PORTRAITURE AND THE BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER, 1739–1805

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides the first sustained study of the portraiture of eighteenth-century British naval officers, concentrating on the period between Edward Vernon's capture of Porto Bello in 1739 and Horatio Nelson's death at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. This period was punctuated by a series of major international conflicts, from which Britain emerged as the world's leading maritime power, boasting a navy unrivalled in size and strength, a burgeoning empire and a celebrated cast of naval officers, many of whom became central protagonists in the nation's social, political and cultural affairs. Whereas existing scholarship has tended to address naval officers' portraits in relation to other forms of society portraiture, this thesis examines how such works responded to the unique characteristics of the sea officer's profession, which required individuals to follow institutional codes and to acquire specialist professional knowledge, whilst also competing against one another for employment and promotion, confronting the dangers of shipwreck, disease and battle, and enduring lengthy separations from home and family. The commissioning, production, ownership, exchange, display and reproduction of naval portraits are explored in this thesis, revealing how the image of the naval officer was appropriated and manipulated to serve a range of personal, political and ideological agendas in an era which witnessed the birth of powerful new forms of celebrity and the development of modern notions of selfhood. Highlighting the variety, complexity and creativity of naval portraiture as a genre, this analysis provides new insights into the role that art can play in mediating between individual and institutional identities.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 60.   Joshua Reynolds (*artist*), James Macardell (*engraver* and *publisher*), *The Honourable Edward Boscawen*, 1759, mezzotint on paper. 35 x 25.1 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 61.   Joshua Reynolds (*artist*), James Macardell and anonymous (*engravers*), John Bowles (*publisher*), *The Honourable Edward Boscawen*, 1759, mezzotint on paper. 35.2 x 25 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 62.   Joshua Reynolds (*artist*), anonymous (*engraver*), J. Fuller (*publisher*), *The Honourable Edward Boscawen*, 1760, engraving on paper. *The Naval Chronicle* 3 (1960): 177.

Figure 63.   Joshua Reynolds (*artist*), T. Chambers (*engraver*), *The Honourable Edward Boscawen*, 1766, engraving on paper. John Entick, *The General History of the Late War*, 5 vols., 3rd ed. (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1766), 3: 442.

Figure 64.   Joshua Reynolds (*artist*), anonymous (*engraver*), John Hinton (*publisher*), *Admiral Boscawen*, 1757, engraving on paper. 17.8 x 12 cm. *The Universal Magazine* 23, no. 158 (Sept. 1758): 125.

Figure 65.   Joshua Reynolds (*artist*), Edward Fisher (*engraver* and *publisher*), *The Honourable Augustus Keppel*, 1759, mezzotint on paper. 50.3 x 35.4 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 66.   Joshua Reynolds (*artist*), B. Green (*engraver*), *Admiral Keppel*, 1766, engraving on paper. Entick, *General History*, 5: 117.

Figure 67.   Joshua Reynolds (*artist*), anonymous (*engraver*), John Bowles (*publisher*), *The Honourable Augustus Keppel*, ca. 1762–3, mezzotint on paper. 15.4 x 11.5 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 68.   George Bickham the Younger (*engraver* and *publisher*), *Admirals*, ca. 1765, engraving on paper. 32.3 x 39.6 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 69.   Thomas Hudson (*artist*), John Faber Jr. (*engraver*), *The Honourable Charles Knowles, Esq.*, 1755–6, mezzotint on paper. 35.5 x 25.3 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 70.   John Bowles (*publisher*), *Edward His Royal Highness Duke of York and Albany &c.*, ca. 1760s, mezzotint on paper. 15.3 x 11.6 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 71.   John Brooks (*engraver*), William Herbert and Thomas Jefferys (*publishers*), *The Honourable William Rowley, Esq.*, 1745–6, mezzotint on paper. 35.6 x 25.2 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 86.   Probably Joshua Reynolds, *Captain Lord Robert Manners*, 1784, oil on canvas. 75 x 62 cm. Untraced.

Figure 87.   Probably Joshua Reynolds, *Captain Lord Robert Manners*, 1784, oil on canvas. 75 x 62.2 cm. Grantham, Belvoir Castle.

Figure 88.   Nathaniel Dance, *Captain Samuel Barrington*, ca. 1770, oil on canvas. 76.2 x 63.5 cm. London, National Maritime Museum.

Figure 89.   Unknown (*possibly after* Praxiteles), *Leaning Satyr*, ca. 130 AD (*after* fourth century BC), marble. 170 cm (height). Rome, Capitoline Museums.

Figure 90.   Thomas Gainsborough, *Richard St George Mansergh-St George*, 1776, oil on canvas. 230.2 x 156.1 cm. Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria.

Figure 91.   Thomas Gainsborough, *Commander Lord John Hervey*, 1779, oil on canvas. 221 x 149.9 cm. Suffolk, Ickworth, National Trust.

Figure 92.   M. [Mary or Matthew] Darly (*publisher*), based on an original design by Benjamin Franklin, *Brittannia Mutilated, or the Horrid (but true) Picture of Great Brittain, when Deprived of her Limbs by her Enemies*, 29 November 1774, engraving on paper. 29.8 x 39.4 cm. Philadelphia, Library Company of Philadelphia.

Figure 93.   Joshua Reynolds (*artist*), William Dickinson (*engraver* and *publisher*), *The Right Honourable Lord Robert Manners*, 1 July 1783, mezzotint on paper. 63.5 x 38.5 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 94.   Thomas Stothard, *The Death of Lord Robert Manners*, 1782–3, oil on canvas. Dimensions unknown. Grantham, Belvoir Castle.

Figure 95.   Benjamin West, *The Death of General James Wolfe*, 1770, oil on canvas. 152.6 x 214.5 cm. Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada.

Figure 96.   Joseph Nollekens, *Monument to the Three Captains (Lord Robert Manners, William Bayne and William Blair)*, completed 1793, marble. 600 cm (approx. height). London, Westminster Abbey.

Figure 97.   George Romney, *Midshipman Joseph Sydney Yorke*, ca. 1781–2, oil on canvas. 90 x 68 cm. Private Collection.

Figure 98.   George Romney, *Admiral Charles Hardy*, 1780, oil on canvas. 127 x 101.6 cm. London, National Maritime Museum.

Figure 99.   George Romney, *William Courtenay*, 1781–3, oil on canvas. 164 x 134 cm. The Nemours Foundation.

Figure 100. John Singleton Copley, *Midshipman Augustus Brine*, 1782, oil on canvas. 127 x 101.6 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 101. Unidentified artist, *Captain James Brine*, ca. 1782–7, oil on canvas. Dimensions unknown. Private Collection.

Figure 102. John Singleton Copley, *Admiral Clark Gayton*, 1779, oil on canvas. 127 x 101.8 cm. London, National Maritime Museum.

Figure 103. John Singleton Copley, *Lieutenant John Loring*, 1780, oil on canvas. 73.7 x 61.6 cm. Winchester, VA, Museum of the Shenandoah Valley.

Figure 104. George Romney, *Charles Grey*, 1784, oil on canvas. 86.5 x 67 cm. Windsor, Eton College.

Figure 105. Jeremiah Davison, *Midshipman Thomas Frankland*, 1731, oil on canvas. 124.5 x 99.1 cm. Aylesbury, Chequers Court.

Figure 106. Mason Chamberlin, *Portrait of an unidentified midshipman*, ca. 1760–74, oil on canvas. Dimensions unknown. Maidstone, Leeds Castle.

Figure 107. Francis Cotes, *Midshipman George Cranfield Berkeley*, 1769, oil on canvas. 91.4 x 69.9 cm. Gloucestershire, Berkeley Castle.

Figure 108. Thomas Gainsborough, *Admiral George Brydges Rodney*, 1783–6, oil on canvas. 229.9 x 148.6 cm. Edinburgh, Dalmeny House, Earl of Rosebery.

Figure 109. Thomas Gainsborough, *Captain George Cranfield Berkeley*, 1784, oil on canvas. 240 x 150 cm approx. Gloucestershire, Berkeley Castle.

Figure 110. James Northcote (*artist*), Thomas Gaugain (*engraver* and *publisher*), *Portraits of the Officers and Men who were preserv'd from the Wreck of the Centaur*, October 1784, stipple and etching on paper. 52.4 x 64.8 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 111. Mason Chamberlin, *Captain William Bentinck*, 1783, oil on canvas. 91.4 x 70.5 cm. Private Collection.

Figure 112. Mason Chamberlin, *John Bentinck*, 1783, oil on canvas. 91.4 x 70.5 cm. Private Collection.

Figure 113. Edward Francis Burney, *The West Wall of the Great Room at the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1784*, 1784, ink and wash on paper. 33.5 x 49.2 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 127.   Henri-Pierre Danloux, *Sergeant Mather of the Dumfriesshire Militia*, 1799, oil on canvas. 99.1 x 73.6 cm. Dumfries and Galloway, Drumlanrig, The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry.

Figure 128.   Henri-Pierre Danloux, *Rear-Admiral Adam Duncan*, ca. 1792, oil on canvas. 76.2 x 62.2 cm. London, National Portrait Gallery.

Figure 129.   Henri-Pierre Danloux, *Vice-Admiral George Keith Elphinstone, first Baron Keith*, 1798, oil on canvas. 254 x 190.5 cm. Private Collection.

Figure 130.   Henry Raeburn, *Admiral Adam Duncan, first Viscount Duncan*, 1798, oil on canvas. 227.5 x 157.5 cm. Leith, Trinity House, Historic Scotland.

Figure 131.   John Hoppner, *Admiral Adam Duncan, first Viscount Duncan*, 1798, oil on canvas. 250 x 150 cm. Forfar Town and County Hall, Angus Council.

Figure 132.   John Hoppner (*artist*), James Ward (*engraver*), John Boydell (*publisher*), *The Right Honourable Adam Duncan, Viscount Duncan of Camperdown*, 16 April 1798, mezzotint on paper. 70.2 x 49.7 cm. London, National Maritime Museum.

Figure 133.   George Romney (with background by Dominic Serres), *Vice-Admiral George Darby*, 1783–6, oil on canvas. 243.8 x 152.4 cm. London, National Maritime Museum.

Figure 134.   Daniel Orme (*artist*, *engraver* and *publisher*), Edward Orme (*publisher*), *Lord Viscount Duncan*, 18 December 1797, stipple engraving on paper. 18.3 x 12.5 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 135.   Daniel Orme (*artist*, *engraver* and *publisher*), Edward Orme (*publisher*), *Admiral De Winter*, 18 December 1797, stipple engraving on paper. 18.5 x 12.5 cm. London, British Museum.

Figure 136.   Daniel Orme, *Duncan Receiving the Surrender of de Winter at the Battle of Camperdown, 11 October 1797*, 1797, oil on canvas. 152 x 201 cm. London, National Maritime Museum.

Figure 137.   John Singleton Copley, *The Surrender of the Dutch Admiral de Winter to Admiral Duncan at the Battle of Camperdown*, 1799, oil on canvas. 275 x 368.5 cm. Edinburgh, National Galleries Scotland.

Figure 138.   Daniel Orme, *Nelson Receiving the Surrender of the* San Josef *at the Battle of Cape St Vincent, 14 February 1797*, 1799, oil on canvas. 149.8 x 198.1 cm. London, National Maritime Museum.

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INTRODUCTION

"It is almost necessary to be in love with enterprise": Portraiture and the British naval officer, 1739–1805

In 1775, the naval officer Captain John Bentinck and his eleven-year-old son William were represented in a large double portrait by the Royal Academician Mason Chamberlin (National Maritime Museum, fig. 1). This painting is one of many naval officers' portraits produced during the long eighteenth century. Sometimes described as the "Second Hundred Years' War", the period between 1689 and 1815 was punctuated by a series of major conflicts between Britain, France and other European powers.[1] Fighting took place around the globe as nations battled for control of colonial possessions and access to lucrative trade routes. Despite suffering losses as well as making gains, Britain emerged from this protracted imperial struggle as the world's leading maritime power, boasting a navy unrivalled in size and strength.[2] Against this backdrop, British naval officers became key figures in the nation's social, political and cultural affairs and their portraits have much to tell us about this context.

This thesis offers the first sustained study of eighteenth-century naval portraiture, focussing upon selected examples of paintings, prints, miniatures and silhouettes. It explores the various roles that painted and printed portraits played in the lives of British naval officers and considers how portraiture shaped public perceptions of the officer's profession at a time when naval affairs occupied a central position in the national consciousness. There is relatively little discussion of busts, monuments and other sculpted portraits because the aesthetic conventions and typical functions of such works diverged significantly from those of two-dimensional portraiture, fulfilling a distinctive cultural role which lies beyond the scope of the present study and which has been explored by other scholars.[3]

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[1] The description of this period as the "Second Hundred Years' War" appears to have been coined in John Robert Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1883), 24. For a critical perspective on the use of this term, see François Crouzet, "The Second Hundred Years' War: Some Reflections," *French History* 10, no. 4 (Dec. 1996): 432–50.

[2] For the wider impact of prolonged international conflict on eighteenth-century British society, see: John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988); Lawrence Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London: Routledge, 1994); H. V. Bowen (ed.), *War and British Society, 1688–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998); Kathleen Wilson (ed.), *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004).

[3] Alison Yarrington, *The Commemoration of the Hero 1800–1864: Monuments to the British Victors of the Napoleonic Wars* (New York/London: Garland, 1988); Holger Hoock, "The British Military Pantheon in St Paul's Cathedral: The State, Cultural Patriotism, and the

Chamberlin's double portrait of Captain Bentinck and his son provides a stimulating introduction to some of the central themes of this thesis. John Bentinck belonged to the relatively small proportion of eighteenth-century British naval officers who came from an aristocratic background: his grandfather was the first Earl of Portland and his father was a member of the Dutch nobility.[4] He gained his first commission in the navy during the Seven Years' War (1756–63) and quickly ascended to the rank of post-captain (see Appendix for a full description of eighteenth-century naval ranks). After the war, he married Renira de Tuyll de Serooskerken at The Hague in 1763 and the couple's eldest son William – also depicted in Chamberlin's portrait – was born the following year. Bentinck was commissioned to command the *Dragon* (74 guns) in 1766–8 and the *Centaur* (74 guns) in 1770–3 but received no further employment before he died from a sudden illness in September 1775, aged only thirty-seven.[5] Signed and dated 1775, Chamberlin's portrait was probably commissioned by the captain before his death, although it could also have been painted posthumously for his bereaved family, who displayed the painting in their country residence at Indio in Devon.[6] Bentinck perhaps knew Chamberlin through the American inventor and politician Benjamin Franklin, with whom he collaborated on a series of scientific experiments at sea in 1773.[7] Franklin had been painted by Chamberlin in 1762 and may have recommended the artist to the naval captain.[8]

The Bentinck double portrait is set in the cabin of a man-of-war, as indicated by the low ceiling and curved beams. A more secluded and exclusive space than the public theatre of the quarterdeck, the cabin was where a captain performed the administrative business of command, such as completing logbook entries and answering correspondence. At the same time, it was a space for leisure and rest: the ship's officers and guests socialised at the captain's table and the cabin was

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Politics of National Monuments, c. 1790–1820," in *Pantheons: Transformations of a Monumental Idea*, ed. Richard Wrigley and Matthew Craske, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 81–105.

[4] Randolph Cock, "John Albert Bentinck (1737–1775)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/2159. See also, John Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, 6 vols. (London: R. Faulder, 1797), 6: 294–5.

[5] This thesis follows the practice of naval historians in giving a ship's number of guns (in parentheses) on the first mention of the vessel. The extent of a ship's armament determined the size, rate and function of the vessel. For more information, see Rif Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail, 1714–1792* (Barnsley: Seaforth, 2007).

[6] *Catalogue of Portraits and Other Pictures, Belonging to Charles Aldenburg Bentinck, Esq. at Indio, Devonshire* (Torquay: E. J. Matthews, 1865), 4.

[7] Benjamin Franklin, "Of the Stilling of Waves by means of Oil," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 64 (1774): 455–60.

[8] Richard Dorment, *British Painting in the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1986), 38–44.

also where the captain stored his personal effects and slept.[9] Chamberlin's depiction of a doorway in the bulkhead behind Bentinck's head suggests the possibility of communication between the cabin and the rest of the ship, situating the depicted space within a wider network of working environments. However, the closure of the door separates the cabin from the world beyond. On one level, this underscores the social exclusivity of the space, which was reserved for the officer class. Gentility is suggested by the presence of a bell-pull for summoning attendants and authority by the guns suspended on the far wall. Bentinck's rank and social status are further highlighted by his clothing and accessories: he wears a captain's full-dress uniform, a wig and a gold signet ring. Additionally, his dress sword – a symbol of both his status as a gentleman and his officer's commission – lies on an upholstered bench in the right-hand background. Yet, the closed door also lends an intimate quality to the cabin, which is reinforced by the scene of father-son interaction and by the prevailing air of ease and informality: Bentinck reclines in his chair and a small brown dog is curled up asleep under the table. These details frame the space as the captain's inner sanctum, removed from the hustle and bustle of the rest of the ship.

The hybrid nature of this setting – part workplace, part private space – sets the tone for the portrait as a whole. Captain Bentinck is simultaneously represented as a conduit for the transmission of accumulated professional expertise, a uniquely creative individual and an affectionate parent. William stands before his father in the uniform of the Naval Academy, an Admiralty-run school in Portsmouth Dockyard which provided education for prospective officers.[10] Under his arm, he cradles an incomplete model of a single-masted sailing vessel, from which the boom and sails are missing. William holds a loose rope from the model's rigging in his right hand, the implication being that he is learning about the practicalities of seamanship through the construction of the miniature vessel. The captain inclines his head towards the boy and gestures in a manner that suggests instruction, apparently taking an active role in preparing his son to uphold the rigorous standards of the naval profession. Featuring weighty tomes inscribed "Anson's Voyage", referring to Admiral George Anson's circumnavigation in 1740–4, and "Saunderson's Algebra Vol. 1", the stack of books on the cabin table represents the substantial body of

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[9] Brian Lavery, *The Ship of the Line*, 2 vols. (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1983–4), 2: 135–6; N. A. M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London: Collins, 1986), 65–7.
[10] The date of William Bentinck's admission to the Naval Academy is not recorded but, as the minimum age of admission for sea officers' sons was eleven, the earliest that he could have been admitted was June 1775. *Rules and Orders relating to the Royal Academy Established in His Majesty's Dock-Yard at Portsmouth* (London: Admiralty Office, 1773), 3.

specialist knowledge, historical precedent, rules, procedures and mathematical formulae that officers were expected to learn.[11] With his right elbow resting casually atop the pile, Bentinck is positioned as an intermediary between these volumes and his son, having seemingly internalised their contents.

At the same time, however, details scattered throughout the portrait indicate that the captain himself does more than passively adhere to procedure. Starting in the late 1760s, Bentinck had developed a reputation as a naval inventor, and Chamberlin incorporated references to several of the captain's innovations in his portrait. Bentinck's new type of pulley block lies on the floor beside the dog and a diagram of his improved chain pump pokes out from under the books on the desk. An identical diagram (National Maritime Museum, fig. 2) appears in the captain's "Scheme Book", into which he copied his correspondence with the Admiralty concerning his inventions.[12] Inscribed "Memorandums relative to the Capstan 1770", the rolled paper in Bentinck's right hand also refers to a document in the "Scheme Book". This memorandum describes a new design for ships' capstans (revolving cylinders used for winding heavy cables), a model for which is depicted on top of the bureau in the portrait's background. Bentinck's inventions were generally designed to increase efficiency, allowing fewer men to perform more work at a faster rate. Unsolicited by the Admiralty, they were developed by the captain on his own initiative, often through trials conducted in his ship, a practice which sometimes brought Bentinck into conflict with the navy's official regulations. For example, in May 1772, he received a stern rebuke from the Navy Board for re-rigging his ship according to his own design, which was "contrary to the Rules of the Navy and the General Printed Instructions".[13] However, conceding that his new rigging had significant advantages, the Board allowed the offence to pass unpunished. The correspondence copied in the "Scheme Book" shows that Bentinck presented his innovations to the Lords of Admiralty as "endeavours to promote the good of His Majesty's Service" but his underlying objective was the advancement of his own standing: in one letter, he refers explicitly to "the great desire I have to shew myself deserving of further marks of their [Lordships'] approbation".[14] The same desire to appear "deserving" seems to underpin Chamberlin's portrait, which elides

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[11] George Anson, *A Voyage round the World, In the Years MDCCXL, I, II, III, IV* (London: John and Paul Knapton, 1748); Nicholas Saunderson, *The Elements of Algebra, in Ten Books* (Cambridge: University Press, 1740).

[12] For an eighteenth-century copy of Bentinck's "Scheme Book", see: NMM SPB/33.

[13] The Principal Officers and Commissioners of the Navy to John Bentinck, 6 May, 1772, NMM SPB/33.

[14] John Bentinck to Philip Stephens, Secretary to the Admiralty, 19 Oct., 1770 and 9 Mar., 1772, NMM SPB/33.

the tension between Bentinck's professional duty and maverick ingenuity, representing these two aspects of his character in harmony.

In the relaxed, almost intimate atmosphere of the cabin, the portrait also showcases the "domestic affections" for which Bentinck was praised by James Fordyce in his *Addresses to Young Men* (1777).[15] The peacefully sleeping dog evinces the captain's ability to inspire loyalty, presenting his authority – as the dog's master, the ship's commander and the boy's father – as benevolent. While, on the one hand, Bentinck's efforts to prepare his eldest son for a naval career signal his devotion to the service, his active involvement in William's education also suggests that he takes his paternal responsibilities seriously. Although prospective officers were generally taught about sailing using full-scale ships, rather than miniaturised models, practical training and manual skills were central to a naval education. However, one could also see the hands-on lesson that the captain is giving his son as a response to the parenting advice in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's influential pedagogical treatise *Emile* (1762), which recommended engaging adolescent boys in practical work.[16] Indeed, John Bentinck was a friend and correspondent of Rousseau, having first written to the philosopher in December 1764 to express his admiration for *Emile*. In the same letter, he requested marital advice from the Frenchman, explaining that his wife, Renira, felt so attached to him that she could not bear even the shortest separation – a significant problem given that his profession required him to spend many months away at sea.[17] Writing directly to Renira Bentinck in reply, Rousseau suggested that she should comfort herself with the knowledge that true love, founded on virtue, was strengthened by sacrifice. He also asserted that, if her charms caused her husband to forget his professional responsibilities, her noble sentiments would restore his courage and sense of duty.[18] The presentation of private love and public duty as intimately intertwined and mutually reinforcing is consistent with Rousseau's wider philosophy, and Chamberlin's portrait evokes a similar synergy of public and private. This painting is not typical of eighteenth-century naval portraiture as officers were rarely depicted in their cabins or with their children. However, the portrait represents an unusually rich source for art-historical analysis,

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[15] James Fordyce, *Addresses to Young Men*, 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell, 1777), 2: 226.

[16] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, Or Education*, trans. Barbara Foxley (London/Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1911 [1762]), 128–71.

[17] John Albert Bentinck to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 28 Dec., 1764, in *Electronic Enlightenment Scholarly Edition of Correspondence*, ed. R. V. McNamee (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), online ed., http://www.e-enlightenment.com/. See also, Elizabeth Le Blond, *Charlotte Sophie, Countess Bentinck, Her Life and Times, 1715–1800*, 2 vols. (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1912), 2: 64.

[18] Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Renira Bentinck, 26 Jan., 1764, in *Electronic Enlightenment*, ed. McNamee, online ed., http://www.e-enlightenment.com/.

given the wealth of associated primary documentation. Moreover, weaving together the themes of gentility, professionalism, creativity and domestic sentiment, it highlights the complex admixture of different elements that could constitute naval identity in eighteenth-century portraiture.

I

Officers' portraits are often included as illustrations in naval histories but the specifics of their production, iconography and display usually pass unremarked. Art historians have subjected some naval portraits to more rigorous analysis but only insofar as they relate to broader themes and categories, such as martial identity, elite masculinity and celebrity.[19] There is some logic in this approach. Whereas marine painting – another genre closely associated with the navy – was generally practiced by specialists, the same artists who produced naval portraits also painted many other sitters, including aristocrats, landowners, army officers, physicians, lawyers, clergymen, merchants, women and children.[20] Naval officers' likenesses therefore need to be understood as part of a broader continuum of society portraiture. However, in focussing only upon this wider context, scholars have failed to recognise how naval portraits were shaped by and responded to the unique characteristics of the sea officer's profession, which this thesis examines.

Openness was one of the distinguishing features of the naval profession in the eighteenth century, forming a crucial point of difference between the navy and the army. Military officers were required to purchase their commissions, a measure which ensured the social exclusivity of the officer corps by denying entry to those without private means.[21] The navy, on the other hand, did not levy any such charges, opening the profession to a broader range of individuals. A small minority, including John Bentinck, belonged to aristocratic and noble families, although these men were typically younger sons, who did not stand to inherit and therefore needed to make their own livings. The majority of naval officers were from middling

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[19] See, for example, J. Carter Brown (ed.), *The Martial Face: The Military Portrait in Britain, 1760–1900* (Providence: Brown Univ., 1991); Martin Postle (ed.), *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity* (London: Tate, 2005).
[20] For marine painting in this period, see: Eleanor Hughes (ed.), *Spreading Canvas: Eighteenth-Century British Marine Painting* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2016); Sarah Monks, *Marine Painting in Britain, 1650–1850: Framing Space, Power and Modernity* (Abingdon: Routledge, forthcoming).
[21] Anthony P. C. Bruce, *The Purchase System in the British Army, 1660–1871* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1980); Alan J. Guy, "The Army of the Georges, 1714–1783," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army*, ed. David Chandler and Ian Beckett (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), 92–111.

backgrounds: they were the sons of merchants, shopkeepers, clergymen, lawyers, physicians and other naval officers.[22]

A naval career offered these individuals the prospect of greater social and economic mobility than many other professions. Simply obtaining an officer's commission entitled the bearer to call himself a gentleman and progressing through the ranks produced further enhancements in status. In ascending order, the permanent commissioned ranks for naval officers in this period were lieutenant and post-captain, followed by the three senior ranks of rear-admiral, vice-admiral and admiral, each allotted to one of the navy's three squadrons – blue, white and red, in order of increasing importance (see Appendix for more details). Admirals, vice-admirals and rear-admirals were known as flag officers because they were entitled to fly specific flags from their ships. There were also two temporary "quasi-ranks", to which an officer might be appointed for the duration of a particular assignment: commander (between lieutenant and post-captain) and commodore (between post-captain and rear-admiral).[23] Within this hierarchy, there were two key thresholds – becoming a post-captain and reaching flag rank – both of which significantly increased an officer's social status. Captains and flag officers also benefited most from the navy's prize money system. Under this scheme, the monetary value of a captured enemy warship or merchant vessel was distributed amongst the officers and men of the ship that had effected the capture, the largest shares going to the ship's captain and to the admiral who had signed its written orders.[24] The sums involved could be staggeringly large, enabling successful officers to become extremely wealthy. Furthermore, the names and exploits of officers who distinguished themselves in battle were reported in the British press and formed part of eighteenth-century popular culture, earning fame and renown for the individuals in question.

However, these opportunities for celebrity, fortune and improved social status came at a price. Those who served at sea had to endure lengthy separations from their loved ones in cramped and uncomfortable conditions. They were regularly exposed to inhospitable climates, violent storms, tropical diseases and hostile enemy action, putting them at risk of injury, illness, disability and death.[25] Officers

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[22] Evan Wilson, *A Social History of British Naval Officers 1775–1815* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017), 223.
[23] N. A. M. Rodger, "Commissioned Officers' Careers in the Royal Navy, 1690–1815," *Journal for Maritime Research* 3, no. 1 (2001): 87–9.
[24] Richard Hill, *The Prizes of War: The Naval Prize System in the Napoleonic Wars, 1793–1815* (Stroud: Royal Naval Museum Publications, 1998).
[25] Rodger, *Wooden World*, 256.

also struggled to develop the social graces expected of gentlemen. A man-of-war was an emphatically masculine, often brutal environment with a unique language and set of routines. On board, an officer's social position was defined more through his control over the plebeian sailors than through his contact with other gentlemen, and there were often few opportunities for him to learn how to behave in refined company. In October 1806, Captain Edward Codrington wrote to Lady Arden about her son, George, who was then a twelve-year-old midshipman (an officer-in-training) under his command: "if his manners by comparison should…[be] coarser than his neighbours on shore let due attendance be made for the simpleness of the profession to which he is detained & remember he has no other abode than that, 'Where wild disorder holds her wanton reign / And careless mortals frolic in her train.'"[26] Recognising the difficulties that officers faced, the Admiralty introduced various measures to help them appear respectable. One of the most notable of these measures was the establishment of naval uniform in 1748.[27] The new uniform was only for commissioned officers and midshipmen, being intended to create "the Appearance which is necessary to distinguish their Class to be in the Rank of Gentlemen".[28]

The appearance of gentility was desirable for officers but of greater importance was the development of technical expertise.[29] This is reflected in the advice that Horatio Nelson gave to Charles Connor, a young recruit, in 1803: "you cannot be a good Officer without being Gentleman" but, to be an officer in the first place, "you must be a Seamen".[30] The Admiralty demanded that prospective officers satisfy three requirements before they could receive their commissions: candidates had to be at least twenty years of age (although this was not always strictly enforced); they had to have served at sea for a minimum of six years (including two as a midshipman); and they had to pass an examination on seamanship and navigation conducted by the Navy Board.[31] Those hoping to become officers typically entered the navy between the ages of ten and fourteen. A family looking to

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[26] Edward Codrington to Margaretta Elizabeth Perceval, Lady Arden, Oct. 1806, NMM PER/1/54, quoted in Ellen Gill, "'Children of the Service': Paternalism, Patronage and Friendship in the Georgian Navy," *Journal for Maritime Research* 15, no. 2 (2013): 152. Codrington quotes from "The Midshipman," *The Naval Chronicle* 2 (1799): 526.
[27] Amy Miller, *Dressed to Kill: British Naval Uniform, Masculinity and Contemporary Fashions, 1748–1857* (London: National Maritime Museum, 2007), 13–33. See also, Derek Barker, "The Naval Uniform Dress of 1748," *Mariner's Mirror* 65 (1979): 243–54.
[28] TNA ADM 2/71, quoted in Miller, *Dressed*, 21.
[29] Rodger, *Wooden World*, 259–60.
[30] Horatio Nelson to Charles Connor, Dec. 1803, in *The Dispatches and Letters of Lord Nelson*, ed. N. H. Nicolas, 7 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1845), 5: 310–11.
[31] See Lieutenants' Passing Certificates, TNA ADM 107, and Rodger, *Wooden World*, 263–5.

send their son into the service had two options.[32] The most common route involved convincing a naval captain to accept the boy as a volunteer in his ship. Recruits who entered via this method received the majority of their naval education afloat: they performed the duties of an able seaman, literally learning the ropes from the common sailors, and took lessons in advanced mathematics and navigation from the captain or, in larger vessels, from a designated schoolmaster. The Naval Academy at Portsmouth, where William Bentinck studied, provided an alternative, shore-based point of entry into the profession, although it only had a very small intake. After completing the Academy course, prospective officers were still required to spend four years afloat, the prevailing wisdom being that onshore learning could never fully replace practical training at sea.[33]

Acquiring the necessary skills was only the first hurdle that naval officers had to overcome. Openings for new lieutenants were scarce and supply usually outstripped demand, leaving many young men who had passed the lieutenant's exam unemployed or languishing as midshipmen. The uncertainty did not cease when an officer obtained his first commission as there were many circumstances that could force him ashore: his ship could be wrecked in bad weather, captured by the enemy or paid off by the Admiralty, or he might require time off to recover from illness or injury. Because the number of officers looking for work often exceeded the number of available positions, the result was usually a lengthy lay-off with only a meagre half-pay allowance for income.[34]

Avoiding unemployment and progressing through the ranks in this competitive environment was not an easy task. Apart from flag appointments, which were allocated by seniority, vacancies were filled and promotions awarded through a combination of patronage and merit.[35] Officers needed good connections and supportive superiors in order to succeed. However, because their own reputations rose and fell in line with the performances of those whom they supported, patrons were often more inclined to back individuals who appeared talented and courageous.[36] This created an incentive for officers to take risks, such as attempting

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[32] H. W. Dickinson, *Educating the Royal Navy: Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Education for Officers* (London/New York: Routledge, 2007); S. A. Cavell, *Midshipmen and Quarterdeck Boys in the British Navy, 1771–1831* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012).
[33] For the Naval Academy, see: J. H. Thomas, "Portsmouth Naval Academy: An Educational Experiment Examined," *Portsmouth Archives Review* 3 (1978): 10–39; Dickinson, *Educating*, 33–57.
[34] Rodger, "Commissioned Officers' Careers," 100–3.
[35] For promotion and patronage in the navy, see: Rodger, *Wooden World*, 273–302; Wilson, *Social History*, 105–30.
[36] Rodger, *Wooden World*, 296–7; Tom Wareham, *The Star Captains: Frigate Command in the Napoleonic Wars* (London: Chatham Publishing, 2001).

dangerous manoeuvres or attacking ships with superior force, in the hope of advancing their careers. The navy was keen to encourage this aggressive mentality and, if the carrot of promotion did not provide sufficient motivation, there was also a stick: officers could be court-martialled and discharged for professional failings. Most shockingly, Vice-Admiral John Byng was executed for failing to "do his utmost" at the Battle of Minorca in 1756, an incident with important consequences for the naval profession which will be discussed in more detail in chapter two of this thesis.[37] An officer therefore knew that, if he did not demonstrate sufficient willingness to engage the enemy, his career or even his life might be forfeit.

Yet, although an officer's success in his profession often hinged on his performance in combat situations, fighting was only a small component of his job. Large fleet battles were exceptionally rare and, even during wartime, commissioned warships spent much of their time in port.[38] Naval command, in the words of the historian John Hattendorf, primarily "involved attention to great administrative detail in the managerial oversight of practical, routine, logistical and operational aspects" of naval life, from navigation and maintenance to health and discipline.[39] At sea, the actual labour was performed by the sailors and it was the job of the officers to orchestrate their work. Officers wielded more or less authority depending on their position within the chain of command but they always remained accountable to those above, being required to record their actions in logbooks, account books, correspondence and dispatches for the scrutiny of their superiors and ultimately the Admiralty.

Covering eight days in mid-April 1771, a double-page spread (The National Archives, fig. 3) from the captain's log kept by John Bentinck in his final command, the *Centaur*, illustrates the mundane administrative activity that occupied the majority of an eighteenth-century naval officer's time.[40] At the time, the *Centaur* was returning home after conveying troops to the British garrison at Gibraltar as part of a small squadron of ships commanded by Commodore Joseph Knight in the *Ramillies* (74 guns). Since this voyage took place during peacetime, there are no references in the logbook to enemy action but the dangers posed by the elements are suggested: Bentinck records that, at 7am on 16 April, the weather was "squally

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[37] N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649–1815* (London: Penguin, 2005 [2004]), 266–7, 324–6.
[38] Rodger, *Wooden World*, 37–8.
[39] John B. Hattendorf, "Whither with Nelson and Trafalgar? A Review Article on the Bicentenary Scholarship of the Nelson Era," *Journal for Maritime Research* 9, no. 1 (2007): 41.
[40] TNA ADM 51/172/3.

with Rain" and the main topsail "split across the 2d Reef & blew almost entirely away", in response to which he "ordered the People to cut away the lost Rope & let it go overboard to Preserve themselves." This dramatic incident is described in the same matter-of-fact tone that prevails throughout the rest of the log. Conforming to the standard grid format consistently used in eighteenth-century captain's logbooks, thin columns on the left-hand page record detailed navigational data resulting from careful measurements and complex calculations. The right-hand page features a single column labelled "Remarks", in which Bentinck has logged information about the weather and the day-to-day operations of the ship. Most comments in this column document the management of the ship's sails and rigging – "down Top Gallant yards", "out 3 reefs topsails" and so on. Other passages describe orders received from Commodore Knight and matters relating to victualling and discipline: on 12 April, "the Commodore made our signal to come under his stern"; on 14 April, one of the casks of pork allocated to the ship ("No. 249") was opened and the pieces inside counted, the total coming up one short of the supplier's estimate; and, on 15 April, Bentinck punished Timothy Richards and James Russell for theft and Robert Jackson, Robert Parsons and Thomas Lampert for neglect of duty.

Produced for the navy's bureaucratic system of internal monitoring, the logbook is an exercise in conformity and convention. It could hardly be further from the double portrait Bentinck later commissioned from Mason Chamberlin, which represented a potent public statement of personal identity, knitting together the captain's private sentiments and his talent for invention with his professionalism. Yet, even in this most formulaic of documents, Bentinck's efforts to display his initiative are in evidence, at least indirectly. The log entry for 13 April contains the following remark: "sent one of our Pumps on board the *Ramillies* she being very Leaky." Upon taking command of the *Centaur* in December 1770, Bentinck had replaced the ship's pumps with his own improved chain pumps.[41] He was thus sending to the flagship of his commanding officer a demonstration of his personal ingenuity. In this way, Bentinck's logbook underscores the complex interaction between institutional demands and displays of individuality that characterised the naval profession more broadly in the eighteenth century.

II

The key features of the naval officer's profession had developed in the seventeenth century. England's first standing navy was established in the Tudor

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[41] See logbook entry for 14 Dec., 1770, TNA ADM 51/172/3.

period and secured a famous victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588, prompting widespread public commemorations which set a precedent for the later celebration of naval triumphs in the eighteenth century and laid an important foundation for the construction of Britain's mythic identity as a maritime nation.[42] However, the officer corps in the Tudor navy lacked a coherent identity, comprising of an assortment of noble courtiers (like Charles Howard, second Baron Howard of Effingham) and professional sailors from lowly backgrounds (like Sir Francis Drake). This social mix would fuel debate in the seventeenth century about the relative merits of high-born "gentleman officers" versus professional "tarpaulins" (so-called after the oiled canvas used to make foul-weather coats), in which the former were presented as the "natural" leaders of society and the latter as possessing greater technical skill.[43] A compromise was eventually struck in the 1670s with a series of reforms which sought to professionalise the navy, ensuring that all officers, regardless of social background, were sufficiently qualified in seamanship. Spearheaded by the naval administrator (and famous diarist) Samuel Pepys, these reforms included the introduction of the lieutenant's examination and the establishment of half-pay for unemployed officers, creating the basic framework of training, payment and promotion that structured officers' lives and careers throughout the eighteenth century.[44]

As the naval profession began to take shape, so too did specific conventions for naval officers' portraiture. Early on, successful officers had generally been depicted as courtiers or noblemen, with little or no reference to their profession. Thus, around 1620, Lord Howard (who had led the English fleet against the Spanish Armada) was depicted standing in front of a green curtain – a common backdrop in contemporary court portraiture (National Maritime Museum, fig. 4). He wears the full regalia of the Order of the Garter in an image which conforms to a pre-established pictorial type, the garter portrait. The only allusion to his naval exploits is the battle scene in the background, which shows the defeat of the Armada.[45]

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[42] Douglas Knerr, "Through the 'Golden Mist': A Brief Overview of Armada Historiography," *American Neptune* 49, no. 1 (1989): 5–13.
[43] Rodger, *Command*, 112–18. The sociologist Norbert Elias saw the rivalry between gentlemen and tarpaulins as essential to the formation of a professional subjectivity in the navy; Norbert Elias, *The Genesis of the Naval Profession*, ed. René Moelker and Stephen Mennell (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2007).
[44] Rodger, *Command*, 118–22.
[45] The inclusion of a distant naval battle would later become a commonplace of officers' portraiture. In *The Art of Painting* (1707), Gerard de Lairesse recommended that the portrait of an "*Admiral*, or Commander at Sea" should include "a Sea-fight". Gerard de Lairesse, *The Art of Painting*, trans. John Frederick Fritsch (London: Printed for the Author, 1738), 366.

Several decades later, Anthony van Dyck's full-length portrait of the naval commander Algernon Percy, tenth Earl of Northumberland, helped inaugurate a new trend for incorporating multiple symbols of naval service within officers' portraits (ca. 1636–8, Alnwick Castle, fig. 5).[46] Like Howard, Percy was a member of the Order of the Garter but, rather than his full ceremonial robes, he wears only the Order's blue sash and titular garter over a lavish martial outfit, complete with breastplate, which clearly identifies him as a military commander. This role is further emphasised by the baton of command – a traditional symbol of military leadership – in his right hand. Meanwhile, the distant naval engagement, the rocky coastal setting and the anchor upon which he leans associate him specifically with the sea service. Subsequent generations hailed Van Dyck as the founding father of British portraiture.[47] "When *Van-Dyck* came Hither", wrote the portraitist Jonathan Richardson in 1715, alluding to the Flemish artist's illustrious career on the Continent prior to his arrival at the court of Charles I in 1632, "he brought *Face-Painting* to Us; ever since which time…*England* has excell'd all the World in that great Branch of the Art".[48] Throughout the eighteenth century, portraitists (including Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough and John Singleton Copley) borrowed poses and compositions from Van Dyck's work, drawing especially upon the anchor motif in Algernon Percy's portrait for their depictions of naval sitters.[49]

The forms of eighteenth-century naval portraiture were also influenced by the *Flagmen of Lowestoft*, a series of thirteen three-quarter-length portraits produced by Peter Lely, the Principal Painter to Charles II, in 1665–6. Commissioned by the Duke of York, later James II, these portraits depict the flag officers of the English fleet which defeated the Dutch at the Battle of Lowestoft on 13 June 1665.[50] In this series, Lely surrounded his sitters with attributes of military and naval command and placed them in rugged coastal settings. For example, striking a swaggering pose beside a rocky cliff, George Monck, first Duke of Albemarle, is shown grasping a baton of command in his hand and propping his elbow on the fluke of anchor (1665–6, National Maritime Museum, fig. 6). Meanwhile, standing before a rusticated column with a burning ship in the right-hand distance, Edward

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[46] Susan J. Barnes et al., *Van Dyck: A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2004), 567, no. IV.177.
[47] Deborah Cherry and Jennifer Harris, "Eighteenth-Century Portraiture and the Seventeenth-Century Past: Gainsborough and Van Dyck," *Art History* 5, no. 3 (Sept. 1982): 287–309.
[48] Jonathan Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, 2nd ed. (London: A. C., 1725), 39.
[49] Karen Hearn (ed.), *Van Dyck and Britain* (London: Tate Publishing, 2009), 116, 224.
[50] R. B. Beckett, *Lely* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), 17–18.

Montagu, first Earl of Sandwich, is identified as a naval commander by his gleaming breastplate and by the cannon upon which he rests his right hand (1666, National Maritime Museum, fig. 7). Both men are elegantly attired – Monck, for instance, has glittering stripes of gold thread woven into his sleeves – but they are also depicted with weather-beaten faces, creating an aesthetic which combines wealth and grandeur with hardy masculinity.

There are strong similarities between these pictures and Dutch naval portraits of the same date, such as Bartholomeus van der Helst's *Captain Gideon de Wildt* (1657, Budapest Museum of Fine Arts, fig. 8), in which the sitter wears a lavish gold-embroidered military baldric and holds a baton of command, posing against the backdrop of a distant naval battle and an austere stone wall, the latter partially overgrown with creeping foliage. As Britain did not have a well-established artistic tradition of its own in this period, artists and styles from the Continent exercised a strong influence over British painting. Born in Westphalia to Dutch parents, Lely himself completed his artistic training in Haarlem before moving to London in 1641. Naval officers were prominent and highly politicised figures in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, prefiguring to some extent the "cult of the naval hero" that emerged in Britain in the eighteenth century.[51] Charged by their naval sitters with articulating their sociocultural significance, Dutch artists sought in their naval portraits to combine the dignity of state portraiture with iconographic motifs (including cannons, anchors and globes) that explicitly referred not only to the sea officer's profession but also to his talents in fulfilling its technical and intellectual requirements.[52]

With the *Flagmen of Lowestoft*, Lely exported this approach to England, and his high-profile, royally commissioned series became an influential precedent for many subsequent works, including a set of sixteen naval portraits commissioned by Queen Anne and her consort Prince George of Denmark from her court portraitists, Godfrey Kneller and Michael Dahl, in 1701–10. Depicting the most successful admirals of Anne's reign, these portraits were partly intended as a sequel to the *Flagmen* and continuity was established through various visual correspondences with the earlier series.[53] For example, the cannon motif used by Lely in his portrait of

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[51] Cynthia Lawrence, "Hendrick de Keyser's Heemskerk Monument: The Origins of the Cult and Iconography of Dutch Naval Heroes," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 21, no. 4 (1992): 265–95.

[52] Stephanie S. Dickey, "Bartholomeus van der Helst and Admiral Cortenaer: Realism and Idealism in Dutch Heroic Portraiture," *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 8 (1989): 227–46.

[53] As Julie Farguson has recently shown, the paintings also alluded to Danish precedents, contributing to the construction of Prince George's Anglo-Danish royal identity. Julie Farguson, "'Glorious Successes at Sea': The Artistic Patronage of Prince George of

Edward Montagu (fig. 7) was recycled by Kneller in his image of Admiral Sir John Jennings (1708–9, National Maritime Museum, fig. 9) and by Dahl in his depiction of Admiral Sir George Rooke (ca. 1705, National Maritime Museum, fig. 10).

The repetition of conventional poses, settings and motifs would have an important role to play in later eighteenth-century naval portraiture, as officers sought to project a sense of the corporate belonging and affiliation which was central to their career success. Indeed, society portraiture more broadly was shaped throughout the eighteenth century by certain enduring iconographic conventions, which were perpetually reused and reimagined to create continuity. Yet, in the period covered by this thesis, portraitists also endeavoured to balance this conventionality with the representation of individuality. As we shall see, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, informed by emerging ideas about the inner self, naval portraits increasingly attempted to suggest psychological depth.

III

In 1815, eleven years after joining the navy himself, Lieutenant Christopher Claxton published *The Naval Monitor*, an advice manual for new recruits in which he reflected upon what it took to succeed as a naval officer. Suggesting that an individual's outward appearance betrayed his inner state, Claxton insisted that an officer had to truly believe in what he was doing: "to have the real glow of animation and confidence painted on your countenance, it is almost necessary to be in love with enterprise. A gallant and confident inward feeling will display an animating, bold, and encouraging exterior."[54] Yet he also allowed room for performance, protocol and learned behaviours to supplement that which was supplied by nature: "you must yourself be naturally gallant, although something is necessary from art."[55] As the historian Greg Denning observes, for Claxton, the virtues of gallantry, animation and confidence were innate but they could be also be cultivated, depending on the officer's ability to read the institution around him.[56]

Denmark as Lord High Admiral, 1702–1708," paper presented at *Royal Representation in the Danish-British Sphere*, National Portrait Gallery, London, 27 Apr., 2018. See also, Wilhelm Nisser, *Michael Dahl and the Contemporary Swedish School of Painting in England* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells boktryckeriatiebolag, 1927), 105–8; J. Douglas Stewart, S*ir Godfrey Kneller* (London: G. Bell/National Portrait Gallery, 1971), 69.

[54] An Officer in the Navy [Christopher Claxton], *The Naval Monitor* (London: A. J. Valpy, 1815), 58.

[55] [Claxton], *Naval Monitor*, 59.

[56] Greg Dening, *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994 [1992]), 141.

Questions about the boundaries between nature and artifice played an important role within the complex and contested discourses of genteel masculinity in eighteenth-century Britain.[57] Julia Banister has recently demonstrated that such questions also were central to more specific debates about military and naval identity.[58] In Banister's account, the long eighteenth century witnessed a protracted struggle between two conflicting visions of martial masculinity. On the one hand, there was the "civic ideal of the citizen-soldier".[59] Inspired by classical models, this ideal was predicated on the assumption that men were – and always had been – naturally inclined to militarism. Military virtues, such as courage and daring, were understood as innate and yoked to the physical matter of the male body. Yet this notion of martial identity repeatedly came into conflict, Banister argues, with a new form of "modern, professionalised military man".[60] Banister's definition of this new character draws on the influential idea that a "military revolution" occurred in Europe between 1500 and 1800, totally transforming the technologies, tactics, funding and administration of both land- and sea-based warfare.[61] Military personnel were changed by this "revolution", the advent of technologically advanced weaponry shifting the business of fighting from a question of physical prowess to one of trained professional skill.

In understanding the consequences that this had for martial identity, Banister turns to Michel Foucault's account of the emergence of the modern soldier during the eighteenth century. For Foucault, the pre-modern warrior bore "the natural signs of his strength and courage": "his body was the blazon of his strength and valour". By contrast, in the late eighteenth century, the soldier became "something that can be made": his body was a blank slate or "formless clay", which was moulded and trained to function within the disciplined military machine.[62] Drawing upon Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, Banister suggests that this shift allowed martial identity to be understood as a kind of performance whilst also raising fears

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[57] Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660–1800* (Harlow: Longman, 2001).

[58] Julia Banister, *Masculinity, Militarism and Eighteenth-Century Culture, 1689–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2018).

[59] Banister, *Masculinity*, 3–5, 87. Banister's outline of this model of masculinity draws heavily upon scholarship concerning the philosophy of civic humanism. See J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1975).

[60] Banister, *Masculinity*, 7–9, 71.

[61] Clifford J. Rogers (ed.), *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995); Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996).

[62] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 135.

that military men lacked "real" substance.[63] Rather than charting a neat linear transition from the classical ideal of the innately courageously "citizen-soldier" to the man-made "modern" professional, she argues that both models constituted "parallel…lines of argument that were shaped by their inherent tensions, by contact with each other and by wider cultural forces": they "clashed against, rather than conquered or displaced each other."[64]

In focussing upon the clashes between these two models of militarism, Banister presents them as incompatible opposites. However, eighteenth-century naval officers appear to have understood the relationship between innate feeling and professional procedure in more fluid terms. As well as conflicting with one another, these two concepts also intersected and blurred together in certain representations of naval personnel. As we have seen, Claxton argued that "art" could augment an individual's natural gallantry. Meanwhile, Bentinck's portrait and his correspondence with Rousseau emphasised the intermingling of duty and specialist knowledge with love and individual brilliance. Dening suggests that "there was a fine line between what was the real world and what was theatre in the presentation of self. The successful officer moved easily back and forth across that line without any sign of artificiality."[65] There was pressure on officers not only to follow but also to internalise the navy's institutional codes. The challenge was to appear "in love" with one's work, melding instinct and professionalism in a seemingly authentic persona.

Successfully presenting oneself in this way could be advantageous in the navy's fierce competition for appointment and promotion. As sociologists such as Richard Sennett and Michel Feher have shown, within intensely competitive employment environments, the assessment of candidates becomes more and more "personally intrusive", distinguishing between individuals not only using objective measures of performance but also through subjective judgements about initiative, potential and personality.[66]

At the same time, the drive for officers to display "inward feeling" can also be understood in relation to a broader shift in the conceptualisation of identity that occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century. The "inward turn" in this

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[63] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York/London: Routledge, 1990).
[64] Banister, *Masculinity*, 10.
[65] Dening, *Bad Language*, 141.
[66] Richard Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2006), 103–15, quote at 111; Michel Feher, "Self-Appreciation; or, The Aspirations of Human Capital," trans. Ivan Ascher, *Public Culture* 21, no. 1 (2009): 21–41.

period has now become a scholarly commonplace. In the *Making of the Modern Self* (2004), Dror Wahrman summarises this idea in the following terms: whereas identity was associated in earlier periods with the "erasure of difference", describing the common ground which united the members of a group, it came in the eighteenth century also to mean that which made a particular person unique, presupposing the existence within each individual of "an essential core of selfhood characterised by psychological depth."[67] This idea of an inner self added new layers of complexity to the careful balancing act between individual and institution that was required in the representation of officers in the eighteenth century's increasingly modern and professionalised Royal Navy.

In *A Social History of British Naval Officers 1775–1815* (2017), Evan Wilson suggests that the relationship between naval officers and the modern notion of the self "is worth exploring further", the issue being absent within the existing literature on the naval profession.[68] Historically, biographical studies of celebrated individuals dominated the published scholarship on eighteenth-century naval officers but the last half-century has witnessed an increasing number of studies examining the social realities of naval command.[69] An important early work in this vein was Michael Lewis's *Social History of the Navy, 1793–1815* (1960), though this has now been superseded by Wilson's more recent publication.[70] A substantial contribution to the field has also been made by Nicholas Rodger. His key findings are summarised in *The Command of the Ocean* (2004), an expansive history of the British navy in the period between 1649 and 1815 which features chapters on operations, administration and technology, as well as social history, providing the most comprehensive guide to eighteenth-century naval affairs presently available.[71] Other

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[67] Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2004), xi–xii. As Wahrman acknowledges, his narrative "can be seen as retelling one of the oldest stories in the Western canon, that of the rise of modern individualism". For other recent treatments of this "old story", see: Raymond Martin and John Barresi, *Naturalisation of the Soul: Self and Personal Identity in the Eighteenth Century* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000); Jerrold Seigel, *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), esp. 87–139; Zubin Meer (ed.), *Individualism: The Cultural Logic of Modernity* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011).
[68] Wilson, *Social History*, 186, n. 8.
[69] For examples of the nineteenth-century tradition of naval biography, see: James Stanier Clarke and John McArthur, *The Life of Admiral Lord Nelson, K. B. from his Lordship's Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1809); John Barrow, *The Life of George Lord Anson, Admiral of the Fleet* (London: John Murray, 1839); Thomas Keppel, *The Life of Augustus, Viscount Keppel*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1842).
[70] Michael Lewis, *A Social History of the Navy, 1793–1815* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960).
[71] N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649–1815* (London: Penguin, 2005 [2004]).

scholars have focussed on more specific aspects of the naval officer's experience, such as his uniform, education and family life.[72] These studies have highlighted the difficulties that officers faced in simultaneously adhering to the rigorous professional standards of the navy, developing the social graces required to cement their status as gentlemen and fulfilling their familial obligations as husbands, fathers, sons and brothers, all whilst competing against one another for employment and promotion. However, there remains a gap in the scholarship when it comes to the subject of individual identity and the importance attached to officers' inner thoughts and emotions. As part of a wide-ranging account of the forms, functions and meanings of naval portraiture, this thesis will offer new insights into this neglected topic by considering questions about the perceived relationship between character and appearance within the eighteenth-century Royal Navy.

At first glance, portraiture may appear to be a limited tool for examining the history of the naval profession. Wilson has shown that the officer corps in the eighteenth-century navy can be divided into two tiers: the "elite" – officers who became post-captains or admirals, often amassing sizeable fortunes and attracting significant public attention in the process – and the "rest" – officers who remained as poorly paid commanders, lieutenants and midshipmen throughout their careers.[73] The latter vastly outnumbered the former but, apart from a few exceptions, such as the silhouettes and miniatures discussed in chapter one of this thesis, surviving naval portraits overwhelmingly depict members of the elite. The "rest" typically had neither the money nor the need to acquire the expensive status symbol that was a portrait. Consequently, any study of naval portraiture is necessarily skewed towards a small minority of officers.

However, thanks to its bias towards the elite, portraiture enables us to explore how successful officers' distinction was constructed and how they sought to justify and secure their elevated social and professional positions. Portraiture lends itself to this task because, rather than simply recording identities that originate outside the artwork, portraits actively participate in the construction of identity. This view has been persuasively advanced by Marcia Pointon. In *Hanging the Head* (1993), her seminal study of eighteenth-century portraiture, she writes: "what [portraits] signify is often connotative rather than denotative, despite the apparently close relationship between the signifier, an image of a particular human being, and

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[72] Miller, *Dressed*; Dickinson, *Educating*; Ellen Gill, *Naval Families, War and Duty in Britain, 1740–1820* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016).
[73] Wilson, *Social History*, 7.

the signified, the idea of the actual human being denoted by that image".[74] Framed in the language of semiotics, this statement highlights the capacity of the portrait, through its imagery and context, to bring into play associated meanings that shape the viewer's perception of the subject. For Pointon, portraiture in the eighteenth century must be understood as a "network of communicative acts", including sitting, painting, viewing and reproducing, which function to enable and to regulate forms of conceptualising society.[75]

Furthermore, portraits provide an ideal source for examining the relationship between the naval profession and the new idea of individual identity that emerged in the eighteenth century. Informed by a widespread belief in physiognomy (the practice of reading character from the face), theories of the genre from this period emphasised its capacity to express psychological attributes through physical appearance. "*Painting,*" argued Richardson in his influential *Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715, revised 1725), "gives us not only the Persons, but the Characters of Great Men. The Air of the Head, and the Mien in general, gives strong Indications of the Mind."[76] Portraiture was therefore a particularly important vehicle for articulating the new sense of self that emerged in the eighteenth century. As the literary historian Elizabeth Fay argues, the "portraitive mode" – a term which she uses to describe various "portraitive practices", including portraiture, biography and caricature – formed a vital mechanism through which the "growing inner sense of self" was expressed and explored.[77] She suggests that the inward turn in this period produced anxiety about the relationship between interior and exterior and about the possibility of discerning the inner self from external appearance. Christopher Claxton was concerned with precisely this point when he insisted that naval officers needed to feel "gallant and confident" on the inside in order to appear "animating, bold, and encouraging" on the outside. Portraiture, the art of appearances, became a testing ground for such ideas. It was where, in Fay's words, the cultural need "for articulating inner worlds in terms of an outer world" was met.[78] This was not necessarily a straightforward task because artists had to circumvent the inherent artificiality of portraiture as a genre, conjuring the illusion of interior depth through

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[74] Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1993), 4.

[75] Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 4–6.

[76] Richardson, *Essay*, 10.

[77] Elizabeth A. Fay, *Fashioning Faces: The Portraitive Mode in British Romanticism* (Durham, NH: Univ. of New Hampshire Press, 2010).

[78] Fay, *Fashioning*, 8.

the careful manipulation of pose, setting, expression, art-historical convention and painterly effects.[79]

This thesis will therefore consider in part the interplay between signs of artifice and illusions of naturalness in portraits of eighteenth-century naval officers. In so doing, it builds upon Banister's account of martial identity in this period, exploring the tensions between traditional ideals of heroism and the social realities of command in a modern, professionalised military institution. Yet it avoids Banister's stark polarisation between instinctive and performative models of militarism, instead attending to the nuances and complexities within naval officers' representation.

IV

The dates selected for the start and end of this study represent important high-water marks in the history of naval celebrity: the popular celebration of Vice-Admiral Edward Vernon after the capture of Porto Bello in November 1739 and the widespread fame of Vice-Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson in the Napoleonic Wars, which peaked following his death at the Battle of Trafalgar in October 1805.[80] Organised both thematically and broadly chronologically, the chapters in this thesis chart the development of naval portraiture's forms and functions across this period.

Chapter one examines naval portraiture and the business of risk. As naval officers were exposed to the dangers of shipwreck, disease and enemy action, risk was an unavoidable aspect of their work. However, there was considerable disagreement about where the line of acceptable risk should be drawn, and this chapter examines the different ways in which naval officers' portraits responded to this issue. First, it considers how the fear of disaster encouraged officers to commission small and portable miniature and silhouette portraits from artists working in naval ports, which they would send home to their loved ones to provide reassurance and comfort during their absence. The second part of the chapter concentrates upon Joshua Reynolds's practice as a portraitist in Plymouth at the

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[79] H. Berger, Jr., *Fictions of the Pose: Rembrandt Against the Italian Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2000).

[80] According to the historians Gerald Jordan and Nicholas Rogers, Vernon and Nelson represent the prime examples of the "admiral-as-hero phenomenon", which they suggest formed a distinguishing feature of Georgian culture. Gerald Jordan and Nicholas Rogers, "Admirals as Heroes: Patriotism and Liberty in Hanoverian England," *Journal of British Studies* 28, no. 3 (1989): 201–24. See also, Kathleen Wilson, "Empire, Trade and Popular Politics in Mid-Hanoverian Britain: The Case of Admiral Vernon," *Past and Present* 121 (1988): 74–109; David Cannadine (ed.), *Admiral Lord Nelson: Context and Legacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Colin White, *The Nelson Companion* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2005).

beginning of his career in the 1740s, charting the close and creatively stimulating relationship that he forged with the port's community of naval officers. Rather than soothing anxieties about the dangers of naval service, Reynolds's naval portraits from this period celebrated bold, risk-taking behaviours. I read these pictures in the context of the controversy surrounding the British defeat at the Battle of Toulon in February 1744, which prompted public debate about whether naval officers should pursue victory at all costs or take only calculated risks. I also examine how Reynolds's pictorial exploration of his sitters' experience of maritime hazards was paralleled by his own willingness to embrace creative risks, through which he established a reputation for himself as an innovative artist whose portraits defied convention in order to offer supposed insights into character.

Chapter two shifts the focus of the thesis from the provincial port to the metropolitan art world, mirroring Reynolds's own career journey, the artist having relocated his practice from Plymouth (via Italy) to London in autumn 1752. The chapter explores the changing landscape of artistic display in the mid-eighteenth-century capital, including the expanding print market and the development of annual exhibitions. In London, naval officers' portraits were exposed to increasingly broad public audiences, turning the sitters into celebrities. The history of celebrity – understood as a new type of wide-reaching, commodified fame which first emerged in the long eighteenth century – has been the subject of significant scholarly enquiry in recent years. However, most of the existing literature on eighteenth-century celebrity focusses upon stage performers. By contrast, this chapter argues that the processes and technologies of celebrity culture also shaped the public reception of many other figures within eighteenth-century British society, including successful naval commanders. Focussing upon the Seven Years' War (1756–63), the chapter begins with an examination of the naval portraits that Reynolds produced in his new metropolitan studio in the 1750s and early 1760s. In this period, he dominated the market for naval portraiture, attracting more commissions from sea officers than any of his rivals. As we shall see, his success was built upon a canny exploitation of naval networks and the creation of nuanced portraits that suggested his sitters' inner strength and resolve, offering a compelling artistic response to the questions about naval identity that arose in the wake of the execution of Vice-Admiral John Byng in March 1757. The chapter then moves on to consider the engraved reproduction of Reynolds's naval portraits, examining how this process responded to and was shaped by the demands of immediacy and familiarity central to the emerging culture of celebrity. Finally, the chapter considers naval portraiture in the Society of Artists'

exhibitions of the 1760s, examining how portraitists and their naval sitters used the exhibition space as a venue for self-promotion.

Chapter three focusses upon the crisis of masculinity in Britain that followed the rebellion of the American Colonies in the mid-1770s. Arising from errant imperial governance and marked by repeated failures on the battlefield, the American War of Independence (1775–83) placed the masculine identities of the British state under intense scrutiny. This chapter considers how representations of young men and boys became particularly important in this context, simultaneously serving as expressions of hope for the nation's future and embodying fears about vulnerability and thwarted potential. Given the exceptionally young age at which sea officers began their careers, naval portraits often provided powerful images of young men who had fought and, in some cases, died for their nation. The first part of the chapter considers the representation of twenty-four-year-old Captain Lord Robert Manners, who was killed at the Battle of the Saintes in April 1782. It focusses particularly upon Joshua Reynolds's posthumous portrait of the captain, exploring this image, which was commissioned by the sitter's grieving brother, in relation to published accounts of Manners's fatal wounding and contemporary political allegories of the dismemberment of empire. The second part of the chapter concentrates on the portraits of two teenage midshipmen who survived the Battle of the Saintes, contextualising these pictures in relation to earlier representations of naval youth and analysing the ways in which they associate their sitters with ideas of inherent youthful potential. Both paintings speak not only to the social and emotional concerns of the sitters' families but also to the broader socio-political significance of the American War.

Finally, chapter four focusses upon another moment of crisis, examining the portraits of officers produced in the aftermath of the major naval mutinies which took place at Spithead and the Nore between April and June 1797 at a critical juncture in the war between Britain and Revolutionary France. Set against a backdrop of radical agitation at home, counterrevolutionary paranoia, propaganda wars and invasion scares, these lower deck rebellions shattered already fragile patriotic and political certainties. In particular, they suggested that the naval officer's ability to maintain control of the common seamen could no longer be taken for granted. This chapter explores the role that portraiture played in reasserting the authority of the quarterdeck and in generating a new imagery of naval authority at this fraught historical moment. The first part of the chapter examines how the representation of the mutineers destabilised the traditional iconography of naval command, especially its more theatrical and performative elements, which were mocked by the rebels as

empty show. Officers were therefore challenged to demonstrate that, as well as glittering uniforms and a commanding appearance on the quarterdeck, they also possessed genuine leadership skills. I consider how this challenge was answered in portraits of two celebrated flag officers of the period, Adam Duncan and Horatio Nelson. Duncan was heralded as a national hero after his fleet defeated the Dutch at the Battle of Camperdown on 11 October 1797, the victory being presented in the loyalist press as proof that order had been successfully restored within the navy after the recent mutinies. In portraits and biographies produced in the aftermath of the battle, particular emphasis was placed upon the sixty-six-year-old admiral's advanced age: he was characterised as a "venerable" commander who had been hardened by many difficult years at sea. Drawing upon Joseph Roach's theory of "public intimacy", I argue that this persona combined signs of both strength and vulnerability in order to create the appearance of interior depth. The combination of strength and vulnerability was also central to the construction of Nelson's celebrity after he lost his arm in a failed assault on Tenerife in July 1797. His empty sleeve became a defining feature of his portraits, the outwardly visible injury acting as a guarantee of his personal commitment to the sea service and helping to frame his authority as something that came from within.

When constructing pictorial identities for members of the naval profession, portraitists had to negotiate a complex range of issues, including officers' exposure to perilous situations, their lengthy separation from home and family, their subjection to institutional regulations, their competition with each other for employment and their desire to cement their social status as gentlemen. Some naval portraits were intended for private display, serving the sentimental needs of the sitters' families, whilst others were addressed to a broader audience in an era which witnessed the dawn of new forms of celebrity and the establishment of the navy as a crucial symbol of British national identity. By considering the different ways in which naval officers were represented in these varied contexts, this thesis highlights how officers' portraits tested the relationship between inward feeling and outward appearance. This analysis provides new insights into the complex interaction between individual identity and institutional demands that structured the image of the naval profession in the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER ONE

"Fighting officers were not in vogue":
Ports, portraiture and the business of risk

Joshua Reynolds, one of the dominant figures in the history of eighteenth-century British art, is primarily known as a fashionable metropolitan painter who catered to the elite of London society. For forty years, he operated an immensely successful portraiture studio in the capital; his paintings routinely starred in London's annual art exhibitions; and, as the inaugural President of the Royal Academy, a role he held from the institution's foundation in December 1768 to his death in February 1792, he stood at the centre of the metropolitan artistic establishment. However, in the early part of his career, he practiced in the provinces, spending six years in the mid-late 1740s working in and around Plymouth, the location of one of the busiest and most strategically significant naval dockyards in eighteenth-century Britain. During this period, Reynolds enjoyed a close and creatively stimulating relationship with the navy, painting a significant number of naval portraits and forging enduring friendships with several sea officers whom he met in the port. These friendships would have a vital impact upon the development of his career, providing lifelong patronage and creative inspiration.

Celebrating Reynolds for his metropolitan success, the artist's biographers have historically presented his period in Plymouth as one of "dissipation in his art", in which he laboured for scant reward among provincial company "from whom little improvement could be got".[1] More recently, scholars have begun to challenge this view, arguing that Reynolds actually used his time in the port to learn the business of professional portrait painting and to develop his own artistic persona. Mark Hallett has demonstrated that, in this period, the artist started "exploring the formal, narrative and psychological possibilities of portraiture", developing his ability to respond to "the distinctive needs of his clients".[2] Meanwhile, the exhibition *Sir Joshua Reynolds: The Acquisition of Genius* (Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, 2009) highlighted Reynolds's efforts to cultivate relationships with patrons in Plymouth, Richard Stephens arguing in the exhibition catalogue that the painter's interaction with elite individuals in the port provided valuable "training in [dealing

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[1] Edmond Malone, *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 2 vols. (London: T. Cadell, Jun., 1797), 1: vii; James Northcote, *The Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1819), 1: 23.
[2] Mark Hallett, *Reynolds: Portraiture in Action* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2014), 51, 53.

with] aristocratic clientele".[3] However, none of these studies has specifically explored Reynolds's relationship with the naval community in Plymouth and its impact upon his practice.

This chapter will redress this omission, taking inspiration from a recent article in which Matthew Hunter uses naval metaphors to explore Reynolds's adoption of "hazardous, risk-taking behaviours" in his painting practice.[4] Recent scholarship has stressed Reynolds's status as a creative risk-taker, both through his technical experimentation with fugitive pigments and untested materials and through his constant search for innovative compositions, poses and formats, often defying convention in the process.[5] Hunter builds upon this research by likening Reynolds's artistic daring to the confrontation of "maritime hazards" by naval officers, who risked shipwreck, capture and personal injury in the course of their duties.[6] Naval officers could minimise the danger to themselves and their crews by acting cautiously but doing so might also surrender a tactical advantage. Meanwhile, taking risks could result in spectacular success – or costly failure. This gave rise to fierce debates, particularly during the 1740s, about whether the ideal naval officer was a hot-blooded hero who pursued victory at all costs or a cool-headed professional who took only calculated risks.[7] Such concerns paralleled a broader reconceptualization of risk in eighteenth-century political, economic and philosophical thought, which, as Emily Nacol has demonstrated, oscillated between the fear of ruin and the lure of opportunity, driving individuals both to take chances and to seek security against possible loss.[8] Hunter demonstrates how these twin impulses – the attraction of risk and the desire for insurance – operated in similar ways in both the navy and Reynolds's art. In the course of this argument, he refers repeatedly to the artist's youthful practice in Plymouth and his engagement with the navy in the port. However, for Hunter, naval affairs function only as a metaphor for Reynolds's creative approach and the article does not investigate the role that the artist's interactions with the navy played in the development of his professional persona.

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[3] Richard Stephens, "City and Country," in *Sir Joshua Reynolds: The Acquisition of Genius*, ed. Sam Smiles (Bristol: Samson, 2009), 17–27.

[4] Matthew C. Hunter, "The Cunning of Sir Sloshua: Reynolds, the Sea, and Risk," *Grey Room* 69 (2017): 80–107.

[5] Lucy Davis and Mark Hallett (eds.), *Joshua Reynolds: Experiments in Paint* (London: The Wallace Collection, 2015); Matthew C. Hunter, "Joshua Reynolds's 'Nice Chymistry': Action and Accident in the 1770s," *The Art Bulletin* 97, no. 1 (2015): 58–76; John Chu, "High Art and High Stakes: The 3rd Duke of Dorset's Gamble on Reynolds," *British Art Studies* 2 (2016), https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-02/jchu.

[6] Hunter, "Sir Sloshua," 83.

[7] Banister, *Masculinity*, 44–71.

[8] Emily C. Nacol, *An Age of Risk: Politics and Economy in Early Modern Britain* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton Univ. Press, 2016).

By contrast, in this chapter, I will undertake a detailed study of Reynolds's engagement with naval personnel in Plymouth, arguing that the painter began cultivating his reputation as an artistic adventurer through the naval portraits that he produced in the port. Many of these works used unconventional imagery to explore the risks and rewards associated with a career in the sea service, responding to contemporary debates about the relative merits of professional caution and maverick heroism. First, however, I will consider the market for portraiture within eighteenth-century naval ports more broadly. This lays the groundwork for understanding the uniqueness of Reynolds's practice in Plymouth and also underscores the centrality of risk within sea officers' lives, a point which had important implications for portraiture.

I

In 1748, Robert Wilkins published *The Borough*, "a Faithful, tho' Humourous, Description" of the town and dockyard of Portsmouth, "for the Benefit of the Gentlemen of the Navy".[9] Almost fifty years later, a similar guidebook to Plymouth dockyard and the surrounding settlements, entitled *The Plymouth-Dock Guide*, was published with the same intention: it was addressed to "Gentlemen of the Navy…[who] have peculiar Need of Information on many Occasions, when their Profession requires them to visit [this] Place".[10] These guides were designed to familiarise sea officers with the day-to-day social, political and cultural affairs of the port, including its government, fortifications, markets, mail coaches, churches and entertainments. They highlight an unavoidable fact of officers' lives in the eighteenth-century navy: since commissioned warships spent large amounts of time fitting out, repairing and resupplying in port, officers were frequent visitors to provincial dockyard towns.[11]

At this time, Britain had a large number of busy commercial ports but naval activity was principally concentrated in Portsmouth and Plymouth, where the largest royal dockyards were located. In an era of protracted conflict against the French, these ports provided strategically vital bases for operations in the Channel.[12] Although one was old and the other new, the Portsmouth yard tracing its origins to the Tudor period while Plymouth was only established in the 1690s, both expanded

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[9] Robert Wilkins, *The Borough: Being a Faithful, tho' Humorous, Description, Of One of the Strongest Garrisons, and Sea-Port Towns, in Great-Britain* (London: M. Payne, 1748), iii.
[10] *The Plymouth-Dock Guide, or, An Authentic Account of the Rise and Progress of that Town, with the Dock Yard* (Plymouth: E. Hoxland, 1792), 3.
[11] Rodger, *Wooden World*, 38.
[12] Rodger, *Command*, 241–90.

rapidly throughout the eighteenth century, gaining additional docks and storehouses. Increasingly overcrowded, the ancient market towns of Portsmouth and Plymouth spawned new satellite settlements, known as respectively Plymouth Dock and Portsmouth Common (later Portsea), which impressed visitors with their "genteel houses", elegant environs and polite attractions, including theatres, bathhouses and assemblies.[13] At the same time, both ports were criticised for the "contagious influence of Vice" among their seafaring populations.[14] While other coastal towns, such as Torquay, benefitted from increasing domestic tourism, the industrial character and reputed "insalubrity" of Portsmouth and Plymouth prevented them from becoming fashionable seaside resorts.[15] Yet, compelled by their profession to spend time in naval ports, sea officers could not eschew the rough-and-ready dockyard in favour of somewhere more genteel. As texts like *The Borough* and *The Plymouth-Dock Guide* demonstrate, it was expected that officers would look to the port and the surrounding area to fulfil their social and cultural needs.

The streets of Portsmouth and Plymouth boasted a large number of retailers selling luxury commodities. For example, according to late eighteenth-century trade directories, the High Street in Portsmouth was home to three silversmiths, three wine merchants, two hatters, two watchmakers, a bookseller, a tailor, a glover, a hair-dresser and a china shop.[16] From these traders, an officer could equip himself with fashionable accessories and gentlemanly comforts. For instance, in 1804, twelve-year-old Midshipman Bernard Frederick Coleridge purchased engraved silver spoons in Plymouth, which he took to sea on board the *Impetueux* (74 guns).[17]

The willingness of naval officers to purchase luxury commodities is suggested by accounts of the possessions that they kept in their sea-chests and cabins. In 1750, Captain Richard Tiddeman furnished his cabin in the *Eltham* (40 guns) with mahogany furniture, two tea chests, four chests of clothes and china,

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[13] *The Ancient and Modern History of Portesmouth, Portsea, Gosport, and their Environs* (Gosport: J. Watts, [ca. 1800]), 47; Lake Allen, *The History of Portsmouth* (London: Hatfield and Co., 1817); R. N. Worth, *History of the Town and Borough of Devonport, Sometime Plymouth Dock* (Plymouth: W. Brendon and Son, 1870), 1–9; Crispin Gill, *Plymouth: A New History* (Tiverton: Devon Books, 1993), 168–74.

[14] *Ancient and Modern*, vii. See also, Andrew Brice, *The Grand Gazetteer, or Topographic Dictionary* (Exon: Printed by and for the Author, 1759), 1041; Madame Van Muyden, *A Foreign View of England in the Reigns of George I. and George II. The Letters of Monsieur César de Saussure to his Family* (London: John Murray, 1902), 361.

[15] John F. Travis, *The Rise of the Devon Seaside Resorts, 1750–1900* (Exeter: Univ. of Exeter Press, 1993), 2; Sam Smiles, "Artists, Tourism and the Discovery of Devon," in *The Perfection of England: Artist Visitors to Devon, c. 1750–1870*, ed. Sam Smiles and Michael Pidgley (Exeter: Royal Albert Memorial Museum, 1995), 9–24.

[16] *The Hampshire Directory* (Winchester: J. Sadler, 1784), 100–12.

[17] Bernard Frederick Coleridge to James Coleridge, 9 June, 1804, in Bernard Coleridge, *The Story of a Devonshire House* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905), 93.

a large quantity of plate, a looking-glass in a gilt frame and six prints of the royal family.[18] Meanwhile, Captain George Johnston had so many books in his cabin in the *Hornet* (10 guns) that it appeared "more like a bookseller's shop than the captain's apartment in a man-of-war."[19] Junior officers also acquired refined possessions, albeit on a more modest scale. When Midshipman William Collin died in the *Russell* (80 guns) in 1747, the contents of his sea-chest were auctioned at the ship's mast; they included several suits of "new Cloaths", silver buckles and a dress sword.[20] This evidence indicates that officers were active patrons of tailors, peruke-makers, chinamen, cabinet-makers, silversmiths and booksellers as they set about acquiring luxury goods that asserted their genteel and cultured status. Some individuals appear to have had certain items brought to their ships from their London townhouses and country residences.[21] However, the preponderance of luxury merchants in places like Portsmouth suggests that many officers shopped in port whilst their ships were fitting out and under repair.

A number of portraitists were among the port-based traders who sought to attract officers' custom. However, it was a particular kind of portraiture that thrived in the distinctive environment of the dockyard town. For reasons that will be explored in more detail below, Reynolds's practice in Plymouth in the 1740s represents the exception rather than the rule. For several years, he sustained a successful business producing large oil-on-canvas portraits in the port. There are relatively few examples of other eighteenth-century artists achieving something similar. Perhaps deliberately seeking to emulate his master's example, Reynolds's former studio assistant James Northcote began his career as an independent portraitist by practicing in Portsmouth and Plymouth in 1776–7, and then undertaking a tour of Italy.[22] Returning to England in 1780, Northcote practiced for a further year in Plymouth before establishing a permanent studio in London.[23] A native of Plymouth with family connections in Portsmouth, he enjoyed patronage from relatives and friends in both ports but, even with their support, his stream of commissions quickly dried up. Writing to his brother from Portsmouth, he complained that "the people

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[18] Richard Tiddeman, "Account Book for the *Eltham*, 1746–1752," NMM TID/31.
[19] Rodger, *Wooden World*, 67. See also, Treve Rosoman, "Some Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Naval Furniture," *Furniture History* 33 (1997): 120–7.
[20] TNA ADM 106/1080/140.
[21] For example, "Yesterday Admiral Boscawen set out from his House at the Admiralty, with a great Equipage, for Portsmouth, in order to take the Command of the Fleet there." *Whitehall Evening Post*, 5–8 Apr., 1755.
[22] Stephen Gwynn, *Memorials of an Eighteenth Century Painter (James Northcote)* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1898), 113–18; Nigel Surry, "James Northcote at Portsmouth," *The Burlington Magazine* 136, no. 1093 (Apr. 1994): 234–7.
[23] Gwynn, *Memorials*, 190–1.

here have if possible less relish for pictures than at Plymouth" and, returning to his native town after his Italian adventure, he found that "no sitters presented themselves".[24] Working in Portsmouth in the late 1790s and early nineteenth century, the artist Richard Livesay never expressed such frustration at his situation.[25] He painted a number of portraits in the port and even exhibited some of his works at the Royal Academy in London.[26] However, he did not depend upon portraiture alone to support himself, for he also produced marine paintings and served as the Drawing Master at the Naval Academy in the dockyard, a role which provided a steady income and permanent employment.[27]

It seems that, as a general rule, the demand for painted portraiture in naval ports was limited. This was partly due to reasons of practicality. The production of an oil-on-canvas portrait was a lengthy and expensive process, requiring multiple sittings over several weeks or months. Whether they were preparing for their next voyage, resupplying their ship or waiting for their next posting, officers were often only temporary residents in port. As a consequence, even the relatively small proportion of officers who could afford a painted portrait could not guarantee that they would be in town long enough to see the work completed. Furthermore, painted portraits were typically commissioned to commemorate specific personal milestones, such as marriage, inheritance or – for a naval officer – promotion, creating an enduring visual archive of an individual's achievements, which was designed to be passed down through the generations in order to cement social status in perpetuity.[28] Such long-term concerns were not necessarily foremost in the mind of a naval officer in port, whose immediate situation was characterised by uncertainty, opportunity and risk: his next voyage could enhance his reputation and make his fortune or, at the other extreme, it could cost him his life. Naval ports were thus unconducive locations for the production of large-scale painted portraits.

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[24] James Northcote to Samuel Northcote, 30 May, 1776, in Surry, "James Northcote," 235; Alexander Brodie (ed.), *The Reminiscences of Solomon Alex. Hart, R. A.* (London: Wyman and Sons, 1882), 120.
[25] E. H. H. Archibald, *Dictionary of Sea Painters*, 2nd ed. (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1989), 148; F. M. O'Donoghue, *rev.* Jill Springall, "Livesay, Richard (1750–1826)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/16794.
[26] Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts: A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their Work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904*, 8 vols. (London: Henry Graves and Co., 1906), 5: 73–4.
[27] For drawing masters at the Naval Academy, see: Thomas, "Portsmouth Naval Academy," 39; Dickinson, *Educating*, 47.
[28] Margaretta M. Lovell, *Art in a Season of Revolution: Painters, Artisans, and Patrons in Early America* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 8–10.

However, other kinds of portraiture – notably miniatures and silhouettes – thrived in such environments, being small, portable and quick to produce.[29] Miniatures were considerably less expensive than oil paintings and silhouettes were even cheaper. The latter were referred to in the eighteenth century as "profiles" or "shades" and ranged from intricate paintings on glass to rapid cut-paper outlines. Although there was a massive gulf in status and price between the most luxurious miniatures, which were painstakingly hand-painted on ivory and encased in bejewelled containers, and the humblest profiles, which were mechanically traced from a projected shadow, the two forms of portraiture blurred into one another, with many practitioners working across both media. Most naval officers could comfortably afford such works, which could be executed in short order for individuals who were sailing imminently. Whereas oil-on-canvas portraitists looked to develop an aura of exclusivity, miniaturists and silhouettists attracted patrons through their convenience and accessibility. They advertised in newspapers and established their studios on fashionable shopping streets. In naval ports, they joined the varied array of other businesses selling portable luxuries to seagoing officers.

Abraham Daniel began practicing as a miniaturist in Plymouth in the 1770s, taking on Samuel Hart as his apprentice in 1778.[30] Following his apprenticeship, Hart moved to London but, failing to gain admission to the Royal Academy schools, he returned to Plymouth and, in 1798, he was recorded in a trade directory as a "watchmaker and miniature painter" in the town.[31] The same directory lists his old master, Daniel, as a "miniature painter", suggesting that by this date there was sufficient demand for miniatures in Plymouth to support at least two artists.[32] A third miniaturist, who doubled as a silhouettist, also seems to have been practicing in the port at this time: a now-lost miniature dated 1795 is recorded with a trade label inscribed "Gerhard, miniature and profile painter, 7 Frankfort St: Plymouth".[33] Still giving his address as "No. 7, Frankfort-street", Gerhard later styled himself as "successor to Mr. Daniel deceased" in an advertisement published in the *Royal*

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[29] For miniatures and silhouettes, see: Daphne Foskett, *British Portrait Miniatures* (London: Methuen and Co., 1963); Sue McKechnie, *British Silhouette Artists and their Work, 1760–1860* (London: Philip Wilson, 1978); Emma Rutherford, *Silhouette: The Art of the Shadow* (New York: Rizzoli, 2009).

[30] Alfred Rubens, "Francis Town of Bond Street (1738–1826) and his Family, with Further Notes on Early Anglo-Jewish Artists," *The Jewish Historical Society of England Transactions* 18 (1953–5): 105–9; Daphne Foskett, *A Dictionary of British Miniature Painters*, 2 vols. (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 1: 233.

[31] *The Universal British Directory of Trade and Commerce*, 4 vols. (London: The British Directory Office, 1790–8), 4: 267. See also, Brodie (ed.), *Reminiscences*, 7.

[32] *Universal British Directory*, 4: 266.

[33] Basil S. Long, *British Miniaturists, 1520–1860* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1929), 170.

Cornwall Gazette on 22 March 1806, in which he informed "the Ladies and Gentlemen of Cornwall and Devon, that he takes LIKENESSES in MINIATURE in a superior stile of accuracy and elegance."[34] Since no works attributable to Hart and Gerhard are known to survive and Abraham Daniel's miniatures cannot be distinguished from those his brother, a miniaturist in Bath, it is difficult to ascertain the role that naval patronage played in the businesses of these men.[35] However, they were clearly able to sustain successful practices in Plymouth.

As Nigel Surry has shown, Portsmouth also hosted various miniaturists and silhouettists during the second half of the eighteenth century.[36] In September 1775, Sarah Harrington arrived in the town, advertising herself in the *Hampshire Chronicle* as "A LADY (who…has had the Honour of taking PROFILES of the first Personages, and most distinguished Nobility in the Kingdom,) takes the most striking Likenesses at 2s. 6d. each."[37] Although beyond the means of a dockyard labourer, this price would have been easily affordable for members of the middling and professional classes of the town, including naval officers. Harrington was one of the period's most prolific peripatetic profile artists. In the tour beginning in November 1774, she visited Bath, Bristol, Gloucester, Worcester, Oxford, Southampton and Winchester before coming to Portsmouth.[38] Travelling with her patented "new and curious…apparatus" – a kind of camera obscura – and boasting that the "time of sitting [is] three minutes only", she produced bust-length portraits using a hollow-cut method.[39] She projected the sitter's miniaturised shadow onto white paper and traced around the outline with a knife, creating a head-shaped hole in the middle of the sheet; the page was then mounted over black backing paper to create the silhouette, as exemplified in her portrait of a man in a cockade hat, called Captain Edward Lasalles (date unknown, private collection, fig. 11). Since this technique registers only minimal details of costume and Harrington never marked her silhouettes with the names of the subjects, it is difficult to distinguish naval sitters from civilian gentlemen and military officers among surviving examples of her work. However, it is probable that her patrons in Portsmouth included sea officers as, according to her advertisements, she was based at "No. 3, Parade, Portsmouth".[40] Located at the western end of the High Street, the Parade – or "Grand Parade", as it

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[34] *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 22 Mar., 1806; McKechnie, *British Silhouette*, 408.
[35] Foskett, *Dictionary*, 1: 233, 287, 312.
[36] Nigel Surry, *Art in a Dockyard Town: Portsmouth 1770–1845* (Portsmouth: Portsmouth City Council, 1992), 9.
[37] *Hampshire Chronicle*, 18 Sept., 1775.
[38] McKechnie, *British Silhouette*, 223–30; Rutherford, *Silhouette*, 142.
[39] *Hampshire Chronicle*, 9 Oct., 1775; McKechnie, *British Silhouette*, 226.
[40] *Hampshire Chronicle*, 18 Sept., 1775.

was sometimes known – featured "a row of elegant buildings", containing shops, lodgings and taverns.[41] Overlooked by the military governor's official residence, the street was also the parade-ground of the Portsmouth garrison. Naval officers stationed in Portsmouth moved in the same social circles as their military counterparts. For example, when the Duke of York visited the town in October 1762, he held a "great Levee, consisting of all the Land and Naval Officers [in Portsmouth]" at the governor's house on the Parade.[42] In setting up her studio on this street, Harrington thus placed herself in a good position to attract commissions from land and sea officers alike.

Within weeks of Harrington's departure, another portraitist took up residence at No. 3 on the Parade. On 4 December 1775, William Grimaldi informed readers of the *Hampshire Chronicle* that "during his residence at Mr. Snook's, No. 3, on the Parade, Portsmouth, he paints Portraits in oil and miniature."[43] This was his second visit to the town, following one in 1772.[44] His adverts identify the landlord at No. 3 as Thomas Snook, who is recorded in contemporary trade directories as the proprietor of a "china-shop and glass-warehouse".[45] Travelling miniaturists and silhouettists often partnered with local glass and china merchants, since the latter were already in the business of selling small and delicate luxury goods. Indeed, sometimes miniatures and silhouettes were glazed or painted on glass, and thus overlapped in terms of materials and techniques with the wares of glass-sellers. Although Grimaldi's advertisement also refers to "Portraits in oil", miniatures were his specialism and he later achieved considerable repute as a miniature painter in London.[46] Unfortunately, no miniatures from either of his Portsmouth periods are presently known to survive.[47]

Both Harrington and Grimaldi stayed only a few months in Portsmouth before proceeding to other locations, exemplifying a peripatetic model of practice which was common among miniaturists and silhouettists at this time.[48] Other portraitists made similarly fleeting visits to the port. Abraham Jones, for instance, was briefly

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[41] Allen, *History of Portsmouth*, 119.
[42] *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, 7 Oct., 1762.
[43] *Hampshire Chronicle*, 4 Dec., 1775.
[44] Alexander Beaufort Grimaldi, *A Catalogue, Chronological and Descriptive, of Paintings, Drawings, and Engravings, by and after William Grimaldi, R. A., Paris.* (London: Privately Printed, 1873), 3.
[45] *Hampshire Directory,* 106.
[46] Foskett, *Dictionary*, 1: 298; V. Remington, "Grimaldi, William, Marquess Grimaldi in the Genoese nobility (1751–1830)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/11633.
[47] Grimaldi, *Catalogue*, 3.
[48] Harrington proceeded to Cambridge, see: *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 11 May, 1776.

based at the aptly named "Mr. Quick's, Glazier, St. Thomas-street" in October 1791. Offering profiles and miniatures to suit various budgets, ranging from "the most perfect Likeness in Miniature Profile at 2s. 6d." to "Profile Likenesses in colours, from 15s. to 1l. 15s. each", Jones urged patrons "to wait on him as soon as possible, as his stay can be only a few days".[49]

Another silhouettist settled in Portsmouth on a more permanent basis. According to his obituary, Arthur Lea was "well-known, highly esteemed and greatly endeared" to the town's public by the time of his death in 1828.[50] His earliest dated profile demonstrates that he was working in Portsmouth by 1799.[51] Newspaper advertisements reveal that, like Grimaldi and Harrington, he was based on the town's bustling "Grand Parade".[52] Described by Peggy Hickman as "possibly the finest painter of profiles on glass ever known", Lea depicted costume in great detail and, unusually for a silhouettist, he generally delineated his sitters' facial features.[53] A typical example of his work is the profile of an unidentified post-captain in the Brooklyn Museum (ca. 1810, fig. 12). Evidently, there was sufficient demand for fine silhouettes in the port to support Lea's high-end business. The majority of the artist's surviving profiles are naval portraits, leading Emma Rutherford to conclude that, by settling in Portsmouth, the profilist "positioned himself perfectly to build a niche business, and his beautiful silhouettes were probably presented to husbands and wives as they parted for…a long sea voyage."[54]

Lea was not the only profile artist in the Portsmouth area to establish a "niche business" of this kind. Across the Solent, at Newport on the Isle of Wight, Charles Buncombe was active from around 1790 until the 1820s.[55] He specialised in producing silhouettes depicting military and naval officers, painted in watercolour on card. Newport's proximity to the Spithead anchorage meant that sea officers stationed at Portsmouth often visited the town, though they were usually outnumbered by army officers, the island being a favoured staging post for anti-invasion forces. Exemplified by a profile of an unidentified naval lieutenant in full-dress uniform in the National Maritime Museum (late eighteenth century, fig. 13),

[49] *Hampshire Chronicle*, 10 Oct., 1791; McKechnie, *British Silhouette*, 421, 546–8.
[50] *Hampshire Telegraph*, 3 Mar., 1828; Peggy Hickman, "Fresh Light on Lea of Portsmouth," *Country Life* (16 Jan., 1969): 122–3.
[51] McKechnie, *British Silhouette*, 714.
[52] Hickman mistakenly asserts that Lea was based on the "Parade" in Portsea, a small street which appears on mid-nineteenth-century maps, but his advertisements clearly refer to the "Grand Parade" in the old town of Portsmouth. Hickman, "Fresh Light," 123; *Hampshire Telegraph*, 2 Jan., 1809.
[53] Hickman, "Fresh Light," 122. See also, McKechnie, *British Silhouette*, 714.
[54] Rutherford, *Silhouette*, 159.
[55] McKechnie, *British Silhouette*, 376, 707–8, 740–2; Rutherford, *Silhouette*, 164.

Buncombe's approach was to render his sitters' faces in black and their uniforms in colour. Like Lea, he worked to a high standard, paying close attention to details: tiny anchors can be seen on the lieutenant's buttons and gum arabic adds shading to his coat, hat, cockade and pigtail. Intriguingly, unlike most profile artists, Buncombe often sold his works unframed, a practice which Sue McKechnie suggests was intended to allow his military and naval sitters to post their portraits to wives or relatives from whom they were separated.[56]

McKechnie's supposition draws upon a prominent theme within the art-historical literature on eighteenth-century miniatures and silhouettes, which stresses how such portraits were often used to mitigate the pain of separation from an absent loved one.[57] The same function could also be fulfilled by oil-on-canvas portraits but miniatures and silhouettes provided a more intimate kind of memento. Due to their small size, they facilitated affective physical engagement: they could be held, caressed and even kissed, the portrait acting as a surrogate for the physically absent sitter. Many individuals carried miniatures and silhouettes on their persons, although there were gendered distinctions within this practice. Women often wore miniatures of male lovers and relatives as pendants and bracelets, outwardly performing through this bodily display of portraiture the feminine virtues of constancy, sentimentality and (implicitly) subordination.[58] By contrast, men could not act reciprocally without sacrificing the appearance of masculine independence and therefore kept miniatures in their pockets or beneath their clothes, where they were hidden from public view.[59] The emotive power of miniatures and silhouettes was reinforced by the fact that they provided the viewer with a tangible connection to a moment in time when the sitter was physically present before the artist. Indeed, silhouettes were usually produced in a single rapid sitting, during which the artist traced the sitter's shadow, creating an enduring record of his or her corporeality. The portrait's connection to the sitter was sometimes further enhanced by the mounting of a lock of his or her hair in the same frame.

Miniature and silhouette artists often insisted that their portraits provided an accurate likeness. For example, Sarah Harrington claimed of her silhouettes that "Nothing [is] required unless the most perfect Likeness is obtained."[60] Such statements were to some extent a marketing gimmick but they also acted as a

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[56] McKechnie, *British Silhouette*, 742.
[57] Marcia Pointon, "'Surrounded with Brilliants': Miniature Portraits in Eighteenth-Century England," *The Art Bulletin* 83 (2001): 43–71.
[58] Pointon, "'Surrounded,'" 51–5.
[59] Pointon, "'Surrounded,'" 59.
[60] *Hampshire Chronicle*, 18 Sept., 1775.

guarantee that the portrait would offer viewers a powerful reminder of the sitter's presence. At the same time, despite their supposed accuracy, miniatures and silhouettes turned the sitter's likeness into something strange and unfamiliar through the miniaturisation of the image and, in the case of silhouettes, the transformation of the human face into a featureless black shadow, which poignantly evoked the sitter's absence.[61] The portrait thus provided a connection to the depicted individual but it remained lesser than – a mere shadow of – the real thing. Buncombe's unusual silhouettes provide a powerful example of this effect, the blankness of the silhouetted face being emphasised by the detailed rendering of the surrounding uniform.

Scholars examining miniatures and silhouettes have often emphasised their use as mourning jewellery, providing viewers with emotionally resonant reminders of sitters who had died.[62] However, in her seminal essay on miniature portraiture in eighteenth-century England, Marcia Pointon urges art historians to think not only about the memorial functions of the genre but also its significance in contexts of "institutionalised separation" – that is, the separation of individuals across vast geographical distances due to phenomena such as "the grand tour (leading to lengthy sojourns in Rome by young aristocratic men), military and naval campaigns, mercantile expansionism, and emigration".[63] Viccy Coltman has recently developed this theme in her study of miniatures commissioned in India by Scottish East India Company officers for their relatives in Britain. Coltman's work highlights the "affective currency [of miniatures] as a material memento to the living…rather than a *memento mori* to the dead."[64]

Naval correspondence indicates that miniatures and silhouettes were exchanged between officers and their loved ones. At sea, many officers carried with them small portraits of family members. Shortly before his death at the Battle of the Trafalgar in 1805, Captain George Duff wrote to his wife "to thank her for her picture".[65] Presumably this was a miniature or profile, capable of being posted to his ship in the Mediterranean. Around the same time, Midshipman Coleridge panicked

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[61] Pointon, "'Surrounded,'" 59, referring to Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC/London: Duke Univ. Press, 1993), 95. See also, John Gage, "Photographic Likeness," in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall, (Manchester/New York: Manchester Univ. Press, 1997), 119.
[62] For example, Robin Jaffee Frank, *Love and Loss: American Portrait and Mourning Miniatures* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2000).
[63] Pointon, "'Surrounded,'" 67.
[64] Viccy Coltman, "Sojourning Scots and the Portrait Miniature in Colonial India, 1770s–1780s," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40, no. 3 (2017): 421–41, quote at 422.
[65] George Duff to Sophia Duff, 28 Sept., 1805, in "Biographical Memoir of the late Captain George Duff," *The Naval Chronicle* 15 (1806): 289.

when he discovered that his writing desk, which contained "his treasured pictures of those he loved at home", had been thrown overboard when the *Impetueux* cleared for action. To his relief, he later learned that the pictures in question – reckoned by his biographer to have been silhouettes – had been saved by a senior officer, who kept them safe in his pocket until he could return them to the young midshipman.[66] Miniatures even featured in popular writings about the navy. In the ballad of "Ben Backstay" published in the *Naval Chronicle* in 1808, the eponymous naval hero wears a portrait of Anna, his sweetheart, "around his neck" on "each voyage he [makes] to sea", "art [standing] substitute for nature."[67]

As well as carrying portraits of their loved ones to sea, officers also gave their own likenesses to those they left behind on shore. A visual record of this practice is provided by George Romney's portrait of the actress Anna Maria Crouch (1787, Kenwood House, fig. 14).[68] Crouch is shown beneath a rocky cliff, laying aside her book and fingering a chain around her neck, from which hangs a miniature of a naval officer. This portrait-within-a-portrait represents her husband, Lieutenant Edward Rollings Crouch. In the background, a sailing vessel speeds towards the horizon, symbolising the couple's physical separation. With its coastal setting, Romney's portrait explicitly suggests that Crouch is pining for her departed love.

This narrative of love, longing and the sea is enhanced by an array of mythological, allegorical and theatrical references. Romney's female portraits often followed pictorial formulae that he had developed through the representation of Emma Hart (later Lady Hamilton), whom he depicted obsessively in various different guises.[69] The Crouch portrait was derived from a similar picture of Emma by the seashore (1785–6, National Maritime Museum, fig. 15), which was known in the nineteenth century as "Lady Hamilton as Ariadne", the assumption being that it showed Emma as the mythological heroine abandoned by her lover Theseus on the island of Naxos.[70] More recently, scholars have reread the portrait as a complex meditation by Romney upon his own feelings about Emma's absence, after she had been sent abroad to be the mistress of Sir William Hamilton, the British Envoy in Naples.[71] At Romney's death, this portrait was probably the work catalogued by one

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[66] Coleridge, *Story of a Devonshire House*, 112.
[67] "Naval Poetry," *The Naval Chronicle* 20 (1808): 228–9.
[68] Alex Kidson, *George Romney: A Complete Catalogue of his Paintings*, 3 vols. (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2015), 1: 158–9.
[69] Nadia Tscherny, "'Persons and Property': Romney's Society Portraiture," in *Those Delightful Regions of Imagination: Essays on George Romney*, ed. Alex Kidson (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2002), 52–3.
[70] Humphrey Ward and W. Roberts, *Romney*, 2 vols. (London: Thomas Agnew and Sons, 1904), 2: 180.
[71] Alex Kidson, *George Romney 1734–1802* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2002), 200.

of his studio assistants as "Absence", strengthening the idea that it was intended to allegorise this concept.[72] The reuse of this pictorial formula brought the same associations with both Ariadne and Absence to bear upon Crouch's fondling of her naval husband's miniature. Her own career upon the London stage brought further references into play. Notably, she was known for her portrayal of Miranda in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which famously opens with a shipwreck.[73] In the play, Miranda watches the disaster from the shore, persuading her father, Prospero, to save the stricken sailors from certain death. This reference thus introduces an undercurrent of threat into the portrait, reminding viewers of the sea's perils. Taken together, the portrait's complex range of pictorial and poetic allusions associate Crouch's wearing of her husband's miniature with the experience of absence and the haunting fear of disaster, loss and abandonment that accompanied the inherent risks of naval service.

Romney's portrait is a piece of theatre, in which Crouch consciously performs the role of the sentimental naval wife. Nonetheless, it provides a stimulating introduction to the meanings that naval miniatures held for their shore-bound owners. The same themes of absence and anxiety appear in letters exchanged between naval officers and their loved ones. Coltman has demonstrated how, for "sojourning Scots" in the East India Company, miniature portraits often functioned in conjunction with "epistolary self-portraits", in which officers verbally described their appearance in letters to their loved ones.[74] Horatio Nelson's correspondence with his wife, Fanny, offers a naval example of this practice. When Nelson was serving as a post-captain in the Mediterranean in July 1794, his right eye was badly injured at the Siege of Calvi.[75] Shortly afterwards, he penned an epistolary portrait for Fanny, describing the extent of the damage to his features: "the blemish is nothing, not to be perceived unless told", he reassured her, though he also acknowledged that "the pupil [of the eye] is nearly the size of the blue part".[76] A few months later, Nelson sent a miniature to Fanny, which he had commissioned from an unknown artist at Leghorn (1794, National Maritime Museum, fig. 16).[77] Coltman notes that the portraits sent home by East India

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[72] Kidson, *Romney Catalogue*, 3: 665–7.
[73] Julius Bryant, *Kenwood: Paintings in the Iveagh Bequest* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2003), 388.
[74] Coltman, "Sojourning Scots," 422–4.
[75] Horatio Nelson to Samuel Hood, 2 Oct., 1794, in *Dispatches*, ed. Nicolas, 1: 487–9.
[76] Horatio Nelson to Frances Nelson, 18 Aug., 1794, in *Nelson's Letters to his Wife and Other Documents, 1785–1831*, ed. George P. B. Naish, (London: Navy Records Society, 1958), 119.
[77] Richard Walker, *The Nelson Portraits* (London: Royal Naval Museum, 1998), 15–17, 195.

Company officers served "as material affirmations of their survival in a climate initially inhospitable to European constitutions".[78] Produced a few months after his wounding at Calvi, Nelson's miniature was perhaps similarly intended to affirm his survival in the face of the risks associated with his profession. The miniature appears at first glance to bear no trace of the sitter's injury but, upon closer inspection, faint scars are visible around his right eye socket, reinforcing the portrait's power as a testament to his survival.[79] Nelson himself wrote to Fanny that the miniature looked "not the least like me" but asserted that, despite the poor resemblance, "I know it will be acceptable".[80] In this comment, he suggests that the power of the miniature was not contingent upon its likeness: whether or not it provided an accurate resemblance, it proved his survival and preserved a trace of his presence.

For her part, Fanny was pleased with the gift. In fact, Nelson's letter about the miniature crossed with one from her, in which – unaware that he had already commissioned a portrait – she wrote "I wished very much you had sat, for your picture…Is it possible [in Italy]? I mean a small one."[81] She later recorded wearing the miniature at a dinner with Captain Edward Berry, who had recently returned from the Mediterranean, bringing the "pleasing message" that Nelson would soon be coming home. Writing to Nelson about the meeting, Fanny notes that Berry "begged to see your picture which he had seen me wear" and she in turn peppered him with questions about her husband, demanding a verbal portrait to complement the visual one. "He assured us you were quite well," she claims.[82] This example demonstrates how naval miniatures worked in conjunction with other forms of portraiture to provide reassurance to officers' loved ones during times of separation.

Whereas Nelson's miniature functioned as a celebration of his survival, other officers appear to have commissioned small-scale portraits in anticipation of imminent risks. Serving in the Mediterranean in the *Madras* (56 guns) in February 1802, Thomas Marmaduke Wybourn – a lieutenant in the marines – hastily engaged an artist in Malta to paint his portrait, reportedly "in oils" but presumably on a small scale, since he "could only sit [for] an hour".[83] He sent the miniature home to

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[78] Coltman, "Sojourning Scots," 438.
[79] Walker, *Nelson Portraits*, 15.
[80] Horatio Nelson to Frances Nelson, 12 Dec., 1794, in *Nelson's Letters*, ed. Naish, 191.
[81] Frances Nelson to Horatio Nelson, 16 Dec., 1794, in *Nelson's Letters*, ed. Naish, 263.
[82] Frances Nelson to Horatio Nelson, 28 May, 1797, in *Nelson's Letters*, ed. Naish, 367.
[83] Thomas Marmaduke Wybourn to Emily Wybourn, 25 Feb., 1802, in *Sea Soldier, An Officer of Marines with Duncan, Nelson, Collingwood and Cockburn: The Letters and Journals of Major T. Marmaduke Wybourn RM, 1797–1813*, ed. Anne Petrides and Jonathan Downs (Tunbridge Wells: Parapress, 2000), 52. See also, Jennine Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the*

his sister but, two months later, he wrote again, asking her to "destroy" it. As he explained, he had only commissioned the "vile daub" because "we were…ordered to that terrible place [Egypt] where the plague is raging very badly at present, and we were within two hours of sailing, I therefore really imagined I might not survive, and sat for my Picture in a hurry, thinking it would be acceptable to you".[84] Mercifully, his orders had changed at the last minute and he was not required to join the disease-ridden forces in Egypt. Now that he was no longer afraid for his life, the portrait had become redundant in his eyes. His sister waited until he had returned home safely before acting on his instruction, then, according to a manuscript note she added to his letter, "we did burn it…he was present and enjoyed it".[85] This correspondence suggests how small portraits were understood by some within the navy as a kind of emotional insurance policy, providing loved ones with a sentimentally invested memento in case the worst should happen. Wybourn's description of his hurried sitting, "within two hours of sailing", powerfully evokes the urgency and anxiety that could potentially characterise the experiences of naval personnel in port, which in turn presented business opportunities for artists offering to produce portable portraits on a tight schedule. Although both Nelson and Wybourn commissioned their portraits overseas, the flourishing businesses of miniaturists and silhouettists in Plymouth and Portsmouth probably depended upon similar commissions from officers looking to affirm their survival of recent voyages or to provide comfort for their loved ones in case of future disaster.

II

Miniature and silhouette artists succeeded in naval ports by catering to the desire of many officers to provide comfort and reassurance to their loved ones, who missed them and feared for their safety. By contrast, instead of seeking to mitigate anxiety, Joshua Reynolds's practice in Plymouth in the 1740s actively celebrated the taking of both naval and artistic risks. The painter had grown up in Plympton, a small town situated only a few miles from Plymouth Dockyard. At the age of nineteen, he left home to train in London with Thomas Hudson, a successful portraitist who also hailed from Devon. This apprenticeship began in 1741 and was supposed to last for

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British Army in the Long Eighteenth Century: 'The Girl I Left Behind Me' (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2014), 175–6.

[84] Thomas Marmaduke Wybourn to Emily Wybourn, 20 Apr., 1802, in *Sea Soldier*, ed. Petrides and Downs, 52.

[85] Emily Wybourn, manuscript annotation, ca. 1802, reproduced in *Sea Soldier*, ed. Petrides and Downs, 52.

four years but, for unknown reasons, it ended after just two.[86] Reluctant or unable to establish his own studio in the competitive metropolis, Reynolds began painting portraits in his native region. Initially, he divided his time between London and Plymouth but, following his father's death in December 1745, he settled in the port on a more permanent basis, taking a house in the town with his two unmarried sisters.[87] He practiced in this property until May 1749, when he embarked upon a tour of the Continent.

Reynolds's practice in Plymouth was aided by patronage from his family, friends and connections in the area. However, setting up in the port was nonetheless something of a gamble for the young painter. Writing in the early nineteenth century, James Northcote – Reynolds's ex-pupil-turned-biographer – was disparaging about the support for painting in Plymouth in the 1740s, suggesting that "there were but few works of art" in the town.[88] Invoking the trope of genius sprouting from barren ground which often features in artistic biographies, this statement was undoubtedly intended to emphasise Reynolds's singular brilliance but it may also have carried some truth, for few artists seem to have practiced in Plymouth before Reynolds's arrival. He claimed to have been inspired during his time in the port by the work of the Devonian portraitist William Gandy (d. 1729) but, although he had reportedly been active in Plymouth, Gandy had worked mainly in Exeter.[89] And while Hudson had occasionally practiced in Devon during the early 1740s, he seems never to have worked in Plymouth.[90] Northcote records that Thomas Rennell (like Reynolds, a former apprentice of Hudson's) was a "much admired" portraitist in Plymouth around the time that Reynolds arrived in the port but, cursed with an "indolent mind", Rennell soon neglected his art, eventually dying "in great poverty" in Dartmouth.[91] In moving to Plymouth, Reynolds therefore seems to have been venturing into relatively unproven territory as far as the professional practice of portraiture was concerned.

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[86] Joseph Farington later alleged that Reynolds was thrown out by Hudson for failing to deliver a portrait to the drapery painter Joseph van Aken. Joseph Farington, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1819), 17–18.

[87] Charles Robert Leslie and Tom Taylor, *Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1865), 1: 32.

[88] Northcote, *Life of Reynolds*, 1: 21.

[89] Northcote, *Life of Reynolds*, 1: 22; David Mannings, "The Sources and Development of Reynolds's Pre-Italian Style," *The Burlington Magazine* 117, no. 865 (Apr. 1975): 219. For Gandy, see: Christopher White et al., *Rembrandt in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale Centre for British Art, 1983), 26; T. J. Fenton, "Gandy, William (d. 1729)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/10337.

[90] Ellen G. Miles, "Thomas Hudson (1701–1779): Portraitist to the British Establishment," (PhD diss., Yale Univ., 1976); *Thomas Hudson 1701–1779: Portrait Painter and Collector* (London: Greater London Council, 1979).

[91] Northcote, *Life of Reynolds*, 1: 4. See also, Stephens, "City and Country," 18.

Taking this risk paid off for the young artist as he attracted a steady stream of commissions in the port and forged many useful connections and friendships, from which he continued to benefit throughout his career. He painted a broad range of sitters, including local aristocrats, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, town clerks and their wives and children.[92] However, naval officers accounted for a significant proportion of his business. His sitter books from Plymouth are not known to have survived but almost a quarter of his extant portraits from this period depict sea officers.[93] Moreover, this group includes some of the most innovative paintings that he produced whilst working in the port.

According to the artist's friend Edmond Malone, "the first of [Reynolds's] performances which brought him into any considerable notice" was his portrait of Captain John Hamilton, which he painted in Plymouth in 1746 (Barons Court, fig. 17).[94] The second son of the seventh Earl of Abercorn, Hamilton was "bred to the sea service", obtaining his lieutenant's commission at the age of twenty on 4 March 1736 and becoming a post-captain on 19 February 1741.[95]

In Reynolds's three-quarter-length portrait, the thirty-one-year-old Hamilton leans on a walking stick with an air of aristocratic nonchalance. The authoritative swagger of his pose is enhanced by his flamboyant costume, his left hand sweeping back his massive fur coat to reveal a black and gold braided belt, into which has been thrust an ornate dagger. Contemporary viewers would have recognised this outfit, which also includes a brown tunic and a black busby, as a representation of the uniform dress of the Hungarian hussars.[96] The hussars were elite Eastern European horsemen, who fought alongside British troops in support of the Empress Maria Theresa during the War of the Austrian Succession (1739–48). In Britain, they became a subject of public fascination, in particular for their exotic-looking uniform, which became a familiar sight at polite entertainments. For example, in 1743, "Gough's illuminated Amphitheatre" in London hosted an exhibition of "about 10,000 of the Hungarian Army…drawn to the Life, by the best Masters, as they appeared in

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[92] For an overview of Reynolds's clientele in Plymouth, see: Smiles (ed.), *Acquisition of Genius*, 17–73.

[93] Twelve out of fifty-two surviving portraits from this period in Reynolds's career depict naval officers. Figures based on David Mannings and Martin Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: A Complete Catalogue of his Paintings*, 2 vols. (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2000).

[94] Malone, *Works*, 1: vii.

[95] Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, 5: 92–6; J. K. Laughton, *rev.* Roger Morriss, "Hamilton, John (d. 1755)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/12108.

[96] Nicholas Penny (ed.), *Reynolds* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1986), 165. For hussar uniforms, see: John Mollo, *Military Fashion* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972), 53, 56–7; Katalin F. Dózsa, "Court and City Costume, 18th to 20th Centuries," in *Historic Hungarian Costume from Budapest* (Manchester: Univ. of Manchester, 1979), 16.

Battle Array".[97] As Aileen Ribeiro has shown, hussar dress also became the most popular male masquerade costume of the period.[98] Hamilton's clothing compares closely with the representation of hussar uniform in the *Recueil de Cent Estampes Representant differentes Nations du Levant* (1714, fig. 18), a collection of Parisian engravings which was frequently used in eighteenth-century Britain as a pattern book for exotic masquerade outfits.[99] The slanted lower flap of Hamilton's tunic identifies the garment as the hussar's *dolman* and his braided belt recalls the Hungarian *sabretache*, a girdle made from woven tubes. A fur busby or *kalpak* was also a central component of hussar dress and appears in both the costume print and the portrait, although Reynolds does not show the loose cloth bag at the top of the hat. The thin moustache that graces the naval captain's upper lip can only be explained in reference to Hungarian costume, since a fashionable gentleman in eighteenth-century Britain would never normally wear facial hair. However, Hamilton eschews the fur-trimmed pelisse usually associated with hussar dress in favour of a voluminous fur coat, which allows Reynolds to indulge in a dazzling display of bravura brushwork. Since official naval uniform had not yet been introduced, portraits from this period tended to represent officers in fashionable civilian clothing. For example, in 1744, George Knapton painted Captain Richard Chadwick (National Maritime Museum, fig. 19) in a luxurious yellow silk waistcoat with silver lace. Reynolds's decision to represent Hamilton in masquerade costume was, however, unprecedented in naval portraiture of this time.

The theatrical effect of this costume is complemented by the portrait's dramatic background. A storm swirls around Hamilton's head and, beneath his sleeve in the lower right-hand corner of the picture, a stricken two-decker is shown breaking apart on the turbulent sea. Relatively indistinct in the original painting, this detail is more clearly legible in a nineteenth-century mezzotint (1876, fig. 20). It is thought to represent the wreck of the *Princess Louisa* (40 guns) on 29 December 1736, when the ship was escorting George II on his return from a visit to Hanover.[100] As a lieutenant in the *Princess Louisa*, Hamilton distinguished himself during the wreck: declaring that he would have "the same Fate with the common Sailors, and claim no Precedency", he remained on board until the entire crew had escaped to

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[97] *Daily Advertiser*, 29 June, 1743.
[98] Aileen Ribeiro, "Hussars in Masquerade," *Apollo* 105 (1977): 111–16; Aileen Ribeiro, *The Dress Worn at Masquerades in England, 1730 to 1790, and Its Relation to Fancy Dress in Portraiture* (New York/London: Garland, 1984), 420–7.
[99] Ribeiro, "Hussars," 113.
[100] For the identification of the wreck as the *Princess Louisa*, see: Penny (ed.), *Reynolds*, 165.

safety.[101] His gallantry was hailed at the time in the metropolitan press and by the king himself.[102] Recalling this earlier act of heroism, the shipwreck in Reynolds's portrait characterises the aristocratic captain as an intrepid adventurer. With its swaggering glamour, fashionable costume and dramatic visual effects, it is no wonder that this portrait "brought Reynolds into considerable notice", as Malone records. The painting would have been particularly striking for viewers in the 1740s because it boldly diverged from the long-established conventions of naval portraiture, breathing new life into what had become a relatively conservative genre.

This conservatism is evident in the representation of Vice-Admiral Edward Vernon, who became a popular hero after his audacious capture of Porto Bello (now in Panama) from the Spanish in November 1739 with a force of only six ships.[103] Porto Bello was the first major action in a conflict between the British and the Spanish over trade in the Americas, named the War of Jenkins's Ear by nineteenth-century historians, which broke out in October 1739, later blurring into the War of the Austrian Succession.[104] The victory prompted mass celebrations in Britain: poems, ballads, plays, pamphlets, ceramics and prints were produced to commemorate Vernon's achievements and bonfires, processions and other public festivities were held in his honour. Kathleen Wilson has identified the political conditions that produced Vernon's popularity. As she demonstrates, the vice-admiral became a figurehead for pro-war sentiment amongst those disaffected with the Walpole administration, especially within the increasingly empowered commercial classes. For Wilson, the episode provides an important index of the shifting power balance within British society and the growth of extra-parliamentary politics.[105]

However, although Vernon's celebrity registered social and political change, the portraits of the admiral produced and circulated in this period displayed significant art-historical continuity with much earlier naval portraiture. This is most obvious in a mezzotint published anonymously around 1740 (fig. 21), which was a re-worked version of a twenty-two-year-old plate. The plate in question was originally engraved by John Faber the Elder in 1718 after a portrait of Admiral George Byng by Godfrey Kneller (fig. 22). Kneller's portrait of Byng (National

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[101] *London Evening Post*, 6–8 Jan., 1737.
[102] *London Evening Post*, 8–11 Jan., 1737; *Daily Gazetteer,* 11 Jan., 1737.
[103] Cyril Hughes Hartman, *The Angry Admiral: The Later Career of Edward Vernon, Admiral of the White* (London: Heinemann, 1953), 16–53.
[104] The War of Jenkins's Ear is named for the appendage lost by British merchant captain Robert Jenkins to a Spanish customs officer, an incident which contributed to the escalating tensions between the two nations. The first use of this appellation for the conflict appears in Thomas Carlyle, *History of Friedrich II. of Prussia, called Frederick the Great*, 6 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1858–65) 3: 119.
[105] Wilson, "Empire," 74–109. See also, Jordan and Rogers, "Admirals," 202–11.

Maritime Museum, fig. 23) had been painted between 1707 and 1709 as part of a series of naval portraits commissioned by Queen Anne, themselves inspired in concept and execution by Peter Lely's *Flagmen of Lowestoft* of 1665–6.[106] In Kneller's portrait and its reproduction by Faber, Byng wears a metal breastplate over a velvet coat, his left hand grasping the hilt of his sword. He leans with nonchalant confidence against a stone plinth, on top of which rests a baton of command. Both the breastplate and the baton were long-standing symbols of military authority which were not specific to the navy. The man-of-war in the background is the only element in the portrait that explicitly identifies the sitter as an admiral, rather than a military general. In the anonymous reworking of Faber's plate, produced several decades later, little has been altered to make the portrait represent Vernon: only the inscription and the sitter's head and shoulders are changed. A copy of this print featuring more extensive changes was subsequently published by Thomas Bakewell (ca. 1740, fig. 24). Here, the old-fashioned breastplate is swapped for a mid-eighteenth-century frock coat, the stone plinth replaced with a cannon and a turreted building added in the background to evoke the capture of Porto Bello. Nonetheless, Bakewell's portrait remains relatively close to Kneller's original. Saving time, money and energy, the reuse of an old plate had obvious advantages, especially for publishers eager to profit from Vernon's sudden popularity. Yet, the enterprise would only be worth pursuing if Kneller's thirty-year-old portrait could be expected to pass as an image of a contemporary naval officer. The fact that this was felt to be the case suggests the extent to which certain conventions for representing the naval profession had become entrenched. Moreover, it is also typical of the early eighteenth-century understanding of portraiture as a tool primarily for signalling social, institutional or gendered belonging, which imbued sitters with a relatively homogeneous image (the so-called "Kneller mask") rather than seeking to provide an authentic trace of a particular individual.[107]

Reynolds would likely have become familiar with this traditional approach to naval portraiture during his apprenticeship with Thomas Hudson in London in 1741–3. Indeed, shortly before the young artist's arrival in the capital, Hudson had painted a portrait of Admiral Vernon (ca. 1739, Ipswich Borough Council, fig. 25), which echoed the imagery of the recycled prints discussed above. The admiral is represented wearing an understated brown frock coat, leaning against a stone pillar and grasping a baton of command in his right hand as the capture of Porto

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[106] Stewart, *Kneller*, 69.
[107] For discussion of the "Kneller mask", see: David H. Solkin, "Great Pictures or Great Men? Reynolds, Male Portraiture, and the Power of Art," *Oxford Art Journal* 9, no. 2 (1986): 42.

Bello takes place in the distance. A stack of papers on top of the stone pillar may allude to the additional fighting and signalling instructions that Vernon distributed to his fleet in the West Indies, seeking to ensure that his ships followed standardised procedures.[108] This emphasis on standardisation put Vernon at the forefront of a movement to modernise the navy through increased professionalization and discipline.[109] Yet, although it alludes to new developments in the nature of naval service (which, as we shall see, were not uncontroversial), Hudson's portrait remains a largely conventional and conservative image. The portrait's conventionality is especially striking in comparison with Reynolds's flamboyant portrayal of the young Captain Hamilton in fashionable masquerade costume.

Reynolds perhaps felt emboldened to experiment in this portrait because of his friendship with the sitter. They met through a mutual acquaintance, the Cornish landowner Richard Eliot, who was friends with Hamilton and provided Reynolds with some of his first portrait commissions in Plymouth.[110] This highlights an important characteristic of Reynolds's engagement with the navy in Plymouth: his naval sitters were entwined within his broader networks of patronage amongst the port's social and political elite. Eliot's commissions from the young painter included a group portrait of his family (1745, Port Eliot, fig. 26), in which Captain Hamilton appears in a playful pose, giving a piggy-back to one of the Eliot children.[111] Disrupting the elevated formality of the painting, which looks back to grand baroque models, such as Anthony Van Dyck's *Pembroke Family* (ca. 1635, Wilton House), Hamilton's dynamic pose indicates that he was open to creative, gently unconventional forms of self-representation. The naval captain formed a close friendship with Reynolds, taking an active interest in the development of his career. For example, he presented the painter with a copy of an influential artistic treatise – Roger de Piles's *Cours de Peinture par Principes* (1708) – in the original French, a gift which demonstrates that Hamilton was interested in artistic matters and suggests that he might have exercised some creative input in the production of his portrait.[112]

The young captain had made a name for himself as a highly successful captain in the Western Squadron. From its operational base in Plymouth, this

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[108] Julian S. Corbett (ed.), *Fighting Instructions, 1530–1816* (London: Navy Records Society, 1905), 214–16.
[109] For Vernon's reputation as a moderniser, see: Daniel A. Baugh, *British Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), 150.
[110] For Eliot and Reynolds, see: Smiles (ed.), *Acquisition of Genius*, 37–45.
[111] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 280, no. 576; Hallett, *Reynolds*, 58–60.
[112] Reynolds's French copy of de Piles is currently held in Yale University Library. It is inscribed on the flyleaf "J. Reynolds, the Gift of the Honble Capt. Hamilton." Roger de Piles, *Cours de Peinture par Principes* (Paris: J. Estienne, 1708), Yale University Library, BEIN Ji3 28.

squadron patrolled the western entrance to the English Channel, covering a large area which included the Celtic Sea, the Bay of Biscay and the Portuguese coast. Originally established as a small force in the mid-seventeenth century, the squadron expanded significantly in the 1740s, at the same time as Reynolds was practicing in Plymouth. With the War of the Austrian Succession raging on the Continent, Britain was fighting a fierce naval war against France and Spain, a struggle which, in a burgeoning age of empire, had both European and global dimensions.[113] As Michael Duffy has shown, ideally positioned at northern Europe's gateway to the Atlantic, the Western Squadron became the "linchpin" of the Admiralty's strategy to protect Britain's home waters, colonial possessions and overseas trade routes.[114] Newly appointed to the Admiralty Board, Admiral George Anson assigned many of his most ambitious protégés to the expanding squadron. This created a close-knit pool of dynamic young officers in Plymouth, which Reynolds successfully tapped for commissions, starting with Captain Hamilton. A young man himself, the painter perhaps felt a sense of masculine camaraderie with these enterprising officers, a number of whom became his personal friends. He was, in essence, the right man in the right place at the right time: whereas other portraitists who specialised in producing large-scale paintings struggled to sustain their businesses in eighteenth-century naval ports, Reynolds was an ambitious young artist in Plymouth at a time when the town was full of ambitious young officers.

Commands in the Western Squadron were highly attractive for young officers eager to make their names and their fortunes. Since major commercial shipping routes passed through the squadron's waters, its ships – mostly small, fast and manoeuvrable fourth- and fifth-rates – were principally employed in escorting British convoys and in chasing down enemy privateers and merchantmen, all whilst battling against westerly winds, frequent storms and treacherous coastlines.[115] Such duties called for officers who were hardy and courageous, and the potential rewards were significant for those who were willing to take risks. With a fast vessel and orders to

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[113] For this conflict, see: H. W. Richmond, *The Navy in the War of 1739–48*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1920); Richard Harding, *The Emergence of Britain's Global Naval Supremacy: The War of 1739–1748* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010).
[114] Michael Duffy, "The Establishment of the Western Squadron as the Linchpin of British Naval Strategy," in *Parameters of British Naval Power, 1650–1850*, ed. Michael Duffy (Exeter: Univ. of Exeter Press, 1992), 60–81. See also, A. N. Ryan, "The Royal Navy and the Blockade of Brest, 1689–1805: Theory and Practice," in *Les Marines de guerre européennes XVII-XVIIIe siècles*, ed. Martine Acerra et al. (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1985), 175–82.
[115] Duffy, "Establishment," 63. For a detailed breakdown of the duties of the Western Squadron in the 1740s, see the orders issued to Vice-Admiral William Martin when he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Squadron in 1745: Admiralty to William Martin, 17 Aug., 1745, TNA ADM 2/1331.

pursue enemy ships, an officer stood an excellent chance of amassing a fortune in prize money. Involvement in a dramatic chase or the capture of a plunder-laden prize could also put his name in the papers and on people's lips in fashionable society. Whereas news from men-of-war serving overseas took months to reach home, the trials and triumphs of the Western Squadron played out before the eyes of the public: detailed accounts of its actions arrived in England within days, if not hours, and were immediately published in the press. Take, for example, the *General Evening Post*'s coverage of a cruise undertaken by Hamilton in the *Augusta* (60 guns) in spring 1745. Although the paper's notices of the captain's progress may seem somewhat repetitive to our eyes, they would have been consumed by contemporary readers over the course of several weeks, forming regular instalments in an unfolding story of naval adventure. On 12 March, the *Post* reported that Hamilton had "taken a French Privateer of 20 guns, and 120 men, and had engaged with seven other French Privateers", having "at one Time a 20 and a 30 Gun ship on him".[116] On 16 March, the paper updated its readers that "the *Grand Turk* and the *Grand Biche*, [privateers] of St Maloes, [had] attack'd the *Augusta*, Capt. Hamilton, taking him for an Indiaman, and that at the first or second Broadside from the *Augusta*, the *Grand Turk*, with 400 Men, was sunk, on which the other struck".[117] Finally, on 9 April, it was reported that Hamilton had put into port with "a rich French Prize", which had on board "400 Hogsheads of Sugar, and 50 Tons of Indigo…worth, at least, 25,000l. sterling" and "three Chests of Silver, containing 20,000 Pieces of Eight".[118] Typical of the daring exploits that earned Hamilton the sobriquet "the active Capt.", these reports encapsulate the eye-watering plunder and extensive press coverage that young captains in the Western Squadron could hope to garner.[119] Seeking to establish himself as an artist, Reynolds would have valued commissions from such officers: they were celebrated heroes with money to burn, whose portraits were likely to attract attention.

On one level, Hamilton's swaggering portrayal by Reynolds evokes his reputation as one of the most swashbuckling officers in the Western Squadron. However, this portrait also needs to be understood in the context of a damaging scandal which engulfed the navy in the mid-1740s and raised questions about officers' willingness to take risks – a scandal in which Hamilton was himself embroiled. After a successful winter harassing French privateers off the southern

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[116] *General Evening Post*, 12 Mar., 1745.
[117] *General Evening Post*, 16 Mar., 1745.
[118] *General Evening Post*, 9 Apr., 1745.
[119] *St James's Evening Post*, 10–12 Mar., 1747.

coast of Ireland, he was ordered in January 1746 to relinquish his command and proceed to the Admiralty, whereupon he was appointed to the court martial tasked with trying Vice-Admiral Richard Lestock for "notorious Breaches of Duty".[120] Lestock had been second-in-command to Admiral Thomas Mathews at the Battle of Toulon on 11 February 1744, which saw the British humiliatingly defeated by a combined Franco-Spanish force.[121] Mathews and Lestock blamed each other for the disaster. The former accused his deputy of refusing to fight: Mathews had led the British centre into a fierce engagement with the Spanish flagship but Lestock in the rear had not followed, keeping his distance and allowing the enemy ships to escape unmolested. Lestock countered by claiming that he had in fact been obeying Mathews's signals, which were confused and ambiguous. He insinuated that the admiral had rushed too hastily into action and failed to communicate effectively with his fleet. The scandal lasted for over two years, sustained by a vicious pamphlet war and an inconclusive parliamentary enquiry, before the two officers were eventually court-martialled.[122]

The debacle at Toulon compounded a mood of dissatisfaction that had been growing around the sea service for several years. The declaration of war in 1739 had been accompanied by exultations of British naval supremacy from the opposition Patriot Whigs but, despite Vernon's initial success in the West Indies, the navy had failed to live up to expectations.[123] The public's alarm was intensified by the dire predicament in which Britain found itself, facing both a Jacobite uprising at home and the threat of an imminent French invasion. Furthermore, the French navy was perceived to have the better of its British equivalent in "the Weight of Metal, their much greater Number of Officers and Men, and the Goodness and Strength of their Men of War".[124] Outmanned and outgunned, Britain's fate was understood as depending upon whether its sea officers were prepared "to take every Advantage of the enemy".[125] The Toulon disaster suggested that some were not. As the scandal rumbled on, the press increasingly blamed the navy's failings on its officers, one author in the *Gentleman's Magazine* writing in May 1745 that "you [Britain] have the

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[120] TNA ADM 51/74/8, 31 Jan., 1745/6; Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, 5: 93.
[121] For a detailed account of the Battle of Toulon, see: Richmond, *Navy*, 2: 1–57.
[122] P. A. Luff, "Mathews *v.* Lestock: Parliament, Politics and the Navy in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England," *Parliamentary History* 10, no. 1 (1991): 45–62; Robert Harris, *A Patriot Press: National Politics and the London Press in the 1740s* (Clarendon: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993), 228; Banister, *Masculinity*, 44–71.
[123] Rodger, *Command*, 235–49.
[124] *Observations and Proposals Concerning the Navy: with An Enquiry into its Condition, and Insufficiency Oftentimes to Defend us from a Sudden Attack of the French*, 2nd ed. (London: S. Baker, 1745), 61.
[125] *Observations and Proposals*, 62.

best common men in the world…[but] your commanders want either courage or conduct".[126]

The disagreement between Mathews and Lestock stemmed in part from personal animosity, relations between the two admirals having soured during the lengthy blockade that preceded the battle.[127] There was also a political dimension to the dispute as Lestock had powerful friends in government, whereas Mathews was backed by the opposition. However, as P. A. Luff has demonstrated, the Parliamentary votes on the affair did not divide straight along party political lines.[128] Julia Banister argues that at the heart of the scandal lay a broader debate about the nature of modern military identity. Mathews maintained that an officer had one purpose – fighting the enemy – to be pursued above all other considerations; by contrast, Lestock presented himself as a new kind of "professionalised military man", who dispassionately followed orders and adhered to correct procedures in all circumstances, even if this meant acting cautiously in combat situations.[129]

Public opinion sided firmly with Mathews but, controversially, the Admiralty courts martial came to the opposite conclusion. The coolly professional Lestock was cleared of all charges in June 1746, then five months later the hot-headed Mathews was condemned as solely responsible for the failure and cashiered. Observers were baffled that "one great naval officer" had been "broke and *rendered incapable of service* for his *fighting*…while another was acquitted for *keeping due distance* and looking on".[130] As a correspondent to the *Old England Journal* remarked, the verdicts seemed to prove that "*fighting officers* were not in vogue" in the sea service.[131] Officers were anxious about criticism of this kind, one "Eminent Sea-Officer" advising a gathering of "Brother sea-men" at Will's Coffee-House in London to display "honour and gallantry" in order to "quiet the Clamours of the Publick".[132]

Given his involvement in Lestock's court martial, Hamilton was likely aware of the controversy, and it is tempting to read Reynolds's unconventional portrait, which was commissioned either during or soon after the trials, as a defence of its sitter's character and reputation in the light of this scandal.[133] The suggestion of a shipwreck in the background of the portrait – perhaps alluding to Hamilton's bravery

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[126] *The Gentleman's Magazine* 15 (1745): 245.
[127] Rodger, *Command*, 243.
[128] Luff, "Mathews *v.* Lestock," 45–62.
[129] Banister, *Masculinity*, 44–71, quote at 57.
[130] *The Gentleman's Magazine* 16 (1746): 591.
[131] *Old England Journal*, 8 Nov., 1746, quoted in *The Gentleman's Magazine* 16 (1746): 591.
[132] *An Oration spoke at Will's Coffee-House in Scotland-Yard, White-Hall* (London: J. Robinson, 1744), 4–5.
[133] The painting was presumably largely complete by the time Hamilton returned to sea on 20 February 1747. TNA ADM 51/74/8.

during the wreck of the *Princess Louisa* – frames the sitter as a heroic survivor, suggesting that he willingly embraced the risks of his profession. The captain's decision to appear in hussar dress can also be read as a rebuff to those expressing doubt about the courage of the navy's officers. Whilst, on one level, this costume evokes the modish world of illuminations, masquerades and entertainments, characterising Hamilton as an urbane man of fashion, it also aligns him with a group of warriors renowned for their fighting prowess. In his *Portraits of the Hungarians, Hussars, Pandours or Croats, Waradins or Sclavonians, Ulans, and Hanaks* (1743), the print publisher William Meyer argued that the hussars were the finest of the various Eastern European soldiers named in his title. The hussars, Meyer claimed, combined a "very Martial air" with "all the Valour and Firmness imaginable", "the utmost Dexterity" in handling weapons and an ability "to bear great Hardships".[134] Thus, by donning this costume, Hamilton was perhaps hoping to claim for himself and for the beleaguered Royal Navy the fabled fearlessness and aggression of the Hungarian horsemen.

Although (as noted above) the captain's fox- or wolf-fur coat was not a traditional component of hussar dress, it nonetheless contributes to the meaning of his outfit. Ribeiro observes that the coat resembles the dress of the Russian nobility, raising the possibility that it was intended to signal Hamilton's aristocratic heritage.[135] It also suggests his need to protect himself against cold, providing a reminder of the physical hardships of the naval profession and of Hamilton's willingness to endure those hardships. Most immediately, however, the coat associates the captain with animalistic qualities, evoking the idea of something predatory, wild and ruled by instinct – the very opposite of the slavish adherence to the arbitrary dictates of procedure that the reviled Lestock, lambasted by his critics for hiding "under a Skreen of Discipline", was seen to represent.[136] Yet, ironically, Reynolds's emphasis upon Hamilton's fur coat and masquerade costume left the captain vulnerable to the criticism that he too was obscuring his true character behind a kind of screen. Hamilton may be dressed in clothes which carry courageous associations but the viewer is left to wonder whether there is any substance beneath his modish performance. The sitter's loss is the artist's gain, however. For although the portrait's theatricality allows a question mark to linger

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[134] [William Meyer], *Portraits of the Hungarians, Hussars, Pandours or Croats, Waradins or Sclavonians, Ulans, and Hanaks, Who are in the Service of their Majesties the Queen of Hungary and the King of Prussia*, 2nd ed. (London: William Meyer, 1743), 5–6.
[135] Aileen Ribeiro quoted in Penny (ed.), *Reynolds*, 165.
[136] *A Just, Genuine, and Impartial History of the Memorable Sea-Fight in the Mediterranean* (London: Printed for the Author, 1745), 148.

over the captain's heroic qualities, the unconventional composition, visual drama and bravura handling of paint authenticate Reynolds's status as an inventive young portraitist, one who was unafraid of embracing artistic risk – at least on occasion.

III

Produced three years after the Hamilton portrait, Reynolds's *Captain George Edgcumbe* (1748/9, National Maritime Museum, fig. 27) is among the last paintings he completed before leaving Plymouth for the Mediterranean in May 1749. It was commissioned shortly after the end of the War of the Austrian Succession, which had concluded in October 1748 with the signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. After the Toulon disaster, the Royal Navy's performance in the war was seen to have improved, especially after two important victories at the First and Second Battles of Cape Finisterre in 1747, but some anxieties remained about the courage and conduct of the nation's sea officers.[137]

Whereas Hamilton's portrait is audaciously original, Edgcumbe's has more in common with other naval portraits from the same period. Comparing this picture to a near-contemporary portrait of Vice-Admiral John Byng painted in London by Reynolds's former master Thomas Hudson (1749, National Maritime Museum, fig. 28), Mark Hallett comments upon the "similarly skilful, almost interchangeable management of the naval portrait's conventions" in the two works. As Hallett writes,

> Both men are shown in poses evocative of polite authority, with hats placed discreetly under their arms and swords clasped in their left hands, and both are juxtaposed with a silhouetted fragment of architecture and a sky flecked with twisting tumbrels of grey cloud. And in both portraits, the ship that each sitter commanded can be seen on the distant sea, a familiar form of allusion and miniaturisation that not only confirms these officers' naval authority, but also helps dramatize their confident presence in the pictorial foreground.[138]

The handling of paint provides a further point of correspondence: in both works, the surface is smooth and flat, and the brushstrokes are tight and precise. This highly detailed manner is typical of Hudson's work but it is more surprising to see such handling in one of Reynolds's Plymouth portraits, which are generally characterised by livelier, more textured brushwork, as potently exemplified in Captain Hamilton's sensuous fur coat.

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[137] For the final phase of the war, see: Richmond, *Navy*, 3: 78–116, 226–52; Harding, *Emergence*, 298–335.
[138] Hallett, *Reynolds*, 65.

Another crucial similarity between the Byng and Edgcumbe portraits lies in the two sitters' clothing. Both men wear full-dress versions of the Royal Navy's new official uniform, which had been introduced by the Admiralty for commissioned officers in April 1748. [139] In line with the new regulations, their outfits consist of dark blue coats and white waistcoats embellished with copious amounts of gold lace, the patterns of which signal the officers' respective ranks: Edgcumbe's vertical stripes mark him as a captain with over three years' seniority, whereas Byng's horizontal bars indicate that he is a flag officer. A complex range of factors lay behind the introduction of officers' uniforms. Banister argues that this move "could be read as an attempt to impose a standardised, professionalised identity" upon officers, plastering over divisions within the officer corps and reservations about professionalism which had surfaced during the Toulon scandal.[140] Uniform was also intended to mark important social distinctions within the navy's rigid hierarchy. Excluding warrant officers and common sailors, the new clothing regulations applied only to commissioned officers and midshipmen in order to create, in the Admiralty's words, "the Appearance which is necessary to distinguish their Class to be in the Rank of Gentlemen".[141] To this end, the categories of "dress" or "full-dress", meaning court attire, and "undress", meaning everyday wear, were adopted from upper-class civilian clothing. The design of the uniform was modelled on contemporary fashions, albeit with an emphasis upon conservative styles, full-skirted coats and long-sleeved waistcoats being preferred to the more closely tailored garments and sleeveless waistcoats that were coming into vogue in the late 1740s.[142] Officers themselves had been active in calling for uniform. In 1746, the "Navy Club" – an association of officers who met in Will's Coffee-House in Scotland Yard – presented an address to the Admiralty asserting that "it is the opinion of thirty Captains who are in Town [London], and is believ'd the general sense of the Service, that an Uniform Dress is useful and necessary for the Commissioned Officers, agreeable to the practice of other Nations."[143] As this comment suggests, the introduction of British naval uniform followed the practice of other European navies, most notably the French.[144] It also brought the Royal Navy into line with the

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[139] Barker, "Naval Uniform," 243–54; Dudley Jarrett, *British Naval Dress* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1960), 26–40; Miller, *Dressed*, 13–36.
[140] Banister, *Masculinity*, 57.
[141] TNA ADM 2/71, quoted in Miller, *Dressed*, 21.
[142] Miller, *Dressed*, 30.
[143] The Navy Club, quoted in W. E. May, *The Uniform of Naval Officers*, 2 vols. (London: National Maritime Museum, 1969), 1: 6.
[144] Miller, *Dressed*, 7.

British army, whose officers had long worn regimental uniforms. Naval uniform thus visually signalled the wearer's membership of an international officer class.

At first glance, it could be argued that, like naval uniform, the Edgcumbe portrait itself functioned as a badge of belonging. By drawing upon the traditional conventions of sea officers' portraiture and even mimicking the manner of his former master, Reynolds affirmed his sitter's claim to a place amongst the naval elite, alongside the likes of Vice-Admiral Byng. In the process, he also demonstrated his own credentials as a competent portraitist, one who was capable of working in the same mode as established London-based painters. However, a closer inspection of the portrait and the circumstances of its commission reveals more complex layers of meaning within the work.

Like the majority of Reynolds's naval sitters in Plymouth, George Edgcumbe was a young captain in the Western Squadron.[145] He was three years older than Reynolds, turning twenty-nine in March 1749. In January 1746, he had taken command of the *Salisbury* (50 guns), in which he cruised with the Western Squadron until the ship was paid off in November 1748 following the end of the War of the Austrian Succession.[146] In this vessel (which can be seen in the background of the captain's portrait), Edgcumbe enjoyed considerable success, capturing a number of wealthy prizes, including a large French East Indiaman "laden…with stores and ammunition, and eight Cases of Silver" in late February 1747.[147] Yet Edgcumbe was not only connected to Plymouth through his service in the Western Squadron; he was also a member of the local aristocracy, being the second son of Richard, Lord Edgcumbe, whose estate at Mount Edgcumbe overlooked Plymouth Harbour. Lord Edgcumbe furnished Reynolds with commissions and support throughout his time in Plymouth, and this connection underscores the fact that the artist's naval sitters were embedded within his wider networks of patronage within the port.[148]

Reynolds's portrait alludes to Edgcumbe's aristocratic status and local connections. The captain stands before two classical columns with a weathered, ivy-covered wall on his left. Although they do not refer to specific buildings at Mount Edgcumbe (where there were no classical structures until the erection of a mock-temple garden folly in 1755), these architectural elements are symbolically

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[145] J. K. Laughton, *rev.* A. W. H. Pearsall, "Edgcumbe, George, first Earl of Mount Edgcumbe (1720–1795)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/8468.
[146] For Edgcumbe's service in the *Salisbury*, see: TNA ADM 51/936/11.
[147] *Penny London Post or the Morning Advertiser*, 4–7 Mar., 1748.
[148] Stephens, "City and Country," 30–6.

suggestive of a grand and venerable property, indicating that the young officer belongs to a noble family with a large estate.[149] Another detail specifically identifies the setting of the portrait as Mount Edgcumbe: the three cannon in the bottom left-hand corner represent the gun battery that Captain Edgcumbe had installed on the estate in 1747 for the purpose of saluting ships as they entered the harbour.[150] Edgcumbe may have created this battery in his role as the landowner's son but, as a naval officer, he often found himself on the receiving end of its salutes. For example, the *Salisbury*'s logbook records that the captain returned a salute from Mount Edgcumbe with thirteen guns on 6 November 1748.[151] The battery thus knitted together Edgcumbe's naval and aristocratic identities, highlighting the modern and mobile existence of aristocratic younger sons like Edgcumbe and Hamilton, who gained status from their noble blood but who made their own fortunes by taking their chances in the sea service. Like the battery, Reynolds's portrait emphasises Edgcumbe's multifaceted identity. The pictorial space can be split into two zones: the maritime zone on the left, containing the battery, Plymouth Sound and the *Salisbury*; and the architectural, landed zone on the right. Edgcumbe stands in the middle, straddling the divide. His left side is enclosed by the densely clustered architectural elements but his right arm and hip break the frame created by the columns, protruding into the sea air. The composition therefore suggests the captain's ability to move easily between naval service and patrician authority, the one connoting risk and opportunity, the other continuity and hierarchy.

Joining Edgcumbe in the portrait is an unusual animal companion – a black bird with a rust-coloured neck and an exceptionally long tail, which perches above the captain's left shoulder on an extended tendril of ivy, its plumage forming a curving diagonal that cuts across the vertical lines of the classical columns and disrupts the ordered appearance of the architecture. This exotic interloper is a long-tailed paradise whydah (specifically a male in his breeding plumage), a species native to Eastern and Central Africa. In the eighteenth century, there was an extensive trade in African wildlife, fuelled by a fashion in Europe for exotic pets,

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[149] For the architectural history of the estate, see: "List Entry: Mount Edgcumbe" (Feb. 2001, ed. Oct. 2001), *The National Heritage List for England*, online, https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000134.

[150] George Wightwick, *Nettleton's Guide to Plymouth, Stonehouse, Devonport, and to the Neighbouring Country* (Plymouth: Edward Nettleton, 1836), 116. William Cotton described this part of the portrait as representing "a part of Mount Edgcumbe". See William Cotton, *Some Account of the Ancient Borough Town of Plympton St. Maurice, or Plympton Earl* (London: John Russell Smith, 1856), 94.

[151] TNA ADM 51/936/11, 6 Nov., 1748.

which served as conspicuous displays of their owners' wealth and social status.[152] Edgcumbe's feathered friend would have been a particularly impressive pet because whydahs were rare in Europe at this time, parrots and canaries dominating the market for African birds. It is unlikely that Reynolds or his original viewers knew much about this obscure species but the artist evidently recognised the potential visual and symbolic power of the whydah's extraordinary plumage. An emblem of flamboyant self-display, the bird's tail playfully subverts the more conventional elements of the portrait, suggesting that, whilst conforming to the navy's institutional codes and fulfilling his patrician responsibilities as a member of the aristocracy, Edgcumbe also possesses individuality and eccentricity. It is possible the bird was plundered from one of the merchantmen or privateers that the captain had captured in the *Salisbury*. Alternatively, Edgcumbe could have purchased the whydah with his prize money. Whatever the case, it is a potent symbol of overseas trade, which highlights the sitter's involvement in growing and maintaining Britain's maritime empire. The implication is that, through men like Edgcumbe, Plymouth society has gained an exotic lustre, the outward-looking world of maritime adventure bleeding into the social life of the port.

The portrait therefore stresses the young captain's status as an important figure within Plymouth society. This local emphasis was significant because the painting had been commissioned by the Corporation of Plympton to hang in their official dining room in the town's Mayoralty House.[153] Situated just a few miles from Plymouth Dockyard, Plympton was Reynolds's home town and part of the broader port community. The Corporation was the town's municipal and political authority, the aldermen and freemen who comprised its membership forming the electorate for the parliamentary borough of Plympton Erle, which was jointly controlled by two local landowning families, the Trebys and the Edgcumbes.[154] In displaying Captain Edgcumbe's portrait, the Corporation were therefore paying tribute to the sitter's family and celebrating their status as aristocratic patrons of the borough. In fact, through the family interest, the young naval officer had been elected to sit for Plympton in July 1747.[155] However, he had given up the seat shortly after the election in order to represent Fowey in Cornwall, for which he had also been

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[152] Louise E. Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots: Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Univ. Press, 2002), 9–36.
[153] Cotton, *Some Account*, 92–4.
[154] For the Corporation's history, see: Cotton, *Some Account*; Joshua Brooking Rowe, *A History of the Borough of Plympton Erle* (Exeter: James G. Commin, 1906).
[155] *London Gazette*, 21–25 July, 1747.

returned (MPs were forbidden from representing more than one constituency).[156] Accounting for nearly eight per cent of seats in the House of Commons, Cornwall was an important centre of political power in mid-eighteenth-century Britain, whereas the Devon borough of Plympton Erle was relatively inconsequential.[157] Captain Edgcumbe's father was Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall and managed the government interest in the county but, after disappointing results in the 1741 election, he needed to re-establish his regional influence.[158] To do so, he secured the election of his two sons for Cornish constituencies in 1747.[159] Thus George's preference for Fowey over Plympton Erle served the family's wider political interests. However, the Corporation of Plympton nevertheless commissioned the young captain's portrait a little over a year later, suggesting that they were reluctant to relinquish their connection to an important local figure who enjoyed influence amongst both the Plymouth naval community and the West Country aristocracy; if they could not have Edgcumbe as their representative in parliament, they would at least have his likeness on the walls of their official dining room, the portrait serving as a proxy for the man.

At the same time, the Corporation also commissioned a pendant portrait representing the naval officer Paul Henry Ourry (1748/9, Saltram, fig. 29), who had been Edgcumbe's first lieutenant in the *Salisbury*.[160] The fact that Edgcumbe's portrait was part of a pendant pair of naval portraits (which was highly unusual) is often overlooked by scholars, but this point is vital to understanding the political rationale behind the Corporation's commission. The Jersey-born son of a Huguenot émigré army officer, Ourry was not a member of the Devon aristocracy like Edgcumbe but he had forged a number of influential connections within Plymouth society.[161] He was linked to the Edgcumbe family through his professional association and personal friendship with the *Salisbury*'s captain, and he married into the Treby family in 1749.[162] The interest for the borough of Plympton Erle had

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[156] *London Evening Post*, 15–17 Dec., 1747.
[157] Nicholas Rodger, "'A Little Navy of your own Making': Admiral Boscawen and the Cornish Connection in the Royal Navy," in *Parameters*, ed. Duffy, 86.
[158] Eveline Cruickshanks, "Edgcumbe, Richard (1680–1758), of Mount Edgcumbe, nr. Plymouth, Devon," in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754–1790*, ed. L. Namier and J. Brooke (London: Boydell and Brewer, 1964), online ed., https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1715-1754/member/edgcumbe-richard-1680-1758.
[159] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 11–13 June, 1747.
[160] Rowe, *Plympton Erle*, 312; Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 359, no. 1372.
[161] Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1957), 34–6; Mary M. Drummond, "Ourry, Paul Henry (1719–83), of Plympton Erle, Devon," in *History of Parliament*, ed. Namier and Brooke, online ed., http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/ourry-paul-henry-1719-83.
[162] Stephens, "City and Country," 34.

traditionally been split between the Edgcumbes and the Trebys but the latter's influence had waned somewhat in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, although they still owned the Mayoralty House, where Reynolds's pendants were destined to hang.[163] Ourry's connection to both families raised his personal stock in this context, and the display of his portrait alongside Edgcumbe's was perhaps intended to help maintain the balance within the borough. Indeed, Ourry later became MP for Plympton in 1763, uniting the Treby and Edgcumbe interests.[164]

Reynolds's portraits were thus bound up with complex, locally specific political machinations. Yet both portraits also emphasise their sitters' involvement in naval affairs. Like Edgcumbe, Ourry is shown wearing the navy's new official uniform, although his coat is devoid of gold lace, signalling his subordinate rank as a lieutenant. He stands before a mass of dark trees and overhanging foliage, an organic and wild backdrop which contrasts with the civilised, architectural setting in Edgcumbe's picture and suggests the rugged, dangerous and exotic locations that naval officers could visit in the course of their duties. It is not known how the pendants were displayed in the Corporation of Plympton's dining room but it is tempting to imagine that Ourry hung on the left and Edgcumbe on the right. Thus arranged, the wilderness behind Ourry would appear as an extension of the maritime zone in Edgcumbe's portrait. Travelling from the dense foliage to the country estate via the moored *Salisbury*, the viewer's eye would trace the mobile existence of the naval officer: adventuring abroad, coming into port and entering polite society at home.

Ourry is attended by a young black servant, who – like Edgcumbe's whydah – symbolises maritime commerce, exemplifying the human cargo brought to European shores via Atlantic trade routes in this period. Although the majority of transported Africans were taken to slave plantations in the West Indies, a select number, predominantly children, were brought to Europe for sale as domestic servants, where they were regarded as luxury goods.[165] The young boy in Ourry's portrait has been dressed in a smart livery, a sign of ownership which marks him as belonging to a particular household, and he also wears a white turban and gold jewellery, highlighting his status as a kind of exotic treasure. William Cotton recorded an old tradition that the boy was called "Jersey", presumably after Ourry's

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[163] Cotton, *Some Account*, 95; Namier, *Structure*, 34.
[164] Namier, *Structure*, 36.
[165] Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca/London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1995), 226–40.

Channel Island birthplace.[166] The motif of a diminutive black attendant staring at a white master has a long history in portraiture, stretching back to sixteenth-century examples like Titian's *Laura Dianti* (ca. 1520–25, H. Kisters Collection).[167] As Kim Hall has shown, this convention became commonplace in English and Netherlandish portraiture in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, functioning as a means of "rendering visible the power of the sitter" through a series of formal, social and racial contrasts.[168] These power dynamics can be observed in Ourry's portrait: the canvas edge is played off against the centre, a short figure against a tall one, servant against master, child against adult and black against white, placing the British lieutenant in a position of unchallenged dominance over the colonised other. This position is granted legitimacy by the boy's adoring gaze, which presents submission to colonial rule as loving recognition.[169] Although this motif belongs to an illustrious art-historical tradition, it takes on new significance in the context of Reynolds's portrait, given the naval identity of the sitter. Coupled with the whydah, the boy affirms the status of Edgcumbe and Ourry as glamorous adventurers who have travelled far beyond the bounds of the familiar and brought back traces of the exotic to the West Country elite.

Highlighting Plymouth's status as Britain's gateway to the Atlantic, these paintings presented the naval port as a dynamic space where politics, polite society and maritime activity collided. Reynolds invoked the two sitters' shared experience of naval life, as well as the navy's pervasive influence within Plymouth's social affairs, in order to bolster the political alliances that the portraits were designed to consolidate. Within these pictures, the navy is presented as the glue that binds Edgcumbe and Ourry together, and their bond symbolically cements the relationship between the Edgcumbes, the Trebys and the Corporation of Plympton. The exotic allure of naval adventure glosses over potentially problematic issues, including Edgcumbe's decision to sit for another borough, the Trebys diminishing influence and Ourry's comparatively lowly status. Whilst working in the port, Reynolds similarly infused his own artistic identity with a sense of adventure borrowed from his seafaring patrons and friends. In his pictures of Edgcumbe and Ourry, he demonstrated his ability to blend the established conventions of naval portraiture

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[166] William Cotton, *Sir Joshua Reynolds and his Works* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1856), 125.

[167] P. H. D. Kaplan, "Titian's 'Laura Dianti' and the Origins of the Motif of the Black Page in Portraiture," *antichità viva* 21, no. 4 (1982): 10–18.

[168] Hall, *Things*, 218. See also, David Bindman, "The Black Presence in British Art: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates, 5 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010), 3: 1: 249.

[169] Hall, *Things*, 230.

with unexpected elements and complex narratives. Remaining on display in the Corporation's rooms in Plympton for almost a century after their production, these portraits created an enduring public legacy for Reynolds's early career as a portraitist and friend of the naval community in Plymouth. In 1809, the aspiring painter David Wilkie undertook a "pilgrimage to the Devonshire shrine" of Reynolds's youth, where (as he later recalled) he saw in the Guildhall at Plympton "portraits of two naval officers, painted before going to Italy, which, for composition, were as fine as any thing [Reynolds] ever did afterwards."[170] Wilkie's comment pays tribute to the portraits of Edgcumbe and Ourry but also alludes to the next step that Reynolds would take in his career – a journey to Italy.

IV

Not long after he completed the portraits of Edgcumbe and Ourry, Reynolds embarked upon his own maritime adventure, leaving Plymouth behind and setting sail for Italy aboard Commodore Augustus Keppel's flagship, the *Centurion* (50 guns), on 11 May 1749.[171] At this point, Keppel was already one of the navy's most highly regarded officers, even though he was only twenty-four – two years younger than Reynolds.[172] The second son of the Earl of Albemarle, Keppel had served as a midshipman on George Anson's famous circumnavigation in 1740–4. Back in England, he was promoted through Anson's influence to a series of commands in the Western Squadron, where he served closely with a number of Reynolds's naval sitters. For example, between April and October 1745, he captained the *Sapphire* (44 guns) as part of a small squadron assigned to patrol the southern coast of Ireland under John Hamilton's command.[173] Keppel also enjoyed a close friendship with Lord Edgcumbe, Reynolds's longstanding patron.[174] During his time in the Western Squadron, Keppel attracted considerable attention in the London newspapers for his remarkably successful record against French privateers in the Channel, which he captured with impressive regularity, earning a reputation as a bold, risk-taking officer. Following the end of the War of the Austrian Succession, he was appointed commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, hoisting a

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[170] Allan Cunningham, *The Life of Sir David Wilkie*, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1843), 1: 240–1.
[171] Northcote, *Life of Reynolds*, 1: 29.
[172] The following account of Keppel's career is based on Keppel, *Life*, 1: 1–188.
[173] TNA ADM 2/1331, 8 Feb., 1745. See also, Richmond, *Navy*, 2: 148–9.
[174] Keppel stayed at Mount Edgcumbe in August 1747 when he returned to England from France, where he had been held as a prisoner of war. See *Whitehall Evening Post*, 13–15 Aug., 1747.

commodore's broad pennant in the *Centurion*. Tasked with undertaking diplomatic negotiations with the dey of Algiers, he was extraordinarily young to receive such a promotion. Keppel departed from Spithead on 25 April 1749 but met strong winds in the Channel and put into Plymouth for repair. In the port, he visited his friend Lord Edgcumbe, who introduced him to Reynolds. Keppel was persuaded to offer the young artist passage to Italy, where Reynolds hoped to study Renaissance masterpieces and classical ruins in order to improve his art.[175]

Reynolds's voyage with Keppel represented the culmination of the artist's intense youthful relationship with the navy. In Plymouth, he had befriended daring sea officers and provided them with compelling painted personae. Now he was experiencing their seagoing adventures for himself, as the artist explained in a grateful letter to Lord Edgcumbe: "I had the use of [Keppel's] cabin, and his study of books, as if they had been my own; and when he went ashore he generally took me with him; so that I not only had the opportunity of seeing a great deal, but I saw it with all the advantages as if I had travelled as his equal."[176] These comments hint at the close friendship that developed between the artist and the naval officer during their voyage together, continuing the pattern that characterised Reynolds's activity in Plymouth, where he formed close personal relationships with many of his naval sitters. Reynolds's friendship with Keppel would prove to be lifelong, the commodore becoming, in Northcote's words, "the most firm friend Mr. Reynolds ever had".[177]

As well as a friend, Keppel also became an important source of creative inspiration for the artist. Over almost five decades of friendship, the naval officer sat to Reynolds for seven distinct portraits, some of which were among the painter's most adventurous works.[178] The first of these portraits (1749, National Maritime Museum, fig. 30) – referred to here as *Keppel I* to avoid confusion with the artist's other portraits of the sitter – dates from the early days of their relationship.[179] Stylistically, the portrait has been dated to the late 1740s and Ellis Waterhouse

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[175] Keppel, *Life*, 1: 144–6.

[176] Joshua Reynolds to Richard Edgcumbe, after May 1750, in *The Letters of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, ed. John Ingamells and John Edgcumbe (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2000), 9.

[177] Northcote, *Life of Reynolds*, 1: 26.

[178] Whitney Davis, "Serial Portraiture and the Death of Man in Late-Eighteenth-Century Britain," in *A Companion to British Art 1600 to the Present*, ed. Dana Arnold and David Peters Corbett (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 502–31; Daniel O'Quinn, "Facing Past and Future Empires: Joshua Reynolds's Portraits of Augustus Keppel," in *The Culture of the Seven Years' War: Empire, Identity, and the Arts in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*, ed. Frans De Bruyn and Shaun Regan (Toronto/Buffalo/London: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2014), 307–38.

[179] Lennard O'Malley and C. H. Collins Baker, "Reynolds's First Portrait of Keppel," *The Walpole Society* 1 (1911–12): 77–84.

conjectures that it was one of the many portraits reportedly painted by Reynolds at Minorca, where Keppel's fleet was anchored between August and December 1749.[180] In the painting, the sitter stands beside a rocky, ivy-covered cliff. To the right, we see a cluster of ships apparently intended to represent Keppel's seven-strong Mediterranean squadron, headed by his flagship, the *Centurion*, which flies his commodore's broad pennant and fires its guns. Lennard O'Malley and C. H. Collins Baker suggest that the portrait shows an incident from June 1749, when the *Centurion* accidentally returned a twenty-one-gun salute from the dey of Algiers by firing a loaded gun, rather than an empty one, creating a diplomatic incident that Keppel was required to brazen out.[181] Whether or not this specific allusion was intended, the smoke billowing from the ship's guns invites the viewer to imagine that Keppel's service in the Mediterranean – and Reynolds's experience as his travelling companion – was punctuated by moments of action, drama and adventure.

Keppel poses with one hand tucked in his waistcoat and the other grasping the hilt of his sword. As Arline Meyer has shown, this pose was employed with "relentless frequency" in mid-eighteenth-century British portraiture, the hand-in-waistcoat gesture signalling "manly boldness tempered with modesty".[182] However, Reynolds subtly subverts this iconography of polite restraint through the dynamic attitude of the sitter's head, which suggests that Keppel is ready and eager for action. The commodore appears to have been distracted from the business of posing for his portrait by some unseen incident, towards which he turns his head, his eyes darting to the left. This is consistent with the unconventional and adventurous approach to naval portraiture that characterised Reynolds's work in Plymouth. It also anticipates the dynamism of the full-length portrait of the same sitter that the artist painted on his return from his Italian tour.

Reynolds parted company with Keppel in Minorca and proceeded to Italy, reaching Rome around Easter 1750. He spent almost two years in the city, before travelling back to Britain via Florence, Venice and Paris, eventually returning to Plymouth in autumn 1752.[183] However, he did not stay long in the port, having decided to relocate his practice to London. The capital was the centre of the

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[180] Ellis Waterhouse, quoted in Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 287, no. 1036. For Reynolds's practice in Minorca, see: Northcote, *Life of Reynolds*, 1: 30.
[181] O'Malley and Collins Baker, "Reynolds's First Portrait," 79. See also, Davis, "Serial Portraiture," 514–16.
[182] Arline Meyer, "Re-dressing Classical Statuary: The Eighteenth-Century 'Hand-in-Waistcoat' Portrait," *The Art Bulletin* 77, no. 1 (Mar. 1995): 45–63, quote at 53.
[183] For Reynolds's Italian tour, see: Malone, *Works*, 1: ix–xvi; Leslie and Taylor, *Life and Times*, 1: 37–87.

eighteenth-century art world, where the most fashionable patrons came to have their portraits painted. One of the first portraits that Reynolds produced in his new metropolitan studio depicted his old friend Keppel (1752–3, National Maritime Museum, fig. 31), who had himself returned from the Mediterranean in August 1752.[184] There is no record of Keppel having commissioned this portrait (henceforth *Keppel II*) and Waterhouse contends that the work "presumably remained for a considerable time in the studio so that sitters who came with more moderate intentions could see what possibilities of immortality were available."[185]

This painting became one of Reynolds's best known works and it has attracted more attention from art historians than any other eighteenth-century naval portrait. By all accounts, the picture was immensely successful in helping the young painter break into the capital's competitive market for fashionable portraiture. The artist's friend Edmond Malone claimed that this work "exhibited such powers, that [Reynolds] was not only universally acknowledged to be at the head of his profession, but to be the greatest painter that England had seen since Vandyck".[186] Meanwhile, Joseph Farington, another friend of the painter, asserted that the portrait "was so much admired, that it completely established the reputation of the Artist".[187] According to Northcote, "the novelty and expression, introduced by Reynolds in his portrait of Mr. Keppel were powerful stimulants to the public taste" and "attracted general notice".[188] All of these individuals were writing more than forty years after the painting's production and, published in laudatory, almost hagiographic biographies of the artist, their remarks enshrined the Keppel portrait as a transformative moment within both Reynolds's career and the history of British art. However, it is important to see past this retrospective mythmaking and to examine the picture in the context of the close relationship that the artist enjoyed with the navy in the early part of his life.

For the past two centuries, most scholars looking at *Keppel II* have concentrated upon its relationship to Reynolds's overseas adventure, suggesting that the artist sought in this picture to showcase his newfound Continental sophistication through a manifold array of classical and art-historical allusions. Perhaps most famously, Keppel's striding attitude and pointing gesture have long been understood as owing a profound debt to antique sculpture. The figure is often

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[184] Keppel's return was reported in the *General Advertiser*, 26 Aug., 1752. For this portrait, see: Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 287–8, no. 1037.
[185] Ellis Waterhouse, *Reynolds* (London: Phaidon, 1973), 18.
[186] Malone, *Works*, 1: xvi.
[187] Farington, *Memoirs*, 41.
[188] Northcote, *Life of Reynolds*, 1: 63, 65.

likened to the Apollo Belvedere and comparisons have also been drawn with the *adlocutio* gesture deployed in much ancient Roman civic statuary.[189] However, Martin Postle has convincingly demonstrated that Reynolds in fact borrowed the pose from a seventeenth-century statue of Apollo – itself based upon the Apollo Belvedere – by the French sculptor Pierre Le Gros, a cast of which the young painter had sketched sometime before 1753.[190] Reynolds combines this sculptural reference with painterly effects inspired by the sixteenth-century Venetian masters whose works he had studied in Italy. The sombre blue-grey tonality of the painting, the breadth of the handling and the atmospheric chiaroscuro are reminiscent of Tintoretto in particular.

Cloaked in the same dark shadows that dominate the portrait's rocky coastal setting, Keppel is visually integrated within the landscape that surrounds him. In this way, Reynolds creates a unified aesthetic which recalls academic history painting as practiced by the Old Masters, rejecting the separation of figure and background that had characterised British portraiture since Godfrey Kneller in early eighteenth century. Whereas Kneller and his followers depicted their male sitters engaging in self-conscious displays of polite comportment, Reynolds presents Keppel as a mobile figure in the midst of an unfolding situation.[191] Seemingly oblivious to the viewer's presence, the young captain strides determinedly across a storm-battered beach. The foaming sea in the background is peppered with thin strokes of brown paint, representing debris from a shipwreck. As Northcote recorded, this alludes to a specific incident from Keppel's career: the wreck of his ship, the *Maidstone* (50 guns), on the Brittany coast on 27 June 1747.[192] The viewer is thus invited to imagine that the portrait shows Keppel taking command in the aftermath of this disaster, the subtle suggestion of narrative further blurring the boundaries between portraiture, on the one hand, and history painting in the European grand manner, on the other.

In an influential article published in 1986, David Solkin argued that the portrait is characterised by a "generalised reference to grand manner art", which transcends specific sculptural and art-historical quotations "to produce a picture

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[189] Ellis Waterhouse, *Reynolds* (London: Kegan Paul, 1941), 9; E. H. H. Archibald, *A Preliminary Descriptive Catalogue of the Portraits in Oils at the National Maritime Museum* (London: National Maritime Museum, 1961), 77; Ellis Waterhouse, *Three Decades of British Art, 1740–1770* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1965), 31; Solkin, "Great Pictures," 44.
[190] Martin Postle, "An Early Unpublished Letter by Sir Joshua Reynolds," *Apollo* 141 (June 1995): 16–17.
[191] Solkin, "Great Pictures," 42.
[192] Northcote, *Life of Reynolds*, 1: 63–4.

worthy of being judged not as a portrait, but as a work of great art".[193] For Solkin, this offered a canny solution to the predicament of the British elite in the mid-eighteenth century. In this period, rapid economic growth and the quickening pace of class emulation led the propertied classes to fear that the external attributes associated with the early eighteenth-century culture of politeness – fine clothes, luxury goods and mannered behaviours – would become so widespread that they would cease to bear any meaningful relation to social rank. Elite identity needed a new aesthetic, one that was less susceptible to appropriation by the unworthy. Reynolds's solution, Solkin argues, was to yoke the image of his aristocratic naval sitter "to another source of cultural authority – that of grand style historical art, which was supported by a body of aesthetic theory deeply imbued with civic humanist values."[194] By presenting Keppel as a suitable subject for this kind of elevated art, the artist authenticated his claims to social distinction. Importantly, as Solkin notes, this approach entailed a fundamental power shift between sitter and artist, since the former was forced to depend – or perhaps to gamble – upon the latter's ability to produce an artwork of sufficient quality and sophistication.[195]

Thirty years on, this final point resonates with current understandings of Reynolds's painting practice. His status as a tireless artistic innovator – through both his technical experimentation with pigments, oils, varnishes and glazes, and his creative exploration of different pictorial formats, poses and compositions – has been repeatedly emphasised by recent conservation projects, publications and an important exhibition, *Joshua Reynolds: Experiments in Paint* (Wallace Collection, 2015).[196] Given this experimental practice, the aesthetic and especially the technical success of the finished picture could not be guaranteed in advance. Those looking to engage Reynolds's services had to be prepared to shoulder this risk. Building on research by Neil De Marchi, Hans J. Van Miegroet and Matthew C. Hunter, John Chu has argued that "the obvious risk inherent in a Reynolds purchase may itself have been attractive", the "willingness to take a chance on greatness" functioning as a marker of social distinction.[197] Although Chu suggests that, at its most extreme, this devil-may-care attitude towards artistic patronage was driven more by internal competition within the elite than by the aristocracy's desire to distinguish itself from

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[193] Solkin, "Great Pictures," 46.
[194] Solkin, "Great Pictures," 46.
[195] Solkin, "Great Pictures," 48.
[196] Davis and Hallett (eds.), *Experiments in Paint*; Hunter, "Nice Chymistry," 58–76.
[197] Chu, "High Art," https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-02/jchu. See also, Neil De Marchi and Hans J. Van Miegroet, "Ingenuity, Preference, and the Pricing of Paintings: The Smith-Reynolds Connection," *History of Political Economy* 31 (1999): 379–412; Hunter, "Nice Chymistry," 69.

nouveau-riche aspirants, his argument nonetheless chimes with Solkin's contention that Reynolds traded upon his patrons' insecurities and their desire for "greatness" in order to secure his own "artistic freedom" and the leeway to take creative risks.[198]

Solkin describes *Keppel II* as the "first key salvo" in Reynolds's campaign for artistic autonomy.[199] This echoes a broader trend among scholars to see the work as a new beginning in the painter's career, which bore the fruits of his recent European travels and announced his arrival on the London scene. However, in light of the research presented in this chapter, it is also possible to view the painting as a continuation of Reynolds's earlier practice in Plymouth, where he had painted several unconventional portraits of young naval officers, many of whom were Keppel's colleagues and friends. As we have seen, in these pictures, Reynolds developed his professional persona as an artistic risk-taker, surprising his viewers with unexpected details – from representing a naval officer in masquerade costume to depicting African birdlife on a Devon estate. Importantly, these inventive portrayals also referred to the risks that the sitters themselves undertook at sea and to broader contemporary debates about professionalism and courage within the navy. Similarly, *Keppel II* combines aesthetic innovation and a disregard for the established conventions of elite British portraiture with an imagery of naval adventure and maritime risk, most notably in the allusion to the wreck of the *Maidstone*.

Reynolds originally planned a very different image. X-ray investigation has revealed that the stormy sea and shipwreck debris were painted over an earlier composition, in which Keppel was represented standing beside a classical column – a relatively conventional backdrop for an aristocratic portrait (fig. 32).[200] This technical evidence accords with Joseph Farington's account of the painting's production, in which he claimed that "after several sittings, [Reynolds] defaced his work and began it again".[201] The painter's drastic revision of his original design for the portrait is consistent with his status as "the quintessential innovator": tireless in his pursuit of fresh ideas, he would even change his mind midway through the painting process.[202] When he obliterated the classical column in favour of the wreck of the *Maidstone*, Reynolds was perhaps inspired by his own earlier portrait of Captain John Hamilton, the background of which also included a shipwreck. As we have seen, the shipwreck in Hamilton's portrait framed the sitter as a heroic

[198] Solkin, "Great Pictures," 48.
[199] Solkin, "Great Pictures," 45.
[200] For these x-rays, see: Penny (ed.), *Reynolds*, 181–2.
[201] Farington, *Memoirs*, 41.
[202] Chu, "High Art," https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-02/jchu/001.

survivor. However, the allusion to the *Maidstone*'s fate had more ambiguous implications for Keppel.

As noted above, Keppel was regarded as one of the most daring officers in the Western Squadron. In November 1745, he was appointed to the command of the *Maidstone*, a fourth-rate which had launched only two years previously.[203] Over the next eighteen months, reports of the *Maidstone*'s zealous pursuits of enemy vessels, often close into the shore, frequently appeared in the contemporary press.[204] Most of these risky chases ended in success. However, one stormy day in June 1747, Keppel's determined pursuit of a particularly large French prize took the ship into dangerously shallow waters on the Brittany coast, where the *Maidstone* struck a rock and was wrecked. Writing several days later to his patron Admiral Anson, Keppel estimated that he had lost twenty-seven men in the disaster.[205] News of the wreck prompted alarm in Britain, the initial reports mistakenly asserting that all but sixteen of the crew had perished.[206] Subsequent reports corrected this error but the relief expressed at Keppel's survival was tempered by accounts of the indignities that he had supposedly endured, the *Whitehall Evening Post* claiming that he had been "scandalously stript of his Cloaths &c. as soon as he came on Shoar, by the French Sailors."[207] The young captain and the other survivors were taken prisoner by the French but Keppel was quickly returned to England on parole. On 31 October 1747, he was cleared of negligence by an Admiralty court martial and soon afterwards he was given a new command, the *Anson* (60 guns), in which he enjoyed further success, before transferring to the *Centurion* and undertaking his Mediterranean adventure with Reynolds in tow.[208]

The artist's portrait does not purport to be an accurate representation of the *Maidstone* disaster. There is a glaring absence of common sailors and other survivors. Furthermore, Keppel anachronistically appears to be wearing a version of the new naval captain's undress uniform, which was not introduced until nine months after the wreck. This detail demonstrates how, in the space of a few short years, naval uniform had become an indispensable component of naval identity and how Reynolds was prepared to depart from factual truth in the interests of visual legibility. However, the breeches, waistcoat and facings of Keppel's uniform are non-

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[203] Keppel, *Life*, 1: 82.
[204] For example, *London Evening Post*, 31 May–3 June, 1746; *London Evening Post*, 31 July–2 Aug., 1746; *London Evening Post*, 28–31 Mar., 1747; *London Evening Post*, 21–23 Apr., 1747.
[205] Augustus Keppel to George Anson, 8 July, 1747, quoted in Keppel, *Life*, 1: 93–7.
[206] *General Advertiser*, 14 July, 1747.
[207] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 18–21 July, 1747.
[208] Keppel, *Life*, 1: 115–16.

regulation grey, rather than Admiralty-mandated white. Perhaps, it has been suggested, this represents an example of the way in which officers (and their tailors) sometimes creatively interpreted the uniform regulations according to their own tastes, exercising their gentlemanly independence rather than submitting to the Admiralty's rule.[209] Equally, it may have been that Reynolds (or his drapery painter, if one was used for this work) was not especially concerned with representing the uniform exactly. David Mannings observes that the silver-grey facings, waistcoat and breeches complement the portrait's stormy blue colour palette, suggesting that artistic concerns may have taken priority in the picture's creation.[210]

As Douglas Fordham points out, it is "curious" that Reynolds should have chosen to highlight the *Maidstone* incident, the most notable moment of "military failure" within Keppel's otherwise glittering career.[211] In private, senior naval officers had put a positive spin upon the young captain's reckless behaviour, Admiral Sir Peter Warren writing to Anson that "I join with you in liking Keppel's eagerness to come at the enemy and hope he will soon get a good ship to be at them again."[212] This statement echoes the public concern in the aftermath of the Toulon scandal that naval officers had become too cautious. Reynolds perhaps assumed that his viewers would share Warren's optimistic interpretation of the *Maidstone* disaster, the wreck therefore emphasising his sitter's willingness to risk disaster in pursuit of victory.

At the same time, the painting can also be read as a more equivocal image. For example, Fordham suggests that the shattered planks serve as a token of humility, through which Reynolds tempers his endorsement of Keppel's risk-taking behaviour with a note of caution. Like a "half-submerged memento mori", this reminder of the young captain's fallibility preserves the portrait "from charges of arrogance and self-promotion" and provides a moral of improvement through "the hard lessons of experience".[213] Matthew Hunter suggests that the allusion to the *Maidstone*'s fate offers "an invitation to meditate on competency under strain and responsibility put to the test", which forces the viewer to acknowledge Keppel's status as a modern, rule-bound professional rather than an autonomous hero.[214] As Hunter notes, Keppel was cleared of culpability for the wreck under a new legal

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[209] Archibald, *Preliminary Descriptive Catalogue*, 77.
[210] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 287–8, no. 1037.
[211] Douglas Fordham, *British Art and the Seven Years' War: Allegiance and Autonomy* (Philadelphia/Oxford: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 68.
[212] Peter Warren to George Anson, ca. 1747, quoted in Keppel, *Life*, 1: 102.
[213] Fordham, *British Art*, 68.
[214] Hunter, "Sir Sloshua," 91.

definition of negligence, which emerged within the eighteenth-century navy.[215] Cases of liability had previously turned upon the question of whether the defendant's actions had caused a particular injury. By contrast, the new definition presupposed that individuals had a responsibility to exercise certain duties of care. Provided that they had fulfilled this responsibility to the best of their ability, as Keppel was adjudged to have done during the *Maidstone* incident, they could not be found liable for any harm that occurred.[216] Implying that officers operated within broader frameworks of responsibility and accountability, this new definition of negligence was associated with the professionalization of the navy. As we have seen, naval professionalism was a hot topic in mid-eighteenth-century Britain. However, it is difficult to imagine that the painting's original viewers would have shared Hunter's minute interest in the legal niceties of professional negligence.

Although largely overlooked in the current scholarship on the portrait, a further significant context for Reynolds's painting lies in the meanings and anxieties associated with the phenomenon of shipwreck in eighteenth-century British culture. The most high-profile incidence of shipwreck in the first half of the century was the loss of the four naval warships, including the *Association* (90 guns), the flagship of Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell, on the Western Rocks of the Isles of Scilly on 22 October 1707 due to navigational error.[217] Shovell died in the disaster, together with over a thousand other officers and sailors, and his fate was woven into London's artistic and ceremonial fabric through the erection of a monument in Westminster Abbey (ca. 1708, fig. 33), ordered by Queen Anne and funded by Parliament.[218] Designed by Grinling Gibbons, this was the nation's first state-sponsored monument. It was also the subject of the first ever journalistic critique of a named monumental composition, Joseph Addison lamenting in the *Spectator* on 30 March 1711 that "the brave rough English Admiral" was represented "by the Figure of a Beau, dress'd in a long Periwig, and reposing himself upon Velvet Cushions". He also attacked the monument's inscription, which "instead of celebrating the many remarkable Actions he had performed…acquaints us only with

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[215] Hunter, "Sir Sloshua," 92–3.
[216] James Oldham, *The Mansfield Manuscripts and the Growth of English Law in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1992), 2: 1108; Michael Lobban, "Common Law Reasoning and the Foundations of Modern Private Law," *Australian Journal of Legal Philosophy* 32 (2007): 53.
[217] W. E. May, "The Last Voyage of Sir Clowdisley Shovel," *Journal of the Institute of Navigation* 8 (1960): 324–32.
[218] Geoffrey Beard, *The Work of Grinling Gibbons* (London: John Murray, 1989), 78–9.

the Manner of his Death, in which it was impossible for him to reap any Honour."[219] This account sees the monument as presenting two troubling visions of prostrated manhood: the modish effigy, which, for Addison, encapsulated the descent of the early eighteenth-century elite into luxury, effeminacy and moral corruption, and the admiral's lifeless corpse, which, according to the monument's inscription, "was flung on the shoar and buried with others in the sands" before being exhumed and returned to England. Addison's critique draws upon specific discourses around masculinity and monumental sculpture in the early eighteenth century. However, it also puts forward a view of shipwreck as an undignified, ignominious and unheroic mode of death – exacerbated in Shovell's case by the sculptor's failure to provide a suitably heroic effigy – which endured into the middle decades of the century and beyond.

Forty years later, Shovell's death still haunted the nation's collective memory. For example, after Admiral Sir John Balchen's flagship was wrecked with no survivors on a stormy night in October 1744, comparisons were drawn between the two unfortunate admirals: "The shatter'd planks confirm thy *Balchen's* fate," read one poetic tribute, "A wreck like *Shovell's*, and a loss as great."[220] In Balchen's case, the admiral's body was never recovered and debris from the wreck was the only tangible trace of his demise. Reynolds also used debris to denote shipwreck but, rather than implying the existence of a lost corpse, the "shatter'd planks" in his portrait were juxtaposed with Keppel's emphatically alive and active body. On one level, the portrait can be read as offering an antidote to the haunting spectre of the shipwrecked corpse. At the same time, the floating debris – Fordham's "half-submerged momento mori" – reminds viewers that there is only a perilously fine line between a living hero and a dead victim, especially in elemental confrontations between humanity and the destructive forces of nature.

As Hallett notes, "in Reynolds's portrait, one can conclude, the experience of personal crisis and the movement through darkly inhospitable environments, rather than being repressed from view, are turned into constituent elements of a modern aristocratic commander's pictorial identity." Defining Keppel "not only as an elegant but also as a rugged hero", this pushes the portrait beyond the boundaries of heroic

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[219] Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, 30 Mar., 1711. See also, Matthew Craske, *The Silent Rhetoric of the Body: A History of Monumental Sculpture and Commemorative Art in England, 1720–1770* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2007), 137–8.
[220] *The Gentleman's Magazine* 14 (1744): 557. For Balchen's death, see: *London Evening Post*, 16–18 Oct., 1744; Daniel A. Baugh, "Balchen, Sir John (1670–1744)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/1152.

representation and into the realm of another aesthetic tradition: the sublime.[221] Indeed, the contrast between Keppel's cool-headed "tranquillity" and the "tempestuous sea and…stormy shore in the distance" was described by Henry Fuseli in a lecture at the Royal Academy in 1804 as "an instrument of sublimity".[222] The concept of the sublime became increasingly important in British aesthetics in the second half of the eighteenth century, finding seminal expression five years after *Keppel II*'s completion in Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757).[223]

Surveying British literature produced in this period, Frans De Bruyn has traced what he describes as "the eclipse of the heroic and the emergence of the sublime".[224] Whereas the greatness of the hero was "displayed and proved in action", the grandeur of the sublime "manifested itself in the elevated emotional responses of an essentially passive perceiver…making feeling rather than action the measure of greatness."[225] De Bruyn attributes this shift to the growth of the modern nation state and the formalisation of state institutions, such as the Royal Navy. As the "heroic qualities of power and greatness" became attributes of the state and its institutions, the "power and greatness" of individuals was circumscribed by frameworks of discipline, duty and accountability.[226] In response, the characteristics of "martial prowess and greatness of soul" were translated into the realm of the sublime, becoming subjects for aesthetic contemplation rather than viable models of social behaviour.[227]

Keppel II exemplifies this trade-off. The portrait foregrounds the naval sitter's experience of risky situations but it remains somewhat equivocal about the social utility of the young captain's actions. What did the wreck of the *Maidstone* actually achieve? In Reynolds's portrait, Keppel can be seen as a daring hero, a lucky survivor or a wild chancer. Moreover, there is something staged and theatrical about his representation, like Captain John Hamilton in his masquerade outfit. He appears

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[221] Hallett, *Reynolds*, 103.
[222] Henry Fuseli, "Lecture IV: Invention" (1804), in *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli*, ed. John Knowles, 3 vols. (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831), 2: 225. Christine Riding points out that there was a longstanding association between shipwreck and the sublime, stretching back to ancient writings on the subject. Christine Riding, "Shipwreck and Storm in British Art," in *Spreading Canvas*, ed. Hughes, 99.
[223] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1757). See also, John Baillie, *An Essay on the Sublime* (London: R. Dodsley, 1747).
[224] Frans De Bruyn, "Hooking the Leviathan: The Eclipse of the Heroic and the Emergence of the Sublime in Eighteenth-Century British Literature," *The Eighteenth Century* 28, no. 3 (Fall 1987): 195–215.
[225] De Bruyn, "Hooking," 195.
[226] De Bruyn, "Hooking," 202.
[227] De Bruyn, "Hooking," 197, 206.

to be performing the part of the dynamic commander for an artistic evocation of shipwreck and storm. Yet, as a work of art, the painting is compelling. Raising the haunting memory of a "wreck like *Shovell*'s", Reynolds invites viewers to experience a vicarious thrill of exhilaration and anxiety. This reinforces the argument that the portrait was primarily intended to serve as an advert for the artist, showcasing how far Reynolds was willing and able to push the boundaries of portraiture. *Keppel II* was the climax of the artist's creatively generative engagement with the navy, which had begun in Plymouth, his naval sitters' daring exploits at sea stimulating his own creative adventures in paint.

Ultimately, *Keppel II* proved to be an audacious one-off, for Reynolds did not employ the same model of highly theatrical representation in his subsequent naval portraits. Whilst shipwreck and naval adventure could be an arresting and sensational subject matter for art, risk was also – as this chapter has repeatedly shown – a problematic issue for the naval profession. The risks involved in naval service engendered profound emotional anxiety for officers' loved ones, from which the port-based miniature and silhouette artists of this period profited. Furthermore, the increasing professionalization of the navy made the notion of a maverick, risk-taking officer undesirable and somewhat ridiculous, appearing more like a theatrical performance than a legitimate mode of naval identity. As the uneasy peace of the early 1750s gave way to the Seven Years' War (1756–63), the range of characteristics that naval officers were required to display became increasingly complex and contested. This forced portraitists – Reynolds included – to develop more nuanced forms of representation, as we will see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

"With his Head neatly engraved":
The making of naval celebrity

In May 1762, Francis Hayman's *Triumph of Britannia* – a massive twelve-foot by fifteen-foot allegorical painting, now known only through Simon François Ravenet's engraving (1765, fig. 34) – was installed in the vestibule of the Rotunda at Vauxhall Gardens.[1] A venue for masquerades, musical performances and artistic display, Vauxhall has been recognised by scholars as a crucial site in the emergence of the "polite public sphere" in mid-eighteenth-century London.[2] Members of the increasingly affluent mercantile and professional classes mingled within the gardens' spectacular surroundings. Through their participation in the various entertainments, these individuals could imagine themselves collectively as a refined public united by shared tastes, moral virtues and national identity.

A description of the *Triumph of Britannia* was published in the *London Chronicle* to mark the unveiling of the painting:

> The new emblematical picture, in the Great Room in Vauxhall-gardens, painted by Mr Hayman, exhibits Neptune, as represented by the poets; Britannia, holding in her hand a medallion of his present Majesty, and sitting by Neptune in his chariot drawn by sea-horses, who, by their attitudes, and the spirit they discover, seem to partake in the triumph, which is supposed to be occasioned by the defeat of the French fleet (represented on the back ground) by Sir Edward Hawke, Nov. 20, 1759. Neptune's car is surrounded by Nereids, or Sea-nymphs, who attend the triumph, and are gently impell'd along by the agitation of the waves; they hold in their hands medallions, as big as the life, representing those British Admirals, and Sea-commanders, who, during the late and present wars against France and Spain, have, with a courage and conduct unstained by dishonour and inhumanity (and therefore peculiar to their country) extended the conquests, and raised the naval glory of Great Britain to a higher pitch than ever was known in this or any other age or nation. – As a medallion, representing Adm. Boscawen [died 1761], could with no propriety be omitted, it is held by a Nereid, who weeps over it.[3]

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[1] Brian Allen, *Francis Hayman* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1987), 149, no. 79.
[2] T. J. Edelstein (ed.), *Vauxhall Gardens* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1983); David H. Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1993), 106–56; Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies 1680–1780* (New York: The Guildford Press, 1998), 116–57; Peter de Bolla, *The Education of the Eye: Painting, Landscape, and Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2003), 72–103; Jonathan Conlin (ed.), *The Pleasure Garden, from Vauxhall to Coney Island* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).
[3] *London Chronicle*, 18–20 May, 1762. See also, *A Description of Vaux-Hall Gardens* (London: S. Hooper, 1762), 26–7.

As this account explains, the painting commemorated recent British triumphs in the Seven Years' War (1756–63).[4] This conflict had begun disastrously for Britain: a sequence of humiliating defeats in the mid-1750s generated anxiety about the apparent incompetence, impotence and indifference of the nation's naval and military officers, reviving concerns that had arisen in the wake of the Toulon scandal ten years previously, as discussed in chapter one.[5] However, the pessimism engendered by the initial phase of the Seven Years' War was replaced by optimism after British forces secured a series of major victories in 1759, including the Battle of Quiberon Bay (20 November), which Hayman represented in the *Triumph of Britannia*.[6] From this point onwards, Britain remained firmly in the ascendancy, making massive territorial gains in North America and India before the war came to an end in February 1763. Nonetheless, the *London Chronicle*'s insistence that the naval commanders depicted in Hayman's painting possessed "a courage and conduct unstained by dishonour and inhumanity" betrays a trace of lingering concern about the temperaments of the nation's officers.

A description of the *Triumph of Britannia* similar to the one printed in the *London Chronicle* was displayed beneath the painting in the Vauxhall Rotunda.[7] The gardens' proprietors were perhaps concerned that visitors would be confused by Hayman's eccentric combination of marine painting, contemporary portraiture and allegory, the latter evoking a range of Renaissance and Baroque precedents. Brian Allen has suggested that Hayman took inspiration from Raphael's *Voyage of Galatea* (1511, Villa Farnesina, fig. 35) and Agostino Carracci's marine fresco, possibly also representing the *Triumph of Galatea*, in the Palazzo Farnese (1597–1603, fig. 36).[8] Hayman may have also based his composition upon Antonio Verrio's *Sea Triumph of Charles II* (ca. 1674, Royal Collection, fig. 37), which features many iconographic elements that later appeared in the *Triumph of Britannia*, including nymphs, tritons, sea-creatures, rearing sea-horses and a shell-backed chariot driven

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[4] Daniel A. Baugh, *The Global Seven Years War, 1754–1763: Britain and France in a Great Power Contest* (London: Longman, 2011). See also, Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001 [2000]); Stephen Conway, *War, State, and Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006); De Bruyn and Regan (eds.), *Culture of the Seven Years' War*.
[5] Banister, *Masculinity*, 72–97.
[6] Frank McLynn, *1759: The Year Britain Became Master of the World* (London: Vintage, 2008 [2004]); Shaun Regan (ed.), *Reading 1759: Literary Culture in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ. Press, 2013).
[7] Allen, *Hayman*, 149.
[8] Allen, *Hayman*, 67. Hayman never travelled to Italy but both of these works were known in mid-eighteenth-century London through reproductive prints. See, for example, British Museum V,6.83 (Raphael) and A,3.12 (Carracci).

by Neptune.[9] More importantly, like Hayman's painting, Verrio's picture is an allegory of naval supremacy. It was probably produced to commemorate the signing of the Treaty of Westminster in February 1674, which ended the Third Anglo-Dutch War with the Dutch conceding supremacy of the seas to the English. The English fleet are depicted in the background and the chariot is occupied by Charles II, dressed in classical armour. This anticipates Hayman's depiction of George III's medallion portrait in a wave-borne chariot. The *Triumph of Britannia* thus utilised a long-established allegorical language that was dignified by prestigious artistic precedents and associated with displays of royal authority and national prowess.

At the same time, one element within Hayman's picture belonged emphatically to the modern world. In their mid-eighteenth-century wigs and uniforms, the officers in the naval portrait medallions were recognisably men of the here-and-now. The names of these officers would have been familiar to the public from the vast body of popular literature, including books, newspapers, journals, pamphlets, broadsheets and ballads, which chronicled the exploits of the nation's most successful commanders in this period. Some visitors might also have recognised the officers' faces because, in all but two cases, Hayman based his portrait medallions on published mezzotints after recent paintings by leading artists – a debt to contemporary print culture which has previously been overlooked by scholars of the painting.[10] The two exceptions were Edward Hawke's portrait in the centre (fig. 38), which Hayman is reported to have painted from the life, and Richard Howe's partially obscured portrait on the far right (fig. 39).[11] Allen suggests that Howe is hidden from view because he was being "discreetly snubbed" for his failed attack on Saint-Malo in 1758.[12] However, Howe had distinguished himself in many other actions and it seems unlikely that he would have been included at all if there was truly a question mark over his service record. A more logical explanation for his concealment is that Hayman could not find a reliable source for his likeness, for there do not appear to have been any engraved portraits of Howe in circulation at this time.[13] Of the other medallions, one – George Pocock (fig. 40) – was derived in

[9] Oliver Millar, *The Tudor, Stuart and Early Georgian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, 2 vols. (London: Phaidon Press, 1963), 1: 133, no. 297.
[10] Noting that "Hawke's portrait…was, we are told, based on a sitting", Allen mistakenly concludes that "it is likely that the other Admirals…sat too." Allen, *Hayman*, 149. Other scholars simply ignore the issue of the portraits' derivation.
[11] [John Bew], *The Ambulator: or, A Pocket Companion in a Tour Round London, within the Circuit of Twenty-Five Miles*, 10th ed. (London: Scatcherd and Letterman, 1807), 291.
[12] Allen, *Hayman*, 149.
[13] A print catalogue for 1764 included a woodcut portrait of Howe "with verses" but it is not known whether this image was available when Hayman was working on the *Triumph of Britannia* and, in any case, the artist is unlikely to have used such a cheap print (which may

reverse from a portrait by Thomas Hudson, which had been engraved in mezzotint by James Macardell (1762, fig. 41). The remaining four – George Anson, Edward Boscawen, Augustus Keppel and Charles Saunders – were all based (also in reverse) on mezzotints after portraits by Hudson's former pupil, Joshua Reynolds (figs. 42–9).

Hayman's extensive reliance upon Reynolds's portraiture is indicative of the latter's success as a naval portraitist in this period. Reynolds appears to have attracted considerably more commissions to paint naval officers' portraits than any of his rivals in the 1750s and early 1760s, and he also arranged for many of his naval portraits to be engraved in mezzotint. These authorised mezzotints were then copied to make cheaper prints and illustrations in popular magazines and histories, not to mention Hayman's medallions at Vauxhall Gardens. Through this extensive public circulation, Reynolds's portraits became some of the most widely known images of the naval profession in mid-eighteenth-century Britain.

Writing in the exhibition catalogue for *Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity* (Tate Britain, 2005), Mark Hallett suggests that Reynolds's naval portraits, in painted and reproduced form, stimulated and sustained "a powerful form of martial celebrity that emerged in this period".[14] The history of celebrity has become a major area of research in recent years. Although the concept of fame has a much longer history, scholars generally agree that celebrity – defined as a wide-reaching, commodified type of fame which is produced through the mass media circulation of an individual's image – first emerged in the long eighteenth century, when the growth of the press and the print market established an extensive apparatus for disseminating fame.[15] Military and naval officers have largely been excluded from studies of early celebrity, which have tended to focus upon stage performers, literary personalities and others in the arts.[16] Cheryl Wanko suggests that this bias has

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have been a generic image, rather than a likeness) as a source. *A Catalogue of Maps, Prints, Copy-Books, Drawing-Books, Histories, Old Ballads, Patters, Collections, &c.* (London: Cluer Dicey and Richard Marshall, 1764), 72.

[14] Mark Hallett, "Heroes," in *Creation of Celebrity*, ed. Postle, 89.

[15] For an overview of the scholarship on eighteenth-century celebrity, see: Cheryl Wanko, "Celebrity Studies in the Long Eighteenth Century: An Interdisciplinary Overview," *Literature Compass* 8, no. 6 (2011): 351–62. See also, Claire Brock, *The Feminisation of Fame, 1750–1830* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Tom Mole (ed.), *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009); Antoine Lilti, *The Invention of Celebrity*, trans. Lynn Jeffress (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017).

[16] See, for example, Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (eds.), *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660–2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Tom Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Laura Engel, *Fashioning Celebrity: Eighteenth-Century British Actresses and Strategies for Image Making* (Columbus: The Ohio State Univ. Press, 2011); Heather

arisen because "activities traditionally considered not very useful or important (such as singing or acting, in comparison to military prowess) generate the surprising divorce between meaningful achievement and the level of renown that helps characterise modern celebrity".[17] However, as the psychologist David Giles argues, celebrity should be "seen as a *process*", which can apply to anyone: it does not describe *what* an individual is known for – singing, acting or fighting in a naval battle – but rather *how* he or she becomes known.[18]

This chapter explores the processes through which naval officers obtained celebrity status. It also considers how artists, printmakers and officers themselves endeavoured to exploit naval celebrity for their own gain. First, however, I want to revisit Hallett's assertion that Reynolds's naval portraits contributed to the construction of celebrity as both paintings and prints. In fact, the artist's painted portraits performed somewhat different functions to the subsequent prints. The paintings were intended for private display and responded in sophisticated ways to the demands placed upon officers during the Seven Years' War. It is necessary to appreciate the original significance of these paintings in order to understand how their meanings changed when they were engraved and circulated to a broader audience. By exploring these changes in meaning, we can gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of naval celebrity in eighteenth-century Britain.

I

After returning from a tour of the Continent, Reynolds established his first permanent studio in London in autumn 1752. He quickly became one of the most fashionable portrait painters in the capital, attracting commissions from numerous wealthy and influential sitters, including aristocrats, actresses, intellectuals and military commanders.[19] At the same time, following his earlier success as naval portraitist in Plymouth, which was explored in the previous chapter, sea officers continued to form an important segment of his clientele. In fact, during the first decade of his metropolitan career, Reynolds dominated the market for naval

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McPherson, *Art and Celebrity in the Age of Reynolds and Siddons* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2017).
[17] Wanko, "Celebrity Studies," 352.
[18] David Giles, *Illusions of Immortality: A Psychology of Fame and Celebrity* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 2. See also, P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis/London: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1997); Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001).
[19] Malone, *Works*, 1: xvi.

portraiture in London. By the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763, he had produced over thirty-five naval portraits, more than any of his rivals in the capital.[20]

Of the naval portraits that Reynolds painted in this period, one stands (or rather strides) apart from the rest. As discussed in chapter one, the artist announced his arrival on the metropolitan scene with a highly dynamic full-length portrait of his friend, Augustus Keppel (1752–3, National Maritime Museum, fig. 31), in which the subject is shown striding across a storm-swept beach in the aftermath of a shipwreck. As this work was Reynolds's second portrait of the young naval officer, it is described in this thesis as *Keppel II*. Reynolds seems to have displayed this portrait in his showroom to advertise his ability to bring the elevated conventions of academic history painting to bear upon the supposedly lesser genre of portraiture. Indeed, scholars have repeatedly singled out the blurring of genres in this picture as a game-changing moment in the history of British art. Writing shortly after the artist's death, Reynolds's first biographers credited the painting with having been "the first thing that distinguished him after his return to his native country".[21] In this work, they claimed, the painter had demonstrated "how much animation could be obtained by deviating from the insipid manner of his immediate predecessors".[22]

Keppel II is undoubtedly innovative. In the previous chapter, it was shown that the portrait's dramatic imagery was a bravura demonstration of Reynolds's artistic ambitions. The painting was a one-off production, a showpiece through which the artist sought to establish himself as a distinctive presence on the London art scene and to promote his practice to an audience of prospective patrons. Hallett reminds us that "Reynolds would have known that he was going to have to adapt the approaches and skills [this picture] displayed when he came to paint commissioned portraits".[23] *Keppel II* was thus destined to become an outlier within the artist's oeuvre. Never intended as a blueprint for future portraits, it was at most a source of inspiration, which could be adapted, modulated or even ignored depending on a sitter's requirements.

However, this has not stopped later scholars from using the painting as a standard by which to judge Reynolds's subsequent naval portraits, often to their detriment. For example, Daniel O'Quinn writes that "after the extraordinary 1752 *Keppel* and the equally powerful portrait of [army officer] Robert Orme from 1756, Reynolds's military portraiture seemed to become less pictorially complex…his

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[20] Figure derived from David Mannings's catalogue raisonné.
[21] *The European Magazine and London Review* 25 (1794): 91.
[22] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 287–8, no. 1037.
[23] Hallett, *Reynolds*, 105.

paintings of various admirals from the Seven Years' War have an almost prosaic quality."[24] This assessment is not entirely accurate. It is true that, at first glance, the majority of Reynolds's naval portraits from this period do not appear to have much in common with *Keppel II*: they feature little or no narrative incident and the sitters do not adopt 'action' poses. Yet they are nonetheless complex images, which are charged in their own way with as much energy and drama as the more famous Keppel portrait.

Taking Hayman's *Triumph of Britannia* as a starting point, it is possible to chart the development of Reynolds's naval portraiture in this period. As noted above, Hayman based four of the portrait medallions in his allegorical composition on mezzotints after naval portraits painted by Reynolds. The earliest of these portraits depicted Admiral George Anson (ca. 1753–5, Shugborough, fig. 50), who had risen to prominence during the War of the Austrian Succession as a result of his global circumnavigation in 1740–4.[25] Joining the Admiralty board in 1744 and taking over as First Lord of the Admiralty in 1751, Anson used his influential position within the navy to advance the careers of several young officers who had served under his command during his round-the-world voyage. This group included Augustus Keppel, through whom the admiral may have heard about Reynolds.[26] Indeed, word-of-mouth appears to have played an important role in the artist's immense success as a naval portraitist, and many of his sitters were connected through the intertwined networks of patronage and friendship that structured the navy's officer corps.[27]

As we shall see, Reynolds's naval portraits were sometimes exchanged between officers, and this was certainly the case with Anson's portrait. The prime version of the picture was commissioned by the sitter and presented to one of his naval protégés, Captain Sir Peircy Brett. A copy of the painting (ca. 1754, untraced) was then commissioned by Captain (later Admiral) Charles Saunders, who had served on Anson's circumnavigation and also benefitted from his patronage.[28] By displaying each other's portraits in their own homes, Reynolds's naval patrons consolidated their relationships with one another and, crucially, reframed those relationships in terms of gentlemanly friendship, rather than simply professional hierarchy. The exchange of fashionable portraits neatly sidestepped differences in

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[24] O'Quinn, "Facing Past and Future Empires," 315. For Reynolds's portrait of Robert Orme, see: Mark Hallett, "From Out of the Shadows: Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Captain Robert Orme*," *Visual Culture in Britain* 5, no. 2 (2004): 41–62.
[25] The following account of Anson's career is based on Barrow's *Life of Anson*.
[26] "Howe, Keppel, Saunders, and many others, were of his making". Barrow, *Life of Anson*, iv.
[27] Postle (ed.), *Creation of Celebrity*, 100.
[28] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 63, nos. 66–7.

naval rank and seniority, implying that officers shared a common standard of social respectability and were united by emotional as well as institutional ties.[29] This point has important implications for thinking about the viewers to whom these portraits were addressed. Whereas *Keppel II* was a semi-public picture, designed for exhibition in the artist's showroom to a broad audience of potential clients, works like Anson's portrait were intended for contexts of private display and exchange within specific naval networks.

Reynolds appears to have started work upon Anson's portrait around the same time that he was painting *Keppel II*, since he mentions both pictures in a letter to the sculptor Joseph Wilton dated June 1753.[30] However, although contemporary with one another, these two paintings are markedly different. In contrast to the dynamic and innovative *Keppel II*, Anson's portrait contains no suggestion of narrative. The sitter is shown resting one hand on an anchor with a rocky cliff and a distant view of his flagship in the background, a compositional formula which looks back to seventeenth-century precedents, such as Lely's *Flagmen of Lowestoft* (1665–6, National Maritime Museum, fig. 6). Addressing the viewer with his gaze whilst turning his body to one side, Anson engages in a self-conscious performance of polite authority. At once direct and aloof, his pose suggests that he possesses the manly reserve that was prized in the eighteenth-century culture of politeness. Placing his right hand on his hip, he sweeps back his coat in a gesture which emphasises the insignia of his rank – that is, the gold stripes on the lapels, cuffs and waistcoat of his flag-officers' full-dress uniform. Other portraitists in this period used the same hand-on-hip pose to showcase the splendour of naval uniform. For example, Thomas Hudson – Reynolds's former master and present rival – used this gesture in his portraits of Vice-Admiral John Byng (1749, National Maritime Museum, fig. 28), as discussed in chapter one, and Vice-Admiral George Pocock (1761, private collection, fig. 51), the engraving of which Hayman used as a source for the *Triumph of Britannia*. Thus, Reynolds's portrait of Anson broadly conformed to the established conventions for polite portraiture and naval representation as they stood in the mid-eighteenth century.

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[29] Robert Jones has advanced a similar argument about an exchange of portraits between Augustus Keppel and his legal team after his court martial in 1779. Robert W. Jones, *Literature, Gender and Politics in Britain during the War for America 1770–1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011), 146–58.

[30] Joshua Reynolds to Joseph Wilton, 5 June, 1753, quoted in Postle, "Early Unpublished Letter," 17. There is some ambiguity as the letter refers to a "whole lenght [*sic*] of Lord Anson" but all of Reynolds's known portraits of the admiral are three-quarter-lengths. Although it is possible that the letter refers to a lost full-length, it is most probable that Reynolds was mistaken or that the full-length portrait was subsequently abandoned in favour of a three-quarter-length one. Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 63.

Reynolds's recourse to convention in Anson's portrait suggests that his naval patron may have had some reservations about embracing the new histrionic approach that the artist had unveiled in *Keppel II*. Anson's age, seniority and political position are perhaps significant here. Whereas Keppel was a young officer with a reputation for daring, even reckless behaviour, Anson was an established figure; indeed, as First Lord of the Admiralty, he was the head of the naval establishment. Furthermore, Anson's portrait was intended for display in a domestic context, serving as a respectable token of naval friendship in the home of his protégé, Captain Brett. For these reasons, the artist or the sitter perhaps felt that a relatively conservative style of portraiture was more appropriate.

However, in heavily watered-down form, echoes of *Keppel II* are present in Anson's portrait, notably in the stormy colour palette and the heightened contrasts of light and shadow. Imbuing the picture with a dramatic atmosphere, these visual effects evoke paintings by Titian and Tintoretto, the sixteenth-century Venetian masters whose works Reynolds had studied at length during his Italian sojourn.[31] This encourages viewers to engage in an elevated aesthetic appreciation of the picture. Anson is dignified not only by his polite comportment and glittering flag-officer's uniform but also by the artistic sophistication of his portrait. Reynolds, it seems, was committed to finding subtle ways to animate and elevate his naval portraits even when working within relatively conventional frameworks.

The artist's full-length portrait of Vice-Admiral Edward Boscawen (ca. 1755–7, private collection) – another of the paintings referenced within Hayman's *Triumph of Britannia* – similarly blends echoes of *Keppel II* with more conventional elements.[32] It was not possible to obtain an image of this picture, which remains in the collection of the sitter's family, for reproduction in this thesis; therefore illustrated instead is an anonymous copy of the painting produced for the Naval Gallery, Greenwich, in 1824/5 (National Maritime Museum, fig. 52). Boscawen's portrait is the first full-length naval portrait that Reynolds is known to have completed after *Keppel II* and it follows the example of the earlier painting in some respects: like Keppel, Boscawen stands upon a rocky beach as dark clouds cluster overhead and large waves crash against the shore. While *Keppel II* represents the aftermath of a shipwreck, this portrait suggests that such a disaster may be imminent, showing a distant vessel battling against the hostile conditions.

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[31] Reynolds's diary from his stay in Venice, including detailed notes about the pictures that he studied, is reprinted in Leslie and Taylor, *Life and Times*, 1: 65–84.
[32] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 96, no. 208.

This does not obviously refer to any specific incident from the sitter's career but instead evokes the general perils of naval service.

Yet, rather than responding to the situation as Keppel seems to be doing in his picture, Boscawen appears entirely oblivious to the danger. Like Anson, he is shown consciously posing for his portrait, standing firmly on the spot and holding his hat in his right hand, as if he has removed it to greet the viewer. Reynolds again draws attention to the elaborate patterns of gold lace on his naval sitter's uniform, although in this case Boscawen wears flag officers' undress uniform, which was designed for everyday wear, rather than the more formal full-dress version adopted by Anson in his portrait. Naval undress coats in this period were characterised by their wide lapels. Copied from regimental military uniforms, these lapels carried strong martial associations, as well as serving both practical and decorative functions: they could be overlapped, creating a double-breasted garment which kept the wearer warm, or (as in Boscawen's case) buttoned back to reveal gold embellishments which signalled the wearer's rank.[33] Tucking one hand inside his pocket, the vice-admiral appears relaxed and at ease, the relative stillness of his body contrasting the violence of the churning waves in the background of the portrait. Only Boscawen's head, which is tilted to one side, shows any sign of animation.

Boscawen was a prominent figure in naval circles, having gained a distinguished reputation in the War of the Austrian Succession, during which he served under Anson at the First Battle of Cape Finisterre (14 May 1747).[34] Enriched with prize money, he purchased a country estate in 1749 and, two years later, he became a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty, once more working with Anson, the recently appointed First Lord. Although the two men were not always in agreement, the connection between Anson and Boscawen is important, since it strengthens the idea that Reynolds successfully grew his business as a naval portraitist by gaining new commissions from the colleagues and associates of officers whom he had already painted.

In the artist's pocket books, the earliest sitting for Boscawen is noted on 4 March 1755 but there were no further sittings that year, the production of the portrait having been interrupted by the sitter's involvement in the early naval campaigns of the Seven Years' War.[35] In April 1755, Boscawen sailed for North

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[33] Miller, *Dressed*, 23.
[34] Clive Wilkinson, "Boscawen, Edward (1711–1761)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2931.
[35] NPG Heinz Archive, Joshua Reynolds's Pocket Books (facsimile), entry for 4 Mar., 1755.

America in command of a fleet carrying reinforcements for the British forces then stationed in Ohio.[36] At this point, war had not officially been declared between Britain and France but tensions were rapidly escalating. Signed at the conclusion of the War of the Austrian Succession in October 1748, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had done little to resolve the competition between the two nations over territory and trading routes in North America, the West Indies, Africa and India, and skirmishes broke out along the St Lawrence River in May 1754.[37] As well as supporting the British troops involved in these clashes, Boscawen also had secret orders to intercept a French squadron carrying reinforcements and supplies.[38] This was despite the French government having proclaimed that any British action against their ships would be regarded as an act of war. Hampered by fog, Boscawen only managed to engage three French ships but he succeeded in capturing two of them.[39] Although popular with the British public, this show of aggression during what was nominally peacetime had serious diplomatic consequences, leaving – in the words of one newspaper report – "no room to hope for Success in any Negotiation for terminating the Disputes between the Two Crowns without coming to Extremities."[40] The prospect of impending conflict generated considerable anxiety in Britain, especially after news arrived from America describing the catastrophic defeat of General Edward Braddock's forces at the Battle of Monongahela in July 1755.[41]

Boscawen returned to England in November 1755, and further sittings for his portrait probably took place early the following year, although this cannot be confirmed due to the loss of Reynolds's pocket book for this period.[42] Boscawen went to sea again in April 1756 and, the following month, the British issued a formal declaration of war against the French.[43] When the vice-admiral returned to London in November 1756, the nation had suffered further significant defeats.[44] A reference to Boscawen's portrait in Reynolds's pocket book for January 1757 suggests that it was finished or nearing completion by this point.[45] Britain's dire predicament at this historical juncture perhaps discouraged the artist from presenting Boscawen in a

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[36] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 22–24 Apr., 1755.
[37] Conway, *War, State and Society*, 6–7. For the early fighting in North America, see: Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 73–140.
[38] Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 111.
[39] *London Evening Post*, 5 July, 1755. See also, Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 113–14.
[40] *London Evening Post*, 24 July, 1755.
[41] Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 94–107.
[42] *Public Advertiser*, 19 Nov., 1755.
[43] *Public Advertiser*, 19 Apr., 1756; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 27–29 Apr., 1756.
[44] For British defeats in this period, see: Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 169–212.
[45] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 96, no. 208.

stridently active, heroic or aggressive manner: such a portrayal might have seemed wantonly flamboyant and perhaps even laughable given the context of the war. By contrast, the representation of the vice-admiral as calm and unfazed in the midst of a storm was perhaps a more reassuring image for a nation in crisis.

<u>II</u>

One defeat in this period had particularly important consequences for the naval profession. On 20 May 1756, the Mediterranean fleet under the command of Vice-Admiral John Byng engaged a French squadron that was laying siege to the British fortress on the island of Minorca.[46] The British ships sustained considerable damage in the action and failed to gain any advantage. After consulting other senior officers at a council of war, Byng decided to retreat to Gibraltar, abandoning Minorca to the enemy. The island's garrison held out for another month but eventually surrendered on 29 June. Various factors contributed to the defeat, including faulty intelligence and poor planning by the British government and the Admiralty. However, the official response focussed on Byng's fateful decision to withdraw his fleet. The admiral was court-martialled and found to have breached the twelfth Article of War, the court ruling that he had not done "his utmost to take, seize and destroy the Ships of the French King", an offence which carried a mandatory death sentence.[47] The officers of the court, one of whom was Augustus Keppel, petitioned George II to exercise mercy but their appeals were not heeded. On 14 March 1757, the sentence was carried out by firing squad to the shock of many in the navy.[48]

Writing six years later, at the end of the Seven Years' War, the historian John Entick suggested that Byng was the victim of "political necromancy", sacrificed to protect the Duke of Newcastle's government from blame for its mismanagement of the war effort.[49] Similarly, Tobias Smollett claimed that the admiral was "the scape goat of the m[inistr]y, to whose supine negligence, ignorance and misconduct the loss of that important fortress [Minorca] was undoubtedly owing."[50] The government

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[46] For this episode and its fallout, see: Brian Tunstall, *Admiral Byng and the Loss of Minorca* (London: Philip Allan and Co., 1928); Gerald French, *The Martyrdom of Admiral Byng* (Glasgow: William Maclellan, 1961); Rodger, *Command*, 255–71.

[47] *The Trial of the Honourable Admiral John Byng at a Court Martial, As taken by Mr. Charles Fearne, Judge-Advocate of His Majesty's Fleet* (London: R. Manby, 1757), 125.

[48] Keppel, *Life*, 1: 229–50.

[49] John Entick, *The General History of the Late War*, 5 vols., 3rd ed. (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1766), 1: 441.

[50] Tobias Smollett, *Continuation of the Complete History of England*, 5 vols., new ed. (London: Richard Baldwin, 1763), 1: 323.

inflamed public opinion against Byng using a vicious propaganda campaign.[51] In towns and cities across the country, there were mass demonstrations against the admiral, which frequently included mock-executions. Ephemeral effigies – often little more than logs or bundles of straw dressed in crude approximations of naval uniform – were paraded, hanged and burned in front of baying crowds.[52] Entick recalled witnessing one such event, during which "a Byng, as the children were taught to call it…[was] brought by day-light upon Tower-hill dressed in the regimentals of an admiral" and "hanged upon a gallows, there erected, twenty feet high; cut down and burnt in the sight of 10,000 people."[53]

Byng was also vilified in prints, pamphlets and ballads, many of which caricatured the admiral as an unmanly coward.[54] There was considerable emphasis upon his supposed effeminacy and it was even rumoured that he had attempted to escape from custody by disguising himself in women's clothes, inspiring a number of satirical prints in which he was shown cross-dressing.[55] Other prints depicted the council of war convened by the vice-admiral in his cabin, at which the decision was taken to withdraw to Gibraltar.[56] Published by Matthew Darly with a satirical letter addressed to John Cleveland, the Secretary of the Admiralty, *Cabin Council* (ca. 1756–7, fig. 53) is a typical example. The walls of the cabin are lined with displays of porcelain, of which Byng was a noted collector.[57] Lending the space the appearance of an elegant parlour in a country house, these delicate and expensive ornaments seem out-of-place on board a man-of-war. They imply that Byng possessed a taste for luxury, a concept associated in the eighteenth century with excess and effeminacy. The centrepiece of the display is a portrait bust apparently representing Byng himself, which is explicitly labelled as "Porcelain". A hand points from the bust to the flesh-and-blood admiral below, suggesting that he is no more suited to naval life than his art collection and equally liable to shatter under pressure. By focussing upon the council of war, the print insinuates that the fragile

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[51] Robert Donald Spector, *English Literary Periodicals and the Climate of Opinion during the Seven Years' War* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), 16–34.

[52] Examples of anti-Byng crowd violence and mock-executions are discussed in Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715–1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 178–205. See also, Nicholas Rogers, *Crowds, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 60.

[53] Entick, *General History*, 1: 438.

[54] Banister, *Masculinity*, 72–97.

[55] Stephen Moore, "'A Nation of Harlequins'? Politics and Masculinity in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of British Studies* 49, no. 3 (July 2010): 514–39, esp. 538–9.

[56] Banister, *Masculinity*, 84.

[57] For Byng's porcelain collection, see: Bevis Hillier, *Early English Porcelain* (London: Walker Books, 1992), 14; Tom Pocock, *Battle for Empire: The Very First World War 1756–63* (London: Michael O'Mara Books, 1998), 38. See also, Moore, "'Harlequins,'" 534.

Byng would rather engage in polite conversation in the private environment of the cabin than face danger on the public stage of the quarterdeck.

Naval officers paid close attention to the public attacks to which their ill-fated colleague was subjected. For example, Boscawen "made a collection of all the Gazettes, prints, songs, etc. sent me about this affair", which he intended to have bound into a single volume.[58] He took a harsh view of Byng's conduct, describing the behaviour of the vice-admiral's fleet as "a scandal".[59] The execution of a senior officer for misconduct was unprecedented in recent memory and had a profound effect upon how the rest of the officer corps both approached their duties and formulated their professional identities.[60] Voltaire pithily satirised this effect in his novel *Candide* (1759), having one character remark during a visit to Portsmouth that "dans ce pays-ci, il est bon de tuer de temps en temps un amiral pour encourager les autres" ("in this country, it is good to kill an admiral from time to time, in order to encourage the others").[61] This flippant comment anticipates the work of later historians, who have suggested that Byng's execution did indeed act as a fillip, encouraging other naval officers to pursue more aggressive, risk-taking tactics.[62]

In the years that followed, Britain successfully overhauled its early losses in the Seven Years' War and emerged victorious from the conflict. The tide of the war turned dramatically during the so-called *annus mirabilis* of 1759, which saw the British secure a series of momentous victories, including significant naval triumphs at Lagos (18–19 August) and Quiberon Bay (20 November).[63] The psychological effect of Byng's death has been understood as a contributing factor in this spectacular reversal in the nation's fortunes, the vice-admiral's execution having prompted public calls for naval officers to display greater courage and heroism.[64] However, painted for private display, Reynolds's naval portraits provide a different

[58] Edward Boscawen to Frances Boscawen, 14 Sept., 1756, in P. K. Kemp, "Boscawen's Letters to his Wife, 1755–1756," in *The Naval Miscellany*, ed. Christopher Lloyd (London: Navy Records Society, 1952), 250.

[59] Clive Wilkinson, "Boscawen, Edward (1711–1761)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2931.

[60] Although there was no precedent for the execution of an admiral, Captain Henry Russane of the Marines – a relatively junior officer – had been condemned to death in early 1746 for failing to do his utmost to assist an attack on ships believed to be carrying the Young Pretender. Harding, *Emergence*, 278.

[61] Voltaire, *Candide, ou L'Optimisme* (London: n. p., 1759), 119.

[62] Rodger, *Command*, 272–3; Margarette Lincoln, "Naval Personnel in Popular Culture," in *Nelson, Navy and Nation: The Royal Navy and the British People, 1688–1815*, ed. Quintin Colville and James Davey (London: Conway/National Maritime Museum, 2013), 121; Sarah Kinkel, *Disciplining the Empire: Politics, Governance, and the Rise of the British Navy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2018), 121–54.

[63] For an overview of the British victories of 1759, see: McLynn, *1759*, esp. 192–387.

[64] Banister, *Masculinity*, 87–96. See also, Rodger, *Command*, 272–3.

perspective on the impact of the Byng affair. Rather than embracing bellicose rhetoric and heroic imagery, these pictures offer a more nuanced commentary on the qualities that officers were expected to embody in this period.

Two of the four Reynolds portraits referenced in Hayman's *Triumph of Britannia* were produced after Byng's execution. Depicting Augustus Keppel and Charles Saunders respectively, these pictures exemplify the strategies that the artist used to represent naval officers in the wake of this key event. The initial sittings for Keppel's portrait (which, being Reynolds's third picture of his naval friend, is referred to here as *Keppel III*) appear to have taken place in April 1759, when the sitter visited London whilst awaiting the completion of repairs to his ship, the *Torbay* (74 guns).[65] The painting exists in two autograph versions: a standard-size three-quarter-length showing Keppel in captain's undress uniform (1759, private collection, fig. 54), and a wider version in which he wears rear-admiral's undress uniform, commemorating his promotion to this rank in October 1762 (ca. 1762, Woburn Abbey, fig. 55).[66]

In December 1758, Keppel had led a successful expedition to capture the island fortress of Gorée, a strategically significant French naval base off the West African coast.[67] The taking of Gorée was one of the key victories that helped to revive Britain's fortunes in the Seven Years' War but Reynolds's portrait makes no reference to this recent triumph. In fact, the picture is devoid of narrative incident: it shows Keppel standing beside a rugged cliff in front of an empty sea. Yet, although he is not performing any specific action, the captain's pose is nonetheless imbued with subtle dynamism. Grasping the handle of a wooden cane, his foreshortened right arm pushes forward towards the viewer. His body faces to the left but his head turns to the right, his gaze intense and focussed. This creates a sense of movement which is further emphasised by the oblique light that illuminates one half of the captain's face and plunges the other into shadow, making his expression seem at once defined and ambiguous. The unbuttoned left lapel of his undress coat flaps forward onto his chest, as though caught in the wind, enhancing the animated quality of the portrait. In this way, Reynolds suggests that his naval sitter is lively and alert, not simply a clothes-horse, like the preening, enervated figure that Byng had become in the hands of the government satirists, nor a stuffed suit, like the effigies of the unfortunate vice-admiral that suffered public immolation.

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[65] O'Quinn, "Facing Past and Future Empires," 315; Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 288, nos. 1038–9.
[66] Keppel, *Life*, 1: 370.
[67] Keppel, *Life*, 1: 268–77.

The foreshortened arm, the twisting pose and the heightened chiaroscuro in *Keppel III* recall sixteenth-century Venetian portraits, especially late works by Titian, such as his *Knight of Malta with a Clock* (ca. 1550, Museo del Prado, fig. 56). Venetian artists had been among the first portraitists to experiment with such devices, developing a new pictorial rhetoric which, as Jodi Cranston has argued, served to create the illusion that the sitter was actually present before the viewer. In such works, the portrait takes on the quality of immediacy, as we are made to sense the possibility of interaction with the depicted individual. [68] Thus in *Keppel III*, the drama and animation comes not from the situation, as had been the case in *Keppel II*, but from the sitter's presence and charisma.

A similar quality defines Reynolds's portrait of Vice-Admiral Charles Saunders, which also featured in Hayman's *Triumph of Britannia*. The sittings for this portrait took place in March and early April 1760, during the brief period that the sitter spent in London between his return from North America in January 1760 and his departure in late April for the Mediterranean, where he served continuously for the next five years. As we have seen, Saunders had earlier commissioned Reynolds to produce a copy of his portrait of Anson, after the initial version of the painting had been given by the sitter to another naval officer, Captain Sir Peircy Brett. Similarly, Saunders's own portrait may have been subject to some kind of exchange between officers. Although the original provenances of the two autograph versions of this work (ca. 1760, National Maritime Museum, fig. 57, and ca. 1765, private collection, not illustrated) are not recorded, they were owned in the nineteenth century by the families of Anson and Keppel respectively, suggesting that Saunders might have presented his portrait to his colleagues.[69]

Saunders sat for his portrait shortly after his return from North America, where he had commanded the British fleet in the St Lawrence River, co-operating with Major-General James Wolfe in the amphibious assault that led to the capture of Quebec in September 1759 – one of the major victories in that momentous year.[70] However, like *Keppel III*, Saunders's portrait does not directly refer to the sitter's recent success, featuring instead an atmospheric but generic backdrop of agitated storm-clouds. What the painting lacks in narrative incident, it makes up for in the visual drama created by the play of texture, pattern and colour within the vice-

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[68] Jodi Cranston, *The Poetics of Portraiture in the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000).
[69] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 404, nos. 1575–6.
[70] J. K. Laughton, *rev.* Roger Knight, "Saunders, Sir Charles (c. 1713–1775)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Oct. 2008, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/24690.

admiral's uniform: the glitter of gold lace, the sharp contrasts of blue and white, and the delicate flourishes of lace cuffs and shirt ruffles. The red sash is a later addition, commemorating Saunders's installation as a Knight of the Bath in May 1761.[71] Stark contrasts of light and dark accentuate the movement of his twisting body: appearing almost like a coiled spring, tensed and primed for action, Saunders's left side is turned away from the light, while his head faces in the opposite direction. It is as if something has suddenly caught his attention, for he stares attentively at a point beyond the picture plane, his dark, arching eyebrows emphasising the intensity of his gaze. He appears alert and keenly sensitive, the splayed fingers of his right hand wrapping around the crown of the anchor.

Reynolds's other naval portraits from this period are relatively varied. The sitters adopt different poses in different settings and wear their uniforms in different ways. For example, George Anthony Tonyn (1757, Musée Jacquemart-André, fig. 58) leans against the mast of a ship with his coat hanging open and his drawn sword resting against his shoulder, whereas Alexander Hood (1764, National Maritime Museum, fig. 59) props his elbow on a rocky outcrop with his lapels buttoned across his chest.[72] Yet, for all their variety, these portraits are united by the sitters' latent energy and watchfulness. In Tonyn's case, his darting sideways glance, his wind-ruffled hair and his casually brandished sword suggest his readiness for action, the gleaming blade perhaps even symbolising his mental and physical sharpness. Hood also gazes off to one side, his head turning in the opposite direction to the rest of his body, creating a sense of tension and animation.

The intense gazes and tense bodies in Reynolds's naval portraits echo the rhetoric of war literature from the same period. The late 1750s witnessed the publication of numerous pamphlets and tracts addressed to military and naval officers.[73] These texts responded to the growing concern that Britain's commanders were physically and mentally unprepared for combat, a fear which had arisen as a result of the Byng crisis and the defeats sustained by the nation in the opening phase of the Seven Years' War. According to its lengthy subtitle, *A Letter to the British Army and Navy* (1756) was "intended to remind our brave Warriors of the important Interests, in which they are engaged, and the generous Motives and Incitements they have to act with Vigilance, Steadiness and Resolution in repelling the bold Insults, and chastising the insufferable Pride, Arrogance, and Perfidy of

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[71] *London Gazette*, 12–16 May, 1761. The sash is not included in Macardell's print, indicating that it was a later addition.
[72] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 445, no. 1755 (Tonyn), and 261, no. 925 (Hood).
[73] This literature is discussed in Banister, *Masculinity*, 92–4.

France."[74] Meanwhile, in *A Letter, Adapted to the Present Critical Juncture* (1758), Hugh Worthington exhorted officers to display "True Valour", which was "not a savage Ferocity, not a brutal Rage, not an insatiable Cruelty; but a manly Greatness, a sedate Firmness and Resolution in the Midst of Danger".[75] The emphasis in these examples upon "Vigilance", "Steadiness", "Resolution" and "Firmness" is typical of such texts, many of which presented the inner qualities of alertness, composure and fortitude as more important than outward shows of aggression, daring and audacity.

But how could one tell if an officer possessed sufficient internal resolve? According to *A Letter to the British Army and Navy*, this quality produced an observable effect on the body, which could be discerned in "every Limb and Nerve": "Valour animates every Part, swells it with Life and Vigour, gives it that Impetus and Agility of Motion, and that bold, resolute, intrepid Front." By contrast, without "the active and enlivening Spirit of Valour", the "bodily Parts, how strong, nervous, and well-proportioned soever, will be motionless, defenceless, and like a dead impotent Corpse".[76] The ideal officer was thus composed, resolute *and* animated, like the sitters in Reynolds's portraits whose subtle eye movements and bodily twists convey a sense of vigilance, which they maintain even in shadowy, inhospitable surroundings.

The idea that an officer's fitness for command could be assessed by scrutinising his facial expressions and comportment featured prominently in the Byng crisis. As noted above, the officers who sat upon Byng's court martial – a group which included Augustus Keppel – appealed to the king to commute the vice-admiral's death sentence. Published in many newspapers, their appeal was based upon the grounds that "it appears by the Evidence of Lord Robert Bertie, Lieut. Col. Smith, Capt. Gardiner, and other Officers of the Ship, who were near the Person of the Admiral, that they did not perceive any Backwardness in him during the Action, or any Marks of Fear, or Confusion, either from his Countenance, or Behaviour, but that he seemed to give his Orders coolly and distinctly."[77] As far as the court was concerned, although Byng had made a serious tactical misjudgement, he had behaved in the manner expected of a naval officer, his facial expressions and bodily actions displaying resolution, calmness and clarity of thought in the view of several eye-witnesses. The court's emphasis upon this evidence indicates that, within the

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[74] *An Address to the British Army and Navy* (London: J. Buckland, 1756).
[75] Hugh Worthington, *A Letter, Adapted to the Present Critical Juncture*, 2nd ed. (London: R. Griffiths, 1758), 6.
[76] *An Address to the British Army and Navy*, 1–2.
[77] *London Evening Post*, 29 Jan.–1 Feb., 1757.

naval profession, an officer's outward appearance during battle was widely understood as an important proof of his character.

The same idea had previously been emphasised in the aftermath of the disastrous Battle of Toulon in 1744, the controversy around which was discussed in chapter one. In the course of mounting a robust defence of Vice-Admiral Richard Lestock, the second-in-command of the defeated British fleet, the author of *A Particular Account Of the late Action in the Mediterranean* (1744) – ostensibly "a marine officer in the Fleet up the *Mediterranean*" – reminded the reader that, during battle, a naval officer was required to stand on the quarterdeck "in the Heat of Action and Smoak", exposing himself to sniper fire, cannon balls and flying debris and to the scrutinising gazes of the ship's crew. As a result, he needed to exercise command not only through his orders but also through his body language and facial expressions: "the Fire in his Eyes in the Time of Action ought to be such as to animate the Seamen, and the Serenity of his Countenance ought to banish all Fear. In the Heat of Battle he ought to be active and resolute, yet calm and present to himself."[78] This comment was designed to criticise Lestock's hot-headed superior, Admiral Thomas Mathews, who had supposedly "precipitated himself into great Blunders, by giving Way to an headstrong Imagination, and an ungovernable Passion."[79] Describing an ideal officer as one who combined activity and resolution with calmness and presence of mind, the *Particular Account* anticipates the language later used in the military and naval literature of the Seven Years' War. Moreover, it also affirms the importance of an officer's expressions and comportment as indicators of his suitability for command.

In sum, there was a significant emphasis upon the psychology of command in both Byng's court martial and the naval and military literature of this period. Officers were expected to have certain intellectual and emotional qualities, evidence for which was sought in external, physical signs. Portraiture was uniquely suited to addressing this concern, since eighteenth-century theories of the genre stressed its capacity to express character through appearance. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the portraitist Jonathan Richardson argued in his influential *Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715, revised 1725) – which Reynolds studied during the formative years of his career – that "*Painting* gives us not only the Persons, but the Characters of Great

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[78] *A Particular Account Of the late Action in the Mediterranean* (London: T. Tons, 1744), 22. The phrase "In the Heat of Battle, an Admiral ought to be active and resolute, yet calm and present to himself" also appears in the pro-Lestock *A Narrative of the Proceedings of his Majesty's Fleet in the Mediterranean, and the Combined Fleets of France and Spain, from the Year 1741 to March 1744*, 3rd ed. (London: J. Millan, 1745), 93.
[79] *A Particular Account*, 22.

Men. The Air of the Head, and the Mien in general, gives strong Indications of the Mind."[80] Intensely focussed upon subtleties of facial expression and bodily movement, Reynolds's portraits responded to the kind of close scrutiny to which naval officers were routinely subjected and suggested that his sitters could stand up to such minute inspection. As we have seen, the paintings were viewed by and sometimes exchanged between fellow officers, many of whom had served closely together. These men had a nuanced understanding of the demands of the naval profession and, since they were likely already familiar with each other's achievements, they did not need to be reminded of specific victories and battles. In this context, intimate portraits that purported to provide insights into their sitters' characters were perhaps more desirable than flamboyant images that referred to particular triumphs. Yet, as we shall see in the next section, the circulation of Reynolds's naval portraits was not exclusively confined to elite exchanges between officers.

III

Reynolds arranged the engraving in mezzotint of a significant number of his naval portraits from the Seven Years' War. The resulting prints may have been privately circulated by the sitters to their peers and colleagues, echoing the way in which some officers exchanged the artist's original painted portraits as tokens of friendship and professional regard.[81] However, the mezzotints were also viewed, owned and displayed by broader audiences, becoming commodities available for public sale, the circulation of which was shaped by the laws of commerce.

Able to suggest texture far better than line engraving, the tonal medium of mezzotint was understood in the eighteenth century as being ideally suited to the reproduction of oil paintings, especially those with rich contrasts of light and shadow, like Reynolds's portraits.[82] To ensure his works were engraved to high standard, Reynolds worked closely with a small number of accomplished engravers, including Edward Fisher and James Macardell.[83] These artists produced exceptionally fine mezzotints, which commanded high prices at the luxury end of the print market.

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[80] Richardson, *Essay*, 10.
[81] Antony Griffiths, "Prints after Reynolds and Gainsborough," in *Gainsborough and Reynolds in the British Museum*, ed. Timothy Clifford, Antony Griffiths and Martin Royalton-Kisch (London: British Museum, 1978), 35.
[82] For a history of mezzotint engraving in Britain, see: Ben Thomas, *The Paradox of Mezzotint* (Canterbury: Museum of Canterbury, 2008).
[83] Macardell's name is sometimes spelled McArdell or MacArdell. I have followed the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* in using Macardell. Griffiths, "Prints," 32. See also, David Alexander, "The Dublin Group: Irish Mezzotint Engravers in London, 1750–1775," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society* 16 (1973): 72–93.

However, the commercial success of a portrait mezzotint depended upon not only the quality of the print but also the public profile of the sitter. Consequently, it was important that the subject was clearly identified. Following the conventional formula for inscriptions on eighteenth-century prints, the mezzotints after Reynolds's naval portraits were lettered beneath the image with the depicted officer's name, title and professional rank. In some cases, the caption also referred to a recent engagement in which he had distinguished himself. For example, the painter's full-length portrait of Edward Boscawen was engraved and published by James Macardell in 1757 with the inscription "The Honourable Edward Boscawen Vice Admiral of the Red Squadron of His Majesty's Fleet, And One of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty".[84] The print was then reissued the following year with an amended caption which described the sitter as "Admiral of the Blue" (fig. 45), bringing the mezzotint up-to-date with the promotion that Boscawen had received on 7 February 1758.[85] In late 1759, the portrait was re-engraved by Macardell in three-quarter-length on a smaller plate and published with the "Admiral of the Blue" caption, plus two additional inscriptions: "Cape Breton taken 1758" and "Five French Ships of the Line taken & burnt 1759" (fig. 60). The former note referred to the sitter's leading role in the siege of Louisbourg in early summer 1758, which resulted in the British successfully capturing the Canadian fortress from the French.[86] "Five French Ships of the Line taken & burnt" described the outcome of the Battle of Lagos on 18–19 August 1759, at which Boscawen commanded the victorious British fleet.[87] Although requiring the production of a new plate and thus involving capital outlay on the part of the engraver, the reduction in the size of the print may have been intended to make the mezzotint less expensive for consumers, thereby appealing to a broader audience. Furthermore, the change from full-length to three-quarter format has the effect of making the image more tightly focussed upon the face and torso of the sitter, this emphasis upon Boscawen's physical presence complementing and reinforcing the caption's presentation of large fleet actions, which in reality involved many officers, sailors and soldiers, as achievements of the admiral as an individual.

As Boscawen's example suggests, the publication (or republication) of a print often followed a sitter's promotion or his involvement in a significant battle. Widely reported in the contemporary press, such events brought officers to public attention.

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[84] For an impression of this version, see: NMM PAH5398.
[85] Clive Wilkinson, "Boscawen, Edward (1711–1761)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2931.
[86] Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 345–8; Hugh Boscawen, *The Capture of Louisbourg, 1758* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2011).
[87] McLynn, *1759*, 223–53; Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 431–4.

Indeed, the names of senior naval commanders frequently appeared in mid-eighteenth-century newspapers. Most of this coverage was brief and factual, comprising of short notices such as "The Lords of the Admiralty have put the Royal George of 100 Guns, at Portsmouth, into Commission; on board of which Admiral Boscawen will hoist his Flag" or "Admiral Boscawen sailed on Wednesday from Spithead for America".[88] Occasionally, however, newspapers and periodicals printed longer biographical notices and personal anecdotes about certain officers, this heightened interest in particular commanders typically peaking in the aftermath of notable engagements. Boscawen's public profile exemplifies this pattern. Having held many of the most strategically significant commands of the conflict, the admiral was regularly mentioned in the contemporary press throughout the Seven Years' War but, after news of the successful siege of Louisbourg was received in August 1758, there was a marked increase in his prominence. For example, in September 1758, the *Universal Magazine* printed an account of "Admiral Boscawen's memorable Exploits, His Descent, Marriage, and Promotions".[89] The magazine "judged it expedient to present our Readers" with such an account because Boscawen had "on many former Occasions, signalised himself as a brave and skilful Commander, and so lately acquired immortal Renown in the Taking of the important City, Harbour, and Fortifications of Louisbourg, in the Island of Cape Breton; wherein his Valour and Conduct were conspicuously displayed".[90] The use of the word "expedient", which Samuel Johnson defined in his *Dictionary* (1755) as meaning both "proper, fit" and "quick, expeditious", conveys a sense of speed and immediacy: the magazine presents itself as satisfying a pressing desire for information about the current hero of the hour.[91] A similar account of the admiral's life and career was published in the *Universal Chronicle or Weekly Gazette* almost exactly one year later, following Boscawen's victory at the Battle of Lagos in August 1759.[92] As we have seen, around the same time, Boscawen's portrait was republished as a three-quarter-length mezzotint with a caption referring to the sitter's recent victories. Similarly imbued with the spirit of expediency, the publication of the print was timed to capitalise on the peak of public interest in the admiral after the Battle of Lagos.

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[88] *Whitehall Evening Post,* 31 Dec.–1 Jan., 1757; *British Spy or The Universal London Weekly Journal*, 18 Feb., 1758.
[89] *The Universal Magazine* 23, no. 158 (Sept. 1758): 125–7.
[90] *The Universal Magazine* 23, no. 158 (Sept. 1758): 125.
[91] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: J. and P. Knapton, 1755), 744.
[92] *Universal Chronicle or Weekly Gazette*, 26 Sept.–6 Oct., 1759.

It is unclear who was responsible for deciding when prints after Reynolds's naval portraits were published. The only documented example comes from 1779, more than a decade after the end of the Seven Years' War, when Augustus Keppel was acquitted following a high-profile, politically charged court-martial. Shortly after the acquittal, which prompted widespread public celebrations, Reynolds wrote to congratulate his old friend, announcing that "I have taken the liberty, without waiting for leave, to lend your picture to an engraver".[93] The picture in question was the painter's fourth portrait of Keppel (1765, National Maritime Museum), a copy of which remained in the artist's studio.[94] In this instance, Reynolds himself was the driving force behind the print's publication, actively seeking to exploit the market for Keppel's image created by his acquittal. However, Keppel was the artist's close friend, a fact which may have emboldened Reynolds to act independently. The painter's admission that he had taken this course of action "without waiting for leave" suggests that it was usual practice for a sitter to be consulted before his or her portrait was engraved. It remains an open question how much agency engravers and publishers had within the process. Although the artist and the sitter were apparently required to authorise the engraving of a portrait in the first instance, the engraver and the third-party publisher – if one was involved – may have had control over the timing of the print's publication and any subsequent amendments or republications. Thus, in the case of Boscawen's portrait, Reynolds and the admiral may have been involved in the initial publication of the full-length print in 1757 but the subsequent revisions of the mezzotint could have been undertaken by the work's engraver and publisher James Macardell, acting of his own accord.

Once a naval officer's portrait had been engraved, it was often pirated and reproduced by other engravers and publishers also keen to profit from the sitter's fame. For example, in 1759, John Bowles published a somewhat crude (and thus presumably cheaper) copy of Macardell's three-quarter-length mezzotint of Boscawen's portrait (fig. 61), retaining the inscriptions referring to the Siege of Louisbourg and the Battle of Lagos but omitting the names of the artist and the engraver. An anchor has been added on the right and the admiral is shown grasping a chart inscribed "Cape Breton" in his right hand, where previously he held his hat (the latter now sitting on his head). Whereas Reynolds's painted naval portraits of this period invited viewers to scrutinise subtly modulated facial expressions and

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[93] Joshua Reynolds to Augustus Keppel, 12 Feb., 1779, in *Letters*, ed. Ingamells and Edgcumbe, 80–1. See also, Tim Clayton, "'Figures of Fame': Reynolds and the Printed Image," in *Creation of Celebrity*, ed. Postle, 55; Jones, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 154.
[94] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 288–9, nos. 1040–1.

body postures, Bowles's print is designed to be read more quickly, reducing naval portraiture to a series of familiar clichés and conventional elements, such as the anchor. Furthermore, tying the image to a notable recent event (the action at Cape Breton), the addition of the chart would have ensured that Boscawen was easily recognisable to members of the newspaper-reading public.

Bowles's print addressed an audience who were familiar with the sitter through the press coverage of his career. In fact, prints after Reynolds's naval portraits were sometimes used as illustrations in periodicals and popular histories, integrating the visual and textual production of an officer's image. For example, a reversed version of Bowles's print was published in 1760 in the third volume of the short-lived periodical the *Naval Chronicle*, where it appeared alongside an account of Boscawen's earlier service in India during the War of the Austrian Succession (fig. 62).[95] Medallion portraits of the admiral based upon Reynolds's image were also included in various contemporary magazines and histories, such as John Entick's *General History of the Late War* (1766, fig. 63).[96] Furthermore, the *Universal Magazine*'s "expedient" account of the admiral's "memorable exploits" in September 1758 was published "with his Head neatly engraved" (fig. 64).[97] In this print, which is also derived from Reynolds's portrait, the admiral's head and shoulders are depicted within an oval medallion set upon a fictive stone plinth adorned with an image of a naval engagement. Placed in front of this plinth are a sword and a sprig of oak, serving as a kind of tribute. The oak was a traditional symbol of the Royal Navy, representing the raw material from which Britain's warships – its "wooden walls" or "hearts of oak" – were made.[98] In this way, the print simulated the appearance of a funerary monument, inviting the viewer to imagine that Boscawen (who was at this time still alive) would have enduring fame beyond his own lifetime. Yet the engraving in fact belonged to a culture of contemporary fame: it was published in response to a recent victory and used a widely reproduced portrait in combination with established symbols of the naval officer's profession (the naval battle, the sword and the oak) to ensure that viewers could quickly identify the sitter.

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[95] *The Naval Chronicle* 3 (1960): 177.
[96] Entick, *General History*, 3: 442.
[97] *The Universal Magazine* 23, no. 158 (Sept. 1758): 125.
[98] In 1760, David Garrick wrote a ballad entitled "Hearts of Oak" for his pantomime *Harlequin's Invasion*, which featured the line "Hearts of oak are our ships; jolly tars are our men". The song proved immensely popular and subsequently became the official march of the Royal Navy. *The Muse's Delight: Or, the Songster's Jovial Companion* (London: J. Pridden, 1760), 67.

Although I have focused upon Boscawen's image, a similar story could be told about many of Reynolds's naval portraits, a large number of which were engraved during the Seven Years' War, usually following the sitter's involvement in a significant victory. The resulting mezzotints then became sources for countless unauthorised copies, cheap prints and magazine illustrations. For example, although it was painted in 1752–3, *Keppel II* was only published as a print in late 1759 (fig. 65), after the sitter had distinguished himself at the Battle of Quiberon Bay (20 November 1759).[99] Engraved and published by Edward Fisher, the mezzotint carried an inscription referring explicitly to recent events in the Channel, identifying the sitter as "The Honourable Augustus Keppel, Commanding His Majesty's Ship Torbay, November 20th 1759." This print was then used as the basis for an illustration in Entick's *General History* (fig. 66) and by John Bowles as the source for a smaller print focussing upon Keppel's head and upper torso (ca. 1762–3, fig. 67). Stripping away the narrative action of the original portrait and employing a blank backdrop, Bowles's reworking creates a bold, easily legible image, which focusses attention on the sitter's personal appearance.

The proliferation of officers' printed portraits in this period needs to be understood in the context of the eighteenth century's burgeoning culture of celebrity and the associated practice of portrait print collecting. As Leo Braudy has demonstrated, the concept of fame has a long history, stretching back to antiquity.[100] Exemplified by Alexander the Great, fame in the classical tradition was regarded as a form of immortality for great men who embodied civic virtue, having performed heroic deeds or services for their people, often on the battlefield. Its defining characteristic was the posthumous remembrance of an individual's achievements, typically through epic poems, songs, sculptures and monuments. However, the eighteenth century witnessed the construction of an alternative discourse of fame, which historians argue developed into the modern concept of celebrity.[101] Wide-reaching and commodified, this new type of fame was produced through the mass media circulation of a living individual's image, as made possible by the growth of both commerce and the press.

As P. David Marshall notes in his influential study of celebrity, the word is derived from the Latin terms *celebrem*, which connotes both "famous" and

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[99] For Keppel at Quiberon Bay, see: Keppel, *Life*, 1: 282–90.
[100] Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986).
[101] On the distinction between modern celebrity and earlier types of fame, see: Brock, *Feminisation*, 1–7; Lilti, *Invention*, 1–14.

"thronged", and *celere*, which means "swift", as in the English word celerity.[102] Thus, by definition, a celebrity image is one that rapidly gains widespread but often short-lived exposure and popular recognition, typically having been produced to make a short-term profit after a recent newsworthy event. The manifold reproductions of Reynolds's naval portraits that circulated in this period conform to these criteria: they made the faces of contemporary naval officers familiar to large numbers of people and the timing of their publication was driven by the events of the Seven Years' War.

Exclusive and hierarchical, classical fame demands reverence for and deference towards exceptional citizens who have (supposedly) performed exemplary acts of leadership and self-sacrifice. By contrast, the popular appeal of celebrity is predicated upon the feeling of familiarity. Audiences are invited to feel as if they know celebrities personally, even though they have never met. Celebrity culture therefore emphasises physical appearance, personality and private life as much as public action.[103] At the same time, familiarity is created through repetition and superficial resemblance. Thus, in order to satisfy the demands of accessibility and rapidity, celebrity images utilise conventional symbols and communicate identity through exterior visual codes. Laura Engel argues that this aspect of celebrity culture parallels the theatre historian Marvin Carlson's notion of the "haunted stage", which describes the importance of memory, familiarity and déjà vu in the theatre-goer's experience.[104] Props, scenery and costumes are reused and recycled; the same plays are repeatedly re-enacted; and actors are typecast in similar roles. As a consequence, each new performance is "ghosted" by past performances. For Engel, celebrity similarly relies on this phenomenon of ghosting: audiences are presented time and again with the same or similar images.[105] For example, Boscawen was consistently represented using Reynolds's portrait, even though the image was reworked in multiple different ways.

At the same time, "ghosting" applies between individuals: the image of one celebrity often recalls that of another or conforms to a pre-established type, allowing such images to be grouped and collected.[106] Artists and publishers in the mid-eighteenth-century print market traded upon the collectability of the celebrity image, and the collecting of portrait prints became an increasingly popular hobby.[107] Prints

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[102] Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, 4–6.
[103] Brock, *Feminisation*, 3–7.
[104] Engel, *Fashioning Celebrity*, 6–7; Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2001).
[105] Engel, *Fashioning Celebrity*, 6–7.
[106] Engel, *Fashioning Celebrity*, 7.
[107] For print collecting and celebrity, see: Clayton, "Figures of Fame," in *Creation of Celebrity*, ed. Postle, 49–58; Wanko, "Celebrity Studies," 357. For the culture of eighteenth-

after Reynolds's naval portraits were probably collected in this way. Indeed, typically featuring the sitter's coat of arms in the centre, the consistent format of the inscriptions on Fisher's and Macardell's mezzotints actively encourages the viewer to regard these prints as parts of a set.

The collectability of naval portrait prints is also highlighted by *Admirals*, a highly unusual print by George Bickham the Younger, probably published around 1765 (fig. 68). In this work, the artist draws from a number of naval mezzotints to create a composite image depicting six officers, each figure copied in reverse from a different portrait print. From left to right, the officers and their mezzotint sources are: Charles Knowles (John Faber the Younger after Thomas Hudson, 1755–6, fig. 69), Augustus Keppel (Edward Fisher after Joshua Reynolds [*Keppel III*], 1760, fig. 47), Edward, Duke of York and Albany (anonymous, 1760s, fig. 70); William Rowley (John Brooks after unknown artist, 1755, fig. 71); and George Anson (James Macardell after Joshua Reynolds, 1755, fig. 43). No printed source has been identified for the head on the far right, and possibly there was none: the inscription underneath this figure reads "How co[mmo]dore", suggesting that it is intended to represent Richard Howe, who (as noted earlier) does not appear to have been the subject of any engraved portraits at this time.

This motley assortment of officers combines successful young commanders such as Keppel and Howe with old veterans such as Rowley, who had not served at sea since 1745 and whose contribution to the Seven Years' War was limited to two relatively brief stints on the Board of the Admiralty in the 1750s.[108] Edward, Duke of York and Albany, was George III's younger brother. Entering the navy in 1758, he cultivated a public reputation as a glamorous and valiant officer. However, his service record was at best equivocal, including both a successful raid on Cherbourg and a failed assault on Saint-Malo, and his seagoing career ended after his brother ascended to the throne in 1760.[109] There is no obvious rationale for Bickham's selection of these particular officers, most of whom are mislabelled in the print's inscription. Only Keppel's name is placed beneath the correct figure and "Sanders" – presumably meaning Charles Saunders, who is not depicted here – is listed, whilst Anson is not.

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century portrait print collecting more generally, see: Lucy Peltz, *Facing the Text: Extra-Illustration, Print Culture, and Society in Britain 1769–1840* (San Marino: Huntington Library Press, 2017).

[108] Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, 4: 66; Robert McGregor, "Rowley, Sir William (c. 1690–1768)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2010, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/24228.

[109] Matthew Kilburn, "Edward Augustus, Prince, Duke of York and Albany (1739–1767)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/66551.

It would seem that the engraver was not especially concerned with the individual identities of the officers in his print. Instead, he presented these images to the viewer as examples of a common *type*: as the print's title suggests, they are simply "Admirals". It is significant that Bickham placed Rowley and Knowles at the back of the group, when they were the only two officers who were not depicted in naval uniform in the original mezzotints. As noted in chapter one, uniform had quickly become one of the most well-known visual symbols of the naval profession following its introduction in April 1748. Thus, in *Admirals*, Bickham obscured the non-regulation clothing of Rowley and Knowles from view and instead placed the uniformed bodies of Keppel, Anson and the Duke of York in the foreground of the print, ensuring that the viewer immediately recognises the figures as naval officers.

This engraving is without parallel among other prints from this time and surviving impressions are rare, suggesting that it did not circulate especially widely. Bickham was principally known as a pioneering producer of obscene satirical prints and political caricatures but his varied oeuvre also encompassed garden views, drawing books, theatrical prints and Rembrandt copies.[110] Innovation and entrepreneurship characterised his practice and he often experimented with new creative and commercial possibilities. *Admirals* was presumably the result of one such experiment, the engraver perhaps seeking to capitalise upon the popularity of officers' portrait prints and the rise of naval celebrity. Bickham's engraving underscores the extent to which the naval officer had – through printed portraiture – become a recognisable and celebrated figure in mid-eighteenth-century British culture. On the one hand, the print presents the role of "admiral" as an important one within British society, emphasising the figures' membership of a professional group, rather than their individual identities and actions. At the same time, even though they did not correspond to one another, the faces brought together in the image and the names mentioned in the inscription would have seemed familiar to many of the engraving's original audience from newspaper reports and widely circulated prints, inviting viewers to imagine that they knew these officers as individuals. A gathering of revenants from earlier mezzotints, Bickham's engraving thus highlights the "hauntedness" and superficiality of celebrity culture, suggesting how, once translated into print, officers' images became commodities for popular consumption.

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[110] Timothy Clayton, "Bickham, George (c. 1704–1771)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2352.

<u>IV</u>

At first glance, Francis Hayman's *Triumph of Britannia* (fig. 34) – discussed in the introduction to this chapter – appears far removed from Bickham's *Admirals.* The latter was a cheap print, which probably had limited circulation. By contrast, the *Triumph of Britannia* was a large-scale allegorical painting, which was displayed to the fashionable crowds at Vauxhall Gardens and utilised grandiose, classicising imagery, looking back to illustrious precedents such as Verrio's *Sea Triumph of Charles II* (ca. 1674, Royal Collection, fig. 37). Yet, as we have seen, Hayman's picture also incorporated naval portraits copied from contemporary mezzotints, like Bickham's composite image. These portrait medallions can be viewed as another manifestation of the mid-eighteenth century's nascent culture of celebrity, drawing upon the regular, sustained and ubiquitous consumption of printed portraiture. The *Triumph of Britannia* also needs to be seen in the context of an emerging urban culture of fashionable entertainment, a point which is highlighted by considering the original context of the picture's display.

The painting was one of four monumental canvases, all featuring subjects related to the Seven Years' War, which Hayman painted for the vestibule of the Vauxhall Rotunda in the early 1760s.[111] This series of four pictures was comprised of two allegories and two historical subjects. All of the original paintings are now lost but, using a combination of written sources, preparatory sketches and prints, it is possible to reconstruct the display. Now known through small-scale *modellos*, the two history paintings were highly innovative in their application of the conventions of academic history painting to the representation of recent events, depicting the protagonists in modern dress. One of these works represented *The Surrender of Montreal to General Amherst*, the preparatory sketch for which is now in the Beaverbrook Art Gallery (1760, fig. 72), and the other *Robert Clive and Mir Jafar after the Battle of Plassey*, the *modello* for which is now in the National Portrait Gallery (ca. 1760, fig. 73). These subjects centred upon displays of magnanimity by British military commanders after securing major victories in Canada and India. The grand manner tradition provided precedents for the representation of humanitarian military leadership, such as Charles Le Brun's *The Family of Darius before Alexander* (1660–1, Versailles, fig. 74), the composition of which Hayman copied in

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[111] For this series, see: Allen, *Hayman*, 62–70; Solkin, *Painting for Money*, 190–9; Carol Watts, *The Cultural Work of Empire: The Seven Years' War and the Imagining of the Shandean State* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2007), 65–7; Fordham, *British Art*, 119–29.

the *Surrender of Montreal*.[112] Yet, as well as evoking prestigious precedents, the emphasis upon human sympathy in the Vauxhall histories, coupled with the contemporary subject matter, also helped to render the paintings accessible to the middle-class viewers who comprised a substantial proportion of the Vauxhall crowd. Striking a compromise between high art and public taste, Hayman presented Amherst and Clive as heroes of the here-and-now who embodied the "natural" ties of sentiment, rather than the exclusive virtues of the civic humanist tradition.[113]

Displayed alongside these sentimental history paintings, Hayman's two allegorical pictures completed the Rotunda quartet. As well as *The Triumph of Britannia*, which celebrated British naval glory, Hayman also painted an allegory of the nation's military success, *Britannia Distributing Laurels to the Victorious Generals*, of which no visual record survives and which is consequently now known only through written descriptions.[114] Like its naval counterpart, *Britannia Distributing Laurels* incorporated the likenesses of successful living commanders. However, whereas the admirals in the *Triumph of Britannia* were represented as portrait medallions and therefore did not themselves appear to physically inhabit the same space as the sea-nymphs and tritons, the generals in the military allegory were absorbed into the picture's classicising imagery. Their likenesses were appended to bodies dressed "in Roman habits" and they were shown waiting to receive laurel crowns from Peace and Britannia.[115] Writing in the *Public Advertiser* shortly after the painting's unveiling, one critic thought that this scene was laughably ridiculous. Signing himself "Candide", he joked that the generals appeared to be "dressed in masquerade", as if attending one of the fashionable entertainments for which Vauxhall was known. He also suggested that the list of their names and victories held up by Fame in the background of the painting had "all the air of a list of prices of provisions" at the gardens.[116] This response suggests that, for all their art-historical pretensions, Hayman's Vauxhall allegories were nonetheless read as irrevocably part of the culture of urban entertainment, fashion and commercial exchange in which they appeared. In equating Fame's roll of honour with a Vauxhall price list, Candide suggested that these men and their achievements had become like commodities for sale. The commodification of reputation was one of the defining

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[112] Martin Myrone, *Bodybuilding: Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750–1810* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2005), 33.
[113] Solkin, *Painting for Money*, 190–9.
[114] *Public Advertiser*, 12 June, 1764. See also, Fordham, *British Art*, 125–8; de Bolla, *Education*, 94–8.
[115] *Public Advertiser*, 12 June, 1764.
[116] *Public Advertiser*, 19 June, 1764.

features of celebrity culture, even though (as Candide's mockery suggests) this presented a challenge to traditional codes of masculine gentility, which were predicated upon ideals of gentlemanly disinterest, requiring individuals to rise above the short-lived fads and fashions of the commercial realm.

The influence of celebrity culture is also apparent within Hayman's naval allegory, the *Triumph of Britannia*. Emphasising the presence of George III's portrait in Britannia's chariot, Douglas Fordham argues that the naval portrait medallions merge seamlessly into the grandiose royal allegory: the picture, he suggests, represents "a royal procession in which every naval officer becomes part of the royal cortège."[117] He claims that both the *Triumph of Britannia* and *Britannia Distributing Laurels* were designed to counterbalance the "demotic impulses" of the two contemporary history paintings in the Rotunda: "if *Amherst* and *Clive* appealed to bourgeois sympathies, the allegorical canvases suggested that royal power, and aristocratic notions of military engagement, sanctioned humanitarian gestures on the imperial fringe."[118] Yet there is little about the *Triumph of Britannia* that resembles an orderly royal procession. As Peter de Bolla writes, "the image pulsates with barely containable energy: the power of the turbulent sea, the rearing of the horses that draw the chariot across the waves, the distant battle depicted in the background, and the all-too-visible sexual desire that throbs through the naked female figures, whose modesty has thoughtfully been salvaged by the judicious positioning of the medallion heads."[119] For de Bolla, the "pounding of power" in the painting beats not to the rhythm of the royal court but to that of the Vauxhall crowd, whose membership of a "generally accessible public visual culture" is confirmed through their recognition of the naval portraits embedded within Hayman's otherwise elevated allegory.[120] Thus de Bolla concludes that the feeling of "familiarity" is central to the picture – and, as we have seen, the popular appeal of celebrity was also predicated upon a sense of familiarity.

Since most of the portraits in the *Triumph of Britannia* were derived from widely circulated and much copied contemporary prints, they would have seemed familiar to a large number of visitors. The oval format of the medallions recalls the portraits printed in popular magazines and histories, although (as de Bolla notes) this shape is also reminiscent of miniatures – small, private portraits which typically depicted one's loved ones. While we might question the assertion that the Nereids

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[117] Fordham, *British Art*, 124.
[118] Fordham, *British Art*, 124.
[119] de Bolla, *Education*, 102.
[120] de Bolla, *Education*, 102.

throb with "all-too-visible sexual desire", their interaction with the naval medallions is informal, sentimental and in some cases even intimate or immodest. A number of nymphs hold the portraits over their pubic areas. One caresses Edward Hawke's portrait, whilst her sister wraps an arm around Augustus Keppel's neck, as if the two of them were lovers. Another Nereid has turned around to stare into George Anson's eyes, and the nymph holding Edward Boscawen's portrait weeps for his recent decease. Standing in stark contrast to the stately dignity with which Britannia presents the image of the newly crowned George III, this affectionate and affective behaviour suggests to the viewer that the depicted officers are worthy of respect, recognition and even love.

The placement of the naval medallions within the picture is also significant. Engraved by Henry Roberts and published as a print in 1752, Samuel Wale's interior view of the "Elegant Music Room in Vauxhall Gardens" (fig. 75) shows the spaces where Hayman's four monumental canvases would later hang.[121] It indicates that the viewer's head was roughly level with the lower frames of the paintings. Thus, when looking at the *Triumph of Britannia*, visitors would have needed to crane their necks to see the king's portrait, which was high up in the chariot. By contrast, bobbing in the water in the lower third of the painting, the naval portraits were much closer to the eye. On one level, this could be understood as a hierarchical arrangement, in which the naval commanders were placed below the king, signalling their subservience. At the same time, it also celebrated the officers as celebrities whose popular appeal and accessibility stood in contrast to the remote authority of the crown.

V

Populated by fashionable visitors, who converse in small groups and eye one another across the room, Wale's view of the Rotunda reminds us that the Vauxhall paintings were displayed in a public space. Public displays of contemporary art became a fixture of London's cultural landscape in the mid-eighteenth century. Vauxhall was an early trailblazer, having displayed works by living artists since the early 1740s, although art was only one of the many attractions at the gardens.[122] The first dedicated annual exhibition of contemporary art in Britain was hosted by the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and

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[121] Allen, *Hayman*, 66.
[122] In the 1740s, Francis Hayman created a series of genre paintings for the supper boxes in Vauxhall Gardens, chiefly depicting pastoral amusements, children's games and scenes from contemporary novels and plays. Allen, *Hayman*, 107.

Commerce at its Great Room on the Strand in April 1760. The following spring, a group of leading artists formed a rival exhibiting body, the Society of Artists, which hosted its own yearly displays. And, eight years later, in April 1769, the newly founded Royal Academy held its first annual exhibition.[123] These displays quickly became fashionable attractions for the urban public, providing artists and sitters with an opportunity to indulge in self-promotion on a public stage.[124] Furthermore, unlike the paintings installed at Vauxhall, the works on show in the new exhibition spaces were only displayed for a season, the annual turnover of images meaning that exhibitions paralleled and catered to the demand for expediency that characterised celebrity culture.

Because sitters are rarely identified by name in the catalogues of the early exhibitions, naval portraits were usually listed under anonymous titles such as "portrait of a sea officer" or, more generally, "portrait of a gentleman". Manuscript annotations in surviving catalogues and press reviews of the exhibitions can be used to identify some sitters but these sources are not comprehensive. As a consequence, it is difficult to gauge exactly how many naval portraits were exhibited in this period. However, from the available evidence, it appears that naval portraiture accounted for at least one or two works per year in exhibitions during the 1760s. Moreover, as we shall see, certain artists used the exhibition space as a venue for the staging of naval celebrity.

Surprisingly, Joshua Reynolds – the most prolific naval portraitist of the period – was not among these artists. Art historians have successfully identified all of the works submitted by Reynolds to the annual exhibitions of this period and the list does not include any naval portraits.[125] In fact, the artist appears to have only exhibited one naval portrait in his entire career, showing his full-length *Admiral George Brydges Rodney* (1788–9, Royal Collection) at the Royal Academy in 1789, three years before his death. Reynolds's apparent reluctance to submit his naval portraits for exhibition is particularly striking because he actively used the annual displays to promote his practice, regularly showing portraits of fashionable writers,

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[123] Brian Allen, "The Society of Arts and the First Exhibition of Contemporary Art in 1760," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 139 (1991): 265–9; Matthew Hargraves, *Candidates for Fame: The Society of Artists of Great Britain, 1760–1791* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2005), 21–41; Holger Hoock, *The King's Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture 1760–1840* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 203–21.
[124] Marcia Pointon, "Portrait! Portrait!! Portrait!!!," in *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780–1836*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2001), 93–109; Mark Hallett, "Reading the Walls: Pictorial Dialogue at the British Royal Academy," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, no. 4 (2004): 581–604.
[125] Waterhouse, *Reynolds* (1973), 177–83.

aristocratic beauties, actresses and decorated military commanders.[126] Perhaps the artist felt that his network of naval patrons was already so extensive, and his reputation as a naval portraitist so well-established, that there was little to be gained from exhibiting his work in the genre, even though many of his naval sitters were well-known celebrities. Furthermore, as suggested above, his naval portraits from this period presented a nuanced portrayal of naval command which turned upon subtle details and invited close scrutiny; such images may not have seemed ideally suited for display on the crowded exhibition walls, where pictures were at risk of being overlooked if they did not feature bold, easily legible effects.

Reynolds's seeming disinclination to exhibit his naval portraits opened the door for other artists to use the exhibition room to position themselves as new players in the market for the subgenre. Francis Cotes was one artist who availed himself of this opportunity. The catalogue for the Society of Artists exhibition in 1762 lists "a sea officer, half length" under Cotes's name, although unfortunately no contemporary sources identify the sitter. Cotes had begun his career as a pastellist in the early 1750s and quickly became successful, before expanding his practice into oil portraiture in the 1760s.[127] Identifying a niche in the market, he presented himself as an affordable alternative to Reynolds, offering Reynolds-like portraits at lower prices.[128] Since naval portraiture was closely associated with Reynolds, exhibiting an example of this genre helped Cotes to establish his reputation as an up-and-coming rival of the more established painter.

Although little is recorded about the "sea officer, half length" that Cotes exhibited at the Society of Artists in 1762, two works in the artist's surviving oeuvre fit this description and date from around the time of the exhibition. One of these portraits depicts nineteen-year-old Captain Edward Knowles (ca. 1762, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, fig. 76) – the eldest son of Admiral Charles Knowles, one of the figures in Bickham's *Admirals*.[129] In Cotes's portrait, Knowles stands on the deck of a man-of-war, pointing with his left arm and holding his drawn sword with his right hand (the weapon is largely concealed by his body but the tip of the blade is visible near the lower edge of the canvas). Meanwhile, in the background of the painting, a British two-decker fires a broadside at a French ship. Presenting the young Knowles

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[126] Reynolds's use of exhibitions throughout his career is discussed in detail in Hallett, *Reynolds*, esp. chapters 3–8, 10 and 11.

[127] The following account of Cotes's career is based upon Edward Mead Johnson, *Francis Cotes: Complete Edition, with a Critical Essay and a Catalogue* (London: Phaidon, 1976), 1–48, and Martin Postle, "Cotes, Francis (1726–1770)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2015, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/6385.

[128] Hallett, *Reynolds*, 189.

[129] Johnson, *Cotes*, 63, no. 89.

actively exercising command in the midst of battle, Cotes surely took inspiration from Reynolds's *Keppel II* (1752–3, National Maritime Museum, fig. 31), which shows its sitter taking control in the aftermath of a shipwreck. In both pictures, the absence of any common sailors creates a degree of artificiality: these portraits suggest the general activity of command, without providing a specific narrative resolution. Daniel O'Quinn has commented upon this quality in *Keppel II*, suggesting that it "forces the viewer to imagine an apposite situation of command" in order to provide a context for the sitter's actions. For O'Quinn, this act of imagination "amounts to conjuring a heroic future": rather than recalling events from the past, the portrait's open-ended narrative is pregnant with possibilities.[130]

This air of possibility takes on a poignant note in Knowles's case because his portrait was painted posthumously. Charged with delivering important dispatches to Lisbon, Knowles's sloop, the *Peregrine* (20 guns), sailed from Belle Isle in bad weather in late December 1761 and was never seen again. It was presumed to have been wrecked with the loss of all hands.[131] Cotes's portrait was commissioned by the sitter's grieving father, Admiral Knowles, who provided the artist with a verbal description of his son and a "profile shade" as a source for the likeness, the latter detail explaining the unusual representation of the sitter in profile.[132] The sense of activity in the portrait was perhaps intended to reanimate the deceased Knowles and to compensate for the indignity and anonymity of his death, about which there were no heroic stories – he had simply vanished. It is significant that Knowles is depicted wearing a post-captain's coat (identifiable by the white lapels and cuffs), despite never having worn this uniform in life. At the time of his death, he held the rank of commander; the Admiralty had made out a captain's commission in his name but he was lost before the promotion reached him.[133] The portrait thus imagined a heroic future that had been denied to the young officer. If this picture was the "sea officer, half length" that Cotes exhibited in 1762, then its purpose was probably to advertise the artist's capacity to produce dynamic and heroic portraiture, echoing the way in which Reynolds had displayed *Keppel II* in his showroom as a demonstration of his abilities. Knowles was not widely known – his death received little coverage in the contemporary press – and therefore Cotes could not count on the picture attracting notice on the basis of the sitter's identity. Yet the innovative portrayal of the young

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[130] O'Quinn, "Facing Past and Future Empires," 314.
[131] "Biographical Memoir of Sir Charles Knowles," *The Naval Chronicle* 1 (1799): 97.
[132] "Biographical Memoir of Sir Charles Knowles," 97.
[133] "Biographical Memoir of Sir Charles Knowles," 97.

captain seemingly in the midst of action would have surely had considerable aesthetic impact on the exhibition walls, garnering attention for the painter.

Alternatively, the "sea officer, half length" exhibited in 1762 could have been Cotes's portrait of thirty-year-old Captain Timothy Edwards (1762, private collection, fig. 77).[134] In this painting, the background shows a ship's boat landing on a sandy beach. It is manned by a crew of white shirted sailors under the direction of an officer in captain's uniform, who points with his arm outstretched in a gesture of command, creating a vignette which probably refers to a specific incident in the sitter's career. However, unlike Knowles, whom Cotes represented in the midst of an unfolding situation, Captain Edwards is shown standing in the foreground of the portrait, where he turns to acknowledge the viewer's gaze, seemingly removed from the events taking place in the distance. The movement of his head creates a sense of animation and there is a touch of flamboyance in the way that he holds his sword under his arm with the blade sticking out behind his back, the weapon creating an unexpected, eye-catching diagonal, which would have helped the picture to stand out at the exhibition, if indeed it was publicly displayed.

Edwards came from an old family in the Welsh gentry and, although his father was a younger son, Timothy's older uncles were childless, meaning that the captain was set to inherit the family estate in Gwynedd.[135] He entered the navy at the age of fourteen in December 1745, and passed for lieutenant in June 1752 but had to wait until the beginning of the Seven Years' War before he received his first commission. Having overcome this initial hurdle, his career progressed rapidly and lucratively: he served as a lieutenant in the frigate *Tartar* (24 guns), which became famous for its success in capturing wealthy prizes, and earned promotion to the ranks of commander in 1757 and post-captain in 1759. Serving successively in the *Favourite* (16 guns), the *Valeur* (28 guns) and the *Wager* (24 guns), he amassed a considerable fortune in prize money. However, in December 1761, the *Wager* was paid off and Edwards spent the next few months on half-pay in London, presenting himself at the Admiralty in the hope of securing a new command. It was in this period that he visited Cotes's studio.[136]

On one level, the young captain's portrait advertised the wealth and status he had acquired as a result of his recent promotions and prize money, asserting his

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[134] Johnson, *Cotes*, 66, no. 107.
[135] The following account of Edwards's life and career is based upon David Beaumont Ellison, *Hammer and Nails: Capt. Timothy Edwards Nanhoron* (Caernarfon: Gwynedd Archives, 1997).
[136] Cotes had previously painted the portrait of Edwards's uncle, a Master in Chancery at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Ellison, *Hammer and Nails*, 77.

claim to a place in fashionable society. At the same time, the sitter may have hoped that his portrait would have a positive impact upon his career as he sought to put himself in consideration for new appointments. In April 1762 (as the Society of Artists' exhibition was opening), he was given command of the *Saint Florentine* (60 guns) but this position was only as a temporary relief for the ship's commander, Captain William Trelawney, and Edwards remained keen to secure a permanent post.[137] If his portrait was the "sea officer, half length" exhibited at the Society of Artists in 1762, then he was surely happy with the arrangement, for the public display of his portrait would have kept his image before the eyes of London society, even as he himself was away at sea in the *Saint Florentine*. This would have helped to consolidate his social position whilst also keeping him in the minds of the Lords of the Admiralty, who would decide whether he received another command after Captain Trelawney resumed his post.

We can only speculate as to whether Cotes exhibited either of Edwards's or Knowles's portraits in 1762. However, considering the different possibilities highlights various ways in which naval portraiture could function in the exhibition space, including as an act of self-promotion by the painter and as a personal and professional advertisement for the sitter.

 Cotes exhibited one further naval portrait before his premature death in 1770, submitting a head-and-shoulders pastel portrait of Rear-Admiral Augustus Keppel (1765, private collection, fig. 78) to the Society of Artists in 1765.[138] Exhibiting a portrait of this particular sitter was a canny move for Cotes, who enjoyed extensive patronage from the Keppel family. As we have seen, Keppel was one of the most celebrated naval officers of the Seven Years' War, and his image was widely known to a large audience through mezzotint portraits and magazine illustrations. Although the convention of anonymity in the exhibition catalogues of the time meant that the pastel was listed simply as "a gentleman, in crayons", Horace Walpole noted the sitter's name in his copy of the catalogue, together with a judgement on the picture's quality: "Admiral Keppel, good".[139] Thanks to Keppel's prominent public profile, it is likely that other visitors would have also recognised the rear-admiral.

The exhibition of this portrait helped Cotes to position himself in competition with Reynolds, who (as we have seen) was close friends with Keppel and had painted his portrait several times. Through printed reproductions, many exhibition

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[137] Ellison, *Hammer and Nails*, 80.
[138] Johnson, *Cotes*, 76, no. 168.
[139] See the facsimile copy of the catalogue at the Paul Mellon Centre Library, London.

visitors are likely to have been familiar with Reynolds's dynamic portrayals of the sitter in *Keppel II* and *Keppel III*. Showing the rear-admiral turning away from the viewer and gazing into the distance, Cotes's portrait echoes the sense of alertness and vigilance in these well-known artworks. Furthermore, the oval head-and-shoulders format of the pastel recalls the cropped versions of Reynolds's portraits that appeared in magazines and popular histories of this period. The portrait is thus "ghosted" by existing images, stimulating the feelings of familiarity and recognition central to celebrity culture. At the same time, it also showcases Cotes's own particular talents, including notably his refined pastel technique. The artist had originally made his name as a pastellist, excelling at the kind of small-scale, intimate portraits, rich in physiognomic detail, for which the soft and delicate medium was seen to be uniquely suited. Keppel's portrait exemplifies this approach, presenting a nuanced study of the rear-admiral's features, which demonstrates Cote's mastery of the pastel medium.

By inviting viewers to scrutinise Keppel's face, the portrait emphasises his personal character, more than his naval exploits. At this juncture in his career, Keppel's priorities were shifting: after playing a leading role in the successful Siege of Havana in 1762, he suffered a prolonged period of ill-health and did not return to England until the end of the war, at which point he did not seek a new command and instead turned his attention to his political career. He was politically attached to the Whig party and in particular to Lord Rockingham, whose influence was growing in this period, culminating in his appointment as prime minister in July 1765. Upon taking office, Rockingham appointed his friend Keppel to the Board of the Admiralty.[140] The Society of Artists exhibition took place shortly before Rockingham's rise to power and, with his political ambitions in mind, Keppel may have been grateful for Cotes's decision to exhibit his portrait at this time, since it kept his image in the public eye. Indeed, in this context, Cotes's emphasis upon Keppel's personality – a quality which was considered important in politics – perhaps suited the naval officer's needs.

Three years later, Thomas Gainsborough – another leading artist of the period – exhibited a full-length portrait of Captain the Honourable Augustus Hervey (1768, Ickworth, fig. 79).[141] In this painting, Hervey leans against the fluke of an anchor on a wave-lapped beach. The shaft of the anchor is draped with captured Spanish colours, alluding to the sitter's involvement in the British assault on Havana

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[140] Keppel, *Life*, 1: 376–408.
[141] Ellis Waterhouse, *Gainsborough* (London: Edward Hulton, 1958), 56, no. 82.

in July 1762, during which he led a naval bombardment of the city's Spanish-held fortress of Morro Castle.[142] This bombardment is hazily represented in the background of the portrait with Hervey's ship, the *Dragon* (74 guns), in the foreground. These elements – the coastal setting, the anchor, the captured colours and the ship – are drawn from the conventional iconography of naval victory, ensuring that viewers quickly recognise the sitter as a maritime hero. Against this backdrop, Hervey is presented as a glamorous member of elite society. The younger brother of the second Earl of Bristol, he is shown exuding refinement and disinterested ease. The light catches on his signet ring and on the seals hanging at his waist, this fine jewellery underscoring his status as a wealthy gentleman. With his elegantly crossed legs, he appears like a landed gentleman transported from his estate to the seashore, exchanging his hunting rifle for a telescope.

Gainsborough's portrayal of the aristocratic Hervey as a leisured gentleman forms a striking contrast with Reynolds's three-quarter-length portrait of the same sitter (1762, Bury St Edmunds Council, fig. 80), painted six years earlier.[143] The background of Reynolds's portrait also features the bombardment of Havana. However, where a relaxed mood prevails in Gainsborough's portrait, Reynolds's picture is imbued with an atmosphere of heightened energy and intensity. Swirling clouds and plumes of smoke fill the sky behind Hervey's head and his body is dramatically bisected by a band of a dark shadow. The naval captain fixes the viewer with an intense stare and flamboyantly displays his unsheathed sword, the gleaming blade symbolising his readiness for action. Bright highlights draw attention to his face, emphasising his intelligence and tactical intuition, and to his left hand, which is wrapped firmly around a diagrammatic plan of the attack upon the Spanish fortress, suggesting his ability to translate his ideas into practical actions. This hand pushes forward towards the viewer while his other hand is tucked behind his hip, making his body appear twisted, tense and animated. Thus, like Reynolds's other naval portraits from the Seven Years' War, discussed in the first part of this chapter, the image frames Hervey as a mentally alert and physically dynamic commander. As Reynolds's picture was engraved in mezzotint (1763, fig. 81) and reproduced in popular histories (for example, fig. 82), many viewers looking at Gainsborough's portrait at the Society of Artists exhibition in 1768 are likely to have been familiar with his rival's earlier portrayal of the naval sitter.[144]

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[142] Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 601–4.
[143] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 255, no. 894; Postle (ed.), *Creation of Celebrity*, 100.
[144] Entick, *General History*, 4: 252.

On one level, the contrast between the two portraits is indicative of broader differences between their respective artists: whereas Reynolds sought to elevate his portraits with a sense of movement and grandeur redolent of grand manner history painting, Gainsborough positioned himself as a painter of fashionable society whose portraits emphasised his sitters' leisured elegance. Over the course of the 1760s, during which time he was based in Bath, Gainsborough submitted a succession of full-length male portraits for exhibition in London, including portraits of military officers, actors and landowners, as well as Hervey's naval portrait. These works shared a common emphasis upon nonchalant ease and elegant accomplishment.[145] For example, exhibited in 1765, Gainsborough's portrait of General Philip Honywood (1764–5, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, fig. 83) showed the military sitter practicing *haute ecole* – the art of polite horsemanship – in a leafy, pastoral landscape.[146] However, unlike his picture of Hervey, none of Gainsborough's exhibited army portraits referred directly to the sitter's participation in battle. Perhaps, having featured in Reynolds's widely circulated print, the bombardment of Havana was a familiar aspect of the captain's celebrity image, which Gainsborough felt unable to exclude from his portrait.

The timing of Gainsborough's portrait is also significant. Reynolds's picture was painted immediately after Hervey's return to England following the Siege of Havana.[147] Through its emphasis upon his sharp mind and animated body, it stresses his abilities as a naval commander. By contrast, Gainsborough's portrait was painted six years later. Like Augustus Keppel, Hervey had returned from the Caribbean in poor health and, in the peace that followed, he opted to turn away from the sea to advance his political career, having been elected as a Member of Parliament for Bury in May 1757.[148] The exhibition of Gainsborough's elegant portrait kept the captain in the public eye, providing a gentle reminder of his distinguished naval career, but there was now no need to match the dramatic intensity of Reynolds's wartime portrait. Instead, the occasion called for the kind of

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[145] For a complete list of Gainsborough's exhibited portraits in this period, see: Susan Sloman, *Gainsborough in Bath* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2002), 214. For an analysis of the differences between the military and naval portraits of Gainsborough and Reynolds, see: Hallett, *Reynolds*, 189–90.

[146] Sloman, *Gainsborough*, 91.

[147] According to Reynolds's pocket books, the sittings for the portrait took place on 27 and 28 October and 10, 12 and probably 13 November 1762; Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 255, no. 894. A single payment of 40 guineas is recorded in the artist's ledger on 20 May 1763; Malcolm Cormack, "The Ledgers of Sir Joshua Reynolds," *The Walpole Society* 42 (1970): 124.

[148] Ruddock Mackay, "Hervey, Augustus John, third Earl of Bristol (1724–1779)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Sept. 2010, https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/13109.

aristocratic ease – the calm disinterest of a landowning political representative – with which Gainsborough's portrait presents us.

Later that same year, the exhibition-going public were shown a very different view of the sea officer's profession. At a special exhibition hosted by the Society of Artists for the visiting King Christian VII of Denmark in September 1768, Tilly Kettle submitted a work listed in the catalogue as "An admiral in his cabin, issuing his orders" (1768, untraced, fig. 84).[149] In this group portrait, Admiral Samuel Cornish is seated on the right, holding some papers and locking eyes with his flagship's captain Richard Kempenfelt, who stands before him with his hat in his right hand. Cornish's secretary, Thomas Parry, sits between the two men at a table covered in paper and writing materials; pausing from his note-making, Parry looks up and stares directly at the viewer. The three men had served together in the *Norfolk* (74 guns) at the Siege of Manila in 1762 and Anthony Boden speculates that the painting was intended to represent Cornish dictating the terms he was prepared to offer the Spanish governor of the city, after the latter surrendered.[150] However, there is no internal evidence within the picture to confirm this suggestion.

Kettle's decision to depict his sitters within a ship's cabin is unusual. It is worth remembering that, little more than a decade earlier, prints like *Cabin Council* had caricatured Vice-Admiral John Byng as a coward by insinuating that he would rather have a cosy chat in the cabin than face the enemy on the quarterdeck. Symbolising the possibility of action, the guns suspended from the wall in the background of Kettle's portrait play an important role in legitimising the cabin as a space of command. However, these weapons are stowed away, suggesting that the admiral's authority is not contingent upon the active performance of heroism or violence. Instead, Kettle emphasises the professionalism of the modern navy. The chain of command is clearly in evidence: the admiral is instructing his captain, who has removed his hat as subordinates were required to do upon entering a senior officer's cabin. As Elin Jones has shown in her recent study of the spatial dynamics of the naval warship, "carefully choreographed actions" of this kind continually

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[149] For this picture, see: Charles Napier Robinson and John Leyland, *The British Tar in Fact and Fiction: The Poetry, Pathos, and Humour of the Sailor's Life* (New York/London: Harper and Brothers, 1909), 457; James D. Milner, "Tilly Kettle, 1735–1786," *The Walpole Society* 15 (1926–7): 62, 88–9. The portrait was painted for Thomas Parry and remained in the possession of his descendants at least until 1998, when it was seen by Anthony Boden. See Anthony Boden, *The Parrys of the Golden Vale: Background to Genius* (London: Thames Publishing, 1998), 14. It has not been possible to establish the work's present location.
[150] Boden, *Parrys*, 14. For the Siege of Manila, see: Nicholas Tracy, *Manila Ransomed: The British Assault on Manila in the Seven Years War* (Exeter: Univ. of Exeter Press, 1995).

reinforced the power of locations associated with command, such as the cabin and the quarterdeck.[151]

Clerks like Parry also supported the authority of the cabin by monitoring and recording transactions that took place within the space. Arresting the viewer's attention with his direct stare, the secretary's central position in the composition stresses the importance of bureaucracy and administration within the sea service – unsurprisingly, since it was Parry who commissioned the painting.[152] He had joined the navy as a rating in 1758 and steadily climbed through the ranks, advancing first to become a clerk, then obtaining a warrant as a ship's purser before finally being appointed as an admiral's secretary.[153] Little is known about his social origins but they do not appear to have been especially distinguished. However, he received a considerable sum in prize money after the Siege of Manila, the British having demanded a massive ransom and captured two wealthy Spanish treasure ships during the raid.[154] After the war, Parry used his new wealth to establish a genteel lifestyle for himself: in 1767, he married a daughter of the Victualler to the Navy at Portsmouth (whose authority was second only to the port admiral) and, two years later, he moved into a large, newly built townhouse in Berners Street in London's fashionable West End. Commissioned around this time, Kettle's portrait can be understood as another element in Parry's campaign to improve his social position, its exhibition helping the clerk stake his claim to a place in fashionable society by placing his image before the eyes of the metropolitan public. In fact, Parry enjoyed two helpings of public exposure as, having initially been displayed at the Society of Artists special exhibition in September 1768, the portrait was shown again at the Society's regular exhibition the following April.[155]

As Evan Wilson observes, warrant officers like Parry were accorded great respect at sea because of their professional expertise and their superiority relative to the rest of the crew. However, their social status was less secure ashore: whereas commissioned officers benefitted from the longstanding heroic associations of command, warrant officers (including masters, pursers, gunners and boatswains) found that their specialist skills and experiences were neither understood nor appreciated by civilians.[156] Furthermore, the press coverage of naval affairs tended

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[151] Elin Frances Jones, "Masculinity, Materiality and Space Onboard the Royal Naval Ship, 1756–1815," (PhD diss., Queen Mary, Univ. of London, 2016), 110.
[152] Boden, *Parrys*, 14.
[153] For Parry's background and career, see: Boden, *Parrys*, 5–16.
[154] Tracy, *Manila Ransomed*, 114.
[155] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 4–6 May, 1769. See also the annotated copy of the exhibition catalogue in the Paul Mellon Centre Library, London.
[156] Wilson, *Social History*, 224.

to reinforce social and institutional hierarchies by focussing upon the achievements of senior commissioned officers. Kettle's portrait was perhaps intended to counteract the public invisibility of warrant officers and to bolster Parry's social status by highlighting the centrality of secretarial work to the operation of the navy. Confidently meeting the viewer's gaze, he compels us to acknowledge his contribution. The portrait also advertises his friendship with two decorated commissioned officers in an effort to raise his profile by association. Many scholars have emphasised how exhibitions supported and stimulated wider celebrity, but Parry offers a contrasting example of an individual using the exhibition space to push back against his exclusion from the public eye.[157]

However, in order to press the secretary's case for recognition and to demonstrate that administrative work was central to naval affairs, Kettle showed Parry actively performing his duties. This stands in contrast to the majority of naval portraits in this period, which – as we have seen – shied away from representing officers in action. In this sense, Kettle's portrait is as much of an outlier as Reynolds's *Keppel II*, even though these two works put forward vastly different views of naval command. The one presents the navy as a modern and highly professional institution, in which every action has a paper trail; the other evokes the ideal of the solitary hero. Yet both stage theatrical scenes in which the naval sitters perform specific actions.

By contrast, most painted and printed naval portraits in this period tended to focus upon the appearance of the sitter outside of the specific context of his duties. As this chapter has shown, such images had different meanings in different contexts. Painted for domestic display and private exchange between officers, Reynolds's naval portraits from the Seven Years' War responded to the close scrutiny placed upon commanders after Byng's execution. Through subtle movements of the face and body, the artist suggested that his naval sitters possessed the requisite psychological attributes of vigilance, steadiness and resolution. Translated into print, these portraits stimulated and sustained a culture of naval celebrity predicated upon expediency and a sense of familiarity. The image of an officer was frequently abstracted from its original context and used to create new prints, quickly spreading the individual's name, face and reputation. Both painted and printed naval portraits in this period relied upon viewers having some concept, whether nuanced or superficial, of what a naval officer was supposed to look like. Closely related to this idea – and implied in the search for inner quality in outward

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[157] For a recent example, see: McPherson, *Art and Celebrity*, esp. chapter 2.

appearance that followed the Byng disaster – is the belief that naval command required certain inherent characteristics: it was not simply a question of actions performed or skills perfected but of the potential that an individual embodied. As the next chapter will show, the question of potential became particularly important during the American War of Independence (1775–83), a conflict with important implications for the British imperial project and the nation's masculine identities.

CHAPTER THREE

"To you your country turns her impatient eye":
Naval portraiture and youthful masculinity

Britain emerged from the Seven Years' War in 1763 as the world's preeminent imperial power but this status quo would be quickly challenged as the nation's new global empire was beset with problems of mismanagement, not least in the American colonies, where mounting tensions gave rise to open rebellion. Pitting the British against an enemy who, in the words of one contemporary pamphleteer, shared "the same language, the same religion, the same manners and customs, [and] sprung from the same nation," the American War of Independence (1775–83) resisted reduction to straightforward notions of 'us' and 'them', and was therefore often characterised as a fratricidal civil conflict.[1] Renewed aggression from France and Spain followed the outbreak of fighting in America and Britain also faced difficulties at home, including popular anti-Catholic riots, ongoing unrest in Ireland and political upheaval (peaking around the opportunistic Fox-North coalition of 1783–4).[2] After the decisive American victory at Yorktown in 1781, the colonies were effectively lost and the British were left fighting to secure favourable peace terms. By the time hostilities ceased in September 1783, national morale was low.

Arising from errant imperial governance and marked by repeated failures on the battlefield, the war placed the masculine identities central to British power under intense scrutiny. It did not help that, in order to legitimise their rebellion, the American colonists had appropriated the ideals of liberty and personal independence that had historically formed the conceptual bedrock of elite British masculinities.[3] Contemporaries worried that Britain's dismal performance in the war was symptomatic of a national loss of martial prowess and masculine potency. In the words of the historian Robert Jones, "manliness (and its contraries) gained an ambiguous though privileged position in political discourse, becoming a sensitive, even oversensitive guide to the state of the nation."[4] Following the loss of the American colonies, it was not clear what the future would hold for Britain nor what kind of men it would now require, hence the art, literature and theatre of the wartime

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[1] *Observations on American Independency* (n. p., 1779), 6. See also, Dror Wahrman, "The English Problem of Identity in the American Revolution," *American Historical Review* 106, no. 4 (2001): 1236–62, esp. 1240.
[2] Eliga H. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2000); Stephen Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003).
[3] Michal J. Rozbicki, *The Complete Colonial Gentleman: Cultural Legitimacy in Plantation America* (Charlottesville/London: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1998), 172–91.
[4] Jones, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 2.

period became a testing ground for different masculine identities, ranging from the heroic to the sentimental.[5]

Age played an important role in this debate about masculinity. The American Revolution is sometimes characterised as a battle between old 'Father England' and his unruly American sons, the latter seeking independence from the patriarchal authority of the British parliament.[6] However, this account belies the complexity of the situation on both sides of the Atlantic. From an American perspective, Anne Lombard has shown that, as well as casting themselves as "Sons of Liberty", the revolutionaries also invoked notions of fatherhood to justify their actions, claiming that they were fulfilling their paternal duty to protect their children's heritage.[7] Meanwhile, the British frequently associated their failures in the war with the leadership of impotent and aging men, prompting calls for a younger generation of male leaders to unseat their elders, although this valorisation of youthful masculinity was accompanied by anxieties about the possibility that boyish promise might fail to translate into manly success. Historians have explored this concern with youthful potential as it was expressed in literary circles – as, for example, in the posthumous cult of the teenage poet Thomas Chatterton, whose suicide in 1770 had initially attracted little attention but who was increasingly celebrated as a lost genius from the late 1770s onwards – but it also manifested in other areas of national life, notably including naval affairs.[8]

Eighteenth-century naval officers began their careers at an exceptionally young age – typically between eleven and fourteen – and could quickly obtain positions of significant authority: if an individual was lucky, talented or well-connected, it was possible that he could gain command of his own ship in his early twenties.[9] As a consequence, the navy provided numerous examples of boys and young men fighting and dying for their country, whose stories and images could be read for indications of the promise and potential that many Britons called for during the turmoil of the American War.

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[5] Myrone, *Bodybuilding*, 201–27; Daniel O'Quinn, *Entertaining Crisis in the Atlantic Imperium, 1770–1790* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2011), 243–302.
[6] David G. Pugh, *Sons of Liberty: The Masculine Mind in Nineteenth-Century America* (Westport: Greenwood, 1983), xvi; Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996), 13–14; Josep M. Armengol-Carrera, "Where Are Fathers in American Literature? Re-visiting Fatherhood in U.S. Literary History," *Journal of Men's Studies* 16, no. 2 (2008): 211–26.
[7] Anne S. Lombard, *Making Manhood: Growing Up Male in Colonial New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2003), 167.
[8] Pete Newbon, *The Boy-Man, Masculinity and Immaturity in the Long Nineteenth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). See also, Andrew Bennett, *Romantic Poets and the Culture of Posterity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 144.
[9] Wilson, *Social History*, 18.

This chapter explores how ideas about youthful masculinity played out in naval officers' portraiture in this period. In so doing, it will probe the boundaries between public and private. Many of the portraits considered in this chapter were commissioned by the young sitters' families for purposes of domestic display and consequently responded to specific private interests. At the same time, they were also shaped by broader concerns about the needs of the nation at a fraught moment in its history. Moreover, the masculine identities constructed in young naval officers' portraits during the American War often sought to combine notions of public duty and private feeling, a balance which, as we shall see, was not always easily maintained.

I

On 12 April 1782, a British fleet under the command of Admiral George Brydges Rodney defeated a French fleet under the Comte de Grasse off Dominica in the West Indies. In this action, which is known to historians the "Battle of the Saintes", nine French ships were taken or lost, including de Grasse's flagship. This crippled France's naval strength in the Caribbean and forced the abandonment of a planned Franco-Spanish assault on Jamaica.[10] Further to its strategic significance, the victory was also symbolically important for the British: in the context of the American War, in which Britain had suffered numerous humiliating losses, it provided a welcome relief from the prevailing national gloom, becoming an occasion for widespread public celebrations, from official commemorations to riotous popular demonstrations.[11] Securing the British imperial presence in the Caribbean and ensuring the continuance of transatlantic trade and slavery, the victory (whilst not erasing the anxieties associated with the loss of the American colonies) raised the possibility that something like the status quo might be maintained. Against this backdrop, various commissions were issued for portraits of British survivors and casualties of the battle, the resulting artworks offering complex commentaries upon the situation of the nation at this important historical juncture.

One of the battle's most high-profile participants was Captain Lord Robert Manners, who sustained fatal injuries in the action. The younger brother of the fourth Duke of Rutland, Robert was the first of his noble family to go to sea, but he had a distinguished military pedigree: his father was John Manners, Marquess of Granby, a celebrated military commander of the Seven Years' War. Robert entered the navy

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[10] Rodger, *Command*, 353–4.
[11] Stephen Conway, "'A Joy Unknown for Years Past': The American War, Britishness and the Celebration of Rodney's Victory at the Saints," *History* 86 (2001): 180–99.

at the age of fourteen in April 1772 and rapidly ascended through the ranks, thanks in large part to the influence of his family.[12] Attaining post-rank on 17 January 1780, he was given command of the *Resolution* (74 guns) and gained a reputation as an aggressive, if somewhat reckless, captain. At the Battle of the Saintes, the *Resolution* opened fire at quarter past eight in the morning, engaging "nine or ten of the French ships".[13] Half an hour into the action, Manners was simultaneously struck by a cannonball and a large splinter, the former shattering both his legs and the latter wounding his right breast and fracturing his right arm. He was carried below decks, where the ship's surgeon amputated his left leg above the knee.[14] The twenty-four-year-old captain initially survived these injuries but subsequently succumbed to "a locked jaw" – a symptom of tetanus – during the voyage back to England.[15] His body was buried at sea three hundred miles north-east of Bermuda on 24 April, and news of his fate reached Britain a little over three weeks later.[16]

The Duke of Rutland was devastated by the death of the brother he called "my dearest Bob".[17] Retreating to his estate at Belvoir Castle, Rutland had Robert's sea-chest and writing desk installed in his private dressing room and hung the captain's signal flags around the entrance to the castle picture gallery.[18] The duke's actions worried his friends, one of whom urged him to leave Belvoir, where "everything I know reminds you of your poor brother…you reflect upon the different situations in which you have seen him there". It would be, the friend continued, "impossible for you to recover your spirit" in a place "where all your misfortunes present themselves to you", the material traces of Robert's life at the castle raising the spectre of his presence but ultimately affirming his absence.[19]

As well as surrounding himself with melancholy reminders of his lost brother, Rutland also hastily commissioned a posthumous full-length portrait of the *Resolution*'s captain from the President of the Royal Academy, Sir Joshua Reynolds (1782, Belvoir Castle, fig. 85).[20] Dated 6 June 1782, less than three weeks after Rutland had received news of his brother's death, the artist's letter accepting this commission included the assertion that:

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[12] J. K. Laughton, *rev.* Christopher Doorne, "Manners, Lord Robert," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/17961.
[13] David Rutland and Emma Ellis, *Resolution* (London: Head of Zeus Ltd., 2017), 366.
[14] Rutland and Ellis, *Resolution*, 366.
[15] *The Gentleman's Magazine* 52 (1782): 337.
[16] Rutland and Ellis, *Resolution*, 376–9.
[17] Rutland and Ellis, *Resolution*, 383–94, quote at 388.
[18] Rutland and Ellis, *Resolution*, 388–9.
[19] Henry Fitzroy Stanhope to Charles Manners, fourth Duke of Rutland, 3 June, 1782, quoted in Rutland and Ellis, *Resolution*, 387.
[20] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 325–6, no. 1215.

> I knew very little of Lord Robert but was very well acquainted with his Grace's affection to him, I therefore felt and sympathised with him…It is the general opinion that we have lost the most promising youth in the whole navy, and I am sure from what I saw of him and the letters I have seen from him I am most perfectly inclined to confirm their opinion.[21]

This paragraph combines the private and the public, starting with the artist's personal sympathy for Rutland's grief before switching – as signalled by the shift to the first person plural – to consider Manners's death as a loss for the British nation as a whole. These comments suggest that Reynolds was well aware of the complex range of demands his posthumous portrait needed to satisfy. On one level, the artwork was to provide the grieving duke with a memento of his lost sibling. At the same time, it was to commemorate a disaster of national significance, due to Manners's supposedly exceptional but unfulfilled promise as a naval officer. Reynolds's task was made more difficult by his lack of access to his subject. This was an obstacle in any posthumous portrait but Reynolds makes a point of stressing his ignorance, noting that he "knew very little of Lord Robert" beyond a distant impression cobbled together from memory and written correspondence ("what I saw of him and the letters I have seen from him"). It is as if the artist is making pre-emptive excuses for himself, in case his unfamiliarity with the captain should result in an unconvincing portrait.

In the same letter, Reynolds comments that he will start work "as soon as ever I receive the picture as will give an opportunity of doing something that shall correspond to his Grace's idea." It would therefore seem that the duke had promised to supply a pre-existing portrait as a source for the likeness. This appears to have been the case, since Reynolds's painting is described in John Nichols's *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester* (1795) as "Lord Robert Manners, the head after a portrait by Dance".[22] In the mid-1780s, the Belvoir Castle collection included three portraits of Lord Robert by the fashionable society portraitist Nathaniel Dance, one of which must have been Reynolds's source.[23] Unfortunately, two of these portraits were destroyed by fire in 1816 and the third portrait has been missing since the early nineteenth century, suggesting that it too may have perished.[24] Little is

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[21] Joshua Reynolds to Joseph Hill, agent to the Duke of Rutland, 6 June, 1782, in *Letters*, ed. Ingamells and Edgcumbe, 108–9, no. 103.
[22] John Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, 4 vols. (London: n. p., 1795), 2: 1: 73.
[23] Victoria Manners, "Nathaniel Dance, R. A. (Sir Nathaniel Dance-Holland, Bart.)," *The Connoisseur* 64 (1922): 77–87. See also, Nichols, *History*, 2: 1: 71–3.
[24] Irvin Eller, *The History of Belvoir Castle, From the Norman Conquest to the Nineteenth Century* (London: Tyas and Groombridge, 1841), 131–2.

recorded about the appearance of these works and their loss prevents any direct comparison between Reynolds's posthumous portrait and its pictorial source.[25] However, Reynolds subsequently produced two further portraits of Manners based on Dance's work: in July 1784, two years after he began work on the full-length picture, he recorded a new commission from the Duke of Rutland to paint "two heads of Lord Robert Man[ners] in the captains [sic] full uniform from Dance".[26] Perhaps the duke was seeking to keep his brother's memory alive through the replication of his image, although this practice would also have had a distancing effect, each new copy of Robert's portrait representing a step further away from the actual body of the captain. Being derived from earlier artworks and produced by an artist who freely admitted he had not personally known the subject, Reynolds's posthumous portraits were caught in a feedback loop of artifice and empty reference.

Rutland kept Reynolds's posthumous full-length for himself, displaying the painting in Belvoir's aristocratic picture gallery. However, he appears to have used the two "heads" of 1784 as sentimental gifts for his brother's friends. According to Reynolds's account book, one of these later portraits was given by the duke to the naval officer Captain Francis Reynolds, later Lord Ducie, who had been one of Manners's closest friends in the sea service.[27] This work was presumably the portrait of Lord Robert Manners sold by Captain Reynolds's descendants in 1949 (untraced, fig. 86), which was included by Algernon Graves and William Vine Cronin in their catalogue raisonné of Reynolds's portraits (1899), although it was later misattributed to Lemuel Francis Abbott.[28] Reynolds did not record the destination of the second "head" but the Belvoir archive includes a letter of around this date from Admiral Samuel Hood, Manners's former commander, in which he thanks the duke for "sending me the portrait of your late most dearly and justly beloved brother".[29] Hood does not name the portrait's artist but it would be reasonable to assume that

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[25] The three portraits are listed as having cost £150, £100 and £21 respectively, and the cheapest is described as having been "a head". No further information about these pictures is recorded. Notebook of Charles Manners, fourth Duke of Rutland, Belvoir MSS 2: 349, quoted in Manners, "Nathaniel Dance," 85.

[26] NPG Heinz Archive, Joshua Reynolds's Pocket Books (facsimile), entry for week beginning 12 July, 1784. See also, entry for week beginning 10 May, 1784.

[27] Cormack, "Ledgers," 162. For the friendship between Manners and Captain Reynolds, see: Rutland and Ellis, *Resolution*, 371, 374.

[28] Algernon Graves and William Vine Cronin, *A History of the Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 4 vols. (London: H. Graves and Co., 1899–1901), 2: 617; NPG Heinz Archive, Icon Notes, "Manners, Lord Robert"; Sotheby's, London, *Catalogue of Fine Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century British Paintings, 17 November 1976* (London: Sotheby's, 1976), 36, lot 64 (property of K. Whatley, withdrawn).

[29] Samuel Hood to Charles Manners, fourth Duke of Rutland, 1784, quoted in Rutland and Ellis, *Resolution*, 405–6.

this picture was the other Reynolds. A portrait of Manners attributed to "Reynolds school" was sold by Hood's descendants in 1914.[30] Now at Belvoir Castle, this work (fig. 87) is currently attributed – for unknown reasons – to Benjamin Wilson but it bears a strong visual resemblance to the Ducie portrait.[31] There are minor discrepancies between the two paintings, most notably in the colour of the sitter's naval uniform coat, which appears brown rather than blue in the Belvoir picture (potentially due to fugitive pigments).[32] Nevertheless, although their questionable quality suggests that they may be largely studio work, it seems probable that these works are the "two heads…from Dance" that Rutland commissioned from Reynolds in 1784.

In both the full-length portrait and the two "heads", Manners is shown cocking his head to one side and gazing into the distance. Similar attitudes frequently appear in surviving works by Nathaniel Dance, including his portrait of the naval officer Captain Samuel Barrington (ca. 1770, National Maritime Museum, fig. 88).[33] Presumably Dance also used this pose in one or more of his three portraits of Lord Robert Manners, from which it was copied by Reynolds. In Dance's portrait of Barrington, the inclination of the head and the sideways glance make the sitter seem alert and animated, as though he is reacting to some unseen stimulus. By contrast, in Reynolds's posthumous portraits of Manners, this sense of movement is absent, the young captain instead appearing aloof and thoughtful. Angled towards the light, Manners's face takes on an almost otherworldly cast, an impression which is reinforced by the strange flatness of his smooth features. In the two "heads", the wind-ruffled look of the captain's hair introduces a frisson of energy, and his white stock softens his appearance, showing the shadows under his chin and thus imbuing his head with substance and three-dimensionality. However, the full-length does not include these details, instead presenting Manners as an elegant but static man of fashion with his hair neatly groomed and a black stock around his neck. The wearing of black stocks was fashionable among military and naval men in this period but, in Manners's case, it may have been specifically intended to symbolise the posthumous nature of the portrait (as David Mannings argues).[34]

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[30] Christie's, London, *Catalogue of Old Pictures and Drawings…10 July 1914* (London: Christie's, 1914), 27, lot 145.
[31] It has not been possible to ascertain the grounds for the present attribution to Benjamin Wilson.
[32] The coat in the Ducie portrait is correctly coloured blue according to the description of the painting in Graves and Cronin, *History*, 2: 617.
[33] For Nathaniel Dance, see: David Goodreau, *Nathaniel Dance 1735–1811* (London: Greater London Council, 1977).
[34] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 325–6, no. 1215.

Whatever the case, this motif has a significant visual effect, the dark fabric forming a stark contrast with the captain's pale skin and consequently enhancing the almost ethereal look of his features.

On one level, the captain's distant, somewhat lifeless appearance in the full-length picture may be attributed to Reynolds's failure to overcome the profound difficulties inherent in attempting to synthesise a convincingly lifelike image of a dead sitter by rehashing another artist's portrait. At the same time, Manners's absent-minded expression also needs to be seen in the context of the portrait as a whole. The captain stands beside a craggy coastal rock formation in front of a distant naval battle and an ominous sky filled with gun-smoke and storm-clouds. However, his pose creates an impression of refined sensibility at odds with the rugged and hostile character of the setting. He adopts an elegant cross-legged stance with one hand behind his back and the other resting on the fluke of a nearby anchor. As we have seen, throughout the eighteenth century, naval officers were often depicted leaning against anchors as artists looked back to influential seventeenth-century models, including most notably Anthony van Dyck's portrait of Algernon Percy (1636–8, Alnwick Castle, fig. 5). Yet Manners does not exhibit the assertive swagger commonly displayed in such portraits. Loosely resembling an ancient statue known as the "resting satyr" (Capitoline Museums, fig. 89), the captain's leaning, cross-legged pose was common in eighteenth-century British male portraiture, connoting classical poise, studied nonchalance and leisured relaxation.[35] Reynolds's decision to represent Manners withdrawing his left hand behind his back – rather than grasping the hilt of sword – reinforces this impression of elegant inactivity. Coupled with his distant gaze and faraway expression, this pose characterises the young captain not as a dashing man of action but instead as a dreamer who would rather indulge in thoughtful musings than engage with the world around him, even though his environment seems to call for heroism and hardiness.

The contemplative tone in this picture sets it apart from the bulk of the naval portraits that Reynolds had produced earlier in his career. As discussed in chapter two, the artist enjoyed considerable success in the Seven Years' War (1756–63) with a distinctive brand of naval portraiture, in which officers were depicted with tense bodies and seemingly alert minds. Yet, having dominated the market for naval portraiture in the 1750s and early 1760s, Reynolds moved away from the genre in

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[35] Meyer, "Re-dressing," 47. See also, Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), 266–7.

the years following the end of the Seven Years' War. The demand for naval portraits always declined during peacetime because the navy reduced in size, leaving many officers without employment. At the same time, Reynolds found new avenues through which to grow his practice, extending his networks of patronage within aristocratic, literary and theatrical circles and capitalising on his position as the inaugural President of the Royal Academy, a role which he assumed in December 1768.[36] By the time the navy remobilised at the start of the American War, he had little need of more naval commissions and, in any case, although he knew many of the aging heroes of the last war, he had fewer connections among the generation of younger officers – Manners included – who would come to prominence in the new conflict. Thus, in representing the young captain, he was not only faced with the challenge of producing a posthumous portrait but also that of returning to a genre he had largely abandoned.

In some respects, the Manners portrait more closely resembles certain works by Reynolds's rival, Thomas Gainsborough, than it does anything from his own oeuvre. Although he did not produce a prodigious number of martial portraits, Gainsborough attracted a small but steady stream of commissions from mostly aristocratic military and naval officers throughout his career. In the late 1770s, his military and naval portraiture took a sentimental turn as he depicted several young officers in pensive poses that emphasised private feeling as much as public duty, as for example in his portrait of the Anglo-Irish landowner Richard St George Mansergh-St George as an ensign in the 4th Regiment of Foot (1776, National Gallery of Victoria, fig. 90), painted shortly before the sitter departed to fight in America.[37] In the words of Martin Myrone, "this extraordinary portrait presents St George as the epitome of the man of feeling, leaning mournfully within a coastal scene as the ship that will take him to the unfortunate war across the Atlantic sets sail, and his dog looks up at his master pathetically."[38] Meanwhile, Diane Perkins suggests that "the languid pose and melancholic mood of the soldier here point to passivity rather than martial action, and the way his left arm is draped around the bayonet on his musket does not give one confidence in his ability to use such a weapon."[39]

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[36] Hallett, *Reynolds*, 221–310.

[37] Martin Myrone, "Gothic Romance and the Quixotic Hero: A Pageant for Henry Fuseli in 1783," *Tate Papers* 1 (2004), https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/01/gothic-romance-and-the-quixotic-hero-a-pageant-for-henry-fuseli-1783.

[38] Myrone, *Bodybuilding*, 237–8.

[39] Diane Perkins, catalogue entry, in *Gainsborough*, ed. Michael Rosenthal and Martin Myrone (London: Tate, 2002), 198, no. 104.

Although somewhat less melancholy, a similarly passive and sentimental mood prevails in Gainsborough's portrait of the naval officer Commander Lord John Hervey (Ickworth, fig. 91), which was commissioned by the sitter in 1779, probably to mark his marriage to Elizabeth Drummond on 4 October that year.[40] Aged only twenty-two at the time of depiction, Hervey leans against a cannon in a fortified coastal setting as grey clouds gather overhead. Although the cannon suggests the possibility of explosive violence, the young commander does not appear to be bracing himself for action, instead adopting an easy pose and thoughtful expression. His cross-legged stance recalls Gainsborough's earlier portrait of his uncle and fellow naval officer Augustus Hervey, third Earl of Bristol (1768, Ickworth, fig. 79), which was discussed in chapter two. However, whereas Augustus – a hero of the Seven Years' War – stands over the captured colours of his Spanish enemies, imbuing his relaxed attitude with an undercurrent of triumphalism, there is no direct reference to battle in John's portrait. At this relatively early stage in his career, he had not been involved in any significant actions. Furthermore, being increasingly characterised by retreat, defeat and the fragmentation of colonial power, the American War was coming at this time to seem inimical to British jingoism. Rather than courage and authority, John is associated with the more refined qualities of perception, literacy and sentiment. In his left hand, he holds a telescope, suggesting the importance of careful observation within naval service, although this instrument hangs limply, almost absentmindedly by his side, as though he has been distracted from the active exercise of his duty. The source of his distraction is seemingly the letter in his right hand. Coupled with the glittering gold seals that dangle from his hip, this detail frames Hervey as a diligent correspondent, evoking both the importance of long-distance communication to naval operations and also the more personal function of letter-writing as a means of contact between officers and their shore-bound loved ones. Given that the portrait dates from around the time of the sitter's marriage, a sentimental interpretation of the letter is perhaps intended: we can imagine that Hervey has momentarily turned away from his public duties to reflect on a private missive from his new wife. A traditional symbol of fidelity, the dog that sits patiently at Hervey's feet further encourages this reading of the portrait, since it suggests the young commander is an affectionate master who commands love and loyalty.

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[40] Waterhouse, *Gainsborough*, 74, no. 363. For Hervey's marriage, see: Egerton Brydges, *Collins's Peerage of England*, 9 vols. (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1812), 6: 756.

With their cross-legged poses and faraway looks, seemingly disengaged from the world of weaponry and warfare that surrounds them, St George and Hervey anticipate the appearance of Lord Robert Manners in Reynolds's posthumous portrait. It is not known whether Reynolds had specific knowledge of these portraits but he is likely to have been generally familiar with the work that Gainsborough was producing at this date and, moreover, with the broader cultural trends upon which his rival was drawing. Significantly, Gainsborough's portraits of St George and Hervey gave pictorial form to a new ideal of martial masculinity that flourished in the literature and art of the American War, one which celebrated not aggressive or courageous behaviour on the battlefield but more refined private virtues. This ideal had first emerged in the Seven Years' War, notably in relation to the figure of General James Wolfe, who died at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759, but it assumed much greater prominence during the American War.[41] The appeal of this sentimentalised version of the military man gained force as a result of the uncertainties of the transatlantic conflict coupled with the imperatives of the cult of sensibility – a genteel fashion characterised by the exaggerated expression of emotion, which reached its height in this period. As Myrone writes, "to uphold a more stridently aggressive imagery of masculinity in an era of retreat, political entrenchment and defeat – an era in which dominant tastes seemed to demand the consolations of sentiment rather than revenge or conquest – was to risk appearing wilfully criminal, foolhardy or even mad."[42] The nation's situation called for a new kind of hero "to be judged not by the exclusive values of masculinist tradition but by the measure of more immediately sensual faculties".[43] The allure of sensibility was therefore predicated upon its apparent naturalness, even though it was in fact highly contrived. Little wonder then that Reynolds's attempt to cast the dead Manners's image in this sentimental mould is not entirely successful. Having been synthesised from earlier portraits of a deceased sitter, the painting struggles to mask or naturalise its own artifice.

II

In aligning his subject with sentimentalised notions of martial identity, Reynolds was following a broader trend in the construction of Manners's posthumous public image, although this trend was riddled with anxieties, many of

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[41] For Wolfe as a man of private virtue, see: Myrone, *Bodybuilding*, 105–20.

[42] Myrone, *Bodybuilding*, 219.

[43] Myrone, *Bodybuilding*, 203. See also, Sarah Knott, "Sensibility and the American War for Independence," *American Historical Review* 109 (2004): 19–40.

which can be seen to haunt the artist's portrait. As well as having a devastating personal effect upon the Duke of Rutland, Manners's death also attracted significant public attention, inspiring numerous journalistic, poetic and artistic tributes, which struck a mournful note in the midst of the victory celebrations that followed the Battle of the Saintes.[44] Manners was one of three captains killed in this battle but the other two (William Blair and William Bayne) did not enjoy anything like the same level of posthumous celebrity, in part for reasons of social class: both Blair and Bayne were born into the Scottish professional classes, whereas Lord Robert came from a distinguished noble family.[45] In particular, he gained prominence through his association with his famous father, the renowned military general John Manners, Marquess of Granby, to whom the young naval captain was often compared. As one of his eulogists wrote, Robert had "shewed himself possessed of the same spirit which [had] animated his father's conduct" in the Seven Years' War.[46]

Yet there was more to Manners's celebrity than his illustrious name. Notably, his youth was an important factor. Aged only twenty-four at the time of his death, Manners was significantly younger than the middle-aged Bayne (fifty-one) and Blair (forty). Typifying the extravagant encomium that greeted Manners's death, the naval biographer Joseph Harris declared that:

> In forming this heroic nobleman, nature combined every mental
> grace, with the most captivating elegance of person. Laurels gathered
> round his ripening years so thick, that heaven itself was envious of
> his worth, and snatched him in early youth from the heights of this
> world's fame, to place him on that immortal pinnacle of glory, where
> God-like heroes only are enthroned![47]

Although overburdened with hyperbole, this description exemplifies the widespread idealisation of Manners as a beautiful ephebe, frozen by his premature death in the moment of his youthful blossoming. His physical beauty, graceful manners and natural intelligence were celebrated as much, if not more than, his merits as a naval commander.

Such rhetoric fed the growing desire in this period for softer, more sentimental forms of martial identity, as opposed to aggressive and actively heroic imagery. Other young officers who perished in the American War were publicly

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[44] See, for example, *Parker's General Advertiser*, 24 May, 1782; *Parker's General Advertiser*, 11 June, 1782; *Morning Post*, 15 Nov., 1782.
[45] *The Gentleman's Magazine* 52 (1782): 337.
[46] *Parker's General Advertiser*, 5 June, 1782.
[47] Nauticus Junior [Joseph Harris], *The Naval Atalantis*, 2 vols. (London: J. Ridgway, 1788–9), 2: 33.

mourned in similar terms, including most famously the British army officer Major John André, who was captured behind enemy lines in New York in October 1780 and hanged by the Americans as a spy. André's death sparked a raft of sentimental newspaper reports and poetic tributes, in which the major was framed as a helpless victim of the war and described as "lovely", "gallant", "graceful" and a "lamented youth".[48] This anticipated the language that was subsequently applied to Manners, although the construction of the young naval officer's posthumous image did not follow exactly the same pattern as André's. The major was mourned in almost exclusively sentimental terms, for the ignominious nature of his fate – neither the crime of spying nor the punishment of hanging was considered honourable for a gentleman – did not lend itself to heroic representation. By contrast, some commentators attempted to present Manners's death (which resulted from injuries sustained in battle) as both a demonstration of public virtue and a prompt for the exercise of private feeling. For example, in *The Cypress Wreath*, his "elegio-heroic poem, to the memory of the Right Honourable Captain Lord Robert Manners", Henry Lucas invited his readers to shed two different kinds of tears for the young nobleman. On the one hand, there were "Roman Tears, to Public Virtue due", which "Honour, and the Nation's Pride, / Confer, to grace the Heroes that have died!" Yet, at the same time, there were also "domestic tears", which existed outside the realm of honour: "Instinctive Nature draws them from their Source, / From our own loss, they arrogate their Force!"[49]

For Lucas, these "domestic tears" were exemplified by those that "now bespread a Rutland's Eye", referring to the Duke of Rutland's grief for his brother.[50] The duke's private feelings formed a recurring motif in journalistic and poetic responses to Manners's death, helping to figure the young captain as an object of sympathy.[51] In August 1782, for example, the *Whitehall Evening Post* reported that, "among other uncommon marks of affection", Rutland had travelled to Eton in order to indulge in "the melancholy pleasure of traversing every spot which might bring to his mind the liveliest recollection of his gallant brother", the two boys having studied

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[48] Anna Seward, *Monody on Major André* (Lichfield: J. Jackson, 1781), 3, 16, 19, 27. For the construction of André as a sentimental hero, see: Larry J. Reynolds, "Patriots and Criminals, Criminals and Patriots: Representations of the Case of Major André," *South Central Review* 9 (1992): 57–84; Andy Tees, "Benedict Arnold, John André and his Three Yeoman Captors: A Sentimental Journey or American Virtue Defined," *Early American Literature* 35 (2000): 246–73; Knott, "Sensibility," 19–40; Myrone, *Bodybuilding*, 202–6.
[49] Henry Lucas, *The Cypress-Wreath; or Meed of Honor* (London: Printed for the Author, 1782), 14. See also, George Crabbe, *The Village* (London: J. Dodsley, 1783), 35.
[50] Lucas, *Cypress-Wreath*, 14.
[51] See, for example, Crabbe, *Village*, 35–6.

together at the school before Robert entered the navy.[52] The same report also noted that the duke had commissioned a posthumous portrait from Sir Joshua Reynolds. In bracketing this commission together with Rutland's nostalgic pilgrimage to his brother's boyhood haunts, the newspaper presented Reynolds's portrait as a sentimental tribute, enhancing the discourse of private tragedy that surrounded Manners's death.

To stress the affecting nature of the young captain's fate, many commentators emphasised the horrific nature of his fatal injuries. For the Duke of Rutland, the manner of his brother's death was an acute source of pain, and he regretted that it had been impossible to repatriate Robert's remains for a proper burial.[53] In the absence of a body, the duke received a morbid gift from his brother's surgeon of the instruments used to amputate Robert's left leg, which he kept together with the young captain's possessions as a reminder of his suffering.[54] The press, meanwhile, fixated upon the gory details of Manners's wounds, sometimes exaggerating their severity. Several newspapers mistakenly reported that he had "both his legs and one of his arms shot off".[55] Other papers imagined the emotional effect of his injuries upon his loved ones, the *London Chronicle* suggesting that "his death…must be the less regretted by his friends, as the sight of him, thus mutilated, must have been a greater torment to them than his death".[56] Such comments framed Manners's death in terms of private suffering, rather than public duty or heroism.

Yet, the emphasis upon Robert's dismemberment also evoked notions of martyrdom and fed into a broader discourse of national wounding and victimhood, which accompanied the loss of the American colonies. In his pamphlet *Taxation No Tyranny* (1775), which provided a rejoinder to the Declaration of Rights of the First Continental Congress of America, Samuel Johnson wrote that "A Colony is to the Mother-country as a member to the body…exposed, if incurably tainted, to amputation, by which the body likewise will be mutilated."[57] This metaphor was frequently invoked throughout the war, most gruesomely in a series of prints – exemplified by *Brittannia Mutilated* (1774, fig. 92) – which allegorised the fragmentation of the empire by depicting Britannia as a dismembered torso, her

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[52] *Whitehall Evening Post*, 3–6 Aug., 1782. See also, *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 7 Aug., 1782.
[53] Rutland and Ellis, *Resolution*, 386.
[54] Rutland and Ellis, *Resolution*, 435.
[55] *London Chronicle*, 18–21 May, 1782; *St James's Chronicle*, 18–21 May, 1782; *Parker's General Advertiser*, 21 May, 1782.
[56] *London Chronicle*, 18–21 May, 1782; *Parker's General Advertiser*, 21 May, 1782.
[57] Samuel Johnson, *Taxation no Tyranny: An Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress* (London: T. Cadell, 1775), 28.

severed limbs bearing the names of North American settlements.[58] In her provocative and influential study *The Body in Pain* (1985), Elaine Scarry argues that, "at particular moments when there is within a society a crisis of belief", the "compelling vibrancy" and "incontestable reality" of "the body in pain, the body maimed, [and] the body dead" may be appropriated to lend an ideology, issue or political authority the aura of "realness" and "certainty".[59] The frequent recourse to images of amputation and mutilation during the American War offers a powerful example of this process, the wounded body being invoked to provide a visceral sense of certainty in a conflict which threatened the boundaries of Britain's dominion and challenged traditional conceptions of British identity.[60]

The public obsession with Manners's wounds needs to be understood in this context. Indeed, a contemporary poem by an anonymous female author, which was sent to the Duke of Rutland in sympathy for his loss, directly links the image of the wounded Britannia with the young captain's maiming. Inspired by a widely reported story that Manners had endeavoured to continue fighting after he had been injured, this poem is worth quoting at length:

> A feeling heart, humanity was thine
> That gives true lustre to a noble line
> In the high bloom of youth he meets a grave
> His injured country much he wished to save
> Britannia's many wounds he died to heal
> His own alas he would not timely feel
> A limb torn off could not abate his zeal
> Still, still, he fought, and fell for England's weal
> A nation sighs shall consecrate thy bier
> Each Briton sure will pay the feeling fear
> Their own, and noble Rutland's loss deplore,
> Their hero falls, His Brother is no more;
> With wonder struck thy prowess we admire,
> Amazement strikes us at thy martial fire
> Till memory tells us Granby was thy sire.[61]

These lines knit together many of the different aspects of Manners's posthumous public image, linking the young captain with the memory of his father's heroic "martial fire", whilst also presenting him as a sensitive soul with a "feeling heart",

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[58] Lester C. Olson, *Benjamin Franklin's Vision of American Community: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2004), 77–109. See also, Ann Uhry Abrams, "Politics, Prints, and John Singleton Copley's *Watson and the Shark*," *Art Bulletin* 61, no. 2 (1979): 265–76, esp. 273.
[59] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), 57.
[60] For the American War as a crisis of British identity, see: Wahrman, "English Problem," 1236–62.
[61] Rutland and Ellis, *Resolution*, 384.

who had been cut down "in the high bloom of youth", robbing Rutland of his beloved brother. Echoing the public fascination with Manners's wounds, the poet refers explicitly to his dismemberment ("a limb torn off"). However, she extends the language of wounding to describe the state of the British nation, her reference to "Britannia's many wounds" evoking prints like *Brittannia Mutilated*. This metaphor lends a tragically ironic cast to Manners's death: in attempting to save "his injured country", he ends up being maimed and killed himself. Moreover, the poet gives little indication of whether his death actually made any difference to the nation's plight. Strikingly, there is no reference to the fact that, unlike most British casualties of the American War, Manners died on the winning side of a battle. Passing up the opportunity to celebrate the British triumph at the Saintes, the anonymous poet focusses instead upon the suffering and mutilation of both the young captain and his country.

The troubling associations and emotive resonance of Manners's wounding can only have complicated the challenge that Reynolds faced in his posthumous portrait. As well as bringing the deceased captain back to (the illusion of) life, he had to imaginatively reconstitute Manners's broken body. Although, on one level, the portrait provides a balm to the horrific mental images conjured by the graphic reports of the sitter's fatal maiming, it is also haunted by the spectre of his mutilated corpse. Original viewers would have been conscious of the grisly reality of the young captain's death and the broader imagery of national wounding to which it was symbolically related, and therefore would have recognised the inherent fiction of the portrait, exacerbating the work's problematic artificiality, as well as the seeming affectation of Manners's pose and expression.

As Reynolds discovered, it was difficult to produce a portrait that successfully navigated the complex conjunction of associated meanings and cultural anxieties that became attached to Manners after his death. It had been rumoured in the press that the artist was going to submit the painting to the Royal Academy exhibition in 1783, but in the end he did not, perhaps because he recognised the shortcomings of the image.[62] The portrait was engraved in mezzotint by William Dickinson (published 1 July 1783, fig. 93), and it is notable that the young captain's face has been remodelled in the print, appearing somewhat squarer and, as a consequence, more masculine than his soft, almost boyish appearance in the original painting. Copies of Dickinson's mezzotint were privately presented by the Duke of Rutland to his friends

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[62] *Morning Herald*, 14 Nov., 1782.

as sentimental gifts designed to perpetuate his brother's memory.[63] At the same time, impressions of the print were also made available for public sale, catering to the popular appetite for Manners's image which arose from the construction of his death as a national tragedy.

In the public arena, the mezzotint joined an array of other artworks designed to commemorate Manners's death. Whereas Reynolds's portrait offered a somewhat unconvincing image of the young captain as a sentimental hero, other artists working in different genres were able to bring out alternative aspects of Manners's posthumous public image. For example, the artist and book illustrator Thomas Stothard produced a contemporary history painting of Manners's fatal wounding (1783, Belvoir Castle, fig. 94), which was exhibited to the public at "Mr Haynes's, the Corner of Cockspur-street" in March 1783 and published as an engraving three years later.[64] Following the model of Benjamin West's highly successful *Death of General Wolfe* (1770, National Gallery of Canada, fig. 95), Stothard depicted Manners as a fresh-faced youth collapsing into the arms of his comrades. West's painting has been described as "a consumer-orientated adaptation of the conventions of epic art" for the "socially heterogeneous spectatorship" of the metropolitan art world, which suggested that "the hero could suffer and thus be the object of sympathetic responses yet also be an appropriate subject for painting in the heroic mode."[65] Stothard's picture strikes a similar balance, presenting Manners's fate as both affecting and heroic.

The young captain was also commemorated in a state-sponsored public monument in Westminster Abbey (completed 1793, fig. 96).[66] Commissioned by Parliament in late 1782, this monument was dedicated to the memories of the three captains killed at the Saintes, although from the start the press described the proposed memorial as "the Monument of Lord Robert Manners, and the other brave captains", relegating William Blair and William Bayne to secondary status.[67] Taking the form of a rostral column hung with portrait medallions of the deceased captains surrounded by the mourning figures of Fame, Britannia and Neptune, Joseph Nolleken's design privileged the youthful and aristocratic Manners over his middle-aged and middle-class colleagues through his placement at the top of the column.

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[63] Rutland and Ellis, *Resolution*, 405.
[64] *Parker's General Advertiser*, 24 Mar., 1783.
[65] Myrone, *Bodybuilding*, 108. See also, Solkin, *Painting for Money*, 209–13, 272–3.
[66] *The Gentleman's Magazine* 52 (1782): 259, 337. See also, Holger Hoock, *Empires of the Imagination: Politics, War, and the Arts in the British World, 1750–1850* (London: Profile Books, 2010), 69.
[67] *Morning Post*, 15 Nov., 1782.

David Bindman has connected the use of medallion portraits in eighteenth-century monumental sculpture with the classical tradition of the *imago clipeata*, or "shield-like image", which, in Roman military monuments, was often shown hanging from a tree in remembrance of a dead warrior.[68] This classicising form therefore abstracts Manners from the political tumult and emotional strains of his own time and instead stakes his claim to a place in a timeless pantheon of public heroes. Furthermore, focussing only upon his head, the *imago clipeata* negated the need for the imaginative reassembly of the captain's broken and dismembered corpse, eliding the traumatic associations of his wounding which haunted Reynolds's portrait. After all, funerary sculpture, unlike portraiture, was not expected to create the illusion of liveliness.

Reynolds had perhaps been set an impossible task, one in which the stakes – both private and public – were simply too high, the artist having to address, on the one hand, the crippling grief of his patron, the Duke of Rutland, and, on the other, the complex range of meanings and anxieties publicly associated with Manners's death, including notions of heroism, sentiment, wounding, national trauma and lost youth. The particular conventions of history painting and public funerary sculpture allowed Stothard and Nollekens to sidestep some of these issues in ways that Reynolds could not in his privately commissioned portrait. However, whilst Manners's death haunted the public response to the Battle of the Saintes, the families of other young naval personnel also used portraiture to privately commemorate their loved ones' involvement in this symbolically important action. As we shall see, the resulting artworks provide further insights into how concerns about youth, heroism and vulnerability were experienced during the American War.

III

"From Joe to his Mama. I observe when you come close to a French Man[-of-war] they run from their Guns, for they do not like that Work, but if you come to long Boats, they will beat you…for their shot reaches a great deal further than ours."[69] Brimming with boyish enthusiasm, this note was scribbled by thirteen-year-old Midshipman Joseph Sydney Yorke to his mother, Agneta Yorke, on 18 April 1782, six days after the Battle of the Saintes, where he had served as aide-de-camp to Admiral Rodney, the commander-in-chief of the victorious British fleet. One of the distinguishing features of the naval officer's profession in eighteenth-century Britain

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[68] David Bindman and Malcolm Baker, *Roubiliac and the Eighteenth-Century Monument: Sculpture as Theatre* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1995), 102.
[69] Joseph Sydney Yorke to Agneta Yorke, 18 Apr., 1782, BL Add MS 35395.

was the young age at which individuals began their careers. Most officers entered the navy between the ages of eleven and fourteen and some were even younger in an informal recruitment system which, in the words of the historian Harry Dickinson, "immersed youngsters, little more than children, into the practical surroundings of their profession to sink or swim".[70] This practice established bonds and loyalties that would be an important factor in future promotions and provided an early introduction to the distinctive routines, skills and hardships of life in a man-of-war, exposing boys to the dangers of disease, shipwreck and battle. With its observations on French gunnery, Yorke's note testifies to his first-hand experience of naval warfare. Joseph entered the navy at the age of eleven on 15 February 1780, serving initially in the royal yacht *William and Mary* (10 guns), before joining the *Duke* (90 guns) on convoy duty in the Channel in June 1781.[71] He transferred to the *Formidable* (98 guns) the following January and sailed for the West Indies, where he served for the next fifteen months, experiencing his first major fleet action at the Saintes in April 1782.[72]

Yorke's youthful service at sea was commemorated in a portrait painted by the artist George Romney (ca. 1781–3, private collection, fig. 97). Holding his sword, Yorke stands in the foreground of the picture wearing a midshipman's uniform coat, recognisable by the white tabs on the collar (introduced sometime in the mid-1760s, these tabs were the defining feature of midshipmen's uniform until the middle of the nineteenth century).[73] In the background, British and French ships are shown exchanging broadsides and generating plumes of gun-smoke. There is some ambiguity around the precise dating of the portrait as Romney painted multiple members of the Yorke family in this period and did not clearly distinguish between them in his appointment books. Based on a detailed study of the available evidence, Alex Kidson suggests that Joseph sat for the portrait in November 1781, before he sailed for the West Indies, and the battle scene in the background was added later to commemorate the young midshipman's involvement in the Battle of the Saintes the following April.[74] This would not be inconsistent with what is known about Romney's practice for, although he was always busy and produced a vast body of

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[70] Dickinson, *Educating*, 32.

[71] J. K. Laughton, *rev.* Andrew Lambert, "Yorke, Sir Joseph Sydney (1768–1831)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30244. See Yorke's passing certificate: TNA ADM 107/10/153.

[72] TNA ADM 36/9118 and 51/365/5–6.

[73] Midshipmen's uniform was first introduced with the commissioned officers' uniform in 1748, and the collar patch was added sometime in the 1760s. Jarrett, *British Naval*, 32–3; Cavell, *Midshipmen*, 31.

[74] Kidson, *Romney Catalogue*, 2: 654–5.

work over the course of his career, he often took a long time to complete individual pictures and many canvases languished unfinished in his studio for months or even years after the initial sittings.[75] It is therefore plausible to suggest that Joseph's portrait was begun in late 1781 and finished at a later date, incorporating a reference to Rodney's victory, which had taken place in the interim.

It is more difficult to explain why the painting was commissioned in the first place. Most naval portraits were intended to mark important personal milestones and professional achievements, such as marriage, promotion, the capture of a wealthy prize or the acquisition of a country estate. However, such events only came later in an officer's career, not during his time as an adolescent midshipman. As a consequence, it seems that midshipmen only sat for portraits in exceptional circumstances.

According to Romney's account book, Yorke's portrait was commissioned by the sitter's mother, Agneta Yorke (née Johnson).[76] Joseph's father, the Honourable Charles Yorke, had died more than ten years previously on 20 January 1770, just three days after accepting the position of Lord Chancellor.[77] His peerage had not yet been confirmed and therefore Agneta and her three young children (Caroline, Charles and Joseph) were left without any formal titles to secure their social status. Their position was made more insecure by the fact that the principal heir to Charles's estate was his eldest son from a previous marriage. The latter, Philip Yorke, came into this inheritance when he reached his majority in May 1778, whereupon he received a letter from his half-siblings stressing their dependence upon him: "Now is the time when we must look upon you as our Protector, Guardian and second Father."[78] Over the next five years, Agneta Yorke commissioned a series of paintings from Romney depicting herself and her children, including Joseph's portrait as a midshipman.[79] These artworks were perhaps intended to prevent the family from disappearing into Philip's shadow and to shore up its somewhat precarious social status. Indeed, the portraits of the children anticipate their entry into respectable adult society through marriage, education and the navy respectively: Caroline was painted when she reached marriageable age (1783–4, private collection); Charles was depicted upon his leaving Harrow (ca. 1779–80,

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[75] Richard Cumberland, *Memoirs of Richard Cumberland* (London: Lackington, Allen, and Co., 1806), 464; Tscherny, "'Persons and Property,'" 33–62; Kidson, *George Romney*, 27.
[76] Kidson, *Romney Catalogue*, 2: 654.
[77] John Cannon, "Yorke, Charles (1722–1770)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30237.
[78] Caroline Yorke, Charles Yorke and Joseph Sydney Yorke to Philip Yorke, 25 May, 1778, BL Add MS 35395.
[79] For the works commissioned by Agneta Yorke, see: Kidson, *Romney Catalogue*, 2: 653–6.

Wimpole); and Joseph, as we have seen, was represented at the start of his naval career.

In many respects, Joseph's portrait resembles that of a more senior naval officer. The background of the painting and the sitter's pose are consistent with the established traditions of naval portraiture, as we have seen them elaborated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Standing against the backdrop of a raging naval battle, the midshipman tucks one hand in his waistcoat and grasps the hilt of his sword in the other, using the weapon like a cane. Romney had previously depicted high-ranking and aging naval officers leaning on their swords in a similar fashion, as, for example, in his portrait of Admiral Charles Hardy (1780, National Maritime Museum, fig. 98). Although it was falling out of favour by the early 1780s, Yorke's hand-in-waistcoat pose was widely used in eighteenth-century male portraiture to signify manly boldness tempered with modesty, as noted in chapter one.[80] Romney's representation of this midshipman's body was thus conventional and conservative, connoting manliness, self-restraint and, given the fierce naval engagement in the background, battle-hardened experience.

At the same time, however, Yorke's head betrays his youth. His hair hangs loose around his shoulders in a boyish style. Furthermore, his softly rounded features and wide, puppy-dog eyes appear distinctly childish, lacking the physiognomic individuation associated with adult masculinity. This emphasis upon what Brian Allen has called the "generalised charms of youth" is a characteristic feature of Romney's portraits of adolescent boys, as, for instance, in his portrait of thirteen-year-old William Courtenay (1781–3, private collection, fig. 99).[81] The artist was highly regarded as a painter of youthful sitters, receiving a high volume of commissions to depict children and teenagers.[82] His boys and young men are often described by modern writers as "effeminate" but it might be more historically appropriate to suggest that Romney imbued such sitters with something of the androgynous, gender neutral beauty that was associated with childhood in the mid- to late eighteenth century.[83] He depicts his young male sitters as having not yet fully grown into their masculinity. In Yorke's case, this visible lack of maturity clashes somewhat with his surroundings: the midshipman's pliable flesh has yet to take on

[80] Meyer, "Re-dressing," 53.
[81] Brian Allen, "Introduction," in *George Romney as a Painter of Children* (London: Leger Galleries, 1984), n. p.
[82] David A. Cross, *A Striking Likeness: The Life of George Romney* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 110–12.
[83] Kidson, *George Romney*, 69. For eighteenth-century perceptions of childhood as gender neutral, see: Chantel Lavoie, "*Tristram Shandy*, Boyhood, and Breeching," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 28, no. 1 (2015): 85–107, esp. 98.

the form of a definitive grown-up identity, even as his uniform, pose and environment draw him into the adult world of naval service.

In this work, Romney effectively spliced together two distinctive portrait types from his repertoire – the naval officer and the adolescent boy. He tended to work largely according to pre-established pictorial formulae, a strategy which, as Nadia Tscherny has shown, was central to his success as a society portraitist: it turned his portraits into attractive symbols of social belonging, giving sitters the opportunity to align themselves with fashionable identities which could be easily recognised.[84] Clients could even choose a specific portrait from his extensive showroom to serve as a template for their own representation. However, as a thirteen-year-old boy embarking upon a naval career, Yorke straddled several categories of identity, blending youthfulness with ideas of duty and professionalism and thus requiring the painter to combine different image types from across his range.

As Marcia Pointon has shown, adolescent sitters in general posed a number of challenges for eighteenth-century portraitists, due to the fact that adolescence is "liminal": "it carries traces of both [childhood and adulthood] without belonging to either".[85] In their teens, human beings undergo various physical and psychological changes associated with the onset of sexual maturity. Since the fifteenth century, the term "adolescence" has been used to describe this transitional period of life as distinct from childhood and adulthood.[86] Although associated with biological changes, the idea of adolescence is a cultural construct, which is bound up with the different social expectations placed upon young people at particular times and in specific circumstances.[87] Partly for this reason, there has never been any consensus about when adolescence begins and ends or about how it should be represented in portraiture. Artists were consequently at liberty to combine mature and immature iconographies in their portraits of adolescent sitters, creatively manipulating the visual signs of age in order to construct symbolic meanings. In the case of midshipmen, matters were especially complicated, for painters had to represent a double transformation through which a young boy turned into both a mature man and a commissioned naval officer.

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[84] Tscherny, "'Persons and Property,'" 33.
[85] Marcia Pointon, *Portrayal and the Search for Identity* (London: Reaktion, 2013), 75–120, quote at 76.
[86] "adolescence, n.," *OED Online*, June 2018, Oxford University Press, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/2648?redirectedFrom=adolescence.
[87] Anja Müller, "Introduction," in *Fashioning Childhood in the Eighteenth Century: Age and Identity*, ed. Anja Müller (Aldershot/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 1–10.

On one level, Romney's portrait can be read as serving a prognostic function: applying a template derived from senior officers' portraiture to the representation of a young recruit, it suggests that his future career will follow a successful trajectory. At the same time, it is possible to see the painting as a sentimental image, poignantly evoking the idea of an impressionable youth plunged into the depths of war. Both readings would be consistent with the way in which Yorke's youthful experiences in the navy were represented in private letters sent to his mother, the patron of Romney's portrait, from his commanding officer, Captain Sir Charles Douglas. In these letters, Douglas invites Agneta Yorke to imagine a bright future for her son in the sea service, describing Joseph as "our future great naval commander" and extravagantly declaring "long may he live to avenge our dear Countrys wrongs!"[88] At the same time, however, the captain's letters are threaded through with paternal tenderness, reassuring Agneta about her son's welfare – "Your dear Boy, God be praised enjoyed the most perfect health…be not therefore uneasy" – and adopting a protective tone that implicitly acknowledges the boy's vulnerability; for example, on 16 July 1782, he touchingly wrote that "your young Hero…is now sound asleep in his Cott at my Elbow".[89] The combination of pride and sentiment in Douglas's letters is typical of the correspondence exchanged between midshipmen's superiors and their parents, as Ellen Gill has shown.[90] Such letters helped families to maintain a sense of connection to children who were away at sea. Agneta Yorke perhaps hoped that Romney's portrait, hanging on the walls of the family home, would play a similar role in mediating her young son's absence, complementing the correspondence that she received from Joseph and his commander. Like the letters, it imagined a heroic future for the midshipman, effectively borrowing against his anticipated later glory to bolster the Yorke family's somewhat precarious social status, whilst also providing an affective prompt for sentimental reflection on Joseph's exposure to the dangers of war.

IV

Yorke was not the only adolescent veteran of the Battle of the Saintes whose fledgling naval career was commemorated in portraiture. In late 1782, John Singleton Copley painted the portrait of thirteen-year-old Midshipman Augustus Brine (Metropolitan Museum of Art, fig. 100), recently returned from the West Indies, where he had served at the Saintes in the *Belliqueux* (64 guns) under Captain

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88 Charles Douglas to Agneta Yorke, 16 July, 1782, and 11 Sept., 1782, BL Add MS 35395.
89 Charles Douglas to Agneta Yorke, 16 July, 1782, and 11 Sept., 1782, BL Add MS 35395.
90 Gill, "'Children,'" 149–65.

Andrew Sutherland.[91] Baptised on 5 November 1769 at Blandford St Mary in Dorset, Augustus Brine was the son of a naval lieutenant from a respectable Dorset family, which had "old standing" in the county but which lacked land or titles.[92] In January 1775, aged only five, Augustus followed his father James into the navy, entering the *Marlborough* (74 guns) as a captain's servant.[93] Although it was unusual for a boy to begin his naval career at such a young age, it was not without precedent: Evan Wilson's recent analysis suggests that almost three per cent of late eighteenth-century naval officers joined before their fifth birthday.[94] In the majority of these cases, the young recruit had a parent or close relative on board, and Augustus was no exception, for his father was the *Marlborough*'s first lieutenant.[95] After Augustus's mother had died in August 1770, leaving no other children, Lieutenant Brine was solely responsible for the welfare of his only child.[96] The *Marlborough* was a guard ship at Portsmouth and the relatively safety of this service may have encouraged James to bring his young son abroad.[97] However, it would not be long before the boy was exposed to more dangerous aspects of the naval profession: by his thirteenth birthday, he had undertaken multiple transatlantic voyages (both with and without his father), encountered tropical diseases, assisted in the capture of numerous prizes and fought in a major fleet action.[98] After serving at the Saintes, Augustus remained in the West Indies and North America for another five months,

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[91] TNA ADM 34/140. For Copley's painting, see: John Caldwell et al., *American Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 3 vols. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 1: 105–6; Emily Ballew Neff, *John Singleton Copley in England* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1996), 123, no. 12.

[92] Joseph Jackson Howard and Frederick Arthur Crisp (eds.), *Visitation of England and Wales*, 21 vols. (London: Privately Printed, 1893–1921), 4: 16–17; Neil Brine, "Admiral James Brine of Blandford," *The Greenwood Tree* 38, no. 1 (2013): 20.

[93] TNA ADM 107/12/66 and 36/7639. Caldwell and Neff mistakenly state that Brine entered the navy in 1782. See Caldwell et al., *American Paintings*, 105, and Neff, *Copley*, 123.

[94] Wilson, *Social History*, 18.

[95] James Brine joined the *Marlborough* as second lieutenant on 26 October 1773. He was promoted to first lieutenant on 30 January 1774. TNA ADM 33/658.

[96] Howard and Crisp (eds.), *Visitation*, 4: 17.

[97] In the twenty months that Augustus spent in the *Marlborough*, it moved only from the harbour to the Spithead anchorage and back again. TNA ADM 51/577/4–6.

[98] James and Augustus Brine served in the *Marlborough* until August 1776, then transferred to the *Courageux* (74 guns), another guard ship. James Brine left this ship to become first lieutenant of the *Prince of Wales* (74 guns) in November 1776. Augustus joined him in the *Prince of Wales* in January 1778 and four months later the ship sailed for the West Indies. On Christmas Day 1778, James took command of the sloop *Surprize* (18 guns), which Augustus also joined as a midshipman. In September 1779, Augustus was discharged from the *Surprize* and travelled back to England in the *Prince of Wales*. Meanwhile, his father remained in the West Indies, taking command of the *Alcamene* (28 guns) in December 1779 and the *Belliqueux* in February 1781. Augustus joined his father in the latter ship in September 1781. This account is based on Augustus's passing certificate (TNA ADM 107/12/66), together with pay books, musters and logbooks for the various ships. See TNA ADM 34/148, 34/839, 34/850, 51/727/8, 34/724, 34/42, 34/140, 34/724, 34/850, and 34/140.

before sailing for England in September 1782.[99] Signed and dated 1782, Copley's portrait must have been painted almost immediately upon his return.

It is not known who commissioned the painting but, given its family provenance, Augustus's father is the most likely candidate.[100] Although he too had been serving in the West Indies (where he was promoted to the rank of post-captain in 1779), James Brine returned to England several months before his son.[101] At home in Dorset, Captain Brine settled into a genteel domestic life, capitalising upon the enhanced wealth and status that came with the promotions and prize money he had won in the Caribbean. He rented the Down House, a country estate in his native village of Blandford St Mary, and remarried in February 1783.[102] We might speculate that he commissioned Augustus's portrait in late 1782 in anticipation of his remarriage, the painting helping to secure the boy's status as his eldest son and heir, ahead of any offspring he might produce with his new bride. Portraits were also status symbols and, hanging on the walls of the Down House, the painting would have helped to showcase James's social aspirations for himself and his family.

As a bravura performance by a leading metropolitan artist, Augustus's three-quarter-length portrait would have surely impressed visitors to the Down House. It is somewhat curious that James Brine should have invested in such an impressive portrait for his son, a low-ranking midshipman, and not for himself, a successful captain. James did sit for his own portrait in this period (ca. 1783–7, private collection, fig. 101) but this painting – a standard oval half-length by an unknown artist in which Brine wears his plain undress uniform and a powdered wig, presenting an image of understated professional respectability – is considerably more modest than Augustus's portrait.[103] Judging from the somewhat clumsy rendering of the left arm, the work's artist was someone much less accomplished (and less expensive) than Copley, perhaps a provincial artist based in Dorset.[104] James was apparently content to present himself as respectable naval officer-

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[99] TNA ADM 34/140 and 36/9140.
[100] For the provenance, see: Neff, *Copley*, 123.
[101] James Brine made post-captain when he took command of the *Alcamene* on 31 December 1779, TNA ADM 34/42. For his return to England, see: James Brine to Philip Stephens, Secretary of the Admiralty, 20 Aug., 1782, TNA ADM 1/503.
[102] Richard Hiscocks, "James Brine," *More than Nelson* (2018), online biographical dictionary, https://morethannelson.com/officer/james-brine/. Brine's children from his second marriage were born at the Down House in 1784, 1785 and 1787, indicating his continued residence at the property. Howard and Crisp (eds.), *Visitation*, 4: 17.
[103] The portrait can be dated on the basis of the uniform. Brine wears the undress uniform of a captain over three years' seniority, a rank he obtained on 31 December 1782. This pattern was discontinued in 1787.
[104] When the portrait was photographed by the Paul Mellon Centre, London, in 1990, it was listed as "attributed to Webber". See photograph in NPG Heinz Archive.

turned-country gentleman, having accumulated the bulk of his wealth and status through many years of naval service. By contrast, his son's portrait works hard to naturalise its sitter's place in the social elite, presenting the teenage midshipman as a worthy subject for an ambitious grand manner portrait and suggesting that his respectable qualities and heroic potential were inherent, rather than acquired.

In Copley's portrait, Augustus stands beneath a massive overhanging cliff, resting one hand on the stock of an anchor. The anchor's fluke rears up behind him, framing a distant view of a man-of-war on a storm-tossed sea. Although the anchor, the cliff and the ship are common motifs within eighteenth-century naval portraiture, Copley imbues these elements with a heightened sense of darkness and threat. The wind-buffeted ship does not appear to refer to a specific episode from the sitter's career, instead providing a generalised suggestion of the drama and danger of a seafaring life. The background of the portrait is also notable for the exceptionally loose handling of paint: undulating brushstrokes merely indicate the waves and clouds, and there is little attempt to create an illusion of pictorial depth, the rocks and the anchor fluke appearing as flat, amorphous masses. This emphasises the artifice of the portrait, allowing the viewer to recognise that the rocky coastal landscape is merely painted canvas. Brine thus seems to inhabit an imagined world, rather than a real one, a point perhaps intended to signal his youthful potential: instead of commemorating events that have already taken place, the portrait anticipates his participation in future naval adventures, the details of which remain as yet unknown.

The painterly handling in this portrait represents a departure from the artist's established practice. Copley had been a successful portraitist in Boston but immigrated to London in 1776 (following a fourteen-month European tour) to avoid the turmoil of the American Revolution.[105] He quickly established a successful portrait practice in the capital, where he attracted a wide variety of sitters, including many from the British establishment, as well as enjoying popularity among the American expatriate community.[106] Given that both James and Augustus Brine had served extensively in the West Indies and North America, they may have been attracted by the artist's reputation as a painter of transatlantic subjects. Copley was known for labouring long and hard over his portraits, producing painstakingly detailed works characterised by a high degree of realism. In Boston, this approach

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[105] For Copley in Boston, see: Jules David Prown, *John Singleton Copley in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1966); Carrie Rebora and Paul Staiti (eds.), *John Singleton Copley in America* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996).
[106] Jules David Prown, *John Singleton Copley in England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1966).

had proved immensely popular with the merchant elite but it was not so positively received in London, where the leading artists of the period, including Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough, tended to employ more fluid effects.[107] In concession to British taste, Copley loosened his brushwork and began to use detail more sparingly.[108] However, even allowing for these changes in his style, the background of Brine's portrait is markedly extreme in its freedom of handling. Most other works that the artist produced in London were worked up to a higher level of finish, including, for example, his portrait of the aging Vice-Admiral Clark Gayton (1779, National Maritime Museum, fig. 102), the background of which includes a detailed representation of the sitter's flagship.

Precedents for the painterly brushwork in Brine's portrait are limited within Copley's oeuvre but one notable example is the artist's head-and-shoulders portrait of the nineteen-year-old naval lieutenant John Loring (1780, Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, fig. 103). A maelstrom of swirling brushstrokes provides the background of this portrait, roughly delineating the forms of a ship, rolling waves and gathering storm-clouds. Like the Brine portrait, this work also represents a teenage naval sitter. Loring came from a family of loyalist landowners in Massachusetts and entered the Royal Navy aged fourteen at the outbreak of the American War in April 1775.[109] The early years of his career were highly eventful: he spent some time as a prisoner of war in Boston and assisted in the capture of several prizes, gaining promotion to the rank of lieutenant on 3 December 1779 at the age of only nineteen.[110] Probably commissioned to mark this achievement, Copley's portrait depicts Loring in lieutenant's full-dress uniform, holding his sword – a symbol of his status as an officer and a gentleman – under his arm. He grasps the weapon's hilt loosely between his fingers and allows the blade to stick out behind his back (where it could be a hazard to others), exuding insouciant confidence. The portrait was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1780, where one reviewer described it as a "spirited sketch".[111] A sketch is traditionally a rough work intended to serve as the

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[107] Theodore E. Stebbins Jr., "An American Despite Himself," in *John Singleton Copley in America*, ed. Rebora and Staiti, 82–3, 90, 93.

[108] For the shifts in Copley's practice after his transatlantic relocation, see: Neff, *Copley*, 12–22.

[109] For the Loring family, see: Eva Phillips Boyd, "Commodore Joshua Loring, Jamaica Plain by Way of London," *Old-time New England Magazine* (Apr.–June 1959), reproduced online, https://www.jphs.org/people/2005/4/14/commodore-joshua-loring-jamaica-plain-by-way-of-london.html; Sharon Kong-Perring, "Lydia Loring and the Loring Family of Massachusetts," *The Revere House Gazette* 130 (Spring 2018): 1–5, 8.

[110] *Commissioned Sea Officers of the Royal Navy 1660–1815* (London: National Maritime Museum, 1954), 7: 567 [annotated Caird Library copy].

[111] *A Candid Review of the Exhibition (being the twelfth) of the Royal Academy, M DCC LXXX* (London: H. Reynell, 1780), 28.

basis for a more finished picture; the term therefore usually implies something preliminary or unfinished but it is also associated with the spontaneous expression of genius. Loring's portrait was not a preparatory work – it was a finished portrait – but, in his relaxed handling, Copley played upon the associations of the sketch. As a newly minted young lieutenant, Loring was not the finished article but his swaggering portrait suggests that, like a bravura sketch for a grand painting, he possesses the seeds of greatness.

A similar reading can also be applied to Brine's portrait, although the latter picture places greater emphasis upon the sitter's youth. With his receding hairline, square jaw and sagging jowls, Loring appears older than his nineteen years. By contrast, Brine seems to linger on the threshold between boyhood and manhood. His long hair and open-collared shirt, worn without a stock or neck-cloth, reflect fashions in children's dress, reminding the viewer that Brine is barely thirteen. A lock of hair hovers over his cheek, not quite touching the skin, creating a sense of delicacy. At the same time, however, the young midshipman displays signs of his growing maturity. Whereas Romney painted Joseph Yorke with a softly rounded, generically youthful countenance, Copley created a more subtle portrayal of burgeoning manhood. The artist's heightened chiaroscuro highlights Brine's profile, emphasising the sharp outlines of his facial features. His narrowed eyes and square jaw suggest his manly resolve, and his pose has a distinctly swaggering quality. He leans back, sweeping his long uniform coat behind his hip in a gesture which reveals his right buttock and thigh, clad in pale breeches. As Karen Harvey has shown, the "exposure and accentuation of the lower half of the male body in light-coloured breeches" was understood in the late eighteenth century as a potent signifier of adult manhood, manifesting masculine beauty, strength and gentility.[112] Copley also emphasises the large brass buttons arrayed along the edge of the midshipman's coat. Noting that an elite man's buttons reinforced his difference from "the beggar, or the cripple, or…the colonial subject, whose clothing was button-less", Marcia Pointon suggests that buttons "encapsulate all the regulative…aspects of English male dress", connoting wealth, refinement and self-control.[113]

The "regulative" connotations of the buttons are reinforced by the tightly controlled manner in which they are painted. In contrast to the loosely handled background, the foreground of the portrait is a tour de force in the illusionistic effects

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[112] Karen Harvey, "Men of Parts: Masculine Embodiment and the Male Leg in Eighteenth-Century England," *Journal of British Studies* 54 (2015): 797–821, quote at 807. See also, Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 65.

[113] Pointon, *Portrayal*, 155, 157.

for which Copley was famed, the artist brilliantly representing the gleam of the midshipman's brass buttons, the shimmer of the gold lace on his hat and the softness of his hair. This suggests both the artist's masterly control of his brush and his young sitter's poised self-command. Juxtaposed with the painterly background, Brine's meticulously rendered body seems to possess solidity, vitality and latent energy, an impression which is reinforced by the visible tension in his clenched left hand. His future career may exist for the moment only in the realm of imagination and speculation but his body seems concrete and tangible, inviting the viewer to imagine that his potential is real and inherent.

V

Although they do so in different ways, the portraits of Joseph Yorke and Augustus Brine both emphasise the readiness of their young sitters to confront dangerous and challenging situations. In Romney's portrait, Yorke appears fresh-faced and cherubic but he is presented as a veteran of the Battle of the Saintes, which rages in the background. Meanwhile, Copley's loosely rendered but darkly threatening backdrop invites the viewer to imagine future dangers for which Brine, whose growing maturity and confidence is signalled by his expression, pose and clothing, seems to be prepared.

In their evocation of drama, peril and violence, the portraits of Yorke and Brine are markedly different from other representations of male adolescents produced in the same period. Most scholarly discussions of eighteenth-century adolescent portraiture are dominated by the extensive collection of leaving portraits at Eton College.[114] From 1756 onwards, pupils selected by the headmaster were invited to present portraits of themselves (at their own expense) to the school upon their leaving. In the second half of the eighteenth century, public schools expanded rapidly in Britain, replacing private tutoring as the preferred mode of elite male education.[115] Advocates for public education blamed domestic schooling for causing effeminacy and weakness in young men, since they were surrounded by comforts, luxuries and feminine influences. By contrast, in public schools, boys were removed from the home and placed in an exclusively male environment, where they competed against one another in sporting and intellectual challenges and studied a rigorous classical curriculum in a regime designed to encourage aggressive

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[114] Giles Waterfield, *Leaving Portraits from Eton* (Dulwich: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1991); Pointon, *Portrayal*, 87–118.

[115] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (London: Pimlico, 1994 [1992]), 167–70.

manliness and to prepare boys for careers in government and the military.[116] Parallels were often drawn in this period between public schools and the navy, likening the toughening effect of an education at an institution like Eton to that of sending a boy to sea. "Were it not for the dormitory at Westminster or the quarterdeck of a British man o' war," one admiral declared around the turn of the nineteenth century, "we should soon have a nation of macaronis", a term for sexually ambiguous men who adopted outlandish fashions.[117]

However, there were significant differences between public schoolboys and midshipmen, which are foregrounded in their respective portraits. In the late 1770s and 1780s, Romney was the artist most favoured by leaving Etonians, yet the paintings that he produced for these schoolboys differ significantly from his portrait of Midshipman Yorke.[118] Exemplified by the portrait of nineteen-year-old Charles Grey (1784, Eton College, fig. 104), Romney's leaving portraits typically depict the sitter reclining in an upholstered chair and holding an open book in an imagery of refined, sedentary scholarship which starkly contrasts with the atmosphere of violence and action in Yorke's portrait. Whereas Romney's Etonians are shown to be engaged in a "dress rehearsal" for public life in the classroom, the young midshipman seems to be living the real thing and facing genuine, life-threatening dangers on active service at sea.[119]

Yet it was not always the case that midshipmen's portraits sought to associate their sitters with the perils of naval service. Throughout the eighteenth century, many portraits of midshipmen presented their sitters as students of the sea officer's profession, celebrating their acquisition of complex mathematical and navigational skills. An early example of this tradition is Jeremiah Davison's portrait of twelve-year-old Midshipman Thomas Frankland (ca. 1731, Chequers Court, fig. 105), which was painted shortly after the sitter entered the navy as a volunteer in the *York* (60 guns) on 11 May 1731.[120] In this portrait, Frankland stands in an austere classical interior beside an open window overlooking the sea, through which

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[116] Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500–1800* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1995), 297–321; Kevin Waite, "Beating Napoleon at Eton: Violence, Sport and Manliness in England's Public Schools, 1783–1815," *Cultural and Social History* 11, no. 3 (2014): 407–24.

[117] William Barrow, *An Essay on Education; in which are Particularly Considered the Merits and Defects of the Discipline and Instruction in our Academies*, 2 vols. (London: F. and C. Rivington, 1802), 2: 164.

[118] Cross, *Striking Likeness*, 112.

[119] Waite, "Beating Napoleon," 408.

[120] A. W. H. Pearsall, "Frankland, Sir Thomas, fifth baronet (1718–1784)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/10087.

can be seen a British man-of-war chasing a more distant vessel. Directly underneath this window is a table covered in navigational paraphernalia, including two books, a chart and a backstaff (an instrument for measuring the altitudes of celestial bodies). These items suggest the intellectual work of the naval profession, reminding viewers of the rigorous course of study that young recruits like Frankland were required to undertake during their training. Painted around thirty or forty years later, a portrait of an unidentified midshipman attributed to Mason Chamberlin (ca. 1760–74, Leeds Castle, fig. 106) similarly features a table covered with charts and books, including an open volume which is inscribed with the word "Navigation" and features a detailed trigonometric diagram. The midshipman in this portrait is shown putting theory into practice by plotting a course on a chart with a ruler and compasses, which suggests that he has successfully internalised the specialist knowledge contained within his various textbooks.

Other midshipmen's portraits focussed less upon specific technical skills and more upon the psychology of command, as illustrated by Francis Cotes's portrait of sixteen-year-old Midshipman George Cranfield Berkeley (1769, Berkeley Castle, fig. 107).[121] The younger son of the third Earl of Berkeley, the sitter had joined the navy at the age of thirteen in 1766. Signed and dated 1769, Cotes's portrait was painted after Berkeley had returned from a two-year survey mission in Newfoundland, and shows the midshipman leaning against the breech of a cannon, his right hand holding his hat on top of the gun, his index finger pointing down the barrel.[122] This pointing action resembles a gesture of command, suggesting Berkeley's readiness to issue orders. At the same time, he turns his head to gaze into the left-hand distance, as though his attention has been caught by something beyond the picture plane, which implies that he is alert to his surroundings. As well as mastering the technical skills of navigation, sea officers also needed to be authoritative and vigilant, and Cotes's portrait asserts that Berkeley possesses precisely these qualities, emphasising his psychological aptitude for naval service. The prominent inclusion of a cannon in the foreground of the picture associates the sitter with the potential for explosive power. However, the gun lies dormant, and the bay in the background is empty of ships, suggesting that there is little prospect of imminent action. Indeed, the scene is suffused with a gentle orange light, which encourages the viewer to see the situation as entirely benign. Thus, although

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[121] Johnson, *Cotes*, 24, 97, no. 277.
[122] "Biographical Memoir of the Hon. George Cranfield Berkeley," *The Naval Chronicle* 12 (1804): 89–113; Brian Mark De Toy, "Berkeley, Sir George Cranfield (1753–1818)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/2213.

Berkeley seems ready to assume command, he remains removed from the kind of dangerous situation that would actually require him to exercise his authority, the portrait lacking the frisson of danger and uncertainty which characterises the later paintings of Yorke and Brine.

This difference may be attributed to the divergent historical circumstances in which these portraits were produced. Berkeley's portrait was painted during the peace that followed the Seven Years' War, and the sitter himself had no experience of facing hostile enemy action, hence the benign atmosphere within his portrait was perhaps appropriate. By contrast, the portraits of Brine and Yorke were painted in wartime and can be read in relation to specific concerns that arose during the American War.

We have already seen how the public response to Lord Robert Manners's death attached considerable significance to his youth, emphasising his unfulfilled promise. This was part of a broader preoccupation with youthful potential in the representation of the navy at this time. Young captains came to be valorised at the expense of their older colleagues and superiors. The *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, for instance, made the following claim in September 1779: "Courage, perseverance, and the gallantry of individual ships, have ever been found of more avail in naval war than the most cautious and refined conduct. It will be found on enquiry that the bravest exploits at sea have been performed not by old, but by young and middle-aged men."[123] The reference in this quote to "refined conduct" is perhaps significant, since it associates the generational divide with a shift in masculine identities. The culpability of the "old" men is presented as being rooted in the schooled mannerisms of polite refinement. Politeness played an important role in notions of masculine gentility in the first half of the eighteenth century but, as the century progressed, it was increasingly haunted by fears that it was artificial and performative, providing no guarantee of genuine moral substance, and that it encouraged enervation, effeminacy, luxury and indolence.[124] The *Gazetteer* imagines the navy's "young and middle-aged men" as representing the antidote to the ills of polite culture, suggesting that they are instinctively courageous.

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[123] *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 24 Sept., 1779.
[124] Carter, *Men*, 23; John Tosh, "Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 12 (2002): 455–72. For an examination of the implications of this shift for portraiture, see: Peter Funnell, "Lawrence among Men: Friends, Patrons and the Male Portrait," in *Thomas Lawrence: Regency Power and Brilliance*, ed. Cassandra Albinson, Peter Funnell and Lucy Peltz (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2010), 1–25.

The same argument formed the structuring polemic in the *Naval Atalantis*, a series of naval biographies by Joseph Harris, writing under the pseudonym "Nauticus Junior".[125] Focussing upon officers who had fought in the American War, these biographies were serialised in the *Morning Herald* in 1786–8, prior to their publication in a two-volume collected edition in 1788–9.[126] Harris's text plays an older generation of admirals off against a younger generation of captains. Accordingly, in the collected edition, the two volumes are divided by rank, the first focussing upon flag officers, the second upon post-captains. In the former, the tone is predominantly negative: Harris condemns Admiral Rodney for preferring "the pursuits of pleasure" to "the study of Naval Tactics" and vilifies the recently deceased Admiral Thomas Pye as "an emaciated old goat" who "joined an infinite share of personal vanity and supercilious consequence", spending most of his time "carrying on amours" with his fellow officers' wives.[127] By contrast, the captains' biographies in the second volume are almost entirely positive, praising their subjects for their zeal, their bravery and, in many cases, their youth. For example, Harris hails Thomas Pakenham as an "eccentric, dashing, excellent young officer", who "has evinced the native ardour which animates his soul, in many glorious instances".[128] In a similar vein, his biography of George Montagu included the assertion that, "blessed with the advantages of youth, experience, and the true *amor patriae*, a distant view, a *prophetic* something seems to mark out this gallant young officer, as a character who may at some future period become a brilliant ornament to the British flag."[129] Harris's message was clear. In his view, the navy had become bloated with senior officers who were unfit for command; these individuals embodied a foppish and dissipated model of masculinity which Harris associated with corruption and vice. However, there was hope for the future: a new generation of young and dynamic officers were waiting in the wings, who possessed an innate, genuine and patriotic commitment to the service ("the true *amor patriae*", "the native ardour").

Even though they celebrated youthfulness, Harris's biographies focussed upon captains – men in their twenties who had ascended to significant positions of command. This is typical of the way in which press coverage of the eighteenth-

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[125] For Harris, see: *The Gentleman's Magazine* 59, no. 2 (1789): 865.
[126] Nauticus Junior, *Naval Atalantis*. The first biography appeared in *Morning Herald* on 29 November 1786. See also, D. A. B. Ronald, *Youth, Heroism and War Propaganda: Britain and the Young Maritime Hero, 1745–1820* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 31–2.
[127] Nauticus Junior, *Naval Atalantis*, 1: 17–21, 23.
[128] Nauticus Junior, *Naval Atalantis*, 2: 93.
[129] Nauticus Junior, *Naval Atalantis*, 2: 41.

century navy tended to replicate shipboard command hierarchies, the humble exploits of teenage midshipmen generally remaining beneath public notice, apart from occasional anecdotes and poems which featured young naval recruits as anonymous stock characters.[130] For example, first published in 1784, *The Orlop* was a widely circulated poem providing a humorous account of a midshipman's experiences.[131] The poem's title refers to the orlop deck, where midshipmen were berthed in cramped conditions, deep below the waterline. Most of the humour turns upon the contrast between the gentlemanly social pretensions and fantasies of martial glory entertained by the young occupants of this space and the mundane and sometimes undignified reality of their situation, which largely involved routine chores and the study of navigational textbooks: "At once the sage, the hero, and the cook, / He wields the sword, the saucepan, and the book." Yet, however comical this may seem, the reader is reassured that it will create a new generation of naval heroes: "our youth / Here catch the paths to glory and to truth; / Here learn their country's honours to sustain, / And Albion's empire o'er the waves maintain." Thus, although very different in tone and purpose to Harris's eulogistic biographies, *The Orlop* concludes with a similar message, looking forward to a glorious future in which a fresh crop of young officers will safeguard Britain's national honour and imperial ambitions.

As Daniel O'Quinn reminds us in his study of theatrical responses to the American War, "in moments of social and cultural crisis, many potential outcomes are possible"; it is therefore important for historians "to uncover this sense of potentiality" and to pay close attention to the "apprehension of the time to come".[132] The rebellion and loss of the American colonies created profound anxiety in Britain about what the future would hold for the nation and its empire. This concern with "potentiality" found particularly significant expression in discussions of young men and boys. In his *Addresses to Young Men*, published in 1777, the Reverend James Fordyce implored his adolescent readers to appreciate their own importance to the nation's future, emphasising the potential that they embodied: "to you your country turns her impatient eye, eager to find in your persons her hope, her protection, and

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[130] Ronald, *Youth*, 67–90.

[131] The earliest published version of this poem appears to date from 1784. *The Town and Country Magazine* 16 (1784): 662–3. For another version, see: *The Naval Chronicle* 2 (1797): 525 –27. James Stanier Clarke later claimed that the poem had originally been written by the sailor-poet William Falconer sometime before 1762, but a reference within the text to the Earl of Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son*, published in 1774, casts doubt on this assertion or at least indicates that the verses were reworked at a later date. James Stanier Clarke, "Biographical Memoir of William Falconer," in William Falconer, *The Shipwreck: A Poem* (London: William Miller, 1804), xxii–xxv.

[132] O'Quinn, *Entertaining Crisis*, 39.

her boast".[133] This statement implicitly suggests that the nation had lost hope, was unprotected and lacked reasons to boast, reflecting the pessimistic national mood that followed the rebellion of the American colonies and the early disasters of the war. Young women also had a role to play in maintaining the health of the nation, Fordyce acknowledged, but, whereas he assumed that girls would become wives and mothers, he imagined a diverse range of possible futures for his male readers as "useful members of a mighty state, through all its variety of departments".[134] Indeed, youth was increasingly valorised in various branches of national life in this period, including in the military, in politics and in the arts. However, the navy provided a particularly powerful outlet for this discourse of youthful promise, given the young age at which officers began their careers.

For individual midshipmen, family patronage and networks were more important than public exposure to the progression of their fledgling careers and the establishment of their social status. Consequently, the commissioning of midshipmen's portraits was usually motivated by specific private concerns within the sitter's family. However, with their emphasis upon their young subjects' readiness to serve in the midst of war, we might read the portraits of Brine and Yorke in relation to the sense of potentiality that structured Harris's biographies, *The Orlop*'s rhetoric and Fordyce's advice. It would seem that Romney and Copley seized upon broader national anxieties in order to suggest the importance of their private patrons' seafaring offspring, thereby bolstering the status claims of the Yorke and Brine families.

VI

As we have seen, carrying overtures of both optimism and anxiety, the representation of adolescent boys in Britain in this period was an important manifestation of a wider range of concerns about heroic masculinity, which multiplied rapidly as a result of the loss of the American colonies and the flourishing cult of sensibility. These concerns can also be seen in the two full-length naval portraits that featured in the one-man show hosted by Thomas Gainsborough at his studio in Schomberg House on Pall Mall in late spring 1784, after a dispute with the Royal Academy over the hanging of his pictures led to the artist pulling out of the institution's annual exhibition.[135] One of these naval portraits, exhibited in "an

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[133] Fordyce, *Addresses*, 1: 13.
[134] Fordyce, *Addresses*, 1: 13.
[135] Michael Rosenthal, *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1999), 95–113.

unfinished state", depicted the sixty-six-year-old Admiral George Brydges Rodney, the victorious commander of the British fleet at the Saintes (1783–6, Dalmeny House, fig. 108).[136] In this picture, Rodney is shown pointing commandingly on the quarterdeck of his flagship in the aftermath of the battle. Smoke billows from a burning vessel in the background and the captured French colours are draped behind the admiral like swags of drapery in an aristocratic portrait or, moreover, like stage curtains, lending the picture a distinctly theatrical quality. Thus, although Gainsborough attempts to present his aging sitter as a heroic and victorious figure, glossing over Britain's overall defeat in the American War by celebrating Rodney's triumph in one particular battle, the effect is undermined somewhat by the image's performative and contrived appearance.

The other full-length naval portrait in the artist's Schomberg House exhibition applied a similarly theatrical approach to the image of a younger officer – the thirty-one-year-old Captain George Cranfield Berkeley (1784, Berkeley Castle, fig. 109), who had previously been painted by Francis Cotes as a sixteen-year-old midshipman in 1769, as discussed above. Gainsborough's portrait was probably produced to commemorate Berkeley's upcoming marriage, which took place on 23 August 1784.[137] In a highly dynamic composition, the captain is shown striding forward, brandishing his hanger (a curved naval short sword) in a beckoning gesture which, according to the artist's friend and publicist Henry Bate-Dudley, was intended to represent the action of "waving a boat to shore".[138] Indeed, the listing man-of-war and massive crashing waves in the background of the painting suggest that a shipwreck may be imminent, inviting us to imagine that Berkeley is guiding the survivors to the safety of the beach. As such, the portrait shows its sitter engaged in a struggle with the elements rather than against an enemy, Gainsborough inventing a fictional pretext for heroic action – no such incident is known from Berkeley's career – which exists at a remove from the problematic actualities of the American War.

John Steegman suggests that this painting openly alludes to the famous full-length portrait of Augustus Keppel produced by Joshua Reynolds in 1752–3 (National Maritime Museum, fig. 31), in which the sitter also strides across a storm-

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[136] *Morning Herald*, 26 July, 1784.
[137] "Biographical Memoir of the Hon. George Cranfield Berkeley," *The Naval Chronicle* 12 (1804): 113; Mark De Toy, "Berkeley, Sir George Cranfield (1753–1818)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/2213.
[138] *Morning Herald*, 26 July, 1784.

swept beach in the aftermath of a shipwreck, as discussed in chapter one.[139] From Berkeley's perspective, this allusion would have been attractive as an homage to his relative and patron, for Keppel was his father's cousin and had mentored the young officer at the start of his naval career. Meanwhile, following his fallout with the Academy, Gainsborough perhaps felt minded to challenge his old rival Reynolds at his own game – a somewhat ironic decision given that, as we have seen, Reynolds had recently adopted a Gainsborough-like approach in his posthumous portrait of the late Lord Robert Manners. Yet, although the design of Berkeley's portrait emulates Reynolds, the picture displays the spontaneous handling of paint that was Gainsborough's hallmark: the foaming waves in the background are a mass of heavy impasto, whilst the young captain's lower body has only been loosely sketched in scumbled strokes of paint. These effects emphasise the painting's status as a work of art, encouraging viewers to see Berkeley's heroism as a somewhat fanciful product of the artist's imagination.

In Gainsborough's absence, one of the most celebrated works at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1784 also featured a narrative of shipwreck, and likewise registered the contemporary ambivalence around heroic masculinity. The centrepiece of the display on the west wall of the Great Room was James Northcote's *Wreck of the Centaur*, a contemporary history painting now known only through Thomas Gauguin's engraving (1784, fig. 110).[140] This work had a naval theme, representing the dramatic escape of Captain John Nicholson Inglefield and eleven of his crew from the wreck of his ship, the *Centaur* (74 guns), during a mid-Atlantic hurricane in September 1782.[141] As a history painting, Northcote's picture lies beyond the scope of this thesis, but a few salient points are worth noting here because they intersect with the arguments of this chapter. In the image, the survivors are seen frantically pushing their small boat away from the stricken ship and hauling a young, long-haired boy from the waves, saving him in the nick of time from being crushed against the *Centaur*'s hull. According to Inglefield's published narrative of the wreck, this figure was fifteen-year-old Midshipman Robert Bayles, who had made a desperate leap for the boat as it departed the ship, leaving behind hundreds of other crewmen to their fates.[142] The picture is packed with straining,

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[139] John Steegman, "A Gainsborough Adaptation of Reynolds," *The Burlington Magazine* 80, no. 469 (Apr. 1942): 98–9, 101.
[140] Geoff Quilley, *Empire to Nation: Art, History and the Visualisation of Maritime Britain, 1768–1829* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 2011), 113–43.
[141] Northcote's depiction of this event is based on John Nicholson Inglefield, *Capt. Inglefield's Narrative, concerning the Loss of His Majesty's Ship the Centaur, of Seventy-four Guns* (London: J. Murray, 1783).
[142] Inglefield, *Narrative*, 26.

muscular bodies but, as Martin Myrone notes, this heroic activity is removed from the war itself, sidestepping "the issue of military achievement (or, more to the point, the absence thereof)" and instead presenting a spectacular struggle between man and nature, which offers viewers a visceral thrill but little moral instruction.[143] Furthermore, in Midshipman Bayles, Northcote's painting focusses upon the image of an adolescent boy whose life hangs in the balance, resonating with the emphasis on youthful masculinity that, as we have seen, played an important role in naval portraiture in this period. Specifically, the motif of the floundering Bayles powerfully suggests the sense of uncertainty that haunted images of naval youth during the American War, raising both the hope of survival and the fear of disaster.

However, eagle-eyed visitors to the Royal Academy in 1784 might have spotted another painting which showed a young naval officer in a rather different light. Displayed at the exhibition in close proximity to the *Wreck of the Centaur*, Mason Chamberlin's portrait of nineteen-year-old William Bentinck (1784, private collection, fig. 111) may have been commissioned by the sitter himself or by his widowed mother.[144] Chamberlin had previously painted William as an eleven-year-old boy receiving instruction in the technicalities of seamanship from his father in a double portrait painted shortly before the latter's death, as discussed in detail in the introduction to this thesis (1775, National Maritime Museum, fig. 1). In returning to the same artist, the Bentinck family perhaps envisioned the new picture of William as a follow-up to the earlier painting, confirming that the son was now ready to succeed his late father as a successful naval officer and as head of the family. Whereas the double portrait showed a prepubescent William embarking upon his naval career, the later work demonstrated that he had grown in the intervening years into a mature man and a commissioned officer. Specifically, it commemorated his promotion to the rank of post-captain in September 1783 at the exceptionally young age of nineteen.[145] He is shown leaning on a table in a dark interior, wearing the undress uniform of a captain under three years' seniority and resting his left arm on an Admiralty commission appointing him to the command of the *Assistance* (50 guns). His brown hair is tied back in a queue, and he has thick, manly eyebrows. As Pointon notes, "hair is so closely associated with masculine vitality in Western culture" that, in eighteenth-century portraiture, eyebrows and head hair can work "as a summation of adolescent male vigour".[146] The portrait thus celebrates Bentinck's

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[143] Myrone, *Bodybuilding*, 216.
[144] Richard W. Goulding, *Catalogue of the Pictures Belonging to His Grace the Duke of Portland, K. G.* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1936), 11.
[145] *Commissioned Sea Officers*, 1: 62 [annotated Caird Library copy].
[146] Pointon, *Portrayal*, 98.

successful transition from boyhood to manhood and also his rapid ascent through the ranks, providing a positive counterpoint to the image of the imperilled midshipman in Northcote's naval history painting.

The coming-of-age message in William Bentinck's portrait was underscored by its juxtaposition on the walls of the family home at Terrington St Clement in Norfolk with a pendant portrait of the sitter's fourteen-year-old younger brother, John (1784, private collection, fig. 112). As recorded in a drawing by Edward Francis Burney (1784, British Museum, fig. 113), the two works were also displayed as a pair at the Royal Academy, where they hung at the top of the west wall, either side of Edward Edwards's *Allegory of Music* (untraced) and directly above the *Wreck of the Centaur*.[147] In his portrait, John Bentinck appears as a distinctly childish figure with long blonde hair and an open-necked shirt. Half-standing and half-kneeling on a mound in an idyllic natural setting, he wraps his arms around a spaniel, his easy and playful appearance contrasting with his brother's sober and mature professionalism. In stark opposition to the imagery of shipwreck, storm and physical strain in Northcote's picture, Chamberlin does not represent the young captain as an actively heroic figure, nor does he allude in the portrait to the dangers of naval service. Instead, William is presented as a refined, perhaps even sentimental man. A large, oval-shaped, diamond-encircled cravat pin pokes out from his waistcoat and, on the little finger of his left hand, he wears a gold signet ring, similar to the one worn by his father in the earlier double portrait. These items of jewellery suggest not only William's wealth and refinement but also his capacity for feeling, the ring perhaps representing a deliberate reference to his father's image and thus signalling his filial affection and his status as the late captain's heir. The display of William's portrait beside that of his younger brother may have further enhanced the sentimental resonances of the picture, suggesting the emotional bonds within the family.

This chapter began with a discussion of Reynolds's posthumous portrait of Lord Robert Manners, which was also commissioned to commemorate the fraternal affection between two brothers. As we have seen, Reynolds struggled in this painting to balance public and private demands, providing, on the one hand, a sentimental memento for Manners's grief-stricken brother and, on the other, a work that acknowledged the national implications and resonances of the young captain's death. Chamberlin did not face the same dilemma, given that his sitter was alive and lacked Manners's celebrity profile. His emphasis upon William Bentinck's

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[147] *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy, M.DCC.LXXXIV. The Sixteenth.* (London: T. Cadell, 1784), 4.

private sensibilities stands at one extreme of the spectrum of masculine identities assigned to young naval officers in portraiture during this period, many of which sought to strike a balance between sentiment and predictions of future heroism. Images of young naval officers spoke to broader concerns about the victimhood and vulnerability of the nation during the American War, whilst also offering a (fragile) hope for the future. The emphasis upon youthful potential and private feeling was important because it suggested that Britain's next generation of officers possessed certain innate and inherent characteristics: they were not simply performers who had learnt to look the part. As we shall see in the next chapter, anxieties about heroism, performance and artifice continued to plague the representation of sea officers beyond the end of the American War, enduring into the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793–1815) and becoming especially pronounced after the authority of the quarterdeck was destabilised by a series of major mutinies in 1797.

CHAPTER FOUR

"My pride is now humbled indeed!":
Mutiny and the image of authority

In spring 1797, the Royal Navy fleets at Spithead and the Nore were disabled by mutiny, their sailors petitioning the Admiralty to address a range of serious complaints, including low wages (which had not increased since the mid-seventeenth century), poor provisions and inadequate care for the wounded.[1] The Spithead mutiny was resolved peacefully in mid-May, after the First Lord of the Admiralty agreed to most of the seamen's demands and obtained a royal pardon for the mutineers. At the Nore, however, the sailors issued a more extensive list of grievances and the government refused to negotiate further, instead quashing the mutiny by cutting off the rebels' supplies. By 13 June, all of the mutinous ships had been recaptured (sometimes violently) by loyalist seamen, and the leaders of the insurrection were subsequently court-martialled and hanged, the Admiralty seeking to make examples of them. These events took place in a decade characterised by revolution on the Continent, radical agitation at home, extreme counterrevolutionary paranoia, heavy-handed state censorship and propaganda wars.[2] Britain had been fighting the new French republic since 1793 and the nation was under serious and continuous threat of invasion. Against this backdrop, the mutinies shattered already fragile patriotic and political certainties.

A number of scholars, including Timothy Jenks, Isaac Land, Gillian Russell and Geoff Quilley, have explored responses to the mutinies within contemporary literature, theatre and visual art.[3] However, these investigations have largely focussed on the figure of the common tar, demonstrating how the mutinies brought about, in Quilley's words, "a remarkable shift in attitude towards the ordinary sailor".

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[1] The most recent account of the Nore and Spithead mutinies is Philip MacDougall and Ann Veronica Coats (eds.), *The Naval Mutinies of 1797: Unity and Perseverance* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011). See also, W. J. Neale, *History of the Mutiny at Spithead and the Nore* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1842); Conrad Gill, *The Naval Mutinies of 1797* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1913); G. E. Manwaring and Bonamy Dobree, *The Floating Republic: An Account of the Mutinies at Spithead and the Nore in 1797* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1935); James Dugan, *The Great Mutiny* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1966).
[2] For the broader political history of the 1790s, see: John Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006). See also, David Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution* (London: British Museum, 1989).
[3] Timothy Jenks, *Naval Engagements: Patriotism, Cultural Politics, and the Royal Navy 1793–1815* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), 88–109; Isaac Land, *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor, 1750–1850* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 97–104; Gillian Russell, *The Theatres of War: Performance, Politics, and Society, 1793–1815* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 101–4; Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 167–8, 181–7.

Granting the seamen greater agency and an enhanced capacity for heroism, which recognised the independence, humanity and political organisation they had demonstrated during the mutinies, this shift implicitly acknowledged "that the stereotype of Jack Tar as the unthinkingly loyal 'son of Britannia', which had been the predominant character attributed to the sailor during the eighteenth century, could no longer be sustained in the light of recent events."[4] Relatively little attention has been paid to the concomitant effect of these events upon the image of the naval officer, which was no less profound: if the unthinking obedience of the lower decks could no longer be taken for granted, then neither could the unquestionable authority of the quarterdeck. This chapter seeks to examine the impact of the mutinies on the representation of officers, exploring how portraiture was used to reaffirm naval hierarchies.

Studies of the power dynamics within the eighteenth-century navy have emphasised the important role that performance traditionally played in the exercise of command.[5] An officer's authority was perpetually reinforced through various rituals, ceremonies and carefully choreographed operations, such as reading the articles of war, dispensing punishments and patrolling the quarterdeck. All of these performances took place in full view of the sailors, turning the ship into a theatre of power. The parallels between command and theatrical performance were recognised in the eighteenth century. Recalling a season that he spent performing in Plymouth in the late 1780s, the actor John Bernard noted that the sailors in the audience described the parts of the theatre using naval terminology: "the pit they called the hold; the gallery, up aloft, or the maintop landing; the boxes, the cabin; and the stage, the quarter-deck."[6] If the quarterdeck was like the stage, then it followed that the officers were like actors.

However, the mutinies broke the spell of the officers' performances. In order to subvert the navy's traditional hierarchies, the mutineers deliberately appropriated and parodied the rituals, ceremonies and symbolic trappings of naval command. As Greg Dening writes, "in an institution in which they were participant audience to a constant theatre of power, the seamen turned the stage around and played the actors, directors and producers in a variety of dramatic tropes."[7] They occupied the spaces of command, the quarterdeck and the captain's cabin; they issued written orders; they carried out courts martial; they staged celebratory pageants in the

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[4] Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 168. See also, Land, *War*, 100–2.

[5] Dening, *Bad Language*, 113–56. See also, Jones, "Masculinity," 99–113.

[6] John Bernard, *Retrospections of the Stage*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 2: 129.

[7] Dening, *Bad Language*, 146.

dockyard; and they flew their own red flag from the mainmast in place of an admiral's flag. These actions helped to demystify the aura of authority around the naval profession by exposing its reliance upon symbolism and performance. In this way, the lower deck rebels insinuated that officers were simply acting the part, rather than inherently worthy of command.

Officers therefore needed to find a way of anchoring their authority such that it could not easily be dismissed as an empty performance. In keeping with the ship-as-theatre metaphor, the acting profession provided a model for how this might be achieved. In recent years, historians of the stage have begun using the term "public intimacy" to describe how eighteenth-century performers appealed to their audiences and became celebrities.[8] Initially coined by Joseph Roach, "public intimacy" refers to the idea that actors and actresses were most successful when they allowed aspects of their own personal identity – their sex appeal, their charisma, their emotion – to shine through the established conventions of a genre, creating an appearance of naturalness and a sense that the performance was rooted in something real.[9] In formulating this concept, theatre historians have drawn upon a broader body of scholarship tracing the increasing fusion of public and private life over the course of the long eighteenth century. Built upon influential texts such as Richard Sennett's *Fall of Public Man* (1977), this literature argues that public performances came in this period to be viewed as a suspect measure of personal virtue and as potential vehicles for artful deceit.[10] Instead, individuals were judged more and more by what their behaviour seemed to reveal of their intimate feelings and motivations. This chapter argues that the navy was one area of public life where the shift towards "public intimacy" can be observed.

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[8] Luckhurst and Moody (eds.), *Theatre and Celebrity*, esp. 12–61; Emrys D. Jones and Victoria Joule (eds.), *Intimacy and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century Literary Culture: Public Interiors* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). See also, Jean-Christophe Agnew's exploration of the links between the theatre and the emergence of a "commodity self" in the period 1550–1750; Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986), esp. 149–94.
[9] Joseph Roach, "Public Intimacy: The Prior History of 'It'," in *Theatre and Celebrity*, ed. Luckhurst and Moody, 15–30. See also, Felicity Nussbaum's work on the "interiority effect": Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theatre* (Philadelphia/Oxford: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 20.
[10] Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977). For an overview of the literature on this subject, see: Jeff Weintraub, "The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction," in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, ed. Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1997), 1–42.

I

Before the mutinies, the dominant image of the common sailor in eighteenth-century British culture was "Jack Tar", a comical stock character who frequently featured in ballads, plays and satirical prints. Usually clothed in loose-fitting striped trousers and a short jacket, Jack was portrayed as a creature of feeling or base instinct, who was naturally subordinate to the rational authority of the officer corps.[11] In the wake of the mutinies, loyalist commentators sought to reassert this stereotype by blaming the insurrection on the corrupting influence of external political agents who, it was claimed, had led the supposedly impressionable tars astray.[12] This argument was given visual form in Isaac Cruikshank's satirical print, *The Delegates in Council* (1797, fig. 114), which represents a group of mutineers meeting around a table in a ship's cabin.[13] Two ballads are pinned on the wall in the background – "True Blue" and "Hearts of Oak". These titles allude to the courage and loyalty that Jack Tar supposedly embodied but the pages are torn, symbolically suggesting that the sailors have abandoned these ideals. The seamen grip various knives and pistols, making them appear violent and threatening. However, they are denied independent agency, for the print is really about the figures around the edges of the table, who vie for the hearts and minds of the mutineers. Charles James Fox – widely caricatured as a Francophile revolutionary – hides beneath the table with his friends in the parliamentary opposition, admitting "Aye, aye, we are at the bottom of it". Meanwhile, pouring drinks for the mutineers at the right-hand end of the table stands the radical orator John Thelwall, his long nose and short-cropped hair recognisable from other caricatures and portraits of this period.[14] In his pocket, there is a piece of paper inscribed "Thelwall Lectu[re]" and a speech bubble above the figure reads "Tell him we intend to be Masters, I'll read him a Lecture", both details referring to his famous political lecture tours.[15] The "him" to whom Thelwall refers is the naval officer at the opposite end of the table. This figure probably represents

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[11] For this stereotype, see: James Davey and Richard Johns, *Broadsides: Caricature and the Navy 1756–1815* (Barnsley: Seaforth, 2012), 30–9.

[12] For example, *Times*, 9 June, 1797. The degree of outside interference in the mutinies is a long-running source of scholarly debate. See Rodger, *Command*, 448–52, for an overview. See also, MacDougall and Coats (eds.), *Naval Mutinies*, 39–60, 120–41, 179–93.

[13] Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 182; Davey and Johns, *Broadsides*, 60; James Davey, "Mutiny and Insecurity," in *Nelson, Navy and Nation*, ed. Colville and Davey, 140–1.

[14] Steve Poole, "Gillray, Cruikshank and Thelwall: Visual Satire, Physiognomy and the Jacobin Body," in *John Thelwall: Critical Reassessments (Romantic Circles Praxis Series)*, ed. Yasmin Solomonescu (College Park: Univ. of Maryland, Sept. 2011), online ed., https://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/thelwall/HTML/praxis.2011.poole.html.

[15] For Thelwall, see: Michael Scrivener, *Seditious Allegories: John Thelwall and Jacobin Writing* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2001); Steve Poole (ed.), *John Thelwall: Radical Romantic and Acquitted Felon* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009).

Vice-Admiral Charles Buckner, who was sent to negotiate with the mutineers at the Nore.[16] Thelwall and Buckner lock eyes with one another across the print, suggesting they are engaged in a battle over the sailors' loyalties. Although he has been pushed to the margins of the image, the vice-admiral remains upright, calm and collected, reassuring viewers that the power of the quarterdeck remains strong, despite the mutineers' insurrection.

Against the loyalist message offered by Cruikshank's print, the radical and opposition press represented the mutinies in very different terms, suggesting that the rebels were consciously engaged in a righteous political struggle and sympathising with their efforts to challenge the established command hierarchy. In particular, opposition writers focussed upon Richard Parker, who was appointed "President" of the mutineers at the Nore.[17] Parker was not a typical lower deck sailor.[18] As an educated young man from a well-off family, he had initially entered the navy as a prospective officer and served for a time as a midshipman. However, after coming ashore and getting into financial difficulties, he re-enlisted as an able seaman to escape debtors' prison. Although he was not one of the instigators of the mutiny, he accepted an invitation to join the rebels, who selected him as their leader because of his education and gentlemanly manners: he could lend legitimacy to their cause because he knew how to behave like an officer.

An article published in the opposition-supporting *Morning Chronicle* emphasised Parker's officer-like qualities.[19] It was preceded by a poem that recognised the illegality of his actions (to dispute this would have been highly incendiary, given the government's oppressive policies against "seditious libel") but also defended his good intentions and dignified character, presenting him as a natural leader: "A hero by nature, though traitor by fate…He fell as he ought for breaking the laws / But fell as a man." The article which followed asserted that Parker was "capable of serious and deep reflection", spoke in a "bold and original" manner and possessed a "peculiar energy of intellect". "His passions", the paper claimed, "though strong, bore no proportion to the strength of his reason" and his inspirational speeches would "be long retained by almost every ship's company

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[16] For Buckner's role as negotiator, see: Philip MacDougall, "The East Coast Mutinies: May–June 1797," in *Naval Mutinies*, ed. MacDougall and Coats, 152–3.

[17] For Parker's representation, see: Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 99–107; Nicholas Tracy, *Britannia's Palette: The Arts of Naval Victory* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 2007), 111.

[18] The following account of Parker's biography is based upon Ann Veronica Coats, "Parker, Richard (1767–1797)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/21333*.

[19] *Morning Chronicle*, 12 Oct., 1797. The same article also appeared in *Star*, 13 Oct., 1797.

among whom he was for any time stationary". In the same article, the provost marshal – the naval officer in charge of imprisoning Parker prior to court martial – was constructed as a foil for the charismatic seaman. Given the monstrous nickname "Cyclops", the marshal was presented as an "unfeeling creature", the paper commenting on his "surly habits", his "cool systematic barbarism" and his "grotesque appearance, especially in uniform". As this example shows, the heroic representation of Parker challenged the officer corps's monopoly over public virtue. Although it was confined to the radical and opposition publications, this rhetoric raised the possibility that officers might be less qualified for leadership than those they were supposed to command. Whether he wore an officer's uniform or sailors' slops, an individual's clothing did not automatically guarantee anything about his moral substance.

Parker's supporters also used portraiture to celebrate his leadership credentials. On 12 July 1797, shortly after Parker's execution on 30 June, the print-seller William Bromley published a portrait print of the mutineer engraved after an "original picture" painted by the sailor-turned-artist Samuel Drummond (fig. 115). As the print's caption reveals, Parker consented to the production of this picture, having posed for the portrait during his incarceration in Maidstone Gaol. He is portrayed sympathetically by Drummond, a supporter of the political reform movement who, as a former seaman himself, had a personal interest in naval affairs.[20] Having abandoned his seagoing career and begun painting in the early 1790s, Drummond was a prolific exhibitor at the Royal Academy, where he usually showed historical subjects and portraits of naval officers.[21] The fact that Drummond was known for painting officers' portraits helped to invest Parker's image with legitimacy, since it suggested that the mutineer deserved to have his likeness recorded as much as his superiors on the quarterdeck.

However, Drummond represents Parker differently from the naval officers whose portraits he produced around the same time. At the Royal Academy in 1798, Drummond exhibited a portrait of Captain Sir John Borlase Warren, which is now known through James Stow's engraving, published on 22 July 1799 (fig. 116).[22] In this full-length portrait, naval authority is associated with heightened visual drama

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[20] Samuel Redgrave, *A Dictionary of Artists of the English School*, new ed. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1878), 130–1; Tracy, *Britannia's Palette*, 112; Geoff Quilley, "Drummond, Samuel (1765?–1844)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/8082.

[21] Graves, *Royal Academy*, 2: 373–6.

[22] In the print, Warren wears rear-admiral's uniform, rather than captain's uniform, reflecting the promotion that he received on 14 February 1799. For Warren's biography, see: Walter Vernon Anson, *The Life of Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren* (Privately printed, 1914).

and spectacular display: resplendent in his full-dress uniform and the sash of the Order of the Bath, Warren is silhouetted against a torrent of smoke issuing from a nearby ship. He strikes a static pose against this explosive backdrop, relying upon the grandeur of his surroundings and the splendour of his clothing to communicate his dignity and power. Next to this sensational imagery, Parker's bust-length portrait appears sober and austere. The mutineer wears a plain, dark-coloured coat and, in the background, there is a barren beach and an empty sea. Rather than emphasising the sitter's costume or surroundings, Drummond highlights Parker's youthfully earnest and expressive features, the sitter's distant gaze making him appear intensely thoughtful. The turn of his head imbues his pose with a subtle dynamism, evoking his reputed "energy of intellect". Furthermore, the thick border around the portrait creates a sense of dignity and suggests posthumous memory, recalling the appearance of a funerary monument or the fictive stonework conventionally included memorial prints. Indeed, some of the print's pathos lies in the juxtaposition of the seemingly vivacious, feeling and thoughtful image of Parker with signs of his death. Describing Parker as "Late President of the Delegates at the Nore", the inscription reinforces the tone of funereal reverence. The coastal backdrop suggests Parker's identity as a sailor but, due to the absence of ships, no specific allusion is made to the mutinies. In this way, Drummond echoes the circumspect rhetoric of the *Morning Chronicle*'s poem: without explicitly endorsing the crime of mutiny, his portrait glorifies Parker as an individual, celebrating his animation, intelligence and charisma and mourning his loss. It eschews the highly theatrical imagery of Warren's portrait and instead concentrates upon Parker's personal qualities, creating a distinctive political persona that subverts the navy's established institutional hierarchies.

Alongside the radical effort to celebrate Parker, caricatured portraits propounded a more condemnatory message. However, their sentiments were often tempered by ambiguity. Published by William Holland during the Nore Mutiny, *Parker the Delegate* (1797, fig. 117) juxtaposes the sitter with a gallows as a warning to other potential lower-deck rebels of the fate that awaited mutineers. It is curious that Holland should have published this seemingly loyalist caricature, given that he moved in radical circles and had been convicted of "seditious libel" in 1793 for selling copies of Thomas Paine's *Letter to the Addressers* (1792).[23] The print represents Parker as a stereotypical common sailor in striped trousers and a short

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[23] David Alexander, *Richard Newton and English Caricature in the 1790s* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1998), 34–8.

jacket but, as we saw in *The Delegates in Council*, the comical aspects of the Jack Tar persona have been replaced with an undercurrent of threat: Parker has four pistols thrust in his belt and leans on his sword. Moreover, the image as a whole is composed like an officer's portrait, depicting Parker alone on a clifftop with his rebel fleet anchored behind him. Through the contrast of lower-deck costume and high-art convention, the print was perhaps intended to portray Parker as a plebeian sailor caught up in a self-aggrandising fantasy of power but, in so doing, it blurs the traditional aesthetic boundaries between officers and seamen.

A few weeks later, the print-seller William Chamberlain published an etching entitled *Richard Parker, President of the Delegates in the late Mutiny in his Majesty's Fleet at the Nore, For Which he suffered Death on board the Sandwich the 30th of June 1797* (fig. 118). This print depicts an athletic young man, smartly dressed in a double-breasted coat, tight-fitting breeches and fashionable calf-high boots. He is shown striking a dynamic pose on the deck of a ship, pivoting on his front foot and drawing his sword. With the point of the weapon, he gestures towards a body hanging from the yardarm. Scholars have interpreted this image in two ways. In both readings, the hanged man is understood to represent Parker, which makes sense given the caption's reference to his execution. However, the identity of the foreground figure is disputed. According to one school of thought, he is an idealised naval officer, who stands for the triumph of the rightful order over the forces of revolution.[24] By contrast, the other interpretation suggests that he also represents Parker, turning the print into a pictorial version of the penitential gallows speech – a central component in the cultural apparatus of corporal punishment in eighteenth-century Britain – in which the condemned man admits his crimes and acknowledges the justice of his sentence.[25]

These two readings highlight the ambivalent character of the print. The young man in the foreground is not clearly identified as either a sailor or an officer. Belonging to a higher class than Jack Tar's traditional costume, his fashionable clothing could represent a simplified version of naval uniform but it does not correspond to any specific eighteenth-century uniform pattern. Furthermore, he is surrounded by weaponry, standing beside a cannon and brandishing his sword with one pistol tucked in his belt as another lies discarded on the deck. Recalling Holland's heavily armed *Parker the Delegate*, this suggests violence, intimidation

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[24] Geoff Quilley, catalogue entry, in *Nelson and Napoléon*, ed. Margarette Lincoln (London: National Maritime Museum, 2005), 31, no. 35.
[25] National Maritime Museum, "Richard Parker President of the Delegates in the late Mutiny," *Royal Museums Greenwich Collections*, online, http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/145388.html.

and criminality more than legitimate authority. For this reason, it seems most likely that Chamberlain's print was indeed intended as a portrait of both crime and punishment, in which Parker was depicted twice. Yet it is important to acknowledge the picture's ambiguity, which demonstrates that, in this moment of upheaval, the aesthetic distinctions between authority and rebellion had become malleable. The mutineers had asserted their leadership credentials by laying claim to the qualities of intelligence, autonomy and individuality, which had traditionally been the preserve of the officer corps. They were also associated with youth and mobility, characteristics which could appear heroic or threatening depending on the context. Although cheap prints like those published by Holland and Chamberlain did not directly influence officers' portraiture, they encapsulate broader cultural anxieties about naval authority that officers' portraitists were required to address.

II

Opening almost exactly one year after the outbreak of the Spithead mutiny, the Royal Academy exhibition in 1798 included a portrait that sought to reaffirm the hierarchical relationship between the quarterdeck and the lower deck. In John Russell's *Vice-Admiral Richard Onslow* (1797–8, Guildford Guildhall, fig. 119), the sitter stands on the deck of a man-of-war, gesturing towards a captured enemy flag, which is supported by a common tar. It was exceptionally unusual for lower deck sailors to appear in officers' portraits, which typically represented the naval sitter in isolation, rendering invisible the labour of the seamen whom he commanded and thus framing his authority as solitary and self-sufficient. For Geoff Quilley, the exclusion of sailors from officers' portraiture "may be a form of aesthetic reproduction of social stratification typical of eighteenth-century art, but it has a more acute and specific political significance in the context of the maritime."[26] In portraits, the successes (and failures) of the Royal Navy were physically embodied in the person of the officer, even though they resulted from the efforts of hundreds, if not thousands, of sailors. However, the mutinies posed a challenge to this aesthetic fiction by demonstrating how the fleet could be paralysed if the sailors refused to enact their officers' orders.

Russell's decision to break with convention by including a sailor prominently in his painting can be understood as a response to the mutinies, acknowledging the fact that the obedience of the tars could no longer be taken for granted. However, the artist presents the relationship between officer and sailor as harmonious and

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[26] Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 170.

hierarchical, soothing the anxieties about lower deck loyalty raised by the insurrections at Spithead and the Nore. Largely screened from view by the captured flag, the sailor is literally disembodied and his capacity for independent action is thus obscured. He stares adoringly at Onslow in a manner that suggests his respect for and willing submission to the authority of his superior, his crouching posture and marginal position in the composition further underscoring his subservience. Emphasised by his red waistcoat, his ruddy complexion denotes his working-class status, which Russell plays off against the attributes of gentility that surround Onslow, such as his full-dress uniform and his sword. The fifty-six-year-old vice-admiral is visibly aging with a bulging paunch, sagging jowls and white (possibly powdered) hair.[27] His fatherly (or grandfatherly) appearance relative to the youthful sailor allows the naval command structure to be imagined in paternalistic terms, the officer embodying a benevolent authority to which the naïve seaman is naturally subordinate.

According to the lengthy title in the Royal Academy exhibition catalogue, the work shows "Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Onslow, who first broke the Dutch line in the late memorable action under Rear-Admiral Lord Duncan; Sir Richard is represented as receiving Vice-Admiral Reintze's flag, whose ship he captured."[28] The "late memorable action" in question was the Battle of Camperdown, a chaotic and bloody engagement which took place on 11 October 1797, resulting in a resounding victory for the British over the Dutch.[29] The latter had joined the war in early 1795 after the previous Dutch government had been overthrown, leading to the creation of a new state, named the Batavian Republic, which was allied with revolutionary France.[30] Having received intelligence in May 1795 that the French intended to use the Batavian navy to invade Britain, the Admiralty ordered Admiral Adam Duncan (mistakenly described as "Rear-Admiral" in Russell's title) to blockade the Dutch fleet in the Texel. Hoisting his flag in the *Monarch* (74 guns), Onslow was appointed as Duncan's second-in-command. Consisting of sixteen ships-of-the-line, their fleet successfully maintained the blockade for over two years, despite hostile weather conditions in the North Sea and, more significantly, the mutinies in spring 1797. During the Nore mutiny, the majority of the fleet abandoned their posts to join the

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[27] R. D. Franks, "Admiral Sir Richard Onslow," *Mariner's Mirror* 67 (1981): 327.

[28] *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy M,DCC,XCVIII* (London: J. Cooper, 1798), 8.

[29] For the Battle of Camperdown, see: Earl of Camperdown, *Admiral Duncan* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898), 172–237; Christopher Lloyd, *St Vincent and Camperdown* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1963), 133–57.

[30] For the Batavian Republic, see: Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780–1813* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 211–44.

rebellion, leaving only the two admirals' flagships and one frigate to patrol the Dutch coast. This desperate situation persisted for several weeks until the mutiny ended and the other ships returned.[31] Four months later, the Dutch finally ventured out of port, whereupon they were engaged and defeated by the British fleet a few miles offshore from the village of Camperduin (anglicised as Camperdown).

As Timothy Jenks has shown, the celebrations that greeted this victory in Britain were the most expansive in recent memory as the government and the loyalist press sought to present the battle as proof that harmony had been restored after the mutinies.[32] In the words of the *General Evening Post*, the action had "enabled our gallant tars, the saviours of their country, to redeem their character from the disgrace which temporarily attached to it from the insurrections at the Nore, &c. and to add a new lustre to the name of British seamen, which a moment of error had covered with shame."[33] Such laudatory press coverage complemented the state's official campaign of commemoration, which included the staging of an elaborate Naval Thanksgiving service at St Paul's Cathedral, the intense fervour of these festivities betraying the profound sense of crisis engendered by the mutinies.[34]

Russell's portrait was part of the widespread celebration of the victory. Shown proffering a Dutch flag to his commander, the sailor's role within the painting accords with the loyalist interpretation of the battle as having enabled the lower decks to redeem themselves through the deliverance of a glorious victory. Although he avoided public involvement in politics, the artist's private diary entries reveal that he held staunchly conservative opinions and possessed a sincere reverence for monarchy, suggesting that he would have been inclined to interpret the battle in a similar manner to the loyalist propagandists.[35] The flag represents the colours of the Dutch Rear-Admiral Hermanus Reijntjes, who surrendered to Onslow during the

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[31] Brian Lavery, "1797: Mutiny and Battle," in *Glorious Victory: Admiral Duncan and The Battle of Camperdown 1797*, ed. Janice Murray (Dundee: Dundee City Council, 1997), 17–23; Rodger, *Command*, 426–56; Philip MacDougall, "'We went out with Admiral Duncan, we came back without him': Mutiny and the North Sea Squadron," in *Naval Mutinies*, ed. MacDougall and Coats, 243–63.

[32] Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 107–23. For the reporting and celebration of the victory, see also, Lloyd, *St Vincent and Camperdown*, 158–63.

[33] *General Evening Post*, 12–14 Oct., 1797. Rhetoric like this was widespread in contemporary newspapers; see, for example: *London Chronicle*, 12–14 Oct., 1797; *St James's Chronicle*, 12–14 Oct., 1797.

[34] For the naval thanksgiving, see: Lynda Pratt, "Naval Contemplation," *Journal for Maritime Research* 2, no. 1 (Dec. 2000): 84–105; Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 114–23. For the cultural response to the battle, see: Helen Smailes, "Prints and Propaganda: The Artists' Victory," in *Glorious Victory*, ed. Murray, 51–69.

[35] For Russell's politics, see: Antje Matthews, "John Russell (1745–1806) and the Impact of Evangelicalism and Natural Theology on Artistic Practice," (PhD diss., Univ. of Leicester, 2005), 47–9.

battle and whose name (misspelt "Reintzes" and erroneously called "Vice Admiral") is written on the fabric. This inscription appears below the distinctive jack of the new Batavian Republic, which features the Netherlandish Lion (or *Leo Belgicus*) and the Netherlandish Maiden – two traditional symbols of the Dutch nation – grasping a spear topped by a cap of liberty.[36] Indicating this motif with his gesture, Onslow draws attention to the defeat of a republican enemy, whilst on the deck below, we see a diagrammatic battle plan (fig. 120) that shows the *Monarch*, the vice-admiral's flagship, cutting across the bow of Reijntjes's ship, the *Jupiter* (74 guns).[37]

The visual resemblance between the Netherlandish Maiden and Britannia adds another layer of complexity to the portrait's iconography, especially since Britannia frequently featured in visual imagery commemorating the Royal Navy's triumphs.[38] For example, in the 1790s, the Admiralty began presenting gold medals to senior officers who had fought in notable actions, enabling the recipients to display their service history as part of their clothing.[39] These medals depicted Britannia being crowned by Victory (fig. 121), and Russell loosely sketched this motif on Onslow's Camperdown medal, which he is shown wearing around his neck, creating an explicit visual echo within the painting between Britannia and her Dutch lookalike (fig. 122). As such, the portrait plays upon the similarities of the allegorical imagery being employed by both sides in the war, framing the defeat of the Dutch as the symbolic rescue of Britannia from those who had annexed her iconography to represent the 'false' freedom of republican liberty.

Onslow is depicted as the static recipient of the important trophy of the captured flag. The presentation of Reijntjes's colours has a ceremonial quality, appearing as a symbolically charged performance or staged tableau. As a composition, it looks awkward and contrived, the vice-admiral's body taking on a strangely lifeless appearance. To some extent, the painting's shortcomings are perhaps to be expected, given that the artist specialised in small-scale pastel portraits, rather than full-length oils. In high demand within fashionable society,

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[36] The flag was designed by Dirk Langendijk in 1796; an original sketch by Langendijk is now in the collection of the Rijksmuseum (RP-T-00-1753). See also, Carol Louise Janson, "The Birth of Dutch Liberty: Origins of the Pictorial Imagery," 2 vols. (PhD diss., Univ. of Minnesota, 1982).

[37] For the capture of the *Jupiter*, see: "London Gazette Extraordinary," *General Evening Post*, 14–17 Oct., 1797; *The Naval Chronicle* 13 (1805): 258; Franks, "Admiral Sir Richard Onslow," 335.

[38] Emma Major, *Madam Britannia: Women, Church, and Nation, 1712–1812* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012), 232–70. See also, Joan B. Landes, *Visualising the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca/London: Cornell Univ. Press, 2001).

[39] Lawrence L. Gordon, *British Battles and Medals* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1962), 15.

Russell's bust-length pastels were valued for their nuanced representation of likeness, feeling and character.[40] Throughout his career, the artist occasionally produced and exhibited oil portraits but, if they took any notice of these works, critics typically decried them as inferior to his pastels and questioned his ability to produce anything larger than a bust-length portrait; for example, discussing Russell's three-quarter-length portrait of Frances Bosville in 1797, the *Monthly Mirror* declared that "the upper part of the figure [is] very well but Mr. R. like other painters chiefly employed upon head and shoulders, fails as he descends".[41] This difficulty in creating larger-scale portraits may help explain the sense of formality and inertia in Onslow's portrait. At the same time, the composition can also be understood as a deliberately aloof and imposing representation of naval command, in which Onslow's authority is reaffirmed through his monolithic presence in the foreground of this ceremonial victory tableau.

That Russell was hired to produce this picture, despite his questionable reputation for full-length portraiture, was due to his father: a print-seller by trade, John Russell senior commissioned the painting to mark the end of his fourth term as Mayor of Guildford, presenting the work to the town's Guildhall, where it originally hung in the large courtroom.[42] The subject was an appropriate one: Onslow was the younger son of an influential and landed Surrey family whose members (including the vice-admiral's older brother and cousin) had represented Guildford in Parliament since the mid-seventeenth century.[43] In November 1797, Onslow was awarded the Freedom of the Corporation of Guildford in recognition "of his gallant conduct, and the considerable share he had in the glorious victory obtained by Admiral Lord Duncan and himself, with the ships under their command, over the Dutch Fleet."[44] The display of the vice-admiral's portrait in the town's Guildhall belongs to a growing trend in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, during which (as we shall see) an

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[40] For Russell as a pastellist, see: George C. Williamson, *John Russell, R. A.* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1894); Neil Jeffares, "Russell, John," in *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800* (Norwich: Unicorn Press, 2006), online ed., http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/Russell.pdf.

[41] *Monthly Mirror* 3 (1797): 345. For further criticism of Russell's work in oils and in larger formats, see: *St James's Chronicle*, 8 May, 1790; *Morning Herald*, 11 May, 1792; *St James's Chronicle*, 8–10 May, 1794.

[42] [John Russell Sr. and Thomas Russell,] *The History of Guildford, the County-Town of Surrey* (Guildford: J. and S. Russell, 1801), 136. The painting was moved in the late nineteenth century from the courtroom to a smaller council chamber on the floor above, where it can be seen today. See *West Surrey Times*, 10 May, 1884.

[43] For the Onslow family, see: Colwyn Edward Vulliamy, *The Onslow Family, 1528–1874* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1953).

[44] Entry for 27 Nov., 1797, in "Guildford Freeman's Books, 1655–1935," quoted in D. M. Stevens, "The Records and Plate of the Borough of Guildford," *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 9 (1883): 330.

increasing number of civic authorities and public institutions commissioned naval portraits for their buildings. With the navy increasingly understood as a symbol of national identity, corporate bodies and individuals sought to appropriate the sea officer's image for their own cause. At Guildford, Onslow's portrait paid tribute to the local elite and to the Royal Navy – imagined as socially harmonious again after the upheaval of the mutinies – whilst also representing an act of mayoral authority and self-promotion by Russell senior, whose personal stake in the commission was broadcast by his choice of his own son as artist.

The painting joined a pre-existing display of portraits on the walls of the Guildhall courtroom. It was the first new addition to this pictorial scheme for almost eighty years and, more significantly, it broke the display's previously exclusive focus upon royalty. The existing collection consisted of full-length portraits of the Stuart monarchs, donated by local dignitaries – including Onslow's uncle – during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[45] On the one hand, the addition of a naval portrait to this royal display could be construed as confrontational or even subversive, presenting combat service as a claim to esteem on a par with hereditary power. Equally, the alignment of the vice-admiral's image with the pageantry and splendour of monarchy could be viewed as a positive affirmation of the officer's status as a representative of the crown. After all, a naval officer had the right to command because he had received a royal commission; he was, in effect, a proxy for the monarch. As Dening notes, "the theatre of the quarterdeck was directed at making the ultimate power of the King…nakedly present".[46] Flanked by the likenesses of kings and queens in the Guildhall courtroom, Russell's portrait evoked the idea of the quarterdeck as a stage of quasi-royal authority, upon which the naval officer commanded obedience through his mere presence.[47] However, as noted above, the power of the ceremonial and performative aspects of naval authority had been challenged by the mutinies, and consequently other portraitists sought alternative strategies to reaffirm the naval hierarchy, as we shall see.

III

As the British fleet's commander-in-chief, Admiral Adam Duncan received the lion's share of the attention in the celebrations that followed the Battle of

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[45] [Russell], *History of Guildford*, 136; George C. Williamson, *The Guild Hall of Guildford and its Treasures* (Guildford: Biddles, 1928), 75.
[46] Dening, *Bad Language*, 145.
[47] For the relationship between theatrical performance, ritual and the representation of authority, see Agnew, *Worlds Apart*, 101–4.

Camperdown and, as Jenks has argued, the "mutiny's effect in fracturing the codes of British naval supremacy" meant that "more than his predecessors, Duncan's career and personal character were read for broader ideological purposes."[48] Through Duncan in particular, many commentators sought to rehabilitate the authority of the quarterdeck.

At this time, the admiral was one of the navy's longest serving officers but, before Camperdown, his career had been largely unremarkable.[49] The second son of a minor Scottish lord, Duncan had entered the navy at the age of fifteen in 1746, becoming a protégé of the celebrated officer Augustus Keppel. As a young captain, Duncan had his portrait painted by Joshua Reynolds, Keppel's close friend, in 1760. The resulting picture (National Galleries Scotland, fig. 123) exemplifies the kind of elegant three-quarter-length that Reynolds made his speciality during the Seven Years' War, as discussed in chapter two.[50] With Keppel's support, Duncan advanced steadily through the navy's ranks, also benefitting from the patronage of his wife's uncle, the influential Scottish politician Henry Dundas, who held several key positions in William Pitt the Younger's Tory cabinet.[51] This connection meant that Duncan rarely struggled to secure commands. However, he was not involved in any major victories nor did he attract significant public attention until, as a result of the dramatic events in 1797, he suddenly found himself fêted as a national hero at the age of sixty-six.

After the Battle of Camperdown, Duncan came ashore for six months, dividing his time between London and his native Scotland. During this protracted period of leave, he maintained a prominent position in the public eye by attending glittering society parties and sitting for numerous portraits.[52] One of these artworks (1798–1800, National Galleries Scotland, fig. 124) was painted by the French artist Henri-Pierre Danloux, a successful royal and aristocratic portraitist in his native country who had fled to Britain in 1792 to escape the Revolution. In his new country,

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[48] Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 110.
[49] The following account of Duncan's career is based upon "Biographical Memoirs of the Right Honourable Adam Duncan, Lord Viscount Duncan," *The Naval Chronicle* 4 (1800): 81–113; David Stockdale, "Admiral Duncan: Naval Officer, Scots Gentleman and British Hero," in *Glorious Victory*, ed. Murray, 24–39; P. K. Crimmin, "Duncan, Adam (1731–1804)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan., 2008, https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/8211.
[50] Mannings, *Reynolds*, 1: 170, no. 529.
[51] Michael Fry, *The Dundas Despotism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1992).
[52] *Morning Chronicle*, 25 Oct., 1797; *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 27 Oct., 1797; *Morning Chronicle*, 9 Nov., 1797; *Morning Chronicle*, 10 Nov., 1797; *Star*, 16 Nov., 1797; *Morning Post*, 20 Nov., 1797; *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 4 Dec., 1797; *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 1 Jan., 1798; *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 1 Feb., 1798; *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 3 Mar., 1798; *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 21 May, 1798.

Danloux established a practice in London and also undertook regular trips to Edinburgh, where he painted portraits of the French royal family in exile at Holyrood and built up a sizeable networks of clients among the Scottish nobility.[53] He exhibited his post-Camperdown portrait of Duncan in his London studio in May 1800, at which point he also published an engraving of the painting by John Raphael Smith (1800, fig. 125).[54] In this way, the artist simultaneously capitalised on Duncan's fame for his own financial and reputational gain whilst helping to maintain the admiral's public profile as an icon of naval authority.

Representing Duncan on deck in the midst of battle, Danloux's massive full-length painting defies the established conventions of eighteenth-century naval portraiture. As we have seen, it was rare for naval portraits to feature a high degree of action. However, in the Frenchman's portrait, Duncan adopts a highly dynamic pose in front of a substantial supporting cast of other figures, including members of the lower decks. According to the caption on Smith's print, the portrait represents "Lord Viscount Duncan when Victorious off Camperdown." Wearing his undress uniform, the admiral perches on the breech of a cannon. Certain aspects of his pose suggest movement and activity: topped by windswept grey curls, his head turns sharply to the right, his brow furrowing and his gaze fixing upon something beyond the picture plane. Meanwhile, his right arm flies out into space as if to steady himself, and his right leg balances on the ball of his foot, seemingly ready to spring into action. At the same time, he braces himself firmly with his left leg and thus appears to be securely anchored in place, embodying both animation and stability.

Behind Duncan's right arm, a figure in warrant officer's uniform issues orders through a speaking trumpet to the men aloft, whose small, shadowy forms can be seen hanging from the yardarm and mending the sails. Slightly further back, three marines fire their muskets and, in the far distance, a sailor in a loose jacket and wide-brimmed hat lights a cannon's fuse at arm's length. The relative prominence (or lack of prominence) accorded to these figures corresponds to their positions within the shipboard hierarchy: the commissioned ranks foremost, then warrant officers, followed by marines and, in the background, the lower decks. Notably, although the painting departs from the traditional conventions of naval portraiture by including common tars, the sailors are admitted only as faceless shadows in the

[53] Helen Smailes, "A French Painter in Exile: Henri-Pierre Danloux (1753–1809)," in *France in the National Galleries of Scotland*, ed. Timothy Clifford (Edinburgh: Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland, 1985), 31–54, esp. 51–2.

[54] *Star*, 8 Apr., 1800. The painting also featured in the artist's one-man-show at Spring Gardens in Charing Cross one year later; *Morning Chronicle*, 6 May, 1801, and 11 May, 1801.

distance. This acknowledges their labour but downplays their potential for independent thought. The painting is thus a deeply hierarchical image, albeit one which replaces the remote and ceremonial iconography of command that we saw in Vice-Admiral Onslow's portrait with something altogether more visceral. Duncan's authority is manifested through his ability to provide a reassuringly solid and stable presence in the midst of the maelstrom of battle.

The dynamism within this portrait is consistent with Danloux's reputation as a specialist in the portrayal of figures in motion.[55] The French artist usually produced cabinet-sized portraits featuring isolated sitters in elegant, balletic poses. For example, he depicted the courtesan Catherine-Rosalie Gérard, Mademoiselle Duthé, hanging an allegorical painting in her boudoir (1792, Staatliche Kunsthalle, fig. 126) and the militiaman Sergeant Mather leaping forward with a pike (1799, Drumlanrig, fig. 127).[56] Duncan himself had previously commissioned a portrait of this type. Traditionally dated 1792, this thirty-by-twenty-five-inch portrait shows the Scotsman on a depopulated deck strewn with coiled rope (National Portrait Gallery, fig. 128).[57] He leans back and holds a long telescope in both hands, seemingly about to raise it to his eye. It would thus appear that Duncan appreciated Danloux's dynamic style, hence his decision to return to the painter's studio after his famous victory over the Dutch.

However, in its massive scale and multi-figure composition, Danloux's later portrait of the admiral stands apart from his usual cabinet-sized pictures. The Frenchman had aspirations to practice as a history painter and appears to have used Duncan's commission as an opportunity to test his talents in this vein.[58] The result is a somewhat awkward compromise between portraiture and history painting, since the sitter does not interact with any of the other figures, reducing the sailors and marines to the status of stage scenery.

Around the same time, Danloux also produced a similar portrait of another successful Scottish naval officer, Vice-Admiral George Keith Elphinstone, first Baron Keith (1799, private collection, fig. 129). This work is the only other picture from the French artist's exile in Britain that compares in size and complexity to Duncan's portrait.[59] Like Duncan, Keith is depicted in the midst of one his most successful

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[55] Stephen Lloyd, "'Elegant and Graceful Attitudes': The Painter of the 'Skating Minister,'" *The Burlington Magazine* 147, no. 1228 (Jul. 2005): 474–86.
[56] Lloyd, "'Elegant and Graceful Attitudes,'" 484, 486.
[57] Although the painting is traditionally dated 1792, the uniform more closely resembles the pattern introduced in 1795 and the two stripes on the sitter's cuffs denote a vice-admiral, Duncan's rank in early 1795. Smailes, "A French Painter in Exile," 52.
[58] Smailes, "A French Painter in Exile," 36.
[59] Smailes, "A French Painter in Exile," 48–9.

battles: his attack upon the Dutch camp at Muizenberg in the Cape of Good Hope on 7 August 1795.[60] Dressed in his full-dress uniform and wearing the regalia of the Order of the Bath, Keith strides across the deck of his ship. He holds a telescope in one hand and points across his body with the other. Immediately to his right, a gun crew crouch around a cannon and, behind them, several more seamen are hauling ropes. In the background, two officers inspect the fortifications on the distant cliffs. Keith commissioned this portrait himself, probably when he was on leave in Scotland between November 1797 and December 1798, although the painting is signed and dated 1799. Danloux must have worked on this portrait concurrently with Duncan's, and he exhibited the two paintings together at a one-man-show in Spring Gardens, Charing Cross, in 1801, inviting viewers to see them as a pair.[61]

After the authority of the quarterdeck had been challenged by the mutinies in 1797, Duncan and Keith perhaps saw this active mode of portrayal as a means of reinvigorating the image of the naval profession. Although he was not publicly associated with the crisis to the same extent as Duncan, Keith had been closely involved in the mutinies, having been sent by the Admiralty to assist with supressing the rebellion at the Nore.[62] However, his portrait is somewhat different from Duncan's in tone. The deck is clean and bathed in sunlight and the viewer is given a clear view of blue sky, towering cliffs and white sails in the background. Slimly built and elegantly attired, Keith moves through the scene with the measured, balletic grace typical of Danloux's figures. By contrast, Duncan's portrait is characterised by darkness, destruction and disorder. Gun-smoke fills the air; blood stains the decks in the lower left-hand corner of the painting; and the ship's sails and rigging are ripped and frayed. In the middle of all this chaos is the robust figure of the admiral, his substantial frame absorbing the visceral energy and violent forces of the battle. On one level, the differences between the two portraits evoke their distinctive settings, Keith in the warm climes of the Cape, Duncan in the darkly hostile North Sea. At the same time, the contrasts associate the two officers with different kinds of masculine identity: an elegant, controlled type embodied by Keith and a battle-hardened type represented by Duncan, which is characterised by the endurance of extreme violence and physical strain.

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[60] W. G. Perrin and Christopher Lloyd (eds.), *The Keith Papers*, 3 vols. (London: Navy Records Society, 1927–55), 1: 214.
[61] The two paintings were listed together as highlights of Danloux's one-man-show in 1801. See *Morning Chronicle*, 11 May, 1801.
[62] Ann Veronica Coats, "'Launched into Eternity': Admiralty Retribution or the Restoration of Discipline?," in *Naval Mutinies*, ed. MacDougall and Coats, 211–12.

This echoes one of the ways in which Duncan was characterised in the press, some commentators presenting the admiral as a fearless and emphatically masculine hero, remarkable for his physical prowess and brutal tactics. In an early report about the British victory at Camperdown, Duncan was described as "a person uncommonly powerful, being much more than six feet, and robust in proportion".[63] A subsequent account expanded on this comment, claiming that he stood "full six feet three inches high, but with a character of muscular strength".[64] In a similar vein, a laudatory poem published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* referred to his "dauntless mien and giant size" and a guide to *British Public Characters for 1798* hailed his "manly, athletic form".[65] Meanwhile, his tactics at Camperdown were read as evidence of his courage and resolve: he was praised for the "skill and rapidity with which [he] seized on the moment" to attack the Dutch before they could escape into shallower waters and for his employment of the "daring" tactic of breaking the line, which resulted in a bloody but ultimately crushing victory for the British.[66] It was acknowledged that the execution of these tactics depended upon the efforts of his sailors, the *London Evening Post* declaring that "the enemy fought with all their characteristic valour; but…the superior skill and bravery of OUR ADMIRAL and SEAMEN commanded at last the Victory."[67] Celebrating this supposed "unity of action" between quarterdeck and lower deck, the Reverend Manley Wood asserted in a published sermon on the victory that "the very men, who but a few months ago were justly branded with the harsh names of mutineers and insurgents…no sooner saw the foes of their country proudly advancing on the ocean, but their hearts became united with the hearts of their commanders like the heart of one man, and they flew on their enemies like a lion on his devoted prey!"[68] In this way, the warrior-like image of Duncan formed the basis for a loyalist interpretation of the battle in which the masculine fraternity of combat was seen to have overridden the social divisions exposed during the mutinies, uniting seamen and officers in a brutally effective fighting unit.[69] The admiral was presented as the prime embodiment of this

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[63] *General Evening Post*, 14–17 Oct., 1797; *St James's Chronicle*, 14–17 Oct., 1797.
[64] *London Chronicle*, 14–17 Oct., 1797; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 16–18 Oct., 1797; *General Evening Post*, 17 Oct., 1797; "Lord Viscount Duncan," *The Scots Magazine* 60, no. 1 (Jan. 1798): 3–4.
[65] *The Gentleman's Magazine* 68, no. 1 (Jan. 1798): 63; *British Public Characters of 1798* (London: Printed for R. Phillips, [1798]), 158.
[66] *St James's Chronicle*, 14–17 Oct., 1797; *Observer*, 15 Oct., 1797; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 16–18 Oct., 1797.
[67] *London Evening Post*, 14–17 Oct., 1797.
[68] Manley Wood, *A Sermon Preached at St. Bride's Church, Oct. 29, 1797* (London: J. Nichols, 1797), 24. See also, Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 113.
[69] Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 113.

unifying fighting spirit, forging a new model of naval authority which depended upon, rather than transcended, the drama of battle. This model staged a symbolic re-appropriation, turning the sense of dynamism and activity that had seemed disruptive when embodied by the mutineers into a positive attribute of naval authority.

However, the notion of Duncan as a warrior-hero was undermined by the fact of his age. Asserting that, in his youth, he was reckoned "the handsomest Officer in the Navy", his biographers were forced to acknowledge that many years had since passed. [70] His age was generally given as sixty-three or sixty-four, though he was actually sixty-six.[71] Danloux's portrait wrestles with the same problem, presenting an incongruous combination of dynamic vigour and advancing age. Duncan has greying hair, a creased brow and a swelling paunch. He also appears lacking in purpose, despite the apparent urgency of the situation. In Keith's portrait, Danloux showed his naval sitter actively issuing orders, setting up a contrast between the graceful vice-admiral and the shirtless sailors who strain at the ropes behind him, displaying their rippling muscular physiques. Aligned by their partial nudity with the idea of man in his natural state, these seamen are represented as providing the physical manpower needed to work the ship, whilst Keith is defined as a refined authority figure, who gives intelligent direction to their labour. By contrast, in Duncan's portrait, the admiral's role is less clearly articulated as the action of directing the seamen is displaced onto the warrant officer with the speaking trumpet. Thus, although the portrait powerfully conveys the hive of activity that characterised a man-of-war during battle, in so doing, it diminishes the significance of the admiral, who is exposed as simply one component in a vast naval machine.

IV

Compared to Danloux, Henry Raeburn adopted a dramatically different approach to portraying Duncan. Raeburn's full-length portrait of the victor of Camperdown (1798, Trinity House, Leith, fig. 130) was commissioned in 1798 by the Incorporation of Masters and Mariners of the Trinity House at Leith.[72] With a membership comprising of ship-owners and merchant captains in the Scottish port of Leith, the Incorporation was a charitable foundation dedicated to the provision of

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[70] *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 20 Oct., 1797. It was even suggested that Duncan had been "the most handsome man in Europe" in his youth; *London Chronicle*, 14–17 Oct., 1797.
[71] *General Evening Post*, 14–17 Oct., 1797, described Duncan as in his "63rd year of age". *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 20 Oct., 1797, gave his age as sixty-four.
[72] Smailes, "Prints and Propaganda," 54–6.

support for destitute sailors and to the improvement of standards in maritime safety and navigation, especially in the Firth of Forth and the North Sea.[73] At a meeting on 6 November 1797, the institution voted to award Duncan the Freedom of the Incorporation in recognition of his "illustrious victory."[74] This was followed on 8 February 1798 by a resolution to obtain the admiral's portrait to adorn the walls of the Trinity House.[75] In choosing Raeburn to fulfil the commission, the Incorporation selected the leading portraitist working in Scotland at the time.[76] On 5 April 1798, a notice appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* stating that Raeburn was at work on the portrait and soliciting subscriptions for a print after the painting "to be engraved in stroke by Paton Thomson, London."[77] An advertisement for subscriptions appeared again in the same paper on 2 August, now stating that the painting was complete and on display at the Trinity House, where "Ladies and Gentlemen" would be admitted to view it "from 11 till 2 o'clock, for a few days; and afterwards on application to the Master or any of the Members".[78] This manner of exhibition would have granted the portrait some public exposure, but Thomson's promised print, which would have circulated the image to a wider audience, never materialised.[79]

Marking a departure for the Trinity House art collection, which until this point had consisted of harbour views and a few relatively small portraits of former Incorporation officials, the commission of Duncan's portrait may have been intended to signal the Incorporation's newly enhanced status and powers after its application for a Royal Charter was granted by George III on 9 June 1797.[80] Amongst other privileges, the new Charter empowered the Trinity House as the only body in Scotland with the authority to examine, licence and appoint pilots for navigating ships of war and merchant vessels in the North Sea. This officially transformed the Incorporation from a provincial organisation of merchant ship-owners into an institution with influence over Britain's commercial and military affairs at sea.

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[73] John Mason, *The History of the Trinity House of Leith* (Glasgow: McKenzie Vincent and Co. Ltd., 1957).

[74] *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 23 Nov., 1797.

[75] Mason, *Trinity House*, 131.

[76] For Raeburn's life and career, see: William Raeburn Andrew, *Life of Sir Henry Raeburn, R. A.* (London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1886). The most up-to-date assessment of his work is Viccy Coltman and Stephen Lloyd (eds.), *Henry Raeburn: Context, Reception and Reputation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2012).

[77] *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 5 Apr., 1798.

[78] *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 2 Aug., 1798.

[79] Smailes, "Prints and Propaganda," 56.

[80] Mason, *History of the Trinity House of Leith*, 80–2. For an overview of the Trinity House art collection, see: Historic Environment Scotland, *Trinity House Maritime Museum* (Edinburgh: Historic Environment Scotland, 2016).

Displaying a grand portrait by a celebrated artist of a recent naval hero provided visual confirmation of the Incorporation's newly established stake in national events.[81] It is significant that they chose to honour Duncan in particular: not only had this Scottish admiral's victory taken place in waters for which the Trinity House was officially responsible but he had also deferred to their authority, asking the Incorporation to provide a pilot for his fleet in the North Sea.[82] Published in the Edinburgh newspapers, the Incorporation's letter awarding Duncan the Freedom of their body asserted that "from their profession and knowledge of maritime affairs, they are enabled to see the superior merit of your Lordship's conduct and to admire the bravery of your Officers and seamen," thus turning their admiration for the admiral into a self-reflexive compliment upon their own professional expertise.[83] The portrait commission was perhaps intended in a similar spirit.

Raeburn's painting stands in stark contrast to Danloux's bombastic portrait. Rather than depicting Duncan in the midst of battle, the Scottish artist showed the admiral in a large interior space enclosed by great swags of red drapery, which are raised on left to reveal a view of the sea. Dark clouds and indistinct shapes on the horizon suggest that a naval engagement may be taking place in the distance but the foreground is far removed from the chaos and violence of the action. The admiral stands beside a table, atop which is a large navigational chart, several partially unfolded letters and a crumpled heap of blue and white fabric, the latter perhaps representing the captured colours of the Dutch admiral.

The prominent inclusion of a navigational chart recalls the activities of the Trinity House and their contribution, through the provision of pilotage, to the admiral's success in the North Sea. It also serves to characterise Duncan as a naval executive, whose responsibilities primarily involve tactical planning, rather than bodily exertion. Wearing his full-dress uniform, he stands with both feet planted firmly on the ground and his body is angled slightly towards the table. This pose highlights his bulging stomach and thus emphasises his physical solidity and stability. His head, meanwhile, turns to face the viewer, bringing the right half of his face into the bright light which emanates from an unseen source on the left. Recalling the bold chiaroscuro employed by Rembrandt and some seventeenth-century Italian masters, oblique and even *contre-jour* lighting was a distinctive

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[81] At some point in the late 1790s, the Trinity House acquired a cast-iron fire surround embellished with a frieze of portrait plaques representing George III, Queen Charlotte and the admirals in command of the British fleets at the four major battles of the 1790s: Howe, St Vincent, Duncan and Nelson. Smailes, "Prints and Propaganda," 58.
[82] Mason, *Trinity House*, 131–2.
[83] *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 23 Nov., 1797.

feature of Raeburn's style in the 1790s.[84] The Trinity House portrait provides an example of this effect, Raeburn throwing the majority of the admiral's body into shadow, save for a handful of significant details which are picked out by the light. These details include key symbols of Duncan's rank and status, such as the silver stars on his one visible epaulette, which denote his rank as an admiral, and his shimmering red sash, which indicates his membership of the Russian Imperial Order of Saint Alexander Nevsky, an honour he received from Emperor Paul I after commanding an allied Anglo-Russian force in spring 1797.[85] The light also catches on Duncan's relaxed hands, the right hanging by his side and the left resting gently by the fingertips on the navigational chart. However, the brightest area in the picture is the illuminated half of the admiral's face, the light throwing into relief his craggy facial landscape of wrinkled skin, fleshy jowls and furrowed brow. By drawing attention to the admiral's features in this way, Raeburn stresses Duncan's advancing years, suggesting that his authority rests more upon his accumulated knowledge, wisdom and experience than upon his capacity for physical action.

A slightly different spin was placed upon Duncan's age in John Hoppner's full-length portrait of the admiral (1798, Forfar Town and County Hall, fig. 131), which was commissioned by the Freeholders, Justices of the Peace and Commissioners of Supply of Forfarshire in eastern Scotland. Following the death of his older brother on 31 August 1796, Duncan had succeeded to his family's estate at Lundie in Forfarshire.[86] Comprised of members of the local gentry, the county's Freeholders voted unanimously on 13 November 1797 to present their fellow landowner with a gift of plate and to commission his portrait for Forfar Town and County Hall.[87] These gestures were intended, they claimed, to mark "the pride and satisfaction they feel that a native of this county has distinguished himself so gloriously and rendered such essential service to his King and country".[88]

Underlying this congratulatory rhetoric, there was a pointed political and social agenda. Hoppner's painting was the third portrait commissioned by the

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[84] Duncan Thomson, "Sir Henry Raeburn: An Introduction to his Art and Life," in *Raeburn: The Art of Sir Henry Raeburn 1756–1823*, ed. Duncan Thomson (Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1997), 19.

[85] Paul I of Russia to Adam Duncan, 19 July, 1797, NMS M.1995.2.14, fol. 52.

[86] Earl of Camperdown, *Admiral Duncan*, 1–4.

[87] David Carnegie to Adam Duncan, 13 Nov., 1797 and 15 Nov., 1797, NMS, M.1995.13.22 and M.1995.13.26. The Freeholders' meeting was announced and the minutes published in *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 6 Nov., 1797 and 18 Nov., 1797. Reports of the meeting also appeared in London newspapers; see, for example, *London Chronicle*, 23–25 Nov., 1797.

[88] "Minutes of meeting of Noblemen, Gentlemen, Freeholders, Justices of the Peace, Commissioners of Supply and other Heritors of the County of Forfar with congratulations, deciding on gift of plate, request for portrait, asking for donations, 13/11/1797," NMS, M.1995.13.25.

Freeholders for the Town and County Hall.[89] In 1793, they had voted to commission portraits of the local MP David Scott and his patron Henry Dundas, who was at that time the Home Secretary and Pitt's closest advisor.[90] Ostensibly, these paintings were intended to thank Scott and Dundas for their efforts in negotiating a repeal of coal duties for northern Scotland but they also represented a demonstration of political loyalty to Pitt's ministry. Furthermore, the commission promoted the power and influence of the landed Freeholders, who voted for the proposal "with a view to [their] own dignity".[91] This was an assertion of the local gentry's superior authority compared to the largely professional and artisanal town provost and magistrates, who shared use of the Town and County Hall in Forfar and who would henceforth have to conduct their meetings under the watchful gaze of the Freeholders' painted representatives.[92] Although they were commissioned in 1793, the two paintings – copies by George Romney's studio of his earlier portraits of Scott and Dundas – were not collected and paid for until early 1798, probably with the imminent arrival of Hoppner's portrait of Duncan in mind, the admiral's picture having apparently been regarded by the Freeholders as part of the same politically charged iconographic programme.[93] As well as being a Forfarshire landowner, Duncan was part of the political network celebrated in the two Romneys, being Dundas's friend, relative and naval advisor.[94] The commissioning and display of his portrait in this context thus framed the admiral as an ally of the politically conservative landed elite, who had a

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[89] The three paintings commissioned by the Freeholders for the Town and County Hall became the subject of a lengthy legal dispute, lasting from 1800 until 1914. Extensive documentation from the case, including copies of original documents relating to the commissioning of the paintings, is held at Angus Archives, F/5/182.

[90] This vote took place at a meeting on 16 August 1793; *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 19 Aug., 1793. In June 1794, Dundas became Secretary of State for War; Fry, *Dundas Despotism*, 192.

[91] [William Maule], "Copy of Bill Chamber, January 27. 1801. MEM. Hon. William Maule, &c. against John Ritchie, &c.," reproduced in "The County Council of the County of Forfar VS. The Provost, Magistrates and Councillors of the Burgh of Forfar &c." (1914?), Angus Archives, F/5/182/51, 84.

[92] The magistrates later disputed the Freeholders' ownership of the paintings in the Town Hall, asserting that their use of the space gave them an equal claim to the portraits. Angus Archives, F/1/1/7/189, 23 Oct., 1800.

[93] W. Roberts to James L. Caw, 15 July, 1913, Angus Archives, F/5/182/48. The details of Romney's original portraits are as follows: Scott (1793–4, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco) and Dundas (1793–4, Arniston House, Gorebridge). Kidson, *Romney Catalogue*, 1: 193–4, 2: 522–3. Scott's portrait still hangs in the Town and County Hall in Forfar. Dundas's portrait was destroyed by fire on 25 May 1807 and replaced by another portrait of Dundas by Raeburn (1807, Forfar Town and County Hall). W. S. McCulloch, *A History of the Town and County Hall, Forfar* (Forfar: Oliver McPherson Ltd., 1968), 22.

[94] The loyalist press emphasised Duncan's connections to Dundas and the ministry in the aftermath of his victory at Camperdown. *London Packet*, 13–16 Oct., 1797; *London Chronicle,* 14–17 Oct., 1797; *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 20 Oct., 1797; *Morning Chronicle,* 21 Oct., 1797.

vested interest in reaffirming the established hierarchy against challenges from below, such as the naval mutinies.

Given the freedom to choose his own artist, Duncan selected a leading London-based portraitist and Royal Academician, John Hoppner, who exhibited the picture at the Academy in 1798 – the same year in which Russell showed his portrait of the admiral's second-in-command, Onslow, as discussed above.[95] Hoppner's portrait was frequently cited as among the best of the artist's eleven works in the exhibition but the reason given was usually the "celebrity" of the sitter.[96] Most critics could muster only faint praise for the actual appearance of portrait, describing it as giving "an adequate idea of that gallant Officer."[97] Even the most enthusiastic review of the portrait, which appeared in the government-sponsored *True Briton* newspaper, wrote only that "the figure is well-placed", "the scenery is appropriate" and "the light and shadow [are] managed with great skill".[98]

This muted rhetoric registers the painting's conventionality. Although the portrait is presently in poor condition, a sense of its original appearance can be gained from James Ward's mezzotint (1798, fig. 132), which was published to coincide with the picture's exhibition at the Academy. Duncan is shown standing on a rocky seashore with the Battle of Camperdown raging in the distance. He leans on a telescope for support, grasping the eyepiece in his right fist, as if it were a walking stick or perhaps an elongated baton of command, rather than an instrument he might actually use. As we have seen repeatedly in this thesis, it was common practice in naval portraiture to depict officers in coastal settings with notable actions from their careers in the background, and numerous precedents can be found for the use of a telescope as a prop, including, for instance, Romney's portrait of Vice-Admiral George Darby (1783–6, National Maritime Museum, fig. 133). Thus, on one level, Hoppner's portrait was "adequate" and "appropriate", rather than innovative, suppressing the trauma of the mutinies beneath a business-as-usual portrayal of naval authority.

Yet, at the same time, Hoppner's picture is notable for the especially hostile nature of the setting. The sky is filled with dark plumes of smoke and waves crash against the jagged rocks. In Ward's mezzotint at least, some of this violence and energy is carried into the foreground through the windswept agitation of the

[95] John Human Wilson, "The Life and Work of John Hoppner (1758–1810)," 2 vols. (PhD diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1992), 55–73.
[96] *Craftsman or Say's Weekly Journal*, 28 Apr., 1798.
[97] *Sun*, 23 Apr., 1798; *London Packet*, 20 Apr., 1798; *Morning Chronicle*, 25 Apr., 1798. See also, *St James's Chronicle*, 26–28 Apr., 1798.
[98] *True Briton*, 24 Apr., 1798.

admiral's hair. However, pot-bellied and visibly aging, Duncan is otherwise immobile and rigid. In Romney's *Vice-Admiral Darby*, there is a subtle suggestion of animation in the bending of the sitter's right knee and the movement of his eyes. By contrast, Duncan stares straight ahead, flat-footed and squarely posed, his static figure placed in jarring juxtaposition with the smoke-filled backdrop. Nonetheless, although the composition lacks pictorial unity, Duncan's depiction as an aging and immobile figure in a threatening environment evokes notions of endurance and resilience.

In emphasising Duncan's advancing years, Raeburn and Hoppner echoed a characterisation of the admiral that frequently appeared in the contemporary press. Recognising the difficulty in presenting an old man as an action hero, an alternative persona was constructed for Duncan that focussed on his long years of hard service, rather than his manly vigour. Styling Duncan as "venerable" after his battered seventy-four-gun flagship, the final verse of Charles Dignum's widely published song about the battle – *The Fight off Camperdown; or, the Glorious Eleventh of October, 1797* – summarises this viewpoint:

> The *Venerable* was the Ship that bore his Flag to fame.
> Our Vet'ran Hero well becomes his gallant Vessel's name;
> Behold his Locks! they speak the toil of many a stormy day;
> For Fifty Years and more, my boys, has Fighting been his way.[99]

Writers espousing this characterisation of the admiral downplayed the importance of the action and violence of Camperdown itself, preferring instead to emphasise Duncan's efforts to blockade the Dutch in the Texel for over two years before the battle, staying almost continuously at sea despite battering storms and, crucially, the insurrection in his fleet. Thus, a report carried by several newspapers claimed that his "promptitude and alacrity" in attacking the Dutch and his "bravery and management of the action" were "his least titles to our praise" compared to the "patience and constancy with which he maintained his difficult and painful station during so many boisterous months" and "the gallantry with which, during the critical period of the mutiny, he kept his post…with only three ships, when he was abandoned by all the rest of his squadron".[100] In this way, an effort was made to turn

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[99] *True Briton*, 7 Nov., 1797. The song was also published as a pamphlet: *The Fight off Camperdown. A Celebrated Song. The Melody Composed, and Sung by Mr. Dignum* (London: Muzio Clemente and Co., n. d.). A manuscript copy of the song in Duncan's private papers asserts that this verse was composed on the spot when Dignum first performed the piece before the admiral himself at the London Tavern on 6 November 1797. NMS, M.1995.2.15.6.
[100] *London Chronicle*, 14–17 Oct., 1797; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 16–18 Oct., 1797; *General Evening Post*, 17 Oct., 1797.

Duncan's age into a virtue, making him the embodiment of an old and stable authority, able to weather any storm – meteorological or political.

In this guise, Duncan provided the basis for an imagery of naval authority that stood in stark opposition to the youthful and dynamic iconography associated with the mutineers. As Pascal Fischer has shown, the key aesthetic binaries at stake here – youth/age, mobility/stasis – were central not only to the representation of the mutinies but to the wider political discourse of the period.[101] Arguing that conservatism, as a coherent ideology, first emerged in Britain in the 1790s as a direct reaction against the French Revolution, Fischer suggests that the contrast between mobility/youth and stasis/old age was the main structural binary of the emerging "anti-Jacobin" worldview. Radicals had already put their own spin on this binary: presenting the existing political system and its corrupt leadership as old and stagnant (hobbling along "by the stilts and crutches of precedent" in the words of Thomas Paine), they argued that reform would reinvigorate society.[102] In response, the anti-Jacobins reinterpreted this opposition. In an argument first set out by Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), the rapid political and social change advocated by radicals and revolutionaries was reframed as a dangerous kind of mobility, feverish and out-of-control.[103] Against this, safety was presented as lying in the old and venerable English constitution, which, having matured slowly over many centuries, was strong, stable and reassuringly static. The construction of Duncan as the "*Venerable*" commander who had withstood the North Sea storms and the crisis of the mutinies played into this novel ideology of conservatism.

At the same time, combining a sense of strength with an acknowledgement of the admiral's suffering and mortality, Duncan's "*Venerable*" persona satisfied the demands of the eighteenth century's emerging culture of celebrity. In his influential theory of "public intimacy", Joseph Roach argues that the appeal of celebrities in the long eighteenth century was predicated upon the "beguiling interplay" between signs of strength ("*charismata*") and signs of vulnerability ("*stigmata*").[104] Whereas earlier notions of fame were predicated upon a feeling of reverence for individuals who seemed to embody exemplary or transcendent ideals, the combination of

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[101] Pascal Fischer, "Mobility as a Threat in Late Eighteenth-Century Anti-Jacobin Writing," in *Anglistentag 2010 Saarbrücken, Proceedings of the Conference of the German Association of University Teachers of English*, ed. Joachim Frenk and Lena Steveker (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2011), 319–26.
[102] Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man; Part the Second* (London: H. D. Symonds, 1792), 36.
[103] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: J. Dodsley, 1790).
[104] Roach, "Public Intimacy," 24.

charismata and *stigmata* created an illusion of intimacy, inviting audiences to imagine that they were seeing celebrities as they "really were".[105] Like much recent scholarship upon the history of celebrity, Roach concentrates upon stage performers. Yet Duncan's example suggests how this emerging phenomenon pervaded other areas of public life, such as naval leadership, where it provided a strategy for rehabilitating the quarterdeck's image in the wake of the mutinies. Rather than relying upon the theatrical performance of command, which risked looking like empty symbolism, Duncan's representation as a "*Venerable*" commander, whose aging body bore the marks of many years hard service, created an impression of authenticity, which suggested that the admiral was tried, tested and trustworthy.

V

In addition to emphasising the admiral's age, some accounts of Duncan's leadership also stressed his personal integrity and honest character. His manner was described as "simple, easy and obliging" and "free from affectation", being characterised by "the natural expression of unfeigned goodness of heart."[106] Indeed, Duncan's alleged lack of affectation was sometimes presented as the factor that kept his flagship immune from "mutinous spirit which prevailed in the fleet".[107] Several newspapers reprinted an "artless and affecting" speech that the admiral had made to the crew of the *Venerable* at the height of the mutiny, in which he described his "sorrowful heart, from what I have lately seen" and exclaimed that "My pride is now humbled indeed! – My feelings are not easily to be expressed!" This confession of private pain and vulnerability was presented as a legitimate and effective strategy of command: the seamen of the *Venerable* were reportedly "so affected by this impressive address, that on retiring there was not a dry eye among them".[108]

Jenks suggests that this anecdote was used to demonstrate Duncan's "abilities to speak the honest language of a seaman" and thus his capacity to bring about naval reintegration.[109] It can also be understood as another expression of "public intimacy", echoing the "interiority effect" that Felicity Nussbaum identifies as

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[105] Richard Dyer influentially argued that the illusion of authenticity is central to the appeal of celebrity culture. Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), 2.
[106] *St James's Chronicle*, 19–21 Oct., 1797; *Oracle*, 20 Oct., 1797.
[107] Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 111; *British Public Characters*, 152.
[108] *Oracle*, 20 Oct., 1797; *St James's Chronicle*, 19–21 Oct., 1797. See also, *British Public Characters*, 153–5. For Duncan's original manuscript copy of the speech, see: NMS, M.1995.2.72.
[109] Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 111.

a key component of eighteenth-century theatrical celebrity.[110] "Rather than transcending one's private self," Nussbaum writes, "acting involved animation and sometimes exaggeration of an alleged personal identity" in order to give the impression of "interior depth".[111] Reimagining the relationship between the quarterdeck and the lower deck as a matter of emotional transparency, the valorisation of Duncan's "artless and affecting" demeanour suggested that naval commanders who cultivated an "interiority effect" and expressed a convincing commitment to the sea service before their men would be rewarded with genuine loyalty. The corollary of this idea was that officers' private feelings became a matter of public concern.

As well as highlighting Duncan's emotional openness with his men, commentators also praised the admiral for his amicable dealings with his vanquished opponent, Vice-Admiral Jan de Winter, the commander-in-chief of the Dutch fleet. The relationship between Duncan and de Winter was celebrated in a pair of medallion portrait prints published by the miniaturist and engraver Daniel Orme on 18 December 1797 (figs. 134–5). According to their inscriptions, these portraits were engraved from original paintings by Orme, which had been presented by the two admirals to one another. Orme later recorded that Admiral de Winter "very politely sat to him (only) and made a reciprocal Exchange of Portraits with his conqueror, who became his Friend".[112] In the aftermath of the battle, de Winter had become a subject of public fascination in Britain and was represented sympathetically in the London newspapers, one of which reported that he had courageously "fought his ship until there was not a man left on the deck but himself".[113] Although some of the papers noted that de Winter described himself as "*un philosophie* [*sic*], i.e. a Republican of the present day", his politics were downplayed in the loyalist press, where he was generally described as a victim of the Batavian Republic's warmongering revolutionary government, having been

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[110] Nussbaum, *Rival Queens,* 20. For the connection between the "interiority effect" and "public intimacy", see: Jones and Joule, "Introduction," in *Intimacy and Celebrity*, ed. Jones and Joule, 5–6.

[111] Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, 20.

[112] Daniel Orme, *Description of the Historical Picture of Lord Viscount Duncan's Victory over the Dutch Fleet off Camperdown, On the Eleventh of October, 1797* (London: Daniel Orme, 1800), 3. The two admirals continued a friendly correspondence for several years after the battle. For de Winter's letters to Duncan, written in French, see: NMS, M.1995.2.72. Orme sent copies of his prints to de Winter after his return to the Netherlands; the Dutch admiral wrote of his "friendly remembrance" of the printmaker. Jan Willem de Winter to Daniel Orme, 20 Apr., 1799, NMS, M.1995.2.101.

[113] *London Evening Post*, 14–17 Oct., 1797. See also, *Star*, 24 Oct., 1797; *London Packet*, 1–3 Nov., 1797; *London Evening Post*, 2–4 Nov., 1797; *True Briton*, 3 Nov., 1797; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 4–7 Nov., 1797; *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 5 Nov., 1797.

forced to leave port "contrary to his own judgement" under threat of court martial.[114] However, the majority of stories about de Winter were really about his British opposite number. When the Dutchman surrendered, Duncan was supposed to have refused to take his sword, a gesture of respect which was interpreted as evidence of the "magnanimity and amiable generosity of the conquering Hero".[115] On one level, this anecdote aligned the British admiral with a chivalric and gentlemanly code of warfare. At the same time, it was presented as evidence of Duncan's good-natured private character, a reading which was reinforced by accounts of the genuine friendship that developed between the former enemies. De Winter, it was noted, "passed a great part of his time in Admiral Duncan's cabin", playing whist and joking with the British officers.[116] Highlighting the exchange of portraits between the two admirals, Orme's portraits complemented this narrative of public virtue and private friendship.

In Orme's prints, the intense focus upon the admirals' faces and the exclusion of their bodies reinforces the emphasis upon personality. Both portraits were based upon miniatures, now in the collections of National Museums Scotland (de Winter) and the House of Orange-Nassau (Duncan).[117] Orme employed the tonal technique of stipple engraving to transfer the subtle renderings of the two admirals' faces in the miniatures to his prints, allowing the viewer to scrutinise their expressions. Yet there is a marked difference between Duncan's physiognomy in this portrait and his appearance in other images of the same period. Orme trims off the fat, smooths away several decades and replaces the deeply furrowed brow – an otherwise ubiquitous feature of the admiral's portraits – with a warm, gentle smile. In this way, the artist creates an image commensurate with Duncan's supposedly "simple, easy and obliging" demeanour.[118] The smile is reciprocated by de Winter in his portrait, enhancing the impression that the viewer has been granted privileged access to a private exchange between friends. Meanwhile, Duncan's full-dress uniform, gold medal, sash and star add a sense of formality to his image, knitting together his public identity with his private character.

However, Orme's ambitions stretched beyond the production of small-scale portrait prints. The publication lines on the images of Duncan and de Winter give the

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[114] *Star*, 24 Oct., 1797; *General Evening Post*, 14–17 Oct., 1797.
[115] Orme, *Description*, 3.
[116] *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 16–18 Oct., 1797; *General Evening Post*, 17–19 Oct., 1797; *Star*, 24 Oct., 1797.
[117] De Winter's miniature is reproduced in Murray (ed.), *Glorious Victory*, 36. Duncan's miniature is reproduced in Foskett, *Dictionary*, 2: plate 257.
[118] *Oracle*, 20 Oct., 1797.

artist's address as "23 Holles St. Cavendish Sq. Where Subscriptions are Received for his 2 Prints of Ld Duncan's & Ld St. Vincent's Victory's [sic]." As this advertisement reveals, Orme was working on two historical compositions, both depicting recent naval battles. Following the example of John Singleton Copley, who had produced a number of contemporary history paintings for exhibition and reproduction since the early 1780s, Orme had launched himself as the impresario of a history painting and print-publishing business in 1792.[119] Initially, he worked in collaboration with the American artist Mather Brown, who produced paintings of recent events which Orme then engraved and published, the pair dedicating themselves to the representation of military and naval subjects in order to profit from public interest in the ongoing war against Revolutionary France.[120] Orme christened his Holles Street exhibition room and print shop the "British Naval and Military Gallery" and continued to operate under this title after his partnership with Brown dissolved sometime around 1797, at which point Orme took on the role of painter as well as engraver and publisher. His first solo projects were his paintings of "Ld Duncan's & Ld St. Vincent's Victory's".

The scene that Orme chose for his painting of the Battle of Camperdown was the moment of de Winter's surrender, specifically the alleged incident in which Duncan refused to accept the Dutchman's sword (1797, National Maritime Museum, fig. 136).[121] Orme faced competition in the representation of this subject from Copley, who also undertook to depict the same episode. Copley's history painting (1798, National Galleries Scotland, fig. 137) was exhibited between May and August 1799 in a purpose-built pavilion on Albemarle Street and the engraving of the picture was published one year later in August 1800.[122] Orme published his engraving in the same month, by which time his painting was on public display in his "British Naval and Military Gallery".[123] It is not clear to what extent Orme and Copley were aware of each other's activities or with whom the idea of representing de Winter's surrender originated. Precedents for the depiction of magnanimity in victory included

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[119] Katherine Coombs, "Orme, Daniel (1766–1837)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., May 2006, https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/20832.

[120] Dorinda Evans, *Mather Brown: Early American Artist in England* (Middletown: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1982), 122–51; Harriet Guest, *Empire, Barbarism and Civilisation: Captain Cook, William Hodges and the Return to the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007), 184–93; Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 195–203.

[121] Smailes, "Prints and Propaganda," 51–2, 62–4; Tracy, *Britannia's Palette*, 126–7.

[122] Prown, *Copley in England*, 353–9. See also, *Morning Post*, 13 May, 1799 and 14 Aug., 1799; [John Singleton Copley Jr.], *Exhibition of an Historical Picture, Painted by John Singleton Copley, R. A., Representing the Surrender of the Dutch Admiral de Winter, and the Destruction and Dispersion of his Fleet, On the Memorable 11th of October, 1797* (London: J. Cooper, 1799).

[123] Smailes, "Prints and Propaganda," 62.

Charles le Brun's influential *The Family of Darius before Alexander* (1660–1, Versailles, fig. 74) and, more recently, Francis Hayman's *Surrender of Montreal to General Amherst* (1761, untraced) and *Robert Clive and Mir Jafar after the Battle of Plassey* (1762, untraced) in the Rotunda at Vauxhall Gardens, as discussed in chapter two. At the same time, whilst they looked back to these earlier works, Orme and Copley's paintings need to be understood in relation to the specific context of the late 1790s, for the decision to represent Duncan's generous treatment of the defeated de Winter played into the characterisation of the British admiral as an old, stable and benevolent authority figure, which (as we have seen) was constructed in opposition to the mutineers' youthful, dynamic and violent public image.

Yet this subject also relied heavily upon the symbolism and ceremonies of command. De Winter was bound by honour and convention to surrender his sword to his captor; Duncan's decision to decline the offer was an established gesture of chivalrous respect. This formality is emphasised in the two paintings by their relatively static compositions, the scene appearing in both cases like a carefully choreographed performance. Copley's Duncan resembles a figure from a fashion plate or dancing manual with his rotund body balanced on the pointed toe of his front leg and his right hand extended towards de Winter. In Orme's picture, the British admiral stands motionless in front of his officers, his legs clamped together and his right arm directing de Winter towards his cabin. Like Russell's portrait of Vice-Admiral Onslow, these paintings evoke the idea of the quarterdeck as a space for the performance of elite authority, even though the mutinies had suggested that such performances were open to appropriation from below. The problem is given visual form in Copley's painting, where the stiffly posed Duncan is contrasted with a group of muscular sailors levering and hauling a gun into position. Although clearly identified as plebeian manual labourers, their straining bodies are invested with heroic dignity and they seem to embody purpose and energy, qualities which the admiral, engaged in the dance-like ritual of surrender, does not appear to possess. Given the "upward re-estimation of the tar…highlighting his heroic instead of his dissolute nature" which Quilley has identified as a significant cultural effect of the mutinies, the ceremonial performance of power was no longer sufficient to guarantee that an officer was cut out for command; he needed to provide some further proof of his commitment to the service and to his crew.[124]

Depicting "Ld. St Vincent's Victory", the second history painting that Orme advertised alongside his Camperdown picture also focussed upon a moment of

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[124] Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 185.

surrender. To represent the British victory at the Battle of Cape St Vincent
(14 February 1797), the artist depicted Commodore Horatio Nelson receiving the
surrender of the *San Josef* (114 guns), after having personally led the British
boarding party which captured the Spanish ship (1799, National Maritime
Museum, fig. 138). Once again, the scene looks like a carefully choreographed
tableau, in which almost every figure makes a symbolic gesture or points out
something important. However, this theatricality makes the painting an outlier within
Nelson's iconography. Rising to prominence in the late 1790s, Nelson quickly
became the most famous officer of his time in part because of his successful appeal
to the demands of "public intimacy", his combination of *charismata* and *stigmata*
suggesting that he possessed a deep, internal commitment to the sea service –
precisely the "interiority effect" which was needed in the aftermath of the mutinies.[125]
As we shall see, this effect came to characterise his depiction by various portraitists.

VI

Nelson's celebrity was born in the aftermath of the naval mutinies. Although
his actions during the Battle of Cape St Vincent (commemorated in Orme's history
painting) and his subsequent elevation to flag rank received significant public
attention, it was a series of risky boat actions in July 1797 that truly made the newly
promoted rear-admiral's name.[126] First, as part of the British blockade of the Spanish
fleet at Cadiz, Nelson led a series of assaults on the harbour, attempting to get a
bomb vessel close to the enemy ships. On the night of 3 July, the British boats met
the Spanish defensive barges and vicious hand-to-hand fighting ensued, in which –
as the British newspapers reported – "Admiral Nelson was at one time near being
killed, but was saved by the gallantry of the Master of the *Ville de Paris*."[127] Three
weeks later, the rear-admiral led an ill-fated amphibious assault on the port of Santa
Cruz de Tenerife in the Canary Islands.[128] Attempting to rush the port's defences,
Nelson was severely wounded in his right arm, which was subsequently amputated.
The assault failed and the British were forced to retreat but Nelson was absolved of
blame for the disaster, which was instead attributed to faulty intelligence, feeding
into a broader mood of pessimism surrounding the government's overall handling of

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[125] For an overview of Nelson's significance in his own time and subsequent legacy, see the
essays in David Cannadine's edited volume, *Nelson: Context and Legacy*.
[126] Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 212.
[127] *St James's Chronicle*, 3–5 Aug., 1797.
[128] Andrew Lambert, *Nelson: Britannia's God of War* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004),
95–9.

the war effort.[129] The rear-admiral was praised for his gallantry in the face of danger and, although his body had been badly damaged, his reputation was enhanced.

These risky inshore actions were a direct response to the threat of mutiny. Fearing that the spirit of insurrection would spread from Spithead and the Nore to his fleet in the Mediterranean, Earl St Vincent – the commander-in-chief in the region – sought to occupy his sailors with fighting the enemy, which he hoped would keep "the devil out of their minds".[130] It was highly unusual for a rear-admiral like Nelson to risk his own life in such perilous assaults; typically, this role would be fulfilled by a junior officer who was considered more expendable. However, as St Vincent was concerned not only about "mutinous spirits among the lower orders" but also about "factious discontents in a few of the higher" after a number of his officers had apparently displayed signs of cowardice, he wanted a senior officer to lead from the front.[131]

St Vincent's fears were kept out of the public domain and the newspapers repeatedly stated that his ships were "in the best state of discipline", although the emphatic character of these statements suggests some underlying anxiety, seeming almost to protest too much.[132] The coverage of Nelson's exploits needs to be seen against this backdrop, for although the press did not explicitly link the rear-admiral's boat actions with the quarterdeck's desire to reassert its authority after the mutinies, the celebration of these largely unsuccessful missions was nonetheless born out of contemporary uncertainties about lower deck loyalty. The attacks on Cadiz and Tenerife were therefore presented as reassuring examples of the naval hierarchy working as it should: the seamen had fought bravely and loyally alongside their commanders and a senior officer had fulfilled his duty to lead and protect his men. For example, after Tenerife, the *Evening Mail* declared that "we cannot…sufficiently admire the persevering gallantry of our seamen, who succeeded in surmounting almost insuperable difficulties, and the steady and spirited conduct of Admiral Nelson in extricating them from the pressing dangers in which their courage…had involved them."[133]

Much press attention was devoted to the wound that Nelson had sustained during the action, which resulted in the loss of his arm, and to his recovery from the

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[129] Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 212–13. See, for example, *London Packet*, 1–4 Sept., 1797.
[130] Edward Pelham Brenton, *The Life and Correspondence of John, Earl of St Vincent*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1838), 1: 362–74, quote at 362. See also, Rodger, *Command*, 454–5.
[131] John Jervis, first Earl of St Vincent, to Lavinia Spencer, Countess Spencer, 27 Dec., 1798, quoted in Brenton, *St Vincent*, 1: 370.
[132] *London Chronicle*, 24–26 Aug., 1797. See also, *St James's Chronicle*, 3–5 Aug., 1797.
[133] *Evening Mail*, 1–4 Sept., 1797.

amputation.[134] There was particular interest in the "curious fact" that "he had for some time practiced writing with his left hand, in case any accident should happen to his right", which was seen to imply that Nelson accepted the risks of his profession and was genuinely "inclined to *prepare himself*" for personal sacrifices in the line of duty.[135] Like Duncan's representation as an old and battered officer, the focus upon Nelson's wounding acknowledged the potential physical costs of his profession whilst also powerfully demonstrating his personal strength and courage. In late September 1797, one newspaper confidently asserted that "Admiral Nelson is said to be so far recovered, that the Spaniards, in the next spring may expect once more to feel the weight of his *arm*."[136]

Returning to the terminology of "public intimacy", the rear-admiral's missing limb was his "*stigmata*" – a mark of vulnerability, which enhanced his charisma. Crucially, this mark of vulnerability became a visible aspect of Nelson's appearance through the empty sleeve he wore pinned across his chest, and portraiture played an important role in cementing this detail as a defining feature of his image. Lemuel Francis Abbott was the first artist to depict Nelson after the loss of his arm. Destined to inspire many subsequent versions and copies, Abbott's portrait was based upon two sittings, which took place during the months that Nelson spent in England recovering from his wound. Specifically, they occurred whilst he was staying with his former commander Captain William Locker, a lieutenant-governor at the Royal Hospital for Seamen in Greenwich.[137] As a tribute to his successful protégé, Locker commissioned the initial version of the portrait (1797, private collection), of which additional copies were then commissioned by Nelson's wife Frances (1797, National Portrait Gallery, fig. 139), his prize agent Alexander Davison (1798, National Maritime Museum, fig. 140) and his fellow naval officer Cuthbert Collingwood (ca. 1797, National Galleries Scotland), among others.[138]

These initial versions of the portrait were half-lengths, depicting Nelson's head, shoulders and chest against a plain background. He wears his dark blue undress uniform with the sash and star of the Order of the Bath and his gold medal

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[134] See, for example, *St James's Chronicle*, 31 Aug.–2 Sept., 1797; *London Packet*, 1–4 Sept., 1797; *Lloyd's Evening Post*, 8–11 Sept., 1797.
[135] *London Chronicle*, 5–7 Sept., 1797; *St James's Chronicle*, 5–7 Sept., 1797; *Whitehall Evening Post*, 5–7 Sept., 1797; *True Briton*, 6 Sept., 1797; *London Evening Post*, 7–9 Sept., 1797; *Morning Chronicle*, 14 Sept., 1797.
[136] *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 27 Sept., 1797.
[137] Walker, *Nelson Portraits*, 33–56.
[138] Unfortunately, no images of Locker's copy of the portrait were available for reproduction in this thesis. For a complete list of versions and copies of the portrait, see: Walker, *Nelson Portraits*, 199–209, nos. 12–47.

from the Battle of Cape St Vincent.[139] With little else to attract the viewer's attention, this format encourages us to focus upon the artist's nuanced study of the rear-admiral's face, taking in the tension of his jaw and the shadows around his eyes. These features are especially pronounced in Locker's version of the portrait, lending a severity to Nelson's expression, which many scholars conjecture represents the effect upon his features of the agony that he endured in the aftermath of the amputation due to the infection of a partially removed ligature.[140] The expression is softer and more idealised in other versions of this portrait, which may have appealed to some viewers, such as Frances Nelson, who worried over her husband's wellbeing; indeed, after receiving her copy of the portrait, Frances wrote to Nelson that she was "well satisfied with Abbot", describing the painting as "my companion, my sincere friend in your absence", towards which she felt "real affection".[141] However, when Nelson's biographer John McArthur commissioned a version of the portrait in 1800 (National Maritime Museum), he implored the rear-admiral to sit to the artist for another ten minutes, adding that, "the instant after [the sitting], I should take the Portrait from poor Abbot's [*sic*] presence, that he might not have an opportunity of making a second attempt to adonize [beautify] it."[142] McArthur's comments indicate a demand among some observers for images of Nelson which had not been overly idealised and which instead revealed something of the toll that his difficult career had taken upon his appearance, highlighting his vulnerability and humanity.

The focus upon the rear-admiral's face in Abbott's portrait is typical of the artist's work, for he was known as a specialist in painting male heads. Having trained initially with Francis Hayman and practiced for a time in his native Leicestershire, Abbott opened a studio in London in 1780 but, throughout his career, he remained on the periphery of the metropolitan art world, exhibiting only sporadically at the Royal Academy and standing unsuccessfully for election as an Associate of the institution in 1788 and again in 1798.[143] He nonetheless established

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[139] The inclusion of the star and sash suggest the portrait dates from after 27 September 1797, when Nelson was invested as a Knight of the Bath. *London Chronicle*, 26–28 Sept., 1797.

[140] Richard Walker, *Regency Portraits Catalogue*, 2 vols. (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1985), online ed., https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitExtended/mw04633/Horatio-Nelson. For the details of the amputation, see: Sameer K. Khan, Iram Saeed and Mark D. Brinsden, "Lord Nelson's Trans-humeral Amputation – a Case Report," *Journal of the Royal Naval Medical Service* 95, no. 1 (2009): 23–7.

[141] Frances Nelson to Horatio Nelson, 23 July, 1798, in *Nelson's Letters*, ed. Naish, 441.

[142] John McArthur to Horatio Nelson, 1 Dec., 1800, NMM CRK/8/149.

[143] A. C. Sewter, "Some New Facts about Lemuel Francis Abbott," *The Connoisseur* 85 (Apr. 1955): 178–83; A. Nisbet, "Abbott, Lemuel Francis [Samuel] (1760/1–1802)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., https://doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/21.

an extensive network of clients, particularly among naval officers, whose portraits are typically half-lengths with plain backgrounds (like Nelson's), showing their sitters soberly attired in their undress uniforms, the dark fabric providing a foil for their glittering medals, honours and adornments of rank. Much of the visual interest in these portraits comes from the officers' faces, which are sensitively rendered with feathery brushstrokes, as exemplified by the craggy-faced *Admiral Alexander Hood* (1795, National Portrait Gallery, fig. 141) or the gently smiling *Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Calder* (1797, National Maritime Museum, fig. 142). Omitting the sitter's body and emphasising the head, this style of portraiture played to Abbott's artistic strengths, as recorded by Edward Edwards in his *Anecdotes of Painting* (1808): "the heads of [Abbott's] male portraits were perfect in their likenesses, particularly those which he painted from the naval heroes of the present time" but "below that part he wanted both taste and skill sufficient to enable him to produce a good whole-length picture, and his figures were in general insipid in their action."[144] And yet the artist's success among sea officers suggests that this mode of representation appealed to members of the naval profession. Rather than highlighting the actions that an officer had performed, it focussed attention upon the sitter as an individual, encouraging a detailed study of his features and creating a sense of public intimacy.

In Nelson's portrait, however, it is not only the rear-admiral's face that attracts the viewer's attention but also his empty right sleeve, which he wears across his chest, the cuff attached to one of his coat buttons by a loop of black ribbon. Further ribbons lace the upper part of the sleeve from the shoulder to the elbow, the fabric having been slit open to allow Nelson to don and remove his coat over the dressing on his stump during his recovery.[145] Although the empty sleeve is one of the most familiar elements of Nelson's personal iconography, little effort has hitherto been made to understand the cultural associations and visual history of this motif. Among naval amputees, the wearing of an empty sleeve across the chest or stomach appears to have been relatively common practice. For example, Captain Frederick Cornewall, whose right arm was amputated after the Battle of Toulon in 1744, was painted with his empty sleeve attached to a button of his waistcoat (ca. 1765, National Maritime Museum, fig. 143).[146] Similarly, a portrait of Lieutenant William Owen, who had lost an arm in the Seven Years' War, shows his right sleeve hanging from one of his coat buttons (ca. 1760–67, National Museums Wales,

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[144] Edward Edwards, *Anecdotes of Painters who have Resided or been Born in England* (London: Leigh and Sotheby, 1808), 281.
[145] Walker, *Nelson Portraits*, 34.
[146] Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, 5: 288.

fig. 144).[147] Although both of these works are relatively modest in quality, they nevertheless provide a precedent for the prominent representation of amputation in eighteenth-century naval portraiture, refuting Teresa Michals's recent argument that, before Nelson, portraitists made "physical losses disappear".[148]

Whilst various scholars have explored how genre paintings and caricatures presented wounded soldiers and sailors as prompts for sympathy, pity, charity and mockery, the representation of officers' injuries in elite portraiture has not been subjected to sustained enquiry.[149] A full investigation of this topic lies beyond the scope of this thesis but one example – James Northcote's portrait of Admiral Thomas Graves (1795, untraced), now known only through Francesco Bartolozzi's engraving (date unknown, fig. 145) – adds light to the present discussion. Although not an amputee, Graves is represented with a visible injury, his right arm (which was severely wounded at the Battle of the Glorious First of June in 1794) hanging in a sling.[150] When this portrait was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1795, the *True Briton* newspaper read the painting in relation to a recent high-profile naval court martial – the trial of Captain Anthony James Pye Molloy for failing to "use his utmost endeavours to close with and defeat the enemy".[151] The newspaper wrote:

> Though Admiral Lord Graves did not appear in the Court Martial at Portsmouth, he presents himself in the Court of Criticism at this place, with a dignity suited to his professional rank, and gives very satisfactory evidence in favour of Mr Northcote. This is a very spirited Portrait, and if the figure were not habited in the Naval uniform, we should see enough in the general attitude of the Piece to evince the heroic character.[152]

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[147] The portrait shows Owen in lieutenant's full-dress uniform, 1748–67 pattern, and therefore must predate 1767. L. K. Ingersoll, "Owen, William," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto/Université Laval, 1979), online ed., http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/owen_william_4E.html.

[148] Teresa Michals, "Invisible Amputation and Heroic Masculinity," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 44 (2015): 17–39, quote at 26. In the seventeenth century, amputees' portraits did sometimes obscure their sitters' injuries, as, for example, in Peter Lely's double portrait of the naval commanders Sir Frescheville Holles and Sir Robert Holmes (ca. 1672, National Maritime Museum), in which the former's left side is turned away from the viewer in order to hide the absence of his left arm. However, from the mid-eighteenth century, naval officers and their portraitists seem to have become less reluctant to reveal bodily mutilations.

[149] David McNeil, *The Grotesque Depiction of War and the Military in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (Newark, DE: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1990); Philip Shaw, *Suffering and Sentiment in Romantic Military Art* (Farnham/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013).

[150] Kenneth Breen, "Graves, Thomas, first Baron Graves (1725–1802)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., Jan. 2008, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11319.

[151] *Minutes of the Proceedings at a Court Martial, Assembled for the Trial of Anthony James Pye Molloy, Esq. Captain of His Majesty's Ship Caesar* (London: J. Debrett, 1795).

[152] *True Briton*, 16 May, 1795.

That "heroic character" is most prominently evidenced by Graves's disabled arm. Moreover, although the language of "evidence" and proof in the *True Briton* review was a specific response to Molloy's court martial, it anticipated the legalistic terms that Nelson's father would later use in respect to his son's wounds: in a letter published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in April 1799, the Reverend Edmund Nelson commented that "[Nelson's] country seems sensible of his services – but, should he ever meet with ingratitude, his scars will cry out and plead his cause".[153] Wounds could thus, it seems, serve as compelling and incontrovertible proofs of courage and commitment to the service.

Worn across his chest, Nelson's empty sleeve also evokes other associations. Notably, Arline Meyer suggests this motif can be understood in relation to art-historical tradition, since it resembles the "hand-in-waistcoat" pose which enjoyed a widespread vogue in mid-eighteenth-century British portraiture, as discussed in chapter one.[154] In eighteenth-century comportment manuals, such as François Nivelon's *Rudiments of Genteel Behaviour* (1737), this pose was described as signifying "manly Boldness…temper'd with becoming modesty", a meaning ultimately derived from the classical art of rhetoric, in which withdrawing one's hand was used to demonstrate the exercise of self-restraint when speaking quietly or modestly.[155] Translated into portraiture, this pose came to represent a distinctly British form of masculinity, defined in opposition to the flamboyant mode of expression supposedly favoured by the French.[156] Meyer suggests that portraits representing Nelson's empty sleeve revived this ideal of masculine self-restraint, the hand-in-waistcoat pose having fallen somewhat out of fashion in late eighteenth-century portraiture.[157] It is also possible to see images of naval amputees like Nelson, Cornewall and Owen as investing this conventional pose with additional significance, for whereas placing one's hand in one's waistcoat was a self-conscious and theatrical gesture, displaying one's empty sleeve revealed a genuine disability and therefore carried connotations of authenticity.

In most portraits, Nelson's sleeve is placed over his stomach with a right-angled bend at the elbow, as exemplified in John Hoppner's full-length portrait (1801–2, Royal Collection, fig. 146). With the sleeve thus positioned, the resemblance to the traditional hand-in-waistcoat pose is pronounced, emphasising

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[153] Edmund Nelson to Brian Allet, Oct. 1798, quoted in *The Gentleman's Magazine* 69, no. 1 (1799): 344.
[154] Meyer, "Re-dressing," 45–63.
[155] François Nivelon, *The Rudiments of Genteel Behaviour* (London: n. p., 1737), 24.
[156] Meyer, "Re-dressing," 53.
[157] Meyer, "Re-dressing," 63.

the association with manly modesty. However, Abbott depicted the sleeve hanging in a higher position on the rear-admiral's chest. As well as ensuring that the injury is plainly visible in the half-length portrait, this arrangement enables the cuff of the sleeve to hang alongside Nelson's star of the Order of the Bath and beneath his St Vincent gold medal, inviting the viewer to read his lost limb as another badge of honour which (like the medal and the star) testifies to his courageous and patriotic service. At the same time, the empty sleeve also rests over Nelson's heart, becoming an "artless and affecting" gesture of sentiment and feeling.

Although born in the aftermath of the mutinies in 1797, Nelson's fame continued to grow long after the crisis passed. By the time of his death at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, he enjoyed far greater celebrity than any other naval officer and was therefore the subject of a large number of portraits, which consistently emphasised his empty sleeve. This *stigmata* formed a central component of his celebrity, not least due to the widespread reproduction of Abbott's portrait, which quickly gained iconic status.

The tendency among scholars has been to treat Nelson as exceptional or to view his fame in isolation. Yet, in keeping with Jenks's contention that "Nelson's image was constructed along existing lines", this chapter has shown how his representation answered a broader demand for "artless and affecting" commanders which arose in response to the Nore and Spithead mutinies.[158] Throughout this thesis, we have seen how officers were increasingly required to demonstrate that they were inherently suited for naval service, possessing inner courage, judgement and potential. Portraiture, an artistic genre celebrated for its supposed ability to reveal character through external appearance, proved a powerful medium for the expression of these ideas. However, the naval mutinies forced the issue, requiring portraitists to confront the tension between the performative aspects of command and the need to know that officers were truly worthy of holding authority. Seeming to offer intimate insights into an officer's character, images that displayed a combination of strength and vulnerability – as, for example, portraits featuring Nelson's empty sleeve – provided a potent mechanism for demonstrating the innate worthiness that was required.

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[158] Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 192.

CONCLUSION

"In looking at the likeness":
Nelson, naval portraiture and the maritime nation

At the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October 1805, Vice-Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson was shot and killed in the course of securing a memorable British victory. As David Cannadine observes, the vice-admiral's annihilation at the moment of his greatest triumph "made possible his apotheosis, and Nelson was launched on his new career of posthumous fame, national glory and global heroism which continues to flourish, to fluctuate, and to renew itself, down to our own day."[1] The construction of Nelson's legend has generally focussed on his character as much as his deeds, and over the last two centuries he has been celebrated (and sometimes castigated) for his protean array of alleged personal qualities, including his sense of duty, his charisma, his self-sacrificing bravery, his strategic brilliance, his inspiring leadership, his ambition, his vanity, his humanity and his endurance of debilitating wounds. Imbued with this complex range of characteristics, the vice-admiral's "immortal memory" was established and sustained through published biographies, public monuments and large-scale history paintings, as well as through the reproduction and circulation of his portraits in a multitude of different forms, from prints and medals to jewellery and ceramics.[2]

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers often sought to read Nelson's portraits for evidence of his personality.[3] In January 1848, the *Westminster Review* declared:

> Those, indeed, who look upon the portraits…see the frail, wan, and wasted form, mutilated with wounds; yet, in the pale, melancholy features, which Vandyke would have loved to paint, in the silent eloquence of the blue, thoughtful eye, may be discovered the traces of that indomitable spirit which actuated the leader, and was successfully infused by him into his followers. In looking at the likeness, in recalling the many recorded traits of his gentle, yet enthusiastic nature, his warm religious emotions, his ardent personal enterprise, we fancy we can comprehend the confidence and attachment he inspired among those who served under him.[4]

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[1] David Cannadine, "Introduction," in *Nelson: Context and Legacy*, ed. Cannadine, 1.
[2] The phrase "immortal memory" comes from the toast traditionally drunk by Royal Navy officers at their annual Trafalgar Day dinners, which commemorate the anniversary of the battle. Charles J. Gibowicz, *Mess Night Traditions* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2007), 159.
[3] Marianne Czisnik, "Admiral Nelson: Image and Icon," 2 vols. (PhD diss., Univ. of Edinburgh, 2003), 1: 291–6.
[4] *The Westminster Review* 95 (Jan. 1748): 202.

On the surface, these comments seem to affirm the power of Nelson's portraits. Yet the critic's assertion that comprehension of the "confidence and attachment he inspired" requires not only "looking at the likeness" but also "recalling the many recorded traits of his gentle, yet enthusiastic nature" implies that the images should be read alongside written sources. This approach is consistent with a broader nineteenth-century historiographical trend, in which the interpretation of portraiture was increasingly understood to complement biographical and historical study, as encapsulated in Thomas Carlyle's remark that "the portrait was as a small lighted candle, by which the biographies [of the sitter] could for the first time be read, and some human interpretation be made of them."[5] Whereas the genre had primarily been appreciated as art in the eighteenth century, it was now also valued as a source of historical evidence. At a time when authenticity was increasingly emphasised in the study of history, historical portraits were imagined to reveal the "true" characters of their sitters, eliding the painted image with the depicted individual.[6]

Many subsequent historians and biographers viewed Nelson's portraits through the prism of this nineteenth-century approach to portraiture, only to express disappointment because the images, as far as they were concerned, failed to showcase every aspect of the vice-admiral's legendary character. Thus, in 1902, William Henry Fitchett complained that "in most of his portraits the sensitive mouth, the curving lips, the set of his eyebrows, all tell of the emotional side of Nelson's character", revealing nothing of his resolve and eagerness for the fight.[7] Three years later, Arnold White and Esther Hallam Moorhouse similarly suggested that the vice-admiral's portraits displayed "a marked sadness, an almost feminine sweetness" but failed to exhibit "the marvellous battle-light which shone in his face when in the presence of the enemy", a comment which reveals how far Nelson's personality had become part of his myth: despite writing a century after the vice-admiral's death, White and Moorhouse felt confident that they knew the precise expression he wore during battle.[8] Different portraits were seen to express divergent aspects of Nelson's persona. For Oliver Warner in 1958, John Hoppner's portrait (1801–2, Royal

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[5] Thomas Carlyle to David Laing, 3 May, 1854, in Thomas Carlyle, *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 7 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1888), 7: 130. See also, Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 227–45.

[6] For nineteenth-century historiography, see: Stephen Bann, *The Clothing of Clio: A Study of the Representation of History in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984).

[7] William Henry Fitchett, *Nelson and His Captains: Sketches of Famous Seamen* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1902), 4.

[8] Arnold White and Esther Hallam Moorhouse, *Nelson and the Twentieth Century* (London: Cassell, 1905), 13.

Collection, fig. 146) featured "a face full [of] suffering and sensibility, delicate, sympathetic and vivid", whereas William Beechey's portrait painted in the same year (1801, Blackfriars' Hall, Norwich, fig. 147) showed the opposite, representing "a virile, confident, even masterful man".[9] No one image seemed to provide Carlyle's metaphorical "lighted candle", capable of fully illuminating Nelson's biography in all its multifaceted complexity.

The valorisation of Nelson's personal qualities and the debate around the expression of character in his portraits offers a postscript to the issues and themes with which this thesis has been concerned. As the preceding four chapters have demonstrated, naval officers were subjected to increasingly inward-turning probes of character during the eighteenth century. It was not enough for them simply to perform gallant actions. Starting out in the Royal Navy as boys or teenagers, they had to demonstrate their inherent potential at a young age. As their careers progressed, they were expected to be instinctively courageous, whilst also internalising a vast body of professional knowledge, remaining mentally alert, possessing refined private sensibilities and artlessly winning the loyalties of their men. The interest in officers' inward feelings can be related to the notion of the "inner self" which emerged in this period and to the shifting balance between public and private which has long preoccupied historians of the eighteenth century. This thesis has described the impact that these broad historical developments had upon notions of heroism, duty and martial identity at a time when these ideas were themselves being challenged and reshaped by the professionalization of the Royal Navy, the emergence of new forms of celebrity and the experience of social, political and imperial crises, including the loss of the American colonies and the French Revolution.

Evidence for officers' internal characteristics was sought in their facial expressions and outward behaviour, which in turn raised anxieties about artifice and performance. As an art of appearances, portraiture provided an important forum in which these concerns played out. Scholars have long recognised that the subgenre of naval portraiture had its own specific conventions, often featuring coastal settings, cannons, anchors, swords and official uniforms, but this thesis has shown that even the most conventional works could be imbued with complexity and nuance. As we have seen, naval officers' portraits were created for a diverse range of purposes. Some works were sentimental private commissions for domestic settings, whilst others were intended as public statements of social, professional or political

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[9] Oliver Warner, *A Portrait of Lord Nelson* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958), 261.

ambition to be displayed in metropolitan exhibitions and provincial town halls. Naval portraits could be exchanged to consolidate personal and professional networks and reproduced to fuel public celebrity. Across these various contexts, artists tried out different strategies to suggest officers' unique personal characteristics, as well as commemorating their achievements and signalling institutional belonging.

Chapter one demonstrated that, whilst working in the busy dockyard town of Plymouth at the start of his career in the 1740s, Joshua Reynolds's contact with the navy inspired him to take creative risks, deviating from conventional iconographic formulae in order to emphasise both the individuality of his naval sitters and his own unique artistic talents. Specifically, he sought to suggest that his naval clients possessed independent-mindedness and courage, counteracting fears arising from the Toulon scandal in 1744 that "*fighting officers* were not in vogue" in a navy increasingly governed by standardised procedures and systems of professional accountability.[10] Chapter two explored how the display and reproduction of naval officers' portraits at exhibitions and in print during the Seven Years' War (1756–63) were shaped by a burgeoning culture of celebrity predicated upon familiarity, immediacy and public intimacy, at the same time as the execution of Vice-Admiral John Byng in 1757 placed pressure upon sea commanders to display the inner characteristics of "Vigilance, Steadiness and Resolution" through outward signs of animation in "every Limb and Nerve".[11] Chapter three showed how Britain's defeat in the American War of Independence (1775–83) occasioned a crisis in masculinity which, coupled with the flourishing cult of sensibility, saw suffering, private feeling and youthful charm emphasised in representations of naval personnel ahead of more bellicose notions of aggression, experience and triumph. In portraits of young officers and teenage midshipmen, artists attempted to suggest their sitters' inherent potential in order to offer a vision of hope for the nation's future – a hope rooted in the seemingly natural commitment of the navy's youngest recruits. Finally, chapter four demonstrated that, following the Nore and Spithead mutinies in 1797, which mocked the rituals and ceremonies of naval command as nothing but empty theatre, portraits were used to help reassert the authority of the quarterdeck. As exemplified in Admiral Adam Duncan's representation as a "*Venerable*" commander and in the public fascination with the amputation of Nelson's arm, senior officers' images were imbued with traces of vulnerability as well as strength in order to suggest that these

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[10] *Old England Journal*, 8 Nov., 1746, quoted in *The Gentleman's Magazine* 16 (1746): 591.
[11] *An Address to the British Army and Navy*, 1–2.

men were emotionally invested in the sea service and willing to suffer alongside those they led.

Together, these chapters have shown that naval portraiture allowed officers to project distinctive identities for themselves which responded to their specific personal, professional, political and social circumstances. In this period, portraits also played a central role in the emergence of a culture of naval celebrity which focussed upon individual officers. The celebration of Nelson can be understood as the climax of this eighteenth-century culture of naval fame. Yet, as his posthumous legend grew, the vice-admiral quickly became a massively overdetermined figure within British culture, a point which meant that, as we have seen, the vice-admiral's portraits seemed inadequate to some commentators: too much rested upon Nelson, from too many different directions, for any one image ever to articulate sufficiently his accumulated meanings.

Nelson's "immortal memory" was in part a product of what Timothy Jenks has called the "victory culture" of the early nineteenth century.[12] In this period, Britain's manifold successes at sea during the Napoleonic Wars were seized upon as grist to the mill of national mythmaking, constructing a powerful identity for Britain as a "maritime nation". The idea of the maritime nation has a long history, stretching back as far as the commemoration of the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, and it was an important, if contested, concept in British culture throughout the eighteenth century. However, as Geoff Quilley has shown, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath saw the cult of the maritime nation imbued with heightened importance and turned into an overarching historicising system, functioning as a prism through which Britain's past, present and future were viewed, ordered and understood.[13] Within this context, whilst Nelson was celebrated as an individual, he was also figured as an important incarnation of British national character.

The maritime nationalism of the early nineteenth century found perhaps its ultimate expression the "National Gallery of Naval Art" (often known simply as the Naval Gallery), which opened in spring 1824, becoming the first public art gallery in Britain to be explicitly labelled as "national".[14] This gallery remained open for more

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[12] Jenks, *Naval Engagements*, 14.
[13] Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 189–217, esp. 202.
[14] For the Naval Gallery, see: Pieter van der Merwe, "'A proud monument of the glory of England': The Greenwich Hospital Collection," in *Art for the Nation: The Oil Paintings Collections of the National Maritime Museum*, ed. Geoff Quilley (London: National Maritime Museum, 2006), 19–38; Quilley, *Empire to Nation*, 209–17; Cicely Robinson, "Edward Hawke Locker and the Foundation of the National Gallery of Naval Art (c. 1795–1845)," (PhD diss., Univ. of York, 2013).

than a century, eventually closing in 1936, at which point the artworks were transferred on permanent loan to the National Maritime Museum. Installed in the Painted Hall at Greenwich Hospital for Seamen alongside James Thornhill's baroque allegorical murals celebrating British royal authority and maritime commerce (1707–26), the Naval Gallery's stated aim was to "perpetuate the memory of gallant actions and the names of the brave officers, who have contributed…to the defence and aggrandisement of their Country".[15] To this end, the display in the main hall provided a visual history of British naval success from the defeat of the Spanish Armada to the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars through a three-tier hang of paintings arranged chronologically around the room. Naval portraits occupied the top two tiers of the display and marine paintings the bottom tier, as recorded in an illustration published in the *Penny Magazine* in January 1838 (fig. 148). In its prominent display of portraiture, the Naval Gallery provided to some extent a conceptual precursor for the National Portrait Gallery (founded in 1856), both institutions drawing upon the understanding of portraiture as an important form of (national) historical record which developed in the first half of the nineteenth century.[16] As would later be the case in the National Portrait Gallery, most of the Naval Gallery's portraits came from family collections, many having been donated by the sitters' descendants.[17] These portraits were therefore abstracted from the varied private contexts for which they were originally designed and re-inscribed as markers in a national history of naval glory.

Although a number of the officers whose portraits appeared in the display remained well-known figures in the nineteenth century, Nelson was elevated above the rest, a room filled with his "relics" (including his blood-stained uniform from the Battle of Trafalgar) providing the Naval Gallery's dramatic centrepiece.[18] Yet this veneration of the vice-admiral was subsumed within an overarching celebration of the maritime nation, for which Nelson was made to serve as a kind of secular patron saint. Displayed in this context, the portraits in the Naval Gallery were thus intended to be read collectively as a coherent expression of national identity. This assigned naval portraiture a new role, distinct from the one that it had previously fulfilled in the eighteenth century when, as this thesis has shown, it was a varied and creative

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[15] William Locker, TNA ADM 67/44, 11 Feb., 1795, quoted in Robinson, "Edward Hawke Locker," 1: 52.
[16] Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 227–45.
[17] Robinson, "Edward Hawke Locker," 1: 58–9. For the National Portrait Gallery's acquisition of family portraits, see: Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 229.
[18] Robinson, "Edward Hawke Locker," 1: 285–99.

genre which could simultaneously express ideas of institutional belonging, national service and personal individuality.

The rank structure in the eighteenth-century Royal Navy[1]

Flag ranks

Admirals, vice-admirals, rear-admirals and commodores were known as "flag officers" because they were entitled to fly specific flags from their ships (hence the term "flagship"). Flag officers (except commodores) were divided between the navy's three squadrons: the blue, the white and the red, in order of increasing importance. Admirals, vice-admirals and rear-admirals were appointed and promoted on the basis of seniority (i.e. when a vacancy arose, the longest serving officer in the next rank down was automatically elevated to fill the post). By contrast, the appointment of commodores was at the Admiralty's discretion.

Rank	Sub-Divisions	Description
Admiral	Admiral of the Fleet Admiral of the White Admiral of the Blue	An admiral commanded a fleet of ships.
Vice-Admiral	Vice-Admiral of the Red Vice-Admiral of the White Vice-Admiral of the Blue	A vice-admiral could command his own fleet or he might command a division of a larger fleet under an admiral.
Rear-Admiral	Rear-Admiral of the Red Rear-Admiral of the White Rear-Admiral of the Blue	A rear-admiral could command his own fleet or he might command a division of a larger fleet under an admiral or a vice-admiral.
Commodore		Commodore was a temporary rank awarded to a post-captain who took on some of the responsibilities of a rear-admiral for the duration of a particular assignment. At the end of the assignment, he reverted to the rank of post-captain.

Commissioned officers

Beneath the flag ranks, there were three further commissioned ranks: post-captain, commander and lieutenant. Officers were promoted to these ranks on the basis of merit and through networks of patronage.

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[1] For more information, see Rodger, *Wooden World*, 16–29.

Rank	Description
Post-Captain	Captains were officially referred to as "post-captains" because the title of "captain" was informally applied to any officer who assumed command of a vessel, regardless of his actual rank. Post-captains commanded ships above a certain size. Those with less than three years' seniority in the rank were considered junior post-captains and wore different uniforms.
Commander	Commanders were officers who commanded small vessels, such as sloops, which were not considered important enough to require a post-captain. Until 1794, this rank did have not permanent status, meaning that a lieutenant could be promoted directly to post-captain without first serving as a commander.
Lieutenant	Lieutenants served under captains and commanders. Most ships had several lieutenants, who were ranked first, second, third and so on in order of seniority. In certain circumstances, lieutenants could be placed in command of small vessels.

Warrant officers

Warrant officers were the heads of specialist branches of the ship's company and reported directly to the captain.

Rank	Description
Master	The master was the ship's senior warrant officer and specialised in navigation and safety.
Surgeon	The surgeon managed the care of the ship's sick and wounded.
Purser	The purser kept the ship's accounts.
Boatswain	The boatswain had responsibility for the ship's rigging, cables, anchors, sails and boats.
Carpenter	The carpenter oversaw the maintenance of the hull and masts.
Gunner	The gunner was responsible for maintaining the ship's guns.

Marines

Marines were the infantry of the Royal Navy. They were soldiers specially trained for amphibious warfare and also helped to enforce discipline on board ship. Founded in 1755, the Royal Marine corps had its own commissioned officers and command hierarchy. However, marine officers were subordinate to the authority of the naval captains and flag officers in whose ships and fleets they served.

Petty officers

A ship had a large number of petty officers, who ranked above the seamen but below the warrant and commissioned officers. Midshipmen and master's mates were the senior petty officers.

Rank	Description
Midshipmen	Midshipmen were usually young men or boys who had aspirations to become commissioned officers. One of the prerequisites for obtaining a lieutenant's commission was having served for at least two years as a midshipman.
Master's Mates	Master's mates studied navigation under the master and assisted him in his duties.

Inferior petty officers included chaplains, boatswain's mates, sailmakers, cooks, armourers, surgeon's mates, carpenter's mates, clerks and schoolmasters.

Seamen

Seamen were assigned various duties and rates depending on their capabilities, ranging from unskilled landsmen to expert able seamen.

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