arts and luxury trades market, the tailor and dressmaker often fulfilled the vital role of researcher of trends, adviser, and sensitive diplomat on public image.

Similarly the high society portrait painter was expected to advise on such matters and show his patron as a connoisseur of taste and style. A visual feast of illustrations from portraits, caricatures, clothing and accessories will be explored with extracts from contemporary letters and journals to bring the players to life.

For as Lord Chesterfield advises (writing to his son in 1748) *'A man of sense ... dresses as well, and in the same manner as the people of sense and fashion of the place where he is. If he dresses better, as he thinks, that is more than they, he is a fop; if he dresses worse, he is unpardonably negligent ...'*

Or, as the great C18 diarist Mrs Delany warns against extremes *'I keep within bounds, endeavouring to avoid all particularities of being too much in or out of fashion'*.



