MURKY WATERS: THE REPRESENTATION OF NEGATIVE AND SUBVERSIVE ACTUALITIES OF THE ROYAL NAVY DURING THE FRENCH WARS, 1793-1815

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the representation of negative and subversive aspects of the Royal Navy and its seamen during the French Wars, 1793-1815, in contemporary print culture. Visual analysis, supported by archival research, is used to show that evasion and exaggeration were key in the representation of such subjects. The figure of Jack Tar (the common seaman) and the facets of his service referenced in works on paper are investigated as constructs. It is argued that such historical documents confirmed and perpetuated misconceptions informed by dominant expectations, values and concerns. Such depictions, often satirical, are indicative of broader material and ideological contexts. Issues collectively and individually salient for Britons' and naval seamen are shown to have included those of identity, liberty, state power, subordination, morality and sacrifice. These are revealed to be central to the construction of the notorious naval tar by printmakers, audiences, writers, publishers, politicians, officers, seamen themselves and even historians. In a chronological narrative from recruitment to cessation of service, the thesis explores the experiences of this infamous naval character through his contemporary representation.

To my parents, Jenny and Martin Jones

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INTRODUCTION

> Man is always ready to ignore the pounds of misery and squalor that go to make each pennyweight of glory. Our naval glory was built up by the blood and agony of thousands of barbarously maltreated men.[1]

This candid epitaph is an apt introduction to this thesis that is concerned with the representation of negative aspects of Britain's Royal Navy and particularly its common seamen during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815). This thesis will analyse prints which depict such subjects within their various, shifting and contentious discursive contexts, relating them to contemporary debates on the Royal Navy and also to broader issues of society and the nation state.[2] The thesis will argue that the production and reception of images were informed by preconceptions regarding the common seaman, the Navy in which he served and the nation state which it protected. However, I also explore the extent to which depiction of the tar played a part in constructing contentious perceptions of disconcerting naval issues, specifically concerning impressment, liberty, unsophisticated pleasures, discipline, crime, punishment, disease and death. As such, I aim to demonstrate the obscurity, ambiguity and complexity of print with naval subjects for contemporary Britons, and for subsequent historians and art historians. My work aims to contribute to an emerging reinterpretation of the particularly prominent and notorious common sailor of the Navy, considering overlooked, underestimated or misconstrued aspects of his role in broader culture that are, nevertheless, significant.

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[1] John Masefield, *Sea Life in Nelson's Time*, London, 1972, 55.

[2] I will take the term 'discourse' to mean any utterance including, for example, conversation, song, letters, pamphlets, notebooks, diaries, texts, poetry, theatre performances, sculptures, prints, paintings, reviews, criticism and official records including legal, governmental and naval documents, in particular concerning naval warfare, impressments, recruitment, mutiny, discipline, patriotic victory culture and monumental heroic representation. Discourse is in a perpetual state of flux, and is invariably shifting and contested. Discourses can be thought about in terms of the different groups of people who had access to them; people sharing access and broad agreement about particular discourses I define as 'discursive circuits'. For example, broadly speaking poor people belonged to a different discursive circuit to the rich, as they went to different theatres, read different texts, talked to different people, and had different social and educational backgrounds. A common discursive ground exists where the discourses of different discursive circuits overlap and interrelate. Different discursive circuits can be defined in terms of socio-economic position or class, however, in some cases, such definitions can be reductive and not especially useful analytically.

In eighteenth-century visual culture the maritime was a common and popular theme, particularly in the form of naval officers' portraits and battle scenes. This thesis addresses the question of why the subversive and negative aspects of the Navy were largely evaded in its representation, and how this corresponds with contemporary perception, taste and official propaganda, which interpreted the Navy as a strong, unifying and patriotic aspect of British society, history and identity. Rare but significant images representing the common seaman being disciplined, pressed into service, at leisure, drunk, criminally involved, punished, unemployed, diseased, dying and dead are the foci of this study. Of course, prints featuring the common seamen pre-date the period addressed by this thesis. For example, William Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness* (1747) series of twelve engravings included two images with maritime-related themes – *The Idle 'Prentice Turn'd Away and Sent to Sea* and *The Idle 'Prentice return'd from Sea, & in a Garret with a common Prostitute*. The prints were intended to illustrate the possible rewards of hard work and the disasters that resulted from idleness.[3] As such, there was an established tradition within visual culture (and beyond) of using naval themes to articulate moral points.. However, such rich materials fall beyond the chronological scope of this thesis. Rather, it is the political and professional stance of such later prints' creators, the material and ideological circumstances in which images were produced and received, and the medium used that are explored throughout this study.[4]

During this era of war against France, the Royal Navy was the 'bedrock of defence, aggression, empire and trade', expanding to an unprecedented manpower of over 140,000.[5] The common seaman was a vital component of this force and became a valuable national symbol of duty, order, strength and independence, embodying and strengthening Britons' sense of a maritime national identity and affinity with their Navy and its seamen.[6] Great import was vested in the common seaman, arguably the 'most

[3] Ronald Paulson, ed. (1965). *Hogarth's Graphical Works* ("First Complete Edition" ed.). New Haven: Yale University Press. p. 194. "Quote from an advertisement of the then new prints: "This Day is publish'd, Price 12s. Design'd and engrav'd by Mr. HOGARTH, TWELVE Prints, call'd INDUSTRY and IDLENESS: Shewing the Advantages attending the former, and the miserable Effects of the latter, [...]"

[4] Particularly pertinent is the notion of ideology, by which I mean, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition, as 'a set of beliefs, values, and opinions, which shapes the way an individual or a group such as a social class, thinks, acts, and understand the world, and/or form the basis of a social, economic, or political philosophy or program.' Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, London, 1981, 49.

[5] Lawrence Stone, ed., *An Imperial State at War: 1675-1815*, London and New York, 1994, 166.

[6] See Jacqueline S. Bratton, 'British Heroism and the Structure of Melodrama', in J. S. Bratton, Richard Allen Cave, Breandan Gregory, Heidi J. Holder and Michael Pickering, eds, *Acts of Supremacy: The*

powerful instrument of imperialist ideology'.[7] He was a stock subject in official reports, parliamentary debates, pamphlets, personal accounts, theatrical productions, ballads, poems and images. Prevailing sense of national esteem and unity related to the tar's predominantly positive interpretation in discourse in terms of his defiance, duty, machismo and jollity. In addition, his purportedly willing subordination and sacrifice were reassurances of his essentially good, unthreatening, character. Yet, it is the negative constructs of the seaman as a potential liability to established and jealously guarded social order - recalcitrant, volatile, strange, immoral, reckless, violent, disorderly, vulnerable, doomed, blasphemous, drunk and promiscuous, which will be analysed in this thesis. Although in imagery such representations were relatively rare and mostly satirical, this does not detract from, but rather supports, my investigation.

With limited acknowledgement or recompense, the Navy's common men were essential to maintaining the economy, industry and culture of the British Empire. The dependence of national security and supremacy upon the maritime, particularly during the period of the French Wars, made it an important component of Britons' national consciousness and sense of identity, as discussed in Linda Colley's *Britons* (1992) and Roger Morriss' *Naval Power and British Culture* (2004).[8] I will consider how the accompanying, and increasingly apparent, negative actualities of sacrifice, discontent, insubordination, and problems of manning, discipline, liberty and welfare, which accompanied naval warfare, fitted into this consciousness. An interesting paradox existed in that the very seamen who fought to protect and preserve British liberty had little sense of their own. This significant issue will be investigated in relation to the cultural constructions of Jack Tar and their contemporary interpretations, specifically in relation to works on paper. As such, the considerable ideological and political weight assigned to the persona of the common tar will be discussed in relation to contemporary periodicals, newspapers, art criticism, legal and official documents, ballads, and theatre productions, in order to extrapolate the significance of his depiction.

British Empire and the Stage, 1790-1830, Manchester, 1991, 18-61, especially 33-4; Surel, 'John Bull', in Raphael Samuel, ed., *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Volume III: National Fiction*, Guernsey, 1989, 11.

[7] Bratton, 'British Heroism and the Structure of Melodrama', 33.

[8] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, London, 1992; Roger Morriss, *Naval Power and British Culture, 1760-1850: Public Trust and Government Ideology*, Aldershot, 2004.

For the majority of eighteenth-century Britons the actualities of naval service during the French wars were apparent through everyday experiences and verbal accounts, with a large proportion of the population bearing arms or being related to those that did.[9] In accordance with this pervasiveness, the focus of this thesis is upon the common seaman, although the officer is occasionally introduced as a necessary comparator. Despite his familiarity, the direct experience of tars on land remained rare for most print-buyers and, as a result, representations were limited and contrived in accordance with dominant conventions of the printmaker and his audiences. Britons, in fact, had little true comprehension of the common seaman or the wars in which he served and fought. However, it is safe to assume, as the entire investigative premise of this thesis does, that contemporary Britons generally considered naval service as being far from pleasant. Printmakers seem to have had generally conservative, loyalist and francophobic tendencies. More often than not they attacked non-conformists of a political, religious or social nature.[10] The relative absence of negative naval subjects in imagery of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries can be understood primarily in commercial terms of image-makers aiming for work that appealed to their markets and, therefore, making selective references to problematic subjects.

The negative construction of the Navy in discourse was a concern in print culture but far more so in texts, which informed and intensified popular misconceptions. Of particular note are the rare extant narratives, accounts and letters of seamen themselves that are predominantly expressive of individual grievances and often have self-interested agendas of heroic elevation, nostalgic sentimentality or socio-political campaigning. These offered rare insights into first-hand naval experience and an appreciation of other discourses which informed audiences' interpretations of a seaman's naval existence.[11] Texts published anonymously by naval officers, particularly after the mutinies discussed

[9] Lincoln estimates that by 1803 one in five of the British population able to bear arms was engaged in some form of military service. Margarette Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy: British Sea Power, 1750-1815*, Hampshire, 2002, 4.

[10] Tellingly, when asked in 1798 by Johann Christian Huttner, a correspondent of *London und Paris*, a sophisticated Weimar journal that often contained satirical prints including ones by Gillray, why his prints were so critical of the Whigs, Gillray replied with cynicism 'they are poor, they do not buy my prints and I must draw on the purses of the larger parties.' Quoted without citation in Godfrey, *Gillray*, 20.

[11] For example, in 1766 Edward Thompson tried to dissuade a young relative from following in his footsteps, by listing a string of hardships, both physical and mental, that had to be endured in the naval service. He poignantly stated, 'if I have met one tar who was uneasy of shore, I have found thousands in a worse situation at sea'. R. B., *Sailor's Letters*, Plymouth, c.1800, 85, 87, 175.

in Chapter Three, expressed grievances about the Navy concerning problematic issues of discipline, manning and welfare, and referred to the disadvantages of a career in the Navy. Such accounts of the hardship, sacrifice and poor pay (to name a few serious concerns), are important as evidence of critical interpretations that would have informed the production and reception of prints, particularly satirical, referring to the negative and subversive aspects of the Navy.[12] Less prominent, yet still significant, were the numerous texts produced by radicals that provided graphic descriptions of warfare and its unappealing effects. These constructed the Navy in a disparaging light and emphasised the gruesome sacrifice of service.[13] This study will explore the extent and significance of visual representations of the seamen's life in relation to their actualities and accompanying discourses.[14]

Britons' interpretation of the common seaman was constructed through discourses that confirmed and perpetuated prevailing knowledge, expectations and anxieties. Positive representations of heroism and patriotism predominated in publications, victory celebrations, naval thanksgivings and commemorative displays.[15] Manipulations of such prominent issues, particularly in relation to the figure of Jack Tar, can be seen as symptomatic of an establishment eager to assert its strength and capability,[16] disguising

[12] For a discussion of the naval officer's grievances, see Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy*, 13, 19-21; Anon., *A Letter from a Captain of a Man of War, to a Member of Parliament,* London, 1773, 4, 10-11, 65-66; Anon., *A Fair Statement of the Real Grievances experienced by the Officers and Sailors in the Navy of Great Britain; with a Plan of Reform … By a Naval Officer*, London, 1797, 1; Anon., *The Case and distressed Situation of the Widows of Officers of the Navy, Explained in a Letter from a Captain of the Navy to a Member of Parliament,* London, 1775, 7; Anon., *A View of the Naval Force of Great Britain … by an Officer of Rank*, London, 1791; Anon., *Observations and Instructions for the Use of Commissioned, the Junior, and other Officers of the Royal Navy … by a Captain in the Royal Navy*, London, 1804, 78.

[13] Among descriptions of war and its effects upon individuals are: J. Fawcett, *The Art of War*, 1795; R. Southey, *Joan of Arc, An Epic Poem,* Bristol, 1796; 'The Dying Sailor', *Cambridge Intelligencer*, 15 December 1798.

[14] As Lincoln notes, there existed a 'dichotomy between public recognition of the Navy as an institution and public understanding about the realities of life at sea which seamen's best endeavours could never wholly overcome.' 'The story of maritime Britain was constructed in positive terms: it helped to bind and unite the nation and it apparently allowed the nation to display its better qualities', which included honourability, loyalty, fair-dealing, courage, strength, fellowship, righteousness and integrity. Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy*, 36, 6.

[15] Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy*, 4.

[16] I will be using the term 'establishment' in accordance with the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition to mean 'a social group exercising power generally, or within a given field or institution, by virtue of its traditional superiority, and by the use especially of tacit understandings and often a common mode of speech, and having as a general interest the maintenance of the status quo.' Thus I refer to the various ruling elites and the institutions in which they operated and participated, including, for example, Parliament and the Royal Academy.

any failings in its own preparations for war and dispelling threats to the status quo.[17] At the level of discourse, the maritime was frequently used to frame a sense of national identity that united disparate Britons and asserted the virtues and distinction of Britishness, thus countering and dispelling unsettling naval actualities, particularly of social discontent, disloyalty, radicalism, non-conformity and suffering.[18]

The Navy's men constitute neither a unified and uniform collective of the lower working class nor simply a miscellany of unstable individuals with problematic characteristics. Bound to service in a prodigious and demanding national institution, their identities were naturally carved out by the realities of naval seafaring. The common tar was never in one place for very long. Voyaging at sea, briefly stopping in port, always restlessly shifting from ships and port-cities, his every move was dictated by the occupational necessities of seafaring. Seamen often came from diverse regions of Britain and abroad; they created, in effect, multicultural environments.[19] Visual representation of naval men could, therefore, be challenging and unpalatable for image-makers and their audiences. Jack Tar was involved in national defence, but also in crimes: against property and person, mutiny and in disturbances of the peace ashore. Nonetheless, he was *not* constructed as synonymous with specific political positions (loyalist, ministerial, Tory, Whig, radical or otherwise). As such, Jack Tar posed various interpretative struggles to the public. This, I argue, contributed to his problematic, ambivalent and selective construction in visual culture. Nevertheless, his contemporary representations also bore generalisations of actualities, often utilising stereotypes. From the 1790s onwards, he became a naval and national symbol, possessing multiple meanings at any given time (synchronically) and over a period of time (diachronically). The identities of, and implications attributed to, the common naval man were dialogical, shifting in response to the responses that print-makers anticipated from their audiences. As such, it is unwise to assign to the individual common tar, with his potential meanings and cross-class appeal, solely positive or negative stereotypes within particular social or political groups.

[17] Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy*, 15.
[18] For further discussion of these issues see Colley, *Britons* and Morriss, *Naval Power and British Culture*.
[19] Robert Hay, a fourteen years old Scottish volunteer in 1803, was amazed at the different backgrounds of seamen. 'It would be difficult to give an adequate idea of the scenes these decks presented to anyone who has not witnessed them. To the eye were presented complexions of every hue, and features of every cast'. M. D. Hay, *Landsman Hay: The Memoirs of Robert Hay 1789-1847*, London, 1953, 43-4.

James Gillray's *Hero of the Nile* (1 December 1798) [Fig. 1] offers a rich example of how the common naval man was a potent construction of service actualities and their accompanying associations. This hand-coloured etching was part of contemporary victory culture celebrations, acknowledging Commander Horatio Nelson's supreme-role by portraying him in full stature adorned with his military awards and above his armorial ensign. Appearing within the ensign, a lone, wholesome and unarmed tar is the only reference to the contribution and commitment of such individuals.[20] Aptly, Gillray's confining of the tar into a cramped space below the decks on which Nelson parades serves as an analogy of the distinct experiences between men of rank and their inferior subordinates of the lower decks. For anxiously patriotic but insecure Britons, such diminutive representation clearly constructed and put in his place the familiar yet feared tar. The negative aspects of tars' lives and their depiction explored in this thesis, specifically of manning, liberty, disciplinary disorder and demise, are avoided. Instead, audiences are offered desired and expected visual reassurance of naval strength and order in accordance with dominant discourse. The seaman is positioned below his superior, holding Nelson's Nile victory augmentations of his crest palm leaves as if to imply the hierarchical respect, loyalty and duteous support central to the Navy. Yet, subtle cynicism is connoted with the correct arms on the shield being substituted by a bulging purse and scroll inscribed '£2000 pr Ann' which are placed alongside Nelson's motto 'Palmam qui meruit ferat' (Let he who has earned it bear the Palm). Gillray's print probed the sensitive issue of service recompense, insinuating large material reward was disproportionate to merit. The inclusion of a seaman amidst such other signs is symptomatic of his discursive adoption as a synecdoche of the Navy, with all the varied, even compromising and contradictory, implications this entailed. Ordinary naval men, regulated, exploited, suspected and, often feared figures in the nation state were excluded from the official patriotic public sphere.[21]

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[20] 'Monthly Chronicle', *The Britannic Magazine; or entertaining repository of heroic adventures. And memorable exploits. [...]* London, 1794-1807, vol. 6, 224. Nelson was granted supporters of the sailor and lion for his crest after his involvement in the Battle of Cape St Vincent, 1797, and further augmentation to these with palm leaves and a tricolour flag and staff in the mouth of the lion, following his victory at the Nile the year after.

[21] The term 'public sphere' is a term I use to connote the conceptual and discursive realm (naval, political, social, legal, cultural or otherwise) in which discourse, particularly printed material, existed and operated. This sphere is taken to be both concrete in terms of physical spaces and objects of display, and virtual in terms of discourse and abstract ideas. This term relates, in part, to Jürgen Habermas's definition of the 'public sphere' as a virtual or imaginary community that does not necessarily exist in any identifiable space. The most important feature of the public sphere as it existed in the eighteenth century was the public use of reason in rational-critical debate and discourse that took place in, for example, coffee houses,

In actuality and imagery, the tar typically appeared visually, and by extension conceptually, at one remove from the restrictions of his naval working and disciplinary environment. His interpretation by various audiences, typically civilian Britons ashore and especially among upper-middle class print-buyers, was partial, problematic and even erroneous. As a construct, the naval man was acknowledged and familiar, yet also remained ignored and obscure. Arguably, it is this persistent mystique that makes the character such a curious and worthy subject for archival research in this art historical study. As Margarette Lincoln notes, 'there had always been a dichotomy between public recognition of the Navy as an institution and public understanding about the realities of life at sea which seamen's best endeavours could never wholly overcome.'[22] Even officers were aware of misconceptions of the Navy and its men, disgruntled by the lack of interest or appreciation regarding the actualities of such service, which some alleged to be detrimental. For example, in his popular text, *Naval Sketch-Book*, the officer Glascock lamented, 'absurdities detailed in graver publications, as to the conduct and character of sailors, would be amusing, were it not for the false, and often unfavourable impressions they create of the service.[23] Indeed, published discourse, visual as well as textual, and the culture surrounding the theatre, victories and naval docking saw the tars presented misleadingly. There were extensive theatrical productions and ballads with maritime themes and sailor characters.[24] For example, 'The Sailor's Festival, or all alive at Portsmouth' was performed at various times between 1793 and 1795 at Covent Garden. 'Starboard Watch', also known as 'The Sailor's Carousal; or Saturday Night at

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reading and print rooms, societies, clubs, newspapers and the Royal Academy. I will explore the socio-political nature of the 'public sphere' concerning the Navy and its seamen in relation to the significance, participatory conventions and contrivance of dominant discourse. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Cambridge, 1991, 176.

[22] Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy*, 36-7.

[23] W. Glascock, *Naval Sketch-Book; or, the Service Afloat and Ashore, by an Officer of Rank*, London, 1826, vol. 7.

[24] See Michael R. Booth, *English Melodrama*, London, 1965 and 'Volume 6: 1750-1880', in Leech, Clifford, and Craik, T. W., eds, *The Revels History of Drama in England*, London, 1975; G. D. Glenn, '"Nautical Docudrama" in the Age of the Kembles', in Fisher, Judith Law, and Watt, Stephen, eds, *When They Weren't Doing Shakespeare: Essays on Nineteenth-Century British and American Theatre*, London, 1989, 137-51; Charles Beecher Hogan, *The London Stage 1660-1800: a Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces, together with Casts, Box-receipts and Contemporary Comment: Compiled from the Playbills, Newspapers and Theatrical Diaries of the Period. Pt.5, 1776-1800*, Carbondale, 1968, vol. 3; Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900*, Cambridge, 1940-59, vols 1-6 and *The Garrick Stage: Theatres and Audiences in the Eighteenth Century*, Manchester, 1980; Terence M. Freeman, *Dramatic representations of British soldiers and sailors on the London stage, 1660-1880: Britons, strike home*, Lewiston, New York, 1995, especially 21, 65, 136, 235, 255.

Sea', was another example of a theatrical presentation of the naval life of the tar and the links this had to contemporary print culture. Significantly, the titles, as well as the narratives, of such productions were similar to those given to prints (particularly those by Ackermann), indicating the cross-fertilisation between media that shaped the work of cultural producers and their audiences reception of such work.[25] Significantly, the tar's observation by civilian, land-based audiences ashore (in both actuality and in publications) did little to deepen understanding of how his purported characteristics were influenced by naval service on active duty, leave or discharged. This thesis provides an original, and overdue, investigation of this specific subject, so as to understand the role of overlooked images in the interpretation of a prominent figure in Georgian Britain's maritime nation – the tar - in relation to broader contemporary debates. My methodology, although not especially theoretical, has enabled in-depth analysis of specific, previously over-looked works found in various collections and presented for the first time in relation to extensive primary sources.

Negative and subversive aspects of naval service experienced by common seamen were ambiguous and complex. Nevertheless, the hypothesis of this thesis is that their representations, while being rare, constitute significant historical material for understanding of the Royal Navy then, and indeed today. It must be acknowledged that all discourse, including imagery, cannot be entirely truthful, being inherently subjective and contextual. Nevertheless, I will argue that the interpretation of Jack Tar by image-makers and audiences was, and arguably to an extent continues to be, a construction and perpetuation of preconceived and prevailing social expectations, values and anxieties. I reveal that although the experiences of naval service were typically and predominantly negative, this was not always the case nor were sufferings universal, inevitable or as extreme as popular perceptions would sometimes have it. Recent developments in maritime historiography support this observation but rarely with reference to images. In this respect, my thesis builds upon existing historiography to advance current understanding of naval imagery in Britain at the turn of the eighteenth century. My work contributes to an emerging reinterpretation of the particularly prominent (and notorious) common sailor of the Navy, considering overlooked, underestimated or misconstrued aspects of him that are, nevertheless, highly significant.

[25] Freeman, *Dramatic Representations*, 258-9.

My knowledge of the maritime world in relation to which prints operated, particularly of naval warfare, notions of national consciousness and constructions of identities, is informed by secondary sources on British naval and cultural history.[26] Other previous studies in this field have tended to focus predominantly upon the positive aspects in a mode of representational glorification and notions of nationalism, patriotism and heroism.[27] While notable texts present useful insights into printmakers, their work and its relation to various contexts, few of them offer sustained analysis of Jack Tar in relation to broader contemporary discourses. Although they do not focus on the maritime specifically or its significance, Vic Gatrell's *City of Laughter* and Diana Donald's *The Age of Caricature* provide important contextualisations of image-makers and their works in relation to various factors, particularly issues of audience, distribution, reception and party politics.[28] I owe a debt to the aforementioned texts and to others including, Mary Dorothy George's *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires* and David Bindman's *The Shadow of the Guillotine*.[29] To date, available literature on maritime visual culture focuses predominantly on positive paintings and/or prints underplaying the significance in imagery of the negative and subversive aspects of naval reality. Although Geoffrey Quilley's 'Duty and Mutiny' has gone some way towards addressing this imbalance, investigating the sailor, his work-ethic, discipline, relation to superiors in the Navy and representation in visual culture, the essay is short and neglects other relevant negative

[26] These include, Nicholas A. M. Rodger, 'Shipboard Life in the Georgian Navy', in Lewis R. Fischer, H. Hamre, P. Holm and J. R. Bruijn, eds, *The North Sea: Twelve Essays on the Social History of Maritime Labour*, Stravanger, 1992, 29-40; Nicholas A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean*, London, 2004; Nicholas A. M. Rodger, *Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy*, London, 1986; Nicholas A. M. Rogers, *The Press Gang: Naval Impressment and its opponents in Georgian Britain*, London, 2007; John D. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment in the Royal Navy: Discipline on the Leeward Islands Station, 1784-1812*, Aldershot, c.1989 and *Naval Courts Martial, 1739-1815*, Farnham, 2009.

[27] Geoffrey Quilley, ed., *Art for the Nation: the Oil Paintings Collections of the National Maritime Museum, with contributions from John Bonehill ... [et al.]*, London, 2006; Timothy Jenks, *Naval Engagements: Patriotism, Cultural Politics, and the Royal Navy, 1793-1815*, Oxford, 2006; Cyril Northcote Parkinson, *Britannia Rules: the Classic Age of Naval History, 1793-1815*, Stroud, 1994.

[28] Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London*, London, 2006; Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III*, New Haven, 1996.

[29] Mary Dorothy George, *The Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, London, vol. 6 (1784-1792), 1938, vol. 7 (1793-1800), 1942, vol. 8, (1801-1810), 1947; David Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution*, London, 1989; Tamara L. Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in late Georgian England*, Aldershot, 2003; Draper Hill's *Mr. Gillray the Caricaturist: A Biography*, London, 1965; Richard Wrigley and Michael Craske, eds, *Pantheons: Transformations of a Monumental Idea*, Aldershot, 2004.

aspects, such as press gangs, desertion, shipboard sickness and post-service problems.[30] Similarly, Lincoln's *Representing the Royal Navy*, John Bonehill and Quilley's (eds) *Conflicting Visions,* Tim Barringer, Quilley and Douglas and Fordham's (eds) *Art and the British Empire* and Tracy's *Britannia's Palette* discuss marine art in relation to naval realities and contexts, yet largely take an approach concerned with naval strategies and painting.[31] Although much has been written about my foci image-makers, including Rowlandson, Gillray, Cruikshank, Ibbetson and Morland, among others, and about British naval history and maritime visual culture, very few studies exist that examine both subjects, and specifically analyse prints in relation to naval discourses pertaining to negative and subversive actualities.[32] Quilley's 'All Ocean is her Own', 'Missing the Boat' and 'Duty and Mutiny', have been prominent and invaluable.[33] While such publications deal with certain image-makers and naval subjects, their breadth and depth is limited to the various implications of their specific subjects. Lincoln's *Representing the Royal Navy*, Roy and Lesley Adkins' *Jack Tar* and Isaac Land's *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor, 1750-1850* have all been valuable texts not least for their consideration of primary sources including prints, upon which my study has sought to build.[34] None offer a sustained and in-depth analysis of negative aspects of marine visual culture in relation to relevant contemporary realities of, and discourse on, the Navy,

[30] Geoffrey Quilley, 'Duty and Mutiny: the Aesthetics of Loyalty and the Representation of the British Sailor c.1789-1800', in Phil Shaw ed., *Romantic War: Studies in Culture and Conflict, 1789-1815*, Ashgate, 2000, 80-109.

[31] Margarette Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy: British Sea Power, 1750-1815*, Hampshire, 2002; Nicholas Tracy, *Britannia's Palette: the Arts of Naval Victory*, Montreal, c.2007; John Bonehill and Geoffrey Quilley, (eds), Conflicting Visions: war and visual culture in Britain and France c.1700-1830, Aldershot, 2005; Tim Barringer, Geoffrey Quilley and Douglas Fordham, eds, *Art and the British Empire*, Manchester, 2006. Also of note are Gerald Jordan and Nicholas Rogers, 'Admirals as Heroes: Patriotism and Liberty in Hanoverian England', *Journal of British Studies*, 1989, vol. 28, 201-24; Lynda Pratt, 'Naval Contemplation: Poetry, Patriotism and the Navy, 1797-99 – Images of Nautical and National Heroism', *Journal of Maritime Research*, December 2000 and Gerald Jordan, 'Admiral Nelson as Popular Hero: The Nation and the Navy, 1795-1805', The Department of History US Naval Academy, eds, *New Aspects of Naval History: Selected Papers from the 5th Naval History Symposium*, Baltimore., 1985, 109-19.

[32] In this study I will be using the term 'patriotism' to refer to Britons' pride in, and devotion to, their country, particularly in relation to its naval heritage and perceived supremacy. It must be noted that the interpretation and adoption of patriotism was polysemic, with its political implications and allegiances contested, shifting and unclearly undefined, with loyalists, radicals, Foxites and Pittites all attempting to appropriate the language of patriotism for their political ends. I take up Jenks's approach to 'patriotism as a category of behaviour, a public costume of rhetoric and symbolic activity, which all points of the political spectrum have sought to invest with interpretative determinism and claims of exclusivity.' Timothy Jenks, *Naval Engagements: Patriotism, Cultural Politics and the Royal Navy*, Oxford and New York, 2006, 10.

[33] Geoffrey Quilley, '"All Ocean is her Own": The image of the sea and the identity of the maritime nation in eighteenth-century British art', in Geoffrey Cubitt ed., *Imagining Nations*, Manchester, 1998, 130-54; 'Missing the Boat: the place of the maritime in the history of British visual culture', *Visual Culture in Britain*, December 2000, vol. 1, no. 2, 79-92.

[34] Lesley and Roy Adkins, *Jack Tar: The Extraordinary Lives of Ordinary Seamen in Nelson's Navy*, London, 2009 and Isaac Land, *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor, 1750-1850*, London, 2009.

mutinies, liberty, heroism, and national identity. This is the first body of research to focus on a corpus of material that represents the common sailor during the French Wars. These works on paper have not previously been addressed in scholarship, but here they are collated in a way that is entirely new. Central to my argument is that negative aspects of the naval life (in actuality and in discourse), specifically print culture, were and remain 'murky waters', subject to inevitable ambiguity and change, according to material and ideological circumstances of producers, publishers, buyers, audiences, collectors, curators and historians.

My thesis will undertake this investigation using an approach that analyses images both as historical documents and in relation to existing primary and secondary source material. Extensive searching of art collections has been complemented by archival research of legal and governmental records, seamen's documents, naval dispatches and discursive commentary in the press in order to present an original and informed study of rare visual sources. The thesis aims to build a more extensive and in-depth piece of scholarship on such important aspects of naval history as the construct of the common seaman in contemporary culture. Some deep-seated presumptions, not only the positive and idealised interpretation of the maritime, but also its excessively negative construct, are questioned and even dispelled.

The theoretical approach that underpins this thesis is fundamentally that of an art historian who is primarily concerned with investigating what the archive can reveal to us about the contemporary negative and subversive aspects of the common seaman and the institution and nation in which, and for which, he served. As such, I am informed by the theories of Karl Marx, Janet Wolff and Raymond Williams.[35] Of particular pertinence are their notions of ideology, by which I mean 'a set of beliefs, values, and opinions, which shapes the way an individual or a group such as a social class, thinks, acts, and understand the world, and/or form the basis of a social, economic, or political philosophy or program' – albeit often unwittingly.[36] This theoretical perspective acknowledges that art is an ideological construct, in Wolff's words, 'the product of

[35] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, London, 1963; Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Literature and Art*, New York, 1976; Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, London, 1993; Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford, 1978.
[36] This definition of 'ideology' is taken from the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

specific historical practices on the part of identifiable social groups in given [actual and material] conditions, and therefore bear the imprint of the ideas, values and conditions of existence of those groups.'[37] As indicated above, this consequently entails a consideration of the social production of art; images discussed will be treated not as self-contained entities, nor as mere historical narrative illustrations, but as the products of specific practices by, and for, particular groups of people in specific conditions. Works will be investigated in relation to their reception in shifting and dialogical discursive contexts, and with regard to the conventions and preconceptions that they fed-off and into.

The theories of semiotics have proved helpful in this respect, offering tools for use in considering images, approaching them as signs, that is, signifiers of signified meanings, constructed and interpreted by the producer's and viewer's bodies of knowledge (their 'semiotic ground').[38] Given that, while there existed certain common semiotic ground that allowed recognition of images' denoted meanings, viewers had access to different discourses, developed different bodies of knowledge and varied in their adeptness at decoding such visual signs, images are polysemic, in other words, having multiple meanings for different people both at any given time (synchronically), and over time (diachronically).[39] Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the 'dialogic' has also helpful in my approach to prints and other contemporary discourses as dialogical, that is, engaged in a

[37] Janet Wolff, The Social Production of Art, London, 1981, 49.

[38] For a definition and discussion of 'semiotic ground', see Sturken and Cartwright, 25; Meike Bal and Norman Bryson, 'Semiotics and Art History', The Art Bulletin , Vol. 73, No.2 (Jun. 1991). These ideas and arguments have been articulated by my supervisor Richard Clay. See Richard Clay, 'Bouchardon's statue of Louis XV; iconoclasm and the transformation of signs', Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay (eds), *Iconoclasm: Contested Objects, Contested Terms*, Aldershot, 2007, 93-122, especially 94. The polysemy of Gillray's prints, their multiple, contested and shifting interpretations, is exemplified in a prosecution case in 1793 Birmingham, where James (or William) Belcher's display in his shop-window of royal caricatures, including Gillray's *The Sun in his Glory*, was seen as an offence, particularly as this loyalist print was completely misinterpreted in the prosecution brief as 'representing the side features of his majesty on the top of a candlestick with rays darting there from for the wicked purpose of ridiculing the king and royal family'. Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 494; Treasury Solicitor's papers 11/578/189, National Archives, Kew.

[39] These ideas and arguments have been articulated by my supervisor Richard Clay. See Richard Clay, 'Bouchardon's statue of Louis XV; iconoclasm and the transformation of signs', Stacy Boldrick and Richard Clay (eds), *Iconoclasm: Contested Objects, Contested Terms*, Aldershot, 2007, 93-122, especially 94. The polysemy of Gillray's prints, their multiple, contested and shifting interpretations, is exemplified in a prosecution case in 1793 Birmingham, where James (or William) Belcher's display in his shop-window of royal caricatures, including Gillray's *The Sun in his Glory*, was seen as an offence, particularly as this loyalist print was completely misinterpreted in the prosecution brief as 'representing the side features of his majesty on the top of a candlestick with rays darting there from for the wicked purpose of ridiculing the king and royal family'. Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 494; Treasury Solicitor's papers 11/578/189, National Archives, Kew.

perpetual dialogue that responds to and anticipates its progression.[40] Bakhtin's theories on the grotesque, death, laughter, comic debasement and 'the world upside down'[41] also feature occasionally when this thesis turns to investigate representations of Jack Tar's problematic identity, corporal discipline, and his suffering,

In seeking to address the current gaps in the historiography, I have made choices concerning the visual sources to address. The majority of works analysed in this thesis are popular prints, in the form of single sheets and typically satirical. As a mechanical creation, the print was lowest in the academic hierarchy of art and could respond relatively quickly to current affairs. It suited the topical, contentious, scandalous and subversive potential offered through portrayals of negative naval actualities, such as seamen's affrays with press-gangs, debauched antics ashore and criminal behaviour. With engravings priced between 3 and 6 shillings, and etchings slightly lower, roughly a quarter of a skilled worker's weekly wage and half of that of an unskilled worker, the print market practically excluded the lower orders to target those of the upper to middle classes with disposable incomes.[42] Products of not inconsiderable time and skill, particularly high quality hand-coloured etchings, their relative expense corresponded with a preoccupation with themes concerning the establishment,[43] including naval affairs.

[40] Mikhail Bakhtin discusses the word in relations to dialogism, stating that 'a word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way […] The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word. Such is the situation in any living dialogue. This orientation towards an answer is open, blatant and concrete.' Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', first published 1934-5, in Michael Holquist (ed.), Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist (trans), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Austin, 1981, 259-422, specifically 279-80.

[41] Bakhtin theorised that the laughter of the carnival granted 'temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order [… and] marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions.' Bakhtin, 212, 209. See also Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, first published 1965, Hélène Iswolsky (trans.), Bloomington, 1993; Pam Morris, *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov*, London, 1994.

[42] Etched satirical prints were published in runs of up to 2000 copies and in comparison to engravings they were quicker and cheaper to produce, enabling their retail price to be lower, as little as a penny in some rare cases. This meant that those among the lower orders, such as tradesmen and skilled workers, would have been able to afford them. Richard Clay, 'Riotous Images: Representations of Joseph Priestley in British prints during the French Revolution', *History of Education*, 2008, 37: 4, 585-604, specifically 587-8. Vic Gatrell, *The City of Laughter*, 235 and 286–7.

[43] I will be using the term 'establishment' in accordance with the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition to mean 'a social group exercising power generally, or within a given field or institution, by virtue of its traditional superiority, and by the use especially of tacit understandings and often a common mode of speech, and having as a general interest the maintenance of the status quo.' Thus, I refer to the various ruling elites and the institutions in which they operated and participated, including, for example, Parliament and the Royal Academy.

They catered for wealthy, educated, culturally informed, elite, and relatively politically-engaged audiences, with a clientele including politicians, ministers, servicemen and noblemen.[44] Such buyers' educated and informed awareness of relatively broad discourses, achieved through participation in the gentlemanly literary culture of subscription, coffee houses and print shops, enabled them to appreciate the topicality and contentiousness of specific naval subjects and to decode their various interpretations. These prints would function not as permanently displayed art objects, but more as discussion or informal education pieces kept in a portfolio and brought out for collective attention to generate intellectual conversation.[45]

Problematic issues of warfare, revolution, radicalism, British liberty, loyalist patriotism, social order and welfare were the implications of works referring to negative actualities surrounding the Navy. As such, modes of representational manipulation were necessary to ensure the images' market appeal. Humour was a key element of the seaman's popular construction, fostered in print culture but also the quarterdeck itself, in order to play with anxieties regarding his identity, particularly in terms of his subjugation, conformity, instability and, yet, potency in relation to the status quo. Image-makers and their audiences fostered satire in order to make the disconcerting aspects of the tar and his Navy, whether real, potential or feared, acceptable through laughter. As such, they offered an acceptable and accessible register of meaning for a broad audience, while especially appealing to upper-middle class clients with their superiority assured through derision of the inferior tar, and by extension the lower orders in general.

While such image-makers' principal consumer market consisted of those of relative wealth, literacy and cultural knowledge, prints were far from socially exclusive. They were available to a broad audience, being displayed in taverns, barbers and shop-windows and lent out from libraries and shops, viewed and discussed collectively as a sociable activity.[46] Gillray comments on this in *Very Slippy Weather* (10 February 1808) [Fig. 2] and *A Barbers-shop in Assize time* (9 January 1818) [Fig. 3]. Both depict the

[44] Godfrey, *Gillray*, 17; Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 58. Huttner, the aforementioned correspondent of *London und Paris*, noted in 1806 that 'caricature shops are always besieged by the public, but it is only in Mrs. Humphrey's shop, where Gillray's works are sold, that you will find people of high rank, good taste and intelligence.' *London und Paris*, 18 July 1806, 246.
[45] Clay, 'Riotous Images', 594.
[46] Regarding the accessibility of prints, see Clay, 'Riotous images', 596.

display of prints in public places, playing upon their significance and roles as commercial products, as means of expressing or influencing taste, and as interior decoration. Original prints were also copiously pirated, redesigned and republished.[47] Oil paintings too were reproduced in print form, such as George Morland's mezzotint of *The Press Gang* (1790). Related to this accessibility of prints was their ideological significance, possessing multiple meanings, cultural-relevance and use of familiar representational resources that offered a register of meaning even for lower to middle-class, uneducated and semiliterate publics.[48] The resonant, responsive, polysemic,[49] witty and critical nature of most of the prints studied confirm the image-makers' prominent and informed discursive positions, and indicate the range and complexity of images' audiences. Clearly, such works served not merely as visual entertainment, but had a significant role in constructing Britons' interpretations of the Navy and its men, and how these mapped on to contested and shifting discourses pertaining to naval actualities, war, and national identity.

Pencil or watercolour drawings by image-makers were not necessarily produced for public display, sale or reproduction, but instead as personal studies for the artists' interest, technical practice, preparatory study or observational documentation. Rowlandson's work is particularly important to consider in relation to his personal experiences and

[47] Regarding the abundance of prints, including pirated copies and altered versions of original prints, see Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III*, New Haven, 1996, 'Introduction'.

[48] The population of London was predominantly literate by the late eighteenth century, including the commercial classes. However, gauging the levels of literacy is problematic, particularly when you consider that the ability to read might not be dependant on the ability to write, with the former skill being more socially diverse. Also, audiences of images and texts were not limited to those who could read them, as their interpretation was often a sociable practice that involved an individual explaining them to others. Nevertheless, the contemporary level of literacy is significant, indicating that most viewers of prints would have a literacy competency that enabled them to interpret them in relation to their discursive context, being informed by newspapers and other publications in circulation at the time. For a discussion of literacy in eighteenth-century London see David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England*, London, 1975, 145-154. See also Naomi Tadmor, 'In the Even My Wife Read to Me: Women, Reading and Household Life in the Eighteenth Century', in James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor, eds, *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, Cambridge, 1996, 162-74; R. S. Schofield, 'Dimensions of Illiteracy, 1750-1850', *Explorations in Economic History*, 1973, vol. 10, 437-54, 444.

[49] By the term 'polysemic' I mean possessing multiple meaning, bearing different interpretation. Images are polysemic, in other words, having multiple meanings for different people both at any given time (synchronically), and over time (diachronically). The polysemy of Gillray's prints, their multiple, contested and shifting interpretations, is exemplified in a prosecution case in 1793 Birmingham, where James (or William) Belcher's display in his shop-window of royal caricatures, including Gillray's *The Sun in his Glory*, was seen as an offence, particularly as this loyalist print was completely misinterpreted in the prosecution brief as 'representing the side features of his majesty on the top of a candlestick with rays darting there from for the wicked purpose of ridiculing the king and royal family'. Gatrell, *City of Laughter*, 494; The National Archives, Kew, subsequently abbreviated to TNA (Treasury Solicitor's papers) 11/578/189.

oeuvre. I consulted material in his own sketchbooks and compiled in volumes and boxes, including a watercolour painting, *A French Buck* (1787) supposedly depicting himself in the company of sailors. Held in special archives, such as the Widener Collection, Houghton Library Harvard University and the Wiggin Collection, Public Library, both in Boston, these primary sources indicate Rowlandson's awareness and subjective representation of aspects of the Navy, which was not necessarily dictated by prevailing pressures of taste nor commercial print culture.[50] Throughout Rowlandson's oeuvre, from his beginnings as an aspiring draftsman and engraver and during his successful career as a satirical printmaker, his interest in, and knowledge of, all things maritime is evident. Naval imagery is often used for derisive, symbolic and topical ends, for example, *'Cattle Not Insurable'* (1 December 1809) and *Shipwreck Sailor* (1801). Indeed, he was as much at home depicting the tar and his lowly companions, as creating humorous caricatures of various other social groups, especially the fashionable aristocracy, for which he was, and remains, renowned. Rowlandson was a most productive printmaker and it is his work that is most frequently analysed in this thesis. Other producers are referred to less often, yet were not necessarily unsuccessful or obscure, including Thomas Rowlandson, George Moorland Woodward, James Gillray, Thomas Tegg, Isaac Cruikshank, William Elmes and Charles Williams, among others. This thesis seeks not only to look at rare and overlooked visual representations of the common seaman, but also to investigate in new ways the motivation for, and significance of, their production.

With use of primary source material, this thesis explores the nature, extent and purpose to which works by the aforementioned artists not only fed off, but also impacted upon, their discursive contexts, dialogically engaging with both official and unofficial discourses in perceptive ways. Of particular consideration is how the images played with and, therefore, relied upon, familiarity with the languages and politics of the status quo, specifically in relation to naval, but also more general, issues of liberty, power, discipline, duty, morality and sacrifice. The art-world and print culture was of a London-centric nature that corresponded with the heavily populated city being a trading and political capital. It is likely that those existing within it, producers and audiences, would have been

[50] Of particular note is Thomas Rowlandson, *Album of watercolour drawings*. Seventy-five drawings and Album of fifty-two original drawings in watercolour, undated; Grolier Club, *A catalogue of books illustrated by Thomas Rowlandson, together with a collection of original drawings by him, exhibited at the Grolier Club, in November 1916*, New York, 1916.

aware of naval affairs and policies that constituted a significant part of everyday-life and which were widely accessible through various discourses, particularly parliamentary debates, newspapers, seamen's accounts and government documents, including published naval records and dispatches. Hence, this thesis has been based on extensive reading of primary textual sources.

The British and London Libraries, London, Caird Library, Greenwich and National Archives, Kew in England, and Yale University's Beinecke and Art History Libraries, New Haven, and the John Carter Brown Library, Rhode Island in America (where I undertook a Caird Fellowship awarded by the National Maritime Museum), constituted major resources for archival research. The extensive and unique textual material such as official government acts, state legislation, naval records, legal and court case information, petitions, pamphlets and newspaper articles I was able to consult were instrumental for this thesis, and often constitute previously unexplored evidence. The *Hume Tracts, Naval Chronicle, Eighteenth Century Catalogue Online* and *Burney Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Newspaper Archive* are especially helpful digital resources of which I have made extensive use.[51] Journals and pamphlets by seamen and officers published at the time or subsequently provided insight into the negative aspects of naval service, not only in terms of experiences, but also how these were misconstrued in actualities and popular discourse.[52] Edited collections of contemporary pamphlets, such as publications of the Naval Record Society, have been key to my research and have provided valuable primary source evidence, specifically the *Manning Pamphlets, 1693-1873* edited by J. S. Bromley to include works by Admiral Patton (1802), Patrick Holland

[51] Through the former I found an abundance of relevant material that provided useful primary evidence for my research, of particular note are: Anonymous, *Naval Jurisprudence: Review of the Naval Service of Boys' bill, and the Naval Prisons and Desertion bill, with remarks on the system of promotion and punishment pursued in the Navy*, London, 1800; Thomas Hodgskin, *An Essay on Naval Discipline, shewing part of its evil effects on the minds of the officers, on the minds of the men, and on the community: with an amended system, by which pressing may be immediately abolished*, London, 1813; Jack Nasty-Face, *Nautical Economy, or, Forecastle recollections of events during the last war*, London, 1836. Also, Sir John Borlase Warren, *A view of the naval force of Great-Britain: ... To which are added observations and hints for the improvement of the naval service. By an officer* ... London, 1791; Officer of the Royal Navy, *Popularity of the Royal Naval Service, with a defence of the admirals and captains against the aspersions of the Edinburgh reviewer, Mr. Hume, and Sir Francis Burdett […]: including remarks on discipline generally, naval discipline, cruelty* ... London, 1826.

[52] Notable works include, among others and those aforementioned, *The Narrative of William Spavens a Chatham Pensioner Written by Himself*, London, 1st published 1796, 2nd ed. 1998; Samuel Leech, *A Voice from the Main Deck*, London, 1856 ed., reprint 1999; George Watson, *Narrative of the Adventures of a Greenwich Pensioner*, London, 1827.

(1809) and an anonymous writer on impressment,[53] and 'Remarks on Board His Majesty's Ship *Unite* of 40 Guns. Written historically by Robert Mercer Wilson's Journal' found in *Five Naval Journals* compiled by editor Thursfield.[54] I am indebted to key secondary literature such as Rodger's *Command of Ocean*, Atkins' *Jack Tar* and Byrn's *Crime and Punishment*, not only for the information and ideas gained, but also the primary sources cited of which I have made use, namely Admiral Philip Patton's *Strictures on Naval Discipline, and the Conduct of a Ship of War, etc.* (1810).[55] Such archival material is used in this thesis to explore how prints were engaged in complex dialogues with official and unofficial discourses, which developed in parliament, the Admiralty, coffee-houses, and not-coincidentally print culture. While this study is concerned with the negative, even notorious aspects of the Navy, it is orientated around what the archive, especially imagery, but also other primary source material, can tell us now about contemporary attitudes and experiences of such actualities and their misconception. My aim has been to explore specific aspects of the negative and subversive not only to challenge predominant positive interpretations, but also to questions the extent, validity and significance of such negativity. The images discussed will be treated neither as self-contained entities nor mere historical narrative illustrations, but rather as the products of specific practices by and for particular groups of people in specific conditions.

This thesis is structured according to the chronology of the common seaman's experience within the Royal Navy. Drawing the chapters of the thesis together into a cogent whole is its focus on one figure – the common seaman, his naval service and their accompanying

[53] J. S. Bromley, ed., *Manning Pamphlets, 1693-1873*, London, 1976, vol. 119. Admiral Philip Patton, 'Sketch of a Plan, for the encouragement of seamen, and for more speedily and effectually manning his majesty's navy, upon any armament. Written during the peace in 1802'; Patrick Holland of North Shields 'A Plan for Manning the Navy without Impressing, or expense to government', 1809 and Anonymous, 'Effects of the Impress of Seamen: The Impress considered as the cause why British seamen desert from our service to the Americans: with a review of the encouragement now held out by the royal navy, and the means in our power of abolishing the impress', 1810.

[54] 'Remarks on Board His Majesty's Ship *Unite* of 40 Guns. Written historically by Robert Mercer Wilson's Journal', in Thursfield, ed., *Five Naval Journals*, London, 1951, xiv.

[55] Nicholas A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean*, London, 2004; Lesley and Roy Adkins, *Jack Tar: The Extraordinary Lives of Ordinary Seamen in Nelson's Navy*, London, 2009; John D. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment in the Royal Navy: Discipline on the Leeward Islands station, 1784-1812*, Aldershot, c.1989; Admiral Philip Patton, *Strictures on Naval Discipline, and the conduct of a ship of war, etc..*, Edinburgh, 1810

negative construction in actuality and representation. Chapter One explores the representation of the issue of impressment with reference to broader discourse on that method and others for manning the Navy. The chapter considers the relatively minor contribution of impressment to naval recruitment, the selectivity and regulations of press-gangs, the complex issues of the causes of, culpability for, and physical and criminal implications of affrays, and problematic notions of British liberty, loyalty and state bodily control. Chapter Two investigates the personal, institutional and cultural identities the naval seaman acquired while at leisure – their manipulation and significances of these. The focus is on his notorious, yet distorted and complex, stereotype, considering his 'strangeness', his masculinity, questionable jollity, alcoholism, female relations, finances, morality, ethics and, as such, his role within broader society. I argue that the seaman's peculiarities were culturally constructed, especially through satirical prints, to become readily taken up by Britons, and even seamen. The third Chapter addresses images that relate to tars' crime and punishment. Issues of legitimacy, morality and justice will be dealt with when exploring prints' relationship with naval penal 'order'. Implications of the ineffectiveness, duplicity and compromises entailed in naval discipline will lead on to subsequent considerations of maltreatment, morbidity and mortality within the service. The final chapter forms an apt ending to this narrative on Jack Tar, developing an analysis of the contemporary representational approaches towards naval death, disease, mutilation, medicine and welfare, particularly in order to understand prevailing misconceptions, anomalies and anxieties. Existing imagery will also be considered as indicative of the interest, importance, criticism and concern for reform, as well as satire and contrivance, with which the issue was vested among broad audiences.

Chapter One

IMPRESSMENT:
MANIPULATION OF NAVAL BODIES AND VISUAL CULTURE

1. 1 Introduction

'Because impressment touched so many political, economic, and social nerves, real power was at stake in its depiction.'[1] These words of naval historian Daniel Ennis draw attention to the significance, especially for image-makers and their audiences, of the sensitive subject of impressment. Impressment was broadly known to constitute the method of recruitment by which eligible men were seized and 'pressed' into the service of His Majesty's Royal Navy when King and Country were threatened, as during the period of the French Wars (1793 to 1815). Aspects of this naval manning were a common theme in various discourses, from parliamentary debates, published pamphlets and official records to references in newspapers, ballads and theatre performances. However, depictions of the subject in imagery were relatively rare and restrained. Such limited visual presence would have been apparent to audiences and contributed to the problematic interpretation of impressment in Georgian discourse and its subsequent historiography. Moreover, negative preconceptions associated with the issue fostered avoidance and exaggeration of it in print culture. In this chapter a small corpus of twelve images relating to impressment will be analysed in order to better understand the implications of their representation of the actualities of impressment. Of particular consideration will be the excessive and often poorly informed negative perceptions of impressment among contemporary audiences. My approach is based upon the premise that impressment existed within a broader socio-political context that had extensive and shifting bearings upon its depiction. As such, related issues of State control, discipline, national security and alternative methods of manning will be explored in relation to the few relevant images found. Constructions of liberty, patriotism, obligation, conformity and legitimacy are revealed in this chapter as having been key to the interpretation of

[1] Daniel James Ennis, *Enter the Press-Gang: Naval Impressment in Eighteenth-Century British Literature*, London, 2002, 40.

impressment in contemporary Britain and specifically to its visual representation. I will argue that image-makers produced works referring to the subject in the light of their upper-middle class clientele's expectations, values and anxieties.

In order to fully consider the significance of prints concerning impressment, it is necessary to question interpretations of impressment's naval actualities within broader discourses. Politicians, servicemen, press commentators, writers, image-makers and subsequent historians have all had their say. Given that impressment was a minor manning method, the subject disproportionately preoccupied textual and some visual discourses. Archival research, in particular that of historian Jeremiah Dancy, together with other secondary source material, tends to discredit various notions of the practice and implications of impressment. It involved stringent regulations and was not a major mode of naval manning in comparison to the alternatives: volunteering, Quota Acts and turning men over, discussed later in this chapter.[2] It could be argued that the abundance of popular discourse about impressment and, subsequently, its historical consideration, have given more weight to the subject over the years than it warrants. However, the conventional interpretation of the press gang's operation as being ashore, widespread and indiscriminately aggressive, does not match up to the recorded actualities.[3] In visual culture it was comparatively absent, found only occasionally in the small corpus of works by George Morland, John Clennell, James Gillray and Thomas Rowlandson, among others.[4] It can be deduced that the problematic subject was unpopular for image-makers and their audiences who were predominantly from the upper to middle classes.

[2] Later in this chapter, 35, n.37-38. Jeremiah R. Dancy, *Redefining Naval Manning: dispelling the myths of Royal Navy Manpower, 1793–1801*, paper presented at the National Maritime Museum Seminar Series at the Institute of Historical Research, 9/2/2010; Daniel James Ennis, *Enter the Press Gang: Naval Impressment in Eighteenth-Century British Literature*, Delawere, 2002; Nicholas A. M. Rogers, *The Press Gang: Naval Impressment and its Opponents in Georgian Britain*, London, 2007, 33, 45.

[3] Examples of such interpretations can be found in contemporary and historical texts. John Robert Hutchinson, *The Press-Gang: Afloat and Ashore,* London, 1913; Geoffrey Jules Marcus, *Heart of Oak: A Survey of British Sea Power in the Georgian Era*, London, 1975; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837,* London, 1997.

[4] The special collections used were the British Museum, London; National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; Royal Holloway, University of London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Yale Center for British Arts, New Haven; Lewis Walpole Library, Farmington, Connecticut.

1. 2 The Actualities of Impressment

Impressment was coordinated through the Impress Service that was responsible for active surveillance of home waters, ports and coastal communities. The task of implementing impressment fell to press gangs. These constituted groups of naval men of one Regulating Officer, usually a Captain, two Lieutenants, four Midshipmen and around twenty men.[5] Gangs were rarely that large, particularly because of frequent injuries and desertions, and were often outnumbered in affrays that involved large parts of communities.[6] Gang members were employed principally to source and seize men to 'press' into naval service. They were also involved in liaising with civilians and local authorities for support and gathering stragglers and deserters from naval ships. The remit of the Impress was to appropriate eligible men for sea service in His Majesty's Royal Navy to protect King and Country during times of warfare. This power to 'press' was a royal prerogative and was advocated by the Monarch's Parliament for the good of the State. The measure, and support for it in published pamphlets, thus operated under the premise that it was legal. In times of intense naval defence against national threat, it was perceived as an urgent last resort. The measure was commonly and persistently described as a 'necessary evil'.[7] Naval power, and with it impressment, were considered central to Britain's established order and key to hierarchical control founded upon aristocracy, property and the parliamentary constitution. During the lengthy French Wars (1793-1815), the Navy faced manning pressures that were exacerbated by associated service casualties, limited potential for raising volunteers, and crime. Impressment was implemented to defend Britain's safety and independence, however, it entailed compromising the liberties of individual pressed men and the making of controversial choices between freedom and civil order. Press gangs operated

[5] Rogers, *Press Gang*, 14.

[6] For example, at Whitby in February 1793 a crowd of over 1000 people wrecked the Impress's rendezvous and deterred the service from establishing a permanent presence in the town. As the gang were ran out of town, the Captain Shortland leaving in his chaise was told 'by party of Seamen that stood in the Street' that if he returned with his men 'I and they must not expect to live'. TNA HO 28/9/71. At the resumption of war in 1803, 500 Irish haymakers defied a gang in Barking sent to impress them. TNA ADM 1/1529 B 620; Hutchinson, *Press Gang*, 209-10.

[7] In *Essay on the Legality of Impressing Seamen*, London, 1777, the author Charles Butler considered the most prominent eighteenth-century apology for this manning measure concedes that it is an evil, but asserts that it is a 'necessary evil'. Later, the article entitled 'Abolition of Impressment' in *The Edinburgh Review: or Critical Journal*, published by Sydney Smith, 1824, describes the pamphlets by Mr. Urquhart and Lieutenant Haly on the subject, 'by the obscurity of their style, to confirm the opinion, that impressment is a necessary evil.' Thomas Hodgskin, 'Abolition of Impressment', *The Edinburgh Review: or Critical Journal*, 1824, 154-181, 124.

afloat and ashore where they were most likely to find targeted eligible men who 'used the sea'. They were subsequently seized and enlisted into His Majesty's vessels to boost their complement of crew in terms of numbers available, seafaring-quality and fighting strength.

Other potentially negative, contemporary subjects associated with violence, such as the gallows or the French guillotine, were commonly featured in imagery, including prints by the successful James Gillray and Thomas Rowlandson.[8] Image-makers and their audiences vested prints with great powers to inform and persuade the viewer, which were harnessed at this time of social instability and naval warfare as a means of loyalist, patriotic and military propaganda.[9] A prime example is the Crown and Anchor Society's commissioning of Anti-Jacobin prints for mass distribution.[10] As discussed above, impressment was complicated and controversial; it even went so far as to challenge keystones of the established order. Yet, depictions of impressment were problematic as subjects of patriotic propaganda that constructed a positive image of the Navy as defending Britain against the threat of invasion. As such, it could be argued that impressment imagery was only produced as a tentative exploration into the subject's potential popular appeal. While the subject of impressment in imagery was uncommon, it was still disproportionately overrepresented in relation to the frequency of actual operations. Pressing was of great concern to civilian society and not just salient to those who experienced it directly, particularly given contemporary debates, anxieties and preconceptions about order and liberty. As such, it was of importance for

[8] James Gillray, *Promis'd Horrors of the French Invasion, -or- Forcible Reasons for Negotiating a Regicide Peace*, 1796; *Louis XVI, King of France ('The zenith of French glory; - the pinnacle of liberty')* (12 February 1793); Thomas Rowlandson, *Hanging in Chains, Pirates sketched on Isle of Dogs* (c. 1810); *Execution Day at York* (c.1820). For further information see secondary literature including Nicholas Robinson, *Edmund Burke: a Life in Caricature*, New Haven and London, 1996; David Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution*, London, 1989; Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III*, New Haven, 1996.

[9] In reference to the 'great powers' of prints, see Richard Clay, 'Riotous Images: Representations of Joseph Priestley in British prints during the French Revolution', *History of Education*, 2008, vol. 37, no. 4, 585-604.

[10] The Crown and Anchor Society is named after the tavern in London the participants met in. This Society, also known as the Association for Preserving Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, existed among the Church and Kings Clubs and Loyalist Associations in late eighteenth-century Britain, which systematically intimidated radicals and their sympathisers. The Society was founded by John Reeves in November 1792. Prints and tracts were published and disseminated through this Society. Gillray was involved in the government campaigns against radicalism, producing anti-French revolutionary, anti-Jacobin and relatively pro-government prints. For further discussion of the Crown and Anchor Society, see Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine*, 18, 32, 34, 35, 63, 106, 113, 114, 117, 118, 122, 126, 204.

image-makers and their audiences (who were seeking drama, scandal and satire in its rare depictions) that images of impressment could also be some form of reassurance. It will be demonstrated that this troublesome subject was avoided in contemporary imagery and misconceived in discourses about the British Navy and its historiography.

Before analysing prints of impressment, brief consideration of their relative scarcity is necessary. The fact that image-makers frequently chose not to depict impressment, despite its discursive prominence, suggests this was mainly on commercial grounds rather than being due to conspiratorial evasion of a subject that might be uncomfortable for the government. It was neither as appealing nor viable to produce visual reminders of the seamy side of naval manning. The ruling elite and print-buying audiences were anxious about threats to the established order and found the subject of impressment rife with negative implications. This section will explore the selectivity that informed the portrayal of impressment and will identify socio-political factors that inhibited the visual representation of the Impress and of pressed men.

The majority of images depicting impressment are undated, but their producers and style make approximate dating possible. There was slightly more productivity prior to this period of naval warfare, including works by Collings, Morland, Ward, Gillray and possibly Rowlandson (all dated 1790). Similarly, production also increased around the end of the French Wars in 1815 with works by Clennell and Tegg. This all serves to confirm that war and increased naval manning problems posed by protracted conflict were causally linked with the absence of impressment imagery. Invasion fears, threats of radicalism, social unrest, war weariness and the Impress Service were most apparent in the revolutionary and Napoleonic era, more so than during the earlier Seven Years Wars and American War of Independence, the Spanish and the Russian Armaments, and during Britain's peacetime of the early-nineteenth century.[11] Consequently, a message of reassuring naval and national strength and stability was promulgated by the ruling elite and endorsed in popular culture. Impressment was replete with negative

[11] The Seven Years War dated between 1756-63. The American War of Independence dated between 1775–1783. The Spanish Armament was in 1790 and the Russian Armament in 1791. For further information on these armaments, see John M. Norris, 'The Policy of the British Cabinet in the Nootka Crisis', *The English Historical Review*, October 1955, vol. 70, no. 277, 562-580; Isaac Schomberg, *Naval Chronology; Or, An Historical Summary of Naval & Maritime Events, from the Time of the Romans, to the Treaty of Peace 1802*, London, 1802, vol. 2, 217-219, vol. 4, 428; Earl Stanhope, *Life of the Right Honourable William Pitt*, London, 1861-2, vol. 2, 49.

implications about the desperate need for naval manpower, the reluctance of Britons to do their patriotic duty, the targeting of the lower classes and maritime regions, the fundamental compromising of British liberty and extensive detrimental repercussions. As such, the subject was far from appealing for wealthy and influential print-buying audiences.

Despite the preoccupation with, and notorious reputation of, the Impress in discourse, no imagery came close to reconstructing the actualities of impressment. Rare designs were produced that in both their depiction and sometimes their title referenced the press gang. However, the visual focus here was not the Impress's servicemen but their targets and some such dramatic scenes in which their seizure took place. Furthermore, portrayals of gangs by no means included the full sum of members, instead only a few gangers were depicted and sometimes unaccompanied by any senior naval personnel. For most people violent scenes of villainous thugs indiscriminately pressing innocent men were unacceptable. The subject was, thus, a construct that resulted from preconceptions held by image-makers and, by extension, eighteenth-century and subsequent audiences.

The leading figures within the Impress Service were naval servicemen of rank and, appropriately, the majority of visual depictions of the press gang found from the French Wars period, and also prior and subsequent years, include some such officers.[12] Their superiority was symbolised by their uniform, sword and cocked hat with gold lace edging and cockade. Known as the Regulating Officer, this authority figure was required by official stipulation to supervise the press gang for their seizure to be legitimate and their catch eligible for enlistment. His presence in such imagery suggests that this requirement was known among image-makers and their audiences. As is shown with reference to specific prints below, amidst circumstances of disorder and violence the limited power of the officer elite is sometimes suggested and other 'gentlemanly' characteristics of supposed refinement and morality were also potentially critiqued. The socio-political status and capacity of Impress authorities are brought into question, if

[12] These press gang depictions were: John Collet's (*c*.1760), Luke Clennell's (1813), Gillray's in *Liberty of the Subject* (15 October 1779), Dighton's in *The Banks of Shannon* (c.1787, reprinted 14 February 1799) [Fig. 7], Barrow's after S. Collings *Attic Miscellany* (1 June 1790), John Chapman's *Mary Anne Talbot* (undated), Rowlandson's *Neglected Tar* (undated) and Anon., *The Use of a Gentleman - or Patronage for the Admiralty*, published by Thomas Tegg (*c*.1818).

not cast in a negative light. They are denigrated as Admiralty castoffs deployed to do dirty work, condoning the compromisingly coercive Impress, too weak to restrain aggressive gangers, or neglectfully accepting possible violence, even sadism and other illicit behaviour.[13]

In both John Chapman's engraving *Mary Anne Talbot Resisting a Press Gang* (*c.*1800) [Fig. 4] and Luke Clennell's watercolour study *Press-gang* (*c.*1813) [Fig. 5] the officer seems to be encouraging and directing his aggressive subordinates, raising his right arm as if in command of the activity unfolding before him. In *Attic Miscellany. Manning the Navy* (1 June 1790) [Fig. 6], a hand-coloured etching by Barlow after Samuel Collings' design, the smartly uniformed officer ignores his gangers' excessive violence. He turns in the opposite direction, away from the actual seizing which he is meant to be observing. Instead, he addresses the gentleman who stands with hand outstretched expectantly as if seeking a financial reward for supplying him with some men. Clearly implied is the gangers' unruly and inappropriate aggression, while the officer seems incapable and irresponsible as a superior supervisor. Indeed, the legitimacy of supposed authority in *Attic Miscellany* is brought into question as this gang seems to resort to getting embroiled in dubious assistance from informers, or more illicitly crimps, themselves potentially guilty of violent coercion, monetary self-interest and corruption.[14]

It is only in Dighton's *Banks of Shannon* (mezzotint published 14 February 1799, after a 1787 watercolour version) [Fig. 7] and George Woodward's *The Use of a Gentleman* (*c.*1818) [Fig. 8] that there is a sense of the officer present controlling the gangers and preventing them from illegitimate coercion. Considering the dates of these two works, their likely message was to assure audiences that the more favoured civilian men would be safe from sacrifice at war – exempt on account of privileged social status. The Regulating Officer in the former image bows his head with an air of compassion and places his left hand on his target's shoulder to encourage his cooperation. In the latter

[13] If the supervisory regulating officer was not present the impressment was generally taken as legally dubious, as was the case in 1798 when gangers seized five apprentices from a collier in Shields harbour while the officer was on the shore. TNA ADM 7/304, no. 406.

[14] The definition of crimp in a naval or military context is 'a person engaged in enlisting sailors, soldiers, etc., by persuasion, swindling, or coercion. Or to enlist by such means.' It is an archaic work, with origins dating back to 1630-40, used in eighteenth century discourse, such as published articles, but then falling into disuse. Available from http://www.definitions.net/definition/Crimp. Accessed on 22 March 2013.

print, he stands poised in an authoritative stance, smoking a pipe while rationally considering the eligibility of the 'gentleman' before him. Only in *The Neglected Tar* (undated and anonymous, although *c*.1805 and attributed to Thomas Rowlandson) [Fig. 9] does the restraint of character bear more dramatic and ambiguous expression; his mouth wide-open in shock or shouting in protest at the excessive liberties taken by some of his aggressive gangers who manhandle a tar in his familial home. Significantly, this was an anonymous and undated pen and ink study produced during the heat of war and intense naval manning pressures – it was never published as a print. The waywardness of such gangs did not necessarily prompt visual representation.

Besides *An Act for Raising a Certain Number of Men for H.M. Navy* stipulating that an officer regulate gangers' catches, official impressment legislation also legally required that a press warrant be appropriately obtained for the breaking and entering of private property in search of eligible seamen to seize.[15] This document, which sanctioned the specific date and extent of such operations, was obtained beforehand from the local Justices of the Peace or Mayors. Without a warrant, as the clerical Justice from South Shields declared, press gangs had 'no authority for dragging Men from their Houses in a forcible manner',[16] leaving the Commanding Officer liable to charges of trespassing, damage to property, assault and negligence. Luke Clennell depicted such a scene in *Press Gang* (*c*.1813) [Fig. 5] and, while there is no visual reference to the actual warrant papers, such brazen seizure was unlikely to have taken place without such a vital document. Nevertheless, some gang members took the law into their own hands, not letting such official requirements or legal risks impede their search. In part, it was these aspects and their consequent incidents, numerous and prominent enough, that brought the Impress its bad repute as an uncontrollable force operating outside the law. The press played a key role in promulgating this interpretation, reporting upon the incidents and their consequences. For example, *The World*, 10 February 1794, stated that:

> A few days [4] since, one of the press-gangs in this town [Hull]: having received information of a sailor being secreted at his lodgings, went, and without any legal authority, broke into the apartments; and the sailor having previously cautioned them of the danger, fired a horse-pistol loaded with

[15] Anon., *An Act for Raising a Certain Number of Men for H. M. Navy.* 35 Geo. III, cap. 5. London, 1796.
[16] 1803. TNA ADM 1/2141 M42.

> slugs, which penetrated into the body of one of the gangs, who soon after died of the wounds. – The sailor was immediately secured, and afterwards underwent an examination when, by the evidence produced, it was proved that he acted hotly in self-defence, and was accordingly acquitted from the charge of murder.[17]

Similarly, the *British Gazette* published an account, based on allegations and official court records, of an incident at Greenhithe, Kent, in 1803. When a Landlord refused to let a gang search beyond the tap-room with only a 'common press warrant', the Lieutenant gave a defiant retort before knocking him over and having his gangers 'beat him dreadfully about the head with the butt ends of their pistols.'[18] Accounts in published newspapers and official legal records, although not abundant, ensured that such incidents became relatively widely known and were, therefore, probably instrumental in shaping the print audience's views of the subject.

The coercion of gangs, whether legitimate or not, constantly brought about legal allegations with the Admiralty funding court cases and more commonly compensation and bribes outside of them.[19] When officers and gangers did face lawsuits, authorities supporting the Navy often tried to transfer the cases from the local jurisdiction, in order to isolate the seaman from popular judgement.[20] The prosecution of naval personnel, often gangers, typically concluded with acquittal. If not, a verdict of assault or manslaughter was reached and the charge rarely amounted to more than a fine with royal pardon almost assured for sentences of imprisonment or death. Ultimately, no government wanted such damaging publicity and took pains to limit it.[21] These

[17] *The World*, London, 10 February 1794, Issue 2222.
[18] The Lieutenant allegedly retorted with drawn sword to the Landlord's objections that 'he would go where he pleased, and his men should follow him, and break open every door in the house if he thought proper', then knocking him over to have his men 'beat him dreadfully about the head with the butt ends of their pistols.' Johnson's British Gazette, 17 April 1803. It was further reported that the landlord's wife was assaulted, with her attempted silencing by thrusting a cane in her mouth. TNA ADM 1/3675/191-6. Cited in Rogers, *Press Gang*, 27.
[19] For example, John Nicholson, Greenlander who had been working in the coal trade during the off-season was impressed in November 1793 and carried aboard Eurydice where he was detained for a year. He employed a lawyer to fight his case for the Impress' unlawful incarceration and loss of earnings, which was ultimately settled out of court. TNA ADM 1/3283, 7 January 1795.
[20] For example, in 1795 case involving death of fishermen resisting impressment in Poole Harbour, Admiralty removed case to Old Bailey on grounds Brownsea Castle was outside shire jurisdiction. TNA ADM 1/3683, 28 February, 7 March, 15 and 28 July 1795.
[21] TNA ADM 1/3677/188-94, 1/3681/270. Even on the rare occasion that county assize charged gangsmen with murder, the Admiralty Solicitor quickly obtained respite of the sentence until His Majesty's pleasure was known. TNA ADM 1/3677/188-94, 1/3681/270.

troublesome legal aspects of impressment consolidated assumptions of its negativity, and help explain the subject's depiction as seemingly having been avoided. The press gangs were construed as villainous, unjust and legally dubious. Press-evaders and those who harboured such fugitives, as well as those disturbing the peace, threatening or causing grievous bodily harm, or indirectly withholding warrants or local reinforcement, all hindered the official Impress Service, albeit more subversively. Indeed, all parties involved seemed culpable to some degree for the negativity this manning method engendered. This more complex interpretation of impressment corresponds to the representational distortion in images, to be discussed below.

Negative representation of the press gang members as unrefined, ill-disciplined and morally dubious individuals potentially spurned from the core of the Navy to which they belonged, corresponded with controversy regarding their appointment to the Impress Service. Even the authority of the supposedly lofty Regulating Officer with his smart uniform, strong physique and gentlemanly reserve, was still compromised. Typically, a senior Captain on half-pay and showing little promise, he was cast into this disconcerting and disreputable task instead of being given a more favourable assignment. The Admiralty was unlikely to select a man for advancement whose requirement was to be 'fit to superintend and regulate the service of procuring men' in a county or in a number of ports along a specific sector of the coast.[22] As the historian John Robert Hutchinson aptly describes:

> The Impress Service ashore was essentially the grave of promotion. Whether through age, fault, misfortune or lack of influence in high places, the officers who directed it were generally disappointed men; service derelicts whose chances of ever sporting a second 'swab', or of again commanding a ship, had practically vanished. Naval men afloat spoke of them with good-natured contempt as 'Yellow Admirals', the fictitious rank denoting a kind of service quarantine that knew no pratique.[23]

Regarding the gangsmen themselves, they were not necessarily selected on account of being particularly robust, experienced, loyal, trusted and supportive naval seamen. The contrary was typically the case. Gangers were often physically unfit, either prior to their

[22] TNA PRO ADM 7/967.
[23] Hutchinson, *Press Gang*, 25.

role in impressment and possible rejection from a ship's crew, or since, through injury in press affrays.[24] In Samuel Collings' *Attic Miscellany* (1 June 1790) [Fig. 6] the pressing and pressed men have similarly ugly physiognomies, roughish clothes and lean physiques. These appearances connoted the wholly and diversely unsavoury implications of such a scene as *Manning of the Navy*. Furthermore, the more abstract title *Antic Miscellany* played upon the grotesque and bizarre group the Impress Service collected – its press-gang members, as well as informers and supporters. The violence of pressing, policing of fever-ridden and mutiny prone tenders,[25] and the stigmatism it brought local gangers and their families, all made impressment a dangerous, disagreeable and humiliating business. Many gangers deserted, suggesting they were far from devoted crusaders for naval impressment or prime specimens of the institution that they served. Some of them might originally have been pressed men themselves, malcontents evicted from ships, or desperate for some form of escape from active duty aboard a warship. It has been alleged that many gangers had never or rarely gone to sea[26] and, while this is questionable, it is unlikely that the Admiralty would spare its quality, experienced seamen, given their scarcity and importance. Impressment was unlikely to be tasked to the more compliant or upright seamen and often offered a helpful means of disposing of problematic individuals. Ultimately, as Collings' image suggested, impressment was a shady business involving unsavoury figures of compromised physical, professional and moral character. The Impress Service with its officers and gangers was not necessarily a well-manned force of strength or conviction. Impressment violated the liberty of the pressed and was assigned to the most desperate of naval men.

The Admiralty specified the impressment of men who were 'able-bodied, in good health and capable of serving His Majesty at sea.'[27] This was certainly not always the

[24] Lieutenant Mitchell, a regulating officer for a press gang, was assaulted by a 'Multitude of Pilots and Women who threw a quantity of Stones and Brickbatts' when he attempted to impress at the fishertown end of South Shields in April 1803. TNA ADM 1/2141 M42; ADM 1/3689, 10 October 1803.

[25] A case in point is the tender *Thetis* operating out of Liverpool during 1793-4, from which five out of seventeen gangers, many of whom were Liverpudlians or Irishmen deserted, and were well able to merge with the local population or find hideaways. They escaped not only the task of preventing mutiny in the hold and keeping it vermin and disease free, but also the tension within the ranks due to the Commander not abiding the Lieutenant, Arthur Hayne, in charge of the press gang. TNA ADM 36/11328, 'Muster of *Thetis* tender', 1793-4.

[26] Commander R. B. Chenevix Trench, 'National Service 200 Years Ago: The Press Gang', *History Today*, January 1956, vol. 6, no. 1, 37-44, 42.

[27] An Act of 1778 ruled that all able-bodied Britons were pressable. TNA PRO ADM 7/967.

case. Some commentators, not only civilians but also naval officers, criticised the indiscretion of the press gang. Receiving Captains in various instances denouncing pressed men as, 'All the ragg-tagg that can be picked up'; 'men more fit for a hospital than a ship'; 'sad wretches'; 'poor ragged souls, and very small'; 'blackguards', 'fill[ing] the Fleet with Felons'.[28] Indeed, as discussed above, the men being seized in *Attic Miscellany* (1 June 1790) [Fig. 6] are skinny and ragged. Collings sets such impressment in the intensely populated London dockyards of Tower Hill, suggesting that the gang was not being particularly discriminatory in who it took, desperate as it was to make a catch in order to secure monetary reward. This is further connoted in this scene through an accompanying stout gentleman standing on the right with arm outstretched as if also embroiled in this shady transaction. As noted above, he could be an informer or crimp involved in some potentially illicit and mutually-beneficial arrangement of supplying locals to gang members.

Overall, the print promoted the idea of the duplicity of the press gang that often acted with indiscretion. The self-interest of Regulating Officers, who gained commission and status per man pressed, might go some way to support the case for such negative representations of the Impress' work.[29] The controversy and criticism of pressed men was, and remains, an example of the negative construct of impressment perpetuated in discourse about the Navy.[30] The corrupt discretion associated with gangs' catches was a common preconception of 'pressing', explicitly visualized in Collings' scene of men not fit for service being aggressively targeted. Theoretically, the Impress specified to gangers the legal regulations concerning who was eligible for service and seizure, the

[28] Christopher Lloyd, 'The Press Gang and the Law', *History Today*, October 1967, vol. 17, no. 10, 683-690, 686. 'The impressment of the Seamen is a most expensive and a most vexatious means of Manning the Navy in the time of war; it fills the Fleet with Felons, and is most destructive to its discipline, and the great cause of the desertion of the good Seamen from the service'. Anon., 'Impressment of Seamen', *Hume Tracts*, London, 1800, 1. Patrick Holland advocated a method for 'manning His Majesty's Navy without so constant and indiscriminate a resort to the practice of impressing.' Holland, 'A Plan for Manning the Navy without Impressing, or expense to government', 1809, in J. S. Bromley, ed., *Manning Pamphlets 1693-1873*, London, 1976, vol. 119, 158.
[29] Lloyd, 'The Press Gang and the Law', 686.
[30] 'The press, of course, was very active in war and brought in its miscellany of men, good and bad, but mostly bad.' Peter Kemp, *The British Sailor: A Social History of the Lower Deck*, London, 1970, 162.

circumstances in which protection documentation was required[31] and when social exemptions could be made.[32]

George. M. Woodward commented on the particularities of eligibility in *The Use of a Gentleman - or Patronage for the Admiralty* (*c.*1818) [Fig. 8] published by Thomas Tegg in *The Caricature Magazine, or Hudibrastic Mirror*.[33] It referenced the typically thorough but debatably harsh approach of gangers, especially hostile to those who attempted to avoid the Impress by claiming exemption, fraudulently or otherwise. This is a complex and relatively ambiguous print that offers satirical post-war commentary on impressment. On the left, two tars manhandle a man who they have just seized; his muscular physique and loose clothes indicate his seafaring occupation and thus his eligibility for naval service. In contrast, the central figure wears a long coat and cravat, and is claiming to be a 'gentleman […] wasty [sic] well known in Bond Street'. Significantly, the speech bubble includes his near slip-up when defending his elite origins from 'St. Gi … James's end of the Town', implying that he was in fact disguising his less than refined associations with St. Giles. This was a place of affluence and commerce, yet also debauchery and poverty with its abundance of gin-shops, brothels, secret alleyways and gambling clubs.[34] Woodward and his audience would have been aware of such a notorious London area. With the iconic church of St. Giles of the Field in the background, this formed the setting for social commentary in prints, such as William Hogarth's *Noon – Of Four Times of Day* (1736, 1738), *Gin Lane* (1751) and *First Stage of Cruelty – Of Four* (1751). *Use of a Gentleman* existed within a rich and complex discursive ground known to print-makers and audiences. This error regarding his origins suggests this 'gentleman' was on-edge and trying to deceive the press gang as to his elite status and, therefore, impressment exemption.

[31] Protection documentation was issued by the State to individuals as certificates of protection from or against impressment, typically on grounds of their special maritime relevance, such as dockyard labourers, watermen, and sons of naval men. For examples, see items (manuscript reference ADM/L/ series) ADL/J/10; 11; 17; 18 and K/2 in the National Maritime Museum's Collection.

[32] Social exemptions were, according to official statutes, privileged to individuals not aged between 18-55 years; foreigners; gentlemen; seamen within their first two years of initial sea service on a merchant vessel or in seafaring trade; apprentices within their first three years having not broken indenture by running away; masters, mates, boatswains and carpenters on vessels over fifty tons, unless caught smuggling or harbouring deserters; and a proportion of whalers, fishermen and other seafaring traders. 13 Geo. II, c.17 Act.

[33] Thomas Tegg, *The Caricature Magazine, or Hudibrastic Mirror*, London, 1807, 5 vols.

[34] Information available from 'St Giles-in-the-Fields', Old and New London, 1878, vol. 3, 197-218. Available from http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45147. Accessed on 1 August 2012.

This ‘gentleman’ is depicted dressed in a smart long overcoat, the staple of the male aristocracy and employed as a disguise by impersonators, including seamen evading the press. This partly explains the skepticism with which the gang was treating him. Concealment is further suggested as beneath he wears not typical tight breeches but instead loose blue trousers, similar to the Captain’s. This officer concedes, ‘you are every inch a Gentleman'. Such a remark, however, seems ironic, possibly in response to his rough defensiveness and pompous self-assertion, derisively implying such claims of refinement did not necessarily foster respect for such an individual. It seems that to scare this presumptuous man and teach him some manners he is to be taken as ‘just the person we want, my men have pressed a d-d number of Blackguards and we want a gentleman on board to teach them good manners!’ The implication could be that the Officer, irrespective of his class, uncertain character and compromised agenda, even as a ‘Yellow Admiral’,[35] was rightly sizing up the ‘gentleman’ and considering him as no less disreputable or disruptive than the Blackguards pressed or even doing the pressing; more so, given his presumptuous pride. The officer rank to which gentlemen went was actually sufficiently, if not overly, subscribed, and would in any case not have been the focus of the Impress Service’s recruitment.

Through the Captain’s remarks, Woodward derisively plays upon social class. Here, an individual's claim to status is open to exaggeration and challenge. All depicted individuals (the ‘gentleman’, ‘captain’, ‘tar’ or ‘press ganger’) have actual and stereotypical characteristics, often involving distortions between the two. What is essentially being defended is the hierarchy of the established class order that was jealously guarded by the leisured, landed and learned ruling elite. The higher echelons of society, unlike the majority of the British population, did not necessarily have to rely on their own physical labour or even a profession for a livelihood. Yet, they enjoyed considerable influence and advantages. Furthermore, the comment of the Captain suggests that Woodward might have been expressing sympathy for naval servicemen, particularly officers, who had to contend with the unpleasant business of impressment and disciplining ‘Blackguards’ among their subordinates. Sympathy may have also been the implication given that naval demobilisation left veterans struggling to get by and relying upon the pity of infirmaries, relatives, employers and charity.

[35] See the criticism of the Impress Service’s Regulating Officers by Hutchinson, *Press-Gang*, 25.

Yet, the susceptibility of impressment to deception meant that illegitimate pressing, often of those ineligible according to official specifications, was not an infrequent occurrence. Legislative Acts identified able-bodied men, not gentlemen, as sought after. However, those without seafaring-experience, not ideal targets, were often taken. In contrast, many ships' muster books provide valuable evidence of selective recruitment. For example, that of HMS *Pandora* during the hasty naval mobilisation of the Spanish and Russian Armaments between 1790 and 1791, rated all its twenty pressed men on board as seamen seized in port, confirming in this case, the selectivity of impressment.[36] The intense and protracted French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars saw more extensive and intensive mobilisation than during previous conflict periods. Seamen were in high demand and gangs' hauls were compromised in number, quality and even legitimacy. Nevertheless, impressment was supposed to aim to remain selective in its quest to man the Navy and press gangs arguably acted with previously underestimated discretion in finding men who 'used the sea'. Jeremiah Dancy estimates that eighty-two per cent of pressed men between 1793 and 1801 were seamen, and only eighteen per cent were landsmen, many of whom were selected for their relevant experience as indicated by their swift reclassification as ordinary seamen or idlers (carpenters, cooks etc.).[37] Furthermore, the reputed deteriorating quality of naval seamen during wartime recruitment was primarily accounted for by the Quota and Vagrant Acts, which often brought in, sometimes coercively,[38] physically, morally and politically dubious men of whom the local authorities were keen to dispose.[39] It is

[36] W. Brooks, 'Naval Recruiting in Lindsey, 1795-7', *The English Historical Review*, April 1928, vol. 43, no. 170, 234. Of the twenty-seven pressed men, fourteen were able seamen, twelve ordinary seamen, and one midshipman. They were pressed either by tenders in port or frigates with gangs at sea, with the exception of five individuals whose impressment method was unknown, but some of their locations, two at Chatham and one at Newcastle, suggest they might have been seized by gangs working ashore in these major port cities. TNA PRO, ADM 36/11136; ADM 36/11085; ADM 36/11092.

[37] This is suggested by the statistical evidence gathered by Jeremiah Dancy in his survey of the muster books' of frigates, sloops and ships of the line from Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth each year between 1793-1801.

[38] Dancy had estimated that impressed quota men constituted approximately seven per cent of naval manning during the French Revolutionary Wars, 1793-1801.

[39] Vagrancy Act of 1795 (35 Geo. III, c. 34). Later, possibly under authority of 19 Geo. III, c. 10 (amending 18 Geo. III, c.53), 'all able-bodied persons who shall be guilty of illegal landing, running, unshipping, concealing, receiving, or carrying prohibited goods' and persons who had deserted their families would be pardoned on condition of serving in land forces, marines or navy.' TNA ADM 1/3684, 30 March 1796. Such minor offenders and seamen criminals not guilty of theft or murder were sometimes accepted into the Navy. Conrad Gill argues that the majority of quota men were not volunteers, but 'had been brought into their unhappy position by crime and misfortune' and were largely responsible for the mutinies of 1797. Conrad Gill, *The Naval Mutinies of 1797*, Manchester, 1918, 315-17. While the level of criminality within these Acts' recruits is unclear, it is unlikely to have been very high as the Navy accepted only a very small proportion of offenders and receiving captains often used their capacity to

therefore clear that the Impress was not organized to seize men indiscriminately, but was created especially as a selective force to safeguard the Navy's manpower. In relation to this, prints of impressment were produced for, and bought by, land and civilian audiences and, therefore, represented their knowledge, values and fears.

Although not obvious from prints, the strain of impressment was borne above all by lower-class maritime communities, with the press gang targeting able-bodied men with seafaring experience or skills applicable to naval service who were seized as serviceable subjects to help protect the State.[40] In this respect, impressment actually bolstered the quality of naval manpower, ensuring that there were sufficient seamen aboard for the functioning and safety of the ship and its crew. Such focus, driven by necessity, legitimized this manning method's problematic implications for some people. Furthermore, most among the impressed were politically inarticulate and socially marginalized, making them powerless in the face of impressment or unjust treatment. The seizing and enlisting of men into the Navy was authorised on account of the necessity to defend King and country against threats from across the Channel. Liberty was compromised, and their prime economic value as labouring units, seafaring or otherwise, was employed in naval labour that was not necessarily to the men's advantage. Those dominating society (commercially and politically, if not numerically) prioritised the good of the State at large over that of the individual, especially when it came to pressed men from the lower classes. The wealthy and influential ruling elites, and the print-buyers among them, were aware to an extent of their disadvantaged and vulnerable counterpart's fears, and uncomfortable with depictions of their plight. However, that the Navy must be manned was indisputable.

Significantly, as noted above, gentlemen were predominantly exempt from impressment and inclined to join the naval officer rank. From their privileged social position, the upper-middle classes had a more supportive and positive perspective of

reject unwelcome recruits. Dancy has estimated that of the naval manning between 1793 and 1801 only 0%, or approximately 90 individuals were criminals.

[40] Dancy findings indicated that gangs operated most commonly and intensively in port areas, both afloat at harbour entrances and ashore among the dockland communities. They made a relatively minor contribution to naval recruitment in comparison to other methods, with only 16% of recruits being obtained by impressment, compared to seventy-two per cent volunteering. Furthermore, of these pressed men, forty-five per cent were able seamen, thirty-seven per cent ordinary seamen and only eighteen per cent landsmen.

naval recruitment, manning and warfare. It was the lower classes, however, that principally made up the lower deck. The pressing of men in the Navy, and all the attendant service associations of recalcitrance, grievances, crime and mortal danger presented awkward implications for print audiences seeking assurance of their secure and legitimate superiority. The fact that the State had to resort to impressment (and other coercive and contentious manning measures, such as turning men over) suggested that society in general and the lower orders in particular were lacking in a sense of selfless duty and national patriotism. Impressment could be seen as having been avoided as a subject in visual culture due to uncomfortable implications not only of such a measure's 'evil' consequences, but also its claimed 'necessity'. As such, the relative absence of imagery, including prints, is linked in various ways to its upper-middle class clientele, whose knowledge, values and anxieties informed the prevailing interpretation of impressment, particularly its targets or 'victims'.

Those of gentleman status were exempt by the Impress, while unofficially, it might excuse those who wielded sufficient financial or social power to bribe their way out from corrupt gangers.[41] *Use of Gentleman* (*c.*1818) [Fig. 8] was an ambivalent post-war construction of impressment, particularly for the upper-middle class audiences. Protection from forced naval service was subject to the regulation or discretion of gangs, but at what cost was not clear. Gangers were notorious for their violence and insolence, as illustrated in this print. The Regulating Officer may have been tempted by his own, less official, agenda of teaching complacent men a lesson, as is the case of the Captain here. Class cynicism, financial self-interest and desperation to assert professional capabilities were other incentives. Thus, the Impress Service's power was viewed with anxiety by dominant elites who otherwise had faith in the established order's respect for liberty and social class. Yet, their wariness of impressment was arguably also due in part to their fear of public embarrassment, expense and hindrance from pursuing their chosen pastimes. This is implied by Woodward's self-asserting 'gentleman' protesting in dismay that the gangers 'have no business to meddle with him!' as a St. James' resident and a well-known figure in Bond Street. The risks of becoming involved in, or witnessing, criminal embroilment in affrays associated with impressment might have deterred or worried gentlemen from frequenting areas where

[41] Hutchinson, *Press Gang*, 25.

such incidents were most likely. Class clearly contributed to the problematic and complex nature of this manning method. This was a factor for the subject's minor presence in imagery, where it was selectively and subtly broached, particularly in relation to its more extensive appearance in non-visual discourses. Image-makers and their audiences were wary of impressment's class implications and avoided them as unpalatable and commercially unappealing. The various negative implications of the press gang's discrimination, actual or feared, were disconcerting for dominant classes already anxious about socio-political threats from French invasion and domestic radicalism.

1. 3 Sites of Impressment

As press gangs were especially seeking out experienced seamen they invariably operated within maritime communities and, therefore, their presence among civilian society was mostly felt in the alleys and taverns of harbours, docks and in waterside dwellings. The working-class and marginalized realm in which impressment was an actuality for gangers and their targets was a world apart from that of the upper-middle classes. The two rarely, if ever, converged. Furthermore, most impressment existed well away from landlocked Britons, in the waters of the coasts and harbours rich with homeward-bound vessels. Press gangs operated primarily afloat via frigates armed with militia guards. Inbound merchant vessels would be halted and boarded in order to press crew members into service, usually leaving all but a skeletal residue of unwanted invalids, protected seamen and ticket men hired to sail the vessel home.[42] This was the Impress Service's first and foremost recruiting ploy because the Merchant Navy

[42] Ticket men were naval seamen the Navy deployed in merchant ships where they had removed via impressment such individuals in the crew and, therefore, required to navigate its return. This was often the initial part of a trusted tar's brief leave and/or errand ashore. They held a 'ticket' for such circumstances. Men-in-lieu were those exchanged by the Impress from the Navy for those from merchant ship crews. In a reformist pamphlet impressment afloat of merchant service crew and such aspects were criticized on grounds of expense as well as injustice. 'The expense of impressing men from merchant vessel not infrequently when taken out of merchant ships at Plymouth, Portsmouth, Downs, Yarmouth, even Thames, [led to a] considerable sum required by men who are hired to navigate ships home, from £50 to £200 have been paid by one ship, and forty guineas per man paid for run from West Indies to England. Not necessarily ticket men or men-in-lieu provided by pressing officers.' Patrick Holland of North Shields, 'A Plan for Manning the Navy without Impressing, or expense to government, 1809, 156. Michael Lewis, *A Social History of the Navy: 1793-1815*, London, 1960, 102-3. See also Rogers, *Press Gang*, 135, regarding Jacob Nagle's experiences being given 'ticket of leave'.

provided the Royal Navy with a sure supply of quality seamen. Pressing at sea was therefore the dominant practice recommended by the Navy, particularly for an Impress Service challenged by disembarked local seafaring communities.[43] It was considered to be most efficient and the best way to avoid violent confrontation, although this still commonly occurred aboard pressed ships.[44] This aspect of pressing presented potential for dramatic and satirical representation. Nevertheless, it was disproportionately underrepresented in imagery and in wider discourses. It seems to be excluded from contemporary visual culture with the only depiction to be found dating from 1840. This was a one-off watercolour, *A Surprise* [Fig. 10] (*c.*1840) by Clarkson Stanfield, in which a man is being pressed from his sanctuary in a merchant vessel's hold. The absence of such impressment in imagery could be symptomatic of the physical distance that made its depiction problematic for a relatively ignorant audience unable to relate to or appreciate its actualities at sea. The significance of this representational propensity is that when recruitment activity was removed from civilian society, geographically and demographically, the subject was less topical for print audiences, and, therefore, less appropriate for image-makers.

As the war wore on and the demand for manpower grew, the Navy could not rely on this seaborne method alone without crippling the merchant service and Britain's commercial economy. Consequently, press gang operations ashore increased in maritime communities and also encroached further inland. This only exacerbated the problems associated with its representation. Given impressment was principally maritime-orientated in implementation, target and impact, it was not necessarily a pervasive social presence or relevant to the majority of Britons, particularly landlocked communities and upper-middle classes. Impressment imagery typically portrayed the gangs operating near the water of maritime communities. This constituted a liminal

[43] In Whitby, there was great opposition to the Impress Service, with seafaring communities violently challenging their presence while the Justice of the Peace was of little use for supporting the State. With recruiting on land troublesomely inefficient, if not impossible, it was recommended in sea-rich ports to station a revenue cutter in the bay and impress from incoming vessels. TNA ADM 1/3090 (Poulden) 4 February 1804; ADM 1/580 (Phillip), 24 April 1804.

[44] Examples of violent resistance put up to impressment afloat include incidents such as, in 1794, that of the whalers aboard their vessels Sarah and Elizabeth against HMS *Aurora* frigate in which four whalers were killed and, in 1804, that of local armed men from Whitby attacked the press tender to secure the release of impressed Greenlanders. *The Times*, 1 August 1794; Edward Gillett and Kenneth A. MacMahon, *A History of Hull*, Hull, 1989, 233-4; TNA ADM 1/3690, 4 February 1804, enclosure from Captain Richard Poulden.

zone that was familiar to, yet distinct and removed from, the majority of Britons, whose knowledge and anxieties were thus exploited. In George Morland's *Press Gang* (1790) [Fig. 11] and John Chapman's *Mary Anne Talbot Resisting the Press Gang* (*c.*1800) [Fig. 4] gangers are seizing seamen from their vessels at the waters' edge, while in Dighton's, Collings' and Clennell's scenes the ships' masts in the background indicate their maritime setting of anchorages and dockyards. Morland's *The Press Gang* (1790) [Fig. 11] is particularly significant not only in its dramatic depiction of a ferryman being appropriated to the horror of his passengers while mooring his boat, but also its rarity as a painted representation. Moreover, the fact that Morland's design was reproduced as a mezzotint *Jack in the Bilboes*, engraved by William Ward and published by Philip Cornman (1790) [Fig. 12] and James Linnell (8 September 1806) and as a stipple and etching by Robert Clamp, published by Joseph (1797) is further indicative that interpretations of impressment accorded with market needs. Despite impressment being socially selective, geographically focused and visually elusive it caught the imagination of the nation as a topical, contentious and scandalous issue, as is evident in certain contemporary imagery discussed above.

The Impress Service even had a permanent presence on land, establishing itself in official 'rendezvous'. These were typically public houses prominent in the community that served as bases from which impressment business was orchestrated. Gangers often brought their seized men there for detention, examination and deployment to naval ships. Volunteers could also come in to sign up while civilian society conducted its usual day-to-day life of trade and recreation in such places. Such familiar social settings brought impressment physically and conceptually closer to audiences and complicated the implications of its representation for image-makers and their clientele. The rendezvous was avoided in imagery; intrusion upon civilian maritime communities was felt on a personal level. Even without the legislative backing of a press warrant a gang might not hesitate to enter private property.

Luke Clennell's study (*c.*1813) [Fig. 5] depicted the gang intruding upon the physical space and peaceful harmony of the home to violently drag a fisherman from his family abode on a domestic waterside plot. This constituted a problematic scene of complex disorder. It is for this reason, perhaps, that it remained an incomplete watercolour and was not developed into a refined painting or a print for wider audiences. No press-

warrant document was depicted. Instead, aggressive gangers and the distressed reaction of the civilians are displayed. Yet, the controversial nature of impressment was also connoted through the setting of the domestic scene in which a 'freeborn Englishman' has his 'castle' invaded. The overall dramatic intensity of the scene with its expressive figures and lucid handling of paint further emphasise the actuality and interpretation of disorder associated with impressment.

Such impressment imagery can be seen to have constructed the gang as principally an unstoppable menace to established order, particularly amongst predominantly landlubber and metropolitan upper-middle classes, and the print-buyers among them. However, as emphasised above, works that represented the actualities, and their accepted interpretation were limited in number and marketability. While image-makers and print audiences were predominantly London-centric and socially exempt from being 'pressed',[45] the setting of these depictions on land might have made viewers more appreciative of the experiences and expectations of pressed men. The emphasis upon the 'abduction' of men ashore from distraught loved ones was salient for visual representation, given the potential significance of bathetic impact. For example, Robert Dighton's *The Banks of the Shannon* [Fig. 7] depicted a pressed man saying farewell to his weeping lover to fulfill his patriotic duty to King and Country. While this hand-coloured mezzotint was 'Published as the Act directs 14 February 1799. Printed for & Sold by Bowles & Carver', its visual design was based on an earlier watercolour painting (1787).[46] Its notable re-publication dated, St. Valentine's Day, 14 February 1799, corresponds with this impressment scene of separation and sacrifice, all of which played upon the audiences' sentimentality, reassuring that all will be fair in love and war. The text identifies this engaged couple as having to postpone their wedding on account of the well-dressed gentleman's imminent departure to serve at sea. Patient and

[45] Based on the trading and political world centering upon the capital, it follows that the visual production of commentary upon it, especially contemporary print culture, was London-centric. Geographically, prints and images did not reach a wide audience, being produced and sold in London, from a small number of shops in a small area of the city. H. T. Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution; 1760-1863*, Cambridge, 1986, 15; Eirwen E. C. Nicholson, 'Consumers and Spectators: The Public of the Political Print in Eighteenth-Century England', *History*, January 1996, vol. 81, issue 261, 5-21, 19. Covent Garden streets were where most were pinpointed on the map. Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London*, London, 2006, 83.

[46] George points out that this is renumbered and redated, and that the original edition must have been c.1787. Dighton's original watercolour for this print from the collection of Mr Jeffrey Rose was sold at Sotheby's, 23 February 1978, lot 89. M. D. George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the British Museum*, vol. 6, cat. no. 1002.

loyal duty are to prevail and the heroic man's victorious and faithful 'return with riches' will prompt marriage.[47] This publication casts impressment in a light that limited its negative implications and even emphasised its positive potential to stimulate virtues of love, loyalty and heroic sacrifice. Interestingly, Morland included in both *The Press Gang* (1790) [Fig. 11] and its companion piece *Cottage Door*, the same waterman and his ferryboat. This could be to further connote for the audience the pervasive and persistent intrusion of gangers upon others' peaceful independence and contentment.[48] Even more explicitly, an anonymous watercolour drawing *The Neglected Tar* (*c.*1805) [Fig. 9], and Clennell's *Press Gang* (*c.*1813) [Fig. 5] all represented the press gang seizing men from the sanctuary of their own homes. Disrupted domestic scenes were portrayed as visual constructs to evoke empathy for those at the receiving end and to play upon prevailing and positive human emotions and notions of justice and liberty. Nonetheless, they also acknowledged, through connotation, the disconcerting associations of impressment, particularly of the moral, legal and civil disorder posed by this recruitment method. These would have been apparent to audiences with a sense of social superiority and sufficient critical awareness to appreciate the complex task that fell to them when deciphering such subtleties in imagery.

The imagery discussed above focused upon the loss of happiness and liberty through the 'pressing' of 'freeborn Englishmen' ashore. Negative interpretations of impressment prevailed, particularly as a scandalous threat to civil liberties and peace.[49] Amongst other remote and unfamiliar naval manning measures is that of turning over from one ship to another at sea, anchorage or in port men who were already bound to the Navy and had often served for long periods without alighting ashore or seeing their family. This naval manning method was an internal and distant affair only affecting the

[47] Such a sentimental interpretation of impressment was also evident in other popular culture, such as poems, ballads and theatrical performances. For example, 'The Press Gang', sung by Mrs. Mountain, set to music by Mr. Hook, at Vauxhall Gardens in 1795. Here a woman sings about her lost love, 'But Ah! one luckless day, a Press Gang forc'd my love to go, To fight for them he never saw'. Song XLIV: The Press Gang' sung by Mrs. Mountain, set to music by Mr. Hook, Vauxhall, 1795, in R. Anderson, *Poems of Various Subjects: Literature and Language*, Carlisle, 1798, 218.

[48] Mary Cowling, 'Catalogue: Rural and Peasant Life', in Tim Barringer, Mary Cowling, and Diane Sachko Macleod, eds, *Paintings from the Reign of Victoria: The Royal Holloway Collection*, London, 2008, cat. no. 18 and 19, 96-99.

[49] A contemporary description indicates the works' discursive significance, 'all the horrors of an agitated mind are expressed in the countenance of the once happy waterman, while the most ferocious passion and barbarism are exhibited in the press gang'. John Hassell, *Memoirs of the Life of George Morland*, 1806, 71, quoted in J. Chapel, *Victorian Taste*, London, 1982, 117.

men already removed from society and, as such, was of less concern to civilians. Therefore, regardless of the key (and potentially dramatically appealing) contribution to naval manpower, discourse about turning men over was minimal and imagery of it was all but absent. Clearly, a prerequisite of visual representation was resonance with audiences' existing knowledge, values and concerns. Hence, the more remote and internal naval manning method of turning over was overlooked, and impressment ashore predominated in visual culture. The latter was a more pertinent subject for the image-maker and audience concerned by the apparent and worrisome intensity of gangs operating in civil society.[50] In turn, this consolidated misconceptions of the press gang as a pervasive, aggressive and indiscriminate force whose desperate quest for men intruded upon the peace of broader society. As Trench, a later Commander, noted with the benefit of hindsight, 'the evil reputation earned by gangers was the prime cause of the detestation in which the principle of pressing came to be held throughout the country'.[51] The average Briton's knowledge, expectations, desires and fears of impressment were constructed and perpetuated in its visual representation.

1. 4 The Violence of Impressment

Of all the negative associations that the Impress had aggressive coercion was supreme. As this section will discuss, the violence of impressment appears in almost all of its imagery, through the explicit aggression of gangers and implicit connotations of their ruffian appearance or weapons. This suggests that violence was the foremost characteristic for which the press gang was notorious, impacting on its visual representation. In *The Press Gang* by Morland (1790) [Fig. 11] and Clennell (*c.*1813) [Fig. 5], Collings' *Attic Miscellany* (1 June 1790) [Fig. 6], Gillray's *Liberty of the Subject* (15 October 1779) [Fig. 13] and the anonymous *Neglected Tar* (*c.*1805) [Fig.

[50] The increased intensity and extensity of impressment can be seen in the form of Quota Acts in 1795 and 1796, which required men from across the nation to be provided for naval service. This increased resistance to impressment is indicated by the number and geography of affrays between the period 1793-1801 and 1803-05. The total rose from 76 to 112, but more significantly, the number of affrays in East England, North and South, decreased while rising in the South West and Celtic regions. The number of reported affrays during 1793-1801 and then 1803-05 in the South East fell from 23 to 13, in the North East from 35 to 16, while in the South West rose from 9 to 24, and in Celtic region rose from 19 to 24. Rogers, *Press Gang*, 39.

[51] Commander R. B. Chenevix Trench, 'National Service 200 Years Ago: The Press Gang', *History Today*, January 1959, vol. 61, no. 1, 37-44, 42.

9], gangers are consistently depicted inflicting physical violence upon the bodies of the men they are seizing, wielding their fists and/or cudgels. The latter was a short stick used as a weapon, included in all impressment imagery and brandished most emphatically in *Attic* and *Liberty*. The cudgel was clearly a symbol of authorised violence. It was also synonymous with State coercion and obligation, and it connoted the unstable nature of an established social order that relied on violence. Such significance was even evident in more passive pressing in which the target is compliant and gangers a mere presence holding their cudgels as a reminder of the power to which they could resort, as in Dighton's *The Banks of Shannon* (1787, 14 February 1799) [Fig. 7]. It is interesting to note that the wooden club was not exclusively negative in its associations. This was often employed in works asserting national maritime supremacy. For example, in Gillray's *Extirpation of the Plagues of Egypt;- Destruction of Revolutionary Crocodiles;-or- The British Hero Cleansing the Mouth of the Nile* (6 October 1798) [Fig. 14] the naval hero of the hour, Horatio Nelson, is shown metaphorically securing the greatest victory over revolutionary France to-date with a wooden club inscribed 'British Oak'. Similarly, in *A DIALOGUE Between a BRITISH TAR and a FRENCH CITIZEN. A loyal sketch in verse* (21 May 1800) [Fig. 15] Isaac Cruikshank depicts a burly Jack Tar with a club in contrast with a foppish Frenchman.[52] In these images, the club's prominent inclusion in the press gang depictions connotes national strength, safeguarded liberty and heroic sacrifice.

The violence of impressment contributed to its largely negative interpretation not only because of its dubious morality and legality, but also its questionable recruitment efficacy. Local hostility to the Impress Service's presence intensified resistance to gangs' operation and hindered their success. For example, the recalcitrant men of Greenock put up such successful resistance, twice burning the Impress Service's small

[52] 'The French are foppish, and will be foppish, no Philosophy can cure them.' Hester Lynch Thrale/Piozzi, Thraliana, June 1777, cited in Peter Yapp, ed., *The Travellers' Dictionary of Quotation: Who Said What, about Where?* London, 1983, 146. 'After the execution of Louis XVI the stereotype of the Frenchman was no longer a laughing matter. They were no longer portrayed as foppish and generally harmless fools, but as dangerous sans-culottes, appearing in swarms as a grotesque, undifferentiated mass, or becoming diabolical or mad, devoid of humanity and behaving like wild beasts.' The Fitzwilliam Museum, 'Vive la difference! The view from England', [online] available from: http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/gallery/viveladifference/works/gallery1.html. Accessed on 3 October 2012. See also Bindman, *Shadow of the Guillotine*, specifically 81 referring to French Stereotypes and specifically in relation to the national contrasts in James Gillray's *Politeness* (11 January 1780) etching and aquatint, BMC 5612.

vessels in the public square, that out of an estimated population of over 1000, Regulating Captain Jaheel Brenton only obtained eight pressed men, of which the majority were not even seamen. Similarly, in Whitby, where there were numerous affrays and the rendezvous was attacked during the two years until March 1795, only 12 men were pressed out of 112 recruits.[53] Furthermore, there were maritime communities, such as Poole and Cornwall, so hostile that the press gang was simply unable to operate, with locals supporting violent resistance and magistrates uncooperatively withholding warrants and reinforcement from the constabulary to assist the Impress.[54] Existing imagery implies the inefficiency of coercion with its poor returns. Works by Morland, Dighton, Clennell and Stanfield show numerous gangers impressing only one man. In actuality, catches varied in size and quality depending on circumstances of time and location, with the gangers' contributions to manpower often meagre. The men caught often received much negative interpretation as vulnerable, disappointing and inappropriate. This was further indication of the inefficient and unnecessary aggression of this unproductive recruitment method.[55] Some commentators saw impressment as a hindrance to general manning, its gangers a force that created and perpetuated the repugnance to naval service that inhibited volunteers and prompted active press resistance. An anonymous pamphleteer in 1810 argued that:

[53] Approximately 54 per cent of the eight impressed men in Greenock were landsmen. Rogers, 57. In February 1793 a crowd of over 1000 wrecked the rendezvous at Whitby and deterred the Impress from establishing a permanent presence in town. Elizabeth Gaskell in A. W. Ward, ed., *Sylvia's Lovers*, London, 1906, 24-26. The 12 impressed men in Whitby were brought at a particularly high cost of nineteen pound per person. TNA ADM 1/579 (Pringle) February - March 1795.

[54] TNA ADM 1/579/86-9; *Newcastle Courant*, 9 March 1793; TNA HO 42/71/96-7; Rogers, *Press Gang*, 56.

[55] For example, in Liverpool 3016 men were pressed between 1793-5 at the cost of only £1 to 4s each. A survey conducted by the Admiralty for 32 British ports during the period 1803-5, excluding London and Ireland, revealed that over 48% of some 11,600 recruits were impressed into the navy. TNA, ADM 1/581/86-9; ADM 1/1498 (John Bover), 15 May 1778; ADM 1/2672 (James Worth) 11 December 1778; ADM 1/1447 (James Alms) 1 October 1780. See William Petty, Lord Shelburne Papers, William L. Clements Library, Michigan, vol. 139, no. 61. Rogers, *Press Gang*, 5. *The Hampshire Telegraph* reported on 14 March 1803 'a very hot press commenced on Tuesday night, at this place and the neighbourhood, by which 500 able seamen were obtained.' Quoted in Marcus, *Heart of Oak*, 153. It must be noted that reports evidence a mutually dependent peak in the activity and affrays of the Impress Service's press gangs upon remobilisation with the breakdown of the Peace of Amiens. Impressment affrays were particularly common and intense following the end of the Peace of Amiens that prompted a rapid re-mobilisation of the Navy in 1803. Between March and December 1803 no less than 88 affrays against press gangs were reported, a spectacularly disproportionate figure to the number of men seized. Rogers, *Press Gang*, 39.

> a just estimate can [not] be formed of the voluntary impulse until the coercive measure be laid aside; or, that the former can [not] reach its full vigour till the other is forgotten.[56]

He believed a 'cessation of violence' in both naval recruitment and discipline would create a calm in which naval service could be appreciated more favourably and, therefore, increase volunteer numbers, reduce desertion and remove the necessity for impressment. The issues of naval discipline and punishment shall be dealt with in the next chapter. Here it suffices to acknowledge that violence was a prominent characteristic of the Navy's negative interpretation among Britons. Representations exaggerating 'press' violence were arguably informing, as well as informed by, coercive press gangs and their aggressive objectors.

The notoriety of the press gang's violence, its aggressive members and physical treatment of targets was referenced mainly in broader discourse, specifically word-of-mouth, newspaper articles, court trial reports and pamphlets. These capture the uncivilized brutality of this business in which men were relentlessly 'hunted by those bloodhounds' (press gangers and soldiers), aggressively seized, manhandled to the tender where vermin and disease greeted them (in this 'floating prison').[57] The sad truth that some of the men seized never actually survived to reach their destined naval ship confirms the violence and cruelty of impressment.[58] Nevertheless, it is wrong to generalise regarding the coerciveness of impressment or its press gang. Responsibility for this violent disorder cannot rest solely on one party. Indeed, gangers were not necessarily recalcitrant or uncontrollable thugs, nor their authorising superiors in the Impress Service negligent or sadistic. The ruling elites, specifically Admiralty Lords, politicians and Regulating Officers, had a part to play, in terms of the decisions, ignorance, short-sightedness and discrimination such a manning measure engendered. The implementation of this officially endorsed task embroiled many men of not

[56] Anon., 'Effects of the Impress of Seamen: The Impress considered as the cause why British seamen desert from our service to the Americans: with a review of the encouragement now held out by the royal navy, and the means in our power of abolishing the impress, 1810, in J. S. Bromley, ed., *Manning Pamphlets, 1693-1873*, London, 1976, vol. 119, 160-171, 165.

[57] Jack Nastyface, 105; N. A. M. Rodger, ed., *Memoirs of a Seafaring Life: The Narrative of William Spavens, Pensioner on the Naval Chest at Chatham*, London, 2000, 27. Spavens' confinement aboard the tender Culloden during the mobilization before the American War of Independence 'lasted thirty-two days'.

[58] See TNA ADM BP 7 for numerous accounts of the men who died after they were impressed and before they were put on board their receiving ships.

altogether good intent. Servicemen 'pressing' were not invulnerable and they were themselves commonly treated with aggression often greater and more violent than their own.[59] Furthermore, those working for impressment were subject to hostility from local commentators, authorities and communities.[60] Who caused such violence is often unclear and open to debate.

The violence involved in impressment was partly a result of the assumptions held by the population regarding the likelihood of such confrontation. In other words, reports of violent affrays fuelled more violence. Interestingly, imagery tended to implicate the Impress Service in impressment violence more emphatically than those who attempted to defy it. The latter group was disproportionately underrepresented given the variety, abundance and intensity of resistance. Incidents of violent affrays, riots and legal cases were prevalent in non-visual discourse and evidenced in text-based accounts, and they contrast starkly with the absence of visual depictions. This was arguably due to the disconcerting implications that such disorderly actualities had for typical print audiences. Purchasers favoured reassuring interpretations, with the violence of press gangs, legitimate or otherwise, appearing less disconcerting than that of their defiers who posed a potentially more serious threat to the established social order. For example, in Collings' *Attic Miscellany* (1 June 1790) [Fig. 6] the gangers are aggressively brandishing, though not evidently physically using, their bludgeons on the cowed men they are seizing. Their targets show no sign of resistance, instead raising their arms as if in surrender with one even on his knees in submission. Visual representations captured press victims' sense of intimidation, yet evaded their active and often successful defiance. Furthermore, there is an absence of imagery referring to broader protest in streets, amongst whole communities or regions, especially near ports, involving local authorities, women and protected seafarers. These same actualities were

[59] For example, upon initial mobilization in 1793 the rendezvous in Sunderland had a threatening letter thrown through its window and was besieged by a crowd of men and women who threatened the lives of the Lieutenants, humiliatingly running the gang out of town. TNA ADM 1/2396 (Peter Rothe), 4 February 1793; TNA ADM 1/2141 (McKenzie) M36, 37. In the law suit filed against the press gang responsible for the death of three men in an affray at Easton in 1803, the press officers liable for wilful murder according to the local coroner, were acquitted at the Dorsetshire Assizes on the grounds that the mob aggressively opposed the legitimate press and caused marines to fire in defence of the officers. Rogers, 112.

[60] In 1795 two Greenland whalers attacked the coxswain of the *Hound* sloop who often worked for the Impress Service, leaving his head irreparably fractured. TNA ADM 1/3285, 16 December 1796.

prominent in non-visual contemporary discourse.[61] The prints played down the risk of a civilian population rebelling in a manner, and on a scale, redolent of revolutionary France.

Only in the early Gillray etching of *Liberty of the Subject* (15 October 1779) [Fig. 13] and in the untitled, undated (*c.*1805) pen and ink study by Rowlandson [Fig. 16] do we get any sense of the presence and scale of female resistance to the press gang, or the level of violence and disorder such affrays created. These images were rare and not widely disseminated or popular. Nonetheless, they are interesting to consider, particularly as evidence that violence and violation of liberty were troublesome associations of impressment for Britons. Despite its earlier date, Gillray's satirical print depicted a street scene of a violent affray as a gang attempts to make a catch without appropriately limited aggression, nor taking account of eligibility. The men they are targeting appear vulnerable and unsuitable for the roughness of the Navy. Most prominently in the front centre of the mob two gangers seize upon a frail-looking tailor, standing with a pocketful of scissors and measuring tape. The active resistance of some womenfolk to defend this man and others is of significance. Their vigour and determination emphatically contrasts with the weakness, helplessness and unsuitability of the gangers' targets. The targeted men and recalcitrant women are shown as terrified and desperate, further suggesting such a dramatic incident's inappropriate and unlawful nature. The actions of the press gang undermined not only the British liberty that the Navy was supposedly defending but also, by extension, the procedures, quality and reputation of this institution. This message would have been particularly poignant at a time when Britain's Navy had recently suffered the devastating loss of HMS *Serapis* and *Countess of Scarborough* to the Continental Congress on 23 September 1779. The Impress Service is thus critiqued as leading to military defeat. Significantly, *Liberty* was produced by a young Gillray, the budding political satirical etcher keen to provide an unofficial critique of impressment. This was possibly a means of asserting his maverick stance and thereby appealing to a critically-informed audience – a testing of

[61] *The Times*, 22 October 1803; *Bristol Gazette*, 31 March 1803; *Reading Mercury*, 4 April 1803; TNA ADM 1/2602, Sandford Tatham to Nepean, 17 November 1803. Elizabeth Johnston and Ann Raeburn were among the riotous crowd that assaulted a Regulating Officer in South Shields in April 1803 and were convicted for this offence. TNA ADM 1/2141 M42; ADM 1/3689, 10 October 1803. Hannah Hobson was among the 1000 strong anti-press mob in Whitby in 1793 and was taken as one of the ringleaders to the Yorkshire assize where she was found guilty under the Riot Act, however her sentence was respited, unlike fellow William Atkinson who was hanged. Gaskell, 24; TNA, HO 28/9/71-2v.

the commercial printmarket. The image could have been referring to Britain's pressures, felt most acutely among the ruling elite, specifically during the War of American Independence (1775-1783).[62] Later during the French Wars, when this controversial measure was further used for vital naval defence and manpower, Gillray avoided the issue. This can surely be taken as being commercially driven in relation to the increasingly challenging negative aspects presented by impressment for such an image-maker and his audiences.[63] Importantly, by this point the printmaker was a loyalist Tory with ministerial alliances and a state-pension, persistently attacking the Francophile Whigs and French Revolutionaries.

The title of Gillray's print is obviously sardonic, suggesting that the 'Liberty of the Subject' in Britain did not amount to much in the context of impressment, which privileged that of the gangers and by extension the Navy and ruling elite over their socially inferior civilian lower classes. Despite being acclaimed 'freeborn' in Britain, men appear coerced by naval control that appropriated them as State property. Their treatment was similar to criminals who have infringed established authority, given the way the Impress Service sought men out with little sense of restraint nor concern for detrimental repercussions (losses of income, existing job, health, life and limb, and heartache and deprivation among their dependants, especially women and children, who were left to get by without key breadwinners). Women often protected menfolk targeted by press gangs, presumably out of pragmatism as much as sentimentality, their desperate violence suggesting that it was a matter not of romantic attachment but of basic survival. The portrayals of women are, unsurprisingly, hardly flatteringly feminine. Instead, they are somewhat grotesque. Noticeably, one kicks and tears at the hair of a ganger with her mouth open as if screaming verbal abuse. Such a

[62] By 1779, the number of British and German troops stationed in North America was over 60,000, although these were spread from Canada to Florida. Jeremy Black, *War for America: The Fight for Independence, 1775–1783*, London, 2001, 27–29; Mark Mayo Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, New York, 1966, revised 1974, 424–26.

[63] While his political, and indeed social and cultural, stance was characteristically ambivalent, he generally had conservative, loyalist and Francophobic tendencies, more often than not attacking the Opposition, but not exclusively so. Tellingly, when asked in 1798 by Johann Christian Huttner, a correspondent of *London und Paris*, a sophisticated Weimar journal that often contained satirical prints including ones by Gillray, why his prints were so critical of the Whigs, Gillray replied with cynicism 'they are poor, they do not buy my prints and I must draw on the purses of the larger parties.' Quoted without citation in Richard Godfrey, 'Introduction', in Mark Hallett, ed., *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature*, London, 2001, 20. His £200 annual state pension from the Pitt ministry between 1797 and 1801. Godfrey, 'Introduction', 17.

representation corresponded with the reported resistance of womenfolk to impressment who verbally dressed down and pelted gangers, and even abetted the escape of their catches from the tenders.[64]

Of even greater significance in *Liberty* was the pregnant woman wielding a broom at a ganger while ignoring her child pulling at her skirt from behind, to the left of the scene. This specific incident would have had complex implications for contemporary audiences. As a mother she might be neglecting the wellbeing of her offspring and failing to be a moral and legal role model in a manner expected. However, this could be explained, if not excused, on account of her defiant protection of her husband on whom the family depended. To be pressed would mean the loss not only of a paternal figure, but also economic stability. His existing employment would cease and once transferred to naval service he would be vulnerable to a lower wage, as well as physical debilitation and fatality. As such, the desperation of the pregnant mother expecting an additional mouth to feed would evoke empathy among viewers. This appreciation of the protection of a child-bearing woman can be seen to inform their riotous behaviour and its treatment in other circumstances. Besides such depictions, archival evidence is found of pregnant women being excused from criminal prosecution, charges and even the death sentences on account of expecting a baby.[65] Furthermore, women in general were favoured with punitive leniency in Common Law. Such exemption was clearly apparent and was exploited, considering how such individuals were among the most common and active participants in protests. The resistance of women, especially when pregnant, often brought considerable support from other women, workers and youths. For example, at the end of the century a pregnant woman attempting to restrain the press gang from taking her husband drew a sympathetic crowd of 300.[66] Again, in 1803,

[64] *The Times*, 22 October 1803; *Bristol Gazette*, 31 March 1803; *Reading Mercury*, 4 April 1803; TNA ADM 1/2602, Sandford Tatham to Nepean, 17 November 1803; TNA ADM 1/2141 M37, M42; TNA ADM 1/1490 (Brown) 12 May 1759.

[65] For example, Ann Palmer who claimed to be 'destitute, have children, and am now pregnant, and humbly beg the mercy of the court. This is my defence and it is truth' at her Old Bailey trial, January 1794, for stealing goods of Joseph Dowling, valued collectively in the region of 15 shillings, in a lodging room, which she was found guilty for, but sentenced to the relatively lenient punishment of three months imprisonment in Newgate and a 1 shilling fine. Available from Old Bailey Proceedings Online, t17940115-78, http://www.oldbaileyonline.org. Accessed on 2 October 2012. This is testimony to how women when perceived to be pregnant tended to be treated with greater leniency, or with benefit of the doubt, by crime-victims, prosecutors, juries and/or judges.

[66] TNA ADM 7/308, no. 381

women summoned their neighbours to save their men from the press.[67] The fact that Gillray's *Liberty* was produced earlier is in itself significant. It demonstrates that impressment and its negative associations of compromised British liberty and violence were not only persistent actualities but also the subject of topical, controversial discourse before the protracted French Wars studied in this thesis.

Violent press gang affrays were common events but they were infrequently portrayed in visual culture. Rowlandson dealt with this theme in a rare untitled, undated (*c.*1805) pen and watercolour work. It seems it was a private study distinct from Gillray's print. Accordingly, it was less emphatically dramatic or critical, and more a portrayal of the discord into which individual figures, especially females, were cast as the press gang intruded upon their quiet lives. Rowlandson's womenfolk, wearing waisted, full-length and three-quarter sleeved dresses and bonnets are less defiant and more distressed victims of these impressment affrays in which men desperately attempt to resist the stronger gang that has descended upon this street scene. To the fore, two women cower on the ground, one lies down having fainted or been harmed, while the other attempts to revive her with a drink. The bared breasts of the reclining figure and wailing child besides her suggest that she was the infant's mother or wet-nurse. Behind them to their left another woman kneels grappling after a ganger involved in a fistfight with the man he and his three other gang-members are attempting to seize. The portrayal of these women implied their vulnerability, desperation, fear and even despair regarding the violence of the press gang, a band of men who would, it appears, be villainously heedless of possible exempting protections. Yet, the gang shows little explicit aggression towards the female company. Only one woman is positioned near the scuffle to the left, raising her arm which is restrained by a ganger, while his two colleagues look on aghast at the woman's ferocity or the punch she might be about to receive. Notably, no men inflict any physical violence upon the women. Instead, it is targeted at those they are tasked with seizing. The women's presence alludes to their involvement in press resistance and suggests that such a sight would have contributed to the anti-impressment sentiment in local communities as well as to the production and reception of discourse about such violence. It must be acknowledged, however, that, despite the topical and empathetic relevance of impressment affrays, the subject was underrepresented in contemporary visual culture. The implications of such an issue

[67] TNA ADM 1/3095 (George Roach) 25 June 1803.

were too problematic for its depiction to appeal to image-makers and their clientele. Irrespective of cause and culpability, such street affray scenes, in actuality and in a few images, indicate that impressment undermined established laws concerning State bodily control and individual liberties and lives. All of which was uncomfortable to accept, especially amongst civilian, family-centric, print-buying audiences. The violent press gang was a threat to familial civilian society.

Alongside the negative role of crowds' resistance must come the declining rate of reported press affrays. These facts combine to suggest that the few extant images exaggerated the violence of impressment. Between 1793 and 1801, the ratio of reported affrays to men borne was an unprecedentedly low 0.07%, with the number of serious injuries and fatalities among them dropping to 11% and rising only slightly to 12.5% after the Peace of Amiens.[68] This decline requires some consideration and cannot simply be attributed to gangers' more gentle approach or to seamen begrudgingly accepting the reality of impressment. The noticeable lack of reported affrays amid periods of wartime, specifically in 1796-8 and 1803,[69] with heightened invasion fears and impressment, suggests that the relative silence in publications might have been caused by self-censorship. Indeed, negative aspects of resistance were at odds with prevailing loyalist patriotic propaganda and was probably assumed to be commercially unviable and even libelous. This corresponds with the rarity, selectivity and distortion of its depiction.[70]

[68] These percentages in the original form of ratios of affrays to men borne are as follows, 1: 1479 in the French Revolutionary war period 1793-1801, 1: 572 during the previous Seven Years War, and 1: 759 during American Revolutionary War (1775-82). During 65 years to 1801, a quarter of all affrays with gangs involved serious injuries or fatalities. Rogers, *Press Gang*, 14.

[69] Between 1796 and 1798 invasion fears were often at a fever-pitch and the Navy was achieving victories, which fed the supply and demand for patriotic propaganda. Impressment was particularly intense as demand increased and the government strove to mobilize a wider section of the population under the Quota Acts, and with this came a rise in resistance affrays. In 1803 there was a spectacular peak in the number of affrays, with no less than 88 reported. This coincided with Britain resuming war with Napoleonic France as the Peace of Amiens disintegrated, while facing considerable financial and political problems. Rogers' research has identified 76 affrays during the French Revolutionary War, 1793-1801, and 112 reported 1803-1805, but this tally omits small affrays that were not, or minimally, reported. Rogers, *Press Gang*, 39.

[70] Such limitations in imagery relates to the Gagging Acts of 1795, which was the collective term popularly given to the official repressive legislation of the Treasonable Practices Act and the Seditious Meetings Act. Print-makers would have been aware of the charges of sedition or treason they risked in representations and relied upon subtle referring. For discussion of this see Bindman, *Shadow of the Guillotine*, 19 and 26.

Nevertheless, the statistical drop in reported affrays can be taken as symptomatic of developments in impressment, indicating not simply a decline of violent resistance but also an increase in evasive practices. Seamen sought by the Impress would become fugitives. They would move further inland and even disguise themselves as landsmen or farmers. One such individual, I will argue later in Chapter Three, was subtly represented in Gillray's *Affability* (10 February 1795) [Fig. 17]. This vicious caricature of such evaders would have corresponded with Gillray's upper-middle class clientele's desire for the lower orders to conform to the conservative ruling elites and their war effort. Nevertheless, the evasion of naval service was a complex issue, as indicated by the selective and distorting visual interpretation of it. Most significantly there was an absence of discourse, especially images, about more passive, arguably little known or uncontentious, modes of evasion. These included: the use of fraudulent protections;[71] joining the local sea fencibles who often recruited too liberally in collusion against the Impress;[72] being assisted by corrupt individuals to gain berths on imminently departing merchant vessels; emigrating from the British Empire to foreign countries, especially America;[73] or being kept in hiding by an accomplice.[74] The rotund and relatively well-dressed man with an arm outstretched in expectation of his reward on the right-hand side of Collings' *Antic Miscellany* [Fig. 6] may be presumed to be an informer.[75] Yet,

[71] For reference to protection documents exempting individuals from impressment, see earlier in this chapter, 33, n. 31.

[72] The Fencibles (from the word defencible) were army regiments raised in the United Kingdom and in the colonies for defence against the threat of invasion during the American War of Independence and French Revolutionary Wars in the late eighteenth century. Usually temporary units composed of local volunteers and commanded by Regular Army officers, their role was, as their name suggests, confined to garrison and patrol duties, freeing the regular Army units to perform offensive operations. They had no liability for overseas service, but did include maritime and/or naval forces with the specific River or Sea definition depending on the waters they operated within. Ron McGuigan, 'The Forgotten Army: Fencible Regiments of Great Britain 1793 – 1816', *Military Subjects: Organisation, Strategy and Tactics, Napoleonic Series*. www.napoleon-series.org/military/organization/fencibles/c_fencibles.html. Accessed on 2 October 2012. When Vice-Admiral Hugh Phillip went on a regulating tour of the fencible districts in December 1803, the overly liberal recruitment of men eligible for naval service and who were attempting to avoid impressment was revealed to him, particularly when many refused to muster in areas hostile to impressment. Among those that did muster in Pevensey and Eastbourne, Phillip estimated that two-thirds of this district's fencibles were of naval material. TNA ADM 1/581/19. For information on sea fencibles see Rogers, *Press Gang*, 113; TNA ADM MLN/17-18.

[73] Holland estimated in 1809 that around 30,000 seamen had left the Empire since 1793 to avoid impressment into naval service. This figure is probably exaggerated, with Michael Lewis offering a more realistic estimation of 20,000 men until 1812. Holland, 'A Plan for Manning the Navy without Impressing, or expense to government', 153. Lewis, *The Social History of the Royal Navy*, 437.

[74] Persons harbouring such individuals were liable to a fine of five pounds or three months imprisonment and a public whipping. F. W. Brooks, 'Naval Recruiting in Lindsey, 1795-7', *The English Historical Review*, April 1928, vol. 43, no. 170, 230-240, 232.

[75] For informing on eligible seamen to be pressed, including deserters and smugglers a reward of around twenty shillings was offered. Brooks, 'Naval Recruiting in Lindsey', 232.

the print's message was not necessarily to assert a law-abiding agenda of such assistance to the Impress. Instead, it implies the social polarization that impressment caused with exempt informers' and advocates' social superiority and self-serving materialism making them indifferent to the plight of men sought and seized by the press. The informer's grotesque expression and rotund physique personify his questionable morality, supporting the image's negative construction of the focal issue, as identified by the subtitle: *Manning the Navy*. Similarly, Isaac Cruikshank's *Kidnapping, or a disgrace to old England* (26 August 1794) [Fig. 18] portrays a grotesque female offering an Army recruiting party a sailor in his attire. She identifies her prisoner as a 'thief'. Interestingly, it is worth noting that his stealing would probably have been in order to survive as a fugitive in hiding from the Impress.[76] These and other such images focused upon and exaggerated the violence involved in military recruitment. Furthermore, the implication is that factors of cruelty, deceit and corruption that accompanied such actualities were even more unpalatable as themes for prints.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the notoriety of the Impress as a force of violence conducive to hostility, unrest and criminal affrays was arguably unfair. Disturbance, injury and fatalities were consequences of active impressment-resistance, but it was often the gangers themselves rather than their resistors, who suffered most. Rogers has calculated that between 1738 and 1805 of all affrays reported, ten per cent involved press gang members being injured or killed, with their fatality cases one in three times higher than those of their targets.[77] Even when not actively pressing, those employed by the Impress Service suffered particular danger; their unpopular and challenging

[76] Three smartly dressed soldiers are depicted attacking the sailor, saying, from left to right, 'come along & fight the French, an be hanged to you by J ... s man you dont know when you are used well; So you won't be a Gentleman Soldier you thief; B . . . t you what do you call Murder for!' A woman holding a key stands in the doorway on the right, her right fist clenched, says 'D------n him. strip him.'

[77] Fatalities were incurred in active resistance of men to gangs attempting to impress them, as was the case for two men in London during the French Wars, and for three men at Easton in 1803. TNA ADM 1/3286, 22 April 1797; *The Times*, 18 April 1797. Cited in Rogers, *Press Gang*, 3 and 112. Violent confrontation was also an aspect of impressment once the men were already seized, when being transported to the tender or once aboard. For example, in 1803 a gang and troop of marines escorting men to tender at Rownham ferry in Bristol opened fire on a mob killing one boy. *Bristol Gazette*, 31 March 1803; Bonner and Middleton's *Bristol Journal*, 2 April 1803. Cited in Rogers, *Press Gang*, 48. For example, in a struggle between a press gang and the watermen of Blackfriars bridge, a Lieutenant was said to have been 'almost killed' and one of his gang members severely wounded in the neck. And fierce resistance by the people of Whitby in May 1803 resulted in the death of two of the crewmembers of the arriving Impress' Eagle cutter. *Reading Mercury*, 16 May 1803. For more information of violent affrays involving the Impress, see Rogers, *Press Gang*, 48-52.

business was part of their public identity and inevitably attracted hostile treatment.[78] A Regulating Officer recounted such an experience at Shields on returning from the tender when he and his gang were 'assaulted without any provocation whatever by a considerable mob of Men, Women and Children' and forced to take refuge in a coopers' yard.[79] Such illegal, violent and riotous civilian behaviour, and the victimisation of gangers, was underrepresented in imagery as it did not accord with prevailing interpretations of the Impress. Instead, scenes are manipulated so as to present the gangs as the strongest, numerically and physically, dutifully coercing their targets with threatened or actual bodily harm. As exemplified by *The Press Gang* by Morland (1790) [Fig. 11] and Clennell (*c.*1813) [Fig. 5], gangers were typically portrayed as veteran thugs with their rough, dark and savage facial features conforming to contemporary conventions of physiognomy associated with moral depravity. These thugs are contrasted with their wholesome victims. Morland's hardworking and contented man clasps his hands together and raises his eyes to the heavens as if in prayer, while Clennell's breadwinning male is being torn from domestic peace with his almost divinely highlighted chest and head implying his innocence and vulnerability. In actuality, the Impress Service was not necessarily responsible for impressment-related disorder ashore, and even had positive roles in civil society. The presence of the press gang in some respects boosted communities' patriotic sentiment and cohesive order. Its established rendezvous served as places to which men could go voluntarily to enlist. The service also recruited the spurned vagrants, criminals, prisoners and deserters who were otherwise deemed to be socially-problematic. Gangers were also employed by local authorities to assist with enforcing law and order in relation to civil unrest.[80] Clearly, impressment violence raised complex issues that discourse, including some imagery, addressed. The disconcerting and detrimental actualities of the press's

[78] As well as those employed as Officers, gangers or temporary working for the Impress Service involved in violent affrays and suffering casualties, very occasionally bystanders were too. In 1803, when a press gang and troop of marines escorting men to a tender at Rownham ferry in Bristol were confronted by a mob and a boy was killed. *Bristol Gazette*, 31 March 1803; *Bonner and Middleton's Bristol Journal*, 2 April 1803.

[79] TNA ADM 1/1206 (Sandford Tatham) enclosures with letter 21 September 1803.

[80] It must be noted that such measures were rare and arguably not unrelated to the Impress, as the unrest was typically caused by seamen rioting or striking against the implications of impressment, particularly the reduction in wages and availability of jobs from the summer 1815 onwards. Tyneside seamen strikers were winning local support, highly organized, employing ritual humiliation of delinquents, they increasingly alarmed Lord Sidmouth and Home Office informants. The numerous tars that turned out on a regular basis easily intimidated local militia and soldiers. Once it became clear that Magistrates were unable to arbitrate strikes or maintain order, troops were called in and naval gunboats entered the Tyne. Rogers, *Press Gang*, 123-4.

aggression explains the significance of the issue and its discursive distortion, especially in the disproportionately excessive, yet still few, images. These are depictions that emphatically address the violence of gangers, contrary to their actual behaviour and experiences and to other discourses concerning impressment's social, criminal and naval consequences.

As noted above, impressment became a preoccupation in discourse not least because of its relevance to debates about liberty. Sir John Borlase Warren's *A View of the Naval Force of Great-Britain* (1791) was an insightful critique of impressment when Britain was poised to implement the measure in order to deal with her revolutionary archenemy:

> The Admiralty, whenever the ministry think proper to advice the measure, have never scrupled to deprive them [the seamen] of it [their liberty] by force of arms […] It is a rule, in our common law, that no length of possession, taken by violence, can give a right: but the impressing of seamen has always been carried on by violence, therefore we conclude, that no duration of a custom, so exercised, can possibly convey the least shadow of a right for its continuance […] the illegal, unconstitutional, and oppressive, custom, of forcing our brave seamen into the royal navy, has never yet arisen from clear and absolute necessity.[81]

At the crux of the controversy caused by impressment was the relationship between British liberties and order, which resulted in the individual freedom of serving men being limited, if not violated, for the greater good of protecting the State's established civil liberties. The issues of legitimate coercion, discipline and compromised liberty entailed in impressment were disconcerting for fellow Britons, particularly at a time when rights, revolution and reform were troublesome issues. The Navy was glorified as a vital institution for this island nation, made up of, and for, loyal freeborn men who 'ruled the waves' and 'will not be slaves'. Impressment was, therefore, controversial and challenging in representation, and attracted critical attention in scarce imagery. Notably, impressment and especially its criticism were themes more apparent in text-

[81] Sir John Borlase Warren, *A View of the Naval Force of Great-Britain: … To which are added Observations and Hints for the Improvement of the Naval Service*, London, 1791, 52-3.

based discourse in publications dated just before as well as during the period of the French Wars studied here.

The eighteenth-century historian and philosopher, David Hume, censoriously elucidated that impressment constituted:

> A continued violence permitted in the crown amidst the greatest jealousy and watchfulness of the people. Liberty, in the country of the highest liberty, is left entirely to its own defence, without any countenance or protection' [and] 'great violence and disorder are committed with impunity; while the one party pleads obedience to the supreme magistrate, the other the sanction of fundamental laws.[82]

Although published in 1784, such a critique of pressing men into service, with associations of liberty being breached and of violence, would not have been out of place later. With the passing of time, troublesome issues of social instability, partisan politics, radicalism and reformism persisted, and placed the Impress Service in an ever more problematic position. Impressment, especially its perceived threat to civil liberties and social and legal justice, became a prominent and contentious preoccupation.

Critical commentary can be found amongst a diverse range of eighteenth-century authors besides Hume. Together they voiced with empathy their concern at the Navy's compromising of liberty and order, as well as of the quality, health and morale among its men. For example, Thomas Gisborne referred to impressment in his two-volume publication, *An Enquiry into the Duties of Men in the Higher and Middle Classes of Society in Great Britain, resulting from their respective stations* (1795). He wrote that:

> It is not only the liberty of the sailor which suffers by the Impress Service: his property is equally exposed to injury. Time for beneficial labour is to him property […] the practice in question, besides being chargeable with injustice, is likewise so repugnant to the spirit of freedom and of humanity, and so little congenial to the general principles of the British laws, that the

[82] David Hume, ed., *Essays and Treatises in Several Subjects in Two Volumes*, London, 1784, vol. 1, 396.

> nation must be inexcusable should it continue it on the mere ground of saving expence.[83]

The Shipping or Mercantile Gazette (21 May 1800) played upon the contentiousness of the issue, staunchly describing the seaman's professional skill as part of his 'personal property' that was being appropriated by the State in what amounted to a violation of his 'independence' and rights as a freeborn Englishman.[84] Such concern was even noted by some officers and surgeons, such as Elliot Arthy's description in his medical treatise, *The Seaman's Medical Advocate,* (1798):

> The Impress Service, in the first place, militates against the native and constitutional freedom of the seamen.[85]

With such negative interpretations of impressment the experience of the targeted able-bodied men paralleled that of a criminal. This would have been apparent to many besides those involved directly in press-gang activity. Men (debatably) eligible for impressment were hunted down like villains, forced to survive as fugitives in hiding or disguise, vulnerable to informers and crimps, subject to violent seizure, and confined indefinitely aboard a tender and then at sea in dangerous, unpleasant and, to some, foreign conditions. Herein lay the problem of impressment. Its parallels with criminal law, in terms of subjugation and suffering, presented it as constitutionally and even morally wrong. Pressed men had no means of escape or opportunity of 'bail' and were often lacking communication with relatives, employees or an attorney.[86] Often, they were unable to bid final farewell to loved-ones, being left instead at the mercy of the press gang. The words of one such distressed individual held within a recruiting ship's tender poignantly capture the intense sense of confusion and injustice suffered by impressed men:

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[83] Thomas Gisborne, *An Enquiry into the duties of men in the higher and middle classes of society in Great Britain, resulting from their respective stations,* London, 1795, vol. 1, 40.
[84] *The Shipping or Mercantile Gazette*, 21 May 1800, quoted in Anon., 'Impressment of Seamen', *Hume Tracts*, 1800, 1-5, 4.
[85] Elliot Arthy, *Seaman's Medical Advocate: or, an Attempt to show that Five Thousand Seamen are, Annually, during War, Lost to the British Nation, ... through the Yellow Fever, ... Illustrated by cases and facts,* London, 1798, 171.
[86] A rare example of a victim of the Impress securing communication, legal aid and eventual release is that of John Nicholson, Greenlander. While working in the coal trade, during the off-season he was impressed in November 1793 and carried aboard HMS *Eurydice*. Fortunately, having an attorney, the Admiralty was threatened with earning losses incurred from one year's confinement. With such grounds of unlawful detainment, the Admiralty Solicitor advised the Captain and Lieutenant to settle the case out of court. TNA ADM 1/3283, 7 January 1795.

> Why was I shut in here? I that am born to be free; are not I and the greatest Duke of England equally free born? If I have done nothing, who has the power to confine me? Where is the liberty of an Englishman?[87]

Such a State sanctioned method of naval recruitment was often seen to invalidate Britain's vaunted respect for liberty as encoded in the *Magna Carta*:

> No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or disseised of his freehold or liberties, or free customs, or outlawed or banished, or any way destroyed, nor will we pass upon him, or commit him to prison, unless by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.[88]

This seminal document of English constitutional practice was referenced by critics, specifically resistant seamen, discontented naval men who mutinied at the Nore anchorage in 1797, and Whig commentators in abolitionist, reformist and non-conformist discourses.[89] The status of the warring Navy was brought into question partly because the very men fighting to preserve British liberty had none themselves. They were principally tasked with protecting the freedom of their social superiors at their bidding. It was feared, or arguably foreseen, that such recruitment would jeopardize loyalist patriotism during a time of intense propaganda that was promoting the war effort, naval achievements and conservatism.[90] The significance of

[87] These words were spoken by a man in the hold of a press tender on the Thames, and were recorded in James Oglethorpe's collection of eyewitness accounts of press gang activities. James Oglethorpe, *The Sailors Advocate*, London, 1728, 11, quoted in Rogers, *The Press Gang*, 12.

[88] Magna Carta, Great Charter Clause 29.

[89] Argument in *Sailor's Advocate*, 3; Petition of the Fleet during the Mutiny at the Nore 1797, TNA ADM 1/5/5125, cited in Hutchinson, *Press Gang*, 17. Seamen demonstrated a high degree of political awareness, informed criticism and of resistance, including strike action and petitioning to demand higher pay and better provisions for dependants. They held meetings, among which most notably were those at the Magna Carta Club, which led them to voice concerns regarding the unconstitutionality of impressment. *Newcastle Courant*, 2 February 1793; TNA HO 42/22/447-8.

[90] Such reference to 'loyalist patriotism' and 'militant conservatism' requires elaboration. At the time there existed increasing threats to the established order in Britain. Evidence of this was the Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers founded by Reeves in November 1792 with strong, if discreet, government support. As Donald notes, such an organisation 'marks an epoch in the articulation of British conservatism as a political ideology, expressed in both verbal and visual forms and, more broadly, an epoch in the history of popular propaganda in Britain.' Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature*, 146. See also Robert Hole, 'British Counter-revolutionary Popular Propaganda in the 1790s', in Colin Jones, ed., *Britain and Revolutionary France: Conflict, Subversion and Propaganda*, Exeter, 1983. Dickenson used the term 'militant conservatism' in relation to the political agenda of voluntary service to armed forces and the local volunteer force of militia for suppressing the threat of radicalization of Britain. H. T. Dickinson *The Politics of People in Eighteenth Century Britain*, Basingstoke, 1995, 282.

impressment in relation to social and political tensions and instability led to it being raised in critical, parliamentary and reformist discourses.

The Impressment of Seamen, published in 1800, presented a censure that evidences the various and weighty views of its subject:

> Impressment debases the seaman and is a disgrace to the noble and honourable service of the Navy […] State pretension to violate a Sailor's independence, and invade his physical and mental resources […] is an assumption taken up by only the most purblind of politicians […] It is puerile ignorance or the irreclaimable doggedness of official "priggism", which hazards a doubt about the power to man the Royal Navy most efficiently on the voluntary principle.[91]

The author, notably anonymously, exploited the crucial significance of impressment, specifically the measure's inefficacy as a means to bolster the Navy's manpower. It was construed as detrimental to the recruitment, quality, morale, reputation and strength of this otherwise prized institution. As in its visual representation, the press gang was regarded as a blight upon the order, and pride, of Britain. The sensitive questions that the measure prompted, particularly of State control and individual liberty, were related to broader struggles in which Whigs, reformists and radicals played upon the link between the ruling elite and the Impress Service. Specifically, in this 1800 publication Parliament with its conservative ministers and royal prerogative was blamed for endorsing impressment. Such association is worth bearing in mind in relation to the notorious press gang's violence, as discussed above.

1. 5 Conclusion

Among influential figures, such as naval officers and politicians, pressing men was condoned as a 'necessary evil' to meet the manning demand faced by the Navy during the protracted period of warfare against France. Britain was contending with naval threats of revolutionary invasion, attacks on her transatlantic trade routes, and the loss

[91] Anon., 'Impressment of Seamen', *Hume Tracts*, 1800, 1-4, specifically 3.

of colonies vital for Britain's imperial status as a commercial world power.[92] Yet, conceptions of such a defence, like critiques of impressment, drew heavily on notions of inalienable liberty. *A DIALOGUE Between a BRITISH TAR and a FRENCH CITIZEN. A loyal sketch in verse* (21 May 1800) [Fig. 15] is worth considering in relation to such actualities and their interpretation. This satirical hand-coloured etching is bordered on either side by a column of text, which reads as a script for a theatrical stage production in which the two depicted characters act. The print, by Isaac Cruikshank, depicts a burly British sailor fiercely brandishing his wooden cudgel at a thin foppish Frenchman who bows, hat in hand, with a grin. Beneath the 'scene – a Street in London' is the inscription: 'The English Sailor, and French Citizen. \ ------- Ah - ah Monsieur. \ Je suis très humblement votre serviteur. Page 5 line 5.' A reading of the accompanying text reveals that the Frenchman has 'come, To teach the English freedom, from my home', to which the indignant 'Jack Oakum' retorts: 'A lath like you - teach Britons to be free! Damme - we learn it with our A.B.C'.[93] This work on paper presents an emphatically positive message of Britain's strength and liberty. The tar embodies the propagandist nature of the piece itself, ensuring it was readily accessible to a broad, even illiterate, audience. This print's accessibility is further evident in the fact that it was priced at 1s. for plain, 1s. 6d. for coloured, a day's wages for a labourer, and advertised as offering 'Handsome Allowance to those who buy Quantities to give away'. Furthermore, two other illustrated dialogues are advertised on the print, 'written and designed by G. M. Woodward': 'A Parish Meeting on the subject of Invasion - John Bull in the Chair . . .' and 'A Dialogue between Mrs. Bull and Madame Bonaparte'. In this particular work, the Francophobic and pro-war propaganda was channelled through a positive message of liberty as an assured national ideal.

The British Tar's representation evaded problems of impressment and manning, presenting this character as a willing bulwark of the Nation's Navy and established order in general. The audience, and by extension Britons in general, was offered an appealing image not only of freedom, but also superiority, independence and tradition. Broader potential implications, through the appearance and dialogue of the two national

[92] Admiral Martin argued that 'no one can attempt to defend impressment upon any ground but that of state necessity, or in other words, national safety'. Admiral Sir Thomas Byam Martin, G.C.B., *Impressment of Seamen, and a few Remarks on Corporal Punishment, taken form the Private Memoranda of a Naval Officer*, London, 1834, 175.
[93] George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the British Museum*, vol. 7, 1942.

icons, could be that Britain's royal subjects were privileged with greater strength, education and military skill. They even assured naval men's contentment with such hierarchical established order, showing Jack's instant rejection of social equality ('All of us equal – that won't do!'). The British Tar is presented as a loyal and defiant seaman in His Majesty's Navy, whether long-time serviceman or recent volunteer. He appears far from the threatening and unsavoury representations of tars who served against their will. In relation to this chapter's focus on impressment and its implications in civil society, here the figure of Jack contrasts with that of a typical press ganger. Although aggressively defiant and armed with a cudgel, like a member of the Impress Service, his refined attire, patriotic vigour and seafaring specialism as a sailor make him unlikely to have been deployed by the Admiralty for such duty. He is more likely to be a man entrusted with an errand ashore. Thus, the troublesome issues of naval manning and manpower are avoided, and instead loyalty and stability on land and at sea are emphasised.

Actually, the contribution to naval manpower by press gang catches was substantially surpassed by alternative methods. However, volunteering, the Quota Acts and turning men over were largely overlooked in Georgian discourses.[94] Volunteers, that is, men who chose of their own free will to enlist in the Royal Navy and received a joining bounty of around £32,[95] were by far the largest proportion of naval recruits at the beginning of the French Wars. Volunteering held positive connotations in official Handbills, recruitment parades, centrally located Impress rendezvous and lively naval communities.[96] Despite volunteering being readily taken up in discourse and a considerable contributor to naval manpower, its rate began to decline after a few years of war. It can be deduced that potential volunteers had been exhausted in number and

[94] Dancy, *Redefining Naval Manning*, paper presented at the National Maritime Museum Seminar Series at the Institute of Historical Research, 9/2/2010.

[95] The joining bounty provided by the Navy to volunteers ranged from as little as £10 10s., to as much as £45, with the average being £30 to £3F. W. Brooks, 'Naval Recruiting in Lindsey, 1795-7', *The English Historical Review*, April 1928, vol. 43, no. 170, 230-240, 235.

[96] 'Officially known as the Rendezvous, a French term long associated with English recruiting, the headquarters of the gang were more familiarly, and for brevity's sake, called the 'rondy'. Publicans were partial to having the rondy on their premises because of the trade it brought them. Hence, it was usually an alehouse, frequently one of the shadiest description, situated in the lowest slum of the town; but on occasions, as when the gang was of uncommon strength and the number of pressed men dealt with proportionately large, a private house or other suitable building was taken for the exclusive use of the service. It was distinguished by a flag a Jack displayed upon a pole. The cost of the two was 27s., and in theory they were supposed to last a year'. Hutchinson, *Press Gang*, 30.

were deterred by the increasingly evident danger, hardship and sacrifice of naval service. The absence of depictions of volunteering can be seen not so much as having been indicative of ignorance or avoidance of the issue among contemporaries, but as simply symptomatic of the relatively limited impact such a manning measure had upon society, but not its somewhat unfamiliar Navy.

The Quota Acts were passed in 1795 and 1796, requiring that each county in Britain provide a set proportion of men for the Navy on pain of a fine. This was a means of local authorities taking some of the responsibility for naval recruitment and coaxing those yet to volunteer into joining with the incentive of both a naval and municipal joining bounty.[97] A consequence of the Bill was that recruitment pressures became more extensive, encroaching further inland and targeting landsmen and rural labourers. While the Quota had its successes, particularly bringing in many men during the poor harvest year of 1795, the significant majority of this in-take comprised of landsmen with no experience of the sea. In 1796, the harvest was good and recruits were down. As a result, the Quota system was deemed expensive, unproductive and inappropriate and was therefore abandoned.[98] It is possible that such limited impact made the subject of minor interest to printmakers and their audiences.

With such a lack of volunteers and problematic quota acts, further methods were employed by the Navy to maintain its vital manpower while conducting intense and protracted warfare. Turning men over became an increasingly adopted practice. As noted above, this involved removing men immediately from one ship returning for repairs or provisions to others ready to set sail. Men were neither allowed shore leave, or even the chance of setting foot on solid ground, nor choice of redeployment. The number of turned over men was rising during the French Revolutionary war and outstripped that raised via volunteers from 1798 onwards. This suggests that experienced seamen, not only those willing or eligible to serve in the Navy, but also those already serving within it, were increasingly scarce as the war took its toll. As a result, the Navy became more concerned with keeping and making maximum use of

[97] For every man the parish failed to raise, it had to pay a fine of £30. Brooks, 'Naval Recruiting', 234.
[98] Based on analysis by Jeremiah Darcy of the muster books for a frigate, sloop and ship-of-the-line per year from Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth between 1793-1801, 93% of quotamen recruited to the Royal Navy during 1795 and 1796 were landsmen.

the men it already had. This manpower challenge had implications beyond simply numbers and was particularly apparent in the light of the naval problems of endemic desertion and the unprecedented mutinies among fleets at the Spithead and Nore anchorages in 1797.[99] Considering that this method was so central to the Navy's manning, the absence of discourse about the issue, especially in imagery, is noticeable. Although some, particularly officers, seamen and relations ashore were not ignorant of the practice and its problems, the majority of landlubber Britons would have been less aware of, or concerned by, the matter. Given the limited potential to observe turning of men over, the subject generally offered little opportunity for appealingly relevant, familiar or marketable visual representations. The absence of its depiction was, therefore, not necessarily an intentional or informed exclusion.

As this chapter has shown, the interpretation of naval manning was highly selective and correlated in complex ways with actualities and associated discourses. The Navy's non-coercive maintenance of manpower through volunteering and turning men over was overlooked in contemporary discourse and has continued to be in subsequent historiography. These manning methods were underrepresented in relation to their actual implementation and in comparison to the use of impressment. 'Pressing' was a preoccupation in discourse, despite only making a minor contribution to the Navy's manpower. Visual discourse on impressment, a practice that brought maritime issues ashore and affected non-naval individuals, communities and classes, had particular impact on the sensitive notions of British liberty, State prerogative, duty and sacrifice. In contrast, there survives abundant imagery depicting the recreational pleasures of the common tar. These are in stark contrast to images of the common sailor's actual existence, disadvantaged as it was by the pressures of naval servitude. The following chapter will consider the numerous visual representations of the tar when released from naval duties and enjoying his short bouts of leisure time.

[99] For a discussion of the Great Naval Mutinies, 1797, see Geoffrey Quilley, 'Duty and Mutiny: the aesthetics of loyalty and the representation of the British sailor c.1789-1800', in Phil Shaw, ed., *Romantic War: Studies in Culture and Conflict, 1789-1815*, Ashgate, 2000, 80-109; Anthony G. Brown, "The Nore Mutiny – Sedition of Ships' Biscuits?' A Reappraisal', *Mariner's Mirror*, 2006, vol. 92; James Dugan, *The Great Mutiny*, London, 1966; Leonard F. Guttridge, *Mutiny: a history of naval insurrection*, Shepperton, 1992; Nicholas A. M. Rodger, 'Mutiny and Subversion? Spithead and the Nore', in Thomas Bartlett, David Dickson, Daire Keogh and Kevin Whelan, eds, *1798: A Bicentenary Perspective*, Dublin, 2003, 549–564.

Analysis of specific images has revealed that in order to appeal to the market, and thus be commercially viable, impressment was interpreted selectively and as a negative subject that could play upon audiences' senses of superiority and anxiety. Images of press gangs' aggressive behaviour on land conformed and contributed to deep-seated misconceptions of the manning method. These were part of a more complex, diverse and shifting set of associations with State, individual liberty, power and knowledge. This consideration of the actualities of, and discourse about, impressment has relevance to other areas of naval existence: discipline, repression, criminal punitive law, leisure, welfare and sacrifice. These are aspects to be explored in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

The Impress Service was not necessarily as scandalous or prominent as suggested by contemporary discourses. Yet, there was something of a discursive preoccupation with the presence of press gangs in civil society, particularly ashore, as provocative of violent resistance and detrimental to the peace, order and liberty of Britons. As actualities, however, these were not so evident in contemporary discourse, nor in historical study. As this chapter has shown, associations of impressment with violent affrays, intrusion upon domestic settings and the compromising of civil liberties and peace were far from straightforward or accurate indications of its actuality. The causes and effects of this manning measure were complex. My investigation of the visual interpretations of impressment during the French Wars has gone some way to demonstrate and address this. Such conflict seriously threatened Britain's strength and impressment was increasingly 'resorted' to as a 'necessary evil'. This was apparent, and widely accepted with some misgivings, however, among Britons. Admiral Martin remarks in 1837:

> false or exaggerated representations on the questions of impressment [were the product of] delusions of […] distempered imaginations [emphasising, with a note of exasperation, in response to reformers' advocacy of the abolition of the measure, that it] was sanctioned out of 'state necessity, or in other words, national safety.[100]

[100] Martin, *Impressment of Seamen*, 174.

Similar criticism could have been directed at other contemporary commentaries, and at visual culture which promulgated negative interpretations of impressment and related in complex ways to audiences' knowledge, values and anxieties. This is evident in the persistent discourse about it,[101] even after it fell into disuse during the nineteenth century, officially 'suspended in peacetime' in 1871, 'suspended in wartime' in 1879 and abolished in the Army 1881.[102] Interestingly, it was never formally abolished in the British Royal Navy.[103] The fact that the royal prerogative to enlist subjects to defend the realm remained meant that impressment retained its contentious and fearful presence in the national consciousness and its subsequent significance in British history.[104]

[101] Thomas Hodgkin, 'Abolition of Impressment', *Edinburgh Review*, October 1824, vol. 41, 154-81; J. R. McCulloch, *The Principles of Political Economy*, Edinburgh, 1849, 385-6. Discourses, such as these later articles, were predominantly in opposition to the measure and came not just from libertarians and radicals, but also on grounds of political and commercial economy, imperial free trade and government economy. It was alleged to have forced mercantile wages to rise to artificially high levels, while also having in itself a high running cost with the press gangs, regulating officers, marines, tenders and transporting of men, before their eligibility was even fully guaranteed with medical examination. According to Hodgkin's calculations, probably with exaggeration to impact upon the government, it cost over £300,000 pa for the Impress Service and tender, and £400,000 for the marines.

[102] Lloyd, *The British Seaman*, 275.

[103] Impressment remained an obsolete power, with politicians keen to avoid the matter. It was never repealed and actually enshrined in statutory form in 1835 and 1853 by allowing the Admiralty residual right to detain seamen in the event of an emergency. 5 and 6 Will IV, c. 24, section 1; 16 and 17 Vict. C 69, section 10. For further discussion of Impressment post-French Wars see J. S. Bromley, 'Away from Impressment: The Idea of a Royal Naval Reserve, 1696-1859', in A. C. Duke and C. A. Tamse, eds, *Britain and the Netherlands: VI, War and Society*, the Hague, 1977, 175. Martin, *Impressment of Seamen*, 174.

[104] This power was enshrined in statutory form in 1835 and 1853 by allowing Admiralty residual right to detain seamen in an emergency. The specific Acts were 5 and 6 Will. IV, c. 24, section 1, 16 and 17 Vict. C 69, section 10.

Chapter Two

JACK TAR:
THE CHARACTER, IDENTITY AND RECREATION OF THE COMMON SEAMAN

2. 1 Introduction

This chapter deals with men once they joined the Navy, whether through impressment or otherwise, investigating their experiences, behaviour and broader implications in popular, and especially visual, culture. Despite recreation and pleasures constituting a very minor aspect of his existence, limited in time, form and extent, they offered a key references when he or image-makers constructed his identity. The majority of prints represented the idle naval seaman as relatively free, happy and capable, enjoying distinct penchants for alcohol, women, money, transport and sociability. The focus here will, therefore, not be upon the tar actively serving, but his relatively brief and rare rest afloat and ashore. This study of the customs and escapades for which seamen were notorious will lay the foundations upon which the thesis will develop. Having addressed the subject of recruitment and its representation, the common sailors' identities and stereotypes relating to their binding service will be explored. Furthermore, through analysis of specific images related to contemporary discourses, I will consider for whom and for what purpose images of the tar were produced.

Individuals, sailors' social, religious, political, educational and occupational circumstances were distinct, and would have informed in particular the service experiences within, and especially outside, active duty. Yet, their naval employment was a common and collective feature that influenced many aspects of their lives. From the moment of enlistment, through whatever means, a varying degree of coercive discipline informed the practical and conceptual experiences of the common man of the Navy, nurtured as he was by the institution and its authoritarian officers. And so, the naval man was born. But, individually, and even in groups, they were diverse and, as such, posed challenges to image-makers. Visual depictions of the figure of the tar were

often stereotypically reductive. Nevertheless, those involved in print culture would have appreciated and drawn on the diversity of individual seaman.

My thesis is based upon the notion that the representational figure of Jack Tar in contemporary discourse, and even historiography (from which my own work is no exception), is a construct. This character's attitudes and behaviour towards money, drink, sex, women, morals and broader society were of particular prominence and pertinence to seamen themselves at leisure and to their audiences in real life and visual culture – but also to print audiences. The subsections of this chapter will address each of these issues and explore cross-cutting themes of identity, oppression, notions of British liberty and of established social order. This chapter demonstrates that images of the characteristic idle tar not on active duty offer significant insights into contemporary interpretations of such a naval serviceman's identities and his associations with important debates.[1]

2. 2 The Existence Construed for the Navy's Real and Represented Men

A man's existence and identity in the Navy at His Majesty's service in the largest workforce of Britain was ultimately as a working member of an exclusive seafaring society.[2] The naval ship constituted his place of employment; he was a vital yet dispensable cog in its workings. Typically anonymous and oppressed, he was part of a mass labour force, with his naval service constituting a persistently regulated and arduous existence. Seafaring was the principal dictate of shipboard life and this took up much of a tar's time in the form of continual, intermittent 'watches' which prevented any lengthy period of recuperation.[3] The men also had to obey the disciplinary regime

[1] For a discussion of these negative characteristics of the sailor see Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, Cambridge, 1987, 162; Quilley, 'Duty and Mutiny', in Shaw, ed., *Romantic War*, 82-84, 91-99. An example of the notorious negative stereotype of the tar in the past is that persisted through the eighteenth century and even to this day is exemplified by Daniel Defoe's censure in 1725, 'Tis their way to be violent in all their motions. They swear violently, drink punch violently, spend their money when they have it violently… in short, they are violent fellows, and ought to be encouraged to go to sea, for Old Harry can't govern them on shoar.' Daniel Defoe, cited in Peter Earle, *Sailors: English Merchant Seamen, 1650-1775*, Methuem, 1998, 13.

[2] During the course of Britain's war against France, her Royal Navy expanded to an unprecedented manpower of over 140,000. Stone, ed., *An Imperial State at War: 1675-1815*, 166.

[3] The responsibility of maintaining the safe and appropriate seafaring of the ship was divided among the relevant members of the crew (excluding idlers) usually split into two or sometimes three teams,

of the naval ship and carry out weekly tasks on specific days, including washing, boat and sail exercise, making and mending, gun maintenance and cleaning.[4] Beyond this working routine, all other aspects of existence - diet, rest, religious practice, and recreational activities - were subject to the strict controls of the military institution to which a serviceman belonged. His natural, social and working environment was characterised by danger, discomfort, uncertainty and hierarchical power relations.

The commercial power, leisure and pleasures of the typical seaman were important aspects of his identity and means of social definition beyond the dictates of the Navy. Nevertheless, this unparalleled national institution to which he belonged, with its inherent hardship, regulation, exploitation, suspicion and segregation, dominated his existence. This was even more so when granted temporary 'liberty', which released the pressures borne of service. His recreational activities, conducted with exuberance for life and near reckless abandonment, were most indicative in actuality and visual representation of his characteristics and experiences. As the veteran seaman Leech avowed, 'bad as things are at sea, they are worse in port.'[5] The seamen ashore were subject to negative interpretations in a society that lacked or withheld appropriate consideration for sailors' circumstances. The tar, particularly in various satirical prints, was derisively construed as duped, fleeced, spendthrift, ostracised, potentially radical, depraved, licentious, womanising, immoral and a threat to the established social order. Indeed, his characteristic penchants for money, transport, alcohol, women and the idle life were common when cast into a leisure context, whether in actuality or imagery viewed by print audiences.

William Ward's mezzotint engravings after Thomas Stothard, *Sailors in Port* and *The Sailor's Return* (16 April 1798) [Fig. 19] depicted two scenarios in which a tar typically found himself when granted leisure from his predominantly working existence at His Majesty's naval service. It was in such circumstances that the Navy's men could enjoy

depending on the size of the ship. Those within each watch were assigned duties appropriate to their skills and specific to their allocated station on deck. Watches alternated every four hours, apart from those of two hours between four and eight o'clock in the evening, and were timed by bells rung every half hour so that eight bells meant the end of a shift. Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 196, 195-229.

[4] Laffin listed these weekly tasks as a timetable specific to each day, from Monday to Saturday, while Sunday was more relaxed for rest. Laffin, *Jack Tar*, 111-2.

[5] Leech, *Thirty Years from Home, or a Voice from the Main Deck*, reprint of 1856 editon, London, 1999, 112.

the greatest sense of liberty and self-expression, released from the pressures of their seafaring and fighting duty and with less fear of punitive discipline and away from maritime dangers. But, whether, still bound to ship or on land in dock, port-city, coastal community or further afield, the interpretation of the tar always bore naval associations in relation to broader society and its persistent preconceptions. In the first image, confined to ship on deck the sailors are set amidst female company with music and dance, while at anchorage in port for supplies, rest and recreation. The second print portrays an individual tar loyally returning home to his welcoming wife and children as if assuring by his presence domestic happiness and moral responsibility. These designs reference the naval seamen's various and ambiguous conventions of sociable drinking, wage-spending and familial obligations, while nonetheless carefully avoiding explicitly negative specifics of such cultural actualities. Yet, despite a stereotypical and "corporate" existence, the tar had individual attitudes, experiences and identities that were not necessarily stable or universal, but diverse, changing and unpredictable. The distinct location in which the sailor is set played on the significance of their liminal and changing circumstances of environment and company.

When the tar went ashore he wore his best dress, typically including white pantaloons, a blue jacket with pearl or metal buttons, silk neckerchief, straw hat and buckled shoes. This was a far cry from his practical, inexpensive and well-worn working garb, thus giving little impression of the causes of shipboard grievances of discomfort, hard work and poor pay. Attire was a most distinct characteristic of identity, particularly social status and profession. The tar's peculiar short blue jacket and loose pantaloons (in contrast to landsmen's long overcoat and tight breeches) were worn to allow for the agile movement and operational dangers to which he was prone. It can be deduced that for the naval man, parading the port streets in costume on foot, horseback or carriage, often with shipmates, was a way to proudly and defiantly assert identity and membership in an exclusive maritime fraternity. The tars' dress-consciousness could also be related to his all too brief opportunities to spend his wages when ashore and his ostentatious desire to impress others with the luxury and frivolity these financed.

External factors significantly defined the naval man's independence, especially in terms of movements, customs and appearance, irrespective of whether he or his audience were cognisant of this. The identity of the common sailor was, understandably, influenced

by extensive and varied discourse about the Navy and its stereotypical Jack Tar. The pressure of his own and others' expectations of what he should be like placed him in a dialogical and anticipatory exchange, oscillating and overlapping between how he was in actuality and in representations. Among fellow shipmates, the tar would have sought to gain acceptance and prove himself worthy of his respected status as a 'genuine man-of-war's-man'.[6] Ashore he responded, often too receptively, to the stereotypical role ascribed to his cultural character as typically jolly, foolish, drunk, womanizing, spend-thrift and reckless.[7] This perpetuated the ambivalence, ignorance and exaggeration inherent in his popular characterisation that he often exploited self-consciously for his own purpose. His honest, foolish and plain persona was commonly used to imply, advantageously, sometimes disingenuously, yet often convincingly, his innocence. This was evident when expressing grievances, defending himself following insubordination or mutiny, and denying radical sympathies where it was employed to assert his politically patriotic, loyalist stance, while pleading social vulnerability.[8] Examples in discourse included prints of the sailor in court by Roberts (*c.*1803), Giles Grinagain (2 January 1804) and Isaac Cruikshank (*c.*1807), to be discussed in the next chapter. Ultimately, the tar's identities bore significance not simply in naval representation, but also in real life.

2. 3 The Distinct Characteristics and Identity of Jack Tar

The prevailing characteristic of the tar's actual and representational identity was his distinctiveness (even his perceivable strangeness). Geographically, the Navy's men were predominantly removed from most of landlubber society, being out at sea or

[6] Leech, *Thirty Years*, 65.
[7] See Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy*, 9, 29; Isaac Land, 'Domesticating the Maritime: Culture, Masculinity, and Empire in Britain, 1770-1820', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 1999, 224.
[8] For example, in 1779 one author purporting to be a seamen complaining about the conduct of the war with America wrote 'it may be asked, who am I, that thus set up myself to instruct my Countrymen. I answer, a plain, open-hearted Sailor, zealous from the Glory of my King and Country.' *A Letter to the Right Honourable The Earl of Sandwich, on the Present State of Affairs. By a Sailor*, London, 1779, 5. Richard Parker, ringleader of the mutiny of the fleet at the Nore in 1797, began his defence at his trial with, 'As I have been at sea from my youth, I therefore hope nothing will be expected from me but a narrative of plain facts. I cannot dress up my defence in the pompous language of a lawyer; could I have procured assistance, I might have been enabled to have expressed myself with more propriety.' Job Sibly, *The Trial of Richard Parker … Taken in Shorthand on board the Neptune*, Boston, 1797, 39.

anchored at its margins. Wartime service was increasingly seen in sacrificial terms, as the negative aspects of pressed, mutilated, veteran and lost men became more apparent. The naval man existed in a realm unknown and feared by most. By 1804, an estimated one in five of the British population who was able to bear arms was engaged in some form of military service and servicemen, particularly tars, were familiar and topical. However, their fellow Britons were unable or, arguably, uncomfortably reluctant to envisage the harsh peculiarities endured by such men. This contributed to the prevailing ignorance regarding the experiences that informed Jack's characterisation as 'strange'.

Making a Sailor an Odd Fellow by Isaac Cruikshank after Woodward (1 December 1812) [Fig. 20] depicted a surly weather-beaten, naval-dressed, nautical-speaking and defiant tar, who is perceivably 'odd' amidst a room full of members of an 'ancient and honourable society'. The sneers and grimaces towards 'Mr. Benjamin Block' dressed in his naval attire allude to the wary suspicion and condemnation with which he was typically interpreted. Yet, this portrayal of the stereotypical tar amidst his present company subtly concedes that if he were among his fellow shipmates instead, he would appear normal. By extension, it was the society he was being set before that made him 'Odd' and his mistrustful awareness of this implied the 'society's' illicit and deceptive nature. Indeed, the surrounding demon-like figures suggest that other social groups were just as, if not more, strange and potentially threatening as this odd and outnumbered sailor. The frowning and assertive tar's exclamation (in a speech-bubble) explicitly asserts this:

> Avast my Hearties, - before I've proceeded any further on the voyage let me know what course you are steering – if you mean to frighten a British sailor with your goggle eyes, and queer faces you are d-dly mistaken-besides it appears to me that you have got masks on which is like fighting under false colours, and that wont do for an English Jack Tar!

The self-conscious sailor is stereotypically portrayed as defiant, uncouth, macho, arguably brave, potentially vulnerable to duping by other social groups, vigilantly suspicious and as having authoritative conviction. As a particular and humorous construct, this depicted sailor reassuringly acknowledged print-buyers' preconceptions of potentially subversive social groups, specifically in relation to the Navy's men. Such anxieties are dismissed as ridiculous, reassuringly mocking the insecurity of the

favourable socio-political established order.[9] Nevertheless, the men of the Navy lived an unparalleled existence and were undeniably, and understandably, although not uniformly, defined in relation to, and by, dominant, civilian, land-based, especially socially elite, audiences. James Scott qualified their interpretation as:

> beings who decidedly differ from the rest of our species. There are many prominent distinctions in their character, but they cannot be fairly judged by the common standard of other men.[10]

Notably, as part of a Captain's *Recollections* published in 1834, this was an account that claimed more expert insight regarding an individual who remained ambiguous to his contemporary audiences.

The socio-economic existence and status of men in the Navy were formative and informative of their behaviour, dress, language, attitudes, pleasures and values. The lavish naval attire, nautical and profane vernacular and clannish socializing with shipmates were typical and so too were comparative distinctions made in relation to predominantly land-based civilian society. However, such identifications as 'strange' could have exacerbated the sailor's defiance and exclusivity – qualities that his maritime fraternity and also the Nation took pride in. In eighteenth-century Georgian Britain, the typical man of the Navy was 'neither wholly foreign nor obviously domestic'.[11] Even the maritime hero Horatio Nelson had appreciated that 'all seemed strange' with regard to the naval ship and its men.[12]

The perception of the tar as a potential problem for society was even more apparent in actuality and representation when set ashore, returning after lengthy absence at sea. On release as granted leave, demobilised with the cessation of warfare, injured, punitively dismissed, pensioned-off or even as a deserter the seaman faced the problems of attempting to reintegrate himself back into civilian society. The seafaring naval ship was construed among contemporary Britons as containing, controlling and directing its

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[9] Other threats posed to the status quo by various demographics and environmental factors will be discussed later in this chapter and throughout this thesis. Issues of radicalism, non-conformism, debt, depravity, crime and other aspects of disorder among society, naval or otherwise, are covered.

[10] J. Scott, *Recollections of a Naval Life*, London, 1834, vol. 1, 72-3.

[11] Isaac Land, *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor 1750-1850*, Basingstoke and New Haven, 2008, 20.

[12] At just twelve years old, Nelson took his first taste as a newcomer to the 'wooden world' in which 'all seemed strange', 'I could not think what world I was in, whether among spirits of devils … different language and strange expressions of tongue … I thought myself in a dream, never properly awake.' James Harrison, *The Life of the Right Honourable Horatio Lord Viscount Nelson*, London, 1806, vol. 1, 12.

men's potentially threatening power and utilising their aggression to fight the elements and enemies. This alleviated audiences' sense of fear, and also of guilt at the exclusion and suffering of the tar. For example, the reformist Henry Fielding's description of the ocean 'as the hospitable friend to the wretched, who opens her arms to receive those whom the rest of the world have discarded,' is loaded with negative connotations of ostracism, rejection and sacrifice.[13] Contemporary discourses were generally more limited, ambiguous and ambivalent in interpreting the tar where any attempt to define the Navy's common men, especially as 'strange', involved problematic questions of validity and causality.

Odd Fellow [Fig. 20] played upon the extensive and unfair wariness, marginalisation, even ostracism with which the tar was interpreted among various audiences. In this satirical print, it is unclear who his surrounding company were, and of which society they were members, with clarification disconcertingly withheld from both the defiantly demanding tar, and anxious print-buyers. The obvious connotation was of radicalism, due to the symbolism of the ten grotesquely caricatured fellows wearing 'bonnets rouges', symbolic of French revolutionary san-culottes and gathering as a seditious group of illicit radicals. They are depicted ceremonially assembled around a table with a chairman seated in a high-backed chair smoking a long pipe, considering applicants and proposed membership. Cruikshank has presented the tar interpreted as 'odd' by none other than radicals among who he finds himself. This offered, in a sense, a reassurance for audiences and as a back-handed compliment to the tar who is the familiarly assertive stereotype. Indeed, Cruikshank appropriately depicted the sailor resenting being 'made an odd fellow'.

Cruikshank's tar's naivety clearly related to audiences' anxieties regarding the reference to non-conformist and radical religion and politics, such as those of Methodists and seditious Corresponding Societies. As will be discussed, the naval men's typical devil-may-care defiance was attributed to their plain attitudes, especially towards superstition (of the dead on board ship) and blasphemy, all of which was potentially disconcerting for their relatively conservative audiences. Ignorance was a

[13] Henry Fielding, *Remarks on Military Flogging, its cause and effects, with some Considerations on the Propriety of is Entire Abolition*, London, 1835, Section A, 5.

vital aspect of Jack Tar as construct, both for individual seamen themselves and for various real and depicted audiences. For example, Rowlandson's *The Sailor, and the Field Preacher* (25 July 1805) [Fig. 21] commented satirically upon fears regarding religious faith among naval men. The preacher's public exclamation 'I hear a voice of Heaven' perplexes the tar leaning over a parapet, who has not heard it, despite being stood at an elevated position. Reassuringly, the sailor was not following devoutly the preaching. Popular discourse tended to construct seamen's faith as uneducated and unsophisticated. Rowlandson juxtaposed the straightforward reason of the unintimidated sailor with the zealous and solemn evangelism of the open-air preacher guiding his flock. The subtle derision was, therefore, not only, or even predominantly, of the sailor but equally of evangelicals and non-Conformists, specifically Methodists.[14] Furthermore, given that such religious sects were feared to target the poor and working classes (including seamen) the subject was uncomfortably pertinent for Anglican society. Undeniably, discourse about the religious inclinations and significance of the Navy's men was complicated. It was typically heavily informed by prevailing preconceptions concerning the Church of England, as well as monarchical, conservative and naval Nation-State. Goodall's account offers valuable insight:

> Sailors, it is said, are not the most serious of mortals [but] there is much of fallacy lurking under this assumption [as they possess] strong foundation of simple, honest faith [I have] never met an infidel among seamen – certainly not among those who had been afloat for any length of time.[15]

As implied by this quote, and the print discussed above, the typical sailor's thoughts, attitudes and behaviour, specifically religious, were heavily informed by his naval experiences during active service and even when released physically from duty. In *Odd Fellow* [Fig. 20], as well as *Field Preacher* [Fig. 21], the sailor's distinction from his surrounding company was positive, assuring audiences that radicalism and any fears of his vulnerability or taking to it, were ridiculous. Indeed, these satirical prints suggest that his complex and problematic character did not constitute a serious threat.

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[14] See Misty G. Anderson, *Imagining Methodism in Eighteenth-Century Britain: Enthusiasm, Belief, and the Borders of the Self,* Rhode Island, 2012.

[15] Daniel Goodall, *Salt Water; incidents in the life of Daniel Goodall, Seaman and Marine,* Inverness, 1860, 50-1.
Available from: www.archive.org/details/saltwatersketch00goodgoog. Accessed on 1 September 2011.

In imagery, Jack Tar was interpreted as a popular symbol of naval and national order, strength, defiance, fair-dealing, fellowship and loyalty. This is furthermore supported by the similarity and even transference in visual representation of the quintessential common seaman and typical Englishman, John Bull.[16] An example of this is found in Gillray's *John Bull Offering Little Boney Fair Play* (2 August 1803) [Fig. 22], which depicts the protagonist with red-face, muscularity, striped pantaloons, white stockings, black hat, checked neckerchief and defiant pose standing up to his knees in seawater. These visual associations divert from the title's identification of this stereotypical Briton, and correspond more with another national construct, specifically the naval man.

The normalisation of the tar was influenced, even qualified, by circumstances of interpretation. This is evident in a contemporary Magistrate's note that a landlubber within a town 'chiefly inhabited by sailors', such as Wapping or Portsmouth, was apt 'to suspect himself in another country'.[17] Indeed, the Navy's men were predominantly removed from mainstream, civilian, society, and when infrequently returning ashore, typically en-masse, they appeared prominently, and often uninhibitedly, as belonging to a close-knit maritime community. Their actualities and interpretations were variously interlinked; the former necessitated his physical exclusion from society that in turn enabled his accepted cultural construct within it. Such interpretative manipulation is exemplified in Rowlandson's *The Sailor's Journal* (20 May 1802) [Fig. 23]. This depicted the tar and his companion removed from their distinct and potentially hazardous working shipboard conditions, and, indeed, from any broader society. Reassuringly for the audience, and thus the printmaker's commercial success, the efficacy of the containment and pacification of the Navy's men is implied. They appear almost as if in a vacuum, set in a non-descript interior, a scene suggestive of their limited social-integration in relation to their land-based counterparts, including print-buying audiences. The two sailors are portrayed together enjoying simple and inclusive

[16] John Bull was a personification of England or the typical Englishman, originating as a definition in Britain's late eighteenth century, much like Jack Tar, from the name of a character representing the English nation in John Arbuthnot's satire *Law is a Bottomless Pit; or, the History of John Bull*, 1712. He was visually represented as a stout, red-faced and defiant, usually as a farmer with attributes of a top hat and high boots. See Jeannine Surel, 'John Bull', Raphael Samuel, ed., *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity, Vol. I: History and Politics*, London, 1989, 3-25, specifically 10-11.

[17] J. Fielding, *A Brief Description of the Cities of London and Westminster*, London, 1776, 28-9.

companionship and sociability with the common pleasures of drinking and literature – as indicated by the bowl of punch between them on the table and the one reading his journal to the other. Thus, the men of the Navy appear far from threatening, but rather as appealingly 'normal' and unproblematic to audiences. However, Rowlandson kept their distinct naval characteristics, in dress and speech, to support an identifiable and familiar stereotype, and its presumed connotations for his clientele. Continually present were underlying implications of subversion and radicalism, with disproportionate number of images, constructing and perpetuating preconceptions. Yet, the very existence, let alone representational appeal, of *The Sailor's Journal*, conveys a fundamentally positive interpretation of common men of the Navy.

Jack Junk embarking on a Cruize!! (1 March 1807) [Fig. 24] engraved by Isaac Cruikshank after Woodward's design also selectively represented the recreational activity of the common naval man. This image even more emphatically appeals to audiences' knowledge, humour and sense of superiority. Here a tar is depicted mounting a horse incorrectly so as to face backwards. His notorious eccentric defiance of social norms is further expressed by his retort to the stableman's derision and a jockey's bemusement – 'I don't mount this here Horse the right way!! You lubberly swab you don't know the way I'm a going.' This scenario demonstrated the typical unselfconsciousness of the jocular tar, whatever his circumstances. He was commonly unsophisticated and uninhibited, especially when let loose on land to engage in inept horse and carriage riding, drunkenness, spend-thriftness, promiscuity and debauchery. As a whole, tars displayed 'all the roughness and wit peculiar to their profession'.[18] The etching played upon the spectacle of recklessness and ineptitude with the principally elite landlubber's mode of transport, appropriately distinguishing Jack from his audiences on land. An officer recalled how such a scene made his colleagues 'ready to die with laughing.'[19] Laughter and recreation, especially in civilian society ashore, were apparent as prerequisites for the tar to be acceptable for image-makers and audiences.

[18] George Landmann, *Adventures and Recollections of Colonel Landmann*, London, 1852, vol. 2, 259-63. Such comical and carefree behaviour can be seen in relation to Freudian theories of 'unconscious elaboration', which enabled a return to an infantile stage in which pleasure can be regained. Sigmund Freud, *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious*, authorised English translation by A. A. Brill, London, c.1922, 150, 262, 326.

[19] Freud's belief that laughter masks anxiety and disorder is relevant to such amusement at the expense of the tar, particularly when idle, relatively happy and free. 'Remarks on Board His Majesty's Ship *Unite* of 40 Guns. Written historically by Robert Mercer Wilson's Journal', in Henry George Thursfield, ed., *Five Naval Journals*, publications of the Navy Records Society, London, 1951, vol. 91, Article 14, 240.

Fundamentally, the tar's naval life, albeit with temporary and physical relief from active duty, meant he was not, nor could be, fully comprehended by print audiences. As Rodger aptly concluded, 'superficially familiar, the seaman remained to his contemporaries profoundly strange. They knew him only on land, out of his element.'[20] His counterparts were unable, or unwilling, to comprehend or acknowledge his often adverse naval actualities. Consequently, they had limited appreciation of his peculiarities that were apparent when ashore. As Robert Southey exclaimed in a poem of 1799, 'Ah! You lubberly landsmen don't know when you're well;/ Hadst thou known half the hardships of which I can tell!'[21] The contemporary mariner, John Nicol, noted:

> Did those on shore only experience half the sensations of a sailor at perfect liberty after being seven years on board ship without a will of his own, they would not blame his eccentricities, but wonder he was not more foolish.[22]

Such interpretations of the 'strange' tar ashore, even from seamen themselves, indicated the disjunction between his actual and his depicted experiences.

2. 4 Jack's Pocket-Money

The tar's financial attitudes and experiences were characteristic of his naval occupation, particularly the unpredictability of his service in terms of liberty as well as mortal danger. Their lives were in various senses taken by the naval service to which they were bound and in which they risked meeting their mortal end. This did not encourage the common serviceman's thoughts and habits to be especially predisposed towards valuing money. Predominantly from relatively poor working-class backgrounds and taking up employment without necessarily much degree of preference or contentment, financial aspiration or expectation of due recompense were far from a tar's mind. Economy and prudence were not characteristics of average seamen. They were little concerned with saving money, which was typically received only as coins when paid-

[20] N. A. M. Rodger, *Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy*, London, 1988, 15.
[21] 'Ah! You lubberly landsmen don't know when you're well;
Hadst thou known half the hardships of which I can tell!
The sailor has no place of safety in store-
From the tempest at sea, to the press-gang on shore!
When Roguery rules all the rest of the earth,
God be thanked in this corner I've got a good birth.'
Robert Southey, *Poems by Robert Southey. [Three lines from Akenside]*, Boston, 1799, 66.
[22] John Nicol, *The Life and Adventures of John Nicol, Mariner*, Edinburgh, 1822, 32.

off, to be immediately, and frivolously, spent. With a hard and unpredictable existence, sailors, somewhat understandably, lived exuberantly, bearing little consideration to expense when given the opportunity to enjoy leisure. As such, their approach to money as the keystone of life in a commercial capitalist society of modern Britain was distinct. They seemed unable and unwilling to take a firm grasp of their finances, literally and conceptually. Future funds were a luxury, or fancy, not easily afforded by the tar who struggled to imagine surviving the service to see retirement or pension.

> One may wish for their sakes that they knew the value of money better. […] Sailors seldom arrive at the age of reflection until they are past the meridian of life, and when it is almost too late to lay by anything considerable to make them comfortable in their old age.[23]

Indeed, as this contemporary lament from Captain Frederick Hoffman's journal exemplifies, the sailor was conventionally financially deficient. He was widely perceived to be foolish, frivolous and spending excessively.

Nonetheless, seamen's handling of finances was not necessarily universally troublesome. *The Sailor and the Banker*, a hand-coloured etching by Rowlandson after Woodward (28 October 1799) [Fig. 25] asserted seamen's more wholesome approach to money in its portrayal of a submission of a 'draught for twenty pounds'. Such a large sum would not have been any seaman's own pay or savings, but that amassed and entrusted to him as an individual representative of a collective. This scenario referred to the practice among all ranks of naval shipmen to subscribe portions of their wages to the Bank of England, and related more broadly to the purchasing of government bonds endorsing the Nation-State's economy and the war it funded. In this respect, not only was the tar represented as financially responsible for saving rather than spending his hard-earned pay, but also as patriotically virtuous in his support of Britain's banking system and foreign policy geared towards current warfare. Used in prints and on silk scarves, this visual image of the serviceman being a stakeholder of such bonds functioned as 'adverts' to promote bonds to potential audiences. This image clearly bore great historical significance. It implicitly acknowledged the financial, as well as physical, sacrifice some naval men made to wartime powers, specifically through bond-

[23] F. Hoffman, *A Sailor of King George: The Journals of Captain Frederick Hoffmann. Royal Navy, 1793-1814,* London, 1901, 32-3.

investment. Indeed, it is the first example of the use of an active serviceman being visually used to pressurise viewers to make some financial sacrifice, through giving money to fund the expenses of war.[24] The tar's statement 'but don't be downhearted - you shant stop on my account – I'II give you two days to consider of it', acknowledges that such a financial gesture, was not considered lightly by seamen themselves, bankers and general society. His seemingly plain and honest approach, appreciating the possible suspicion prompted by his proposition, and his meek facial expression, might have been a disingenuous pretence to be the accepted, even lovable, rogue who was the stereotype of Jack. Although not explicitly shifty-looking, the gold watch chain showing from his right pocket could connote thievery, or on the other hand a prize. This somewhat ambiguous print indicates the ambivalence of the tars' financial sense, which was appreciated by some seamen themselves and their audiences, albeit to a limited extent. Ultimately, treatment of money was as diverse as the very character and identities of the naval men themselves.

Julius Ibbetson's *An Unmarried* and *Married Sailor's Return*, (*c.*1800) [Fig. 26 and 27] referenced the varied nature of such men's spending when paid-off, contrasting their implied moral and financial responsibility. Clearly, in actuality, as well as in visual culture, the issue of tar's pay was complex and potentially problematic. *The Married Sailor's Return* [Fig. 27] depicted him as the loyal and breadwinning family-man, bringing home a large purse of coins lain on the table. The fact that from 1795 the Navy introduced a system enabling seamen to have some of their wages deducted at source and paid to their chosen dependents indicated that there existed a popular demand among shipmates to exert some financial control and responsibility. This could have continued for some when granted leave.[25] As discussed above, some seamen,

[24] A case in point was the twentieth century war tanks, which were such a novelty that they were used extensively for propoganda purposes at home, raising morale and bringing the war home to the people. For many people, the newsreel film *The Battle of the Ancre in* early 1917 was their first sight of a tank. The strange new weapon was brought to the people at home in an effort to raise funds for the war. See http://www.1914-1918.net/tanks.htm Chris Baker. Accessed on 6 August 2012.

[25] The seamen's dependents typically consisted of wives, children and mothers, and they were to collect their allowance at a pre-arranged location with the necessary documentation, usually consisting of a declaration of consent written by the seaman identifying his dependent and the amount to be allowed to her. For example, Thomas England's mother had to produce, every time she went to the custom house at Deptford to collect her money, a certificate which stated that 'Thomas England, now serving as an *Ordinary Seaman* on board His Majesty's ship *Indus* having declared that he has a mother living at Deptford in the County of Kent … WE do hereby direct you to pay or cause to be paid to Ann England living in the place and county aforesaid, at the end of every twenty-eight days from the 1st day of May one thousand eight hundred and 13 the sum of eleven shillings and eight pence, being at the rate of five-

particularly those without dependents, even took measures of bonds, subscriptions or donations. Such virtuous actions, including charitable gifts, could have been informed directly by their naval experiences, not only in terms of sympathetic paternalism towards those they deemed deserving, but also, more subversively, their own heavy consciences that were particularly felt when not employed in fighting or seafaring but at leisure, probably ashore, when more involved in social welfare. They sometimes gave to children whom they hoped might grow up to become valuable sailor boys for the Navy, possibly appreciating that often such young orphans or paupers could be the illegitimate product of the promiscuity typical of seamen.[26] This was referenced in an anonymous mezzotint etching illustration to a song, published by Laurie & Whittle (13 December 1802). *The Poor Little Child of a Tar* [Fig. 28] depicted a paid-off seaman recognising with surprise his son William who sits in tattered clothes, begging on a doorstep on the right. The future plight into which the men of the Navy could be cast was appreciated by society. Mutilated veterans became an increasingly apparent sight during this era of war and pension funds such as the Chatham Chest were increasingly pertinent.[27]

Seamen also had a system of posthumous financial responsibility, in the form of a Will and Power. This document, usually made out to seamen's dependants, was an entitlement to their wages, prize-money, and any belongings, in case they should die. Indeed, survival in the Navy was woefully uncertain and ex-service subsistence plainly insufficient, bearing in mind the problems of finding further employment. The making of a 'last will and testament' is the subject of *A Sailor's Will* (25 May 1805) [Fig. 29] etched by Rowlandson after Woodward's design. Here the tar is portrayed bequeathing all his money to Poll and his wooden leg to his messmate. With sentimentality as well as satire, the image captures the plain, but nonetheless admirable, consideration that

pence per day.' TNA ADM 27/19. Similarly, John Booth, yeoman of the sheets on board the frigate *Amazon*, filled out a form in September 1804 so that his wife Sarah would collect half of his wages (the maximum allowed for a petty officer) from the Collector of Customs at Hull where she lived and instructed her on 21 September 1805 in response to her letter telling him of the stoppage of his half-pay to 'let them see this letter for there is no stoppage ordered for the ship.' RNM manuscripts 1992/442.

[26] Allegedly at least one sailor on his rare visit ashore always changed a sovereign into three-penny bits for distribution among the children he met. L. S. Dee (pseudonym), *The Navy and Army Illustrated*, vol. 9, cited in Laffin, *Jack Tar*, 20.

[27] The Chest was a fund set up to pay pensions to disabled seamen. It experienced a substantial increase in the number of pensioners during the Napoleonic Wars, rising to 5,205 in 1802. The following year it was merged with Greenwich Hospital. C. G. Lewin, *Pensions and Insurance before 1800 - A Social History*, London, 2003, 216-243.

seamen were capable of demonstrating for those they cared about. In circumstances less favourable or foreseen the seaman could be forced to sign his Will and Power when arrested for debts to avoid a sentence in a debtor's prison. This financial safeguard was often what creditors intended when selectively encouraging the frivolous tar's excessive spending.

It is worth acknowledging here important circumstances that could have informed, qualified and explained the tar's notoriety as spend-thrift and debt-ridden. Presented with likely and unpredictable danger of death in combat, seafaring and even when idle, seamen often bore a strong, bleak and reckless sense of their own mortality and challenging emotional and psychological hardship. Such a situation was conducive to financial vulnerability. Notably, as well as schemes for deductions from wages at source, whether for subscriptions, savings, naval purchases or even fines, they were also guaranteed welfare benefits including food, lodgings, medical treatment, clothes and injury compensation. Given such management, it is little wonder the Navy's men received their actual pay pennies with simple excitement, treating them as 'pocket-money' for spending frivolously. Careful saving for future needs was not a priority. Instead, the tar typically embarked on a spree of hedonism and recklessness.

When not on duty at His Majesty's naval service, the tar still had significant commercial exchanges with, for example, clothing, riding, alcoholic drinking and women. While the Navy fundamentally defined the existence of such men, it was typically not the employment or pay itself but the recreational recompense that had the greatest significance for their self-expression and satisfaction. It was not in itself the money, or 'rollar' in lower-deck vernacular, that was treasured but what it afforded, which was not necessarily unambiguously positive. For full recreational pleasure, the Navy's men needed in two necessities: leave from active service and pocketed money in the form of pay and possibly prize-money. This freedom to choose how to spend their time and money in itself was relished by the otherwise oppressed and sensorily-starved tars. It was not uncommon for the men of the Navy to expend, intentionally as Colonel Landmann alleged, 'large sums of hardly-earned prize-money in the least possible time.'[28] Even without prize-money, just wages, they often spent quickly and to excess.

[28] Landmann, *Adventures and Recollections*, 259-63.

Yet, spend-thriftiness was not necessarily the natural predisposition or even intent of the Navy's men who, as discussed above, were able to manage their money with some degree of reason. On leave the idle and moneyed tar, whether spendthrift or not, faced a predatory world of prostitutes, hawkers, sellers, dealers and creditors, all eager to part him from his cash through persuasive and relentless temptation. Duping the tar to ill-spend, whether through exorbitant prices, subtle billing or encouraged debt was satirically alluded to in some images. The motif of the barmaid gleefully chalking up the tar's tally as he obliviously enjoys the free-flowing drink, women and music was included in Rowlandson's *Tavern Scene* (1786) [Fig. 30], *Dispatch or Jack Preparing for Sea* (*c.*1798) [Fig. 31] and *The Sailor's Return* (10 October 1799) [Fig. 32].

The multiple, various and complex commercial exchanges in which the tar was embroiled and his conspicuous consumption can be seen in Charles Williams' portrayal of *Sailors Rigging out Poll* (12 November 1807) [Fig. 33]. This hand-coloured etching depicted two finely dressed naval men in a draper's shop admiring their female companion's fashionable adornment. The paying man, probably a suitor, seems unrestrained with his treats and oblivious to the exorbitant expense. His more astute messmate voices his concern that as paying customers they were being 'cheated […] pretty handsomely' for their purchases and barters with the draper's salesman for a further 'dozen laced Smickels [to] make it even money'. A more subversive aspect of seamen's approach to financial responsibility and dress is traceable as their declining buying-power, as they 'ran out of cash'. The tar would consequently go about disposing 'of every article of clothing which anybody would buy' until returning to duty either ill-clothed or even semi-naked, to don working garb, although not prescribed uniform. Eventually, the whole process would again repeat itself.[29]

Indeed, it was apparent that the men of the Navy commonly and easily ran up substantial debts to sellers, agents and dealers. A contemporary newspaper reported that 'instances have been known where a Seaman has brought home 40l. and in a fortnight after he has been 14l. or 15l. in debt.'[30] Rowlandson satirised the subject of the tar's debt in designs illustrating Alfred Thornton's T*he Adventures of a Post Captain: by a*

[29] Watson, *Narrative of the Adventures of a Greenwich Pensioner*, Newcastle, 1827, 92.
[30] *The Sun*, Saturday, 30 August 1800, Issue 2478. *Albion and Evening Advertiser*, London, Friday, 24 October 1800, Issue 353. Article in 'Thames Police' Section.

Naval Officer, first published in 1817 [Fig. 34]. This depicts a scene of jeering sailors in a rowing boat escaping an angry group of gentleman left on the pier, some of whom are brandishing receipts of debts owed to them. The inscription below - *Callous to the sordid crew… reckless of prayer and menace* - confirmed the immoral implication. William Elmes (fl. 1791-1830) portrayed a more explicitly satirical caricature of the spendthrift seaman in *Jack in a White Squall, amongst Breakers- on the Lee Shore of St Catherines* (16 August 1811) [Fig. 35]. The nautical terminology in the title and the tar's response, was possibly used to consolidate audiences' amusement at, and sense of superiority over, the familiar yet distinct characteristics typical of the naval man in financial strife. To be on the 'Lee Shore' was a seafaring nightmare when the wind pushed the ship towards the coastline, necessitating weighing anchor and weathering the challenge until conditions changed. This was translated here to the situation ashore at St Katherine's, a maritime community in London next to the Tower, rife with seamen on leave. This seaman has no money to pay off his demanding 'breakers', a nautical term for threatening waves used metaphorically to mean the female creditors flanking him. On the right is an aghast landlady who waves a long list of expenses, including 'lodgings' and 'grog' among other things, a barmaid pointing to the mounting tally on the wall, and on the left a syphilitic prostitute wielding a violin as a threat for payment of her services. A ghoulish watchman enters through the doorway on the far left holding a lantern and springing his rattle, coming to settle the disturbance.

Neither seamen themselves nor broader society were ignorant of the tar's financial irresponsibility and the agitation it caused, although it was often construed light-heartedly and almost as a spectacle. This was unsurprisingly evident and perpetuated in visual constructs, such as Rowlandson's *Callous* [Fig. 34] and Elmes' *White Squall* [Fig. 35]. Nevertheless, the anxieties, vulnerability and victimisation associated with the finances of the Navy's men were evidently apparent to the tar and his various audiences. Yet, the detrimental circumstances of debt-ridden Jack were underrepresented, if not excluded, in visual culture. It was far from a fictive or amusing matter that the Navy's men were constantly under threat of financial exploitation by crooked landlubbers who were keen to prey upon his foolishness and fortune. It was not uncommon for civilians, including creditors, to claim commercial ownership of seamen. With valuable seafaring-experience and their Will and Power, there was often some gain to be made from returning them to their naval service or selling them to a

press gang or merchant Captain. Discourse about such subversive practices was marginal, whether on account of commentators' and their commercial audiences' ignorance or, more likely, avoidance. Although these actualities were not explicitly acknowledged in imagery, printed texts confirm that they were apparent. For example, a popular newspaper article of *The Sun*, 30 August 1800 presented:

> Remarks, taken from Mr. Colquhoun's last *Publication*, [which] cannot but prove materially interesting, and particularly to our Nautical Readers: [regarding] two classes of men who are at present great nuisances in the maritime affairs of the River Thames […] Crimps [and] Dealers in Seamen's Wages and Purchasers of Prize-money' [who were the cause] to require an additional degree of protection against that fraud and pillage, and those gross abuses.[31]

The readership, with a certain level of disposable-income, literacy and discernment were predominantly members of the upper-middle class, including naval officers, and had circumstances quite distinct from the seamen. Nonetheless, this victimisation seems to constitute a serious subject of concern. With sympathy and conviction it claimed:

> 'harpies' and 'miscreants' preyed upon 'careless […] unguarded and unprotected' seamen who 'speedily-squandered' their pay until 'suddenly into debt' to be left 'under circumstances greatly to the disadvantage [and] always injurious to their families, and defeating in the result every means which might be established to secure a provision against old age and infirmities.[32]

Negative issues surrounded the naval seamen's experiences, from his conspicuous and even exploited consumerism, to the consequences of their financial irresponsibility. Beyond simply misspent wages it led potentially to debt, violence, crime, arrest and destitution. George Pinckard would not have been alone in his belief that for a tar like himself:

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[31] *The Sun*, Saturday, 30 August 1800, Issue 2478. *Albion and Evening Advertiser*, London, Friday, 24 October 1800, Issue 353. Article in 'Thames Police' Section.
[32] *The Sun*, Saturday, 30 August 1800, Issue 2478. *Albion and Evening Advertiser*, London, Friday, 24 October 1800, Issue 353. Article in 'Thames Police' Section.

> to return, penniless, to his ship, he had much cause to think himself fortunate if an empty purse be the worst consequence of his long wished for ramble ashore.[33]

How or to what end the tar spent his pocket-money was not necessarily a consideration or concern for such individuals. With many financial responsibilities taken care of for him, he was typically content to fritter his cash away during eagerly-anticipated, although brief and unpredictable, leave. He gave little, if any, thought to any consequences beyond instant gratification. Neither savings nor material acquisition were especially valued or sought. Instead, typically meagre, irregular and unguaranteed money received by the tar seemed to burn a hole in his pocket, being spent quickly, frivolously and often to detrimental excess. Irrespective of the extent of the naval men's money, it often led to damaging experiences for such an impatient and naïve consumer. The excitable and vulnerable tar was drawn into social contexts akin to, if not literally, a marketplace that played, or preyed, upon his attitudes and penchants. The common seaman was a loaded figure, in more ways than one. He was utilised for service to His Majesty's Royal Navy and, by extension, the Nation-State and (as a subject of prints) to image's audiences. Yet, as established above, more subversive actualities did exist. Persistent limitations were placed upon his activities and possessions at sea. The image-makers and their commercial audiences preferred the tar's financial circumstances to be light-hearted and they were typically portrayed in this manner with the sailor enjoying respite from work, embracing some degree of liberty through the pleasures of money, alcohol and entertaining, especially female, company.

The visual representation of the tar's rare, unguaranteed and limited recreational extravagance can be seen as a construct and perpetuation of preconceptions among audiences. Britons were presumably hindered from seriously appreciating what hardship, sacrifice and grievances he experienced. A prime example is Rowlandson's watercolour study *Middle-Deck of* Hector, *Man of War* (1784) [Fig. 36]. Idle seamen are depicted 'in port' passing their time through a diverse range of relatively unsophisticated pleasures, including singing, dancing, music playing, smoking, drinking, gaming, flirting with women, writing, reading and chatting. This accorded

[33] George Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies: Written During the Expedition under the Command of the Late Sir Ralph Abercromby*, 1813, 14.

with audiences' views of their typical experiences, identity and behaviour; a rewarding life of camaraderie, adventure and solace for the hard-working, simple and jolly Jack Tar. Yet, the scene conveyed little sense of the discomfort, dankness, claustrophobia, lack of personal space, overcrowding and boredom typical of their shipboard incarceration, even when granted some release from their oppressive service with rest or recreation. This selective visual representation was complemented with the lucid, unpretentious and whimsical style employed by Rowlandson. Similarly, the *Sailors in Argument* (*c.*1802) [Fig. 37] in Piercy Roberts's hand-coloured etching after Woodward, are set in an idealised gundeck. The scene's furnishing would, in reality, have been absent from this artillery area, with the trunks secured within the hold while at sea as potentially hazardous and only possibly accessible when laid up at anchorage, which they *could* be in this print. This setting enjoyed by idle sailors representationally evaded the less than comfortable over-crowding they actually endured.[34]

Whether as experienced-seafarer or mere labourer, the tar was a valuable working cog in the greatest collective defence force that partly fuelled the emerging modern capitalist society. While he was occasionally an idle and moneyed consumer, the responsibilities of his service had persistent bearing upon his existence and he remained constantly exploited by various social groups. Many were eager to part him from his money and gain something from his frivolity and ignorance, possibly as a consequence of his 'strangeness' that allowed him few allies. The Navy and its men were significant market forces in the commercial economy of port-cities, enlivening otherwise sedate places with profitable trade and its accompanying hubbub.[35] General assumptions regarding the naval behaviour when granted pay and leave were part of print culture, as well as of reality. He was observably involved in fun-loving recklessness or commercial consumption. Indeed, these were symptomatic of his complex and underappreciated existence in the warring Navy that caused him to enjoy any release from service and ship 'like an un-caged bird, as gay and quite as thoughtless'.[36] Such opportunity, whether afloat or ashore, was rare, brief and uncertain, and the heady excitement

[34] Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 64.
[35] Dr. George Pinckard described the change he witnessed at Portsmouth with the 'hurry and tumult' that attended the embarkation of Grey's expedition for the West Indies and would 'vanish with the sailing of the fleet, and the town will relapse into its tranquil sameness until the recurrence of a similar occasion.' Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 1813, 32.
[36] Leech, *Thirty Years*, 109.

usually led to reckless repetition and heedlessness of previous scrapes.[37] These are aspects that inform imagery. The paid-off tar's recreational experiences with money, shopping, alcohol, women and other leisure pursuits constituted familiar and often satirical conventions to deal with his peculiarity and troubling strangeness.

2. 5 Leisure on Board Ship

Laughter, a universal human pleasure and tonic, was a common aspect of seamen who were typically happy-go-lucky, jocular, amusing and often cynical. Whether this nature of naval men was genuine, self-consciously role-playing or a stereotype, it was most expressed and visible when they were enjoying some degree of leisure and liberty. As demonstrated, such circumstances were prominent in contemporary visual culture, particularly satirical prints of Jack Tar, often serving to address and alleviate fearful negative associations of their inhibition and unorthodoxy. Commonly linked with seamen's 'jolly Jack' construct was his penchant for alcohol and the sociable habit of its heavy drinking. For example, Richard Newton satirised naval drunkenness in *One Too Many!* (10 November 1792) [Fig. 38]. This depicted a group of seamen frightened by an armoured apparition during an evening's drinking and, story-telling. While this image alluded to the tar's purported love of revelry, drink, exaggerated tales and adventure, it evaded the deeper negative and subversive implications: alcoholism, insanity, gullibility and neglect of duty. Similarly, in Woodward's designs of *Sailors in Argument* [Fig. 37] and *The Welsh Sailor's Mistake or Tars in Conversation* (30 June 1808) [Fig. 39] etched by Rowlandson, they are portrayed as leisurely enjoying banter with tankards at hand. In the former print, men are disagreeing on the subjects of Lord Nelson and King Solomon, while David, a Welsh sailor, amusingly misunderstands his

[37] As in the words of Jack from the favourite maritime ballad of the period, 'The *Arrow* sloop of war', 'We'll spend our money cheerfully, and then again in sea.' *Naval Songs and Ballads*, C. H. Firth, ed., *Naval Songs and Ballads*, London, 1907, 289. The archive abounds with incidents in which the tar risked leading himself into trouble, typically involving drunkenness, knowing the high probability of being caught and punished, although seemingly accepting this as a standard part of their recreational activities when serving in such a disciplinary institution. For example, during allotted idle time, messmates would enjoy below deck heavy drinking of alcohol obtained from bumboat sellers, only to then, when beat to quarters at sunset, to be reported as drunk and subsequently the 'following morning at seven bells received one dozen lashes.' RNM manuscript MSS/73/075. Cited in Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 368. A 'bumboat' was a small vessel carrying provisions for sale to ships in port. The noun originated in the late seventeenth century, with the term originally denoting a scavenger's boat removing refuse, etc., from ships, often also bringing produce for sale. *OED*

shipmate's description of a 'leak' for his similar sounding national vegetable. Here the artist played upon the lower-deck's diversity of knowledge, beliefs, backgrounds, nationalities and sense-of-humour. In so doing, a comical yet reassuring scenario of social harmony, amongst acknowledged differences, is achieved. The confusion, misunderstanding, intolerance, isolation, bullying and social segregation found in such a multicultural working space was evaded. Such scenes were idealisations of the tar amidst his shipmates that endorsed an impression of his contentment that was appropriate for his stereotype. The rarity of depictions of a solitary naval tar, I argue, was symptomatic of the avoidance or ignorance regarding the loneliness, isolation and alienation suffered by such men.[38]

As these images suggest, the tar's leisure time was often passed languidly drinking and conversing. However, often on-board amusements were organised by officers who believed them beneficial to the men's physical and mental wellbeing and as a form of regulation to prevent waywardness.[39] The significance of in-service recreation was acknowledged, specifically in accounts written by old sea veterans nostalgically recalling their trials and tribulations.[40] Specific raucous celebrations to mark naval, historic and national events were important in breaking up the monotony of life at sea, maintaining morale and fostering subordination. Rowlandson's *Nelson recreating with his Brave Tars after the Glorious Battle of the Nile* (20 October 1798) [Fig. 40] suggested such festivity constituted a means of socially unifying all ranks and compensating for everyone's hardship and sacrifice. This was clearly an emphatically positive image, part of the abundant contemporary victory culture referred to in the introduction to the thesis.[41] It avoided the inequality of experiences in this hierarchical and polarized institution in which luxuries, pay, prize-money, fighting and sacrifice

[38] The service of the naval seaman had associated with it a 'patriotic card [as] an 'invaluable resource', yet furthermore, constituted 'a profoundly alienating experience which only confirmed their status as petty subjects of the realm.' Rogers, *Press Gang*, 125.
[39] Goodall remembered how on the *Temeraire* in 1802 'Our captain would pipe all hands to amusement – a certain mode, under proper regulation, of keeping Jack out of mischief, and in health and spirits.' Goodall, *Salt Water Sketches*, 51-2.
[40] Leech account is archetypal. He recalls that 'by such means as these [singing and dancing among a crowd to music] sailors contrive to keep up their spirits amidst constant causes of depression and misery… but for these interludes, life in a man of war, with severe officers, would be absolutely intolerable; mutiny or desertion would mark the voyages of every such ship.' Leech, *Thirty Years*, 72-3.
[41] For reference to contemporary victory culture, see earlier in this thesis, Introduction, 1 – 17.

among officers and their men were not all borne as one and the same, but favoured the superiors.

In fact, revelry was usually a more socially divided affair, and symptomatic of naval exclusivities. Officers, with their more comfortable quarters before the forecastle, more abundant luxuries and superior food and wine, often enjoyed high-spirited dinner parties. Such was the subject of Rowlandson's *The Captain's Going out of the Ship - Gentlemen!* [Fig. 41] reproduced in *The Adventures of Johnny Newcome in the Navy* by John Mitford (1818), a popular publication focusing upon the advantages enjoyed by the naval social elite.[42] In the same work the disorderly antics of the lower deck were illustrated by Rowlandson in *Crossing the Line* (1818) [Fig. 42], a traditional and unsophisticated ceremony held for seamen passing the equator for the first time. As represented, this well-attended spectacle involved humiliation and manhandling for the amusement of more experienced shipmates. Here it appears they are pouring water on the man set in a bucket, but custom has it they were tied at their feet by a rope and dunked into the sea from the yardarm.[43] These depictions indicated the behavioural parallels, and contrasts, between ranks and confirmed such 'temporary relaxation of the bonds of discipline was as much enjoyed by the captain and officers as by the crew themselves.'[44] It is possible that officers' laxity and empathy with their men could go some way to explain why such revelry and drunkenness was condoned within the Navy. Nonetheless, more subversive aspects were avoided, although apparent in non-visual discourse, including the fact that such intoxication and recklessness often amounted to neglect of duty by both parties. Trust was undermined and brutality and crudity found among supposedly distinguished officer-gentlemen as well as their inferiors. Nevertheless, the stereotyped tar, accurate or not, positive or negative, was most associated with naval debauchery, insubordination, violence and suffering, and posed a potential threat in actuality and visual representation. In contrast, most satirical imagery, such as *Crossing the Line* [Fig. 42], supported the assuring, idealised and

[42] These lithographic plates were engraved after Rowlandson's designs by W. Read and set within the text, *The Adventures of Johnny Newcome in the Navy* by John Mitford (1782-1831). David Roberts, ed., Havard, 1904.
[43] Williams, *Anson's Voyage*, 375n. Newton, *Journal of a Slave Trader*, 9. Powell, *Bristol Privateers*, 222. Rodger, *Wooden World*, 45.
[44] Scott, *Recollections*, 1, 40.

light-hearted construct of naval serviceman's simple, fun-loving, contented, uncomplaining, essentially good and unthreatening character.

Besides resting and carousing, naval men also partook in other recreational activities with arguably fewer problematic implications. Although shipboard life was physically taxing, and energy and good health were deficient, exercise such as 'buffet-the-bear, leap-frog, wrestling', fishing and dancing accompanied by music and singing occurred.[45] More practical, even cultivated, pursuits included instrument playing, sewing, woodwork, reading and writing, possibly learnt prior to or during naval service.[46] Such pragmatic, emotional, intellectual, mundane and even virtuous recreation rested uneasily with audiences' expectations and was, therefore, avoided by print-makers.

2. 6 Alcohol - The Other Waters the Tar Survived Upon

Metaphorically, alcohol was the fuel on which the tar lived and the oil that kept the mechanics of his working institution running as smoothly as possible, whether he was merry-making or otherwise. Indeed, beloved booze was central to naval recreation and highly prized, often to detrimental effect. It constituted, as a contemporary Barnaby Slush aptly wrote, 'the very cement that keeps the mariner's body and soul together,'[47] alleviating suffering and relaxing inhibitions for the hardy tar. The significance of alcohol was referenced in numerous images, particularly in Rowlandson's scene of drunken mourning, *A Sailor's Observation on the Lamented Death of Lord Nelson* (3 December 1805) [Fig. 43]. Over a bottle of grog one tar toasts the late Commander, while his company exclaims he has reluctantly started to 'pipe my eyes' for the first time since losing his sweetheart. The naval penchant for drinking was undoubtedly linked to the solace and escape it offered from harsh actualities of death, danger,

[45] Scott, *Recollections*, 1, 40.
[46] For example, the lonely and bored Marine Lieutenant John Fernyhough's request for his 'brother to procure [him] a flute, to beguile a few tedious hours' aboard ship at sea. Fernyhough, 1829, 57. Another seaman, Robert Wilson, described a typical scene on board a naval ship, 'Those who are not employed sewing or mending, you'll see them either learning to read or write, or ciphering, or instructing others. Some are playing the violin, flute or fife, while others dance or sing thereto. Others are relating awful stories of what happened in awful times, while their hearers are listening with respectful silence'. Thursfield, ed., *Five Naval Journals*, 257.
[47] Quoted in Laffin, *Jack Tar*, 88.

suffering, coercion and emphatic masculinity. 'To be drunk [was] considered by almost every sailor as the acme of sensual bliss'.[48] The import the tar vested in his booze, as a relished pleasure and emotional outlet, is confirmed in one such individual's claim that, 'I would have given my allowance of grog for six months […] to have saved [the late Lord Nelson's] precious life.'[49] The fact that a seaman, quoted above, believed giving up his grog for a time to be a worthy gesture of sacrificial homage suggested the comparable ardour seamen felt for their grog and their great hero.

Despite its prominence in contemporary anecdotes, ballads and prints,[50] such a weakness for the bottle cannot simply be accounted for by the tar's stereotypically unsophisticated and insatiable thirst.[51] Supply of drinking water was problematic throughout society, and particularly that bound to naval ships. Alcohol was essential for seamen's hydration and nutrition. Improved water storage, tighter disciplinary regulations and a general cultural sobering, only occurred later in the nineteenth century.[52] As such, the Navy itself played a part in its men's alcoholic disadvantages. Seaman Robert Williams' account of the situation provides valuable insight:

> each man is allowed a quart [two pints] of grog a day if grog is served out twice in the course of the day; if not, ½ pint of wine and one pint grog. Now it is mixed thus- 3 gills [or quarters of a pint] of water to one of rum or brandy, which is called 3-water grog and is very good, but when a fourth gill of water is added, it is insipid.[53]

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[48] Leech, *Thirty Years*, 65. Leech made this statement in his diary when in Lisbon in 1810.

[49] G. Brewer, 'Account of the Battle of Trafalgar: In a Letter from Jack Handspeck, on board the Temeraire, to his landlord, Bob Spunyarn, at the Common Hard, Portsmouth', *European Magazine and London Review*, 1805, 48, 433.

[50] An apt example is provided by the typical contemporary anecdote of 'A poor drunken sailor being asked, if he was sure of being gratified in three wishes, what they would be? Replied – "My first wish would be *all* the brandy in the world." Your next Jack? "All the tobacco in the world." Now for the third – "Why, d-n my eyes, *more* brandy.' *World*, London, Thursday, 30 May 1793, Issue 2003. From *The London Gazette*, Tuesday, 28 May 1798.

[51] See Laffin, 88-90. Neale presented the argument that considering the alcoholic percentage in seamen's grog in relation to their bodies, 'a man who drank the Navy's ration every day was an alcoholic, and a man of war was community of 600 chronic alcoholics.' Neale, 'Forecastle and Quarterdeck: Protest, Discipline and Mutiny in the Royal Navy, 1793-1814', unpublished PhD, University of Warwick, 1990, 111.

[52] For a discussion of Britain's social attitudes and tendencies towards alcohol see, Roy Porter, 'The Drinking Man's Disease: The 'Pre-History' of Alcoholism in Georgian Britain', *British Journal of Addiction*, 1985, vol. 80, 385–396; Jessica Warner, *Craze: Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason*, London, 2003; Peter Borsay, *A History of Leisure: the British Experience since 1500*, Basingstoke, 2006.

[53] Thursfield, ed., *Five Naval Journals*, 173. In the contemporary Navy, 'rum allowance was a quarter of a pint at a time (a total of half a pint a day), but this was in wine measure, roughly one-fifth less than an

This standardisation of alcohol consumption cultivated a taste for it and, by extension, complacency regarding drunkenness. Admiral Edward Vernon introduced 'grog' into the Royal Navy on 21 August 1740,[54] as a diluted alcoholic drink, lemon-juice supplemented, to improve the sobriety, and nutrition, amongst seamen. Ironically, despite such virtuous intentions, its regular rationing and popularity actually nurtured an alcohol drinking custom and addiction that became an occupational hazard of naval service.[55] Furthermore, it posed problems of discipline and quantity control, which complicated the question of causality for any alcohol-related disorder. According to Gilbert Blane, a naval physician of the time, 'the common quantity of small beer [grog] allowed daily is so liberal that few men make use of their whole allowance.'[56] The remainder they could exchange for payment.[57] Considering that everyone received the same allowance, regardless of age, health or weight, and seamen were often underweight, hungry and exhausted, drunkenness was even more probable. The seamen were, indeed, frequently 'groggy' (hung-over, half-sober or plain drunk). With alcoholic drinking ingrained into seamen's daily existence, the custom was inevitably subsumed into their sense of identity as a prerequisite for a true tar. One such quintessential individual described, 'many fancy that swearing and drinking are necessary accomplishments in a genuine man-of-war's-man. Hence it almost universally prevails.'[58] Once granted leave, seamen would typically 'hasten to the first tavern and drink themselves into a state of helpless infirmity; which not to do would be symptomatic of cowardly lubberliness, or worse.'[59]

Alcohol was not only an aspect of the typical naval man, it had broader class significance that distinguished him not only from land-based society but also his social

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imperial half-pint and equivalent to the modern US half-pint.' It was usually topped up with three-quarters water. Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 97.

[54] Order to Captains No. 349 in August 1740. The earliest reference found referring to 'grog' is as follows, 'but short Allowance of Grog was worst of all', *An Account of the late Action fought between Admiral Knowles and the Spanish Admiral, taken from the Jamaica* Gazette, which was reprinted in the *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer*, Tuesday, 31 January 1749, Issue 465, vol. 1, col. 1. Cited in Michael Quinion, *Why is Q Always Followed by U?: Wor-Perfect Answers to the Most-Asked Questions*, London, 2000.

[55] Vernon's nickname was Old Grogram, after the waterproof cloak made of grogram fabric (a mixture of mohair, wool and silk, often stiffened with gum) that he commonly wore. The word 'grog' thus transferred to the drink he initiated. Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 97.

[56] Gilbert Blane, *Observations on the Diseases Incident to Seamen*, London, 1785, 301.

[57] Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 97.

[58] Leech, *Thirty Years*, 65. This remark was made in 1810 on board an HMS warship off Lisbon.

[59] C. R. Pemberton, *The Autobiography of Pel Verjuice*, London, 1929, 217.

superiors afloat. He would relish, typically to excess, his 'grog', or its undiluted form in beer or spirits. As a prescribed ration, surreptitiously smuggled on board,[60] or consumed in taverns and brothels, it was usually unaccompanied by food. In contrast, his officers would sit at the dinner table and drink wine or port with a meal, as portrayed in Rowlandson's *A Snug Cabin or Port Admiral* (*c.*1810) [Fig 44]. The seaman's love of alcohol was often ascribed to his lack of cultural sophistication and his behavioural roughness, thus avoiding any implication of the Navy's part in nurturing such negative characteristics, while consolidating his stereotype as inherently foolish and simple. For example, Rowlandson's later *Sailors Drinking the Tunbridge Water* (1 March 1815) [Fig. 45] derisively implied that the tar's unrefined palette and disregard for a healthy or stylish lifestyle made him ignorant and rude when tasting the fashionable spa on offer. One sailor rejects the water claiming (in the print's speech bubble) that it gave him 'and his Poll stomach ache', while another directs a boy to fetch 'a pint of half-and-half and a Squeeze of Lemon' demonstrating his preference for his customary grog. More disconcertingly, an elderly tar appears to pour the substance to the ground as he drinks and curses this 'Damn Queer Tipple', implying his decrepitude and disagreeability were exacerbated by his alcoholism. Clearly, the men of the Navy had environments, customs, tastes and consumer power that might predispose them towards drinking alcohol with its apparent financial and disciplinary consequences.

For the common seaman booze played another important role. As the principal shipboard currency, it was offered as a reward by officers for good behaviour; officially withheld or diluted as a punishment, especially for drunkenness; sold in return for other luxury items or labour; collectively amassed by stockpiling rations and even clandestinely offered as a bribe, particularly for the overlooking of its smuggling on board. Drinking clearly contributed to disorder beyond plain drunkenness, including neglect of duty, deception and violence.[61] Alcohol was the lifeblood of the tar's naval existence as part of its dietary, recreational and disciplinary economy. It was arguably

[60] An example of the level of ingenuity deployed by seamen so eager to obtain alcoholic drink through smuggling is provided by mariner William Richardson. He noted how, while the naval warship *Minerva* was being repaired in Bombay, the crew, being held in the hulk, *Alexander*, frequently went ashore and constantly smuggled drink aboard by passing bladders and bottles from the boats into lower deck through a porthole. RNM manuscript JOD/156.

[61] This is evident in the common formula of booze being smuggled on board from bumboat women and enjoyed in excess below deck, leaving the tar so intoxicated that when he next was called to duty on deck was reported drunk and sentenced to punitive lashes, usually numbering roughly a dozen. RNM manuscript MSS/73/075.

the single most potent liberation or liability. Consequently, discourse about the tar's relationship to alcohol was problematic and generally relied upon the notorious stereotype and ideological construct of the 'drunken sailor'. In imagery, especially commercial prints, such manipulation was a prerequisite with the subject selectively represented rarely, subtly and mostly satirically.

2. 7 Relations with Women

A notorious subject of satire, womanising was another aspect of the seaman's leisure and pleasure, and one typically enjoyed accompanied by drink. Ackermann's design etched by Rowlandson, *'Cattle Not Insurable'* (1 December 1809) [Fig. 46], portrayed how, when granted liberty either afloat 'in port' at a naval anchorage or harbour, or ashore in a port city, women were sure to be found among seamen. In the former circumstance, wives, relatives, friends, prostitutes and bumboat sellers all visited the ship in abundance,[62] contributing to disorderly overcrowding, confusion and debauchery. Some officers disliked condoning such practice. Nevertheless, it was normal and even officiated over by the Navy to appease the men, and thereby, prevent criminal disorder and loss through desertion, straggling or law-breaking.[63] Prostitutes were the most eagerly demanded and easily procured of female company for the tar. *Cattle* satirically depicted the degrading process of these women's visits on board, ferried by the boatload up to the ship, sized up by awaiting seamen and loaded via a ladder or even a sling. The title likened such females to 'cattle', not only derisively emphasizing their depravity and further debasing the practice, but also implying the primal sexual needs of their clientele. This negative analogy would not have been lost on audiences and was evident in other published discourse, specifically an anonymous Statement on ferryboats 'permitted to come alongside; the men then go into the boats and pick out women (as one might buy cattle), paying a shilling or two to the boatman

[62] For an explanation of the term 'bumboat' see earlier in this chapter, 88, n. 37.

[63] 'Little or no leave was ever granted to the sailors, to have a run on shore, partly from the uncertainly of their ever returning on board again, and also when, by chance, they did get on shore, either on duty or otherwise, they did not know very well how to behave themselves, and generally got themselves, and others, into serious trouble.' Sinclair, 1857, 28-9. Leave ashore when abroad was even rarer with 'the reason of this prohibition [being] a fear lest we should desert', which would be particularly problematic due to the foreign location, more limited personnel and probable need to set sail. Leech, *Thirty Years*, 102.

for her passage off.'[64] But it seems it was the depravity of the women that served as the satirical focus. Their voluptuous and fleshy forms uninhibitedly carouse among themselves, and just a few seamen. The word 'Insurable' in the title was significant, connoting that the tar would only pay for those prostitutes who they selected to alight at their destined ship. The irreverent implication, therefore, is that business was only secure once the cargo was sold.[65] On a more subtly subversive note, the descriptive word could have alluded to the negative potential of such debauched women and the uninsurable risk of disease.

The mastery with which this problematic subject was represented by Rowlandson is further evidenced in its adaption by William Elmes in a later version, *Exporting Cattle NOT Insurable* (23 February 1813) [Figs. 47], published by the successful copyist Thomas Tegg. Women were commonly permitted aboard during a naval vessel's stay in port, but were required to disembark before the ship went to sea.[66] Therefore, not only was the allowance, the practicalities and the effects of their attendance on ship troublesome, so too was their removal. The knowing grin of the fiddler and the high spirits of the women in this work suggest ship's officers' presumably faced problems preventing them from staying aboard and being illegally 'exported' once the ship sails. The title references cattle, often stolen or privately stowed and thus uninsurable,[67] in association with the depicted women, who furthermore are surrounded by barrels and flagons of 'smugled coniac Brandy' and 'smugled Hollands Gin', reinforcing the analogy of women to clandestine cargo.

The allowing of prostitutes' access to seamen was acknowledged and had complex and troublesome implications for many within, and outside, the Navy. Commentary and critique of the practice in imagery was informed by, and informed, broader discourse that was not always light-hearted. Anxiety about the disciplinary order of Her Majesty's ships and the welfare of their servicemen would have been felt acutely among the upper-middle classes and the ruling elite that dominated commercial, and specifically

[64] Anon., (Admiral Hawkins and others) *Statement Respecting the Prevalence of Certain Immoral Practices in His Majesty's Navy*, London, 1821, 2-4.
[65] Anon. (Admiral Hawkins and others) *Statement Respecting the Prevalence of Certain Immoral Practices in His Majesty's Navy*, London, 1821, 2-4. Quoted in Kemp, *British Sailor*, 164.
[66] William Robinson, *Nautical Economy: or, Forecastle Recollections of the Events during the Last War [...] by a Sailor [...] Jack Nastyface*, London, 1836, 60-61.
[67] Hay, *Landsman Hay*, 183.

print, culture. Captain Edward Hawker, writing later in the more peaceful year of 1821, deplored these 'abandoned women' who caused 'a continual scene of riot and disorder, of obscenity and blasphemy, of drunkenness, lewdness and debauchery […] most polluting' to others.[68] Similarly, naval chaplains found such sociability 'productive of considerable embarrassment',[69] not only nurturing seamen's immorality but also undermining positive constructs of the Navy as a bulwark of Britain's Anglicanism. On more practical lines, unsavoury liaisons with diseased prostitutes exasperated naval physicians and surgeons tasked with upholding the welfare of the men who were often heedless of warnings of contagion and the limitations of medicine.[70] Risks posed by female company were connoted in imagery, for example the black facial spots hiding their syphilis scars and abundant liquor bottles depicted in *Cattle*. Besides such restrained references, portrayals of the tar and his companions (prostitutes, ladies, sweethearts and wives) generally evaded far greater and more serious negative and subversive aspects of this milieu. The actual disease, death, violence, crime, unwanted pregnancies and destitution that attended such interactions were not explicitly represented visually, although it is safe to assume such troublesome actualities were apparent at other levels of discourse.[71] The Navy's 'contribution' to landlubber society was predominantly overlooked, with derision and humour. Rare satirical prints, emphasised that the fun-loving, pleasure-seeking and reckless naval men had distinct sexual appetites that were, reassuringly, somewhat removed from mainstream society, geographically and socially.

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[68] Indeed, it must be noted that this published condemnation was made after the French Wars when immoral practices were of lesser priority in the Navy and society. Captain Edward Hawker, *Statement Respecting the Prevalence of Certain Immoral Practices Prevailing in His Majesty's Navy*, London, 1821, 2.

[69] Edward Mangin, 1812 on board HMS *Gloucester*. Thursfield, ed., *Five Naval Journals*, 8.

[70] The Surgeon, George Magrath, on board HMS *Russell* while at anchor at Spithead in May 1798, was despairing of Marine Captain Robert Johnson who was suffering from gonorrhoea. 'This gentleman has a girl on board, the same that communicated this disease, and although he is well aware that she is injured, he still continues to sleep with her, notwithstanding I have put him in the remembrance of what mischief she may do him. However he was deaf to all my arguments and still persists in keeping [her] on board.' TNA ADM 101/118/1.

[71] Notably, demographic censuses were undertaken during this era in relation to sexual activity, relations and prostitution. At least 1000 prostitutes flocked to Portsmouth alone, according to census figures of 1801. Cited in Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 155. Seamen's licentiousness, combined with the fact that checks on non-marital sex were being increasingly ignored, lead to a nationwide plague of unwanted pregnancies in the late-eighteenth century. Trumbach, *Sex and the Gender Revolution*, Chicago, 1998, vol. 1, 279. See also, 116, 140 for a discussion of prostitutes whose fathers were recorded as being 'at sea'. The most common response recorded by the Foundling Hospital orphanage to the questions about the whereabouts of the infant's father was 'gone to sea' or 'impressed'.

Loose women also accompanied the tar when ashore, flocking to the port-cities in anticipation of lucrative business and entertainment. They were accused of degrading such places with their 'war against every habit of common decency and decorum.'[72] With the nearby Spithead naval anchorage, the major trading port of Portsmouth was predominantly where seamen were released, and 'scenes of debauchery and brutal violence, [coined] its fearful name' – Point.[73] Such a notorious place was persistently referenced in imagery. Robert Dighton's *Men of War, bound for the Port of Pleasure* (1791) [Fig. 48] conveys the sense of pandemonium, and Rowlandson's later hand-coloured etching satirises the antics at *Portsmouth Point* (1811) [Fig. 49]. While jaunts ashore by the Navy's men normally caused spectacle, the individuals themselves were unselfconscious and unashamed. Instead, the merry tar was predominantly represented seemingly enjoying himself without inhibitions. This is demonstrated in seaman George King's account of a typical Portsmouth foray, 1809:

> When we had well dowsed up our gibs [drunk enough liquor] we called a coach and swore we would be gentlemen for one day. Accordingly we desired the coachman to drive us to Portsea and back […] occasionally [we] cried out 'avast' when we wanted to wet the whistle at different houses.[74]

The riding of hired horses, chaises and coaches was a common and notorious practice among seamen parading themselves, and often their sweethearts, around the naval port town. As a relatively common motif in various contemporary images, it seemingly constituted a familiar and amusing activity not only among tars but also their British landlubber audiences. Isaac Cruikshank's *True Blue- or Britain's Jolly Tars Paid Off at Portsmouth* (1797) [Fig. 50],[75] Julius Ibbetson's *The Jolly Tars of Old England on a Land Cruise* (1 November 1802) [Fig. 51] and George Cruikshank's post-war *Sailors on a Cruise* (1 September 1825) [Fig. 52] depicted dramatic scenes of reckless abandonment and debauched revelry in such transits. All included a carriage laden with passengers seated at the front, back and within, and even precariously standing atop,

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[72] Pinckard, *Notes on the West Indies*, 1813, 14. Quoted also in Marcus, *Heart of Oak*, 227.
[73] W. G. Gates, *Free Mart Fair*, London, 1897, 40.
[74] RNM manuscript MSS/73/075. Upon visiting Portsmouth, Colonel Landmann's noted the hubbub of such a scene: 'the huzzas of the half-drunken sailors, parading through the streets on the tops of hired coaches, shouting and waving their hats and banners, and drinking and cheering at every corner, hailing one another from coach to coach with all the roughness and wit peculiar to their profession'. Landmann, *Adventures and Recollections*, 259-63.
[75] Etched illustration in Charles G. Harper, *The Portsmouth Road and Its Tributaries: To-Day and in Days of Old*, 1895, London.

while drinking, smoking, singing, cheering and even vomiting. Significantly, the latter print depicted the coach with unfurled banner, bearing the HMS name *Arethusa*, presumably from the distant ship, implying it was a visual accompaniment to a story of that title 'recounting the adventures of a group of hard-drinking sailors, recently back from a long voyage, who spend a great deal of money carousing and […] regaling themselves before local onlookers.'[76] The celebration was upon great naval achievement under Captain Edward Pellew's command in which a French squadron off Ireland was captured on 21 October 1794, providing the crew with bountiful prize-money when granted their liberty. Notably, such visual memorabilia dated over two decades after the event, suggesting discourse about seamen's disruptive behaviour only became a subject for commercial appeal when audiences' memories were clouded with nostalgia and they were no longer fearful of the prospect of its recurrence. This is further indicated by the noticeable increased production during the short-lived Peace of Amiens of similar prints. For example, Ibbetson's *The Jolly Tars* (1 November 1802) [Fig. 51] are depicted raucously riding a carriage, with the driver standing on the roof using a whip with his hat at the tip. Such imagery indicates that the actual and represented tar's jocular, fun-loving and somewhat outlandish idiosyncrasy, especially ashore, was interpreted positively by and for audiences as familiar, temporary, harmless and acceptable.

Clearly, the seamen's womanising, promiscuity and recklessness were actualities, although not necessarily universal or unique to this social group. While these vices were scarcely and evasively represented, they were nevertheless apparent and presumed among upper-middle classes, anxious to maintain the established order in which they dominated. Any wayward attitudes and behaviour characteristic of the tar can be seen to have been variously informed, albeit inadvertently, by such authorities. Firstly, the naval ruling elite enforced their subordinates' distinction from broader society (in terms of geography, living conditions, occupation, customs and habits). With this they experienced loneliness, ostracism, frustration and oppression in their emphatically masculine and disciplined institution. These circumstances, borne for long periods of time, strained seamen's relationships, sexual behaviour and emotional wellbeing, and

[76] Richard A. Vogler, ed., *Graphic Works of George Cruikshank*, Dover, 1979, 139. See also Henry Baynham, *From the Lower Deck: the Royal Navy, 1780-1840*, London, 1972.

predisposed them to womanising, promiscuity and general machismo. It deserves note that the relief and escapism women offered to seamen was not limited to sexual satisfaction. It also fostered frivolity and emotional release among a hardy and somewhat insensitive workforce whose sensory stimulation and sympathetic affection were limited. For example, a sailor complained in a private letter of the lack of 'any humane bosoms to alleviate your feelings.'[77] Considering the circumstances of such men, their predisposition or susceptibility to temptations in society was hardly surprisingly, nor deservedly censured as 'strange'.

Naval men's typical attitudes, behaviour and vices were not unusual. Their relations with others (women and shipmates, officers, ruling elites) were influential and underplayed. Visual representation of the tar, and the lower orders with whom he had association, such as prostitutes, labourers, fisherwomen and hawkers, were constructs and perpetuations of social stereotypes that accorded with the expectations of the powerful, consumer, upper-middle classes. These audiences were able to appreciate the faults of such 'inferior' characters, being aware not only of their predominant differences but also similarities. There was no explicit condemnation of immorality, or insinuation of guilt in imagery. Prints served instead as satirical relief by deflecting and distracting troublesome implications.

As established earlier, seamen themselves and their audiences self-consciously ascribed 'strangeness' to the tar as part of his cultural construct. Their companions at the bottom of the social hierarchy were typically interpreted warily and critically. This is evident in the archive, including accounts by naval servicemen themselves, which viciously described prostitutes and sellers presenting:

> such a reckless disregard of every claim of decency and morality as Jack, even at his worst, could ever hope or would ever attempt to equal. […] The coarsest seamen on board were far outdone by those damsels,[78] [with] their expressions in conversation quite beyond the limits of prudence or modesty.[79]

[77] R. B., *Sailor's Letters*, Plymouth, c.1800, 85, 87, 175.
[78] Goodall, *Salt Water*, 26.
[79] T. W. Moody, ed., 'An Irish Countryman in the British Navy, 1809-1815: The Memoirs of Henry Walsh', in *The Irish Sword*, 1959, vol. 4, 233.

This condemnation has both qualifying and insinuating implications – the peculiarities of the Navy's common men were not innate or exclusive. Officers censuring 'abandoned women' for possessing the 'language and behaviour [of] usually the most polluting description', showed concern for their characteristically vulnerable subordinates, but also hinted at their own responsibilities and possible culpabilitiy.[80] Female associations formed central themes in society's culture and character. The tar was not an exceptional case when considered alongside his superior counterparts.

Womanising by naval men of rank was also apparent in actuality and limited visual representations. This not only discredited the exclusivity of such perceived 'vice' among 'inferior', 'strange' or 'immoral' tars, but also suggested the extent of misguided, even inadvertently endorsed transference down the naval ranks or lax attitudes and behaviour towards women. Senior officers would have women, wives and mistresses on board with them, often contrary to naval disciplinary codes of practice concerning the presence of passengers and expected orderly behaviour.[81] Similarly, while ashore they often sought the company of prostitutes and even ladies of class, typically young and impressionable. This was often a subject of derision in satirical prints. For example, James Gillray referenced the comparably immoral characters of two distinct social and naval classes in his pseudo-bust portraits *Nauticus* (11 October 1791) [Fig. 53] and *A True British Tar* (28 May 1795) [Fig. 54]. Both the Duke of Clarence and the common seaman are portrayed with stout paunches, ruddy faces, unkempt hair and swollen lips. These details connote their excessive indulgence, alcoholism, lack of refinement and licentiousness. The superior's features are even more emphatic visually and with the inscription reading 'Those lips were made for Kissing Ladies!' Gillray was caricaturing aspects of this retired Royal Admiral of the Fleet's biography, specifically his notorious coarseness, moral laxity, debauched behaviour and scandalous relationship with his mistress Mrs. Dorothy Jordan, an actress from the Drury Lane Theatre.

[80] Captain Edward Hawker claimed they demonstrated 'language and behaviour [of] usually the most polluting description'. Edward Hawker, *Statement Respecting the Prevalence of Certain Immoral Practices Prevailing in His Majesty's Navy*, London, 1821, 2.

[81] For example, naval seaman Aaron Thomas constantly refers in his personal accounts to antics of drunkards on board HMS Lapwing at the West Indies anchorage in 1798, specifically the notoriously hard drinking boatswain John Dixon and his wife. By January their drunkenness had become so serious as to amount to 'our Boatswain and Surgeon in confinement for drunkenness, and both will have court martials.' *Aaron Thomas Papers.* Special Collection. University of Miami Libraries.

Rowlandson also successfully represented such a theme in *Sea Stores* (25 March 1812) [Fig. 55]. The print depicted a coastal scene in which a young, uniformed and fashionably-dressed midshipman confidently presents himself before two prostitutes with whom he bargains to come aboard the boat and be taken to their ship in the distance along with the three sailors waiting at the shore. As he puts his arm round a comely young woman, he feels in his pocket for the payment she prompts with her extended hand, thus securing his preferred 'store' over the grotesque black woman smoking a pipe and the shapeless elderly woman (probably their pimp) crouching at the foot of a ladder leading to the coastal fortifications. The printmaker derides the appropriation of women through the commercial power and sexual desire of dominant men, specifically naval officers. The implication is that such superior, supposedly refined, moral and respectable gentlemen, were as involved in the subculture of licentious and exploitative exchange as their social and service inferiors.

Later, Rowlandson produced *Defrauding the Customs, or Shipping of Goods not Fairly Entered* (1 March 1815) [Fig. 56]. Here two officers are satirised running towards the shore carrying off in their arms fine ladies, destined to become mistresses aboard their ship. These naval figures were distinctly senior (as shown by their uniforms), and their inappropriate moral, professional and even paternal conduct is demonstrated and derided in their reckless 'kidnapping' from 'Mrs Crostiche's Boarding School for Young Ladies' (as identified by the sign above the remaining crowd) when on an excursion with their enraged chaperon. The legal and trade vernacular in the title emphasised their seeming disregard for personal pride, reputation and self-preservation, with connotations of socio-economic but also sexual relations. The different facial expressions of these girls – dismay, delight, swooning and envy – accord with gender-stereotypes of female innocence, whimsy and vulnerability. This is consolidated by the grotesque, muscular and rotund woman who is in pursuit, brandishing an umbrella. Headmistress Mrs Crostiche is desperate to ensure that her subordinates' chastity and repute, as well as their education, are not forsaken. This light-hearted representation avoided explicit detrimental implications of such sexual escapades, but these would have been disconcerting images for astute audiences. Both parties involved in these relations may have had to endure subsequent embarrassment, reprimand, disrepute and even venereal disease, but arguably greater detriment was borne by women.

Contemporary textual discourse, including diaries, novels and records, often referred to their sufferings: disappointment at an officer's departure or unfaithfulness, disapproval, even ostracism, particularly from families, and further personal decline in society.[82] Womanizing within the Navy occurred across the ranks. The common tar dallied with inferior female companions, but his social superiors set bad standards and demonstrated poor leadership. This lack of professional, and socio-moral, guidance accorded with criticism of problematic naval manning, officers' patronage, shipboard discipline and hierarchical distribution of power, responsibilities, status, wages and heroism.

The reliance of the tar's stereotype upon familiar and indefinite generalisations was demonstrated in Julius Caesar Ibbetson's oil paintings *An Unmarried* and *Married Sailor's Return* (*c.*1800) [Figs. 26 and 27], with their comparative compositions and figurative positioning. The former depicted a typical scene of debauched revelry in which paid-off sailors enjoy drink, music and female company, with the central woman leaning backwards over one tar to kiss another connotative of promiscuity. The second image is distinctly more domestic, portraying one tar seated at a table with his family about him. Without the use of satire, this relatively esteemed artist was possibly more concerned with the individuality and variety of naval men. Indeed, the tar's recreation and pleasures were influenced by external factors. Ibbetson, like fellow image-makers, seems to be suggesting that not all tars should be 'tarred' with the same brush. The paths individuals take and where these lead them, particularly regarding life experiences with money and the opposite sex, were most famously explored in William Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness* (1747) created as a set of 12 plot-linked engravings. This morally didactic work portrayed comparatively industrious and idle contemporary apprentices, advertised as 'Shewing the Advantages attending the former, and the miserable Effects of the latter' and sold at 1 shilling per print. At this price they were affordable to a wider and less wealthy clientele, including workers.[83]

[82] Negative results of women's promiscuous relations with men, including those from the Navy, would have included unwanted pregnancies and orphaned children, poverty, destitution, adoption of children, prostitution, begging, and thieving. For example, the trial and sentencing of Ann Palmer, Old Bailey Proceedings Online, January 1794 (t17940115-78). Available from http://www.oldbaileyonline.org. Accessed on 4 November 2012.

[83] Ronald Paulson, ed., *Hogarth's Graphical Works: Introduction and Catalogue*, New Haven, 1965, 194.

Ibbetson's *The Married Sailor's Return* [Fig. 27] asserted the protagonist's morality. His domestic responsibility, filial paternalism and marital fidelity are implied by his return home with wages for his family, and his loving gaze towards his wife. The children and dog each symbolise the qualities of innocence and loyalty. A similar earlier watercolour painting, *The Sailor's Return Home* (1795) [Fig. 57] is worth analysing for significant differences. The sailor turns away from his wife and family to glance at the more prominent sailor-boy at the left of the scene, who looks with a disapproving gaze towards the cat and dog at their master's feet. As symbols of promiscuity and loyalty respectively, such dynamics may have been presenting a subtle metaphor for the duality, even duplicity, of officers' sexual morality afloat and now ashore. An audience aware of the promiscuity common amongst maritime communities and closely associated with naval men would have readily grasped this adulterous theme. The husband's knowing glance at the sailor-boy points to the danger of him being exposed as unfaithful, fathering illegitimate children or a cuckolded husband. This implication is further emphasised by the parrot on his wife's chair. The bird was rich in symbolism: truth-telling portent, luxury, exoticism and moral laxity.[84] The figures' wayward moral convictions and practices are furthermore apparent in the noticeable absence of a religious figure, such as the elderly cleric we see in the later oil version. Also, where a crucifix might have been displayed, there are on the mantelpiece and wall above more temporal attributes, symbols of a more frivolous lifestyle: decanters and a violin and bow. This is an image replete with connotations of mutual gratitude, sympathy, respect and concern. As the sailor embraces his daughter, his look towards the sailor-boy may be of pity. Many servicemen were not as fortunate in having a contented and secure family to which to return.

When considering all aspects of the tar's supposedly dubious morality, particularly in relation to money and women, it is important not to regard the guilt or lack of responsibility exclusive to him alone. The part played by seamen's companions should not be overlooked or underestimated. Rowlandson's etching after Woodward, *A Sailor's Marriage* (25 May 1805) [Fig. 58] satirised the self-gratification, delusion and

[84] This animal was a popular theme in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art. For example, Giambattista Tiepolo's oil painting *Young Woman with a Macaw* (*c.*1760) 'for the Empress of Russia depicted a blushing lady in décolletage so low-cut as to reveal her right breast, staring into space while caressing a parrot that looks out at the spectator with a sharp, proprietorial [sic] gaze.' Andrew Graham-Dixon, Review of *The Parrot in Art* exhibition at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts 2007.

deception involved in spontaneous and light-hearted conjugal commitment between tars and women. Yet, belief in maintaining marital fidelity, childbirth within wedlock and the assurance of security are hinted at.[85] The suggestion is that the couple's approaches to these notions often involved humour and cynicism, confirmed by the archive. The sailor is depicted proudly declaring that they are to be wed as his sweetheart was pregnant with 'a young Jack Tar in the midships!' He continues to vow that she 'shall ride safe at Anchor as long as I live and when I die his Majesty […] will take her into keeping', giving further vocal demonstration of his sense of moral rectitude. His fiancée's compliance was not necessarily on account of love, but rather of pragmatism. Indeed, many women, not only wives and sweethearts, but even prostitutes, were motivated primarily by self-interested materialism. They often sought to receive his wages, be assigned his Will and Power, and appropriate or even run off with his stolen valuables.[86]

The shock of the gentlemanly witness of the *Sailor's Marriage* derisively exemplified the scepticism and consternation regarding such a woman's alleged fidelity, both prior to and after this ceremony. It also pokes fun at the foolish tar's moral ambitions and delusions about relationships. The cynicism is further apparent in the fact that, despite having been absent for a long voyage, he claims paternity of the unborn child. This theme of the naval cuckold, arguably connoted in Ibbetson's watercolour *Sailor's Return* (1795) [Fig. 57] and Rowlandson's *Sailor's Marriage* (25 May 1805) [Fig. 58], is more explicitly found in the latter's *Seaman's Wife's Reckoning* (15 July 1812) [Fig. 59]. Here the woman appears far from naïve in terms of infidelity, wise to her foolish husband's potential vulnerability to misguidance, and subsequently, to accusations of her adultery and illegitimate child. The seaman's father suspiciously notes his son's long absence and the infant's resemblance to 'Peter Wilkins the Soap Boiler'. His

[85] Keith, a reprobate parson of the time recalled witnessing a scene of revelry among seamen leading to their marriages. 'At length one of the Tars starts up and says "Damn ye, Jack! 'll be married just now; I will have my partner." The joke took, and in less than two hours Ten Couples set out for the Flete [sic]. They returned in Coaches, five Women in each Coach; the Tars, some running before, some riding on the Coach Box, and others behind. The Cavalcade being over, the Couples went up into an upper Room, where they concluded the evening with great jollity. The landlord said it was a common thing, when a Fleet comes in, to have 2 or 3 Hundred Marriages in a week's time among the Sailors.' Keith, *Observations on the Act for Preventing Clandestine Marriages*, London, 1753.

[86] Seamen commonly fell prey to women's thievery, especially of prostitutes and sellers, but also disingenuous sweethearts, who would often subtly appropriate his full purse when revelling with him and then steal his valuables once he had fallen into a drunken stupor. See reports of such incidents: Nagle, *Journal*, 154-7; *Oracle and Daily Advertiser*, London, Monday, 5 November 1798, Issue 21810.

daughter-in-law's response is quick and exacting as if rehearsed by one wary, or weary, of such allegations and suffering a guilty-conscience. Indeed, sweethearts and wives did not necessarily pass their seaman's absence uncomforted and even sometimes took up new partners. Such infidelity, if discovered, caused the tar great distress and even led to violent reprisal.[87] In an elaborate explanation, the wife calculates the time of conception as being when her husband was last with her on shore leave. The naïvely devoted or gullible seaman is shown defending his lover, claiming 'she has kept her reckoning like a true Seaman's wife'. Both *Marriage* and *Reckoning* represented the men of the Navy as commonly of simple and good character whose morality was complex and compromised. The more subtle implication was that interpretations to the contrary were unfair, although they were common in print culture.

2. 8 Conclusion

In actuality and imagery, especially print culture, the subject of naval recreation, although a small part of a seaman's life, was readily employed to construct the figure of Jack Tar humorously. The key question addressed in this chapter is why his stereotype existed: a clear symbol, synecdoche or scapegoat for image-makers and their audiences. What were the reasons for, and implications of, such discursive preference? The tar became the nexus for troublesome issues, specifically anxieties of vulnerability, liability and culpability among the established social order. In visual representation, the typical naval man was a prominently distinct, even 'strange', but fundamentally *good* character. The idiosyncratic, if not crude, maritime dispositions of the Navy's men, with expected identities of machismo, hedonism and defiance all peppered with seafaring vernacular, were most commonly and explicitly evident in their unsophisticated and amusing recreational pleasures and similarly most represented in visual imagery.

[87] Susannah Dell was killed in a dispute between her returned husband, John Dell, and her new man, Bob Anderson, who she was then living with. She was fatally wounded with the knife of Bob, who subsequently went on trial. POB Robert Anderson, Matthew Goodall; Murder, 23 May 1792. Similarly, on 12 May 1811 seaman John Colley returned from months at sea to mortally stab his wife who had reputedly been living with another sailor. POB John Colley, Murder, 29 May 1811.

That Jack Tar was no more depraved than his counterparts, whether naval or otherwise, was broadly acknowledged by astute image-makers and by extension their audiences. Society was ready to laugh at all levels of humanity and even itself.[88] The disconcerting truth that vice was a prevalent and pervasive aspect of Georgian Britain, irrespective of any demographics, was appealingly implied with wit, cynicism and derision. Those besides the tar himself, particularly the ruling elites keen to maintain their authoritative and exploitative superiority, were aware that the social order was not without inequity and inconsistency. This was evident in Captain James Scott's lamentation:

> How often doth the reckless sailor escape the perils of mighty oceans din – the greedy monsters of the deep – the cannon's roar- the battle fight-the fire- the wreck, to be finally stranded on his native land-to feel he hath grappled with the omnipotent works of a mighty God, only to fall a prey to the grasping clutches and devouring passions of his fellow men![89]

Although this recollection was written with hindsight in 1834, it nevertheless eloquently encapsulated the various trials and tribulations typically experienced by naval service men. This suffering informed the interpretation of men well beyond the bounds of their naval ship, institutional employment or active service, and caused it to persist in actuality and discourse. The problematic characteristics of the tar were best presented in his recreational conduct and became a preoccupation – as the archive indicates. Most demonstrative of his misconception and its extent, nature and significance are three contemporary and contrasting descriptions below.

The Evangelist William Forster exhorted his readers in 1814 to consider, 'Where at the present day, shall we find greater wickedness, and more abominable vice than in some of these places amongst our sailors, and their companions in riotous mirth?'[90] The truth was not always clear, buried as it was beneath complexity, rhetoric and self-justification. The 'wickedness' and 'vice' of idleness, debauchery and hedonism so readily observed in the common seaman were not faults of them alone. In fact, similar

[88] This idea of universal and unofficial laughter is indebted to useful Bakhtinian theories on humour and the carnival. Mikhail Bahktin, *Rabelais and his World,* first published 1965, Trans. Hélène Iswolsky, Bloomington, 1993, 199. '[A]ll were considered equal during carnival. Here, in the town square, a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age'. Bakhtin, *Rabelais,* 10.
[89] Scott, *Recollections,* 372.
[90] William Forster, *A Christian Exhortation to Sailors and Persons Engaged in a Seafaring Life*, London, 1814, 9–10.

behavioural problems transcended class, rank, gender and occupation. It was an erroneous assumption that the common seaman was unique in his perceived threat. Yet, contemporary discourse, such as *A Christian Exhortation*, and rare satirical prints, implied that the sailor was at a grave disadvantage amongst bawdy women, dealers and criminals, and also vulnerable to manipulation by the Navy itself, Parliament, Church and society's commercial markets. Irrespective of circumstances and stereotypical character, naval men were as easily influenced as they were influential; they were ready to take on a distinct identity.

In contrast, references of less sweeping rhetorical condemnation and self-justification did appear in discourse.[91] Naval officer Crawford's description of newly recruited Andrew Mouat is indicative of such apparent problems and the rare concessions they elicited:

> Thoroughly versed in every branch of a seaman's duty [… he] had none of the thoughtless, reckless habits and manners that usually characterize the profession to which he belonged: on the contrary, his were peculiarly quiet, orderly, and sober.[92]

The conventional interpretation of Jack Tar by seamen themselves was perhaps the most pertinent and appropriate. These were usually more straightforward, non-propagandist and understandable for audiences then and now. Aaron Thomas's private papers (1798-99), written while serving in the Navy, provide countless significant, albeit unofficial and atypical, descriptions of naval actualities. For example, on observing his fellow shipmates returning late from leave, drunk and missing items of clothing, he concluded that 'half of sailors are truly asses when ashore.'[93] This is noteworthy in its simplicity and honesty. However, in discourse and especially in prints, the sailor's antics tended to be unfairly exaggerated in order to satisfy image-makers and their clientele.

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[91] Basil Hall described the typical shipboard scene on a Sunday, 'groups of men may be seen sitting on the deck chatting over very old stories, a few reading, and many are stretched out flat on their backs fast asleep, or dosing with their heads on their arms on the mess-tables.' Basil Hall, *Fragments of Voyages and Travels*, London, 1846, vol. 2, 66.

[92] This was a description of the pressed recruit Andrew Mouat, on board the *Immortalite* in 1805. A. Crawford, *Reminiscences of a Naval Officer during the Late War with Sketches and Anecdotes of distinguished Commanders*, London, 1851, vol. 1, 169.

[93] *Aaron Thomas Papers*.

Typical circumstances of the tar (being idle, paid-off, moneyed, spend-thrift, drinking, reckless and womanising on leave ashore and at leisure aboard ship) were particularly apt for representation. His visual construct, specifically in prints, characterised the socially inferior men of the lower deck in various negatively derisive circumstances. The best opportunity for understanding men who served in the Royal Navy during the French Wars was when the tar was least restrained by work and discipline. The generalisations and assumptions that are at play, particularly in visual interpretations of the tar, are even supported by naval men themselves and a social cross-section of audiences. Satirical prints exploited the causal tensions and similarities in recreational behaviour between the upper-middle class and the stereotypical Jack. Further investigation of specific, predominantly negative, aspects of the tar in actuality and visual representation, will follow in this thesis's studies of the themes of discipline, law, justice and the welfare of the servicemen of His Majesty's Navy. Crime and punishment will be the subject of the next chapter; death and disease will be examined thereafter. Having demonstrated liberty, conformity and control as underlying notions for the interpretation of his enrollment in and breaks from naval service, these notions will further be investigated in terms of the tar's legality and mortality.

Chapter Three

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT AS NAVAL DISORDER IN ACTUALITY AND VISUAL REPRESENTATION

3.1 Introduction

'Serving in the Royal Navy during the French Wars, a seaman "could *think* but would soon learn to keep his thoughts to himself."[1] This wariness and pessimism expressed in Jack Nastyface's contemporary account was neither unusual nor unfounded, with naval men suffering constant mental, as well as physical, repression. As duteous subjects and guardians of King and Country, seamen were no strangers to the naval and common laws in place to control crime and punishment aboard ship. Such discipline was meted out extensively on an individual and corporate level. More importantly to this study, it entailed complexities and challenges in its visual representation. This chapter focuses on the nature, validity and significance of the visual representation of crime and punishment in the Royal Navy. A small corpus of rare and overlooked works by print-makers such as Rowlandson, Cruikshank, Grinagain, Roberts and Williams will be analysed to consider the 'offensive' tar in the imagination and print culture of Georgian Britain. Such visual documents will be explored in relation to other primary and secondary sources.

The issue of naval criminality was apparent in contemporary actualities and related textual discourse (specifically, these were *The Articles of War*, naval accounts, parliamentary debates, courts-martial records, pamphlets, newspaper and periodical articles as well as personal manuscripts). There were few images depicting naval crime and punishment because for image-makers and their audiences the subject entailed challenging negative preconceptions. Jack Tar's criminality connoted contemporary problems concerning hierarchical social order, power and justice in the established echelons of the Navy and society in general. The issue of crime and punishment amongst naval seamen undermined their positive image as vital, powerful and even

[1] Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy*, 27.

revered. The fundamental dynamics between state control and individual liberties were nowhere more pertinent than on the lower-deck. Although toiling tirelessly as defenders of King and Country, at sea tars' duteous subordination was not guaranteed. These notions are evident in contemporary preoccupation with sailors' criminality. This subversive subject was broached disproportionately in numerous prints, newspaper reports, legal records and publications relating to naval men. However, archival material and findings of recent scholars, notably Byrn and Dancy, form the premise of my argument that existing visual representation indicates avoidance and exaggeration of actualities for the comfort of audiences' preconceptions. Of particular note will be the rarity of visual commentary on certain aspects, specifically offences of insolence, desertion, the role of alcohol and corporal punishment (especially flogging).

Having begun with a focus on crimes, this chapter moves on to punishments in the Navy. Legal, circumstantial and cultural factors that impacted upon naval men's actual and representational treatment will be addressed. The discussion will cover offences and accusations, but also broader embroilment in disorder and possible explanations for such behaviour. Subsequently, the various punitive consequences of disciplinary law will be investigated, among these corporal and capital punishments with their associated psychological and emotional suffering. Analysis of the relationships between such naval actualities and discourse about them, specifically images, will demonstrate the manipulation at play. The subsections begin by addressing the most prominent crime within the Navy, that of mutiny, and specifically that at the Nore in 1797, which posed major challenges regarding the maintenance of order. The perceived and proportionate seriousness of other offences will be explored in relation to limited visual representations. Depictions of the tar in Courts of Common Law will also be assessed; they are important for the understanding of his criminality ashore and most pertinent to civilian audiences' property and persons. Such potentially negative subjects will lead on to discussion of typical punitive consequences, specifically the lash. The controversy of flogging was and remains prominent, although underrepresented in visual culture in comparison to other official and unofficial discourses about naval punishment. Finally, unjust discipline, discrimination, capriciousness and brutality will be considered, paving the ways for further investigation of naval welfare in the final chapter on death and disease.

3. 2 Mutiny - The Greatest Disciplinary Challenge

Mutiny, the open and explicit rebellion of subordinates against authority, was and remains the supreme challenge to official naval order. It epitomized manifestations of disorder that were fearful to a politically conservative and socially hierarchical maritime nation. The offence of mutiny included individual verbal or written expressions of protestation, active refusal of orders, attacking officers, and collective seizure of a ship or fleet. Passive participation in any of these acts also constituted a crime. It fell to officers to decide whether and on what grounds to charge a mutineer. Notably, while mutiny was the second most common naval crime, three-quarters of its indictments adjudicated at courts-martial on board HM ships resulted from just nine incidents.[2] Its seriousness, particularly to those active in the world of prints, was not so much on account of frequency but rather the fundamental challenge that major mutinies were perceived to pose to the Navy and nation state. Mutiny was of great concern for most Britons during increasingly intense and protracted warfare against revolutionary France. Irrespective of the nature, purpose, extent or conclusion of the seaman's mutiny, it was invariably a threat to national security. But, contemporary discourse was especially preoccupied with mutineers' radical protests at the Nore naval anchorage near Sheerness (May - July 1797). What transpired there were extreme and escalating demands and violence that brought about the forced removal of officers,[3] the full usurping of control over ships, the blockading of maritime trade in the Thames Estuary[4] and weakened defence of the Nation.[5] The demise of the mutiny involved ships

[2] Byrn's statistical survey of criminal cases adjudicated at naval courts-martial between 1793-1815 revealed that mutiny constituted 16% of the criminal allegations with mutinous expressions accounting for approximately 4% more. John Byrn, *Naval Courts-martial, 1793-1815*, Farnham, 2009, 347-9.

[3] The men on the forecastle began to unlash a gun to point at quarter-deck, but the first lieutenant Peter Bover threatened to fire if they carried on, and shot one man who did. Men were seething, charged forward crying and were fired on by officers, with much bloodshed and confusion ensuing. Several were wounded, 3 sailors fatally, and one Delegate and on the other side two or three marines including an officer and Midshipman. George Ernest Manwaring, *Floating Republic: An Account of the Mutinies at Spithead and the Nore in 1797,* London, 1937, 83.

[4] Located at the Nore naval anchorage near Sheerness, this mutiny posed a serious strategic threat to national trade. With the mutiny's fleet arranged to form two crescents, it became a potentially intimidating force at the very gateway to the City of London. Leonard F. Guttridge, *Mutiny: A History of Naval Insurrection*, Shepperton, 1992, 64.

[5] It was reported that the Dutch were building up their fleet at Texel. This strengthened the belief that the sooner Admiral Duncan's North Sea fleet secured disciplinary order and resumed the blockade of this force the better, which was feared to pose a serious invasion threat. Prime Minster Pitt was particularly anxious about the vulnerable state that the mutiny put Britain in at a time of great threat from foreign invasion, writing 'there is little doubt of a descent upon this country being in contemplation'. Guttridge, *Mutiny,* 66, 62. Amidst such alarm, the Nore fleet defied orders to set sail from their anchorage.

breaking away and suffering a brief naval embargo. Capitulation became an inevitability, leading to arrests and trials.

The mutineers' complaints and their behaviour, their riotous supporters ashore and the seamen's eventual penal treatment raised complex questions about where responsibility lay for such enormous disorder. The events at the Nore were interpreted almost exclusively negatively. This is unsurprising, given contemporary threats to the established socio-political order and support for anti-radical and patriotic propaganda. Criminal records, trials, newspaper reports, published pamphlets and verbal accounts of the events all indicate widespread concern.[6] Yet, such troublesome issues were not palatable and were, therefore, mostly avoided in visual culture by image-makers and their clientele.[7] Contemporary debates tended to emphasize that mutineers were susceptible to radicalism. Yet, the Nore mutiny had important circumstantial factors besides simply politics. Vessels stationed at the Nore, namely the receiving ship HMS *Sandwich*, were enduring growing problems among the 'unhappy sufferers' crowded on board.[8] Many of the men of Admiral Duncan's fleet were serving against their will, due to impressment, Quota Acts or commuted penal sentences, and had limited powers of communication, all of which made them potentially discontented, volatile and susceptible to criminal conduct. *The Morning Post* reported that nearby Portsmouth was in a state of 'horror and confusion […] beyond description', with its inhabitants wearing 'a most gloomy appearance and every countenance betrays the most evident anxiety.'[9] Insecurity regarding the loyalty of the Navy's men compromised the institution's repute as a guarantor of established order. Given the tar's mutinous potential, his service's

[6] The mutineers from HMS *Sandwich* engaged in their own patterns of transference of blame, constructing Richard Parker as the source of the trouble. See their courts-martial. TNA ADM 1/5340. See also Donald Frederick Featherstone, *Resistance, Space and Political Identities: The Making of Counter-global Networks*, London, 2008, 781.

[7] Interpretation of the Nore mutiny by the mutineers and commentators would have been informed by the earlier mutiny at the Spithead anchorage in May 1797, which had involved unprecedented organization and peaceable petitioning of grievances. They secured extensive concessions without any alleged crime being prosecuted. All Spithead mutineers received royal pardon from King George III. Furthermore, the delegates were invited to a celebratory feast on 10 May in person by Admiral Howe. This previous commander who they knew fondly as 'Black Dick', had been instrumental in negotiations to secure their demands and concessions.

[8] 'Regardless of events elsewhere, an outburst of some sort at the Nore was probably inevitable. The fuse had long sputtered on the *Sandwich*, a grossly overcrowded receiving ship, whose surgeon had weeks warned that the men aboard were "unhappy sufferers" [… on board] Parker 'found himself […] as one of many supernumeraries among the eleven men crowded into a the vessel built for one-third that number.' Guttridge, *Mutiny*, 61-2. This number is extremely high, and probably exaggerated.

[9] Marcus, *Heart of Oak*, 150.

disciplinary repression was an acceptable measure for the State's security and defence. Nevertheless, the terrifying possibilities of naval mutiny, particularly in relation to invasion by France, were apparent in discourse concerning the Nore. Its mutinous seamen allegedly instituted a 'French-like system of terror', according to Captain John Willet Payne's fearful account to Lord Spencer.[10]

Admiral Philip Patton also maintained the significance of other external circumstances upon the disorderly propensity of the tar:

> Added to these considerations [of domestic radicalism and social unrest, is] the forcible and violent manner by which seamen are supplied to the Navy, the rapid increase and extension of the ideas of general liberty among all ranks of people, with the asylum and freedom which a rival nation presents to those who may imagine themselves persecuted or oppressed, and together, they [the ruling elite in the Navy and society in general] will form to the view the immense importance of the subject of mutiny.[11]

Although Patton wrote this in 1810, having survived the 'Great Mutinies of 1797' his statement would have been poignant to a broad, especially upper-middle class, readership persistently troubled by their own potential socio-political instability and insecurity. Circumstances of naval service were appreciated as conducive to criminality. Discourse not only fostered a degree of understanding towards the mutineers and other disorderly servicemen, but also allowed for the complexity and ambiguity of culpability and the sensitivity of the established social order. The result was scarce visual representation of the Nore narrative and its individual characters.

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[10] Captain John Willet Payne in letter to Lord Spencer 18 April 1797, *Spencer's Papers*, vol. 2, 112. *L'Impeteux* was a French vessel captured by the British to become part of the Channel Fleet and at the time having captured various others had a number of their French officers on board as prisoners, whose presence arguably exacerbated fears of radical manifestations at home, particularly among mutinous seamen. 'The officers of the *Impetueux*, prisoners on board our ships, assured Captain Payne they had seen with their own eyes a ship, painted red and black, which had particularly troubled them by sticking close to them […]'. From such accounts it is possible they might have been trying to scare the British officers into believing that the Spithead mutiny had not be positively concluded at Portsmouth and/or that the Nore mutiny was underway, and even acting with suspect loyalty by 'sticking close to' a French ship. Henry Christmas, George Augustus Frederick Fitzclarence (1st Earl of Munster), *The Literary Gazette: A Weekly Journal of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts, For the Year 1837*, London, vol. 21, 828.

[11] Admiral Philip Patton, *Strictures on Naval Discipline, and the Conduct of a Ship of War*, Edinburgh, 1810, 29.

Although not extensive or impartial, a sense of apprehension and impending doom can be traced in imagery referring to the Nore mutiny with an emphasis upon the political radicalism among aggrieved seamen who felt that they were subject to repression, manipulation and inequity. In some prints, the mutineer could be depicted either as a supreme naval criminal or a lovable rogue, extremes of the notorious Jack Tar stereotype. The tar's familiarity to print audiences was, nonetheless, challenging for image-makers who had to ensure their work appealed to potential purchasers. The mutineer was typically negatively represented in relation to radicalism, political opposition and the death penalty. Demonstrative of this are the few images, analysed below, found in the archive: Isaac Cruikshank's *Delegates in Council or Devils on Horseback* (9 June 1797) [Fig. 60] and portrayals of *Richard Parker* by William Holland [Fig. 61] and William Chamberlain (June and 18 July 1797, respectively) [Fig. 62].

Among the numerous mutineers at the Nore, Richard Parker was by far the most prominent individual. He featured large in mutiny narratives, subsequent legal proceedings, in addition to their related discourses including visual representations. This notorious figure had been appointed 'President of the Delegates of the Fleet' which mutinied at the Nore and was consequently arrested, tried and hanged for his crime. He was an Englishman of good education, affluence and officer service but his biography,[12] which attracted much speculation, reveals his chequered past. Having been demoted from Acting Lieutenant to Midshipman in the Navy before being discharged with rheumatism, Parker went on to squander his wealth and accumulated a devastating debt that landed him in the debtor's jail. From there he obtained his release with the joining bounty he received when enlisting as an able seaman in the Navy as part of the Quota Acts in 1797. After joining the recruiting ship HMS *Sandwich* at the beginning of May, mutiny broke out on the twelfth day of that month. It was unlikely, however, that he would have had the inclination or the means to be one of its instigators or organisers.

[12] Richard Parker came from a middle-class background, having received a good education and had a career in the Navy during which he achieved rank, although being demoted from Acting Lieutenant in one of his Majesty's ships for insubordination, transferred and eventually discharged with rheumatism about the time of the conclusion of the American War. He soon came into the possession of a considerable sum of money, and shortly after he arrived in this country and married a farmer's daughter in Aberdeenshire. He squandered his wealth and accumulated devastating debt that landed him in the debtor's jail. From here he obtained his release with the joining bounty he received when enlisting as an able seaman in the Navy as part of the Quota Acts in 1797.

Furthermore, he was not necessarily an aspiring leader, staunch radical or even of stable mind. Yet, Parker's involvement was not denied. He was invited to join the mutineers and developed significant empathy for his disillusioned shipmates. His relatively distinguished social status, literacy, and his persuasiveness and organisational skills equipped him for a useful role among the mutineers, although he had no control over them. The leadership he was granted was more symbolic than active. He supervised proceedings and lengthy communications with delegates which eventually failed through lack of support and led to his arrest, imprisonment, trial and punishment. However, above all, he became the embodiment of mutinous crime for contemporary audiences.

Images depicting Parker set him in relation to the petition of delegates 'resolutions', the negotiation of shipboard events at the Nore, and the punitive hanging for mutiny. The relative abundance of visual portrayals of Parker specifically confirmed and consolidated the import with which this particular mutineer, among many at the Nore, and during other such naval incidents in history, was blamed for the mutiny itself. His biography attracted extensive coverage in contemporary and historical texts and so too did the physiognomy and attributes with which Parker was visually represented. An anonymous mezzotint (3 July 1797) [Fig. 63] and hand-coloured etchings by Holland (June 1797) [Fig. 61] and Chamberlain (18 July 1797) [Fig. 62] are explicit depictions of this notorious criminal identifiable by his appearance, setting and title. Despite the numerous individual contributors to the Nore mutiny, Parker seemingly embodied it.[13] He himself, as well as his demonizing public, anticipated his execution; capital punishment was warranted and his fate was sealed. During the hanging ceremony on board HMS *Sandwich*, Parker declared to Captain Moss that, 'I acknowledge the justice of the sentence under which I suffer; and I hope my death may be deemed a sufficient

[13] The *Sandwich* came under the guns of Sheerness, and Admiral Buckner's boat, commanded by the coxswain, and containing a picket guard of the West York Militia, who went on board obtaining Parker from below deck. Upon landing ashore, Parker was much hissed and defensively said aloud, "Do not hoot me; it is not my fault. I will clear myself." Keith Grint, *The Arts of Leadership*, Oxford, 2000, 72. He appeared the rueful martyr, amazed at, even to the extent of a degree of denial, his involvement in helping the underdog. He claimed at his execution, "The miseries [of] the lower classes are imputable in a great measure to their ignorance, cowardice and duplicity. Nothing short of a miracle would ever afford them any relief". He wished he had not become leader, if anyone wonders how such an educated man could have been so indiscreet he said, 'tell them that RP in his last moments, was pierced to the bottom of his soul with asking himself the same question.' Guttridge, *Mutiny*, 70, 72.

atonement, and save the lives of others.'[14] These words and, furthermore, his peaceful arrest and trial evidenced his acceptance of culpability and hope of martyrdom. Solemn and resolute in the face of capital punishment, depictions of Parker are in a style free from caricature.

Holland depicted *Parker the Delegate* [Fig. 61] relatively diminutively, standing alone in a coastal landscape. He gazes blankly out to the right of the scene where a vacant gibbet looms ominously in the distance. The bleak prophecy of mutiny and the anticipated hanging for such crime are connoted. The implication of this striking visual composition was that this figure, as a criminal individual, constituted a threat that justified his legal removal as a tried and capitally convicted mutineer. A fleet is gathered left of his turned back, symbolizing how he has forsaken his influential role among shipmates and faces his fate independently. The disorderly North Sea Fleet has reconvened to oversee punitive proceedings and make ready to set sail, assuring that official naval power will prevail. The title *Sketch'd by a Naval Officer* infers the acceptance of enforcing the established order through the State's disciplinary institutions and punishment. This 'portrait' of Parker dressed in the stereotypical tar's striped pantaloons and blue jacket ensures the obvious and familiar naval relevance of the image. More to the point, it avoided suggesting any complications associated with his superiority or credibility in comparison to that of the challenged ruling elites. Yet, this mutiny on board an overcrowded and festering receiving ship, alongside others waiting at anchorage, exposed the controversy and limitations of the Navy's established order. Coercive recruitment and a diverse and often dissatisfied lower deck were conducive to disorder; all points that such prints successfully evade.[15]

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[14] Available from http://www.exclassics.com/newgate/ng389.htm. Accessed on 18 November 2012. *The Criminal Recorder*, London, 1804; William Jackson, *The New and Complete Newgate Calendar or Malefactor's Universal Register, Comprising INTERESTING MEMOIRS of the MOST NOTORIOUS CHARACTERS who have been convicted of outrages on the LAWS OF ENGLAND, with SPEECHES, CONFESSIONS, and LAST EXCLAMATIONS of SUFFERERS*, London, 1818, 389.

[15] Over a third of all the seamen at the Nore were made up of Quota men, which was indicative of the heterogeneous and volatile nature of its complement. See Anthony G. Brown, 'The Nore Mutiny – Sedition of Ships' Biscuits?' A Reappraisal', *Mariner's Mirror*, 2006, vol. 92, 66. Rodger argues that the Quota Acts, which have been seen as a key source of dissent, were not a source of 'educated trouble-makers', but rather of 'respectable working men in need of employment'. Rodger, 'Mutiny and Subversion?': Spithead and the Nore', in Thomas Bartlett, David Dickson, Diire Keogh and Kevin Whelan, eds, *1798: A BICENTENARY PERSPECTIVE*, Dublin, 2003, xii, 756, 549–564. It was precisely 'respectable working men', however, who were members of societies like the London Corresponding Society and who would have brought their experiences of these organisations to negotiate the harsh life aboard ship. Featherstone, *Resistance*, 778, n.54. The London Corresponding Society (LCS) was the 'most controversial and most famous' of the various reform movements that emerged in Britain in the

Chamberlain's representation of the individual after which the work is titled, *Parker* (18 July 1797) [Fig. 62] is somewhat more ambiguous and complex. There are two figures depicted; one hanging from the yardarm in the background who we can be assumed to be the mutineer, punished for his mutinous offence, while another man in naval uniform stands prominently on the foreground deck with his unsheathed sword raised so that the eye is directed to a corpse. The latter could be a second portrayal of Parker, or simply an anonymous officer included to symbolize elite, authoritarian rank controlling disorderly counterparts. This hand-coloured etching offers a more understanding and apologetic construct of the mutineer, suggesting martyrdom and defiant fortitude in the face of culpability, criminal demonization and criminal law. The printmaker could have been suggesting here that Parker's demise was a foregone conclusion. The work served as a reminder that this figure, discursively styled as ringleader and symbolic embodiment of the Nore mutiny, 'suffered Death […] on 30th June'. It tapped into audiences' sense of historical correctness and reassurance that steadfast disciplinary order had prevailed. Yet, this print confirmed the insecurities and haunting threat associated with its subject.

In Isaac Cruikshank's *The Delegates in Council or Beggars on Horseback* (9 June 1797) [Fig. 60] various figures are portrayed in a somewhat less sympathetic manner. The majority of mutineers are depicted as anonymous and mute caricatures, listening in bewilderment as one of their number, with his back to the viewer, attempts to articulate their list of 'Resolutions'. Seated in an elevated armchair at the head of the assembly table is Parker, wearing a hat and clasping a blunderbus, an alert and alarmed expression on his face. This hand-coloured etching was a rapidly produced and damning response to the mutinous and escalating events at the Nore, specifically the drawing up of the mutineers' 'resolutions' for presentation to Admiral Buckner on board the usurped HMS *Sandwich,* 20 May. The scene is set in the appropriated Captain's cabin with an overturned Britannia print and defaced ballad 'Hearts of Oak are our Ships Jolly Tars are our men We always are ~~Ready~~' hung on the wall. This shipboard interior is occupied by figures of ugly physiognomy and rough, prominently red, attire, amidst drink and weaponry. All of these visual symbols suggested the further

1790s. Mary Thale, ed., *Selections from the Papers of the London Corresponding Society, 1792–99*, Cambridge, 1983, 15. For further investigation of recruitment, specifically impressment and the Quota Act, see Chapter One, 35, n. 37-38.

criminal potential of this scenario and throughout the Navy's fleet. The vicious caricature of these mutineers related to their notoriety as recently condemned by the King as rebels.[16] Lord Arden recorded it as 'the most awful crisis that these kingdoms ever saw',[17] while the press abounded with alarmist commentary on the Admiralty's treatment of the Nore mutiny, from negotiations, disintegration, capture, courts-martial and hangings. Cruikshank presented a complex satirical critique not only of the mutineers but also of their actual and cultural interpretation informed by preconceptions of disorder in the Navy and society at large held by wary and privileged upper classes.

The stupid, deranged and closed-mouthed *Delegates* in Cruikshank's disorderly council assembly mock not only the Nore mutineers but also allegations that such individuals were guilty of orchestrating mutiny. This is further implied by the inclusion of politician Fox depicted claiming, 'Aye, Aye, we are at the bottom of it', in the company of five conspiratorial and gleeful figures of the Opposition whom he reveals beneath a tablecloth. Another perceivable instigator holds a *Letter from Sheerness to Ld L------le*.[18] Further to these Whigs, a gentleman advocates his lecture, the papers of which hang from his pocket and identify him as Thelwall the renowned radical orator, writer and member of the London Corresponding Society.[19] His presence and active role in the mutiny are explicit in his demand, 'Tell him we intend to be Masters, I'll read him a Lecture'. This print suggests that the mutiny was a manifestation of circumstantial factors rather than criminally predisposed seamen. Their discontent, exacerbated by naval treatment and response to initial complaints, meant communication with the Admiralty and radicals was likely to incite them further. Reasons for this unprecedented mutiny that related closely to issues of naval responsibility in terms of maltreatment or disorganization were evident in preliminary petitioning and planning, yet, they were visually avoided. The *Delegates*' grotesque, deranged and armed caricatures in a disorderly interior were at odds with any suggestion of any rational or peaceable

[16] A royal proclamation was issued on 6 June 1797, declaring the Nore mutineers as 'rebels'.
[17] Lord Arden to Spencer, 10 May 1797, *Spencer's Papers*, vol. 2, 126. Cited in Rodgers, *Command of the Oceans*, London, 2004, 448. Lord Spencer also described the events among the fleet anchored at the Nore as 'the most complete state of mutiny'. Lord Spencer, cited in Guttridge, *Mutiny*, 64.
[18] Lord Lauderdale holds the letter from Sheerness and the confession is inscribed in the speech bubble of Fox, the most prominent and arguably visually familiar of the politicians, who include, from left-to-right: James Maitland, 8th Earl of Lauderdale (1759-1839) author of *An Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Public Wealth*, 1804 and second edition 1819, John Horne Tooke, Charles Stanhope, Charles Grey, Charles James Fox and Richard Brinsley Sheridan.
[19] For reference to The London Corresponding Society (LCS) see earlier in this chapter, 117-8, n. 15.

requests of the seamen. Instead, the mutineers were perceived as incapable and misguided fools whose potential threat necessitated oppressive discipline in order to maintain the established socio-political order of the Navy and nation state.[20]

Cruikshank's print of mutiny on board HMS *Sandwich* and others of the North Sea Fleet indicates the inferiority of these vulnerable and volatile seamen who are depicted as being incapable of asserting their grievances without external political influences inciting extremism. The address from 'Delegates of the Different Ships at the Nore assembled in Council to their Fellow Subjects' written to challenge 'falsehoods and misrepresentations' in 'Public Prints' demonstrates mutineers falling prey to negative, especially radical, distortion in actuality and interpretation.[21] Cruikshank's masterful portrayal of rebellious men avoided stimulating a sense of insecurity or remorse among the sensitive ruling elites' upper-middle print-buyers. Not only could his audience deride the foolish excess, weakness and ineffectuality of the marginal mutineers and their radical associations, but also of the naval authorities and the order they supposedly guaranteed. The Admiral appears in diminutive profile on the left margin, a position that underplays his responsibility for the mutiny's cessation. Fundamentally, this print is an attack on radical Whigs, if not a piece of official ministerial propaganda, caricaturing radical disorder and reassuring audiences that established order would

[20] Their list of resolutions included 8 articles that demanded the royal pardon of Nore mutineers, as had been granted to those at Spithead, financial administrative reforms that ensured wages were not heavily in arrears and prize-money was more fairly distributed among the crew, disciplinary improvements that allowed for more generous shore leave, an amnesty for returning deserters and further changes to *The Articles of War*.

[21] Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* was supposedly discovery on board HMS *Espion*. Conrad Gill, *Naval Mutinies of 1797*, Manchester, 1913, 300. Tomms, Wright and Smart did not deny accusations of correspondence with malicious or seditious members of societies at courts-martial. For a discussion of the links between the mutineers and LCS and United Irishmen, see 'Report from the Committee of Secrecy of the House of Commons relative to the proceedings of different persons and societies in Great Britain and Ireland engaged in a treasonable society, London Corresponding Society', in M. T. Davis, ed., *London Corresponding Society, 1792–1799*, London, 2002, vol. 6, 303. Also see information on John Gale Jones, *Sketch of a Political Tour Through Rochester, Chatham, Maidstone, Gravesend &c*, London, 1796. Thompson argues that these contacts may have been 'among the threads which link the Jacobins to the naval mutineers at Spithead and the Nore'. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, London, 1968, 162. The courts-martial of George Tomms and John Wright of the *Diomede* contains detailed evidence of their contact with Corresponding Societies in Nottingham, 29 October 1798: TNA ADM 1/5347. The *Grampus* court-martial trial of James Smart provides a useful example. TNA ADM 1/5340. According to evidence given in the trial, he was accused of being the 'president' of the *Grampus* delegates in the Spithead mutiny 1797. During the trial James Wright, a 'seaman belonging to the *Grampus*', gave evidence that Smart was associated with the London Corresponding Society. While Smart response was articulated to emphasise his loyalty to government, he at no point denied having said he was a member of the LCS. Featherstone argues that this refusal to distance himself from the LCS, or to disavow his connection to it, can be read as an unrepentant construction of his involvement in the mutinies and of his wider radical connections. Featherstone, *Resistance*, 779.

prevail. The exclusivity of hierarchical power meant that those attempting usurpation lacked the prerequisite strength, shrewdness and popular support to succeed. This was reiterated by the extended title 'beggars on horseback' which had complex connotations of absurdity, suggesting the mutineers were not simply deficient but even ridiculous in having pretensions beyond their station. Politics and social organisation are satirically paralleled with the equestrian transport and recreation enjoyed by a privileged, educated and leisurely sector of society far above that of the lowly tar.[22]

Interestingly, the four etched portrayals of Parker show him without the physiognomy associated with wickedness, attributes linked to radicalism, or violence actively committed by or against himself. Instead, he is consistently handsome, upright, confident and self-controlled. The noticeable sword in his portraits by Holland and Chamberlain, and also in *Delegates*, is significant, albeit ambiguous. As a symbol of martyrdom or valor in art, it could have connoted the sacrifice suffered by seamen in their attempt to challenge an unfair established order and assert their self-respect and desire for positive change. On the other hand, it might have been included as an ironic attribute that mocked such presumptuous arrogance.[23] It clearly contrasted with the more negative associations of the cudgel and fist, typically brandished by the Navy's men – as in Morland's *Pressgang* (1790) [Fig. 11] and Isaac Cruikshank's *A DIALOGUE Between a BRITISH TAR and a FRENCH CITIZEN. A loyal sketch in verse* (21 May 1800) [Fig. 15]. Parker's appearance has symbolic implications of control and honour, and was not over-dramatically threatening. Such representation suggested a degree of sympathetic understanding for seamen in their desperate attempt to bring about reforms they felt were due.

Reference to the Nore mutiny in imagery was scarce and discerning but, nonetheless, acknowledged the pertinence of such disorder and its association to broader problems of domestic and French radicalism. The disconcerting implications of the subject were limited and deflected, in order to offer audiences reassurance that mutinous action, while an inevitable threat and a grave crime, was rare, containable and, therefore,

[22] This relates to the characteristic pastime of seamen riding horses when at leisure ashore, with disturbances, laughter and derision common associations, which is discussed earlier in Chapter Two, 77 and 98.
[23] Featherstone, *Counter-Insurgency*, 780. This document is included in the court-martial of mutinous sailors from the *Sandwich*, TNA ADM 1/5340.

doomed to failure. Mutiny was a manifest challenge to the prescribed and enforced order of naval service; questioning of obedience alone constituted an offence and independent thinking was a threat to the established order and incompatible with subservience. For example, Captain Thomas Troubridge explained his identification of subordinates' criminality as, 'whenever I see a fellow look as if he was thinking, I say that's mutiny'.[24] This was a wary, even presumptuous, but not unorthodox attitude which evidently informed many courts-martial and penal sentences. Also noteworthy was that this remark came from one who had ascended the ranks from humble beginnings as a steadfast 'architect of his own destiny'; he was a man who expounded conformist aspirations.[25] Portrayals of Parker give him an expression of concentration, self-assurance and poised intent. He is even 'tendering the List of Grievances, to Vice Admiral Buckner on Board the Sandwich at the Nore' in the anonymous mezzotint (3 July 1797) [Fig. 63]. Clearly mutiny was a complex issue and a serious preoccupation for all and at all levels of society.

3. 3 Jack Tar as Criminal Deserter

Given the loaded socio-political significance and severe discipline afforded to the Navy's men, their criminality was especially pertinent in actuality and visual representation. Discipline was essential and defined according to specific laws (described by historian Douglas Hay as 'ideological instruments'), assumptions, values and anxieties in dominant society.[26] Legitimate discipline invariably involved identifying, charging, convicting and punishing crime. Social historian Arthur Gilbert's

[24] Allegedly, this was a response to Lord Eldon's question of how a mutinous seaman could be identified posed by Admiral Troubridge. Lincoln and McEwen, eds, *John Scott, Lord Eldon (1751-1838)*, London, 1960, 20. Following the suppressive conclusion of the Nore mutiny, in 1798, at least fifty British sailors were hanged and as many flogged with between a hundred to four hundred lashes for mutiny, incitement to mutiny, or mutinous assembly, expression or behaviour. Guttridge, *Mutiny*, 73-4.

[25] John Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*, London, 1827, part 1, 279.

[26] Clive Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars, 1793-1815*, London, 1979, 2. Douglas Hay has described English criminal law in the eighteenth century as one of the 'chief ideological instruments' of the ruling class, 'It is easy to claim equal justice for murderers of all classes, where a universal moral sanction was more likely to be found, or in political cases, the necessary price of a constitution ruled by law. The trick was to extend that communal sanction to a criminal law that was nine-tenths concerned with upholding ignore division of property. [The law] allowed the rulers of England to make the courts a selective instrument of class justice, yet simultaneously to proclaim the law's incorruptible impartiality and absolute determinacy.' 'Property, authority and the criminal law', in Douglas Hays, Peter Linebaugh, John G. Rule, E. P. Thompson and Cal Winslow, eds, *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, London, 1975, 26, 35, 48.

notion of crime as disorder in relation to the 'symbolic universe of the naval officer' suggests the gravity of criminal naval disorder among subordinates as experienced by men of rank, ruling elites and the British populace.[27] At such a time of protracted warfare and threats of revolution, radicalism and social disorder, the Navy constituted the bulwark of the material and ideological status quo. With its manpower more massive, varied and volatile than ever before, the Navy's fighting force was perceived as a real and potentially threatening instrument of power. The ambiguous nature and extent of the tar's subordination and efficient, legitimate and severe disciplinary experiences made of him a force dangerous to his own self as well as to broader society. He required constant confinement, surveillance and corporeal punishment in accordance with the orders or whims of the various ruling elites (officers, Admiralty Lords, physicians, politicians and the King).[28] As Lord Mansfield asserted:

> The salvation of the country depends upon the discipline of the fleet; without discipline they would be a rabble, dangerous only to their friends, and harmless to the enemy.[29]

In contemporary discourses, particularly naval reports, accounts of disorder, and the scarce images, the stereotypical and satirical construct of the criminally embroiled common seaman was prominent. Prevention of crime posed problems; the press emphasised the potential and actual threat of the naval tar to established order. Newspapers often reported on security precautions, crime incidents, legal trials and punitive sentences involving 'sailors'[30] and related contentious naval issues were

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[27] Arthur N. Gilbert, 'Crime as Disorder: Criminality and the symbolic Universe of the Eighteenth Century British Naval Officer', in Robert William Love, ed., *Changing Interpretations and New Sources in Naval History*, New York, 1980, 110-122, especially 119.

[28] 'The adage that idleness is the root of evil is with no people more strongly verified than with sailors and soldiers.' Kempenfelt in long letter to Sir Charles Middleton, Comptroller of the Navy, in J. S. Corbett, ed., *Barham Papers*, Naval Research Society, 1906, 305. 'I would therefore, my Lord, in the first instance, suggest that such individuals should no longer be suffered to disgrace men of war; for where severity has been resorted to, it has mostly originated in the misconduct of such men, who callous to every sense of propriety themselves, have almost invariably proved the fomenters of insubordination and mutiny in others.' Robert Otway, 'On naval discipline with observations on the system of impressment: pointing out the practicability of raising seamen for the Royal Navy, without recourse to such a measure', *Hume Tracts*, 1823, 8.

[29] *Sutton v. Johnstone*, 1 T. R. 549. *Per* Lords Mansfield and Loughborough. Cited in Theodore Thring, *A Treatise on the Criminal Law of the Navy: with an Introductory Chapter on the early State and Discipline of the Navy, and an Appendix, comprising the Naval Discipline Act, the Queen's Regulations on Courts-martial and Discipline and Practical Forms*, London, 1861, 44.

[30] Having extensively searched the online resource *Burney*, a helpful archival collection of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century British Newspapers, relevant reports were found in relative abundance among publications such as *True Briton*, *The Times, Sun, Oracle and Daily Advertiser*, *London Herald and Evening Post*, and *Morning Chronicle*, particularly focusing upon dramatic or extreme crimes and convictions.

discussed by Parliament and the Admiralty.[31] However, the real and representational construct of the naval seaman was essentially of good character, although of inferior social standing. As such, anything to the contrary, specifically criminality, was limited in validity. But, the repressive code and crude maritime culture of alcoholism, womanizing, aggression and recklessness were conducive to disorderly manifestations of grievances. Harsh corporeal coercion and strict penal law arguably exacerbated discontent, undermined respect and fuelled or ignited disorder; this is suggested by aggrieved seamen's personal accounts, petitions, mutinies and offences.[32] The Navy's criminals, whether recruited as such (a small minority) or having committed infractions once in the service where they typically remained following judicial proceedings, were also an undeniable burden to the disciplinary institution.[33] Their existence was symptomatic of broader desperate manning situations within the Navy during the unprecedented pressure of the French Wars.

Naval disorder can be considered to have been a prerequisite for, and a detrimental by-product of, imposed order. While discipline from the time of enlistment was central to the existence of men in the Navy, its disconcerting implications resulted in representational avoidance. Besides scarce satirical prints, other text-based discourse

[31] Issues of corporal and capital punishment were particularly topical, and also related to impressment, naval manning and pay, as this chapter will demonstrate with reference to publications such as Anon., *Naval Jurisprudence: Review of the Naval Service of Boys' bill, and the Naval Prisons and Desertion bill, with Remarks on the system of Promotion and Punishment pursued in the Navy*, London, 1800 and Anon., *Strictures on Naval Discipline, and the conduct of a Ship of War*, Edinburgh, 1810.

[32] According to the archive, particularly Captains' and Boatswains Mate's log books and Court-martial records, the majority of naval offenders were recidivists, whether criminal prior to or once in naval service. Three-quarters of indictments for mutiny, the second most common crime tried at courts-martial, resulted from just nine incidents. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 347.

[33] Those impressed under the Vagrancy Act 1795 (35 Geo. III, c. 34.) the Admiralty advised could only be discharged for criminal, not civil, causes. This made it impossible for them to be arrested for debt, a ploy often attempted as a means of escaping service. TNA Adm. 1/3684 30 March 1796. Rogers, *Press Gang*, 34. Patrick Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis: Containing a Detail of the Various Crimes and Misdemeanors by which Public and Private Property and Security are, at Present, Injured and Endangered; and Suggesting Remedies for their Prevention*, London, 1800, 92-3. To quote Justice Burn, 'if such person, being a male, is above 12 years of age, the Court may, before he is discharged from the house of correction, send him to be employed in His Majesty's service by sea or land.' Burn, *The Justice*, 1797, 4, 260-9; J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800*, Princeton, 1986, 610; Peter King, '"Press Gangs are Better magistrates than the Middlesex Justices": Young Offenders, Press Gangs, and Prosecution Strategies in Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century England', in N. Landau, ed., *Law, Crime and English Society 1660-1840*, Oxford, 1997. In the last two decades of the eighteenth century a number of young men convicted at Surrey and Sussex quarter sessions were offered the choice at the sentencing stage of joining the forces as an alternative to several months in jail. For pardons from imprisonment upon condition of serving in forces see, for example, Secretaries of State, 37 /15, f. 590 (State Papers, Domestic); SP 44/92, 488 (Entry books, criminal, 1704-82); ASSI 31/12, 166 (Agenda Books, 1748-1802).

evidenced this interpretative tendency, such as the contemporary writings of Admiral Philip Patton.

> By a mistaken policy, the most abandoned and daring miscreants have been released from their confinement, and sent to serve in His Majesty's ships, where, though the pernicious effects of their contaminating example could not be prevented, they have been kept within the bounds of good order by fear of detection, and the certainty of a dozen lashes upon the bare back.[34]

Such interpretations conceded the shortsightedness of the Navy's recruitment of criminals, but evaded causal associations with the service's ill-reputed discipline and ineffectual preventative law. Unsurprisingly, the author overlooked existing detrimental factors besides release from prison, avoiding culpability for the behaviour of those conducive to disorder. Yet, the number of criminals enlisted was negligible,[35] with only those guilty of minor misdemeanors or debt being eligible for service. Recruitment in general was far from indiscriminate and involved, in fact, a high degree of regulation.

The archive reveals that this small minority group of criminals or other recalcitrant men newly serving through impressment, Quota Acts or penal sentencing, did not feature commonly among those offending and punished in the Navy. Byrn confirms that:

> contrary to the belief of advocates of the abolition of corporal punishment and modern historians, at least 55% of victims of brutal correction [of severe flogging] were volunteers. The next largest proportion was of men turned over.[36]

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[34] Patton, *Strictures on Naval Discipline*, 84.

[35] Statistical analysis of recruitment records reveals that between 1793 and 1801 only c. 90, criminals were pressed into the Navy. It is likely a similarly negligibly number continued throughout the war against France. Jeremiah R. Dancy, *Redefining naval manning: dispelling the myths of Royal Navy manpower, 1793–1801*, paper presented at the National Maritime Museum Seminar Series at the Institute of Historical Research, 9/2/2010. Byrn's statistical survey revealed that those entering the Navy through prison were 29 in raw numbers or 0.7% of those in the sample. John Byrn, *Crime and Punishment: discipline on the Leeward Islands station*, 1784-1812, Aldershot, 1989, 157. Serious offenders against person, property and Constitution were rejected as detrimental to naval morale and discipline. Yet, minor 'mischievous members of the community' were taken in, often by recruiting officers of press gangs working with local magistrates and prisons to take their unwanted, a strategy particularly appealing to the Admiralty to appease civilian authorities and communities for the socio-political problems caused by recruitment, specifically violent pressgang incidents and joining bounty problems.

[36] J. D. Bryn, *Crime and Punishment in the Royal Navy: Discipline on the Leeward Islands Station, 1784-1812*, Aldershot, 1989, 75.

Byrn's point could be explained by the fact that those who had served for many years and also possibly enlisted voluntarily may have felt their liberty compromised by manning measures that transpired. Disappointment may have been compounded by economic, as well as humanitarian and socio-political, inequity they suffered under the ruling elites' authority. Disconcerting comparisons were apparent, given that new messmates received increasingly generous joining bounties. A serving officer at the time, Edward Brenton wrote of such problems with hindsight:

> The quota bounty given in 1795, 1796, and 1797, we conceive to have been the most ill-advised and fatal measure ever adopted by the Government for manning the fleet. The seamen who voluntarily enlisted in 1793, and fought some of the most glorious of our battles, received the comparatively small bounty of £5. Those brave fellows saw men, totally ignorant of the profession, the very refuse and outcasts of society, fleeing from justice and the vengeance of the law, come on board a ship of war with £70 bounty. [One such newly arrived bounty man] was seized by a boatswain's mate who, holding him up with one hand by the waistband of his trousers exclaimed, with wry humour: 'Here's a fellow that cost a guinea a pound.'[37]

Animosity caused by various financial discrepancies between naval servicemen did manifest in the form of physical confrontations, petitions and even mutinies. Officer-ranks were granted disciplinary privileges and greater pay, prize-money, patronage and influence on term of service. These were not advantages experienced in the merchant navy or seafaring industries. Discipline, hardship and financial uncertainty remained for these men too but liberty to resign from their employment was particularly envied by the tars bound to royal naval service. Hence, desertion was an on-going problem.

Desertion was a serious and significant offence.[38] Evidence demonstrates that it constituted roughly a quarter of all indictments adjudicated at courts-martial and that offenders were most frequently convicted and punished.[39] Official statistics and textual

[37] E. P. Brenton, *Naval History of Great Britain*, London, 1837, vol. 1, 49.
[38] Nelson estimated that whenever a large convoy of merchant ships assembled at Portsmouth, at least a thousand men deserted from the fleet. Nelson, 'Memorandum on the State of the Fleet', Admiralty Records, 1803, 1, 580.
[39] Byrn's statistical survey of 477 cases of all types of crime on the Leeward Isles between 1793-1815 adjudicated at courts-martial revealed absence or desertion to account for 25.2% of the total. Bryn, *Crime and Punishment*, 53. In another statistical survey of 1241 specifically naval criminal cases charged at courts-martial reveal that 349, or 28%, were for desertion or absent without leave. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 347.

sources generally suggest the extreme trajectory typical of the crime, and the causal desperation and disillusion of long-term endurance of binding naval service. Those enlisted as volunteers or able seamen were the highest proportion of deserters during the period.[40] Deserters disregarded not only the law but faced grave danger and punitive risk when seeking opportune circumstances to escape. Nelson estimated that 'of those who thus deserted fully one-third […] never saw the fleet again. From loss of clothes, drinking and other debaucheries' they were 'lost by death to the country.'[41] Of those surviving, some were rounded up by the press gang as stragglers or voluntarily returned. More commonly they existed as fugitives inland, typically falling prey to crimps' incentives of alcohol, bounty and a wage to join the merchant navy.[42] As Nelson lamented, 'money and liquor held out to a seaman are too much for him.'[43] Yet, desertion was absent in imagery and only rarely dealt with in non-visual culture. It is interesting to note this underrepresentation, particularly in comparison to the subject of mutiny. The number of deserters prosecuted was approximately twice that of mutineers. The complex causality of desertion increased its troublesome implications for image-makers and audiences.

Scenarios of desertion commonly involved conspiracy of small numbers of tars below deck, escape by swimming or boat at night, attempts to avoid capture by authorities on duty or detection by press gangs ashore, and a tough existence as fugitives in the countryside, the merchant navy or the American seafaring community until being brought to justice by coercive seizure, trial and punishment. The archive abounds with references to such actualities, primarily in the form of textual material such as Captain's journals, official records, seamen's accounts and published pamphlets, as well as via word-of-mouth reports. Imagery was almost entirely absent, the subject of desertion was too remote and disconcerting for civilian audiences. Their experiences of state

[40] From accounts between 1 May 1804 and 5 June 1805 it has been revealed 'that the loss of able seamen is nearly equal to that of the ordinary seamen and landsmen collectively taken, and despite the fact that no more than one third of a ship's company is allowed to consist of men rated able seaman.' The statistics were stated accordingly out of a total of 15319 lost to desertion in 13 months. Invalided by surveys of Captains and surgeons numbered 3017, Able seamen deserted, 5662, Ordinary seamen deserted, 3903, Landsmen deserted, 2737. Anon., *Strictures on Naval Discipline, and the conduct of a ship of war, etc*. Edinburgh, 1810, 42.
[41] Nelson, 'Memorandum on the State of the Fleet', Admiralty Records, 1803, vol. 1, 580.
[42] John R. Hutchinson, *The Press Gang Afloat and Ashore,* The Project Gutenberg EBook, 2004, 21. Accessed on 16 October 2012.
[43] Nelson, 'Memorandum on the State of the Fleet', Admiralty Records, 1803, vol. 1, 580.

obligation were not of service 'upon pain of death'.[44] As such, the satirical potential for familiarity, drama and humour was arguably insufficient for commercially viable imagery during action against French threats that called for a loyal naval workforce. The nature, causes and repercussions of desertion were complex, ambiguous and feared, with visual absence consolidating negative misconceptions associated with ignorance.

Central to desertion was the issue of manning the Navy's extensive and expanding fleet and the inherent and heightened problems of supply and demand during this era of intense and protracted naval warfare. Measures taken to deal with these demands included positioning sentinels to guard against deserters,[45] anchoring at a distance from the shore, keeping idle tars shipbound and satisfied with women, traders and booze, granting shore-leave only in discriminate and allotted turns,[46] retaining at least six-months' worth of back-pay and imposing judicial severity upon capture by officers, marines and civilian-informants.[47] Clearly, those who challenged such extensive practicalities were desperate men. Desertion was a by-product, or more sympathetically an expedient, of naval inequities and injustices, specifically coerced and deteriorating manpower, disciplinary hardship, shipboard confinement, poor financial recompense and negligent welfare. Critical and reformist discourse about broader naval manning

[44] *The Articles of War* proscribed that convicted deserters 'shall suffer death, or such other punishment as the circumstances of the offence shall deserve, and a court-martial shall judge fit', and such punishment was typical of various other legal obligations within the service. Articles 15, 16 and 34 specifically. *Articles of War*, 1749. Hutchinson, *Press Gang*, 21.

[45] For an example, Wilson recorded in his journal while aboard *Unite*: '12th Jan. 1806 - Two men attempted to desert, but were prevented. A nightly guard-boat was hereafter ordered to row around the ship, and an additional number of sentries placed on board the frigate.' Robert Mercer Wilson, 'Remarks on board His Majesty's ship *Unité* of 40 guns, commanded at different periods by captains Ogle and Campbell, commencing July 19, 1805', 1805-9, in Thursfield, *Five Naval Journals*, 136.

[46] 'Admiral Penrose recalls with pride that his ship was at Spithead in 1797 and because he allowed each division in turn to go ashore he only lost two men, whereas the ships alongside which had boats rowing round it to prevent desertion lost far more.' Christopher Lloyd, *British Seaman*, London, 1968, 245. C. V. Penrose, *Observations on Corporal Punishment*, Bodmin, 1824, 47.

[47] Byrn's statistical survey of crime and punishment on the Leeward Islands revealed that between 1784 and 1812 almost one-third of the men, or a total of 112 of the 362 individuals, tried on the station were charged with desertion. Furthermore, 90 per cent of such accused were found guilty at naval courts-martial, or in raw numbers, ninety-eight of the 109 men for whom verdicts and sentences survive were convicted, while three cases are missing. Sentencing was typically severe; of the ninety-eight sailors convicted, five were adjudged to suffer the death penalty, ninety-two received a number of lashes through the fleet ranging from fifty to 500 and one was imprisoned in the Marshalsea prison for eighteen months. A similar pattern of prosecution was followed in the summary adjudication of the crime of desertion. 84% of those summarily flogged for desertion, or a total of 224 of the 266, received more than a twelve strokes, with the number of lashes ranging from one to ninety-six. And Absence without leave was treated with slightly less severity, with 88% of such offenders, or 115 of the 131, suffering a dozen blows or less; the number of stripes ranged from two to twenty-four. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 165-166.

problems of wages, leave, living conditions, brutality and illegitimate impressment often presented improvement as a more effective approach to desertion.[48]

Although the disconcerting actualities and implications of desertion were problematic and consequently predominantly avoided in print culture, a rare satirical reference to naval desertion is found in James Gillray's *Affability* (10 February 1795) [Fig. 17]. Masking anxiety through ridicule, it portrayed a man on the right dressed in a checkered neckerchief and blue pantaloons typical of naval sailors and conventional features of Jack Tar's depiction, as evident in Gillray's studies of seamen for Loutherbourg (1793-4) [Fig. 64] and his caricature *A True British Tar* (28 May 1795) [Fig. 54]. Yet, here he wears a large overcoat, as if put on in haste to conceal his occupational identity beneath the disguise of a landlubber or farmer. The implications were that the seaman was living secretly as a fugitive inland, an increasingly common tendency among those naval service-evaders avoiding detection by the local authorities, Impress Service and informers.[49] In suggesting the risk and hardship suffered by deserters the printmaker invited sympathetic understanding for such criminality. Further disorder of naval manpower was connoted, specifically disturbance of civilian peace and the involvement of locals in such criminality.[50]

The seaman's terror when visited by gentrified authority, characterised as King Farmer George III, suggests his illicit activity and guilty conscience. As if under personal inquisition he is asked: "Well, Friend, where a'you going, Hay? what's your Name, hay? _where d'ye Live, hay? _hay?" This individual is presented as suspicious and

[48] Anon., *Strictures on Naval Discipline, and the Conduct of a Ship of War*, Edinburgh, 1810, 38. 'The impressment of the Seamen is a most expensive and a most vexatious means of Manning the Navy in the time of war; it fills the Fleet with Felons, and is most destructive to its discipline, and the great cause of the desertion of the good Seamen from the service'. Anon., 'Impressment of Seamen', *Hume Tracts*, 1800, 1.

[49] Inland towns Kingswood, Clutton and Radstock in Avon and Whitby in Yorkshire were particularly renowned as sanctuaries for such fugitives who all 'bid defiance to the gangs'. Vice-Admiral Pringle, who undertook an inspection of selected ports between February and March 1795, remarked that 'seamen, seeing the impossibility of pressing at Whitby, go to it over land from other ports, where they continue till their vessels are again ready for sea.' TNA ADM 1/579/86-9; *Newcastle Courant*, 9 March 1793. It was estimated that over 1000 straggling sailors were hiding along the coast of Hull. TNA HO 42/71/96-7; Rogers, 56.

[50] Despite the financial incentive of around a twenty-shilling reward for information on such deserters and press-evaders, and the disincentive of those harbouring such individuals being liable to a fine of £5 or three months imprisonment and a public whipping, the Navy did not receive much help from communities in seeking out such miscreants. Furthermore, it even faced active hostility and collusion. F. W. Brooks, 'Naval Recruiting in Lindsey, 1795-7', *The English Historical Review*, April 1928, vol. 43, no. 170, 230-240, 232.

fearful of discovery as a criminal and of subsequent judicial punishment. As a vital, functioning military institution, the subordination of men to the Navy was paramount, but it could not be guaranteed. This presented considerable, extensive subversive potential, which Gillray exploited with subtle connotations. In the ironically titled *Affability* [Fig. 17], the fugitive deserter is construed as being far from the 'Friend' that his inquisitor sceptically addresses him as. While some men evaded naval service due to heartache, homesickness, employment disadvantages, hardship, isolation or danger, Gillray does not suggest these are necessarily factors for this lone fugitive attempting to get by on a farm. His illicit and reprehensible actions must have been on account of more obscure, complex and arguably subversive grounds. Such implications here are mere iconographic subtleties offered to Gillray's discerning audiences. The disguised tar's apprehensive face with gaping mouth implied his fear of being discovered as a disloyal subject, neglecting his duty to protect King and Country. Furthermore, the inclusion of pigs beside him referenced Burke's critique of the French revolution and what he coined its 'swinish multitudes', popularly taken up by Britons at the time.[51] Both these features were assimilated into radical visual culture and have iconographic precedence in Gillray's earlier *A Birmingham Toast, as given on the 14th July, by the Revolutionary Society* (23 July 1791) [Fig. 65]. In this way Gillray further directs his audiences to interpret unforthcoming seamen in a negative manner as politically radical.

The print also warned of the prevalent, inconspicuous and subversive naval actualities of desertion. The disguised seaman's treatment by an inquisitive, even suspicious, but not entirely alert King, offered a critique of the ignorance, insecurity and jealous guarding of their privileges typical of ruling elite audiences. There is a suggestion of further corruption. It was highly probable officers would turn a blind eye to the escape of troublemakers, especially potential radicals, to preserve the order of their ship and to minimize the number of offenders recorded and to avoid suspicion of their own disciplinary incapabilities. Ultimately, this ambivalent interpretation of the deserter tar deployed aspects of humour, stereotype and symbolism in a way that would appeal to Gillray's predominantly conservative clientele. As a depiction of a deserter, now caught and likely to be redeployed in the Navy where he would receive judicial punishment,

[51] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution*, first published 1790, rev. ed. Leslie George Mitchell, Oxford, 1999, 79.

probably severe flogging, it appropriately assured its audience of the rarity and successful suppression of such insubordination. This exaggerated socio-political satire, despite its damning representation of desertion, nonetheless, confirmed and endorsed the national support for the Navy and its men as the supreme, impeccably disciplined bulwark *against* disorder.

Nevertheless, it was excessive to assume all deserters or offenders were potentially politically dangerous or subverting the Nation-State. The majority of deserters, in general, possessed limited political awareness or intent and were more desperate or opportunistic escapees.[52] The significance of *Affability* is complex, yet, nonetheless appealing to audiences then and now. Not explicitly or simply concerned with troublesome actualities of naval manning and discipline, it dealt with the broader significance of those existing on the margins of society.

3. 4 Transgressions Against Naval Law

Other naval offences besides mutiny and desertion included sailors' contempt, cowardice, insolence, disrespect, disobedience of orders, neglect of duty and loss of ship.[53] It could be argued that these were predominantly more spontaneous incidents of misbehaviour as opposed to the calculated or opportunistic nature of mutiny and desertion. While less conspiratorial and threatening, and constituting fewer prosecutions at courts-martial, these minor transgressions were still of extensive significance. Rare representation in imagery, and to a lesser extent non-visual discourses, suggests that such actual criminality was interpreted as limited in its seriousness and less threatening to the controlled order of the Navy and nation state.

[52] Isaac Land, 'Customs of the Sea: Flogging, Empire, and the 'True British Seaman', 1770 to 1870', in *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 2001, vol. 3, no. 2, 172.

[53] The statistics gauged from Byrn's two surveys are invaluable. In terms of specifically naval criminal offences tried at courts-martial, of a total of 1241 these broke down as follows: Mutiny 16%, 196. Mutinous expression 4%, 44. Contempt, insolence and disrespect 13.6%, 170. Disobedience of orders 11%, 136. Neglect of duty 9.4%, 110. Loss of ship or grounding 10%, 121. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 347. In terms of all crimes, including general immorality, that seamen were convicted for, the proportion was slightly different: Absence/desertion 25.2%; mutiny/sedition 12.6%; alcohol 9%; disobedience 8%; loss of ship 6.7%; miscellaneous 6.5%; property 6.5%; insolence/contempt 5.9%; neglect 5%; violence 4.8%; conduct unbecoming of an officer 3.6%; disturbances/uncleanliness 2.7%; tyranny and oppression 2.3%; immorality 1.3%. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 58.

Minor criminal acts by naval servicemen were referenced subtly in the satirical hand-coloured etching by William Heath, *Equity or a Sailor* (*c.*1805) [Fig. 66]. This depicted a kneeling gunner who has been derisively accused by his superior of turning to prayer because of being 'afraid […] of the enemy bearing down upon us'. The surly tar defiantly and contemptuously retorts his 'hope that the enemy's shot is distributed among them in the same proportion as the prize-money, the greatest part among the Officers'. *Equity* explicitly referred to the tar's contempt for the unfair hierarchical distribution of prize-money awarded to the crew from the value of ships captured in battle.[54] Such poor recompense, along with a shortfall in wages, victuals, leave and pensions, was a major and persistent grievance among the lower-deck men who served and died at sea for their country. Insolence and contempt, such as 'threatening or insulting language' or behaviour towards superior officers, were offences in part prevented by the disciplinary formulae of obedience and respect, still relatively common in naval punitive justice.[55] However, this was far from the suggestion given by rare depictions of the crime. In the atypical print *Equity*, the offending tar is a single maverick, sardonically speaking his mind. Although aggrieved and poised for combat, he is neither violent nor politicized. The officer juxtaposed to him does not bear a disciplinary weapon such as cudgel, rope-end or cat-of-nine-tails, nor does he express any initial aggression towards such an offensive affront. Actual punishment is neither actively inflicted nor implied. Instead, he has the attribute of a sword, emphasising his presence as a superior and supervisory authority. The specific moment of drama here, combined with the contemptuous dialogue, would have disconcerted audiences who

[54] The lower-deck only receiving a quarter of the total spread among them. Mitchell, Oxford, 1999, 79.
[55] Crimes of contempt, insolence and disrespect was the third most common specifically naval infraction, constituting 13.6%. In terms of raw numbers from Byrn's survey, of a total of 1241 naval criminal offences tried at courts-martial, 170 were of such a nature. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 347. Byrn's other survey of all offences, both social and naval, tried at courts-martial, revealed that disobedience constituted 8% and insolence/contempt 5.9%, ranking fourth and eighth most common, respectively. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 58. Statute XVII of the, *Articles of War* stated: 'Every person who shall willfully disobey any lawful command of his superior officer, or shall use threatening or insulting language or behave with contempt to his superior officer, shall be punished with dismissal from Her Majesty's service, with disgrace, or suffer such other punishment as is hereafter mentioned', which typically meant various numbers of lashes. Thring, *A Treatise*, 126. An example of the severe punitive treatment of offences is provided by the case of Andrew Graham, late Boatswain of His Majesty's sloop *Nightingale*, 'tried for drunkenness and contempt to his superior officer on or about the 21st October last (1812)' at a court-martial held on board the *Irraisonnable* in Sheerness Harbour on Monday 11th January 1813'. Such charges were found proved and Graham was 'to be dismissed from his employment […] and to serve before the mast in such one of His Majesty's ships as the commander in chief of His Majesty's ships and vessels at this port shall direct.' Minutes of Andrew Graham's Court-Martial, TNA ADM 1/5434. Cited in Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 559, case 141.

were unsure as to its cause or culpability. This ambiguity insinuated that both parties were potentially blameworthy. The sailor's offensive 'prayer' could be tantamount to contempt, insolence and mutiny. Yet, it also implied that there were inequities, provocation and disciplinary inconsistency to which he was subjected by his superiors, suggesting that disorder was not inexcusable.

Equity played upon concerns that shipboard discipline pressurized naval servicemen to bow not simply to their superiors and seafaring duties but also to their popular stereotypes among macho crewmembers and members of the public. Negative implications of his weakness or effeminacy in conviction or capability could lead to the more serious, albeit relatively rare, naval disorder of cowardice, neglect of duty and loss or grounding of a ship. These crimes detracted from the entire premise and ethos of the Navy with its presumed prerequisite complement of 'true man-of-war's men'. Courageous patriotism, strength, defiance and righteous order were essential to the construct of the tar. Cowardice posed great subversive potential among a crew, fleet or even an institution, having the power to undermine the essentials of military warfare: patriotic duty, fighting conviction and heroic sacrifice. Those found guilty of such an infraction received severe sentencing – leading convicts were hanged *and* their wayward followers subjected to transportation.[56] Such disciplinary issues were, I argue, visually underrepresented as a result of image-makers avoiding lowering the morale of audiences but also limiting the viability of their work as appealing and unlikely to cause prosecution for seditious libel. This would have been of especial pertinence to Britons in relation to contemporary fears of radicalism among naval criminals, internal societies and French revolutionary enemies, which prompted the Gagging Acts of 1795.[57]

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[56] An example of the punitive gravity with which cowardice was treated in the Navy is found in the court-martial of individuals indicted for such an offence on board HMS *Carnation* during a battle in December 1808. In February 1809 Marine Sergeant John Chapman was charged for retreating below deck when responsible for leading a boarding party to capture the French ship *Palinure*, which consequently captured their own ship instead. At court-martial Chapman was convicted of cowardice and condemned to hang, while thirty-two of his followers were sentenced to transportation for fourteen years to Botany Bay. Scott, 1834, vol. 2, 158. The sensitivity regarding cowardice persisted through Britain's military history, as evident in the shooting of convicted soldiers during the First World War, controversy surrounding Conscientious Objectors and politics concerning the Armed Forces' manpower. A new law passed on 8 November 2006 and included as part of the Armed Forces Act has pardoned men in the British and Commonwealth armies who were executed in World War One. See John Boyne, *The Absolutist*, London, 2011; Michael Morpurgo, *Private Peaceful*, London, 2003; Julian Putkowski and Julian Sykes, *Shot at Dawn: Executions in World War One by Authority of the British Army Act*, London, 1998.

[57] For reference to the Gagging Acts of 1795 see earlier in Chapter One, 52, n.70.

The gunner, with muscular arm and clenched hands, is depicted as being eager and ready to fight for victory over the approaching enemy and subsequent financial recompense. Such portrayal also connoted his violent potential, portentous of criminal attack upon person or property closer to home. This is compounded by his wish that officers receive deadly enemy shot; his homicidal potential to increase the mortal vulnerability of his superiors is implied. The undertones of mutual hostility, provocation and unprofessionalism prior to battle suggested the deep-seated self-assertion and defiance of naval manpower and its potential to 'misfire'. Such a subject of this print arguably accorded with the understanding of, even sympathy for, naval inequities gathering momentum at the level of discourse. The anonymous print, and by extension its audience, critiqued disorder within the Navy and acknowledged factors of exacerbation, incitement and the dubious established order administered through pay, prize-money, criminal law, corporal punishment and fighting duties. Importantly, this print did not represent or refer to any realised 'nightmare' in naval combat or internal discipline. Nevertheless, the extended title of *A Sailor's Prayer before Battle - Anecdote of the Battle of Trafalgar* arguably had an element of bleak prophecy. The implication could have been that the wish for casualties, as well as prizes, to be more equally distributed compromised the fighting spirit of seamen in battle, becoming sadly fulfilled with their Commander Nelson's fatal wounding. The significant absence of this iconic naval officer in the post-Trafalgar image was further associated with his public advocacy for judicial punishment[58] and reforms to the grievous practices of unfair prize-money distribution and turning-men over.[59]

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[58] Admiration was granted towards the tough stance of disciplinarian Captain Jervis, Earl St Vincent towards suppressing mutiny, specifically that on board HMS *St George*, with prompt courts-martial and punishment. As to those convicted being hanged on a holy day, Nelson concurred 'had it been Christmas Day instead of Sunday I would have executed them. We know not what might have been hatched by a Sunday's grog'. Cited in Guttridge, *Mutiny*, 73-4. While Captain of HMS *Victory*, records show that 'in the last five months of 1803, there were 71 punishments, and between 1 August 1804 and 31 July 1805, no fewer than 330; three dozen being common, and four, five and even six dozen not unknown.' C.G.P.J. [Pitcairn-Jones], 'Lord St Vincent's Discipline', *The Mariner's Mirror,* Nov. 1953, vol. 39, issue 4, 306-7.

[59] Nelson advocated the fairer distribution of prize money, writing in a letter to Earl Spencer, having already made himself unpopular with this official by billing the Admiralty for an additional £60,000 prize money for the French ship set on fire in order to gain further prize money to distribute among his crew. 'An admiral may be amply rewarded by his feelings and the approbation of his superiors, but what reward have the inferior officer and men but the value of the Prize?' Letter from Nelson to Earl Spencer, 7 September 1798. Cited in Geoffrey Rawson, ed., *Nelson's Letters*, London, 1960, 196. For a discussion of Nelson's concern for the health and welfare of his crew, see Gerald Jordan, 'Admiral Nelson as Popular Hero: The Nation and the Navy, 1795-1805', in The Department of History US Naval Academy, ed., *New Aspects of Naval History: Selected Papers from the 5th Naval History Symposium*, Baltimore,

Equity [Fig. 66] was evidently complex and ambiguous. It referred to troublesome issues of disciplinary order, specifically discontent and provocation. Minor disorder was suggested to be common, whether an explicit or latent threat among tars. The successful publisher Tegg was commercially astute, not only in publishing such appealing naval commentary but also in avoiding references to crime, radical-sympathy or inglorious acts in his works that might mean poor sales or even liability for sedition. Considering its cynical critique, it is hardly surprising that *Equity* was an anonymous, undated and ambivalent construct of naval disorder. On the other hand, the print could be understood in relation to images of tars' subsequent mourning of Nelson, a rare officer who advocated their welfare, which here tempered their scepticism of this being the case among his survivors and successors.

3. 5 Crimes Against Property

As the above analysis of specific prints has shown, financial power was vested with great social significance, not least for the Navy's men in actuality and in visual representations. Archival sources, including Captain's journals, Admiralty statutes, Parliamentary debate, seamen's petitioning and court records, all evidence the extensive and intense pertinence of property in the context of law and its infractions. The division and distribution of such assets posed various problems, including the threat of contempt, insolence, cowardice and revolt. Crimes against property were pertinent to all of society and not especially common among indictments and convictions of its seamen.[60] As such, the rarity of depictions of such an offending tar was not necessarily owing to avoidance or ignorance. The undertone of understanding, even sympathy, fostered by some naval representations, such as *Delegates in Council* [Fig. 60], *Affability* [Fig. 17] and *Equity* [Fig. 66] implied that seamen inadvertently or brazenly committed crime with a sense of exasperation and jocularity. Nonetheless,

1985, 109-19, especially 112-3. It was recounted that Nelson remarked: 'Disgust of the seamen to the Navy is all owing to the infernal plan of turning them over from ship to ship, so that men cannot be attached to their officers, or the officers care two-pence about them.' N. H. Nicolas, *The Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral ... Nelson, with notes by sir N.H. Nicolas*, London, 1844-6, 76.

[60] Of contemporary naval indictments tried at courts-martial, 6.5% were for crimes against property. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 58.

property crimes were particularly disconcerting to the propertied audiences for prints who were anxious about the tar's detrimental financial insecurities.

Britons' interpretations of naval men's crimes relating to property were informing, and informed by, the typical satirical derision and ambivalence of the subject in imagery. This is most noteworthy in the hand-coloured etching *The Sailor and the Tea Kettle* (2 January 1806) [Fig. 67]. Here Alfred Mills depicted an ugly and red-haired tar standing braced and confidently addressing his Captain, while light-heartedly explaining the loss of the luxury item to the seabed. This amusing incident plays upon the seaman's distinctly irresponsible attitude towards property, being as he was characteristically jocular, of limited purchasing power, owning few possessions and typically disposed towards lighthearted recklessness. These factors, emphasized by his unconventional and foolish behaviour and philosophy, offered further possible connotations of his possible criminality and even excuses for its occurrence. This image of the sailor's treatment of other's property was clearly mindful of cultural conventions. The reference to a silver container for an imported commodity, lost 'overboard', had various links with social, and naval, exclusivity. The print itself, and its depicted sailor, sardonically referenced the exclusive power of property law. The burly and defiant sailor was under suspicion for the loss of the tea-kettle; his plea to 'your Honor', the proper title for a judge, further implied his guilt. This could suggest either his pricked conscience or his mockery of a legal authority that commanded respect and fearful intimidation. While insubordination was implied, there were neither explicit references to criminal offences nor responses of shock or punishment. There was a firm assurance that fundamental order reigned in the State controlled Navy, and by extension, the Nation.

Having just dropped the Captain's silver kettle overboard, the tar is shown giving a naïve and deceptive account of the incident that further indicates his disregard for his obligation of respect. Yet, such irresponsibility, unscrupulousness and even immorality were suggested to be far from being exclusive to the sailor, present company or contemporary society. All 'professionals' – messmate, Admiral, two further officers, and implicitly upper-middle class print-buyers – look upon the incident with naïve amusement. Law and authority are presented as a joke, for not only has the sailor lost the Captain's kettle but apparently this has prompted no signs of accountability, dismay or anticipated reprimand. There is no indication of how seriously crime against

property, especially theft or destruction, was perceived and punished in the Navy. In actuality, great value was vested in material protection and preservation generally, and more specifically in shipboard security, trust and camaraderie.[61] The subversive potential of compromised obedience and respect, vital prerequisites for the Navy's disciplinary systems of rank, penalty, surveillance and loyalty would have been apparent, particularly during this time of social tension and French revolution.[62] The loss, levity and laxity referenced in this scene implied the inconsistency of professional and moral character of its servicemen. This image ridiculed how the understanding, abilities, practices and principles in naval power-relations were problematically equivocal.

Tea Kettle raised the question of naval discipline. It was of further relevance to audiences increasingly interested in maintaining and promulgating established order, specifically that concerning property.[63] Property crime committed by sailors constituted only a minor proportion in courts-martial records, published reports and visual representations.[64] Mills was playing with the complex and excessive concern among

[61] Courts-martial indictments for crimes against property had a typically high rate of conviction and harsh punishment sentences. For example, Thomas Beecher and George Delany, midshipmen to HMS *Ambuscade* and then presently supernumeraries on HMS *Cambridge*, were tried for committing great acts of violence and plunder on board the gun barge, *Anne Theresa*, on 25 May 1799 between midnight and 1am. They were found 'guilty and sentenced to be disqualified to receive or hold a commission in naval or military service of His Majesty, his heirs or successors for three years to be computed from this 11th day of June 1799 and also to be severely reprimanded.' TNA ADM 1/5349. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 147. Such seriousness and severe punishment was applied in the case for sailors' property crimes ashore tried under the jurisdiction of the Common Law. An example is provided by the case of Andrew Aitken, sailor, tried in a High Court of Justiciary 2 July 1798 for trespass and grand larcency committed on 27 December last, and found guilty and subsequently hanged on 8 August. *Sun*, 3 July 1798, Issue 1802. Other examples include: *London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post*, 7 April 1800, Issue 4782 (T. Lawson); *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 15 October 1772, Issue 1060 (Hickman); *Oracle and Daily Advertiser*, 12 January 1799, Issue 21 879 (J. Lowe).

[62] When Mr Peter Simple was a prisoner of war he had occasion to observe that the French soldiers 'did not appear to have the same discipline, or the same respect for an officer, as the soldiers have in our service, or they would not have been so free in their language; yet at the same time, they obeyed all his orders on service very implicitly.' Quoted in David Hannay, *Naval Courts Martial*, Cambridge, 1914, 44.

[63] Property crimes were generally rising during this period in Britain. Beattie's study of crime has revealed that such an offence against property in Surrey rose over the last two decades, from an annual average of thirty-one bills laid before the grand jury in I780-4, to sixty-six in I798-I802. Beattie, *Crime and Courts*, 74. The three year average in a graph of the number of indictment crimes against property in Surrey per 100,000 population rose from c.48 to c.87 between 1794 and 1802, averaging about an increase of ten per year. J. M. Beattie, 'The Pattern of Crime in England 1660-1800', *Past & Present*, February 1974, no. 62, 47-95, including Graph I and II.

[64] Property crime amounted to 6.5 per cent of all criminal indictments adjudicated at naval court-martial, and 21 per cent of specifically social crimes within the Navy. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 147. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 58.

Britons regarding this potential disorder, which was symptomatic of the negative preconception of the Navy's men's pervasive and innate criminal tendencies. Nonetheless, the tar could pose a threat not simply to the ship. His criminality, particularly in relation to property, was not only shipbound, it was even more prominent and pertinent when he returned to land.[65] Indeed, when inundated with seamen disembarking on leave or discharge, certain locations ashore were notorious for disorder. Portsmouth was an exemplar in this respect, typically disparaged in the press as 'crowded with a class of low and abandoned beings, who seem to have declared war against every habit of common decency and decorum.'[66] The real and represented tar's embroilment in property crime conflated complex implications socio-moral issues, such as penal law, national security, wartime service, poverty, depravity and individual rights. Arguably, the fearful criminal potential of the sailor was symptomatic of his adoption as a scapegoat for the actual and more serious threats of disorderliness and illegality facing the Nation, whether on sea or land. This perceived pertinence can especially be seen to have informed the interpretation of the tar's embroilment in crime ashore. Representation of this issue was disproportionately excessive compared to its actual incident, and satirical in style. In contrast to the absence of courts-martial imagery, depictions of the tar's appearance in civilian Courts of Law were relatively abundant. This accorded with the desire of upper-middle, print-buying classes to see the tar's crime reassuringly dealt with closer to home under civil jurisdiction.

3. 6 The Sailor's Criminality Ashore

Absent in courts-martial imagery, the tar appears in civilian Courts of Law in three prints. *The Sailor and the Judge* by Piercy Roberts (*c.*1803) [Fig. 68], *The Indignant Tar* by Giles Grinagain (2 January 1804) [Fig. 69] and *The Sailors Defence!!* by Isaac Cruikshank after George Moutard Woodward (*c.*1807) [Fig. 70]. While only few in number, the differences between these representations are of particular significance. The nature of the tar, his preceding behaviour and present role in each trial are

[65] 'The adage that idleness is the root of evil is with no people more strongly verified than with sailors and soldiers.' Kempenfelt in long letter to Sir Charles Middleton, Comptroller of the Navy, J. S. Corbett, ed., *Barham Papers*, Naval Research Society, 1906, vol. 1, 305.
[66] *The Sun*, Saturday, 30 August 1800; Issue 2478; *Albion and Evening Advertiser*, Friday, 24 October 1800, Issue 353 (Articles on 'Dealers in Seamen's Wages and Prize-Money').

interpreted distinctly, although satire is consistently and typically employed in all three works. Roberts depicted the familiar sailor denying drunkenness, although it is unclear whether he is criminally charged, prosecuting or a witness. In Grinagain's portrayal he is evidently an accuser, even possibly a victim. More explicitly, the tar in Cruikshank's scene is a defendant in an assault charge. These prints and their variety aptly demonstrate the complexity of the tar's perceived criminality.

Roberts's *The Sailor and the Judge* (*c.*1803) [Fig. 68] was a satire depicting a rotund and wigged official seated with hands together in an armchair, questioning whether the figure before him could be certain he was not drunk. The sailor appears in typical naval attire and self-confident and jocular mood, indignantly defying doubt of his proud, hard-drinking persona. He claims that he would call anyone a lubber who would call him drunk, 'I had only shipp'd in eight grogs and a gill, not enough to make a Lawyer merry, - in short your honor, - I'll be d-nd, if I was not as sober as a Judge.' Although informal, his manner is not disrespectful, furthermore confirmed by his hat removed in his hand. The reality in Georgian Britain was that drunkenness was not abnormal and was far from tantamount to crime, particularly given that gin and beer were popularly drunk as a prime means of hydration as well as leisure.[67] The scarcity of archival material regarding the tar's appearance in Courts of Common Law for drunkenness or alcohol-related crimes suggests their rare and unremarkable occurrence. By comparison, of all social offences adjudicated at naval courts-martial, alcohol was involved in a third and constituted 9% of overall criminal cases.[68] Interestingly, Cruikshank's *Delegates* (9 June 1797) [Fig. 60] included the radical Thelwall noticeably refilling his glass with a bottle of grog, further suggesting that alcohol often

[67] For information on the diet and hydration of contemporaries, seamen and civilians see: Sir J. Watt, E. J. Freeman and W. F. Bynum, eds, *Starving Sailors: The Influence of Nutrition upon Naval and Maritime History*, Aldershot, 1981; Guenter B. Risse, 'Britannia Rules the Seas: The Health of Seamen, Edinburgh, 1791-1800', *The Journal of the History of Medicine and Applied Sciences*, 1988, vol. 43, 426-446; Christopher Hamlin, *A Science of Impurity: Water Analysis in Nineteenth Century Britain*, California, 1990; Roy Porter, 'The Drinking Man's Disease: The 'Pre- History' of Alcoholism in Georgian Britain, *The British Journal of Addiction*, 1985.

[68] The raw numbers are 117 alcohol-related crimes out of a total of 352 social offences. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 148. Byrn has also calculated through a statistical survey of 447 criminal cases adjudicated by courts-martial that those relating to alcohol amounted to 9%, the third most common offense in the Navy. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 58. As drunkenness deemed the seaman incapable of performing his duty, he was liable to charges of neglect of duty. For example, the case of Andrew Graham, Boatswain of His Majesty's sloop *Nightingale*, who was tried 'for drunkenness and contempt to his superior officer on or about 21st October' 1812 and held at court-martial on board *Raisonnable* in Sheerness Harbour on Monday 11th Jan 1813.' TNA ADM 1/5434 and Byrn, *Court-martial*, 559.

influenced and exacerbated disorder, particularly within the Navy. The serious potential of alcohol-related crime corresponded with its severe punishment, both of which, unsurprisingly, were avoided in imagery as being too disconcerting for audiences. Seamen's drunkenness was notorious in maritime customs, a common theme in sentimental ballads, and a frequent decorative subject on earthenware drinking vessels and in visual culture. However, as *Sailor and the Judge* indicates, explicit depiction of associated disorder, such as violent behaviour, was absent because it was commercially unviable. Instead, it was made the focus of light-hearted relief for tars themselves and their audiences, helping to assure ignorance. While Roberts's sailor's drunkenness is depicted satirically and ambiguously, it is fundamentally a positive construct of the possibility of naval men's alcoholism and involvement in civil jurisdiction.

Grinagain's *The Indignant Tar* (2 January 1804) [Fig. 69] more clearly, and positively, denies his criminality. The sailor is portrayed as a witness for the prosecution in a court trial of three ill-looking fellows standing behind a wooden barrier on the right to whom he points accusingly. One holds a watch and chain, presumably an item stolen from the tar who had been a victim of theft. On the one hand, this is surprising given his notorious disorder ashore. Yet, on the other, it is to be expected because he was often seen as susceptible to misunderstanding and provocation. The vulnerability, even victimization, of the Navy's men to become criminally embroiled ashore had a basis in actuality according to contemporary textual sources. For example, a newspaper reported that,

> two prostitutes in Essex street, Whitechapel, were charged on the oath of Peter Williamson, a sailor, with robbing him of a watch and a silk handkerchief, aided by the assistance of three Ruffians, who rushed into the room, where he was sitting with the women, and who afterwards made their escape.[69]

[69] *London Herald and Evening Post*, Wednesday, 13 February 1799, Issue 402. Also reported in *Courier and Evening Gazette*, Thursday, 14 February 1799, Issue 2030 (Whitechapel Officer). See also, *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* Tuesday, 8 January 1799, Issue 21, 875. 'Hatton Garden – yesterday Joseph Jordon, a carman, was accused by an American Sailor of the name of Foy, of robbing him of some gold, and a discharge of his services on board one of HMS of war. The honest tar only wished that the mean culprit should be ordered to go as a Marine into HM's service, which the other readily complied with'; *Sun*, Monday, 18 January 1796, Issue 1033. Samuel Simons was found guilty of attempting to steal a Sailor's Portmanteau; *London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post*, Monday, 27 October 1800, Issue 8426. 'Yesterday a man of the name of William Smith was charged by a Portuguese sailor, with robbing him of three one pound Bank of England notes, in a house of ill-fame, in George yard, Whitechapel, the night before; the prisoner was committed to Newgate for trial.'

Indignant Tar invites audiences to interpret the scene from the protagonist's perspective. The composition is arranged with the standing tar in the foreground positioned before the Justice seated at his writing-table scattered with legal paraphernalia. The sense of subjection is explicit in the demanding address, 'now in order to convict these notorious Offenders, You must swear that they put you in bodily Fear.' The scowling sailor answers; 'Then d—n my Eyes if I convict them- had there been Three Dozen instead of them Three lubberly Rascals.'[70] The tar seems indignant not only because he has been the victim of crime and suffered the inconvenience of attending trial but also because it has been stipulated that conclusive conviction requires a public confession of fear which was contrary to his own and the Nation's honour and glory in righteous bravery. He withholds vital evidence to warrant penal sentencing so as to maintain his proud and defiant attitude. Once again, the image-maker and his audiences are 'satisfied' with a reassuring interpretation that the tar was of good character and limited criminal activity.

Isaac Cruikshank finely balanced his audiences' desires and expectations regarding the seamen's contribution to civilian society in his complex and challenging print *Sailor's Defence!!* (*c.*1807) [Fig. 70]. Here the defendant is constructed as a loveable rogue held in court and charged with assaulting a civilian whilst walking in Wapping. Humbly he stands before a Magistrate to whom he plainly pleads 'he meant no harm'. The viewer is presented with the familiar stereotypical Jack Tar. Jocular, self-assured and burly, with a weathered face and attire of striped pantaloons and blue jacket, his behaviour and physiognomy are unthreatening and essentially predisposed to the more rough and remote naval environment rather than civilian society. There are connotations of violence in the 'poor fellow's' bloodied head-bandage and his accused assailant's aggressively raised and clenched fist. However, the serious and disconcerting actualities of criminal assault and subsequent corporal punishment, typically flogging, were evaded. The reference is instead to the sailor's problematic relations with society ashore, to misunderstanding, suspicion and disrespect that have led to an offence. The Magistrate points out reproachfully to the 'athletic' defendant his unfair aggression towards one so physically vulnerable, such a 'poor fellow – so much inferior to you in

[70] In the speech bubble he continues, 'Ben Block was not the Man to be frighten'd if they had not popt out of a Creek, and taken me by Surprise, I warrant I'd soon a made a clear Deck.'

point of size'. The wealthy land-based, and probably land-owning, print-audiences are reassured. The tar is appropriately presented before 'your Magistrate worship and Glory', embodying steadfast and secure justice for the general good of society. The naval suspect's inferiority is emphasized by his willingness to involve himself in a foolish and reckless fistfight and his unsophisticated colloquialism and legal inexperience in attempting to defend his actions. Yet, his simple, candid and compliant manner presents his criminality as limited, a fact that was vital for the print's viability and appeal in discourse preoccupied with social degeneracy.

Cruikshank fostered understanding, even absolution, of the aggressive sailor and skirted the issue of his disciplinary treatment. This print is a rare, fictive and satirical representation of naval violence and an example of the distorted interpretation of such actualities more evident in official and unofficial texts. Indeed, contemporary legal records and newspaper reports acknowledge that only 4.8% of all offences in the Navy were for violence, while 2.7% were for disturbances or uncleanliness, and 1.3% for immorality, of which a nominal proportion was for brutality, murder or sodomy.[71] The tar's aggression was notorious, arguably understandable, in an all-male, crowded and harsh disciplinary institution, but it was not necessarily universal nor criminally manifest. In imagery it was predominantly absent. Cruikshank's rare reference depicted just one lone suspect offender defending his non-malicious and misjudged aggression. He repents his conduct in the hope that he might return to naval service as he 'hop [sic] to see salt water again'. This print appealingly advocates the positive strength and conviction of the Navy's men and firmly denies suggestions of intended criminality.

[71] Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 58. In another of Byrn's surveys of naval crime, in this case indictments tried at courts-martial for specifically social offences, during the period 1793 to 1815, he has offered the statistics that, of the raw total of 352 cases, 74 (or 21%) were for violent crimes including homicide, fighting, striking an officer and self-mutilation, 33(or 9%) for sexual offences, and 28 disturbances of the peace such as rioting and quarrelling. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 147. Uncleanliness was a complex punishable offence, ranging from poor physical hygiene to minor sexual lapses, and could receive severe sentencing upon conviction. For example, at the court-martial of George Read and Thomas Tattesell, they were acquitted of the charge of buggery but convicted of 'abominable uncleanness' and sentences to 500 lashes apiece. TNA ADM 12/26, 'Courts-martial Digest'. Sodomy was especially abhorred in the Navy and received the severest penal sentences delivered by Court-martial. For example, in 1807 George Shandoff and James Johnson of HMS *Bellona* each received sentences of 1000 lashes for attempted sodomy. National Archives, Adm 1/5383. During the seven years war, 1756 – 1763, the Navy's average sentence for attempted sodomy and uncleanliness was 585 lashes, comparatively high in relation to the average for other offences , such as deserters sentenced to typically 300 lashes each in the period 1760-1. Gilbert, 'Crime as Disorder', 113. For further discussion of this offence, see Arthur Gilbert, 'Buggery and the British Navy', *Journal of Social History*, Autumn 1976, vol. 10, no. 1, 72-98.

While the sailor's trial and likely criminal conviction was avoided in visual representation, there was an indirect allusion to the negative actualities and interpretations of state and specifically naval control. The Navy's harsh corporality were regarded as conducive to violent crime and the naval sailor's construct took into account his disconcerting shipboard existence of repression, strict punitive discipline, hardy masculinity, danger and sacrifice. Circumstances, arguably, led to irresponsibility.[72] Naval neglect is suggested by the dismal fact that little or no responsibility was taken for seamen's economic and cultural reintegration into civilian society after service, whether on leave, pensioned-off or demobilized. Consequently, tars were a danger unto themselves and to the public at large. *Sailor's Defence* [Fig. 70], and even the related works by Roberts and Grinagain, presented such a tar's criminality, irrespective of its type or concluding sentence, as indicative of the limitations of naval discipline and order and the failure of punitive deterrence. However, it was an exaggeration to suppose that men released from naval service were, as a result of their harsh treatment and aggressive survival instinct, destined to turn or return to crime.

These three prints, and many besides, reassuringly represented the tar as simple, defiant and well-intentioned, fostering among audiences a sympathetic interpretation of his potential criminality. Published in 1803, 1804 and 1807 respectively, after the resumption of war with Napoleonic France, these are positive visual constructs. This was a time of intense mobilization when seamen were increasingly removed from civilian society and into service through impressment and turning over. Previously, on returning to land on leave or demobilization with the Peace of Amiens (1801-3) such individuals would have been more in evidence concerning civil crime and punishment. On cessation of war their struggle to reintegrate into civilian society was perceived as detrimental to the established order and the ruling elites.[73]

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[72] An example of the severe punitive treatment of alcohol-related offence is provided by the case of Andrew Graham, late Boatswain of His Majesty's sloop *Nightingale*, 'tried for drunkenness and contempt to his superior officer on or about the 21st October last (1812) at a court-martial held on board the *Irraisonnable* in Sheerness Harbour on Monday 11th January 1813'. Such charges were proved and Graham was 'to be dismissed from his employment […] and to serve before the mast in such one of His Majesty's ships as the commander in chief of His Majesty's ships and vessels at this port shall direct.' Minutes of Andrew Graham's Court-martial, TNA ADM 1/5434. Cited in Byrn, *Courts-martial,* 559, case 141.

[73] *The Times* warned its conservative readers in 1790, 'Take care of your pockets gentlemen for the blackguards are all to be let loose upon use again. Fasten your doors and your windows well for the

Remobilization for intense and protracted warfare ensured disposal of such potent individuals for whom civilian society would otherwise have had to find suitably distant and disciplined occupation. The advantage of warfare to civilian law and order was the subordination of volatile characters as safeguards not only against external, but also internal, disorder.[74] For example, at a time of intense military recruitment in the summer of 1795, *The Leicester Journal* conceded the quietness of the County Assizes 'at least, is one benefit arising from the war [against Revolutionary France]',[75] while two years later Patrick Colquhoun, who founded the Thames River Police, acknowledged that:

> during the war many convicts and idle and disorderly persons go into the army and navy […] the present war gives employment […] to many of these mischievous members of the community.[76]

War correlated with troughs in crime rates,[77] although statistical fluctuations also corresponded with various social, especially economic, conditions and developments.[78] It was reductive to interpret the Navy's men as exclusively linked to increases in crime ashore, particularly during demobilization and peace. The few satirical prints published

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occupation of our tars is no more.' *The Times*, 6 November 1790

[74] This recalls positive discourse on the resumption of war, describing its appearance as 'a present safety to the public' not only in terms of national defence but also social security with the mobilization of communities' unwanted men. *The Times*, 3 November 1790. Cited in King, 158.

[75] 'At Lincoln there is but one prisoner for trial [at the Assizes]; at Cambridge not any; and at Norwich during the last year, there have been but six persons.' *Leicester Journal*, 24 July 1795. Colquhoun, *Police*, 92-3.

[76] Colquhoun, *A Treatise*, 92-3.

[77] War and the military were artificial depressors of crime and indictment rates. Wartime enlistment removed those persons from the community who most commonly were indicted for offences, particularly against property, in times of peace, namely young men in their late teens and early twenties who were especially vulnerable to the temptations of criminal activity for a variety of reasons. Some may have been tempted into crime to acquire money to support their leisure activities and to establish a degree of independence alongside their peers. Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion in England, 1740-1820*, Oxford, 2000, 156-7. Emsley's statistical survey of data regarding civil crime during the eighteenth and nineteenth century has revealed that between 1805 and 1815 the number committed for trial in England and Wales, in thousands, fluctuated but indicated a general increase of approximately 4700 to 9000. Furthermore, the peaks within this period, in the years 1809 and 1812, as well as those following the war in 1817 and 1819, coincided with years of marked economic depression and political unrest. Emsley, *Crime and Society*, 34, 35 and fig. 2.1

[78] This fluctuation and patterns within it have been evidenced in various primary sources and secondary statistical surveys. Beattie conducted a statistical survey that revealed that during the years sampled, all troughs come in periods of war, including 1795. Just as invariably, the peaks follow conclusion of wars, as in 1802. 'The end of a war was not only likely to decrease employment created by the war effort, more seriously it brought a sudden dumping of thousands of discharged men, especially in the ports and in London, men whose money would soon be gone and who might well be drawn into crime if work was not available. When so many were in any case only employed seasonally or casually, as in London, the sudden influx of a large number of men seeking work could obviously produce a great deal of unemployment or underemployment.' Beattie, 'The Pattern of Crime', *Past & Present*, 93-95.

during periods of intense wartime naval manning represented the orderliness of the court scene yet evaded the troublesome topics of active crime, judicial consequences or punishment. The actualities were problematic and, in fact, less frequent than even their illustrations would suggest. Archival records of naval men being disciplined by Common Law are scarce. Social offences only constituted approximately a quarter of all charges tried by naval courts martial, and just fifteen point eight per cent excluding those combined with Navy specific offences,[79] the latter of which were estimated to account for three quarters of the seamen's contemporary criminality.[80] This suggests that seamen's disorder was interpreted in relation to their service's archaic disciplinary doctrine as expounded in *The Articles of War*. These long-standing and complex laws were written and recited as the premise of the Navy's objectives for effective regulation, professionalism and discretionary power.[81] Nevertheless, contrary and subversive actualities and interpretations were apparent. The contemporary Senior Judge, Sir William Blackstone, dismissed such martial legislation as outmoded and having been 'built upon no settled principles, but is entirely arbitrary in its decisions; in truth and reality, no law, but something indulged rather than allowed as law.'[82] Only rare satirical prints such as *Equity* [Fig. 66] and *Sailor's Defence* [Fig. 70] referenced criticism of the flaws in naval disciplinary order, rooted in social and legal inequities. The

[79] A preliminary survey of charges listed in 22 of 118 volumes of transcripts of period under consideration reveals that 22% of these transgressions were of this nature. In terms of raw numbers, of the 1,596 charges listed in these volumes, 352 were social offences. Some were combined with other offences, with just 15.8% of the total tried solely for social offences. Social crimes constituted only about a quarter of alleged offences tried by naval court-martial. In terms of raw numbers of the 1149 men tried, only 182 were charged exclusively for social crimes. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 147. Often social crimes amounted to naval offences too due to its specific laws. For a man would be charged for drunkenness and neglect of duty since to be found guilty of drunkenness meant that the accused was deemed guilty of being so intoxicated as to be incapable of performing his duty. Cases of which include TNA ADM 1/5412 and ADM 1/5434. Similarly, attempted or actual violence towards an officer would be accompanied by charges of disrespect. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 559.

[80] By comparison, naval crimes as violations of *The Articles of War* amounted to nearly 78% of all offences. Of the 1149 defendants named in the sample, 533, or slightly more than 43%, were tried exclusively for naval infractions. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 147 and 347.

[81] *The Articles of War* were implemented by Charles II in the Restoration period and only consolidated by George III in 1749 (22 G. 2, c.33) to then last through to the Victorian era. Their preamble significantly stated their purpose, 'for the regulating and better government of his Majesty's navies, ships of war, and forces by sea, wherein under the good providence and protection of God, the wealth, safety, and strength of this kingdom is so much concerned, be it enacted, that all and every the articles and orders in this Act mentioned shall be duly and respectively put in execution, observed, and obeyed in manner hereafter mentioned.' 13. Car. 2, c. 9. Quoted in Thring, *A Treatise*, 33. Important requirements included: prior to court-martial, for the actual legal trial, appeal, written records documenting the account of the indictment and minutes of court-martial, and for the Captain to send the Admiralty quarterly tallies of punishments administered on board his ship.

[82] Cited in Thring, 35 as 1 Bl. Com. 412; Toml. Law Dict. *Mart. Kaw; Grant v. Sir C. Gould*, 2 H. Bl. 99. Quoted in Alexander Tytler, *An Essay on Military Law and the Practice of Courts-martial*, Edinburgh, 1800, 15.

implication was that as factors these might to some extent explain criminal manifestations of dissatisfaction and defiance. This representational evasion is further evident in relation to the excessive preoccupation with a tar's trial before a court of Common Law and hanging, as opposed to more common actualities of naval courts martial and flogging.

In contrast to the relatively abundant imagery of the tar in a court of law before an official magistrate or judge, depictions of naval courts-martial were noticeably absent. Civilian jurisdiction in court and its discursive representations seemed to take into consideration the naval seamen's peculiar, even exonerating, situation. A case in point is Andrew Cunningham's indictment for the murder and conviction for the manslaughter of seaman Henry Wood, whom he had shot dead after having 'improperly […] made a noise at the Prisoner's door.' *True Briton* (16 January 1797) quoted the Council for the Prosecution's expectation that the Jury 'would take into their consideration that the deceased was a Sailor, and their manners were in general more boisterous than people who spent their lives on shore.'[83] This suggests a degree of understanding regarding naval disorder among the press, public and legal profession.

Courts-martial were a prominent actuality of the Navy and the highest level of enforcement of its criminal code of law. However, this more remote, obscure and disconcerting theme was absent in imagery and suggests avoidance by image-makers and their print-buyers. Never explicitly or visually represented, audiences might have had exaggerated assumptions regarding the hardship of naval service and severity of its penal discipline, with the suffering of grim punitive actualities notorious in contemporary and later discourse. Personal accounts by seamen and Captains, in addition to naval crime records recently analysed by historians Hannay and Byrn, reveal that the infliction of punishment without trial by court-martial, and discriminatory and inhumane sentencing are less common than one might expect. In fact, the Navy's men were variously better off within naval jurisdiction, where those involved were less experienced in law,[84] but more appreciative of institutional contexts. The accused was entitled to a defence council and officers' character references,[85] the trial was not

[83] *True Briton*, 16 January 1797, Issue 1267.
[84] Hannay, *Court-martial*, 193-4.
[85] Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 228.

subject to any time restraints,[86] the jury ruled by majority and sentencing was often restrained by a pragmatic reluctance to exercise capital punishment.[87] Even contemporary seamen acknowledged the positives of the Navy's legal system,[88] not averse to strict discipline and corporal punishment for hierarchical and functioning order as long as it was justly implemented in accordance with law and humanity.[89]

Inequity, however, was pervasive within the established social order's extensive law, naval, criminal, civil or otherwise.[90] The general masses of the King's subjects were

[86] For the trial of capital cases at courts-martial, two-thirds of the board had to concur with the indictment being proven. By comparison the trials at courts of law ashore were one day affairs that had no interludes for juries to eat, drink, rest or sleep, and required a unanimous decision to be reached. Arthur N. Gilbert, 'Military and Civilian Justice in Eighteenth-Century England: An Assessment', *The Journal of British Studies*, Spring 1978, vol. 17, no. 2, 41-65, 49.

[87] The acquittal rate for indictments of murder tried at General Courts-martial during the American Revolution was 61%. We do not have the comparative figures for the same period in civilian courts, but the 1810 statistics for England and Wales show that the acquittal rate then was 29.9%, or 34.5% if we eliminate cases not prosecuted. The acquittal rate was probably lower in the civilian courts in the eighteenth century. The proportion of death sentences to all cases tried was below 22%. Gilbert, 57, citing as source TNA WO 71/54-59 and WO 71/82-96.

[88] For example, the reprieved Robert Wilson claimed the accused 'are allowed a fair trial […] like a Court of Judicature', able to make their defence, which was strongly supported by respected character references, as if '*any* officer [spoke] in their favour, they are acquitted or their punishment is mitigated'. 'Remarks on Board His Majesty's Ship *Unite* of 40 Guns. Written historically by Robert Mercer Wilson in his Journal, August 1806,' cited in Thursfield, *Five Naval Journals*, 256. For Wilson's reprieve see 146. Scott similarly claimed those sentenced to flogging did not always receive punishment. 'The fact is that thorough-bred good seamen, or respectable men, seldom place themselves in a situation to call for corporal punishment, and if unfortunately they should inadvertently at any time break through the rigid rules of a man-of-war, it is generally so arranged that some officer steps forward, and by pleading in their behalf, obtains a remission of the punishment, unless the offence is of a very deep dye.' James Scott, *Recollections of a Naval Life*, London, 1834, vol. 1, 37.

[89] Seaman Bechervause reminisced 'I would always choose a ship in which every duty was attended to strictly, in preference to one in which a man did almost as he liked. Indeed, I've frequently heard old seamen say (when two ships were in commission and both wanting hands), I'll go with Captain -; he's a taut one, but he is Captain of his own ship.' John Bechervause, *A Farewell to my Old Shipmates and Messmates: With Some Examples, and a Few Hints of Advice*, London, 1847.

[90] The hierarchy, arguably inequity, of law and order was further evident in a tribunal for court-martial composed exclusively of men of rank - 13 to 15 flag officers, captains and commanders, out of which one of the most senior was to serve as court's president. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 17. See also, John Mc Arthur, *Principles and Practice of Naval and Military Courts-Martial*, London, June 1792 revised and expanded 4 times by 1813; John Delafons, *Treatise on Naval Courts-Martial*, London, 1805. A court-martial could only happen once started by the Captain of the ship upon which the alleged offence took place had applied to the Commander-in-Chief of the station in which they operated who, with council if necessary, would warrant appropriate legal proceedings. The trial would be started on the prescribed date by the said Captain and colleagues assembled in tribunal. There was no jury, and no men from the lower deck had any influence in the proceedings. Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 228. Douglas Hay has recently called the equality and fairness of civilian justice into question, 'All men […] knew that judges, justices and juries had to be chosen from their own ranks. The jury, the supposed guarantee that an Englishman would be tried by his equals, had a sharp property qualification […] The reason, simply put, was that the common Englishman could not be trusted to share in the operation of the law. […] The cottager who appeared in court charged with theft had no illusion about being tried by his 'equals and neighbours', whatever the writers of law books claimed.' Hay, 'Property, Authority, and the Criminal Law', in Hay, Linebaugh, et al., *Albion's Fatal Tree*, 38.

never actually tried by their peers. Yet, specific attacks were launched against the Navy's elitist and obscure penal discipline. Reformists often focused upon alleged 'wrongs of the Navy' when advocating more 'just' legal systems, as exemplified with dramatic rhetoric in the *Observations* of A Friend to Justice and Foe to Deception:

> Oh, banish *such* injustice from these enlightened shores forever! From these shores blessed with genuine and national liberty! Where *none* are punished, even for the most obvious crimes, without the consolation of a fair trial; excepting your champions, who have, or willingly *would* have, guided.[91]

As demonstrated above, interpretation of penal law was a complex and controversial issue that was rarely explored in visual culture. The three aforementioned prints of the tar in court by Roberts, Grinagain and Cruikshank portrayed him speaking plainly without the support of legal aids. His perceived character and criminality were associated at the time with his uninhibited vernacular and jocular colloquialism. He was essentially a straightforward and well-intentioned figure, who positively assured national order through maritime strength; here he was merely in a civil context 'out of familiar ground'. The tar's treatment at court martials remained entirely obscure to print audiences.

3. 7 Punishment

Judicial penal sentencing and publications reporting on it, such as Captains' records, newspapers, texts and rare images, tended to focus on big cases – grand theft, violent assault, murder and consequent hanging.[92] Contemporary, and mostly textual,

[91] A Friend to Justice and a Foe to Deception, 'Observations on the wrongs of the Navy: chiefly on those that most solicit redress', *Hume Tracts*, 1816, 48.

[92] The *Oracle and Public Advertiser* reported 'Tuesday night a Dutch sailor, armed with a sword, planted himself on the roadside near Deptford, where he attacked every passenger with the most brutal ferocity. He stabbed a young woman in the breast, and wounded several gentlemen, but none mortally. After a desperate resistance, he was at length overpowered by numbers, and conveyed to the watch-house, where he declared it was his intention to destroy every person he met; in revenge for the defeat of his countrymen.' *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, Thursday, 19 October 1797, Issue 19 755. Similarly, *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* reported, 'Yesterday John Saxien, a Swedish sailor, was apprehended by the Officers, for violently assaulting several of the Inhabitants of Shadwell, and breaking the windows of the King's Arms, Narrow Street, Limehouse; he is of the most athletic make, being six feet four inches high, and well proportioned – he swore he would not be taken by the Officers to London. He made great resistance, but was overpowered by numbers, and when he was manacled he cried like a child. The Magistrates admonished him, pointing out to him the dangerous consequences of such behaviour. He

representations of the tar's criminality were symptomatic of audiences' preoccupations. They ignored or evaded more common, pervasive and endemic minor crimes. When official justice was applied the upper-middle class clientele were reassured of their jealously guarded established social order.

The discipline enforced by the naval elite engendered discretionary power in their own favour, although the effect of their treatment of subordinates was not guaranteed. In cases of malice, discrimination, capriciousness and brutality the effects could be compromised and even subversive. The problems of socially hierarchical distinction and the legitimacy of punishment attracted commentary in a satirical print, *The Caneing in Conduit Street* (1 October 1796) [Fig. 71]. With characteristic mastery of discursive references, James Gillray presented an informed critique of flaws within naval and general established order. This hand-coloured etching portrayed the public assault of a stout naval officer, Captain Vancouver, by a taller and slimmer officer, the notoriously eccentric and insubordinate Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford.[93] It referenced the officers' past in which Vancouver had Pitt flogged, put in the bilboes and discharged to the shore during the superior's voyage of discovery.[94] On his return in 1795, Vancouver churlishly refused to accept his junior's challenge of a duel.[95] Vancouver has a scroll rolling from his pocket that reads, 'List of those disgraced during the Voyage - put under Arrest all the Ships Crew - Put into Irons, every Gentleman on Board - Broke every Man of Honor & Spirit'. He stands before a pile of shackles labelled 'For the Navy'

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was dismissed on making reparation for the damage he had done, and asking pardon of those whom he had ill-treated.' *The Oracle* and *Daily Advertiser*, Friday, 4 January 1799, Issue 21 872. *London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post*, reported 'Thomas Lawson (a Sailor) was tried for stealing 14lb of butter, valued 17s, and being called on for his defence, and asked if he had anyone to appear to his character, replied, "My Lord, I'll not trouble you with a defence; and as to character, I'm not long enough in London to have a good one – but you can easily mitigate the business." – He was found Guilty. *London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post*, Monday 7 April 1800, Issue 4782. *The Sun* reported Andrew Aitken, late sailor on board the Lancaster Man of War. Guilty of the two first charges, viz. stealing the bay mare at Mordington, and the silver plate &c at Carron Inn. Sentenced to be hanged. *The Sun*, Tuesday, 3 July 1798, Issue 1802.

[93] This physical attack by Pitt, now Camelford, upon Vancouver took place on London's Conduit Street, 21 September 1796.

[94] 'Bilboes' is a term for an iron bar with sliding shackles formerly used for confining a prisoner's ankles. *OED*

[95] Vancouver believed that he was not obliged to respect Camelford's request unless any fellow flag-officer should decide that he owed him satisfaction, with the implication that he believed his own, and by extension Camelford's, honour did not need to be contested in a duel. The suggestion here is that social hierarchy/status informed the perception of honour not only in terms of official corporal punishment, but also individual/unofficial interactions. Vancouver prevailed on the Lord Chancellor and Camelford was bound to keep the peace.

with his left foot on an open book, 'Every Officer is the Guardian of his own Honour. Lord Grenvills Letter'. Gillray constructed Pitt's aggression in a somewhat sympathetic light that corresponded with the popular negative perception of Vancouver as a despotic and alienated commander.[96] The implication of such visual attributes, and the extended title 'Dedicated to the Flag Officers of the British Navy', was that the Navy's system of corporal punishment was socially discriminatory and detrimentally undermined the honour of naval servicemen and their national institution.

A derisive connotation that would have been readily deciphered by Gillray's critically-informed audiences were of the prevailing social prejudice that a gentleman was privileged with superior honour and power. Furthermore, there were implications of the discriminatory discretion entailed in punitive sentencing. Although suitable for the common tar, the dishonourable acts of flogging and shackling were construed in discourse, not only in *The Articles of War* but also in popular publications, as forms of punishment inappropriate and scandalous for the elite criminal. For example, in 1805, the purser John Delafons defended socially distinctive punishment:

> Habits and education create essential differences in the minds and manners of men. To dismiss an officer from HM's service, would be esteemed a heavy punishment; whereas a common sailor would look upon it, in many cases, as a favour conferred upon him. Corporal punishment, which seldom operates on the feelings of a common seaman or soldier, must affect a petty officer (such as a midshipman) &c. so sensibly, if he has the sentiments of a gentleman, as to render his future life a burden to him.[97]

Those in the ambiguous transitory rank of midshipman were aggrieved at not being privileged with exemption from corporal discipline in the same way as their superior officers. One such serviceman, John Courtney Bluett, complained:

> It is unnecessary, injudicious and unjust. It depresses the spirit of emulation which ought to be nourished and encouraged, it cramps their exertions and

[96] Vancouver's treatment of Pitt and other 'young gentlemen' alienated him from most of the crew and many were prepared to speak against him when the ship arrived back in Britain.
[97] Delafons, *Treatise*, 271-2.

> completely damps their ardor for the services. [They] must put up with […] oppression and injustice.[98]

As such, besides the humiliation of Pitt's punitive experiences, the issue of affronted honour was particularly significant. He had been enlisted as an able seamen[99] and despite his social status he was denied ranks' privileges of automatic court-martial and more lenient sentencing.[100] The complexities, inequities and limitations of naval law and order were apparent to contemporaries. Even one North American Judge Advocate concluded, 'the moment […] a gentleman enters the service, he waives the Rights and Privileges he might be entitled to as an Englishman.'[101] The archive, including the relevant official crime records, textual sources and prints, suggests ambivalence concerning the Navy's punitive and oppressive discipline. Such discourse led audiences to criticise its efficacy in preventing disorder and in strengthening the Navy's reputation and even actual manpower.

The criminality of the figures in *Caneing Street* [Fig. 71] is focused upon their public confrontation, which caused a spectacular disturbance, rather than Pitt's crime, punishment and declined duel. Such a representation avoided challenging audiences' essentially assured notions of penal justice, liberty and morality. As a dramatic and highly publicised subject, this street fight was more opportune for depiction than any tar's shipboard disorder. Furthermore, its significance was neither exclusively naval nor serious, but related to broader social issues, especially of honour and masculinity. These virtues were pertinent in relation to this case, given its punishment. The inclusive and ambivalent satire of *Caneing Street* appealed to Gillray's upper-middle class print-

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[98] Royal Naval Museum manuscript 1995/48. Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 219.

[99] Pitt joined the *Discovery* on 12 March 1791 as an able seaman, with a brief spell between 1 June 1791 and 1 June 1793 serving as master's mate. In February 1794 Vancouver's tolerance of the ill-disciplined Pitt ran out and he was sent home on the store ship. During his long and tortuous journey home via Australia, Malacca and India, Pitt's anger and resentment grew, arriving in Britain in September 1796 at which point he lost no time in confronting Vancouver.

[100] Captains could not prescribe punishments to warrant or commissioned officer without a court-martial. They could demote petty officers under their command, and this was usually preceded by flogging. Warrant officers were often punished with dismissal, redeployment and/or demotion, even sometimes stripped of their rank and made to serve before the mast. Commissioned officers could be reduced to petty officers but were excused from flogging. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 79. *Muster Table of His Majesties Sloop The Discovery*, Admiralty Records in the Public Record Office, U.K. 1791. Retrieved December 15, 2006. See also, John Naish, *The Interwoven Lives of George Vancouver, Archibald Menzies, Joseph Whidbey and Peter Puget: The Vancouver Voyage of 1791-1795*, 1996, London.

[101] Stephen Payne Adye, *A Treatise on Courts-martial*, New York, 1769, 18.

buyers. The scene, and by implication its actuality, cast the officers, naval ruling elite and institution itself into disrepute. Established hierarchical superiority was mocked. The satirical treatment, however, reassuringly alleviated any anxiety and controversy among audiences. This was not always the case because the subversive potential for discretionary punishment to manifest malicious sadism and lack of humanity was also sometimes connoted in prints.

An Irish Leap, or a Pat Reply to a plain Question by Charles Williams after George Moutard Woodward (June 1807) [Fig. 72] suggested various negative experiences of corporality and discipline on board naval ship.[102] It depicted an aggrieved sailor kneeling on deck having taken, as his shipmates reckon, a 'tumble' 'direct from the topgallant mast'. The Captain dressed in his elaborate uniform waves his arms in dismay and stoops to exclaim solicitously – 'My Good Fellow. Where did you come from?' The tar's response, 'Please your Honor – I come from the North of Ireland' can be interpreted in several ways. His misunderstanding of the question presents various implications and associations, including concussion from the fall, characteristic simple-mindedness, shock at his superior's concern for his wellbeing and anticipation of disciplinary consequences. The fear of imminent punishment is further suggested by his intimidated appearance. It is worth noting the explicit Irish reference. One interpretation could be that Irish men in the Navy were associated with particular disorderliness, incapability and recalcitrance, given their substantial impressment via the Quota Acts, the unsuccessful Irish Rebellion in 1798 and general anxieties of non-conformist radicalism, republicanism and Catholicism.[103] However, as this satire implies, the threat to naval order was ambiguous.[104] Further negative behaviour aboard ship incited punishment, such as errors in judgment or conduct, ineptitude, neglect of

[102] In *The Caricature Magazine, or Hudibrastic Mirror*, by G. M. Woodward, vol. 1, Folio 75 W87 808. See also Mary Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, vol. 8, no. 10913.

[103] Rodger's analysis of musters of ships commissioning at Plymouth in 1805, in comparison to 1770-9, revealed that the proportion of Irish had risen from 20% to 29%, of which four-fifths were rated as unskilled. The proportion of English recruits had decreased. Rodger, '*Devon Men and the Navy',* Table 10, cited in N. A. M. Rodger, "Shipboard Life in the Georgian Navy, 1750-1800: The Decline of the Old Order," in L. R. Fischer, H. Hamre, P. Holm and J. R. Bruijn, eds, *The North Sea: Twelve Essays in the Social History of Maritime Labour*, Stavanger, 1992, 29.

[104] Byrn's statistical survey revealed that 90% of summary flogging was inflicted upon subjects of the Crown, and besides the English majority, those of Irish origins accounting for the second largest proportion, constituting 1,226 in raw numbers or 16.5% of those in the sample, or 27.5% not including those of unknown nationality. He also discovered that the proportion of deserters originating from Ireland was 618 in raw numbers or 14.7% of those in the sample. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 76, n. 2, 156.

duty, contempt, insubordination, insolence and brutality. All these, and even a thoughtless reply to a superior, would typically receive a summary reprimand or lashes, if not more severe corporal punishment. This tar's wide-eyed terror and grimacing mouth are indicative of the paranoia and psychological trouble seamen suffered during the hardship, physical pain, danger and corporal discipline of naval service. Williams chose the tense and ambiguous moment when the tar is rubbing his backside after having accidentally fallen, yet, before any consequent treatment. The Captain's sympathetic reaction could on the one hand imply naval welfare, paternalism and humane justice. By contrast, it could connote the possible application of corporal discipline by officers' prejudiced by their sense of superiority and insecurity.

The purpose of punishment was prevention and, as such, restraint should be key and actual infliction rare, consistent and a last resort. This interpretation was gathering momentum in naval practice and discourse. It indicates that excessive naval corporal discipline was falling into disfavour or disrepute even amongst the authorities themselves.[105] At the time corporal punishment was apparent in various critical discourses and reformist ventures of contemporaries, including naval officers themselves. For example, Vice-Admiral Collingwood, successor to Nelson was not alone in condemning those who:

> endeavouring to conceal, by great severity, their own unskillfulness [sic] and want of attention, beat the men into a state of insubordination.[106]

Some satirical prints offered subtle, subversive and ambivalent references to the excessive actualities of the Navy's penal law. Interpretations, much like the inflictions

[105] Critical discourse about such corporal discipline was most prominently reformist, such as in parliamentary debate and published pamphlets. For example: Hodgskin, *An Essay on Naval Discipline, shewing part of its evil effects on the minds of the officers, on the minds of the men, and on the community: with an amended system, by which pressing may be immediately abolished*, 1813; Anon. *Effects of the Impress of Seamen 1810; The Impress considered as the cause why British seamen desert from our service to the Americans: with a review of the encouragement now held out by the royal navy, and the means in our power of abolishing the impress*, 1810. In the official archive, legal records also provide evidence of this trend. Towards 1800, cases emerge where warrant officers were brought to court-martial for disobeying standing order of ship, which forbade them to strike the men. Naval historian David Hannay noted that manifestations of inhumanity and unjust corporal discipline/punishment were declining as new approaches to naval discipline developed. Hannay, *Court-martial*, 65.

[106] In a letter to Lord St. Vincent, Collingwood stated, 'I pride myself in maintaining strict discipline, when surrounded by factious spirits in the lower orders, and discontents among the higher classes.' G. L. Newnham Collingwood, *A selection from the Public and Private Correspondence of Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood: Interspersed with Memoirs on his Life*, London, 1829, 71 and 58 respectively. Quoted in Rodger, "Shipboard Life", Fischer, ed., *The North Sea*, 33.

themselves, were complex, varied and contentious. While naval convictions and punishments were not uncommon, they were not a foregone conclusion. Judicial acquittals, merciful pardons and commuted sentences did occur.[107] Furthermore, mulct wages,[108] fines, demotion, dismissal and debarment of descendents existed as more discreet, socio-economic, penalties.[109] Non-violent punishments could also be inflicted, including hard labour, solitary confinement, imprisonment and transportation.[110] These punitive actualities were apparent but were notably marginal in official records and unofficial representations.

Such absence in imagery accorded with the infrequent adoption of such penal measures. Also, the fact that they were unfamiliar and unspectacular might account for their lack of visual representation. Despite the controversy of the Navy's corporality, no images dating from the French Wars can be found that portrayed starting, running the gauntlet, gagging, ducking, cobbing and tying to the rigging.[111] Interestingly, the latter two inflictions appear as Thomas Rowlandson's designs engraved by W. Read to illustrate

[107] For primary source references see elsewhere in this chapter, 142, n.71 and 165, n.142.

[108] Rasor writes concerning alcoholism in the Royal Navy prior to 1850 that, 'The former method of dealing with an officer guilty of excessive drinking was quiet, "respectable" withdrawal to half pay with no punitive connotations, or resignation without due process.' Eugene L. Rasor, *Reform in the Royal Navy: A Social History of the Lower Deck, 1850-1880*, Hamden, Connecticut, 1976.

[109] An example of the severe punitive treatment is provided by the case of Andrew Graham, late Boatswain of His Majesty's sloop *Nightingale*, 'tried for drunkenness and contempt to his superior officer on or about the 21st October last (1812)' at a court-martial held on board the *Irraisonnable* in Sheerness Harbour on Monday 11th January 1813. Such charges were found proven and Graham was 'to be dismissed from his employment […] and to serve before the mast in such one of His Majesty's ships as the commander in chief of His Majesty's ships and vessels at this port shall direct.' Minutes of Andrew Graham's Court-martial, TNAADM 1/5434. Cited in Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 559, case 141.

[110] In Byrn's statistical survey of courts-martial for solely alcohol-related crimes two sentences were for sixty lashes, one for fifty lashes and demotion, three for demotion, and one acquitted not guilty. He also noted typical sentencing leniency, especially given the number of lashes was practically unlimited. Byrn, *Courts-martial*, 147. Aaron Thomas of HMS *Lapwing* commented in his journal that 'upon an average we flog two men in 3 weeks, but we have had many heavy squalls amongst the officers we have at this time, our boatswain and surgeon in confinement for drunkenness and both will have court-martials.' *Aaron Thomas Papers*, Special Collections, University of Miami Libraries.

[111] Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 215-6. Such punishments were seldom registered in the Captain's journal. Starting involved the beating, usually on the back or backside, with a tarred ropes end or cudgel. Running the gauntlet was where the crew were lined up and the prisoner ran through their two rows as they strike him. Gagging was inflicted with a choke made of metal or wood and varied in size according to severity of punishment. Similarly, a wooden collar weighing roughly sixty pounds could be prescribed to the culprit for several hours. Ducking involved putting the culprit on a small batten with his feet weighed down by shot and hoisting him rapidly up one of the yard arms only to drop him suddenly into the water. Cobbing is a form of spanking using a paddle known as a cob or in full cobbing-board, typically used unofficially among comrades. Tying a man's outstretched hands and feet to the standing rigging of the mizenmast and leaving him for however long the Captain pleased was referred to as spread-eagle. Kissing the gunner's daughter was when the culprit had his trousers pulled down to be struck 6 to 12 times on his bottom with a cat-of-nine-tails. This punishment was usually for young midshipmen. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 79.

Alfred Burton's popular publication *The Adventures of Johnny Newcome in the Navy* (1818) [Fig. 73 and 74]. Under a pseudonym, these poems were written by John Milton during and after his naval service and were shaped by his negative experiences of shipboard punishment.[112] Furthermore, such material only appeared subsequently once such disconcerting actualities were reassuringly past and remained only as a distant memory incorporated into sentimentalized constructs of the Navy's outmoded corporal discipline. This relative underrepresentation was symptomatic of the distaste for it felt by civilian, especially print-buying, audiences. Diverse discourses indicate that naval servicemen including disciplinary authorities were also unsupportive of such punitive archaism in actuality and imagery.[113]

3. 8 Flogging

While flogging was a major preoccupation of naval penal legislation and of wider publications, depictions were highly rare in contemporary print culture. Most pertinent to punishment and naval discipline in general is the questionable absence of lashings in Captains' records and imagery. Flogging of the Navy's men was topical in non-visual discourse and correlated with contemporary treatment of civilian criminals and slaves. Contrary to its notoriety and negative associations, the lash was not necessarily adopted as a sadistic or capricious enforcement of authority. Instead, it constituted a routine and accepted threat and pragmatic method for upholding established order. It was favoured to ensure the seaman's quick return to active service, unlike the alternatives of

[112] As a master's mate under Sir Samuel Hood, John Mitford (1782-1831) was dismissed from the service as being unaccountable for his actions. His poems suggest unjustified flogging was the one thing that seamen hated most about the Navy. The hero protagonist of this tale is unfairly flogged by a tyrannical Captain, and, although he is able to admit that this captain is perhaps atypical, he brooded over the unnecessary disgrace, which made him disaffected and eager to leave the service. 'For Gales, and Actions – and all that, I do not care – but d-m the Cat!' Alfred Burton, *The Adventures of Johnny Newcome in the Navy*, 246.

[113] Indeed, alongside critical commentary in newspaper, published pamphlets and prints, official records also evidence the declining use of archaic punishments and enhanced regulations prior to and during courts-martial. Specifically, the Captain was required to authorize penal treatment for it to be legal. Furthermore, in June 1811 an order was issued which required him to regulate officers' disciplinary power further by sending quarterly returns of their ship's punishments to the Admiralty. Seaman Hall claims that before this legislation, 'there was little to no restraint upon the despotic authority of the Captain, as far, at least, as corporal punishment was concerned.' Hall, 1846, series 2, 96. Starting fell into disfavour and was abolished in an 1806 regulation that reminded Captains that he alone could order punishment 'which he is never to do without sufficient cause, nor ever with the greater severity than the offence shall really deserve'. *Regulations*, 1806, 163. Running the gauntlet was abolished in 1809.

transportation, incarceration or death employed under Common Law to punish the lower orders.[114] Seaman Wilson described an official flogging ceremony:

> When a poor fellow is being punished, his agonizing cries pierce you to the soul. The scene is awful! Hot boiling lead poured on a criminal's back would be put in comparison to the sufferings of those who come under the lash of the unrelenting Boatswain's mates.[115]

Such harrowing experience for all involved suggests the rationale for preventative discipline, particularly for recidivist and potential disorderly tars.

Not surprisingly, the terrifying prospect and painful witnessing and experience of flogging were not captured in contemporary imagery, despite the significance invested in it in naval law and text-based discourse. No images are to be found of flogging sentences being anticipated by the prisoner, judicially deliberated, actually inflicted or borne subsequently as physical and psychological scarring. The continued use of flogging, together with ambivalent textual discourse and non-representation in imagery are arguably indicative of the acceptance, albeit conditional, of such naval corporal punishment. It was resorted to if and when the established order of disciplinary justice deemed it necessary. The somewhat impartial views on naval penal discipline of a passenger on board HMS *Gibraltar* in 1811 are of note here:

> I could not but observe how seldom the men were punished; and that they were disgraced at the gangway but for some wilful fault. The captain does not

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[114] 'Civilian law used the gallows and the jail to punish men and women, particularly those of the lower classes, because they were expend-able. Removing a threat to the society by killing or incarcerating men was a luxury the army could not afford. The lash was a re-flection not so much of military sadism as of the need to punish quickly and without depriving the army of its most precious commodity - a functioning soldier.' Gilbert, 'Military and Civilian Justice', *The Journal of British Studies*, 64.

[115] 'Remarks on Board His Majesty's Ship *Unite* of 40 Guns. Written historically by Robert Mercer Wilson's Journal', August 1806' in Thursfield, *Five Naval Journals*, 256. Leech also gave an account of the painful scene of seaman's flogging, based, albeit with probable exaggeration, upon first-hand observation. 'The boatswain's mate is ready, with coat off and whip in hand. The captain gives the word. Carefully spreading the cords with the fingers of his left hand, the executioner throws the cat over his right shoulder; it is brought down upon the now uncovered herculean shoulders of the man/ his flesh creeps – it reddens as if blushing at the indignity; the sufferer groans' lash follows lash, until the first mater, wearied with the cruel employment, gives place to a second. Now two dozen of these dreadful lashes have been inflicted: the lacerated back looks inhuman; it resembles roasted meat burnt nearly black before a scorching fire; yet still the lashes fall… Vain are the cries and prayers of the wretched man […] four dozen strokes have cut up his flesh and robbed him of all self-respect; there he hangs, a pitied, self-despised, groaning, bleeding wretch; and now the captain cries, forbear! His shirt is thrown over his shoulders; the seizings are loosed; he is led away, staining his path with red drops of blood, and the hands, 'piped down' by the boatswain, sullenly return to their duties.' Samuel Leech, *Thirty Years from Home, or a Voice from the Main Deck*, reprint of 1856 ed., London, 1999, 50-1.

> choose to flog a man for an error which is excusable [… only] where it was plain to everybody that the culprit deserved the correction he received. It generally happened that the same men were constant offenders; nothing could keep some of them sober, or quiet, which convinced me that a ship's company could not be kept in order unless the fear of corporal punishment deterred some of the notorious bad characters, who too often disgraced a Man of War […] Sir Francis Burdett (radical reformer) and co may talk, but I wish they could point out any other means than that of occasional flogging by which 600 men confined in a ship could be restrained from faults which would lead to more serious consequences […] Generally speaking, not one 20th out of 600 or 700 men ever allowed themselves to be thus disgraced.[116]

The rate and severity of naval flogging, however, rose during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. This was symptomatic of the mounting manning pressures. To some degree, a varied and discontented lower-deck necessitated such measures, in legislation and effect, to maintain their functionality for protracted and desperate naval warfare against France.[117]

However, the theme of the punitive lash is referenced by Charles Williams' *The Merry Ships Crew or Nautical Philosophers* (*c*.1818) [Fig. 75]. A Captain leisurely promenading the quay with a woman on his arm is depicted being informed by a Mate that, following the Captain's orders, he has flogged all seventeen of the men who 'are happy it is over; and the rest are happy because they have escaped.'[118] This print can be seen not only to play upon audiences' perception, exaggerated as it may be, of the Navy's notorious corporal discipline but, furthermore, its contemporary actualities evidenced in discourse. Specifically, it referenced Admiral Pakenham's boast about his crew's recent flogging when he was asked by a friend on landing at Portsmouth why he claimed he had left his whole crew the happiest fellows in the world, as reported in

[116] RNM manuscripts JOD/148. Quoted in Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 211.

[117] Prior to 1806 the regulations enjoined Captains to give no more than a dozen strokes in a single infliction of the lash. While not universally adhered to, this did have moderating influence on the general severity of flogging. 'Whereas 1487 of the 4520 scourgings in the sample administered before 1806, or 33 per cent, were of more than a dozen blows, 1189 of the 2253 meted after 1806, 53%, were of like proportion.' Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 75. Not until 1812, was the maximum allowable sentence for flogging restricted to 300 lashes, prior to which a Court-Martial board was free to assign any number of lashes that according to their discretion, was commensurate with the crime. Gilbert, 'Military and Civilian Justice', *The Journal of British Studies***,** 50.

[118] See speech bubble of print.

The Naval Chronicle in 1810.[119] Let us first consider the implications in relation to a crew's proportionate flogging. A survey of naval records reveals that a ship's complement typically numbered around 500 to 700, and of this roughly four to fourteen per cent, or eight to seventy-five crewmembers, were recorded receiving punishment over a period of at least a year, usually more.[120] Bearing such archival material in mind, the negative exaggeration of Rowlandson's satirical print is confirmed. *The Merry Ships Crew* suggested a high proportion of victims of the lash on a single given occasion. The preventative efficacy of such flogging is derided. The Mate duteously fulfilled the orders of a capricious, even sadistic, Captain who neglected to supervise the deed but awaited its report in a leisurely manner.

While the disconcerting infliction and consequences of flogging itself were not explicitly depicted in imagery, its non-physical and negative implications were present in the form of connotations. The audience is left to imagine the tar's misery and the impact such punitive discipline had upon a crews' psychology. Through the textual title and officers' speech-bubbles, Williams was suggesting that the naval crews' happiness aboard ship were dictated and distorted by a corporal discipline itself negative and flawed. Furthermore, the Captain's absence from the ceremonial lashing and mate's satisfied implementation of it unsupervised pointed to another defect in the efficacy of such punishment. The extensive nature of corporal discipline appears implicitly unwholesome, its regulatory and didactic premise defunct and undermined in its actualities and interpretations, including the *Merry Ship* print satire.

Criticism of the negative repercussions, as well as implementation, of naval corporeal punishment was also apparent in textual discourse. George Vernon Jackson lamented in 1801 of his first ship, HMS *Trent*, that under the captaincy of Edward Hamilton, notorious for his tyrannical command, it was well disciplined and efficient 'but these qualities had all been promoted at no small sacrifice to humanity […] The 'cat' was incessantly at work.'[121] Later seaman Daniel Goodall criticised flogging as:

[119] *The Naval Chronicle*, 1810, vol. 24.
[120] See appendices of Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*.
[121] G. V. Jackson, H. Burrows, ed., *The Perilous Adventures and Vicissitudes of a Naval Officer 1801-12: Being Part of the Memoirs of Admiral George Vernon Jackson, (1787-1876)*, Edinburgh and London, 1927, 11.

> the least effective check that could be devised for degraded minds, and that men of sensitive feeling are but too certain to be sunk to the degraded class by its infliction, thus inflicting an irreparable evil on the service.[122]

While it was written with the rhetoric of a hardy veteran reminiscing over the strife he suffered and survived, it indicates how audiences ashore could appreciate the physical, emotional and psychological impact of violent corporal punishment. Goodall's allegation that he had 'repeatedly heard […] many [officers and men] of the very best and bravest in command […] declare against' such 'a heart-sickening exhibition of barbarity', is significant.[123] Although it clearly served to support his critical view, it nevertheless has some validity. It suggested that cynicism towards the principles, implementation and efficacy of flogging existed, *and not* exclusively among recalcitrant or weak seamen or jaded veterans.

Corporal punishment, flogging or otherwise, was 'a discretionary power so enormous, and so liable to be abused, [that] no individual ought to be entrusted with'.[124] Often problems and improvements were conceded, although preservation was persistently advocated, as by Admiral Martin:

> By what unaccountable perverseness is it that the extinction of military punishments is aimed at […] subordination is the vital principle of all military bodies […] if the power of corporal punishments be taken away, all substitutes for it will prove ineffectual; but it is the power, more than the practice of it, which serves to preserve discipline. […] what's wanted is a better uniformity of discipline.[125]

Even the naval ruling elite, comprising Captains, court-martial and the Admiralty, lacked clear authority, order and uniformity. Their discipline was varied and incongruous, and potentially conducive to dissatisfaction, exasperation and manifest crime among the common seamen. This was apparent to seamen, as evident in Dillon's explanation:

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[122] Daniel Goodall, *Salt Water Sketches; Being Incidents in the Life of Daniel Goodall*, Inverness, 1860, 34-5.
[123] Goodall, *Salt Water Sketches*, 34-5.
[124] *An Inquiry into the nature and effects of flogging in the Royal Navy and the Merchant Service. To which is added a Seaman's appeal ... on the necessity of adopting such measures as would prevent a recurrence to horrible system of Impressment*, London, 1826.
[125] Admiral Sir Thomas Byam Martin, *Impressment of Seamen, and a Few Remarks on Corporal Punishment, taken form the Private Memoranda of a Naval Officer*, 1834, 186-7.

> one of the most unpleasant duties of a captain is to train the crew of a vessel which has been disciplined by another commander. If his regulations differ from what they have previously been used to, it occasions unpleasant occurrences, murmurs, and sometimes even mutiny.[126]

Faults found with the Navy's penal orders were not just its inconsistency and counter-productivity, but even illogicality and hypocrisy. Aaron Thomas alluded to this in reference to a case in the summer of 1798 in which a boy was flogged for selling his rum allowance in exchange for practical assistance with his laundry, arguably excessive in itself, which conceivably 'encouraged intoxication'.[127] Most pertinent was mutiny, perceivably a manifestation of inappropriate discipline in cause and effect, as exemplified at the Nore in 1797.[128] A supreme infraction of naval law regarded it with grave seriousness and it warranted trial and probable conviction, although not necessarily for capital offence or actual execution.[129] The persistence and escalation of crime irrespective of punishment evidences the limitations of preventative discipline.[130]

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[126] Michael Lewis, ed., *Sir William Dillon's Narrative of Professional Adventures, 1790-1839,* Navy Records Society Published Series, 1953, vol. 93, 84.

[127] Aaron Thomas noted the inconsistency of a punishment on Monday 13 August 1798 in his diary: 'Punished the boy [Richard] Skipper on the backside with 12 lashes for giving half a gill of rum to Gater the marine for washing his clothes. […] the boys are allowed their rum, and if they drink it, they often get drunk with it, therefore it is understood they may give it to persons who wash and mind for them. And may boys in some ships sell their liquor. […] So that by flogging this lad, it is the same as giving orders for all boys to drink their own allowance, and thereby get drunk with it. The best that can be said of it is that it will encourage intoxication.' Aaron Thomas Papers. The discretion and inconsistency of naval authorities on board ship was recounted from first-hand experience by other seamen in their written accounts: Basil Hall remarked how 'a man may got to sea for twenty years, and find no two commanding-officers, and hardly two days, alike.' Basil Hall, *Fragments of Voyages and Travels,* London, 1846-56, 3 series, vol. 1, 5.

[128] 'The first Lieutenant, they said, was a *blackguard*, and *no* gentleman, and by no means fit for being an officer. That the Master was like him; both of them a *disgrace* to His Majesty's Service. […] The second Lieutenant, Nieven, was surprised at their *tender mercy* to him, above the rest, turned around to *one* of the delegates and said, 'How do you spare me? Did I not get you flogged the other day?' His answer was – 'You did, Sir, *but I deserved* it. You are a gentleman, and a good officer. You never punished men but when they were in fault, and you did it as an officer ought to do.' Quoted in 'Peter Cullen Esq. 1789-1802, 1796 May, Thursfield, ed., *Five Naval Journals*, 84.

[129] Joseph Price Moore, 'The Greatest Enormity That Prevails: Direct Democracy and Workers' Self-Management in the British Naval Mutinies of 1797', in Howell and Twomey, eds, *Jack Tar in History: Essays in the History of Maritime Life and Labour,* Fredericton, 1991, 102. Among those at the Nore, 412 were tried for mutiny offences, only 56 were found guilt of capital offence and an even smaller proportion actually hanged. Guttridge estimated that around sixty mutineers of the Nore were sentenced to death and a similar number flogged, most of whom were men from HMS *Sandwich*. Guttridge, *Mutiny*, 72-4. The proportion of mutineers actually executed is an obscure and contentious issue, but can be assumed to have been smaller than those convicted and even sentenced to death. Historian Dugan estimated at least 36 sailors were hanged. James Dugan, *Great Mutiny*, London, 1966, 363. Grint asserts that of the 400 court-martialled, 59 were sentenced to death and 29, including Parker, hanged from the yardarm. Keith Grint, *The Arts of Leadership,* Oxford, 2000, 72.

[130] This can also be deduced from the highest proportion of flogging inflicted being upon those enlisted as voluntary or turned-over, with those pressed in the minority. From a statistical survey of the muster books of five ships in the Seven Years War, Rodger has estimated that at least 55% of all floggings were

The officers adjudicating courts-martial were tasked with choosing 'death, or such other punishment as [they deemed] the offender to deserve',[131] the standard, therefore, open to varied severity, and review.[132] For example, *The Morning Post and Gazetteer* reported:

> Not long ago [following the events at the Nore], a sailor was tried for Mutiny, and the sentence past on him was, that he should receive eighty lashes. "Is that all" he said, "I don't care a rope's end for the lashes: for I thought I was to have been punished with death."[133]

Exclusively naval discipline and punishment were, as we have seen, relatively underrepresented in discourse, and hanging and imprisonment of civilians were more common than whipping. Naval flogging, however, would have been disconcertingly apparent to diverse audiences. The negative repercussions of corporal discipline, especially severe (even fatal) use of the lash, are evident in cases of mutiny, brutal violence and manslaughter. *The Balance of Justice* (3 March 1802) [Fig. 76] by Thomas Rowlandson[134] is a significant critique upon naval penal justice, particularly the elements of authority and discretion that underpinned it. The print enables an investigation of the negative actualities of punishment in relation to visual representation.

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of volunteers, followed by turned over men accounting for 26% and pressed only 15%, with notably those 'turned over' including more volunteers. Despite Quota men not being included and generally concerning an earlier period, these figures nonetheless offer insight into the criminal propensity of the lower deck. Rodger, *Wooden World*, 3, 353. Lewis estimated that in 1812, 25% of typical ship's company were volunteers, 50% pressed, and 25% quota men or conscripts of another sort. Lewis, *A Social History of the Navy*, 139. On the questionable efficacy of preventative discipline, specifically the hanging and severe flogging of mutineers for their capital crime, historian Greg Dening wryly observes, 'After their hanging Captain Hammond of the *Brunswick* reported to the Admiralty following the punitive sentencing of *Bounty* mutineers that "the example seems to have made a good impression upon the minds of all the ships' companies present". Perhaps it did, perhaps it did not. Five years later, most of these ships' companies mutinied against most of these ships' captains in the mutiny at the Nore. After Nore 36 men were hanged'. Greg Dening, *Captain Bligh's Bad* Language**:** *Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty*, Cambridge, 1994, 48.

[131] *The Articles of War*. Section II: Art. III., London, 1762.

[132] This sentence was specifically 'for mutiny, incitement to mutiny, or mutinous assembly, expression or behaviour'. Guttridge, *Mutiny*, 73-4.

[133] *Morning Post and Gazetteer*, Tuesday, November 21, 1797, Issue 9007.

[134] There seems to be some disagreement as to who made this print. The British Museum's website and George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the British Museum*, London, 1947, vol. 8, name Thomas Rowlandson, which I will be adopting as most reliable. Alternatively Charles Williams has been attributed to it on other online resources, specifically Getty Images and Corbis Images.

3. 9 Hanging

Balance of Justice [Fig. 76] is an image that conflates this chapter's themes. It presented the corpses of naval servicemen hanging at the ends of a horizontal balance. They have received the death sentence as punitive justice. Joseph Wall, Governor of Goree, hangs for the convicted murder of a sergeant in 1782 by brutally flogging him without trial at court-martial on a charge (unsustained) of mutiny. Juxtaposed are the 13 tried and executed mutineers at Bantry Bay in December 1801.[135] Beyond the initially grim visual subject, there are subtle, complex and ambiguous negative implications to the image. Capital punishment for mutiny suggests the apparent limitations of preventative penal discipline. Rowlandson, however, alludes to the tar's vulnerability to unjust inhumanity, discrimination, irrevocable error and subversion. The notorious corporal discipline and its potentially fatal consequences suffered by the common seaman are therefore exposed. In his interpretation of disorder, the printmaker is exploiting and perpetuating audiences' sense of morbid curiosity.

Rowlandson's *Balance of Justice* distorted the subject of hanging and its crime and punishment implications. It inflated the actual number of mutineers hanged (6) to the number who received trial (13) and juxtaposed references to two unofficially, but discursively related, legal cases. The extended title 'NB in a Few Days will be Published the Old Gunner lashed to the Shrouds' suggested an awareness of, and even a sadistic curiosity for, extremes of naval punishment. The biased scales depicted the social discrimination of the legal system; one Commander is equivalent to a baker's dozen of his lower-working class inferiors. In this satirical penal scene the latter suffer in greater numbers at the expense of a disciplinary authority.[136]

[135] In December, mutiny on board Admiral Mitchell's fleet at Bantry Bay broke out as to the dismayed seamen, despite peace preliminaries agreed, had received orders to sail to the West Indies instead of home. There is much disparity and ambiguity about how many mutineers, or even alleged ringleaders, were convicted, hanged and flogged around the fleets, but fundamentally it was a failed mutiny swiftly suppressed by naval authority which promptly ordered punishments and continued defence duties out at sea.

[136] Wrongful or prejudicial conviction, excessive and/or unwarranted punishment were not uncommon. If allegations proved completely unfounded, it was not unheard of for justices to state disapproval of plaintiff's motives. For prevarication when examined for evidence, Patrick Gill, Seaman from the sloop *Voltigeur*, received the sentence as follows: 'The court doth order him to be imprisoned in the Marshalsea for the term of three months.' TNA ADM 1/5349, case 57, 187. Byrn, *Courts-martial,* xxv and 559 respectively.

The criminal cases this print referred to were prominent in broader discourse, particularly in newspapers and published pamphlets, through which audiences would have been informed.[137] This is confirmed by Rowlandson's inclusion of two wall-placards: (left) 'An Account of the Mutiny', and (right) 'A Full True and Particular Account of the Trial of . . . For the Murder of. . .' headed by an image of a man being tied to a cannon and flogged, while an officer looks on and soldiers stand to attention. The penal consequences of the Bantry Bay mutineers were relatively direct, with many hangings. The criminality associated with the juxtaposed corpse of Wall, however, was far more complex. He fatally flogged allegedly mutinous Benjamin Armstrong, who was not depicted, with his legal case dated several decades earlier, as respite was twice granted to postpone punishment. Wall was sentenced to death after several, lengthy and controversial deliberations of the Privy Council, connoted by the print's conspicuous wall clock in the background interior. Furthermore, the striking of three o'clock might have indicated the time set to deliver the verdict regardless of indecision or protest among some councillors, such as the figure standing with arm outstretched. The messenger's urgent command 'Deliver this Immediately, He must Die' could have been a criticism upon how sentencing often lacked gravitas, instead being rather cursory. It is likely the ruling authorities' fears of exacerbating resentment at any inequities of law and order influenced the fate of Wall who did not again elude hanging which took place on 28 January 1802.[138] This interpretation is also played upon in the print's ironic inclusion, between kneeling statues of Truth and Justice, of a tablet inscribed, 'It is determined that British Justice shall never be Stained by Partiality, while the poor & ignorant suffer for their Folly the Rich shall also suffer for their Brutality and Infamy.'

A more straightforward and positive interpretation was presented in the rhetoric-laden conclusion of a contemporary pamphlet, priced at 6 pence and notably tailored for the wealthier classes:

> Thus within the period of a few days, has the triumph of British Justice been displayed by a striking contrast of two memorable events: an

[137] For example, *The Annual Register*, 1801, 65-6; 1802, 7-9, 174-86; *London Chronicle*, 18 January 1802; *The Life, Trail and Execution of Joseph Wall, esq. Late Governor of Goree, for the Willful Murder of Benjamin. Armstrong, a Serjeant of the African Corps*, London, 1802, price six-pence.

[138] *Annual Register*, 1801, 65-6; 1802, 7-9, 174-86; *London Chronicle*, 18 January 1802; *Daily News Bulletin*. Description and comment from George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires* and BM Online Catalogue. Accessed on 13 August 2012.

> exemplary punishment of Mutineers, for disobedience under command; - and a no less exemplary execution, of a Commander, for violating the delegated authority of his Sovereign, in ordering a punishment which caused the death of one of his soldiers! Ever thus may the Laws of England, which are founded in Wisdom, be administered with purity and firmness![139]

Balance of Justice [Fig. 76] is a rare print that acknowledged the apparent and disconcerting complexities of naval punishment pertinent to these exemplar cases specifically and to others generally. Manipulation was key to this visual representation, in terms of satirical exaggeration, select composition, and topical references to problematic penal possibilities, particularly given the significant factors of causality and discretion in official legal 'justice'.

Typically overlooked or marginalized in discourse, sentencing and infliction of capital punishment was rare with the rate of actual execution in relation to that for the trial and conviction of capital offences declining.[140] Only six convicted Bantry Bay mutineers were hanged, contrary to the 13 Rowlandson depicted and to the implication of an anonymous etching [Fig. 77] of 16 bust-portrait etchings from the 1802 published pamphlet *The Trial of the Mutineers, late of His Majesty's Ship Temeraire*. The relative absence of naval executions in print culture indicates evasion of already limited actualities. Anticipating 'the whole nation rise up in horror against them', ruling elites presiding over crime, indictments and convictions of a growing mass of individuals can be seen to have adopted a warily restrained use of the gallows.[141] In relation to this, however, the extent of audiences' awareness and even informed criticism regarding

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[139] Anonymous, *The Life, Trail and Execution of Joseph Wall,* 'The execution of Joseph Wall Esq. Thursday, 28 January 1802', 43.

[140] Ten of the 36 *Articles of War* specifying death subject to no qualifications or mitigations, and a further twelve depending on the court-martial's discretion. Thring, *A Treatise*, 39. At least a two-thirds consensus, rather than the usual majority, was required for a capital indictment to be passed, with consequently a relatively high rate of acquittal due to hung jury or inconclusive evidence. Gilbert**,** **'**Military and Civilian Justice', 49. This was primarily as death was frequently commuted for lashes to pragmatically retain serving manpower in response to the demands of this protracted war. The statistical analysis historian Gilbert presents assert that roughly 22% of all military prisoners may have received capital sentences at the CCM level in wartime the proportion of death sentences to all cases tried (non-capital, as well as capital) would be much lower than the 22% GCM figure. Gilbert**,** **'**Military and Civilian Justice', 49 and 57 particularly.

[141] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 2, 1784, 224; M. Cottu, *On the Administration of the Criminal Code in England, and the Spirit of the English Government, c.*1805, cited in *The Pamphleteer*, 16/31, 1820, 37-8.

punitive disciplinary order in society and the Navy should not be underestimated. While it is difficult to decipher interpretative tendencies in such a discursive field, it is worth acknowledging such a semiotic ground did exist, and would have informed, as well as been informed by, diverse and altering debates in texts and prints. This all detracted from the actuality that punishment, especially hanging, was as, if not more, prominent and increasingly problematic an aspect of the established 'Bloody Code' not at sea but ashore.[142]

Execution was scarcely and selectively depicted, typically reserved for low culture penny prints and small vignettes in textual publications. Andrew Knapp and William Baldwin's popular *Newgate Calendar*[143] included engravings by R. Page, J. Chapman and others, such as *Two Gentleman Regarding the Gibbets with Satisfaction* (*c*.1799) [Fig. 78]. Handbills and Broadside Cheap Repository Tracts had small woodcuts illustrating moralising tales and criminal cases as in, for example, *The gin-shop; or, a peep into a prison* (1796). More importantly, such discourse had naval references, with the image of *Parker at the Yard-arm* [Fig. 79] in the *Newgate Calendar*, as well as numerous text-only execution reports. Yet, visual acknowledgement of the disconcerting, and potentially subversive, actualities of inflicted punishment, especially hangings, was exceptionally rare. The prisoners' terror or defiance, and spectators' ghoulish morbid curiosity, discontent or disorderly, even violent, participation were visually avoided. Independent works on paper were more outspoken. For example, Rowlandson's *An Execution* (1803) [Fig. 80] was a private watercolour painting never exhibited or published. This portrayal of a terrified man and woman noosed and

[142] Common Law can be seen to have more heavily, and arguably inhumanely, relied upon capital punishment, especially hanging, than its naval and military counterparts. Indeed, statistics evidence a higher rate of capital crime, indictments, convictions and implemented sentences. The proportion of death sentences to all cases tried was lower in military compared to civilian law, estimated at below 22%. Furthermore, the acquittal rate for indictments of murder tried at General Courts-martial during the American Revolution was 61%. We do not have the comparative figures for the same period in civilian courts, but the 1810 statistics for England and Wales show that the acquittal rate then was 29.9%, or 34.5% if we eliminate cases not prosecuted. The acquittal rate was probably lower in the civilian courts in the eighteenth century; certainly, it was not higher than the military figures noted above. Gilbert, 57, citing as source TNA WO 71/54-59 and WO 71/82-96. Capital criminal cases at Sussex assizes fell in percentage of executions from 42.9% between 1788-1792 to 20% between 1795-9 and 28.1% between 1800-2. Capital Punishment, 1783-1802 from Public Records Office, Clerks of Assize (Home Circuit Records) ASSI 35 (Felony Files within Indictment Files 1660-1802) and ASSI 31 (Agenda Books 1748-1802). Beattie, *Crime and the Court*, 587.

[143] *The Newgate Calendar; comprising interesting memoirs of the most notorious characters who have been convicted of outrages on the laws of England since the commencement of the eighteenth century; with anecdotes and last exclamations of sufferers*, London, 1824 – 1826.

awaiting hanging on the scaffold, surrounded by a coffin and rowdy crowd, incorporated some disconcerting aspects of public ceremonial punishment. These contemporary civil hangings amounted to local spectacle, sometimes national holidays, and garnered extensive press coverage. Broader issues of law and order evoked less morbid curiosity than the sight of capital punishment, although society's general preoccupation with mankind's vulnerability and mortality was in evidence. Indicative of this is the relatively popular imagery of medical consultations, ailments and treatments, especially surgical dissection and amputation, which will be investigated in the next chapter.

3. 10 Conclusion

The crime and punishment of such a disciplinary bulwark of established order was problematic in visual culture, and loaded with ambiguous significance for various audiences. There existed a propensity towards negative interpretation informed by prevailing assumptions, values and anxieties promulgated by the ruling elites who jealously guarded the established order and were the main patrons of print culture. The images discussed in this chapter demonstrate careful manipulation that played upon readily accessible and accepted preconceptions regarding discipline whether pertaining to mutiny or far more minor crimes. This was specifically the case in terms of crime and punishment of the Navy's men and their bearings upon civilian society ashore.

Arguably, the criminal naval tar was a scapegoat for material and ideological insecurities amongst the ruling elites. The tar embodied a genuine, yet decidedly ridiculous, threat to all aspects of established order. The Navy did suffer from crimes but, nevertheless, this was a less serious issue than was popularly assumed. Indeed, there actually existed a somewhat underestimated degree of regularity and transparency within the Navy's criminal punitive law. Its implementation and professionalism set it apart from its inland counterparts, specifically the Army[144]

[144] 'A quick survey of army and navy General Courts-martial records for virtually any period in the eighteenth century would have shown that lash sentences in the army were about four times more severe than those in the Navy. In 1779, for example, the navy lash average was 205 per sentence, while the army lash average was 827.' Arthur N. Gilbert, 'Review: *Reform in the Royal Navy: A Social History of the*

and civilian society.[145] Interpretations, both negative and positive, of the Navy's discipline became subsumed within the broader historical and modernizing established order of Britain. As such, the Navy could even be seen as a pioneer of reforms in the judicial, penal, socio-political and humanitarian system. Given the large numbers of men, including criminals, employed in naval service, its discipline had to be effective. Shipboard existence was repressive, harsh and dangerous, analogous to a prison sentence, yet, arguably, it fostered a move towards omnipotent surveillance. This can be seen to have paved the way for the modern state systems of social order, such as the police and hospitals. Nevertheless, varying and ambiguous kinds of malpractice persisted within supposed disciplinary order, including psychological suffering, neglect, abuse and error of judgments. The regulation of naval authorities according to *The Articles of War* was not without limitations or detriment to the flexibility, accountability and humanity of the Navy's vital discipline. Discretion was an important but awkward factor in depictions of the seamen's crime and punishment. Image-makers played upon the topicality and contentiousness of their subject in consolidating preconceptions of naval men's criminality.

As with imagery of the common seaman's impressment and recreation discussed in the previous chapters, his crime and punishment required satire to mask the fears associated with the negative issues they broached. Print buyers endorsed caricature, stereotype, drama and socio-political derision to consolidate their senses of privileged distinction and informed opinion of the typical seaman as simple, contrary and too easily susceptible to disorder. For example, images by Cruikshank [Fig. 60 and 70], Williams [Fig. 72], Roberts [Fig. 68], Mills [Fig. 67] and Grinagain [Fig. 69] constructed the tar as his own worst enemy. For many Britons, an awareness of the seamen's foolish misdemeanours, which in turn necessitated their expected disciplinary treatment, removed a disconcerting sense of guilt and insecurity about their own responsibilities in society. This sense was achieved through light-hearted distraction, evasion and

Lower Deck, 1850-1880, by Eugene L. Rasor, Hamden, Connecticut, 1976', *Journal of Social History*, Winter 1977, vol. 11, no. 2, 279-281.

[145] For further discussion of the crime and punishment administered through the Common Law of eighteenth century Britain see King, *Crime*, especially 72, 264, 272-3, and the statistical graphs of data collated from sources E. R. O. Q/ SPb 5-17. Oscar Sherwin, 'Crime and Punishment in England of the Eighteenth Century', *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, January 1946, vol. 5, no. 2, 169-199, especially 182-4, 188; Henry Angelo, *Reminiscences*, London, 1828, vol. 1, 472, 460, 465-6, 474-6; William C. Sydney, *England and the English in the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1891, vol. 2, 285.

exaggeration combined with a reassurance of the ridiculousness of perceived threats. The image-maker, and by extension his upper-middle class clientele, ensured that the Navy's vital and exalted established order was appropriately asserted and undisturbed. Not only were serious criminal actualities explicitly excluded but the less prominent issues of defects, grievances, inconsistency and injustices were often avoided. The tar's inferiority was repeatedly stated; his physiognomy, vernacular, attire and the company he kept served to imply and exaggerate his problematic plainness, impressionability and jocularity. Jack appeared idiosyncratically vulnerable to being misguided, provoked or incited by external influences and, therefore, by implication, not innately or intentionally dangerous. In discourse the serviceman's predisposition towards disorder was thus placed at one remove from his essential character and experiences. The negative interpretation of the Navy's discipline became subsumed within the broader historical and modernizing established order of Britain. Actual and represented naval criminal manifestations fostered a degree of understanding and relief in audiences.

As discussed above, in the criminal punitive discipline of the Navy, which included capital convictions and executions, there existed more subversive aspects of excessive corporeal punishment that caused fatal accidents and incited offensive insubordination, manslaughter and premature mortality. This leads to the issues of maltreatment and morbidity discussed in the next chapter, which are clearly relevant to the overall experiences of seamen in their disciplinary institution. The tar was subject not only to penal law; his very existence on board ship amidst dangerous conditions proved challenging and punishing. Having demonstrated the misrepresentation of crime and punishment among naval men and the efficacy and implications of its disciplinary order, this thesis will continue in the next chapter by considering the less ambiguous aspects of basic existence in the Navy. Analysis of overlooked images will enable a consideration of the seamen's mortal experience of their shipboard environment and naval service that was conducive to pressures of combat casualties, accident, disease and potential maltreatment. The interpretation of naval service as 'deadly' was not at its most apparent in strict discipline. Its very ship-bound circumstances were constantly life-threatening. The thesis's underlying themes of state control and individual sacrifice are again shown to be at the forefront of problematic naval actualities and representation.

Chapter Four

MORTALITY AND MALTREATMENT: THE DEATH AND DISEASE OF NAVAL SEAMEN

4. 1 Introduction

Isaac Cruikshank's coloured etching after Woodward *Dance of Death Modernised* (October 1808) [Fig. 81] played upon the morbid curiosity that all mankind, irrespective of social class, age or occupation experiences in connection with the subject of human mortality. Indeed, death and disease were, and remain, constants of human life, and no more so than in the Royal Navy during and after the French Wars. The subject of mortality was ever present in visual culture with danger, vulnerability and sacrifice prominent aspects of armed service at the time of intense and protracted conflict. The success of the prints of Cruikshank, among others, renowned for their morbid and grotesque depictions, are testament to the interest in, and arguably negative exaggeration of, the subject of death among image-makers and their audiences. Cruikshank's reference to seamen's mortality through the peg-legged pensioner Jack Tar was typical of the reassuring interpretation that this important and revered character would reach a ripe old age, survive the dangers of service, stoically endure the accompanying hardships and live life to the full with a devil-may-care acceptance of his mortality.

This chapter will explore how the actualities of naval mortality and maltreatment were represented, paying particular attention to the impact of negative misconceptions concerning death, disease, welfare and demobilization. As with the themes discussed in previous chapters, certain subjects (such as amputation surgery and contagious disease) were evaded by image-makers, even excluded entirely, and others exaggerated. It is significant to remember that such representational contrivance was informed by, and informed, preconceptions regarding life in the Navy. Nonetheless, the mortality of naval men was technically difficult to depict and unappealing to audiences. The obscure and indefinite nature of death, particularly as a result of conflict, environmental circumstances and disease, made the subject in naval discourse especially problematic. Of fundamental importance to print-audiences was the preservation of seamen for active service, from the

moment they were enlisted and throughout their existence in the Navy, until it was impractical to continue their employment. The manpower of the Navy's fleets should be kept fit and healthy in the interest of national security. Imagery concerning the seamen's health and how it was treated by the Navy provided predominantly appealing and reassuring constructions of the negative actualities of disease, medicine and welfare support. Although the subject of health received discursive attention, it was generally not conducive to popular portrayal, particularly offering little potential for representations using the conventions of satire.

While commonly perceived as 'deadly', service in the warring Navy at sea was replete with dangers many of which were overlooked, unfamiliar and even trivialized and avoided in civilian discourse. Despite their various stereotypes of brave hero, defiant fighter, devil-may-care maverick, exuberant jock and unstoppable rogue, seamen were vulnerable to many risks. As with other sensitive and negative aspects of naval life, the physical order, health and wellbeing of tars were problematic for image-makers and audiences. The Physician to the Grand Fleet, Dr. Gilbert Blane, estimated approximately 100,000 British seamen died during the French wars from 1793-1815. The mortality rate of seamen was unfavorable, at 1 in 30.25 in the last three years of the Napoleonic war, and unsurprisingly higher than domestic counterparts, with 1 in 57 civilian men aged between 20-40 dying similarly prematurely.[1] Yet, Blane and others advocated and acknowledged improvements to the seamen's health during the French wars, which ensured a better preservation of life and consequently contributed to an eventually victorious naval campaign.[2] These actualities of naval mortality were disproportionately underrepresented in visual culture in comparison to their prominence in actuality and their corresponding topicality within broader discourse, specifically published pamphlets, parliamentary debates and naval and medical documents. Statistical data from Blane and historian Michael Lewis offer informed estimation of the proportional distribution of fatalities of British seamen while serving in the warring Navy: 12% from enemy action,

[1] Gilbert Blane, *Statements of the Comparative Health of the British Navy, from the year 1779 to the year 1814, With Proproals for its Farther Improvement*, London, 1815, 519. These figures were derived from Richard Price's 'Northampton Tables' dated to the 1770s.

[2] Blane calculated that the improved health between 1779-1813 led to the lives of 6,674 sailors being saved in the latter year alone. He acknowledges the figures dealt with were unreliable and uncertain but stated that, 'under such an annual waste of life, the national stock of mariners must have been exhausted in the course of the prolonged warfare from which this country has just emerged.' Blane, 'On the Comparative Health of the British Navy', 1815, in Christopher Lloyd ed., *The Health of Seamen: Selections from the Works of Dr. James Lind, Sir Gilbert Blane and Dr. Thomas Trotter*, London, 1965, 176.

shipwreck or disaster, 20% from accident, and no less than 65% from disease.[3] The preoccupation with death as a consequence of direct combat, typically in battle or boarding party, or through nature's cruel seas amidst storms, legitimized the loss of life and presented it as a heroic individual sacrifice. This avoided various negative actualities, namely the abundance of inglorious, sometimes seemingly anonymous and purposeless mass suffering and fatalities of seamen through other aspects of seafaring service.

4. 2 Punishment and Death

Before exploring the causes of fatalities in the Navy – active combat, natural disaster, accident, injury and disease – penal actualities are worth considering as contributors to naval mortality rates. As the previous chapter established, the threat and infliction of corporal punishment influenced the interpretations of naval service for seamen, with the fatalities to which it was conducive only furthering negative implications. Flogging was the most commonly, yet not always appropriately, administered punishment and could lead to irrevocable harm and even manslaughter,[4] as evident in some contemporary discourse (*The Articles of War*,[5] courts-martial, parliamentary debate, naval accounts, published pamphlets, and to a limited extent visual representations). Such actualities were devoid of positive assurances of heroics or justice that legitimized harm to sailors in the course of duty. Penal fatalities through capital punishment for a major crime, especially

[3] These estimates were the conclusion of Blane regarding the fatalities during the French Wars out of the approximate 100,000 British seamen who died. Blane, *Select Dissertations on Several Subjects of Medical Science*, London, 1822, 2-3, 22. The historian Michael Lewis has made a helpful, informed estimation that the casualty figures in Navy alone, not allowing for peacetime losses, out of a total of 103,660, was: 6,540 from enemy action; 12,680 from foundering, wreck, fire and explosion; 84,440 from disease and individual accident. Lloyd, ed., *The Health of the Seamen*, 134.

[4] Byrn revealed that violence amounted to 4.8% of all criminal cases adjudicated at courts martial, disturbances/uncleanliness 2.7% and immorality 1.3%. Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 58. If considered in relation to social offences specifically, violent crimes, albeit including not only homicide but also lesser acts of aggression upon others or self-mutilation, amounted to only 21%, and sexual crimes, albeit including not only acts of rape and sodomy, but also their attempts, and indecent behaviour alone and with animals, amounted to a mere 9%. Byrn, *Courts Martial*, 148. Examples of such a serious offences as rape and murder can be found in newspaper reports: Regarding the case at the Old Bailey on Friday, 12 April of 'James Lavender, a sailor, 1793, tried for a rape on Ann Lewis, a servant, a girl about sixteen years of age, at the Bee Hive, in Nightingale-lane'. *Sun*, 13 April 1793, Issue 168; *True Briton*, 15 April 1793, Issue 90. Regarding the case at the Murder High Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh on 30 January1800 of 'the Trail of Griffith Williams, late a sailor on board the Susannah, of Charleston, accused of the murder of Anne Wilson, or Bruce, on the 10th Dec. last, in her house, Smelton's Close, Leith.' *Oracle and Daily Advertiser*, 5 February 1800, Issue 22 213.

[5] 'Of 36 articles of war, ten award the punishment of death, subject to no qualifications or mitigation; twelve were prescribed 'death, or such other punishment as the court-martial shall deem the offender to deserve.' Thring, *A Treatise on the Criminal Law of the Navy*, 35, 36.

mutiny, were arguably the least problematic to print-makers, offering them the opportunity to construct works that commented upon justice and the death sentence. Yet, in visual culture, such interpretations were scarce, with only one such image sourced, featuring *Richard Parker,* supposedly leader or president of the radical Nore mutiny of 1797. In J. Risort's etching of *Richard Parker: Done from an original Sketch taken as he lay in his Coffin*, (18 July 1797) [Fig. 82] is an intimate bust portrait that conveyed something of the morbid curiosity, solemnity and pathos which may have appealed to those with sympathetic, critical or reforming attitudes towards such aspects of naval disciplinary punishment, sacrifice and fatalities. Notably, the closed-eyed face shows no signs of his hanging: no noose markings around the neck, no indications of fear, sadness or pain in his expression, nor any grotesque or ominous features that would connote, to viewers with faith, his damnation to hell. Instead, he displays almost peaceful stoicism. Risort is clearly challenging many representational and ideological conventions, albeit subtlety, in this rare image.

Ceremonial executions in the Navy were usually only attended by a ship's complement, possibly attracting unofficial spectators, and interest and discourse among various civilian publics. Yet, in contemporary imagery, this subject was visually absent. Significantly, this is in stark contrast to civilian executions that were commonly depicted, particularly in woodcut penny prints by the crude representation of a gibbet template with the appropriate number of hanging corpses included from a separate printing blocks, with the figures either identified or more typically anonymous.[6] This suggests not only that such mortality was part of a broad visual culture, but also that the individual, his ceremonial punishment and representational conventions did not necessarily matter in the extensive market for such quickly, prolifically and cheaply produced images. Clearly, contemporary executions informed Britons' visual experiences of the subject in discourse, being generally known and endorsed by diverse publics, including by image-makers and by extension their target audiences. More significantly, the comparatively limited naval counterpart in imagery indicates the issue of capital punishment was more problematic for audiences, including printmakers and their clientele. Such punitive fatality would have compromised the positive constructs of naval heroism, order and sacrifice. If such a subject did not insinuate that its corporal discipline was wasteful,

[6] See Thomas Gretton, 'Introduction', *Murders and Moralities: English Catchpenny Prints, 1800-1860*, British Museum Exhibition Catalogue, London, 1980.

excessive or ineffectual, it nevertheless connoted the grave shame it engendered. This is suggested by the relatively unknown printmaker Risort's tentative interpretation of this most notorious naval mutineer, in which Parker is explicitly depicted, after hanging, lying in his coffin.

Having said that, as the previous chapter demonstrated, Rowlandson's *Balance of Justice* (3 March 1802) [Fig. 76] was a direct and satirical interpretation of fatal punishment in the Navy. It critiqued not only the relevant criminal convictions of those hanged but also broader associations. Having already been thoroughly analyzed in relation to contemporary penal actualities and discourse, here it suffices to investigate briefly this print's significance with regard to the depiction of the dead seaman. Strikingly, to the right is shown the uniformed Governor Wall hanging for brutally flogging to death a sergeant he alleged was mutinous in 1782. Previously granted respite and retrial, lengthily deliberated capital sentencing occurred on 20 January 1802 amidst circumstances of more recent naval mutiny and general disorder.[7] Most notable is the underrepresented presence of the officer in this specific design. Indeed, there is archival evidence that such superiors were often acquitted for committing murder by corporal punishment or negligence. If convicted, however, their offences were transmuted to ones of immoral or mistaken discipline that may, in law, have warranted immediate execution, but, in actuality, seldom did, receiving instead commuted and respited capital sentences.[8] We know that those of superior rank were excused the pain and dishonour of corporal punishment with punitive records evidencing that the majority of floggings were given to seamen and marines who suffered extensively varied, even unlimited and sometimes fatally excessive, numbers of lashes.[9]

The strict, pervasive and severe punitive discipline of the Navy's healthy, hearty, even to an extent happy men had not only a direct and physical impact upon their mortality, but also impacted on their emotional states. Such personal consequences can further be

[7] *Annual Register*, 1801, 65-6, 1802, 7-9, 174-86; *London Chronicle*, 18 January 1802.
[8] A good example is the case of Lieutenant William Richards of HM sloop *Dart* who was court-martialled for causing the death of John Robinson through a severe gag he had authorized as acting commander in the absence of the Captain. Richards was acquitted for murder, but was found guilty of being 'oppressive and cruel in making use of so large a gag'. TNA ADM 1/5397, CM of W. Richards, 20 July 1809, cited in Byrn, *Crime and Punishment*, 79.
[9] In 1812 a royal statue was issued that limited the maximum number of lashes to 300, and specified that punishment sentenced was commensurate with the crime. *Queen's Regimental Disciple*, Art. 47 and 59. Arthur N. Gilbert, 'Military and Civilian Justice in Eighteenth-Century England: An Assessment', in *The Journal of British Studies*, Spring 1978, vol. 17, no. 2, 41-65, 50.

related to other arguably devastating service experiences of coercion (possible impressed or turned over), corporal goading, surveillance, oppression (limited shore-leave, rest, leisure and freedom-of-expression), isolation (at sea away from loved ones and civilian society), dangerous seafaring conditions and active combat in an intense and protracted war. These could cause seamen to suffer from paranoia, depression, alcoholism, insanity, self-harming and even suicidal tendencies that contributed to their demise. Although it is hard to gauge the extent of such actualities, given the various stigmas and taboos attached. Nevertheless, their existence can be assumed and would have been apparent through contemporary discourse, albeit absent in visual representation. But, some references in works on paper can be found. As discussed in the previous chapter, *The Merry Ships Crew or Nautical Philosophers*, attributed to Robert Williams (late 1810s) [Fig. 75], referred to the constant threat and fear of corporal punishment to which seamen were subject. Rowlandson's *The Suicide*, undated, [Fig. 83] was unique in its subject matter, for no other image can be found that deals with such a subversive issue. Here an officer of good wealth and status, as indicated by his decorated uniform and the scene's lavish interior, seems to have taken his life during a night of solitary drinking, most probably over his secret financial problems. Such a disconcerting image was not reproduced in print form, but remained as a personal study for the artist fascinated with human suffering. A more public satirical reference to naval service being conducive to financial disorder and suicide is to be found in the hand-coloured etching *More Reports. A False Alarm or a New System of Suicide, An Experiment for a troubled Conscience*, by S. Knight after Charles Williams (1805) [Fig. 84]. This explicitly depicts Lord Melville, who resigned when suspected of embezzling Navy funds while Chair of the Admiralty Board. Here we see Melville in Highland dress on the floor in front of a shattered mirror, the last will and testament of 'Johnny McCree' on the mantelpiece. Melville explains to the Prime Minister Pitt and two others who rush into the room alarmed at the sound of gunshot made when he shot his reflection only to try to see what it would be like – 'a New System of Suicide'. The implication is that suicide was often tempting to those who felt doomed by ruinous charges, criminal conviction or capital punishment. Significantly, these few representations of self-imposed death did not include the common seaman, but only his superiors. It can be deduced that a focus upon the officer not only avoided evoking dismay, guilt or sympathy regarding the vulnerable and volatile subordinates, but also enabled more satirical or topical socio-political commentary upon the naval elite's world.

It can be deduced that popular representational evasion of these delicate and self-destructive issues of naval life indicated a broader disconcerting awareness regarding the suffering due to negligence, hardship and anxieties that serving seamen had to endure. Victims of paranoia, depression, alcoholism, insanity or any other mental disorder posed a threat not only to themselves, but also to their shipmates who, besides having to take the strain for those incapable or invalided, were vulnerable to similar negative thoughts and habits and in danger of physical harm.[10] While references to such negative actualities were rare, partial and not necessarily widely accessible, this does not necessarily mean the subject was entirely excluded from contemporary discourse nor unfamiliar or misinterpreted by an ignorant audience. The absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, but rather signifies that disconcerted image-makers and audiences, although aware of such threats to naval mortality, found them unviable for popular, especially visual, representation. The sensitive issue presented very limited potential for topical, controversial, dramatic or satirical alleviation with its underlying and clear implication of mortality, a harsh reality even for the invaluable, hardy, and heroic naval men. Mortality in relation to disciplinary actualities was understandably too ambiguous for successful interpretation, especially in print culture. Fatalities on account of more spectacular, purposeful and obvious threats were more opportune for creative and conceptual license in constructing a viable, yet still disconcerting, portrayal of mortality in naval service. Casualties on account of fighting or of natural disasters engendered fewer complications and more apparent comment, including select visual representation. The following sections will focus on these aspects and continue the consideration of premature death of the Navy's men on account of their own or others' behaviour.

4. 3 Combat

As established, the stresses and discretion of penal order were conducive in certain cases to fatal punishment and suicide, yet fighting was of far greater significance to seamen's experience and existence. Heralded as brave and hardy defenders of Britain's Empire and guarantors of her national social order, the Navy's men's mortality was a highly sensitive issue. While serving in His Majesty's Navy for King and country in far from hospitable

[10] For example, Alexander Mitchell was dismissed by Surgeon Robert Young of HMS *Ardent* from the ship to sick quarters at Great Yarmouth in June and July 1797 on account of his insanity. TNA ADM 101/85/7.

circumstances, the ultimate sacrifice was best presumed to be that of death in active combat. This legitimised human loss as a sad actuality of heroic endeavour, reassuringly fulfilling seamen's obligation to fight for victory, while avoiding cynical views of such casualties as being anonymous and disposable cannon-fodder. Such a demise could be seen as justification of the prior hardships that the Navy's men endured during an intense and protracted war, specifically those of impressment, turning-over, limited shore-leave, enforced obedience, severe discipline, and arduous and an incessant working-routine with an emphasis upon ammunition- and combat-drill. Indeed, the mortal danger faced by seamen fighting the enemy at sea was the most popular interpretation of their fate, as evidenced by the comparatively numerous depictions of seamen in battle and boarding parties. Useful examples constitute part of the extensive victory culture, especially commemorating major victorious battles, such as that at the Nile painted by Phillippe Jacques de Loutherbourg (1797) and published as an engraving by I. Rogers on (1 August 1798) [Fig. 85]. Significantly, the later, cheaper and more-widely disseminated work flanked the image with two figures. These were relatively modest or sad tars, their heads bowed in regretful memory and respect to the suffering and sacrifice of their shipmates, and arguably even enemies,[11] as referenced in the scene of destructive explosions and those struggling to survive in the water or small boats. The interest, if not preoccupation, with the humanitarian implications of battle was evident in prints of naval rescues, specifically British naval seamen saving the French ship *L'Orient*'s crew blown up during the Battle at the Nile, as portrayed, for example, in an anonymous, undated engraving [Fig. 86].[12] Scenes of combat on a close up and more minor scale offered even greater potential for appealing drama, macho aggression and heroic sacrifice, and also an inclusive and individualistic take on fighting servicemen. This is indicated in the relative abundance of such imagery, especially in the form of engravings, such as the anonymous, undated, *Attack on the French Gun Boats in the Harbour of Boulogne* [Fig. 87], Charles Williams' *An English, Set-too, or British-Tars clearing the deck of the Temeraire of*

[11] This would be particularly pertinent given the claims British tars rescuing of those struggling in the water was indiscriminate, including enemies as well as allies, which was arguably to various extents and purposes a means of asserting the naval, even national, virtues of righteousness and humanity. Jack Nastyface recounted how, 'When the French *L'Orient*, 120 guns, exploded at the Battle of the Nile in 1798, the whole battle stopped for a few minutes. Nobody spoke and the guns were still. Men and women on both sides just looked.' Cited in Ludovic Kennedy, *Nelson and his Captains*, London, 1975, 131.

[12] Charles Napier Robinson, *A Pictorial History of the Sea Services; or graphic studies of the sailor's life and character afloat and ashore, collected and arranged by Charles Napier Robinson, Commander, Royal Navy, author of "The British fleet," "The sea service," &c. &c., and "The British tar in fact and fiction," herein enlarged, extended, and extra-illustrated, with appendices, notes, and index*, 1911, 'Nelson 1758-1800', vol. 10, pt. 1.

French and Spaniards (1805) [Fig. 88], and John Augustus Atkinson's *British Sailor's Boarding a Man of War* (4 June 1815) [Fig. 89]. These typified the sensationalist spectacle and heroic rhetoric of selfless and fearless bravery and sacrifice such naval operations required, and were emphatically construed within popular discourse. Significantly, such works referenced death very tentatively and indirectly, and limited its negative implications. The predominant representational approach to the negative subject of combat death was, if not to exclude the fatal moment, to reserve it either for the enemy, reassuringly implying their weakness, or for the heroic few, asserting their ultimate sacrifice. Both interpretations avoided the mass loss of human life or the problematic question of the righteousness and legitimacy of such devastating conflict.

The mortal danger faced by the common sailor, with its various and problematic implications of heroic sacrifice, was more rarely referenced in art. It was all but excluded from large oil paintings and monumental sculpture, instead it was only represented in the lowly print medium, principally etchings, which had a greater accessibility for a broader audience. For example, *Lord Nelson boarding the San Joseph* (undated) [Fig. 90] depicted the Commander fighting beside his men, one of whom has daringly positioned himself in the rigging, exposed and precarious, in order to fire his pistol at a potential sniper. The anonymous printmaker has carefully composed the composition to draw the eye to the prominent and elevated sailor, whose courageous tactics reinforce the positive interpretation of vital, united and heroic naval manpower. While this image avoided any fatal consequences of such selfless bravery, these were nevertheless connoted, along with more disconcerting and critical implications of social, sacrificial inequity. There is a noticeable representational absence of mortally-wounded or dead seamen, either at the moment of fatal injury or subsequent expiration or commemoration. Such depiction was exclusive to select officers whose status distinguished their actual and perceived heroism and recompense. The extensive 'commemorabilia' for Nelson, in the form of paintings, monuments and medals, as well as more popular items, including prints, epitomized this distortion.[13] The seamen's combat death was referenced more elsewhere, such as in

[13] The term 'commemorabilia' is my own, created from an amalgamation of the words commemoration and memorabilia, which I use as a general category to refer to objects produced, kept and/or collected specially to commemorate a particular historically significant person or event, perpetuating the memory of it for posterity. Naval commemorabilia in the late eighteenth-century consisted especially of prints, paintings, artifacts and publications of excerpts from personal diaries and letters. I previously developed and deployed this term in my MPhil thesis, 'James Gillray's *Design for a Naval Pillar:* Naval Heroism and Patriotic Public Display in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain', University of Birmingham, unpublished 2009, specifically 37.

official reports, documents, handbills, newspaper articles, published pamphlets, sermons and theatrical performances.[14] As such, the issue's comparative absence in imagery suggests its negative interpretation as being of limited and problematic applicability to artistic and social tastes given the anxieties of consumers and dominant society in general.

In actuality the seaman's death in combat often had unsavoury elements of confusion, anonymity, humiliation, error and pointlessness. The avoidance, if not entire exclusion, of such elements in visual representations is arguably indicative of existing, distorted, interpretations of endangered fighting seamen. *The Boarding of the Chesapeake* (undated *c.*1812) [Fig. 91], reassuringly presented tars fighting bravely on or loyally supporting their fallen comrades in battle despite evident, and escalating, life-threatening circumstances. Isaac Cruikshank's *Tom Tack's Ghost* (24 July 1808) [Fig. 92] presented the self-assured lower deck's fearless disregard for mortality in a less active context, although still shipboard and pragmatic. This presented the seamen as more jocular and devil-may-care than heroically self-less, one draped in a sheet, acting the ghost and addressing another amidst the primed gun-deck. As a positive construct, the image seems to be suggesting that camaraderie, sacrifice and a lack of sentimentality were aspects, even necessities, advocated by the Navy's men and audiences in the face of the disconcerting reality of insufficient support and the fear of impending doom and unnecessary and anonymous death. The sensitive significance of this image was further apparent in its publication by Laurie and Whittle with accompanying letterpress verses, 'Written by C. Dibdin, Jun., and Sung with unbounded Applause by Mr. Bannister. Composed by Mr. W. Reeve'.[15] We can deduce that such a visual representation was too ambiguous or inappropriate to appeal to print-buyers as an independent design, and was instead only popularly viable with a supportive vocal text.

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[14] *Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1804 reported Britain could boast 77,012 seamen and 11990 mariners. Publicizing such escalating numbers sought to reassure the public of the strength of naval defence and patriotic support, while affirming the government's own power and displaying its ability to respond to the crisis of manning. Popular forms of entertainment, including handbills, theatre productions and ballads were used as means of raising morale, if not necessarily naval recruits. For example, "The English Fleet' was performed in 1803, featuring tars and at end encourage volunteering for the Navy. George III's proclamation calling for seamen was disseminated in newspapers and handbills. Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy*, esp. 30 and 64. Increasingly, during the wars, the authors of some thanksgiving sermons extended their praise to the lower ranks of the Navy and celebrated Britain's intrepid seamen who demonstrate heroic self-sacrifice, courage and humanity. For example, S. Horsley, *The Watchers and the Holy Ones A sermon on Thursday December 5, 1805*, London, 1806, 26.

[15] Plate numbered 492. Description and comment from M. Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the British Museum*, 1947, vol. 8. Illustrated by R. Cruikshank in *The Universal Songster*, 1826, vol. 2, 33.

The deadly aspects of naval combat were, indeed, manifold, involving portentous anticipation of imminent battle, the actual actions of desperate fighting, purposeful military endeavour, heroism, selfless sacrifice and chaotic devastation, with the consequences of grave, grotesque and unquantifiable loss of life. Yet, the selective and exaggerated representation, specifically visual, of such actualities was demonstrably distorted. Compared with imagery of combat, real-life active engagement constituted a minor proportion of seamen's mortal fate. Mick Crumplin estimated that the proportion of deaths from battle during French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars was as low as six or even per cent,[16] and this is not even taking into consideration injuries and the consequent fatalities (typically from hemorrhaging, infection and unsuccessful amputation). Notably, the seamen's mortal danger was not exclusive to exposure on deck or fighting in a boarding party, for the massive work force below deck was involved in one of the most important and hazardous aspect of combat, namely gunnery. The gundeck in *Tom's Ghost* [Fig. 92] is far from idealised. The actualities of battle were crammed in this smoky confine, figures scrambled amidst the dead and debris, sustaining often fatal injuries from ordnance, from lethally projected hull-splinters, from enemy shots and also from malfunction of their own guns.[17] The ravages of conflict nonetheless made a considerable impact upon those who experienced, witnessed and imagined battle and post-battle scenes, which goes some way to explaining the preoccupation and elaborate rhetoric on the subject in discourse, textual as well as visual.[18] Indeed, while combat constituted a predominant, arguably primary, parameter for the Navy, other threats to its men existed beyond specific or initial conflict, and were more serious in their nature, scale and impact.

A sense of superiority and derision was important to interpretations of the characteristic tar as a defiant defender, so too was sentimentality in his representation, especially in satirical prints. This is suggested in Piercy Roberts' *Nautical Experience* (c.1803) [Fig.

[16] Michael Crumplin, 'Surgery in the Royal Navy during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars', in David Boyd Haycock and Sally Archer, eds, *Health and Medicine at Sea, 1700-1900*, Woodbridge, 2009, 3.
[17] Injuries suffered by land forces compared to naval engagement proportionately differed. Two-thirds of the Army's were caused by small arms fire, rather than by ordnance (only 17%), whereas for the Navy over half were due to ordnance in 2 French ships at Trafalgar, and HMS *Shannon* 1813. Table 3.2. Haycock and Archer, eds, *Health and Medicine,* 83. Among a typical ship's company there was general approval for provision and procurement of tourniquets and a 33% proportion of first aid proficiency. C. Lloyd and J. J. Coulter, *Medicine and the Navy 1200-1900: Vol 3: 1714-1815,* Edinburgh, 1961-1963, 63.
[18] Midshipman William Dillon at Battle of the Glorious First of June 1794 lamented after that 'the number of men thrown overboard that were killed, without ceremony, and the sad wrecks around us taught those who, like myself, had not witnessed similar scenes that War was the greatest scourge of mankind.' Quoted in Adkins, *Jack Tar,* 327, cited from Dillon, 1953, vol. 1, 138.

93], depicting a tar justifying his release of a donkey in sympathy with its suffering 'short allowance' of liberty and victuals. This image alludes to the fact that the sailor, in his 'nautical experience', suffered hardship similar to that of the donkey, a beast of burden. The analogy draws on concern and compassion from seamen themselves and their audiences, while possibly, on the other hand, implying the incomprehension or derision it also fostered. It is apt to note here the sad truth in an anonymous naval officer's lament that those who serve(d) were 'the most *invaluable* but *neglected* description of men'.[19] It was the humour, sympathy and cynicism of these textual and visual representations that disassociated the seamen from serious, challenging and even subversive actualities. Such texts and imagery serve as evidence that some audiences considered the Navy's men with compassion, even respect. Any problematic aspects that they may not be able to fully understand or control were to be excused. Ultimately, in both actuality and culture the tar was forever somewhat strange, but not necessarily estranged. In this respect, the Ovidian lament is recalled, 'Here I am the barbarian, because no one understands me'.[20]

As noted in the previous chapters, Jack Tar was constructed positively in prints as a man of great masculinity – almost of super-human significance. Aptly testified in William Robinson's memoirs as a hardy naval veteran, published in 1836 under the pseudonym (possibly shipboard nickname) Jack Nastyface, 'nothing hurt Jack's feelings more than being taunted of anything unmanly or inferior.'[21] Machismo was asserted through stoic endurance of pain, fear and loneliness, the officers generally showing more reserve than their brazen subordinates. The tar's defiant confidence, bravery and jocularity were essential to the conviction of his strength and sense of near immortality. Isaac Cruikshank played upon such a point in *Nautical Comfort* (*c.*1807) [Fig. 94]. This satirical hand-coloured etching represented a stout sailor on the poop deck of a warship, asserting defeat of the approaching enemy ship. He reassures a thin, fearful civilian that their fight will be

[19] Anonymous, *The Story of the Learned Pig, by an Officer of the Royal Navy*, London, 1786, 98, 103.
[20] In original Latin: '*Barbarus hic ego sum, quia non intelligor illis*.' Ovid *Tristia*, Book 5, 10, X, 37. Quoted by Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) in the Frontispiece to *A Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (commonly called *The First Discourse*). This was written in 1750, as his entry in a competition set by the Academy of Dijon, to answer the proposed question: *Has the restoration of the sciences and the arts contributed to refining moral practices?* Rousseau produced a collected edition of his work in 1763. Interestingly, throughout the rest of the eighteenth century, Rousseau's work was published in numerous volumes. 1764 (6 vols); 1769 (11 vols.); 1774 (London, 9 vols); 1782, etc. (17 vols); 1790 (33 vols); 1790 (30 vols, or 35); 1788–93 (39 vols.); 1793–1800 (Didot, 18 vols.), and later editions from this same firm; Musset-Pathay, 1823–6. This suggests that image-makers and their audiences were likely to be aware of the philosophical notions, theories and debates surrounding such works, which would have informed their interpretation of the tar in actuality and culture.
[21] William Robinson, *Jack Nastyface: Memoirs of a Seaman*, with illustrations by George Cruikshank and introduction by Oliver Warner, London, 1973, 102-3.

so easily won it will barely even be noticed. Undoubtedly, seamen were hardened to the danger they faced at sea and battle. This hardening was not without adverse effects, and included no guarantee of sympathetic regard for the wellbeing of fellow crewmembers, despite the collective effort of working a ship.

The survival instinct of humans, especially seamen, meant actual acts of selfless humanity were less common than one might like to believe. The lack of archival evidence of individuals rescuing shipmates or enemies from drowning further suggests this, as does the rarity and fame of one such case at the Battle of the Glorious First of June, 1794. This first great naval battle of the French Revolutionary Wars was preceded by some engagements all set in the Atlantic Ocean and involving long and intense fighting.[22] While Britain's slightly larger fleet secured tactical victory over the French enemy, 11 British and 12 French ships were more or less dismasted. Human casualties were heavy too, with about 7000 killed, wounded and captured on the French side and 1000 killed or wounded from the British fleet.[23] *Lord Howe's action, or the Glorious First of June* (1795) [Fig. 95], by de Loutherbourg, heroised the bravery, determination, skill and sacrifice involved in naval warfare. The painter, having trained at the French Academy and now established in London as a Royal Academician and renowned for his sublime themes,[24] used man's heroic struggle against the sea itself to enhance the conflict of the opposing fleets, in a sense diverting from the more problematic actualities of combat. The artist's response is in the Romantic tradition, capturing the duality and tension between the dramatic and human nature of this life-or-death event. Significantly, set before the confusion of ships, rigging and smoke-plumes, are rescue boats floundering in the rough waves laden with seamen, who, in their struggle to help one another, are taking onboard any survivors, even possible enemies.

[22] Battle of the First of June, also called Battle of the Glorious First of June or Battle of Ushant, (1 June 1794), the first great naval engagement of the French Revolutionary Wars, fought between the French and the British in the Atlantic Ocean about 430 miles (690 km) west of the Breton island of Ouessant (Ushant). Available from http://www.britannica.com. Accessed on 2 November 2012.

[23] The battle was technically a British victory, but the French fleet had accomplished its task of drawing the British away and enabling the convoy of 130 merchant ships to reach Brest safely. The battle also proved that the navy of the French Revolution was capable of hard fighting even though most of the officers of the navy of the ancien régime had left France or been executed. Available from http://www.britannica.com. Accessed on 2 November 2012.

[24] Born in Strasbourg, son of a miniaturist, de Loutherbourg was already a well-established member of the French Academy and painter to Louis XIV when the actor David Garrick, persuaded him to settle in London as scenic director at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, at the huge salary of £500 a year. He was a highly successful and influential designer for the theatre and was elected to the Royal Academy in 1781. He exhibited there in most years from 1772 to his death in 1812. This painting is signed and dated 'P J de Loutherbourg RA 1795'. Available from http://www.portcities.org.uk. Accessed on 2 November 2012.

More typically, the tar's working experience of mortality encouraged a dog-eat-dog selfishness, or at least pragmatism. Unsurprisingly, there was an absence in visual culture of these more obscure, even contradictory, realities of the seaman's revered masculinity. Rare references employed nostalgic, dramatic and matter-of-fact distortion, as exemplified by William Spavens' account of survival, having been set afloat from a capsized boat:

> I at first caught hold of a man, but knowing he could not swim, I let him go to shift for himself, and next seized an oar, but had it pulled from me by another who wanted it for the same purpose I did.[25]

While the tar's camaraderie, teamwork and survival instinct was founded upon fearless mortal defiance, death was nevertheless a problematic issue. Loss, vulnerability and mourning did not accord with his supposed masculine strength. At sea, and also even near land, those who died from action in battle, disease or other shipboard fatalities were commonly committed to the deep. Corpses posed a storage and hygiene problem, and on more sentimental grounds, unnecessarily aggravated superstitions and an acute sense of mortality.[26] Disposal was undertaken with little ceremony; the chaplain saying a simple prayer among the ship's crew before the shrouded body was tipped overboard. As a gesture to the deceased and his dependants, the few possessions he left behind were subsequently auctioned. Mourning was more personal and internalised.[27] Clearly, mortality was a complex issue, not necessarily only combat against the enemy, but struggles with any fellow man, and furthermore in a volatile and hostile environment. It was more broadly a battle of mere man against omnipotent nature. Death could be construed in a religious sense as the result of God's will, or in a more earthly sense as demonstrating the limitations, transience and frailty of mankind.

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[25] N. A. M. Rodger, ed, *Memoirs of a Seafaring Life, Memoirs of a Seafaring Life*, London, 1998, 97.

[26] Adkins, *Jack Tar,* 326. However, the corpses of women and officers were often given better treatment. When a woman died on board the frigate *Hussar*, within sight of Harwich, the crew thought the Captain Wilkinson inhumane to order her body overboard. John Wetherell of the said ship noted 'This morning several of our married men's wives left the ship and went on board the tender and landed in the evening at Harwich. They would not remain on board where such an unfeeling monster commanded.' Ed. C. S. Forester, *The Adventures of John Wetherell*, London, 1954, 43. The corpses of officers were granted greater ceremony, either being rowed out from the ship in a boat to be committed to the deep or preserved to be interred in state with a funeral.

[27] Following the Battle of the Glorious First of June, 1794, Midshipman William Dillon lamented that 'the number of men thrown overboard that were killed, without ceremony, and the sad wrecks around us taught those who, like myself, had not witnessed similar scenes that War was the greatest scourge of mankind.' W. H. Dillon quoted in M. A. Lewis, ed., *The Adventurers of John Wetherell,* London, 1953, vol.1, 138.

4. 4 The Cruel Sea and Death

Combat was often acted out in hostile circumstances – at night in stormy and foggy conditions, and with battle devastation caused by the explosion of gunships, which were constructed of wood and carrying great stores of ammunition. As mentioned, a few selective images referred to such dramatic battle explosions, specifically *L'Orient* at the Battle of the Nile by de Loutherbourg [Fig. 85] and *An exact Representation of burning the Arsenal & blowing up the French Ships of War in the Harbour of Toulon* by an anonymous printmaker (July 1792) [Fig. 96]. The fiery blaze amidst the turbulent and obscure scene of vessels and figures challenged by smoke, winds and waves, not to mention enemy shot are depicted. The implication of such works, and other representations of naval operations that emphasised natural threats to life, is of man's struggle to survive in their earthly world. Conflict between fellow man is presented as both a distraction from, and a cynical triviality compared to, the more permanent, indefinite and inevitable natural eventualities of the transience of time and human mortality. Despite the drama, heroics, sacrifice and achievements of warfare that were focused upon to make imagery appealing, disconcerting connotations of its lasting devastation and pointlessness would have been apparent to all audiences.

Nature's omnipotence loomed over the life of those at sea; it was unpredictable, uncontrollable and at odds with seafaring ideals of regularity, authority and purpose. A possible interpretation of naval men was that their endeavours, arguably foolishly defiant and mortally limited, riled nature and provoked ill-Providence. It was evident that natural disasters and the raging elements exacerbated mortality risks and rates during the dangerous operations of naval service, such as battles, blockades, long voyages and distant postings. Water, wind, land and fire were ever threatening hazards for a seafaring man. Storms at sea were common, with lightning, huge waves and strong gales causing ships to become damaged or wrecked by grounding or in blazes[28] or explosions.[29] Detrimental natural circumstances were often sudden, unforeseeable and unmanageable, catching seamen out, despite their protocol of orders and their training. Ultimately, the

[28] The frigate *Resistance* was destroyed in an explosion in 1798 East Indies following lightning strike. Lincoln, *Representing the Royal Navy,* 114-5.

[29] Alexander Scott, who was Nelson's chaplain at the Battle Trafalgar, recounted how when he was asleep in his cabin lightning struck setting the cartridges and powder horns ablaze and resulting in 14 men being killed or wounded in the incident. Scott, *Recollections*, 85-6.

very nature of serving on board the Navy's ships was in itself the most detrimental to its men's lives. Indeed, Lewis estimates that of 103,660, naval casualties during the French Wars, 12,680 were due to fire, explosion, foundering or wreck, rather than actual combat.[30] Despite its prominence in actuality, and by extension discourse, such depictions focusing specifically on natural disasters and their fatalities were relatively scarce in contemporary visual culture. Nonetheless, a few images are found in the archive and are significant as constructs of how human peril and demise at sea were interpreted. These works predominantly referenced the consequences of shipwreck, portraying dead and live seamen washed up ashore, or struggling in a small life-boat, having been lost from their naval vessel which is in some cases to be found wrecked or grounded nearby. Noticeably, the transitory and harrowing moment depicted is only one aspect of such natural disasters and mortal devastation, with the preliminaries, particulars and repercussions of the scenario left to the imagination.

De Loutherbourg produced various shipwreck paintings, most notably one dated 1793 [Fig. 97] in which two vessels struggle on a stormy shore, the larger one capsizing in the distance while a smaller rowing-boat has figures scrambling about it. It is unclear who is dead or alive, who are naval men and who not, and what the palely dressed woman and man are doing. The artist has quite literally, as well as conceptually, presented an intense, yet ambiguous and marginal, scene of maritime mortality. Similarly, George Morland's oeuvre included coastal paintings, especially of wrecking, smuggling and trade, and therefore emphasized the theme of maritime mortality. The majority of these were genre scenes with indistinct staffage and not necessarily including or involving naval seamen. Yet, one is to be found that explicitly depicted such individuals' struggles to survive their disastrous circumstances at sea, possibly following the devastation of battle or storm. Loutherbourg's *The Shipwreck*, 1793 [Fig. 97], is a rocky coastal scene scattered with shipwrecks, lifeboats and their components of rigging, barrels and men. Of the latter, three struggling ashore wear the remains of uniform, denoting their naval service and, by extension, the mortal dangers their work entailed. Those less fortune shipmates, being victims of burns, falls and injury, stranded at sea or cast adrift in a lifeboat are left to drown, sink to the seabed or be washed up on shore. These typical, although nevertheless

[30] Cited in Lloyd, ed., *The Health of Seamen*, 134. While the rate of such disasters was higher during the French wars when fleets were on longer voyages and had to brave all weathers and new routes, the number lost was not inconsiderable. After statistical analysis and interesting comparative study, Major Greenwood estimated it to be 11, 985 seamen. Major Greenwood, 'British Loss of Life in the Wars of 1794-1815 and in 1914-1918', in *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1942, vol. 105, no. 1, 1-16, 2.

shocking, consequences were avoided by image-makers, arguably because they were conceptually and aesthetically too problematic for their audiences. Nonetheless, Thomas Rowlandson explored such subjects in various watercolour paintings, notably not produced for public display or commercial publication. One such untitled image, found within his *Sketchbook of 52 works*, identifiable as *Shipwrecked Sailors in a Boat* [Fig. 98][31] depicted a close-up and bleak scene of naval seamen struggling to survive in a small vessel that is heavily laden, low-lying and tossed by open-sea, wind and waves. The figures are given ill, deathly, fearful, despondent, exclamatory and maddened expressions. Noticeably, actions among the chaos include three men hauling a corpse overboard, while others seem to respond to a presumable sighting of land as a Captain and boatman point arm-outstretched forward, one clasps hands as if in hopeful prayer, and many appear speechlessly agog. This turbulent scene contains a multitude of disconcerting circumstances often suffered by seamen and not necessarily borne with the hardiness, jocularity, heroism or even dignity which more popular constructs would have audiences believe were customary.

Scenes that brought death at sea closer to home were Rowlandson's two, very similar, watercolour paintings of curious and dismayed figures gathered upon *Finding a Shipwrecked Sailor* (undated) [Fig. 99]. It is unclear whether the lifeless body dressed in a typical tar's blue jacket and pale shirt and pantaloons, was conscious, unconscious or dead, and this fearful ambiguity is enhanced by the expressions of the man, women and child set before it. Seamen's deaths were even more disconcertingly and explicitly interpreted through other works by this prolific image-maker. A watercolour and ink work [Fig. 100][32] inscribed with the title '*Shipwreck Sailor'* on the right, and 'Rowlandson 1801' on the left, depicted the remains of a sailor, his drowned corpse washed upon the rocky and barren shore only vaguely sheltered by a cave. Although lucidly illustrated, there is grotesque detail in the exposed ribs and legs, thin, desperate hands and feet, awkwardly cast-up head, with mouth gaping and eye sockets swollen and sunken. Rowlandson's morbid fixation was especially evident in his designs produced in a series, in collaboration with William Coombe, titled *The Dance of Death*, which included *The Dangers of the Ocean or/ Death Wrecks the Sailors on the Shore* (1 May 1814) [Fig.

[31] *A Collection of 52 Original Watercolour Drawings by Thomas Rowlandson* held in the Widener Collection of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Boston, USA. Referenced also in Riley, *Catalogue of Thomas Rowlandson's Drawings* and in relation to the artist's work identified as *Distress* held in the Prints and Drawings Collection, The Yale Center of British Art.
[32] *A Collection*, Widener Collection.

101].[33] This scene depicted a skeleton personifying Death sitting on a rock at the edge of the sea, supporting his jaw in his hands, elbows on knees, staring at two sailors who sit or lean against a rock, beside wreckage from their ship, whose masts emerge from the water, staring boldly ready for an end to their misery. Although a fictive, ambiguous and ambivalent interpretation, it nevertheless constituted a significant representation of naval seamen's mortal peril. This is further supported by the work's date, set in the closing phase of the Royal Navy's war, with peace negotiations between Allies and France having started months earlier and the Treaty of Paris to be signed at the end of May 1814.[34]

Discourses, including visual illustrations, of seamen's mortality on account of natural disasters invariably existed and corresponded to existing preoccupations of dominant society. Interpretations of this sensitive issue had the ability to provoke understanding, even empathy, although not necessarily to legitimize the great loss of naval men to the natural perils of the sea. By extension, they could also imply the insecurities of power, responsibility, obligation and sacrifice. Arguably, disconcerting connotations of the Navy's, and by extension ruling elites', involvement in, and culpability for, such human suffering and loss were removed to the realm of nature's agency and the causes and consequences of such disasters became more conceivable and comfortable for maker and audiences.

4. 5 Accidents at Sea

While the likelihood of natural disaster could possibly have been reduced through better navigation, seafaring skills, ship engineering, meteorology and even swimming ability, they could not be avoided entirely. Besides dramatic storm and shipwreck incidents, other fatalities were simply eventualities of mistakes or individual accident. Amidst

[33] William Coombe and Thomas Rowlandson, *Dance of Death*, London, 1815-6. *The Dangers of the Ocean oer*, vol. 1, plate 8, held in the Widener Collection of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Boston, USA.

[34] See T. F. Jefferies, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1814, vol. 84, issue 1, 634-640; Edward Baines, William Grimshaw. *History of the Wars of the French Revolution from the breaking out of the war in 1792 to the restoration of general peace in 1815*, Bangs, 1855, 342-347.

demanding, unpredictable and hazardous circumstances at sea, the Navy strove to maintain the safety of the British Nation – servicemen and civilians. Something of a defensive and defiant vigilance was a prerequisite of every crew, and each of its individuals was tasked with an essential, universal and intense responsibility over their physical wellbeing. Nonetheless, while accidents at sea were common, almost no contemporary imagery, not even among satirical prints, can be found of the ill-fated moments when naval men made or suffered a mistake or accident causing death. This seems somewhat surprising, given its representational potential for personal empathy and drama, and for accompanying appropriately consoling or critical commentary. Such noticeable representational absence suggests avoidance due to more problematic conceptual associations, specifically of the disconcerting culpability, limitation and weakness of the Navy, its men and even society as a whole. Constructs of righteousness, regularity and responsibility, central to maritime Britain and her national consciousness, were undermined by errors, however singular or unspectacular. Possibly these actualities were excluded because they were so telling of mankind's weakness and mortal existence.

Naval seamen's accidents or mistakes scarcely feature in imagery at all. However, the one exception to be found in the archive is *A Man Overboard*, a coloured aquatint engraving by Thomas and William Daniell (1 January 1810) [Fig. 102]. It portrayed a seaman reaching out for a float that has been dropped from his storm-tossed ship in the distance. It focuses on a single tar whose perilous situation may not have been unique, vulnerably adrift amidst the waves, although reassuringly, not unnoticed, unaided or unconscious, instead clinging desperately to a barrel as float. This object was a symbol of hope, not only for such a drowning individual, but also his audience. Along with other items, it came from the ship and was lost overboard, ironically like the poor man, and is now both helping his rescue and reducing the risk of further detriment to the safety of his shipmates from unsecured, heavy and destabilizing components. In relation to the latter point, indeed, injurious knocks sustained from objects and infrastructure of the ship were commonplace, especially given the fact that many of the men may have been unfit, new to the vessel or even to seafaring and were, therefore, lacking in required agility and hardiness. The results were typically fatal, if not from instantaneous death, then subsequent demise often involving haemorrhaging, infection, concussion, or brain-

damage.[35] For example, ordinary seaman Joseph Lawrence fractured seven ribs when he fell from the main deck into the hold in the act of taking his hammock down aboard the hulk *Yarmouth* while his ship *Canopus* was being repaired. His young shipmate Richard Cronan received a nine-inch wound to his scalp on falling from his hammock on the main deck down a hatchway to the orlop.[36] As well as resulting from challenging seafaring conditions and tasks, accident and injury were often due to strenuous labour, operating cumbersome machinery and moving heavy objects. These risks were apparent to the Naval Physician Gilbert Blane who devised preventative measures, such as the use of smaller water-storage casks, iron ballasts and the wearing of trusses as standard issue to abdominal casualties.[37]

Seamen's fatalities even occurred during inactivity on board anchored ships.[38] Recruiting ships overcrowded with pressed landsmen confined below deck were dangerous environments conducive to disorder that jeopardised discipline, as discussed in the previous chapters, but also wellbeing and mortality. Captain Morse of HMS *Sandwich* warned that,

> the number of sores, scalds and other unavoidable accidents which the awkward landsmen are liable to, often degenerate into bad ulcers, which almost cannot readily be cured on board, owing to their own bad habits, but oftener to the foul air they breathe between decks; besides being frequently trod upon in the night from their crowded state.[39]

Such scenes of inhospitable shipboard environs and unsavoury sufferers were barely imaginable and consequently any form of observation, reportage or reminder in visual culture lacked appeal. The negative aspects and implications, especially of extensive and unquantifiable detriment within the Navy's manpower, were a key reason for the subject's underrepresentation in contemporary discourse, specifically imagery. After this investigation of natural disasters and simple tragedies suffered by naval men, it is now

[35] Surgeon Robert Young of HMS *Ardent* let several men go to the sick quarters at Great Yarmouth in June and July 1797, being discharged on account of all manner of conditions, including Alexander Mitchell for insanity, Charles Cain for a maimed hand, John Halloran for venereal disease and the surgeon's mate John Todd for scurvy. TNA ADM 101/85/7. Laurence Brockliss, John Cardwell and Michael Moss, eds, *Nelson's Surgeon: William Beatty, Naval Medicine, and the Battle of Trafalgar,* Oxford and New York, 2005, 67-68.
[36] TNA ADM 101/93/1.
[37] Blane, *Comparative Health of the British Navy*, 1815, 508-9.
[38] Michael Crumplin, 'Surgery in Royal Navy during Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars', in David Boyd Haycock and Sally Archer, eds, *Health and Medicine at Sea, 1700-1900,* Woodbridge, 2009, 63-5.
[39] Captain Morse's letter describing the 'true picture of situation' on board his ship, forwarded to the Admiral at the Nore. Quoted in Lloyd and Coutler, eds, 164.

essential to consider, arguably, the most pernicious, endemic, uncontainable and troublesome issue of the Navy's mortality – in terms of threats, treatments and death rates – disease.

4. 6 Disease

So far, this chapter has dealt with the death of seamen in relation to penal law, combat, disaster and mishaps, these themes being more obviously synonymous with, and topical for, naval mortality in broader discourse. However, I will now explore the Royal Navy's problem of disease, a far more pernicious, endemic and devastating, yet somewhat overlooked subject. Civilian Britons' were as vulnerable to disease's inevitable mortal threat as any other members of society. Within the Navy, however, disease presented even more disconcerting connotations due to the importance of the institution's functioning men and the hazardous, inhospitable and medically-limited service of which they were members. Disease was a complex issue, associated with the disconcerting actualities of the medical health of seamen.

As discussed in the first chapter, Collings' *Manning the Navy* (1 June 1790) [Fig. 6], referred to the dubious dealings involved in impressment and in recruitment in general. Significant here, the depiction, albeit exaggerated, is of men taken by the Impress Service who are presented as meek, ragged, unhealthy and potentially infested with contagious diseases and vermin. Such additions to the Navy were widely criticized as significant contributory factors to the discontentment and death of seamen and the service's notoriety for such negative actualities. As well as in imagery of diseased sailors, the subject was also apparent in other, official and textual discourse. Captains were often disgruntled with the unwholesome state of the recruits they received, condemning them in various personal accounts as, 'sorry fellows; poor ragged souls, and very small; miserable creatures', and more exasperatingly, 'unfit for service and a nuisance to the ship', 'half-dead', 'incurables and cripples, and wretches the general part of them are; more fit for a hospital than the sea'.[40] Similarly, surgeons complained of these liabilities to the functionality and

[40] Other descriptions included: 'Blackguards; sorry poor creatures that don't earn half the victuals they eat; sad thieving creatures; not a rag left, but which was of such nature as had to be destroyed; a hundred and fifty on board, the greatest part of them sorry fellows; miserable creatures, not a seaman amongst them and the fleet in the same condition; never so ill manned a ship since I have been at sea; the worst sort I ever saw; twenty-six poor souls but three of them seamen; landsmen, boys; all the ragg-tagg that can be picked

efficiency of the Navy, with one on HMS *Mars* claiming in 1800 that verminous recruits 'continue to pour infection through the fleet'. The suggestion is that for disciplinary officers, medical practitioners, or even experienced and hardened naval tars, any hope of preserving shipboard health were hindered, even undermined and negated, by inappropriate additions to the crew. Nonetheless, regulations and positive reforms partially addressed such problems with quarantine, cleaning, re-clothing and medical examination.[41] Improvements to the welfare and health of seamen were beneficial not only for decreasing the rate of fatalities, injury and sickness, but also for improving the general conditions, reputation and strength of the Navy. Commentary by naval authorities, including physician Gilbert Blane and Captain Roger Curtis,[42] confirms this fact and its cognizance.[43] The words of Nelson are most apt to quote here, 'The great thing in all military service is health; and you will agree with me that it is easier for an officer to keep men healthy than for a physician to cure them.'[44] The advocacy of administrative and medical welfare reforms was pioneering and contributed to broader contemporary developments in other areas of society but they were rarely represented in prints.

The loss of seamen in the Navy was on an unimaginable scale with the sacrifice becoming increasingly apparent to the public witnessing the departure and absence of men from home and the return, if at all, of mutilated veterans. The sickness and loss of men from disease was far less prominent, being the preserve predominantly of those working or interested in medicine. Physicians and surgeons within the Navy were required and able to various extents to address disease among their crewmembers and the service at large. Their records, official naval reports and personal accounts of disease mortality within the Navy due to natural sickness, epidemics, unsuccessful medical treatment, and infected

up.' This is a collection of quotes from various naval officers over the course of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century helpfully amassed, yet unfortunately not sourced, in a single citation in Baynham, *From the Lower Deck*, 8.

[41] This processing of a new recruit was described by Robert Hay in 1800, 'after being thoroughly washed in a number of cisterns which were fitted around the sides of this vessel, we were examined while in a state of nudity before a committee of surgeons.' Landsman Hay, 1953, 41. See also, Lloyd and Coulter, eds, 168; Blane, *Comparative Health*, 539. Blane quotes Baird who claimed between 1806 and 1811 there was only a quarter of the number sick compared with the first five years of war, 1793-8.

[42] Blane, *Short Account*, 4.

[43] Sir Roger Curtis wrote, 'It has wisely been said, that the fatherly care of a commander is the *Seaman's best Physician* [… crew being] entitled to kindness in return for obedience.' *The Means Use to Eradicate a malignant fever, which raged on board his Majesty's Ship* Brunswick, *at Spithead in the spring of the year 1791*, London, 1794, 24.

[44] Letter by Nelson to Dr Mosley, 11 March 1804, quoted in James Watt 'Surgery at Trafalgar', *Mariner's Mirror*, 2005, vol. 91, 281.

injuries or amputations are valuable sources for understanding different interpretations, including those which informed its representation in visual culture. This material enabled subsequent statistical analysis by medical reformers in the Victorian era as well as later social historians.[45] Most notable among the latter was Dr Allison who estimated that the whole mortal cost of the war from 1793 to 1815 was about 63,000 naval seamen, of which 44,662 died due to disease.[46] While such discourse was steeped in inaccuracies, the consensus is that death by disease was the single greatest killer within the service. Yet, this was not the case in imagery, with visual representation of such disorder in naval health predominantly avoided, rare, select, simplified and satirical.

Elmes' *Jack Hove Down* (12 August 1811) [Fig. 103] is valuable as a rare visual representation of sickness suffered in the Navy. It depicts an old-fashioned doctor attending to Jack consigned to his sickbed hammock and suffering from red boils to the face. The slightly mad looking medical professional, surrounded by his accoutrements, lists the various treatments prescribed (stopping grog, and administering 'Jollop', 'Sweat' and 'Pills'). The tar is responding to the doctor's disconcerting 'lingo' with wide-eyed dismay and clench-fisted aggression. Leaning over a sea chest, he guards his treasured bottles of alcohol, of which one is gripped in his a claw-like hand. He defensively retorts, 'stop my grog! […] you may batter my hull as long as you like, but I'll be d-n'd if ever you board me with your Glyster pipe.' The implication was that Jack reckoned that medical treatment was detrimental to his supposed and assumed hardy masculinity and that authoritative advice was an insult. Alcohol abstinence deprived the tar of his hardy habit, arguably nurtured by the Navy, of heavy drinking. Also, an enema had sexual connotations of sodomy, a crime to which the all-male service was particularly sensitive. Elmes' satire, therefore, alluded to the sexual, social and moral identity of the naval man and his typical hedonism. The implication was that this defiantly self-destructive and reckless individual, stuck in his own disorder, was incapable of heeding medical advice, or even common sense. In this case, his objection to enduring disconcerting personal restraint for the preservation of his health and consequently his ability to function in the

[45] For example, William James, *Naval History of Great Britain from the Declaration of War by France in February 1793 to the accession of George IV in January 1820 : with an account of the origin and progressive increase of the British Navy,* London, 1822-4, vol. 2; William Barwick Hodge, 'First Paper' and 'Two Memoirs', published in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, vol. 18, 201; vol. 19, 219. See also Major Greenwood, 'British Loss of Life in the Wars of 1794-1815 and in 1914-1918' in *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1942, vol. 105, no. 1, 1-16.

[46] 'Review of *Sea Diseases. The Story of a Great Natural Experiment in Preventive Medicine in the Royal Navy* by R. S. Allison. M.D., F.R.C.P.' in *British Medical Journal*, London, July 1943, vol. 138, 31

service subtly derided his selfish addictive drinking habit, laziness, and pride, all of which played upon the tar's notorious stereotype. The naval physician Thomas Trotter's remark on the typically feckless drunken seaman is apt to quote here. It is an excellent example of how disease among this set was construed by the medical, naval and general ruling elites as the child of 'excess' or 'debauch' in contrast to 'true health and vigour of body [being] the inheritance of the untutored savage'.[47] This interpretation placed most responsibility for Jack's health in his own hands in a way that supported the ruling elites' sense of moral and social worth. More generally, in *Jack Hove Down* issues of responsibility, trust and identity were disconcertingly at stake in relation to addressing the health and ailments of the Navy's men. Jack is not suffering the devastation of small pox, fever, typhus, malaria or syphilis, but instead seemingly suffering from a hangover, flu and likely unwholesome habits. Clearly, the troublesome issues of disease, medicine and mortality were especially loaded in relation to the Navy, given its massive, vital and controlled manpower. Imagery of such a subject, by Elmes, and others to be discussed, exercised appropriate selectivity to appealingly accord with audiences' ignorance of shipboard and medical actualities.

The scale of naval disease, in terms of the threat and rate of sickness and fatality, and military, financial, scientific and humanitarian implications was hard to qualify, not least in visual representation. Its causal extent for seamen's suffering and premature death was rarely, and never fully, acknowledged; it was too vast, complex and disconcerting to be presented appealingly. This was even the case in published texts with those that referred to the diseases servicemen suffered. Dr. Johnson's remark in a pamphlet on the Falkland Islands is an apt reference to how the life of a servicemen 'was ill represented in heroic fiction':

> War has means of destruction more formidable than the cannon and the sword. Of the thousands, and ten thousands who perished in our late contests with France and Spain, a very small part ever felt the stroke of an enemy; the rest languished in tents and ships, amidst damps and putrefaction; pale, torpid, spiritless, and helpless […] and were at last whelmed in pits, or heaved into the ocean, without notice, and without remembrance.[48]

[47] Thomas Trotter, *A view of the nervous temperament*, London, 1807, xvi-xvii, cited in 'Introduction' by R. Porter to *T. Trotter, An Essay on Drunkenness*, London, 1988.
[48] James Thomson Callender, *The Political Progress of Britain; or, An Impartial History of Abuses in the*

In contemporary military circles, death from disease was seen to have been ignoble – 'The death of cowards, and of common men.'[49] Unsurprisingly, seamen suffering and dying from disease were excluded from popular imagery, which instead referenced non-life threatening sickness and various treatments to assure medical support, responsibility and recovery. Audiences' interpretation of disease was, therefore, limited. The seamen's demise due to ill-health and natural decline, somewhat at odds with their prescribed and lauded role as defenders of the nation. The issue of countless, unrecognized, purposeless, inglorious and unnecessary deaths amongst those charged with such vital work was, indeed, problematic.

Although rarely referenced in images, the wide implications of disease to the Navy would have been apparent to audiences, particularly given diverse textual discourses. Environmental circumstances were acknowledged as key factors, with strict sanitation, Hales' ventilators and Jenner's smallpox vaccination notable welfare measures. Despite the quality of significant existent and pioneering preventative medicine, it was absent in visual discourse, suggesting avoidance in comparison to more prominent civilian experiences of bleeding veins, dental extraction, surgical amputation, smallpox vaccination with the cox-pox virus, and the practices of various medical characters.[50] Improvements to diet, provisions, air and hygiene as well as professional standards, supplies, funding and treatments of the Navy were overlooked in imagery visually constructed to serve ignorant and assuring preconceptions. Due recognition was not given to the institution's concerted effort and achievements regarding the preservation of seamen's health, which in actuality significantly decreased naval mortality rates. According to Blane's calculations they would have been 6674 higher in 1813 had the situation of disease in 1779 persisted.[51] The implication was that reforms to naval medicine and welfare, in relation to broader shipboard cultural and disciplinary circumstances, supported the maintenance of manpower in terms of men's life-expectancy, experiences and service.

Venereal diseases were rife in Georgian society where limited medical knowledge, poor hygiene and promiscuity were commonplace; it was particularly rife among seamen due

Government of the British Empire, in Europe, Asia, and America, Philadelphia, 1795, 56.
[49] Lincoln, *Representations of the Royal Navy*, 177.
[50] See among the extensive historiography, Fiona Haslam, *From Hogarth to Rowlandson: Medicine in Art in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Liverpool, 1996.
[51] Blane, *Select Dissertations on Several Subjects of Medical Science*, London, 1822, 2-3, 22.

to their relations with female companions allowed on board at anchorage and awaiting them ashore in port cities. As discussed in the second chapter, drinking and womanizing were not exclusive to the lower deck. They might be said to be an occupational hazard nurtured or at least condoned by the whole Navy. As syphilis was so widespread among seamen, naval surgeons became adept at treating the symptoms with the application of mercury which in itself caused similar suffering of hair loss, blackened flesh, physical weakness and mental instability. Nevertheless, little cure could be found and prevention was difficult, considering the obstinacy of seamen keen to enjoy themselves, heedless of medical caution and reluctant to pay the 15 shillings for medical treatment once infected.[52] The latter factor Trotter identified as detrimental not only to the health but also reputation and recruitment of the Navy, for it could be seen that volunteers, if not already infected, expected the worst after enlisting and the adoption of womanizing customs on board.[53] Interestingly, syphilitic black spots, the most notorious symptoms of the disease, were not represented among seamen, but instead only his female companions, as in Elmes' *Jack tar in a White Squall* (16 August 1811) [Fig. 35], and *Exporting Cattle NOT Insurable* (23 February 1813) [Fig. 47]. This contrivance made depraved female prostitutes the scapegoat for venereal disease in the Navy, excusing the seaman, and by extension those supposedly responsible for him. This interpretation could be seen as typical of contemporary social and gender prejudice that places prostitutes at the bottom of society and pinned upon them culpability for its various problems, reassuringly absolving social superiors.

The subject of the common disease of smallpox received similar evasive treatment in naval representation. Inoculation with the cowpox virus gradually became accepted as medical preventative practice, yet it attracted much popular speculation, even hysteria, in contemporary discourse. Gillray's *The Cow Pox or The Wonderful Effects of the New Inoculation!* (20 June 1799) [Fig. 104], satirized with anthropomorphic effects the novel medicine and fearful reactions to it. Yet, no imagery can be found which specifically referred to smallpox or its prevention in the Navy, despite ship life being particularly conducive to its spread, and the medical profession's, specifically Trotter's, preoccupation with advocating preventative measures. Indeed, the first trials of the

[52] Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 318. up to 1795 infected men were charged 15 shillings y surgeon for treatment, frequently involved mercury, but payment abolished as it deterred them from reporting their condition.
[53] Trotter, *Medicina Nautica*, 459-461; Thomas Trotter, *A Practical Plan for Manning the Royal Navy without Impressment*, Newcastle, 1819, 40. Karl Vogel, 'Scurvy: 'The Plague of the Sea and the Spoyle of Mariners', in *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine,* August 1933, vol. 9, no. 8, 476.

smallpox vaccination took place on selected ships from September 1800, within two years of Jenner's discovery being published; it was subsequently acknowledged as of beneficial import to the health of naval, and later general, populations.[54] Charles Williams' *The pack-horse yard in an uproar, or milksops frighten'd at their nurse. Vide Campaigns of St James Volts* (August 1809) [Fig. 105] was significant in its rare representation of the subject. This depicts a disorderly street-scene cow charging through a stable-yard, while figures make frantic efforts to escape. Uniformed volunteers take refuge in a post-chaise, while one climbs on to the seat of a gig, remarking on the animal leaping over the prostrate figure in the foreground, 'She'll give the poor drum Major the Cow Pox'. Reference to this disconcerting medical issue in a military context, where the disease was most rife and its inoculation most advocated, was only through satirical derision of the Army. There are awkward associations with social pretension, particularly of gentlemanly honour, and especially here of unskilled volunteers who at the time were disparagingly seen as fearful of danger. This corresponded with the Navy's contemporary favorable popularity as a service of heroic and healthy servicemen and, by extension, of pioneering, professional and effective welfare.

Fever posed the greatest threat to the health and mortality of the Navy's seamen during the French wars and continued to present problems and anxieties among medical professionals regarding infection, contagion, prevention and cure. Naval physician Thomas Trotter aptly described it as 'one of the most formidable opponents of medical skill.'[55] Significantly, the rate of sickness and fatalities from fever did decrease in the Navy.[56] The simple fact that wartime prioritization meant fewer fleets were based out in the Indies where such disease was more rife is the influential factor in the relative absence of such casualties and their depictions. Indications that fever was persistently problematic are evident (although not in visual publications) in existing primary sources such as official medical records, naval accounts and commentary in pamphlets.[57] The rarity of the ailment in imagery suggests its conscious avoidance due to the various limitations

[54] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1801, vol. 71, 318; 1803, vol. 73, 520. Blane, *Select Dissertation*, 354.
[55] Trotter, 'Expedition Autumn', 1794. Cited in Lloyd and Coulter, eds, *Medicine and the Navy*, vol. 3, 171.
[56] The proportion of sick and dead has been estimated as follows: in 1794 1 in 4 and 1 in 86; in 1804 1 in 8.3 and 1 in 62, in 1813 1 in 10.75 and 1 in 143. Lloyd and Coulter, eds, *Medicine and the Navy*, vol. 3, 170.
[57] A key example is surgeon Elliot Arthy, *The Seaman's Medical Advocate: or, an attempt to show that five thousand seamen are, annually, during war, lost to the British nation, ... through the yellow fever, ... Illustrated by cases and facts.* London, 1798.

upon a reassuring interpretation of the warring Navy's military, medical and imperial supremacy. The disproportionate underrepresentation of this 'disease' significantly serves to promote ignorance of disconcerting symptoms, preventions and cures of fever that, in reality, constituted a major and perplexing preoccupation for medical professionals, and more broadly speaking, the Navy and society. This ambiguity and anxiety would have been a strong factor for its exclusion from popular representation, particularly given the Royal Navy's prominence, importance and patriotic implications. As suggested by Cruikshank's *Poisoning the Sick at Jaffa in 1799* (29 November 1814) [Fig. 106], popular representation of military fever could only be accommodated in Francophobic satire that derided the common enemy's military weakness and assured contradistinction to Britain's improvements to seamen's health and battle victories, all of which made anxieties regarding disease somewhat less visually problematic.

As a peculiar and subordinate naval serviceman, the seaman was subject to curative and preventative treatments in order to preserve or regain his health for active duty. Given the predominant reassuring interpretation of Jack Tar in sympathetic and heroic terms, satirical derision in relation to medical problems was not primarily directed at the sick, but hardy and even defiant patients, but rather at his supposedly knowledgeable and refined practitioner. This corresponded with the cynicism towards surgeons and their injurious operations upon those wounded in active combat, natural disaster or accidents, and more broadly, with doubts regarding the capability and efficacy of medical measures in the Navy. It is noteworthy that of the surgeons' work only a small part constituted operations, which were typically part of a sustained and frenetic medical activity following combat or disaster. Instead, doctors performed routine checks and prescribed treatments for disease, contagion, climate-induced problems or trauma. Medicine was correspondingly of greater significance to the health and mortality of seamen than the more notorious actualities of their seafaring service with the proportion of fatalities from, and treatment for, seamen's battle wounds the minority of combat deaths.[58]

Britons' assumptions regarding seamen's ailments and medical treatment would have been informed not only by ignorant imagination and misleading print representations, but also, and more significantly, by witnessing such individuals ashore seeking medical

[58] Crumplin, 'Surgery', 63. Citing that out of the 144,558 seamen registered in 1801, those that died from battle strikes was low, merely 6,663 (7.2 % according to Hodge) or 6,540 (6.3% according to Lewis). Lloyd and Coulter, eds, *Medicine and the Navy*, vol. 3, 182.

assistance outside the Navy. This was a preoccupation in popular discourse, such as *The Sailor and the Quack Doctor* (1807) [Fig. 107], by Isaac Cruikshank after George Moutard Woodward. The sailor suffering a 'confusion' on his cheek beneath his improvised bandage explains his visit 'as I don't think it of consequence enough for our Ship's surgeon'. This presents various subtle derisive implications, suggesting that the medical professionals within the Navy were understaffed, negligent or complacent, preoccupied with more serious treatment of devastating diseases and severe wounds, and unconcerned with the minor ailments of seamen when actively serving. The naval patient's remark on the skeleton in the cupboard, 'I suppose from the messmate in the Cabin there, you don't always make a return of the Killed and Wounded?', while playing upon their jocularity and devil-may-care attitude towards mortality, subtly and subversively imply his scepticism.

While Cruikshank explicitly asserted the ineptitude of the medical practitioner in *Quack Doctor*, other image-makers implied it with more nuanced satire. This was more subtly connoted through his stereotypical decrepitude, possibly from his long, strenuous and poorly-paid professional service, as *Dickey Gossop – Surgeon Dentist* (13 August 1795) [Fig. 108], with shrunken leg and exorbitant charges, and, in William Elmes' work, bespectacled and desperately prescribing treatments for *Jack Hove Down* (12 August 1811) [Fig. 103]. The derisive implication was that such a 'professional' was a poor, hypocritical representative of good health and incapable of identifying the appropriate prescription. Indeed, ailments were often left un- or mis-identified and speculatively, if not ineffectively, treated.[59] The former caricature commented upon the state of the naval medical profession, presenting a derisive, ambiguous and even sympathetic view of the doctor who had to endure unpleasant living conditions, demanding duties, reluctant and reckless patients, low social status and limited authority. Such poor incentives for strong applicants meant many naval surgeons and physicians were far from dedicated, pioneering, adept or even capable practitioners, to the detriment of the health of seamen and reputation of the Navy. This print was part of broader discourse, especially published texts by naval physicians and officers which critiqued such naval medical problems and, albeit in a visual and subtle way, advocated reform that would improve medical confidence.[60] Yet, these factors did not necessarily mean that intellectually deficient,

[59] For example Nicol's account of how he was blinded with opthalmia for 6 weeks reveals the limitations of contemporary naval medical care. Nicol, *Life*, 194-5

[60] 'It is a field for young men just past their education, who cannot afford to set up in business.' Anonymous,

resentful or neglectful individuals hampered the entire profession. As noted above, there were some who made major contributions to the preservation of health among seamen, and arguably to contemporary society in general. Their statistical recordings, observational experiments, advisory petitions and informed publications brought great improvements to the medical situation of the Navy not only in terms of a decrease in the rate of sickness and death by disease or injury, but also of a better quality of service that boosted morale and recruitment of seamen and medical professionals. Indeed, the ruling elite, or what Lincoln described as the 'oligarchy', of the Navy was far from inimical to the health of seamen and made various medical investments towards its improvement. The problem, which was decipherable in these caricatures, was the timidity, conservatism and reluctance which hindered those responsible, seamen, medics, officers, Admiralty and the ruling elites from swift and successful welfare measures.

Hove Down also related to the abundant, shifting and conflicting discourses on social mobility and scientific discovery, critiquing the capabilities and contributions of naval medicine. It derided the situation of contemporary medicine in general, with its archaic, inept and experimental, often failing, approaches in diagnosis, prevention and cure and poked fun at the financial, administrative and social strains requiring reform as the demands of the patients' and institutions' changed. Yet, it also mocked such accompanying scepticism, cynicism and reluctance among audiences, including patients and authorities, in the sometimes hysterical atmosphere of alarm that shrouded Britain during the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Overall, in *Hove Down*, Elmes was satirically critiquing the entire medical situation in the Navy, not simply the seaman or his doctor. Such universal laughter provided an inclusive alleviation of various prevailing anxieties.[61] On a superficial level, the caricature referred to the inabilities of those responsible to preserve the health of the Navy, both Jack Tar and his doctor being equally absurd. But at a more complex level, it connoted the conventions, misconceptions and hypocrisies of society, specifically in relation to the moral, intellectual and authoritative superiority of the ruling elite. Neither the vital naval seamen, nor surgeon, nor medical

A Fair Statement of the Real Grievances Experienced by the Officers and Sailors in the Navy… of Great Britain; with a plan of reform, Which is calculated to benefit and satisfy all those Parties: at the same Time it would Occasion a considerable Saving to the Country, and obviate the Necessity of the Impress Services in future- in a letter to the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, Treasurer Of The Navy, &c. &c. &c. &c. By a naval officer, London, 1797, 38.

[61] See Mikhail Bahktin, *Rabelais and his World,* first published 1965, Trans. Hélène Iswolsky, Bloomington, 1993, especially 199.

intellectuals, nor powerful Admiralty, nor concerned Briton had the power or assurance to know what was the right approach when dealing with disease. This print, therefore, presented an ambivalent interpretation that allowed viewers to question and make their own judgment, enjoying a sense of superiority and derisive, yet also self-deprecating and critical, laughter.

These satirical interpretations of naval medical professionals and their practices were undeniably distortions of more serious, subtle and complex actualities within contemporary naval medicine. Dr. Rodger's acknowledgement that the history of naval medicine constituted the 'demolishing, or at least circumventing [of] the power of the medical establishment' is apt for appreciating the contemporary production and reception of rare satirical prints.[62] Such caricatures of naval medics were exaggerations, not only of surgeons' individual incapabilities and vices, but also the overall visual reiteration of professional stereotypes. Indeed, the majority of naval surgeons and physicians made due and even remarkable contributions to the service and to social welfare and medicine in general, particularly through their empirical studies that often demonstrated the values of good hygiene, diet and preventative measures. Dr Gilbert Blane was arguably the most prominent figure in naval medicine during the French wars period, advocating significant reforms to its practical and administrative aspects. His most significant contribution was the introduction of lemon juice to Jack's twice-daily ration of grog, a standard practice from 1796, which resulted in the near elimination of scurvy. As noted above, Dr. Thomas Trotter was also a pioneering figure within naval medicine, supporting Edward Jenner's discovery of the smallpox vaccination using cowpox virus inoculation. Yet, in spite of such prominence, these individuals, like their colleagues were almost entirely absent from contemporary imagery. Arguably, this was a result of the misconceived ignorance, cynicism and exaggeration that hampered achievements and recognition in medicine.

Daniel Orme's engraving of *Trotter, Physician to the Grand Fleet* (1 May 1796) [Fig. 109], consists of a traditional oval portrait of what appears to be a plain, unpretentious sitter. The image lacks any assertions regarding Trotter's occupational contributions, naval or medical, usually evident in portraits of legendary naval officers such as Nelson, or doctors, such as Edward Jenner. Nevertheless, such individual representation was

[62] N. A. M. Rodger, 'Medicine and Science in the British Navy of the Eighteenth Century', in Christian Buchet, ed., *l'Homme, La Sante et La Mer: Actes du Colloque international tenu a l'Institut Catholique de Paris les 5 et 6 December 1995*, Paris, 1997, 333-44, 341.

unusual, reserved only for superior and distinguished physicians who gained a prominence within the Navy and outside of it, while the majority of colleagues of a similar occupation and, or inferior professional status, never received such attention. Surgeons, their mates, nurses and other naval medical staff constituted a considerable number in the service, their importance evident in the care they provided seamen and the attention they received in textual discourse, particularly on the welfare reforms of the Navy. However, there is a disproportionate absence of such individuals in visual representation not only in the form of portraiture, but also genre scenes, satirical or documentary imagery depicting their practices in relation to advising officers and patients, administering treatment, attending to the sick in the sickberth, performing surgical operations and supervising the administration of medical care. This suggests that it was not that such actualities were of minor prominence, import or interest within debates about the Navy, but rather that they presented problematically ambiguous, complex, shifting and even contradictory implications for print-makers and their audiences.

Finance was a significant factor in the medical experiences of those involved from the vulnerable naval seamen to the socio-economically superior, self-seeking professionals. The former, potentially desperate, poor and ignorant, were exploited, yet, they were often alert to being overcharged by dubious, exorbitant or unnecessary treatment by greedy practitioners using their professional power for their own economic or social gain. In *Dickey Gossop* (13 August 1795) [Fig. 108], the tar is disgruntled by what he feels is the surgeon dentist's excessive charge of one shilling for a tooth extraction. He claims a 'Doctor Pluckam at Plymouth would have pulled me about for an Hour, and only ax't threepence'. Challenging this 'Lubber' exclaiming 'none of your tricks upon travelers', the sailor is aware that when ashore and away from the navy-orientated commerce of ports he was at a disadvantage as a stranger and more susceptible to medical charlatans. The tar's characteristic alienation, defiance and wariness are carefully played upon, deflecting derision towards the supposedly superior professional instead of his own stupidity, ignorance or financial irresponsibility. As a consumer he is construed as informed and fair when reasoning with sellers attempting to dupe him, which corresponds with his experiences of other commercial transactions, such as with fabric sellers in *Sailors Rigging out Poll* (12 November 1807) [Fig. 33], by Charles Williams after George

Moutard Woodward, as previously discussed in Chapter Two.[63] The references and their parallel within *Dickey* are interesting to consider. Jack explicitly critiqued the financial expense of medical treatment for seamen, whilst the design in which he is depicted further connoted, through its extended title 'parish clerk, sexton and undertaker', its potential mortal cost. The tar's and audience's farfetched, yet not entirely fictionalized, fears of fatality were satirized to alleviate anxieties regarding the limitations of contemporary medicine. The civilian, land-based and dentistry narrative detracted from more severe and subversive mortality actualities of the Navy at sea where individuals were vulnerable to disease, irrespective of medical measures. The tar was reluctant to seek, let alone purchase, medical assistance not only necessarily due to his scepticism, suspicion, defiance and hardiness, but also to his financial incapacity. He may not have been able to afford the expense of receiving treatment, particularly as a consequence of injury or illness, and may have received insufficient support for proper recovery. The problematic consequences for injured servicemen, particularly in terms of the strain it put upon their mobility, independence and dependants, and on those in society left to aid them in their struggle, were disconcertingly apparent to Britons. Rowlandson constructed and perpetuated this in his representations, such as *Miseries of War* (undated watercolour) [Fig. 110], in which a busy carpenter administers aid to the numerous amputated servicemen who inundate his workshop, and the hand-coloured etching of *A Distressed Sailor* (1 January 1801) [Fig. 111], in which one-legged tar is dressed in the ragged remains of his uniform using two sticks to hobble through a barren landscape, journeying with his child on his back to find some help. Such images can be seen to have sympathized with individuals, particularly veterans, who did not have the physical ability or commercial power to access the treatment and support that they required.

The cynical implication was that those who survived the dangers, hardship sickness and even surgery typical in the Navy, did not necessarily receive appropriate follow-up welfare, either during or after service. Satirical prints offered a means of subtly vaunting criticism at maladministration of medical funds and resources that made seamen the victims of exploitation, neglect, corruption and discrimination. This was the case in the above works where the focus was predominantly upon the suffering seaman. However, more explicit and extensive references were made in military satirical prints.

[63] For previous discussion of *Sailors Rigging out Poll* (12 November 1807) [Fig. 33], by Charles Williams after George Moutard Woodward, see Chapter Two, 83.

Rowlandson's *The Winding Up of The Medical Report of the Walcheren Expedition* (30 March 1810) [Fig. 112], for example, illustrated problems in the Army that put the Navy's position in a better light. The financial preoccupation, mismanagement and corruption apparent among military officials and the institution of the armed forces was a disconcerting issue for Britons, particularly with its subversive connotations of detriment to, if not culpability for, servicemen's mortality. The censorious scrutiny of the issue of fatal disease and medicine in the Army, specifically its devastating Walcheren campaign 1810, demonstrates the degree of public awareness and support for military reforms that would prioritize servicemen's health over administrative and economizing measures in respect of budgets, provisions and tactics. *Winding Up* commented on the inquiry into the appalling annihilation of the regiment from disease, specifically fever, supporting criticism of the Army Medical Board's corruption among its dealings with the appointment of members, expenses and medical supplies. Here 'Stores for Walcheren' including 'cobwebs', 'candle chuffs' and 'arsenic' referred to allegations of supplies, particularly bark, being of dubious medical quality and purpose. The inadequacy of these stores damningly contrasted with the medical comforts 'For Home Consumption' and 'Hospital', including barrels of port, and harshly criticized the misappropriation of luxuries at the expense of the Army and its servicemen's lives. The print can be seen as a construction and perpetuation of unpopular medical practitioners, suspicion towards the ruling elite, with their self-serving agendas, particularly in the realm of finance, and favoritism towards the more successful and arguably professional Navy and subordinate ranks.[64]

Human error of judgment was a factor among influential figures (including medical practitioners, ministers, Admiralty Lords and Admiralties of the Fleet and Commanding Officers), who wielded professional authority over the administration, finances and implementation of medical and welfare measures. Their actions could cause grave rises in the rate of sickness and mortality among seamen, costing the Navy not inconsiderable expense, manpower and reputation. A good example is the improvement in conditions and provisions, specifically supplementing grog with lemon juice which, as noted above, was found to prevent scurvy. This measure was adopted as standard procedure throughout

[64] For contemporary criticism see: Robert Jackson and the 5th Report of the Commission of Military Inquiry. Minutes of Evidence, 'Parl. Debates', vol. 16, 107; J. Grego, *Rowlandson the Caricaturist*, London, 1880, vol. 2, 182.

the Navy from 1795,[65] yet the technical science behind this preventative medicine was misguided or lacking in its underestimation of the acid's scorbutic qualities. Lemons were substituted with limes, on grounds of economy, unwittingly weakening the medicinal and nutritional benefit to scurvy-susceptible seamen. Similarly, readily administered tourniquets to reduce bleeding entailed unintended, or at least underestimated, risk of infection.[66] Given the prominence of such maladies and measures, their absence in visual culture was most noticeable and significant. It not only confirms selective evasion by image-makers, but also the problematic actualities of the limited and sometimes mistaken or limited powers of humankind of which audiences who were keen to remain in 'blissful ignorance'.

Yet, trial and error was key to the emerging empirical methods in medicine that were particularly pioneered in the Navy. The controlled environment of containment on board ship during a lengthy voyage was ideal for the methodical observation of seamen's sickness, diseases and fatalities, and for collective experimentation with medicinal and practical measures, officially endorsed, enforced and institutionalized by naval authorities.[67] Foucault's theories are useful to apply here: power and knowledge of the state, ruling and professional elite are exercised over subordinate subjects to impose changes or improvements to social order for the greater good. The recorded evidence, served not only bureaucratic or historical purposes, but was more portentously directed to the development and standardization of treatment across the Navy's fleets and hospitals, and subsequently in private practices and national institutions within general society. As such, the tar served essentially as a guinea-pig, with the Royal Navy constituting what Rodger aptly termed a 'laboratory'.[68] He was at the front-line in more ways than one, in medical treatment as well as national military defence. While cynically construed as disposable, anonymous machines or cannon-fodder on warships,[69] seamen received greater medical attention than their more numerous civilian counterparts. Once

[65] Blane, *Observations on the Diseases of Seamen,* 1789.
[66] Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 299.
[67] These ideas were developed through reading Foucault's key texts, especially *The Birth of the Clinic*, 1963, as well as references made by Lincoln in *Representing the Navy*, 172.
[68] Rodger, 'Medicine and Science in the British Navy of the Eighteenth Century', in Buchet, ed., *l'Homme,* 333. See also David Boyd Haycock and Sally Archer, eds, *Health and Medicine at Sea, 1700-1900*, Woodbridge, 2009, esp 8.
[69] The sailor Henry Walsh was not the only one disturbed by the fact that so many seamen were buried at sea without their relations ever learning of their death. 'There is thousands of worthy men buried in the boundless ocean unknown to any of their parents or relations, the thoughts of which often grieved my heart full sore.' Royal Naval Museum manuscript 2001/57 80, 'Moody', 1959, 235.

again, the contributory value to society of the seamen actively serving in the Navy far outweighed the landlubber masses, giving them the advantage in regard to fighting, if not beating, disease, as well as in respect of capital punishment discussed in the previous chapter.

Contemporary documentation and commentary on naval medical measures predominantly constituted textual material, including official records, naval dispatches, parliamentary debate, Admiralty orders, newspapers, public notices and published pamphlets. Clearly, the health and medicine of the Navy was not an infrequent, minor or cut-and-dried topic and as an issue of social and military import and reform was of interest. Patriotic implications were common among commentators advocating public support for improvements to, and benefits of, the welfare of undervalued seamen upon whose institution the Empire depended.[70] Such relative discursive abundance in comparison to noticeable absence of imagery is striking. Unsurprisingly, given the technical, experimental and unreliable nature of medicine, it was not readily adopted by image-makers; there are no representations to be found referring to physicians' various responsibilities of medical observation, inspection and treatment. The principal mode of representation relating to such subjects was illustrated diagrams of infected or wounded limbs based upon observational studies by ship's surgeons.[71] Such visualization may have been an official requirement or voluntary exercise to accompany their continual reporting and treatment of seamen's health and mortality. While it is hard to gauge the extent and significance of these representations, their existence and survival among an abundance of treatment diaries at the National Archives and rare manuscripts in special collections indicate that they were of documentary and pedagogic value to their creators and audiences, if not to popular printmakers and artists. Limited to private, official or non-mainstream representation this was undeniably part of discursive selectivity regarding such disconcerting actualities that excluded explicit, candid and informed visual interpretations in favour of popular appeal through evasive imagery.

Studies drawn by the naval surgeon William Warner of wounded and infected legs were the typical form of representation to be found referring to ill health among seamen,

[70] Huxton, cited in Lincoln, *Representing the Navy*, 168.
[71] Illustrated diagrams of medical conditions of seamen were produced by surgeons such as William Turnball in 1806, and William Warner in 1813. These images as works on paper and in dissection and treatment diaries, and medical journals, are held at the Wellcome Collection and National Archives.

whether from injury or disease. Such documentary depictions had private or pedagogic purposes and, thus, focused upon the detail of the medical symptoms, apparatus, treatment and results. These interpretations were entirely absent of humanitarian sentiment or satirical exaggeration. They were concerned explicitly with the actualities of disease. This theme was problematic particularly as the majority of artists and viewers who, with their limited knowledge and distorted preconceptions, were unable to relate to such maritime or medical actualities. Clearly, there was incompatibility between informed, graphic approaches and appealing artistic convention that aimed to alleviate anxieties in relation to the representation of naval disease. The absence of prints of suffering servicemen, alongside observational studies and private drawings of the subject, therefore, suggests its widespread evasion among image-makers and audiences. Rowlandson's work conveyed his predisposition towards morbid curiosity which was typical of Britons in an era when starving beggars, hanging prisoners and dissected corpses were common spectacles. This is aptly illustrated in the 'rough sketch' that Rowlandson did upon observing the dying moments of a French prisoner of war in Forton prison, 1794, as noted by his less-enthralled companion, the artist Henry Angelo, in his *Reminiscences*. This indicates how the personal experience and awareness of such actualities informed representations of servicemen's expiration, such as *Finding a Shipwrecked Sailor* [Fig. 99] and *Shipwrecked Sailor* [Fig. 100]. In these we see the delicate balance between morbid curiosity and pity with which they were vested.[72]

While the health and mortality of the seaman was an extensive discursive preoccupation, the disproportionate absence of the subject in visual culture, particularly prints, suggests a perpetuation of evasion due to its limited potential for appropriate representational conventions of satire, heroism, drama or sublimity. The depiction of the tar sick, weak, inactive, receiving dubious or unpleasant medicine, struggling to recover, deteriorating and confined to his death-bed, was understandably not popular. Nevertheless, illness and disease were common within the Navy and did attract some attention in print culture,

[72] In his *Reminiscences* Angelo tells of visiting Forton prison with Rowlandson to view French sailors held there, following Lord Howe's naval victory at the Great First of June, 1794. 'In one of the sick wards we saw one of the prisoners, who, an officer told us, had been a tall, handsome man, previous to t battle; but. Having received a shot that had lacerated his side, a mortification had taken place. He was then making his will; his comrades were standing by, consoling him, some grasping his hand, shedding tears. This scene was too much for me, and made such an impression on my mind that I hastened away; but I could not persuade Rowlandson to follow me, his inclination to make a sketch of the dying moment getting the better of his feelings. After waiting some time below, for my friend, he produced a rough sketch of what he had seen.' Henry Angelo, *Reminiscences of Henry Angelo*, London, 1828-30, vol. 2, 293. Cited in John Riley, ed., *Rowlandson Drawings, from the Paul Mellon Collection*, New Haven, 1978, vol. 18.

albeit satirically underrepresented in relation to actualities and broader discursive commentary. Rowlandson's *Jack Hove Down* (12 August 1812) [Fig. 103], Cruikshank's *The Sailor and the Quack Doctor* (1807) [Fig. 107], and *Dickey Glossop* (13 August 1795) [Fig. 108], are examples of how the subject of the seaman's health was only rarely included in popular visual culture. The actual sickness of Jack was hardly referenced, his physical symptoms minor, not life-threatening or horrendously gruesome, while the specific cases of individuals illustrated detracted from the countless fellow sufferers requiring medical assistance or more morbidly anticipating death. In order to deflect any disconcerting guilt or anxiety regarding the shortcomings of the intellectual, financial or political powers that be in relation to medicine and the Navy, the seaman was presented as chiefly responsible for his own health. Shown receiving medical advice, his symptoms and prescriptions imply that he himself was chiefly culpable for his sickness. These prints employ the stereotypical Jack whose hardy, defiant, masculine and simple character predisposed him towards a reckless and hedonistic lifestyle detrimental to his wellbeing. References to his vices of heavy drinking, smoking and sexual promiscuity often with venereal diseased women were subtly implied as the cause of his discomfort. Such imagery could, therefore, be seen as indication of a broader desire among Britons' for the greater accessibility, transparency and professionalism of medicine in order for individuals' to take responsibility for preserving their own health to the benefit of themselves and society.

As Morse alluded, a contributing factor to naval mortality was the lack of appropriate medical attention, and this was the case not only for those newly enlisted and confined in recruiting ships, but also those on board ships at sea who might not have a surgeon, surgeon's mate or physician resident, nearby or in sufficient numbers to deal with inundations of combat and disaster casualties. Surgeon Robert Young of HMS *Ardent* struggled with little assistance at the Battle of Camperdown, with about 16 men dying before he was able to treat them.[73] Furthermore, the relatively few and stretched practitioners were also limited in their professional capacity in terms of personal conduct, resources and power. It was not uncommon for surgeons to be serving in a state of exhaustion, drunkenness, desperation, shock and frustration, performing their butchery in dark, unhygienic and cramped bowels of the vessel, usually the cockpit.[74] Samuel Leech

[73] Adkins, *Jack Tar*, 296.
[74] See for example the complaints of Whyte, of HMS *Atlas*, in 1800

aptly captured how overwhelming and primitive the practice of the surgeon seemed to be when describing the sight on board the frigate *Macedonian* in battle against USS *United States* in 1812:

> the surgeon and his mate were smeared in blood from head to foot: they looked more like butchers than doctors. Having so many patients, they had once shifted their quarters from the cockpit to the steerage, they now removed to ward-room, and the long table, round which officers had sat over many merry feast, was soon covered with bleeding forms of maimed and mutilated seamen.[75]

The most commonly practiced treatment for those injured in accidents, combat or disasters was surgical operation. This was a preventative measure against fatal hemorrhages and infection. Nevertheless, surgical strategy was not always effectively administered or received.[76] Despite good intentions, a high proportion of surgery patients, particularly for the amputation of broken, wounded or contaminated limbs, died following, if not during, operations with fatalities induced through pain, blood-loss, unconsciousness or infection. From surgeons' records Crumplin has estimated the percentage mortality rate for operations constituted 40-50% upon the mid-thigh, 25-30% below-knee and 15% foot.[77]

Despite the potential for implications of heroism, pathos, drama, suspense, scandal or criticism, such scenes were visually evaded to the point of near total exclusion from imagery. The negative gruesomeness was to an extent a factor, however, to what extent is questionable, given the morbid curiosity that attracted crowds to public executions. It can be deduced that ignorance of the actualities and preconceived implications of neglect, weakness and inhumanity presented challenges too great for its popular visualization. Explicit imagery concerning the injury, surgery, welfare and fatality of the tar was too poignant, given his assumed vitality, volatility and vulnerability. This tendency in visual culture can be seen to be influenced by social issues, even ideologies, of class and occupation when it is considered in relation to the more abundant imagery of a naval officer or, more often, the anonymous civilian, receiving surgical attention. Various

[75] Leech, *Thirty Years from Home*, 142.
[76] 'The argument about when to operate was discussed throughout the era. Should a surgeon operate immediately after the injury, or when the patient had recovered from shock, or possible some days or even weeks later?' 'The Development of British Military Medicine', 1793-1814, Richard L. Blanco, in *Military Affairs*, February 1974, vol. 38, no. 1, 4-10, 6.
[77] Crumplin, *Men of Steel*, 301.

paintings and prints depict Lord Nelson's legendary loss of his left arm, particularly the scene of him convalescing below deck during the Battle at Santa Cruz de Tenerife on 24 July 1797. Notably, none of his actual amputation operation have been found. Appealing implications were more applicable to the exclusive naval elite whose symbolic grandeur was a preoccupation in discourse.

The subject of surgery also received proportionately greater, and in cases more explicit, representation when set in a purely civilian context. Rowlandson's coloured aquatint *Amputation* (17 October 1793) [Fig. 113] provides an interesting example. This is a characteristically grotesque and satirical interpretation by the printmaker, representing the drama of surgery in which almost deranged assistants are restraining a pained patient while a surgeon attempts to operate with alarming zeal. The concept of the operating theatre is all too apparent, exploited in this depiction where the figures play out their stereotypical roles with grave expressions, gathered around the focal incident in a specific scene full of props. It can be deduced that in visual culture seamen's surgical experiences presented various, complex and unavoidable problems that invalidated its appealing potential for assurance and humour in popular depiction. Imagery relating to his surgery was tentative and tenuous, reserved only for the consequences of his successful amputation that implied the patient's effective treatment and capable practitioners. The jocular, hardy, selfless, pragmatic, heroic and stoic identity of the seamen was preserved. For example, a sailor with a broken peg-leg, having fallen on the ground in the streets, is depicted in *A broken leg, or, The carpenter the best surgeon* (24 February 1800) [Fig. 114], published by Laurie & Whittle. This scene excluded the negative actualities of his painful injury, gruesome amputation, unguaranteed recover, frustrating incapacity and resentment of poor recompense for such sacrifice. Instead, he is presented as a happy, healthy Jack back to his jocular antics ashore and maintaining his affiliation to the naval service. Significantly, there is no indication of the veteran, or his able-bodied messmates, being drunk, disorderly and reckless. The civilian witnesses express friendly concern rather than any annoyance or derisive satisfaction. This is somewhat at odds with the representational convention noted in chapter two, and can be taken as indicating the contrived construction and perpetuation of less cynical and more sympathetic popular interpretations of mutilated seamen, possibly as a result of their suffering and sacrifice being more apparent. In the case of this scenario, the carpenter really was what was

required for the recovery of Jack's broken wooden leg. Such a scene would have amused audiences on a superficial level.

The hardy peg-legged Jack's requiring the carpenter's assistance in the case of this breakage was a witty, even ironic, play upon the issue of amputated and debilitating injury. It related to the actuality that the best hope of true recovery from mutilation was not necessarily offered through a surgeon's medical treatment, but through more practical help, particularly by the carpenter, who ensured that the victim could endure the loss and achieve some kind of independent and contented existence with an wooden limb or crutches. Nevertheless, it was also subtly connotative of negative aspects and anxieties, specifically, that ultimately, despite any kind of physical recovery or effective support, mutilation brought lasting weakness, vulnerability, dependency and insecurity. The veteran would forever suffer limitations and reliance upon external resources – his substituted limb, the carpenter who made it, the friends who helped and cheered him, the strangers who took pity on him and the Navy who pensioned him off. Such interpretations, cynical and legitimizing, are significant in relation to the analogy played upon between the surgeon and carpenter in this print. The implication was that both practices involved physical treatment of an object in order to salvage from it some kind of functioning purpose, and, furthermore, that this entailed a self-interested agenda and brutal, mechanical techniques. All this construed the surgeon and his amputation unfavorably, derisively connoting the unprofessional, incapable and inhumane approach of such medical practitioners, but also, conversely, the antagonism, ignorance and simplicity on which such an interpretation relied.

As in other representations of the seaman, there is play upon his renowned pragmatism, cheerful, hardy, proud and devil-may-care attitudes towards pain, dismemberment, loss of limbs and even death. Defiant retorts of these amputees are commonly cited, such as that upon losing both legs of 'devil to the shoemaker' or specifically Coney, a victim of such mutilation in the Battle of Camperdown in 1797, exclaiming in surgery, 'well, never mind, I've lost my legs, and mayhap, may have lost my life, but we've beat the Dutch, my boy; we've beat the Dutch!' Similarly, John Ryan after enduring amputation without 'a sigh, or groan, or single syllable', remarked of his previously worrisome, now discarded limb:

> you damned ungrateful rascal, who after helping me out of many scrapes,
> and into many prisons for the last two years have been a miserable

> torment to me; I thank God that in now losing you I am become comparatively at ease![78]

Such a reported lack of sentimentality for the lost limb was not uncommon, even when not wounded or infectious, with Nelson dismissing the invitation to have his amputated arm embalmed, instead instructed his surgeon to 'throw it into the hammock, with the brave fellow that was killed beside me', a common sailor.[79] Indeed, amputees made light not only of the painful and risky surgical operation, but also the defunct body part and its incapacitating absence.

Victims and their commentators also construed amputation and mutilation as heroism of sacrifice and honour. The notion of the absence of a limb presenting a badge of bravery and identity paralleled with fellow heroic amputees is aptly illustrated in the recorded proclamation of an anonymous tar, having had his arm amputated on HMS *Victory*:

> Well, this by some would be considered a misfortune, but I shall be proud of it, as I shall resemble the more our brave Commander in Chief.[80]

The impression such brave and stoic self-sacrifice had on witnesses invited commendation but also emulation, particularly for those with less service experience. William Henry Dillon, a young gunner of only fourteen years, aboard HMS *Defence* in the Battle of the First of June, 1794, noted the 'patriotic sentences […] uttered that would have done honour to the noblest minds: yet these were expressed by the humblest class of men'.[81] Dismemberment through injury and amputation was complementary to associations of heroics, patriotism and sacrifice and even vested with religious significance. Yet, seamen's welfare was cynically viewed as lacking in moral and faith guidance on the part of their authorities. George Moutard Woodward conveyed the latter implication in his design for *The Cheerful Cobbler*, a hand-coloured etching by Charles Williams published by Thomas Tegg in 1808 [Fig. 115].[82] Two tars are depicted standing in a street remarking favorably on the cobbler's business, skill and reasoning. They claim that he 'beats our Parson' and surgeon, implying that his plain philosophy and mechanical

[78] *The Naval Chronicle*, 1805, vol. 13. Both quotes cited in Laffin, *Jack Tar*, 18-19.
[79] Nicolas, *The Life of Nelson*, 1845, vol. 3, 475.
[80] Tracy, *Naval Chronicles*, vol. 3, 235.
[81] Quoted in Hoock, *Empires of Imagination*, 154. Quoting William Henry Dillon from Michael Lewis, ed., 'The Narratives of My Adventures, as Vice-Admiral of the Red', in King and Hattendorf, *Everyman Will Do his Duty*, New York, 1997, 12-32, 31.
[82] Charles Williams after George M. Woodward, *The Cheerful Cobbler*, 1808. Hand-coloured etching in *The Caricature Magazine, or Hudibrastic Mirror*, by George M. Woodward, vol. 3, Folio 75. W87 808 Lewis Walpole Library.

pragmatism were more beneficial. More broadly, Woodward could have been connoting how the cobbler's goods, working-class status and crude cultural customs were more befitting for the seamen. This corresponded with the tar's notorious impatience, suspicion and defiance towards intellectuals whose limitations included pretentiousness, unprofessionalism, hypocrisies, inadequacies and charlatanism.

While alluding to problematic aspects of naval mortality, specifically seamen's mutilation, humanitarian welfare and philosophy, *Broken Leg* [Fig. 114] and *Cheerful Cobbler* [Fig. 115] displayed complexities, limitations and ambiguities. Such relatively rare, satirical imagery constructed and perpetuated assuring preconceptions regarding the attitudes and experiences of the tar in relation to injury, whilst also conveying a humorous interpretation that alleviated anxieties and even deflected allegations concerning exploitation, discontent and neglect among seamen. Furthermore, the absence of surgery involving tars, like the lack of images of disease, in visual culture was of significance, as has been demonstrated, not only in terms of its rare evasive imagery, but also its disproportionate underrepresentation in comparison to that of officers and civilians.

4. 7 Conclusion

Mortality, medicine and disease were prominent actualities and discursive issues that held considerable relevance especially in relation to the Navy. Nevertheless, such subjects were largely excluded from visual culture. As discussed in this chapter, disconcerting connotations of sacrifice, suffering, vulnerability, legitimacy and exploitation, among other things, were arguably too intense to be accommodated in appealingly assuring representations. It is possible that such noticeable absence of imagery referring to these subjects, especially in comparison to civilian versions and other negative naval actualities, was due to their deep-rooted implications that aroused anxieties in viewers. The issues of mortality, maltreatment and disease in the Navy were loaded with negative implications, not least of the weakness, vulnerability, suffering and exploitation of seamen, but also, more subversively, of the ruling elites' limited and self-interested intellectual, financial and social powers. Such problematic concepts would have been ones to which the upper-middle classes were disconcertingly attuned and keen to see

excluded as subjects from print culture, in which they constituted the dominant consumer market.

The Navy did, however, make major contributions to contemporary medicine and its discourse, and demonstrated pioneering welfare reforms that advocated empiricism, experimentation and individual care. Nonetheless, the lengths it could go to were often hindered by inherent conservatism regarding socio-economic pretensions among those possessing a deep-seated vested interest in safeguarding the status quo. Naval servicemen, from the Admiralty and superior officers down to the humble and superstitious seamen, were sceptical of new and empirical medicine, and the benefits it might have. Self-satisfied, even defensive, claims regarding the Navy's medical circumstances were inherent in its professional discourse and practice. This is evidenced by Blane's rhetorical conclusion on the valuable, although far from complete or conclusive, achievements of naval medicine:

> It is highly satisfactory to contemplate the many proofs of substantial benefit that have accrued to the sea service in the last forty years, both in war and commerce, in all quarters of the world, from the zeal, humanity and good judgment displayed in promoting the health of seamen. It has been proved that it has added at least one third to the national force, and therefore subtracted in the same proportion from the national expenditure.[83]

Indeed, maintaining a healthily functioning and reputable Navy was paramount, particularly during this protracted war that was draining the service and nation of its men and money. Loss of active seamen to disease, and the costly consequences of treating the sick and recruiting replacements meant that investment in preventative medicine and employment of surgeons had some support. Nevertheless, such endeavours and strategies suffered from inconsistency, contradiction and incapabilities. Further to this, just as health deficiencies were not the sole or even principal cause of naval disease, mortality and even related negative actualities, so too sickness and death rates were not necessarily primarily the fault of medical professionals or their patients. Indeed, as acknowledged earlier, the health of the seaman was very much determined by superiors, officers as well as medics, and this subordination, even reliance, predisposed them towards a peculiar

[83] Quoted in Lloyd and Coulter, ed., *Medicine and the Navy*, vol. 3, 184.

lack of personal responsibility. Their occupation can be seen to have engendered, even required masculine endurance of discomfort, reluctance to show any weakness, and proud defiance and the demeaning of medical advice. Jack Tar's stereotypical representations, such as in *Hove Down* [Fig. 103], *Quack Doctor* [Fig. 107], *Tom Tack's Ghost!* [Fig. 92] and *Broken Leg* [Fig. 114], satirically played upon his characteristic responses to mortality threats of naval service, of jocularity, hardiness and heroic self-sacrifice. Such constructs, nonetheless, engendered negative implications; they subtly derided the irresponsibility of those who condoned, contributed to and exploited his vulnerability, not simply in terms of dubious medical professionals or neglectful officers, but also those cognisant of such actualities of the Navy. By extension, these interpretations can be seen as a product and perpetuation of contemporary reformism that advocated not only improved medical capabilities but, by extension, that of finances, administration, recruitment and general professionalism. Furthermore, the issue of mortality in relation to punishment, maltreatment, combat, natural disaster and disease prompted the necessity of a transparency that would enable decreased death rates.

The preservation, and improvement of life, of naval servicemen and Britons generally, was understandably a preoccupation in discourse, particularly in a modernising society. Threats and limitations to his well-being caused by judicial punishment, corporal maltreatment, natural disasters, accidents and disease, as well as combat were significant problems, not least at a time of warfare. The print-market did not include visual reminders of such disconcerting subjects. The service of a Navy at war left a complex, ambiguous and even negative legacy, although its more direct patriotic counterpart evident in victory culture, reformist discourse and naval history overshadowed it. Even experienced, well-off and fit servicemen did not necessarily find it easy to deal with various aspects of the devastation they experienced, let alone appreciate their survival or relish its commentary. It is apt to note the poignant remark, to his wife Eliza, of Lieutenant John Yule of the *Victory* at Trafalgar nearly a month after Nelson's death:

> the action will be, by the nation, conceived a glorious one, but when the devastation is considered, how can we glory at it? How many widows, orphans and fatherless has it made? … *One hundred and fifty* killed and wounded, and *I am* alive without a wound.[84]

[84] Letter from Lieutenant John Yule to Mrs. Eliza. 16 November 1805. Yule-Booth Collection. Cited in Lincoln, *Representing the Navy*, 288.

Yet, there existed a disproportionate body of images focused upon death in combat in comparison to the endemic problem of disease, medical limitations, natural disasters and accidents. The explicit absence as well as allusive presence in contemporary naval imagery of these issues related to the profound, perpetual, and arguably unanswerable problems of human, especially seamen's, sacrifice. How can it be quantified, qualified, limited or justified, if at all? These were concerns of the lower deck, medical professionals, naval authorities, and individuals and groups within broader society. As this chapter, and thesis have demonstrated with archival evidence, the negative actualities of naval life were undeniably apparent to audiences, yet, avoided in imagery.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has investigated the visual representation of negative aspects of the Royal Navy associated with its common seamen during the French Wars, 1793-1815. The rare and typically satirical images analysed are important documents of contemporary constructs of Jack Tar, his experiences and the nation state he served. This study has involved extensive archival research to build upon a limited, although gradually expanding, field of scholarship. With a greater understanding of the existing material, both images and primary sources, this thesis has considered the preconceptions and anxieties that made the legendary naval sailor, both real and depicted, seem so peculiar to much of broader society. Works on paper have been shown to exhibit evasion and exaggeration of seamen's experiences, in order to accord with aesthetic and commercial pressures, and thus satisfy image-makers and their clienteles. It is what was avoided, what was given disproportionate attention, and what was portrayed negatively or light-heartedly that has been my particular focus. Despite the prominence in various contemporary and historical discourses of subjects of Jack Tar's impressment, recreation, crime, punishment, death and disease, these were scarcely dealt with by image-makers and their representations limited in number, seriousness and accuracy.

This thesis is the first study to focus specifically upon the visual representation of negative aspects of the Royal Navy during this period. Analysing a relatively small corpus of imagery found among collections both in England and America, such depictions have been shown to be complex and shifting in their relationship with the actualities of naval service. Chapter One revealed that, despite the pressing of men to meet the manning demands faced by the Navy during the protracted period of warfare against France, this measure was not without complexities and contradictions. Specifically, the visual interpretation of the subject remained disconcerting for land-based civilians who anxiously guarded their circumstances and often felt threatened by naval seamen. 'Pressing' was a preoccupation in discourse, despite only making a minor contribution to the Navy's manpower. Visual discourse on impressment, a practice that brought maritime issues ashore and affected non-naval individuals, communities and classes, having particular impact on sensitive notions of British liberty, duty and sacrifice. Yet, given the challenging and complex significance of the subject, it was not

without potential for image-makers, notably featuring in caricatures of gangers seizing men in street affrays. Caricatures of press gangs' aggressive behaviour on land also conformed and contributed to deep-seated misconceptions of this infamous naval manning method.

Chapter Two went on to investigate the experiences, behaviour and broader implications in popular, and especially visual, culture typical of such men once they were serving in the Navy and able to enjoy some degree of distinct identity and recreation. The majority of prints represented the idle naval seaman afloat and ashore as relatively free, happy and capable, enjoying distinct penchants for alcohol, women, money, transport and sociability. The Navy's men and their interpretations were problematic, and in visual depictions the figure of the tar was often stereotypically reductive and satirically distorted. This diverse character's attitudes and behaviour were of particular prominence and pertinence to seamen themselves at leisure and to their audiences in real life and visual culture. In contrast to the actuality that the pleasure and recreation was only a small part of a seaman's life, the subject was readily employed to construct the figure of Jack Tar for humorously critical purposes. As demonstrated, this stereotype existed as a clearly legible symbol for image-makers and their audiences, becoming the nexus for troublesome issues, specifically anxieties of vulnerability, liability and culpability among the established social order. Yet, the negative associations of seamen, real and represented, were alleviated by humour. This chapter argues that vice and depravity was found throughout contemporary society, including among the women, hawkers, officers and social elite who encountered seamen on leave and who influenced the tar and his somewhat unfair notoriety. This notion led on to a focus upon the crime and punishment of the Navy's men, which reveals problems and misconceptions of the institution's disciplinary remit.

Chapter Three explored how the sensitive and shifting issue of naval discipline entailed complexities and challenges in its visual representation. Seamen's criminality was a subject apparent in contemporary actualities and related textual discourses, yet, unsurprisingly, less so in print culture. From the limited imagery found and analysed in relation to archival material and findings of recent scholars, notably Byrn and Dancy, I argued that image-makers misrepresented actualities for the comfort of audiences' preconceptions. The more subversive offences of insolence, desertion, the role of

alcohol and corporal punishment (especially flogging) were avoided, while more dramatic outbursts of criminality, such as the Nore mutiny of 1797, and violence ashore, were exaggerated. The study of various punitive consequences of disciplinary law, among these corporal and capital punishments with their associated psychological and emotional suffering, confirmed their problematic nature, loaded with ambiguous, and arguably excessive, significance for audiences that dominated the print market. The images discussed tended to use satire to alleviate prevailing anxieties regarding the potential threats the Navy's men presented to the established order and the effects and limitations of the strict discipline to which they were subject. Aspects of particular pertinence were, unsurprisingly, those most recognisable to civilian audiences, specifically the tar's detrimental presence ashore and bearing upon civilian society. Image-makers played upon the topicality and contentiousness of their subject and, in the process, consolidated preconceptions regarding naval men's tendencies towards criminality.

The final chapter considered insubordination, suffering and premature mortality as aspects of the seamen's experience when aboard ship and subject to the dangers of combat, accidents, disease and potential maltreatment. The interpretation of naval service as 'deadly' was not at its most apparent when subject to strict discipline; mere seafaring environments and duties were as constantly life-threatening. Reference to seamen's mortality through the peg-legged pensioner Jack Tar was typical of the reassuring interpretation that this important and revered character would reach a ripe old age, survive the dangers of service, stoically endure the accompanying hardships and live life to the full with a devil-may-care acceptance of his mortality. Yet, the actualities and preconceptions were often more negative, and complex. The lurking presence of death, particularly as a result of conflict, environmental circumstances and disease, made the subject in naval discourse especially problematic, with imagery providing appealing and reassuring constructions of naval medicine and welfare support. The favoured theme was to represent the tar's mortality as a consequence of direct combat, typically in battle or boarding party, or through nature's cruel seas amidst storms, legitimising the loss of life and presenting it as a heroic individual sacrifice. This avoided various negative actualities, namely the abundance of inglorious, sometimes seemingly anonymous and purposeless mass suffering and fatalities of seamen through other aspects of seafaring service and human limitations.

Throughout the thesis I have shown that there existed a preoccupation with the physical experience and morality of the tar, particularly in relation to recreational, disorder, violent and dangerous circumstances. In print culture, these had the capacity for evoking empathy, drama and satire that limited and evaded the more negative issue of his service pressures and the sacrifices he made. Such imagery constituted a distraction from other serious matters relating to naval administration, discipline, recreation, crime, punishment, death, disease and post-service welfare. The typical derision of Jack Tar, which was somewhat unfair, utilised satire to alleviate anxieties regarding the pressures put upon the common seamen. They and their Navy constituted not only an invaluable facet of national defence and identity, but had even more fundamental implications for society, presenting questions of selfless duty and established order. These subjects' visual construction, arguably, distracted contemporary viewers from unease at not being able to repay the debt to servicemen, let alone even relate to or quantify their servitude and sacrifice.

The experiences of the 'fortunate' survivors of naval experiences once out of the service fall beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet, brief consideration is further demonstrative of the misconceptions regarding negative naval actualities and representation during this period. The health, welfare and mortality of ex-Navy men, whether as pensioners, old sea-dogs, incapacitated veterans or among the abundance of fit, active men who inundated the retracting labour-market in the post-war depression, remained a problematic issue for such individuals, the Navy and broader society. While free from their seafaring warships with their dangerous, harsh, strenuous and disease-prone environments, the tar's service had ensured some quality and structure in life – accommodation, food and drink, purposeful work, hierarchical order, wages and access to medical assistance. Indeed, the Navy had been something of a lifeline for many males of varying ages from orphaned or poor family backgrounds, with the Marine Society responsible for recruiting over 25,000 boys, as well as 33,000 men, between 1756 and 1805.[1] Without the mutual obligations entailed in His Majesty's Navy, such individuals remained susceptible to disease, malnutrition, starvation, hypothermia, infection and mortal decline. The common ex-serviceman lost his livelihood, purpose and

[1] Alison Yarrington, 'Popular and Imaginary Pantheons', in Richard Wrigley and Matthew Craske, eds, *Pantheons: Transformations of a Monumental Idea*, Aldershot, 2004, 116.

professional community. Many tars in the wake of service were unable to adapt or reintegrate back into society ashore, remaining in Greenwich Infirmary, Naval Hospitals, seafaring trades or maritime cultures and reliant on official aid, charity or individual sympathy to get by. The moulding of the tar to a specific occupation, environment and culture alienated him from civilian society making employment and community support more of a challenge. As such, further research needs to be done that explores representations of veteran tars post-service.

This thesis on naval representation demonstrates how we are all, including Jack Tar, fundamentally seeking individual identity and reassuring acceptance in a given civilisation. The recreational pleasures of the typically jolly tars were ingredients in such endeavour, especially as means of coping with the monotomy, oppression, subjugation, derision and hardship suffered in their naval existence. Service in the Georgian Royal Navy significantly moulded its common men and informed their relations with others. The tar's form, behaviour and treatment, in reality and representation, bore signs of his naval service. Besides detrimental associations and experiences of their professional-identity, common seamen were also subject to economic exploitation, disciplinary maltreatment, social-ostracism and poor welfare sadly still found today. The march of civilisation, specifically the achievements of national defence, transatlantic trade, institutional professionalism and medical science, for which the Navy was often a pioneering contributor, have not eliminated the problems posed by state control and bodily order in society. It is interesting, although probably unsurprising, that the controversial question of the efficacy of capital punishment resonates throughout history, especially in connection with the armed forces. It may come as a shock to readers that up until 1998 the death penalty was officially permitted for mutiny and the offences of failing to suppress or report it in the United Kingdom. The sentence, however, had not been passed prior to that date for many years.[2] Furthermore, the issues of corporal discipline and martial law, and the

[2] Section 21(5) of the Human Rights Act 1998 completely abolished the death penalty in the United Kingdom. Prior to this, the death penalty had already been abolished for murder, but it had remained in force for certain military offences and treason, although no executions had been carried out for several decades. This provision was not required by the European Convention on Human Rights, since Protocol 6 of the Convention permitted the death penalty in time of war, and Protocol 13, which prohibits the death penalty for all circumstances, did not then exist. The UK government introduced Section 21(5) as a late amendment in response to parliamentary pressure. 'Part II, Discipline and Trial and Punishment of Military Offences', *Army Act, 1955, c.18, (Regnal. 3 and 4 Eliz 2).* Available on UK Statute Law Database. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/3-4/18/contents. Accessed on 25 April 2013.

problematic questions of morality, efficacy and legitimacy of state control and power, remain salient in present-day affairs of the Ministry of Defence and in contemporary discourse. One only has to think of the recent incidents involving NATO servicemen killing their fellow allies and the local civilians they are charged with protecting, as in war-torn Afghanistan.[3] Clearly, a disconnection between representation and negative realities of naval service during the French Wars has contemporary resonance. In future research, I would be interested to explore how such issues mapped in to the mutating visual cultures of nineteenth-century Britain, perhaps extending the scope of my work to include the army. But, for now, I hope I have gone some way towards offering a balanced view of Jack Tar's problematic status as a star of eighteenth-century British print culture.

[3] For example, *The Annual Register*, 1801, 65-6; 1802, 7-9, 174-86; *London Chronicle*, 18 January 1802; Anon., *The life, trail and execution of Joseph Wall, esq. late Gov of Goree, for the willful murder of Benjamin. Armstrong, a serjeant of the African corps,* London, 1802.

Illustrations are not included in the digital version of this thesis

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