Issue 3: Reform
in the Long-Nineteenth Century

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Editorial Board

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Editorial: Representing Reform in the Long-Nineteenth Century

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> 'Sir: I had a Reform Bill;—in fact, I've got a Reform Bill,—but unfortunately I've left it at home on my dressing-table. It's too far to send; but, I think, if you will allow me, I can explain the scheme of it.' John Hollingshead, 'The Humiliation of Fogmoor', *Household Words* (1858)

AS THIS SCENE in John Hollingshead's political satire for *Household Words* shows, reform can be an elusive concept. Nonetheless it remains one of the essential frameworks used by scholars to orientate and unsettle thinking about the long-nineteenth century. On the one hand, the persistent—although not unchallenged—classification of the nineteenth century as 'the Age of Reform', and the ways in which the term is persistently applied to narratives of increased political and cultural access, mean that reform seems to coalesce with the idea of neatly cumulative statistics and progress narratives. However, recent research has tended to subdivide the study of reform, finding an approach which focusses on single institutions, individuals or pieces of legislation more favourable to making sense of the heterogeneity and patchiness of nineteenth-century reform projects, than addressing the concept as a whole.

This edition of *Romance, Revolution & Reform* combines a granular analysis of the individual cultural moments that form our composite sense of nineteenth-century reform, with an evaluation of the rich and often surprising continuities between such moments: continuities which are often considered in separate studies, or even separate disciplines. In this respect, it follows work such as Joanna Innes and Arthur Burns' *Re-thinking The Age of Reform*, which unifies its chapters on separate reform projects by exploring their shared engagement with 'reform as aspiration'.[1]

The idea that reform is primarily defined by the discourses that precede (or follow) a moment of change is a crucial one for many of the articles published here.

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[1] Joanna Innes and Arthur Burns, 'Introduction', *Re-Thinking the Age of Reform: Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

However, this issue moves beyond the question of aspiration to consider that of mediation, by exploring the ways in which reform was represented and reimagined. From published statistics to unpublished plays, and from periodicals to popular fiction, these articles reveal ways in which textual discourses about reform facilitated—or attempted to facilitate—material impacts. At the same time, their shared focus on representation unites discussions about reform as aspiration, reform as retrospection and reform as lived experience, by considering the ways these approaches were all mediated via various texts and types of data.

Sometimes this data reveals reform to be the product of decades of small changes, as opposed to the achievement of a single watershed moment. As Paul Smith and Jeff Ralph explain in the first article in this collection, which analyses the development of price measurement: '[i]f the development of measures of retail prices was a revolution, it was a very slow and stealthy one, operating more or less throughout the long-nineteenth century'.[2] Nonetheless, as Smith and Ralph argue, this steady, long-term development, recorded in statistical studies across the century—from Thomas Tooke's calculations of historical price data, to Seebohm Booth and Joseph Rowntree's collection of household expenditure statistics—produced a no less radical change in society than epochal reform. Instead, their article shows that it was precisely the work of 'enterprising individuals' who built upon the statistical methods of their predecessors across decades, which ultimately led to a state maintained price index, culminating in the introduction of the Cost of Living Index by World War I. Such work, they argue, also prompted serious thought about the relationship between price levels, wage levels and the poverty line, which in turn acted as evidence of the need for nationwide social reform. In this way, Smith and Ralph's mapping of the development of general price measurement reveals statistical approaches, revised over decades, to be capable of executing the landmark changes with which we most closely associate reform in contemporary criticism. It also reveals a combination of reform aspiration and retrospection to be responsible for the progress of retail price measurement, as strategies moved from 'individual innovation to state production'.

Conversely, taking the periodical as his chosen medium, Jonathan Potter's article about the retrospective representation of the reformed post office and the hospital in

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[2] Paul A. Smith and Jeff Ralph, 'Measuring the General Level of Prices in the UK in the Long-Nineteenth Century: from Individual Innovation to State Production', *RRR*, 3, pp.10-35, (p.33).

two *Household Words* articles—'Valentine's Day at the Post Office', by Charles Dickens and William Henry Wills, and Frederick Knight Hunt's 'Twenty-Four Hours in a London Hospital'—takes a less linear approach to the relationship between the individual and the system. Potter's work offers a timely analysis of these texts and their representation of institutional reform, contributing to a burgeoning body of work on urban improvements and mid-century infrastructural networks championed most notably by Karin Koehler, Joanna Hofer-Robinson, Eleanor Hopkins and others.[3] Potter argues that, '[f]or those writing at the mid-nineteenth century, [...] similar shifts in scale and in what space and time meant to lived experience were not so much reformations of a previous system, but an entirely new way of being'.[4] Rather than building upon the work of previous initiatives, Potter argues that the mid-century reform of the Post Office and hospital was understood as making a more radical break with the past. This meant that periodical authors such as Dickens and Knight Hunt needed a new way to make sense of these confusing and overabundant spaces. For Potter, this means that the role played by these articles, as they re-imagine the individual's relationship with reformed spaces, is somewhat sinister, as they 'seek to reform the role of the individual in relation to [...] systems, subjugating individual agency to the primacy of systemic control'.[5] Using Marc Augé's discussion of non-places and supermodernity as a theoretical framework, and demonstrating how these articles teeter between a rational representation of confusing spaces and a darker attempt to subsume the individual within the system, Potter reads meaning into tangled networks. However, his work also tentatively raises questions about what happens, not when reform itself is disquieting, but when it can only be mobilised or represented if controversial topics are acknowledged. When the ability to represent the need for reform is significantly restricted, it takes additional detective work from the modern scholar to uncover hidden motivations and agendas.

In her article on Elizabeth Inchbald's 1792 play *The Massacre*, Eva Lippold addresses this problem by astutely interweaving discussions of censorship, the position of women in the late-eighteenth century and the concept of female morality to reveal

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[3] See for example, Karin Koehler, *Thomas Hardy and Victorian Communication: Letters, Telegrams and Postal Systems*, (London: Palgrave, 2016).

[4] Jonathan Potter, 'Humanity Invested with a New Form: The Post Office and the Hospital in Household Words, c. 1850', *RRR*, 3, pp.36-56, (p.37).

[5] *Ibid.*, p.36.

intriguing resonances between the fictional world of the play, and its fraught post-revolutionary context. Lippold offers a re-appraisal of the possible reasons why the *Massacre*—the only known play written by a woman dedicated to a representation of the French Revolution at this time—was not staged during Inchbald's lifetime. By suggesting early in her article that the piece was an intentional closet drama, Lippold moves beyond previous work on this topic—which takes the Revolution itself and French culture as its centre of gravity—focusing instead on the intersection between Inchbald's fictional representation of female morality 'as a potential means for political change', and the representational limits placed upon women playwrights during this particular cultural moment.[6] 'Despite the threatening atmosphere prevailing throughout Inchbald's play', Lippold argues, 'her work is not primarily about the physical dangers of revolution, but instead reflects on the concept of morality in challenging times'.[7] For Inchbald, the moral standards enforced upon women can have violent and tragic consequences, and Lippold's discussion of these representations analyses Inchbald's advocation for reforms that chime with several of her contemporaries, including Mary Wollstonecraft. In this article, we also return to the importance of individual enterprise in shaping patterns of reform, which Smith and Ralph explored in their more empirical approach. However, rather than using reform to consider the relationship between self and system, Lippold draws out the unique engagement with reform in one of Inchbald's plays and analyses its uniqueness in relation to the rest of her oeuvre.

Our penultimate article takes us from the work and approaches of individual feminists to the imagined communities that they formed. In her article about feminist campaign journalism during the crisis in France in the early 1870s, Sian Kitchen mines an immensely productive subject at the intersection of feminism, periodical history and military history. Her article illuminates the stakes of women's campaign journalism during the French crisis, suggesting that because feminist journalists contributing to these publications and 'expressed opinions on spheres outside those usually ascribed to women, including foreign events', they wrote against dominant patriarchal

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[6] Eva Lippold, 'Liberty joined with Peace and Charity': Elizabeth Inchbald and a Woman's Place in the Revolution', *RRR*, 3, pp.57-77, (p.58).

[7] *Ibid.*, p.66.

ideologies and created a very specific kind of imagined community.[8] Rather than simply re-shaping Benedict Anderson's cornerstone theory, however, Kitchen posits that feminist campaign journalists created a complex counter-community, distinct from the male, nationalist vision of England 'that defined itself against a "foreign other"', during this time of crisis in France.[9] However, Kitchen nuances the binary terms of this model by suggesting that this feminist imagined community 'may itself be challenged, as it emerged from English feminists' experiences which were themselves grounded in their own class privileges and political ideologies'.[10] The article therefore suggests ways in which the representation of debates about political reform in France on the pages of English feminist periodicals created new discursive communities, while also remaining alert to their limitations. This revised framework allows Kitchen to approach the articles of such periodicals as the *Englishwoman's Review* and the *Women's Suffrage Journal* in a new light.

Kitchen's article reconstructs a narrative formed of female voices, in which revolutionary warfare in Europe is bound up with the fight for women's rights and suffrage, rather than a male assertion of nationalistic superiority. In our final article, Carol Bolton echoes the at times unexpected relationship between anti-establishment coups and fervent nationalism in her analysis of the under-studied African Journal of Captain Philip Beaver. Bolton's article includes a careful survey of the journal's account of Beaver's venture to Bolama, where he and others attempted to establish a colonial project in 1791. A supporter of abolition and with high-minded plans for reforming relations between white British colonists and indigenous African communities, the planned Bolama colony about which Beaver wrote, was a 'civilising' mission, predicated on the employment of 'free' Africans. In narrating the history of the venture and the published journal to which it gave rise, Bolton uncovers a fascinating trajectory: while the Bolama colonists' constitution was disapproved of by the British government as echoing Revolutionary instability, Beaver's published journal led to his being revered with the same kind of national pride as such figures as Horatio Nelson. The article also offers a timely addition to other methodologically conscious writing about colonists,

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[8] Sian Kitchen, '"Let the feminine plebiscite be consulted": English feminists' campaign journalism, foreign policy and the crisis in France of 1870-71', *RRR*, 3, pp.78-104, (p.78).

[9] *Ibid.*, p.78.

[10] *Ibid.*

slave owners and abolitionary reform, such as Christer Petley's recent book *White Fury* (2019).[11] Ultimately, Bolton argues, '[e]xamining the context from which Beaver's text emerged enables understanding of the nexus between individual ambitions to explore and settle foreign lands, the imaginative engagement of readers with such accounts, their influence on secondary works, and the implications for British foreign policy in expanding knowledge of, and intercourse with, the Atlantic world'.[12]

Unlike the luckless politician in Hollingshead's sketch—who ultimately accepted that Reform is not easily described, particularly if one leaves the paperwork at home—this edition of *RRR* uses the idea of 'reform as representation' to unify broad conceptual thinking about the topic, with an original analysis of specific texts, individuals and projects. By placing subjects that would not normally be analysed together in adjacent positions, this issue aims to reveal unexpected methodological cross-currents, as well as revisiting some well-trodden paths to offer new perspectives.

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[11] Christer Petley, *White Fury: A Jamaican Slaveholder and the Age of Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[12] Carol Bolton, 'The Bolama Colony and Abolitionary Reform in Captain Beaver's African Memoranda (1805)', *RRR*, 3, pp.105-127, (p.112).

Measuring the General Level of Prices in the UK in the Long-Nineteenth Century: from Individual Innovation to State Production

PAUL A. SMITH & JEFF RALPH

ABSTRACT: We examine the trajectory of price measurement in the UK in the nineteenth century. The initial steps were taken by interested individuals, and were largely concerned with documenting changes in the value of money driven by increases in the availability of gold and silver. We focus on (a) the conceptual approaches to price measurement, particularly the move from producer (wholesale) prices towards consumer prices; (b) the practical problems of obtaining the information needed and calculating an index; and (c) the social and political pressures which eventually led to the introduction of an official index.

KEYWORDS: Wholesale Price Index; Inflation; Household Expenditure; Board of Trade; Commodity Prices; Consumer Prices

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1.   INTRODUCTION

THE FLUCTUATION OF prices resulting from great political and natural events has long been recognised as being greatly harmful to all but the wealthiest in society. In response, rulers and governments have tried to control prices, especially of essential goods, with little success. Today, while central banks attempt to limit price changes, we accept their inevitability and compensate for them using a statistical measure of the *overall* change in prices. We use the concept of a 'general level of prices' across all consumer goods and services and use statistical methods to estimate how it changes over time. A measure of the general level of prices is calculated in the UK by the Office for National Statistics each month – it is known as the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).[1] The percentage

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[1] The current main measure produced by the Office for National Statistics is the CPI including housing costs, known as CPIH. It is a relatively recent development and hasn't yet been adopted by the

change in the CPI over the value for the equivalent month of the previous year is called the rate of inflation. The CPI was set to take the value 100 in 2015 and the CPI value in April 2020 had risen to 108.6, which means that overall prices rose by 8.6% between 2015 and April 2020. A price index is a means of converting the value of money from one time period to another.

Except in times of austerity, the government uses the CPI to uprate benefits, state and public sector pensions and tax thresholds, thereby maintaining their value. There are many other uses of this measure of the level of prices, and it is arguably the most important of all official statistics pertaining to the economy. This process of updating financial quantities with an inflation adjustment is called indexation.

The calculation of the general level of prices starts by choosing a basket of consumer goods and services to represent all the items that can be bought in the consumer marketplace. The current basket contains just over 700 items. Each month, prices for these items are collected from retail outlets across the country and the internet – in total about 180,000 price quotes are captured. There is another type of data that is also required. We don't spend an equal amount of money on the different items, and when we calculate an average price change over a period of time, we weight each item with the relative expenditure on it. To estimate these expenditure shares, data are captured in a survey of household expenditure, and combined with some additional data from other sources. The measure of the general level of prices is a weighted average of price changes.[2]

In practice, the collection of the data and the subsequent calculations are a substantial exercise. The detailed methodology is complex and has been developed over many years through international collaboration by generations of experts. Current practice is well established as a function of the state, and is carried out in a similar manner in almost all the countries in the world.

Such an influential measure as the general level of prices has a long history of development, from the first steps in the early years of the eighteenth century to the first

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government. There is also an older measure – the Retail Prices Index (RPI). Some financial instruments, including government bonds, and some private pensions are indexed by this measure.

[2] ONS, *Consumer Prices Index technical manual* (2019) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/methodologies/consumerpricesindicestechnicalmanual2019> [Accessed 12/05/2020].

official measure at the start of the First World War. This article looks at the main phases of development in the long-nineteenth century (1789-1914). While the various elements now used to calculate the general level of prices arose independently and from differing motivations, they have a common characteristic in that they were all advanced in the first place by insightful and motivated individuals; we discuss some of these individuals and their contributions in more detail in sections 2 and 3.

The important developments made by these individuals included recognising the importance of such a measure and what benefits it would bring, establishing the conceptual basis, identifying the data required, specifying the elements of the required calculations, combining the data, and considering how such a measure could be applied to compensate for the changing value of money. As well as laying the foundations, a few individuals took on the significant challenge of capturing data themselves and demonstrating what could be produced. However, we show that towards the end of the nineteenth century, it became apparent that the scale of data collection required and the calculations were beyond individual efforts and could only be achieved by the state.

In the modern economic world, a measure of the level of prices is considered essential for the management of the economy. However, a few individuals recognised how useful such a measure could be as long ago as the early part of the nineteenth century. Despite a growing recognition of its importance, we show that its development was slow and met with resistance. A combination of pressure from MPs, the Royal Statistical Society and political imperatives eventually ensured the resources for it were provided. We focus here on the evolution of the method and practice of a modern style index of prices, founded on the prices of goods and services and appropriate weighting information. Although wages formed one very important element of the costs of goods and services, we do not consider wage rates as prices themselves, and therefore do not discuss the substantial literature on the gathering and interpretation of wage series.[3] We also focus on the nineteenth-century development of the index, and therefore only

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[3] For more on this topic see the extensive references in A.L. Bowley, *Wages and income in the United Kingdom since 1860* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1937).

mention later work to reconstruct series of prices and expenditures from original data when it is relevant to this narrative of nineteenth-century development.[4]

A few words on terms are also useful at this point. Today we use 'the general level of prices' or just the 'level of prices' for the abstract concept of an average of the prices of the goods and services in the consumer marketplace. We also use the term 'inflation' for the percentage change in the level of prices over a twelve month period. A related expression is the 'purchasing power of money' – that is, how much a unit of currency will buy, as prices rise and the purchasing power of money declines. The terms used in the nineteenth century were slightly different. The level of prices was sometimes called the 'monetary standard', and the effect of an increase in the level of prices was known as the 'depreciation in the value of money' or 'the decline in the power of purchase'.

We introduce a further, highly useful concept from economics and statistics – index numbers. When presenting a series of data items over a number of years, the degree of change can be made clearer by choosing one value and scaling it to be 100, and then applying the same scaling to all the other values. It is easier to gain an intuitive grasp of the change in the values when they are close to 100 in magnitude. This is called an index number representation of the data.

2. COLLECTING INFORMATION ON PRICE

2.1. EARLY SERIES OF PRICE MEASUREMENTS

Historical records of the prices of goods and wage rates exist in fragmentary form from the time of the Norman Conquest. From the thirteenth century onwards, manorial farming served the needs of both subsistence and profit, with many estates keeping detailed accounts of income and expenditure.[5] These records, and others, provided important material for a few motivated individuals with an interest in collecting the prices of goods and rates of pay for labour. In 1707, William Fleetwood, the Bishop of Ely, wrote an account of his efforts to explore the course of prices over a period of 600 years, together with an application to estimate the change in the value of money

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[4] See for example Sir William Beveridge, *Prices and wages in England from the twelfth to the nineteenth century*, I (London: Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., 1939).

[5] John Burnett, *A history of the cost of living*. (Harmondsworth and Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1969), p.17.

between 1440 and 1700.[6] A similar consideration motivated Nicholas Dutot in 1738 who took averages of prices of a collection of items to compare the incomes of two French kings.[7]

While both Fleetwood and Dutot recognised the value of collecting prices for a selection of goods and rates of labour—a kind of basic 'basket of goods and services' for a specific purpose—there is no indication that they considered the wider value of establishing a measure of the 'level of prices' and how it varied over time. The credit for the first attempt to do so is given to Sir George Shuckburgh Evelyn, who was the MP for Warwickshire from 1780 to 1804. His interests extended beyond parliamentary matters to scientific pursuits, particularly in trying to establish an 'invariable and unperishable standard of weights and measures'.[8] In 1798, he presented a paper to the Royal Society on this subject which contained a few pages at the end on a very different topic of interest – the value of money and its depreciation. He had collected prices for the 'necessaries of life together with that of day labour, [...] at different periods, from the Conquest to the present time'.[9] He then took the average of the prices across his 'basket' for each time period to create an estimate of the level of prices. To make the degree to which this price level had changed over time more clearly seen, he set the value in 1550 to be 100 and scaled all other values accordingly. This showed a small increase in the level of prices up to 1550, but a faster increase afterwards.[10] This representation of change is strikingly modern – he created an index number data series, an approach which is very widely used today to highlight change, particularly for economic data.

Shuckburgh Evelyn's work displays many of the basic attributes of modern measurement of the level of prices, and it attracted much attention from his contemporaries - his data for the depreciation of money were referenced widely.

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[6] William Fleetwood, *Chronicon precosium, or an account of English money, the price of cord and other commodities* (London: Charles Harper, 1707).

[7] M.G. Kendall, 'Studies in the history of probability and statistics, XXI. The early history of index numbers', *Review of the International Statistical Institute*, 37 (1969), pp.1-12 (p.2).

[8] *Ibid.*, p.4.

[9] George Shuckburgh Evelyn, 'An account of some endeavours to ascertain a standard of weight and measure', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 88 (1798), pp.133-182, facing p.176.

[10] *Ibid.*

However, it did attract criticism too: the agriculturalist Arthur Young questioned the items he had chosen and the validity of the price information he had collected, saying that he had not adequately specified the items he had chosen to price. Young also noted that some items should be counted more than once to reflect their relative importance – an early form of weighting. Young proceeded to collect his own data and apply his multiple counting for certain items. Young's resulting table of the depreciation of the value of money showed smaller changes over time than those of Shuckburgh Evelyn.[11]

Though Young had built on the pioneering work of Shuckburgh Evelyn, in particular by applying an elementary form of weighting, the calculation of the level of prices was not yet fully developed. The individual who is credited with establishing a firm foundation for the measurement of the level of prices is the Scottish economist, Joseph Lowe. In his book, *The Present State of England in Regard to Agriculture, Trade and Finance* he explained the wider factors that led to fluctuations in the value of money, the unfortunate consequences and the need for a measure of 'the power of purchase' which could correct 'a long list of anomalies in regard to rents, salaries, wages etc. …'. He also explained the need for the collection of prices for a wider range of items—'a standard of more comprehensive character'—and described the formula that should be used to calculate the level of prices from the collected prices and expenditures.[12] This formula, known as the Lowe formula, is used all round the world today. In recognition of his contribution to the field, he is known as the father of index numbers.

2.2. SYSTEMATIC PRICE COLLATIONS

Later in the nineteenth century, a few individuals took up the challenge of the regular collection of prices of a range of commodities, publishing them and attempting to use these data to calculate measures of the level of prices. Because price collection was the province of individual endeavour, it was natural to look for prices that were easily

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[11] Robert O'Neill, Jeff Ralph & Paul A. Smith, *Inflation: History and Measurement* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) pp.55-56.

[12] Joseph Lowe, *The present state of England in regard to agriculture, trade and finance: with a comparison of the prospects of England and France*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1823) p.331; p.335; p.332.

abstracted and had the widest coverage. This generally meant obtaining published prices, most of which derived from price lists, trade bulletins and similar published sources. These were *wholesale* prices of commodities such as wool and precious metals, and were used to construct wholesale prices indices, which could be used to judge the changes in the value of money.[13] Therefore the main task was one of collation rather than collection. Retail prices were not published regularly in the same way, so gathering them would have involved actually visiting retail outlets, and this was beyond the capacity of individual price compilers on anything more than a very local scale. Therefore, at this stage, wholesale price indices were the only way in which change in prices was measured.

By the mid-nineteenth century, wholesale prices were officially collated, because the Board of Trade published them for selected commodities for the period 1855-1879 in the *Miscellaneous Statistics of the United Kingdom*.[14] They were derived from contract prices of commodities sold to the armed forces in different counties, and from returns made by a few London hospitals for the prices paid for certain goods. Vol. XI of *Miscellaneous Statistics of the United Kingdom*, published in 1883, was the last volume, after which official reporting of commodity prices stopped. It was picked up again in a small way in the *Abstract of Labour Statistics*, which included prices for coal and iron from the 1895-6 volume, supplemented gradually by corn prices from 1897-8 and bread from 1900-1, but there was no wider information in the form of a price index until 1903.[15] Instead, the role was continued by resourceful individuals, although average values of imports and exports of some commodities were included in the annual *Abstract of Statistics*.[16]

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[13] These are still produced, but nowadays called Producer Price Indices.

[14] Parliamentary Papers, 2427 (1857) pp.234-245 to C. 3423 (1883) pp.365-375.

[15] Board of Trade, *Third annual report of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade (1895-96) with abstract of labour statistics* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1896) p.84; Board of Trade (Labour Department), *Fifth annual abstract of labour statistics of the United Kingdom, 1897-98* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898) pp.88-89; Board of Trade (Labour Department), *Eighth annual abstract of labour statistics of the United Kingdom, 1900-1901* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1902) pp.74-76.

[16] O'Neill et al., *Inflation*, pp.334-344; Board of Trade, *Report on wholesale and retail prices in the United Kingdom in 1902, with comparative statistical tables for a series of years*, Report no. 321. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1903a) p.426.

The English economist Thomas Tooke, latterly with the assistance of William Newmarch, produced a series of comprehensive volumes called *The History of Prices*, which compiled and analysed a large amount of price information.[17] In 1861, Newmarch, then the editor of the *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, published a paper on the course of prices for nineteen commodities from 1851 to 1861 as a continuation of that work, expressing the average price for each commodity in each year as an index of the average price in 1845-50.[18] This effectively produced a set of price indices for each commodity, compiled without the use of weighting information. Newmarch didn't, however, combine his commodity price indices to produce an overall index number for the average course of wholesale prices. Newmarch's series were derived from prices published in the *Economist* by averaging over commodities. The *Economist* adopted Newmarch's approach and published prices for these commodities from 1864, creating an overall index number for the wholesale price level from 1869. The *Economist* still publishes a commodity price index, with the set of commodities updated periodically to ensure the index stays relevant to the prominent items in the commercial marketplace.[19]

However, it was William Jevons who first made sense of the vast quantities of information in the *History of Prices*. Jevons published two essays on commodity prices

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[17] Thomas Tooke, *A history of prices and of the state of the circulation from 1793 to 1837, preceded by a brief sketch of the state of the corn trade in the last two centuries*, 2 Vols (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1838a,b); Thomas Tooke, *A history of prices and of the state of the circulation in 1838 and 1839, with remarks on the Corn Laws and on some of the alterations proposed in our banking system*, III [of *The History of Prices*] (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1840); Thomas Tooke, *A history of prices and of the state of the circulation in 1839 to 1847 inclusive with a general review of the currency question and remarks on the operation of the Act 7 & 8 Vict. c.32*, IV [of *The History of Prices*] (Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1848); Thomas Tooke & William Newmarch, *A history of prices and of the state of the circulation, during the nine years 1848-1856*, V & VI [of *The History of Prices*] (Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans & Roberts, 1857a,b).

[18] The Statistical Society of London became the Royal Statistical Society in 1887; William Newmarch, 'Results of the trade of the United Kingdom during the year 1860; with statements and observations relative to the course of prices since the year 1844', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 24 (1861) pp.74-124.

[19] 'The Economist's commodity price index – 160 years on', *The Economist*, 10 February 2005, <https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2005/02/10/160-years-on> [Accessed: 12 May 2020].

in the 1860s. In the first, he investigated the social effects of gold discoveries by comparing prices for thirty-nine commodities (mostly derived from the *Economist* and trade sources) between the years 1845-50 and 1860-62.[20] He took the average market prices of each commodity and calculated the percentage change between the two sets of years. He then combined these thirty-nine percentages using a geometric mean, an approach that is still associated with his name. In his second paper, he summarised the price data from Tooke & Newmarch's work into an index for the annual level of prices for each year from 1782 to 1865, again using the geometric mean.[21] We do not deal here with the methodological development of index numbers, which is well documented elsewhere.[22]

Like William Jevons, Augustus Sauerbeck, a London wool merchant, was interested in the effects of precious metals on commodity prices and the course of these prices over time. He was active towards the end of the nineteenth century, and extracted prices for forty-five imported and home produced commodities from records of business activity and from The *Economist* and other publications, and calculated index numbers for the overall average price for the years 1848-85.[23] In his calculation he used an arithmetic formula (unlike Jevons), and was aware of the fact that he hadn't included any weighting factors. He noted that he would need to identify quantities of commodities in order to estimate weights and it would be too much effort for him to do.[24]

These individual efforts were admirable and provided useful (unofficial) statistics, but ultimately, the effort of producing them limited their extent and duration. Nonetheless, the chain from Tooke and Newmarch through Jevons and on to Sauerbeck provided a set of information which could be used to produce a long run of

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[20] W. Stanley Jevons, *A serious fall in the value of gold ascertained, and its social effects set forth* (London: Edward Stanford, 1863).

[21] W. Stanley Jevons, 'On the variation of prices and the value of the currency since 1782', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 28 (1865), pp.294–320.

[22] W. Erwin Diewert, 'The early history of price index research', *NBER Working Paper No. 2713* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1988).

[23] Augustus Sauerbeck, 'Prices of commodities and the precious metals', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 49 (1886) pp.581-648.

[24] Bert M. Balk, *Price and quantity index numbers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) pp.10-11.

index numbers covering most of the nineteenth century, though with some differences in methodology and data sources. It would have to be a function of the state to take over their production, and to expand and improve both price series for individual commodities and an overall wholesale price index. For retail prices, which are an essential element of a consumer price index, fewer records were available and it would take a greater effort to find and record them – this would also be a future task for an organisation of the state.

3. COLLECTING INFORMATION ON EXPENDITURE

We turn now to the historical development of capturing information on household expenditure, which forms the basis for the weighting information needed to produce a robust measure of the level of prices. Its origins were not in measuring price change, but arose from investigating the extent and causes of poverty.

3.1. MEASURING HOUSEHOLD BUDGETS

The investigation into household budgets as a means of gaining insight into standards of living for families began in the seventeenth century with the work of William Petty, an English polymath and politician who proposed that society could be studied numerically. He is considered the founder of 'Political Arithmetick', or what we would now call social statistics, for his work on living standards in England and France.[25]

At the end of the eighteenth century, David Davies and Frederick Morton Eden both conducted surveys of household budgets. They were motivated by concern for the extent of rural poverty, and were the first researchers to collect data directly from families. Davies was a Welsh clergyman who collected detailed income and expenditure data from families in his parish. He encouraged others to do the same, and 127 budgets were collected in total. Frederick Morton Eden was the son of the Governor of Maryland, and he funded the collection of data from sixty agricultural and twenty-six urban families across England. In both cases, the reports they published contained detailed data which enabled later researchers to construct long-run series on living standards.[26]

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[25] Christopher Deeming, 'The historical development of family budget standards in Britain, from the 17th century to the present', *Social Policy and Administration*, 44 (2010) pp.765-788 (p.767).

[26] Ian Gazeley & Nicola Verdon, 'The first poverty line? Davies' and Eden's investigation of rural poverty in late 18-century England', *Exploration in Economic History*, 51 (2014) pp.94-108.

The work of both these pioneering individuals showed the fragile existence of labouring families, who struggled to make ends meet even when in full time work. Both Davies and Eden argued that wages should be aligned with costs.[27]

In the first half of the nineteenth century, further systematic studies were carried out including one by William Neild, the mayor of Manchester. He organised the collection of nineteen household budgets in and around Manchester. His subsequent analysis showed that fluctuations in the prices of essentials such as bread left families struggling to afford food, and many were in debt to shopkeepers.[28]

The effects of the American Civil War in limiting the supply of raw cotton to Lancashire, the centre of cotton milling at the time, led the government's Medical Officer of Health, Sir John Simon, to ask the social reformer and physician, Dr Edward Smith, to investigate the impact on Lancashire families in 1861. Specifically, he was asked to ascertain the 'least outlay of money to procure food enough for life'.[29] Smith formulated a 'minimum dietary standard' and explored whether the food purchased by families was sufficient to meet this standard. As well as collecting data in Lancashire, over the following two years, Smith supervised a wider collection of income and expenditure data for 370 households. He found that the average diet fell below the minimum dietary standard and provided evidence for widespread poverty among the poorer working class.[30]

Despite the growing evidence for poverty at the lower end of the income scale, there was also evidence of improvements in the average income of households when the prices of essential items were taken into account. In the years 1882-1899, money wage rates grew at an estimated 0.92% per year; however, prices also fell in this period, as a result of increased imports, particularly wheat from North America.[31] This led to sharp reductions in the price of bread, which halved over this period. The result for

[27] Deeming, p.769.

[28] Wm. Neild, 'Comparative statement of the income and expenditure of certain families of the working class in Manchester and Dukinfield, in the years 1836 and 1841', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 4 (1842) pp.320-334.

[29] Carleton B. Chapman, 'Edward Smith (?1818-1874) - physiologist, human ecologist, reformer', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 22 (1967) pp.1-26.

[30] Deeming, p.770.

[31] Charles Feinstein, 'What really happened to real wages?: trends in wages, prices, and productivity in the United Kingdom, 1880-1913', *The Economic History Review*, 43 (1990) pp.329-355, Table 4.

average real wages—that is, wages adjusted for the change in prices—was an estimated increase of 1.58% per year.[32]

Although there was advancement in the overall standard of living for many working people in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the state of the poorest was of increasing concern to social reformers. In the Victorian state, there were three approaches for dealing with poverty: self-help, charity and the provisions of the Poor Law. All three were considered by many to be inadequate.[33] The limited official figures of the time indicated that 2-3% of the population were classified as paupers, a percentage which had declined from 5% in 1850.[34] While some believed that the rising real wages and the decline in pauperism indicated that poverty was no longer a major issue, others did not accept this, and believed the pauperism figure to considerably underestimate the true extent of poverty. To resolve this conflict, it was recognised that comprehensive, empirical studies would be the best way of deciding between what were largely impressionistic views.[35]

The work of the social reformers Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree contributed to building this empirical evidence base. Charles Booth was a businessman with a deep interest in social issues; he undertook his famous survey of households in London employing a team of social investigators. Booth's investigations used existing information and the opinions of officials who knew families as well as data collected by his researchers to determine a classification of degrees of want. The results were published in four editions. The first edition comprised two volumes and was entitled: *Life and Labour of the People*, published in 1889.[36] The fourth edition extended to seventeen volumes and was entitled: *Life and Labour of the People in London*, published in 1902-3.[37] Charles Booth's inquiry is perhaps best known for the maps of London showing levels of poverty and wealth street by street. The study indicated that about 30% of the studied population in London was living in poverty. This was a

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[32] *Ibid.*

[33] Martin Pugh, *State and society – a social and political history of Britain 1870-1997*, 2nd edn (London: Arnold Publishers, 1999) p.48.

[34] George R. Boyer & Timothy P. Schmidle, 'Poverty among the elderly in late Victorian England', *The Economic History Review*, 62 (2009) pp.249-278.

[35] Ian Gazeley, *Poverty in Britain, 1900–1965* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMaillan, 2003).

[36] Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People*, 1st edn (London: Williams & Norgate, 1889).

[37] Charles Booth (ed.), *Life and Labour of the People in London* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1902-3).

startling result and led to speculation as to whether similar results would be found elsewhere.[38]

Seebohm Rowntree was the second son of Joseph Rowntree and went into the Rowntree confectionery business. As well as his business interests, he was also concerned about the state of the poorest in society. Rowntree set out to investigate the question of whether Booth's figure for the extent of poverty applied elsewhere by examining the situation in his home city of York in 1899. His method differed to Booth's – he went to considerable effort to rely less on impressions and more on directly captured data on household finances. Rowntree's researchers carried out a house-to-house survey of all working class households, but excluded households which kept servants. In total, data was captured from 11,560 households and 46,754 people – a significant proportion of the whole population of York, which stood at 75,812.[39] From this data, he also produced a classification of the degree of want of households. The results were published in *Poverty, A Study of Town Life* and showed that 28% of households in York were living in poverty - a similar number to Booth's figure for London.[40]

As well as the social and political implications of their work, the approach taken by Booth and Rowntree was highly influential in other ways, advancing the systematic study of household budgets and the field of social science research in general. Taken together, the work of Booth and Rowntree not only established figures for households in poverty in two different areas of England, but also indicated that the causes of poverty mainly lay outside the control of the individuals affected. Rowntree established the concept of a 'poverty line', a major development in the understanding of poverty that still influences policy today.[41]

While the work of Booth and Rowntree was highly influential, it was also difficult to extend it further to other towns and cities. The sheer effort involved in capturing data from every household in a location made wider investigations impractical.

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[38] E.P. Hennock, 'The measurement of urban poverty: from the metropolis to the nation, 1880-1920', *Economic History Review*, 40 (1987) pp.208-227.

[39] Gazeley, *Poverty*, p.25.

[40] B. Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty: a study of town life* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1901); Hennock.

[41] Pugh pp.47-48.

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3.2. WEIGHTS AND BASKETS

The developments in the collection and analysis of data on household budgets in most of the nineteenth century reflected the process of the compilation of prices. This work was undertaken by individuals with a particular interest in the topic, and although some of the datasets were quite substantial, they were ultimately limited by the energy and resources which those individuals could bring to bear on the problem. The publication of the information made data about household budgets accessible by the standards of the day. But it would require a leap of understanding to use these data to provide the weights from which a *weighted* price index could be calculated. The need for weights in a price index had been acknowledged by Young, Sauerbeck and particularly Lowe, but it was not accepted practice that a price index needed to use weights, and nearly all the series produced during the nineteenth century were unweighted. Only Sauerbeck undertook some limited analysis of the effects of weights in his index.[42]

Similarly, only rudimentary thought had been given to what items should be included. Some choices such as corn and bread were self-evident and straightforward because of their great economic importance, but in many cases the indices were constructed more on the basis of what prices were available than on a critical choice of prices to assemble. Sauerbeck however gave a rationale for the commodities included in his index, though also noting that not all the data which he would have liked to include were available:

> Only such commodities have been included in the tables the value of which in the United Kingdom (production and imports) of late amounted to about a million £ or more; smaller articles have been excluded, but a few important ones like wine, spirits, and tobacco, had to be left out, as no reliable data were obtainable. [43]

This was an early recognition of the need for a defined basket of commodities representing the majority of the transactions in the economy.

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[42] O'Neill et al., *Inflation*, p.335.

[43] Sauerbeck, p.632.

4. THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA

4.1. INCREASED POLITICAL PRESSURE

The late-Victorian period saw a drive for better statistics on both the labour market and the level of prices. The breakdown of industrial relations, the decline in the competitive performance of the British economy, and the rate of unemployment all drove the need for better data on the labour market. The debate on the extent of poverty, partly driven by the early findings of Booth and Rowntree, put pressure on the government to improve data on household income and expenditure and the retail prices of items purchased by working-class families.[44]

Before 1886, official statistics on prices and the labour market were spread out in the evidence for Royal Commissions and Select Committees and the annual reports of official organisations. Some were brought together in abstracts and compendia by the Board of Trade, but it was still challenging to locate data, and a number of influential individuals campaigned for better statistics.[45] The trade unionist, George Howell, made representations to the government in 1869 and wrote of the need for reliable statistics 'where the statesman, philanthropist, author, journalist or citizen can at all times obtain authentic information'.[46] He called for a comparison of the cost of living with wage rates over a number of years.[47] The Board of Trade also pointed out the defects in its own statistics.[48] The Treasury appointed an Official Statistics Committee to examine the issues in 1879, which endorsed the need for significant improvements. However, its tentative recommendations didn't result in any changes.[49] The Royal Statistical Society also applied pressure when its President, Sir Rawson Rawson, used his opening address

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[44] Roger Davidson, 'Official labour statistics: a historical perspective', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A*, 158 (1995) pp.165-173 (p.165-166).

[45] For more on the history of statistics at the Board of Trade see Hubert Llewellyn Smith, *The Board of Trade* (London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928).

[46] Roger Davidson, *Whitehall and the labour problem in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Kent: Croom Helm Ltd., 1985) p.80.

[47] J.F. Wright, 'Real wage resistance: Eighty years of the British cost of living', *Oxford Economic Papers*, 36 (1984), pp.152-167 (p.167).

[48] Davidson, *Whitehall*, p.86.

[49] Davidson, *Whitehall*, ch.3.

at the Jubilee Meeting of the Society to call for better statistics in line with developments made in the US and other countries.[50]

The Liberal MP for Northampton, Charles Bradlaugh, advocated the call for improved official statistics. In parliament, he proposed a resolution to 'ensure in this country a full and accurate collection and publishing of Labour Statistics' on 2nd March 1886.[51] Bradlaugh suggested that the work could be carried out by a central statistical department. The resolution was adopted. During the debate, the President of the Board of Trade, Anthony Mundella, reported that he had approached the Treasury for funding to improve labour statistics.[52]

The efforts to improve the provision of official statistics on labour and prices were ultimately successful, and the formation of a new Labour Bureau in the Board of Trade was announced in September 1886. The Board of Trade accepted the call from Parliament for 'information on prices, production and the cost of living'. In August 1886, they published a note setting out what they had committed to in five categories, which included bringing together relevant statistics from the past fifty years of reports, fuller statistics on wages and hours of working, and details of prices and the cost of living – it was a substantial commitment.[53]

4.2. THE BOARD OF TRADE EXPENDITURE REPORT (1889)

After the resolution of the Commons (see section 4.1), the Board of Trade turned its attention to expenditure patterns with a preliminary study published in 1889.[54] The Memorandum which opens this report says the importance of this topic 'is manifest', but the Board of Trade noted that competing priorities had meant that this line of research was at an early stage, and even suggested that 'a special investigation is

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[50] Rawson W. Rawson, 'Opening Address, Jubilee Meeting of the Statistical Society', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London, Jubilee Volume* (1885) pp.1-13 (p.10-11).

[51] *Hansard*, vol. 302, 2 Mar 1886 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1886/mar/02/resolution-1#S3V0302P0_18860302_HOC_161> [Accessed: 17 April 2020].

[52] *Ibid*.

[53] 'Labour statistics. Copy of memorandum explaining the arrangements made by the Board of Trade for collecting and publishing statistics relating to labour', *House of Commons papers*, 48.2, (1886).

[54] Board of Trade, *Labour statistics: returns of expenditure by working men*, C.-5861 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1889).

unnecessary' because (wholesale) prices and index numbers derived from them were widely published.

Nonetheless, they attempted to gather information on balance sheets. The response rate was very low – less than 5% of questionnaires were returned. But the Board of Trade took the radical step of reproducing the information from all thirty-four usable responses, without statistical editing. Previous studies were over-edited, and therefore risked providing an idealised view in line with the researcher's preconceptions.

The report contains a translation of the introduction to Ignaz Gruber's *Die Haushaltung der arbeitenden Klassen* (1887) which includes a review of nineteenth-century attempts at collecting expenditures from the working classes. It is interesting to note that Gruber exhorts 'agricultural societies, [...] chambers of commerce, [...] industrial societies, and [...] societies of the working classes' to gather expenditure information (in his case referring specifically to Austria), and does not suggest that the statistical arm of government has any role (though he has previously discussed the useful role played by statistical offices in Prussia and Germany). Therefore, at this time it was clearly not part of general expectations that this information should be collected (and used) by governments.

4.3. THE BAAS REPORTS

Section 2.1 described the important contribution of Joseph Lowe, who set out the broad approach to producing a measure of the level of prices in his 1823 book, and section 2.2 described the efforts of a few individuals to collect wholesale prices and create basic index numbers of overall prices. However, it was clear that there were still many aspects of producing a measure that needed to be decided. To try to better specify the practical steps, a Committee was brought together by the British Association for the Advancement of Science. The Committee, which was founded 'for the purpose of investigating the best methods of ascertaining and measuring the Variations in the Value of the Standard of Money', first met in 1887. The members included notable figures from the economics community, including Alfred Marshall and Robert Palgrave,

with Francis Edgeworth acting as secretary. The Committee issued reports each year from 1888 to 1891.[55]

The Committee considered a wide range of questions, including which commodities to incorporate in a measure, how weighting should be applied, the data needed and how to combine that data in a formula to produce index numbers. They also reviewed notable work carried out over the previous half century. The first report described the degree of challenge, and it noted that 'those who have entered on such discussions, like the notaries of speculative philosophy, may have found no end in wandering mazes lost'.[56] The Committee's findings were set out in their four annual reports. While they didn't give precise instructions on questions such as which commodities to include in a measure, they did specify principles which they hoped would benefit future producers of a 'monetary standard'. In the final report, presented in 1890, they gave a clear steer that a new or existing department of state should be

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[55] F.Y. Edgeworth, 'Report of the committee, consisting of Mr. S. Bourne, Professor F.Y. Edgeworth (Secretary), Professor H.S. Foxwell, Mr. Robert Giffen, Professor Alfred Marshall, Mr. J.B. Martin, Professor J.S. Nicholson, Mr. R.H. Inglis Palgrave, and Professor H. Sidgwick, appointed for the purpose of investigating the best method of ascertaining and measuring variations in the value of the monetary standard', in *Report of the fifty-seventh meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (London: John Murray, 1888) pp.247-301; F.Y. Edgeworth, 'Third report of the committee, consisting of Mr. S. Bourne, Professor F.Y. Edgeworth (Secretary), Professor H.S. Foxwell, Mr. Robert Giffen, Professor Alfred Marshall, Mr. J.B. Martin, Professor J.S. Nicholson, Mr. R.H. Inglis Palgrave, and Professor H. Sidgwick, appointed for the purpose of investigating the best method of ascertaining and measuring variations in the value of the monetary standard', in *Report of the fifty-ninth meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (London: John Murray, 1890) pp.133-164; F.Y. Edgeworth, 'Fourth report of the committee, consisting of Dr. Giffen (Chairman), Professor F.Y. Edgeworth (Secretary), Mr. S. Bourne, Professor H.S. Foxwell, Professor Alfred Marshall, Mr. J.B. Martin, Professor J.S. Nicholson, Mr. R.H. Inglis Palgrave, and Professor H. Sidgwick, appointed for the purpose of investigating the best methods of ascertaining and measuring variations in the value of the monetary standard', in *Report of the sixtieth meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (London: John Murray, 1891) pp.485-488; Robert Giffen, 'Second report of the committee, consisting of Mr. S. Bourne, Professor F.Y. Edgeworth (Secretary), Professor H.S. Foxwell, Mr. Robert Giffen, Professor Alfred Marshall, Mr. J.B. Martin, Professor J.S. Nicholson, Mr. R.H. Inglis Palgrave, and Professor H. Sidgwick, appointed for the purpose of investigating the best method of ascertaining and measuring variations in the value of the monetary standard', in *Report of the fifty-eighth meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (London: John Murray, 1889) pp.181-232.
[56] Edgeworth (1888) p.248.

responsible for collecting and publishing prices and calculating one or more index numbers for the monetary standard at least once a year. A draft proposal was created for the calculation of an official measure in the form of an index number. The report also gave an example of the use of such measures, suggesting that all contracts for money in a given year could be linked to the value of the monetary standard. This was a recommendation for what we would now call indexation of contract terms.

The department of state that took up the calculation of these index numbers was the Board of Trade, but not for some years, as section 4.4 explains. However, the reports of the BAAS Committee were summarised in Appendix 2 of the Board of Trade's *Report on Wholesale and Retail Prices* from 1903.[57] The value of the reports was acknowledged by the Board of Trade, and it helped them to move towards an official measure.

4.4. HIATUS IN THE 1890S

Despite the commitment made by the Board of Trade in 1886, only limited progress was made at first. This lack of progress on working class expenditure and the cost of living was to continue through the 1890s. Why was this? The actions of the Treasury were a major factor.[58] Throughout the period 1886-1914, the Treasury resisted the expansion of official statistics both as a means of limiting expenditure, and from its derogatory view of statisticians:

> the collecting and digesting of public statistics is a duty that should be carefully watched and guarded in order that it may not degenerate into extravagance. There is a dangerous tendency to magnify work and extend functions beyond the limits required at once by economy and expediency.[59]

The Treasury also opposed the appointment of professional statisticians, for two reasons. Firstly, it considered statistical enquiries to be 'mechanical work' suitable for junior administrators; secondly, statistical enquiries might uncover justification for additional government expenditure. The former objection presented a wholly inaccurate description of the statistical skills of the staff in the Labour Department, and

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[57] Board of Trade, *Wholesale and retail prices*, pp.429ff.

[58] Wright, p.166.

[59] Davidson, *Whitehall*, p.169.

Llewellyn Smith still felt the need to fight for the skill and professionalism of official statisticians when he wrote his history of the Board of Trade in 1928.[60] If there was a valid criticism to be made of the Labour Department at the time, it was that despite engaging consultants conversant with the latest developments in statistical and sampling theory, the Labour Department was slow to adopt these methods itself.[61] The Treasury also limited statistical capability through tight control of the budget allocation. Although the Labour Bureau was expanded to become a Labour Department in 1893, the number of staff allocated to labour statistics shows how limited the capabilities of the Labour Department were. At its inception, there was only one senior member of staff and eleven junior staff working on labour statistics and the cost of living – that covered producing statistics on industrial disputes, wage rates, hours and earnings as well as working class expenditure and the cost of living. The numbers grew slowly, reaching three senior staff and eighteen others in 1900.[62]

Apart from the small scale Board of Trade enquiry into household expenditure of working class families described in section 4.2, the only other notable enquiry was carried out by the Commissioner of Labor from the United States, who organised the collection of expenditure data from 1,024 families in Great Britain for the purpose of comparing expenditure across countries.[63]

5. THE STATE TAKES AN INTEREST

5.1. BOARD OF TRADE REPORTS

The priorities changed in 1903, when the Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour, asked for data on wages, the cost of living and comparisons with other countries.[64] These statistics

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[60] Llewellyn Smith, *The Board of Trade*, pp.209-210.

[61] Davidson, *Whitehall*, pp.220-223; Davidson, *Official labour statistics*, p.168.

[62] Davidson, *Whitehall*, p.105.

[63] *Sixth annual report of the Commissioner of Labor* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1891), p.605; *Seventh annual report of the Commissioner of Labor*, II (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1892) p.845; for more details see Christoph Conrad & Armin Triebel, 'Family budgets as sources for comparative social history: Western Europe U.S.A. 1889-1937', *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, 35 (1985), pp.45-66.

[64] Rebecca Searle, 'Is there anything real about real wages? A history of the official British cost of living index, 1914–62', *The Economic History Review*, 68 (2015) 145-166 (p.147).

were to assist with the debate over free trade (the Tariff Reform campaign of 1903).[65] This led to two reports, published in quick succession, in August 1903. The second was a compilation of statistics comparing the economic situation in the UK with those of foreign countries, particularly France, Germany and the US.[66] It was commissioned rather by way of making some progress in response to repeated calls for a Royal Commission to investigate free trade, but it provided many statistics and little interpretation. Its outputs therefore generated more controversy than enlightenment.[67] It was also a challenge for the Board of Trade, who said:

> If, however, we want to obtain a single series of figures representing accurately the average changes of General Prices or of Wages, or the comparative level of foreign Customs duties as a whole, we are at once embarrassed by the difficulty both of obtaining and of dealing with the required data.[68]

Nevertheless, this second report included some comparative information on prices in the UK and other countries. But it was the first of the 1903 reports that was the catalyst for a real interest in the provision of price information by the state. This 'Report on Wholesale and Retail Prices' gathered together in one place much of the research that had taken place during the long-nineteenth century, and made the best of putting it together to make a continuous series of wholesale prices for the UK covering that whole period.[69] It also, for the first time in an official publication, collated the available information on retail prices, which was at this stage rather sparse. Along with weighting information from the US Commissioner of Labor's study (see section 4.4), it was also used to create a retail price index for the years 1877-1901. This study was chosen so that the resulting statistics would be comparable internationally. However, there were several alternative choices for the weighting information which would have been more up to date, although they were all incomplete, with small samples and partial coverage,

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[65] A.W. Coats, 'Political economy and the tariff reform campaign of 1903', *The Journal of Law and Economics*, 11 (1968) pp.181-229.

[66] Board of Trade, *Memoranda, statistical tables, and charts prepared in the Board of Trade with reference to various matters bearing on British and foreign trade and industrial conditions*. Cd. 1761 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1903b).

[67] Coats, pp.205-208.

[68] Board of Trade, *Memoranda*, p.vii.

[69] Board of Trade, *Wholesale and retail prices*.

including a 1903 household expenditure survey run quickly by the Board of Trade.[70] The report was put together hurriedly, but it covered a range of sources and made recommendations on the ways in which indices should be calculated, building strongly on the work of the BAAS committee (section 4.3) in setting out the theoretical basis for calculating price indices.[71] Indeed, the use of index numbers, hitherto mainly used in comparing prices, was extended to other measures in the second report, and it is doubtless the proximity of the development of these reports which suggested this use.[72]

The inadequacy of household expenditure data for the purpose of constructing a retail price index was apparent. The 1903 survey had been run very quickly, had weaknesses in its design, and a very poor response rate, all of which led to considerable doubts about the quality of the estimates derived from it. It was therefore quickly followed by a further, much more successful survey in 1904, with the results published in an updated *Second Series of Memoranda*.[73] At this stage the machinery of state had been engaged, and further consolidation was not long in coming, with additional surveys of household expenditure, retail prices and rents in 1905 and 1913.[74] This activity meant that the UK was well-placed at the start of the First World War to introduce the first regularly calculated, national index of retail prices: the Cost of Living Index. For details of the subsequent evolution of the retail price measures, see Searle (2015), O'Neill *et al.* (2017) and Ralph *et al.* (2020).[75]

5.2. SAMPLING

Booth and Rowntree both attempted essentially a complete enumeration of their defined study areas in collecting poverty information (see section 3.1). But this was not feasible as an approach to gathering evidence on which the condition of the whole

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[70] O'Neill et al., *Inflation*, pp.99-103.

[71] Edgeworth (1888, 1890, 1891), Giffen (1889).

[72] Board of Trade, *Memoranda*, pp.vii-viii.

[73] Board of Trade, *Second series of memoranda, statistical tables, and charts prepared in the Board of Trade with reference to various matters bearing on British and foreign trade and industrial conditions*. Cd. 2337 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1905); O'Neill et al., *Inflation*, section 5.4.

[74] Board of Trade, *Cost of living of the working classes*, Cd. 3864 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1908); O'Neill et al., *Inflation*, sections 5.5-5.6.

[75] Searle; O'Neill et al., *Inflation*; Jeff Ralph, Robert O'Neill & Paul A. Smith, *The Retail Prices Index: A Short History* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Pivot, 2020) doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-46563-6.

country could be deduced. There was considerable discussion of the generalisability of Rowntree's results.[76] The Board of Trade's 1903 and 1904 inquiries covered all parts of Britain and Ireland, but used a sampling process that was 'anything but random'.[77] The 1905 inquiry investigated rents and fuel as well as food prices, covering eighty-nine industrial towns in the UK as part of a multi-country investigation, where the Board of Trade also collected data in Germany, France, Belgium, and the US.[78] The UK component presented a national picture based on selected towns, which was a further step in generalisability, but involved a substantial effort in data collection, and did not use a process of randomised selection.[79]

Arthur Bowley was an academic at the London School of Economics and University College, Reading, and was interested in the application of sampling to the measurement of social conditions. He and Alexander Burnett-Hurst undertook surveys in four English towns in 1912-13 using sampling, and were able to show that their results were consistent with other statistics produced from official collections (for example, of numbers of schoolchildren).[80]

This demonstrated the efficacy of sampling for the collection of household expenditure data, even though the primary purpose of these surveys was not to provide data to calculate weights for price indices. It formed one part of the beginning of the use of sampling in official statistics, but did not generate official sample-based series of expenditure data until after the period covered in this paper.[81] It was, however, a final example of an endeavour outside of state-funded collections during the long-nineteenth century, as an exemplar for the state to follow.

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[76] E. P. Hennock, 'The measurement of urban poverty: from the metropolis to the nation, 1880-1920', The Economic History Review, 40 (1987) pp.208-227.

[77] Ian Gazeley & Andrew Newell, 'Poverty in Edwardian Britain', The Economic History Review, 64 (2011) pp.52-71 (p.57).

[78] Board of Trade, Cost of living.

[79] Hennock.

[80] A.L. Bowley & A.R. Burnett-Hurst, Livelihood and poverty (London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd., 1915) pp.182-183; Hennock.

[81] Alain Desrosières, The politics of large numbers (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998) pp.221-225

6. DISCUSSION

If the development of measures of retail prices was a revolution, it was a very slow and stealthy one, operating more or less throughout the long-nineteenth century. However, it did reform the way in which money and its value were considered, and this produced a radical change, in several respects. First, it altered the views of those who were concerned with work and poverty; the idea of the change in the value of money providing a way of thinking about changes in poverty lines and the effects of prices alongside changes in wages. Second, it contributed to the political pressure to institute wider statistical collections about poverty, wages and the cost of living. The availability of this information affected policy in the government more widely, as well as providing evidence of the need for social reform. Finally, it culminated at the beginning of the First World War with the linkage of wages to the newly constructed Cost of Living Index. This began a development in the national psyche of linking the value of wages with measures of the changes of prices, which had a real impact on take-home wages – even to the extent that wages fell when prices dropped, a situation which would not operate in modern conditions.

All of this development depended on the interest, dedication and scholarship of a few individuals who compiled quantities of price information and undertook the calculations needed to summarise them into a form which could be interpreted. In the first three quarters of the nineteenth century this situation was relatively stable – there were debates about the correct form for an index number (and we have already seen that Jevons used the geometric form, whereas most other series were based on the simpler arithmetic mean) – but otherwise the sources of prices (and therefore the focus on the wholesale price index) and the items to be included did not change much.

The demand for the collection and analysis of price information arose out of a wish to understand observed changes, and to have the best data to judge between competing hypotheses for the relatively large changes in prices observed at the end of eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. This would present evidence to refute (or not) the persistent proposals for returning to fixed exchange rates; such was the push for Tooke's collections.[82] Jevons had a similar motivation, though he wanted to understand the effect of the greater availability of gold on its value.

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[82] Tooke, *History of prices*, I, pp.1-6.

The situation became quite complex in the 1880s, however. The Board of Trade ceased to compile the *Miscellaneous Statistics of the United Kingdom* series, which had provided an official price series (though admittedly mostly compiled from available data from trade journals and public contracts rather than through a price collection). This may have been a response to the government's request for more and better statistics on the labour market, wage rates and the cost of living (section 4.1) and the reluctance of the Treasury to provide further funding for statistics (section 4.4). It is ironic that the government's request for more statistics on prices should effectively stop the only large scale official price publication. Nevertheless, government interest stemmed from pressure to understand the extent and causes of poverty, rather than from a requirement for the price information in itself. This interest contributed directly to improvements in price measurement because it led to collections which provided data that could be used to calculate index weights, although this was not their primary purpose.

At the same time, Sauerbeck was continuing the tradition of an individual-compiled series by commencing his own series of calculations, which could nevertheless be linked to what had gone before, and the BAAS was setting up a committee to consider how measures of the value of money could best be organised.[83] This committee came down strongly on the need for an index number (a measure of the level of prices), and for the resources of the state to be employed in providing it, as the only reasonable approach to collecting such a wide range of information. Indeed, in the final report they proposed an Act of Parliament to support the calculation of such an index by a suitably appointed commission. Although this was not immediately taken up, the material was readily at hand when the official data collection for a retail price index commenced, allowing quick progress that would have been unlikely if the methods had needed to be decided at the same time the data were being collected.

The final driver for collection of the building blocks of a modern price index, acting in the early 1900s, was the need for evidence to support the government's free trade policies, and this finally made the gathering of information on prices and expenditure patterns an activity supported by state funding, though it was not until the start of the First World War that this led to a regularly produced consumer price index.

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[83] Sauerbeck.

Although no legislation was brought forth to support or require the calculation of a retail price index (or its wholesale counterpart), in a curious twist, almost exactly 100 years later the Statistics and Registration Service Act (2007) for the first time *required* the monthly publication of the Retail Prices Index, the successor to the Cost of Living Index.[84]

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[84] Ralph et al., *The Retail Prices Index*.

Humanity Invested with a New Form: The Post Office and the Hospital in Household Words, c. 1850

JONATHAN POTTER

ABSTRACT: This essay explores some of the techniques employed to present new infrastructural formations to a general reading public through close examination of writings about the postal system and the hospital in Dickens's popular general interest magazine, *Household Words*. Reading these articles against Marc Augé's account of late twentieth-century 'supermodernity', I argue that the newly extended reach of such systems is presented as a way out of chaotic overabundances of detail, especially in busy urban environments, as well as a means to acquire a greater mastery over the world. Yet at the same time, these articles also seek to reform the role of the individual in relation to these systems, subjugating individual agency to the primacy of systemic control. This essay aims to deepen our understanding of the reception and portrayal of infrastructural industrialisation in *Household Words* specifically, and the periodical press more broadly, in the years immediately following the Great Exhibition.

KEYWORDS: Household Words; Victorian Periodicals; Division of Labour; Industrialisation; Systemisation; Networks

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IN THE OPENING of his 1992 book on late-twentieth-century 'non-places', Marc Augé outlines the three primary characteristic figures of what he calls 'supermodernity': first, an 'overabundance of events', which encompasses both a sense of 'overabundant information' and of a 'growing tangle of interdependences in what some already call the "world system"'; secondly, a 'spatial overabundance', which is characterised by 'the proliferation of imaged and imagined references', and by 'the spectacular acceleration of means of transport', which has changed our sense of scale so that the world is seeming both smaller and yet more open; and finally, a sense of alienated individualism

generated from the 'individualization of references', in which all meaning is available to individual interpretation and all interpretation can be critiqued as an individual's interpretation.[1] Scholars in Victorian studies are likely to recognise similarities between Augé's first two figures and Victorian remarks about the world becoming smaller or closer in writing on telegraphy and railways. We might also see parallels between the way Victorian pictures became mass commercial objects that claimed to bring the world into one's parlour (or at the least to a nearby exhibition hall), and Augé's account of 'the proliferation of imaged and imagined references' across our myriad screens, which 'assemble before our eyes a universe that is relatively homogenous in its diversity'.[2]

For those writing at the mid-nineteenth century, similar shifts in scale and in what space and time meant to lived experience were not so much reformations of a previous system, but an entirely new way of being. The lead article in the launch issue of *The Engineer and Machinist and Engineering and Scientific Review*, for example, extolled the ability of the railway to open 'wide fields for commercial and industrial enterprise', and to establish 'new communities of skilful and busy artisans', through transit 'so swift and easy, that to be *here, there, and everywhere* is almost a truism'.[3] The 'electric flash' of the telegraph, meanwhile, was described as effecting an unprecedented level of communication, 'annihilating time and space'.[4] These new public institutions and systems had significant socio-cultural potential, as the address of Charles Ellet, president of the Schuylkill Navigation Company in Pennsylvania (reproduced in issue 2

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[1] The author would like to thank the Victorian Popular Fiction Association for the Mary Eliza Root prize (2019) which provided the means for archival research used in this article. Marc Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*, trans. by John Howe, 2nd edn (London: Verso, 2008), pp.23-33.

[2] This has been extensively covered since the publication of Wolfgang Schivelbusch's classic *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 1979, repr. 2014). See, for example, Richard Menke, *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems* (Redwood City, California: Stanford University Press, 2007); Alison Byerly, *Are We There Yet?: Virtual Travel and Victorian Realism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013); *Transport in British Fiction: Technologies of Movement, 1840-1940*, ed. by Adrienne E. Gavin and Andrew F. Humphries (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[3] 'The Progress of Invention', *The Engineer and Machinist and Engineering and Scientific Review*, 1 (March 1850), pp.1-2 (p.1).

[4] *Ibid.*, p.1.

of *The Engineer and Machinist*), pointed out: '[m]en know themselves and each other better; national characteristics are obliterated; it seems that humanity is invested with a new form; organisation is established between states, and between continents'.[5]

In the effusive Victorian descriptions of new systems like the railway, something akin to supermodernity's overabundances of event and space might thus be identified in the texts of the nineteenth century. The significance of these systems, however, was entirely different. Rather than prompting a reflexive turn inwards to individual subjective interpretation, as in Augé's third figure of supermodernity, in the 1850s, large-scale systemisation elicited a very different kind of reformation of self and system. In this essay, I explore this reformation by analysing some of the techniques employed to present new infrastructural formations to the readers of Charles Dickens's popular general interest magazine *Household Words*, concentrating on two articles about the postal system and the hospital. There are obviously important distinctions to be made between these disparate systems and the forms they took, but, as will be seen in these articles, such distinctions could be lost to the overwhelming sense of rationalised systemisation that pervades each example. For a generation that had lived through such rapid developments, from the stage coaching of the 1820s to the railways and penny post of the 1840s and 1850s, to the new promises of the telegraph, it is plausible that a general sense of rationalisation and systemisation might overwhelm the changing details of any given system. These articles from *Household Words* are significant primarily not because of their subjects—the post office or the hospital—but because of how they portray these subjects.

Augé's work forms a backdrop to my reading of these two texts, acting as a comparative framework to foreground the historical specificity of each text. That is, I intend to use Augé's work not to read back and claim trajectories of historical change (or worse, 'progress') but to do exactly the opposite – I foreground the similarities in order to more ably avoid taking them at face value, whilst remaining alert to divergences and historical specificity. In doing so I borrow from Caroline Levine's innovative study of forms – taken broadly to mean the structures, configurations, and

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[5] 'Influence of Coal on the Progress of Mankind', *The Engineer and Machinist and Engineering and Scientific Review*, 2 (April 1850), pp.56-57 (p.57).

patterns we identify both in texts and in the physical and socio-political world around us. Levine approaches forms through their 'affordances'—the potential uses and meanings latent in them—thereby enabling an understanding of 'both the particular constraints and possibilities that different forms afford, and the fact that those patterns and arrangements carry their affordances with them as they move across time and space'.[6] Thus, although we might to some extent see a replication or re-enactment of nineteenth-century systems and institutions in supermodernity, under closer examination we find that this is because the formal elements—organising principles and configurations—have repeated while the particulars and the values ascribed to them have shifted. Using Augé's account of supermodernity as a comparison will help separate the form from the content, or in other words, separate the thing itself—the hospital, the post office—from the historically particular uses and meanings ascribed to it.

In a similar way, we might also compare the form of a text and the form of a public institution described in it, for instance the hospital, and ask questions about how the one teases out certain values latent in the other. In what follows, I will discuss how the forms of journalistic articles in *Household Words* complemented, even replicated, the forms of the social institutions they described, in order to enact a certain formal relation between reader and society. This relation, then, is what I mean when in my title I repurpose the line from Charles Ellet that 'humanity is invested with a new form'.

The periodical, *Household Words* (1850-1859), 'conducted' by Charles Dickens but written by a multitude of writers—some famous (such as Wilkie Collins, Harriet Martineau, and Elizabeth Gaskell, as well as Dickens himself) and some less well known—was a unique entry into the periodical market in 1850. Aimed squarely at a middle-class readership with a price of two pence for weekly issues or nine pence for monthly numbers with wrappers, *Household Words* intended to combine entertaining, vibrant prose with intelligent, original journalism, both in fiction and non-fiction (often blurring the line between the two). In relation to industrialisation, on the one hand *Household Words* campaigned for factory workers' safety and, in featuring Dickens's

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[6] Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), p.6.

own novel *Hard Times* (1854) highlighted some of the human costs of industrialisation. On the other hand, as Catherine Waters points out, such views were not ubiquitous and, overall, the magazine's stance was ambivalent and complex.[7] As an assemblage of many writers, the magazine did not present a single worldview or ideology, and part of its challenge to scholars is its multiplicity: there were over 380 contributors (including ninety women), though, as John Drew notes, a small group of male writers wrote many of its articles in line with Dickens's 'broadly Liberal agenda'.[8]

Despite this multiplicity, Dickens did intend the journal to have a unifying identity across its disparate parts, albeit a diffuse one that is difficult to pin down. Jonathan V. Farina has shown how *Household Words* invoked a sense of 'deep character', an ineffable sense of identity stemming from its sometimes contradictory articles, through a rhetorical approach that combined practical observations with an 'affective, spiritual subjectivity'.[9] Thus, Farina argues, 'Dickens could imagine that the form of his journal would represent deep character whatever the specific content of its individual articles'.[10] Indeed, Farina makes a persuasive case that the subjectivity in Dickens's journal—the way objects are personified for instance—functions as a 'clear epistemological unit' within an 'earnest, non-fictional mode of representation'.[11] In an article on a paper mill, for example, Farina finds the paper itself is presented as an embodiment not just of

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[7] See Catherine Waters, *Commodity Culture in Dickens's Household Words: The Social Life of Goods* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) p.6-7; p.83-96. Furthermore, as Tamara Ketabgian demonstrates, even in Dickens's novel *Hard Times*, the tension between human and machine is not as clear cut as it might seem, conveying 'a more porous and productive relation among human nature, industrial technology, and that most contested of topics—emotion'. Tamara Ketabgian, *The Lives of Machines: The Industrial Imaginary in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011) p.48 <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/dcbooks.9544598.0001.001>.

[8] John Drew, 'Household Words', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (Gent; London: Academia Press and the British Library, 2009) pp.292-93 (p.293).

[9] Jonathan V. Farina, 'A Certain Shadow: Personified Abstractions and the Form of Household Words', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 4.42 (2009) pp.392-415 (p.400); Farina, 'Characterizing the Factory System: Factory Subjectivity in "Household Words"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 1.35 (2007), pp.41-56.

[10] Farina, 'A Certain Shadow', p. 400.

[11] *Ibid.*, p.408.

'future progress' but of 'the narrator himself and thus the capacity for narrative and emotional meaning where rags [from which the paper is manufactured] had only monetary value'.[12] However, as I hope to demonstrate, in *Household Words* the use of this epistemological unit, this way of presenting a physical object or social institution as though their values are personal and human, is not politically neutral but works to constitute a specific relation between self and society. My argument is that these two journalistic articles about public institutions, through their use of subjectivity and narrative character, elide the differences in institutional particularities, forms and structures, in order to enact—or at least emphasise—specific sets of meanings latent in those forms.

I make this argument through detailed analysis of two articles published around the time of that most emblematic symbol of Victorian industrialisation, the Great Exhibition of 1851: 'Valentine's Day at the Post-Office', an 1850 article by Charles Dickens and William Henry Wills, and an article by Frederick Knight Hunt from the following year entitled 'Twenty-Four Hours in a London Hospital'.[13] Dickens and Wills' article, published in the inaugural issue of *Household Words*, acted, in Harry Stone's words, as a 'prototype' for what Dickens called the 'process' article.[14] Stone's observation is borne out by examination of Knight Hunt's article the following year, which takes the formal elements from Dickens and Wills and applies them to the hospital. By reading the two articles together in this way, I outline the beginnings of a general formal approach to documenting rationalized systems which posits a formal relation between public institution and the individual.

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[12] Farina, 'Characterizing the Factory System', p.48.

[13] Charles Dickens and William Henry Wills, 'Valentine's Day at the Post-Office', *Household Words*, 30 March 1850, pp.6-12 (p.9) <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-i/page-6.html> [Accessed: 02/11/2019]; Frederick Knight Hunt, 'Twenty-Four Hours in a London Hospital', *Household Words*, 8, February 1851, pp.457-465 <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-ii/page-457.html> [Accessed 30/05/2019].

[14] Harry Stone, 'Introduction', in *The Uncollected Writings of Charles Dickens, Household Words, 1850-59*, ed. by Harry Stone, 2 vols, repr. <http://www.djo.org.uk> [Accessed: 09/10/2020].

1.   THE POST OFFICE

In 1850, Charles Dickens and William Henry Wills wrote an account of one of the century's newly massive systems, on one of its busiest days – the General Post Office on Valentine's Day. The article begins with a description of 'an individual who bore not the smallest resemblance to a despairing lover, or, indeed, to a lover in any state of mind', posting three letters – one stamped, one unstamped, and one paid for with coins at the counter. He then joins his accomplice and they enter the post office to observe, using the letters as 'tracers for mapping [the] network', as Richard Menke puts it in his excellent account of the Victorian postal system.[15] The article, at the mid-point of the century, neatly demonstrates how one might look for order in the systematised social institutions of the age which, as mass entities, defied observation. Dickens and Wills point to the almost constant operation of the system to indicate scale ('six nights every week, all through the rolling year!'), while using temporal units to rationalise that scale into discrete elements.[16] Dickens and Wills take the temporal demarcations used in the sorting office and use them as regular discourse markers; paragraphs are introduced with chronological development, such as '[w]hile this dialogue was going on', and direct temporal signposts – for example, '[s]uddenly it struck six', and '[t]he clock now struck eight'.[17] Towards the end of the article, the narrator explicates this, announcing that time 'is the most striking peculiarity of the extraordinary establishment'. 'Everything is done on military principles to minute time', they write, with such precise 'drill and subdivision of duties' that the offices would go from a noisy, crowded environment before the hour, to 'hardly a light or a living being visible' by ten minutes past the hour.[18]

The article makes a large system observable, therefore, by looking at small constituent parts and then multiplying up to scale. Chronology is crucial here, as what is done in a minute is multiplied to an hour, and what is done in a night, is multiplied to 'six nights every week, all through the rolling year!' but so, too, are material aspects

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[15] Menke, *Telegraphic Realism*, p.51.

[16] Dickens and Wills, 'Valentine's Day at the Post-Office', p.9.

[17] *Ibid.* pp.8-11.

[18] *Ibid.*, p.11.

of the system.[19] Dickens and Wills begin by dividing up geographical space: '[the] Great National Post-Office in St. Martin's-le-Grand is divided into halves by a passage', where 'huge slits gape for letters, whole sashes yawn for newspapers, or wooden panes open for clerks to frame their large faces'.[20] These small-scale divisions relate to larger ones: 'the southern side is devoted to the London District Post, and the northern to what still continues to be called the "Inland Department," although foreign, colonial, and other outlandish correspondence now passes through it'.[21] The article begins by describing the posting of a single letter, before moving onto the reproduction of a numerical ledger of the number of letters posted every hour that day. Dickens and Wills take care to describe in detail the different types of post and the numbers processed, moving fluidly between these abstract recitations of figures to descriptions of concrete details as they observe the process in action. In doing so, they simultaneously emphasise the system's large scale whilst attempting to delineate its scope and workings.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the process of extrapolating a whole from disparate fragments enabled mid-century readers to conceptualise the otherwise unobservable (or only partially observable) systems that formed in this newly industrialised society, including the periodical press itself. Waters notes that *Household Words* was forced to find 'new ways of representing magnitude' as it wrestled with 'the new gaps in knowledge created by industrialisation'.[22] These new techniques included graduated calculations, and explorations of the manufacture and origins of mass-produced goods, which linked industrial manufacture to everyday objects. Most readers would likely have also been accustomed at this point to the process by which geologists and naturalists extrapolated large-scale systems and process from small, fragmentary artefacts and relics (perhaps most famously Georges Cuvier and, later, Charles Darwin). Indeed, some readers may also have been familiar with the parable of the blind men and the elephant: long before John Godfrey Saxe's popular poem 'The Blind Men and the Elephant' (1872), Charles Knight's *Penny Magazine* published a short piece entitled

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[19] *Ibid.*, p.9.

[20] *Ibid.*, p.6.

[21] *Ibid.*, p.8.

[22] Waters, p.97.

'The Partial and the Comprehensive – a Hindustanee Parable' (1843).[23] In Knight's version, the inhabitants of a village of blind men each recount what they touched of the elephant to 'an old blind man of some judgement'. On hearing that the creature was like a 'plantain-tree', a 'winnowing-fan', a 'snake', and a 'pillar', the old man correctly identifies the different parts of the elephant they have touched. 'In this way', the story concludes, 'the old man, uniting all their conjectures, made out something of the form of the elephant'. It is not coincidental that the parable makes use of blindness; the point is that true understanding (and therefore mastery) of the world around oneself does not come only through perception or interaction (seeing, touching, etc.) but through the abstract interpretation and understanding of perceptual data. So, too, the systems of 'civilisation' that sprung up in the nineteenth century are presented to readers as physical interventions that represent, or are made useful through, intellectual abstraction. Examples abound of this intellectual sense-making technique. For example, in another of Knight's publications, the companion to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge's *Almanac or, Year-book of General Information for 1853*, the meaning of a railway line is extrapolated beyond its physical properties, described as being more than simply a set of iron rails but 'a line of civilisation.'[24] Similarly, telegraph lines are presented as 'lines of thought.'[25]

Industrialised systems tend to be valued in this abstracting process as key forms or practices of 'civilisation'. In Charles Knight's *London* (1841), for example, J. C. Platt writes that without the post office 'the whole world would be thrown backward in civilization, and all the springs by which it is urged onward would lose some portion of their elasticity'.[26] In Knight's *Companion to the Almanac; or, Year-book of General Information for 1853*, readers are told that the telegraph in the central United States is especially striking because it 'contrasts more forcibly with the semi-civilised condition

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[23] 'The Partial and the Comprehensive – A Hindustanee Parable', *The Penny Magazine*, 1 April 1843, p.124.

[24] 'Railways of the Continent and America', in *Companion to the Almanac; or Year-Book of General Information for 1853* (London: Charles Knight, 1853) pp.68-85 (p.68).

[25] 'Electric Telegraphs', *Companion to the Almanac* (1853) pp.34-53 (p.43).

[26] J. C. Platt, 'LXVIII. The Post Office', in *London*, ed. by Charles Knight, 6 vols (London: Charles Knight, 1841) III, pp.273-288 (p.273).

of those regions only a few years ago', while the railways are more important to continental Europe than Great Britain, as they ensure that 'prejudices of race and of creed should be softened down by intercommunication', and 'each country should benefit from the produce of others by interchange'.[27] Although these articles give practical information on line gauges and lengths and different systems and so on, such particularities are occluded by the final, ultimately abstract, analysis. The individual railway carriage or line, although the products of precise engineering, are details that become subordinated to the overall railway system. The physical material of the system is then reconceptualised into an abstract system. As a result, the reader is taken from tangible particulars like lines, carriages, and signalling devices to overarching systems of railways and telegraphs and post and then, finally, these systems become extensions of personal actions – of communication, of thought, or, at the social level, 'civilisation'. Dickens and Wills' article uses a similar strategy: it moves fluidly from the journeys of specific letters, and the physical spaces and temporal rhythms of the organisation, to the abstract statistics that outline the system as a whole, and finally gestures to further abstractions that apply the underlying logic more broadly.

Charles Knight was closely acquainted with Dickens, who personally requested his services as a writer for *Household Words*. Knight obliged with twenty articles between 1850 and 1852, including a series, 'Illustrations of Cheapness', which explored the manufacture of various 'cheap' commodities. Two things stand out from this series: first, that Knight is keen to outline the 'principles' of cheap manufacture, especially the division of labour (citing Adam Smith in the first article of the series – an account of Lucifer matches); and second, that labourers and workers are largely glossed over as parts of the overall machine or system.[28] Knight variously comments on the 'facility of habit' and skill 'which makes fingers act with the precision of machines', and tends to ignore the other human aspects of the work, such as who the people are, what they

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[27] 'Electric Telegraphs', p.43; 'Railways of the Continent and America', p.68.

[28] For a similar depiction, see Harriet Martineau's series of factory visits in *Household Words*. See also Ketabgian, pp.35-36; Farina, 'Characterizing the Factory'; Waters, pp.95-99.

look like, and what they say or think.[29] Knight is firmly in favour of the division of labour as a principle of 'cheapness', but he also implies that divided labour can be mindless, mechanical labour.[30] Readers, then, were being taught division as a principle and this principle—if taken to also include its inverse, multiplication—applies across a wide range of contexts.[31] Like the railway or telegraph, the forms of the system—its processes and organising principles—are not restricted to physical apparatus, but are extrapolated and reapplied across a range of particulars. In this way, people and machines become conflated because they share the same formal characteristics of repetition and regularity within the division of labour.

The system emerges, in Dickens and Wills' article, from the chaos of particulars, some of which are themselves abstract, vague, or open to variation and interpretation. 'All the history of the time', they argue, 'all the accidents, all the vanities, all the changes, all the realities,' are, despite appearances, 'really in a system of admirable order, certainty, and simplicity'.[32] Here, we can see something similar to the compression of space and time that Augé finds in supermodernity, but rather than positioning the reader in a place of interpretation, Dickens and Wills do the reverse. The chaos and confusion of reality, or 'realities', is, in their view, rationalised, simplified, and made certain by the large-scale system. Whereas the description of the telegraph as 'lines of thought' in the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge's 1853 *Almanac* might seem to empower the reader, Dickens and Wills position the individual's limited powers

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[29] Charles Knight, 'Illustrations of Cheapness [i]: The Lucifer Match', *Household Words*, 3.1, 13 April 1850, pp.54-57 (p.57).

[30] See Waters, pp.86-92, for a comparative analysis of two articles on glass factories – one by Dodd for Knight's *Penny Magazine*, and one by Dickens and Wills (likely drawing on Dodd's article) for *Household Words*.

[31] George Dodd, another recruit from the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge publications, provides an exemplar of this in a list-like article that describes an array of engineering feats, such as boilers, bridges, steamships, lighthouses, cranes and houses, which were made possible by a new construction process using iron plate and rivets. The article reduces each construction—described with numerical measurements to emphasise scale—to its smallest constituent parts, the plate and the rivet, which are measured in fractions of an inch. See George Dodd, 'The Present Hollow Time', *Household Words*, 128.5, 4 September 1852, pp.589-593.

[32] Dickens and Wills, 'Valentine's Day at the Post-Office', p.9.

to organise and master reality as subordinate to the powers of the system. The processes of division and multiplication, as outlined in the parable of the elephant, only empower the observer if they are able to comprehend and then synthesise all of the parts. In Dickens and Wills' article, the multivarious particulars make such synthesis nigh on impossible: we are not taken through a series of calculations or logical steps to reach the whole, but simply assured that it is a rational system.

Farina argues that 'deep character' in *Household Words* is formed from rhetorical moves that combine 'affective, spiritual subjectivity' through an 'idiom of mystery and secrecy', with objective, observable facts, often figured via 'self-division, paradox, and synecdoche'.[33] In this reading, such moments enact a specific mode of non-fiction, a 'clear epistemological unit', which invokes within the journal a sense of a unified, if sometimes self-contradictory, identity. Dickens and Wills' article on the post office complicates this impression however, as the narrative character is both impersonal and cognitively inadequate to the task. It might seem odd to say it is impersonal, given that the article begins with two characters who seem to represent Dickens and Wills, from a twenty-first-century perspective at least. Nonetheless, the tone is not that of distinct individuals.[34] For a start, we are distanced from the two observers, who are described in the third person by an unidentified narrator, and even the descriptions of them are wittily vague, playfully calling them 'mysterious visitors'.[35] We are told, for instance, both what they do *not* look like—'an individual who bore not the smallest resemblance to a despairing lover'—and how they move—'he retired from the counter with extraordinary *nonchalance*, and coolly walked on'—but we are not told much else about them.[36] As the article progresses, these vague descriptions soon give way to descriptions of the postal system which is, after all, the article's real focus. The impersonality, owing to the lack of specific identifying characteristics, means that

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[33] Farina, 'A Certain Shadow', pp.400-406.

[34] Menke, in his discussion of this article, identifies parallels between the description of the posting of the individual letters at the start and Dickens's recollection, in the 1847 preface to *The Pickwick Papers*, of submitting an early sketch for publication. See Menke, *Telegraphic Realism*, p.50.

[35] Dickens and Wills, 'Valentine's Day at the Post-Office', p.7.

[36] *Ibid.*, p.6.

the reader can easily slot themselves into the narrative viewpoint, but also that individuality is lost to a sense of a *someone* but not a specific person. That, combined with the narrator's insistence on the post office's incomprehensible scale, undermines the interpretative confidence of the voice itself.

Underneath the descriptive certainty of the documenting voice lies the implication that the narrator, like the reader, is just one of many interchangeable individuals who might have observed the post office. In fact, not only is the individual interchangeable, but the system is in any case too vast for observation. Levine suggests that in the novel *Bleak House*, published two years later, Dickens creates narrative suspense by withholding information at the same time as 'replacing the centrality of persons with the agency of networks', in order to portray a networked world in which information, narrative and system can never be complete, but simply extend and expand in overlapping layers of connection.[37] A similar thing happens on a smaller scale in Dickens and Wills' article, in which information is withheld, not to create suspense but instead to signal the incompleteness of the description, and where the centrality of a narrative character seems to have been replaced by the logic and agency of systems of labour beyond their comprehension. In place of a distinct individualised character to observe and narrate the account, we have a narrator defined mostly by the function they perform. At stake here is the deeper relation between self and system, a relation generalisable beyond the post office to include other large-scale systems. If the individual is defined primarily by their function, then it follows that the value ascribed to them is dictated by the system with which they are interacting and is liable to change as they move from one context to another. The postal worker performs one function at the post office and another when they post their own letters or, more widely, when they travel on a train or attend a hospital.

The usual idea of agency is explicitly reversed in Dickens and Wills' description of the post office. The physical structure of the General Post Office, an embodiment of that system, is the subject of active verbs, as in 'huge slits gape', 'sashes yawn', and 'panes open for clerks', creating the appearance that the system acts and the clerk is

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[37] Carline Levine, 'Narrative Networks: *Bleak House* and the Affordances of Form', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 3.42, (2009) pp.517-523 (p.520).

acted upon. Where people are the subjects of active verbs, they are often overwhelmed and subsumed by scale, as when they are 'up to their knees in newspapers'.[38] Dickens and Wills' use of rhetorical techniques to create a sense of character is not a gesture of individual empowerment over facts and figures, but nor is it the same as the alienated individualism in Augé's supermodernity, where all meaning is available to individual interpretation and all interpretation can therefore be critiqued as an individual's interpretation. Instead, what we see is a shift from a faith in a particular individual's interpretation to a belief in the logic of the system which takes apparent chaos and rationalises it into 'a system of admirable order, certainty, and simplicity'.[39] The article initially describes an overwhelming, even alarming, level of detail, but this is then turned into a foil for the ordering system, and the article overtly positions the workings of the system over individual judgement. We can see this in the course of a single sentence:

> All the history of the time, all the chronicled births, deaths, and marriages, all the crimes, all the accidents, all the vanities, all the changes, all the realities, of all the civilised earth, heaped up, parcelled out, carried about, knocked down, cut, shuffled, dealt, played, gathered up again, and passed from hand to hand, in an apparently interminable and hopeless confusion, but really in a system of admirable order, certainty, and simplicity, pursued six nights every week, all through the rolling year![40]

The comforting order of the system actually takes up a very small part of the text, occurring only in the final moment in a rhetorical move that tells readers to trust the system over their own perceptions: 'but really,' Dickens and Wills reassure, despite appearances, all this apparent chaos is 'a system of admirable order, certainty, and simplicity'.[41] The paragraph ends, in a final flourish, by using its progression from chaos to order as a way to reaffirm conservative Anglican values: 'Which of us, after this, shall find fault with the rather more extensive system of good and evil, when we don't quite understand it at a glance; or set the stars right in their spheres?'.[42]

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[38] Dickens and Wills, 'Valentine's Day at the Post-Office', p.9.

[39] *Ibid.*, p.9.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] *Ibid.*, p11.

Towards the end of the article, Dickens and Wills give a mildly alarmed description of the supervisory surveillance conducted on postal workers. This surveillance is in the form of 'an invisible individual' who at any given moment may or may not be 'stealthily watching behind the ground glass screen'.[43] 'Only the other day', Dickens and Wills report, this hidden supervisor is said to have 'detected a sorter secreting 140 sovereigns'.[44] For Dickens and Wills, although such surveillance is 'deplorable' it is the fault of the public for creating the temptation to steal in the first place 'by enclosing actual coin' in their post.[45] In their view, the individual clerk is powerless before situations created by the system: '[n]o man can say that, placed in such circumstances from day to day, he could be stedfast'.[46] The system thus enacts its principles and laws upon the individual. Whereas one might read the situation as a critique of a system that places a poor worker in constant temptation and under constant surveillance, in the article, the surveillance is excused by the temptation and the temptation is blamed on the public putting coins in the post. In effect, this becomes an example of a system having to mitigate the foibles of individual people and human error. The overall thrust of the article is thus to encourage readers to trust the system over their own experience, perception, and judgement. With its post slots that 'gape', 'open', and 'yawn', the system itself is personified in a way that smooths the tension between human and non-human, while glossing over the differences between individuals who become parts of the system's machinery, in a manner akin to the workers in Knight's articles on 'cheapness'. In essence, we see the two versions of society that Caroline Levine finds in Dickens's novels *Bleak House* (1853) and *Hard Times* (1854): '[w]hile *Hard Times*, by relying on synecdoche, renders society as a finite sum of social groups, *Bleak House*, by choosing networks over representative types, constantly runs up against the limits of its own capacity for representation'.[47] In Dickens and Wills' article only a few years earlier, people are represented as exchangeable parts defined by their

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[43] *Ibid.*, p.9.

[44] *Ibid.*, p.11.

[45] *Ibid.*.

[46] *Ibid.*.

[47] Levine, 'Narrative Networks: *Bleak House* and the Affordances of Form', p.522.

function within the system and as a sort of 'finite sum of social groups'. Anyone cast in the role of clerk, it is suggested, would act in the same way. However, the system itself, as a network, is constantly running up against the limits of the article's capacity for representation and, by implication, the observer's capacity for observation and understanding.

2. THE HOSPITAL

A year after the publication of 'Valentine's Day at the Post Office', Frederick Knight Hunt wrote a similar article for *Household Words* about another social institution, entitled 'Twenty-Four Hours in a London Hospital'. Knight Hunt's article offers us a useful comparison to examine how the strategy employed by Dickens and Wills to portray the post office was then adopted for other subjects in the journal's 'process' articles. Through the comparison we can begin to see how readers were encouraged to view such institutions as exemplars of a broader systemising logic, and on a more personal level, how this shapes the relation between self and system.

Knight Hunt presents the hospital as an ordered system of particulars using similar techniques to Dickens and Wills. In fact, three key strategies are at work in his article. First, he uses a similar temporal structure to Dickens and Wills, but his article begins and ends with jarring contrasts between clock time and subjective time. The article begins in the early morning with the statement that 'everything looks so dim and dark, that when you hear it [the clock] strike six, you fancy it must have made a mistake', and ends in the early hours of the next morning: 'A night nurse [...] counts the hours— these long still watches of the night—wearily enough. St. Paul's Clock speaks audibly from hour to hour. One; two; still all quiet; three [...]'.[48] Time, as measured by clocks, organises the human experience but it also chafes against it. In other words, like Dickens and Wills, Knight Hunt employs temporal discourse markers in a way that encourages readers to trust external systematisation over their own perception and judgement.

Secondly, Knight Hunt contrasts the regimented order of the hospital with the more chaotic city scenes surrounding it. The first page of the article (the entire front

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[48] Knight Hunt, 'Twenty-Four Hours in a London Hospital', pp.457-465 (p.457, p.465).

page of that particular issue of *Household Words*) makes hardly any mention of the hospital itself beyond the title, but is instead devoted to describing the city, which is 'a very whirlpool of life'.[49] Indeed, the city confounds abstract ordering:

> Look out upon the army of sheep, oxen, calves, and pigs there drawn up, all full of life, and remember, then, that all this is not three days' meat for London; that within a week all these living things will have been killed, cooked, eaten, and digested, their skins in the tan-yards, their horns in the turner's workshop, and their hoofs in the glue-pot. Gone; used up; to help feed London for just a few days, and you will have one element for making up a notion of how vast an affair this same London is. But Smithfield is not a safe place for abstraction.[50]

London literally consumes, kills, eats, digests, and uses up its 'living things', and although the city may be construed through the same scaling technique of multiplication used by Dickens and Wills for the postal system, one can only get towards a 'notion' of its vastness. Indeed, abstraction is dangerous in this place: the city moves too quickly and is too chaotic for the observer and threatens, one supposes, to use up the observer along with all the other living things. The hospital, in sharp contrast, 'stands just where it stood centuries ago', and is inhabited by nurses who possess 'withal the modes of good management requisite for preserving order, cleanliness, quiet, and an air of comfort in places where disease in its worst forms, and with its most unpleasant accompaniments, is ever present'.[51] Knight Hunt's second strategy, then, is to contrast the hospital's order and stability with the human chaos surrounding it.[52]

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[49] *Ibid.*, p.457.

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] *Ibid.*, p.458.

[52] Although not the main focus of Knight Hunt's article, it is worth noting that views of London tended towards two extremes: at the street level London was often portrayed as a bewildering chaos, while from elevated positions (panoramic views and views from balloons) London was more often portrayed as a single coherent entity. Henry Mayhew, as a striking example, longed to see London from a balloon, having focussed on its street-level chaos for his journalism. See Henry Mayhew, '"In the Clouds;" or Some Account of a Balloon Trip with Mr. Green', *Illustrated London News*, 18 September 1852, p.224.

Knight Hunt's third key strategy is the way in which he presents the order of the hospital. Knight Hunt uses multiplication to create a sense of its scale. After a detailed description of a single ward, for example, he writes: 'we have only to multiply by twenty, and the whole hospital may be, thus far, understood'.[53] This technique necessarily relies on regularity and generalisation, and thereby elides the subtle differences that naturally occur in real-life particulars. Knight Hunt's description of a single ward, although detailed, is pointedly not of a specific ward but is a generalised description of what every ward contains. When he advises multiplying up by twenty, he qualifies it: '[o]ne ward may be appropriated to medical cases, in charge of physicians: and another to accidents, and other visible injuries and diseases entrusted to surgeons: but each has the knot of resident attendants we have described'.[54] Similarly, the total number of patients might fluctuate, 'but, be the number what it may, they are arranged in companies, controlled and attended as we have seen'.[55] Regularity, then, is more important to Knight Hunt than specificity. The ordering system takes precedence over the chaos of details.

The hospital is rendered generic and decentralised in the manner of larger-scale phenomena. Even though one can stand in front of it and point to a material entity that is the hospital, it exists in Knight Hunt's text as something more complex. Knight Hunt is clear about the problems of conflating the hospital with its physical structure: although the hospital has stood, reassuringly for 'centuries', the 'present building has no remnant of the old one in its construction'.[56] One can indeed stand and look at it, but the buildings, we are told, 'give no idea of the real character, or exact extent of the place'.[57] Although one might observe a specific ward, Knight Hunt chooses not to do so because, in order to multiply to scale and conceive of the whole hospital, one must understand the generalities of *a* ward, not of *this* ward.

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[53] Knight Hunt, 'Twenty-Four Hours in a London Hospital', p.459.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] *Ibid.*, p.458.

[57] *Ibid.*

The prioritisation of general regularity over specific differences is central to both the description of the post office and the hospital. These are locatable, concrete institutions, but their 'real character', in Knight Hunt's words, is in their decentralised regularity and subordination to systematised processes. This cognitive technique employs relatively new ideas about systematic order to make the world observable, but it does so by moving away from detail to present a higher-level view. Specific wards are lost to the overview of the hospital as a formation of wards in general. The technique helps alleviate issues with overabundance, since it omits or avoids details, and also precludes Augé's third figure of individuality of reference, since such individual reference would be necessarily attentive to specific individual details.

Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of these Victorian texts is their shared attention and adherence to chronological time, an aspect of rationalisation most fully realised by the recent adoption of standardised or 'railway' time in the 1840s. Augé writes of supermodernity's excess of events, whereby too much occurs within a compressed timeframe to be properly understood within a historical framework. Yet, this impression is only made possible by the absolute rule of standardised chronology and the technologies of communication that share news of increasing numbers of events regardless of spatial distance. Overabundance requires us first to think of multiple events happening at a certain moment – at 2pm, say. If, instead of linking those events through their moment, I think of them in relation to other events at other moments through thematic connections, or I think of them as occurring separately since I was not aware of them all at the same moment but only learned about some at a later time, then my sense of overabundance becomes allayed. In fact, the number of things happening is not really the problem; the issue is that distance no longer limits the sharing of news of those events. In the supermodern context it may also be difficult to disentangle my sense of event from my learned sense of standard chronology. But in the Victorian instance, we see in texts like those in *Household Words* the instigation of standard chronology as an organising principle to waylay overabundance. The telegraph and railway might seem to annihilate space and time, but this is not seen as

a problem in these texts; instead, it allows for the homogenisation of particulars and thus helps rationalise and control them.[58]

Returning, finally, to Augé's three figures of supermodernity, we can form an overall view of the techniques employed in Dickens and Wills' account of the post office and Knight Hunt's account of the hospital. These articles begin with chaotic descriptions of London where too many things happen all at once—an 'overabundance of events' as Augé might put it—but this overabundance does not stem from the systems of infrastructure and information which sublimate the individual and particular. Instead, in an inverse of late twentieth-century supermodernity, these writers find a solution in large-scale organisational systems and suggest that the sublimation of the individual is actually the way to untangle the 'tangle of interdependences' and to process the chaotic overload of information.[59] Similarly, as in Augé's second figure—spatial overabundance—space does indeed seem both smaller and larger in these articles: we are in a single place looking at a single thing and yet to look at the hospital buildings, to consider a specific ward, is to lose the 'idea of the real character', just as to consider a single letter, or a single newspaper, or a single worker, or a single destination, is to lose sight of the whole of the post office system.[60] But again, this effect is not seen as a problem by these writers. Instead, the newly extended reach of such systems is portrayed as offering greater mastery over the world, to move out of the chaos of details, and to extend the range of influence from any given point.

To offer up some of one's individual agency—or better yet, someone else's, such as the anonymous worker or the colonial subject—was seemingly a small price to pay for the socio-economic and epistemic advantages. If, as Charles Ellet proclaimed, humanity was 'invested with a new form' by industrialisation, then these two articles in

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[58] This view was not universally shared. Elsewhere, writers were sceptical of systematic methods of ordering. For example, Beth Seltzer, argues that M.E. Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) uses railway timetables to draw attention to 'the fictions of organization and usability, the fiction that the timetable represents the real, and the fiction that detailed information denotes human meaning'. Beth Seltzer, 'Fictions of Order in the Timetable: Railway Guides, Comic Spoofs, and Lady Audley's Secret', *Victorian Review*, 1.41 (2015) pp.47-65 (p.47).

[59] Augé, p.23.

[60] Knight Hunt, 'Twenty-Four Hours in a London Hospital', p.458.

Household Words show us one way in which some writers imagined this form.[61] Although on the surface Dickens, Wills, and Knight Hunt are interested in the recent reformations of post office and hospital, underneath lies a greater interest in the ongoing reformation of individuals into industrial subjects.

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[61] 'Influence of Coal on the Progress of Mankind', p.57.

'Liberty joined with Peace and Charity': Elizabeth Inchbald and a Woman's Place in the Revolution

EVA LIPPOLD

ABSTRACT: While the French Revolution was one of the defining events of the eighteenth century, it is conspicuously absent from female-authored plays of the time. By the 1790s, women had been using the drama genre to write insightful commentary on other political issues for some time, but writing about the Revolution was accompanied by particular challenges in the form of censorship and increased concerns about sedition. Elizabeth Inchbald's 1792 drama *The Massacre* represents an exception to the stage's general reticence on the topic. While the play was not staged and the Revolution never named as explicit inspiration for the plot, Inchbald provides a detailed and moving account of the Revolution. This article analyses her perspective on the role and potential of female morality as a means for political change, focussing on the significance of Inchbald's inclusion of Madame Tricastin as a tragic martyr figure who condemns the Revolution's descent into violence. It also contextualises the unique place that both the Revolution and this particular play occupy in Inchbald's writing career.

KEYWORDS: Eighteenth-century Drama; Inchbald; French Revolution; Women Writers; Mary Wollstonecraft; Politics.

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ELIZABETH INCHBALD'S TRAGEDY *The Massacre*, written in 1792 but not performed in her lifetime, showcases her complex engagement with the major political upheavals of the late-eighteenth century – a time in which the American Revolution of 1776, the Irish Rebellion of 1798, and especially the French Revolution in 1789 contributed to a climate of uncertainty. In the midst of these events, contemporary authors tried to reflect, reflect upon, and influence current political developments through their writing, and determine how the extraordinary changes in the political landscape would impact their own society. Previous analyses of *The Massacre* have highlighted Inchbald's interest in documenting the Terror of the French Revolution, and her interaction with and

adaption of French culture and literary genres.[1] Building on this existing scholarship, this article focuses on Inchbald's consideration of female morality as a potential means for political change, and her often critical interpretation of the Revolution's tenets of liberty and equality. In particular, analysis of Inchbald's representation of women's role in reforming society reveals remarkable connections with the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. Through *The Massacre's* tragic female character Madame Tricastin, Inchbald develops a nuanced analysis of themes also featured in Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman,*engaging in a similar exploration of the position of women in a rapidly changing society, and the factors that could impede their full participation in political discourse.

As Mathew Kinservik has noted, 'Many critics and artists in the eighteenth century […] insisted that literature and politics were necessarily interrelated', and this interrelation is particularly noticeable in the last, revolutionary decades of the century.[2] The increased fusion of political discourse and debate with the literature of this time coincided with a remarkable increase in the number of women working as professional authors, particularly in the field of playwriting; Betty Schellenberg has calculated that 'women increased […] from being responsible for approximately 14 percent of all new novels for the three decades of 1750 to 1779 […] to a slight majority of known authors at the end of the century.'[3] For female playwrights, Judith Phillips Stanton notes that only two new women playwrights were published in 1760-69; thirteen in 1770-79, another thirteen in the 1780s; and sixteen in the 1790s.[4] This rise in numbers gave readers and theatre audiences an unprecedented opportunity to hear political

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[1] John Robbins, 'Documenting Terror in Elizabeth Inchbald's *The Massacre', SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900,* 57.3 (2017) pp.605-619; Wendy C. Nielsen, 'A Tragic Farce: Revolutionary Women in Elizabeth Inchbald's The Massacre and European Drama', *European Romantic Review*, 17.3 (2006) pp.275-288.

[2] Mathew J. Kinservik, 'Reconsidering Theatrical Regulation in the Long Eighteenth Century', in *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance 1660 – 1800,* ed. by Michael Cordner and Peter Holland (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) pp.152-171 (p.166).

[3] Betty A. Schellenberg, *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) p.17.

[4] Judith Phillips Stanton, 'Statistical Profile of Women Writing in English from 1660 to 1800', in *Eighteenth-century Women and the Arts*, ed. by Frederick Keener and Susan E. Lorsch (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988) pp.247-253 (p.251).

commentary written by a variety of female voices. It also confirmed that these women writers had access to both stage and audience, making their engagement with the political landscape an intensely public one. As a writer of eighteen plays, Inchbald can certainly be counted as a prominent voice among them and *The Massacre* sees her using that voice in a new way, as she negotiated a particularly careful balance between boldness and respectability. In her book *Women, Nationalism and the Romantic Stage*, Betsy Bolton has found that '[t]he careers of female dramatists depended on their political innocence or neutrality – yet their plays might well engage political issues within a pose of female domesticity'.[5] Inchbald usually maintained this 'pose' by writing in the genre of domestic comedy, but in *The Massacre* she takes on both a new genre— tragedy—and a new theme: revolution. The tragic ending of the play, combined with Inchbald's inability to publish it during her lifetime, reflects in some ways the failure of the Revolution to bring about a new equality, especially where women were concerned.

While the number of female literary voices at the end of the eighteenth century is remarkable, it was not unprecedented for women writers to comment on contemporary politics; Aphra Behn and Delarivier Manley, among others, had made names for themselves by writing political satire in the previous century. Playwriting and the theatre had always been a place for political engagement. Plays were relatively quick to write and to produce compared to longer poems and novels, so that playwrights could react to contemporary events much faster than novelists. This meant, for example, that Hannah Cowley could set her play *A Day in Turkey* (1792) during the Russo-Turkish War (1787-1792) only a few months after the war had ended, and Mariana Starke's *The Sword of Peace* (1788) could comment directly on the ongoing trial of Warren Hastings and Cornwallis' new approach to governing India.[6] Playwright Arthur Murphy (1727-1805) remarked on the close association between theatre and politics in the period, claiming that the 'theatre engrossed the minds of men to such a degree [...] that there existed in England a fourth estate, Kings, Lords and Commons and Drury

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[5] Betsy Bolton, *Women, Nationalism, and the Romantic Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) p.39.

[6] Jeanne Moskal, 'English National Identity in Mariana Starke's "The Sword of Peace": India, Abolition, and the Rights of Women', in Catherine Burroughs (ed.), *Women in British Romantic Theatre: Drama, Performance, and Society, 1790-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp.102-132.

Lane Playhouse'.[7] As a result of this close association, plays presented on the eighteenth-century stage had the potential to influence the political perceptions of their audiences, as well as reflecting contemporary political developments.

While there was therefore nothing inherently new about the representation of political events in the theatre, late eighteenth-century female playwrights who wrote about politics faced a number of unique restrictions. As playwrights, they were restricted by official theatre legislation in the form of the Licensing Act of 1737, which enabled the Lord Chamberlain to censor or reject plays on the grounds of controversial political content. As women, they were additionally restricted by their society's changed expectations about female morality.[8] Unlike Behn and Manley, eighteenth-century female playwrights could not have written an openly satirical work about their politicians, as to do this would have resulted in censorship of their manuscript by the Examiner of Plays, and in censure of the playwright herself by her audience and critics. Hannah More warned in 1799 that any woman in the public eye must be prepared to have 'her sex always taken into account'.[9] When a woman wrote a play, her audience and critics would examine not only what she had written, but also whether it was appropriate for a *woman* to have written it. The rules of the Licensing Act of course applied to writers of both sexes, but the disproportionate amount of scrutiny female-authored works received in the press implies that women had to be particularly careful not to step outside the parameters of what was considered respectable.[10] Female playwrights depended on their reputation as respectable women in order to continue their professional careers – producing a play was in many ways a collaborative effort, and depended on social connections which had to be continually maintained. Especially during the time of the French Revolution, women in the public eye had to be careful

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[7] Qtd. in Linda Kelly, *The Kemble Era: John Philip Kemble, Sarah Siddons, and the London Stage* (London: Bodley Head, 1980), p.31.

[8] Barbara Darby has written about this parallel between the stage and society in *Frances Burney, Dramatist: Gender, Performance, and the Late Eighteenth-century Stage* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1997).

[9] Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1799) pp.12-13.

[10] Greg Kucich, 'Reviewing Women in British Romantic Theatre', in *Women in British Romantic Theatre: Drama, Performance, and Society, 1790-1840*, ed. by Catherine Burroughs (Cambridge: CUP, 2000) pp.48-78 (p.50).

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not to be perceived, and consequently shunned, as part of the threat to British respectability.[11]

The events of the Revolution made the tension between the theatre's political engagement and the increasing restrictions on what could be represented especially apparent. Any examination of literature published at this time shows that the French Revolution influenced novelists, poets, diarists, painters, and generally artists of any kind, including Mary Wollstonecraft, William Wordsworth, and Helen Maria Williams among many others. George Taylor has argued that 'throughout this period of cultural crisis, the popular theatre embodied and reflected in many forms not only the material concerns but also many of the wider, less tangible, anxieties of its audiences.'[12] Playwrights were concerned not only with the potential danger to human lives that the Revolution represented, but with the less immediately obvious effect it had on their society and its culture and values. Female playwrights had very effectively used their access to the stage to reflect contemporary concerns before. For example, Elizabeth Griffith's *The Platonic Wife* (1765) had shown the precarious legal and financial situation of women leaving their marriages. Inchbald herself had taken on the issue of prison reform in her play *Such Things Are* (1787), and her novel *A Simple Story* (1791) has been credited with co-founding the English Jacobin Novel.[13] Generally, therefore, female playwrights were neither apolitical nor afraid to comment on politics, despite the official restrictions of the Licensing Act. On the matter of the French Revolution, however, female playwrights remained mostly silent. The extent of the cultural anxieties caused by the Revolution in the late-eighteenth century and the increasing number of trials for treason in Britain during the 1790s contributed significantly to a cultural environment in which it was simply safer to avoid the subject.[14]

Inchbald's *The Massacre*, the only female-authored play of this time that is clearly about the French Revolution, therefore stands out not just in the context of Inchbald's own career, but also among the works of female playwrights more broadly.

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[11] See Tim Fulford, *Romanticism and Masculinity: Gender, Politics and Poetics in the Writings of Burke, Coleridge, Cobbett, Wordsworth, De Quincey and Hazlitt* (London: Macmillan, 1999) p.5.

[12] George Taylor, *The French Revolution and the London Stage 1789-1805* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) p.14.

[13] Gary Kelly, *The English Jacobin Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

[14] Kenneth R. Johnston, *Unusual Suspects: Pitt's Reign of Alarm and the Lost Generation of the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) p.xiv.

While the massacre of the title supposedly refers to the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in France in 1572, it is quite obvious to the reader that Inchbald is writing about the September massacres of 1792.[15] The timing of Inchbald's production of the text, the setting of the play, and finally the fact that the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre is hardly mentioned, heavily imply that the story is about contemporary events in France. The September massacres were a period of unprecedented violence during the French Revolution. France's struggle in the war against Austria and Prussia, combined with internal conflicts about the country's new government, led to increased anxiety and paranoia about treachery. Encouraged by rumours of a counter-revolutionary plot, mobs attacked prisons in Paris and executed prisoners, often finding them guilty of treason in impromptu courts. By the end of the massacres, over a thousand people had become victims of this violence. It was one of the events that contributed to the opposition against the Revolution in other countries, especially in Britain.[16]

Inchbald's play represents this undercurrent of violence and paranoia by showing its effects on a French family, the Tricastins – consisting of husband and wife, their young children, and the husband's father – who are in danger of being executed by a revolutionary mob. The father and son are captured and put on trial; the judge, chosen by the citizens, reveals himself to be a moderate and sensible man who protects them after nobody can offer any tangible evidence that they have committed a crime. The leader of the mob threatens them with his soldiers, but the soldiers also refuse to harm the Tricastins without cause. However, having survived this incident at the trial, father and son learn that Madame Tricastin and her children have been murdered by the mob. Simply from a summary of the plot, it becomes clear that this play is unlike anything else Inchbald wrote. She often referred to current political and social issues in her writing, but usually she mitigated her commentary on these issues with comedic elements and more light-hearted storylines, and most of her plays have separate

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[15] See Ben P. Robertson, *Elizabeth Inchbald's Reputation: A Publishing and Reception History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015) p.95.

[16] Alexander Mikaberidze (ed.), *Atrocities, Massacres, and War Crimes: An Encyclopedia*, 2 vols (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2013) I, p.594; Mary Ashburn Miller, *A Natural History of Revolution: Violence and Nature in the French Revolutionary Imagination, 1789-1794* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp.58-59.

interwoven plots with different themes.[17] *The Massacre*, in contrast, only consists of one storyline, which is heavily focused on the intersection of female morality and revolutionary change.

Critical opinion is somewhat divided as to whether Inchbald intended the play to be produced as a performance or simply published as a text. Melynda Nuss, for example, calls it a closet drama, arguing that while Inchbald did want to publish the play text, the play itself was never intended for the stage.[18] Annibel Jenkins, however, writes that Inchbald did send the manuscript to a theatre manager and was rejected.[19] Considering the play text in detail, the assumption that Inchbald did intend it as a closet drama seems reasonable. The play has only three acts, making it easier and quicker to read at home; there is very little physical action and a great deal of dialogue, making it less well-suited for a live theatrical production due to its static nature. Most tellingly, there are only two female roles and one, that of Amédée, is practically non-speaking. Inchbald usually wrote many good roles for actresses, having been an actress herself, so to suddenly deprive her colleagues of good parts in this play is quite out of character. For a closet play, the character division makes more sense: Inchbald would not be concerned about writing roles for other actresses in a play that was never going to reach the stage, and female readers at home would find it easier to read through the play with members of their own families, or perhaps a friend. Additionally, a preliminary note to the posthumously published text informs us that, '[t]his play was suppressed, though printed, before publication in deference to political opinions'.[20] This suggests that Inchbald had considered publishing the play as a printed, though not performed, text before the increasingly volatile political situation dissuaded her. The non-public nature of *The Massacre* accounts partly for how much it differs from Inchbald's other

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[17] See Misty G. Anderson, 'Genealogies of Comedy', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre 1737-1832,* ed. by Julia Swindells and David Francis Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) pp.348-367 (p.352).

[18] Melynda Nuss, *Distance, Theatre, and the Public Voice, 1750-1850* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p.36.

[19] Annibel Jenkins, *I'll Tell You What: The Life of Elizabeth Inchbald* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015) p.318.

[20] Elizabeth Inchbald, *Memoirs of Mrs. Inchbald, Including her Familiar Correspondence with the Most Distinguished Persons of her Time,* ed. by James Boaden (London: Bentley, 1833) p.356.

works. It is also, of course, a tragedy, and therefore stands out from the comedies which were usually her genre of choice.

The play represents a departure for Inchbald not only in its form, but also in its tone and characterisation. She very rarely writes about anything in an entirely sombre tone, and even serious subjects in her other plays are frequently treated with a dry, black humour. But in this instance the play is entirely serious, and this shift in tone and approach indicates, perhaps, Inchbald's awareness of the Revolution's tremendous impact on her society and culture. The play is intended to shock her readers rather than to entertain them, and includes no comedic elements that might soften or mitigate the terror of the Revolution. In her preface to *The Massacre*, Inchbald introduces her work by quoting Horace Walpole's statement about his own play *The Mysterious Mother*:

> The subject is so horrid, that I thought it would shock, rather than give satisfaction, to an audience. Still I found it so truly tragic in the essential springs of *terror* and *pity*, that I could not resist the impulse of adapting it to the scene, though it never could be practicable to produce it there.[21]

Inchbald states how applicable this comment is to the subsequent pages, and 'imagines that no further reason requires to be alleged for their not having been produced at one of our theatres'.[22] Having provided this explanation, she then adds that the play's plot is 'founded upon circumstances which have been related as *facts*, and which the unhappy state of a neighbouring nation does but too powerfully give reason to credit'.[23] This statement serves a twofold purpose: it refers obliquely to the Revolution without actually naming it, and lends Inchbald the objective authority of reported '*facts*', helping her to pre-empt any accusation of merely inventing a story for her own (or others') entertainment. John Robbins in his analysis of the drama has shown how Inchbald here 'positions herself as a member not only of the reading public but also of the news-gathering and news-interpreting media structure'.[24] This positioning, along with her insistence on the factual nature of the story suggests she is writing out of public

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[21] Elizabeth Inchbald, *The Massacre,* in *Memoirs of Mrs. Inchbald, Including her Familiar Correspondence with the Most Distinguished Persons of her Time,* ed. by James Boaden (London: Bentley, 1833) p.357.

[22] Inchbald, *The Massacre*, p.357.

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] Robbins, 'Documenting Terror in Elizabeth Inchbald's *The Massacre*', p.614.

and, crucially, moral duty, reporting the unfortunate realities of the Revolution even though she and her readers may find it uncomfortable.

In the same vein, Walpole's remark also constitutes a kind of warning: if the reader was expecting one of Inchbald's usual comedies, they were to abandon that expectation immediately. The play itself certainly deserves this warning; the scenes in which the mob threatens the Tricastins, and the description of Madame Tricastin's death (III, 2) contain graphic violence, and the main characters are in mortal peril for almost the entire story. The play starts with Tricastin narrowly escaping death on a visit to Paris, where he describes seeing children being killed in their sleep, and 'the Seine – its water blushed with blood', which 'bore upon its bosom disfigured bodies'.[25] Inchbald asserts the historical accuracy of these events in a footnote, which tellingly refers to the St. Bartholomew's massacre only as an afterthought:

> Shocking, even to incredibility, as these murders may appear, the truth of them has been asserted in many of our public prints during the late massacre at Paris; and the same extravagant wickedness is attested to have been acted at the massacre of St. Bartholomew.[26]

This sense of shocking violence accompanies the Tricastins throughout the rest of the play until, tragically, Madame Tricastin becomes its victim. Inchbald's representation of violence as a constant threat captures the turbulent atmosphere of the September massacres, in which events were unpredictable and deaths occurred frequently. It also reflects the mood in Britain, where the volatile situation in Europe caused concern and uncertainty. The threat of mob violence, 'the fury of the multitude', was an especially present one for someone as closely associated with the theatre as Inchbald, since theatre audiences had a history of becoming violent to express their displeasure.[27] Both Drury Lane and Covent Garden had seen riots in 1744 and 1763 respectively, and more theatre riots would occur at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Robert Shoemaker has argued that those living in London were especially aware and cautious of mob violence, as the large population of the city facilitated this method of expressing anger or disagreement:

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[25] Inchbald, *The Massacre*, p.365.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.*, p.372.

Violence, insult and riot were frequently used in order to defend and enhance Londoners' reputations and advance their interests. Although most such disorder was limited by cultural norms, it generated real fears of mob rule among those with power and property.[28]

Inchbald's representation of a constant undercurrent of hostility reflects these anxieties at a time when they were fuelled by the violence of the French Revolution, and events such as the Priestley Riots (1791) brought the fear of hostile crowds home to England.[29]

However, despite the threatening atmosphere prevailing throughout Inchbald's play, her work is not primarily about the physical dangers of revolution, but instead reflects on the concept of morality in challenging times. The play explores what it means to be a good citizen, and how good citizens react when faced with violence. In the context of the French Revolution, ideas of personal liberty and responsibility are predictably an important theme, and crucially, all the characters believe in the concept of liberty, though they interpret it in very different ways. Glandeve, the judge, declares: 'If I am a friend to freedom, my first object is, freedom of *thought*', advocating for the right to express a political stance regardless of whether it contradicts his own. The leader of the mob, Dugas, argues for 'the voice of the people', who have collectively invested him with the power to arrest and charge those he feels are against the principles of the Revolution.[30] Their differing views are made particularly obvious in the following exchange, in which Glandeve refuses to sentence the captured Tricastins without evidence:

> DUGAS: I thought, Glandeve, you were the sworn friend of Liberty?
> GLANDEVE: And so I am — Liberty, I worship. But, my friends, 'tis liberty to do good, not ill — liberty joined with peace and charity. (III, 2)

While Dugas may appear as the villain of the piece, he believes he is doing what is right – he is also on the side of liberty. Although Inchbald certainly favours Glandeve's approach, none of her characters are painted as simply morally good or bad; instead Inchbald shows them as occasionally making morally questionable choices because of

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[28] Robert Shoemaker, *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-century England* (London: Continuum, 2007) pp.24-26.

[29] See Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p.47.

[30] Inchbald, *The Massacre*, p.376.

their mistaken views or the influence of outside circumstances. Later in the same scene, Tricastin attacks Dugas with a knife, intending to kill him. Glandeve prevents him from doing so, and his standing between the two opponents makes such an impression on Tricastin that he immediately gives up his weapon. Dugas retaliates by calling in his soldiers to kill the Tricastins, but they refuse to carry out the execution. Their colonel remarks:

> Yes, Sir, my brave men have received your commands; and this is their brave reply: — They are all men of courage— all ready to enter the field of battle against an insulting foe, and boldly kill him; but, amongst the whole battalion, we have not one hangman. (III, 2)[31]

His repetition of the words 'brave' and 'courage' emphasises that refusing to use violence here is neither an act of cowardice nor an act motivated by fear of consequences. In the case of both Tricastin and the soldiers, refraining from violence is the more difficult and more courageous choice. This, Inchbald is saying, is real liberty: the ability to apply reason and restraint to a situation, even if it results in a personal disadvantage. She does not support any particular side of the conflict; she does not even seem to object entirely to the conflict itself, as the play does not condemn the act of revolution. What is important to her is the manner in which such conflicts are fought. It is difficult to know precisely what Inchbald's personal views on the French Revolution were at this time, but it is very clear in this play that she objected to the indiscriminate violence and lack of humanity that characterised the Reign of Terror.[32] Her comments on the Revolution, at least in this instance, are not focused on its politics but on its morality. Wollstonecraft similarly explored the idea of liberty in *Vindication* when she wrote, '[l]iberty is the mother of virtue, and if women be, by their very constitution, slaves, and not allowed to breathe the sharp invigorating air of freedom, they must ever languish like exotics, and be reckoned beautiful flaws in nature'.[33] Like Inchbald,

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[31] Inchbald includes a footnote stating that these lines are based on an actual reply sent by a military commander during the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre (p.378, fn.1).

[32] Inchbald wrote an autobiographical work, which might have given us more insight into her opinions; however, she eventually destroyed it on the advice of her confessor. Her published *Memoirs* were heavily edited by James Boaden.

[33] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p.103.

Wollstonecraft emphasises the important role liberty plays in enabling conscious choice, and explicitly links the concepts of personal freedom and morality.

Wollstonecraft's demand for liberty in her *Vindication* is of course specifically advocating on behalf of women; it may appear from this analysis so far that *The Massacre*, in contrast, is very centred on male characters – and, in comparison with Inchbald's other works, it certainly is. Madame Tricastin is the only female character with any significant dialogue and stage time, and even her presence is quite limited. She functions mainly as a representation of the humanity and morality which Inchbald identifies as vital in preventing a descent into bloodshed and revenge. Madame Tricastin is a constant reminder of how male violence during a revolution affects women's lives. She is the only named character who dies in the play, and throughout the story, she tries to prevent violence and rash decisions. She does this first by telling Tricastin, 'let us fly the danger which threatens us [...] the infection of the metropolis still spreads – let us leave this city – nay, the land'; when he objects, she reminds him that he has a family who would be devastated if he died in the fighting.[34] She does this again in the second act, trying to prevent Tricastin from killing either himself or others by taking his weapon from him: 'Why do you hold that poniard in your hand? – do you mean to turn it against yourself? Oh! Give it me'.[35] In the last act, Madame Tricastin is herself killed by the mob; the soldiers who witness this are so affected by her death that they no longer engage in combat but instead guard her corpse from being mistreated. They carry her to the hall in which the judgement of the Tricastin men is taking place, where she becomes a powerful visual symbol of the consequences of violence. The shock of seeing her dead body prompts Glandeve to reaffirm the need for reason and humanity, and his final speech functions as both a political statement and her eulogy:

> My friends, I conjure you to take every care that the perpetrators of this barbarous outrage are secured. [...] Then, the good (of all parties) will conspire to extirpate such monsters from the earth. It is not party principles which cause this devastation; 'tis want of sense — 'tis guilt — for the first precept in our Christian laws is charity — the next obligation — to extend that charity EVEN TO OUR ENEMIES.[36]

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[34] Inchbald, *The Massacre*, p.365.

[35] *Ibid.*, p.369.

[36] *Ibid.*, pp.379-80.

His fervent insistence on universal charity and mercy rather than party politics shows him as a proponent of active Christianity, a concept Inchbald also champions in some of her other plays – especially *Such Things Are* (1787), in which the story's moral heart, Haswell, takes a compassionate and charitable stance that resembles Glandeve's.[37] Both characters are men with considerable social influence, and both show an approach to leadership that values compassion; where Dugas' method is to create division by identifying those he considers enemies, both Glandeve and Haswell aim to create equality. A system of values which is based on equal treatment for everyone clearly represents an improvement for women who were frequently faced with unequal treatment. Madame Tricastin is a victim of the division in society caused by the identification of certain groups as enemies, and Glandeve's more equitable approach represents the best hope of avoiding further deaths.

Female characters participate less actively in both these plays, as their main function is to help both the male characters and the audience to determine the morally right thing to do. It is undeniable that this representation of women is far more conservative than making the heroine a witty woman who outsmarts others to get what she wants; this kind of heroine is a more frequent feature in Inchbald's comedies and is rooted in the unapologetically outspoken women of Restoration drama, such as Aphra Behn's Hellena and Widow Ranter.[38] *The Massacre*'s characterisation of Madame Tricastin owes much more to late eighteenth-century texts which cast women as supporting characters who help to civilise male society – ideas which would later evolve into the Victorian ideal of the Angel in the House.[39] In the context of *The Massacre*'s exploration of moral citizenship, Madame Tricastin's passivity also signals her exclusion from participating fully in that citizenship; she has no actual political or legal power, only entering the male space of the courthouse as a symbolic dead body, not as an active participant. While Tricastin, Glandeve, and Dugas have the ability to make

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[37] Michael Tomko provides a more detailed exploration of *The Massacre's* religious aspects in 'Remembering Elizabeth Inchbald's The Massacre: Romantic cosmopolitanism, sectarian history, and religious difference', *European Romantic Review*, 19.1, pp.1-18.

[38] For an exploration of Restoration drama's 'unruly' women, see Rebecca Merrens, 'Unmanned with Thy Words: Regendering Tragedy in Manley and Trotter', in *Broken Boundaries: Women and Feminism in Restoration Drama*, ed. by Katherine M. Quinsey (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996) pp.31-50.

[39] Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (London, Paris & Melbourne: Cassell and Company, 1891).

impactful choices – even to make the wrong choices, if it supports Inchbald's representation of the importance of a reasoned pursuit of freedom – Madame Tricastin's own liberty is limited. Wendy Nielsen has argued that, '[i]n Inchbald's dramatic plots, mothers and wives are legitimate targets for political wrath but do not share the same privileges as their male relatives.'[40] Consequently, rather than being an active heroine, Madame Tricastin becomes a passive symbol, recalling in some way Edmund Burke's synecdochic use of Marie Antoinette as a representation of the lawless revolutionaries' destruction of genteel, feminine virtue and motherhood.[41] She represents liberty and morality as theoretical concepts, but is never able to actively employ them in a way which improves her own life in a practical manner – she only demonstrates them to others.

In many other female-authored plays of this period, public displays of female virtue are more actively influential and can sometimes function as catalysts for social change, which is often achieved through a female character demonstrating such unrelenting virtue that other characters are compelled to change their own behaviour by her example. In Inchbald's own *Every One Has His Fault*, Eleanor Norland's virtue reforms her father Lord Norland, and Miss Wooburn shames her rakish husband Sir Ramble into reversing their separation (though in Ramble's case there is some doubt as to how permanent this change will be). Similar instances can also be found in Elizabeth Griffith's *The Platonic Wife*, in which Emilia is able to defend herself against the predatory Mr. Frankland through her steadfast belief in her own virtuousness when he threatens her '[w]ith one of the greatest misfortunes that can possibly befal [sic] an innocent young woman — the loss of reputation, madam.' She replies: '[m]y character, Sir, is far above the reach of malice, nor has the tongue of slander ever yet pronounced my name.'[42] Similar words are spoken by Seraphina in Hannah Cowley's *School for Greybeards* (1786): 'A woman, who respects herself [...], is safe in every situation; – she ne'er incurs risk, who has sense of Duty for her Guard!'[43] In all these instances, women use their morality as an active virtue, and their 'sense of Duty' and moral rightness has

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[40] Nielsen, 'A Tragic Farce: Revolutionary Women in Elizabeth Inchbald's The Massacre and European Drama', p.83.

[41] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Dodsley, 1790) p.78.

[42] Elizabeth Griffith, *The Platonic Wife* (Dublin: Wilson et al., 1765) II. 1.

[43] Hannah Cowley, *A School for Greybeards, or, the Mourning Bride* (Dublin: Porter, 1787) V. 5.

a noticeable effect on others around them. In this they resemble Madame Tricastin, but there is one crucial difference: her virtue improves things for others, but not for herself, whereas female characters in other plays benefit in some way – either by reconciliation, marriage, or increased social standing. In *The Massacre*, the concept of female virtue succeeds in reforming society only to some extent, and that reform comes at a heavy price for the female character.

Tricastin even addresses his wife as a 'Dying saint', explicitly linking the reforming example of her exceptional virtue with the sacrifice of her life.[44] His characterisation of her as a saintly figure, however, also points to an unequal dynamic in their relationship – his idealisation of her fragility places her in a situation in which her self-sacrifice is almost expected as part of her role of virtuous martyr. Wollstonecraft argued that this attitude of courtly gallantry towards women impeded their ability to make rational and practical choices:

> 'It seems natural for man to search for excellence, and either to trace it in the object that he worships, or blindly to invest it with perfection, as a garment. But what good effect can the latter mode of worship have on the moral conduct of a rational being?'[45]

Inchbald similarly identifies the social expectations of female passivity and delicacy, which have placed Madame Tricastin in an inescapable situation, as the cause of her inability to defend herself. The play shows that Madame Tricastin's helplessness is not an innate part of her character, but has rather been encouraged by external influences. When Tricastin decides that flight is impossible and they should attempt to fight their attackers, his friend Menancourt suggests that Madame Tricastin should have a weapon as well:

> MENANCOURT: Give her an instrument of death to defend herself — our female enemies use them to our cost.
> EUSEBE: No, by Heaven! so sacred do I hold the delicacy of her sex, that could she with a breath lay all our enemies dead, I would not have her feminine virtues violated by the act.[46]

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[44] Inchbald, *The Massacre*, p.379.

[45] Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, p.114.

[46] *Ibid.*, p.368.

His refusal to even consider that his wife should be able to defend herself means that once she is separated from him, there is no possibility of her fighting back. Her 'delicacy' and 'feminine virtues' are of no practical help at all to her, since they cannot protect her. She is almost too virtuous for her own good, and her (and her family's) idea of female virtue is one of passivity. Inchbald thus suggests that trying to be too delicate and self-sacrificial, and basing one's sense of self exclusively on maintaining a state of extreme virtuousness is actively harmful to women. Her ideas here show especially remarkable parallels to Wollstonecraft's critique of the cultivation of helplessness, and society's view of women 'as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone'.[47] In her introduction to the *Vindication*, Wollstonecraft 'wish[es] to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of body and mind'.[48] Madame Tricastin's death can certainly be attributed to a lack of strength on her part – because of the difference in physical strength between her female body and those of her male attackers, but also because of her inability to contradict her husband's decisions – so Inchbald is here similarly considering the negative consequences of discouraging women from acquiring the power to 'stand alone', both mentally and physically. While Inchbald uses a more subtle approach here compared to Wollstonecraft's forthright style, it is remarkable how comparable they are in their critique of the artificial passivity society encouraged women to perform.

Wollstonecraft was, in some ways, fairly confident about the potential for women to achieve equality through a reform of their society and education:

> It is time to effect a revolution in female manners – time to restore to them their lost dignity – and make them, as part of the human species, labour by reforming themselves to reform the world. It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners.[49]

Inchbald is rather less optimistic in *The Massacre*. Madame Tricastin possesses the 'unchangeable morals' that Wollstonecraft champions; her first speech in the play shows that her character prioritises sincere affection over material wealth: 'I condemn avarice; and yet, was gold half so precious to me as the society of my dear Eusèbe

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[47] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p.73

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] *Ibid.*, p.113.

Tricastin, I should be most avaricious!'.[50] When she is surrounded by the mob, she tries to shield her children: 'The eldest, to the last, she held fast by the hand – the youngest she pressed violently to her bosom, and, struggling to preserve, received the murderer's blow through its breast, to her own.'[51] Her speech and actions are always intended to foreground her virtue, and thus it becomes her defining characteristic. As a consequence, her husband seems to be more concerned about a potential loss of her virtue than he is about the loss of her life. Tricastin is clearly influenced by 'local manners' – contemporary ideas about the nature and value of female morality – in his indignant response to the idea of his wife wielding a weapon. He considers it a serious transgression that would have 'violated' her, equating the sanctity of her female body with her feminine virtue; in his idealisation of her virtue, he chooses to 'blindly invest [her] with perfection', and she is therefore unable to escape the passive vulnerability he expects of her.[52] Inchbald's fictional characters perfectly illustrate the same argument Wollstonecraft makes in her more theoretical, philosophical treatise – that rigid definitions of respectable and appropriate female behaviour could leave women with very little choice or agency.

Violence is established throughout the play as the morally incorrect choice, and by 1792, female physical violence especially had become associated with chaos and societal breakdown rather than empowerment.[53] Unable to defend herself physically, and without access to legal or institutional protection, Madame Tricastin is left with no material defence. Like Wollstonecraft, Inchbald recognises the need for large-scale reform if women are to participate actively in society to the same degree as men. However, Inchbald's representation focusses on the potential cost and resistance that any female reformer might encounter both on a personal and an institutional level by representing the circular and finally fatal moral standards women are required to uphold. Ultimately, it can be argued that Madame Tricastin does succeed in effecting some reform in her society, as Glandeve's speech promises 'an end to blind obedience'

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[50] Inchbald, *The Massacre*, p.351.

[51] *Ibid.*, p.379.

[52] Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, p.114.

[53] Wendy C. Nielsen, *Women Warriors in Romantic Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2013) p.116.

and a prioritisation of reason and charity, but this reform comes too late for her.[54] No female characters, except for the dead Madame Tricastin, are present in the last scene of the play. Therefore the reforming of society, though prompted by the death of a woman, is ultimately led and conducted by men and only results in material benefits for the male characters. A great deal of the sense of unease and danger present in this play stem from the fact that reform can only be enacted by a woman if it is accompanied by her self-sacrifice.

In comparison, Inchbald's representation of women's ability to affect societal reform is not quite so pessimistic in some of her other plays; *Every One Has His Fault* and *Such Things Are* both end with strides having been made towards a more reasonable and humane society, which also visibly improves the lives of the female characters that most closely resemble Madame Tricastin (Eleanor and Arabella, respectively). However, in both plays this reform is supported by a male character with institutional power: in *Such Things Are* by Haswell the prison reformer, who has the ear of the Sultan of Sumatra; and in *Every One Has His Fault* by the wealthy Lord Norland. The female characters in these plays are also put in danger—with Eleanor living in poverty and Arabella in prison—but accounts of their suffering prompt the Sultan and Norland to institute reforms which enable the women to escape those dangers, and will prevent other women from facing similar situations in future. While these two female characters therefore avoid Madame Tricastin's tragic fate, Inchbald uses them to consider the same duality of reform that she includes in *The Massacre*: she simultaneously acknowledges the role of women in reforming society, and the fact that those reforming women face societal barriers. The publication of *Every One Has His Fault* in 1793 proves that Inchbald was not silenced by the repressive atmosphere that followed the Revolution, but it also shows the potential danger she was in; her cynical social satire in this play earned her the *True Briton's* accusation of being a *'Democrat'*, implying that her intention was to undermine the British government and monarchy.[55] As Angela Smallwood has noted however, *Every One Has His Fault* is positioned more carefully than *The Massacre* 'to operate on the margins of radical ideas and discourse.'[56]

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[54] Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, p.90.

[55] *The True Briton*, 30 January 1793, Issue 26.

[56] Angela Smallwood, 'Women Playwrights, Politics and Convention: the Case of Elizabeth Inchbald's "Seditious" Comedy, Every One Has His Fault (1793)', *CW3 Journal*, 1 (2004) [n.p].

Despite its political content, *Every One* does not mention revolution, and is framed as a domestic comedy. *The Massacre,* trying to do without these safeguards, probably exceeded the safe margins within which Inchbald usually operated.

The Massacre is an intriguing development in Inchbald's writing career, both in her discarding of the domestic comedy frame and in its ambiguity. Some of this ambiguity comes from external sources: the uncertainty of its status as an unperformed play, a text published after the author's death, a reflection on a contemporary event that masquerades as a historical one, and the unusual choice of genre on Inchbald's part. The contents of the text itself have invited a variety of interpretations of Inchbald's intentions, as well as revealing a marked uncertainty surrounding the status and safety of women in public spaces, particularly in revolutionary spaces. The ambiguity inherent in the text perhaps speaks to Inchbald's own uncertainty regarding the extent to which women could enact political reform, and her awareness of her own precarious status as a writer in a time when other authors were being censored and prosecuted for sedition. After *The Massacre,* Inchbald returned to writing the comedies for which she was known, which perhaps allowed her to write in a safer and more clearly defined mode. The political content in these plays operates within the traditional structure of the domestic comedy, and Inchbald herself could therefore define herself as a comic writer rather than a radical one.

Amy Garnai has described Inchbald's career as one 'defined by caution', and this caution is in some ways present in *The Massacre*, both in its careful framing as a documentation of historical violence and as a closet drama, and in the reservations it expresses about the effectiveness of revolution and reforms in female manners.[57] The fact that the French Revolution could not be safely framed within the genre of a domestic comedy, in combination with the increased anxiety surrounding potential threats and treason against the British government, certainly justified any female playwright's cautious approach to the subject. To abandon caution, as Mary Wollstonecraft did, and comment openly on the Revolution without any attempt to soften the blow, was to risk isolating oneself socially and professionally. On the other hand, Madame Tricastin, standing alone against the mob, exemplifies the precarious situation in which a woman in the public sphere might find herself without institutional or social support. Even from her relatively secure position as an established writer with

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[57] *Ibid.*, p.703.

a good reputation, Inchbald was keenly aware of the restrictions placed on playwrights, writing that, '[t]he novelist is a free agent. He lives in a land of liberty, whilst The Dramatic Writer exists but under a despotic government.'[58]

Given these restricting circumstances, writing about the Revolution in the first place was a remarkably bold stroke in 1792, and one that speaks to Inchbald's underlying potential for radicalism. Other critics such as Gary Kelly and John Robbins have previously explored the radical tendencies present in Inchbald's writing, and her connection with male radical writers such as Holcroft and Godwin. Her connection to Wollstonecraft, however, has been much less widely acknowledged, perhaps partly because Inchbald eventually distanced herself from her personal acquaintance with Wollstonecraft, and a perception that Wollstonecraft's 'deep, at times obsessive, preoccupation with personal authenticity' tended to set her apart from other women, who at least for appearances' sake sometimes performed elements of traditional femininity and respectability in order to avoid repercussions.[59] While it is undeniable that both in their personal lives and in their choice of literary genres Inchbald and Wollstonecraft seem very dissimilar, the ideas expressed in Inchbald's writing accord remarkably with those expressed in the *Vindication*, in foregrounding the consequences of society's imposing of the expectation of passive virtue on women, and the potential agency of women themselves to reform and change those expectations. Wollstonecraft is therefore not entirely alone in questioning these expectations, as Inchbald similarly acknowledges the vulnerable position of women in a society in which they lacked either social or political influence, and therefore advocates for women's equal inclusion in the reforming of that society.

Because of the restrictions of the Licensing Act, and the caution women writers needed to employ in order to remain respectable, the role of female playwrights in the development of eighteenth-century proto-feminist thought has frequently been overlooked or diminished. However, works like Inchbald's demonstrate the complexity of female playwrights' engagement with both contemporary events and contemporary societal shifts, and their remarkable ability to maintain the necessary balance between

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[58] Elizabeth Inchbald, 'To the Artist', *The Artist: A Collection of Essays Relative to Painting, Poetry, Sculpture, Architecture, the Drama, Discoveries of Science, and Various Other Subjects*, 1.14 (1807), p.16.
[59] Barbara Taylor, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.32.

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expressing their often radical ideas and retaining their reputation as respectable women. Inchbald's inability to publish *The Massacre* during her lifetime, and the accusations of sedition levelled against her by newspapers like the *True Briton,* show that there was always a potential danger inherent in engaging in political discourse in this way. In order to enable women to participate more actively in this discourse without major repercussions, Inchbald demonstrates in *The Massacre*, society needs to make space for choice and compassion – 'Liberty joined with Peace and Charity' – and overcome artificial concerns about propriety that stifle both women's ability to be active participants in political reform and women writers' ability to write and publish freely.

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'Let the feminine plebiscite be consulted': English Feminists' Campaign Journalism, Foreign Policy and the Crisis in France of 1870-71

SIÂN KITCHEN

ABSTRACT: Feminist campaign journalism of the 1860s and 1870s both promoted women's campaigns and expressed opinions on spheres outside those usually ascribed to women, including foreign events. English feminists' activist and journalistic responses to the French crisis of 1870-71, from the commencement of the Franco-Prussian War through to the defeat of the Paris Commune, contextualise key events in the women's campaigns of the same period. I argue that feminist writings of this period were influenced not only by feminist campaigning but also by the campaigners' political ideologies. The feminist press challenged the notion of an 'imagined community' with regard to English attitudes to European affairs.[1] Such attitudes were embedded in English masculine notions of self-identity that defined itself against a 'foreign other'.[2] Instead, the feminist press created their own 'imagined community'. However, this may itself be challenged, as it emerged from English feminists' experiences which were themselves grounded in their own class privileges and political ideologies.[3]

KEYWORDS: Franco-Prussian War; Paris Commune; Victorian Feminists; Contagious Diseases Acts; Suffrage; Nineteenth Century Press

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[1] Michelle Martin has contextualised Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' in her study of the coverage of the Franco-Prussian War in the Victorian illustrated press. See, Michele Martin, 'Conflictual Imaginaries: Victorian Illustrated Periodicals and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71)', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 36 (2003) pp.41-58. Similarly, Matthew Beamont has claimed that English anti-communism in the last decades of the nineteenth century is rooted in an imaginary arising from the reactions of the British middle-classes to the Paris Commune. Matthew Beaumont, 'Cacotopianism, The Paris Commune, and England's Anti-Communist Imaginary, 1870-1900', *ELH*, 73.2 (2006) pp.465-487.

[2] Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The Germans' Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) pp.41-64; Michael Pratt, 'A Fallen Idol: The Impact of the Franco-Prussian War on the Perception of Germany by British Intellectuals', *The International History Review*, 7 (1985) pp.543-75.

[3] Michelle Tusan has described a nineteenth-century 'imagined community' between the women's press—which was used by English feminists in the period as a means of campaigning—and its readership. Michelle Elizabeth Tusan, *Women Making News: Gender and Journalism in Modern Britain* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005) p.3.

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DORA NEILL RAYMOND, in her *British Policy and Opinion During the Franco-Prussian War*, described London in 1870 as being 'agog with war'.[4] Raymond outlined the vast array of articles and notices published in the British papers concerning the conflict between France and Germany: 'John Bull' she remarked, 'read them all'. Although there was no full consensus in Britain—officially neutral—on the events in France and Germany, some historians have attempted to define a generalised view of English opinion on the war.[5] This generalised overview suggests firstly that initial English (although specifically not Irish) sympathy lay with—the perceived liberal—Prussia.[6] Following the Battle of Sedan, the fall of the Second Empire in September 1870, and Bismarck's demands on Alsace Lorraine in 1871, this sympathy was eroded and some sympathy emerged towards France (or at least the French people, if not Louis Napoleon). As the Siege of Paris (19th September 1870 to 28th January 1871) took hold, anti-Prussian views and a revision of the Prussian national character ensued, with the English now being 'appalled by the bombardment of civilians in Paris'.[7] English views on the war, particularly in their abhorrence of the perceived weakness and degeneracy of the French national character, were influenced by the late-nineteenth century English concept of 'manliness', based upon 'physical courage, chivalric ideals, virtuous fortitude [and] patriotic virtue'.[8]

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[4] The range of articles cited included leading articles on the War, musings on the British Military Systems, subscriptions for aid, and adverts from French refugees seeking work. Dora Neill Raymond, *British Policy and Opinion During the Franco-Prussian War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1921) pp.194–95.

[5] For historiography relating to British views of the events of 1870-71 see Raymond; Jonathan Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism: English Liberalism, National Identity and Europe 1830-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); E. De Groot, 'Great Britain and France: July 1870', *Durham University Journal*, 44 (1951) pp.10–21.

[6] 'Most thinking Englishmen - including George Eliot', Pratt has asserted, 'felt bound to support Prussia.' (Pratt, p.546). A position of formal neutrality was adopted by the government, but support for Prussia was evident. Raymond has claimed that: '[i]t was because England was essentially not neutral in her feelings that it made such a grandiose parade of her neutrality.' (Raymond, p.70). Irish Catholics tended to support their fellow Catholics in France, (Ibid., pp.76-78).

[7] Pratt, pp.563, 568.

[8] Wawro, pp.41-64.

Of the revolutionary Paris Commune following the war, Frank Jellinek remarked that it 'passed in flame and fury over the scene of European politics and vanished'.[9] For a brief time in the spring of 1871, during the fleeting life of the Commune, coverage of its events in the English press was comprehensive; reports and comments were set out in papers and periodicals as diverse as *The Times*, *Telegraph*, the *Illustrated London News* and *Punch*.[10] 'Most Englishmen', Jellinek proclaimed, 'thought the Commune meant that the French, driven to desperation by the war, had quite simply gone mad'.[11] Among many in Britain, the response to the Paris Commune revealed a fear of republicanism. The opinion abounded that France had 'veered from one political extreme to another' and that the 'inhumanity and immaturity of French politics' were exposed by its revolutionary events.[12] However, Mark Higgins intimates that there were a diverse range of opinions, and that as the war progressed, these opinions did not remain static.[13]

Rachel Holmes, biographer of Eleanor Marx, claims that 'the Commune was a great gender event'. She contends that: '[t]he "dominance" of women in the Commune was one of the reasons for its perceived "awfulness, bloodthirstiness and failure" and that anti-Communard responses were full of misogyny.'[14] In her revisionist history of the women of the Paris Commune, Gay Gullickson has cited Marina Warner's concept of a 'lexicon of female types' to describe nineteenth-century and modern historians' characterisations of the women of Paris – including as either 'good housewives' or 'bad prostitutes'.[15] While Gullickson identifies a number of 'typologies', an analysis of the responses of English feminists relating to the Commune and the Communards reveals

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[9] Frank Jellinek, *The Paris Commune of 1871* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937) p.411.

[10] Jellinek, p.423. A search conducted in the database of the British Newspaper Archive revealed also over 8,000 articles from newspapers across the country referring to the Commune in April 1871.

[11] Ibid, p.411.

[12] Parry, pp.295, 296.

[13] Mark Higgins, *The British and the Paris Commune* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Keele, 1994).

[14] Rachel Holmes, *Eleanor Marx: A Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014) pp.105-06

[15] Other typologies Gullickson identifies are 'grieving widows and mothers […] amazon warriors, horrific furies, scandalous orators, and angels of mercy'. Gullickson further notes that the 'appeal of these female types lay in their ability to convey moral and political judgments about women and the Commune'. Gay L. Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris: Images of the Commune* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996) pp.118-9, p.55.

that a reliance on such a 'lexicon' of types over-simplifies the gender implications of the Commune and contemporary responses to it.

This article will demonstrate that depictions of the women of Paris and France provided by the nineteenth-century feminist press defy Gullickson and Warner's typologies of women. Indeed, this lexicon was explicitly challenged by an, albeit small, group of English feminists. In this paper, I explore the extent to which the views of Victorian feminists challenged a prevailing, national 'imagined community' and established their own in relation to the events in France.[16] I analyse their opinions and assertions on the war and Commune in the context of the 'hidden internationalisms' of women campaigners, previously identified by Anne Summers.[17]

The sources examined are two feminist periodicals published at this time, the *Englishwoman's Review* (under the proprietorship and early editorship of Jessie Boucherett from its launch in 1870, and later editorship of Caroline Ashurst Biggs) and the *Women's Suffrage Journal* (edited throughout its publication by Lydia Becker).[18] I also discuss the *Shield*, the paper of the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts which was a key issue for many feminist campaigners during the period, and in which Josephine Butler was significantly influential. Barbara Caine has defined feminist women in the nineteenth century as those 'most closely involved in the English women's movement'.[19] This definition is applied herein and I use the term 'feminist press' to describe the three publications cited—which concerned themselves primarily with

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[16] Martin, pp.36, 56.

[17] Anne Summers, 'Gaps in the Record: Hidden Internationalisms', *History Workshop Journal*, 52 (Autumn 2001) pp.217-27; Summers refers specifically to her work on Josephine Butler in the context of 'hidden internationalisms', p.226.

[18] In her obituary of Caroline Ashurst Biggs, Boucherett noted the start of her [Biggs'] editorship of the *Englishwoman's Review* as either from 'the end of 1870 or the beginning of 1871'. *Englishwoman's Review*, 14 September 1889, p.388.

[19] Caine, in her work on Victorian feminism has noted that 'the difficultly faced by anyone attempting to write the history of feminism is the fact that the word 'feminism' itself was not conceived until the end of the nineteenth century'. She noted that some historians have accepted a broad definition while others have 'attempted to assert the feminist consciousness of those most closely involved in the English women's movement'. The women considered here were explicitly and closely linked to the women's movement of the 1860s and 1870s and fit within the narrower definition of 'feminist' in the Victorian context; the term 'feminist' as applied herein, is used with that meaning. Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp.4-5.

aspects of the nineteenth-century women's movement, including suffrage and the abolition of the Contagious Diseases Acts—thereby distinguishing them from a wider collection of contemporary publications aimed at or written by women. Lydia Becker, with financial support from Boucherett, launched the *Women's Suffrage Journal* in March 1870 with the specific aim of promoting the campaign for women's suffrage.[20] the *Englishwoman's Review* had a similar focus on women's campaigns, but also a wider aspiration to 'express the yearning of young Englishwomen for more active and extended interests'.[21] The *Englishwoman's Review* included articles under such headings as 'Record of Events', 'Parliamentary Intelligence', 'Colonial and Foreign News', and 'University and Educational Intelligence', in addition to those directly related to the women's suffrage campaign.[22] Josephine Butler had attempted to establish a specifically internationalist women's paper, *Kettledrum*, in 1869, which was later subsumed into the international pages of the *Englishwoman's Review,* and she argued for a 'natural' role for women in international affairs.[23] This is evident in coverage of the war, and later the Commune, in the *Women's Suffrage Journal* and the *Englishwoman's Review*. These editors and campaigners were exceptional for women of their class at that time, in terms of both their involvement in erstwhile masculine occupations, and their full support of the women's equality movement. It is impossible to claim that their views and opinions were representative of women generally, however, in challenging the perceived (masculine) 'imagined community' of English identity in response to the war and the Commune, I will show that English feminists created their own women's 'imagined community', grounded in their own experience and ideological positions.

John Tosh has discussed the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' prevalent in Britain in the nineteenth century, wherein: '[t]he political order can be seen as a reflection of the gender order in society as a whole, in which case political virtues are

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[20] Jessie Boucherett was an independently wealthy woman of the upper classes, who remained unmarried, and dedicated her life and her fortune to women's causes throughout her life—including proprietorship of the *Englishwoman's Review*—as well as support of causes relating to the employment of women. See Ellen Jordan and Anne Bridger, 'An unexpected recruit to feminism: Jessie Boucherett's "feminist life" and the importance of being wealthy', *Women's History Review*, 15 (1986) pp.385-412.

[21] *Englishwoman's Review,* 15 January 1890, p.1.

[22] Jane Horowitz Murray and Anna K Clark, *The Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions: An Index* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985) p.ix.

[23] Tusan, p.38.

best understood as the prescribed masculine virtues writ large'.[24] However, English Victorian feminists challenged this 'hegemony' by advancing the cause of women, using their voice to pursue their right to speak and campaign in a public sphere.[25] In respect to the political upheavals occurring in France in 1870–1871, these feminists also challenged this 'hegemony' by claiming the war as an area of discourse for women, by defying gender representations associated with the war, and by questioning the disparaging and misogynistic depictions of the Parisian women associated with the Commune. Evidence that English women were discussing the war and the Commune at all is significant, but through these actions feminist campaigners also further widened the assumptions of what was an appropriate 'sphere' for women's discourse. In focussing on women in the Franco-Prussian war and the Paris Commune, the *Englishwoman's Review* and *Women's Suffrage Journal* challenged and attempted to overturn the gendered view of the conduct of women and men in the war. They sought to focus on women's experiences, associating their reports with the cause of women's suffrage and other women's campaigns both in Britain and internationally.

Boucherett claimed that the *Englishwoman's Review* was politically neutral, but coverage of some aspects of the war demonstrate that the responses printed here did have an ideological basis.[26] Indeed, English feminists' experiences as women campaigners shaped their opinions and statements relating to war and the Commune, as much as did other aspects of their identity, such as their class, national identity, or political ideology, and their responses were formed by a complex interaction of these factors. Articles published in the *Englishwoman's Review, Women's Suffrage Journal* and the *Shield*, similarly demonstrate that some opinions these feminist journalists expressed respecting the war were aligned to the writers' general political ideologies, whether liberal or conservative. That these views were comprised of and rendered

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[24] John Tosh, 'Hegemonic masculinity and the history of gender', in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*, ed. by Stefan Dudnick, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) pp.41-58 (p.41).

[25] J.E. Parker, 'Lydia Becker: pioneer orator of the women's movement', *Manchester Region History Review*, 5 (1991) p.13-20; T. Fisher, 'Josephine Butler: Feminism's Neglected Pioneer', *History Today*, 46 (June 1996) pp.32-38.

[26] Writing in the *Englishwoman's Review* following Caroline Ashurst Biggs's death, Jessie Boucherett stated that despite their different political positions, 'the REVIEW was conducted on strictly neutral lines' *Englishwoman's Review*, 14 September 1889, p.388.

heterogeneous by a variety of factors can be seen to be at odds with feminists' other campaigns for the treatment of women as a class and the development of a female 'imagined community' within the feminist press in the period.[27]

Michelle Tusan has observed that the women's press in the 1850s and 1860s (including feminist publications such as the *Englishwoman's Journal,* which was the predecessor to the *Englishwoman's Review* and *Women's Suffrage Journal*) established women's interest in contemporary events and provided a 'gendered perspective' when reporting on them.[28] According to Tusan, at this time 'the women's press constructed women as public citizens as distinguished from other periodicals targeted at women, which tended to focus on the domestic, and presented an apolitical stance'.[29] Tusan describes the women's periodicals of the period as providing their own form of 'imagined community' that used women's traditional modes of sociability, to engage with other politically minded women'.[30] She claims that the feminist press 'imagined the emergence of a 'cross-class "sisterhood" meant to appeal to women from a wide range of experiences'.[31] In what follows, I will use Tusan's model of the women's press and its readership to argue for an 'imagined community' in the feminist press's framing of international affairs in 1870-71. This imagined community was internationalist in nature and focussed on the women's movement. Developing Tusan's work, however, I will also expose the limitations of this community's attempt to speak for women as a constituency.[32] In her exploration of the responses to the Franco-Prussian war in illustrated periodicals, Michelle Martin has challenged the view that there was a collective 'imagined community' in English interpretations of the war, and the notion that these formed the foundation of a 'national memory'.[33] There are, she argues, a number of 'imaginaries' aligning with the different politics of the periodicals in her study, and the various audiences to which they were addressed.[34] I argue that one such 'separate imaginary' is identifiable within the feminist press. In her work on women's

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[27] See for example 'Women as a Class', in the *Englishwoman's Review*, 13 May 1876, pp.199-203.

[28] Tusan, p.38.

[29] *Ibid.*, p.25.

[30] *Ibid.*, p.3-4.

[31] *Ibid.*, p.6.

[32] *Ibid.*, p.3.

[33] Martin, p.53.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp.44-45.

journalism in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Tusan has also depicted a 'gender identified community of female activists' who reconfigured acceptable boundaries for public activism for women. Through the suffrage movement, they 'both drew upon and contributed to an institutional culture that asked women to make sacrifices for issues that placed women squarely in the centre of debates about social reports, parliamentary politics and even foreign policy'.[35]

THE *WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE JOURNAL*'S RESPONSE TO THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

In 1870, 'Jane Bull' was as consumed by the Franco-Prussian War as her male contemporaries. As George Eliot wrote to her friend Sara Hennell from Shotter Mill, '[w]e are excited even among the still woods and fields by the vicissitudes of the War, and chiefly concerned because we cannot succeed in getting the days' "Times"'.[36] Elizabeth Garrett wrote to James Anderson: 'It is sadly difficult even to pretend to do anything but read the papers and look at the map'.[37] Feminist women were as keen observers and as interested in the events of the war and the Commune as their male counterparts; this is reflected in coverage of the Franco-Prussian war within the feminist press. In the leading article in the *Women's Suffrage Journal* of September 1870, its editor, Lydia Becker, considered the likely long-term consequences of the war, insightfully declaring: '[w]ho can tell when the bitterness of this hour will have passed away? It will be felt by unborn generations'.[38] This authoritative statement, loaded with gravity, established for the periodical's readership the legitimacy of the *Women's Suffrage Journal*—and its woman editor—to comment on the subject of the war. Feminist responses focussed on the effects of the war and the Commune on women,

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[35] Tusan, pp.3, 5.

[36] 'Letter to Sara Hennell, 12 August 1870', *The George Eliot letters*, ed. by Gordon S. Haigh, 9 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1954–1978), V, p.56.

[37] Louisa Garrett Anderson, *Elizabeth Garrett Anderson: 1836–1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939) p.137. Garrett herself travelled with her younger brother and sister through Belgium to the war front at Sedan in September 1870. She wrote three letters home to her father, her friend Jane Crow and to her future husband James Skelton Anderson describing her experiences. These are held in the Women's Library Archive at the London School of Economics.

[38] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, September 1870, p.69.

and for this reason their discourse challenged the notion of 'separate spheres'.[39] English feminists such as Lydia Becker, Josephine Butler and others were already challenging this idea in other areas including education; campaigning and oratory; journalism and politics; and science and medicine. However, by the 1870s, they were also attempting to extend this challenge to broader political affairs including war and international events.[40] They directed their discourse on the war and Commune across class and international boundaries. Indeed, the *Women's Suffrage Journal* claimed that women as a group were uniquely affected by, and had the right to a collective view on, the war. Such views were directly connected to other areas of feminist campaigning, including women's suffrage and the campaigns against the Contagious Diseases Acts (and the equivalent laws in France) to which discourse about the war and later the Commune gave rise. This in turn helped to construct an alternative 'imagined community' of international women brought together by shared topics of discussion.

The *Women's Suffrage Journal* aimed to promote women's causes, most specifically the suffrage campaign. Leading articles for its June, July and August issues focused on domestic legislation including the Women's Disabilities Bill and the Married Women's Property Bill which had recently been debated in Parliament.[41] The next edition was published on 1 September, the date of the battle of Sedan — at which time the defeat of France by Prussia was likely but not yet certain. In this edition, Becker focussed the leading article solely on the war. In line with other Liberal thinkers—

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[39] Anne Summers has defined and discussed the concept of 'separate spheres' in relation to women's activism in the nineteenth century, including that of Josephine Butler. See the introduction to Anne Summers, *Female lives, moral states: women, religion and public life in Britain 1800-1930* (Newbury: Threshold Press, 2000), pp.i-ix.

[40] See, for example: Philippa Levine, *Feminist Lives in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990). Articles relating to feminists in the mid-Victorian period include: Susan David Bernstein, '"Supposed Differences": Lydia Becker and Victorian Women's Participation in the BAAS', in *Repositioning Victorian Sciences: Shifting Centres in Nineteenth-Century Scientific Thinking*, ed. by David Clifford et al (London: Anthem Press, 2006), pp.85-106; J.W.E. Parker, 'Lydia Becker's 'school for science': a challenge to domesticity', *Women's History Review*, 10 (2001) pp.629-50; Tina Gianquitto, 'Botanical Smuts and Hermaphrodites: Lydia Becker, Darwin's Botany and Education Reform', *Isis*, 104 (June 2013) pp.250-77; Fisher, pp.32-38; Joy Harvey, 'Darwin's "Angels": The Women Correspondents of Charles Darwin', *Intellectual History Review*, 19 (2009) pp.197-210.

[41] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 June 1870, p.29; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 July 1870, p.45; *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 August 1870, p.57.

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including John Stuart Mill—Becker blamed Louis Napoleon for the war, but her leader focussed primarily on the impact of the war on women.[42] She wrote:

> But if our sympathies are aroused on behalf of the masses of Frenchmen plunged into war [...] what must they be for the nations of French and German women on whom the burden and the misery of war falls in an equal or even greater measure than on man, and who are denied the right to a voice in deciding whether it shall or shall not be laid upon them. Men have charged themselves with care for the welfare of women; yet they have brought this woe on those whom they profess to protect – this desolation on the homes they were sworn to defend. [...] Let there be universal suffrage among the women of these desolated lands – let the question of peace and war be debated in these lonely homesteads, in sight of the rotting crops which should have furnished their children's bread, - let the feminine plebiscite be appealed to as having a right to be heard, and who can doubt that the unanimous vote from the Pyrenees to the Baltic, from princess to peasant, would be given for peace between peoples and re-union in homes.[43]

Becker's words invoke an 'imagined community' of women across classes and nations, which opposes war and has a legitimate claim to political representation.

The leader of the 1 May 1871 edition again returned to the theme of the effect of the war on women, arguing that the cost of Britain's arming for a potential conflict in the wake of the war in France fell disproportionately on working women, and connecting this claim directly to Becker's campaign against the British government's proposed tax on matches:

> But the government stamp, and the extravagantly enhanced price of an article which has hitherto cost next to nothing, will reveal to every housekeeper the fact that the government is dipping its hand into her pocket, and giving her nothing in return. If she wants to know why the government cannot go on as heretofore, paying its way without taxing a poor woman's match-box, and hears that it is in order to make huge military

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[42] Letter from J.S. Mill to Henry Fawcett, 26 July 1870: 'The English public should know [...] that this war has been brought on wholly by Napoleon; that the Prussians are fighting for their own liberty and for that of Europe'. 'The Later Letters of John Stuart Mill', *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill,* ed. by Francis E. Mineka and Dwight N. Lindley, 32 vols (London: Routledge, 1972) XVII, p.1754; Becker's father was German, so this too is likely to have influenced her opinion.

[43] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 September 1870, p.69.

preparations just when the state of Europe seems almost to forbid the possibility of the occurrence of international war, she may be tempted to ask whether the disputes between peoples are always going to be settled by that bloody and murderous strife which the masculine mind regards as the ultimate and natural issue of vexed questions, and to which they are terribly prone to resort.[44]

For Becker, international affairs, the campaign for women's suffrage and the perceived realities of women's lives during conflict were inseparable matters. Becker interrogates the idea that the 'masculine' concern with war is 'natural' and argues for an alternative view of international war that is, or will become, self-evident to all women. Joyce Berkman has noted the connection between feminism and the pacifist movement in Europe, which is clear in the above example, which supports Berkman's claim by showing the coverage and opinions of the war in the feminist press to be aligned with a generally anti-war stance.[45] This alignment is also evident in an article printed by the *Women's Suffrage Journal* on 1st September 1870 which presented the following eloquent claim against an unnecessary war through the lens of women's suffrage:

> We affirm that the governments of France and Germany have no right to ignore the nations of women – to reject the feminine plebiscite. We maintain that the suppression of this element in the national councils destroys the only sufficient safeguard against causeless war […] Put no longer asunder thou whom God hath joined together; let the feminine plebiscite be consulted as well as the masculine; and the spirit which prompts men to deeds of violence and blood will pale under the humanising influence of woman and be finally laid forever.[46]

Becker's article puts forward an alternative, feminist, argument for women's influence in politics, public and international affairs, and the associated claim for political representation, through the notion that women were a 'humanising' influence on men, at a time when women's 'natural' state (as 'inferior' to men) was a considered a

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[44] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 May 1871, p.43.

[45] Joyce Berkman, 'Feminism, War and Peace Politics: The case of World War I', in *Women, Militarism and War: Essays in history, politics and social theory*, ed. by Jean Bethke Elshtain and Sheila Tobias (Savage MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1988) pp.141-160.

[46] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 September 1870, p.69.

legitimate subject for scientific discourse.[47] Becker's statement makes a further bold claim, that women (as a nation) not only have a right to be consulted on military and political matters but, as a constituency, that their voice would lead to peace – because Becker's community of women is evidently opposed to war and could, if allowed, sufficiently influence men in this respect.

The same edition of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* published a statement from the International Association of Women and notification of a petition it had organised against the war.[48] Notably, Josephine Butler was listed as a member of the organising committee of the International Association of Women, along with its founder Marie Goegg.[49] The address, which was published in its original French and in English,

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[47] John Stuart Mill had published The Subjection of Women, arguing for the intellectual equality of women, in 1868. Charles Darwin published The Descent of Man in 1871, which made the claim for the natural inferiority of women. See Fiona Erskine, 'The Origin of Species and the Science of Female Inferiority', in *Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species: New interdisciplinary essays*, ed by David Amigoni, and Jeff Wallace, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) p.104. Becker herself had been a correspondent of Darwin on the subject of botany and Joy Harvey has claimed that Becker was drawn to the Victorian women's movement as a consequence of her being 'excluded from the all-male scientific societies'. Joy Harvey, 'Darwin's "Angels": The Women Correspondents of Charles Darwin', *Intellectual History Review*, 19:2, p.202.

[48] The *Women's Suffrage Journal* explained that the International Association of Women had been founded in 1868 with the aim 'to protest publicly against some of the laws of all countries in respect of women; to point out the miseries and abuses which such laws occasions; to labour to get them changed; to claim for women an equal share in all the rights which men enjoy in the State and in Society'. *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1, September 1870, p.71.

[49] The *Women's Suffrage Journal* provided details of the central committee of the International Women's Association. In addition to Goegg from Switzerland and Butler, it included representatives from France, Germany, America, Italy, Portugal and Sweden. Anne Summers has provided details of Butler's continuing collaboration with Goegg and others in the context of the International Abolitionist Federation. Summers, 'Which Women? What Europe? Josephine Butler and the International Abolitionist Federation', *History Workshop Journal*, 62 (2006), p.217. For details of the founding of the International Women's Association see Berkman. Berkman claims that the establishment of the International Association of Women was influenced by the two most significant wars preceding the Franco-Prussian War: the Crimean and American Civil wars. Berkman indicates that the work of the International Association of Women was interrupted by the war, while Sandi Cooper describes how Marie Goegg's focus 'turned to work on women's emancipation after 1870-1871'. Berkman, p.145. Sandi E. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging war on war in Europe 1815-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.51.

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categorically opposed the war as 'an act of barbarism, vandalism and destruction – a bloody cut which is a shame and a dishonour for all nations, even those who are only lookers on'.[50] The Association called for an end to the war, in an emphatic statement:

> We come saying, Down with your arms, you soldiers who have no quarrel one against another, and for whom your families watch in moral anguish. Down with your arms, you Kings, who give yourselves out for representatives of the peoples, and who, betraying your oaths, bring destruction, ruin, and death where you had promised peace plenty and life.
>
> The whole world has eyes upon you. History, severely just in its decision will separate the good grain from the chaff. She will show in their nothingness the puerile questions of self-love set up as an excuse; what is good and right alone will satisfy her.
>
> This good is peace - and this is what we demand.[51]

This statement further cements an anti-war stance as a characteristic of the 'imagined community' of feminist women created by feminist campaign journalists, and its promotion in the *Women's Suffrage Journal* further seeks to build this community of pacifist women. Butler was an internationalist and focussed on the women's peace movement as an international rather than a national movement. The International Association of Women condemned not only the belligerent countries in the war, but all other nations (including neutral Britain) for their failure to condemn the action. Marie Goegg and her organisation were concerned both with women's equality and with pacifism, and the Association's statement also addressed the close connection between the women's equality and peace movements. The address described the war as 'a fatal consequence of the seclusion of women from all the interests of the state, as well as the rivalry of two dynasties'.[52] The Association's statement and accompanying petition – which a subsequent edition of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* went on to note was 'signed by fifteen thousand Englishwomen of all classes of society', reinforces Becker's authority in speaking to and for a community of women about the war and the concerns for women's political representation she associated with her journalism.[53]

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[50] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* September 1870, p.71.

[51] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, September 1870, p.71.

[52] *Ibid*.

[53] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 November 1870, p.90.

The *Women's Suffrage Journal* also provided some of its own commentary on the International Association of Women and its objectives stating that:

> To claim for women an equal share in all the rights which men enjoy in the state and in society [...] it also aims at seconding all enlightened men to secure to the nation's liberty, instruction, morality, economy, well being and peace, based on fraternal union.[54]

The *Women's Suffrage Journal's* position on the war *vis-a-vis* the International Association of Women's pacifist purpose, coalesced with its objectives regarding the equality of women, while its aims also hinted at the liberal ideals of peace, economic stability, fraternal union, and national liberty.

As Geoffrey Wawro notes, however, it must be remembered that there also existed patriotic support for the war. Wawro particularly quotes one German mother's parting words to her soldier son: '[i]t is not necessary that you return from the war, only that you do your duty'.[55] This statement challenges the opinion presented by Becker that women across Europe would be opposed to the war, given the plebiscite. Coverage of the International Association of Women and the printing of its petition within the *Women's Suffrage Journal* represents an internationalist approach at odds with other such opinions on the war, which were rooted in national identity, patriotism and the English concept of 'manliness', against which the French army in particular, was unfavourably compared.[56]

THE WAR, THE COMMUNE AND THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS: BUTLER'S CAMPAIGN

The Contagious Diseases Acts were introduced from 1864 with the aim of reducing the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases in the military. They were in force in garrison and naval towns. The Acts gave the police the ability to arrest and subject any woman suspected of prostitution to a medical examination. If the woman were found to have a sexually transmitted disease, the police were able to detain them in a hospital. Josephine Butler led the campaign for the abolition of the Acts in England.[57] Members

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[54] *Ibid.*

[55] Wawro, p.88.

[56] Parry, p.20; J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (eds), *Manliness and morality: middle-class masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987) p.1; Wawro, p.41-64.

[57] See, for example Margaret Hamilton, 'Opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1864-1886', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies,*

of her international network—including International Women's Association founder Marie Goegg, and Marie Troubnikoff, a Russian woman resident in Paris—also worked for the abolition of similar laws in France, as evidenced by their correspondence with Butler and with the *Shield*, which I will explore in this section. Butler and her interlocutors formed an international imagined community that observed and commented on events in France during the turmoil of 1870 and 1871, primarily through the perspective of the anti-CDA campaign.

Anne Summers' research has uncovered the extent of Butler's international networks and the degree to which she corresponded with them regarding her campaign for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts.[58] Since Summers' work reveals an international network of women in Switzerland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy, it is likely that Butler was (or quickly became) aware of the political situation in countries across Europe in the 1870s, and how it pertained to her anti-CDA campaign and those of her colleagues abroad.[59] The International Association of Women's address, discussed in the previous section, had a clear anti-war and pro-suffrage message, and was critical of both German and French governments. However, journalism and correspondence responding to the war and relating to the anti-CDA campaign complicates our sense of the imagined community the feminist press had created.

The influence of the repeal campaign on journalistic discourse about the war can be seen in the pages of the *Shield*. For this publication's community, the CDAs were a response to the spread of venereal disease amongst members of the military, and this arguably led to the *Shield*'s anti-standing army, and generally anti-war stance. In addition, in the context of the Franco-Prussian war, up to the Siege of Paris in December 1870, the pacifist stance set out in the International Women's Association address published in the *Women's Suffrage Journal*, was complicated by a tendency to support

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10 (1978) pp.14-27. The use of such laws originated in Napoleonic France, as noted by Anne Summers. Anne Summers, 'Which Women? What Europe?', pp.215-216.

[58] Summers, 'Gaps'. The term Contagious Diseases Acts usually refers to the English laws. However, here as in many of the primary sources (see for example the 'Letter from Paris' in the *Shield* dated December 1870) the reference to the 'Contagious Diseases Acts' relates to other nations' equivalent or similar legislation.

[59] Anne Summers, '"The Constitution Violated": The Female Body and the Female Subject in the Campaigns of Josephine Butler', *History Workshop Journal*, 48 (1990) pp.1-15.

the Prussian military system over that of the French army, which can be seen in the *Shield*. A letter from Marie Goegg, published in the *Shield* in December 1870, discussed the respective armies, and the status of prostitution and moral conduct during the war between the French and Prussians. She condemned the French system of conscription and the ban on marriage for soldiers, comparing it unfavourably with the Prussian army's system of short-term conscription for young men, and their freedom to marry and to have families. Goegg outlined each army's resulting positions regarding prostitution. For the French army 'it naturally follows in such state of things, that a man will seek to gratify his nature, and give but little heed of the laws of morality', while legalised prostitution was 'unknown in Germany. (It exists in Berlin, but not ostensibly for the army)'.[60] Goegg ended her letter on a pacifist note, more akin to the International Association of Women's address, and expressed sympathy for French refugees: '[e]nough of this subject, it is sickening. Our city is full of voluntary French exiles – of families who fly the horrors of a siege'.[61] Nonetheless, despite her internationalism and pacifism, Goegg did not have an equally critical view of the French and the Prussians in their conduct of the war. Instead, in relating the anti-CDA campaign to military structures, prostitution laws, and by extension the character of German and French men, her opinion showed a pro-Prussian and anti-French stance.

This stance was expanded by another correspondent in the same edition of the *Shield*, written in an anti-French (and particularly anti-Parisian) tone, which associated the character, and military failings, of the French, with perceived Parisian degeneracy and with the legalisation of prostitution. The correspondent cited a message from the Paris Correspondent of the *Manchester Examiner and Times* which purported to have come via balloon mail from besieged Paris. It described the lack of national guard recruits and their resulting inability to defend the city:

> The enemy is at the gates, yet the needful qualities of heroism and patriotism seemed altogether wanting [...] the source from which this apathy springs is the twenty years' moral degradation [...] I can't help warning the English people against the Contagious

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[60] *Ibid.*

[61] *Ibid.*

Diseases Acts [...] It is these Acts which have rendered the immorality which reigns here supreme a part of the country's institution.[62]

This community, corresponding through the *Shield*, and focussed as it was on the fight against the Contagious Diseases Acts, led to commentary loaded with moral judgements on French character, which was then associated with the defeat of France and the eventual fall of Paris in January 1871, combining anti-CDA, anti-war and anti-French feeling. The journalists and correspondents to the *Shield* constructed a picture of the war and Commune that was informed by and promoted the anti-CDA campaign, and in this context, opinions previously expressed on France in particular proved to be changeable.

The nature of the opinions held by this alternative imagined community created by the *Shield*—and especially its views on the character of Parisian men—altered radically with the advent of the Commune. Far from perceiving the Commune, as did much of the press in Britain, as representing the worst of degeneracy, language concerning the Commune itself was relatively tempered in the *Shield*—as it would be in representations of the Commune in other feminist publications—and in one instance was significantly praised.

In a letter of April 1871 to Marie Troubnikoff in Paris, Butler questioned her about the apparent abolition of the Contagious Diseases Acts in Paris by the Communard government.[63] Butler noted that the Commune had 'taken a step towards the equality of the sexes', by the abolition of legal prostitution, and asked Troubnikoff if she knew whether any in the national government (the Republican Government at Versailles) supported this change in the law.[64] The Josephine Butler archive at the Women's Library includes an annotated transcript of this letter by her secretary Rose Bruker, on behalf of the National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. In her annotations, Bruker outlined details of the war and Siege of Paris, before discussing the Commune. She described it as comprising socialist and left-wing republicans, as being the first socialist government, and outlined the Commune's end wherein the Versailles

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[62] *Shield*, December 1870, p.61.

[63] Troubnikoff and Butler started correspondence in April 1869 and found that they had a shared cause. Jane Jordan, *Josephine Butler* (John Murray: London, 2001) p.102.

[64] University of Liverpool Special Collections and Archives, reference: JB 1/1 1871/04/00(I).

government 'captured Paris and massacred at least 20,000 people'.[65] Bruker's account contended that the abolition of the '*Police de Koers* in Paris was one of their [the Communards'] acts, an act approved of [by Butler]' as it freed 'prostitutes from the slavery of total police control'.[66] This brief statement indicates opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts both in themselves and as an act of police control — thereby supporting Butler's liberal values, alongside her abhorrence of the massacre of Communards and Parisians by Versailles at the Commune's violent end. On the other hand, the note was neutral in its view of the Commune itself, only approving their action in abolishing the Contagious Diseases Acts.

What must certainly have been Marie Troubnikoff's reply to Butler's letter was published in the *Shield* in an anonymous 'A Letter from Paris' in May 1871:

> The Commune, you are aware, has supressed the Bureau of Prostitution, of which M. Le Cour was the head. I hope with all my heart, that these horrors will not be restablished in Paris, as part of the restoration of order; but I know little of what is going on just now. Beyond Paris, our towns and villages are infected with the horrible pest of legalised prostitution, which could only be effectively opposed by a strong association, such as you have in England'.[67]

A report from a correspondent in Versailles reproduced in the *Shield* in April 1871, warned that: '[l]adies travelling or walking by themselves, are exposed to worse indignities than imprisonment, especially if they are foolish enough to express concern for the possible fate of Paris'.[68] It also set out the case of one such young woman who had been taken by the police under their Contagious Diseases Acts, having been heard to declare 'Ces Pauvre Parisienes! Que Dieu protège!'[69] Thus the *Shield* attempted to demonstrate that the Acts were being used for nefarious political purposes by the Versailles government, despite its claim of being concerned only for public health. The *Shield* and its community of readers and activists thus interpreted events and constructed their own reality which was inflected by their feminist agenda, and particularly the anti-CDA campaign.

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[65] Women's Library Archive, London School of Economics, reference: 3JBL/03.

[66] *Ibid*.

[67] *Shield*, May 1871, p.541.

[68] *Shield*, April 1871, p.477.

[69] *Ibid*. (Translated by the author as: 'You Poor Parisians! May God protect you!')

On 27 May 1871 (five days after the Commune's brutal destruction) an article appeared in the *Shield* entitled 'A Lesson from the Commune', declaring that:

> The Communists of Paris, with all their faults and follies, have at least proclaimed their logical perception of the relation of slavery, prostitution and celibate armies and have thus shown a profounder knowledge than some who bear the name of statesmen. The Communal delegation […] have issued a proclamation in which […] it is decreed that all houses of ill-fame in their quarter shall be immediately closed.[70]

The Commune's abolition of prostitution (or at least legal prostitution) vindicated the anti-CDA community's views and required a modification of previously expressed views on the men of Paris, as subject to 'twenty years' moral degradation'. the *Shield* claimed: '[i]t is the effect that the working men who know how their sisters are treated in the French brothels […] see no difference between their condition and that of the slaves of the southern states of America before the war'.[71] Although much anti-CDA campaigning was, as with Butler and Goegg, led by women, according to this article, within the Paris Commune, Communard men were active participants in ending prostitution and the Parisian CDAs, where working-class Communard women are not seen as having played an active role. In this *Shield* article, they even take on a passivity akin to the perceived passivity of slaves. Although Gullickson and others have noted the active participation of women within the Commune, in this article, all action in abolishing prostitution and repealing the Parisian CDAs is attributed to the leaders and working-class men of the Commune, excluding the opinions, voices and activity of Commune women in relation to actions that most directly impacted their lives. It is in this example that the limitations of the alternative imagined community created by feminists in these publications begins to become evident.

Gullickson has observed the dichotomous depictions of Parisian women in March 1871 as either 'good housewives' or 'bad prostitutes'.[72] Butler and her allies, however, focussed on the institution of prostitution and the associated Acts, nuancing their representation by avoiding such judgments on women themselves. Their responses to the war and to the Commune were a complex interaction of issues of

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[70] *Shield*, 27 May 1871, p.506.

[71] *Ibid.*

[72] Gullickson, p.55.

women's equality, peace, and moralism; they argued that the Contagious Diseases Acts related to questions of the military, liberalism, and class. Opinions on the war and the Commune expressed in the *Shield* differed from the supposed general view prevailing in Britain but they diverged most notably in their opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts, which was the *Shield*'s, and Butler's, dominant purpose in this period, even while this excluded the voices of those women most directly affected by the Contagious Diseases Acts.

THE WOMEN OF PARIS AND THE COMMUNE: REPRESENTATION IN THE *ENGLISHWOMAN'S REVIEW*

Troubnikoff's letter in the *Shield* concluded with a plea for support for law reforms relating to prostitution in France, declaring that: '[i]t is because they have neglected these [reforms], that France is torn by blind and powerless revolutions'.[73] Like Troubnikoff (who was from a minor Russian aristocratic family), Boucherett came from a landed upper-class background, and might well have been staunchly anti-revolutionary.[74] Indeed, her feminism was consistent with her conservatism. In 1868 Boucherett demonstrated her conservative feminist position in her pamphlet, *The Condition of Women in France,* in which she had argued that women's educational and professional opportunities had been significantly restricted in post-revolutionary France, as compared to under French monarchy.[75] In 1870, under Boucherett's editorship, the *Englishwoman's Review*, in addition to printing stories relating to the conduct of women in the war, republished extracts from articles that presented a moralistic response to the French army and to the citizens of Paris. It approvingly quoted members of the clergy, and also—in line with its conservative political perspective—cited commentary that was highly critical of 'Bismarckism'.[76]

Editorship of the journal transferred from the conservative Boucherett to the radical Ashurst Biggs in early 1871 owing to Boucherett's ill health, though it is not

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[73] *Shield*, 27 May 1871, p.541.

[74] Marie Troubnikoff was from the Russian aristocracy. Although her father had been a Decembrist and she embraced women's and progressive causes in Russia, she was opposed to revolutionary activity and was firmly against her daughter's involvement in the revolutionary movement in Russia during in the 1870s. Barbara Alpern Engel, *Mothers and Daughters : Women of the Intelligentsia in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) pp.56-61, 201.

[75] Emilia Jessie Boucherett, *The Condition of Women in France* (London: Strahan & Co, 1868).

[76] *Englishwoman's Review*, December 1870, p.61.

known how much influence she retained as sole proprietor of the paper.[77] Under Biggs, the editorial stance of the *Englishwoman's Review* was sympathetic to the women of Paris, in contrast to a generally very hostile press, particularly conservative publications such as *The Times*.[78] At the end of the Siege of Paris, the *Englishwoman's Review* provided a sympathetic description of the women defending Paris:

> TEN BATTALIONS of women have been formed at Paris to serve on the ramparts. They will attend on the wounded, serve the ambulances, and, if necessary, fight. They wear a black blouse, black trousers with an orange stripe and a black cap with an orange band. If the ramparts are really attacked, we fully expect these women will show plenty of courage. They are working women of good character from twenty-five to forty years of age. They receive a rand and a half a day pay.[79]

These women, who would later be characterised as the notorious 'petroleuses' of the Commune by many commentors, are here instead alternatively described as of good character. In developing a feminist viewpoint associated with the last days of the Paris siege, they are portrayed with virtues such as courage, in contrast to the apparent weakness of character depicted in French men.[80]

Major histories of the Commune, including the first written by Eleanor Marx's fiancé Prosper-Olivier Lissagaray and translated by her, include negative references to the women of the Commune, which went on to be challenged in the *Englishwoman's Review*.[81] Lissagaray himself had described '[t]hose females who dedicated themselves to the Commune [who] had but a single ambition: to raise themselves above the level of man by exaggerating his vices'.[82] Higgins has cited contrasting examples of press commentary about anti-Communard women from *The Times*.[83] The *Dublin Evening Mail* also asserted that 'English opponents of women's claims [for suffrage] held up

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[77] Janet Horowitz Murray has described the ongoing relationship between proprietor and editor as a 'more than 20 year partnership'. It is likely that Boucherett continued to have some input into the journal following her departure as editor. Janet Horowitz Murray, 'Class vs. Gender Identification in the "Englishwoman's Review" of the 1880s', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 18 (1985) pp.138-142 (p.139).

[78] Higgins, pp.16-20.

[79] *Englishwoman's Review*, January 1871, p.66.

[80] Wawro, pp.41-64

[81] Holmes, pp.106, 151.

[82] Cited in Holmes, pp.105-06.

[83] Higgins, pp.25-27.

these imaginary furies as terrible examples of what women would become if they got the franchise, or any political rights whatever'.[84] These testimonies negatively associated the sensational stories about the Communard women, portrayed in the British press, with the women's suffrage campaign in England — which was, in fact, some years away from taking on a militant aspect. the *Englishwoman's Review*, constructing an imagined community that had at its centre the claim for women's suffrage, needed therefore to challenge this portrayal of the women of Paris. The description of the women of the Commune given in the *Englishwoman's Review* in late 1871 was thus sympathetic:

> Many papers have commented, some harshly, a few generously, on the share which women have taken in the last terrible days of the siege of Paris. *The Daily News* does justice to the heroism the better class of women have shown through the whole desperate struggle.

> The women of Paris earned the respect and sympathy of the male populace in quite another fashion. It was upon them the distresses of the blockade came heaviest. The poorer classes, whose husbands and bread-winners were employed upon the ramparts, sat out the weary hours at home, waiting with desperate anxiety for news of the battle, or stood at the doors of the offices where scanty food and fuel were distributed. In fact, they suffered and endured as, we believe, women have for the most part ever suffered and endured when subjected to conditions of feverish uncertainty and peril which would test the spirit of the strongest men. [...] We cannot follow with much patience the rhetorical denunciations of English writers, who do not hesitate to refer broadly to the women of Paris, and to the women of the Commune, as if they were monsters of revolting cruelty and vice.[85]

These assertions refute both the class-based fears of revolution engendered by the Commune and the misogynistic depiction of Communard women. They also, in describing Parisian women's endurance and strength—in comparison to men—provide an alternative imagery of women that opposed contemporary discourses on mid-Victorian womanhood.[86] As Gullickson has duly noted, the treatment of Communard

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[84] *Dublin Evening Mail*, 11 October 1871, p.1.

[85] *Englishwoman's Review,* July 1871, p.197.

[86] Women's inherent and fundamental 'weakness' was asserted by many the scientific and medical community, including Henry Maudsley. See Michael Collie, *Henry Maudsley Victorian Psychiatrist: A Bibliographical Study* (St Paul's Bibliographies: Winchester, 1988) p.51.

prisoners and the abuse that they received from the people of Versailles was justified by contemporary reporters because they were popularly depicted as '[f]uries of Greek myth, wild animals, witches, and madwomen'.[87]

The *Englishwoman's Review,* however, presented a nuanced picture of women prisoners and their trials at Versailles. In an article outlining those arrested and their trial, the *Englishwoman's Review* also noted that the 'ladies' of Versailles provided support to the women prisoners:

> The women prepare their own food, and for this purpose small portable stoves are ranged along the court-yards of the prison. Some ladies of Versailles bring, daily, linen, books, and occasionally money. They also procure work for the women, who, if they please, may earn a franc and a half a day. The women belong to all classes of society. Of the total of 340, at least 150 are married, and their husbands are almost all among the prisoners.[88]

Again, this passage challenges the tendency in modern criticism to focus on women as a class, by representing the women of Paris as hardworking, respectable (and potentially educated). It also reveals support between the women of Versailles and Parisian Communards which contrasts with Gullickson's description of the abuse of prisoners by the people of Versailles.

English feminists, with their emphasis on women's experiences across classes, may have claimed to speak for English working-class women in responding to the Commune, particularly in highlighting the sympathetic response to the working-class women of the Paris Commune. This sympathetic portrayal is connected to the internationalist approach of the *Englishwoman's Review*, a periodical that regularly included articles on international events and campaigns. However, it is at odds with other interpretations of the Commune in England that were influenced by anti-French feeling and the fear of working-class revolution. It must also be remembered, though, that it is not known what English working-class women themselves thought of the Commune.

We can glean some idea however, as Gareth Stedman Jones has suggested that irrespective of fears of revolution in Britain—fears stoked by the press in response to

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[87] Gullickson, pp.183-84.

[88] *Englishwoman's Review*, October 1871, p.281.

the Commune—Friedrich Engels was correct in asserting that the British working-classes were indifferent to the Commune.[89] Engels argued that the working classes (or at least, working-class men) 'behaved in a disgraceful manner, though the men of Paris had risked their lives, the working men of England made no effort to sympathise with them or assist them'.[90] If the *Dublin Evening Mail* was right to claim that depictions of 'The Petroleuses of Paris' were being used to make a case against women's suffrage, then it was in the clear interest of the *Englishwoman's Review* and the suffrage campaign to present a view that countered this claim, and thus to be sympathetic to the Commune women.

The *Englishwoman's Review* returned to the subject of French women and the war in 1872. It considered the French reparations, which were supported by a 'patriotic subscription,' and reflected on the costs of the war to all the women of France:

> Committees are being formed at Versailles and several other towns to receive subscriptions from the women of France for the purpose of paying the indemnity. Jewellery and objects of art will be accepted, and bazaars will subsequently be organised by French ladies residing in London, Vienna, Rome, New York and other capitals.

> All classes of women in France are helping, poor workwomen are giving the earning of two or three days' labour. It appears to be everywhere recognised as women's privilege to pay for the expenses of war, though she must not be consulted as to its commencement.[91]

In commenting on the longer-term impact of the war, the *Englishwoman's Review* continued to construct its imagined community, developing the same themes previously explored in the feminist press: its focus on internationalism, the categorisation of women as a class, it's claims on behalf of working women, and, as Lydia Becker had established at the beginning of the war, a relationship between the impact of the war on women and the campaign for women's suffrage.

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[89] Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), p.521.

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] *Englishwoman's Review*, 1872, p.139.

'WE ARE JUSTIFIED IN TALKING OF WOMEN AS FORMING ONE CLASS': A FEMINIST 'IMAGINED COMMUNITY' AND ITS LIMITS

English feminists' responses to the war and to the Commune specifically considered the effect on women, and there is clear evidence of an intersection between liberal, pacifist and feminist ideas. Critically, in such a context, this constituted an attempt to portray women as a 'class' uniquely affected by war.[92] In their responses to the war and to the Commune, the group of women journalists examined in this paper were clearly influenced by feminist causes and their identification as activists: for Butler by her campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts and in the *Englishwoman's Review* and the *Women's Suffrage Journal* by the suffrage campaign. The inseparableness of their feminist campaigns from their worldview means that opinions expressed in the feminist press often differed widely from either the generalised nationalist English view claimed by some scholars, or the alternative multiplicity of views espoused by others.

Butler also focussed on the women's peace movement as an international and not a national concern, and her engagement with the International Association of Women—and the organisation's universal declaration against the war—reflected this, in comparison to other English opinions on the war that were tied to notions of a patriarchal English national identity. Karen Offen claims that the repression of the Paris Commune, which resulted in a suppression of women's rights activism in France, contributed to the centre of women's rights campaigning moving from France to the English-speaking world in the 1870s.[93] This assertion to some degree neglects the complexity of feminists' international networking, which presented ways of sharing

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[92] In its article of May 1876, 'Women as a Class', the *Englishwoman's Review* made the claim that there was '[a] sense in which we are justified in talking of women as forming one class, whether in "the highest, the middle or the humbler ranks of life;" a sense in which women […] do form one common class […] The fact remains that by the law all men in England are equal and all women are inferior to them'. *Englishwoman's Review*, 13 May 1876, p.203.

[93] Karen M. Offen, 'Internationalizing Feminism, 1870-1890', in *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000) pp.144-81 (p.144). In her work on Hubertine Auclert, Carolyn Eichner describes the development of feminism in France in the years following the suppression of the Commune through the publication of *La Citoyenne* from 1881. This, as English feminism did in the 1870s, presented an international view with a focus on sisterhood, but also from a 'first world' perspective, with imperialist convictions. C. J. Eichner, '*La Citoyenne* in the World: Hubertine Auclert and Feminist Imperialism', *French Historical Studies,* 32 (2009), pp.63-84.

views on women's equality issues across borders and classes. This is illustrated by the response of the *Englishwoman's Review* to the Paris Commune, with its international focus and presentation of Communard women in a sympathetic light.

The feminist press used the opportunity to comment on the French crisis and its perceived impact on women to construct an alternative 'imagined community' claiming comment on foreign affairs as a legitimate sphere for feminists, and emphasising the existence of an international coalition of women campaigners. This was constructed by focussing on the impact of war and the French crisis on women specifically; by a focus on women across classes of society and on the claim for women as a class; and by a sympathetic portrayal of women. For Becker this meant the hypothetical women impacted by the Franco Prussian war; for Butler and her fellow campaigners, the Parisian women who were victims of prostitution and contagious diseases laws; and for the *Englishwoman's Review* this meant challenging the negative portrayal of Parisian women during the Siege of Paris and Paris Commune.

Sheila Rowbotham, in her social history of women, explored 'both what has been specific to women as a sex and the manner in which class has cut across this oppression.' She stated that 'the consequences of [male control] for women of different classes were not the same'.[94] Indeed, this examination of English feminists' responses to the war and the Commune, reveals the absence of alternative voices, including working-class French and English women. It is evident that middle- and upper-class English feminists could not speak for all women across nations and classes, despite their intention to do so.

While some English feminists sought to establish an 'imagined community' in their interpretation of the political upheaval in France in 1870-71, for women across both class and national boundaries, the degree to which their own 'imagined community' was more or less valid that the patriarchal English nationalist imaginary they had sought to disrupt, is uncertain. Indeed, the act of using the 'imagined community' as a framework for understanding the significance of feminist journalists' responses to the war demonstrates the limits of their discourse in claiming to speak for all women across all classes and nations. However, building on the concept of a feminist 'imagined community'—rooted in Mary Tusan's work on the women's press and developing Anne

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[94] Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from history: 300 years of women's oppression and the fight against it* (London: Pluto Press, 1973) p.ix.

Summers' concept of hidden internationalism—analysing the commentary of the feminist press on the French crisis establishes foreign affairs as a legitimate sphere for nineteenth-century feminist discourse.

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The Bolama Colony and Abolitionary Reform in Captain Beaver's *African Memoranda* (1805)

CAROL BOLTON

ABSTRACT: In 1805, naval officer Captain Philip Beaver (1766-1813) published his *African Memoranda: Relative to an Attempt to Establish a British Settlement on the Island of Bulama, on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Year 1792.* Beaver's text provides an absorbing testimony of his efforts to assist British colonisers in establishing their African settlement. Despite the colonial ambitions of this project, the 'Bulama Association' members were reformists at heart. Their high-minded intentions in purchasing the island and settling it, were to demonstrate the anti-slavery principle that propagation by 'free natives' would bring 'cultivation and commerce' to the region and ultimately introduce 'civilization' among them. The colonists' ambitions to benefit the African economy and set a precedent of humanitarian labour for the slave-owning lobby in Britain, led to the extraordinary emigration of 275 men, women, and children in order to put their humanitarian ideals into practice. Within two years, all the colonists had died or returned to Britain, but Beaver asserted that their socio-economic model was successful and that future settlements would benefit from their efforts. This article examines the motives of the Bolama scheme within the context of other colonial projects (for instance in Sierra Leone) to demonstrate how British anti-slavery ideals combined with commercial ambitions to settle land in Africa at the end of the eighteenth century. It contributes to academic investigations into Atlantic history, popular abolitionist movements of the 1790s, and Romantic-period colonial policy, to demonstrate how such collective enterprises sought to expand British influence abroad.

KEYWORDS: Beaver; Bolama; Sierra Leone; Africa; Colony; Abolition

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IN 1805, NAVAL officer Captain Philip Beaver (1766-1813) published his *African Memoranda: Relative to an Attempt to Establish a British Settlement on the Island of*

Bulama, on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Year 1792.[1] His account of the extraordinary migration of 275 men, women, and children to Bolama was intended to demonstrate a socio-economic model of engagement with Africans that would prove West Indian slavery was unnecessary. At a time when anti-slavery initiatives were becoming prominent in Britain through the efforts of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade (formed in 1787) and the parliamentary campaign for abolition led by William Wilberforce in the late 1780s and early 1790s, the Bolama colonists intended to engage with the problem of slavery in Africa itself. They embraced Wilberforce's belief that Britons should vindicate their involvement in the slave trade and make 'reparation to Africa, as far as we can, by establishing a trade upon true commercial principles'.[2] And like the better known Sierra Leone colony, which was the inspiration for the Bolama venture, it did not only intend to promote anti-slavery policy through commercial exchange with Africans; it also had a benevolent purpose to 'improve' their lives:

> To purchase land in their country, to cultivate it by free natives hired for that purpose; and thereby to induce in them habits of labour and of industry [that] might eventually lead to the introduction of letters, Religion and civilization, into the very heart of Africa.[3]

Such plans anticipated the better known 'civilising' missions of Thomas Fowell Buxton and David Livingstone by at least fifty years, and therefore have a much longer history of 'combining legitimate commerce, civilization and Christianity' than the 'New Africa Policy' of the mid-nineteenth century, as Suzanne Schwarz has pointed out with regard to the Sierra Leone Company's ambitions.[4] The attempt to colonise Bolama adds to our knowledge of how eighteenth-century Britons envisioned embedding a 'legitimate

[1] Philip Beaver, *African Memoranda: Relative to an Attempt to Establish a British Settlement on the Island of Bulama, on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Year 1792* (London: Printed for C. and R. Baldwin, 1805). The colonists believed the name of the island to be Bulam, or Bulama, and these names are used interchangeably in accounts of the settlement. When not quoting from the original sources, this article will use the island's modern name of Bolama.

[2] Quoted in *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa,* eds Robin Law, Suzanne Schwarz and Silke Strickrodt (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013) p.2.

[3] Beaver, *African Memoranda,* p.3.

[4] Suzanne Schwarz, 'Commerce, Civilization and Christianity: The Development of the Sierra Leone Company', in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, eds David Richardson, Suzanne Schwarz and Anthony Tibbles (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), pp.252-270 (p.270).

commerce' in Africa, an idea that 'by the 1780s [...] had become widely accepted, in a variety of forms, within the Abolitionist movement'.[5] Such ideas were not confined to Britain alone; they can be identified in other parts of Europe, such as France, Denmark, and Sweden, as this article will demonstrate. It can be argued that these economic models of engagement with Africa directly contributed to the colonisation of that continent, yet the Bolama venture is an aspect of Atlantic history that has generally gone unnoticed by academics working in this field, despite 'the implications of this commercial transition for the African societies involved [being] the subject of a considerable amount of scholarly analysis and debate'.[6] Therefore Beaver's account of the venture is a valuable document of record that offers an additional perspective on attempts to colonise Africa at this time.

For Beaver, the most important aspect of the Bolama venture was the socio-economic experiment he had been commissioned to carry out. Despite all the colonists having died or returned to Britain within two years, Beaver nonetheless asserted that this experiment was successful, in that it paved the way for future settlements. This is reflected in his *African Memoranda,* which will be discussed throughout the article to demonstrate how colonial schemes by individuals and groups emerged from their anti-slavery convictions, as well as their firm belief that they would be 'enlarging the sphere of human felicity and extending the blessings of civilization and religion to distant nations'.[7] The first chapter of Beaver's work explains how the 'Bulama Association' members came together to plan the colony in Africa, with the next three chapters providing a detailed account of the voyage of the ships transporting the colonists. A transcript of the manuscript journal that Beaver kept on the island makes up the next, very long chapter at the centre of his work, accounting for when he took charge of the colony after more than half the settlers returned home, until their final evacuation.[8] Six

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[5] Law, Schwarz and Strickrodt (eds), *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa,* p. 4.

[6] *Ibid.*, p.6.

[7] C. B. Wadstrom, *An Essay on Colonization, Particularly Applied to the Western Coast of Africa, with Some Free Thoughts on Cultivation and Commerce; Also Brief Descriptions of the Colonies Formed, or Attempted, in Africa, Including Those of Sierra Leone and Bulama,* 2 vols (London: Darton and Harvey, 1794-5; repr. New York: Kelley, 1968), I, p. 59.

[8] A distinction is made in this article between Beaver's published text and the manuscript journal he kept on the island, which is denoted as 'journal' throughout.

further chapters contain descriptions of the African people, the terrain and climate, and the flora and fauna. They were presumably written when Beaver was preparing his book for the press, as they also provide justifications of the colonists' actions and decisions, and judgements of the scheme's successes and failures. In this way the book combines two distinct types of narrative: the first being the reporting of daily events on the island from his original journal, and the second being the author's more subjective, retrospective reflections on these events (a synthesis of writing styles common in Romantic-period travel writing).[9] The book's appendices list the settlers' names and fates, and lay out the colony's constitution and regulations, as well as providing additional documents and letters relevant to the project. Beaver's original journal contains a daily record of the colony's development, interactions with native communities, and sickness and deaths, but does not reveal very much about the colonists themselves. While some individuals stand out as more fully developed because Beaver interacts with them in some way, or rates them as significant contributors, generally we learn little about them, especially because Beaver saw his human material as largely faulty in character. Instead, readers often find out more about the conditions for the experiment, in case of it being repeated by others, as Beaver hoped it would. As his main concern in publishing this work was to ensure that the plan to colonise Bolama should be resurrected by others, Beaver also downplays his own personal investment in the project and the great physical toll it had on him. Schooled in his reading of science and philosophy, as well as by his practical naval education, and tasked with a public-service role that required obeisance to the ethics of duty and responsibility, the individual is elided in his work by a greater benefit: 'the increase of the general happiness of mankind'.[10] Beaver was an avid reader of the narratives written by contemporary travellers in Africa, extolling the 'zeal, the patience, the fortitude and the intelligence' of James Bruce (1730-1794), John Ledyard (1751-1789), and Simon Lucas (d. 1799) among others.[11] As in their accounts, Beaver does not focus on his own

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[9] Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp.117-8.

[10] Though Beaver's early education at a local endowed school was interrupted by the sudden death of his father, he later schooled himself in 'history, ethics, natural philosophy and jurisprudence', and during one voyage is said to have read the entire *Encyclopaedia Britannica.* W. H. Smyth, *The Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver, Late of His Majesty's Ship Nisus* (London: J. Murray, 1829), pp.4-5, 44, 301; Beaver, *African Memoranda,* p.4.

[11] Beaver, *African Memoranda,* p.403.

feelings, or those of others, but on the social benefits of the outcome. Therefore, at a time when human interiority was being fetishized in Romantic literature, art, and philosophy – and despite the travel journal being generally categorised as an ego-document – national priorities are perceived as more important than individual concerns in the quest for greater knowledge of Africa, and in Beaver's case, in reporting how their colonial experiment would benefit future settlers.

Beaver's aspirations for settling the west coast of Africa need to be appreciated within the context of other late-eighteenth century colonial schemes. His *African Memoranda* is just one of many narratives of exploration and colonisation that have recently emerged, and which present a clearer picture of the overseas ambitions of individuals and groups, as well as national priorities to expand British influence abroad. The lessons learned from such texts shaped other responses and approaches, because as Felix Driver asserts, in the eighteenth century: 'the explorer was the foot-soldier of geography's empire', and Beaver's account provided knowledge for others to use in their own attempts to explore and colonise Africa.[12] One such explorer who envisaged settling Africa on behalf of Sweden, was the abolitionist, colonial theorist, and Swedenborgian, Carl Bernhard Wadstrom, who travelled to the West coast of Africa in 1787-8. On his return he moved to London to work with British abolitionists, where he published his *Observations on the Slave Trade, and a Description of Some Part of the Coast of Guinea* (1789). This text was used by Wilberforce in his anti-slavery speeches in Parliament, and Wadstrom also advised the Privy Council and House of Commons on this matter. Colonial ambitions, founded on the belief that 'cultivation and commerce on right principles' in Africa would 'promote the civilization of mankind' were never far from Wadstrom's mind, and he embraced the plans for colonization of Sierra Leone and Bolama.[13] In fact, in 1791, he was a prime mover in collecting Bolama subscribers from Manchester, where he was then residing.[14] Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization*, published in 1794 after Beaver's return to England, uses Beaver's manuscript journal as a source for advocating African settlement. His text provides a wider frame of reference for Beaver's work as well as promoting the ideas within it,

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[12] Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire* (Blackwell: Oxford and Malden, Ma., 2001), p.3.

[13] Wadstrom, *An Essay on Colonization*, I, p.iii.

[14] *Ibid.*, II, p.133.

thereby demonstrating how colonialist discourses built on knowledge contained within other accounts. The *Essay* is not only more theoretical in nature than *Memoranda,* but its colonial policies are more extensively developed and have greater perspectival distance; Beaver's being limited by his experiences on Bolama and his narrower nationalistic ambitions to protect and enlarge British territories abroad.[15] Wadstrom, instead, proposes what he sees as a benevolent pan-European scheme of colonial expansion. In doing so he criticises individual nations who have acquired colonial territories through 'contracted views of commercial and financial advantage' that refuse to 'spread beyond the limits of a partial and local policy'.[16] In contrast, Wadstrom claims that his colonialist vision will not be marked by their records of 'injustice, rapine and murder', even if – as Deirdre Coleman points out – it invokes racial hierarchies that fall back on 'the usual cliché of the complementary natures of the European and African, with the European stronger in understanding and the African in feeling'.[17]

Modern scholarship recognises that colonialism, in the form of exploratory initiatives, commercial enterprises, and migratory settlements on the part of its citizens, contributed to a massive expansion in Britain's territorial possessions. In fact, by 1820 (after nearly twenty-five years of war with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France) 'Britain ruled over a quarter of the world's population', and Romantic-period literature reflects contemporary responses to the political, social, and economic impact of this phenomenon.[18] These territories gave Britain great status as a colonial power and were influential in forming literary perceptions of alien people and places. First-hand accounts of colonial life, exploration into new territories, and missionary justifications of attempts to 'civilize' native populations, were consumed by a curious British public.[19] Such accounts were responsible for generating racial profiles of foreign 'others' that were disseminated through popular literary forms, such as novels and poetry.

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[15] For instance, *African Memoranda* concludes with a long note on French plans for colonisation, exhorting the British government to prevent their attempt to 'run away with all western Africa' (p.414).

[16] Wadstrom, *An Essay on Colonization*, I, p.59.

[17] *Ibid.*; Deirdre Coleman, *Romantic Colonization and British Anti-Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p.91.

[18] Deirdre Coleman, 'Post-Colonialism', in *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide,* ed. Nicholas Roe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.237-56 (p.237).

[19] See Innes M. Keighren, Charles W. J. Withers and Bill Bell, *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

Nevertheless, these texts could also contain ambivalent responses towards colonial policy, because as Britain's influence abroad was expanding, some of its citizens desired a more responsible engagement with the territories that came under its rule. For instance, writers such as William Wordsworth and Robert Southey complicated the stereotypes of Native Americans as aggressive and warlike in poems such as 'The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman' (1798) and 'Songs of the American Indians' (1799), while abolitionist poetry depicted examples of black suffering at the hands of white oppressors to oppose transatlantic slavery.[20] In novel form, writers such as Phoebe Gibbes in *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789), criticised wealthy British 'nabobs', while presenting a tolerant attitude towards Hindu culture. In this way, some literary works of the period promoted British extra-parliamentary opposition to the slave trade, revised opinions about Indigenous Americans, and engaged in the debate over the best methods for governing India at a time when the East India Company's control there was being challenged.

In the wake of critical studies that contextualize socio-political discourses of the period and investigate their concerns – for instance by Mary Louise Pratt, Tim Fulford, and Deirdre Coleman – Romantic literature has been better understood as having a broader, global focus, that more accurately reflects the lives and priorities of its first readers and writers.[21] In the last twenty years, Atlantic history has also become a rapidly developing field of academic study, shaping our understanding of the interactions between Europeans, Africans and Americans within this arena, as Bernard Bailyn has shown.[22] Examining the context from which Beaver's text emerged enables understanding of the nexus between individual ambitions to explore and settle foreign lands, the imaginative engagement of readers with such accounts, their influence on secondary works, and the implications for British foreign policy in expanding knowledge of, and intercourse with, the Atlantic world. For instance, the influence of travel accounts

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[20] For instance, Thomas Day and John Bicknell's 'The Dying Negro (1773), Ann Yearsley's 'A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade' (1788), Southey's 'Poems on the Slave Trade' (1797).

[21] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 9th edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); Tim Fulford, *Romantic Indians: Native Americans, British Literature, and Transatlantic Culture 1756-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Deirdre Coleman, *Romantic Colonization and British Anti-Slavery.*

[22] Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, Ma. and London: Harvard University Press, 2005).

and colonial narratives on British writers and thinkers during the nineteenth century can be seen in the documented responses to reading Beaver's journal by Robert Southey, Dorothy Wordsworth, and John Stuart Mill. Southey's engagement with the journal in particular, demonstrates how this nexus of influence operated. As a writer for the *Quarterly Review* for thirty years, Southey specialised in travel-writing, narratives of exploration, and colonial discourse, and first-hand accounts such as Beaver's fed directly into his published opinions on how to colonise Africa. In 1809 Southey recorded that 'I have lately been much delighted with the "African Memoranda" [...] where Beaver himself did all that it was possible for man to do, and, I believe, more than it would have been possible for any other man in the world to have done'.[23] When he reviewed Smyth's *Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver* twenty years later, Southey referred to the Bolama scheme again as evidence for his opinion that 'it is from negroes and mulattos, trained in European civilization, that the civilization of Western Africa must come; and proper colonists, fitted by such training, as well as by constitution, will be raised up in the course of one generation'.[24] Southey adopts Beaver's socio-economic model of engagement with Africans, but extends it further to envisage them not just as partners in a 'legitimate commerce' with Britain, but as colonial subjects; a prediction that would come to fruition in many parts of Africa during the nineteenth century.[25] As a prominent man of letters, Southey's poetry and journalism were directly influenced by accounts such as Beaver's, thereby demonstrating the importance of resurrecting Romantic-period travel narratives and colonial discourses for modern readers.[26] The significance of these forms of writing needs to be recognised, because their influence often extended beyond the confines of disciplinary boundaries by being absorbed and

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[23] *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey, Part 3: 1804-1809*, eds Carol Bolton and Tim Fulford, *Romantic Circles*. Letter 1569, 20 January 1809 <https://romantic-circles.org/editions/southey_letters/Part_Three/index.html> [Accessed: 28/12/2020].

[24] Robert Southey, 'Life and Services of Captain Beaver', *Quarterly Review*, 41.82 (November 1829, 375-417 (p.391).

[25] See also Carol Bolton, *Writing the Empire: Robert Southey and Romantic Colonialism* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007) pp.62-6.

[26] As part of this ongoing twenty-first century recovery of texts once familiar to Romantic-period readers and writers, my scholarly edition of *Captain Philip Beaver's African Journal* is being published by Anthem Press in 2022.

re-worked for other kinds of audiences (as in Beaver's case) so disseminating the ideas within them more widely.

While eighteenth-century European explorers and navigators were mapping the peripheries of the African continent and sharing their discoveries with readers through their narratives, the blank spaces of its interior on charts such as those made by the cartographer Aaron Arrowsmith, still justified its designation as the 'dark continent'. British interest in exploring the interior resulted in government-led and individually sponsored journeys across it, such as those by James Bruce in the 1760s and 70s, and Mungo Park in the 1790s. The African Association, founded in 1788 and led by Joseph Banks, sponsored Park's journey as well as other expeditions to gain scientific and geographical knowledge of Africa. So, when Beaver was put on half pay by the navy in 1791, after anticipated conflicts with Spain and Russia had not emerged and before the war with France, he concocted a similar scheme to cross the African continent on foot.[27] That was until he met the abolitionist Henry Hew Dalrymple, who had been appointed by the Sierra Leone Company to govern their settlement at Freetown. The colony of Sierra Leone was founded in 1787 to provide a home for Africans freed from slavery. These first settlers were impoverished black people from London, many of whom had been slaves in America before being emancipated by the British at the end of the American War of Independence (1775-1783).[28] The nascent colony struggled with the climate, lack of food and shelter, administrative problems, and high mortality rates. When the Sierra Leone Company took control of it in 1791, its first directors included the prominent abolitionists Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp; Henry Thornton (a politician and banker); the parliamentarian, William Wilberforce; as well as two naval officers.[29] As Bronwen Everill has demonstrated, the 'association of key British humanitarians, colonizationists, missionaries, naval officers, and parliamentarians' that

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[27] Romantic-period expeditions to establish geographical or scientific knowledge of unknown territories, were often carried out by half-pay officers from the army or navy whose services were not required during peace time.

[28] Stephen J. Braidwood, *Black Poor and White Philanthropists: London's Black and the Foundation of the Sierra Leone Settlement 1786-1791* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994) p.80.

[29] Schwarz, 'Commerce, Civilization and Christianity', p.255.

forged such projects through 'close connections and tight networks', were essential in determining 'the type of civilizing mission that would later develop'.[30]

Dalrymple was no doubt appointed as the colony's governor because he was a man of high ideals who was committed to ending slavery, after his military service in the slave station of Goree in West Africa, as well as from his upbringing on a Caribbean plantation in Grenada. He believed that Africans could be taught to be as industrious as Europeans, and on inheriting his family's plantation in 1788 he freed all the slaves to prove his point, also testifying as a witness to the evils of slavery in the British Parliament.[31] Beaver was approached by Dalrymple to join the enterprise because of his 'military and nautical knowledge', a proposal to which he instantly acceded:

> It was a plan so congenial to my mind, that a second was not required to hesitate; and my own plans [to cross Africa] being too expensive for my purse were given up. I knew nothing of what would be expected from me, nothing of the plan, except that it was benevolent and humane. All that I knew was, that a colony was to be established; and among uncivilized tribes; and that was enough for me.[32]

However shortly after meeting Beaver, Dalrymple disclosed that 'I am no longer governor of Sierra Leone; I have disagreed with the directors; and have nothing more to do with them'.[33] As a result, Dalrymple came up with a new plan. Having heard Bolama described 'by a director of the French Senegal Company [as] exceedingly favourable', it was decided on 'as a proper place for making an establishment'.[34] The 'Bulama Association', as the six founding members of the scheme who met at Old Slaughter's Coffee House in London came to be known, drew up a radical constitution to define the new colony with a republican government in which 'sovereignty resides in the people'.[35] They embraced universal adult male suffrage, regardless of wealth or race, 'provided they were not indented servants or domestics receiving wages, or

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[30] Bronwen Everill, *Abolition and Empire in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.18.

[31] *Abridgement of the Minutes of the Evidence, Taken Before a Committee of the Whole House to Whom it was Referred to Consider of the Slave-Trade* (London: House of Commons, 1789-91).

[32] Beaver, *African Memoranda,* p. xiii.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] Beaver, *African Memoranda,* p.xiv.

[35] *Ibid.*, p.431.

mendicants'.[36] Absolute freedom of religious belief was established in the colony, and of course owning slaves was outlawed.

The colonists intended to grow the same kinds of tropical produce that generated income through the slave trade: sugar, cotton, and indigo for instance, but—rather radically for the time—through hiring African workers and paying for their labour. In this regard they were influenced by the commercial ideas of Malachy Postlethwayte and John Fothergill, who in the late-eighteenth century lent substance to the arguments of abolitionists that the slave trade could be eradicated in Africa by European intervention. Postlethwayte, as Christopher Leslie Brown has shown, claimed 'that a British empire in Africa could liberate the continent from the horrors of the Atlantic slave trade' and establish 'a friendly, humane, and civilized commerce' there instead.[37] Fothergill, a Quaker physician and abolitionist, argued that instead of enslaving Africans to labour 'by the dread of torture' in the West Indies, they should be 'employed as servants for hire' in their own country.[38] Such ideas were also mooted in other parts of Europe. For instance, as Pernille Røge has demonstrated, French physiocrats 'proposed relocating the production of sugar, coffee and other colonial cash crops to Africa where free local labourers could cultivate it with European encouragement'.[39] The establishment of Danish plantations on the Gold Coast of Africa from 1788 onwards, came out of a similar 'shift in focus which occurred in Abolitionist thought from European to African initiative'.[40] Such ideas were also promoted by Wadstrom in Sweden and Britain, as already demonstrated, and were embraced by the Bolama colonists who also intended to promote the abolition of slavery by forging a

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[36] *Ibid.*, p.425.

[37] Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) p.272. See also Brown's 'The Origins of "Legitimate Commerce"', in Law, Schwarz and Strickrodt (eds), *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa*, pp.138-57.

[38] Deirdre Coleman, *Henry Smeathman, the Flycatcher: Natural History, Slavery and Empire in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018) p.2.

[39] Pernille Røge, *Economistes and the Reinvention of Empire: France in the Americas and Africa, c.1750–1802* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020) p.10.

[40] Law, Schwarz, and Strickrodt (eds), *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa,* p.2. See also within this collection: Per Hernæs, 'A Danish Experiment in Commercial Agriculture on the Gold Coast, 1788-93', pp.158-179.

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legitimate commercial relationship with Africans: as laid out in the Association's charter.[41]

　　The charter also stated that in order to prevent any of Bolama's individual land-owners becoming wealthier than the others (and thereby creating a dominant plantocracy, as in the West Indies) there would be an equitable division of property, with only one African labourer allowed to be hired per forty acres of land.[42] They also pledged only to settle where they could purchase land from local people, rather than seizing it from the inhabitants. As was the case for many such enterprises, the committee advertised for subscriptions, which mostly came from people living in London and Manchester. Their payments were given in exchange for land ownership in the new colony. Absentee subscribers paid £60.00 per 500 acres, and colonist subscribers paid £30.00 for the same amount of land.[43] The scheme quickly gained in popularity with nearly half the subscribers coming from Manchester, home of the earliest factories in England and with a strong community of support for the abolition movement. The idea of new opportunities abroad for working-class people must have been attractive at a time when a fifth of babies in London died during infancy and adults were unlikely to live past their early thirties.[44] No doubt the Bulama Association's liberal principles were also welcomed because they allowed any man to join the governing council, whatever their religion or status. Among the colonists was one black male, James Watson, and fifty-eight female subscribers, including seventeen who signed up as 'personal servants.[45] It seems these women were similarly motivated by anti-slavery ideals, as one of the subscribers was Ulrica Wadstrom, who clearly shared her husband's 'sincere desire to communicate to the injured nations of Africa, the blessings of civilization'.[46]

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[41] The British colony of Senegambia (established in 1765) also focused on trade in African commodities. Despite lacking the abolitionist principles of later colonial enterprises, it 'also helped to popularize the idea of a commercial alternative to the slave trade'. Law, Schwarz, and Strickrodt (eds), *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa,* p.17.

[42] Beaver, *African Memoranda,* pp.427-8.

[43] *Ibid.*, p.419.

[44] Billy G. Smith, *Ship of Death: A Voyage that Changed the Atlantic World* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2014) p.36.

[45] *Ibid.,* p.40.

[46] Wadstrom, *An Essay on Colonization*, II, p.173.

While Dalrymple obviously embraced these high-minded ideals, and his reformist principles convinced his fellow Association members to join the scheme, he lacked skills as a pragmatist or planner and there were significant weaknesses in the venture that led to its downfall. Beaver later described him as a 'dreamer of dreams' who was incapable of achieving anything difficult.[47] Once in Africa, Dalrymple must have realised how hard it would be to put their plans into practice, leaving on the first ship out again two months later and dying shortly after his return to England in 1795. Idealistic in tenor, the Association's coffee-house meetings had also failed to appreciate that nobody, including Dalrymple, knew where the island was. Nevertheless, they set sail with the colonists on three ships, with the first arriving at Bolama by the end of May 1792. Due to calamitous events on their arrival, which saw several of the settlers dead, injured or sickly within a few weeks, many of the colonists returned home, and by July 1792 there were only ninety inhabitants left on the island. In November of that year, due to further deaths and departures, only twenty-eight remained. A year later Beaver was one of five men left on the island, with only he and one other being original subscribers.

One of the reasons given by Beaver for the scheme's failure was that as they prepared to leave in April 1792, the colony had still not been given a charter by the government that approved its constitution. This was ostensibly because the funding for the colony was considered to be insufficient, but it is likely that the pro-slavery Home Secretary, Henry Dundas, was alarmed by their proposal.[48] Certainly Wadstrom's account of the settlement laments the 'interference of the Ministry', which 'sent an order to detain them, till certain articles in the constitution, or agreement of the colonists, were renounced', and Dalrymple was forced to return to London to appeal against the decision.[49] It appears that in the highly charged political atmosphere of the French Revolution, the British government were suspicious of the democratic principles of their charter, which espoused common ownership of property and contained hints of Spencean agrarian radicalism.[50] Beaver's journal bears witness to the turbulent political

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[47] Beaver, *African Memoranda,* p.82.

[48] Smith, *Ship of Death,* p.4.

[49] Wadstrom, *An Essay on Colonization,* II, p.297.

[50] Thomas Spence (1750-1814) believed 'that landownership lay at the root of all injustice, inequality and economic exploitation [and] argued for land nationalization in England'. When faced with the

environment of the 1790s, when British reformists came up against Pitt's repressive government, not only at home but also in new dominions abroad, where their improving principles were still seen as ideological sabotage by the administration. In contrast, in the Sierra Leone colony, where on its initiation in 1792 its settlers were made up of 'over 1,100 self-liberated slaves' from the American War of Independence, such revolutionary principles were not countenanced.[51] As a result of the Bolama venture's reformist charter, its ships eventually left without official sanction, an issue that would cause problems for the settlement's leaders who lacked the authority to control the enterprise and its participants. There was no legitimacy to land claims and contracts in the colony, and little hope of protection from the British navy in the future if it was needed.[52] Beaver also came to realise that the scheme's failure to obtain a charter was partly to do with the composition of the Bolama council itself. Though the number and configuration of the council members changed rapidly over the winter of 1791 and spring of 1792, as their plans were formalised—growing from six to nine and then thirteen—the majority were ex-military men or half-pay officers who were stood down during peace time. Dalrymple and John Young had been army officers, Sir William Halton was a captain in the militia, John King was a lieutenant of marines, and Robert Dobbin, Richard Harcourne, and Beaver were naval lieutenants. Though they had more influential supporters, namely the merchant and politician Paul Le Mesurier—one of the 'appointed trustees for the [Bolama] concern in England', MP for Southwark between 1790-1796, and later Lord Mayor of London (1793-1794)—they lacked the political clout of the Sierra Leone Company.[53] This colony in contrast, had several prominent

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impracticalities of such a scheme in his own country, he laid out his plans for a fictional utopian colony in *Crusonia, or Robinson Crusoe's Island* of 1782. Deirdre Coleman, 'Bulama and Sierra Leone: Utopian Islands and Visionary Interiors', in *Islands in History and Representation*, eds Rod Edmond and Vanessa Smith (London: Routledge, 2003) pp.63-80 (pp.64-5).

[51] Schwarz, 'Commerce, Civilization and Christianity: The Development of the Sierra Leone Company', p.252. See also Bruce L. Mouser's 'African Academy: Clapham 1799-1806', *History of Education*, 33.1 (2004) pp.87-103, which Schwarz draws on to make this point

[52] Smith, *Ship of Death,* p.5.

[53] Andrew Johansen, *A Geographical and Historical Account of the Island of Bulama, with Observations of its Climate, Productions, etc. and an Account of the Formation and Progress of the Bulama Association, and of the Colony Itself* (London: printed for Martin and Bain, 1794), p.5. Though this account predates Beaver's, it draws on his unpublished journal and other source material provided by

campaigners and parliamentary lobbyists working to assist them in obtaining a government charter, so adding further weight to Everill's theory that networks of influential abolitionists, politicians and businessmen were necessary to the success of such ventures. Beaver's journal is testament to the consequences of this absence of collaborative support and highlights a significant difference between the planning and financing of the Bolama and Sierra Leone colonies.

Another difference between the two colonies becomes clear in Beaver's account of Dalrymple's rift with the Sierra Leone company directors, which was due to his recruitment of military men for the scheme when they wanted to 'create a nonmilitarized colony'.[54] Beaver reports that 'far from wishing persons of our description to go out, we were of all others those whom they most wished to avoid', despite being 'persons of liberal minds and manners'.[55] No doubt lack of employment in their professions was a motive for joining the Sierra Leone and then the Bolama scheme, as in Beaver's case. But as Mary Wills has shown 'British naval strategy in the eighteenth century was heavily concentrated on the West Indies, to protect the valuable sugar industry that was dependent on slave labour', and many sailors therefore had exposure to the evils of plantation slavery, or had served on slave ships themselves prior to naval service.[56] Beaver, for instance had served in the West Indian fleet from 1778 to 1783, and 'the breadth of his naval voyages had provided him with an appreciation of other cultures'.[57] His liberal political principles were further developed through a long period of self-education (between 1783 and 1791) during which he studied the writings of prominent philosophers and thinkers.[58] So even before the naval blockade of slave ships along the African coast after 1808, many naval (and indeed army) officers had served in locations where they saw slavery first-hand, leading to their abolitionist convictions. The fact that so many ordinary British people were prepared to support abolitionist strategies demonstrates the strong anti-slavery sentiment in society

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him, as does Wadstrom's *Essay on Colonization.* Johansen also published the Prospectus for the Bolama colony (see Coleman, *Romantic Colonization and British Anti-Slavery,* p. 82).

[54] Smith, *Ship of Death,* p.47.

[55] Beaver, *African Memoranda,* pp.xiii-xiv.

[56] Mary Wills, *Envoys of Abolition: British Naval Officers and the Campaign Against the Slave Trade in West Africa* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019) p.10.

[57] Smith, *Ship of Death,* p.49.

[58] Smyth, *The Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver*, p.44.

by the end of the eighteenth century. However, the Bolama venture shows how these military personnel, who had witnessed the slave trade first-hand, translated their distaste for it into a practical scheme to oppose the government's pro-slavery policy.

This uniting factor among the Bolama council members, however, could not make up for the lack of strategists among them and the absence of political support for the colony. A further reason for its failure was that the delays caused by waiting for government approval prevented the settlers from arriving until the rainy season had begun. On arrival they soon lamented the lack of carpentry tools or house-building skills among the settlers, and 'not carrying out with us the frame of one or more large houses, to shelter the people immediately on their arrival, was a fatal error'.[59] The colonists' frequent exposure to the extremes of tropical weather, debilitating bouts of fever, and fear of attacks from their African neighbours, compounded their problems. Beaver's fiercest criticism of the venture, however, was in having brought out 'men of the most infamous character and vicious habits' for which he provides anecdotal evidence.[60] None of the colonists were vetted prior to signing up and it turned out that some of them had criminal convictions, with the courts giving them the choice of serving a prison sentence or going on the Bolama voyage.[61] In fact many of these settlers had already been rejected from the Sierra Leone venture because of their 'bad character'.[62] It is a little-known aspect of British colonial history, that when the American War of Independence prevented the British transportation of convicts to the thirteen colonies and before Botany Bay was proposed as a penal colony, sending British convicts to West Africa was seen as a method for creating settlements there. According to Philip Curtin, 'the initial plan was to use the Gambia [...] It was a mixture of dumping, pure and simple, along with the hope for the development of tropical agriculture'.[63] Therefore, it is easy to see why the British government, who had adopted this policy in 1784, sanctioned the 'transportation' of undesirable characters as members of colonial projects. It eased the pressure on prisons at a time of economic difficulty, offering

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[59] Beaver, *African Memoranda*, p.310.

[60] *Ibid.*, p.494.

[61] Smith, *Ship of Death,* pp.36-7.

[62] Coleman, 'Bulama and Sierra Leone: Utopian Islands and Visionary Interiors', p.66.

[63] See Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1973) I, p.92.

working class people 'one of the few viable alternatives to life in a factory, in poverty, in jail – or all three'.[64] Nevertheless, the calibre of many of these settlers was a deep disappointment to Beaver, who was strongly committed to the middle-class values of self-improvement and hard work and espoused these values to others, judging his fellow colonists by his own principles. As Michael J. Braddick points out, where new 'societies developed and diversified [...] they did not necessarily do so in isolation from the homeland. In fact, in many ways they drew on English values and practices in order to cope with growing complexities overseas'.[65] Beaver's attempt to institute such 'values and practices' were naval in nature, and he laid out regulatory terms under five headings to which all the colonists had to agree. These were based on the 'constitution which they had all signed in England', and imposed discipline and cleanliness on the colonists, as well as 'public prayers being read, to the whole community every Sunday morning'.[66] However Beaver reports that most of them 'were dissipated vicious characters [...] who required the strong hand of the law to keep them within the bounds of decency and decorum'.[67]

The most disastrous factor for the colony, however, was the high mortality rates among the settlers, at a time before modern epidemiology had identified the causes and treatment of tropical diseases. According to Billy Smith, the newly arrived colonists killed and ate several monkeys without knowing they 'harboured a vicious strain of yellow fever, circulated among them by mosquitoes that infested the mangrove swamps of Bolama'.[68] Beaver's account of the frequent deaths is often dismissive, recording them in brief, dispassionate entries that include more mundane information. The journal entries for Sunday 9th and Monday 10th of December 1792, read:

> [Sunday 9th] Same weather and employment. Died of a fever, and was buried, Mrs. Harwin. Killed a bullock for the colonists. Therm. 88. Three men well. Myself a little

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[64] Smith, *Ship of Death,* p. 28; see also Emma Christopher, *A Merciless Place: The Lost Story of Britain's Convict Disaster in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[65] Michael J. Braddick, 'Civility and Authority', in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800,* David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (eds), 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.113-132 (p.126).

[66] Beaver, *African Memoranda,* p.91, 93.

[67] *Ibid.*, p.152.

[68] Smith, *Ship of Death,* p.69.

feverish. [Monday 10th] Employed as before. Died of fevers, and were buried, Peter Box, Henrietta Fowler, and Hannah Riches. Therm. 90. Three men well. Myself ill of a fever.[69]

Beaver's stylistic brevity reflects the reduced circumstances and depressed state of the colony. But his note-form documentation of events is also a manifestation of his training in scientific, or at least military methods of record-keeping. In Beaver's previous naval roles, he was expected to keep a log of voyages, noting climatic conditions and significant occurrences, with the assumption that he could be held to account for it later as an official document (or here as a published work). As Mary Louise Pratt asserts, such records of travel 'were central agents in legitimating scientific authority and its global project' for European readers; a 'project' that Beaver's account supports in providing information for future colonists.[70] Additionally, by stressing that the creation of a legitimate commerce in Africa will be beneficial to Africans and Britons, Beaver attempts to mitigate the tragedy of this individual colony's fate by anticipating the success of future attempts.

Beaver's account of his time on Bolama is an absorbing testimony of his extraordinary efforts to establish the colony, taking sole leadership of it when others returned to Britain or became ill and died. Despite all these adversities, in an account that approaches mythic dimensions in detailing his efforts to maintain the colony and its survivors, Beaver emerges as a heroic model of reason and self-discipline; though as the situation became more desperate and he suffered frequent attacks of fever, notes of irritability become evident. As a first-person, self-interested record of the Bolama venture, it is obvious that Beaver's intention is to impress future settlers and the British government with his endeavours on behalf of the colony. We need to be aware therefore of the limited, partial nature of his account, in which he is the sole witness to the events described. This is especially the case when we consider that Beaver had to justify imposing a constitution on the colonists that had been rejected by the British government.[71] However, contemporary readers of Beaver's *African Memoranda* praised

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[69] Beaver, *African Memoranda,* p.170.

[70] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes,* p.29.

[71] As Southey states, Beaver 'refused to take charge of the colony till the assembled colonists had agreed to be governed by that constitution which the council had been obliged to disclaim before they left England. Illegal he knew this to be; but he knew it also to be an act of moral necessity', 'Life and Services of Captain Beaver', p.391.

it as 'so plain and unvarnished a tale, that we have no doubts of his veracity, though his hardships and exertions appear to be almost incredible'.[72] According to Thomas De Quincey, Beaver 'was greatly admired by Coleridge and Wordsworth for the meditative and philosophic style of mind exhibited in his book'.[73] Such reviews encapsulate the value to the literary marketplace of travel accounts and colonial endeavours, depicting a rational and reflective protagonist prioritising public service over private good. For instance Mungo Park's published account of his travels was 'an instant success, necessitating two more editions of the book after the first sold out within a week'.[74] Readers were attracted not only to the 'empiricist' knowledge it contained, but the writing style that presented him as 'a reliable witness because he was a disinterested gentleman, free from the desire to gain personally from his testimony'.[75] Despite the first-person nature of their accounts, Beaver and Park prioritise communitarian values, representing their own efforts through a detached and objective narrative voice. Nevertheless, Park's first readers were attracted by frequent moments of Romantic introspection in his work, and in Beaver's account his philosophical reflections and humanitarian principles are also appealing.[76] For instance in contemplating the new skills the colonists have learnt on Bolama, Beaver says, 'although I am not an advocate for Rousseau's mode of educating his Emilius, yet I cannot help thinking that the more practical knowledge one can acquire, the better: it makes a man acquainted with his own resources, and a less dependent being'.[77] To exemplify this point, Beaver lists the specific trades he has learnt in his time on the island, noting new-found skills as a carpenter, brickmaker, tanner, thatcher, rope-maker and architect (among others). Despite the colonists being at odds with the British government in leaving without official sanction, this dispute is forgotten in reading about the enormous exertions made to establish the colony.

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[72] 'Beaver's *African Memoranda*', *The Monthly Review,* 49, (April 1806), pp.356-366 (p. 356).

[73] *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889-90), VIII, p.289, fn.1.

[74] Tim Fulford and Debbie Lee, 'Mental Travelers: Joseph Banks, Mungo Park, and the Romantic Imagination', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 24.2 (2002) pp.117-137, (p.129).

[75] Fulford and Lee, 'Mental Travelers', p.128.

[76] See Thompson's, *Travel Writing,* p.118, for his discussion of this aspect of Park's *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799).

[77] Beaver, *African Memoranda,* p.297.

It is therefore easy to see how Beaver and other prominent imperial and military figures became paradigms of national character during an extensive period of European conflict and territorial expansion, especially when represented in print. The most famous example was presented to generations of schoolboys in Southey's *Life of Nelson* (1813), which was so popular that according to David Eastwood it had 'sold out within a year', with a second edition planned within six months.[78] It was 'reprinted more than any other of [Southey's] works' within his lifetime, and 'in the century after his death it went through more than a hundred impressions'.[79] Other accounts of patriotic endeavour in the service of Britain were published in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, including Southey's ambitious work of naval history, the *Lives of the British Admirals* (1833-7), and William Henry Smyth's *Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver* (1829). While this posthumous biography written by a fellow naval officer did not sell on the scale of Nelson's, it eulogised a man whose 'bright example may serve as a beacon to all those who feel the glow of conscious worth'.[80] Like Nelson, Beaver was the son of a clergyman who became a midshipman as a boy, when the death of his father propelled him into a naval career at the age of eleven.[81] Southey's review of Smyth's biography judges that 'a braver, an abler, more accomplished, or more high-minded officer never trod the deck of a British ship', while recommending that the book should 'be put into the hands of many a young sailor'.[82] Such men from ordinary backgrounds, presented after their deaths as self-sacrificing heroes to contribute to a national myth of public service, would continue to be promoted in Victorian imperialist texts and still survive today in the popular imagination. Beaver's journal account therefore lives on as an important record of an intrepid, if misguided, endeavour to improve humanity, long after the government dispute over the origins of the colony had been relegated to history.

In *African Memoranda*, published more than ten years after the events in Bolama took place, Beaver still suggests that it could be a British colony. The defensive, even

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[78] David Eastwood, 'Patriotism Personified: Robert Southey's Life of Nelson Reconsidered', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 77.2 (1991), pp.143-9 (p.143).

[79] *Ibid*. See also William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.555.

[80] Smyth, *The Life and Services of Captain Philip Beaver*, p.ix.

[81] *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.

[82] Southey, '*Life and Services of Captain Beaver*', p.381, 376.

triumphalist nature of Beaver's conclusions about the success of the project in socio-economic terms, only make sense if we see the work in its original context; as an account given by a naval officer who had a mission to fulfil and colonial aspirations to justify. He argues that despite the settlement failing on the ground, it was successful in fulfilling its three main goals: 'to cultivate the tropical productions on the Island of Bulama and the adjacent shores', to do so 'by the means of *free natives*', and thirdly 'by *cultivation* and *commerce*' to 'introduce among the [Africans] *civilization*'.[83] He maintains that the settlement had produced 'many tropical fruits, esculent vegetables, and cotton trees' that were 'thriving admirably', so fulfilling the first claim.[84] The second claim, of using African workers, he considers achieved by hiring 'grumetas' (a Portuguese word for a free black labourer) to clear the land and build houses. Due to their resistance to tropical diseases and their ability to labour in the hot climate, Beaver says that 'in about one year I employed on the island 196 of them'.[85] In the third area, Beaver argues that the establishment of successful commercial relationships with African communities would have eventually introduced 'civilization' and was already 'paving the way for some more fortunate enterprize [sic]'.[86] He puts this down to 'the favourable alteration which we were enabled to make in the minds of the natives relative to the character of white people'.[87] According to Beaver, when the colonists arrived, they discovered that for the Africans there was 'no species of cheating, of deceit, or of treachery, of which they did not think a white man capable'.[88] However, Beaver avers that they were able to 'convert their well-grounded suspicion of fraud and deceit in all Europeans, into esteem and respect for the character of a white man'.[89]

Despite the failure of his colony on the ground, Beaver hoped that his *Memoranda* would be successful in convincing the British government that the type of colonisation attempted by the Bulama Association—motivated by compassion and social responsibility—was an important aspect of national strategy. For this reason, Beaver felt some measure of vindication in the venture, and his primary motive for

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[83] Beaver, *African Memoranda,* p.303.

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] *Ibid.*

[86] *Ibid.*, p.304.

[87] *Ibid.*, p.298.

[88] *Ibid.*, p.294.

[89] *Ibid.*, p.302.

publishing his account was to encourage future colonists (who would benefit from his experiential knowledge) to follow in his footsteps. The utopian ideas of colonial projectors and planners in Africa are evident in many of their written accounts which foreground the act of bringing 'civilization' to the continent. As Curtin states, 'they followed the unconscious assumption of popular culture theory that a lack of civilization meant a lack of culture. African society therefore lay there, a *tabula rasa* ready and waiting for the utopian inscription'.[90] Evidence of the seductive nature of utopian planning can be seen in an illustration of the harbour of Bolama from Wadstrom's 'Plan of the Island of Bolama' in his *Essay on Colonization* (see Figure 1).[91] The orderly avenue of palm trees along the harbour, its solid built-up structure, and the lighthouse at the end, all exemplify the 'cultivation and commerce' that the Bulama Association envisaged. The scene is one of prosperity and industry, with domesticated animals (in the lower right-hand corner), ships at dock, neat warehouses on the wharf, and a well-populated scene in the foreground. At the front left of the plate, a white settler and a free black worker are walking and conversing together on the wharf. This vision seems very close to the one that Beaver had in mind when he jumped at Dalrymple's proposal for an African colony, and which kept him going through the many hardships the settlers faced. Ultimately it was a vision that could never be achieved, with the failure of the experiment demonstrating the price to be paid for the high-minded, but nonetheless misguided idealism, which often lay behind Romantic-period colonial enterprises.

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[90] Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, I, p.115.

[91] Photograph by Carol Bolton, reproduced by permission of Cambridge University Library.
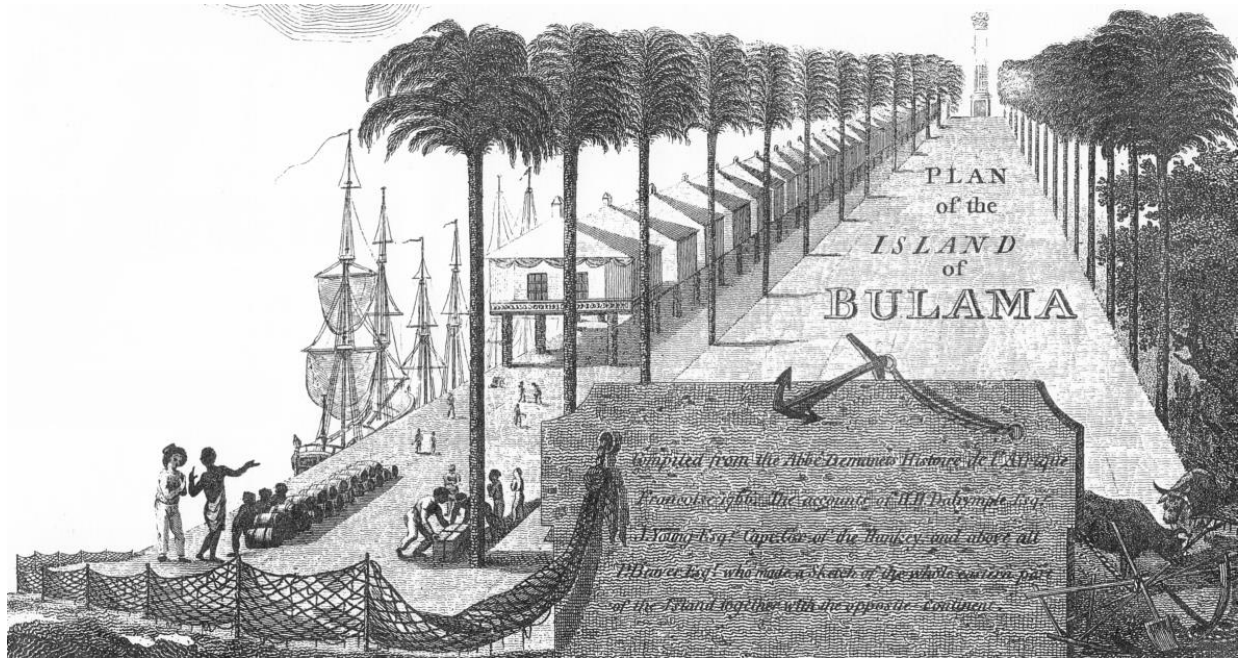
Figure 1: 'Plan of the Island of Bulama'

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BIOGRAPHY: Carol Bolton's research centres on writing of the Romantic period that represents travel, exploration, and colonialism. She publishes journal articles on these subjects, as well as presenting her research at conferences. Her monograph, *Writing the Empire: Robert Southey and Romantic Colonialism* was published in 2007, and a modern edition of Robert Southey's *Letters from England* in 2016. Her current research project is preparing an edition of 'Captain Philip Beaver's African Journal' for publication with Anthem Press in 2022.

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Review: Robert Poole, *Peterloo: The English Uprising* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019) 480pp. ISBN 978-0-19-878346-6, £25.00.

LEONARD BAKER

ON 16 AUGUST 1819, approximately 40,000 people descended upon St Peter's Field, Manchester, to attend a meeting regarding parliamentary reform. Led by the radical orator Henry Hunt, this mass demonstration was designed to further a national campaign for universal male suffrage, vote by ballot, and annual parliaments. However, shortly after the meeting had begun, local magistrates ordered the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry to arrest Hunt and his compatriots. A shambolic charge followed, leaving at least eighteen dead and seven hundred injured. The 'Peterloo Massacre', as it would soon be known, sent shockwaves around the country and was the 'bloodiest political event of the nineteenth century on British soil'.[1] Unfortunately, modern academic historians have generally concurred with E.P. Thompson's assessment that there was no need for an 'hour by hour account' of Peterloo.[2] Despite a growing body of literature examining related developments, such as Peterloo's impact on popular memory or radical culture, the events of 1819 have remained worryingly disconnected from their local contexts.[3] As Professor Poole laments in his opening chapter, Peterloo is 'often invoked but rarely examined.'[4] This monograph, therefore, seeks to reassess the massacre by incorporating new evidence and theoretical developments.[5] Concomitantly, Peterloo provides an opportunity to shift the locus of early nineteenth-century radicalism from London to Manchester, which remains

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[1] Robert Poole, *Peterloo: The English Uprising* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019) pp.1-2.

[2] Edward Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin Books, 1968) pp.750-3.

[3] For example, see: Joseph Cozens, 'The Making of the Peterloo Martyrs, 1819 to the Present', in *A History of Secular Martyrdom in the British and Irish Isles: From Peterloo to the Present*, ed. by Keith Laybourn and Quentin Outram (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) pp.31-58; Robert Poole, 'The March to Peterloo: Politics and Festivity in Late Georgian England', *Past and Present*, 192 (2006) pp.109-53.

[4] Poole, *Peterloo*, p.4.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.

a 'little-recognized realm of the past.'[6] The intense scrutiny that surrounded Peterloo allows for an unprecedentedly detailed study of socio-political conflict in northwest England between 1815 and 1820. As Poole notes, 'hardly anything political seems to have happened in 1819 that was not written down somewhere.'[7]

Consisting of sixteen chapters, this monograph provides a comprehensive examination of the political struggles that gripped late-Georgian Manchester. Building upon his extensive experience studying nineteenth-century radicalism, Poole commits himself to a 'holistic' examination of both Peterloo and northwest England. Indeed, while five chapters analyse the events of 1819, the majority of this book centres around the political, industrial and social movements that preceded Peterloo. For Poole, this focus situates the massacre within its 'proper context'.[8] Rather than aligning early-nineteenth century radicalism with a teleological 'model of progress' culminating in the Reform Act of 1832, Poole argues that Peterloo was the 'political endgame of the long eighteenth century'.[9] Moreover, incorporating previous protests allows for a nuanced understanding of the local politics within Regency Manchester. In his introduction, Poole criticises 'history from below' as an approach that 'can never be more than half the picture.' Instead, the 'weight of explanation must lie on the perpetrators rather than the victims.'[10] Subsequently, throughout this book, Poole reveals how radical protests had a formative effect on Manchester's ruling classes. Without excusing the atrocity that occurred, Poole demonstrates how the practices and cultures of authorities, loyalists and reformers evolved through combative political discourse.

In his initial three chapters, Poole criticises the economically deterministic narratives that have presented early nineteenth-century radicalism as a simplistic battle between rich and poor. Although the upheavals of the industrial revolution inevitably influenced popular protest, Poole states that Peterloo 'was not about wages or industrial conditions […] it was about democracy'.[11] The 'white heat of

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[6] *Ibid.*, p.6.

[7] *Ibid.*, p.6.

[8] *Ibid.*, p.4.

[9] *Ibid.*, p.8.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.

[11] *Ibid.*, p.9.

war' had transformed the British state into a confident, proactive and repressive vehicle for the aristocratic establishment.[12] In Manchester specifically, Poole reveals how a 'secretive network of High Tory officers, magistrates and clergy' provided locals with 'a practical lesson' in socio-political inequality.[13] Crucially, by examining Manchester's decrepit local power structures, Poole demonstrates how issues such as food shortages or high taxation were envisioned as the inevitable consequences of an unreformed parliament. Countering the materialistic arguments of historians such as Thompson, Poole details how radicals traced economic deprivation back to a corrupt political system that 'stole from the productive classes and gave to state parasites'.[14] Consequently, Peterloo was not the result of an abstract or universal "class warfare". Instead, it was the 'jarring combination of economic laissez-faire and political authoritarianism' that allowed radical parliamentary reform to become the popular solution to Manchester's economic maladies.[15]

These arguments are reinforced by case studies, which reassess the radical movements that emerged between 1815 and 1817. Titled 'Reformers', 'Petitioners' and 'Rebels', chapters four, five and six reveal how previous protests provided Peterloo with its material and cultural foundations. Poole shows that through new organisations, such as the 'Union Society', local unrest was 'swept up and given constitutional bite by a national petitioning campaign'.[16] Controversially, Poole states that this 'home-grown radicalism owed nothing to the French revolution'.[17] Instead, he argues, these 'defiant protests' were driven by an 'oppositional form of patriotism' that sought to defend an ancient 'English constitution' from the corrupted British government and autocratic German monarchs.[18] Through this argument, Poole engages with Linda Colley's foundational study of nationalism, patriotism and conservatism in the long-eighteenth century.[19] Notably, Poole

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[12] *Ibid.*, pp.26, 34.

[13] *Ibid.*, p.51.

[14] *Ibid.*, p.16.

[15] *Ibid.*, p.22.

[16] *Ibid.*, p.80.

[17] *Ibid.*, p.74.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp.76-7.

[19] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

challenges Colley's wedding of 'patriotism' and 'conservative loyalism'.[20] As these chapters convincingly demonstrate, the success of the reform movement following the Napoleonic Wars was largely due to the reconcilement of patriotic imagery with radical discourses. For English reformers, Poole argues, an 'idealized past' and half-imagined constitutional heritage provided popular legitimacy for their political struggle.[21]

Chapters seven through eleven focus on the protests, riots and demonstrations that provided the immediate backdrop for Peterloo. Between 1817 and 1819, Poole writes, 'the infrastructure of radicalism developed rapidly', moving 'beyond the politics of petitioning and remonstrating to the politics of confrontation.'[22] During the summer of 1818, for instance, Poole states that radicals in Manchester were catapulted into a 'position of leadership' due to strikes within the cotton industry.[23] Similarly, military drilling was co-opted into radical political culture as a 'show of defiance, a declaration of fitness for citizenship and a statement about who were the real patriots.'[24] Crucially, Poole notes, these campaigns were empowered by the enthusiastic participation of local women. Throughout this section, Poole implores historians to 'dispense with modern categories of analysis and locate female reformers fully in the context of 1819'.[25] He argues that the 'socially conservative language' deployed by these women acted as a 'cloak for politically radical behaviour' and helped legitimise the reform movement.[26] Conversely, for local authorities, these years brought repeated embarrassments. Through a wide-ranging assessment of loyalist letters, newspapers and reports, Poole conveys the growing frustration amongst Manchester's magistracy. In these documents, female reformers were envisioned as 'disgusting creatures' whilst political gatherings were increasingly described in militaristic terms.[27] Although every mass meeting in the early-nineteenth century

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[20] Poole, *Peterloo*, pp.14, 55; Colley, pp.308-20.

[21] Poole, *Peterloo*, pp.388-9.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp.205, 212.

[23] *Ibid.*, p.157.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp.170, 236.

[25] *Ibid.*, p.237.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp.237-45.

[27] *Ibid.*, p.240-6, 249-59.

balanced 'on the edge of physical conflict', Poole successfully demonstrates the acute instability of Regency Manchester.[28] For Poole, after years of humiliation, Peterloo provided an opportunity for local elites to enact their revenge.

As may be expected, the strongest section of this book centres around the massacre and its immediate repercussions. Chapters twelve and thirteen provide a highly detailed, powerfully emotive, easy to follow 'minute-by-minute' account of Peterloo. In Poole's analysis, Peterloo allowed a 'drunk and disorderly' yeomanry to enact cathartic violence against those who had previously bested them.[29] Building upon his previous studies, Poole notes how radical banners were treated as 'war trophies' and how 'women seemed to be the special objects of rage' for the amateur cavalrymen.[30] By making extensive use of over four hundred eyewitness testimonies, Poole reveals how Peterloo was a 'face-to-face affair' founded upon local animosities and interpersonal feuds.[31] However, this local event would soon reshape the national political landscape.

As such, in chapter fourteen Poole concludes his study by examining the popular and political responses to Peterloo. Throughout his analysis, Poole criticises historical studies that have gauged public reaction through the 'middle-of-the-road' accounts presented in national newspapers or governmental reports.[32] In contrast, Poole utilises local correspondence, court documents and regional newspapers to reveal an organised campaign of 'official denial' that ineffectually deflected an overwhelming, and almost revolutionary, wave of criticism and radical activity.[33] Poole shows that wherever possible, officials silenced inquests and investigations through physical force or legal chicanery.[34] As Poole concludes, the real 'battle of Peterloo' was the 'war of words, images and ideas that followed and this was the one authorities lost'.[35]

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[28] *Ibid.*, p.220.

[29] *Ibid.*, pp.281-2, 372.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp.305-307.

[31] *Ibid.*, p.318

[32] *Ibid.*, pp.356-7.

[33] *Ibid.*, p.343.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp.348-51, 386.

[35] *Ibid.*, p.393.

There is little to criticise in this well-argued and detailed study. However, historians of other regions may question the consistent framing of London and Manchester as the paramount political battlegrounds of early-nineteenth century England. In particular, Poole's argument that 'if we want to study the national picture, metropolis and cottonopolis need to be considered together' risks minimising and misrepresenting radical activity not only in cities such as Bristol, Birmingham or Liverpool but also across rural England.[36] As scholars such as Steve Poole and Nicholas Rogers have demonstrated, the performance, perception and repression of radical protest varied wildly across the country.[37] Despite the persuasiveness of Poole's arguments, prospective readers should thus be wary of constructing a national picture from these two cities. Nevertheless, if positioned alongside studies of other regions, this book will provide readers with a sweeping reassessment of the social, political and economic struggles that shaped nineteenth-century England. *Peterloo: The English Uprising* will likely become a foundational text for historians of protest, with Poole's scholarly yet accessible analysis providing a clear example of regional history's strengths and importance.

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BIOGRAPHY: Dr Leonard Baker is a Research Fellow in the History Department of the University of Bristol, whose research explores the connections between protest, customary culture, and 'natural' landscapes in nineteenth-century rural England. In particular, his recently completed doctoral thesis reveals how countryfolk developed a series of 'vernacular environmental ethics' that influenced how social, political and ecological protest was perceived, performed and punished. He has also recently published in *History Workshop Journal* and *Romance, Revolution & Reform*, and has a forthcoming article that explores effigy burning, mock executions and the 'political culture of fire' in South West England.

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[36] *Ibid.*, p.4

[37] Steve Poole and Nicholas Rogers, *Bristol from Below: Law, Authority and Protest in a Georgian City* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017).

Review: Colin Carman, *The Radical Ecology of the Shelleys: Eros and the Environment* (New York: Routledge, 2018) 204pp. ISBN 978-036-703-0230, £120.00.

KATHERINE WARBY

UNTIL COLIN CARMAN'S *The Radical Ecology of the Shelleys* (2018), there was little scholarly recognition of the Shelleys' queering of nature. George Haggerty's *Queer Gothic* (2006) investigated how, beginning in the eighteenth century, writers 'gave sexuality a history in the first place', with a particular discussion of how gothic works were 'primarily concerned with male relations', such as in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818).[1] In more recent years, Eric Robertson's article 'Volcanoes, guts and cosmic collisions: the queer sublime in *Frankenstein* and *Melancholia*' (2013), questioned how 'the nonprocreative body addresses the complex mythic relationship humans have towards the ecological realities of death, debasement and decay'.[2] However, as the first book-length study of its kind, Carman aims to demonstrate the Shelleys' belief that nature and queerness are interconnected as they 'pervert dominant notions of the "natural" in [the] English Romantic age'.[3]

Carman uses queer ecology—an interdisciplinary mode of ecology—to demonstrate how the Shelleys queered nature in their Romantic works. As defined by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson in their text, *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire* (2010) a queer ecology 'probe[s] the intersections of sex and nature' to understand 'the ways in which sexual relations organize and influence both the material world of nature and our perceptions, experiences, and constitutions of the world'.[4] Using this lens, Carman's study

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[1] George Haggerty, *Queer Gothic* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006) p.5; *Ibid.*, p.4.

[2] Eric Robertson, 'Volcanoes, Guts and Cosmic Collisions: The Queer Sublime in *Frankenstein* and *Melancholia*', *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*, 18.1 (2014) pp.63-77 (p.64) <https://www.tandfonline.com> [Accessed 03/06/2020].

[3] Colin Carman, *The Radical Ecology of the Shelleys: Eros and the Environment* (New York: Routledge, 2018) p.21.

[4] Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010) p.5.

enables a new interpretation of the Shelleys' writings, as he demonstrates that their texts reveal their views on sex, sexuality, and the queering of nature. Carman's study entreats us to broaden our critical approaches to Romantic nature writing, 'challeng[ing] us to adopt a different understanding of the human species and its deeply intimate, even erotic, interrelatedness with its environs'[5] as he demonstrates that the lines between ecocriticism, feminist studies, climate studies, and natural sciences meet in the Shelleys' works.

Throughout his book, Carman explores the works of Percy Shelley including his apocryphal *Discourse on the Manners of the Ancient Greeks Relative to the Subject of Love* (1818), and his poems "The Sensitive Plant" (1820), and "The Witch of Atlas" (1824). Carman also explores the novels of Mary Shelley including *Valperga* (1823), *The Last Man* (1826), *Lodore* (1835), *and Maurice* (1998). His analysis provides fresh insight into the couple's different ecological approaches to their work. For Carman, Percy Shelley attempts to deconstruct the norms of nature, sex, and sexuality in the environment, whereas Mary Shelley works on the ecology of the domestic, same sex-family structures, and the community.

Chapter one 'Queer Ecology and its Romantic Roots' lays out the theoretical foundations for Carman's discussion by following the origins of queer ecology back to Timothy Morton, who, in 2010, defined this ecology and challenged the heterosexist notions of nature.[6] For Morton, queer ecology reimagines nature and sexuality through a multidisciplinary attitude to biodiversity, gender and sexuality, and the denaturalization of heteronormativity. Here, Carman identifies that the word 'sexuality' arose in the late 1790s, in the context of a suppression of liberal freedoms which he links to the French Revolution. However, this did not stop the Shelleys from exploring their 'intense curiosity about nature and the natural in relation to sexual pleasure'.[7]

The second chapter focuses on Percy Shelley's belief that 'nature and culture are not opposites but deeply interfused'.[8] Carman reads Shelley's *Discourse* and argues that, while Shelley seeks to naturalise sex and sexuality, he

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[5] Carman, p.1.

[6] Timothy Morton, 'Guest Column: Queer Ecology', *PLMA,* 125.2 (2010) pp.273-282 (p.274).

[7] Carman, p.22.

[8] *Ibid.*, p.38.

was writing during a time that actively punished men who had sexual relationships with other men. Therefore, Carman shows that Shelley took precautions against this, including expressing his 'dismissiveness and disgust [as a part] of the necessary precautions a writer had to take if he even dared to take on the nature of queer *Eros*'.[9] Carman not only points out Shelley's use of gender-neutral pronouns such as 'the person' or 'a person', but highlights that (despite the essay remaining unpublished until 1840) Shelley gently attempted to seek the 'natural[isation] [of] same-sex *Eros*' in a sexually repressive Britain through addressing same-sex relationships.[10]

In chapter three, 'Percy Shelley's Hermaphroditus', Carman explores the queering of botanical nature through the hermaphroditism in "The Sensitive Plant" and "The Witch of Atlas", asserting that: '[t]he Sensitive-Plant and The Witch are also ecologically minding inasmuch as they adumbrate habitats wherein queer bodies and desire flourish free of social prejudice'.[11] For Carman, the sensitive-plant and the Witch each represent the queering of nature, gender, and sexuality. Carman also tracks the influences of the works of Erasmus Darwin, Carl Linnaeus, and Edmund Burke on Percy Shelley's poems. He argues that, when the sensitive-plant latterly becomes infected, it is because of 'the lack of sexual variety'[12] the plant is receiving. Carman recognizes Shelley's queering of nature in the diverse sexual life that the plant requires.

Chapters four and five move on to Mary Shelley, where Carman addresses the queer domestic within Shelley's novels *Maurice* and *Valperga*. In chapter four, Carman reinforces that the blended family unit of Mary Shelley's youth influenced the presence of the untraditional family structures within in her texts. Carman highlights Mary Shelley's interweaving of the domestic with the natural, with particular attention to dwelling spaces and natural spaces (such as the forest) that frequently converge in her works. For Carman, Shelley housing her characters in 'the cottage' often blurs the lines between indoors and outdoors. As Carman recognises, this liminal space seeks to influence others to improve the community

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[9] *Ibid.*, p.46.

[10] *Ibid.*, p.38.

[11] *Ibid.*, p.78.

[12] *Ibid.*, p.94.

as a whole, otherwise known as 'communal ecology'. Carman further notes that in disrupting the privileged convention of the 'cottage' as a form of escape from patriarchal industrialisation, and further separating the 'cottage and its enmeshment in the English landscape', Shelley chooses instead to focus on the families who thrive within them.[13]

In Chapter five, Carman discusses how Mary Shelley explores desire and same-sex relationships through nature in her novels *The Last Man*, and *Lodore*. Carman focuses on the acts of 'earth kissing' and 'tree kissing' through a romantic relationship between *The Last Man's* protagonist, Lionel Verney, and Adrian (often read biographically as Mary and Percy Shelley respectively). Carman notes that the unusually warm climate in *The Last Man* induces femininity within Lionel, as when he sees Adrian after a time spent apart, Lionel loses control over his feelings towards Adrian in 'girlish ecstasies'.[14] However, Lionel 'transfers his frustrated desire from the erotic aim he dare not embrace openly onto the earth'.[15] This, as Carman notes, enables the characters to make sense of their environmental belonging as they attempt to 'make erotic contact with the natural world and channel the untamed wildness they feel in their surroundings'.[16] Lastly, Carman posits that the male friendships in *The Last Man* are portrayed in a similar way to the female relationships in *Lodore*, with its heroine Ethel who is immensely sensitive towards the atmosphere.

Carman's conclusion, 'Tangled, or the Shelleyan Network', returns the work to a theory-based approach to explore commonly used words in the Shelleys' writings. Recurring words such as 'tangled', establish, as Carman reinforces, that the Shelleys 'wanted their readers to think about the way they are networked and intertangled with all living creatures'.[17] Carman notes that this way of thinking is now what is defined by Morton as 'the mesh', the interconnectedness of all living things.[18]

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[13] *Ibid.*, p.125.

[14] Mary Shelley, *The Last Man* (New York: Open Road Media, 2015) p.620.

[15] Carman, p.154.

[16] *Ibid.*, p.155.

[17] *Ibid.*, p.192.

[18] Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010) p.94.

This book will be invaluable to any scholar with an interest in the Shelleys and Romantic ecocriticism. As Carman demonstrates, ecology is already queer and erotic, but due to nature's association with the heteronormative and masculine, it has been overlooked in previous Shelley scholarship. Carman best demonstrates this in his fourth and fifth chapters through his analysis of the connections between same-sex relationships and the wider community, 'where the straightjacket of heterosexual matrimony is concerned'.[19] Carman's text would benefit from more interaction with the Shelleys' journals, diaries, and letters. Such interaction would help to suggest how the Shelleys may have been inspired by their environments and would prove useful in understanding the genesis of their queer writings. Though some of these sources are included, some further engagement would add to the already rich knowledge of queer ecology and the Shelleys that Carman possesses. Nonetheless, Carman pinpoints hitherto neglected queer elements within the Shelleys' works and therefore presents a broader understanding of the fundamentality of queer ecology to Romantic writing.

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BIOGRAPHY: Katherine Warby is a PhD student at The University of Huddersfield. Her research focuses on cold and hostile weather in Romantic writing. Katherine received funding for her PhD in 2019 placing her on a 'Fast track' PhD, converting her MA studies into a full research degree. Since this, she has been working on several chapters of her dissertation including a chapter on Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826). As well as exploring the impact the cold had on Wordsworth when in Goslar, the cold and icy setting in Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancyent Marinere' (1798), and William Cowper's frightful weather in 'The Task' (1785).

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[19] Carman, p.11.

Review: Edith Hall and Henry Stead, *A People's History of Classics: Class and Greco-Roman Antiquity in Britain and Ireland, 1689 to 1939* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020) 642pp. ISBN 978-1-138-21283-1, £96.00.

QUENTIN BROUGHALL

AT THE BEGINNING of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895), the young Jude Fawley reveals to the quack doctor Vilbert his ambition to learn Greek and Latin, and attend university in Christminster. The itinerant physician is familiar with the university town, and remarks that there 'the very sons of the old women who do the washing can talk in Latin', even if it is merely 'dog-Latin' or 'cat-Latin' to him.[1] In return for Jude advertising his business, Vilbert promises to give him a pair of Greek and Latin grammars the next time he visits the area. But Vilbert forgets about his promise, and Jude encounters one of the first disappointments in his quest for knowledge and advancement.

Hardy's novel about a stonemason longing to be a scholar is one of the most well-known interpretations of Victorian working-class intellectual aspiration. But Jude Fawley had many real-life brethren. Throughout the long-nineteenth century, many working-class individuals sought to better their lot by pursuing self-education through organizations, such as the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, founded in 1826. These institutional efforts were buttressed by the increasing availability of cheap compendia of knowledge, such as John Cassell's *Popular Educator* (1853-6), which sought to give 'the vulgar people more knowledge for a "*Penny*" than the lords used to have for a pound'.[2] However, guarded by the linguistic barriers of Latin and Greek, classics represented an elite form of knowledge that was far more challenging for members of the working classes to gain through self-education alone.

Covering the period from the Glorious Revolution to the Second World War, Edith Hall and Henry Stead's *A People's History of Classics* represents the first substantial investigation of British and Irish working-class receptions of the ancient

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[1] Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2000) pp.20-1.

[2] Edith Hall and Henry Stead, *A People's History of Classics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020) p.54.

world. Owing to a paucity of sources, non-elite engagement with Greece and Rome has long been a lacuna at the heart of classical reception studies. This long-awaited study endeavours to correct that deficiency by recording the interactions of a diverse array of working-class individuals and groups with classics over two-and-a-half centuries. To illuminate this under-studied aspect of cultural history, Hall and Stead employ a multiplicity of sources, including 'memoirs, autobiographies, Trade Union collections, poetry, factory archives, playscripts, artefacts and documents in regional museums'.[3]

The book will be of interest to students and scholars of classical reception, British social history, and the history of education. Its text is complemented with 135 black-and-white illustrations, six maps, and an associated website www.classicsandclass.info. It will be available in an open-access format from 2023. The book's title references A.L. Morton's *A People's History of England* (1938)—one of the first books to chronicle the experiences of ordinary English people—and builds upon the pioneering work of Jonathan Rose's *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (2001). Hall and Stead's study was also preceded by their edited collection of essays: *Greek and Roman Classics in the British Struggle for Social Reform* (2015).

The first part of *A People's History of Classics*, 'Canons, media and genres' (chapters one to eight), places into context the aims, sources and span of the book, as well as its chronological and regional focus. The second part, 'Communities' (chapters eight to twelve), examines classical reception amid a number of diverse groups, including among Nonconformists, within organised working-class education, and in Irish, Scottish and Welsh contexts. The third part, 'Underdogs, underclasses, underworlds' (chapters thirteen to eighteen), analyses the influence of classics on a group of activists and autodidacts, as well as examining some non-traditional sites of reception, including asylums, brothels, fairgrounds and prisons. The final part, 'Working identities' (chapters nineteen to twenty-five), places work back at the heart of working-class receptions, examining how labour could be perceived through a classical lens. It continues with a survey of a number of classicists active in trade unionism, socialism and communism, before concluding with an examination of David Jones's *In Parenthesis* (1937).

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[3] *Ibid.*, p.12.

Although working-class literacy expanded throughout the nineteenth century, many individuals encountered the legacy of Greece and Rome outside the covers of a book. Some of the most illuminating chapters of this study are those which explore the non-literary sources of working-class reception, such as those on the visual environment, theatrical productions, and the Staffordshire Potteries (chapters six, seven and twenty-one). Two of the most original of these are 'Classical underworlds' and 'Class and the classical body' (chapters seventeen and eighteen), which examine the ways in which athletes, dancers and entertainers sought to personify certain aspects of the ancient world using their own bodies. But, as the brief section on classics and prostitution in the former chapter demonstrates, many of these kinds of reception can never be fully recovered. As the authors recognise, even the use of literary sources is fraught with difficulty, since there is often far less evidence of working-class reading habits.

Much of the book concentrates upon the experiences of a varied group of working-class autodidacts (albeit mostly male and white), often focussing upon the alternative or subversive ends to which they put classics. The authors present a number of case studies in which classical knowledge is used to inform left-wing political activity in Britain and Ireland, charting its appropriation by a variety of radicals, Chartists, socialists and communists from the late-eighteenth to the early-twentieth centuries. Their political affiliations aside, the majority of the autodidacts depicted in the book gained their classical learning against the odds, and employed it to transform themselves from dockers, carpenters or miners into merchants, journalists or trade-union leaders. A perfect example of this is John Cassell, producer of the *Popular Educator*, who rose from being a child labourer in a Manchester cotton mill to become one of mid-Victorian Britain's most successful publishers. Although not all enjoyed Cassell's rags-to-riches trajectory, the authors emphasize how classics operated throughout this period not only as a badge of intellectual accomplishment, but also as a master key that could unlock access to social mobility.

There are few errors in the text, although one or two inaccuracies have crept in. For instance, Irish people usually refer to their native language simply as 'Irish', rather than 'Gaelic', which refers to the entire language family of Irish, Scots

Gaelic and Manx.[4] Apart from such minor imperfections, the book's main limitation is perhaps the difficulty of knowing how representative all of its subjects are of the working-class experience, and how selective its authors have been in the perspectives that they have chosen to depict. Many of the autodidacts portrayed in its pages were clearly exceptional individuals, while others accrued enough intellectual or monetary capital to transcend their working-class backgrounds.

The authors make no secret of the fact that their study is driven by a left-leaning, anti-elitist agenda to recover non-traditional receptions of Greece and Rome. But, in their earnestness to celebrate working-class achievement, they can also simplify what may be a more complex picture of the connections between class and education. One important example quoted in the book epitomises this problem. Hall and Stead's starting point is Edmund Burke's comment in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) that, without the aristocracy and the church to protect it, 'learning will be cast into the mire and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude'.[5] But, while the authors portray him as an arrogant defender of elitism, Burke did not benefit from an exclusive public-school or Oxbridge classical education. Instead, he gained his formative schooling in his native Ireland, where he attended a 'hedge school' in Cork and a Quaker school in Kildare, before going on to study law at Trinity College, Dublin. Burke's own education therefore possesses exactly the unorthodox, Dissenting and subaltern features that the authors extol repeatedly throughout the book for their working-class subjects.

Such reservations aside, *A People's History of Classics* is a timely and important book, which will help to provide, as its authors suggest, 'a new ancestral backstory for a discipline in need of a democratic makeover'.[6] Its publication marks a watershed in the study of working-class classical reception in the British Isles and Ireland, and Hall and Stead are to be commended for excavating a stratum of social history that has been for too long obscured by the layers above it.

While many studies have examined classical reception in the context of gender, race and sexuality, class has remained a poor cousin. This book goes far towards remedying that fault, while providing numerous starting points for others

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[4] *Ibid.*, p.207.

[5] *Ibid.*, p.1.

[6] *Ibid.*, p.537.

to extend scholarship in the field. Presenting another facet of the 'self-help' advocated by the campaigner Samuel Smiles, this book shows how classics could be used in place of technical education by members of the working classes to challenge their social limitations.

Fittingly, the words 'class' and 'classics' derive from the same Latin noun, *classis*, which originally referred to the economic subdivision of ancient Roman society. The same sense of attributing social or cultural value to people or objects is preserved in our modern use of the words. As a result, it is easy to see how the study of the ancient world has long been utilised to privilege some social groups (white, male, wealthy), while excluding others (non-white, female, working-class). *A People's History of Classics* gives a platform to a chorus of marginalized voices rarely heard in the study of Greek and Roman reception. In doing so, its authors put class back at the heart of classical reception, and make a lot of real-life Judes a lot less obscure.

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Review: Maaheen Ahmed, *Monstrous Imaginaries: The Legacy of Romanticism in Comics* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2020), 235pp. ISBN 978-1-4968-2527-8, £24.99.

WILL KITCHEN

MAAHEEN AHMED'S *MONSTROUS Imaginaries: The Legacy of Romanticism in Comics* offers an exploration of the form and content of selected comic books in reference to various Romantic themes, including nostalgia and visuality. Between an introduction and a conclusion, this analysis is delivered across five chapters, four of which present expansive case studies of individual comic book texts.

The Introduction 'Charting Monstrous Territory' outlines the central themes and objectives of the book: the importance of the conceptual dichotomy between monstrousness and humanity; the important role played by the imagination across both Romanticism and monstrous fiction; and the persistence of Romantic tropes in contemporary cultural products. Ahmed demonstrates that themes such as these are of vital importance in terms of widening our contemporary understanding of otherness and modern cultures' varied historical legacies.

Chapter one, 'Romantic Monsters: A Brief History', undertakes an analysis of the importance of the monstrous as an aesthetic category. From the early popularity of 'freak shows', to the persistence of monstrous themes and graphic styles which form the prototypes for later comic books in the drawings of Goya and Blake, Ahmed even extends her analysis to the production methods used by each artist.[1] Also examined, are monstrous characters in literary fiction: Quasimodo from *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), the iconic monster from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein: Or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), and Gwynplaine from Victor Hugo's 1869 novel *The Man Who Laughs*.[2]

Chapter two, '*Swamp Thing*: Patchworks and Panoramas in Monster Comics', interprets the saga of *Swamp Thing* (1971-) by extending and developing Romantic themes identified in the previous chapter. The adventures of the

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[1] Maaheen Ahmed, *Monstrous Imaginaries: The Legacy of Romanticism in Comics* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2020) pp.27-36.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp.36-43.

antiheroic protagonist are read in reference to such concepts, including Burkean aesthetics of sublimity, narratives of resurrection, passion, dreaming, and the Romantic attempt to explore 'the limits of [...] consciousness'.[3]

Chapter three '*Monstre*: Monstrous Fluidity' centres around an analysis of the Baudelairien conception of 'ennui' in Enki Bilal's tetralogy: *Le Sommeil du monstre* (1993), *32 Décembre* (2003), *Rendez-vous à Paris* (2006), and *Quatre?* (2007). Concepts of amorphousness, fluctuation and fluidity are addressed, exploring the idea of beauty in the horrible, the unstable and the incomprehensible.[4]

Chapter four '*Hellboy*: Nostalgia and the Doomed Quest' draws on Svetlana Boym's concept of 'reflexive nostalgia' – an attitude towards remembering the past which calls into question the truthfulness of historical representation through creative remediation.[5] The concept of Romantic liminality frames discussions of supernaturalism, Christian symbolism, folklore, and a reading of Nazism as a cultural referent for monstrosity.

Chapter five '*The Crow*: Secularity and Emotionality' brings the book to a close by analysing the emotional effect of fragments, visuality and the trickster figure. It brings into focus the monstrosity of the legitimate worlds that persecute comic book outsiders and, through the power such worlds wield to define and defend notions of normality, render the struggling protagonists of these comic book stories 'monstrous' in the first place.[6]

Ahmed's analysis of the relationship between Romanticism and comics is certainly not built upon an anachronistic hypothesis. Despite the fact that many decades separate the 'Romantic' period of European art from the supposedly 'Postmodern' era of comic books and graphic novels, Ahmed demonstrates that these two fields overlap concerning a variety of important thematic and aesthetic concerns including ambiguity, otherness, visuality and nostalgia. Ahmed's task consists of tracing where the very real and pertinent legacy of Romanticism is to be found in selected comic books. By so doing she seeks to fill another part of that

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[3] *Ibid.*, p.57.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp.88-89.

[5] *Ibid.*, p.113.

[6] *Ibid.*, p.164.

often-overlooked gap in contemporary scholarship concerning the relationship between Romanticism and popular culture: '[t]o my knowledge', Ahmed states, 'the relationship between comics, especially comics monsters, and romanticism has rarely been explored in detail'.[7]

The comics and graphic novels explored by Ahmed in *Monstrous Imaginaries* are all products that have circulated since the mid-twentieth century – a moment when the market became increasingly heterogeneous.[8] However, the persistence of tropes such as rebelliousness, violence, outsiders, nostalgia, solitude, a blurring of boundaries between past and present, good and bad, and a formal playfulness in representational methods, attest to the broader 'influence' of Romanticism on the art and stories to be found in comic books and graphic novels. In this respect, the monsters 'remediate' the 'romantic imaginary' by working-through various socio-historical trends and interests shared between different cultural epochs.[9]

In terms of monstrousness, or 'the monster' type as a category for aesthetic and cultural analysis, Ahmed draws upon existing research by figures such as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Fred Botting.[10] As might be expected for a book focusing on comics and graphic novels, the theoretical background for the concept of Romanticism Ahmed employs is drawn mostly from mid-twentieth-century scholarship of the literary and visual arts, as opposed to contemporaneous sources. The commonly cited bulwarks of English Romantic literary scholarship are acknowledged: Northrop Frye, M. H. Abrams and Isiah Berlin.[11] There is even fleeting engagement with the work of Morse Peckham (a still woefully underappreciated scholar whose idiosyncratic interpretation of Romanticism is yet to be fully explored for all its implications).[12]

Ahmed argues that the relevance of Romanticism to the study of comics can centrally be understood in reference to the idea of boundarylessness. She

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[7] *Ibid.*, p.4.

[8] *Ibid.*, p.16.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp.9-10.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp.5-7.

[11] *Ibid.*, p.19.

[12] *Ibid.*, p.46.

draws upon a standard discursive hypothesis which claims that Romanticism as a concept entails a philosophical exploration of the tensions that arise between competing categorical judgements: '[a]mbiguity, a staple of art, takes centre stage in many key works of romanticism through its destabilisation of established polarities, above all the binary of good and bad.'[13] This important (and, in this context, highly relevant) idea is, of course, self-referential. Ahmed is sure enough of her subject to not attempt any totalising definition of Romanticism, but rather opts for a pragmatic appropriation of pertinent terms and ideas. The comic books selected for analysis in the central chapters are replete with textual and extratextual notions of moral ambiguity, formal ambiguity in multimedia practices, the breaking of boundaries between human and otherness, positive and negative cultural value, and a host of other ideas which have a bearing upon Romanticism, including solitude, nostalgia, otherness and rebelliousness.

The impressive thing about this selection of elements is that so many of them have a strong bearing upon the very 'heart' of the concept of Romanticism so inadequately (but not unjustly) served by the simple term 'ambiguity'. As Ahmed argues: '[t]he Enlightenment [...] assumption of the body and the mind as mirrors of each other is overthrown in romanticism, most blatantly by Hugo's protagonists [...] the monsters themselves are "getting harder to recognise"', leading to a condition in modern comics where 'the boundaries between monsters and humans are blurred'.[14]

Although Ahmed certainly justifies her proposition that '"Romantic outsiders" are in many ways the focus of this book'—a book which is populated with grotesque yet sympathetic creatures who emerge from brooding and picturesque swamps, netherworlds and hellscapes—there is perhaps a lack of deeper theoretical analysis which leaves certain of her conclusions lacking impact. Many varied secondary references are employed—from Michel Foucault to Friedrich Schiller—but very few are given sustained treatment in the construction of the arguments presented by each chapter.[15]

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[13] *Ibid.*, p.9.

[14] *Ibid.*, p.77. Ahmed is citing Alan Moore, with Stephen Bissette and John Totleben, *The Saga of the Swamp Thing*, Book 1 (New York: Vertigo, 2012) pp.8-9.

[15] Ahmed, p.9.

Despite its occasionally limited conclusions, Ahmed's *Monstrous Imaginaries* offers one of the few sustained analyses of the Romantic legacy in the popular visual arts of the late-twentieth century. The monograph will doubtless make a significant contribution to the scholarly understanding of comic books and graphic novels, as part of an enduring and influential Romantic cultural heritage.

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Review: Rory Muir, *Gentlemen of Uncertain Fortune: How Younger Sons Made Their Way in Jane Austen's England* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2019) 384pp. ISBN 978-0-300-24431-1, £25.00.

ZACK WHITE

READERS OF *PRIDE* and *Prejudice* know that the Bennet family's lack of a male heir profoundly impacted the novel's protagonists. Yet Rory Muir's *Gentleman of Uncertain Fortune* indicates that had the Bennet family had five sons (rather than daughters), their fate would have been almost as precarious.[1]

In his latest monograph, Muir explores important social questions surrounding the fates of the younger sons in the landed gentry who were 'spares who never became heirs'.[2] Muir acknowledges that this is not 'history from below', and that even describing it as 'history from the middle' is misleading.[3] Instead, the book identifies a sub-section of Georgian society which has been neglected in the historiography, focusing not on the new blood of the nouveau riche that grew in prominence in Hanoverian society, but on how the 'old blood' tried, and often failed, to annex space for themselves in an increasingly prosperous country. Many biographies have explored the careers of individual notaries, soldiers and politicians, such as Muir's own two-volume biography of the Duke of Wellington, and Jacqueline Reiter's 2017 book on John Pitt, Earl of Chatham.[4] Meanwhile, others have examined specific career paths in depth, with notable examples including Peter Mathias's 1984 work, and Alannah Tomkins's 2011 article on the legal profession.[5] However, *Gentleman of Uncertain Fortune* is the first

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[1] Rory Muir, *Gentlemen of Uncertain Fortune: How Younger Sons Made Their Way in Jane Austen's England* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2019) pp.viii-ix. Subsequently Muir, Gentlemen.

[2] *Ibid.*, p.x.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp.x-xi.

[4] Rory Muir, *Wellington: The Path to Victory, 1769-1814* (London: Yale University Press, 2013); Rory Muir, *Wellington: Waterloo and the Fortunes of Peace*, *1814-1852* (London: Yale University Press, 2015); Jacqueline Reiter, *The Late Lord: The Life of John Pitt, Earl of Chatham* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2017)

[5] Peter Mathias, 'The Lawyer as Business in Eighteenth-Century England', in *Enterprise and History: Essays in Honour of Charles Wilson*, ed. by D. C. Coleman and Peter Mathias (Cambridge:

comparative study of the options available to 'younger sons', shedding new light on the challenges and uncertainties that pervaded each profession.

Muir draws together a wide array of secondary sources, memoirs, letters and diaries, into a veritable gold mine of information, which deftly weaves the social and historical context together with the perspectives and experiences of individuals. The book is thoughtfully arranged, beginning with two chapters offering vital contextual overviews on the family unit at the turn of the eighteenth century and the purchasing power of money during the period. The latter topic often causes consternation for researchers, and previous attempts to address this have only been partially effective.[6] Yet Muir does not solely focus on figures, instead demonstrating that even within the gentry, there was a complex interconnected web of hierarchies, politics and patronage, where those with less money sometimes enjoyed a higher status than their more affluent acquaintances.

Chapter three offers the first detailed analysis of a career path, focusing on the Church. Muir highlights that incomes for clergymen were often meagre, forcing vicars to administer multiple parishes simultaneously, and that, paradoxically, a training in the pagan classics, not theology, characterised the university education that prospective curates received. Muir also emphasises the recurring theme, across all professions, that patronage was paramount in securing promotion. Those expecting to be promoted through their superiors noticing their work were doomed to disappointment. Muir posits that where vicars were able to secure multiple parishes to supplement their incomes, this was usually the result of having multiple patrons they could rely upon.[7]

Medicine is chapter four's focus. Muir argues that, like many of the professions, medicine was not usually associated with the landed gentry, and, surprisingly, its associated social standing was not high, though physicians were more respected than apothecary-surgeons due to a mixture of tradition and their

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Cambridge University Press, 1984) pp.151-167; Alannah Tomkins, 'Who Were His Peers?: The Social and Professional Milieu of the Provincial Surgeon-Apothecary in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Social History*, 44.3 (2011) pp.915-933.

[6] See, for example, Richard Holmes, *Redcoat: The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket* (London: Harper Collins, 2001) pp.xxi-xxiii.

[7] Muir, *Gentlemen*, pp.57-58.

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university training.[8] A common thread throughout the work emerges here, as Muir notes that new recruits to the medical profession were often harshly treated, although they were not subjected to the bullying that was commonplace in the Navy.

In the next two chapters, Muir explores two strands of the legal profession, looking at barristers (chapter five), and then attorneys and solicitors (chapter six). In both cases, a successful career was often an elusive dream, particularly for aspiring barristers, requiring long periods of study and obscurity, which dissuaded all but the most tenacious.[9] Surprisingly, Muir also finds that attorneys lacked respectability, despite the fact that a large proportion came from the landed gentry, unlike the other professions he examines. For Muir, this lack of respectability indicates that younger sons had to resign themselves to the reality that their career choices often resulted in an inevitable eroding of their social status. This raises questions as to whether there was a psychological impact on these men as they exchanged their place in the social hierarchy for a relatively meagre wage. While Muir is unable to explore this question in the monograph, this is an area which merits further examination.

While exploring banking and commerce (chapter seven), respectability and social standing re-emerge, with Muir positing that those who made their money from commerce were lower in the social hierarchy than those whose finances were supported by land holdings. In chapter eight, on civil offices, however, patronage again returns to the fore. Muir uses the examples of Arthur Wellesley's fruitless attempts to secure government positions for himself, early in his career, and later for his illegitimate son, to show that patronage was by no means a guarantee, a point which builds on the work of Karen Robson.[10] In the process, Muir highlights relatively underexplored nuances in the patronage system, which has generally been characterised as one where the benefits of having a patron were both

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[8] *Ibid.*, pp.87-88.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp.103-104.

[10] *Ibid.*, p.165; Karen Robson, 'Military Patronage for political purposes: the case of Sir Arthur Wellesley as Chief Secretary of Ireland', in *Wellington Studies I*, ed. by Christopher Woolgar (Southampton: Hartley Institute, 1996), pp.115-138.

considerable and guaranteed.[11] As patronage was widespread within Georgian society, and its vital role in receiving promotion has been taken for granted, the established interpretation clearly now requires fresh investigation.

Chapters nine and ten examine the lifestyle and career options of recruits to the Royal Navy. This was a pragmatic choice for many, representing a traditional, patriotic, and respected career path, with limited financial burden for the family, as there were neither school fees nor a commission to purchase. Nonetheless, Muir challenges this narrative, finding that only one fifth of naval officers were from the landed gentry and bullying was a fact of life for new midshipmen. The Navy, Muir argues, was a vocational career, as success could rarely be measured by financial gain.[12] For those content to endure a modest income and prolonged absence from home in exchange for a respectable career that satisfied a desire for adventure, the Navy was amongst the best career options.

Chapter eleven explores the British Army, dispelling the misconception that all officers' commissions were purchased, since this applied to just twenty per cent of them during this period. Muir highlights that the Army was not suited to those with dreams of meteoric promotion, as ranks above Lieutenant Colonel were awarded by merit and seniority. Equally, he points out that, despite perceptions, the army did not provide the adventurous life which attracted some. Muir also shows that those who pursued a career in the army often found it difficult to marry, as their pay was insufficient to support a wife.[13] Muir's findings throw into sharp relief a dichotomy between Georgian society's disdain for Britain's Army and the phenomenon of 'scarlet fever', identified in the work of Louise Carter, where some ignored the lack of respectability that came with being an officer's wife, in favour of the perceived glamour associated with the position.[14] The way in which these divergent attitudes co-existed with, and were influenced by, the increasingly

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[11] J. E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation, 1793-1815* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

[12] Muir, *Gentlemen*, pp.240-241.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp.273-275.

[14] Louise Carter, 'Scarlet Fever: Women and the Military Man, 1780-1815', in *Britain's Soldiers: Rethinking War and Society*, ed. by Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014) pp.155-180.

successful exploits of Wellington's army in the Iberian Peninsula, is an important question, which although not explored by Muir, will hopefully be explored further by future scholars.

The final chapter explores career options in the East India Company. Muir argues that here, again, prospects were not encouraging, partly because the nature of Britain's intervention in India was changing. Many who went out could not afford the return voyage to Britain, becoming effective exiles, and many died due to disease.[15] Particularly interesting is Muir's observation that, although racial prejudices were hardening during this period, those prejudices were often held by those who had just arrived in the region, and that greater exposure to Indian culture brought more enlightened views.[16]

Ultimately, Muir concludes, a man's career was dictated by his parents' priorities and finances while he was a boy. For those who could not afford their son's education, the Navy or East India Company were the logical solutions, which, alongside the army, were well suited to independently-minded children. Nonetheless, patronage was vital in determining the trajectory of an individual's career. The rewards from the respectable professions open to gentlemen were slow in materialising, and the sad reality is that life was a struggle for younger sons, whichever path they took.

Criticisms of this work are few. The most noticeable omission is a bibliographic essay, which has been an invaluable mainstay of Muir's other publications. Nonetheless, this does not detract from the quality of the research. Written with the light, engaging style, and deft balancing of detail, analysis and anecdote which are characteristic of Muir's work, this book is a model of interdisciplinary research, viewed through a historical lens. Muir has achieved an admirable mastery of a wider-ranging topic, offering a ground-breaking comparative study of the career options that faced younger sons of the gentry. More work is now needed to examine the impacts that his findings have on our understanding of wider social attitudes, particularly with reference to notions of masculinity, patronage and social mobility. *Gentlemen of Uncertain Fortune*

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[15] Muir, *Gentlemen*, p.310.

[16] *Ibid.*, p.295.

provides much food for thought and is therefore, essential reading for scholars and students of Georgian society.

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BIOGRAPHY: Zack White is a PhD researcher, and holder of the Archival Scholarship, at the University of Southampton, specialising in crime and punishment in the Napoleonic era. He was co-founder and inaugural Editor-in-Chief of *Romance, Revolution & Reform*, and is now the co-ordinator of the British Commission for Military History's Next-Gen Network for emerging scholars, and the Commission's conference paper sharing site www.historygoeson.com. He also runs the podcast *The Napoleonicist*, the online hub www.thenapoleonicwars.net, and the Dorset School Historical Lecture Series.

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Call for Submissions:

Transnationalism in the Long-Nineteenth Century

Romance, Revolution and Reform

The Long-Nineteenth Century saw immense changes in transport, travel, infrastructure, technology, exploration, journalism, and politics that dramatically transformed the ways in which places and people around the world were connected. Steam trains and telegraph cables, photography and newspapers made the world a smaller, more connected place for some, and alienated others. Yet these technological advancements, and the transnational networks they facilitated, are often viewed from a Euro-centric perspective.

Now, more than ever, it is important to think globally and to challenge these dominant Euro-centric narratives. This issue will be a space where disparate transnational research into the Long-Nineteenth Century from across the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and from around the world can be read in discourse together.

Papers are invited of between 4,000 and 8,000 words on any aspect of transnationalism in the Long-Nineteenth Century (1789-1914) from disciplines across the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and from scholars at any stage in their academic careers. We are especially interested in interdisciplinary submissions and encourage papers from archaeological, ethnographical, musical and social sciences perspectives as well as those from literary or historical ones. Potential topics could include: global citizenship; religion; gender and sexuality; black British literature; decolonisation of the arts and heritage; slavery and emancipation; imperial studies; political reform; philosophy; transnational print cultures; boundaries and redefining them; mapping; British colonialism in Ireland; international trade and exchange; Orientalism/Occidentalism and eco studies.

The closing date for submissions is Sunday 25th April.

To submit a paper, please email rrr@soton.ac.uk

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Afterword

KATIE HOLDWAY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE PUBLICATION OF a new issue of an academic journal is always cause for celebration, as it marks the culmination of months of rigorous research, collaboration and creativity. However, the work of our authors and editorial board this year deserves a special acknowledgement; for this year has been no ordinary year, and this issue of *Romance, Revolution & Reform*, is no ordinary issue.

Shortly after the launch of our Call for Submissions at our international conference in January 2020, the circumstances that are usually so vital for innovative research and writing to flourish, altered dramatically. Libraries and archives closed, movements were restricted, our authors and editors—many also working as teachers, shop assistants, healthcare workers and lecturers—were suddenly met with monumental new challenges.

It was just as we were faced with all these obstacles, and just when we might all have been forgiven for compromising, paring back or giving up altogether, that I saw our community fighting its very hardest, not simply to keep going, but to develop and grow further, while steadfastly maintaining our founding principles. You shared books and articles with each other to resolve access issues; you came together at our remote retreat in April to support your peers; you juggled writing and editing with significant workloads to meet deadlines; and shared our news and promoted one another's work so enthusiastically, that our contacts have more than doubled during the past year. *RRR* has always championed community and collective enterprise just as much as scholarly excellence. This year has shown that we can marshal that community to do a great deal of good when it is needed most.

In closing this issue, therefore, it is more important than ever to acknowledge the truly phenomenal achievements of our authors: Leonard Baker, Carol Bolton, Quentin Broughall, Sian Kitchen, Will Kitchen, Eva Lippold, Jonathan Potter, Jeff Ralph, Paul Smith, Katherine Warby and Zack White, for braving the unprecedented circumstances with which this year has presented them, and for coming together from across the country to produce the piece of undaunted, articulate, high-quality scholarship you are reading today.

Equally, behind every successful publication is a board of patient and industrious editors, and this year each of you deserves the very warmest thanks, not only for your meticulous editorial work, but for your steadfast upholding of our core values during one of the most challenging times the journal has experienced during its short life. In a scenario that none of us could have predicted a year ago, you helped to ensure that the journal remained freely accessible to all; that we offered support to all our authors, especially those publishing for the first time; and that we continued as a unique postgraduate-led venture underpinned by a rigorous network of established academics. So to all twenty-three of you: Megen de Bruin-Molé, Cleo O'Callaghan Yeoman, Aude Campmas, Ildiko Csengei, Aaron Eames, Stephen Edwards, Trish Ferguson, Mary Hammond, Roger Hansford, Emma Hills, Andy Hinde, Gemma Holgate, Francesco Izzo, Andrew King, Will Kitchen, Olivia Krauze, Clare Merivale, Beth Mills, Nikita Mujumdar, Anisha Netto, Chris Prior, Fern Pullan and Zack White, thank you for showing such energy and perseverance throughout this long year.

The publication of this issue also marks the end of *RRR*'s founding era, as I hand over the role of Editor-in-Chief to our current Deputy Editor, Emma Hills. As co-founder and inaugural Deputy Editor of *RRR*, I am so proud, not only of the board's achievements in the face of adversity this year, but to look back over the past four years since the project's beginnings, and to see just how far we've all come. From a founding committee of two postgraduates, to a full-fledged, peer reviewed, open access journal with an engaged, international community, our continued growth and development portends an even brighter future.

On a personal level, before I close, I owe particular thanks to three people. Firstly, I must thank our Lead Academic Editor, Mary Hammond, who not only encouraged me to join *RRR* in its earliest days, but who, for all of us on the board, has been an endless source of wisdom, a calm and attentive listener in times of crisis and one of the project's most ardent supporters.

Secondly, I would like to thank Zack White, *RRR*'s inaugural Editor-in-Chief, for trusting me to work with him as co-founder to build the journal from scratch four years ago. I think we will always regard the day we launched in September 2018, as a proud moment.

Finally, and most importantly I would like to thank Emma Hills, who has been a stellar Deputy Editor. Throughout the last year, Emma has been patient, attentive and

hardworking, and there is nobody better suited to take the journal to new intellectual heights, and to exciting new audiences, than she is. Under Emma's leadership, I know that the future of *RRR* will be bright indeed.

20th December 2020