

EFFECTS OF IMPERIALISM ON BRITISH SOCIETY: HOW CULTURAL  
INTERACTIONS AND SOCIAL ADAPTATION CREATED A NEW BRITISH  
IDENTITY

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

Sam Houston State University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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by

Jeanna Paige Strickland

May, 2021

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## **DEDICATION**

For Chloe and Frank, your patience and love are appreciated.

## ABSTRACT

Strickland, Jeanna Paige. *Effects of imperialism on British society: How cultural interactions and social adaptation created a new British identity*. Master of Arts (History), May, 2021, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

From the late sixteenth through the nineteenth century, Great Britain expanded across the globe building an empire in diverse regions of the world on every livable continent. British engagement in overseas expansion initiated new cross-cultural exchanges on an unprecedented scale. This thesis explores how East and South Asia as well as North America influenced the British people, ultimately transforming British identity and expression through speech, appearance, and habit during the eighteenth century. The British began to modify their perspectives on themselves and their own roles in the world as the focus shifted from a nation to a global empire. Coming into contact with indigenous groups forced the inhabitants of the British Isles to either adapt to, reject and replace, or claim the newly encountered resources and cultural traits as “British.” Although studying impacts of imperialism is not new, traditional historical research on the British Empire focuses mainly on how it both positively and negatively impacted its territories, especially during the nineteenth century. I argue that imperialism infiltrated and influenced British society, especially literate middle class urban dwellers, much earlier than the traditional height of the British Empire.

Although the British Empire affected territories across the world, the influence was mutual, and the cultures that the British encountered gradually shaped their society. By researching changes in British consumption, lifestyle, and expression during the eighteenth century, I show how imperialism shaped the British identity. I searched newspapers, artifacts, and printed literature that demonstrate the shifting focus of the

British as they encounter new peoples. Although the British transported many products and pieces of foreign culture to new locations within their expanding control, the amazing innovations, commodities, and ideas that the empire collected should be recognized as the product of many peoples throughout the world. My findings show that the true origins of “British” culture can be traced to outside the British Isles.

KEY WORDS: Britain, National identity, Gender, Polite society, Eighteenth-century.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Throughout the writing of this thesis, I have received an abundance of support and assistance. Without the help of many individuals, I could not have been successful in my endeavors.

I would, first, like to express my deepest appreciation to my committee for all the guidance and knowledge imparted on me during this process. My committee chair and mentor, Dr. Sarah Mass, has spent countless hours helping me formulate my thoughts, guiding the multitudes of information I collected into a cohesive and comprehensible argument. I have relied on her expertise continuously throughout this process from our first meeting to inserting my last period; her patience must be endless. I also would like to thank Dr. Cox and Dr. Rapp, who have provided invaluable feedback and encouragement to me. Both of them have enriched my work through their guidance and support.

I am also grateful to the graduate faculty at Sam Houston State University. The array of historical information and analysis encountered in the classroom contributed heavily to my success during this research. Likewise, the Newton Grisham Library and Graduate School both provided useful tools and support for me while completing this thesis.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

From the late sixteenth through the nineteenth century, England, and later Great Britain, expanded across the globe building an empire in diverse regions of the world on every livable continent. Beginning the process in the late 1500s, a hesitant Queen Elizabeth supported privateers who wished to raid Spanish fleets in hopes of gaining great wealth and prestige. Later, at the urging of these privateers, she agreed to establish a post in the New World to aid them in their efforts to attack the Spanish. Granting a charter to Sir Walter Raleigh initiated the process of exploring and colonizing the eastern coast of North America. Unfortunately, the English colonies did not stumble upon large sources of gold or silver as the Spanish had during their colonial endeavors.<sup>1</sup> Oftentimes, the English settlers encountered environmental hardships and Native hostilities instead. Despite the ups and downs of those first colonial attempts, the North American colonies proved to be profitable for Great Britain in the long run as an exclusive market as well as provider of raw materials. Over the next three centuries, Great Britain proceeded to venture to new lands in Asia and South America to increase their presence throughout the world. By the early 1700s, England emerged as a dominate European force that was not content imperializing just the Atlantic World. Taking Gibraltar from Spain in 1704, for example, opened up opportunities in the Mediterranean Sea and allowed for more control over trade in Asia.<sup>2</sup> By the beginning of the eighteenth century, royal companies had

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<sup>1</sup> Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 16-22.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Black, *The British Empire: A History and a Debate* (Routledge, 2016), <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat00667a&AN=sam.2727928&site=eds-live&scope=site>. 71, 74.



formed to increase trade and British presence in India, Ottoman Empire, and Africa as well.<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, the imperial competitions that the British engaged in during overseas expansion initiated new cross-cultural exchanges on an unprecedented scale. The dynamics of global affairs shifted during the eighteenth century and an influx of foreign influence flooded into the country. In the 1700s alone, the British engaged in imperial wars with Spain, France, and the Netherlands in both Europe and foreign territory as they all competed for imperial control. With success in these wars, Britain's government and political leaders continued to expand their mission for power and fortune beyond the Atlantic. The East India Company and the Royal African Company led the British further into India and Africa, respectively.<sup>4</sup> With growing cross-cultural interactions throughout the globe, new information rushed into the British Isles detailing not only the land they conquered but also the people that lived throughout it. Each encounter introduced a new indigenous society whose unique cultural traditions as well as resources impacted the British. Travelers brought back detailed accounts of their adventures introducing new maps, foods, and habits they had picked up abroad. As British society filtered through all that they encountered, they kept aspects deemed beneficial and discarded the rest. Over time, these adopted traits became synonymous with the term "British."

This thesis explores how the outside world influenced the British people ultimately transforming British identity and expression during the eighteenth century. As

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<sup>3</sup> Black, *The British Empire*, 57.

<sup>4</sup> Ogborn, *Global Lives*, 78 and 115.

Britons increasingly encountered and engaged with the outside world, they began to react to the new ideas, commodities, and peoples they met. By noting and evaluating the response of Britons to various new exposures, the influence of foreign communities can be observed. The eighteenth century brought both imperial wars and new contact with indigenous populations from various continents that all contributed to the transformation of British society as they expanded their presence in the Atlantic and Asian regions. As British culture spread throughout the world due to imperialism, the world's diverse cultures also spread throughout Britain. The relationships between colonial ruler and colonized people, as well as among traders, mutually altered one another. This contact caused the British population to begin to modify their perspectives on themselves and question their own roles in the world as their focus shifted from Nation to Empire. Instead of concentrating on the differences among their own society such as religion or political leanings, Britons viewed themselves in a much larger, global context. Having a common "Other," to use Linda Colley's term for non-Britons, allowed the diverse population on the British Isles to unite under a new identity.<sup>5</sup> As they successfully gained control in new lands, Britain embraced the notion of their own superiority over the Others. This idea of superiority became embedded in the British identity and became a purpose for empire-building. Generation after generation, the British government continued to strive for supreme power in the world. Each foreign exposure affected the British people leading them to definitively determine what was "British" and what was not. However, many new traits infiltrated that ideal "British" identity signifying the appropriation of foreign culture into their own.

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<sup>5</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 368.

This research argues that coming into contact with indigenous groups forced the inhabitants of the British Isles to either adapt to, reject and replace, or claim the newly encountered resources and cultural traits as “British.” Foreign goods, people, and ideas entered British ports and disseminated first among merchants and urban dwellers before trickling out into more rural areas. British fashion, commodities, arts and literature, and even self-expression underwent change during the eighteenth century. In London, Britons frequented coffee houses styled after those encountered in India where they discussed political reform or drank tea and read the newly circulating newspapers heralding news from all over the world.<sup>6</sup> The clothing worn by middle and upper class Britons began to reflect designs and fabrics native to conquered territories or trading partners.<sup>7</sup> Even gender identities shifted to adapt to the societal changes created by overseas expansion.<sup>8</sup> As all of these changes became the new normal, they altered how the British would describe themselves and others. Although change did not occur instantaneously, change did begin from the earliest encounters. By the eighteenth century, the influences from the outside world became clear. By looking specifically at upper and middle-class Britons particularly those in more populous, urban areas, I demonstrate how this process occurred.

Although studying impacts of imperialism is not new, traditionally historical research on the British Empire focuses mainly on how it both positively and negatively

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<sup>6</sup> Patricia U. Bonomi, *The Lord Cornbury Scandal: The Politics of Reputation in British America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Lou Taylor, “The Indo-Chinese Influence on British Chintz Design,” *Newsletter (Museum Ethnographers Group)* no. 6 (Sept. 1978): 10-14.

<sup>8</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire* (London, Routledge, 2016), 7.

impacted its territories. Historian Bernard Porter argues that most Britons were ignorant of imperialism and that their idea of national identity does not equate to the reality of the past.<sup>9</sup> Porter discusses at length in an explanatory article responding to criticisms of his book *Absent-Minded Imperialist* explaining that historians should not concern themselves with the impact imperialism had on British society as it was minimal to nonexistent.<sup>10</sup> Other historians, such as John MacKenzie, disagree with Porter's theory. MacKenzie declares that imperialism infiltrated various aspects of life including education, theatre, and literature.<sup>11</sup> While I agree with MacKenzie's assessment, both scholars focus mainly on nineteenth and twentieth century Britain. In his review of Porter's work, MacKenzie notes the fame of imperial military heroes during the late eighteenth-century, yet he does not expand on the other ways in which imperialism impacted British society in the 1700s.<sup>12</sup> Exploration began in the late sixteenth century, and by the end of the seventeenth century, Britain had a presence in North America, South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and South Asia. I argue that imperialism infiltrated and influenced British society, especially literate middle class urban dwellers, much earlier than the height of the British Empire. In the eighteenth century, cross-cultural interactions already began making a mark on Britons, and more adequate attention should be paid to the impact of these cross-cultural exchanges.

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<sup>9</sup> Bernard Porter, "Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 1 (March 2008): 101-102.

<sup>10</sup> Porter, "Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness," 101-112.

<sup>11</sup> John M. MacKenzie, "'Comfort' and Conviction: A Response to Bernard Porter," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 4 (Dec. 2008): 662, 664-665.

<sup>12</sup> John M. MacKenzie, "Review of Bernard Porter, *Absent-Minded Imperialist: Empire, Society and Culture in Britain*," *The Round Table* 94, no. 379 (2005): 282.

My thesis centers around changes in British society during the eighteenth century. This time period is important to consider due to the amount of turmoil and change Britain experienced just as imperialism gained steam. In section one, I discuss how interactions and competition with European nations affected the gender identity and gender roles of Britons. Imperial wars increased a need for soldiers and sailors, and the resulting deployment of individuals shifted the behavior of both men and women at home. The second section focuses on the impact of British imperialism in Asia, especially concerning the development of a polite society in Britain that dictated the inclusive, yet structured behavior expected during this century. I argue that British presence in Asia created a more diverse and adaptable population at home. Finally, in the third section, I analyze how British involvement in the Atlantic contributed to the British national identity. Interactions between American colonists and African natives forced Britons to reflect on their ideals and on themselves a little more closely.

It is important to remember that although the British Empire affected territories across the world, the influence was mutual. Other cultures that the British encountered gradually shaped society on the British Isles. Some scholars have researched aspects of change that took place in Great Britain during the time of empire-building. Linda Colley, for example, details how England, Scotland, and Wales combined to form Great Britain throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries based on common enemies and goals.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Erika Rappaport details how tea became a staple in Great Britain after colonizing in the East.<sup>14</sup> However, it is important to also look at how cross-cultural

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<sup>13</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 6-8.

<sup>14</sup> Erika Rappaport, *A Thirst for Empire: How Tea Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 7-8.

interactions influenced the identity and culture of society as Britain transitioned into a world-wide entity through imperialism.

Historian Miles Ogborn provides an introductory yet well-rounded account of British imperialism in his book *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550-1800* by examining multiple perspectives on the same events. He approaches history at various class, gender, and occupational levels which allows his readers to grasp a more complete comprehension of the empire. My work attempts to do just as fine a job as Ogborn to portray various perspectives and realities experienced in Britain during the eighteenth century. Diving into national archives of artifacts, books, and newspapers, I demonstrate how people who lived during this century dealt with foreign influence in their everyday lives. Although official documents can be helpful, my research predominately centers around printed accounts and newspapers.

By researching changes in British consumption, lifestyle, and expression during the eighteenth century, I show how imperialism shaped the British identity predominately in urban upper and middle-class society, and, at times, even travelling down to the lower ranks. Previous scholarship emphasizes the economic and political changes of the British Empire, mainly focusing on the political and economic impact the empire made on the rest of the world. Historians have detailed changes that the British have forced indigenous populations to make, such as the implementation of plantations or participation in the Atlantic Slave Trade. I focus instead on how the identity and everyday life of the British were shaped by their global involvement, particularly during the eighteenth century. Some of the quintessential “British” traits have roots in other countries and were given a new label to signify an association with civility. Even typical items seen in Great Britain

today such as umbrellas, shawls, and coffeehouses have been culturally appropriated from the East during imperialism.<sup>15</sup> Colonized and conquered peoples should be recognized for their contributions to the modern world even if their cultural traditions or commodities were changed or disseminated by the British Empire.

I accessed archive collections to search newspapers, artifacts, and printed literature that demonstrate the shifting focus of the British as they encountered new peoples across the world. I also use secondary research on colonial societies that detail indigenous cultural tradition met by British colonial officials and settlers. J. H. Elliott, Nathaniel Philbrick, Edward Said, and Thomas Allsen all detail in length the challenges of cross-cultural interactions as well as provide information on some of the people that the British encountered through imperialism.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, historians such as Patricia U. Bonomi and William B. Warner discusses how British society viewed colonial activity, particularly how both the British and American press influenced social views demonstrating how the newly formed American culture shaped Britain as well.<sup>17</sup> These secondary sources provide expert and invaluable knowledge about the process of and

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<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Eacott, *Selling Empire: India and Britain in the Making of America, 1600-1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 276, Kindle Edition and Lawrence Klein, "Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century," *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 4 (Dec. 2002): 879.

<sup>16</sup> J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), xviii, Nathaniel Philbrick, *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978) and Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>17</sup> Bonomi, *The Lord Cornbury Scandal*, 11 and William B Warner, "Truth and Trust and the Eighteenth-Century Anglophone Newspaper," In *Travelling Chronicles: News and Newspapers from the Early Modern Period to the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Brandtzæg Siv Gøril, Goring Paul, and Watson Christine (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 27-48, accessed March 9, 2020, 7, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctvbqs8w9](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctvbqs8w9).

people encountered during exploration and empire-building during the eighteenth century.

By focusing my research on how British society changed through imperialism, I demonstrate that foreign people throughout the world altered the British people just as much as the British altered other societies. Although the British transported many products and pieces of foreign culture to new locations within their expanding control, the amazing innovations, commodities, and ideas that the empire collected should be recognized as the product of many peoples throughout the world rather than a product of just the British Empire. Reviewing the everyday remnants of the past such as newspaper ads, letters, and private décor demonstrates how deeply the influence of foreign cultures became embedded into British culture and identity. Thus, the true origins of “British” culture can be traced to outside the British Isles. Even conquered lands contributed greatly to the development of global society in many ways, among them creating envy and imitation in one of the largest empires in the world. As noted by Miles Ogborn, “this world, with all its inequities, injustices, and resistances, was made what it was by people living all sorts of global lives.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ogborn, *Global Lives*, 333.



## CHAPTER II

### Influence of Imperial Wars with Europe

Since the days of the Roman Empire, conflict between continental Europe and the British Isles persisted as diverse groups such as the Romans, Celts, Vikings, and Anglo-Saxons, among others, fought to control the most amount of land. During the eighteenth century, Britain still continued to fight against its neighbors for control and autonomy. Despite overcoming the domestic turmoil that plagued the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland during the seventeenth century, which included civil war, regicide, and revolution, European political affairs continued to pose a threat to the stability and security of the British Isles.<sup>19</sup> With European countries, particularly France, threatening the prospect of harmony among the three kingdoms by supporting dissention, England desperately sought to eliminate foreign influence over domestic affairs. In fact, the unification of Britain in 1707 stemmed from the notion that all three kingdoms must band together in order to keep foreign countries such as France and Spain from successfully invading their islands—a serious danger that still lingered in 1700.<sup>20</sup> However, being significantly intertwined in European affairs through hundreds of years of wars, treaties, and negotiations, Britain had an interest in more than just protecting itself from its neighbors; they wanted to compete against them as well.

Beginning the 1700s firmly focused toward Continental Europe, Great Britain not only started the century with political tension but also spent over half of the century

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<sup>19</sup> Jeremy Black, *The British Empire: A History and a Debate* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 73, <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat00667a&AN=sam.2727928&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

<sup>20</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 6.

engaged in violent conflicts with other European countries—at times with more than one. The French and Spanish dominated the attention of Britain over the Dutch, Russian, and eastern Europeans, yet as each one of these nations pursued their own global aspirations and desire for political dominance, the resulting political and economic changes affected British society in multiple ways.<sup>21</sup> First of all, the gathering of military capital—including people as well as money—began to alter the interactions and behavior of men and women at home on the Isles. Additionally, British perceptions of their European foes influenced the way Britons began to view themselves. By investigating the printed materials that became increasingly available during the long eighteenth century, we find that Britons left breadcrumbs of their cultural transformations as they moved from rebounding nation to global empire.

The rise in printed materials, including various types of books, advertisements, newspapers, journals, and magazines, experienced throughout this century allowed new information to circulate among the general public in an unprecedented manner with more diverse opinion and facts disseminating through the country. Newspapers of the eighteenth century, such as the *London Gazette* and *Public Advertiser*, became more commercially based and thus less dependent on the support and approval of the government compared to the gazettes of the seventeenth century. This separation from government allowed satirical essays and a variety of perspectives to appear on the same pages as well as boosted the confidence of the reader that the newspaper did not have a

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<sup>21</sup> Black, *The British Empire*, 73.

political leaning. The eclectic, messy style of the early newspapers attracted many readers who searched for accurate information to form their own conclusions.<sup>22</sup>

According to historian William Warner, the eighteenth century witnessed a growth of mass media that was more reliable than previously experienced partially due to the improvements in infrastructure needed to physically move letters and information across the globe.<sup>23</sup> Imperialism certainly assisted the process as an increasing amount of goods and people traveled abroad. Additionally, the network of information used by newspapers scrutinized the news stories being passed along more easily and more effectively than was previously seen. Printers knew that their success depended upon their credibility, so they constantly worked to keep that credibility intact.<sup>24</sup> Fortunately, by publishers taking an impartial position evidenced by printing multiple perspectives and an assortment of topics, historians have an array of information on Great Britain's culture and society during the eighteenth century.

These newspapers, along with books, pamphlets, political decrees, and other print material, hide an abundant amount of detail on the thoughts, opinions, and actions of everyday life. Local shops put ads in newspapers for the most desirable commodities, while readers submitted their own writings on debated or controversial topics. Memoirs and instructional manuals both occupied bookshelves of the time, and printed art engaged those without the literacy skills necessary to enjoy the written printed materials. The

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<sup>22</sup> William B Warner, "Truth and Trust and the Eighteenth-Century Anglophone Newspaper," In *Travelling Chronicles: News and Newspapers from the Early Modern Period to the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Brandtzæg Siv Gøril, Goring Paul, and Watson Christine (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 37-38, accessed March 9, 2020. [www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctvbqs8w9.7](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctvbqs8w9.7).

<sup>23</sup> Warner, "Truth and Trust," 31.

<sup>24</sup> Warner, "Truth and Trust," 33-35.

emerging print culture of the eighteenth century is key to understanding why Britons experienced changes in their own identities during this time period.

The British government also used printed materials to disseminate information about their imperialist efforts that drastically affected British lives. For example, Britain's population had to adjust to the growing demands for soldiers and sailors to fight in all the many battles throughout the century. In 1708, Queen Anne issued a proclamation in which commissioners previously charged with enacting the Land-Tax Act would additionally be charged with enacting the Act of Recruiting Her Majesty's Land-Forces and Marines. According to the proclamations published for the masses to read on January 27<sup>th</sup>, qualified recruits who volunteered for service would receive an incentive of four pounds for joining the war effort. Additionally, the proclamation instructed commissioners—after the initial recruitment process—to recruit any able-bodied men they find who are not employed or otherwise financially sound.<sup>25</sup> Queen Anne and her successors desperately needed all the recruits she could get to survive the many wars Britain faced. However, this need came at the expense of British families.

As recruiting soldiers became high priority for the queen, the countryside became polluted with officers persuading young men to join her military forces. Visiting towns and villages regularly, this persuasion sometimes turned into coercion or even became a means for some residents to escape a prison sentence. As evidenced in an article printed in *Modern Whigs and Rigid Dissenters* in April of 1711, judges often pressed tradesmen and the poor into service as well as a form of punishment for their crime. The author of

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<sup>25</sup> By the Queen, a Proclamation, for the Better Recruiting Her Majesties Land-Forces and the Marines (London: Charles Bill, 1708), 1, <https://ezproxy.shsu.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/docview/2240931390?accountid=7065>.

this piece warns of the tyrannical authority that is placed into the hands of unjust authoritarians. Detailing counts of multiple tailors who had been forced from their everyday life into military service, this article demonstrates the prevalence of pressing and the demographically disproportionate population targeted.<sup>26</sup> Families of these tradesmen relied on their income. By being sent off to war, men left wives behind to try to find enough income to feed their children and provide a warm home while the men hoped to live long enough to send home the money they had earned as a soldier.

The impressment of soldiers persisted throughout the eighteenth century as evidenced by the continual controversy in the newspapers. For example, over sixty years later in 1777, Amicus Curie published his thoughts on pressing in *The Public Advertiser*. In his article, Curie echoes the *Modern Whigs and Rigid Dissenters'* view on pressing as a use of tyrannical force that selectively takes the freedom of only certain British citizens. However, Curie goes on to discuss how military service has been given to “felons, to convicts, to the lowest malefactors as a ransom, or commutation of the penalties they had incurred by their crimes.”<sup>27</sup> Clearly throughout the eighteenth century, the British struggled to keep up with the demand for soldiers and sailors necessary to fight in imperial wars. Subsequently, Britons continuously debated the method as well as the results of forcing British tradesmen and criminals to fight against their European neighbors.

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<sup>26</sup> “Modern Whigs, and Rigid Dissenters, the worst of Tyrants, when cloath’d with Power and Authority; Prov’d from Undeniable Facts. A Letter from a Tradesman in London to his Friend in York,” *Modern Whigs and Rigid Dissenters*, April 1, 1711.

<sup>27</sup> Amicus Curie, “Summary Thoughts on Pressing,” *Public Advertiser*, March 19, 1777.

By targeting the most vulnerable populations of society—the poor and the convicted—Britain was able to continue in imperial quests both in the Atlantic and Asia. However, the impact of participation in these wars did not solely reside in the men pressed into service. As men left the countryside, they left behind wives, children, and parents that must maintain a household without the presence of their young able-bodied males. In addition to managing their own family income, the financial burden of developing a disciplined standing army and powerful navy ultimately fell on the British citizens as well. According to the parliamentary records, the debt of the navy in December of 1733 amounted to £2,020,175.<sup>28</sup> In 1760, parliament voted to spend £5,611,708 on naval expenses alone.<sup>29</sup> After parliament debated how to pay off these reoccurring debts, they decided to pass on the burden to British citizens to generate the revenue parliament needed. New taxes such as the increase on the duties for malt in 1760 and the addition of an income tax in 1799 further added to the financial struggles of those trying to make do without their household men.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> "GREAT BRITAIN," *The Historical Register* no. 75 (07, 1734): 177-257, <https://ezproxy.shsu.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/docview/3560492?accountid=7065>.

<sup>29</sup> "GRANTS by Parliament for the Service of the Year 1760," *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, June 1747-Dec.1803 26, no. 181 (05, 1760): 267-269, <https://ezproxy.shsu.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/docview/6260480?accountid=7065>.

<sup>30</sup>"GRANTS by Parliament for the Service of the Year 1760," *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, June 1747-Dec.1803 26, no. 181 (05, 1760): 267-269, <https://ezproxy.shsu.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/docview/6260480?accountid=7065> and *Tax on income: A correct abridgment of the act for imposing a tax on all income...* fifth edition (London, 1799), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Sam Houston State University, 3 Oct. 2020, 3, <<http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW104852647&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

The lack of men at home and increasing financial burdens took a toll on family life and, in turn, altered gender roles and identities in Britain. Due to the abundance of men sent to fight in the British Army and Navy, women and children often found themselves without a spouse or father. Although enlisting as a soldier provided a wage that some husbands and fathers could not find locally, the wages were not generous, leaving wives and mothers to rely heavily on charity for survival.<sup>31</sup> Enough children were left fatherless in London that during the 1740s the Foundling Hospital was established to look after orphans. By the 1760s, the hospital abandoned the original age limit on admitted children to accommodate for the increasing number of orphans due to these imperial wars.<sup>32</sup>

Unfortunately, wives and children lost their husbands and father due to more than just death by combat. While some men sought the monetary benefits of becoming a soldier in hopes of sending wages home, more sinister motivations resided in other men. As popularized in contemporary plays and literature, the army became known as an escape route out of unhappy or overburdensome marriages and family life.<sup>33</sup> Once enlisted, men could start fresh somewhere new. Documented in a medical book on venereal disease, one abandoned woman left behind by her soldier husband contracted a

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<sup>31</sup> Jennine Hurl-Eamon, "Did Soldiers Really Enlist to Desert Their Wives? Revisiting the Martial Character of Marital Desertion in Eighteenth-Century London," *Journal of British Studies* 53, no. 2 (2014): 359, Accessed October 3, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.shsu.edu/stable/24701867>.

<sup>32</sup> Foundling Hospital (London, England). *An account of the Foundling Hospital in London, for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted young children*, The second edition, (London, 1799), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Sam Houston State University, 3 Oct. 2020, 34-35, <<http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW105443556&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

<sup>33</sup> Hurl-Eamon, "Did Soldiers Really Enlist to Desert Their Wives?" 356-357.

disease from him before he left her destitute. The author describes her “in such a miserable condition, that had not the woman that came with her....she must have died in a street or a ditch.”<sup>34</sup> Another man similarly left his wife to sail the foreign seas after wasting away her money on frivolous partying and debauchery.<sup>35</sup> Popularized examples in Defoe’s *Roxana* and Haywood’s *The History of Miss Betsey Thoughtless* demonstrate that the less-than-honorable actions of some enlisting soldiers became commonly known throughout the country.<sup>36</sup>

Regardless of the motivation of men as they signed up to defend the British cause overseas, women and children that remained at home needed to find a way to survive without their husbands and fathers around. Local parishes provided poor relief to aid war widows and their children. The British government also made special provisions available for these widows throughout the mid-1700s. *The London Gazette* periodically ran announcements in their newspaper informing women how to access these government funds throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>37</sup> Essentially the British government began to

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<sup>34</sup> John Marten, *A treatise of all the degrees and symptoms of the venereal disease, in both sexes...* The sixth edition corrected and enlarg’d, with a copious index to the whole, (London, 1708), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Sam Houston State University, 3 Oct. 2020, 127, <<http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW107120981&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

<sup>35</sup> *The female soldier; or, the surprising life and adventures of Hannah Snell...* (London, 1750), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Sam Houston State University, 3 Oct. 2020, 18, <<http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW104689797&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

<sup>36</sup> Hurl-Eamon, “Did Soldiers Really Enlist to Desert Their Wives?” 356.

<sup>37</sup> “News,” *London Gazette*, May 23, 1741 - May 26, 1741, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection, Accessed 14 Sept. 2020, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/Z2000724718/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBN&xid=f0c4da43>



view the wives and children of their fallen soldiers as a responsibility to look after and provide for. While it is a noble gesture, it indicates that women were viewed as helpless dependents. Rather than giving women opportunities to support themselves, the government opted instead to provide them money. Through the hardships created by imperial warfare, women became more dependent on men for survival.

Just as the government viewed women as dependent so did the general male population, as evidenced in a warning written by Anthony Aufrère in 1798. This author details actions taken by French soldiers during a recent altercation in Germany. The French had been a constant enemy to the British throughout the eighteenth century, and things did not change when the revolutionary French forces became antagonistic on the European continent. Aufrère warns his readers of the destruction and physical harm caused by France. He describes the French soldiers as they “began...to plunder and destroy in the most outrageous manner.”<sup>38</sup> He goes on to describe this outrageous manner when the French “...rifled their pockets, destroyed their furniture, tore up the floors of their rooms, cut open the mattresses and feather-beds, dug up the ground in the cellars and gardens, turned over even the contents of the privies, in hopes of finding some

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and "News," *London Gazette*, July 3, 1736 - July 6, 1736, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection, Accessed 18 Sept. 2020, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/Z2000723036/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBN&xid=50c8f5dd> and "News," *London Gazette*, January 19, 1731 - January 23, 1731, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection, Accessed 18 Sept. 2020, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/Z2000721734/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBN&xid=6df9b6b8>.

<sup>38</sup> Anthony Aufrère, *Warning to Britons; or, a short account of the treacherous and inhuman conduct of the French officers and soldiers, during the invasion of Germany in 1796...* (Hull, 1798), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Sam Houston State University, 3 Oct. 2020, 4, <http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW105822044&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

concealed treasure.”<sup>39</sup> That is not all the French are charged with, though. Aufrère describes the brutal way in which women and children had been treated, “The women and children who attempted to escape, were pursued, plundered, and violated; and girls from ten to twelve years of age were deprived of their innocence and health by these republican barbarians.”<sup>40</sup> Detailing the menacing nature of the French soldiers during this encounter, Aufrère notes how the British men, in addition to being weary of the French, need to actively protect their property—including their wives and children. Just as the British government must financially support women who lost their husbands, according to Aufrère, British citizens needed to protect their females from foreign predators.

In order to protect them from the harsh realities of the world, the proper place for women became more and more isolated from the public sphere hidden away in the safety of the home. Gardening and letter writing became popular among elite women to occupy their time and allow for some socialization in a safely controlled manner.<sup>41</sup> While elite ladies spent much of their time gardening, the middling women often read novels and conduct books that specifically targeted the expectation for them to act properly.<sup>42</sup> Regardless of the activity that women engaged in, it was designed to be solitary and reflective promoting the norms of seclusion.

Despite the intended protection of these controlling expectations, some women did speak out against the role that British society placed them in. These women did not

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<sup>39</sup> Aufrère, *Warning to Britons*, 4.

<sup>40</sup> Aufrère, *Warning to Britons*, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Stephen Bending, *Green Retreat: Women, Gardens, and Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 2013), 4-5, Kindle.

<sup>42</sup> Bending, *Green Retreat*, 23 and 65.

shy away from explaining their unhappiness with the efforts to contain females in a lonely private sphere. An address to the British legislature entitled *The Hardships of the English Law in Relation to Wives*” that was written in 1735 by Sarah Chapone details specific case examples of how female subjects of the crown did not receive the full benefits of British citizenship as their male counterparts did. Most strikingly, Chapone discusses a court case that likened wives to slaves, only slavery was not voluntary as marriage was. In this particular court case, a woman wrote a will while married to her first husband but neglected to update or create an entirely new will after remarrying later. At her death, her will was contested. The attorneys of the case likened marriage to slavery as a wife necessarily submits to her husband in the same way a slave submits to his master. However, as noted by Chapone, a man that writes a will prior to becoming a slave and then becomes free once again would not have to argue for his will to be accepted in court. As for the woman in this case, her original will was not reinstated due to the voluntary nature of marriage.<sup>43</sup> As Chapone astutely points out, “wives have not a degree of liberty or property which is allowed all other subordinate persons in the whole community.”<sup>44</sup>

While some women outraged by the injustices of gender inequality due to the ill effects of imperial warfare reached out to the government in hopes of inciting legal changes, others simply rejected the gender boundaries imposed by societal expectation. For example, female crossdressers emerged and flew in the face of eighteenth-century

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<sup>43</sup> Sarah Chapone, *The hardships of the English laws in relation to wives...* (London, 1735, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Sam Houston State University, 3 Oct. 2020, 7-8, <<http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW124435887&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

<sup>44</sup> Chapone, *The Hardships of English Laws*, 48-49.

social norms. Disguised as men, female crossdressers broke tradition in order to gain access to male privilege. The growing concern over these disguised women led men to critically view their male compatriots looking for clues of disguise. They looked for any female quality such as lack of facial hair or being easily offended.<sup>45</sup> Declaring the femininity of a man or group of people even became an insult often hurled at political enemies.<sup>46</sup> Dressed in men's clothing and identifying publicly as a man, a British woman could go out on her own, become involved in business or government affairs, or even participate in raucous shenanigans filled with nights of drunken debauchery without the least look of disapproval. Often women who were not in disguise would become involved with these female crossdressers—knowingly or not. These women who associated with the crossdressers became known as *beards* due to their ability to convince others that the crossdresser was a man just by assumption in the same way that a physical beard would cause people to assume someone was a man. In addition to adding to the apparent authenticity of the crossdressers' maleness, these female companions were allowed to join their crossdressing friend in public outings.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, these female crossdressers flew in the face of the stereotypes created in this century of warfare with European nations and gained a bit more freedom for other women as well as for themselves.

One of the most well-known female crossdressers from the time period, Hannah Snell, successfully hid her female identity for almost five years as she became a soldier

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<sup>45</sup> Ula Lukszo Klein, "Eighteenth-Century Female Cross-Dressers and Their Beards," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 16, No. 4, SPECIAL ISSUE: New Queer Readings (Fall 2016): 119.

<sup>46</sup> Patricia U. Bonomi, *The Lord Cornbury Scandal: The Politics of Reputation in British America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998), 189.

<sup>47</sup> Klein, "Eighteenth-Century Female Cross-Dressers and Their Beards," 124 and 120-122.

and later marine for the British military forces. While historians such as Theresa Braunschneider and Ula Lukszo Klein analyze Snell's biography for examples of female cross-dressing and evidence of perhaps homosexual desire, other historians such as Georgina Lock and David Worrall focus on her contributions as a stage performer portraying a soldier later in life.<sup>48</sup> However, these articles neglect to look at the entirety of Snell's story for the implication about female experiences in British society during the eighteenth century. Looking closely at Hannah Snell's story, readers witness an example of how women attempted to break free from the constraints of womanhood as well as the difficulties women faced when men abandoned them. Her story further demonstrates how women dealt with the effects of imperial warfare as well as how men participated in it.

Hannah Snell found herself abandoned within two years of marriage to a Dutch sailor named James Summs. Her husband left her to fend for herself after taking her money to waste on frivolous fun with prostitutes.<sup>49</sup> After moving in with her married sister as an abandoned wife was to do, Hannah determined she must find her husband. Assuming her brother-in-law's name and disguised in his clothing, she made her way to Coventry—the location she suspected Summs to be residing. Apparently being a convincing young male, Snell quickly attracted the eye of military officers looking for young recruits, and within mere days of arriving in Coventry, they had pressured Snell to enlist as a soldier.<sup>50</sup> Over the course of the next five years, Hannah deserted her regiment

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<sup>48</sup> Klein, "Eighteenth Century Female Cross-dressers and their Beards," 119-143, and Theresa Braunschneider, "Acting the Lover: Gender and Desire in Narratives of Passing Women," *The Eighteenth Century* 45, No. 3 (Fall 2004): 211-229, and Georgina Lock and David Worrall, "Cross-Dressed Performance at the Theatrical Margins: Hannah Snell, the Manual Exercise, and the New Wells Spa Theater, 1750," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 77, No. 1 (Spring 2014): 17-36.

<sup>49</sup> *The Female Soldier*, 18.

<sup>50</sup> *The Female Soldier*, 19-21.

only to re-enlist in the Marines months later, traveled to the East Indies weathering many rough storms on the seas, and engaged in dangerous battles as her unit laid siege to foreign forts.<sup>51</sup> It was not until after finding out about the unfortunate fate of her unfaithful husband while harbored in Lisbon with her shipmates that Snell finally returned home to her sister and began living her true identity once again.<sup>52</sup>

Snell's story as published in 1750 provides great insight into gender roles, British military practices when engaged in war with European nations, and general imperial policy during the eighteenth century. Her adventures led her through commonly experienced ups and downs of soldier life as Britain pursued imperialism. However, Snell did not do so for love of adventure. She sought out her husband who had ruined her life. The life of an abandoned wife had to be worse than all the trials that she would endure as a soldier or marine. Being from a military family, Snell knew the dangers of her endeavor yet still pushed on in search of her husband.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, she knew the public humiliation she would face if she were ever caught impersonating a man. Although Snell boldly assumed a disguise which she carried off successfully for years, she constantly worried about her cover being blown and becoming subject to ridicule.<sup>54</sup> In order to keep her secret, she even performed her own surgery to remove a bullet from her groin so as not to be discovered.<sup>55</sup> Why would she risk her reputation and her life unless her position as an abandoned wife were not treacherous?

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<sup>51</sup> *The Female Solider*, 30, 34-35, and 40.

<sup>52</sup> *The Female Soldier*, 157-158.

<sup>53</sup> *The Female Soldier*, 12-15.

<sup>54</sup> *The Female Soldier*, 26.

<sup>55</sup> *The Female Soldier*, 58-62.

While disguised as a man, Snell experienced the expectations and hardships of imperial warfare on the male gender as well adding the perspective of a soldier and sailor to her story. Death, sickness, and weather misfortunes killed many men she met along her travels. In addition to the physical hardships, men experienced ridicule for not behaving in the expected manner—as serious concern for our disguised protagonist. For example, Snell resorted to orchestrating a night of debauchery in order to prove to her shipmates that she was a man. Though some of the men she met were brave and others were just power-hungry, masculinity seemed to always be under surveillance even while fighting against the enemy in an imperial war.

Though she sailed to Madeira and Cape of Good Hope fighting the French and laying siege to forts such as Pondicherry in East India, Snell also experienced life in Europe. After her ship became damaged in storms offshore, Snell and her shipmates waited for the repairs in European ports such as Lisbon. During this time, Snell appears to have a good time with her shipmates without running in to any real dangers as a foreigner. Though hostilities occurred in the East and at sea with European foes, Lisbon only posed a danger of exposing her gender. Additionally, her time in Lisbon demonstrated the diversity of port cities. While drinking with a group of sailors that Snell and her shipmates randomly encountered, she discovered the fate of her husband.<sup>56</sup> Although he was a Dutch sailor and she herself was enlisted as a British sailor, the mixed company that had gathered for drinks unknowingly had a mutual connection. Snell's inquiry on Summs raised no red flags to her companions, and their detailed knowledge of his fate demonstrates the broad exposure of sailors to European foreigners.

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<sup>56</sup> *The Female Soldier*, 83-97.

Women were not the only people to rebel against the gender norms that developed due to the imperial warfare though. If women were to be weak and in need of care then men would need to be the strong, masculine savior meant to protect them. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, effeminacy was not linked with sexuality; however, by the eighteenth century, effeminate behavior became a sign of homosexuality.<sup>57</sup> The “effete, too fashionable macaroni, and the overrefined fop” often associated with the rival Frenchmen juxtaposed the polite masculinity required of British men.<sup>58</sup> Some men did not fit the dominating masculinity ascribed to their gender, and some had no desire to at all. In fact, a subculture of male homosexuality formed—most notably in London. By the eighteenth century, sodomy and homosexuality had not only become taboo but also were both crimes. This, however, did not prevent the growth of this subculture. The underground homosexual scene included alehouses and public restrooms where men met out of the watching eye of the public to give in to their sexual desires. Although unacceptable by society’s standards, many Londoners knew this subculture existed. The negative perception eventually became a method of blackmailing unsuspecting men—both heterosexual and homosexual. Some manipulative Londoners out to make some quick money would threaten their unsuspecting victims with exposure of their involvement in homosexual acts. Even if the man were threatened with lies, the rumor itself could successfully damage the reputation of a gentleman. In order to avoid public

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<sup>57</sup> Karen Harvey, “The History of Masculinity, circa 1650-1800,” *Journal of British Studies* 44 no. 2 (April, 2005): 300.

<sup>58</sup> Harvey, “The History of Masculinity,” 308.



ridicule, usually the blackmailer would be paid off regardless of how true the rumor was.<sup>59</sup>

Asserting masculinity in everyday public behavior preemptively countered any potential problem that the future would present. According to historian Amanda Vickery, marriage and starting a household were the mark of manliness in eighteenth century Britain.<sup>60</sup> The wife was not undervalued for all the support, work, and companionship she offered, but “a husband was entitled to community respect and a stake in local government.”<sup>61</sup> While men longed for a partner to at least ease the burden of housekeeping, they proved themselves and their masculinity in public arenas such as the political posts, coffeehouses, and drinking clubs.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, historian Karen Harvey notes the importance of exclusively male social events. She notes that the punch parties of guilds, companies, and clubs provided “reassuring unity in an age of commerce, war, and newly forming social distinctions: fashioning a potent corporate identity, one that was public yet intimate, middling, urban, British and manly.”<sup>63</sup>

Additionally, sporting became a popular way to prove masculinity as well, particularly boxing . Fighting for one’s honor and reputation was not new; however, the

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<sup>59</sup> Randolph Trumbach, "Blackmail for Sodomy in Eighteenth-Century London," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 33, no. 1 (2007): 24-26, Accessed October 3, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41299398>.

<sup>60</sup> Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 64, Kindle Edition.

<sup>61</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, 21.

<sup>62</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, 64.

<sup>63</sup> Karen Harvey, “Ritual Encounters: Punch Parties and Masculinity in Eighteenth Century,” *Past and Present* no. 214 (Feb, 2012): 202-203.

controlled environment of the boxing ring was new.<sup>64</sup> A book entitled *The Complete Art of Boxing* published in 1788 spread the word on the rules and regulation of the new sport. According to the author, this particular book was written so that readers would not have to “mix with some of the lowest part of the community” in order to learn the science behind boxing.<sup>65</sup> British men desired a method of demonstrating their masculinity, and boxing allowed them to flaunt it in front of an audience. Although beginning with the common class of men, clearly becoming a champion in the ring appealed to even the polite gentlemen of the eighteenth century.

This culture of championship, defending oneself, and fighting against evil matched the mentality of British imperialism as well. As Britain engaged with Europe fighting for control of global wealth and resources, this same culture of championship that grew among the male population at home also grew in their imperial endeavors. Britons viewed themselves as distinctly different from their European foes. The print culture that swept through Britain during the eighteenth century accentuated this idea. Political cartoons often appeared in print pitting Britain against the rest of Europe. For example, in Figure 1 entitled “The British lion engaging four powers,” Britain faces the French, Dutch, Spanish, and Americans who are all attacking. The caption warns that these four nations will soon know the power of the lion.<sup>66</sup> In this image, the British lion

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<sup>64</sup> Christopher Johnson and Henry Fielding, “British Championism: Early Pugilism and the Works of Fielding,” *The Review of English Studies* 47, no. 187 (1996): 335, Accessed October 3, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.shsu.edu/stable/518283>.

<sup>65</sup> Amateur of eminence. *The complete art of boxing...* (London, 1788), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Sam Houston State University, 3 Oct. 2020, vi, <<http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW102661553&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

bravely stands up to the antagonistic efforts of all his major opponents at once, implying that Britain has been facing the whole of Europe on its own. Despite facing four enemies, the British lion is firmly holding his ground and ready for a fight demonstrating the imperial determination of Great Britain.

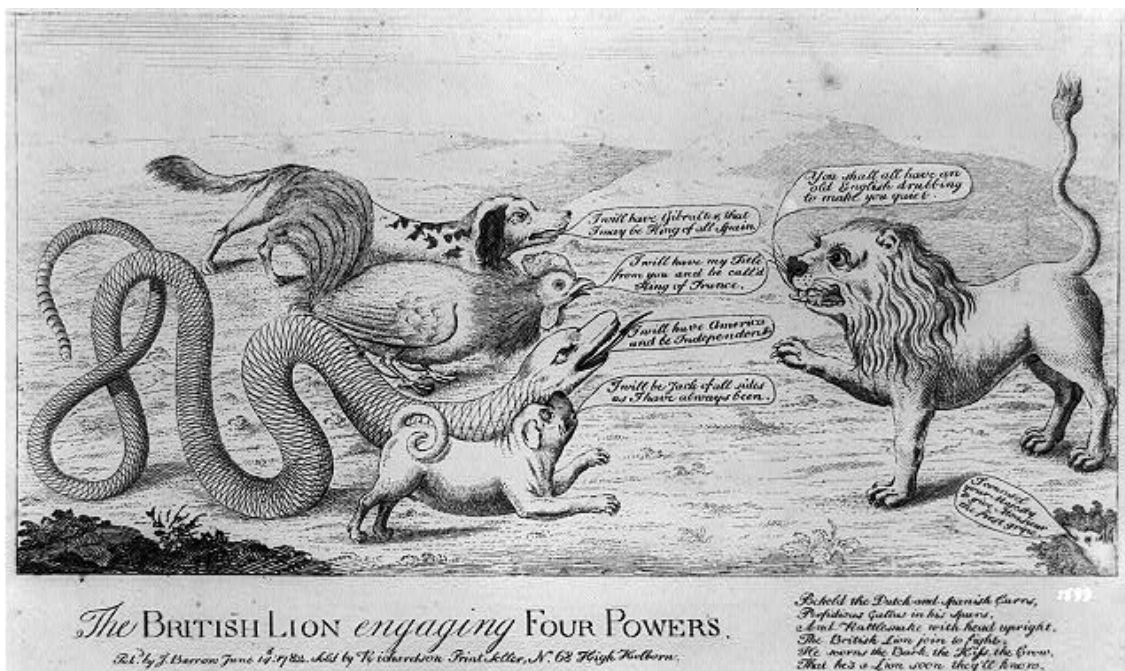


Figure 1: *The British Lion Engaging Four Powers*. [1782]. From the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004673480/>.

As the imperial wars continued, the British national identity strengthened around this idea of us versus them. Historian Linda Colley has discussed at length the idea of an “other” challenging the British and pushing the British to form their own identity.<sup>67</sup> As seen in the printed cartoons of the time, Britons often compared themselves with their foes creating an idea of difference and superiority. In a political cartoon published in 1769, European nations sit together dividing up the British Empire amongst themselves

<sup>66</sup> *The British Lion Engaging Four Powers* (London: J. Barrow, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1782), etching, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004673480/>.

<sup>67</sup> Colley, *Britons*, 7.

while King George III monitors the domestic disputes going on. This cartoon warns of the dangers associated with the European foes especially concerning their ability to all gang up on the British at once.<sup>68</sup> As asserted by Colley, in the minds of the British, there was a united “them” in Continental Europe that dangerously loomed on the other side of the English Channel.

The two major distinctions between England and other European nations during this time that became exacerbated by imperial warfare were religion and type of government. Britain was largely protestant during the eighteenth century, particularly when discussing political control. Their Spanish foes had already been condemned for their religious affiliation with the Catholic church, providing an excuse of many for why the British should stop the spread of Spanish imperialism in the New World. According to colonial America historian James Horn, the Anglican Church “would serve as a counterbalance to the expansion of Catholicism in Spain’s possessions.”<sup>69</sup> They were highly suspicious of the Catholic agenda; however, at this point the British were more concerned by the French Catholics. The French had already supported the Catholic rebels in Ireland against the English as well as threatened to invade as part of their support.<sup>70</sup> Now the French threatened their empire as well as domestic security.

As the century progressed and political revolution swept through Europe, England emphasized the political differences between themselves and the continent. As noted previously, writer Aufrère warned the English to protect their property and families

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<sup>68</sup> *What May Be Doing Abroad – What Is Doing at Home*, 1769, etching and engraving, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004672629/>.

<sup>69</sup> James Horn, *Kingdom Strange: The Brief and Tragic History of the Lost Colony of Roanoke* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 62.

<sup>70</sup> Black, *The British Empire*, 73.

against the French who he termed “republican barbarians.”<sup>71</sup> Unlike the absolute monarchs that ruled France and Spain throughout the eighteenth century, Great Britain already had a constitutional monarchy in place. Britons viewed the British government as fairer and much better due to their established freedoms. Even after revolution swept through Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the British still viewed France as oppressors and a huge threat to their safety.

Cartoons printed in local newspapers became a method of expressing the thoughts and feelings toward others. These cartoons emerged mocking Europeans, especially the French for their differences. As the artists drew comparisons between the two, they utilized physical differences to imply the ideals associated with each group of people. For example, French characters often appeared thin, unhappy, and having very little to eat while antagonizing the English or engaging in some form of impropriety. These artists attacked the taste and morals of the French as well as their unfortunate political and economic condition. The British characters, however, were drawn plump and happy. An abundance of food symbolized the success of the British, whereas the general cheeriness demonstrated their good humor.

In a cartoon drawn in 1793 labeled “French Happiness—English Misery,” the two nations are compared to one another side by side. As displayed in Figure 2, the artist depicts Frenchmen dressed in tattered clothing fighting over a frog in a dirty, rundown place. On the other side of the drawing, the British sit in a comfortable home eating plentifully. The British are well clothed and plump. Even their animals look well taken

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<sup>71</sup> Aufrère, *Warning to Britons*, 5.

care of with round bellies laying in front of a fire.<sup>72</sup> This cartoon—and the many more like it that were printed during the eighteenth century—demonstrates the superiority felt by Britons compared to their French neighbors. The British were happy, successful, well fed, and peaceful, while the French angrily stumbled through a meager existence wrought with turmoil, at least according to the artist. Cartoons such as this fed the national identity growing in Great Britain during the eighteenth century.



Figure 2. *French Happiness—English Misery*. Created by Isaac Cruikshank [1793]. From Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/cpbr/item/2004669793/>.

Engaging in a century of imperial warfare with Europe took its toll on the British population. Both at home through financial burden, changing family dynamics, and shifting gender identities and roles as well as the development of a national identity to

<sup>72</sup> Isaac Cruikshank, *French Happiness-English Misery* (London: S.W. Fores, January 3, 1793), etching: hand-colored, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/cpbr/item/2004669793/>.

contrast with their European enemies, imperialism impacted Great Britain as much as Great Britain impacted the larger world. Due to the conflict with Continental Europe, Britain developed confidence and drive to expand into the Atlantic and Asian territories leading to economic and political success. The effects of these conflicts also prepared the British society at home to embrace the cultural impacts of these new regions of the world. Despite the variations seen in the reality of British life during the eighteenth century, women and men balanced in their roles well in a changing, yet polite society that embraced new commodities and novelties from the outside world.

## CHAPTER III

### Influence of Imperialism in Asia

By the seventeenth century, after the Portuguese lost their monopoly on direct trade with Asia, other European nations such as the Netherlands and England attempted to capitalize on the opportunity by sailing their own vessels into Asian ports to directly access highly coveted commodities. Luxury items from Asia had already been trickling into Great Britain for centuries. However, they came at a high cost for consumers due to fees added by merchant middlemen that transported these goods across land or sea. By venturing into the Indian Ocean to trade directly with local Asians for these coveted items, Great Britain gained control over the movement of products out of the region thereby cutting the cost for Britons at home.<sup>73</sup> The result of these imperial actions created both diversity of products and diversity of experience for people in Great Britain.

Direct trade with Asian peoples impacted British society in more ways than bringing luxury goods into the British Isles, though. These cross-cultural interactions transformed British society by blurring the once-rigid lines between the ranks of its citizens. Britain is often described as “polite” society during the eighteenth century due to the emphasis on being amiable and agreeable in social interactions. Politeness stressed the importance of form or manner. There was a proper way to live, socialize, and conduct business. While hierarchy existed as it had for centuries, polite society allowed a person of a lower station to associate or interact with persons of a higher station based on the ability to engage with him or her in a polite manner. The character of an individual

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<sup>73</sup> P.J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd, 1982), 8.



became almost as important as their rank. By performing life in a polite manner, a Briton demonstrated intelligence, trustworthiness, and credibility.<sup>74</sup>

Just as British polite society embraced the idea that people could amicably interact with one another, it also embraced amicable interactions with those from other regions of the world.<sup>75</sup> Expansion into Asia by the East India Company was essential as Britain actively sought new commodities and markets to grow the national economy. Sending Britons abroad to India accomplished this economic goal; it also opened the gateway to Asian cultures. New and exotic experiences swept through the nation as Britain began to expand its empire into Asia, and the fashions, foods, décor, and adventure from the East captured the attention and imagination of Britons from the elite to the middling sort. While Britons largely maintained an everyday separation based on wealth and status, the experiences of each group become a bit more similar as the century progressed.<sup>76</sup> Ubiquity of imported foods and the sale of second-hand items or apparel allowed Britons that lived more modestly to at least dabble in the consumerism infatuated by exotic fashions.<sup>77</sup> According to Lawrence Klein, the accessibility of goods allowed more Britons to be “polite.”<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Helen Berry, “Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth Century England,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002): 389.

<sup>75</sup> Lawrence Klein, “Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century,” *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 4 (Dec. 2002): 879-880.

<sup>76</sup> Klein, “Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century,” 882-883.

<sup>77</sup> Klein, “Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century,” 883 and Berry, “Polite Consumption,” 375-376.

<sup>78</sup> Klein, “Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century,” 883.

Imperialism expanded the role of politeness and enhanced the inclusivity of foreign cultures in Great Britain. Just as a polite person did not mock or laugh at someone for being physically different, one must also refrain from being rude to anyone culturally different from himself as well.<sup>79</sup> By the eighteenth century, British curiosity of foreign cultures and people had already become evident based on published adventure literature, foods consumed, and commodities purchased. After gaining access to India's ports and establishing trade relationships with Asian merchants, Britain began to move large amounts of Asian commodities into the nation. The taste for luxury goods had already been established; now these goods would be available on a wider scale than previously experienced.

The emerging print culture of the eighteenth century contributed to the development of a polite society that embraced the influx of Asian goods.<sup>80</sup> Newspaper ads and merchant trade cards disseminated information about foreign commodities and where to find them. With the added variety and perhaps unfamiliar commodities that emerged on the shelves of local shops, retailers and wholesalers needed a way to notify customers about them. Ads for "fine green tea" and "morning gowns for men and women, of silks, stuffs, and calicos" littered newspapers in the eighteenth century.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> David M. Turner and Alun Withey, "Technologies of the Body: Polite Consumption and Correction of Deformity in Eighteenth Century England," *History* 99, no. 5 (338) (December 2014): 779.

<sup>80</sup> Troy Bickham, "Eating the Empire: Intersections of Food, Cookery, and Imperialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Past & Present* no. 198 (Feb. 2008): 82.

<sup>81</sup> "Advertisements and Notices." *Post Boy*, January 20, 1708 - January 22, 1708, *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection* (accessed November 9, 2020), <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/apps/doc/Z2001402434/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBCN&xid=ede98fa0>, And "Advertisements and Notices." In *Tatler* [1709]. August 26, 1710 - August 29, 1710, *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection* (accessed November 9, 2020). <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/apps/doc/Z2001699776/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBCN&xid=519ac4f3>.

Merchants used advertising trade cards to exploit their customers' fascination with exotic worlds by accentuating stereotypical traits assigned to the foreign lands that their new fashionable merchandise came from. However, in some instances, these stereotypes were downplayed or even removed from association with the product at all.<sup>82</sup> Regardless, through the use of these trade cards and newspaper ads, Britons could find all the fashionable goods they could desire or afford.

Another form of print material prevalent during the eighteenth century that also shaped the attitudes and actions of Britons was the instruction manual. Manuals, such as *The Polite Academy, or School of Behavior for Young Gentlemen and Ladies*, explained the proper way to behave and interact in a social setting.<sup>83</sup> Topics such as dress, conversation, cleanliness and friendship targeted the key aspects of proper behavior and instructed readers on how to become most socially acceptable in their interactions with others.<sup>84</sup> According to *The Polite Lady, or a Female Education*, a published correspondence between a mother and adolescent daughter designed to be used as a manual for raising a proper daughter, experience and knowledge often associated with age necessitated respect. During conversation, this was a key point because only those

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<sup>82</sup> Ericka Rappaport, *A Thirst for Empire: How Tea Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 14.

<sup>83</sup> *The polite academy, or school of behaviour for young gentlemen and ladies...* (London, 1762), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Sam Houston State University, Accessed Nov.8, 2020, <<http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW120702764&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

<sup>84</sup> Charles Allen. *The polite lady: or a course of female education* (London, 1769), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Sam Houston State University, Accessed Nov. 8, 2020, table of contents. <<http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW111744537&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

with substance should speak.<sup>85</sup> Additionally, this mother directs her daughter to be agreeable and amicable above all else.<sup>86</sup> The sentiments of this mother exemplify the attitudes of eighteenth century polite society that would extend to cross-cultural interactions as well.

Prior to the early modern era, British interest in the continent centered around the Middle East and namely for its religious and historical value. The Levant hosts locations significant to Christian religions. Biblical place such as Jerusalem, which is considered a holy city to several religions, attracted British visitors, yet these visitors exclusively desired to visit the location rather than the people. European Christians had battled Arabic Muslims for control over this area for centuries during the Middle Ages, and a mutual distaste for Muslims of all backgrounds lingered. Even as late as the eighteenth century, most Britons that entered the Levant refrained from actually interacting with locals and cared little about their modern society.<sup>87</sup> Yet these interactions with the Levant allowed Britons to gain access to Asian goods otherwise unknown to them. The Ottoman Empire, who had expanded to control the Levant by the eighteenth century, had built a trade empire in the Middle East that linked Europe to Asia, and these foreign commodities sparked the desires that would drive popularity for Asian commodities during the eighteenth century.

As the British government began to actively seek out economic opportunity in the Asian region, the focus and location of interest shifted from the Levant to India. By the

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<sup>85</sup> Allen, *The Polite Lady*, 77-80.

<sup>86</sup> Allen, *The Polite Lady*, 82-95.

<sup>87</sup> Marshall, *The Great Map of Mankind*, 67-68.

eighteenth century, the term “Asia” generally signified “India” rather than the Middle East. Furthermore, as British travelers and traders entered India, they interacted with locals and learned the customs and fashions of the indigenous population.<sup>88</sup> They then began to bring these customs, stories, and commodities back home to Britain. As Great Britain increased trade with India, more Indian culture seeped into British society.

Expeditions into the Asian continent and surrounding islands spurred the essential characteristics of eighteenth century polite society in Great Britain. Key features of the polite society included a willingness to associate with others outside of their own social station, a higher value placed on amiability than merit, and a collection of exotic goods from across the world. Having experienced-based knowledge became just as coveted as academic based knowledge, and experience with foreign peoples captured British attention.<sup>89</sup> By surrounding oneself with exotic goods and reading travel accounts from Asia, even those who had never left Europe, or even Britain, could demonstrate their knowledge of the world.

Travel accounts gave readers an insight into the foreign encounters of those adventurous travelers brave enough to go beyond the safety and comfort of Europe. Travelers such as Henry Abbott published their interactions with people from foreign lands after realizing the curiosity of their friends and acquaintances. Abbott traveled from Aleppo in modern-day Syria to Bussora in modern-day Iraq. In his preface, he explains that his published account actually began as a letter to a friend. However, by the time he published his work, he already had 106 subscribers waiting for their copy to read.

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<sup>88</sup> Marshall, *The Great Map of Mankind*, 75.

<sup>89</sup> Klein, “Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century,” 889.

Likewise, books such as *An Affecting Narrative of the Unfortunate Voyage and Catastrophe of His Majesty's Ship Wager, One of Commodore Anson's Squadron in the South Sea Expedition ... The whole Compiled from Authentic Journals*, which chronicles the adventures of British sailors as they ventured into the unknown, allowed British readers to join imperial adventures.<sup>90</sup> Patrick Barclay compiled the adventures of explorers and sailors from various European nations into foreign territories such as Turkey, Japan, and India. Barclay's extensive collections of stories provides insight into interactions with native population as well as description of those indigenous peoples.<sup>91</sup>

In addition to India, English traders attempted to set up direct trade in China. By the eighteenth century, British society already knew and loved some of the finer Asian commodities that had trickled in via the Silk Road and Continental Europe. As their naval strength grew, the East India Company pushed into the Indian and Pacific Oceans to expand upon the economic opportunities there. Unlike in India, the Chinese did not desire a strong trade relationship with Western Europeans and thus limited the amount of trade activity permitted. Unfortunately for Great Britain, China had very little demand for British goods. Although the limitations set by the Chinese government reduced trade activity, the desire for Chinese goods did not wane even though China's prevention of

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<sup>90</sup> *An affecting narrative of the unfortunate voyage and catastrophe of his Majesty's ship Wager, one of Commodore Anson's squadron in the South Sea expedition ... The whole compiled from authentic journals, ...* (London?: Printed for John Norwood, and sold by the booksellers of London, Bristol and Liverpool, 1751), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, accessed February 17, 2021, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0100298168/ECCO?u=txshracd2543&sid=ECCO&xid=7230a047&pg=1>.

<sup>91</sup> Patrick Barclay, *The universal traveller...* (London, 1735), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, Gale, Sam Houston State University, Accessed Nov. 8, 2020. <http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW101319834&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>.

large scale infiltration by Western Europeans created resentment and hostility in the British.<sup>92</sup> Chinese commodities remained highly desirable, so much so that British manufacturers attempted to imitate them domestically.

One of the coveted commodities that Asia offered to its trading partners was spice. Nutmeg, cinnamon, mace, and coriander powder were among the most desired spices during the eighteenth century. Prior to the East India Company dominating trade with India, spices had already entered the country via both land and sea trade routes controlled by others, but their expensive cost limited who had access to them. Every time a commodity changed hands as it crossed the Eurasian continent or even pass through various ports, the price increased. By eliminating foreign middlemen, Britain's cost dramatically decreased, allowing those with less wealth to enjoy the exotic flavors as well.<sup>93</sup>

However, having the accessibility to spices did not translate into knowing how to properly use them. To remedy this problem, self-proclaimed experts printed cookbooks to provide appropriate recipes with instructions on how to incorporate these exotic luxuries into edible dishes. Hannah Glasse, for example, capitalized on this opportunity by publishing several editions of her famous cookbook *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy; Which Far Exceeds Any Thing of the Kind Ever Yet Published*. First published in 1747, Glasse notes in her introduction that she writes using plain and simple terms so that

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<sup>92</sup> David Porter, "Monstrous Beauty: Eighteenth Century Fashion and Aesthetics," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 35, no. 3 (Spring, 2002): 401 and David Porter, "Peculiar bur Uninteresting Nation," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 33, no. 2 (Winter 2000): 184.

<sup>93</sup> Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World 1550-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 78.

servants could easily understand her instructions as well as those more educated.<sup>94</sup> Her cookbook provides over 900 recipes instructing her readers on the proper way to bake desserts, cook meats, and make stews, among many others. Even new dishes could be confidently served by following the explicit instructions Glasse provided.

New dishes became fashionable during this century, especially when hosting guests. Serving exotic dishes was common practice among hosts that wanted to demonstrate their cultural knowledge of the world. Popular travel accounts often detailed the adventurer's experiences with native cuisine, so for those Britons who could not travel, eating foods from foreign regions gave them a way to virtually travel the world without leaving their homes.<sup>95</sup> Indulging the host and proving their own sense of adventure, guests at least tried the foreign dishes out of good manners.<sup>96</sup> However, to exemplify one of the chief principles of polite society that urges amicability, a polite host would hope to avoid serving an offensive dish to their guests. With the use of cookbooks, hosts could both demonstrate their superior cultural knowledge and provide a pleasing meal at the same time.

Imported spices did quite well in Britain, and thus were included in various recipes listed in Glasse's *The Art of Cookery*. Nutmeg was used in 293 recipes while mace was listed in 292. Coriander and cinnamon were included in nine and twenty-one recipes, respectively, indicating the growing popularity of their use. To aid the cook in

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<sup>94</sup> Hannah Glasse, *The art of cookery, made plain and easy...* (London, 1747), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Sam Houston State University, Accessed Nov. 9, 2020, i. <<http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW108678475&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

<sup>95</sup> Bickham, "Eating the Empire," 94-95.

<sup>96</sup> Bickham, "Eating the Empire", 96.



their choice of recipe, Glasse labeled recipes with multiple variations based on their geographic location of origin. There are several different recipes that brag of foreign locales: To Dress a Pig the French Way, To Dress Mutton the Turkish Way, and To Make a Currey the Indian Way.<sup>97</sup> Interestingly, foreign spices became so popular among the British that stores began selling spice blends to make them easier to use. A curry powder mix, for example, simplified the various spices used to make a delicious curry dish into one proportionate blend of spices taking the guesswork out of the recipe for novice cooks.<sup>98</sup> The popularity of cookbooks and availability of spice blends indicate how Britons—retailers and consumers alike—welcomed at least some aspects of foreign regions. Instead of relying on the same information passed down from one generation to the next using food grown locally, Britons embraced Asian foods that entered the country as a result of globalization. According to Troy Bickham, “edibles constituted the majority of the value and weight of Britain's imperial trade, and they appeared on the tables of Britons from across geographic and social spectrum.”<sup>99</sup> He goes on to explain how spices, among other things, “became commonplace during the eighteenth century, often reaching the tables of even the poorest and remotest Britons.”<sup>100</sup> The positive attitudes toward exotic dishes exemplified through polite behavior allowed new experiences to become not only normal but also fashionable.

In addition to spices, other Asian customs and commodities trickled into the country as well. One of the most well-known appropriated customs that Britons borrowed

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<sup>97</sup> Glass, *The Art of Cookery*, table of contents.

<sup>98</sup> Bickham, “Eating the Empire,” 105.

<sup>99</sup> Bickham, “Eating the Empire,” 72.

<sup>100</sup> Bickham, “Eating the Empire,” 73.

from their Asian encounters is the practice of drinking tea. Although Britons drank tea during the seventeenth century, only the wealthy elite could afford to do so, and it was usually for medicinal purposes. Despite the reason for drinking this hot beverage, tea consumption became associated with prestige and wealth, especially once King Charles II's foreign wife Catherine of Braganza expressed her preference for it.<sup>101</sup> As prices began to drop due to the increase in supply available in Great Britain, the fashionable drink slowly became a staple in British homes of all ranks—from poor to king.

The popularity of tea was not an accident, though. Upon realizing the potential profits of buying and selling tea leaves as well as provide an alternative to alcoholic beverages—particularly gin—that hindered industrial productivity, British investors began a campaign to squash any xenophobic fears that could potentially prevent consumer purchase.<sup>102</sup> These British tea distributors advertised the “Britishness” of tea-drinking while also demonstrating its fashionably exotic origins. For example, Figure 3 demonstrates how Prince Eugene's shop in London accentuates the Britishness of his products with the portrait of a knight at the top of the trade card. Below the picture is a list of items sold at the shop including fine teas and chinaware.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> P.M. Guerty and Kevin Switaj, “Tea, Porcelain, and Sugar in the British Atlantic World,” *OAH Magazine of History* 18, no.3 The Atlantic World (April, 2004): 57 and Rappaport, *A Thirst for Empire*, 33-34.

<sup>102</sup> Rappaport, *A Thirst for Empire*, 56.

<sup>103</sup> Trade card for Prince Eugene, The British Museum, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_Banks-38-4](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_Banks-38-4).

*Fans curiously mounted & Sticks*

**PRINCE**



**EUGENE**

*neatly mended & altered.*

*At Prince Eugene's head in Cheap side*  
**London.**  
*All sorts of Fine Tea, Coffee, Choco-  
 late & Snuff, Iapan & China-Ware,  
 Fine Flint Glases,  
 Lackerd Tea Tables & Hand  
 Boards, India & English, with  
 Fann's, and Several other goods,  
 Wholesale & Retaile.*  
*Sold by Tho. Hodgson.*

Figure 3. *Prince Eugene's Trade Card*. The British Museum,  
[https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_Banks-38-4](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_Banks-38-4).

Based off her extensive research on the tea industry from early modern times, historian Ericka Rappaport asserts, “tea’s history is in fact inseparable from that of advertising...”<sup>104</sup> Historian Jonathan Eacott notes that the British “recognized not only difference but also sameness, and they intentionally and unintentionally claimed sameness to obscure difference and claimed difference to obscure sameness.”<sup>105</sup>

The intentional efforts of distributors to appropriate the custom of tea consumption, distinguishing the habit as particularly British due to tea’s ability to serve a positive purpose both economically and socially, transformed the consumption of the commodity into a British custom. According to Amanda Vickery, tea encouraged the practice of visiting, and even became equivalent to it.<sup>106</sup> Breakfast parties and dinner parties alike served tea. Both women and men drank together and in same sex socializing.<sup>107</sup> According to historian Ching-Jung Chen, major British painters of the eighteenth century often depicted groups of people drinking tea in their art. These conversation piece artworks served to reiterate the social status of drinking tea in the proper manner with the proper accessories. As Chen notes, although tea became more ubiquitous during the eighteenth century, the middling sort and poor could not afford the

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<sup>104</sup> Rappaport, *A Thirst for Empire*, 14.

<sup>105</sup> Eacott, Jonathan, *Selling Empire: India and Britain in the Making of America, 1600-1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 2016): 13, Kindle Edition.

<sup>106</sup> Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009): 28, Kindle Edition.

<sup>107</sup> Ching-Jung Chen, “Tea Parties in Early Georgian Conversation Pieces,” *British Art Journal* 10, no. 1 (Spring/Summer, 2009): 33.

proper tea sets, serving dishes, or tea tables of the gentry social gatherings.<sup>108</sup> While tea came from Asia, Britons drank tea, and polite society drank it a certain way.

Due to this specific polite manner in which to serve and consume tea, other Asian commodities such as Chinese-printed porcelain also became popular in Britain. Porcelain teapots accompanied tea into the country but became its own source of fascination and awe. Although functional, they demonstrated taste, fashion, and status. The popularity of porcelain is also evidenced in trinkets and vases that became widely collected by the upper classes.<sup>109</sup> The prestige and value of these teapots and accessories rose if they were made of finer materials or due to their exotic origins which advertisers accentuated in their trade cards. According to the unknown author of *Beauties of nature and art displayed, in a tour through the world; ... Illustrated and embellished with copper plates*, porcelain made in China was “so much esteemed and used among us, being the most beautiful earthen manufacture in the world...”<sup>110</sup> In Figure 4, Daniel Hardy advertises his chinaware with images of vases and teapots decorated with Chinese designs to demonstrate the collection of work he sold.<sup>111</sup> He intentionally chose to include images with Chinese designs in order to attract customers indicating the high demand among consumers of the time.

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<sup>108</sup> Chen, “Tea Parties in Early Georgian Conversation Pieces,” 32-33.

<sup>109</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, 326-327.

<sup>110</sup> *Beauties of nature and art displayed, in a tour through the world; ... Illustrated and embellished with copper plates* Volume 9, The second edition, greatly improved (London, 1774-75), Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, Sam Houston State University, Accessed Nov. 9, 2020, 40, <<http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW100524906&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.

<sup>111</sup> Trade Card for Daniel Hardy, The British Museum, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_Heal-37-30](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_Heal-37-30).



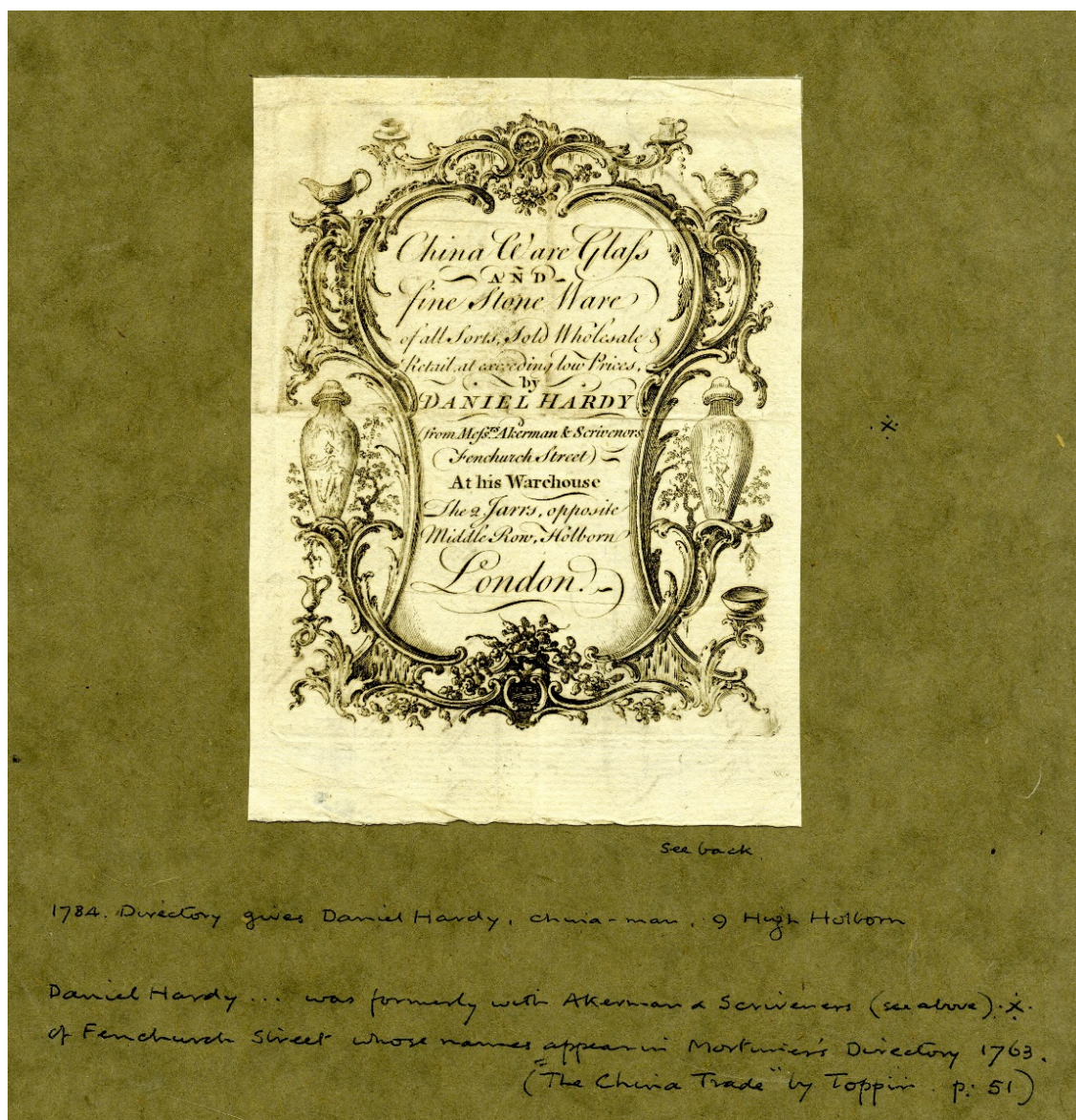


Figure 4. Trade Card of Daniel Hardy, China & Glass. The British Museum, [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P\\_Heal-37-30](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_Heal-37-30).

Just as serving exotic dishes distinguished fashionable, worldly hosts from the much duller, ordinary hosts, possession of Chinese material goods also gave status to their owners. However, the style Britons attributed to East Asian culture became more fashionable than what truly was fashionable in China.<sup>112</sup> Instructions on print designs

<sup>112</sup> David Porter, "Writing China: Legitimacy and Representation, 1606-1773," *Comparative Literature Studies* 33, no. 1 East-West Issue (1996): 110.

sent to foreign manufacturers ensured the desirability of “Chinese” goods once they landed in Great Britain—and thus ensuring profit for investors.<sup>113</sup> For example, due to the popularity of the attributed Asian designs that included flowers, birds, and Chinese scenic pictures, painting shops in China began adding those designs to their own work by the 1730s and 1740s in order to sell their product to Europeans.<sup>114</sup>

As the popularity of these Asian commodities grew, British manufacturers attempted to tap into the profitability by creating imitation goods known as *chinoiserie*.<sup>115</sup> According to Maxine Berg, manufacturers of the eighteenth century invested in process innovation as opposed to product innovation. They desired to make goods they already know would sell—and sell well at that—for a lower cost than importing the original goods from Asia. These manufacturers did not wish to make a cheap imitation but rather a domestic imitation.<sup>116</sup> Josiah Wedgwood became one of the most famous imitators as he perfected the production of porcelain on British soil. He produced hookahs, curry dishes, and vases all that were inspired by Asian culture.<sup>117</sup> Though some of his ventures did better than others, historians such as Robin Reilly herald him as “the world's most celebrated manufacturing potter.”<sup>118</sup> The fact that he replicated goods already available did not diminish his prestige or praise.

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<sup>113</sup> Margot Finn and Kate Smith, *East India Company at Home* (London: UCL Press, 2018), loc. 1733-1740, Kindle Edition.

<sup>114</sup> Finn, *East India Company at Home*, loc. 1211.

<sup>115</sup> Porter, “Writing China,” 109.

<sup>116</sup> Maxine Berg, “From Imitation to Invention: Creating Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Britain,” *The Economic History Review* 55, no. 1 (Feb. 2002): 2-5 and 17.

<sup>117</sup> Eacott, *Selling Empire*, 346-348.

<sup>118</sup> Robin Reilly, “Wondrous Surprises,” *RSA Journal* 143, no. 5462 (Aug/Sept, 1995): 82.

Another fashionable commodity that demonstrated social status was Chinese wallpaper. These wallpapers were used to decorate country estate houses of the wealthy landowners, whether they had gone East themselves or simply been gifted the item.<sup>119</sup> Although designs of these wallpapers catered to the taste of British buyers and thus not truly authentic of Eastern natives, the designs contained images that clearly evoked the European preconceived notions of Asian culture that would be clearly understood by their guests. While Helen Clifford argues that Chinese wallpaper retained its high price and elite status throughout the eighteenth century, Vickery asserts that the cost of wallpaper was well within reach for the middling sort who wished to demonstrate their sophistication and fashion.<sup>120</sup> The option to liven up a room with wallpaper cost much less than tapestries and carpet used as décor by the wealthy elite to experiment with exotic designs.

Popular patterns often represented a combination of both British and Chinese taste. For example, in both Mongol and Chinese cultures, gold and yellow symbolized elite status.<sup>121</sup> Over the course of the eighteenth century, yellow increased in popularity in British choice of wallpaper due to the connotation of the color in Asia.<sup>122</sup> Additionally, trellis patterns evoked the image of chinoiserie screens at the same time providing a neat appearance and remained popular throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>123</sup> Elegance in

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<sup>119</sup> Finn, *East India Company at Home*, loc. 1539-1587.

<sup>120</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, 199 and Finn, *East Asia at Home*, loc 1149

<sup>121</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, 207 and Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 71.

<sup>122</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, 207.

<sup>123</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, 207.



polite society required a lack of gaudy showmanship; neatness and simplicity, however, could be combined with exotic imagery for quite fashionable designs. These design rules, however, did not limit themselves to just wallpapers. As Vickery notes, “wallpaper patterns had so much in common with the silks and chintz that they imitated.”<sup>124</sup>

Similar to China, India also offered more than just consumable commodities to the British population. Fabrics and cottons dominated the majority of goods that entered the country from India.<sup>125</sup> Initially, Great Britain wished to trade their woolen cloth for lighter Indian fabrics, but Asians did not desire the heavy fabrics produced in Britain. This rejection of British exports did not hinder the popularity of Indian cloth among Britons though.<sup>126</sup> Calicos became quite popular, to the point that some Britons began to worry. The amount of imported fabrics negatively impacted domestic fabric manufacturing so greatly that London’s woolen and silk producers protested the importation of Indian goods in hopes of reducing foreign competition.<sup>127</sup>

Bowing to pressure of the English weavers, Parliament passed the first Calico Act in 1700 followed later by a second Calico Act in 1721.<sup>128</sup> However, Great Britain did not want to end trade with India. The principles of mercantilism that powered the British economy at this time necessitated both resources and markets, and Britain did not want to lose either of these that they had found in India.<sup>129</sup> Parliament found the perfect solution

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<sup>124</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, 217.

<sup>125</sup> Eacott, *Selling Empire*, 37.

<sup>126</sup> Eacott, *Selling Empire*, 71 and 117.

<sup>127</sup> Eacott, *Selling Empire*, 94.

<sup>128</sup> Eacott, *Selling Empire*, 113-117.

<sup>129</sup> Eacott, *Selling Empire*, 238 and Porter, *A Peculiar but Uninteresting Nation*, 184.

to this dilemma across the Atlantic Ocean. In order to not lose out on the potential profits from trading with India, Britain began pushing these fabrics to their American colonies. The East India Company would continue to buy fabrics from India merchants, but by selling them directly to North America, domestic fabric manufacturers did not economically suffer either.<sup>130</sup> This demonstrates the significance of Asian trade and imperialism to the British economy and the people, who relied on economic stability. Despite the domestic challenges, Great Britain was unwilling to slow trade with Asia.

British persistence in economic engagement in the Indian Ocean allowed many Britons to experience a foreign world and perhaps to rise above their born station in life to accumulate significant wealth. Involvement with the East India Company provided opportunity to go abroad and accumulate wealth and luxury items while growing the empire.<sup>131</sup> The newly rich, called Nabobs, shifted ideas of wealth and status in the British Isles which was no longer reserved for the landed gentry. According to historian Tillman Nechtman, the Nabobs brought anxiety to some British citizens, especially to the upper classes. The rank and wealth of the Nabob were inconsistent with the traditional social hierarchy where the elite had economic power but also political, social, and economic responsibilities. The upper classes still viewed the Nabob as a man of low rank whose new wealth could potentially bring instability back into the nation.<sup>132</sup>

However, the rarity of some Asian commodities that Nabobs could obtain did bring status as well as wealth to both EIC members and families. Owning rare goods

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<sup>130</sup> Eacott, *Selling Empire*, 117-119.

<sup>131</sup> Eacott, *Selling Empire*, 225-226.

<sup>132</sup> Tillman W. Nechtman, "A Jewel in the Crown? Indian Wealth in Domestic Britain in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 41, no. 1 (2007): 71-82. Accessed January 24, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30053749>.

demonstrated social connections with someone of influence in Asia. Chinese armorial ware and ivory, for example, both became a huge indicator of status during this time period. Armorial ware was known for being hard to obtain, thus only those with trade connections in China landed such coveted items.<sup>133</sup> Ivory similarly required some connection with the East India Company which added to the rarity and appeal.<sup>134</sup>

By venturing into Asian territory, the East India Company turned luxury goods into household goods—some of which would become symbols of “Britishness.” The wealth of goods and knowledge that poured into Britain via trade and travelogues created a taste for the exotic cultures previously unknown to them. Spices that had previously been reserved for the elite appeared in dishes of common Britons. Serving, exotic dishes even began to signify cultural affluence. However, it is important to note the tensions that existed due to the importation of foreign goods into the British Isles. Some Britons feared that their nation would become polluted by foreign evils if they traded with Asian merchants.<sup>135</sup> This pushed the British to find other ways to secure the luxury items they wanted without potentially corrupting their own country. According to Eacott, this was exactly why many Britons looked to America to colonize.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Finn, *East India at Home*, loc. 2466.

<sup>134</sup> Finn, *East India at Home*, loc. 1867.

<sup>135</sup> Eacott, *Selling Empire*, 25.

<sup>136</sup> Eacott, *Selling Empire*, 8-10.

## CHAPTER IV

### **Influence of Imperialism in the Atlantic**

European interest in the Western Hemisphere spawned from economic interest, initially in the Asian spice trade then later, upon realizing the existence of North and South America, resources available for extraction there, including a new source of human labor. During the sixteenth century, the Spanish stumbled upon gold and silver in modern-day Latin America which inspired English privateering and created hostility between the two countries in the Atlantic Ocean. Eventually, after multiple failed attempts to locate an abundance of gold and silver for themselves in North America, the English shifted their attention to other economic opportunities available such as fishing, lumber, and tobacco. Similarly, the English took the opportunity to establish colonies in the West Indies to grow sugar cane as well as set up trade connections in Africa. These African connections and labor-intensive plantations encouraged the British to become involved with the Atlantic Slave Trade as well. If they could not find riches, they could at least earn riches through trade.

By the eighteenth century, the British Empire controlled the American colonies in North America as well as territories in the Caribbean. Control over these territories contributed to the success of the British mercantilist economy providing natural resources and new sources of human labor as well as a market for finished goods. However, British involvement in the Atlantic Ocean also significantly influenced British society including how the population viewed their own government, liberty, and foreign populations. Over the course of the century, especially due to the growing conflict with the North American

colonies, the mindset of Britons shifted in their notions of empire, identity, and their place among a world of nations.

Over the course of the 1700s, communication became a large contributing factor to the dynamic relationship between Britain and the colonies across the Atlantic Ocean. The infrastructure and technological developments of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century enhanced the ability for information to travel internationally. No longer did a writer send their written information and wonder if it would even reach its intended recipient. An efficient postal service to ensure that letters quickly and correctly arrived to their destination, adequate road system for wagons to carry communication, and development of proper ships that could safely carry packet of mail overseas all limited the uncertainty and risk that previously hindered written messages from reaching their destination. The stability inspired more writers to send their message both within and outside the British Isles.<sup>137</sup> Through personal accounts, letters to family, and, later, printed news, Britons learned about the New World. Their ideas and opinions developed based on the words they read from loved ones and through the stories of adventurous travelers.<sup>138</sup> According to Paul Goring, “news reporting was inseparable from the post; news was recognized as being, in large part, the collective outpouring of a far-flung network of letter writers...”<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communication in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 23-28, Accessed January 31, 2001, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>138</sup> Louis B. Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc, 2002), 238-239.

<sup>139</sup> Paul Goring, "A Network of Networks: Spreading the News in an Expanding World of Information." In *Travelling Chronicles: News and Newspapers from the Early Modern Period to the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Goring Paul, Brandtzæg Siv Gøril, and Watson Christine (LEIDEN; BOSTON: Brill, 2018), Accessed February 16, 2021, 8, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctvbqs8w9.6>.

With the development of a reliable postal system from mother country to the colonies in the late seventeenth century, the exchange of information grew between Britain and America. Ironically, information traveled more easily across the Atlantic than from one extremity of the American colonies to the other. Even after laws designed to inhibit transfer of mail outside of the official postal system, southern colonies especially remained reluctant to accept this new governmental institution.<sup>140</sup> Through the eighteenth century, colonists would only overcome their fragmented state to unite over a common enemy—Great Britain itself.

With the start of an easier exchange of information across the Atlantic, American publishers began to print their own newspapers from the American perspective. Although some printers did not wish to upset the government which they relied on to distribute their newspapers through the postal system, others pushed the limits with radical satirical commentary. According to David Shields, the newspaper printers, who would be held responsible for its contents despite authorship, employed equivocation and metaphors to avoid certain prosecution for controversial material. For example, James Franklin, publisher of *New England Courant*, printed a particularly offensive note in his newspaper, which led to his arrest. The use of his fictional character Janus to compare to and demonstrate the two-faced tendencies of his foes left room for interpretation and legal defense. Although the equivocation allowed him to side-step guilt at times, his masked attack on the clergy officially removed him as the named printer.<sup>141</sup> His nephew, Benjamin Franklin, took over publishing the newspaper while James lurked in the

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<sup>140</sup> Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies*, 240-241.

<sup>141</sup> David Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill, 1997), 267-272.

background. They took measures, however, to ensure Benjamin would not be arrested as well.<sup>142</sup> On the front page of the first edition published by Benjamin Franklin, he explicitly notes his intentions that the *New England Courant* “will be to entertain the town with the most comical and diverting incidents of humane life.”<sup>143</sup> They clearly wanted to veil any political intentions to prevent either himself or the newspaper from experiencing the trouble James had landed in, yet they were still very willing to profit off readership interest in the American colonies on both sides of the Atlantic.

New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, and Newport all began publishing their own local newspapers that would make their way across the ocean. Britons consulted these papers for the latest American news; however, pieces of letters sent from the Americas can be found printed in British newspapers as well.<sup>144</sup> For example, in 1771, *The Public Advertiser* printed a letter sent from Virginia that described in detail a discontented group of North Carolinians plotting to confront their governor about the lack of security on the frontier portion of the colony.<sup>145</sup> Regardless of the source, printers kept Britons apprised of American affairs.

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<sup>142</sup> Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies*, 243-244.

<sup>143</sup> “Article,” 1723, *New England Courant*, MHS Online Collections, Massachusetts Historical Society, [https://www.masshist.org/database/resource.php?t=MHS%20Collections%20Online%3A%20The%20New-England%20Courant&i=/database/images/4800nec17230211\\_1\\_lg.jpg&u=https%3A//www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php%3Fitem\\_id%3D659%26mode%3Dlarge%26img\\_step%3D1%26%26pid%3D6%26br%3D1](https://www.masshist.org/database/resource.php?t=MHS%20Collections%20Online%3A%20The%20New-England%20Courant&i=/database/images/4800nec17230211_1_lg.jpg&u=https%3A//www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php%3Fitem_id%3D659%26mode%3Dlarge%26img_step%3D1%26%26pid%3D6%26br%3D1).

<sup>144</sup> Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies*, 242-5, 250-1.

<sup>145</sup> “News.” *Public Advertiser*, July 16, 1771. *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection* (accessed December 28, 2020). <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/apps/doc/Z2001138839/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBCN&xid=052de590>.

According to Jeremy Black, the strong flow of information going in both directions across the Atlantic throughout the eighteenth century took the form of pamphlets and books, as well as newspapers.<sup>146</sup> James Walcott, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams are among the many American colonists whose written works were printed in Great Britain for reading. Detailed accounts on the discoveries and developments of North America from scientific topics to social conditions captivated British audiences as they were published. Even topics of seemingly mundane occurrences found an audience in Britain. Examples of both instances include Benjamin Franklin's *Experiments and Observations on Electricity* that was published in London in 1769 as well as a colonist's letter written in 1742 describing the religious state of New England after the appointment of a new reverend, which then was printed in a 137 page book in Glasgow.<sup>147</sup> Information of various sorts continuously poured into Great Britain and spread across the nation.

As the American colonies became more agitated with parliamentary actions after the French and Indian War, revolutionary ideas and Enlightenment concepts became embedded in printed communication traveling across the Atlantic. For example, the *New-York Weekly Journal* published portions of *Cato's Letter* in 1735. In the September 8<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Jeremy Black, *The British Empire: A History and a Debate* (Routledge, 2016), 87.  
<http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat00667a&AN=sam.2727928&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

<sup>147</sup> Franklin, Benjamin. *Experiments and observations on ...*, 4th ed. London: printed for David Henry; and sold by Francis Newbery, at the Corner of St. Paul's Church-Yard, MDCCLXIX. [1769]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed December 28, 2020).  
<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0107467464/ECCO?u=txshracd2543&sid=ECCO&xid=2bf9badb&pg=1>  
 . and A. M. *The state of religion in New-England...* Glasgow, 1742. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. Sam Houston State University. 16 Dec. 2020  
 <<http://find.gale.com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=txshracd2543&tabID=T001&docId=CW118932122&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>>.



edition of the newspaper, the printed section discussed civil liberties and proclaimed, “Free government is the protecting the people in their liberties by stated rules; tyranny is a brutish struggle for unlimited liberty to one or a few...”<sup>148</sup> A conversation of political philosophy emerged that polarized the populations on both sides of the Atlantic. By the end of the eighteenth century, two very different views on civil liberty and the role of the government existed.<sup>149</sup>

As previously demonstrated in chapter one through political cartoons and printed warnings about the dangers of European revolutions, Great Britain considered itself more liberated and more concerned about the welfare of its citizens than its continental neighbors were. Since the thirteenth century, Britons had been advocating for their own interests via legal means. The signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 legally recognized the voice of the people—at least a very specific portion of the population. In reality, the barons who drafted the document developed it in order to protect their economic interest in a growing money economy. However, that fact did not deter future generations from referencing the Magna Carta in their notions of being a liberated country.<sup>150</sup> As one letter that was sent in to the *Patriot* in 1714 commented, “the meanest peasant has his Bible and his Magna Carta, as well as the greatest person of honour and distinction in the

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<sup>148</sup> "From Cato's Letters." *New-York Weekly Journal* (New York, New York), no. XCVI, September 8, 1735: [1]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers including Texas Historical Newspapers*. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/apps/readex/doc?p=EANX&docref=image/v2%3A1036CD36DBC06A78%40EANX-1062A4AFE54E620B%402355006-1062A4B014B2FCD2-1062A4B0405C2A02>.

<sup>149</sup> Eric Foner, “The Contested History of American Freedom,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 37, no. 1 (Jan 2013): 16.

<sup>150</sup> Alexander Lock, "Reform, Radicalism and Revolution: Magna Carta in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-century Britain," In *Magna Carta: History, Context and Influence*, edited by Goldman Lawrence (London: University of London Press, 2018), Accessed December 29, 2020. doi:10.2307/j.ctv5136sc.14, 102.

kingdom; and whoever shall dare to be guilty of any action which tends to deprive us of either, may as justly be censured by the humble villager as the exalted courtier.”<sup>151</sup>

British colonists in America viewed themselves in a very similar light. As British citizens, they expected to receive all the same luxuries of British freedoms allotted in the mother country.<sup>152</sup> However, the colonists’ and Parliament’s understanding of the role of the colonies differed greatly. Questions of legality and jurisdiction remained a source of tension between metropole and colonies throughout the eighteenth century, even concerning slavery. The colonists expected the laws they implemented to be universally upheld, as well as have a say in making the laws that impacted them.<sup>153</sup> Parliament and defenders of parliamentary sovereignty argued that the result of the Glorious Revolution gave ultimate power to the King and Parliament, and thus the colonists were subject to the laws imposed by either.<sup>154</sup> However, some members of Parliament agreed with the colonists. Isaac Barré, for example, challenged the tax plans proposed by Charles Townshend, claiming that America should not be taxed due to their lack of representation.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> "News." In *Patriot* [1714]. April 12, 1714 - April 16, 1714. *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection* (accessed December 28, 2020). <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/apps/doc/Z2001056115/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBCN&xid=5f7e8eeb>.

<sup>152</sup> Lock, "Reform, Radicalism and Revolution," 103.

<sup>153</sup> Dana Rabin, "“In a Country of Liberty?”: Slavery, Villeinage and the Making of Whiteness in the Somerset Case (1772)," *History Workshop Journal* Autumn 2011, no. 72 (Autumn, 2011): 16-20.

<sup>154</sup> Harry T. Dickinson, "Magna Carta in the American Revolution," In *Magna Carta: History, Context and Influence*, edited by Goldman Lawrence (London: University of London Press, 2018), Accessed December 29, 2020. doi:10.2307/j.ctv5136sc.13, 82.

<sup>155</sup> Lawrence Henry Gipson, "The Great Debate in the Committee in the Whole House of Commons on the Stamp Act, 1766, as Reported by Nathaniel Ryder," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 86, no. 1 (Jan., 1962): 19-20.

As Enlightenment ideals traveled from European philosophers such as Rousseau, John Locke, and Adam Smith across the Atlantic, they infiltrated the minds of political leaders in America. Notions of liberty and freedoms took on new meanings, and a discrepancy grew between the British idea of liberty and the American idea of liberty.<sup>156</sup> According to Eric Foner, the British idea of liberty depended on law. Social, economic, and religious overtones all complicated what exact liberties a person could have. In America, with less structured society, liberty transformed into the idea of basic freedoms that everyone—of British descent at least—should enjoy.<sup>157</sup> This very different understanding of liberty created tension that led to rebellious acts such as the Stamp Act Congress and the Boston Tea Party.

As American colonists pushed for acceptance of their political views by the British government, the issue of independence for the American colonies divided the population on the British Isles, particularly in London.<sup>158</sup> A 1772 pamphlet written by Richard Price, a preacher and radical activist, exemplifies one side of the debate that engrossed the city. In an explanatory argument on the notion of civil liberty followed by an analysis of the American Revolution in particular, Price details the reasons why he agrees with the American colonists' push for self-government. According to Price, "when a state becomes so numerous, or when the different parts of it are removed to such distances from one another...a diminution necessarily arises."<sup>159</sup> He goes on to compares

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<sup>156</sup> Foner, "The Contested History of American Freedom," 15.

<sup>157</sup> Foner, "The Contested History of American Freedom," 15-16.

<sup>158</sup> Matthew Lockwood, *To Begin the World Over Again: How the American Revolution Devastated the Globe* (NEW HAVEN; LONDON: Yale University Press, 2019), Accessed December 29, 2020. doi:10.2307/j.ctvnwc044, 42.

Great Britain to a tyrant who enslaves a large portion of his subjects by not allowing the colonies to self-govern while also questioning the proclaimed superiority of the British.<sup>160</sup> In a well thought out argument, Price dismantles the various objections to the independence of the American colonies.

Another Briton anonymously submitted a letter that was published in *The Public Advertiser* defending the American colonies. He states that “the current Minister, now seemingly in the exercise of power, has breathed out (and still does) vengeance against the Americans, for not submitting to what would entail misery and slavery on them and their posterity.”<sup>161</sup> This writer also expresses his favor of civil liberty, as well as advises his fellow countrymen to examine their own actions in the matter. For both this anonymous writer and Price, ideology trumps economic and political gains of remaining in control of the American colonies.

On the other side of the argument, Britons such as Samuel Johnson expressed their disdain for American rebellion quite vocally. Johnson declares that the American’s “anti-patriotic prejudices are the abortions of folly impregnated by faction, which produced against the standing order of nature, have not strength sufficient for long life.”<sup>162</sup> He goes on to say that he thinks “it reasonable that they, who flourish under the

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<sup>159</sup> Richard Price, *An appeal to the public, on the subject of the national debt*. By Richard Price, D.D. F.R.S. London: Printed for T. Cadell, in the Strand, M.DCC.LXXII. [1772]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed December 28, 2020), <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CB0130867505/ECCO?u=txshracd2543&sid=ECCO&xid=ebce0082&pg=1>, 4.

<sup>160</sup> Price, *An appeal to the public*, 21.

<sup>161</sup> "News." *Public Advertiser*, January 24, 1775, *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection* (accessed December 28, 2020), <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/apps/doc/Z2001152468/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBCN&xid=ce2b83a5>.

<sup>162</sup> Samuel Johnson, *Taxation no tyranny; an answer to the resolutions and address of the American congress*, 4th ed. London: printed for T. Cadell, in the Strand, MDCCLXXV. [1775], *Eighteenth*

protection of our government, should contribute something towards its expense.”<sup>163</sup>

Throughout his response to the American rebellion, Johnson continuously criticizes their involvement in slavery, noting the irony of American slavers pushing for liberty.<sup>164</sup>

Similarly, a note sent to the *Morning Chronicle* signed by Lucidus Ordo admits to initially understand and support the colonies but, by the end of 1774, the colonists had become prideful and ungrateful. He proclaims, “the seeds of those evils which were the rebellious principles of Charles the first’s days, seem to have broken out among these saucy Americans, who are certainly direct lineal descendants, and whose progeny has imbibed the same villainous plan, to the destruction of all legal authority, either human or divine.”<sup>165</sup> Clearly, the fervor with which some Britons supported the American colonists was equally matched by those that condemned the colonists.

As the war proceeded, the rift across the ocean increased the rift among those in Great Britain as those both for and against the war became polarized in their positions. The economic strain of another war, the threat of France and Spain who decided to take advantage of Britain’s vulnerability by attacking the island, and political unrest in Britain all led to suspicion and fear in the British Isles.<sup>166</sup> After riots over the Catholic Relief Act and spy plots to blow up naval ships, paranoia set in as well.<sup>167</sup> According to Matthew

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*Century Collections Online* (accessed December 20, 2020), <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0103820880/ECCO?u=txshracd2543&sid=ECCO&xid=01462e33>, 4.

<sup>163</sup> Johnson, *Taxation no tyranny*, 6.

<sup>164</sup> Johnson, *Taxation no tyranny*, 64, 89.

<sup>165</sup> "News." *Morning Chronicle* [1770], January 2, 1775. Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection (accessed December 20, 2020). <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/apps/doc/Z2000834930/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBCN&xid=dd55e2aa>.

<sup>166</sup> Lockwood, *To Begin the World Over Again*, 68.

<sup>167</sup> Lockwood, *To Begin the World Over Again*, 38, 54-55, and 56-57

Lockwood, the Revolutionary War as well as all the extenuating stress of the time period resulted in a British society that was more interested in having the protection of an authoritative government than reforming like other governments on continental Europe who were experiencing revolutions.<sup>168</sup>

The justice system was one aspect for which the Revolution necessitated change. The British government and British society both unexpectedly benefited from gaining control of lands in North America due to the ability to physically remove undesirable inhabitants from the British Isles. The colony of Georgia, for example, began as a place for both those imprisoned and those potentially facing prison for debt.<sup>169</sup> Little quantitative data is available on crime in general during this time period in Great Britain, as the British government did not keep extensive records unless a trial occurred. However, newspapers were essential for the dissemination of information about local crimes committed at the time.<sup>170</sup> As Norma Landau points out, though, newspapers were prone to print only the exceptional or shocking incidents rather than the mundane. Theft of valuable goods and highway robbery littered the newspapers to inform readers of the atrocious crimes against the elite, leaving historians to speculate about actual total crime rates.<sup>171</sup>

While it had been practiced for decades previously, in 1717, Parliament passed an act that would send certain convicts, including those that would otherwise have received

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<sup>168</sup> Lockwood, *To Begin the World Over Again*, 82.

<sup>169</sup> Rodney M. Blaine, "New Perspectives on Debtors in Colonial Georgia," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (Spring, 1993): 4-5.

<sup>170</sup> Norma Landau, "Gauging Crime in Late Eighteenth-Century London," *Social History* 35, no. 4 (Nov 2010): 396.

<sup>171</sup> Landau, "Gauging Crime in Late Eighteenth-Century London," 399-402.

the death penalty to the American colonies.<sup>172</sup> According to Basil Sollers, the number of convicts sent over to the American colonies during the seventeenth century can't accurately be approximated due to the lack of specific information and accurate record keeping of the time.<sup>173</sup> However, the eighteenth century fared a bit better for historical records. According to the Old Bailey records, from the year 1674 to the year 1775, a total of 14,185 convicted criminals were sentenced to transportation. Only 308 of these occurred prior to 1718, before the Transportation Act was passed.<sup>174</sup> According to Willis, the British government sent over 50,000 convicts to the Americas for the punishment for their crimes.<sup>175</sup> Although there is a lack of details concerning location of transport or whose custody they would be in upon arrival, a significant amount of convicts no longer threatened the mother country. Due to the Transportation Act of 1717, criminals could be removed from society and put to use for the country's benefit laboring in the New World.

When the American Revolution removed Great Britain's control over the colonies, transporting criminals across the Atlantic abruptly halted. This resulted in two developments: a new prison system and the colonization of Australia. The British had to find an alternative means of handling the criminal population. Great Britain looked to other land holdings such as Australia to deposit the convicts, but the tension and fear

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<sup>172</sup> Basil Sollers, "Transported Convict Labor in Maryland During the Colonial Period," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 2 (1907): 27-28.

<sup>173</sup> Sollers, "Transported Convict Labor in Maryland During the Colonial Period," 22.

<sup>174</sup> Old Baily online records, [https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/search.jsp?gen=1&form=searchHomePage&\\_verdicts\\_verdictCategory\\_verdictSubcategory=guilty&\\_punishments\\_punishmentCategory\\_punishmentSubcategory=transport&toYear=1775&toMonth=99&start=0&count=0](https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/search.jsp?gen=1&form=searchHomePage&_verdicts_verdictCategory_verdictSubcategory=guilty&_punishments_punishmentCategory_punishmentSubcategory=transport&toYear=1775&toMonth=99&start=0&count=0).

<sup>175</sup> James J. Willis, "Transportation versus Imprisonment in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain: Penal Power, Liberty, and the State," *Law & Society Review* 39, no. 1 (2005), Accessed December 29, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1555123>, 175.

among British society that increased as a result of the American Revolution pushed Britons to reconsider their perspective on the judicial system.<sup>176</sup> Fear of spies, terrorism, and revolutions led to Britons looking toward the government to take charge. At this point, the British began shifting the responsibility for lawlessness from private to government officials. In 1792, Parliament passed an act that created fifty police officers for the city of London. Rather than collecting money or work in running the city in general as was often commonly expected of those charged with keeping order, these officers focused solely on the apprehension of criminals.<sup>177</sup> This shift began the centralization of criminal management by the government that would lead to the establishment of national penitentiaries during the early nineteenth century.<sup>178</sup>

Another aspect of change provided by exploring and expanding in the Atlantic World was the increase of foreign people brought into the view and concern of the British government. The natives encountered in the American colonies both posed a threat and provided an opportunity for trade from the first explorations. Intrigued, the joint stock companies that financed early adventures in America encouraged interactions with the natives. The colonists learned how to negotiate using native traditions such as exchanging wampum beads.<sup>179</sup> They made allies and enemies, and the colonists eventually began to uproot large groups of indigenous people from their land as more colonists made their

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<sup>176</sup> Lockwood, *To Begin the World Over Again*, 76-78.

<sup>177</sup> John M. Beattie, "Garrow and the Detectives: Lawyers and Policemen at the Old Bailey in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies* 11, no. 2 (2007), Accessed December 29, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42708680>, 6-7.

<sup>178</sup> Willis, "Transportation versus Imprisonment," 177.

<sup>179</sup> James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 187-188.



way across the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>180</sup> Over the years, accounts and drawings by explorers such as John White and colonists such as John Smith traveled back to Britain to inform the general public of the radically different manners and traditions of the indigenous people. By the eighteenth century, some of the native populations even sent foreign ministers across the Atlantic to meet with the King of Great Britain to negotiate the terms of peace agreements with their tribes.<sup>181</sup>

In addition to the indigenous population of the Americas, the British government and explorers became more heavily involved with inhabitants of the African coast as they looked for additional ways to profit from Atlantic trade. Noticing the high profitability of buying and selling slave labor, the Great Britain became involved in the Atlantic Slave Trade alongside the other major European powers. The American colonies desperately needed strong, able-bodied laborers to harvest the sugar and tobacco that Britons demanded back home. Additionally, the African custom of enslaving criminals and enemies to keep as a form of property wealth provided a ready-made supply of potential laborers.<sup>182</sup> The British sailed to the African coast to try to persuade the African rulers to trade with them. Although the Africans controlled the trade by determining the terms of trade agreements or even whether to trade or not, the British continuously sought out opportunities to purchase from their supply of slaves.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Nathaniel Philbrick, *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 146, 148, and 179.

<sup>181</sup> Kate Fullagar, *The Warrior, the Voyager, and the Artist: Three Lives in an Age of Empire* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2020) Accessed December 29, 2020, doi:10.2307/j.ctvt1sgr9, 3.

<sup>182</sup> Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 199.

<sup>183</sup> Ogborn, *Global Lives*, 201-203.

The increase in contact with both racially and ethnically different groups such as the Native Americans and various populations on the west coast of the African continent began to shape the way that the British viewed themselves. These foreign places provided a distinct visible alternative to the British and European physical features they were accustomed to seeing. The manner in which Britons described themselves and others began to change over the eighteenth century demonstrating this change in perspective. According to Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton, as the popularity of newspapers grew, masters, military officers, and victims of criminal acts all used the medium to post descriptions that might catch their runaway servants, deserting soldiers, or criminals, respectively.<sup>184</sup> Earlier descriptions in these paid advertisements used the commonly accepted notions of humors as a method of detailing the offenders' appearances as well as physical deformities and noticeable odd mannerisms.<sup>185</sup> Europeans believed there were four humors of the body that must remain in a balanced state in order to be healthy. An imbalance could make a person physically ill or socially disagreeable. Humoral stereotypes ranged from describing criminals as dark or pale to the elite to be described as white or sanguine.<sup>186</sup>

While an early ad may note skin tone, it did not note race. A concern over the pale, greyish, or fresh coloring, however, focused on the humoral balance within the body. In an ad placed in the May 21, 1707 *Daily Courant*, a deserter and thief is described as a "well-set man about 5 foot 5 inches, with lank brown hair and a pale thin

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<sup>184</sup> Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton, "Visible Bodies: Power, Subordination and Identity in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World," *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 1 (Autumn, 2005): 39.

<sup>185</sup> Morgan and Rushton, "Visible Bodies," 46.

<sup>186</sup> Mark S. Dawson, "First Impressions: Newspaper Advertisements and Early Modern English Body Imaging, 1651-175," *Journal of British Studies* 50, no. 2 (April 2011): 279.

face, and speaks broad Scotch.”<sup>187</sup> Another ad in the March 4-7, 1700 *London Gazette* describes a murder suspect as “tall, fat, and fresh coloured, light brown curled hair, a grey full eye...”<sup>188</sup> By contrast, an ad placed much later in the February 28, 1784 *Morning Herald* mentions a “fine African man, of black complexion, five foot ten inches high” who is looking for a job as an under-butler or footman.<sup>189</sup> Rather than describing the health of an individual, this ad comments on the racial pigmentation of the man described.

According to Mark Dawson’s research, the focus on skin characteristics increased in these advertisements throughout the early 1700s.<sup>190</sup> As the century progressed, stereotypes began to shift from humoral imbalances to racial differences. Perhaps this was due to the increased interactions with people of different racial backgrounds. Perhaps due to the nature of the ads printed in American papers, the racial features of black versus white became common to read.<sup>191</sup> The exact reason for this shift can only be speculated though a clear connection to the complexities of imperialism exists. Dawson notes, “Apart from the unrelenting depiction of non-Europeans, in everything from the front

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<sup>187</sup> "Advertisements and Notices." *Daily Courant*, May 21, 1707. *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection* (accessed December 28, 2020). <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/apps/doc/Z2000172834/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBCN&xid=d5e01c04>.

<sup>188</sup> "Advertisements and Notices." *London Gazette*, March 4, 1700 - March 7, 1700. *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection* (accessed December 28, 2020). <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/apps/doc/Z2000711268/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBCN&xid=2544012a>.

<sup>189</sup> "Advertisements and Notices." *Morning Herald*, February 28, 1784. *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection* (accessed December 28, 2020). <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.shsu.edu/apps/doc/Z2000916211/BBCN?u=txshracd2543&sid=BBCN&xid=0f46a2f5>.

<sup>190</sup> Dawson, “First Impressions,” 303.

<sup>191</sup> Dawson, “First Impressions,” 302.

page news reports to outlandish shop signs, contact with foreigners, Africans included, had become common place for Londoners, if not English people generally.”<sup>192</sup>

However, British involvement in Atlantic trade, and more specifically the Slave Trade, affected Britons in more ways than simply providing an alternative way to describe one another. It also challenged their self-image as long-proclaimed champions of liberty. Although for years, various Britons complained of the inhumanity and violation of human rights that slavery in the American colonies embraced, Britain did not take a stand against the slave trade until the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>193</sup>

The Slave Trade posed an ideological challenge for Britons as enslaving Africans stripped the Africans of their freedom, yet many Britons did not foresee an Atlantic trade system without it.<sup>194</sup> For centuries, the contradictory nature of the question of slavery lingered in the air as most Britons viewed it as a necessary evil that was more of an American problem than a British one. Britons did not personally keep slaves or practice the inhumanity expressed in the tales of slavery that trickled into the nation. The institution emerged and was confined to the colonies. The physical distance allowed Britons to morally distance themselves from the practices of slavery.<sup>195</sup>

According to Dana Rabin, a definitive decision on the legality of slavery remained in question for much of the eighteenth century due to the economic benefit

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<sup>192</sup> Dawson, “First Impressions,” 303.

<sup>193</sup> Ogborn, *Global Lives*, 291.

<sup>194</sup> Ogborn, *Global Lives*, 261.

<sup>195</sup> Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 36-37, <https://ezproxy.shsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=965102&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

slavery provided many upper and middling Britons—at home and abroad. Rabin asserts that judges intentionally distanced the court cases from the issue of legality of slavery, focusing instead on habeas corpus and jurisdiction of colonial laws.<sup>196</sup> For example, William Murray, first earl of Mansfield presided over several court cases concerning slavery in Great Britain, including the Somerset Case of 1772, where he avoided making a ruling on the matter.<sup>197</sup> Mansfield had economic connections to the slave trade, and he even cared for a child of mixed race that resulted from his nephew's adventures as a captain in the Royal Navy. After capturing a female African slave, Mansfield's nephew fathered an Anglo-African child that he left in his uncle's care. Mansfield was not unique in his personal connections to the issue of slavery or his avoidance of making a decision on the legality of slavery.<sup>198</sup> Although, many abolitionists viewed the Somerset case as a victory, Mansfield did not rule that slavery was illegal in Britain.<sup>199</sup> What the Somerset and other court cases over slavery in the British Isles did accomplish was to demonstrate the rejection of idea of a multi-racial Great Britain.

To determine the legality of slavery, the British courts had to determine if the law granted or denied freedom to the African slaves. The question of jurisdiction naturally arose due to the colonial laws that allowed slavery in America. British attorney William Davy argued, and Judge Mansfield agreed in his court decision, that the laws of Virginia were essentially laws of another country and Britain could not enforce foreign laws. Rabin notes that this line of jurisdiction certainly shifted opportunistically throughout

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<sup>196</sup> Rabin, ““In a Country of Liberty?”,” 14.

<sup>197</sup> Rabin, ““In a Country of Liberty?”,” 6.

<sup>198</sup> Rabin, ““In a Country of Liberty?”,” 9-10.

<sup>199</sup> Rabin, ““In a Country of Liberty?”,” 20-21.

Britain's empire-building, but at least in the case of slavery in the mother country, the British government would not take into consideration the Virginian laws allowing it.<sup>200</sup>

The argument both for and against slavery in Great Britain, thus, hinged on the legality of villeinage that persisted under the feudal system in Britain until the sixteenth century. Villeinage bound Englishmen to either a lord or the land to work in whatever manner the lord deemed appropriate. While some argued that villeinage itself was a form of slavery, others argued that villeins had more freedoms—that they could even pursue in courts—than slaves were afforded. The distinction between slave and villein throughout various court cases over the seventeenth and eighteenth century rested on the ancestry of both. Slaves were foreign. Villeins were English.<sup>201</sup> With the change in perception and description of physical characteristics noted by Morgan and Rushton, this transformed into the notion that slaves were not white, while villeins were white.<sup>202</sup> Rabin also notes the uneasiness of eighteenth century Britons to embrace even free Africans in Great Britain for fear of becoming a mixed race.<sup>203</sup> The end of the Slave Trade and later illegality of slavery did not develop out of care for the slaves as much as end to the profitability in Britain.

According to Christopher Leslie Brown, the rebellions of the American people are what sparked the British government and its supporters to begin condemning the colonists in hopes of regaining governmental respect and obedience once again. In addition to attacking the rebellious actions, they also attacked the vices and character

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<sup>200</sup> Rabin, “‘In a Country of Liberty?’,” 17-20.

<sup>201</sup> Rabin, “‘In a Country of Liberty?’,” 11, 15-19.

<sup>202</sup> Rabin, “‘In a Country of Liberty?’,” 23.

<sup>203</sup> Rabin, “‘In a Country of Liberty?’,” 21.

flaws of the American people. Slavery, for example, provided an opportunity for British writers to pose the horrors and brutality taking place in the American colonies against the professed virtues of the mother country.<sup>204</sup> Exemplifying this point, Samuel Johnson adds a critical note to his response to the American Revolution, “why do we hear the loudest yelp of liberty from the owners of negros?”<sup>205</sup> Brown further notes that the moral issue with slavery had been presented for decades prior to the effective end to the legal Slave Trade, and thus he rejects the notion that morality or even liberty alone succeeded in making the practice appalling. Instead, he insists that the American Revolution provided the political motivation to tap into the moral and religious outcries against the inhumane institution.<sup>206</sup> When slavery became politically unnecessary for the British and morality became politically advantageous for the British, that is when the practice ended.

Regardless of whether slavery was necessary or not, the economic and social benefits of slavery affected all areas from port towns that sent ships to transport slaves to the distant rural villages where families gathered to drink their tea sweetened by the hard labors of slaves across the ocean.<sup>207</sup> To quote James Walvin, slavery was at the time “as British as a sweet cup of tea.”<sup>208</sup> Despite the broad influence of slavery on the lives of the general British public, they did not associate their practices with the practice of slavery.

The sugar plantations and tobacco farms that required slave labor, after all, existed on the

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<sup>204</sup> Brown, *Moral Capital*, 121-123.

<sup>205</sup> Johnson, *Taxation no tyranny*, 89.

<sup>206</sup> Brown, *Moral Capital*, 451-457.

<sup>207</sup> James Walvin, "The Slave Trade, Abolition and Public Memory," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Sixth Series*, 19 (2009): 144 and 147, Accessed December 29, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25593895>.

<sup>208</sup> Walvin, “The Slave Trade, Abolition and Public Memory,” 149.

other side of the Atlantic. With all the political and economic challenges at home, the issue of slavery did not get much attention in Great Britain during the early years of the Atlantic Slave Trade.

In the late 1700s, the abolitionist movement began to make progress in Britain though. Quakers, former slave owners, and first-hand witnesses of slavery rallied together to encourage political change.<sup>209</sup> This movement did not hinge solely on the men of parliament or even the voting population. Marginalized groups played a significant role in bringing about the political change that would end the Slave Trade. Former slaves and women took a stand against the injustices of slavery, and they succeeded.<sup>210</sup> For example, women—who were not able to vote at this time—attempted to affect political change by donning symbols of the abolition movement, such as the Wedgewood symbol of a chained slave with the words “am I not a man and a brother?”<sup>211</sup> Additionally they used their consumer power to boycott sugar products that were produced by slave plantations. Other women wrote in an effort to encourage an end to the Slave Trade. One notorious female abolitionist, Hannah More, used her gift for writing to disseminate cries for an end of slavery.<sup>212</sup> In her poem entitled *Slavery: A Poem*, she wonders, “was it declared, fair Freedom! At thy birth, That thou shou’d’st ne’er *all* the earth? While Britain basks in thy full blaze of light, Why lies sad Afric quenched in total night?”<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Ogborn, *Global Lives*, 262-263.

<sup>210</sup> Walvin, “The Slave Trade, Abolition and Public Memory,” 147-148.

<sup>211</sup> Ogborn, *Global Lives*, 271.

<sup>212</sup> Ogborn, *Global Lives*, 273-276.

<sup>213</sup> Hannah More, *Slavery, a poem. By Hannah More* (London: printed for T. Cadell, in the Strand, M.DCC.LXXXVIII. [1788]), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed December 26, 2020), 5,



Former enslaved persons also found a political voice during the abolition movement of the late eighteenth century. During the Revolutionary War, Britain offered freedom to slaves who would revolt against their owners and join the British in the fight.<sup>214</sup> While this did not lead to the successful defeat of the colonies, the offer did bring an influx of former slaves into the country upon their own defeat. These former slaves joined the demobilized soldier and sailors in the already overcrowded conditions of London looking for a better way of life.<sup>215</sup> The stories of their lives impacted the moral conscience of the public as they mentioned the brutalities and horrors they experienced.<sup>216</sup> Olaudah Equiano wrote an autobiography extensively describing his experience being torn from his homeland and sold into slavery. He admits in the preface that “the chief design of which is to excite in your august assemblies a sense of compassion for the miseries which the Slave-Trade has entailed on my unfortunate countrymen.”<sup>217</sup> Equiano formed the Sons of Africa to unite former slaves in speaking

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<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CW0112280884/ECCO?u=txshracd2543&sid=ECCO&xid=c485d211&pg=5>.

<sup>214</sup> Ogborn, *Global Lives*, 265.

<sup>215</sup> Lockwood, *To Begin the World Over Again*, 388.

<sup>216</sup> Lockwood, *To Begin the World Over Again*, 392.

<sup>217</sup> Olaudah Equiano, *The interesting narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by himself*. Vol. 1 (London: printed for and sold by the author, No. 20, Union-Street, Middlesex Hospital; sold also by Mr. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard; Mr. Murray, Fleet-Street; Messrs. Robson and Clark, Band-Street; Mr. Davis, opposite Gray's Inn, Holborn; Messrs. Shepperson and Reynolds, and Mr. Jackson, Oxford-Street; Mr. Lockington, Chiswell-Street; r. Mathews, Strand; Mr. Murray, Prince's-Street, Soho; Mess. Taylor and Co. South Arch. Royal Exchange; Mr. Button, Newington-Causeway; Mr. Parsons, Paternoster-Row; and may be had of all the booksellers in town and country, 1789) *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed December 26, 2020), 6, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CB0128828699/ECCO?u=txshracd2543&sid=ECCO&xid=50c85833&pg=6>.

out for abolition in Great Britain.<sup>218</sup> He joined briefly with labor party reformers to jointly advocate for change. According to Caroline Bressey, the rights of black and white workers were somewhat intertwined and together briefly pushed for political reform in the late eighteenth century before racism eventually split the united effort apart.<sup>219</sup>

The abolition movement, spurred on by the horrific accounts of the Atlantic Slave Trade, increased political activity particularly by those with the least political power. The efforts of leading abolitionist politicians such as William Wilberforce strengthened those marginalized voices by taking up the cause in political debate in Parliament.<sup>220</sup> Finally the abolition movement met with success when, in 1807, Parliament declared an end to the Atlantic Slave Trade. Though in practice the Slave Trade continued to operate illegally, this was the first step in the long fight for human rights and equality on a global level.<sup>221</sup>

Although the imperialistic goals of Great Britain across the Atlantic Ocean were shattered by the American Revolution during the eighteenth century, the experiences in overseas settlement and trade provided valuable lessons that they would apply going into the nineteenth century. Rather than sending British citizens to live abroad in colonies, Britain became a ruler of foreign people in subsequent imperial efforts.<sup>222</sup> Domestically,

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<sup>218</sup> Caroline Bressey, "Race, Antiracism, and the Place of Blackness in the Making and Remaking of the English Working Class," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 41, no. 1 (2015): 76, Accessed December 29, 2020, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24720605>.

<sup>219</sup> Bressey, "Race, Antiracism, and the Place of Blackness in the Making and Remaking of the English Working Class," 76.

<sup>220</sup> John Coffey, "'Tremble, Britannia!': Fear, Providence and the Abolition of the Slave Trade," *The English Historical Review* 127, no. 527 (Aug., 2012): 874-875.

<sup>221</sup> Ogborn, *Global Lives*, 290-291.

<sup>222</sup> Black, *The British Empire*, 98.

the British people altered their views on the role of government ultimately opting for a more protective, albeit more authoritarian, government. Increasing prisons and adding the presence of a police force whose main focus was protecting the public while apprehending criminals appealed to a majority of citizens who, in turn, relinquished control to the state. With all the changes abroad and at home, the British self-image and national identity adapted to the many challenges they had faced during the eighteenth century.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Conclusion**

British society changed greatly over the course of the eighteenth century due to the constant imperialistic efforts of the British government and joint stock companies. Focused heavily on the economic benefits of imperialism, the government and EIC intended to engage more with Asia and the Americas while maintaining distance between themselves and continental Europe. Their ambitions threw the British population into a global community filled with new ideas, commodities, and people. Though unintentional, foreign interactions affected the behavior and fashions of the general public, particularly the upper and middle classes in urban areas, where diversity of people and commodities was most prevalent.

The imperial wars that plagued Britain during the 1700s required time, money, and manpower that strained the nation for a large portion of the century. As Great Britain engaged in war, the population adapted to the changes through their actions and beliefs. The impressment of young men to meet the military demands of an empire-building nation created hardship for both families and the young men sent off to fight. Gender roles and identity in particular adjusted to the tough times. While Hannah Snell took more drastic measures to deal with her misfortunes, other women also stepped out of their socially acceptable roles to deal with the hardships they faced while men displayed their masculinity through sport and the control over their wives and children. Britons also focused on the differences between themselves and other Europeans, especially religious and political differences. The constant fear of war stirred hostility towards their European

competitors. Individual and national identity shifted to meet the challenges that imperial warfare created at home.

While the British military spent the century fighting with European powers, foreign commodities and cultural traditions flowed into the nation as the East India Company and its affiliates back home reaped some of the reward for their imperial efforts in Asia. Spices, cloths, designs, and wealth spurred consumerism and created new fashions for those that could afford them. The abundance of new, exotic ideas and items pushed the limits on xenophobic fears and created more broad acceptance of at least some of the new commodities. British polite society embraced the wealth of information that imperialism in Asia brought into the nation. Cookbooks, travel accounts, and chinoiserie demonstrate the growing fascination with the East, especially in the homes of the elite and middling sort.

Likewise, involvement in the Atlantic world stirred change in British society as well. Conflict with the American colonies and trade relationships with African peoples challenged the British views on their government, liberty, and self-identity. A combination of fear and ideological principles divided the population at home leaving Britain at odds with how to handle the imperial and moral struggles they found themselves in. By the end of the eighteenth century, the British government had changed their model for imperialism, learning from their failures in North America that controlling foreign populations would be a better fit for them than repopulating a land with British citizens. The British government began to take a clear stand on issues that previously lingered ambivalently in the air such as slavery. Forced to choose a stance on the legal and moral status of slavery, the British government bent to the push from

marginalized citizens and popular moral requests that emerged as the economic benefit of slavery began declining. Struggling to feel secure and safe in a world of change and war, the British population largely sought safety in the power of their government by supporting judicial reform and allowing the implementation of local police. Britain transformed from novice imperial power to veteran empire builder over the course of the century.

The social implications of British imperialism equal those of political and economic in significance for both Britain and the global community. Great Britain conquered or controlled lands across the globe for over four centuries leaving behind a trail of residual culture. Britain tied together a geographically vast empire connecting remote parts of the world to one another in a mercantilist network. In addition to disseminating their own culture, the British collected and disseminated the culture of foreign lands as well. Sometimes this was done under the guise of their own name, but the origins still lie with other groups.

During my research, I looked for patterns in description of behavior or rhetoric about particular topics that affected British society during the eighteenth century, such as impressment and civil liberties. Printed material provided an outlet for many Britons and foreigners to express their opinions about the changing world around them. However, this unfortunately left the voice of the lower classes vastly underrepresented. Further research should be taken up to uncover the social changes that this portion of society endured due to the imperialistic agenda of Great Britain in the eighteenth century.

This research, while focusing heavily on the impacts to British society, demonstrates the significance of every population to our global community and the links

between even the most distant or different peoples in the world. No one group of people nor one single event shaped the world. The value of studying imperialism today is the ability to see how the initial connections transformed both societies from their original state into a brand new blended state. Granted some blended more than others, but no population was left untouched. Acknowledging the contributions and value of all people in this world is the first step in working towards understanding one another and developing a cooperative global environment. Perhaps with an interdependent view of the peoples in this world, nations will be more hesitant to dwell on their differences and instead embrace a more peaceful approach to global affairs.

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